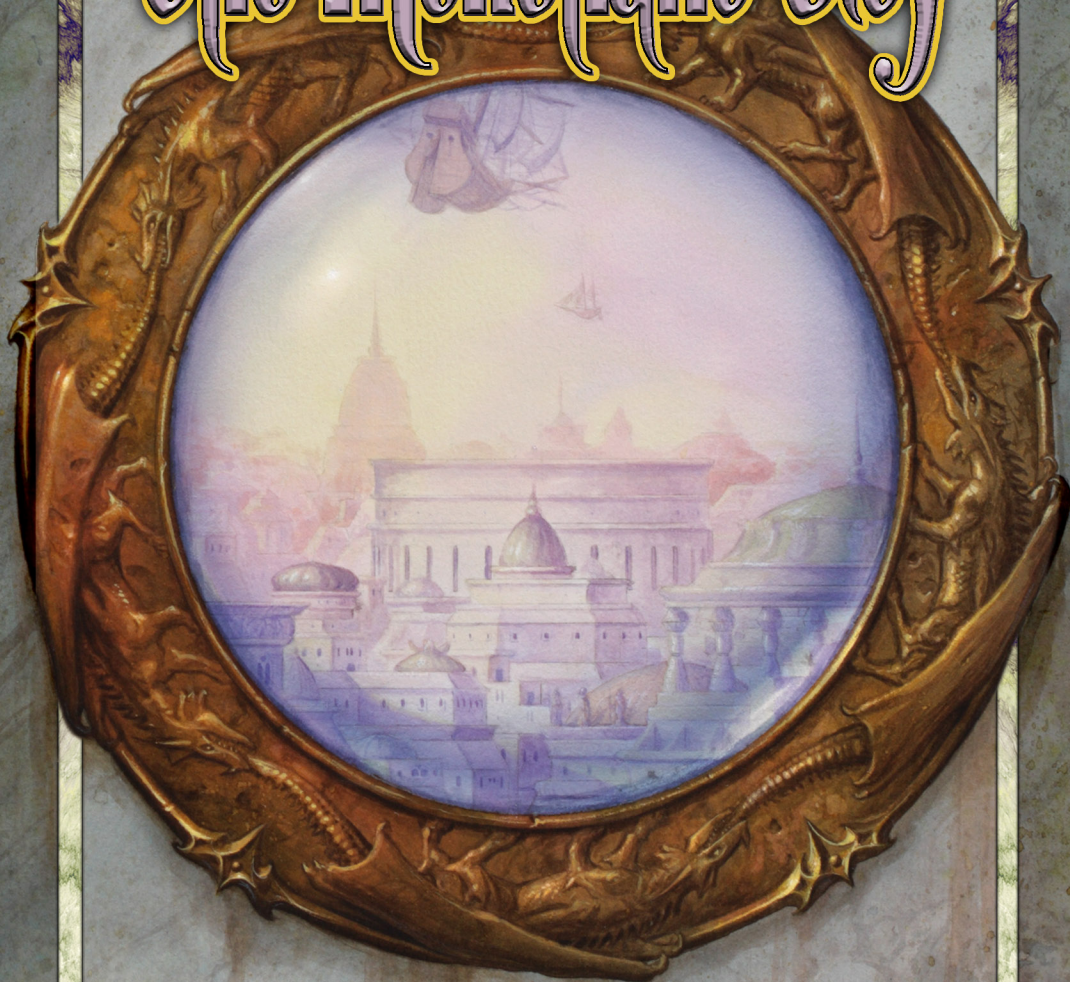


EARTHDAWN

FAS14201

# TRAVAR

## The Merchant City



AN EARTHDAWN — FOURTH EDITION — SOURCEBOOK

EARTHDAWN

# TRAVAR



the Merchant City



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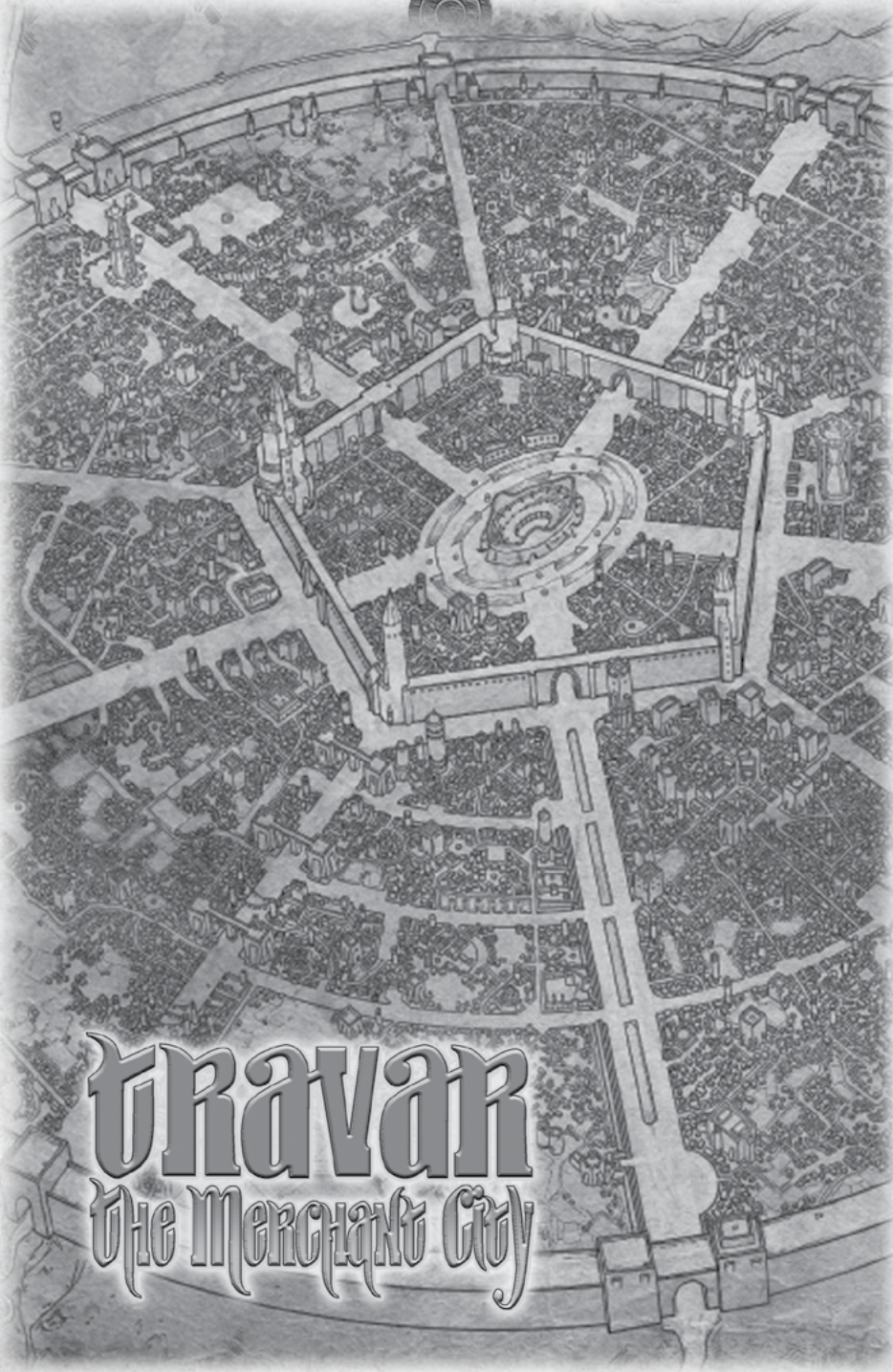
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# travar

The Merchant City



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A PLACE TO HIDE</b> .....	<b>7</b>	<b>The City Watch</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>ON THE HISTORY OF TRAVAR</b> .....	<b>11</b>	<b>PEACHES</b> .....	<b>83</b>
The Journals Of Shiellen Woodsong.....	11	<b>THE GREAT TRADING HOUSES</b> .....	<b>89</b>
An Ancient Land.....	12	On Trading Houses and Companies.....	89
Nehr'esham And The Books Of harrow.....	12	The Synod.....	91
The Ivory Codex.....	13	On Coins And Currency.....	91
The School Of Shadows And The Body		The Byrose Consortium.....	93
Of Five.....	14	House Achura.....	97
The Founding Of Travar.....	14	House Dumorjen .....	111
The First Magistrates And The Cycle		House Halla.....	119
of Five .....	15	House Thanton.....	122
Death Of A Scholar.....	17	Juliack Merris .....	125
Preparations For The Scourge.....	18	Omasu and the Overland Trading	
The Orichalcum Wars .....	19	Company .....	127
Travar And The Theran Empire.....	19	<b>SECRET SOCIETIES OF TRAVAR</b> .....	<b>131</b>
Rebellion And The Time Of Hiding.....	20	Naaman's Hand .....	131
The Water Rebellion.....	22	The Liferock Rebellion .....	136
The Founding.....	23	Order of The Crimson Sky .....	139
Weathering The Storm .....	23	The Protectorate Movement.....	142
The Earthdawn .....	24	The Var'eidyllon Tara'var .....	143
The Road To War .....	26	Thieves of Travar.....	145
Better The Enemy You Know .....	28	<b>FOREIGN RELATIONS</b> .....	<b>149</b>
<b>ON TRAVAR TODAY</b> .....	<b>31</b>	Blood Wood .....	149
The People Of Travar.....	31	Iopos.....	151
The Magistrates .....	32	Jerris.....	153
The Merchant Houses.....	32	Kratas.....	155
The Average Citizen .....	34	Tskrang Aropagoi.....	157
Slaves .....	36	Thera.....	160
The Indentured Folk.....	36	Throal .....	161
The Code Of Travar .....	39	Urupa .....	163
Passions and Questors.....	43	Vivane .....	165
In The Grip Of Chorrolis.....	52	Cara Fahd .....	165
On Air Crew Culture And Tradition.....	54	Crystal Raiders.....	167
<b>ORGANIZATIONS OF TRAVAR</b> .....	<b>61</b>	<b>SIGHTS OF THE CITY</b> .....	<b>169</b>
The Magistrates' Council .....	61		
The Body Of Five .....	68		

The City Walls .....	169
Thoroughfares and Avenues .....	170
Divides .....	174
Gates and Markets .....	177
The Five Towers .....	180
Tower of Commerce .....	182
Air Docks .....	184
The Arena .....	186
Libraries of Travar .....	190
Ruins Under Travar .....	192
The Sanctum of Garlen .....	192

## SASHA TOMB.....195

## OUTSIDE TRAVAR.....199

Tent City .....	199
Bryose Riverfront .....	203
Slave Markets .....	207
Byrose River Valley .....	209
The Badlands .....	210
Death's Sea .....	218
Dragon Mountains .....	219
Mist Swamps .....	220
Thunder Mountains .....	222

## THE FOUNDING TOURNAMENT.....225

The Tournament in Travar .....	225
Designing A Tournament .....	232
Sample Event: Escape from Dragon's Ridge .....	238
Sample Event: Storm Over Thunder Ridge .....	241
Sample Event: Dominion .....	243
Sample Event: The Last Dragon Riders .....	247

## ADVENTURES IN TRAVAR.....253

Campaigns in Travar .....	253
Adventure Frameworks .....	257
The Price of Passage .....	258
Festival of Horrors .....	262
Fate Forger .....	265
Legal Documents .....	269

## GAME INFORMATION.....273

Goods and Services .....	273
Common Magic Items .....	274
Blood Inks .....	276
Blood Charms .....	278
Transport and Services .....	279
Magical Treasures .....	280
The Ivory Codex .....	280
Greycairn's Legacy .....	283
Brooch of Yielding .....	285
Soulbinder .....	287
Earth Gates .....	288
The Gift of Jaspre .....	291
Dagger of the Thorned Vine .....	293
The Edge of Travar .....	294
Creatures .....	296

## GAMESMASTER

## CHARACTER INDEX.....308

## INDEX.....314





## A PLACE TO HIDE

Kratas seemed the logical place to hide for Shiellen Woodsong. His father once told him, "In Kratas, everyone is hiding from something or someone." It was also convenient. Not only did he have an old debt to pay, but a trade mission from Travar to re-petition old One-Eye regarding the use of Kratas' neglected docking towers had been leaving that very day. Getting a place on the team was a formality, a benefit of being the illegitimate child of the great Lord Alderac Windspear. Not only did his father have the clout as a member of Magistrates' Council of Travar, but shipping a past indiscretion and source of future embarrassment to another city was an incentive too good to be missed. Now in Kratas, Shiellen regretted the decision as he paced the floor of his room in the Drunken Dragon Inn.

In Travar, he was sure someone had been watching his every move, but he had no idea who that someone was. In Kratas, everyone was watching, and most were not discrete about it. He recognized the look in their eyes. He had seen the same look in the eyes of Travar's merchants when they knew the next big business deal was within their grasp. Except, in Kratas, it didn't quite work that way, and the result would be a one-way transaction. Under advisement from the innkeeper, Shiellen lost the fancy merchant robes and hired two personal guards.

Shiellen knew the trade mission was doomed before they left Travar, but it was a means to an end. He didn't even bother leading the delegation to Hilltop. He feigned sickness and convinced an overly eager junior member of the mission to take his place. He knew the Force of the Eye would rough them up and send them packing. Shiellen looked down at the new copy of *Travar: The Merchant City* he held tightly in his hands, not quite remembering why he had brought the book with him...

It had been a busy evening in Travar and the Eternal Market was more congested than Shiellen had ever seen it. Almost anything could be bought at the Eternal Market at any time of the day or night, and Shiellen had stopped at one stall to drive a hard bargain with a merchant. Shiellen needed a fresh journal; his own was full and then some. He settled for the same type the Great Library in Throal commonly issued to its adepts. Haggling for the journal had kept him late. He hurried to the secret meeting place of the Var'eidyllon Tara'var or the Remnants, a small society he had recently become involved with.

Pushing aside the concealed door at the back of a merchant's warehouse Shiellen hurried down the stairwell. Only on reaching the bottom did he realize something was wrong. A single body lay on the ancient stone floor among a litter of discarded documents. It was not the body that Shiellen first noticed, but the documents. Only yesterday the room had been in perfect order.



Shiellen examined the body, his heart pounding. Never had he been so close to a corpse before. He was no expert, but judging by the number of small crystal shards embedded in the body he had run afoul of the society's resident Elemental. The dead man's left sleeve was rolled up and Shiellen noted the symbol tattooed on his arm, he was sure he had seen it somewhere before. Shiellen could only guess the society had been attacked and the fifth protocol initiated, which boiled down to every member taking whatever action necessary to protect the society's most treasured documents and get them to another safe house. Shiellen realized that included him.

The words at the initiation ceremony echoed in his head. "Tell no one of what you are about to read." Shiellen had told no one as instructed and as the blood oath had demanded, but he had written almost everything in his journal, now weighing heavily in the lining of his robes. Shiellen quickly gathered the scattered documents from the floor, most of which were treatises on Travar by others in the organization.

A noise brought Shiellen out of his thoughts. Someone was coming down the stairwell behind him and he instinctively knew it wasn't one of his fellows. Shiellen fled for a concealed door at the far end of the room, leading to an exit on one of the main streets.

Shiellen could sense he was being followed and had no way of knowing how to contact the Remnants. Even if he did, he couldn't do it while being watched. He knew he had to get rid of his journal safely. It would be impossible to tell what the consequences would be for Travar if anyone discovered the secrets he had been privy to.

With a renewed sense of purpose, Shiellen picked up the pace in his stride. He remembered his father's lessons on presentation of a market stall. "*The items you really want to sell should be placed to stand out and catch the customer's eye, anything of interest to a dwarf should be at his eye level, not yours, and the same applies for trolls and obsidimen. Anything else and you're just hiding your wares in plain view.*" There was only one place to hide a book in plain view, the Labyrinth Library.

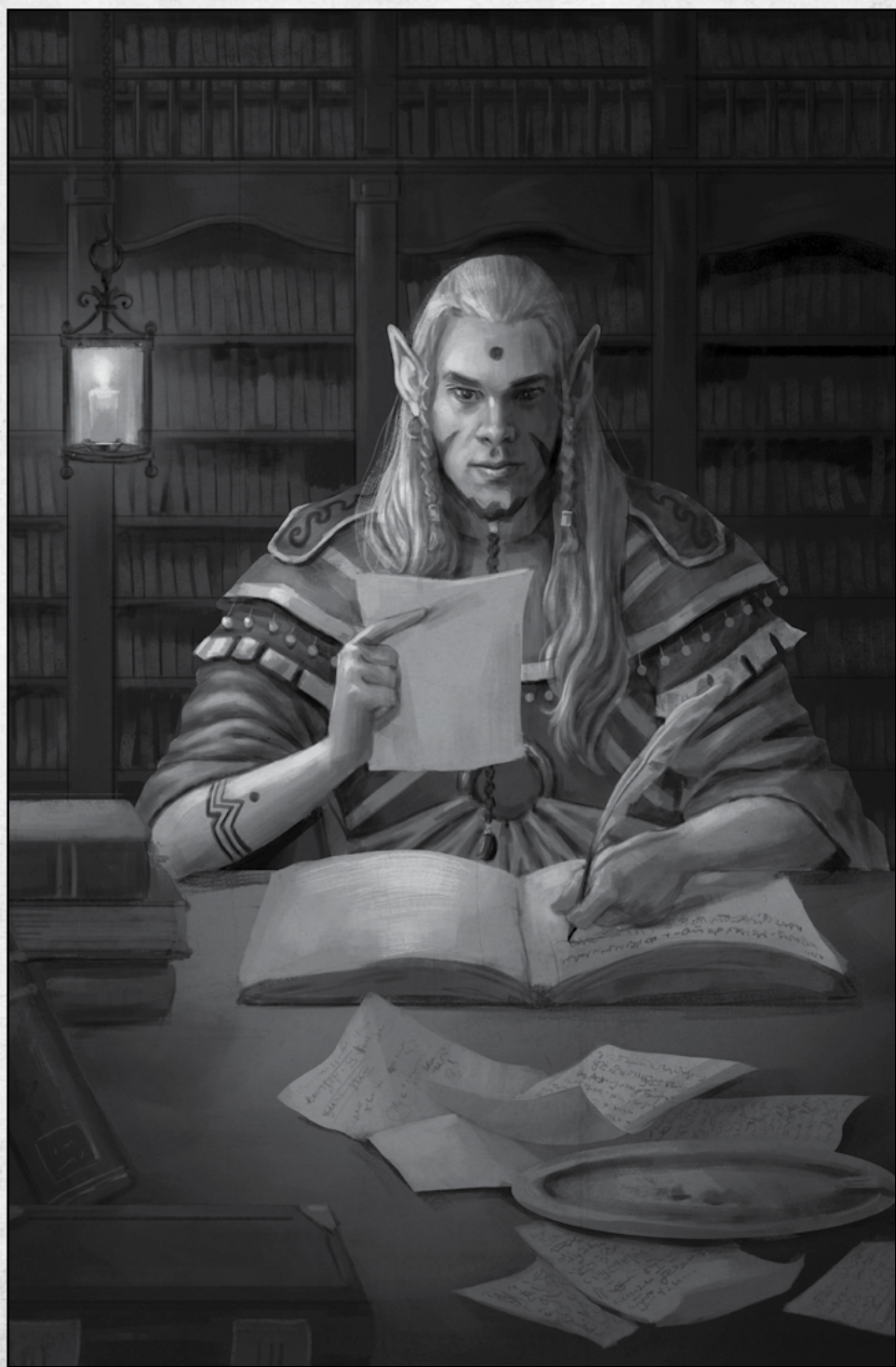
The library was reasonably empty in the evening, which suited Shiellen's purpose. In the center of the room was a series of wooden crates half packed with books. Shiellen had been talking to one of the scribes just that morning and knew the boxes were destined for the vaults in the Great Library in Throal. The books they contained were on special loan so the scribes of Travar could make copies for the city's libraries, and Shiellen knew when they returned to Throal they would be locked in some dark vault, possibly never again to see the light of day.

Shiellen knew the book he wanted. The scribes in the library had made over a dozen copies of it. The Passions were smiling. *Travar: A City For Sale*, was yet to be packed. Of course, the title the dwarfs of Throal had given the book was not much to the liking of those in Travar, so the scribed copies were given the alternative title, *Travar: The Merchant City*. Shiellen had his own ideas on how the book should be titled after the Remnants had introduced him to Ayesha's journals, which offered a radical firsthand account of Travar's history.

Shiellen took the book to a private booth and, placing a few coins in the collection box, took the offered light quartz from the holder. Drawing his dagger, Shiellen cut deep into the book, removing the center, dozens of pages at a time. Making space for his journal, he made a point to cut out all the history he now knew to be false. The dwarfs of Throal should have known better. Shiellen stuffed the journal into the space he had created along with the papers he had gathered earlier from the floor, and into his robes he stuffed the paper cut from the book. He returned the book where he had found it, knowing in several hours it would be packed and on an airship to Throal.

Shiellen lifted a freshly scribed copy of *Travar: The Merchant City* from its shelf to check it out of the library as his exorbitant annual subscription allowed. Anyone watching him as he left would not be suspicious of his short stay. Feeling content, Shiellen knew he had to lie low for a while and Kratas was just the place to do it.

As he paced his room in Kratas, there was a knock on the door. "Enter," Shiellen commanded. At least the brigands he hired remembered to knock this time. The door opened to reveal a figure clad in the type of black hooded cloak common to Kratas. Shiellen could only stare aghast at the two bodies of his hired protection and the bloodied sword the assassin held in his hand. In a blur of motion, the assassin attacked. Shiellen raised the thick tome he carried to block the blade, but, aided by the assassin's magic, the blade punched straight through. As Shiellen dropped to his knees, he feebly grappled with the man's arm. The assassin bore a similar tattoo to the corpse in Travar and Shiellen remembered where he had seen it. It had been sketched in Ayesha's journals, and he had copied it to his own. Shiellen died wondering if it was possible that hundreds of years after her death, Ayesha's enemies had finally tracked her down.





# ON THE HISTORY OF TRAVAR

*The history of Travar is shrouded in mystery, and its truth is known only to those few who guard its secrets. As with the history of Barsaive, the history of Travar cannot be complete without mention of the Therans. While the Therans are fully aware of their role in shaping the history of Barsaive, the role they played in shaping the history of Travar is not what they may think.*

• **Shiellen Woodsong – Merchant Scholar of Travar** •

## THE JOURNALS OF SHIELLEN WOODSONG

I have heard a thousand tales of how Travar came to be, each differing slightly from the next, but whether the tale comes from the tongue of a Troubadour or drunken Air Sailor, they have a common theme. It begins in an ancient land of warring nomadic tribes, each trying to conquer the other. The smaller tribes band together for mutual protection and are defeated in a great battle. Ousted from their traditional migration routes, the survivors arrive at the banks of a mighty river to settle far from their warring brothers, looking only for peace. Soon, they learn to plant the rich earth and trade with the t'skrang and, as they say, the rest is history.

Each day as I travel the streets of Travar, I can see they are full of wondrous clues from the past for us historians and scholars to discover and piece together. There are abandoned shrines to Passions now all but neglected that give clues to the time before the Scourge. Many streets are Named after villages and communities that no longer exist, lost to the Badlands. Travar preserved so many things from before the Scourge, yet the truth wasn't one of them. A pity, for the truth is a tale worth telling.

How I got involved with the *Var'eydyllon Tara'var* is a story for another time. Suffice to say, they had seen enough quality in me to invite me to join their ranks, tempting me with the promise of hard evidence of an alternative version of Travar's origins and insights to its future. How could any scholar turn down such an opportunity? I remember the initiation as if it were only yesterday.

The room was cold, but it was the mixture of excitement and fear that made me shiver. In front of me stood five figures clad in white, their faces hidden in the depths of their hooded robes. Kneeling beside me were four other initiates I had never met. Mesmerized by the chanting of the hooded figures, I nearly missed my cue. "We are of the third cycle, always of five," I replied—not quite in unison with the others. The ceremony finished with a simple blood oath, after which I was led to a small room. On the table in front of me was a box containing papers, scrolls, and a series of journals, all of which were very, very old. From the moment I turned the first page, I realized the magnitude of what I was reading.

## AN ANCIENT LAND

Long before the founding of Travar, the area between the Byrose River and the Scarlet Sea was a lush and fertile land known only as the Tara'var to its nomadic inhabitants. It is a description that reminds me of an old painting in my father's office (at the time of writing he sits on the Magistrates Council of Travar). The painting depicts a landscape with tribesmen leading a herd of huttawa across an ancient plain. The serenity of that scene belied the constant conflict between the nomadic tribes and a once great civilization predating them all; a civilization which, according to the journal, vanished from the living memory of all Namegivers, except perhaps the dragons. The clues were visible to those with the desire and knowledge to seek out such places. And seek these places they eventually did.

## NEHR'ESHAM AND THE BOOKS OF HARROW

The events that lead to the founding of Travar began in Nehr'esham (now known as Thera) around the time translation had begun on the Books of Harrow and the foundation stones of the Eternal Library were being laid, when thousands of scholars and adepts were flocking to the small island nation. The fledgling government believed more books like the Books of Harrow must exist and they sponsored exploration parties, sending out scholars and adepts, like leaves in the wind, across many lands.

Inspired by the building of the Eternal Library, a young but brilliant student Named Ayesha Selestran was making a Name for herself translating various text fragments that had been returned to Nehr'esham. Ayesha gave no description of herself in her journals. One source described her as an elf of unmarred beauty. Later texts described her as an elf whose beauty was marred only by an unusual scar on her left cheek. Regardless, as word of her talent for translation spread she expected to gain access to the Books of Harrow, yet, to her surprise, all her requests were brushed aside without explanation.

Undeterred, she became a persistent thorn in the side of the scholars in the Eternal Library, making enemies of many of them. Realizing she was not going to be given access to the Books of Harrow, she demanded to lead one of the expeditions searching for artifacts from a previous age of magic. Eventually, the Eternal Library acceded to her constant and irritating demands, seeing it as a way to rid themselves of a troublesome student, sending her on a fool's errand to an area barely even marked on the map.

I will not bore you with the details, but it is enough to say that after a difficult and dangerous journey, Ayesha's expedition arrived in the vast land on whose eastern reaches Travar now stands. Ayesha's group read the features and lay of the land. They saw the difference between what was natural and what nature had reclaimed, leaving behind only a hint something older lay beneath.

Ayesha, a natural leader, befriended local sages, wise men, and tribal leaders who knew the location of ruins long buried beneath the earth. With the help of local laborers, excavation of the site began. Occasionally, the scholars sent items of interest back to Nehr'esham, but support and the promised funding never arrived. All but forgotten, the scholars stopped sending discoveries altogether as Ayesha realized the truth. She had been effectively exiled. Though it matters little; she had long outgrown

any loyalty to Nehr'esham. Future discoveries remained in the private collections of the scholars who unearthed them.

The ruins are so vast, and the scholars so few, that it took years just to investigate small portions of them. What started out as a task of discovery expanded beyond an excavation site into a small trading outpost. As the years passed, growing numbers of Namegivers settled the area, building on top of the ancient ruins.

## THE IVORY CODEX

Ayesha, at first, worked the dig site with a small group of laborers, one discovery leading to another, one clue leading to the next. This pattern continued as the years passed. Eventually, short on resources, she worked the dig site alone, most of her fellow scholars long since departed. Her tenacity paid off. Almost 74 years after her arrival, she made an incredible discovery.

Ayesha uncovers what at first appeared to be a burial chamber, its entrance heavily warded with an aura of ancient magic. The chamber was dedicated to the deeds of its sole occupant, an honored hero and champion of ancient times. The hero's remains, held intact only by the stillness of the air, crumbled to dust with her entry, leaving behind five stone tablets. Each tablet was fourteen inches tall, eight inches wide, and made from a solid piece of marble, flecked with minute traces of orichalcum, just enough to bestow an ivory hue.

*It seems strange to me now that we are surrounded by this very material every day of our lives and scarcely give it any thought. – S.*

Carved on each tablet were several sections of text in an unfamiliar runic language. Fine orichalcum gilding outlined the runes and each tablet is framed in the magical metal.

Using what little resources Ayesha still had at her disposal, she had a powerful Nethermancer summon the spirit of the chamber's occupant. The summoning was successful and she learned the artifact was called the Ivory Codex and to unlock its secrets she must perform a ritual detailed by the spirit.

Ayesha does not provide detail on the ritual, only that it requires a small drop of blood from five Namegiver races. While the details of the ritual are scant, Ayesha does mention those who provided blood for the ritual.

During a trip to the market to collect supplies, Ayesha discovered a slave caravan passing through on its way to Thera. She managed to convince the slavers of her credentials using an old letter of credit from the Eternal Library and purchased five slaves. The fate of these slaves is unaccounted for, but she listed them from the slavers ledger: Karnak of the Greathorns, criminal and brawler; Vim of Mathatos, criminal and deserter; Kryis of Ardavara, criminal and escaped slave; Egeris of Ikrilsyn, criminal and poisoner; Ekoris of Xaragal, criminal and architect.

The ritual revealed a series of maps, overlaid with a series of geometric patterns in addition to the runic text. Disappointed but not discouraged, Ayesha removed her discovery from the dig site to her own workshop. Certain the codex has more to reveal once she deciphers its texts, Ayesha began what became her life's work.

## THE SCHOOL OF SHADOWS AND THE BODY OF FIVE

Not all of Ayesha's time was spent studying the Ivory Codex. Having lived in the area for so long, she had fallen in love with the area's natural beauty and its people held her in high regard. She accepted a leadership role in the settlement, grown into a large market town called Highhollow and an important center of trade in the area.

Thera itself was rapidly growing and not only completed the Eternal Library, but translated the first Book of Harrow. Thera sent copies of the translated Book far and wide, including Highhollow. The leaders, uncertain what to make of this book, consulted with local sages, scholars, and merchants who had knowledge of the arcane. Ayesha, the last of the Nehr'esham scholars, was certain there was truth to the warnings in the Book of Harrow. Ayesha advised they should heed the warnings, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. She was, however, able to convince four of the merchants present of the need to prepare for this threat.

*Selling it to them as an investment in the future, terms any merchant like myself can think in. Perhaps it is no mistake Travar is a city of merchants after all. – S.*

Ayesha and the merchants formed the Body of Five. She shared with them her discovery of the Ivory Codex, and the Body of Five poured their resources into translating them. Realizing the task will take generations, each member of the Body of Five took on several apprentices, one to succeed them and the others to administer their trading concerns. Within a generation, the Body of Five became a secret society under the guise of a powerful trading house, its true purpose a tightly held secret.

The Body of Five made their first breakthrough and pinpointed the location of the map inscribed on the first tablet of the Ivory Codex. The location was many days' walk to the east, nestled between two major tributaries of the Serpent River. The Body of Five concentrated on deciphering the text of the tablet. Unfortunately, unfolding events hampered their efforts.

The annual migration of nomadic tribes brought rumor of the first manifestation of a Horror in the Tara'var. Not long after, the School of Shadows in Thera dispatched a group of powerful adepts to the area under the guise of investigating the Horror manifestation, but there was another purpose. Those who had sought to rid themselves of the troublesome Ayesha had learned of her discovery and tasked the School of Shadows with finding her and her discovery, and return with both to Thera.

Ayesha used the considerable wealth and resources of the Body of Five to keep the School of Shadows at arm's length. Meanwhile, she disappeared within the organization, which slowly relocated its base of operations east, to the location identified on the first tablet of the Ivory Codex. The School of Shadows never gave up its search for Ayesha, but, far from home, they had limited resources and Ayesha's trail went cold. Still fearful of discovery, however, Ayesha worked behind the scenes, keeping out of the public eye wherever possible.

## THE FOUNDING OF TRAVAR

*When I first learned of what I write here, I could feel the hairs on the back of my neck rise, and goose flesh prickle at my arms like never before. The Var'eidyllon*

*Tara'var believes their chosen Name translates as the Remnants of Five, and I can see the significance of the Name. However, I believe this to be incorrect and the literal translation is "descendants of five". I feel the pieces of some ancient puzzle are slowly falling into place. – S.*

Having completed their relocation from the prying eyes of the School of Shadows, the Body of Five continued to work on the translation of the text. Ayesha learned the nomadic tribes in the region called this location *Ryn'var Tara'var*, which has the literal meaning "five of five."

Ayesha realized she has mistaken the sequence of the tablets in the Ivory Codex and they had moved to the location indicated by the fifth tablet. The Body of Five had a partial translation of the text, which explained some of the geometric shapes overlaid on the map. They discovered a set of five foundations buried in the earth, each hewn from a single giant rock. Each foundation stone was carved with the same runic script found on the Ivory Codex. Each stone was trimmed with a seamless circle of living crystal. When viewed astrally, the area inside the living crystal circle was a construct of a standing stone, its surface covered in runic design. Each foundation stone was located on the circumference of a much larger circle.

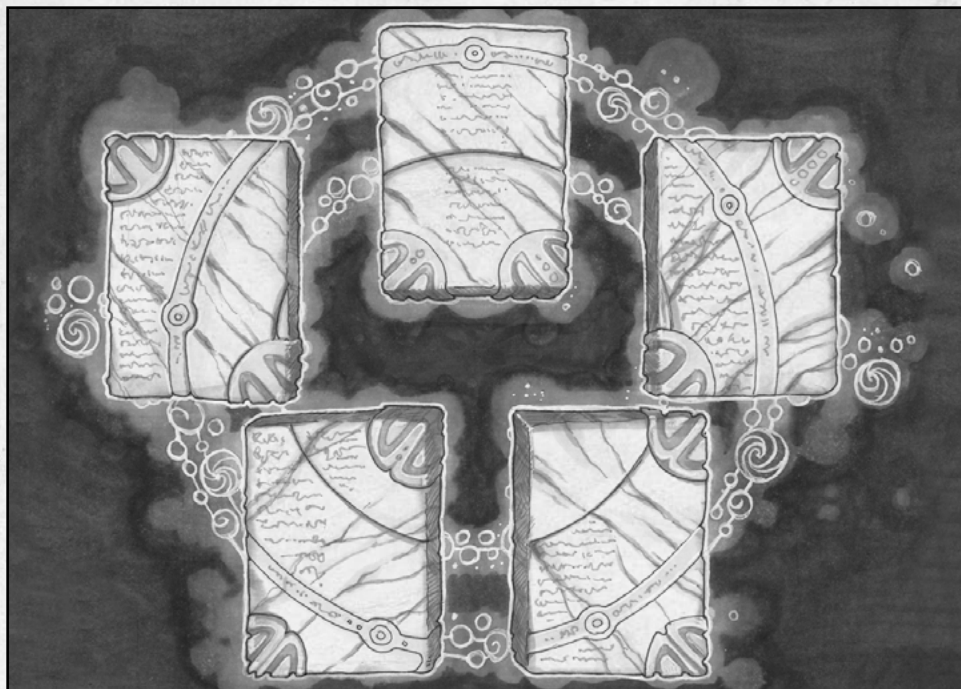
Again, fearful what they had discovered would be brought to the attention of the School of Shadows, the Body of Five used their assets to fund the construction of towers to cover the foundation stones. With the foundation stones physically hidden and the privacy to study them assured, they continued their research. Ayesha named the site Travar, which roughly translates as Five Towers.

Travar is located close to the banks of the Byrose River and is in a perfect location for both river and overland trade. The trading assets of the Body of Five flourished, attracting many settlers to the area. Leaving their trading concerns to their apprentices, the Body of Five continued to study the Ivory Codex. Finally, a breakthrough in the understanding of the fifth tablet offered enough insight to pinpoint the locations of the maps on the remaining tablets and provided the locations of more buried ruins under Travar.

Unfortunately for the Body of Five, their trading concerns had grown and their good fortune came at a price. Travar had become a bustling market town and a center of river trade. The central area located between the five towers became a thriving livestock market, and many hundreds of people built their homes and business around the market, leaving no possibility of further exploration of any subterranean ruins. Travar flourished and its merchants became rich trading with Throal and Thera. A victim of its own success, Travar became a target for attack by the more warlike tribes. In response to these acts of aggression, the Body of Five funded the construction of Travar's first protective wall.

## THE FIRST MAGISTRATES AND THE CYCLE OF FIVE

Direct trade with Thera increased and many Theran merchants arrived in Travar. Their airships increased the volume of trade and offered greater potential profit for Travar's own merchants. Alarmed, the Body of Five divested their organization of its trading interests and handed administration of Travar to publicly appointed rulers



on the agreement their services were to be retained indefinitely. There were initially to be five magistrates to mirror the original ruling Body of Five, but Ayesha became suspicious of the purpose of the Ivory Codex and reduced the number to three.

For some time, Ayesha had felt there was more to the Ivory Codex than ancient knowledge and obscure warnings. Her fears were heightened after an extended research expedition. Ayesha was on the deck of an airship, enjoying the late evening sun over Travar having spent most of her day below deck. Allowing herself a moment of pride, she saw the growth of the town that was swiftly becoming a city and had a sudden moment of clarity. The center of the town remained unsettled, and the five main roads radiated outward from the center, splitting the city into five evenly spaced sectors. She recognized the pattern. Travar's layout was identical to the overlapping patterns depicted on the fifth tablet of the Codex.

Ayesha became disturbed by events that, at the time of their happening, seemed natural enough, but with hindsight appeared more than coincidental. She recognized a repeating pattern of five in many pivotal events over the years. From the discovery of the five tablets of the Ivory Codex, the Naming of the Body of Five, the arrival at the location marked on the fifth tablet, the meaning of Tara'var itself, the construction of the five towers, and many more besides. She suddenly had the feeling, all this time, she had been duped.

When Ayesha landed in Travar, she became infused with a sense of purpose, a sense she was destined for greatness. This was something she could not explain, but she believed it was only apparent because of her extended absence. A powerful magical pattern had been created for Travar, perhaps by the Ivory Codex, or simply

due to the many years of expanding trade. Ayesha noted everyone in Travar had this attitude as part of their personality.

Ayesha redoubled her efforts to translate the Ivory Codex. Soon, with a more complete translation, she postulated a theory called the Cycle of Five. This theory stated events occurring near the Ivory Codex rather than developing naturally, follow patterns involving the number five. These events lead to more significant events that also fall into this pattern. Believing the Ivory Codex somehow interacts with and manipulates True Patterns, Ayesha spent the next few years researching her theory. She believed the Ivory Codex was a series of magical templates, but templates for what she still had to discover.

Ayesha insisted there should be only three magistrates ruling Travar. It was an attempt to break the cycle, as she did not know what would happen if it continued unchecked. Ayesha devoted the rest of her years researching the Cycle of Five and its possible influence on the pattern of Travar.

In her twilight years, Ayesha completed the translation of the first tablet. The Codex tells of an ancient civilization at the height of its power, preparing for the invasion of the Horrors. Its rulers, confident in their ability to weather the coming storm, knew as the magic fades, the Horrors would depart. They also knew their cities, built on a foundation of magic, would crumble. They mourned the inevitable demise of their great civilization, for, even if they weathered the apocalypse, their cities would come to ruin, as all things before them.

Determined to leave a legacy, they created a set of five tablets into which they poured their mystical knowledge. They imbued the tablets with enough purpose and magic to survive unharmed until the level of magic once again rose. Ayesha believed that was not all they had done. While she was unable to prove it, she believed they had forced the patterns that magically represent their great cities into the tablets and linked each tablet to a specific location. Ayesha believed the purpose of the Codex was not just to warn, but also to recreate an ancient civilization in a new age of magic.

*I came to the end of Ayesha's journals burdened with a heavy heart. I feel I have come to know her and my scholarly scribblings barely pay homage to the elegant detail contained within her writing. I feel, at this point, I must explore Travar's tale from other sources, for I am now without doubt there is much more to this beautiful city than meets the eye. – S.*

## DEATH OF A SCHOLAR

Ayesha Selestran died at the age of 297 and her theory of the Cycle of Five died with her, unproven. Ayesha was buried in Travar, keeping with her wishes, in a secret location known only to the Body of Five. In her final words, she reiterated the warnings laid out in the Books of Harrow.

The Body of Five never lost sight of her warning. They worked to convince the new rulers that Travar required a proper wall, with proper defenses, that would hold back the Horrors. The new wall was built further out to allow for expansion of the city. Soon, work started on Travar's main fortification. No expense was spared, and each

block in the wall was flawlessly cut from the same ivory stone as the Codex, which, it had been discovered, originated from quarries near the coast of the Scarlet Sea.

The merchants, seeing how beautiful the wall would be, make the ivory stone an expensive, but fashionable, building material throughout Travar, including rebuilding important buildings. They build bigger and taller than before, using techniques offered from the research of the Body of Five. The workforce swells the city's population, and trade booms.

## PREPARATIONS FOR THE SCOURGE

Travar's walls, designed to keep the Horrors out, were put to their first test on 324 TH, when Travar was beset by a pack of large dog-like Horror constructs. These constructs arrived unnoticed and without warning, bypassing the watch towers picketing the areas beyond the city. Adepts joined the defenders on the city walls, eager to prove themselves against the first Horrors, none of them truly understanding what they were about to face; soon they learned the wisdom in hiding from the Horrors. The magicians were the first to discover the taint the Horrors brought with them. They succumbed to astral pollution. Worse, the unlucky become marked.

The constructs were dubbed chaos hounds because of the unstable effect their presence had on spell casting and the panic their arrival caused throughout the city. They seemed solely bent on tearing down the western walls and gates. Curiously, they left outlying villages untouched, focusing their attention on Travar. They were eventually turned from the city walls, disappearing as mysteriously as they arrived.

Thera unveiled the Rites of Protection and Passage to the world, and the Body of Five realized there was a close correlation to their own research. The Body of Five believed the layout of the city was acting as a focus for magical energies that would vastly enhance the protective powers of the wards described in the Theran rites. With this in mind, the Body of Five began designing their own defenses to complement anything the Therans may offer.

Early on, it is clear Travar, while surrounded by natural boundaries, sits exposed and only slightly elevated above the surrounding flood plain. There were no convenient mountains from which to hew a new home from the rock. The Body of Five chose to put their faith in what they had learned from the Ivory Codex and what the Rites of Protection and Passage promise. From the beginning, the Body of Five planned to protect Travar using a dome of True Fire and True Air. Travar's proximity to Death's Sea made this an attractive option, for Death's Sea is rich with the Elemental Fire, and the snow-covered peaks of the Thunder Mountains to the east are known for their rich deposits of Elemental Air.

A trench was cut deep to the bedrock and fortified with Elemental Earth. Lined with orichalcum to create a magical seal, this became the grounding device to seat the dome. Finally, like the main wall, the trench was engraved with the Theran runes of warding and those of the Body of Five's own devising. Special runes were devised to create magical gateways, called portals, to allow access.

The Body of Five also planned to feed the population during the Scourge, setting aside the area of land between the dome and inner wall as the main area for food production. Travar had, at this time, more preparations in place for the Scourge than

perhaps any other settlement in Barsaive. Many towns and cities in the Tara'var follow Travar's lead.

## THE ORICHALCUM WARS

Travar suffered a few minor raids during the Orichalcum Wars, which were successfully repelled, but nothing on the scale of other settlements and centers of trade. Travar was not only surrounded by a formidable wall, but had many natural defenses. To the south lie the Dragon Mountains and Death's Sea, while to the north, the Serpent River is guarded by the rising power of House K'tenshin. To the east, the city is sheltered by the Byrose River and Thunder Mountains, with the Iontos River to the west.

What will become the Badlands was a prosperous land of smaller towns and cities, a buffer absorbing the brunt of the attacks. While Travar does not suffer constant raiding, trade came to a virtual standstill and many of Travar's oldest trading houses collapsed. Unlike many places, Travar did not have to rebuild after the Orichalcum Wars, and this left it in a stronger position. Travar easily expanded its trading to a Barsaive rebuilding and preparing for the Scourge. It still had access to the rivers, Vivane, and direct trade with Thera and Throal via airship.

## TRAVAR AND THE THERAN EMPIRE

In 443 TH, Thera declared itself an empire and Barsaive its first province. It used the Rites of Protection and Passage as a bargaining tool to force subservience in many kingdoms and city-states. While Travar wanted whatever protections the Therans offered, Thera did not need to threaten to withhold the Rites of Protections and Passage to gain Travar's loyalty. Travar was already rich from Thera trade, and saw only the opportunity for further profit. It agreed easily to Thera's overtures.

Travar's seamless subservience to Thera authority and Throal's administration was regarded differently in different quarters. The Body of Five saw the benefit of welcoming the Therans with open arms, but also saw it as a threat to their own research, and made every effort to keep their research hidden. The Therans, however, showed no interest in the Body of Five, except in their advisory capacity to the Magistrates of Travar.

For the average citizen of Travar, there were several unwelcome changes. Thera required a levy of troops each year from Travar's population, its citizens lost the right to appoint magistrates by consensus, and the ominous cloud of slavery was on everyone's mind. As it turned out, the average citizen in Travar did not need to overly worry about slavery, as the magistrates outlawed taking slaves from the city streets. Travar's merchants set up some of the biggest slave markets in the province and so Thera's demand for slaves was easily met.

The merchants of Travar gained more than any other with the arrival of the Therans. The increase in air traffic alone offered new opportunities for trade, contacts, and profit. The main losers were the native magistrates, who were replaced with magistrates from the Thera-backed Throalic administration. As with other areas under their administration, the dwarfs of Throal designated one of their merchant

houses responsible for the administration of Travar, a situation that proved beneficial to both Travar and Throal.

Because Travar, as a whole, accepted the administration of Throal, there was no need for the usual show of military strength to prove who was in charge. Travar was garrisoned with a small number of troops; enough to patrol the outlying areas and protect Thera and Throalic interests within the city. This decision had ramifications that would be the undoing of Throal's administration of Travar.

## REBELLION AND THE TIME OF HIDING

There was a time when the threat of an invasion by creatures from the depths of astral space was no more than a dark theory postulated by Thera scholars, a theory many ridiculed and held in contempt. However, time and the increasingly frequent manifestations of Horrors proved these naysayers wrong, and the Namegivers of Barsaive held no doubts there was a dark future ahead. This was best illustrated by two closely related events: the sealing of Thera, and the activation of Travar's protective shield, the Glimmer Dome.

Thera announced it intended to seal their great citadel earlier than expected. This announcement started a chain of events that shaped Travar as we know it today. With Thera closing its doors, high-ranking officials and their families began the migration back to their homeland. The provincial capital, Parlainth, and the dwarfs of Throal took up the slack. Thera had, quite literally, been holding the fabric of the province together while its subjects prepared for the coming Scourge. With Thera's departure, things began to unravel.

With Thera gone, trade slowed and bandit raids became more frequent, as did Horror manifestations. Travar was assaulted by chaos hounds again. Lessons had been learned, and this time they were effectively dealt with. They would not return until the opening of the citadel, over four hundred years later. With increased Horror activity in the region, Travar implemented the first of its defenses, the Glimmer Dome. This allowed for the remaining protective measures, if required, to be implemented in short order. The Glimmer Dome was designed to support and enhance an outer defense of True Fire, while shielding the population from its savage heat. Portals were activated on the western and eastern sides of the city to allow for ground and air access.

The sealing of Thera and the erection of the Glimmer Dome resulted in many kaers throughout the Tara'var being sealed early and incomplete in panic. In the ensuing chaos, the price of raw materials soared and Travar's merchant houses stepped in to address the shortfall, making vast profits in the process.

Then the situation took a turn for the worse. Word reached Travar's citizens the merchant houses were profiteering, selling rationed goods, essential stores, and supplies they were obliged to set aside for emergency use during and after the Scourge. Even worse, two of Travar's magistrates were implicated. The people revolted, venting their anger on the trading interests of the implicated magistrates. In no time at all, the magistrates found their palatial estates under siege. The Throalic administrators put troops on the streets, but they were overstretched from the outset. The dwarfs had a reputation for brutal suppression of civil unrest, but that did little to

calm the situation. Much of Travar's air fleet was put to the torch, and several Theran vessels were also destroyed. While unintentional, this gave the troops carte blanche to brutally re-take the streets.

The small garrison of troops, supplemented by the city watch, was overwhelmed by the sudden widespread violence in what had previously been a passive and co-operative city. Indeed, some believed the sudden shift in civic attitude could be a sign Horrors had infiltrated Travar. Unprepared, the troops suffered high casualties. The backlash was predictable and there was bloodshed on both sides. Struggling to maintain order, the garrison's commander, Kuris Aeonender, sent a messenger spirit to Parlainth requesting reinforcements. Granting the request, Parlainth mustered reinforcements and Travar sent the last of its airships to collect them.

The Body of Five did not care to get involved in such affairs, but, fearing what reinforcements from Parlainth would achieve, it decided to act. They realized their actions must be decisive and they would face repercussions. With the airships a day out on their journey to Parlainth, the Body of Five summoned several powerful spirits to seek out and destroy any further messenger spirits sent to Parlainth or the departing airships. The Body of Five announced the citadel would be sealed within a week, citing the most recent incursion of chaos hounds as the reason.

This declaration quelled the violence, albeit unintentionally. The Body of Five warned the populace that final preparations should be made. Messengers are sent to outlying villages to spread the word. The Magistrates saw this as an idle threat at first, but as the first lines of refugees poured into the city, troops were ordered to seize the towers of the Five. Only the towers were empty, and the magistrates realized too late they had no control over Travar's magical defenses.

The Body of Five held off sealing the citadel as long as they could, allowing as many people as possible to reach the city. Most of those who had been promised sanctuary in Travar made it on time. Those who don't are mostly merchants and their entourages, too far afield to make it, and many trading houses were left leaderless. When the summoned spirits bring back word reinforcements are only a day's flight away, the city was sealed.

A lone drakkar floated above Travar, a not uncommon sight. The drakkar was crewed by volunteers, including the powerful Elementalist, Errilis Splinterhorn, one of the Five. Several air elementals manifested and unloaded the cargo, a huge net woven from the finest spun orichalcum laced with kernels of elemental fire, and people took notice. Word quickly reached the magistrates and troops were dispatched, but the troops found their way blocked; the portals had been deactivated and the citadel sealed. The Elementalist summoned the assistance of a great fire elemental, while the remaining members of the Body of Five gathered in Ayesha's tomb. There they completed the Theran rites and ignited the Storm Shield. They also completed their own ritual, using the physical layout of the city as a focus to strengthen the Theran wards. The Body of Five's enhancement ritual proved vastly more powerful than expected. The drakkar and its crew were consumed by an energy wave released by mixing True Elements.

As they approached the city, the reinforcements from Parlainth witnessed the ignition of the Storm Shield. It was a spectacular sight, one they took to their graves.

The fleet commander ordered an aerial bombardment of the city, planning to create a breach in the citadel's defenses. As the airships positioned themselves, they were set upon by dozens of airborne Horrors that suddenly manifested around them. The ignition of the Storm Shield created a great astral flare and a spike in the ambient magic levels, allowing many Horrors to breach the astral barrier close to the vicinity of Travar. The fleet retreated, fighting for survival. It did not return to Parlainth.

The Body of Five had acted decisively, managing to stop the reinforcements from Parlainth gaining access to the city. The Body of Five had no intention of taking power. They never did. Wanted by the authorities, they remained in hiding.

The population of the city had swollen and included many adepts. The troops in the city, still loyal to the Theran Empire, knew they were weak and must act as decisively as the Body of Five if they wanted to stay in power. They had the backing of some of the merchant houses and two of the magistrates.

## THE WATER REBELLION

Troops seized the public water supplies in the city, effectively giving them control over the population. There was more bloodshed, but the operation was a success. An uneasy stand-off resulted as anti-Theran sentiments simmer just beneath the surface. The peace lasted only a few years, until it was shattered by another act of pure greed by Travar's magistrates.

With the troops controlling the distribution of water, citizens had to wait hours for their weekly ration. The magistrates owned several large estates within the city and had access to their own wells. Seeing yet another opportunity for profit, they dug more wells, storing water in great quantities and selling it for a handsome profit to those who could afford such luxury. Digging wells became excessive and lowered the water table throughout the city. As the wells took longer to fill, queues became longer and tempers frayed. Rioting broke out across the city. The troops did their best to contain the worst of the trouble, but the pressure grew. The common citizens of Travar were not the only ones unhappy with the situation. As the situation threatened to explode, the Sanctum of Garlen stepped in.

Early in Travar's history, a plague spread and, to those devoted to the Passion Garlen, it was a call to arms. An aid station had been set up around a fountain dedicated to the Passion Jaspree. A traveling questor, recognizing the need for fresh, clean water, bestowed Jaspree's blessing on it, linking it to a pure source in the astral realms. With the help of Elementalists among the ranks of the Body of Five, the flow of water from the fountain was increased from a trickle to a heavy flow, and the Sanctum of Garlen undertook the distribution of water around the city, reducing the demand on the city's wells.

The magistrates took this act as a direct challenge to their authority and troops were ordered to move in. Many refused the order outright, but a small unit of loyal troops seized control of the sanctum. This act by the magistrates was more than the people could take and they called for the Body of Five to intervene on their behalf. With anti-Theran sentiments running high, it took little to gain support for a rebellion.

A large force of rebels, including many adepts, gathered under cover of darkness in the center of the city. They simultaneously struck at the homes and business concerns

of the magistrates. The fighting was ferocious, but over quickly and the magistrates taken hostage. There was little the troops could do, as they were spread throughout the city guarding the wells. With the Body of Five in control of the city, troops loyal to Thera laid down their weapons.

## THE FOUNDING

The Body of Five proposed the founding of a new Travar, promising to punish those who had transgressed against the people. In their first act, the Body of Five outlawed the sale of water drawn within Travar's walls. They promised all water rights would reside with the people and not individuals, regardless of who owned the land, granting all citizens rightful access to that water. Many merchants had their wells seized and the space around them converted to gardens with public access. Enshrined in the Code of Travar to this day, water is the only commodity not for sale in Travar.

The Body of Five needed to be seen punishing the guilty and knew the best way to hurt a rich man was his pocket. Buying and selling is in the blood of Travar. The Body of Five decided if merchants want to buy power, they would have to pay a high price for it, and the people get to be entertained watching them spend their money.

The Body of Five proposed a great tournament to decide who would control the city. They feared people would hate the idea, but, in fact, they loved it, and do to this day. The merchant houses fell over themselves appointing champions and spending huge sums of money to outmaneuver their competitors. Failure to win the Founding ruined many a merchant house over the years.

The implicated merchants were given the choice of slavery or paying their way to freedom, an act that sets a precedent continuing to this day. The merchants elected to pay and the price of their freedom was funding the construction of an arena in the central park to hold the Founding Tournament. The construction of the Arena and the spectacle of the Founding Tournament united the citizens of Travar, seeing them through the worst of the Scourge.

## WEATHERING THE STORM

The Scourge was not an easy time for any Namegiver. For those in Travar, the first few years were the worst. Travar was better prepared than most for the Scourge, but the sudden closure left the city wanting. While areas had been set aside for food production, nothing had been planted and merchants had sold much of the seed and food stores. Food was strictly rationed for the first few years, and merchants were warned of the consequences of any actions that might jeopardize the situation. After several years of ingenuity and tight belts, Travar could feed itself.

Horrors flooded the Tara'var plains. Only the most powerful and insidious Horrors could approach the Storm Shield to attempt to find a way through, the powerful wards stopped weaker Horrors. There are several stories told in Travar's drinking houses of Horrors attempting to breach the city's defenses, but how much truth can be attributed to these stories is uncertain.

For a time, the Body of Five believed a Horror had slipped unnoticed into the citadel. Something terrible stalked the streets. At the end of each month on the stroke of midnight, a citizen is slain in a gruesome manner and their body publicly displayed.

Authorities were unable to discover the culprit, and soon rumors of Horrors were rife throughout the city. For months, Travar's families locked themselves in their homes praying to Garlen for salvation.

Eventually a young Beastmaster, Named Jurl Heartsong, traked down the murderer with the help of his faithful hounds. While the killer was quite deranged, he was declared free of Horror taint and summarily executed. This bleak episode of Travar's history is known as the Midnight Murders and Jurl Heartsong became a legend in Travar. Jurl became the first Master of Hounds; a title still handed down in Travar's most famous unit of the city watch, The Hounds of Travar.

Protected by the Storm Shield, life continued as normally as was possible under such conditions, Travar's citizens unaware of the fate that befell every other citadel in the Tara'var. Travar's only officially documented incident of Horrors in the city occurred after Travar opened its doors to the new world.

## THE EARTHDAWN

On its first mapping voyage from Throal, the *Earthdawn* arrived in Travar, drawn to the Storm Shield like a moth to a flame. The blazing dome was a beacon that could be seen from a great distance. Even more significant, the Storm Shield was the only sign anyone in the region had survived the Scourge. The Tara'var had been annihilated, so corrupted by the Horrors that Vaare Longfang Named it the Badlands.

Some believed the *Earthdawn* an elaborate trap by the Horrors. Others feared it more likely a trick by the Therans to once again seize control of the city. As the *Earthdawn* and her crew patiently waited for a response, a great debate raged between the magistrates and the Body of Five, for it had not gone unnoticed the level of magic had stabilized, rather than falling as predicted by the Therans. Eventually, it is agreed a delegation would be sent to meet those claiming to be representatives of Throal.

The atmosphere in the city became electric as word spread that an airship from Throal had arrived outside the citadel and a delegation was to meet with them. The magistrates, still fearful of some trick, did not want to potentially leave the city leaderless. The outgoing magistrate and newly incumbent magistrate were to lead the delegation; accompanying them was a member of the Body of Five and a powerful group of adepts. The city was put on alert, sailors man the few remaining airships, adepts were summoned to the walls, and the city watch patrolled the streets.

Two events convinced the magistrates the *Earthdawn* was what it claimed. They were presented with Travar's copy of the *Book of Tomorrow*. The dwarfs of Throal had been unable to present the *Book of Tomorrow* to the people of Travar, the citadel having been sealed early and without proper warning.

As the delegation returned to the city, the final documented manifestation of chaos hounds occurred. At first, the delegation feared they had been duped, but the *Earthdawn's* crew, veterans at fighting Horrors, fell upon the chaos hounds without mercy. A small number managed to make it into the city, but seemed bent on physical destruction, rather than killing, tearing at the city walls and bringing down smaller structures. Their small numbers were no match for the adepts and airship crews patrolling the city. The few chaos hounds that managed to slip into the city proper were hunted down and dealt with by the Hounds of Travar. Battered and bruised, the

delegation returned to the city with news. The news was not good, but there was still hope.

The citizens of Travar learned they appeared to be the sole survivors of the Tara'var, and the physical map of the region needed to be redrawn, as did the political map of Barsaive, for there appeared to be no sign of the Therans or their empire. While Travar did not lower their defenses right away, it did periodically open its main portal to allow its citizens to see the outside world for themselves.

### The Cleansing

It is said the people of Travar wept as one on learning of the Badlands. While this tale may have become exaggerated, the hysteria that followed gripped the entire city. When one of Travar's most celebrated champions, Meridian Stormshield, publically announced her intention to delve into the Badlands and rip out its black heart, the people of Travar rejoiced.

She returned days later, her body and mind broken, raving about a cursed map. What she meant may never be known, for she carried no map and died shortly after. Rumor quickly spread that with her dying breath, Meridian had issued a warning that maps of the Tara'var carried the taint of the Badlands.

Concerned merchants began by burning old trade maps. What started as concern became panic, and any documents relating to the Tara'var were rooted out and destroyed. Panic turned to hysteria, with even works of art being purged. This time became known as the Cleansing, and is one reason why so much knowledge of the Tara'var has been lost.

It was not long before bolder citizens left the confines of the city. The first settlements outside the city appeared north of Travar, along the banks of the Byrose River. These pioneering communities consisted of small groups of hunters, fishermen, and farmers, providing much needed fresh food for Travar.

The Storm Shield was a beacon that could be seen from a great distance, and it drew Namegivers from other newly opened kaers who had no real way to protect themselves from the Horrors still in the area. Travar initially denied entry to these newcomers as suspicion and fear still held sway with Travar's rulers. These new arrivals set up camp outside Travar's eastern gate, gaining protection from Travar's astral wards. This camp became a permanent settlement known as Tent City.

Five years after the arrival of the *Earthdawn*, the Storm Shield was lowered. Many adepts, who had made excursions into the Badlands and saw what lies there, advised against the act. Their fears, fortunately, proved groundless.

As other kaers and citadels across Barsaive opened their doors, Travar's merchants were among the first to welcome them to the new world, one hand in friendship and one in their purses. Soon Travar was doing a brisk trade, prospering as an independent city-state. The city's continuing prosperity made it the biggest economic trading center outside of Throal, and Travar's influence and trading alliances expanded across Barsaive. However, an old shadow loomed on Barsaive's horizon, one that jeopardized Travar's newfound freedom.

## THE ROAD TO WAR

In 1449 TH, after a long absence, the Therans returned to reclaim the first province of their old empire. King Varulus III sent envoys to every major settlement in Barsaive. The message was simple: the people of Barsaive must unite, or they will once again fall under the yoke of Theran slavery. The Magistrates of Travar feared a return to Theran administered Travar, knowing they would be stripped of their power. Travar's trading houses were divided, as many of them had historical loyalties to Throal or Thera.

Travar took a neutral stance, avoiding direct conflict with the Therans and their allies, and trading with both sides (making a handsome profit in the process). Everything changed, however, with an act by Thera's staunchest allies in Barsaive, the t'skrang House K'tenshin.

House K'tenshin used its riverboats to blockade the Serpent River, marking the beginning of the siege of Throal. The merchants of Travar were far from happy, as Throal was Travar's largest trading partner. Travar's merchants continued to ferry goods down the Byrose River, land their cargoes in secluded inlets and transport their goods by little known trade routes to Throal.

House K'tenshin perceived this as a direct challenge to its power and dominance of the river. To prove there was only one power on the Byrose, a fleet of K'tenshin warships launched a surprise strike on Travar's River Docks. Many of Travar's riverboats were scuttled, supplies seized, and crews put to the sword. Not content with just destroying Travar's river trading fleet, K'tenshin destroyed much of the River Dock and its surrounding infrastructure. House K'tenshin believed Travar unable and unwilling to attempt any kind of military response and left only a few ships to picket the Byrose River.

Travar's merchants, horrified at the loss of their ships, cargo, and crew, clamored for reparation for lost profits. The citizens of Travar took to the streets, demanding vengeance. With merchant and citizen united, Travar gave an immediate response. That night, under cover of darkness, Travar's small air fleet slipped out of their berths, running silent and dark, each airship bearing a cargo of hand-picked adepts, many of them Champions. The airships bypassed the K'tenshin picket and made a daring attack on a larger K'tenshin fleet on the Serpent River.

The attack came from above; swinging from the airship hulls by long ropes, Travar's adepts dropped silently to the decks of the K'tenshin riverboats. The unsuspecting t'skrang crews barely got a chance to defend themselves. Several riverboats were captured and stripped of anything of value before being put to the torch. Others were simply lost to the darkness in the chaos, lifeless hulks taken by the strong currents of the Serpent River.

The K'tenshin flagship, Sentinel, was spared the fate of the other boats, and a crew of Champions took command of the vessel, powering her up the Byrose River toward Travar. The crews on the K'tenshin picket ships, already damaged by an opportunistic attack from Travar's returning airships, cheered at the sight of the Sentinel. But the cheers turned to cries of despair as the flagship's fire cannons delivered a series of crippling broadsides. The picket ships broke and ran for safety. Most K'tenshin riverboats, taking on water, were unable to get far and their crews were forced to

beach them on the riverbank. The crew who captured the K'tenshin flagship returned to a hero's welcome in Travar.

Those not chosen for the raid on the K'tenshin riverboats watched from the city walls as the picket ships were forced to retreat. When it became apparent the riverboats intended to run aground on the west bank, they got their chance to prove themselves worthy of the title Champion. Some formed teams to hunt down the t'skrang crews spotted heading inland, while others were sent to police the grounded riverboats.

Determined to recoup at least some of their lost honor, K'tenshin did not give up without a fight. The crews spotted heading inland a diversion to draw the larger groups of away from the ships. These crews gave up without a fight once cornered. Those sent to police the riverboats, got much more than they bargained for. Within the hold of the largest of the ships is a troop of heavily armed K'tenshin marines.

As the Champions approached the riverboats, they were met by two groups of battle-hardened marines. The smaller group engaged the Champions while the larger turned toward Travar. The marines intended to retake their flagship, making their way through the maze that of docks to the wharf where the flagship was moored.

The few adepts remaining aboard the Sentinel realized if the marines boarded they would easily retake the ship. Several adepts engaged the K'tenshin marines, while others cut the mooring lines, allowing the boat to drift free. Fighting past the adepts, the K'tenshin marines arrived at the end of the wharf too late.

Out of time and luck, the marines made their last stand at what became known as the Battle at Wharf's End. No quarter was given and none asked for. The marines were driven from the wharf into the cold, deep waters of the Byrose, the weight of their armor pulling them under. This battle was immortalized in Travar's commercial culture with the saying "An armored t'skrang can't swim," used in Travar to indicate bad business practice, or a business laden with debt and about to go under.

Without a standing army, Travar cannot directly challenge K'tenshin aggression beyond its borders, but the city boasts a large pool of adepts, a fleet of small airships, and a supply chain any military commander would envy. Travar put these resources to good use, monitoring the movement of K'tenshin troops and supply caravans. Striking without warning, many supplies for K'tenshin's war effort were taken or destroyed by adepts using hit and run tactics.

This constant, low intensity warfare had a debilitating effect on House K'tenshin's ability to wage war. Travar used its logistical power to covertly supply those resisting the Therans elsewhere in Barsaive, and yet actively avoided direct confrontation with them. It continued to aggressively counteract any K'tenshin violations of its boundaries in an undeclared war. The night raid on the K'tenshin fleet became legend in Travar and is conveniently forgotten by the t'skrang. Hull jumping becomes a rite of passage among Travar's airship crews, homage to the Champions who took part in the raid.

The collective action of a briefly united Barsaive drove the Therans back, but they do not give up on their hopes for re-conquest. Over five decades later, Thera sent a second military expedition led by the ancient behemoth, Triumph. When the dust settled, Triumph landed on the Ayodhya Liferock and Travar found itself slowly divided. For

JANET AULSIO 2015.

the first time, Travar's merchants truly sat up and took notice. Some saw the tensions as a route to further profit, but more significantly, many became personally motivated. Putting their desire to see the end of the Theran presence in Barsaive before their pursuit of profit, they threw their support behind Throal and the Liferock Rebellion. Still others saw it as a chance to reclaim their Theran heritage and settle old scores.



## BETTER THE ENEMY YOU KNOW

*While I was old enough to remember the first Theran War, I was at that stage of life where I paid scant attention to the details. The second Theran War, and the events leading up to it, are a different matter entirely.*

*The years following the arrival of the Theran behemoth were tumultuous. I remember with startling clarity the sonorous toll of the Usurpers Bell as it rang out across the city. Normally the chime has urgent tenor to it, warning of an imminent threat. On this occasion, however, it had what I can only describe as a tone of lament. Shortly after, the assassination of King Varulus III was announced, and for a few precious moments, the streets of Travar fell silent. Everyone knowing once again war would come to Barsaive.*

*As with the rest of Barsaive, Travar held its collective breath and it wasn't long before Throalic and Theran forces clashed at the Battle of Prajor's field, which ended in a humiliating defeat for King Neden. Only later was it discovered the Denairastas of Iopos were behind the assassination and it became clear a new power was making its play. For years there had been rumors the Holders of the Trust were operating in Travar, rumors the Magistrates Council had conveniently ignored. Until Iopan forces seized Jerris at any rate.*

*The Magistrates Council has a tendency to turn a blind eye to a great many things; this included the operations of the Overland Trading Company. It was an open secret the company became little more than a front for the Liferock Rebellion. The magistrates were happy to point out there were many pro-Theran outfits in Travar, and as long as no laws were being broken, neither would Travar's neutrality. The magistrates hoped by maintaining Travar's neutrality, they could help maintain the status quo in Barsaive. This lasted about three years.*

*The Harwood Incident, and the subsequent Declaration, led to war. Travar's neutrality was stretched to the limit. While the Magistrate's Council maintained Travar's official neutral stance, many of the large trading houses, including some of the magistrates, opened their supply lines and trade networks to Throal's military commanders and their allies.*

*The exact role Travar played in the outcome of the war may never be fully known, but many, the Therans included, now see the city in a different light. Many of the Champions of Travar are known to have been absent from the city during the war, and indeed rumors I've heard continue to circulate in Travar's taverns there were Champions in Harwood when the Therans attacked the town.*

*Despite no direct involvement in the war, it has had a huge impact on Travar and its people. While the destruction of Vivane and Sky Point is a blow to trade, it is nothing compared to the repercussions from the death of King Neden. Throal has become more isolationist. With growing instability in Barsaive, the Magistrate's Council finds itself under constant pressure to maintain and patrol the trade roads beyond Travar's own boundaries. Now more than ever, hostile powers recognize the importance of Travar's economic power.*

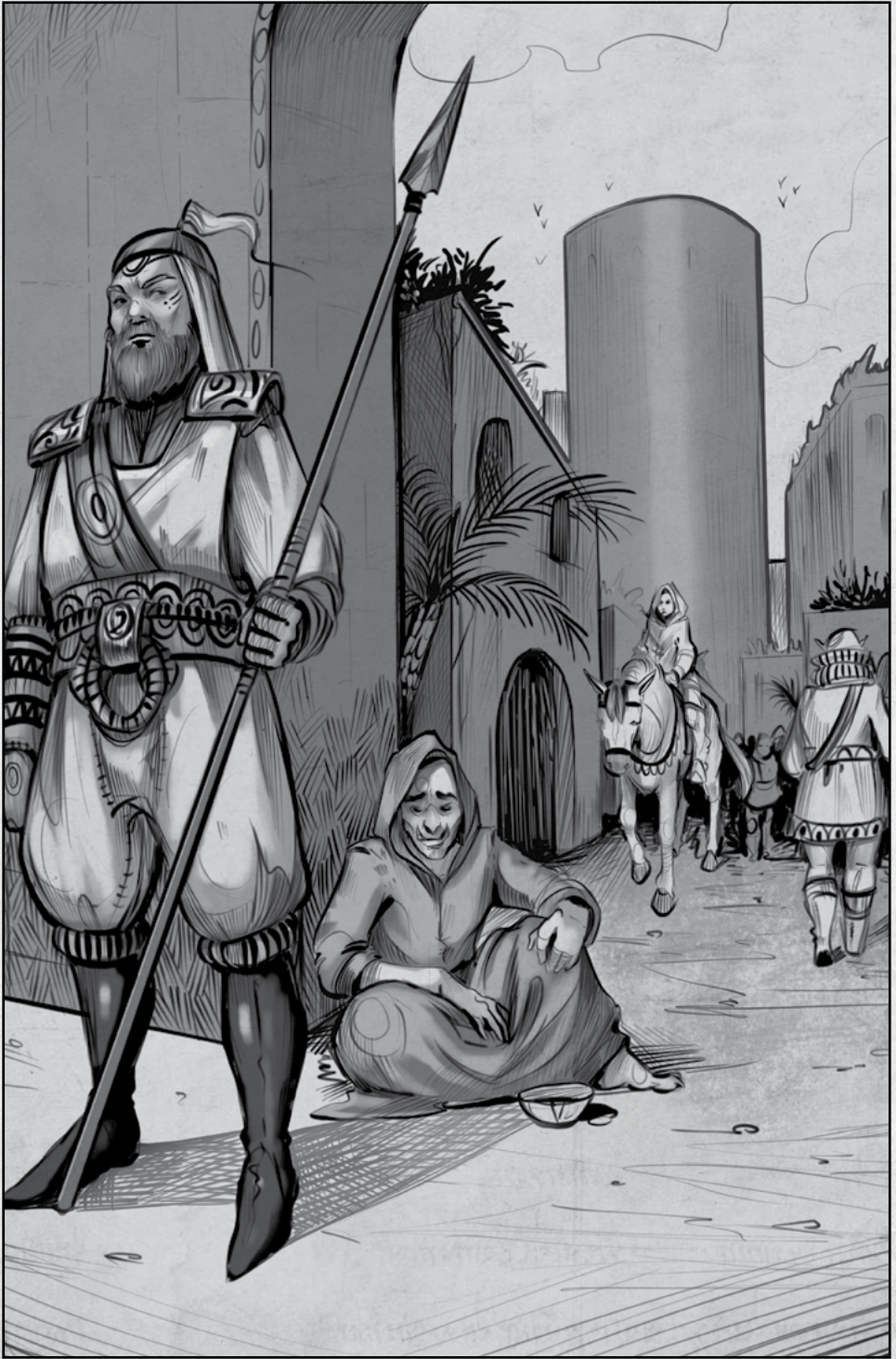
*Travar continues to maintain its policy of no standing army, relying instead on its Champions and economic clout to deter attack. It is clear the balance of power in Barsaive is precarious, and I believe Travar is the fulcrum that could shift it in any direction. Many powers, Thera among them, realize with Throal pulling inward, Travar may be the key to seizing Barsaive.*

*Not all Theran troops were stationed in Triumph when it was attacked. After the slaughter of their brothers by the elves of Blood Wood, many fled to Travar, taking advantage of its neutral status, and sought asylum. Granting asylum to Theran troops was unpopular with many of Travar's trading partners, not least Throal. Thera, however, seems to have seized the opportunity and flooded the city with their agents, vying with other foreign powers attempting to sway the balance of power in their favor.*

*The Founding Tournament is the obvious target for foreign agents. The Magistrate's Council knows full well they try to manipulate the outcome of the tournament, but in Travar corruption and greed run amok, and, for the most part, the magistrates continue to turn a blind eye as vast sums are spent trying to place a sympathetic puppet on the council. None have yet succeeded.*

*As if Travar does not have enough problems with interference from outside influences, there is once again growing disunity between Travar's citizens and its merchant houses. Tensions bubble just beneath Travar's perfectly presented façade of peace and wealth, and the Badlands continue their relentless expansion towards the city's borders.*

*I fear the corruption of Travar is not yet complete. – S.*





## ON TRAVAR TODAY

*"Your sense of fair play and justice are laudable qualities sir, stick by them and they will serve you well. Enter the gates of Travar and you will soon find yourself more than willing to part with your lofty ideals, for in Travar, everything is for sale"*

• **Ranill Shyfund, Broken Merchant and Gate Beggar** •

There are many issues that divide the citizens of Travar and only a few that bind them. These bonds, however, are so tight they have forged the society we see in Travar today. Perhaps the greatest shared belief held by each and every citizen is they are a merchant destined for greatness.

This chapter gives an overview of the everyday life of Travar's citizens, from the indentured folk still paying off their pre-Scourge debt, to those ridiculously wealthy merchants who have already attained greatness, to the law they all live by, and the Grip, a trading addiction unique to Travar.

## THE PEOPLE OF TRAVAR

In Travar, the gap between rich and poor is a veritable chasm. To the outsider, this usually goes unnoticed, swallowed up by Travar's façade of majesty and unity. Many of Travar's people, rich and poor alike, do not recognize any kind of class division or strata among the population. Money may be a measure of success, but as most of Travar's citizens believe they are destined for greatness, it is hardly a cause for concern. After all, the average resident of Travar is wealthier than the average resident of rural Barsaive.

In the streets of Travar, the rich and poor can be seen mingling freely. It is said the wealthy of Travar are selfish and have no sympathy or kindness for the poor, but it's not a simple matter of benevolence, or lack thereof. Just as the dwarfs of Throal have an affinity with the earth that defines who they are, the people of Travar believe themselves to be merchants, and this defines them as a people.

This is much more than the impression of Travar visitors to the city recount to friends and family upon their return home. To the citizen of Travar, handing over money for nothing in return is just not part of who they are. It's an alien concept they cannot begin to fathom. Even those who work for a pittance see their labor as an investment or a business deal. Outside those literally unable to help themselves and the thieves of the city, no one in Travar expects something for nothing. Even the beggar in Travar only sits idle in the street long enough to strike his next business deal.

*The people of Travar are an odd bunch for sure. It's as if they go out of their way to be different. There is no doubt they are cut from a different cloth, and they really do believe they are destined for greatness. Most of them also believe they are merchants and will eye you up as if you're their next big slice of the pie. And then there's that damn strange accent, kind of soothing and familiar, yet nobody can quite place its roots."*

— Ar'gyn Coppertop, Windling Elementalist

Travar's population is predominately human, making up about half the city's population. Dwarfs account for the next greatest number, around one third. T'skrang are the next largest racial group, with their number growing rapidly in recent years. The number of elves and orks in Travar are in decline. The reason for the decline of the elves is unknown, but many cite the rise of Cara Fahd as the reason for the drop in the number of orks. Trolls, windlings, and obsidimen are true minorities in Travar.

To understand the current demographics, one needs to consider Travar's history. Before the Scourge, Travar had a significant human population, as the Tara'var was predominately human. When Travar became established as a centre of trade, it saw an influx of the other races, especially t'skrang. During the Throalic administration, the dwarf population swelled, and just before the Scourge the t'skrang all but abandoned the city. Just after the Scourge, there was an exodus of dwarfs as many left for Throal, and a surge in the number of t'skrang seeking citizenship.

Humans fill many of Travar's government institutions. This is partially because of their demographics, but also because of tradition. After the brutality displayed during the Water Riots, the Body of Five and new magistrates had little option but to remove the dwarf administrators to maintain public trust in the authorities.

## THE MAGISTRATES

Travar is ruled, most say wisely, by three Magistrates. Most of those who have held the title of Magistrate were fabulously wealthy before entering office, and, with few exceptions, increased their personal fortunes substantially during their three-year term. Travar's magistrates are accustomed to a lifestyle of luxury that makes even the most opulent court from the kings of old pale in comparison.

The current magistrates are no exception. It is said if the Magistrates of Travar laid their silver coins end to end along Founder's way and continue out Thundergate they would eventually arrive at the city's west wall, with wealth to spare.

## THE MERCHANT HOUSES

While most of Travar's residents see themselves as merchants, there is still a vast difference between those who run the great trading houses, and those who sell trinkets at the gates. Trading houses provide the economic trust that generates not only Travar's wealth, but also the surrounding region's. They generate more profit in one day than a successful shopkeeper or tavern owner can make in many years. The

merchants of these trading houses and companies are rich beyond belief and they make no bones about it, flaunting it wherever they go.

*Profit is what all Travar's merchants seek and desire. It is what they think about in bed at night, what they dream about when they sleep, and what they spend their waking hours pursuing. Profit motivates them, drives their innovation, and sometimes gets them into all manner of trouble.*

— Jereg Axe-Tongue, Mercenary Captain

People across Barsaive tell grand tales of Travar's merchants wearing robes of woven gold, sleeping on beds of Elemental air, traveling with great entourages of advisors, and employing living legends as bodyguards. Many of Travar's merchants love to openly flaunt their wealth, especially to impress visiting dignitaries. To impress a visiting ambassador from Vivane, one merchant arrived on a flying golden chariot pulled by horses whose hooves were shod with Elemental air. In Travar, these are not mere tales to delight young children. While uncommon, they are a reality and a great source of inspiration to those aspiring to become one of Travar's great merchants.

It is not uncommon for the wealthy and ostentatious to employ large numbers of bodyguards and personal servants for no other reason than to openly herald their approach. The entourages often employ "pushers", whose job is to shove people out of the path of the oncoming procession. Despite appearances, pushers are usually gentle with children and the elderly, while doing their utmost to appear violent.

Functionaries bringing up the rear often help those who have fallen to their feet, sometimes sending them on their way with coin to make the unpleasant experience worthwhile. Street urchins frequently approach such processions, hoping to earn a few silvers for getting unceremoniously thrown into the crowd.

The great trading houses also differ from those trying to emulate them by the sheer amount of clout they wield. The houses control the flow of money and goods, command the workforce, direct transportation, and effectively are the government. Most wealthy merchants are also invested in the assets of other trading houses and companies. Travar's merchants have their fingers in everyone else's pies, which can lead to bad blood, or even open hostilities. There is limited space at the top of the pile in Travar, and the merchants at the top stop at nothing to protect their bottom line and maintain their position.

### **Adventure Hook: Hart Dar the Gilded**

The player characters witness a procession in which a crier demands that, "*all step aside for Hart Dar the Gilded.*" Seconds later a scrawny teenager gets flung into their midst. In the middle of the procession is an ostentatiously dressed merchant elevated above the crowd on a floating golden carpet that coalesces in front of him and evaporates behind him as he walks.

The player characters are likely to be upset getting hit by a young child and any reaction invites the attention of Hart Dar the Gilded. The merchant apologizes to them and the child, offering them a lift on his magic carpet. Once he has mollified the player characters, he tells them though the Founding Tournament is many months away, he wishes to hire them as his Champions. He invites them to be his guests at a luxurious villa where they can avail themselves of his training facilities.

Hart Dar intends to lure the player characters to his villa, under which he has constructed an arena of his own. Here, he runs gladiatorial events for his own amusement and well paying customers. The player characters stay in luxurious quarters and upon awakening discover the walls of their rooms have opened up to reveal a labyrinth leading to the gladiatorial arena. The player characters must escape the labyrinth while fighting for survival against Hart Dar's own roving squads of gladiators.

## THE AVERAGE CITIZEN

For the everyday citizen, life is what they make of it, and most are proud to call themselves a citizen of Travar. The people of Travar are merchants at heart and their entrepreneurial spirit is almost unbreakable. If one endeavor fails, they come up with a new one, or tackle it from another angle. While fierce when it comes to negotiating a business deal, they are among the most peaceable folk in Barsaive and have no appetite for war or conflict. Instead, they prefer to solve their problems with negotiated settlements, preferably the profitable kind. Compare this to the Throalic citizens who supported conflict with the Therans to regain their perceived loss of honor at Prajor's field, or the Kratan thief willing cut your throat as part of doing business.

The Passions, it appears, have blessed (some might say cursed) the people of Travar with great patience and a high tolerance for greed, avarice, and hostility. They often tolerate that which would have other nations at the brink of war. The exception to this is the Founding Tournament. It should be noted; the city's residents are often overcome with an unusually fearsome bloodlust when supporting the Champions inside the Arena. It takes colossal greed, or momentous cruelty, for the people of Travar to shake off their peaceable nature, but when they do, it marks a turning point in Travar's history.

Residents of Travar use "champion" to refer to two different, though related, titles granted by the city. "Champion of the Tournament" is a temporary honor for those competing in the upcoming Founding (see *Entering the Tournament*, p. 227). "Champion of Travar" is a permanent title bestowed on those who actually win the tournament, and is considered one of Travar's greatest honors.

While profit-making ventures are the most popular pastime, they are not the only interests pursued by Travar's citizens. The arts have a great following. Indeed, the number of artists per capita in Travar is among the highest in Barsaive, though many of them struggle to make a living. Most of Travar's poor are artists who have not been able to find a patron, but this does not in any way seem to discourage them.

Fashion is a pastime for those who like to be setting the latest trends. Anyone wearing the latest fashion from another city is sure to court attention to the point of distraction when in Travar.

But almost without question, the greatest pastime after profit in Travar is gossip. In taverns and alehouses Troubadours specialize in spreading the latest gossip about the lifestyles of Travar's rich and famous, rather than recounting the heroic deeds of the past. People have an insatiable appetite for following the hedonistic exploits of the rich and legendary in Travar.

Travar's citizens are loyal, but where the city's loyalties should lie is a different issue, and one that divides ordinary people and those in power. Prior to the Second Theran War, this issue sparked the first signs of dissent and unrest in the city. Because dissent among the people does not historically bode well for those in power, the Magistrates are nervous and keeping an eye on developments.

Travar's independence has always been a hotly debated topic. Some of the most powerful families and trading houses have historical links to Throal and Thera, and use their influence to increase their ties with these nations, each believing Travar is better off throwing its lot in with one or the other.

Looking at what is left of Vivane, most of Travar's people rightly fear what closer ties with Thera would bring, and while they would rather remain completely independent, if given a choice between Theran domination and a Throalic protectorate, it's safe to say the Therans did themselves no favors in Travar when they landed Triumph on the Ayodhya Liferock.

Travar's independence and neutrality are a great source of pride among its citizens, but with Throal's recent isolationism, many have realized just how much Travar relied on the dwarf kingdom. With trade roads no longer as safe as they were, the Magistrates have been forced to project Travar's strength beyond its walls. Many citizens see this as a dangerous precedent and openly blame Throal's withdrawal. On the other hand, many of the larger trading houses believe this is the opportunity they have been waiting for to further their agendas and earn greater profits.

Injustice is another issue that has the potential to cause problems, but, as with other issues, people tolerate it to a point. It's only when some vile act goes unpunished the people show their anger. Like any other commodity in Travar, justice is for sale, and many simply take it at face value. If a perpetrator can make financial reparations for their crimes and pay for their freedom, that is just part of doing business.

Those with money, however, sometimes manage to circumvent this unusual legal arrangement. The arbiters are mostly in the pocket of the rich and powerful, especially those who regularly break the law. Travar's arbiters are amongst the most corrupt in Barsaive and their influence can be bought. The corruption that goes hand in hand with wealth and power is the true division between the rich and poor.

Slavery is generally abhorred in Travar, and slaves are one of the few commodities most of Travar's merchants will not openly trade. With the growing popularity of the protectorate movement, the issue of slavery has once again been brought to the fore.

## SLAVES

The slave trade continues because it is lucrative, and allows the justice system to rid Travar of troublesome criminals. It is, however, kept out of sight and, therefore, out of mind, unless you venture outside the city. While most of Travar's citizens abhor slavery, they often ignore the issue.

It is rare to see a chained or downtrodden slave in the city's streets, and slaves purchased by Travar's wealthy are often granted their freedom and employed as servants in some of the large estates within the city. This freedom typically has less to do with sympathy for the plight of the slave, but to avoid taxes levied on slave ownership, and these servants are typically signed to an indenture contract to recoup the cost of their purchase.

When a trading house requires a large labor force on short notice for some new project or venture, whole groups of slaves are purchased. These slaves are likewise offered indenture and given the chance to pay off any costs incurred by their purchase—naturally including a margin of profit.

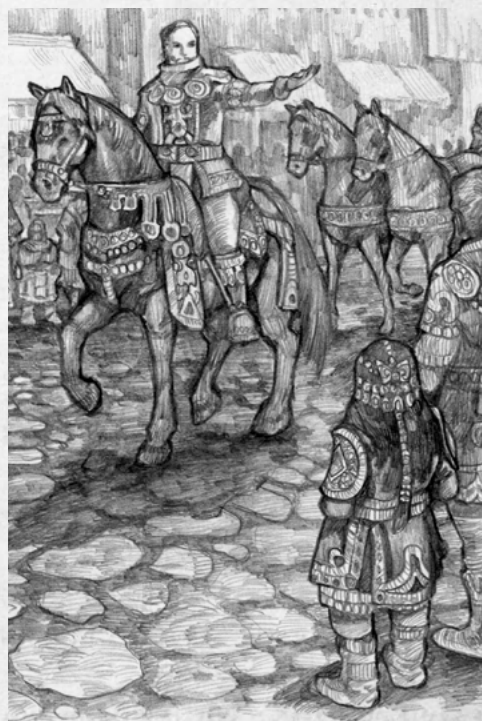
While the slave trade is tolerated, taking slaves within the city is not. The people of Travar simply wouldn't stand for it. The Magistrates have no wish to deal with the political fallout, or the claims of lost profit because a skilled worker or family member has been snatched.

The exception to this is habitual thieves and other hardened criminals. They are sold to Thera's slavers who still visit Travar, living out the rest of their short lives powering Thera's slave driven vessels. The people have no issue with criminals, especially thieves, who get their just desserts.

## THE INDENTURED FOLK

The coming of the Scourge was a double-edged sword for the merchants of Travar. Vast profits could be made trading in material and labor contracts necessary for the construction of a kaer, but merchants feared when the Horrors arrived in numbers, they would all but be cut off from their ability to trade with anyone but their closest neighbors, and the opportunity for profit would shrink until, locked in their citadel, trade would cease.

The merchants of Travar have an uncanny ability to find their way around any problem, just ask the beleaguered revenue men of the city. The Scourge was no exception. The problem was what was known as the Sustainability



Regulations. These were based on a formula from the Rites of Protection and Passage, and enforced by the bureaucracy-obsessed Throalic administration.

The regulations calculated the optimal number of Namegivers required for the survival of a kaer. The Code of Travar, however, allowed any registered merchant, at their own expense, to house any Namegiver considered a business asset—even if they were not a citizen. This law, ratified by the Throalic administration to pacify the concerns of a few merchants, superseded the Sustainability Regulations. The spirit of the law was intended to allow merchants to grant refuge to essential staff from outside Travar who found themselves without shelter from the Scourge. It wasn't long, however, before at least one merchant figured out a way to convert any Namegiver into a business asset of substantial value and thereby get around the regulations. Of course, this did not evade the hard facts the regulations were based on, and inevitably every citizen of Travar would pay the price.

As the threat of the Scourge grew closer, many villages and small towns realized they would have no place to go for shelter. With the price of raw materials soaring, they would never afford the construction of a viable kaer. A merchant on business in a small town outside Travar was saddened by the plight of the people, as well as the potential loss of future profit. As if blessed by Chorrolis himself, the merchant thought if he could fill his empty warehouses with these people and charge them for the privilege, he could make a lot of money. If he could get the entire town to indebted themselves to him for a substantial amount of money, he could class them as a business asset, circumvent the regulations, and lawfully provide protection for the people of the town.

The price of protection he offered may have been high, but it was still more affordable than building a kaer, and more desirable than Theran slavery or facing the Horrors. Believing they had no other option, the townspeople indebted themselves and their future generations for shelter from the Scourge. Unfortunately, the idea did not catch on as the merchant expected and almost every other village refused to pay the extortionate prices.

The idea may not have caught on among the villages and towns in the area, but the basic concept was not lost on House Dumorjen. They refined the idea into the Common Indenture Contract, making the terms much more palatable. Whether down to a stroke of genius or pure luck, House Dumorjen offered its first indenture contracts just as Thera announced the sealing of its citadel. This act alone had many towns and villages scrambling to sign one. Before long the other trading houses picked up the idea, and indenture contracts were soon being signed in every town and village that had not already received one.

There was the predictable outcry from the Throalic administration, but the merchants stood their ground. There were still many years before Travar would have to close its citadel, and plenty of time to stockpile supplies and work out how to feed so many extra mouths. However, only a few years later Travar closed its own doors unexpectedly, and, with a population that had almost doubled overnight, it began to look like Travar's survival was in doubt. As described in the city's history, the people of Travar suffered great hardships for many years, even before the Scourge had begun in earnest elsewhere.

## The Common Indenture Contract

The Common Indenture Contract is an agreement of indentured service between an individual village and a trading house, until such times as the debt is repaid. The agreement includes not only those who sign the contract, but future descendants of both the village and the trading house. The contract is loosely based on the terms of working passage on a t'skrang riverboat, revised to offer protection and passage from the Scourge.

The indenture contract is designed to benefit both parties, but favors the indenturing house. Any villager unable to find work, and therefore feed their dependents, is provided with a food ration, basic clothing, and shelter. Anything else that incurs expense is added to the village's indenture debt.

Like every citizen of Travar, indentured people pay taxes to the city. They also pay an additional tax to their village, which has responsibility for levying, gathering, and paying off the indenture debt. It was in the interests of both the trading house and village to keep people employed. A working indentured village could pay off its indenture tax by generating wealth for the patron house, but a village unable to pay its indenture tax increases its debt, putting financial strain on the indenturing house. Indenture tax was a vital revenue stream that kept many trading houses afloat during the Scourge.

Indentured folk, as they became known, developed numerous customs during the Scourge that continue to this day. Before the Scourge, indentured folk were tattooed with a symbol representing their village and indenturing house. This tattooing has become part of indentured culture and is a rite of passage for children as part of their Naming ritual. The symbol representing the village is a link to the past and the symbol of the patron house a mark of loyalty. Many indentured villages are still loyal to the houses that offered them protection from the Scourge, where others could or would not.

There are still several indentured village groups living within Travar and many more outside the city. While many towns and villages managed to pay off their debt before the Scourge ended, some contracts have been extended, providing loans and material for the construction of new villages and businesses. The number of indentured folk is believed to be more than five thousand, but the exact number is not known, as each trading house closely guards how many indentures they have. Today many of the indentured folk work in agriculture, or in the airship yards, and indenture gives the trading houses a large pool of labor to draw upon if required.

During the Scourge, most indentured folk lost their identities as a community, their history only reflected in some of Travar's older street Names. A few tried to maintain their sense of community and heritage, but how true these practices are to their history and culture from before the Scourge is an open question.

## Indenture versus Slavery

Travar's wealthy citizens are quick to point out indentured people are not slaves. Nothing in the Common Indenture Contract forces an indentured person to work for the indenture house or do anything against their will. The only burden is

the level of debt agreed upon in the contract. Of course, if a village were to shirk its financial obligations, there are punitive measures (which could include slavery). By the same token, if the house doesn't live up to its obligations, the indentured can seek remedy in the courts.

Critics of the practice point out that indenture is slavery *de facto* if not *de jure*. Merchants and trading houses may treat their indentured well, but they would do the same for their airships, wagons, or beasts of burden. The original contracts were established under duress; a choice between life, and death or madness, is no real choice at all. Likewise, holding an entire village to a contract adds to the pressure; the indentured will endure much to avoid having their families turned out to starve.

Other critics argue against the rampant corruption and influence peddling in the city's judicial system. Indentured may not be locked in chains and worked to death, but the system is weighted against them. Those who benefit, critics say, comfort themselves with convenient legal fictions and self-serving tales of their house's nobility and sacrifice saving these poor souls from the Scourge.

## THE CODE OF TRAVAR

The Code of Travar sets out the various laws, acts, and regulations that Travar's citizens are expected to abide by, enforceable on all people within Travar's boundaries. The code is divided into three sections, each dealing with a type of law in Travar. Further regulations and acts are given in various volumes of addenda. A master copy of the Code of Travar is held in the magistrate's tower and its security and content entrusted to the magistrates as part of their terms of office. Magistrates also receive a copy of the Code of Travar as part of their inauguration ceremony. The master copy of the Code of Travar still retains its original binding and some scholars speculate the binding is one of Travar's pattern items.

### Tolls & Tithes

Travelers passing through the gates of Travar are expected pay a toll to one of the many official toll collectors just outside the city gates. Entering via the gates gives the first time visitor a true insight into the business like ambience of Travar and the character of its people. Like almost everything else in Travar, gaining entry to the city is considered a business transaction and, for the visitor short on coin, it pays well to haggle, or even shop around. While the official toll to enter the city is one silver piece, the price not only varies wildly from gate to gate, but between toll collectors. The hawk-eyed toll collectors often charge over and above the official rate when they spot a rich merchant from out of town, hoping to line their own pockets by taking an additional percentage.

Toll collectors are often bribed to lower the gate toll by different merchant consortiums to attract more people, and therefore more business, to their markets. Some unscrupulous merchants have been known to bribe the toll collectors at competing markets into keeping their prices high, but point out that the next gate charges a lower fee. Canny travelers can take advantage of these practices and get into the city for a lower price, sometimes as little as three copper coins.

Tolls not only help fund the city government, but also keep out undesirables. Almost any bargain can be struck with the toll collectors and those who regularly pass in and out of the city can expect discounts. Caravan merchants often barter for monthly or yearly fees allowing unrestricted passage through any of the city gates.

Those who arrive in Travar by airship have their entry fee factored into the fare agreed between the passenger and captain. The ship's captain is ultimately responsible for paying tolls upon docking in any of the city's facilities whether public or private.

### **Common Law**

Common law is based on principles recognized by almost all Namegivers. For example, murder and theft, which most consider wrong. Common law also contains laws so old they have become common practice in Travar. Everyone knows and accepts water is not for sale, even if they don't know the reason why. Common law is broad and open to a great deal of interpretation. The outcome of a criminal trial often depends on the views of the individual arbiter hearing the case.

As in Throalic law, individuals are sovereign. One notable difference, however, is if an individual is convicted of a criminal act in Travar and does not have the funds to compensate the victim (or the city), the perpetrator forfeits their sovereignty, becoming property of the court and therefore eligible for slavery.

### **High Law**

High laws are specific to Travar regarding its sovereignty, such as treason, and they are much more detailed than the common law. It is a treasonous offence to act on behalf of a foreign power that would compromise the independence of the city-state.

High law is important to anyone who may decide to interfere in the annual Founding Tournament. Merchants sponsoring Champions look for every advantage, but must exercise caution. The Founding Tournament is viewed with almost religious reverence by Travar's citizens. Intrigue is expected, but blatant corruption or meddling by outside agents is likely to result in a revolt, and the Magistrates know it.

High law also details the use of capital punishment, which, while rarely applied, is enforced for acts of enough gravity to warrant it.

### **Trade Law**

Trade law is the most complex, convoluted, and detailed part of the Code of Travar. It details anything and everything related to trade in the city and beyond. These laws set out the regulations on registering yourself as a merchant of Travar and the rules of business. They also define the difference between companies and the trading houses of Travar.

While these differences are complex, trading houses are generally family owned and leadership defaults to the head of the family. The whole family benefits from the house profits to some degree, even if not actively involved in day-to-day business. How the responsibilities and profits are divided is a family affair, and there are strict rules for judicial intervention. Companies, on the other hand, are owned by individuals or groups of investors. The death of the individual, or a disagreement between investors, often results in the dissolution of the company. While trading houses can endure for

generations, the same cannot be said for most companies.

Travar's Magistrates are responsible for making new laws, or amending existing ones, requiring unanimous consensus. It is rare for common law or high law to be amended, but trade law, which includes tax laws, is amended every year without fail. Each Magistrate influences the tax laws favoring their own line of business.

## The Arbiters

Those accused of all but the most serious crimes can expect to face trial by one of Travar's many arbiters. Each arbiter is appointed for a term of three years and, during that time, is expected to make a full circuit of each of Travar's three jurisdictions. The first jurisdiction is the city itself. The second encompasses the immediate outskirts, including Tent City, the slave markets, T'town, and the River Docks. The third includes the many outlying small towns and villages.

Arbiters review the evidence and any arguments presented by the parties involved in a trial or dispute, and makes a ruling. During the proceedings, the arbiter is free to ask questions; whether to clarify details, tease out motive, or discuss legal technicalities. While not required, many individuals hire scribes or scholars knowledgeable in Travar's legal code to represent them and their interests.

Arbiter's rulings may be appealed to the Magistrates, but these appeals are rarely granted.

## Crime and Punishment

*A briefing by Ambassador Kavos Jul to his newly arrived support staff from Urupa*

So, you're filled with awe at the grandeur of Travar's white walls and buildings. You marvel at the ivory towers, the domes reflecting the sunlight on the paved thoroughfares, painting them with gold. Impressed by the wealth of the citizens, you are already inspired to make some kind of business deal of your own. Well that's what Travar wants you to see and feel.

Yes, Travar, not the people, not the Magistrates, and not the Body of Five, Travar! You think me mad? Well, that may be so, but what you see around you is a façade, the great illusion of Travar. I will tell you about the things you don't want to see and do in Travar.

You don't want to find yourself on the wrong side of the law in Travar, or even accused of something you didn't do. This is where the great illusion of a city at peace with itself fades. This is where the vast wealth of Travar slowly corrupts all those who come in contact with it. Justice is for sale in Travar, like almost every other commodity, and there are even laws that deal with it. But in Travar, those of us with money can't resist a bargain. Rather than waste all that hard-earned money paying fines, compensating victims, and making reparations to the state, it often costs less to pay off a greedy arbiter, or make witnesses disappear, rather than admitting guilt and paying the agreed compensation, which is almost always affordable anyway.

Those in power look the other way, take bribes, and accept favors, eventually rising to greater positions of power and responsibility where they are expected to tackle the very issue that got them where they are. This is often the case with the Magistrates, who are often powerless to halt the corruption of the arbiters, as they

often availed of the arbiters' willingness to sell their judicial impartiality before becoming Magistrates. Arbiters are happy to extort money and seek influence from those who have attained greater power and wealth than themselves in a vicious, never-ending cycle of corruption.

So... if you want a fair trial in Travar, forget it. Unless you're lucky enough to stand before one of the few arbiters yet to succumb to the corruption of their peers. In Travar, equality in the eyes of the law is subjective, and the balance is often tipped in favor of those of greater wealth or influence. Justice is not blind, but she is easily distracted by the sound of silver changing hands.

Before I have you fleeing the city in fear of accusation and punishment (imagined or otherwise), the chance of falling victim to a violent crime is low compared to many other cities. Of those in Travar unlucky enough to suffer violence, most are visitors to the city, and often their reason for visiting is the reason for the violence in the first place.

Outside the city walls, the chances of falling victim to a criminal act significantly increase. Not only are there a greater number of criminals, but law enforcement resources are targeted and proportionate to the actual tax collected in any one area. Due to the transient nature of the denizens of Tent City and their routine tax evasion, the area is more prone to crime.

Tent City, the River Dock, and, to an extent, T'town can give the impression they have the rough edge of a frontier settlement, rather than the civilized air of a modern city. While exaggerated, it is this element of lawlessness that makes them the destinations of choice for spies contacting with their handlers before making their way into the city.



Now, there is breaking the law in Travar and there is breaking the law. There are some laws in Travar the casual visitor should know about; to the outsider, they may seem almost trivial, but if convicted, the penalties are harsh and the consequences life changing, to say the least.

Light fingered? Theft is the first big no-no in Travar, unless you are well organized and well connected. Regardless of how rich or poor, everyone has worked hard for what they have, and few residents in the city expect something for nothing. Theft of another person's money or property is a serious crime. Minor theft, such as picking a pocket or stealing food from one of the city's markets, at the very least lands you in jail for the night, followed by a stiff fine, maybe a beating by the city watch if you can't pay. You will then be dumped outside the city gates, which you will not be able to enter without paying the appropriate toll.

Habitual theft, or a notable score against the larger merchant companies is may land you in the slave market. At that point, your only hope is escape or a term of reduced slavery or indenture. The law allows for recognized low threat criminals to be purchased by registered merchants of Travar with the usual tax is waived for a short time. These slaves find themselves worked until they have paid off their fine. Those who do manage to escape the slave market may find themselves evading bounty hunters.

Murder, while mercifully rare inside the city, speaks for itself. Because a good percentage of the killings in Travar are related to, or even sponsored by, feuding trading houses, it is often hard to get a solid conviction due to the corruption of the arbiters and the interference of trading houses. Many houses have at least one arbiter in their pockets and if they are planning to commit some dirty deed, like striking at a rival's assets, they often do it in the jurisdiction in which their favored arbiter is currently sitting.

You have little to fear because, honestly, it will never happen to you.

Trade law is another issue altogether. Needless to say, it is complex. Few understand its intricacies and only know enough to get by. Most arbiters deal with cases of fraud and breach of contract, but when a trade dispute is on a large enough scale, the Magistrates step in and deal with the issue personally.

## PASSIONS AND QUESTORS

Devotion to the Passions in Travar is either in vogue or not, and quite often dependent on location or time of year. The influence of the Passions is unevenly distributed throughout Travar and surrounding areas. While the Passions Astendar, Chorrolis, and Garlen are revered year-round, Passions such as Thystonius, Upandal, and Mynbruje are all but neglected by the masses and revered only by a select few societies and individuals. Followers of Jasprea are more likely to be found in the outlying areas where agriculture is the mainstay, whereas Floranuus is celebrated during the two-week festival of the Founding Tournament and seldom given a second thought the rest of the year.

There has been a noticeable shift in the popularity of the Passions since the end of the Scourge. Before and during the Scourge, the Passions Upandal and Thystonius had a greater following. This is evident from the number of neglected shrines found in alleys

and back streets. Upandal's following reached its height after construction started on the new wall, when Travar's merchants began pursuing fashion by rebuilding the city with the same white stone. Architects and engineers from across Barsaive and beyond flooded the city during this period, bringing the ideals of Upandal with them. In Travar today, there is little new construction and Upandal has only a handful of serious followers. Thystonius' decline is a result of the end of Theran rule and Travar lacking a garrison or standing army.

The Mad Passions command an unhealthy following in Travar. While a few of Vestrial's followers skulk in Travar's shadows hatching their twisted plots, the followers of Dis and Raggok are found in much greater numbers. Dis has a greater following within Travar and its immediate surroundings, while followers of Raggok lurk in ever growing numbers along the edges of the Badlands, which offers them a safe haven to launch their own corrupted plans. Even the most fanatical supporters of Raggok hesitate to delve too deeply into the Badlands, however. Those that do and survive are among the most corrupt Namegivers in Barsaive.

Travar's growing importance has agents of opposing factions waging a war of ideals. Emotions run high, drawing questors and their followers to champion their patron's ideals. The results of this conflict could not only determine who gains mastery over Barsaive, but also which Passions wield greater influence over Namegiver lives in the province.

The Passions are powerful spiritual beings and can appear as a member of any race and gender. The use of personal pronouns like he and she illustrate how the Passion is viewed within Travar's general culture. Other places may view them differently, and individuals within Travar (and among the Passion's followers) may, likewise, have varying personal opinions on the matter of a Passion's gender.

## Astendar

The Passion Astendar is one of three in Travar that has a large following all year round. Followers of Astendar can often be found practicing their arts before an audience in the Tournament Circle, or enjoying the romantic view of the fountains against the backdrop of the Arena from the Pavilion. Visitors hear mention of Astendar's Walk, a popular circuit for those with romantic inclinations, especially at sunset, along the length of the city's walls.

Astendar enjoys the regular attention of the people of Travar, but many of those people are among its poorest, and they struggle to combine their love of art and business. Those who manage it are among the wealthiest and best known artisans in Travar, able to command a high price for their works. Unfortunately, pursuing the ideals of both Astendar and Chorrolis can make for an unhealthy combination. Crimes of passion are often blamed on mixing Astendar's love and Chorrolis's desire.

## Chorrolis

It goes without saying that Chorrolis enjoys the largest following of all the Passions in Travar. Almost every citizen pays homage to the Passion of trade and wealth daily,

something that eclipses even the devotion to Garlen, also held dear by many. This is not surprising in a city where most citizens think of themselves as merchants. Well-tended shrines to the Passion are present on most street corners regardless of the neighborhood's affluence. The Tower of Commerce, while having a legitimate function, was built as a shrine of devotion to the Passion and is the single largest shrine to Chorrolis in the city, if not Barsaive. The people of Travar have an outlook on life as only a city of merchants can. It defines them, and something Chorrolis thrives on.

It is nigh impossible to walk the streets of Travar without seeing or hearing an offering to the Passion. With every sale, you can hear a merchant reciting a blessing on his customer, and every gate toll in the city is collected in Chorrolis's Name. The Passion can travel any trade route and through Travar's trade network alone, Chorrolis can visit almost anywhere in the province. There are so many markets, shops, and business deals in Travar Chorrolis can easily walk every street in the city.

Many of the city's merchants claim to have been personally visited by the Passion, or claim to have seen him walking the streets and inspecting wares in the markets, perhaps haggling over something special that has caught his eye. While most such tales are, at best, wild claims to entice customers, Chorrolis frequently manifests in Travar to inspire individuals to recognize a business opportunity where it might otherwise be missed. He encourages merchants to build on the fortunes they have already accumulated. The Grip of Chorrolis, a manic addiction to making profit (see p. 52), is attributed by some to be the result of a personal visitation by the Passion himself.

Many look to Chorrolis as the patron of Travar, believing his influence is what shapes that attitude of the people. Some scholars, however, point out customs and beliefs shape the Passions, and not the other way around. Perhaps Travar and its people attract Chorrolis.

Some of Travar's merchants are questors of the Passion and wherever they go, they expand Travar's trading networks and spread Chorrolis's ideals. Few of Chorrolis's questors spend their time in Travar engaging the people; that would be preaching to the converted. Many questors visit the city to pay homage to the city, hoping for inspiration or an encounter with the Passion they so revere.

## Dis

Because of the strange relationship between the ideals of freedom and slavery in Travar, the city has become a magnet to followers of both Dis and Lochost. Despite Theran military forces being driven out of Barsaive, the Theran merchant air fleet still regularly visits the city. Slave taking in the region has increased, and Travar's slave markets are thriving. This emboldens the followers of Dis, who yearn for a return to the good old days of an enslaved Barsaive. Followers of Lochost offer a tempting target for the followers of Dis, since they openly advertise their presence to all with their energetic attempts to rally the citizens to their cause. Adepts with little sense of honor and short on coin could easily find themselves on the payroll of this Mad Passion.

Slavery is not Dis's only vehicle for destroying the passion of the Namegiver races. Travar's merchants create huge amounts of paperwork, and there is nothing like unnecessary bureaucracy to destroy anyone's passion for life. Many questors of Dis work among Travar's merchants to willingly spread their soulless ideology. These questors wield power as few followers of Dis can, for nowhere else, as part of daily business, can you create a bureaucratic nightmare, condemn hundreds to a life of slavery while profiting from the misery, then use the proceeds to create further misery. Dis's acolytes operate in secret and often under the protection of some of Travar's wealthiest citizens. Should they be convicted of illegal activity, they can expect justice to be purchased in their favor.

Many of Dis's followers sense their patron's growing power and influence in Travar. They believe the days of Lochost and his followers interfering in their plans are numbered, and a final reckoning between the two Passions is inevitable.

### ***Adventure Hook: Red Tape***

When Travar's civil servants reorganize the administration of the Air Dock, the new bureaucracy and red tape become a nightmare. The Air Wardens discover they cannot launch their ships without first filing a flight plan, which involves sending runners across town to another office for approval.

The player characters are hired to investigate and find something incriminating on the bureaucrat in charge. After succeeding, the bureaucrat is arrested for his crimes. However, the player characters discover him back in his post the following day, reparations paid on his behalf. The player characters must find another way to remove him, possibly by discovering his mysterious benefactor is a questor of Dis.

## **Floranuus**

Devotion to the Passion Floranuus is transient for most of Travar's citizens. During the two weeks of the Founding Tournament, the Passion of revelry is on the mind of every Namegiver in the city, yet he is barely given a second thought the rest of the year. Only airship and riverboat crews pay any kind of homage to the Passion throughout the year, invoking the Name of Floranuus at the beginning of a journey and hoping the Passion favors them with a swift voyage.

While most people see their devotion to Floranuus as part of the festival experience, perhaps more interesting is how those who devote their lives to the Passion see the festival. To those questors and their followers, the Founding Tournament is like nothing else in Barsaive, for it embodies all Floranuus's ideals. It is said during the two weeks of the Founding Tournament, Floranuus holds court in Travar.

The Founding Tournament attracts followers of Floranuus from all over Barsaive. Many of those that flock to the city do so as a pilgrimage and come to perform acts of devotion to the Passion. Some of Floranuus' supporters hope to win the tournament and become Champions of Travar. Questors visit the city to petition the Body of Five, hoping to be chosen the following year for the position of Master of Ceremonies. Successfully organizing the Festival of Color, the Festival of Choosing, and coordinating

thousands of events to keep over ninety thousand people entertained for two weeks is nothing short of a quest in itself.

## **Garlen**

After Chorrolis, Garlen is the most revered Passion in Travar. During the long night of the Scourge, all Namegivers looked to Garlen for protection. The people of Travar feel truly blessed by the Passion when they look toward the Badlands to the west, knowing they alone survived.

Garlen is not only revered for the sanctuary and protection provided during the Scourge, but for freedom from the Therans and independence as a city-state. When the people of Travar think of the Water Rebellion, their thanks go to Garlen. In Travar, a Questor of Garlen, if they so desired, would not find it difficult to agitate a mob of supporters. This fact is not lost on the questors of Lochost.

There are many groups of Garlen's questors and followers in Travar. The Sanctuary of Garlen is the main shrine and focus of devotion to the Passion, where Garlen's followers administer to the sick and injured daily. Another notable group crew Sevan's Run, a riverboat that travels the Byrose and Serpent rivers, tending those in need of assistance.

A few of Garlen's questors believe there may yet be kaers in the Badlands that, with Garlen's protection, survived the Scourge. These questors have led expeditions deep into the Badlands in search of survivors, sometimes alongside the followers of Jaspree that operate outside of Trosk. Those few that have returned rarely talk of their experiences.

### ***Adventure Hook: Healing Waters***

After a particularly nasty scrape, the player characters end up with an overnight stay in the Sanctum of Garlen. The questors refuse payment for their aid, asking only that they guard the entrance and hallways of the Sanctum from intruders and deal with them as they see fit.

During the night, they catch several young women dressed in black sneaking over the walls to collect water from the Fountain of Jaspree. The women claim they need the water for their village, as they have heard it brings fertility to the soil. The women claim they are not thieves and produce a large bag of silver to pay for what they are taking. The player characters have several choices:

- Refuse payment and let the women go on their way with the water. If the player characters ever end up in their village close to the Badlands, they are hailed as heroes.
- Accept payment for the water and let the women go. One of the questors witnesses this act, and before the player characters are ready to leave, they are unexpectedly arrested for the crime of selling water. This can lead to many outcomes. Justice is a commodity in Travar and can be bought, and the arbiter hearing their case may just have need of a large sum of silver. If the player characters have no money, or claim ignorance of the law, the

arbiter may grant clemency if they undertake a dangerous mission on behalf of the city.

Alternately, the arbiter may be someone the player characters have crossed before and this ill fortune leaves them condemned to the slave markets. The player characters may try to fight the charges, but no one is willing to represent them. If the player characters ask the right questions they learn the law is very specific and only relates to water drawn from within Travar's walls. This may acquit them on a technicality if they know the water is drawn from an astral realm and not actually a well within the city walls.

- The characters detain the women, who are brought up on charges of theft and end up in the slave markets. Several days later, many refugees arrive in Travar, their village abandoned. Shortly afterwards, a small group of children track down the player characters looking for their mothers as they have heard the player characters were among last ones to have seen them.

## Jaspree

Jaspree's base of support originated from those who left their kaers to coax the land back to life after the Scourge, and continues among those who farm the land to make a living. Like many cities, Travar relies heavily on agriculture and it is only natural those working the land pay homage to the Passion, giving thanks for her bounty. Some questors live in Travar, overseeing the ostentatious public and private gardens inside the city walls, and ensuring the welfare of the unusual animals imported during the Founding Tournament.

Jaspree's following is currently enjoying resurgence in and around Travar. These increasing numbers are not because people have gained a sudden interest in horticulture or taking up the plow, but a reaction to problems such as the Badlands. While the Magistrates fund some expeditions into the Badlands by Jaspree's questors in Trosk, there is increasing antagonism between the Magistrates and Jaspree's followers on other issues.

Some of Travar's largest trading houses are currently constructing a series of plantations in the Servos Jungle for K'tenshin's Meru niall. Many of Jaspree's followers question the need for the destruction of such large swathes of the jungle. Some have taken their protests directly to Travar's Magistrates, while others take direct action alongside Cathan tribesmen whose hunting grounds are suffering from the slash and burn policy. Many a plantation overseer has opened their doors in the morning to discover part of the plantation reverted to pristine jungle overnight. One merchant in Travar awoke to find his house covered in poison ivy.

Jaspree's questors face a problem unique in Barsaive. The Badlands grows closer to Travar's western border each year. Its spread has the potential to reverse the decades of work done since the Scourge, for who is to say the Badlands will stop at Travar? Jaspree's followers often visit Travar before traveling to the edge of the Badlands to study the impact on farms and villages suffering from its proximity. Many equip themselves at the Twilight Market before moving on to the village of

Trosk, the focus of efforts to halt the encroaching corruption. Many questors have been looking to Travar for answers. They find it difficult to understand how the corruption didn't touch Travar at the height of the Scourge, but is now, a century later, expanding at an ever-increasing rate toward the city.

## Lochost

As a city divided between the issues of slavery and the personal freedom of its citizens, Travar is caught between the ideologies of Dis and Lochost. Lochost has drawn a line in the sand in Travar, fighting for his ideological existence.

Travar's history shows its potential for rebellion, and Lochost is currently enjoying an upsurge of support among the people of Travar and surrounding area. This is mainly due to a large influx of his questors come to champion the cause of freedom; a cause that takes many forms in Travar.

Prior to the Second Theran War and subsequent political upheaval in Throal, Lochost's questors in Travar were divided into two broad camps. The first supported the Protectorate Movement and agitated for implementation of the Council Compact, while others openly agitated for rebellion on the issue of slavery. Since the dwarf kingdom's withdrawal from provincial affairs, the questors have become more unified, with the former Protectorate supporters developing a compact for Travar, trying to bring an end to slavery through political means. They are finding, however, that causing dissension among the people of Travar is much harder work than they anticipated.

Lochost and his followers are opposed to slavery, and while slavery is legal in Travar, it is obvious Travar is not overly comfortable with it. It generates profit for Travar's merchants and rids the city



of unwanted criminals, but the selling of slaves is only allowed outside the city walls, as if selling slaves inside would tear down Travar's exterior façade.

Encounters between the followers of Lochost and Dis have led to clashes in the back streets of Travar, often with deadly consequences. The overall level of violence in Travar is low, and much of it can be attributed to these two opposing factions. There have recently been open clashes between small groups of followers of these Passions in Tent City and the River Docks.

Many of Lochost's followers make easy targets for the followers of Dis because they openly agitate in the streets, while those who follow Dis tend to skulk in the shadows, directing paid thugs and assassins to do their dirty work. Adepts may find themselves approached by questors of Lochost, hired to uncover and weed out the followers of Dis within Travar's society.

With both Thera and Iopos meddling in Travar's affairs, it is possible Barsaive might once again become an enslaved province, something Lochost cannot allow to happen, but his influence is spread dangerously thin. His questors will stop at nothing to hold the influence of Dis and Thera at bay. As tensions continue to rise, some in Travar fear what that could mean.

## Mynbruje

*You ask an interesting question, but I fail to understand how you don't see Mynbruje in all of Travar. Why am I the only questor and possibly the only follower of Mynbruje? I think you spend too much time in that tower looking at your tomes, manuscripts, missives and whatever else you have managed to acquire.*

*You are clearly not familiar with the baker, When'shell, over in Old Town. He deals with many a dispute that never reaches the arbiters. There is a much-respected elder at the Sanctum of Garlen, but he's not one of Garlen's questors.*

*Why look so surprised? They are not the only ones in Travar. Granted, few of my fellows come to Travar, for they find their service to Mynbruje keeps them quite busy out among the small farm villages in the area and even elsewhere in Barsaive, but if Mynbruje needs them in Travar, trust they will be here.*

*Why are there so few in the city compared to the questors of other Passions? The answer is as varied as the Namegivers in Travar, but don't for a bit believe it means the ideals of Mynbruje cannot be found here. Mynbruje is in Travar, even if justice, compassion, or truth are found wanting at times. He is found in the generosity of a fruit vendor to a hungry street urchin, or the old woman who scolds some amateur thief with her cane. Sometimes, he's found when a simple scholar uncovers an important truth. As for the questors, well, Travar's view of the ideals of justice, compassion, and truth cause many of my fellows discomfort.*

*Why are there no buildings to mark one's belief in Mynbruje in Travar? Can truth only be discovered in a library, or justice only found in a building dedicated to it? Can compassion only be found when one Namegiver works to provide the ideals of Mynbruje to another?*

—Amicus of the Book answering questions from a gathering of Travar's merchants.

Justice is as much a commodity in Travar as gold or silver, cotton or wool. Many say the merchants of Travar have no compassion, but this is not entirely true. Unfortunately, compassion often comes into conflict with profit.

Many of Mynbruje's questors struggle with this concept of justice in Travar. Justice as a commodity for profit alone is enough to drive all but the most fervent questor to despair, and Travar's attitudes toward justice offer a singularly unique challenge, especially those who serve what could be considered the interests of natural justice.

Questors of Mynbruje soon discover Travar's concepts of justice, compassion, and truth do not often reflect their own. Learning to deal with the views of Travar's people and still serve Mynbruje takes time, patience, and a will of steel. Those who don't leave Travar often question their own beliefs and turn to the path of the vigilante.

## **Raggok**

Raggok is the most corrupt and depraved of all the Passions, and his jealousy of those that did not suffer his fate knows no bounds. He spreads chaos and corruption among Namegivers who follow other Passions to slake his thirst for vengeance.

Travar is an affront to Raggok and his followers. Its gleaming white walls and towers stand like a beacon of hope against the Badlands, whose spreading corruption Raggok's followers have been attempting to hasten.

Few of Raggok's followers reside within Travar. Those who do keep their presence secret, and are strong willed enough to continue everyday life without discovery. These agents of Raggok bide their time, forming a network of contacts. New arrivals are directed to the various cults lurking on the edges of the Badlands in abandoned temples and kaers. In these places, cadaver men are found in great numbers, giving rise to rumors the followers of Raggok have something big planned for Travar.

One would think Raggok's followers would be rife among the wealthy of Travar, but this is not the case. Flaunting your wealth before those with little is a common practice, but rather than upset people, it inspires them to strive for their own fortunes. The few merchants in Travar who follow Raggok must to go out of their way to turn their wealth into the misery of others.

## **Thystonius**

Thystonius is all but ignored among Travar's general population, for it is not just soldiers who mistake Thystonius for the Passion of war. As a peace-loving people, most in Travar think of Thystonius as a troublemaker and warmonger, and have little or no time for the Passion. There are old, mostly forgotten, shrines to Thystonius in the city, remnants of the Theran occupation, another part of Travar's pre-Scourge grandeur.

The only followers of Thystonius can be found among the city's Champions and those who come to explore the Badlands. It is often remarked as strange how the people of Travar have little time for Thystonius, yet the greatest event in Travar's calendar embodies so much of what the Passion represents.

## Upandal

Upandal is Travar's forgotten Passion. Prior to the Scourge, Upandal's praise was on the lips of all. Architects, master masons, and laborers poured into the city, and Travar's people grew ever more prosperous. Stunning new buildings were raised in Upandal's glory, each one a work of art and beauty. Except for the Arena and the Greycairn Docking Tower, there has been little construction during or after the Scourge.

Shrines to the Passion of architecture grace many of Travar's streets, but are no longer tended and the Passion's following is all but extinct outside of a few smiths and similar artisans. Questors often visit the city to gaze upon its great works of architecture, but unless the people of the city embark on another great building project, it is likely Upandal's glory days are never to be revisited.

## Vestrial

Those who have sought dominion over Barsaive since the end of the Scourge have considered Travar no more than a neutral city-state with little strategic importance. However, since the Theran defeat in the most recent war, many have reassessed their opinion, none more so than the Therans themselves.

With this dawning recognition of Travar's strategic importance, few places see more plotting from within and without, and by such a diverse range of conspirators. Thera, House K'tenshin, the Denairastas, and even Throal hatch numerous plots each year in attempts to influence the Founding Tournament and install their puppets to rule Travar. Even Kratas and Urupa are not above interference, should they consider it in their interests.

House K'tenshin conspires against the city to force merchant freight back to the river, restoring the power they once held over the merchants of the city. Kratas attempts to disrupt Travar's slaving operations and encourages the development of a compact, while discouraging the ideals of the Protectorate Movement in the hope of continuing Travar's status as an independent city-state. Theran agents exert a growing influence over Travar's merchants, while the Denairastas see the city as fertile ground to sow their lies and plots to create further instability in the region. Within the city, Travar's merchants scheme and connive daily as they compete for greater profits, their greed knowing no limits.

Add the machinations of the city's many secret societies, some of which lay the groundwork for Travar's eventual destruction, and it is no wonder Travar appears to be Vestrial's playground. It is unknown how many Namegivers in Travar are under the sway of the Mad Passion, but Vestrial's plots are intricately woven into the current power struggle. It is possible the grand illusion of Travar could be Vestrial's greatest masterpiece.

## IN THE GRIP OF CHORROLIS

*It was before the war, you understand. What I remember isn't much, and what I do remember is akin to some crazed dream. Trade was slow, of that much I'm certain. The morning was beautiful; the mists lifted early leaving the streets ablaze with sunshine reflecting from the gold-topped spires of the city. I was giving my sales pitch to anyone*

who would listen, but few had the courtesy to even look my direction. Have no doubt, even in those early hours of the morning the streets were bustling, but the attention of the crowd was focused elsewhere.

One of those damn fool questors of Lochost was agitating against Theran slavery, his doom saying filling everyone with all kinds of fears, promising insurrection, anarchy, and rebellion. The questor lauded the virtues of Throal's Council Compact and the crowd hung on his every gesture, buying his words as if he were selling them at a discount; few appeared interested in what I had to offer.

Sure, what I sell is tat, mostly toys for children and mementoes for tourists, but aren't I entitled to make a living? I had risen earlier than normal to get a choice position to pitch my stall, and now I could feel my anger reaching boiling point. That's when I first noticed him, another merchant inspecting my wares. At least I assumed him a merchant. He wore fine embroidered robes common to the merchants of Travar. He appraised me thoughtfully and smiled. He explained how the questor played on the fears of the crowd and I should use this to my advantage. He pointed to one of the many wooden dolls of the young King Neden and asked me, "Is Neden not a proponent of the Protectorate Movement?"

I lifted a handful of dolls and carried them into the crowd, inspired. I pitched the dolls as good luck charms, effigies of the champion of the Protectorate Movement, each and every one blessed by Lochost himself.

That's when things became a little hazy.

The dolls heightened my already keen business acumen and sense of growing euphoria. With the crowd now gathered around my stall and the dolls gone, I turned to dwarf-made snow globes of the Arena, guaranteeing all profits would help fund the Liferock Rebellion.

Before I knew it, the pottery vases were going at half price to slake my insatiable need to close another sale. Pottery vases hand crafted by escaped Theran slaves. That, I guess, is when the trouble started. The vases belonged to the merchant next to me, for I had run out of my own stock. As it turns out, the vases were hand crafted by slaves in Thera, a fact not lost on the crowd. The questor of Lochost got the anarchy he had been looking for. Realizing there was no more profit to be made, I came to my senses, just in time for the city watch to clamp me in irons.

Still, no one was badly hurt and the arbiter accepted my donation to his favorite charity. All in all, I still made a handsome profit.

— Tamisin Valis, Street Hawker of Travar

A visitor to Travar should expect to see many new sights and prepare themselves for unique and unusual experiences. There is an atmosphere of trade in Travar that the newly arrived visitor notices as they travel the streets. One experience a visitor may come across is a merchant caught in The Grip of Chorrolis.

The Grip of Chorrolis, often just referred to as the Grip, is so called because it seizes an individual unexpectedly, as if Chorrolis himself takes over their mind. The Grip only appears to affect those who actively engage in regular buying and selling of goods for profit, and are of weak mind or loose morals; the latter applies to most of

Travar's merchants. For those affected by the Grip, the closing of a sale or making a profitable deal becomes an obsession or sometimes even an addiction.

Like any addiction, the longer it goes unchecked, the harder it is to break. For some merchants, the Grip becomes so tight they sell their own shop front when they run out of anything else to sell. Those convicted of breaking trade laws often cite the Grip, claiming diminished responsibility and hoping for a lesser punishment. The most notorious claim of influence from the Grip was when the Body of Five convicted the Magistrates of the profiteering scandal that led to the early closure of the citadel.

Anyone caught in the Grip acts erratically and out of sorts, and will do or promise anything to anybody to close a sale. Many openly break the law, risking everything for their next slice of profit. Once the Grip has taken hold, it is difficult to break, and often nothing short of subduing or isolating an individual will break it. However, if you can convince someone they are about to make a loss, they often snap out of it. Many who lose everything trying to win the Founding Tournament are said to be fools caught in the Grip of Chorrolis.

In Travar, it is not difficult to find debate about the phenomenon and whether it truly exists. Some scholars believe the Grip is magical in nature, and claim it to be an actual manifestation of greed that gets out of control when an individual gets swept up in the unique atmosphere of trade in Travar. Others believe the Grip is proof Chorrolis is truly corrupt. One scholar noted the number of reported cases of the Grip has been steadily rising over the years, and some attribute this rise to the fact the Badlands gets steadily closer to Travar's borders every year. Then again, there appear to be more merchants in Travar each year.

## ON AIR CREW CULTURE AND TRADITION

*By the obsidiman Juliak Merris of the Juliak Merris Trading Company*

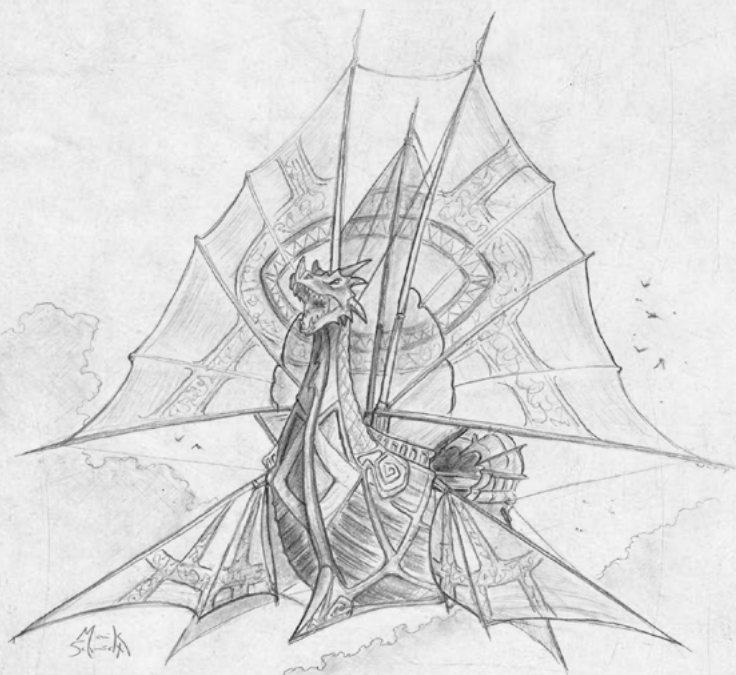
The cultures of different Namegivers across the world are fascinating and varied. It was curiosity about this diverse nature that drove me to set out from my Liferock all those years ago. I soon discovered, often to my confusion, the culture and traditions of neighboring villages could differ dramatically. What passed for humor in one town, could be considered insulting in the next.

The same is true for different groups of Namegivers within individual communities, and in that respect, Travar is no exception. Indeed, it was the fascinating culture of Travar's airmen that influenced my decision to get involved in the shipping business, in order to know and better understand the people of Travar.

I'm not certain how the pre-Scourge culture of Travar's airship crews relates to their current culture. Taking account of what little I do know, and what I have witnessed evolve in my comparatively short time in Travar, it is perhaps possible to narrow down the possibilities. As far as I can tell, if there was a culture among airmen, much of it did not survive the Scourge.

### On Artistic Decoration

The decoration of trading vessels by their crews is commonplace in Travar. My own have some of the most eye pleasing and colorful designs, and this is something I encourage among my crews. From my travels before the Scourge, I cannot recall such



painted ships. Indeed, most ships were of Theran origin, and while breathtaking in design, had a regular martial theme, which included their trading vessels.

Sail embroidery is one form of decoration common to Travar's airships, especially those mining near the peaks of the Thunder Mountains or Death's Sea, where storms or intense heat destroy any paintwork. Travar's crews tend to embroider the mainsail of their ships with designs they see from the air. The Arena, known as the Eye of Travar, is the most commonly depicted pattern. Most of Travar's airships are instantly recognizable at a distance by a stylized eye on the mainsail. Smaller sails often display geometric patterns that can be seen in the layout of the city.

The hysteria and mistrust generated by the Scourge placed a focus on the artisan skills of all Namegivers, and while this focus has diminished in other parts of Barsaive, it remains as strong as ever in Travar.

It is not just Travar's ships that are the subject of decoration, but often the crews themselves. Tattoos are not uncommon among the aircrews. For Travar's fire miners it has become an important tradition to ritually decorate their bodies with ink symbolizing important events and superstitions. Those who survive their first flight over Death's Sea get inked as a rite of passage and it is common to get a new tattoo after escaping a brush with Death. The styles of these tattoos are unsurprisingly representative of Death's Sea, often depicting flames and fire breathing monsters with vivid yellow, orange, and red ink.

Some of the most experienced fire miners bear magical tattoos called blood inks (see **Goods and Services**, p. 276). Secrecy and loyalty are common traits among the crews of Travar's mining ships, and Travar's blood ink artists prefer to keep their

identity hidden. This just adds another layer of mysticism to ritual. The fire miners themselves refuse to publicly identify the artist and rarely speak of the circumstances that led to them getting the tattoo in the first place.

## On Naming

Looking down from the skies, as perhaps only the birds and dragons should, Barsaive looks like a different place. From this unique angle, features on the ground conjure images in the mind's eye. I can personally attest to this. Standing on the banks of the mighty Serpent River, one does not see a snake, but from the skies, the river instantly suggests a great silver serpent winding its way across the land.

This unique view has led to airman culture giving names to places and objects utterly different to what they are called on the ground. This can lead to all manner of confusion. There are many maps of Barsaive and few agree on matters of distance, location, or topography, let alone a naming convention. To make matters worse, almost every airship captain maintains their own maps and charts. It is not difficult to see how this has become the bane of explorers everywhere.

Travar has many examples. The most renowned is one I previously noted: the Arena being dubbed the Eye of Travar. This kind of casual naming rarely has any effect on patterns, but one can never be too sure. Many believe the Naming of the Badlands by the captain of the Earthdown may have inadvertently created a new True Pattern for the area, and the continued usage of the Name may be causing this pattern to grow in strength.

I will leave that debate to the magicians and scholars.

## Burial at Death's Sea

It is without doubt the practice of burial at Death's Sea has its roots in the seagoing tradition, though the reasons behind the practice could not be more different. In the skies above Barsaive, certain elements of this custom are practiced almost exclusively by Travar's airmen and are, without doubt, part of the post-Scourge culture. The custom of burial at sea takes two forms, one practiced by airmen and the other growing in popularity with all citizens of Travar.

Those who spend their lives navigating the skies of Barsaive often wish their ashes to be scattered on the air currents, drifting on the winds in death as they once did in life. I find this custom most peculiar, even unsettling. For an obsidiman to think his physical body will not return to the Liferock is a torturous thought at best. While this custom is most prevalent in Travar, it is practiced in other parts of Barsaive.

The other form is to have their remains buried in Death's Sea, a custom more common to fire miners than average airship crews. Burial at Death's Sea is a growing custom taking hold in Travar, and the reason behind this, and to a lesser extent, scattering ashes, is the encroaching Badlands.

After the Horrors had retreated and communities had once again taken hold in the region, burial became the most economical way to dispose of a corpse, rather than the elaborate, but necessary, methods used in many kaers. Unfortunately, one of the first signs of the Badlands spreading its corruption towards Travar was the dead

rising from their graves, and what began as a trickle of cadaver men soon became a flood plaguing the area.

The easy and immediate solution was to ensure corpses were buried deep in the earth. It was soon realized, however, those buried beneath the ground were in eternal torment, unable to escape their claustrophobic prison, their pain and suffering possibly fueling the spread of the corruption.

Such was the fear of becoming one of the walking dead, or buried in some half-life, that those who could afford it arranged for their bodies to be consumed by Death's Sea, seeing it as the only way to safeguard against such a terrible fate. Travar being Travar, some of my fellow airship owners soon realized the business potential and now actively promote the concept (if one is to be honest, mainly by playing on people's fears). Today, burial at Death's Sea, once the preserve of the airmen, is now affordable to the average citizen of Travar.

As an obsidiman, the different ways of marking the passing of the dead never fails to amaze and confuse me. There are different practices for burying an earth-bound citizen and an airman, even some aspects unique to Air Sailor adepts. Final rites, such as offerings to the Passions, speeches, and other strangeness associated with mourning, occur on the ground for the average citizen. The corpse is then sealed in a wooden casket for storage before an unceremonious mass burial over Death's Sea.

On the other hand, a dead airman can expect the recounting of great deeds to take place on board his ship with all hands present to witness their passing. With the ship at a dead stop, the sailor's corpse is placed in a bag sown from sailcloth and wrapped in heavy rope by their crew. Should the individual be important or popular enough, Death himself may be woken to personally welcome the dead airman to his kingdom by firing one or more of the ship's cannons ringing its bells.

## On Charms

Many different charms are used by Travar's airmen. Some of these charms are just that: tokens and fetishes of no real power, believed to bring good luck to the wearer. Some, however, are potent blood charms used to great effect (see **Goods and Services**, p. 278).

It is tradition that no member of an airship crew take to the sky without a charm, for it is believed the crewman without one will never return home, and more importantly neither might their ship. This superstition, as ridiculous as it may sound, is one I have succumbed to and I never set foot aboard an airship without one.

These charms come in many shapes and sizes, and are often inset with gems, silver, or gold. Indeed, most charms carry enough value to cover any funeral expenses, should an unfortunate incident occur, and leave something extra for the unfortunate airman's family.

Despite the many shapes and the expense of their construction, charms in Travar are always carved from a fragment of the same white stone prominent in the city. While this stone is expensive and in short supply, many buried fragments can be found in and around Travar and they are widely sought after by craftsmen and artisans. Travar's airmen believe the piece of Travar they carry with them will always safely guide them home.

## On Knife Throwing

After several unfortunate incidents, this is a practice I have banned aboard my vessels while they linger in the skies over Travar, or any other city for that matter. I otherwise encourage it, for it is a useful skill should the ship's crew need to discourage any would-be pirates.

Many of the city's aircrews practice knife throwing. The sport is not so much in hitting the target, but in parting passengers with their cash. Even the most skilled passengers find it hard to compete, as the ship often hits an air pocket, or sharply adjusts its course just at the moment the blade is to be released. I think this tradition was perhaps stolen from t'skrang riverboat crews.

## On Hull Jumping

I have noted during my travels the shorter lived of my fellow Namegivers often reach the point where they consider themselves past their prime. While this is not a sensation I'm familiar with, for those that suffer from this condition I heartily recommend hull jumping. You will feel ready to take on the world.

Hull jumping is, perhaps, one of the most dramatic and unnecessary of Travar's airman traditions. It is, without doubt, Travar's most dangerous and useless contribution to air shipping. Despite its noble heritage, I can only beg the Passions the practice does not spread beyond the white walls of Travar. I have lost so many novice crewmen to this rite of passage I fear to count their number, or the silver it cost to train them.

The tradition of hull jumping owes its beginnings to Travar's many brave champions and airmen who took on the might of the House K'tenshin river fleet in retaliation for their bombardment of Travar during the First Theran War. These brave heroes hung from ropes draped over the hulls of the airships so they could swiftly board the K'tenshin riverboats from above. It was the stuff of legend, and is a tale that can be heard every night in an alehouse somewhere in Travar. However, as is the case with such tales, they are prone to what I call exaggeration, but troubadours call artistic embellishment.

The tales tell of adepts and non-adept alike tying rope to their feet before throwing themselves off the deck to attack the K'tenshin fleet. A ludicrous tale at best, for what is the use of hanging upside down by your feet with your head embedded in the deck of a t'skrang riverboat?

Ludicrous or not, these legends inspired the next generation of airmen to pay homage to those who risked their lives to defend the city, and the tradition of hull jumping was born. It has been developed over the years, and has now become a rite of passage among the airmen of Travar.



### ***Rules for Hull Jumping***

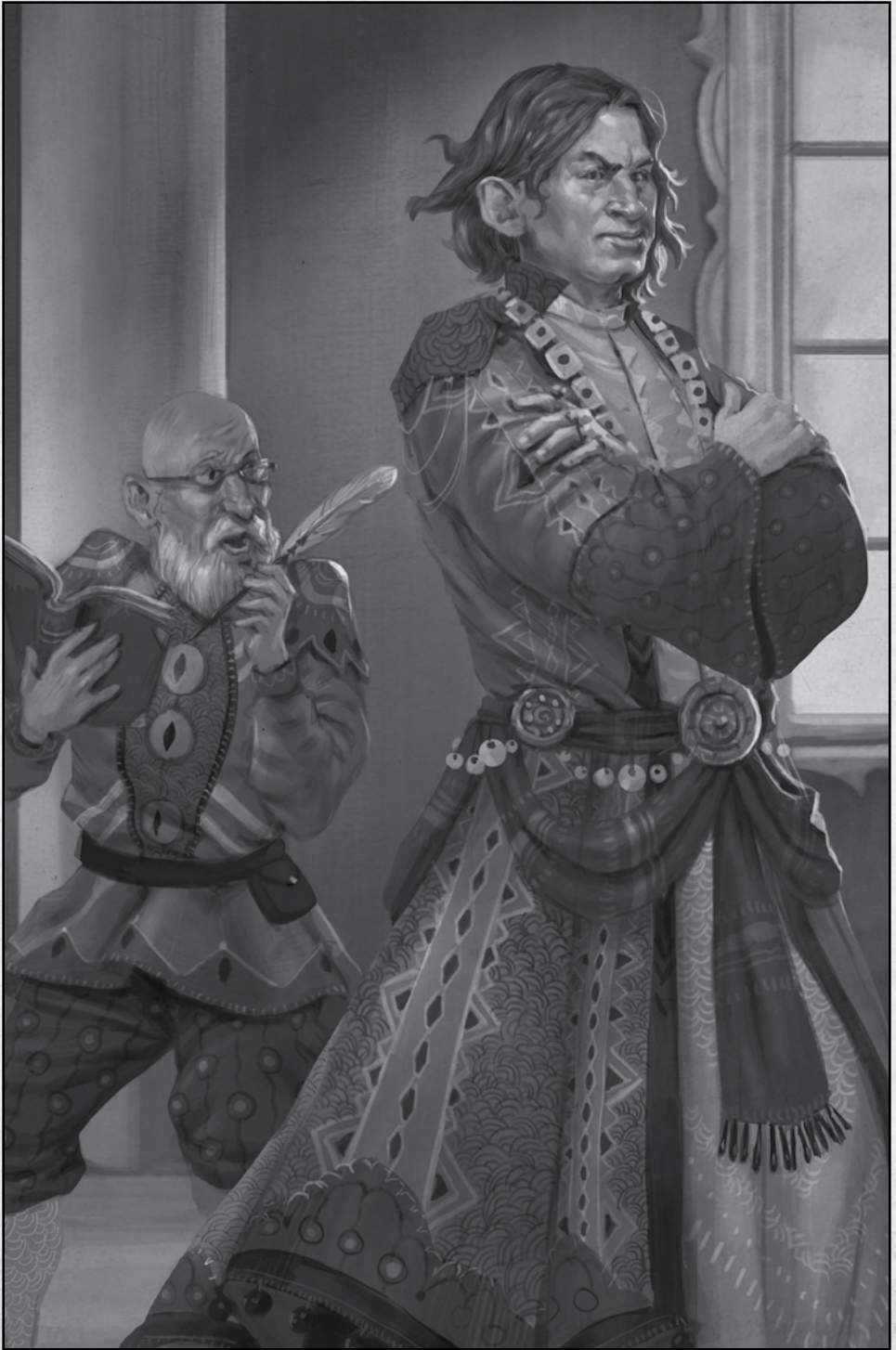
Hull jumping is only performed on smaller vessels: drakkars, airboats, and the like. The character making the jump secures one end of a rope or long cord to the mast or other central anchor point, and the other end to themselves (usually around their waist, though some avid jumpers have developed special harnesses).

Once secured, they leap off one side of the ship, trying to jump as high and far as possible. As they fall, the rope pulls taut and their momentum swings them under the ship and up to the other side. The longer the length of rope, the more difficult the jump.

Hull jumping is a Dexterity test. The Difficulty Number starts at 10 for the shortest rope needed to make the leap, and increases by one for each additional foot of rope. With one success, the jumper manages to grab the railing or cargo netting on the side. With two successes, they clear the railing but fall to the deck. With three or more successes, they land on their feet. If the character fails, they hang from the rope below the ship and must be hauled up.

Air Sailor and Sky Raider adepts may perform hull jumping as a Dexterity-based Half-Magic test. Characters may also use the Swing Attack knack or skill for hull jumping (see the *Earthdawn Companion* for information on knacks and learning knacks as skills).

Airship crews often place bets on hull jumping challenges. Each participant puts one silver (or other stake) into the pot, and then jumps. Failure eliminates the jumper. All successful jumpers add another stake to the pot, add 3 feet (or some other agreed upon length) to the rope and make another round of jumps. The process repeats until only one jumper remains, who claims the pot.





## ORGANIZATIONS OF TRAVAR

*There are hundreds of organizations in Travar, each one a small bureaucratic empire wheeling and dealing with the others for power and personal gain. Each competes for the scraps left behind by the organization above it, and each is responsible for maintaining the well-oiled machine that is Travar. There are two organizations, however, that feed them all. The Magistrates Council of Travar, the rulers of the city that keep the great trading houses in check and Travar's enemies from the gates; and the Body of Five, responsible for the Founding Tournament. The latter is a corrupt organization that continues to maintain their façade as protector of the people.*

• Merryglide Silverwing, Merchant of Travar •

### THE MAGISTRATES COUNCIL

Depending on with whom you speak, you will hear a variety of different opinions on the Magistrates of Travar. In Kratas, Garlthik One-Eye is likely to spit at your feet at the mere mention of the Magistrates; the hypocrisy of their stance on the slave trade is enough to give him an ulcer. House K'tenshin sees them mostly as a necessary evil, while the Denairastas and the Therans view them as pawns to be used for now, and obstacles to be removed when the time is right. Throal, Jerris, and Urupa, on the other hand, see them as representatives of an important trading partner.

In Travar, most see them for what they are: greedy, often corrupt, opportunistic merchants with a flair for the dramatic and a keen interest in politics. While Travar continues to prosper, the people give the Magistrates their due as wise rulers, even if they do not agree with every decision or stance they take.

Travar's Magistrates are chosen via trial by tournament in the Arena. Some choose to represent themselves, but most use their connections and great wealth to sponsor adepts to champion their cause. Becoming a Magistrate is a rite of passage that instills a sense of leadership, and the tournament exposes a candidate to the power of the gathered masses. Whether a candidate is playing spectator from the tiers or personally taking part in the tournament, being in the Arena and feeling the energy of the people is a truly humbling experience. It reminds the candidate of the indignation those early Magistrates faced when they were removed from power.

Some candidates claim they have had visions in the Arena, seeing echoes of Travar before the Closing and the downfall of the Magistrates. Others claim to have witnessed haunting images of brutal combat in the Arena egged on by a passionate crowd, all dressed in identical garb. One candidate stepped out of the running after being traumatized by a vision, claiming to have found himself walking Founders Way, the city desolate and empty. Whatever the truth behind these experiences, taking part in the Founding Tournament can have a profound effect on some candidates.

By paying their fees, candidates are literally exchanging coin for the hope of power, giving them the right to rule Travar should they win the tournament. The Founding Tournament is a powerful and symbolic reminder the Body of Five is the historical guardian of the people in times of tyranny. The Magistrates, wary of this precedent, often pause for clarity of thought in what might otherwise turn out to be a moment of unparalleled greed.

Unfortunately, today's Body of Five is a shadow of their predecessors, who rose up against the Therans. The likelihood of them coming to the aid of the people today and opposing the Magistrates is regrettably slim.

### **The Cycle Of The Magistrates' Council**

The Magistrates' Council of Travar is a triumvirate of Magistrates, each serving a three-year term of office. Each year after the Founding Tournament the incoming Magistrate replaces the outgoing magistrate. Occasionally the outgoing Magistrate returns for a consecutive term after winning the Founding Tournament again that year. It is rare for a Magistrate to win consecutive terms, even if many do serve more than one term in office. The most renowned was Niss Reeves, who won the tournament five times for a record breaking consecutive fifteen years in office.

The Magistrate's duties are varied, but cover two main departments. The first is the Judiciary, the department that runs the courts, appoints the arbiters, and is responsible for documenting any addenda to the Code of Travar. The second is the Civil Service. The Council is responsible for myriad public bodies and bureaucratic departments overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the city. These departments are responsible for funding the Body of Five, the City Watch, and Air Marshals, and are also responsible for the appointment of representatives of the Magistrates' Council to other cities. The Civil Service also has a permanent staff of merchants brokering trade deals on behalf of the city.

There is, however, one much maligned and feared office of the Civil Service. The Bureau of Taxes and Levies or "The Black Bureau" puts dread in the heart of every one of Travar's merchants. The Black Bureau has a dedicated team of specialists, called Inquisitors, who have sweeping powers to investigate any merchant or trading house in Travar. Travar's merchants are experts at tax evasion and avoidance, and the Inquisitors are ruthless in ferreting out those who think they are above paying tax. When Travar's merchants tell their children tales of bogeymen, it is not of Theran slavers or Horrors from the Badlands, but the Inquisitors of The Black Bureau.

The Magistrates run Travar on a rotating cycle, with each department overseen by a single magistrate for a period of one month. After a monthly meeting to discuss issues and change laws and policy by unanimous decision, the Magistrates swap duties. This leaves a magistrate free every third month to pursue their own personal interests.

It is this arrangement, along with the ability to influence the tax laws, which attracts so many merchants to put themselves forward as candidates each year. They risk everything, seduced by the belief that becoming Magistrate elevates them to greatness. The profits Magistrates can make for their business or trading house are breathtaking. Merchants spend their whole lives building their network of contacts.

Becoming a Magistrate provides access to the city's network of trade contacts, a network that would take most individuals many lifetimes to rival.

Travar has four galleys in its fleet, one of which is reserved for official business by the Magistrates' Council. The Magistrate on the off month of the cycle often uses it for personal business, if it is free from official duty. This financial boon greatly boosts the Magistrate's business enterprises. Having an air ship carry your goods across Barsaive without a cargo levy or operating costs is something even the most powerful merchants and trading houses cannot do.

### *Lord Alderac Windspear*

Egotistical braggart, exhibitionist, and gambler are all words that once described the young Alderac Windspear. The young man was renowned for his drunken exploits, whoring, and lordly airs, and his family despaired at what would become of their youngest son and his trail of illegitimate children. They tried all manner of sanction to bring him to heel, but the young Alderac was not interested in his family's ancient roots or noble descent. His older brother had left to explore the ancient Kingdom of Landis, from where the Windspear family claimed their heritage and noble title.

If not for a chance meeting, Alderac would never have made a name for himself or become known for more than his vices. While in an establishment of ill repute one evening, Alderac insulted what he assumed was a drunken sailor who turned out to be a skilled Swordmaster. Without identifying himself, the Swordmaster challenged Alderac to a duel to first blood, which Alderac accepted after the Swordmaster referred to him as Lordling Windbag. Alderac quickly found himself disarmed and flat on the floor.

Undeterred, the young man picked himself up and riposted with a series of stinging jibes about the Swordmaster's legitimacy. The Swordmaster recognized the very attributes that had attracted him to the Discipline, and a few drinks later, convinced Alderac to train with him. Not long after, Alderac was initiated into the Discipline, having found a focus and legitimate outlet for his tendency for outlandish behavior.

After adventuring for several years, Alderac returned to Travar and took over the family business concerns and title. After several repeated attempts, and spending a considerable portion of his family's wealth in the process, he won the Founding Tournament. Some believe Lord Alderac had an unusual experience



during his time in the Arena, for since his inauguration, Lord Alderac has become more pragmatic, discarding his normal approach and flowery speech.

He has not lost all his lordly airs, however, for when asked if he should be addressed as Lord or Magistrate he replied, "Lord Magistrate should suffice." Lord Alderac has turned his flair for the dramatic to politics and trade, increasing the fortunes of House Windspear. Lord Alderac is nearing the end of his second consecutive term in office and has already announced his intention to compete in the next tournament.

Lord Alderac often hires adventurers, sending them on quests to Landis, leading many to believe there is truth to the rumors of an ancient rivalry between him and Xoros Honeyed-tongue. Lord Alderac is seeking word of his brother, who has not been heard from since he left for Landis many years ago. Despite what many would think, Lord Alderac has no interest in the past glories of the Kingdom of Landis, as he has plenty of power and wealth from his position in Travar.

Lord Alderac is tall for a human, standing over six feet, and his blond hair and striking blue eyes make him an instantly recognizable figure. His flamboyant, but expertly tailored, clothing is a compromise between the robes of a merchant and the functional garb of a swordsman.

Now in his late forties, Lord Alderac shows little sign of slowing down, combining his love of politics and trade with that of his Discipline. He is renowned for the cut and thrust of his verbal talents, whether negotiating on behalf of Travar, or ridiculing the policies suggested by his fellow Magistrates.

#### **Fifth Circle Human Swordmaster**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 5      CHA: 7**

#### *Xoros Honeyed-tongue*

One of Travar's greatest rags to riches tales is that of Xoros Honeyed-tongue. Xoros was abandoned in Tent City as a child by the Night Sentinel scorcher tribe, and lived day-to-day earning a pittance from those he could convince to take pity on him. It did not take Xoros long to adjust to his situation, and he quickly picked up the concept of barter as a method of accumulating wealth, rather than the Night Sentinels' doctrine of theft by strength of arms. Brokering deals became second nature to smooth-talking Xoros, earning him the Name Honeyed-tongue.

Xoros knew many nomadic scorcher tribes came to Travar to purchase and repair weapons, for it was the reason for his former tribe's visits. Xoros soon became the one to see when it came to supplying weapons to the various tribes. Unable to meet demand, Xoros purchased his first smithy and put it to work to meet his needs.

Xoros has made his fortune producing arms, and today owns a string of smithies in the city and along the banks of the Byrose River, including Travar's largest foundry. Xoros' decision to run for magistrate was driven by his best customers abandoning their traditional migration routes to join the newly declared nation of Cara Fahd, and he needed to expand his customer base.

His bid for Magistrate was wonderfully timed, for in the same year Xoros was inaugurated as Magistrate Theran and Throalic forces clashed on Prajor's Field. The

events created a high demand for arms across Barsaive and with it, new business opportunities. Xoros holds charters across Barsaive, including Throal and Urupa, and he currently holds the largest charter for fire cannons in Barsaive. With the creation and ongoing recruitment of Travar's latest unit of the City Watch, the Road Wardens, Xoros' business continues to expand.

Many assume Xoros is an avid supporter of Cara Fahd and that there is tension between himself and Lord Alderac over the issue. This is not the case, and while Xoros' smithies do supply arms to Cara Fahd from time to time, they are bought and paid for like any other customer. The recent surge in arms sales has made Xoros one of the wealthiest Namegivers in Travar, and certainly the wealthiest ork.

Xoros lives in a mansion in the River Side district close to Founders Way, and knows he owes much of his wealth to his position on the Magistrates' Council. In his second year of a second nonconsecutive term, he is becoming concerned about the following year's Founding and has started hiring adepts to guard his arms shipments with a view to registering the best as Champions of the Tournament.

Despite approaching his twilight years, Xoros does not intend to let age force him to give up the position and power he has worked so hard for. Age may not be slowing him, but his diet and rich living are taking their toll, and he has developed a distinctive waddle, along with an ever-growing set of jowls.

Xoros has a mellow demeanor and quiet disposition, unusual for orks, often surprising those who meet him. Some speculate Xoros does not have gahad, or has never experienced it and this is the reason he was abandoned as a child. Xoros' position and wealth is down to charisma, bribery, and his great knowledge of weapons and history. All this is even more remarkable as, unlike the other Magistrates, he is not an adept.

#### **Non-adept Ork Merchant**

**DEX: 5      STR: 6      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 4      CHA: 6**

#### *Greixian Redrock*

Although his reputation as a powerful Nethermancer and widely traveled explorer precedes him, Greixian Redrock is perhaps the most enigmatic of all the Magistrates. Greixian is unusually old for a human and many believe he is even older than he looks; something Greixian refuses to comment on. Several years ago, Greixian arrived in Travar searching for clues to the final resting place of Brand Flamefounder, a pre-Scourge Weaponsmith also known as the Spirit Smith, whose fabled creation was known as the Edge of Travar (see p. 294). Shortly after his arrival in Travar, Greixian invested his personal wealth into a number of trade expeditions, which made him a very wealthy man. Having discovered an unexpected flair for business, Greixian became a citizen of Travar and appears to have abandoned his search for Brand Flamefounder.

Those that have traveled with him in the recent past point to the self-serving nature of his personality and are unsure whether Greixian, like so many others before him, has simply succumbed to the hedonistic lifestyle Travar is famous for, or whether



his decision to run for Magistrate is just another step in his quest. Grexian is well on his way to making a name for himself as a Magistrate and is often seen in the Tower of Commerce brokering deals and mixing with other merchants.

Grexian's tanned, weather-beaten skin, and rough stubble make him appear in his mid-sixties. His haunting eyes are the source of the rumors regarding his age and sometimes in mid conversation they wander, staring through those he is talking to as if he has been reminded of something that happened a long time ago. While he is called "the old man" by the other Magistrates, no one believes the rumors of his age because he is human.

Grexian is rarely seen without his large retinue of servants and retainers. Like all Travar's magistrates his robes are befitting his station.

### ***Grexian's Secret***

Grexian is indeed much older than he looks; he was a founding member of Brand Flamefounder's company of adepts. Grexian helped the Weaponsmith forge the Edge of Travar, its purpose to destroy a Horror. Grexian negotiated the assistance of a powerful spirit, which Brand intended to bind into the blade.

Unfortunately, the Horror corrupted the enchantment process, and Grexian's pattern was bound to the sword. The Nethermancer appeared to die, but woke some time later, unaware of his true condition: Grexian is now an ally spirit. While this makes him ageless, it also means he is subject to powers and abilities that can influence or bind spirits.

While Grexian managed to find shelter in a small kaer, the long years of the Scourge took their toll on him. Each year he felt less alive and decided he needed to find the Edge of Travar, determined to learn whether it would complete him or kill him. In Travar, he has felt more alive than he has in centuries and has all but forgotten his quest. Deep down, however, he knows one day he must resume his search for the Edge of Travar.

More information is provided in the description for the Edge of Travar, p. 294.

### **Force 5 Named ally spirit**

**DEX: 7      STR: 6      TOU: 10**  
**PER: 11    WIL: 10    CHA: 10**



### *Niss Reeves*

Of Travar's previous Magistrates, Niss Reeves is perhaps the most famous, the most controversial, and almost certainly the most powerful. Her power comes not just from ability and wealth, but because she won the Founding Tournament an astounding five consecutive times. Fifteen years is the longest any magistrate has served, and Niss used that time to forge political, economic, and personal relationships with the leaders of many nations and city-states in Barsaive. Niss knows the Code of Travar inside and out, and many of its trade laws were written by her own hand. This insight allowed her the ability to make instant decisions on behalf of the city.

In her youth, Niss traveled extensively across Barsaive with many different groups of adventurers. Her lust for adventure was tempered only by her need to create, and she flourished as

a Weaponsmith. Her best creations were often ceremonial weapons of astounding beauty that lacked true functionality for battle.

Her travels led her to Travar and she was seduced by its unique ambience and the lifestyle of the wealthy and powerful. Niss set aside crafting weapons in favor of jewelry of rare and unique beauty. She realized the potential for making money creating unique pieces for whichever celebrity was in vogue, driving demand for cheaper copies among Travar's citizens. Niss harnessed the labor of the many artisans struggling to make a living to meet that demand.

Like many in Travar, wealth was not enough for Niss. She thrived on being seen in public displaying her wealth, and was veritable icon of self-indulgence, earning her the nickname 'Sparkling Niss'. It was a shock to all when Niss announced she was not running for a sixth term and was leaving the city for an extended period on personal business.

During her time on the Magistrates' Council, Niss's flamboyant displays attracted thieves from Travar and Kratas, resulting in her latest creations being stolen on several occasions. Garlthik One-eye had a particular distaste for Niss and considered her displays as vulgar as her stance on the Council Compact, and its implications for slavery in Travar. He actively encouraged his thieves to target Niss, but it looks like this policy backfired.

Niss and her loyal champions recently returned from Kratas, having pulled a massive heist on Hilltop. Garlthik was so enraged, he has placed a massive bounty on

Niss's head. This could deteriorate relations between Kratas and Travar even further, for Niss has declared her intention to run for Magistrate once again and registered her champions for the upcoming Founding Tournament.

Presentation is everything in Travar and Niss understands this better than most. She is always immaculately turned out, wearing just enough jewelry to border on the ridiculous, but never quite getting there. This is a lot of jewelry, considering Niss is a troll.

Whether dressed in the robes of a merchant, the flowing gown of a socialite, or her adventuring garb, Niss is a distraction wherever she goes. Now in her late thirties, her artisan skills are legendary, and her knowledge of trade law, both Throalic and the Code of Travar, is second to none.

### **Eighth Circle Troll Weaponsmith**

**DEX: 6      STR: 7      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

## **THE BODY OF FIVE**

*The Body of Five is one of the most powerful organizations in Travar. It is practically a living legend cult with a massive public following. Its past members were the founders of Travar and protectors of its people. Without them, the people of Travar would have suffered terrible reprisals at the hands of their Theran overlords. Without them, Travar would not have survived the Scourge. Without them, the Founding Tournament, the greatest show on earth, would not exist. Knowing all this makes it that much harder for me to say without them, the people of Travar might be better off.*

*The Body of Five are but a shadow of what they once were. They have become corrupted by the very power they sought to give away. They bask in the glory and hero worship of a people whose respect they are no longer worthy of. Their greed is greater than the Magistrates their predecessors toppled. They survive on the power that their Name conjures among commoner and Magistrate alike. They have become a self-serving entity hidden behind the spectacular smokescreen of the Founding Tournament. Should this great façade slip and the grand illusion be revealed who knows what the consequences for Travar might be? But credit should be given where credit is due, they put on one hell of a show.*

— Cyanna the Earthweaver, Var'eidyllon Tara'var

The Closing brought great changes to the people of Travar, and the Body of Five was no exception. When the Guild Master of the Body of Five announced the citadel's closing, he knew the Magistrates would hunt down their organization. By the time of the Water Rebellion, the Body of Five agreed their original purpose of unlocking the secrets of the Ivory Codex had been superseded, and their research should remain hidden for the time being. No new members would be told of Ayesha or the Ivory Codex, for there was no longer a need to research long buried texts seeking protection from astral threats. This time is known as the Forgetting.

Forgetting was easier than expected. By the time the worst ravages of the Scourge passed, the Body of Five bore little resemblance to the organization they once were.

They no longer resided in the ancient towers that gave Travar its Name, but in large, perfectly manicured estates in the city. Their headquarters is no longer a hidden chamber deep under Travar, but the Guild House Tower, one of the most prominent towers in the city. The people of Travar idolize them as saviors, protectors, and custodians of the Founding Tournament, an event that has come to define Travar.

Many believe five individuals are solely responsible for the Founding Tournament, but the Body of Five consists of more than five magicians. The five guild members that make up the permanent Council of Five, each one a master of a spellcasting Discipline, wield the power and control the organization, but there are an unknown number of apprentice magicians, other adepts, and mundane functionaries within its ranks.

The Body of Five is retained at huge expense, but the price is willingly paid. Their primary function is to manage the Founding Tournament. The original purpose of the Founding was to make the powerful and wealthy pay for the right to rule, a plain and simple business transaction that could be understood by all. At some point in Travar's history, however, the Body of Five took responsibility for the collection of these payments at their Guild House Tower to simplify matters and reduce bureaucracy. This gave rise to a situation where those wanting power are directly paying those who can put them there, leading to the corruption it was intended to prevent.

After the citadel opened, the Body of Five delivered a stroke of genius. They decreed participants competing in the Arena must be available to aid Travar in times of need. During the time of hiding, many would-be Magistrates championed their own cause. With this new declaration, and with self-preservation in mind, the candidates hired adepts to compete for them. With too few native adepts to meet the demand for champions, adepts were drawn from across Barsaive by the lure of wealth and the prospect of earning the much-coveted title "Champion of Travar."

In one act, the Body of Five saved Travar the expense of building and maintaining an army, and secured a self-sustaining source of power and wealth for themselves. The Magistrates have a legal obligation to retain the services of the Body of Five, written into the Code of Travar. In most places this would be corruption of the highest order. In Travar, it is business as usual.

When the Body of Five is not dreaming up strange events to challenge those competing in the tournament, they revel in a hedonistic celebrity lifestyle. They delight in entertaining visiting dignitaries with great feasts and other lavish displays of wealth and power. They are like a drug to those around them, fawning over them and hoping to be seen receiving the slightest nod of recognition.

The Body of Five are serious about keeping the power they have accumulated, and their organization is dedicated to that end. While the Founding Tournament has a legitimate function, it is used to blind the masses to the Body of Five's organized greed. The individual wealth the Five accumulate each year would pay for the Founding Tournament several times over. They buy loyalty through bribery and favors, often in the form of complimentary tickets to the Founding. While the Five attempt to control ticket distribution across the city, they are the worst offenders for abusing the process, bribing those whose services they wish to retain with tickets to the tournament and invitations to important social events.

Each member of the Five, and some of the more influential members of the organization, have their own personal security. The organization also has a small pool of loyal adepts and lackeys to carry out whatever tasks the Five should set them.

While the Body of Five desire more power in Travar, they are held in check by their own creation, the same thing that holds many of Travar enemies at bay. The Champions swear loyalty to Travar and not the Body of Five, giving the Magistrates the upper hand in the city's behind-the-scenes power struggles. However, like the merchants of Travar, the Body of Five can petition the Magistrates for aid from Travar's Champions, should the situation warrant it.

The Body of Five's secondary function is to grant aid and advice to the public on magical matters. Members of the public can request or petition the Body of Five in the Guild House Tower. However, only matters of extreme importance are handled directly by the Council of Five. All other tasks are delegated to other members of the organization.

Every five weeks, the Body of Five holds a full council meeting to discuss business. After council business concludes, they then hear the various pleas for aid on matters of the arcane. As the Founding Tournament approaches, it becomes more difficult to get an audience with the Five and, during the two weeks of the Founding Tournament, it is impossible.

The Body of Five is led by the Guild Master, who only attends the full council meetings, though they are kept informed of anything of importance. The position has traditionally been permanent, though the Guild Master can step down if they choose. When this happens, the new Guild Master is chosen by mutual consent of the other four members, and the former member's chosen successor is usually granted the vacant seat.

## The Council Of Five

### *Oman Odestrus*

Oman Odestrus is a powerful human Wizard and current Guild Master of the Body of Five. Odestrus is not only a master of his Discipline, but also a master of deception. He uses the sense of awe that his title has on others, bewitching them without the aid of any magic.

Odestrus understands the people of Travar better than they understand themselves, and understands the people's perception of the Body of Five as key to maintaining that hold over them. He knows everyone in Travar believes they are destined for greatness, for those beliefs inspired him to rise through the ranks of the Body of Five. Knowing how the people of Travar act and think allows him to play to their strengths and weaknesses. Odestrus also understands this belief is a phenomenon unique to Travar.

Odestrus enjoys his ostentatious lifestyle and happily foregoes his duties, leaving them to others where possible. He is renowned for the number of courtesans he is seen with, and while he enjoys their company, they are just for show, giving the gossip mongers something to focus the public's attention on. Odestrus' guilty pleasure is keepingslaves, something no one outside his household and the other council members

know about. He knows it would damage his reputation and tarnish his image if it were discovered, which adds a degree of excitement to the danger. His slaves are kept well out of sight in his lavish villa, which is in one of the most affluent areas of Travar's Great Divide.

The villa is more than just his home. It is a place for conducting his personal research and is well protected by unusual creatures, many imported as part of the Founding Tournament. His personal study contains a magical portal that teleports users directly into the Guild House Tower. Called an Earth Gate, the original Body of Five designed it based on research from the Ivory Codex. Odestrus only knows how they operate and not the secrets of their construction (see **Magical Treasures**, p. 288).

It has been traditional for members of the Council of Five to take an apprentice to succeed them when the time is right. Odestrus is a pragmatic man and knows the steps he took to get where he is. With that in mind, he has several apprentices, each one carefully chosen for their mutual dislike of the others. The occasional subtle hint at who may succeed him is enough to keep them at each other's throats for years and divert any individual designs they may have on his position.

Oman Odestrus styles himself an adventuring Wizard, despite being anything but. He is commonly found wearing knee-high walking boots, fashionable pleated breaches, and hooded tunic over which he wears faux leather segmented armor and a waist sash. Topped off with a traveling cap and an ornate staff, he cuts an impressive figure, and despite being in his early fifties, appears much younger. His shoulder length hair always appears to be blowing in the wind, even when there isn't any, and his beard is always immaculately trimmed.



### **Thirteenth Circle Human Wizard**

**DEX: 6      STR: 6      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 7      CHA: 6**

### *Artacus Carbh*

If any member of the Body of Five could still be considered a protector and defender of the people, it is Artacus Carbh. While he indulges in all the hedonistic pursuits the trappings of wealth afford him, he truly lives for the Founding Tournament, Travar, and its people. Carbh understands the founding principles of the tournament

and what it truly means to the people of Travar. He dedicates his time, energy, and funding into creating spectacular and devious challenges to test the Champions of the Tournament, ensuring each event will be a crowd pleaser.

Carbh is constantly at odds with Iroldak Darklore's insistence there is too much pomp and ceremony in the tournament. He believes Darklore simply doesn't understand the founding principles of the tournament, and would like to see the Founding become a gladiatorial blood fest, which Carbh will not allow to happen.

Each year after the Founding Tournament, Carbh can be found frequenting bars and taverns in the city, discussing the various events and challenges. This makes him popular with tavern owners and customers alike.

Carbh spends much of his time in the towers of his spacious home, located in the Fifth Divide. His balcony provides an inspirational view of the Tournament Circle and Arena, and it is here he organizes and plans events for the Tournament. Carbh may be small in stature, but makes up for it with great enthusiasm and personality. His in-depth knowledge of engineering, architecture, and the creatures of Barsaive are impressive considering he is only in his late thirties and the youngest of the Five.

Always enthusiastic about his latest projects, Carbh always comes across as wildly excited, and his pale skin and scruffy appearance just adds strength to his manic reputation. During the Founding, however, his appearance is immaculate, his robes tailored to allow him to wear his matching swords without impeding his movement.

### **Eighth Circle Human Wizard, Second Circle Warrior**

**DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 6      CHA: 7**

### *Nymia Eldernight*

Nymia is the only member of the Five who truly lives for the research possibilities being part of such an organization can provide, and is the most dedicated to practicing her Discipline. Unlike the others, her focus is unclouded, seeking knowledge for knowledge's sake alone. She foregoes much of the party lifestyle the others indulge in, only taking part when Odestrus orders it, reluctantly appearing in public wearing the latest fashion.

Nymia's good looks have made her the natural, if reluctant, face of the Body of Five. When not flying the flag for the Body of Five, Nymia is locked in her lab in the Guild House Tower, or out in the field carrying out her research. Most of her research centers on finding new and unusual ways to use True elements. Much of her research finds use in the Founding Tournament each year.

Nymia has one apprentice, Ath'reil Tyke, who rarely leaves her side; giving rise to rumors they are also lovers. Nymia lives in the Northern Divide, close to the Western Gate, in a small, luxurious home protected by all manner of fiendish traps designed around True elements.

Perhaps the most unusual of the Five, Nymia is a tall, slim woman sporting a series of fiery sigils tattooed on her partially shaved head. The meaning of the tattoos is known only to her, but they change color depending on her mood, matching the green of her eyes one minute and the red of her hair the next. The nature of the



tattoos suggests she spends time with Travar's fire miners over Death's Sea, not surprising given her Discipline.

Her long, dark red hair spills from two topknots on the middle right of her otherwise shaved head, then flows around her neck and over her left shoulder. Normally dressed in practical work clothes, Nymia's appearance is that of a tomboy, but when dressed in her finery, her beauty is truly startling. She is happiest on a trip into the field or devising her next experiment.

#### **Eighth Circle Human Elementalist**

**DEX: 5    STR: 5    TOU: 6**

**PER: 8    WIL: 6    CHA: 6**

#### *Auldwind Shadowsinger*

As an ork, Auldwind Shadowsinger is the only non-human Namegiver on the Council of Five. He is, in fact, one of the few orks within an organization almost exclusively human. It is unclear whether

this is by design, or just representative of the fact the most common Namegiver in Travar is human.

Auldwind shamelessly covets the power Odestrus wields, not only over the Body of Five, but Travar. A challenge to Odestrus' position may not come from one of his apprentices as he expects, but from within the Council of Five. Until the time is right, Auldwind continues to build his power base by other means.

One of the few original covenants the Body of Five holds true to is the Equilibrium Covenant. This dates to pre-Scourge days when the Body of Five divested themselves of their trading assets. This was not only to reduce the likelihood of having to interact with the Theran traders, but was a group commitment to focus their efforts into research and remove the chance their trading interests would clash or create a power struggle.

Each member of the Body of Five bends this rule to one degree or another by investing in various business interests without openly engaging in trade. But Auldwind, unknown to the others, has built a trading empire from the ground up. He disguises his trading concerns through a series of shell companies, and makes good use of his Discipline, masquerading as a merchant.

Auldwind's merchant alter ego is known as Corbac Issang. He frequently visits the Tower of Chorrolis trying to make sense of the trading language the other merchants use so fluently. Auldwind has never taken any apprentices, and has resisted doing so, believing an apprentice would just complicate his plans. He knows this status quo

cannot last, however, and eventually Odestrus will insist he choose an apprentice from the pool of willing candidates.

Auldwind's house sits amidst a beautifully manicured garden in the Great Divide. While the garden is quite real, much of the sprawling manor is a series of powerful illusions he has spent years crafting to his liking.

As an Illusionist, Aulwind's appearance is what he wants it to be, depending on who is doing the looking or what character he is masquerading as. Entering middle age, he smooths over his imperfections, his cracked tusks appear unblemished, and his eyes full of fire and emotion. He likes to keep everyone guessing, even when on official business.

When masquerading as a merchant, he appears as a young, filthy rich ork. As an accomplished Illusionist Aulwind knows he only needs to bend the truth a little to create the perfect deception. Aulwind claims to have attained Ninth Circle in his Discipline, but this is just another part of his future play against Odestrus.

### **Eleventh Circle Ork Illusionist**

**DEX: 5      STR: 7      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 8      WIL: 6      CHA: 6**

### *Iroldak Darklore*

Iroldak pushes to make the Founding Tournament more deadly each year, believing there is not enough real danger involved in many of the events. Iroldak cares nothing for the Tournament itself, except how it makes him ridiculously wealthy. Of all the Five, he contributes the least simply because his ideas and suggestions are considered too grim for the spirit of the Tournament.

When not keeping up appearances as Odestrus's macabre sidekick, Iroldak spends his wealth collecting artifacts. He recently discovered a book called Discipline of the Spirit, a pre-Scourge treatise on Nethermancy written by a powerful follower of the Discipline.

The book recounts the persecution of Nethermancers before the Scourge. It also describes safe havens created in a location known as the Valley of Souls, by a group of Nethermancers called the Lost Circle. Iroldak believes this mysterious valley is located close to Travar, and is determined to discover its location. To this end, Iroldak spends his wealth organizing expeditions to explore the surrounding area.

Currently, Iroldak does not have any apprentices. His last two died during separate expeditions to the edge of the Badlands in search of the mysterious valley. Iroldak once had a large pool of willing apprentices, but rumors regarding the unusual circumstances of their peers' deaths led to that pool drying up.

Like many of his Discipline, Iroldak feels a greater affinity with the spirit world than the physical. Despite this, he realizes he cannot afford to alienate people and goes out of his way to maintain a public presence, including living in a large villa in the wealthiest part of the Great Divide where he receives important guests.

Iroldak Darklore is lean and wiry from his long expeditions looking for the Valley of Souls, a far cry from the rotund man he was a year ago. His sharp facial features and

long, tightly plaited hair stand in stark contrast to how he once looked. He is enjoying some anonymity in the streets, at least until the upcoming Founding Tournament.

In his early forties, Iroldak has a new-found purpose and is only now realizing that despite being one of the longest serving members of the Council of Five, he has barely advanced in his Discipline during that period.

### **Sixth Circle Human Nethermancer**

**DEX: 6      STR: 6      TOU: 6**

**PER: 7      WIL: 7      CHA: 6**

### **The Guild House Tower**

The Guild House Tower is a grandiose structure of towering marble topped with a golden dome, standing like a silent sentinel over Travar. At the top of the dome is a pylon supporting a large, beautifully carved, multi-faceted light crystal that can be seen for many miles in all directions. The light burns throughout the night and is used by airship crews to easily locate Travar in the dark.

The tower is one of a handful that is so tall their golden domes soar above the frequent morning mists that rise off the Byrose River. Airship crews can see the rising sun reflecting off the dome from a great distance and pinpoint Travar. Hanging from the top of the tower, just below the dome, are the flags and banners of the city of Travar.

At street level, the tower is notable for its pentagonal base and the red-glazed sigil of the Body of Five emblazoned above the grand entrance. The sigil depicts five serpentine bodies with the heads of dragons, each chasing and snapping at the tails of the others around a figure-eight design.

The tower is where the Body of Five carries out much of their research, and where the plans for the Founding Tournament are drawn up and secured. The tower is a fortress and only the ground floor accessible by normal means. The rest of the tower, which holds the research labs and artifact rooms, is only accessible by the Earth Gate located on the top floor; even the windows are a simple ornamental façade. The Body of Five holds Guild Council meetings within the privacy of the tower.

The tower is where people come to petition the Body of Five for advice and aid on magical matters. The public frequently seeks advice on the Badlands, in the mistaken belief the Body of Five are still the protectors they once were. The Body of Five only offers simple advice on that matter, as the Council believes it beyond their remit and a problem the Magistrates need to address. The only interest in the Badlands comes from Iroldak Darklore, who is exploring its fringes looking for lore lost to his Discipline during the Scourge.

Situated on the ground floor, the Office of the Guild is a large pentagonal room with a throne sitting behind a desk that resembles an altar. Both sit on a dais opposite the entrance, in what is otherwise a spartan room. Here Rupert Rostan, a Wizard who manages the guild's public relations, presides behind the desk taking note of public requests, collecting suggestions on future tournament events, and most importantly, registering any candidates for Magistrate along with their champions.

The Office of the Guild has an enchantment causing the hairs on the back of the neck to rise, and projects a sense of might and awe on all those who enter. The room is also kept unnaturally cold to dissuade casual loiterers, for there is always a steady line of petitioners. As individuals enter, an orb of light detaches from a cluster of orbs lighting the room and hovers above their head, denoting who is next in line. Rostan can control these orbs, which have many functions. With a command from Rostan they can plunge the room into darkness, attack as swarm, or seek help from other members of the Body of Five.

### *Rupert Rostan*

Odestrus once had Rostan in his sights as a prospective apprentice until he realized just how good the man was at his job. Rostan is a victim of his own efficiency, and now the public's permanent point of contact with the Body of Five. Rostan knows he has been overlooked for promotion, but doesn't care as he enjoys working in the Guild House Tower, which comes with its own benefits. While he tries to be fair with those who come to petition the Body of Five for help, his station allows him to grant an audience with the Council of Five. This gives him almost as much power and influence as being on the Council itself.

## THE CITY WATCH

In the past, the Body of Five maintained order, and the Magistrates' Council assumed those duties when the Therans ruled the city. With the early closing, brutal reprisals by the Therans and their Throalic lackeys, and the Water Riots, tempers in Travar burned hotter than True fire and order needed to be restored. The Body of Five created the City Watch, with native citizens in charge.

Many Therans and their sympathizers were trapped in Travar, and action was needed to prevent them from attempting to overthrow the Body of Five. High-ranking officials implicated in atrocities were sentenced to indenture. Theran soldiers of low rank were given the option of joining the City Watch under blood oath or likewise face indenture. High-ranking officers and those whose actions were the cruelest were executed, for the people demanded nothing less.

### **The City Watch Today**

Undermanned, underfunded, and spread dangerously thin, the City Watch is unrelenting in its commitment to the job, and its watchmen are a constant presence on the city streets and walls. By anyone's standards, they are well groomed; renowned for taking pride in their appearance while carrying out their duties. Those new to the city often mistake their outward appearance for an unwillingness to get their hands dirty or pursue their duties. This is a mistake only made once, for while there may be few City Watch, they make up for it in skill, and an uncanny ability to appear just as a crime is taking place.

This is often the result of rivalry between trading houses. When a merchant uncovers a misdeed by a rival, they pass the information to one of their contacts in the Watch rather than act themselves and risk retaliation.

The starched uniforms and polished armor belie how tough Travar's watchmen are. They not only have experience dealing with criminals, but other threats to the city as well. On the increasing number of occasions something threatens the city from the Badlands, it is the City Watch that keeps such creatures at bay until Travar's Champions arrive.

## The Road Wardens

The Magistrates' Council has long resisted calls to increase the size and funding of the City Watch, believing doing so threatens the perception of Travar's neutrality in the region. The Magistrates recognize Travar's neutrality plays an important economic role and any rash decisions jeopardizing this position could be financially devastating.

With the increasing instability across Barsaive, however, bandit raids on merchant caravans have increased. Traditionally patrolled, protected, and maintained by the dwarfs of Throal, the well-established trade routes between Travar and Throal were once the safest in Barsaive. With the recent political strife in the dwarf kingdom, Throalic patrols have increased in size, but decreased in frequency and range. To quell the growing unquiet from the great merchant houses, the Magistrates have agreed to address the issue and trial a new unit of the City Watch known as the Road Wardens.

Travar's Road Wardens are a small mounted unit fresh off the training grounds and have yet to be tested. They currently patrol the trade roads following a four hundred mile stretch of the banks of the Byrose River, much of which passes through dangerous regions. The new unit is currently limited to a scouting and assistance role, rather than a combat one.

The wardens' role is to maintain a presence and track the growing number of bandit groups, sending word to nearby caravans. Once threats have been identified and tracked down, the Magistrates intend to harness the capabilities of Travar's Champions. As part of the deal struck by the Magistrate's Council, the Road Wardens, and Champions working with them, can make use of the basic facilities at coaching houses owned by House Halla free of charge.

*Honestly, I'm amazed there is crime at all in Travar. When people say the Watch have an uncanny ability to stumble across a crime just as it's happening, they aren't joking. Most put it down to each new cadre of recruits containing some reformed criminals that simply visit their old haunting grounds after earning their sash.*

*The faithful would have you believe this is Chorrolis' city and he doesn't like thieves, but the thought of Chorrolis as some kind of crime busting vigilante is the most ridiculous suggestion I've ever heard.*

*Rumor is only one in three recruits survives their initiation, and those survivors undergo some kind of spontaneous initiation into a pseudo-Discipline based on the use of half magic.*

*Me, I don't know. What I do know is a lot of people are willing to pay handsomely to anyone who can discover the truth of the matter.*

*— Aphoistis Shadowcloak, Lost Items Specialist*

## The City Watch and Travar's Champions

Interactions between Travar's Champions and the City Watch can be unpredictable. Problems can arise when overzealous Champions decide to handle a crime as part of their service. Technically the Watch has jurisdiction over law enforcement, but Champions are given significant latitude by their position in Travar's culture. When disputes come before arbiters, the Champion's patron will, as they often do, influence the outcome.

The Watch returns the favor by asserting authority over duels fought by Champions, especially during the run up to the Founding Tournament. Some see this behavior as bad blood between the Watch and the Champions, but Champions provide significant support driving off threats from the Badlands. Apart from the occasional personal grudge, there is little real animosity.

## The Hounds of Travar

The During the early years of the Scourge a young man called Jurl Heartsong hurried through the streets of Travar. It was a dark time for the city and its people were living in a state of terror. It was the time of the Midnight Murders and there was a strict curfew. Eager to beat the curfew, Jurl took a shortcut down a back alley. In doing so, he happened upon a dog fighting ring. Overcome with anger at the cruelty he was witnessing, Jurl intervened to rescue the dogs. Unfortunately, Jurl was no match for the thugs running the fight and he suffered grievous wounds for his efforts.

The City Watch found Jurl near death and brought him to the Sanctum of Garlen. When Jurl had recovered, he discovered the two fighting dogs waiting for him. Jurl had undergone a spontaneous initiation as a Beastmaster.

Without understanding what had occurred, Jurl sought out others like himself. On hearing his story, they were as eager to teach as Jurl was to learn. Before long, Jurl had gathered many abandoned or abused dogs, cats, and other animals, nursing each one back to health.

When one of the murders occurred in Jurl's neighborhood, he swore to protect his own, and went hunting with his pack. Where the City Watch failed, Jurl and his pack captured the Midnight Murderer. Jurl became an overnight celebrity in Travar.

In recognition of Jurl's achievements, and realizing the potential of combining trained animals and skilled handlers, the Magistrates offered to feed the Beastmaster's pack if he agreed to lead a unit of City Watch. Jurl agreed on the condition that animal protection laws were added to the Code of Travar, for he had not forgotten the cruelty he had witnessed in that back alley. The Beastmaster became formally known as The First Master of Hounds and his legacy lives on through The Hounds of Travar.

The Hounds of Travar consist of several specialized units, each with their own pack of highly trained dogs. The current Master of Hounds is a Beastmaster Named Bhrell Threeclaws. Each unit consists of specially trained, chosen men, often bolstered by Novice Beastmaster adepts.

The Hounds of Travar are rarely encountered without their faithful dogs. The animals are highly regarded, not just beasts trained to fetch and attack. The dogs are particularly popular with children who try to feed them. The dogs are trained not to

accept food from strangers, in case it is poisoned, a foul trick often attributed to Kratan thieves, but occasionally the dogs are allowed a particularly tasty treat.

*The uniforms of the majority of the City Watch are an unmistakable, striking blue. The main uniform consists of dyed leather breeches, a long sleeved leather jacket with a wool lining, and black boots. A polished steel breastplate is worn over the jacket. A white woolen sash edged in silver thread is worn from shoulder to hip. Embroidered in the center of the sash is the Seal of Travar. In colder weather, a blue cloak is worn, with the clasp shaped into the seal. A watchman's rank is denoted on the sash and the cloak.*

*When outside the city and manning the walls, they wear polished steel helms. Specialized units wear the same uniform in a different color. Road Wardens wear green, and Hounds wear red. Uniform colors are officially designated as Watchman Blue, Road Warden Green, and Wolfhound Red.*

*The Code of Travar regulates the use of the official uniform colors, only allowing its use by authorized tailors and armor smiths. Earning a commission to provide uniforms for the Watch is highly sought, as nothing in the Code prohibits the shop from using the colors for other goods. Given the popularity and position of the Watch in Travar, this has made the fortunes of more than one merchant over the years.*

— Aphoistis Shadowcloak, Lost Items Specialist

## The Air Marshals

The Air Marshals are a special unit of the City Watch and have a similar command structure. At the top is Air Warden Gardius Drimsby. Air Warden is a Watch rank and does not indicate status attained in a Discipline. While the members of the air patrol are commonly known as Air Marshals, the captain of each ship holds the official rank of Air Marshal, roughly equivalent to the rank of sergeant in the City Watch.

On paper, the airmen patrolling Travar's skies are just another unit of the City Watch. Most do not see it that way, however, including those within the Watch. The airmen are outsiders because they do not train with the other Watchmen or undergo the same rites of initiation. Travar's aircrews are often filled with individuals pressed into service. Picked fresh after committing minor crimes, they are given a choice between learning the ropes or facing an arbiter's justice. Most in the City Watch are not willing to treat as an equal someone they arrested only days earlier.

The Air Marshals were founded after Travar's airships suffered attacks from flying Horrors, marauding Crystal Raiders, and, on one occasion, a dragon. Realizing a small air force was a must, the trading houses petitioned the Magistrates to create a dedicated City Watch unit to fulfill this role. While agreeing in principle, the Magistrates balked at the cost of such a venture and the idea was shelved until the trading houses began to talk of building their own private escort fleets.

Not having such forces under their control was unthinkable, and the Magistrates saw this as a direct challenge to their power. Eventually, a deal was struck. On behalf of the people, the Magistrates would supply facilities and cover the costs of recruitment, training, and wages, while the merchant houses would shoulder the cost of funding the construction of the patrol ships. Both parties would contribute annually to the upkeep of the ships and facilities. This gave all parties a shared interest and sense of ownership, and more importantly, it made the Magistrates look good by enhancing Travar's defenses at minimal cost to the taxpayer.

Unfortunately, inter-house bickering took hold when houses started poaching high-ranking members of the Air Marshals to crew their own growing fleets, leaving the air patrols crewed mostly by inexperienced air sailors. It was not long before the Magistrates got involved. Arbitration failed, and the Magistrates declared, for the good of the city, no trading house could employ anyone who had worked as an Air Marshal during the previous three years. In response, the trading houses withdrew their support and funding. Not wanting to lose face, the Magistrates increased the city's funding, but it was never enough to compensate for the generous contributions of the trading houses.

The Air Marshals were once drawn from the ranks of the Air Sailor and Sky Raider Disciplines, along with non-adepts who could pass the rigorous training required to join. Today, however, mostly volunteers and impressed criminals fill the ranks. The Air Marshals and Air Warden Drimsby have special dispensation allowing them to call on the men at arms of the City Watch when fighting muscle is required. As with other organizations in Travar, they may petition the Magistrates' Council for help from the Champions of Travar.

The Air Marshals' main duty is to protect airships entering or leaving Travar's airspace, which extends well beyond the city's land boundaries. Airships can expect to be escorted as far as the foothills of the Thunder Mountains to the east, the Serpent River to the north, and the source of the Byrose River in the south. The air patrols will not venture into the foothills of the Dragon Mountains, or west into the Badlands without very good reason.

Merchants seeking escort for their airships must give the Air Marshals a minimum of two hours' notice. By tradition, a runner from the docking facility brings news of the departing or arriving ship. On receipt of the notice, one or more drakkars are prepared. If not enough airmen are on duty, runners are sent out to call them in. It is unusual for vessels to leave Travar at night, but because of delays or inclement weather, it is not uncommon for ships to arrive after dark.

### ***Gardius Drimsby***

Travar's long suffering Air Warden, Gardius Drimsby, has a job no one envies and that is why he has held the job for more than twenty years. Only his loyalty to Travar and love of airships keeps him from finding more highly paid employment elsewhere. Travar produces some of the best air sailors in Barsaive, adepts and non-adepts alike, which makes them highly sought after. The large merchant houses pay premium wages and this leaves the Air Marshals with less skilled and otherwise undesirable novice sailors.



This puts Drimsby in an almost impossible situation. He is personally responsible for the safety of airships, cargo, and aircrew while they are in Travar's airspace, but when something goes wrong, as it is more likely to with inexperienced airmen, compensation is drawn from his operating budget. This has made Drimsby adept in the city's politics and he often grants favors or takes bribes to look the other way simply to keep the patrol ships flying.

Between city politics and his other responsibilities, Drimsby rarely sets foot on an airship. He often wishes something would happen to make the trading houses and Magistrates see sense. During the war, Drimsby had a clandestine arrangement with Omasu to carry agents of the Liferock Rebellion and allowed them to gather intelligence while escorting trading vessels. This deal went a long way to cover the costs of proper repairs to the aging fleet of patrol boats.

Despite the hardships of his position, Drimsby is immaculately turned out each day for duty. His aged uniform is pressed, his armor polished, and his beard and long hair are groomed to perfection. The same cannot be said for the rest of the Air Marshals, most of whom have no uniform or equipment whatsoever. For the past several years, Drimsby has resorted to recruiting criminals arrested by the Watch to fill the ranks and is determined to do whatever it takes to keep his airships flying. Administration of the docks takes up almost all Drimsby's time and he rarely gets to do what he enjoys most, captaining an airship.

#### **Sixth Circle Dwarf Air Sailor**

**DEX: 5     STR: 5     TOU: 6**  
**PER: 6     WIL: 6     CHA: 6**





## PEACHES

Kyrell hated Verhamil. He often felt guilty about that, since it was his hometown, but he was quite sure Verhamil hated him with equal vigor. Its people were a miserable bunch, inward looking and suspicious, and gave no thought to the future. The only thing that made them happy was their disdain for trading with the town at the other end of the valley. Sure, they purchased the fresh produce and goods, but trade attracted strangers, who were treated with even greater disdain than Kyrell. Few returned a second time.

The Scourge was hard on everybody, but in Verhamil the people appeared to be unable or unwilling to step out of the past. Many still preferred to dwell in the old kaer. Kyrell was the exception. Verhamil had been an orchard town before the Scourge. As if anyone could remember the orchards anyway. Now, instead of picking fruit, the people herded sheep. Kyrell hated sheep as much as the rest of the townsfolk, but if he heard them lament the orchards, blossom festivals, cider, or peaches one more time, he would snap.

Well, maybe not Peaches. Visiting Peaches was the reason Kyrell had become a merchant. She was the reason Kyrell first visited the neighboring town. She was the reason most people visited. Peaches was what the town's folk called her. Like most men, Kyrell had hoped to catch her eye. Instead he found a market for the fleece produced in Verhamil.

It was during one of these visits to see Peaches that Kyrell had met Grinjin Hammerheart, a merchant from the city of Travar. Grinjin told him he had encountered many towns and villages like Verhamil, each one full of fear and suspicion. Grinjin said the best way to open up a community was through trade. He believed trade could go a long way to help heal the scars of the Scourge. Grinjin told Kyrell tales of the merchant city of Travar, its gleaming white walls, towers so tall the clouds had to pay a toll just to pass over them, and streets gleaming with gold. Grinjin explained how Travar's people were merchants before any other consideration, how they were destined for greatness, and how they were constantly striving to better themselves. Kyrell was smitten.

It would seem, however, either Kyrell was not the merchant he thought he was, or Grinjin was simply wrong, for trade was having the opposite effect. The villagers referred to him as Chorrolis's whore. Kyrell had simply given up. Feeling ostracized, he made the decision to travel to Travar. At least there he could be with people he could understand. Grinjin told him as a merchant, Chorrolis would guide and inspire him, and profit would follow. Kyrell left Verhamil with a full purse and as many fleeces as he could pull on his small cart.

Riverboat was the quickest way from Verhamil to Travar, and it turned out it to be the most expensive. Kyrell abandoned his cart, for at the price the t'skrang captain

was asking, he could buy a new one in Travar. It soon became clear river travel did not agree with Kyrell, and the captain, unable to convince him death was not imminent, put him ashore with his bale of fleeces. After the sickness had passed, Kyrell sat on his bale looking up and down the length of an old Theran trade road, unsure just how far it was to Travar, or in which direction it lay.

It was then he was sure Death had placed a hand on his shoulder for a second time that day. The horsemen came out of the trees without sound or warning. Kyrell had heard the rumors of scorchers and highwaymen, but was unsure in which category the new arrivals should be placed. Kyrell cowered behind his fleece bale as the horsemen galloped toward him. Moments before they reached him they split to either side, continuing past without so much as a by your leave.

It was then Kyrell noticed the slow rumbling sound. Thinking at first it was the same sound he could often hear emanating from the Thunder Mountains near Verhamil, it soon became clear it came from the wall of dust sweeping down the old trade road toward him. Another group of horsemen soon became visible in the dust cloud. Behind the horsemen was the largest wagon Kyrell had ever seen. Pulled by eight powerful horses, it creaked and groaned under the weight of goods it carried. The large wagon was followed by two dozen more, which were followed, in turn, by a rag tag group consisting of more than a hundred wagons and carts of all shapes and sizes, drawn by all manner of beasts. The number of wagons was beyond anything Kyrell could have imagined in all Barsaive, let alone traveling together.

At various intervals, stern faced guards walked alongside the caravan. Each one eyed him through a fine film of gray dust while Kyrell stood there looking stupefied. It wasn't long before one merchant with a half laden wagon was touting what free space he had left. After some bartering, Kyrell reduced the toll to a price he could ill afford, but he had little choice. Despite the feeling he had just been robbed, he was grateful for the ride and a traveling companion. Later that day, Kyrell learned he traveled with one of Barsaive's greatest trading outfits, the Overland Trading Company.

On the sixth day of travel Kyrell got his first glimpse of Travar. Through the early morning mist of the Byrose River, something Kyrell had grown accustomed to, he could just see the reflection of the sun on the golden-domed towers. As the mist lifted, the white walls of Travar came into view, rising skyward out of the surrounding land. The merchant Kyrell traveled with pointed out what Kyrell was seeing was not the walls, but the tallest buildings, each one constructed of the same white stone. It was only after several more miles that Kyrell could see the truth of the merchant's words.

Hidden by distance, or the lay of the land, the walls slowly came into view and behind them the buildings he had mistaken for walls. The closer they approached Travar, the taller the buildings appeared, as if rising to meet the sky in greeting. The caravan skirted several villages as it traveled the sparsely populated riverbank, but now, only a mile or so from the city, the shores were full of life and industry. Kyrell was astonished. One great foundry belched purple smoke that hung low over the river, just waiting for a breath of wind to carry it away. Kyrell learned the locals called this smoke Xoros' Breath. Ahead, Kyrell could see a sea of tents between the city and the river docks, but the caravan had changed course, breaking away from the river toward the northernmost of the city's gates.



It appeared to Kyrell the closer one came to Death's Sea, the greater Death's sense of humor became, for the third time in his journey he was sure Death had come for him. One minute the sun was shining brightly, and the next it was blotted out, casting the road in twilight's shadow. Looking up, Kyrell expected to see a dark cloud passing in front of the sun. Instead he saw a red ribbed beast passing only meters above his head. Kyrell would have thrown himself from the wagon if fear had not rooted him to the seat. The beast passed swiftly, allowing him to see it for what it was: an airship, something he had only before seen from a great distance. He never admitted to anyone he thought it was a dragon.

Fear was overcome by awe as the vessel drifted along the great thoroughfare known as Chorrolis's March. Mayhem reigned at the gate market, and bartering raged in every part of the market. Merchants battled each other for customers, and customers battled merchants for a bargain. Kyrell did not know people could make such a din, though, admittedly, there were more people than he had ever seen before.

The further down the thoroughfare, the taller the buildings became until the merchant stopped, telling Kyrell this was as far as he went. For the second time in a week, Kyrell sat on his bale of fleeces looking up and down an ancient road, wondering in which direction he should go. It was only then Kyrell noticed many of the buildings and walls draped with great vines of brilliant white flowers, suggesting images of the much-lamented Verhamil orchard blossom. Kyrell stopped a merchant who explained the flowers were part of the Festival of Color in the run up to the Founding Tournament. The merchant also directed him to a wool merchant and an inn where he could find a room for the night.

What Kyrell had believed his fleeces to be worth and what he got for them were altogether two different things. Travar imported large quantities of fleece each year and the small amount he offered was barely worth the merchant's effort and most certainly not his own. Dejected and in need of a good meal and a bed, Kyrell found the inn. The meal was as delicious as it was cheap, perhaps the low price making it taste all the better. The same could not be said for the room, which was more than Kyrell had left in his purse. After some hard bargaining, he managed to arrange for a space in the stables with several other recent arrivals in the city.

Kyrell slept late the next morning, woken by excited voices passing in the street outside. Forgoing a breakfast he could ill afford, Kyrell joined the throngs making their way to the Arena. Perhaps there was still a bargain to be found. A ticket, it turned out, would cost enough for any sane Namegiver to retire on and Kyrell soon gave up hope of entering. The exterior of the Arena was the most stunning piece of architecture Kyrell had ever seen, and the Founding Circle surrounding it was likely a sight to behold as well, but for the crowd of people. In addition to the sea of people filling the Founding Circle, the tallest buildings overlooking the plaza were festooned with people hanging from every available window, balcony, and rooftop. Every piece of vertical space was crammed with cheering Namegivers waving colored banners, looking to catch a glimpse of the action in the Arena.

Kyrell did not share the crowd's enthusiasm. When the sky above the Arena flashed with red and purple light, sparking waves of celebration outside the Arena, Kyrell was wandering the now deserted side streets. This was not the Travar Grinjin had described to him, or at least not how he had imagined it. The people of Travar were cut from different cloth, of that much he was sure.

Wandering aimlessly, Kyrell didn't see or hear the wagon speeding along the cobbled street, and the driver's warning came much too late. The wagon didn't even stop. Kyrell landed in stall full of rotten fruit, much of which had grown a beard any dwarf would have been proud of. Kyrell realized he was in front of the barracks, outside of which stood several sets of stocks, each holding a struggling Namegiver.

"A silver, a silver for the lot," said a fruit seller pointing to the mound of rotten fruit that had broken Kyrell's fall. Kyrell laughed; there weren't even any people about to throw fruit at the prisoners.

A merchant reached down and helped Kyrell to his feet. He was dressed in fine robes like Kyrell often imagined himself wearing one day. Kyrell almost didn't recognize Grinjin.

"I was going to buy the lot," Grinjin said, "but you seem to have ruined them." Grinjin held a soggy piece of fruit in front of him. "Still they have their uses," he said before winking and moving to browse another stall.

Kyrell could smell the sweet scent of the crushed fruit and a slight hint of fermenting alcohol. He felt giddy and unsteady on his feet. When he turned to speak to Grinjin, the merchant was gone, and realization dawned on Kyrell. Filled with a sense of purpose, Kyrell knew it didn't matter if the fruit was rotten, he wanted the seed stones. He had never seen one before, but now he knew what they were. Peaches!







# THE GREAT TRADING HOUSES

*The merchants of the great trading houses inspire the people of Travar, instilling a sense of greatness and a hunger to reach for the unattainable. They are idolized by the masses unable see past the façade, and they are demonized by those who glimpse behind the veil. Those who idolize them should know they did not get where they are without being ruthless. In their pursuit of profit, they shape Travar as a glacier shapes a mountain valley. Anything that blocks their path is either crushed or pushed aside.*

*Those who demonize them should know without them, Travar would be nothing, another backwater at best, and at worst, a forlorn post-Scourge ruin. In another time or place, these are the men who would be kings.*

• The Second Cycle, Three of Five, Var'eidyllon Tara'var •

## ON TRADING HOUSES AND COMPANIES

It would take several books to detail the many trading entities in Travar, so only the largest and most noteworthy are described here. Even those referred to as minor trading houses should not be underestimated, for their power and wealth is staggering. Gamemasters are encouraged to add to and expand on those presented below.

The terms *trading house*, *company*, and *merchant* are sometimes used interchangeably in Travar, but as described under **Trade Law** in Chapter 3 (page 40), there are legal and social differences between trading houses and companies.

The trading houses of Travar, regardless of their size, are merchant family dynasties, many of which date back to before the Scourge. They are set in their ways, and have their own customs and traditions. Some boast past Magistrates in their family heritage. They are not, however, considered noble families in the same way as the houses of Throal.

On the other hand, Travar's trading companies are run by individual merchants and may have any number of investors in the company's endeavors. Most companies do not survive the merchants who founded them. Their assets are broken up between individual investors, or bought outright by the trading houses. Some companies are consortiums and cartels operating out of Travar and the surrounding area. Consortiums often attract smaller merchant outfits because they offer advice on exporting goods and run regular wagon trains, riverboats, and even chartered airships on behalf of their members.

The great trading houses do not just buy and sell goods in greater quantities than the smaller merchants and traders. They also create trading opportunities and demand for goods where none previously existed. They invest in new products and strive to improve on what already exists. Travar's shipyards are testament to this, and produce some of the finest airships, using cutting edge designs. The largest trading

houses of Travar have their fingers in every pie, lest a business opportunity pass them by.

Travar's trading houses are likened to the foundation stones on which the city is built. They support the people and culture, and without them, Travar would not be the city it is today. The opposite is also true, for, without Travar, the trading houses would be little more than shop keepers struggling to earn a pittance, and the citizens little more than beggars and farmers scratching out a living. Travar instills a sense of greatness and the trading houses are a manifestation of this. Travar and the trading houses have become part of the same pattern. Remove one and the other would surely unravel.

Collectively, the trading houses hold more power across Barsaive than many governments, and have influence in places it is not always welcome. They drive the economy in Travar and the surrounding area. Even well beyond the city walls, their presence is felt.

Trade is the source of Travar's power and influence, which, if not wielded wisely, could prove its undoing. Travar's power and wealth helped it survive the Scourge. That same power and wealth nurtured the greed and avarice that almost destroyed the city from within. Today, this power attracts Travar's enemies to its gates, but also holds them back, hesitant to strike lest they damage their own interests, or bring the wrath of others down upon them.

Travar's merchants pursue peace and profit, though many would argue the ordering of that statement. Through its merchants and trading houses, Travar follows a path of personal peace where others walk a path of war. There is a saying in Travar, "By weight or by measure, soldiers and merchants do not prosper in the same market." Critics point out, however, Travar's merchant houses are more than happy to outfit an army if the price is right. Travar is renowned for avoiding martial conflict, but its merchants will fight to protect their bottom line.

Travar's merchants excel at finding another way, even in domestic matters. For this reason, Travar's companies and trading houses are often considered a law unto themselves. They frequently abuse their wealth and influence at the expense of the individual, buying their own brand of justice when required. Travar's trading houses get away with things that land an average citizen in the slave pens. Merchant companies push the limits of the Code of Travar, and rarely let ethics affect their bottom line. Fortunately, any that truly step over the line can expect to be dealt with in the harshest manner. Travar's citizens have a history of tolerance, but when pushed to breaking point, they have brought even the greatest trading houses to their knees.

The Founding Tournament and current system of government are a result of the people's righteous indignation at unscrupulous trading houses just before the Scourge. As strange as the Founding may seem to outsiders, the process and expense of becoming a Magistrate tends to promote wise leadership, weeding out those prone to reckless gambling. As all but a few of Travar's Magistrates have been powerful merchants or members of the great trading houses, this leadership ensures future profitability for individuals, their trading houses, and Travar.

The Founding is the best example of how Travar, the great trading houses, and the people are interconnected. The Founding has become a spectacle that attracts

thousands of visitors to the city each year and generates vast wealth. Among these thousands are adepts who take part in the tournament and pledge to defend Travar. Travar's enemies fear these adepts, and they are one of the reasons Travar has been at peace for so long. While peace lasts, Travar and its people continue to profit.

Most trading houses indulge in friendly rivalry and show an outward façade of unity and cooperation, but cutthroat competition does not allow for true friends. On the other hand, many profitable enterprises are joint ventures between rival trading houses. Profit has a way of smoothing the rough edges in most relationships, and the trading houses are no exception.

A few trading houses display open contempt for each other and wage clandestine war against their rivals inside and outside the city. Occasionally, a trade dispute becomes something more serious, leading to open hostilities in the streets. Travar's merchants may pursue peace with their neighbors, but they don't always practice what they preach with each other. There are only so many seats at the table, and the trading houses will fight tooth and nail to keep their positions.

The preferred method of easing hostilities between trading houses or individual merchants is mediation. Mediation can involve the Magistrates, especially if the Code of Travar has been breached, but this can have its own repercussions and is often a last resort. Most parties prefer mediation from their peers in the Tower of Commerce (p. 182).

## ON COINS AND CURRENCY

There is no official mint in Travar and no official coin. The trade that flows through the city brings people and their currencies from all over Barsaive. Coins are grouped by minting source before referring to their value.

If you want to trade in Throalic currency, you should be know that Throalic coins are called senaries, (singular senary), so a Throalic silver would be a silver senary. Visitors to the city soon discover Travar's merchants have their own terms for most currencies: the Theran imperial, the Urupan pearl, and the Iopan fal'sment (a slightly derogatory term). Most merchants in Travar are familiar with Throalic slang and terms and often take advantage of an outsider's lack of knowledge about Travar's exchange rates.

## THE SYNOD

**B**arring a few exceptions, Travar's Magistrates and their representatives come from the city's wealthiest and most powerful merchants and trading houses. This mix of business and politics gives them a range of contacts and connections across Barsaive. Each merchant in Travar has a network of contacts, which collectively span the province. Travar's merchants use this network to conduct trade and gather information on their rivals to gain a competitive edge. While this network exists primarily because of trade, this information is vital to the security of Travar.

This network of contacts has become a gestalt that functions as Travar's eyes and ears. The central hub of this network is the Tower of Commerce, and is known simply

as the Synod. The Synod is not a specific group or organization, but the gathering of individual merchants as they rub shoulders, passing information as they conduct their day-to-day business.

Travar does not have an official intelligence service, instead relying on information gathered through the Synod. The contacts of every trading house, company, and merchant are interacting with one another across Barsaive, even if they don't realize it, passing along information in various forms. On top of this, trading companies regularly spy on rival merchants. The daily interaction of the Synod allows for plots against Travar to be uncovered, and the Magistrates rely on the Synod to root out Travar's enemies.

Most in Barsaive don't understand the Synod the way Travar's merchants do. Many have tried to manipulate it or glean information from it and failed. The complex language of trade Travar's merchants use in the Tower of Commerce can take years to master, especially for those not native to Travar. It must be experienced and learned rather than taught.

The language has two main components. The first is verbal and easily understood if the individual can speak Throalic, which, along with a smattering of Theran, makes up the bulk of Travar's local language.

The second component is difficult to master, and comes only from time spent interacting with the merchants of the Synod. This is because the language is actually instead highly specialized jargon. Understanding this aspect requires knowledge of the other merchants of the Synod and their dealings. This includes a specialized sign language that allows merchants to communicate prices and other relevant information across a raucous trading floor.

This is why those who try to learn the language—even with magic—often misinterpret what they see and hear. They lack the background knowledge and understanding that informs conversations in the Synod.

## Synod Language

The Synod dialect is not actually a language. It is learned and advanced as a Knowledge Skill. Attempts to learn the language with the Speak Language talent will fail, or at best lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretation.

The Synod is the by-product of thousands of personal trade connections. Its strength and resilience are due to no reliance on any one person or organization. However, its strength is also its weakness. Should some event reduce the ability of Travar's merchants to trade across Barsaive, the Synod becomes less useful as an information resource. This was the case during the Orichalcum Wars. While Travar didn't suffer much in the way of physical attack, trade across Barsaive was greatly reduced and for the first time the halls of the Tower of Commerce fell silent.

The Synod is not a finely tuned entity, like the Eye of Throal or Holders of Trust. It cannot turn the focus of its collective attention to some vital task at a moment's notice. Despite the number of plots against Travar that have been uncovered, it is not

unheard of that wider events take Travar by surprise; such as the K'tenshin attack that resulted in the Battle of Wharf's End or the landing of the *Triumph* at the Ayodhya Liferock. The Synod's greatest weakness is the greed of the merchants themselves. Information learned is often put aside if it poses no direct threat to Travar, especially if not acting on it gives someone a business edge.

One merchant discovered scorchers exiled from Cara Fahd lay in wait along a popular trade route. The merchant realized one of his rivals was due to travel the route. Instead of informing the authorities, he delayed the release of his information, letting his rival walk into the hands of the scorchers. Unfortunately, the scorchers were lying in wait not for a trading caravan, but for a dignitary from Throal with whom they held a grudge. The dignitary was killed in the ambush and when it came to light the attack could have been prevented, the result was several months of frosty relations with Throal.

Before the arrival of *Triumph*, the merchants of Travar had been too caught up in the singular pursuit of profit to bother with anything outside their own business concerns. That has changed. From the moment *Triumph* landed at Ayodhya, the Synod came into its own as an information exchange and has been responsible for uncovering many foreign agents plotting against the city. Many merchants are now engaged in activities other than trade and the Synod grows as merchants expand their network of contacts. Omasu was a master of using the Synod to gather intelligence and used it to coordinate the activities of the Liferock Rebellion. Some believe if not for the Synod, the Second Theran War may have had a different outcome.

Like anything else in Travar, information has value. Merchants pay well for information relating to threats to their own organization or to Travar. Many merchants spend much of their time interacting with the Synod as information brokers. The information they learn can earn favor with Travar's Magistrates. The City Watch is often passed information gathered from the Synod when potential criminal operations are discovered (see **The City Watch**, p. 76).

## THE BYROSE CONSORTIUM

There are as many consortiums in Travar as towers, but the 'Byrose Consortium' is worthy of special mention. The Byrose Consortium, sometimes known simply as 'The Consortium' is a relative newcomer to Travar. Its growth has been steady and, lately, it has been making significant ripples in the pond.

The Consortium is run by t'skrang and is one of the few large trading concerns that do not have their headquarters within Travar's walls. The Consortium is based on the eastern bank of the Byrose River, alongside the ferry docks, but also maintains an office and warehouses along the western shore. While the Byrose Consortium is registered in Travar, three sisters from the Naxos *niall* of House K'tenshin run it: Yespis, V'nedgia, and Thysiss.

The Naxos are synonymous with intelligence gathering and espionage. As short sighted as it may seem, Travar's Magistrates could care less if House K'tenshin uses the Consortium to monitor river traffic. After all, the Consortium pays its taxes promptly and, anyway, much of the city's river trade is conducted on House K'tenshin riverboats.

The Consortium appeared shortly after *Triumph* landed on the Ayodhya Liferock, and it is widely believed the Consortium was originally funded with Theran silver. This is supported by the fact many of the smaller merchant houses in the Consortium hold pro-Theran sympathies and benefit from advantageous trading terms with Theran merchants and House K'tenshin.

While the Consortium does not appear to meddle in Travar's affairs, it's another story outside Travar's borders. To the north, the Consortium is pressuring independent river villages, attempting to force them to deal only with Consortium traders. South of Travar is much the same. Some believe this is a prelude to K'tenshin abandoning the Free Trade Compact.

Much of the Consortium's income is derived from the subscriptions and services it offers its members. The most notable service is insurance, though for some unfortunate villagers this amounts to little more than a protection racket. The Consortium also runs a reliable 24-hour ferry service across the Byrose, and offers storage space and a stevedore service. For longer journeys, cargo

space is available on their chartered K'tenshin ships. As this is one of the few ways a merchant can guarantee non-interference with their goods by K'tenshin warships, the Consortium can charge a premium when there is a demand for space.

Yespis, V'nedgia, and Thysiss have served their *niall* faithfully for many years as spies and jumped at the opportunity to head the Byrose Consortium, believing it a great honor and opportunity to further their careers and the ambitions of House K'tenshin. While they report anything they learn to their *niall*, they have begun to feel marginalized. The Consortium, while having obvious political and trade agendas, does not need their specific skills. Any child of the Naxos *niall* could run the clandestine operations performed on behalf of the Consortium. The sisters feel they have become more proficient as merchants than spies. They have recently begun to suspect the Consortium may be a front for a group operating independently of House K'tenshin (see **The Order of the Crimson Sky**, p. 139). They have started investigating the organization they were charged with leading and believe that may be the reason they were originally offered the position. Not only are they trying to discover what



is behind the Consortium, they must discover who they can trust within their own organization, their own *niall*, and House K'tenshin as a whole.

### *Yespis*

Known as the smiling assassin among her kin, Yespis is the eldest of the three sisters. Despite having equal authority, V'nedgia and Thysiss defer to her as matriarch when it comes to the Consortium's daily business affairs.

Short for a t'skrang, Yespis rarely appears in public without dressing in long, heavy robes, complete with cloak and cowl. When it suits her needs, she uses her stature to her advantage, tucking her tail to give her a distinctive waddle akin to a fat dwarf. Those few who have survived her direct assassination attempts recall seeing only a long set of smiling white teeth behind the cowl.

Yespis has a distinctive set of yellow chevron markings down her left side, in contrast to her blue-green skin, which has begun to pale with age. Despite her age, her eyes remain bright and her tail as twitchy as her sword arm. She prefers infiltration to direct assault, but always has a backup plan. She is an accomplished Thief having reached 10th Circle and has also attained 3rd Circle in the Warrior Discipline.



### **Tenth Circle T'skrang Thief, Third Circle Warrior**

**DEX: 7     STR: 5     TOU: 7**  
**PER: 7     WIL: 6     CHA: 6**

### *V'nedgia*

V'nedgia comes across as dark, brooding, and calculating, which is exactly what she is. She is the strategist and spymaster. Unlike her sisters, she prefers to work behind the scenes, rather than get directly involved. V'nedgia has her own network of spies and she is believed to have in her possession a powerful thread item given to her by the Shivalahala K'tenshin to assist in running her network.

Missing her left arm just below the elbow, V'nedgia is the most instantly recognizable of the sisters. Legend has it in her early years she was revealed as a spy by a V'strimon Swordmaster Named Nax Verk. Insulted by her treacherous ways, he cut off her arm and, with the bravado only a Swordmaster could display, caught it midair and handed it back to her. V'nedgia accepted her arm and promptly put the Swordmaster's eyes out with its still extended claws, swearing the next time he

wouldn't see her coming. Some say she still has the arm, always keeping it close.

Whatever trauma V'nedgia has suffered, it can be seen in her eyes. She has an unsettling gaze that feels as if she's looking through you, rather than at you. Her mottled dark blue skin is changing to a shade of purple with age. As with her sister Yespis, she has a series of yellow chevron markings down the left side of her body.

### Eleventh Circle T'skrang Scout

**DEX: 6     STR: 6     TOU: 6**  
**PER: 8     WIL: 5     CHA: 6**

#### *Thysiss*

Still referred to as *little egg* by her sisters, Thysiss is the tallest and most outgoing of the three. She is a graduate of the K'tenshin War Academy and responsible for operational security. Thysiss is also the Consortium's public face and travels with many of its trade missions up and down the Byrose.

Dressing more like the stereotypical t'skrang boatman, Thysiss is normally decked out in bright colors, earrings, and headscarf. Like her sisters, she has a series of yellow chevron markings down her left side. Her tail has distinctive red spots in contrast to the rest of her blue-green skin and is her most notable feature.

Despite her allegiance to House K'tenshin, Thysiss is currently on the trail of a killer that has been eluding the City Watch. She hasn't told anyone she believes the killer may be a highly placed member of the Consortium, and she is protecting the Consortium's interests.

During her investigations, Thysiss has stumbled across an unrelated secret she is having difficulty coming to terms with. It is widely known during the Scourge one of the K'tenshin *nials* vanished without a trace. What is not



widely known is when the tower was opened all, that was found was a clutch of three eggs. Missed in the initial search of the tower by the t'skrang, they were discovered by the Therans in a hidden space protected by a series of powerful wards. The eggs were rumored to have had strange yellow markings and they didn't hatch for many years after they were removed from the tower.

### **Eighth Circle T'skrang Warrior, Fourth Circle Archer**

**DEX: 7      STR: 6      TOU: 7**

**PER: 6      WIL: 5      CHA: 6**

## **HOUSE ACHURA**

**O**f all the great trading houses in Travar, House Achura is perhaps the most enigmatic. Believed to be the oldest trading house, it is not run by a single extended family, but rather a cartel of five families, with little known of their origins.

House Achura takes its Name from the individual who brought the five families together. Little is known about how these events unfolded, who Achura was, where he came from, or even if he was, indeed, male. If the families of House Achura know the details of their own history, they refuse to speak of it. Whatever the truth, House Achura was very successful and held many of the other trading houses in check until the closing of the citadel.

House Achura always looked beyond the short-term profit sought by many of Travar's other trading houses. When it became clear the Horrors were not just a story conceived by the fledgling Theran Empire, the families of House Achura looked to their long-term survival. They realized once Travar was sealed, there would be little trade and many merchants. Even with their huge reserves of cash, they would be diminished after the threat from the Horrors receded.

House Achura proposed a plan to fund kaers in the region, targeting towns and villages unable to pay for their own. Each kaer was to be constructed in an area of mineral wealth. The deal allowed residents to pay what they could toward their kaer's construction, then they would mine for precious metals and stones during the Scourge, accumulating enough wealth to pay off the balance of construction costs and enough left over to rebuild their homes on the surface.

With the establishment of the Common Indenture Contract (see p. 38), some kaers signed contracts that resulted in indenture if the kaer could not pay off their debt after the Scourge.

Knowing it was likely some kaers would not survive, House Achura needed enough kaers to ensure a return on their investment. With that goal in mind, House Achura embarked one of the single largest kaer construction projects in the region.

Despite the best intentions and planning, House Achura's plans fell to ruin with Travar's early closure. Many kaers were not complete and with only days to act, House Achura brought the residents of the closest kaers into the citadel under an indenture contract. Those not wishing to remain in Travar were sent with word and what funding could be spared to kaers still under construction. Also sent were the locations of kaers

that would never be finished, so they could be stripped of needed materials. Much of House Achura's manpower, wealth, and documents were lost when the citadel closed.

Soon after the Closing, those who had envied the position House Achura held called in their loans, forcing House Achura to sell off assets within the city to pay their creditors. Brought to its knees, House Achura vowed those trading houses would pay for their actions. To date, nothing has come of their vow. Truth be told, during those early years, every merchant house was doing what it could to survive and House Achura had simply overextended itself.

The families of House Achura fell to petty squabbling as they struggled for their very existence. Through pure tenacity, they pulled themselves back from the brink, took stock, and started over. Relocating to a small estate, House Achura refinanced and opened a small market catering to the needs of their indentured folk. This market would eventually grow into the Eternal Market. This business and other small enterprises kept them afloat during the Scourge. By the end of the Scourge, House Achura was ready to act and re-established Travar's Gate Markets, giving them control of highly desirable market stalls and generating the first real income in over 400 years.

The Closing and the Cleansing resulted in the loss or destruction of many pre-Scourge documents. House Achura fell victim to both and the descendants of the five families knew almost nothing of the locations of the kaers and construction projects their predecessors had funded. The few kaers that were located appeared to have never been finished, or had been breached early during the Scourge. Kaers located in the Badlands were given up as lost when the destruction that had been wrought there became evident.

Fortunately, House Achura's pre-Scourge planning paid off. One morning, about ten years ago, a merchant arrived at the Achura estate with a small cart containing a fortune in rare metals, True elements, and contracts of obligation. Hailing from Kaer Blackrock in the foothills of the Thunder Mountains, the merchant had come to Travar to honor an agreement struck over 500 years earlier. The discovery two years ago of Kaer Hueco has resulted in another massive return on their investment.

With an unknown number of kaers out there still to be discovered, delving operations are now a staple of House Achura's business. Each year, they hire significant numbers of adepts to explore the region for any clues or information that could lead to the discovery of their lost mines and kaers.

House Achura is second only to the Overland Trading Company when it comes to the number of adepts in its employ. With their overflowing coffers, House Achura has started to return to what they were famous for and now have a number of small building projects on their books, including a contract to build a number of coaching inns for House Halla.

Now, almost fully diversified, House Achura is once again in position to challenge the financial might of the other great trading houses. The houses that almost brought House Achura to ruin centuries ago are fearful of House Achura making good on their vow.

## The Cartel Families

The five families of House Achura are Avara, Ghorn, Ilsyn, Matos, and Xagal. The head of one family takes the role of Achura, which translates into 'leader' from an old human tongue. The Achura holds the position for ten years. The role moves from family to family in an order established with the founding of the house. The head of the Ilsyn family was first, followed by the Xagal, Ghorn, Matos, and Avara families. This set order reduces the likelihood of a power struggle between the families. Within the individual families, however, it encourages murderous tendencies between ambitious siblings when their family is due to assume the reins of power. Bahl Ghorn, the current Achura, ends his term at the end of this year.

Each family has tales and legends regarding the founding of House Achura. They know, despite their many differences, they share a bond reaching back to the days of Travar's founding. Their tales also warn House Achura's fate is inextricably tied to Travar's.



## The Ruling Family

The family leading House Achura greatly benefits from their position. Not only do they claim a greater share of the cartel's profits, individual family members are often given important positions within the organization. The Achura chairs regular committee meetings where important decisions are voted on, but the Achura has a fair degree of latitude when directing the house's trading operations. The ascendant family also finds itself in a position of power as the other families curry favor with them so important positions within the organization are awarded to some of their own.

Surprisingly, no member of House Achura has ever run for a position on the Magistrates' Council, despite being among the oldest of the great trading houses. During the Scourge, the house was in no financial position to run for Magistrate. Now that House Achura's star is on the rise, the house committee has unanimously agreed the Achura cannot run. Running the house requires the Achura's undivided attention. Other members would be able to run, but Bahl Ghorn banned this, deeming it a potential source of interfamily conflict. With his rule almost at an end, this prohibition is likely to end with the ascendancy of Matos family.

Despite complaints from merchants fearing the house's growing power, the current Magistrates are actively encouraging the Matos family to overturn House

Achur's self-imposed ban. The Magistrates know a powerful player entering the political arena can only increase the number of Champions in Travar, allowing the Council to meet the public demand for the city to be better protected.

Should members of House Achura choose to enter the Founding and win, the political landscape in Travar will change dramatically. The rivalry between the families of House Achura is likely reach new heights, and will either make or break the house.

## The Ghorn Family

The Ghorn family is the only known surviving descendants of a clan of lowland trolls hailing from the Tara'var. Exiled for reasons lost to time, these trolls took the family Name Ghorn before moving east toward the fledgling city of Travar. The family thrived on trade before merging their interests with the other families of House Achura.

The trolls of the Ghorn family are instantly recognizable for the sheer size of their horns, and while others might consider them impractical, they are a source of pride. The Ghorn family is the largest of the few troll clans that call Travar home. When wronged or angered, the trolls are a terrifying sight to behold, but they are the most rational and peaceable of the five families.

There is currently a generational crisis in the Ghorn family. Only Bahl, his brother and sister, and a few other relatives are old enough, or of sound mind, to hold important positions within House Achura. This leaves other families in positions of importance normally held by the ruling family.

### *Bahl Ghorn*

Bahl Ghorn is the head of the Ghorn family. As the current Achura, he also leads House Achura and is responsible for directing the house's trade assets. Bahl is of average size and build for a troll, but the same cannot be said for his horns. They grow over and down the back of his head, curve up under his chin and past his mouth before spiraling around his jowls, obscuring much of his face. Bahl wears his horns in the same fashion others would wear excessive sideburns or facial hair.

Those meeting Bahl for the first time are often struck speechless and cannot help but stare at the excessive growth, which Bahl uses to his full advantage when brokering a deal. Bahl is in his mid-twenties and not only the youngest head



of the Ghorn family but also the youngest Achura. The other cartel families bemoaned his youth and inexperience but the beginning of his reign was marked by good fortune with the opening of kaer Blackrock, silencing his critics.

Bahl does not follow any Discipline but he is a competent swordsman, and an excellent leader and businessman.

#### **Non-adept Troll Merchant**

**DEX: 5      STR: 7      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 6      CHA: 6**

#### *Raahl Ghorn*

Bahl's younger brother, Raahl has come of age just as his family is at the height of their power. Unlike his older brother, who was the only logical choice to lead the family at the time, Raahl knows he will be an old man when his family's turn comes again in forty years, and the competition for Achura will be fierce because of the large number of younger siblings who will have come of age. Compared to the other families, the Ghorn family has always had small numbers and Raahl believes this to be the reason there is little feuding within the family. He is worried the family's growth may change this.

Raahl is an imposing figure, standing a hand taller than the average troll. He has a well-trimmed red beard, and a matching head of coarse red hair. His massive horns also have a reddish hue, their points capped in silver and crystal. Unknown to all but his brother, Bahl, these caps are handles of short fighting daggers, the ends of his horns hollowed out as sheathes.

Raahl has recently been initiated into the Warrior Discipline. With his newfound way of looking at the world, he is contemplating running for Magistrate rather than becoming the head of the family should the Matos family overturn the current ban.

#### **First Circle Troll Warrior**

**DEX: 7      STR: 7      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 6      CHA: 6**

#### *Sensha Ghorn*

The oldest of the three siblings, Sensha's interests lie outside the day-to-day management of House Achura and its interfamily politics. Sensha was a restless child and never content within the walls of Travar. She traveled widely before returning to Travar to help run the house, and Bahl created a position well suited to her background and temperament. Sensha is the Achura's trade envoy, traveling Barsaive and representing House Achura in matters of trade and finance.

Whether she keeps the post depends on what impact her efforts have on the fortunes of House Achura. Until recently, the house has focused most of their efforts in and around Travar. Sensha is very direct in her business dealings and has a growing reputation for straight and honest dealing.

Sensha is tall for a female troll who dresses for comfort and utility rather than style. Like her brother Raahl, she has red hair, which she wears in a side braid. Often

seen out in Travar with her Avara bodyguards, she spends quite a bit of time in taverns catching up on the latest news and gossip.

Sensha is a member of the Var'eidyllon Tara'var, but has had no contact from them since the attack on their headquarters (see p. 143).

#### **Fourth Circle Troll Archer**

**DEX: 7      STR: 7      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 5      CHA: 6**

### **The Matos Family**

The elves of the Matos family trace their lineage back to early Vivane. How the family ended up in Travar is a matter of some speculation. Most likely, they traveled from Vivane with Theran trade expeditions into Barsaive.

Later this year, the Matos family takes the reins of leadership from the Ghorn family. They have already been inundated with gifts, bribes, and well wishes from the other families, wishing to curry favor in hope of keeping influential positions granted by the Ghorn.

The individual longevity of Matos family members contributes significantly to the long-term thinking House Achura is known for. Many of the older family members remember living alongside the indentured folk during the Scourge, and the shame of their elders at their near ruin. The Matos family has not forgotten those trading houses that pulled the rug out from beneath them when there was nothing left to stand on.

The Matos family wishes to restore House Achura to the top in Travar. Whatever direction the Matos family takes House Achura in the next ten years, all know it is the next generation that benefits or suffers from their decisions.

#### *Everwind Matos*

Arrogant, cunning, and devilishly handsome are words many use to describe Everwind Matos. Everwind carries an air of arrogance everywhere he goes. This is, however, a false persona he projects, for Everwind knows the folly of arrogance. He uses his cunning, good looks, and charm to the advantage of his family and House Achura.

As head of the Matos family, Everwind will soon assume the role of Achura for a second term. He has fought off challenges to his leadership from other members of his family, the most rigorous from his cousin Kysis.



Known for his personal wealth, Everwind openly flaunts it when mingling with the leaders of other trading houses. He wishes all to know House Achura is ascendant and for some, there is a price to be paid. Everwind passionately believes House Achura is destined to regain its position as the largest and most powerful of Travar's trading houses.

Bahl Ghorn may have had the luck of the Passions with Kaer Blackrock, but Everwind cannot afford to rely on luck. The investments made by the Matos family during his last term as Achura are coming to fruition and he expects the returns to significantly expand the house's influence in Travar.

Everwind is considered tall, dark, and handsome even among elves. In public, he is immaculately presented. His merchant robes are cut from the finest cloth and display House Achura's bronze and crimson crest. His long black hair is worn in the latest fashion and he travels nowhere without his walking cane, which he carries like a swagger stick, rather than a walking aid. He is rarely seen without his retinue, which is large enough to fill a tavern.

In private, Everwind dresses casually and, when not managing the family's business affairs, enjoys walking the dogs from the family kennels.

### **Third Circle Elf Illusionist**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 4**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

### *Malindria Matos*

Everwind's younger sister, Malindria, is proud to be the wild child of the family. She is notorious for her hare-brained adventures and dereliction of family duties. Unlike the rest of the family, Malindria is not enthusiastic about their ascendancy to power. She is torn between the duty expected of her, and her love of spontaneous escapades and schemes.

Despite her reputation, her plans sometimes bear fruit. She uncovered Kysis's plot against Everwind. While her cousin has not forgiven her, Malindria does not hold it against him, as she believes his humiliation was sufficient punishment. She has kept it to herself, but she is concerned about Kysis's growing friendship with Vivius Ilsyn and the other family's influence over him.

During her jaunts around Travar, Malindria has spent time with the Air Patrol and developed a passion for airships and their construction. She is friends with Air Warden Drimsby, and donates money to keep his ships in the air. Malindria intends to use her family's influence to invest in Travar's shipbuilding industry. She knows this will be an uphill struggle, but has unlikely allies in the Xagal family, particularly Pyrite Rockblood.

Malindria is an initiate of the Var'eidyllon Tara'var and was present during the assault on its headquarters (see, **Secret Societies of Travar**, p. 143). She is currently seeking the other members and is the only one who knows the identity of one of the assailants.

Malindria may be older than many of the other family members, but refuses to give up her carefree attitude just because everyone else thinks she should grow up.

Her slim build and mischievous grin make her appear even more childlike.

During the Founding, Malindria loves to match her clothes and dye her long hair to whatever color is in vogue for the festival. This gives her a great sense of personal freedom and allows her to blend in, unnoticed, with the masses. She hates the attention other members of her family seem to crave.

Having spent much time hanging about with Air Warden Drimbsy and his crew, she has picked up plenty of uncouth habits and a wide selection of choice phrases unbecoming of the young lady her family expects her to be.

#### **Fifth Circle Elf Air Sailor**

**DEX: 7      STR: 6      TOU: 4**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 7      CHA: 6**

#### *Kysis Matos*

Young, impetuous, and fed up with his cousin's swaggering and posturing, Kysis seeks more direct retribution on the trading houses that brought House Achura to its knees. Kysis knows his failure to usurp the leadership of House Matos from Everwind has left him humiliated, out of favor, and likely without position in House Achura for the foreseeable future.

With his plan for family leadership scuttled, Matos eagerly awaits the ban on running for Magistrate to be lifted. He can run where his cousin, as Achura, cannot. As a Magistrate he can assure House Achura's profitability in ways his cousin can only dream.

Kysis' one true friend is Vivius Ilsyn, who he appears to have more in common with than his own family. Together, they are laying plans for the future of House Achura, if either can win the Founding Tournament and become a Magistrate.

Kysis is driven by an anger and desire for vengeance he doesn't quite understand. The only thing he has in common with his family is his love of dogs, and being near the house kennels calms what his cousin Everwind calls his destructive emotions.

Short and ruddy faced, Kysis could pass for human, were it not for the pointed ears protruding from his long dark hair. As a member of a rich and powerful family, Kysis rarely sees the point in doing things himself and enjoys being waited on hand and foot. He employs a well-paid personal entourage of handpicked adepts.

#### **Non-adept Elf Merchant**

**DEX: 7      STR: 5      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

#### **The Avara Family**

Claiming to be descended from escaped human slaves, the Avara family is the largest of the five families. They are the honor-bound guardians of House Achura, their loyalty owed first to the house and then to family. There are more adepts in the Avara family than the rest of House Achura combined, and many have responsibility for the protection of House Achura's assets as well as individuals in each family.

Members of the Avara family keep a neutral role to the best of their ability, which can be difficult. Their fierce loyalty to the house can lead them to actions defending House Achura's interests. The most notorious example involved one of Avara's adepts killing the head of the Xagal family. The Avaran adept was cleared of wrongdoing after it was discovered the Xagal patriarch was involved in a plot against the house. The adept was not only defending herself, but the integrity of the house.

Unlike the Ghorn or Matos family, whose leadership is determined by respect for power, the head of the Avara family is based on respect for age and wisdom, and the oldest family member almost always heads the household.

### *Krion Avara*

The head of the Avara family is known as the High Steward, a position Krion has held for twelve years. As High Steward, Krion not only has responsibilities with the house committee and his family, but also maintains peace between the cartel families. Krion is proud of his family's heritage and the role the Avara family played during the Scourge. All the families in House Achura accept that without the Avara family's efforts, the house would have torn itself apart.

The High Steward must balance his responsibilities on the house committee with the need to instill the upcoming generation with the importance of honor and impartiality. Krion does not support the proposition overturning the ban on individuals running for Magistrate. He believes the resulting competition will reignite old feuds and start new ones.

Krion demands vigilance from the Avara family and believes they may once again be called on to keep the families from House Achura from each other's throats.

In his late forties, Krion's youthful looks vanished soon after becoming High Steward. At first glance, he appears to be in his early sixties, his thinning grey hair a testament to the stress associated with his position. His apparent age is not helped by a series of disfiguring scars down the right side of his face and neck, the result of a street battle with cultists of Dis in his early twenties. Krion dresses in a military-style uniform bearing the crimson and bronze crest of House Achura.

He still practices his combat skills with other members of the family, but age has slowed him. After surviving many scrapes in his career, Krion has taken to talking his way out of more fights than wins with a blade.



**Sixth Circle Human Warrior**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 6      CHA: 6**

*Viciene of Tharl*

Not every member of the Avara family is born or married into it. From time to time, those who have proved their loyalty are given the opportunity to join the family. This was the case with Viciene, one of the few surviving indentured folk from the pre-Scourge town of Tharl. Free of their contract, the people of Tharl struck out to find and rebuild their town. Viciene, however, remained in Travar, believing there were not enough of them left to rebuild.

Several months later, Viciene received a plea for help from his kin. The village had been seized by brigands. Viciene managed to free the surviving villagers along with a member of the Avara family who had been visiting the fledgling village to broker a trade compact. Returning the survivors to Travar, Viciene was rewarded with a place within the ranks of the grateful Avara family, recognizing his loyalty and wisdom.

Viciene currently holds one of the most important positions within the Avara family, Master at Arms. He is responsible for overseeing the training and discipline of all Avara's men at arms, adepts and non-adepts alike.

Like most of his adoptive kin, Viciene is human. His sharp features and bronzed skin contrast the pale skin and rounded features common to most of the Avara family. His lanky frame gives him a distinctive stride, and his head is topped with an uncontrolled mop of curly dark brown hair.

In the training grounds, he is normally found leaning on the pommel of his two-handed sword watching novices practice. Viciene is known for his diligence and attention to detail, especially when it comes to the security and protection of House Achura.

**Twelfth Circle Human Warrior**

**DEX: 7      STR: 6      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 5      CHA: 5**

*Elemon Matos*

Married to Krion's daughter, Hymeria, Elemon holds the position of Quartermaster within the Avara family. Elemon is the focus of the Xagal family's contention that the Avara family is no longer neutral, but those claims remain unfounded. Elemon takes the neutrality of his new family seriously and was aware of that expectation before he married into the family.

As Quartermaster, Elemon is responsible for the billets, equipment, and assignments of the family's men at arms. He also has responsibilities to House Achura granted by the Ghorn family, which he is likely to keep when his birth family ascends to power.

With spectacles seated on his red, bulbous nose, and his ledger and quill close to hand, Elemon's bookish appearance would seem more at home in one of Travar's libraries than House Achura's armory. Elemon's appearance, however, often surprises

those dealing with him for the first time. He has the uncouth mouth of a tavern brawler and the instincts of an alley cat. He easily sizes up anyone he meets, whether their fit for clothing and armor, or their intentions.

Having worked in the same position for years, Elemon wants to see more of the world beyond Travar's walls. While something in him yearns for adventure, he doesn't seem to have a calling for any Discipline, though he has been training with Viciene to improve his skill with a blade.

### **Non-adept Human Quartermaster**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 8      WIL: 5      CHA: 5**

### **The Ilsyn Family**

The windlings of the Ilsyn family are masters of intrigue, and the most devious of the Achura families. Some in Travar have described the Ilsyn family as poisonous, and, while their reputation is exaggerated, it is not completely unfounded. When those in House Achura have need of underhanded dealings, it is often the Ilsyn they turn to.

The family spends much of their time plotting in their family's estate, sometimes known to the other families as the den of iniquity. Like the Matos family, they have not forgotten House Achura's humiliation and much of their planning is dedicated to bringing down the trading houses that wronged them.

It is fortunate for Travar and House Achura's other families that Ilsyn's worst deeds are saved for their own. If not for their constant infighting and convoluted assassination attempts on each other, the family would be more prominent. Only the most devious windling gets to head the Ilsyn family, and many Ilsyn windlings view assassination, plotting, and intrigue as sporting activities.

When not plotting, members of the family can be found making bribes, gleaning valuable information, and spreading rumors in the Synod, though they sometimes carry out legitimate business on behalf of House Achura. Some in House Achura believe if the ban on running for Magistrate were overturned, the entire Ilsyn family would enter the Founding Tournament could they afford it. This would likely spark off another wave of assassination attempts within the family.

#### *Grogiel Ilsyn*

Known for vile tantrums and toxic intrigue, Grogiel is the current head of the Ilsyn family, a position he has held for only the last few years. After a spectacular and convoluted assassination attempt on the previous family head, Morakki, Grogiel won the support of the rest of the family. While the assassination failed, Morakki survived through sheer luck and the rest of the family decided Morakki should have seen it coming, and awarded the position to Grogiel.

Grogiel spends his time divided between the Achura committee chambers on official business and the Ilsyn estate hatching plots against enemies of the Ilsyn family and House Achura. Like most who have pushed others aside to become head of the family, Grogiel has no ill will toward Morakki. In the Ilsyn family, assassinations

and coups are just how things are done. To show there are no hard feelings, Grogiel awarded Morakki the position of spymaster for the Ilsyn family.

Grogiel is small, even for a windling, and other windlings in the family openly joke his temper is to compensate for his size. When enraged, which is often, his hair stands on end and his ears turn an unusual shade of purple. His serrated wings are often decorated with symbols common to those who follow the shadowy path of the Nethermancer.

When plotting in the family living room, Grogial can be found dressed in very little, relaxing in front of a book twice his height, and smoking a long stemmed pipe. In the Synod, Grogial wears the crimson and bronze robes of House Achura and is always accompanied by Oskynn Matos, a giant of a man who is his favorite shoulder perch and bodyguard.



### **Seventh Circle Windling Nethermancer**

**DEX: 6     STR: 3     TOU: 5**  
**PER: 7     WIL: 7     CHA: 7**

#### *Morakki Ilsyn*

Many in the Ilsyn family consider Morakki blessed by the Passions, for after surviving the assassination attempt, he was given the position of spymaster. As spymaster, he is responsible for information gathering in and around Travar, focusing on those considered enemies of House Achura.

Morakki spends much of his time in the Synod and has extensive contacts with Travar's thieves. Morakki is much better as spymaster than he was as head of the family, and while he enjoys his current position he plans to usurp the position again. Rather than take on Grogial directly, which would reek of petty revenge, Morakki intends to wait until someone else makes a bid for head of the house, then snatch it from under them before they have time for celebratory drink.

Morakki bears scars from numerous assassination attempts, not all from his own family. His wings have the characteristic serrated edge common to the Ilsyn family, but have additional irregular striations, a sign of wing wilt due to poisoning. This gives Morakki an instantly recognizable flight pattern. In addition to his scars, the tip of his right ear is missing, not that it can be seen beneath his mess of hair.

Morakki is upbeat about the future, and obsessed with practicing his Discipline, especially now that he is Spymaster.

**Sixth Circle Windling Thief**

**DEX: 7      STR: 4      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 5      CHA: 5**

*Vivius Ilsyn*

Vivius has no position of note within the Ilsyn family or House Achura, but his close friendship with Kysis Matos has raised eyebrows. With the impending ascendancy of the Matos family, many are positioning themselves to use this friendship to their advantage, and Kysis has found himself an honored guest in the Ilsyn family home.

Vivius despairs at his kin's fascination for complex intrigue and assassination and prefers a more direct approach. He would like to see his family take a more prominent role within House Achura. When the time comes, Vivius intends to run for Magistrate.

Vivius' wild eyes and shock of white hair are distinctive, even among his own family. His serrated wings are almost as large as he is and has adorned the apex of each with small, custom-made clasps and piercings. Young, passionate, and energetic Vivius is often found flying around the Achura estate.

**Third Circle Windling Warrior**

**DEX: 7      STR: 4      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 6      CHA: 6**

**The Xagal Family**

Passionate followers of Upandal and proud dwarfs, unlike House Achura's other families, the Xagal family knows exactly where they hail from. During the early days of Throal, the Xagal family were renowned architects. They fled Throal after a competitor blamed them for a collapse that killed hundreds. Known as "the architects" among the other Achura families, the Xagal are builders first and foremost.

During Travar's construction and preparations for the Scourge, they made their mark on the city and House Achura. Many of Travar's landmark buildings are attributed to them. Since the citadel's opening, there has been little serious construction and the Xagal family has lost focus, looking inward and lamenting the decline of the Upadnal's following in Travar.

There is currently bad blood between the Xagal and Avara families after the death of Corix Blackvayne, former head of the Xagal family. The Avara discovered Corix was a follower of the Mad Passion Dis and acting against House Achura. While the Xagal don't deny the claims, they insist they should have been informed, rather than House Avara act unilaterally as arbiter and executioner.

The Xagal family has yet to choose a successor. This lack of direction is a growing concern to the other Achura families.

*Pyrite Xagal*

One of the youngest candidates to lead the Xagal family, Pyrite Rockblood is determined to return the Xagal family to prominence. Unlike most of the other contenders, he has no gripe with the Avara family and sees further antagonism with them as an obstacle to his ambitions for Xagal family.

Like many in the Xagal family, Pyrite laments the decline of Upandal's following in Travar and has plans to correct what he believes is an unnatural imbalance. He has embarked on a personal quest to discover the location of the quarries Travar's white stone originated from.

Pyrite wishes to see his family undertake construction projects worthy of Upandal, ideally an airship docking tower to rival even those of Thera. Pyrite can often be found discussing the state of the airship industry with Malindria Matos.

Despite his youth, Pyrite's is already balding and what hair he has left has already turned grey. His beard, however, is still black, if a little singed. Of average height for a dwarf, he is lean and muscular, and his chest and arms are scarred with small burn marks from his frequent work at the forge.

Pyrite is one of House Achura's chief negotiators and, when not on official business, he can be found working on his latest project, or drinking in the Chisel & Mold.



### **Fifth Circle Dwarf Weaponsmith**

**DEX: 4     STR: 5     TOU: 12**  
**PER: 6     WIL: 7     CHA: 8**

### *Adze Xagal*

Cantankerous, moody, and old beyond his years, Adze is the brother of the late Corix Blackwayne. He harbors a burning hatred for the Avara family and is the most outspoken of all the Xagal dwarfs. He not only has issues with the Avara family, he still harbors a deep distrust of Throalic dwarfs. He did not explicitly support the Theran presence in Barsaive, but had a sympathetic ear and enjoyed seeing the dwarves of Throal squirm.

Adze has no intention of replacing his late brother as head of the family, but has insisted Corix is properly mourned before the family begins fighting over the scraps.

With middle age upon him, Adze has a deep, ruddy complexion and his beard is showing its first flecks of grey. His upper lip is curled in a permanent sneer, and he is gruff and curt to the point of rudeness. Frequently dressed in dark clothing, he looks as though his temper is always on the verge boiling over. Adze appears thin and undernourished. Many put this down to his mourning, but he was always the sickly child.

**Non-adept Dwarf Craftsman**

**DEX: 5      STR: 6      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 4      WIL: 8      CHA: 5**

*Zorsha Xagal*

Zorsha is a perfect example of the inward-looking attitude of much of the Xagal family, focused more on her projects and passions than expanding the family's influence. She has always been seen by her kin as a bit odd, but her quirks were indulged as she has the finest mind for enchanting theory the Xagal have seen in generations. Her ideas for new magic items are refined and implemented by more practical craftsmen.

Zorsha, now middle-aged, dislikes being seen in public and on the rare times she ventures out, wears a hat and veil to cover her face and short-cropped dark hair. She was once considered attractive, but has become increasingly frail and haggard. These days she is easily startled, and has a nervous demeanor, always looking around her and back the way she has come, as if being followed.

The family believes Zorsha's decline is the result of Corix's death. In fact, she has been experiencing the strange visions and terrible dreams known as Enemy at the Gates (see p. 216), but has not told the family. She has started making discreet inquiries for independent agents willing to help investigate the phenomenon.

**Seventh Circle Dwarf Wizard**

**DEX: 6      STR: 4      TOU: 4**  
**PER: 8      WIL: 7      CHA: 5**

**HOUSE DUMORJEN**

**H**ouse Dumorjen is counted among Travar's oldest trading houses, and is counted among the largest in Barsaive. This was not always the case. In Travar's early days, House Dumorjen struggled to remain profitable, as did dozens of other trading houses now faded from memory. House Dumorjen's ascendancy was because of Greycairn Dumorjen, who led the house in the last decades before the Scourge.

Under Greycairn's guidance House Dumorjen commissioned the largest independent fleet of airships in Travar. This gave the house independence from the Theran dominated fleet operating out of Vivane, a bold step that paid great dividends.

Greycairn was concerned the Dumorjen family business would collapse when he died. He had twin sons, Ironcairn and Firecairn, who had inherited their father's business acumen. Greycairn realized, however, they did little more than follow his directions, and took steps to increase their involvement.

Greycairn commissioned two swords, one for each son, representing their equal claim to the Dumorjen estate, and a symbol of their kindred spirit. The swords were completed days before he died.

After Greycairn's death, Ironcairn and Firecairn buried their father in a tomb at the family estate. Business in Travar halted for an entire day, as every merchant wanted to be seen attending the funeral. Many watched, some hoping the sons would be unable to continue in their father's footsteps. But it seemed House Dumorjen was

blessed by Chorrolis. House Dumorjen flourished under the brothers' joint leadership, and was the envy of Travar.

### **The Sundering**

As their Names suggested, Firecairn was hot headed and impulsive, while Ironcairn was calm and down to earth. When workers in a deep but profitable mine refused to work, Firecairn flew into a rage. Worried his brother might do something rash, Ironcairn offered to deal with it and left Travar for the mine. Soon after, the Body of Five announced the citadel would be sealed. Like many of Travar's merchants, Ironcairn was far from home, and was unable to return in time.

Ironcairn sought refuge in the kingdom of Throal. His trading contacts allowed him sanctuary, but Throal would not grant the same to the miners. Disgusted, Ironcairn refused to abandon the closest thing to family he had, dissolved his assets in Throal, and returned to the mine.

Ironcairn knew House Achura was constructing a kaer near the mine, and soon discovered Kaer Hueco, using his resources to complete it. Ironcairn swore a blood oath one day House Dumorjen would become whole again. He passed Greycairn's legacy down through the generations, giving them a purpose that saw them through the Scourge.

In Travar, Firecairn lamented a brother lost and fell to despair and madness, and took his life with his own sword. Firecairn's death marked the start of House Dumorjen's decline. It had lost both brothers, along with its trading empire.

### **Dumorjen Against Dumorjen**

By the end of the Scourge, House Dumorjen was a shadow of its former self. Much of its wealth was lost, and since the city opened, House Dumorjen has been working to rebuild. They had all but forgotten their family's sundering, remembering it only as an unfortunate side note in their history.

In contrast, while the Ironcairn family had been administering Kaer Hueco and accumulating mineral wealth, the sundering had become legend. They only needed to open the kaer, pay their debts to House Achura, and complete Greycairn's Legacy.

Two years ago, House Achura rediscovered Kaer Hueco. After some intense negotiations, its doors opened and representatives of the Ironcairn family arrived in Travar to reunite the families.

The meeting led to a heated argument and bloodshed. The Firecairn demanded immediate and full control over Ironcairn wealth and assets. They argued Ironcairn used House Dumorjen assets with no remuneration to the house. The Ironcairn were merely custodians of those assets, and the Firecairn also claimed Ironcairn's descendants only had a minor claim on House Dumorjen.

To this day, stubbornness rules the two factions. Each claims the family legacy and the feuding is constant. The Ironcairn, their honor slighted, are determined to complete the blood legacy handed down by their forbear, seeking nothing less than full reunification. The Firecairn demand control and ownership of all House Dumorjen assets with nothing left to the Ironcairn.

The Magistrates have not been able to find a resolution. The Ironcain claim the Legacy of Greycain proves their position, since each family has half the artifact in their possession. Unfortunately, the Firecain state the legal documents proving ownership, which were kept in Travar, were destroyed during the Cleansing. The truth may never be known.

While the Magistrates have not reached a decision, the impasse may not last forever. The Firecain are offering advantageous trade terms to the Magistrates to sway their opinion, including use of its airships and docking facilities. The Ironcain, however, are looking to tilt things in their favor by putting one of their own in a Magistrate's seat. Until matters are decided, relations between the two factions continue to deteriorate.

Two factions calling themselves House Dumorjen causes problems, but both factions refuse to change their Name. They have managed one small compromise. When negotiating business deals or acting as representatives of Travar, members include their forebear's Name. For example, Ingot Dumorjen goes by Ingot Ironcain Dumorjen.

### **The Firecain Faction**

Fireforge Dumorjen currently leads the Firecain family, spending much of his day in the Tower of Commerce. He vehemently opposes the Ironcain reunification, believing them a cabal of con men who waited until House Dumorjen was ascendant before trying to usurp their power and wealth. The only common ground Fireforge has with the Ironcain is his loathing of the Theran Empire.

Theran interference in Dumorjen's trading enterprises, especially their practice of seizing cargo in the name of the Empire, took a heavy toll on the house's fortunes. Frustrated from the lack of action by Travar's Magistrates, Fireforge used his personal wealth to oppose the Therans, which included aiding the Liferock Rebellion. Fireforge had no real care for the trapped obsidimen and no strong feelings for Omasu, but he respects Omasu's achievement wielding trade as a weapon of war.

The Harwood Incident was the final straw. House Dumorjen had a substantial investment in the goods carried by the trade caravan, as well as a trade mission in Harwood. The town's destruction inflicted a significant loss of profits and personnel. Fireforge did not need any encouragement from King Neden's philosophical paper. The day after he learned of the loss at Harwood, he offered Omasu full use of House Dumorjen's assets to prosecute his campaign.

Fireforge believes the Magistrates made too many concessions to the Therans, leaving Travar's merchants to deal with the problems. He also questions their judgment after Ingot's appointment as delegate of the Magistrates' Council to Urupa. This has led Fireforge to consider once again pursuing candidacy for magistrate.

The Firecain currently run the largest independent air fleet in Travar. Theran activity around the Ayodhya Liferock prior to the war wreaked havoc with air shipping, affecting House Dumorjen more than most. The air lanes should have been safer and more profitable after the war, but pirates and freebooters filled the vacuum and shipping is as dangerous as ever.

House Dumorjen specialized in mining True elements before the Scourge and two of the newest galleys, *Storm Reaper* and *Magmata*, are designed to cope with the harsh conditions of high altitude mountain peaks and the intense heat of Death's Sea, allowing mining of True air and fire.

The Greycairn Tower (see p. 115) is another source of the family's income. Its docking facilities see significant traffic from independent airship owners. Each year the tower handles significant quantities of freight. Travar's own air fleet even uses the docking facilities when transporting dignitaries from other cities.

Agriculture is another mainstay for the Firecairn. The house is rumored to still have nearly one thousand indentured on its books. Some of these people comprise entire farming communities on the banks of the Byrose. While much of the family's agricultural output supports Travar, some of the more exotic produce is exported to Throal.

### *Fireforge Dumorjen*

Fireforge has lived a long and full life. While age is starting to catch up to him, his mind remains sharp. In the last few years his posture has become stooped, and the tip of his white beard trails on the ground. When not assisted by his retinue of powerful adepts, he uses a crystal-tipped cane move around. Rumor says the crystal is a small piece of the Ayodhya Liferock, given by Omasu as a mark of respect for House Dumorjen's aid, to be returned to the Liferock upon Fireforge's death.

Given his physical condition, Fireforge usually rides in a palanquin, but still dresses in an ostentatious manner. His one regret is never having experienced a Discipline's calling, and with no child to succeed him he has put his full support behind his much younger cousin Skycairn as future leader of the house.



### **Non-adept Dwarf Merchant**

**DEX: 4     STR: 4     TOU: 5**  
**PER: 5     WIL: 7     CHA: 7**

### *Skycairn Dumorjen*

Skycairn hails from a human branch of House Dumorjen that married in during the Scourge. Unlike others in the family, Skycairn refuses to be ruled by his heart, or

do things because it's how they've always been done. He likes to experiment with new methods and ideas, learning as he goes. This fascination with experimentation led to the path of Wizard. Indeed, Skycairn is one of the few in a position of power in the family to follow a Discipline. He believes his research will open new business opportunities for the house, and has Fireforge's full support despite others believing it an unprofitable obsession.

Skycairn is grateful for his cousin's support, but he does not agree with many of Fireforge's hotheaded views. He knows when to keep his mouth shut, however, and believes his cousin's passing will naturally lead to new blood and new ideas.

Skycairn is willing to explore the idea of unifying the families, which would see House Dumorjen become the largest trading house Travar has ever seen. He also believes the two swords of Greycairn's Legacy have become powerful magical items, and their true power will only be revealed when they fight for the same cause.

One passion Skycairn shares with Fireforge is the belief safe airship passage can be found through the Thunder Mountains. He has personally traveled on numerous expeditions to chart a course beyond the reach of pirates plaguing the air lanes between Travar and Urupa.

Skycairn keeps his straw-colored beard and hair trimmed and his nails manicured. Taller than average, his fast-paced stride gives the impression he is always in a hurry, which is rarely the case. His sky-blue robes bear the sigil of House Dumorjen, clasped forearms.

#### **Eighth Circle Human Wizard**

<b>DEX: 5</b>	<b>STR: 5</b>	<b>TOU: 6</b>
<b>PER: 7</b>	<b>WIL: 7</b>	<b>CHA: 7</b>

#### **The Greycairn Docking Tower**

Travar is one of the few cities in Barsaive to maintain its pre-Scourge grandeur. Since the Opening, there has been little in the way of new construction, except for docking facilities for Travar's burgeoning air fleet. The destruction of the city's pre-Scourge air fleet and House K'tenshin's pre-emptive strike taught Travar's merchants a valuable lesson: secure docking facilities are imperative.

To this end, most of Travar's airships are berthed within the city walls in specialized docking facilities. Of these, those of House Dumorjen are the most impressive. The spectacle of an airship docking in the Greycairn Tower often attracts small crowds of spectators at the edges of the Dumorjen estate.

One hundred seventy feet across and just over three hundred feet tall, the Greycairn Tower is the tallest docking facility in Travar. Its most striking feature is a series of extendable docking cradles. These extend outward, allowing an approaching galley to be tethered to both sides of the cradle. The airship's masts are lowered to the mast crutch and the cradle is retracted into the docking tower like a ship in a bottle. Each bay can be sealed by internal sliding doors. This protects the airships while within the tower, allows passengers to disembark in comfort and privacy, and allows movement of cargo in a secure environment.

The Greycairn Tower can house up to 5 galleys and 20 drakkar. It has storage facilities on multiple levels, connected by air elevators and stairs. Elevators are used for loading and unloading cargo, with smaller elevators for foot passengers. Stairs are used for trips between adjacent levels, or when the elevators aren't practical. Large individual items that won't fit on an elevator are moved via hoist.

Greycairn Tower has an enormous light quartz at the top, which can be seen from any direction for miles outside the city. Each docking bay is equipped with a smaller light quartz to help guide ships into berth.

House Dumorjen was constructing a second docking tower, planned to be larger than Greycairn Tower. Construction was halted after the arrival of Triumph. The official reason offered was due to the decrease in air traffic.

The truth is Skycairn discovered the Body of Five's ability to teleport from their individual estates directly to their guild tower. Skycairn realized if he could replicate this feat between two distant points, a new epoch of trade would result, with House Dumorjen at the helm. He has been experimenting with teleportation magic in the new tower. Flashes of light can sometimes be seen in the tower's windows.

### **Adventure Hook: Now You See It, Now You Don't**

Skycairn Dumorjen has had minor success experimenting with teleportation over short distances. Attempts over longer distances, however, have simply failed. Skycairn doesn't know the Body of Five's ability to teleport is due to the Earth Gates crafted by the original Five with information gleaned from the Ivory Codex.

His studies have led him to learn Illusion through Versatility, exploring how it could be combined with Wizardry to achieve the affect he seeks. Results have been mixed. The items vanished as intended, but failed to appear at their destination. Unknown to Skycairn, his limited understanding of Illusion led to the items arriving in a ruin in the Mist Swamps.

A group of Theran agents monitoring activity in the Mist Swamps came across the items, some valuable and obviously from Travar due to the Dumorjen sigils inscribed on them. On a subsequent visit to the site they discovered new items, and thought they had found something significant. The agents sell the goods in Travar's markets, hoping to catch the attention of those behind the items.

Skycairn hires the player characters to discover how the items came to be in the market. The characters are not told about the experiments, only that they must find the source of the items. They follow the Therans' trail, which leads to the ruin.

The Therans ambush the player characters, hoping to capture and interrogate them to learn how the goods came to be in the ruin. The combat attracts the attention of some terrible creature in the mist. At the same time, there is a flash of light, what looks like a glowing portal appears and several barrels spill out of it. What happens next is up to the gamemaster, but here are a couple of options:

*Option One:* The Therans, having previously run afoul of creatures that lurk in the Mist Swamps take their chances and leap through the portal, which closes behind them. The characters are left to deal with the creature. If they survive at

least they can report back to their employers regarding the source of the items.

*Option Two:* The Therans and the characters leap through the portal and appear in the middle of Skycairn's lab in the new tower, triggering all manner of mayhem.

*Option Three:* It's not just barrels that appear, but Skycairn and his assistants. Recognizing one of the arrivals as their employer, the characters must lead the escape from the swamps and return to Travar.

The nature of the creature in the Mist Swamps is left to gamemaster discretion. Keep in mind the swamps are home to the Great Dragon Aban, who does not look kindly on intrusions into her domain.

## The Ironcainr Faction

Blackcainr Dumorjen leads the Ironcainr family, with the aim of fulfilling Greycainr's Legacy. He is much younger than Fireforge and does not have his rival's business acumen. Blackcainr is more of a schemer who relies on an inner circle of advisors to make important decisions in relation to trade and business.

Blackcainr is passionate about his quest to reunite the house, but he is also a realist. He knows while Fireforge is head of the family there is little chance of reconciliation. Simply killing his rival is out of the question, as this would drive a larger wedge between the two families.

Blackcainr's loathing of the Therans is as fierce as Fireforge's, especially the slave trade. Blackcainr sees this as potential common ground, and intends to exploit it if the opportunity arises.

He often engages in aggressive competition with the Firecainr, hoping to take them down a peg or two for their belief the Ironcainr are not worthy of the Name Dumorjen. This has the added benefit of increasing his family's fortunes, putting them in a better negotiating position.

The Ironcainr have recently gained the respect of Travar's merchants by the appointment of Blackcainr's eldest son, Ingot, as delegate of the Magistrates' Council to Urupa. Unfortunately, this has worsened relations with the Firecainr and led to skirmishes outside of the city and more than one duel.

The Ironcainr follow the family's tradition of mining True elements. Since they have no airships, they focus on mining True earth and other minerals from Kaer Hueco and other mines in the foothills of the Thunder Mountains.

As a challenge to the Firecainr agricultural trade with Throal, the Ironcainr have collaborated with House K'tenshin's Meru *niall* to build and administer a series of plantations in the Servos Jungle. The Ironcainr family has built its own workforce, mostly by buying slaves and offering them an indenture contract to work off their purchase price.

This practice has sparked new debate about the ethics of indenture. The Ironcainr argue they are freeing those who would otherwise end up in Theran hands. Others argue while the sentiments are noble, paying for the freedom of a slave increases demand, and those so employed are given little choice in the matter.

*Blackcairn Dumorjen*

A portly dwarf with a disarming smile and golden braided beard, Blackcairn is a flamboyant, if slightly eccentric, dwarf. He leads with a passion few questors can summon. His enthusiasm is contagious, and his belief the families of House Dumorjen will one day be reunited is absolute.

Like all his family, he proudly wears the clasped arms sigil of House Dumorjen despite the confusion this causes outside the family home. Blackcairn has on more than one occasion felt the call of the Troubadour, but is afraid to embrace it lest it divert his path from reunifying House Dumorjen.

Non-adept Dwarf Merchant

**DEX: 4**     **STR: 5**     **TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5**     **WIL: 7**     **CHA: 7**

**Adventure Hook: Cooking up a Storm**

The documents Greycairn Dumorjen had drawn up on his deathbed were forgotten until the Ironcairn arrived in Travar seeking unification. Fireforge Dumorjen has never been able to locate these documents, and conveniently declared them lost or destroyed during the Cleansing.

When rumors spread that deeds to Greycairn's Legacy have been uncovered in one of the city's libraries, another bitter round of inter-house feuding ensues. The player characters are approached by an individual claiming to represent House Dumorjen who hires them to locate the documents.

*Option One:* The documents turn out to be a cookbook belonging to Delia Dumorjen, Greycairn's wife. Before the truth is uncovered, both factions clash in the streets of Travar.

*Option Two:* The player characters locate the documents and they are authentic. Their employer cannot be found, however, and the characters do not know which Dumorjen family they are working for, if any.

## HOUSE HALLA

**O**f all the trading houses, House Halla has changed the most. Before the Scourge, House Halla's portfolio relied heavily on supplying the market with specialist materials and the skilled labor required for kaer construction. With orichalcum, True elements, ward-smiths, and rune-masons in high demand, House Halla had contracts across Barsaive. As with other trading houses, however, the Closing had serious repercussions for Halla's fortunes.

The house was left with significant cash reserves and stockpiled materials, but its workforce was trapped outside the citadel. They had no indentured folk on their books, and their specialized focus on arcane protections limited them to competing for the contracts maintaining the wards and monitoring Travar's defenses.

This brought House Halla into conflict with House Thanton, who held the monopoly within the city. The competition between the two houses was fierce. The dispute spiraled out of control, with each house attacking the other's assets, using the backdrop of civil unrest as a convenient smokescreen.

After the unrest, the houses resorted to dirty tricks and smear campaigns. House Halla almost brought House Thanton to its knees, uncovering evidence House Thanton had colluded in the profiteering scandal. The new Magistrates reined in the two houses, as their feud was deemed a threat to the long-term survival of the citadel. If Travar were to survive, the Magistrates realized they needed both houses.

A compromise was found. House Thanton was given the monopoly on maintaining Travar's main defenses, while House Halla was given the lion's share of the contracts to supply material to construct the Arena, and create the magical enhancements devised by the Body of Five. Both houses could compete for private contracts unimpeded. This gave House Halla a lifeline, allowing them to diversify their portfolio.

Since the Scourge, House Halla diversified further and only dabbles in magical goods. They recently set up offices in Throal and have plans to expand to Urupa, but its largest asset is its network of inns and taverns, possibly the largest in Barsaive. This includes a string of inns along the northern reach of the Byrose River. House Halla establishments are easily recognized by the stylized letter H they all bear. This symbol is recognized by those who travel regularly as a sign of security, warmth, and good food.

The resurgence of House K'tenshin's aggressive stance is affecting House Halla's profits. The *aropagoi* is strengthening its grip on the Byrose and disrupting trade by sabotaging roads that follow the riverbank. This directly affects House Halla's inns. The situation has not been helped by recent increases in banditry, which House Halla suspects their old rivals House Thanton are behind.

Protector Gaius Silar currently leads House Halla. Where the title comes from is unknown, but as the house's founders were Theran, it is likely of Theran origin. The title has been handed down by each generation to the new head of the family.

House Halla has some Theran supporters among its ranks, dividing the family. The older generation has Theran sympathies, as much of their wealth was due to connections with the Theran Empire. They respect the dwarfs of Throal for their ideals, but don't believe the dwarfs can hold the Therans at bay forever. They also

believe many of their problems would be solved if the Therans were in charge. Many of the younger family members, however, blame the Therans and their K'tenshin allies for the current drop in profits.

Regardless, House Halla does not benefit from their Theran connections as much as some trading houses do, because of the nature of their business. Much of their business revolves around hostelry and hospitality services and as a result it purchases large amounts of food, drink, and linens, keeping much of Travar's satellite economies afloat.

### *Protector Gaius Silar*

Gaius is a human of sixty years of age with all his faculties intact. During his youth, he had an adventurous spirit and traveled as a sword for hire. Gaius even competed as a Champion of the Tournament multiple times, although he never won the coveted title Champion of Travar. He now enjoys the comforts of wealth, and has a passion for his network of inns. Gaius has one of the largest stables of slaves inside the city, something he has no issue with. Some have joked it is his inner Theran trying to get out.

Despite his age, and unlike many in Travar seduced by the luxury wealth provides, Gaius still practices his Discipline even if this mostly involves sparring with his slaves and bodyguards.



### **Sixth Circle Human Swordmaster**

**DEX: 7     STR: 6     TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5     WIL: 5     CHA: 7**

### **The Protector's Heirs**

Gaius has two sons, Cassius and Breht, each of which could follow him as Protector. Cassius is the younger and more astute of the two when it comes to business. Unfortunately, he shows little enthusiasm for inns and taverns, his own interests lying elsewhere.

Cassius feels the family's historical links to the Theran Empire are more of a burden than they are worth. Given the recent conflict he believes the association gives the house a bad name. With Throal's withdrawal from provincial affairs, he believes Travar's Magistrates should stop trying to appease everybody and take a bolder stance against those who threaten the city. He believes the Road Wardens are a step in the right direction. He would like to see the Magistrates go further, however, and

declare Travar's borders sovereign, including a declaration of the Byrose River as a protected area of free trade.

Breht shares his father's passion for inns and taverns, and loves to spend time traveling between House Halla's properties playing empire builder. Unlike his brother, he lacks his father's gifts for negotiation and business, but that doesn't stop his passion for driving his father's vision forward.

He does not agree with his brother's views and believes passionately in Travar's neutrality. After the recent war the Magistrates granted amnesty to many Therans, and Breht believes disavowing any connections with Thera to be short sighted. He does, grudgingly, admit Travar may have no choice but to directly confront House K'tenshin's growing aggression.

They may not see eye to eye on everything, but where they are united is their anti-slavery stance. Both, however, have long given up trying to convince their father otherwise and simply accept he is a man of his times.

### *Cassius*

Tall, dark haired, with narrow eyes and hawkish features, Cassius is the image of his father in his younger days. Cassius spends much of his time in the Tower of Commerce investing the House's profits to diversify their portfolio. He believes the network of inns, while profitable, may become a liability given House K'tenshin's saber rattling. Like his father, Cassius is a bit of a showman and has started training as a Swordmaster.

### **Second Circle Human Swordmaster**

**DEX: 7      STR: 6      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 5      CHA: 7**

### *Breht*

Trade can open doors conflict can never smash down, and Breht has taken this as his life's inspiration. Taking after his mother, Breht is smaller than his brother and his features softer. What he lacks in the art of negotiation, he makes up for with enthusiasm and passion. He understands his brother's views, but believes they are simply the folly of youth.

Breht is a Questor of Chorrolis. The Passion appeared to him one evening in a vision, inspiring him to embrace his father's passion for the network of inns. The vision showed not only increasing profits for House Halla, but also a way to channel even more trade through Travar's gates. Breht is always dressed in fine quality merchant robes bearing the sigil of House Halla.

### **Non-adept Human Questor**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

## HOUSE THANTON

House Thanton did not sponsor any indentured folk during the Scourge. They were satisfied they had implemented much of Travar's magical protections under the direction of the Body of Five and assumed they would continue to do so unchallenged. This mistake led to the conflict with House Halla and almost destroyed them.

House Thanton was guilty of selling materials set aside for the citadel's protection. The house was not implicated in the profiteering scandal as it traded to the other houses; the other houses shipped the resources outside Travar. The dispute with House Halla almost turned the city against House Thanton, but the Magistrates intervened because the house's services were necessary to Travar's survival.

To this day, House Thanton has not forgotten House Halla's actions and takes any opportunity to undermine their rivals. Since the end of the Scourge, however, the business interests of the two houses rarely come into conflict.

House Thanton still specializes in arcane protection. It supplies skilled runemasons and ward-smiths to a variety of wealthy clients. Many believe while the Scourge is officially over, the Badlands still present a significant challenge and wish to protect their assets. Others wish to keep their secrets behind more than physical walls. While this is a steady revenue stream, it is not comparable to the profits generated before the Scourge. Like all trading houses House Thanton has had to diversify to maintain its position.

House Thanton owns one of the largest airship yards in Travar. Airship construction is a natural expansion of their specialized magical expertise, since building an airship, like constructing a protective wall, requires weaving True elements into a physical structure. House Thanton produces some of the finest airships in Barsaive.

The Theran defeat after the Second War has seen the house's fortunes rise. Travar's Magistrates lifted the heavy taxes imposed on the airship industry. These taxes were originally designed to placate Theran demands construction of airships for the Arm of Throal be halted.

As one of the biggest consumers of True elements, especially True air, House Thanton has contracts with House Dumorjen, along with some mining outfits outside Travar. They also purchase large quantities of lumber from the Henika *niall* of House K'tenshin, who harvest it from the Servos Jungle.

The Thanton shipyards are currently building six ships. The *Midnight Flare* is a trading galley for the Byrose Consortium, close to completion. *King Varulus III* is a galley rumors say is financed by the Throalic House Elcomi. Many of Travar's powerful merchants believe this is unlikely as House Elcomi rarely gets involved in such grand ventures outside the dwarf kingdom. They suspect this is simply a cover story and the ship is destined for the Arm of Throal.

Great secrecy surrounds the construction of the third ship, which has only just begun in a specially built warehouse. House Thanton claims the secrecy is due to a new design they wish to keep out of their rivals' hands, but some believe Travar has commissioned its first warship, which the city's allies and enemies would consider a disturbing development. Travar's merchants believe these claims are ridiculous. Whatever the truth, the shipyards have recently stepped up their security. It is no



secret House Thanton has substantial future orders on their books. They are being unusually tight lipped on their future work.

The Overland Trading Company has commissioned three airships, but work on them has stalled. These airships were part of a consignment of six, three of which were ordered from Jerris as part of a joint contract. With the recent annexation of Jerris by the Denairastas, this order's fate s up in the air.

House Thanton is the only trading house without a leader. The previous head of the house, Auori Thanton, unable to come to terms with the recent loss of his wife and the constant feuding of his family, committed suicide by hurling himself off the mining ship *Dancing Spark* during its maiden voyage over Death's Sea. This act has created a sensation in Travar, but it was just the beginning. Auori's Last Will and Testament is almost as dramatic as his death.

For those who pondered what drove Auori beyond the edge of reason and off the edge of the *Dancing Spark*, it is now becoming clearer. The purpose of Auori's will may have been to demonstrate the madness within his family is what drove him over the edge.

If Auori intended to sow discord and reap havoc, it was a spectacular success. In the weeks since Auori's memorial service, the seven families are at each other's throats. Not a single representative has been chosen by any of the families and all manner of madness has ensued. As a result, the tasks have not yet been announced.

*I, Auori Thanton, being of sound mind, if not irritable temperament at the continuous and ungrateful bickering of my beloved family, declare this my Last Will and Testament.*

*To each and every member of my family, I bequeath an equal share of my wealth and estate thereby giving no reason for further quarrelling. Though I fear you will find a way all the same.*

*As the traditions of House Thanton dictate, I leave one final instruction: House Thanton shall not choose my successor until these terms are met. A council of representatives shall be chosen, one from each of the seven families, to administer the day-to-day business of the house. I have allocated a single task to each family, which shall be made known on the first day of the new month after they have selected their representative. From this time, they have a year and a day to fulfill the assigned task.*

*My successor shall be chosen from among those council representatives that can offer proof their family has successfully completed the task set to them.*

*May the Passions offer you the guidance I could not!*

Quangin, Auori's brother, has discovered even if chosen to represent his family at the council, he cannot lead the house because he is not currently married, as required by the house charter. He has since announced his intention to marry a t'skrang by the name of Lillieth, originally of K'tenshin's Meru *niall*, who now resides in T'town. Marriages of convenience are not uncommon in Travar, but a human marrying a t'skrang has the whole city in an uproar.

Vivianna, Auori's eldest sister, is uninterested in the whole affair and told her two eldest sons, Vulkis and Heri, if they wanted the position on the council, they could fight it out between them. They took her literally and engaged in a public duel. Before they could kill each other, they were arrested by the City Watch and released after a court date had been arranged.

When charged, they were reminded only Champions of the Tournament could duel publicly and could expect a heavy sentence. They both rushed to the Guild House Tower and, with the appropriate bribe, retroactively registered themselves as Champions of the Tournament. Unfortunately, in the rush to complete the paperwork, they accidentally declared their intention to champion the other's right to become Magistrate. Should either become a Magistrate they would not be eligible to lead House Thanton.

Pyxennia, Auori's youngest sister, has declared the first one to discover the nature of any of the seven tasks can represent the family on the council. Already the clerk's office has been ransacked and it is unknown if they still possess Auori's instructions. Other families have hired adepts to investigate and recover the documents, if indeed they are missing.

Yanna, Auori's middle sister, is still overcome with grief and refuses to believe her brother is dead. She has hired adepts to travel to Death's Sea and attempt to summon his spirit, none have yet returned.

Those with cooler heads believe if a council is not elected soon, profits will suffer. If the madness continues it could be a generation before House Thanton's reputation recovers, if this affair does not destroy them.

## JULIACK MERRIS

Many have observed how odd it is that two of Travar's most notable merchants are obsidimen. It is a common misconception Juliack Merris and Omasu are from the same Liferock. If asked, they would find the notion at least mildly insulting, for other than being obsidimen merchants, they have little else in common.

Juliack Merris took a very different path from Omasu. Awakened before the Scourge, Merris traveled widely and over the years he spent time in most of Barsaive's major cities. He intended to spend time in Travar before the Scourge, but the Closing prevented it and he returned to his Liferock, deep in the Thunder Mountains. After the Scourge, Merris emerged and traveled to Travar, one final journey to complete his odyssey.

After a short stay, however, Merris became fascinated with Travar's people, and despite his age believed he had much to learn from them. The best way to do this was to become one of them, pursuing a career as a merchant. With the knowledge of the earth that only an obsidimen can have, he soon had teams of mules hauling rare and valuable ores to Travar. He used the profits to fund what he really desired: his own airship.

Juliack Merris feels a connection with the people of Travar and his loyalty to them is second only to his brotherhood. He sees past the greed, double-dealing, and scramble to get to the top. Like obsidimen, when driven to anger they are a force to be reckoned with. He has made friends in Travar who respect him for his friendship, rather than the influence he wields or what he can do to further their own goals. He does not count Omasu among his friends, but has offered him much advice on assuming the role of elder and aided the cause of freeing the Ayodhya Liferock.

Merris has come to realize, perhaps more than the people of Travar themselves, the array of threats arranged against them. He has contemplated running for Magistrate to address these issues, but is aware he may be called back to his Liferock at any time to assume the role of elder. Merris has a strong sense of duty and honor, and would hate to abandon his adopted home because of his brotherhood.

For now, he does what he can to support those who are devoted to the city's protection, especially the Air Wardens.

Merris enjoys the experience of running a trading company and feels at home within Travar's walls. The stone Travar is constructed from offers him a strange peacefulness. He spent much time underground in Throal, but somehow Travar offers a sense of home away from home, almost as if his Liferock were close by.

The Juliack Merris Trading Company is one of the most successful air trading ventures in Travar and widely renowned for its fleet. While the fleet is not as large as House Dumorjen's, its airships are a frequent sight drifting over the city, coming and going on an almost daily basis. The vessels are recognizable by their brightly painted colors, the complex designs on their sails, and the crimson banners flying from every mast. Two of Travar's most notable airships, the *Crimson Dawn* and the *Obsidian Flyer*, belong to Juliack Merris. The *Obsidian Flyer* is particularly unusual because its hull is constructed of obsidian sourced from somewhere in the Thunder Mountains.

The company's airships trade with most of Barsaive's large population centers avoiding only Kratas and the Blood Wood. Like all merchants, Merris has a network of

partners and contacts across the province, and while his network may not be as large as those of his rivals, he has something they do not: knowledge. Having lived in most of Barsaive's large towns and cities, Merris has a deep understanding of their culture and trade. This insight is one of the reasons for his company's great success.

Like most trading houses that operate airships, the Juliack Merris Trading Company is offering substantial rewards to anyone who can chart safe airship passage across the Badlands or through the Thunder Mountains to the Aras Sea.

## The Corsair Tower

The Corsair Tower is a pre-Scourge docking facility and warehouse complex currently owned by Juliack Merris. While its architecture fits well with the rest of the city, even casual onlookers can tell its design has a heavy Theran influence. The Corsair Tower has kept its original pre-Scourge Name and Merris has seen no reason to change it.

The tower rises from a hive of multi-story warehouses, its central core supported by five buttresses that extend outward to support a platform and series of docking cradles. The central platform is topped with the dome common to Travar's towers which offers protection and grants access to the winching equipment in the central core.

While the Corsair Tower is not as large as the Greycairn Tower it is still a stunning piece of architecture. Its construction was subject to many delays and while briefly in use before the Closing, many of its functional parts remain uncompleted. Additional protection was to be provided by a dome of True air. Unfortunately, the dome was never completed and only two of the docking cradles are functional.

The Juliack Merris Trading Company does not have the diverse portfolio of the other houses, but what it lacks in diversity it more than makes up in market reach. Most of the company's business is hauling the goods of other merchant companies across the skies to the markets of Barsaive.

### *Juliack Merris*

Juliack Merris's great age shows in much the same way as weather-wearied rock. His marbled skin, once scarlet and shot through with yellow and black, has faded as if bleached by the sun.

None of this, however, has slowed him or dimmed his mind, and he is determined to continue living among the people of Travar until he has to return to his brotherhood. Juliack has experienced the call of many Disciplines in his time.



He has forged a path in battle with a sword as a Warrior, and walked the ways of both Elementalists and Wizard.

**Seventh Circle Obsidiman Warrior, Fifth Circle Elementalist,  
Fifth Circle Wizard**

**DEX: 6      STR: 8      TOU: 8  
PER: 7      WIL: 6      CHA: 6**

## OMASU AND THE OVERLAND TRADING COMPANY

Omasu is one of Travar's most famous residents while remaining one of its most enigmatic figures. It is well known that Omasu is a Troubadour, though few have seen him publicly perform.

Omasu was first attracted to Travar by tales of the Founding Tournament, which was the talk of Barsaive after the Scourge. Travar's caravans helped him travel Barsaive, where he spread the legends of his own people, and collected tales from other Namegivers. He saw how trade overcame the suspicion that had grown between Namegivers because of the Scourge, demonstrating concepts core to his Discipline's teachings.

After many years of traveling with Travar's merchants, Omasu settled in Travar. Before long, he created the Overland Trading Company. His contacts and knowledge of Barsaive's trade routes gained from his travels allowed Omasu to become one of the wealthiest individuals in the city.

In addition to his network of contacts, Omasu's success comes from his understanding of the Synod, which can take some a lifetime. Omasu is a master at manipulating the Synod and using it to its full potential. This understanding may be a result of his Discipline's focus on communication and connecting with others, or perhaps the patience his race is famous for.

Like many of Travar's merchants, Omasu traded almost any commodity, including slaves. Profit soon came before other concerns, and he found himself living an indulgent, hedonistic lifestyle. He was courted by those in power, and those who wished to be in power. He had achieved the greatness most of Travar's citizens believe they are destined for.

Omasu's outlook changed dramatically when *Triumph* landed on the Ayodhya Liferock, trapping his obsidimen brothers and condemning them to a slow death. The Theran presence sobered Omasu, freeing him from the seductive of his lifestyle in Travar. His focus became directed along a more dangerous and unexpected path (see **The Liferock Rebellion**, p. 136).

### The Overland Trading Company

The Overland Trading Company has an impressive list of assets and is the largest of Travar's independent trading companies. It may not have the total wealth of some of the oldest trading houses, but Omasu is the sole owner, making him one of the wealthiest individuals in Travar. While the company has investors, their investments are limited to individual trade missions, allowing Omasu to retain full control.

The company does not produce any goods, or rely on fixed assets that provide services. It focuses, instead, on trading goods across Barsaive and beyond. The company's caravans are an impressive sight, and parents often bring their children to the city wall to watch them pass through the gates. Even a modest trading expedition can number over one hundred individual merchants, each with their own complement of wagons. Depending on their destination, river crossings can take days.

The guards protecting the caravans are well-paid and loyal. Smaller merchants often purchase rights allowing them to travel as part of the Overland Trading Company, which affords them the protection they would otherwise lack. In addition to the protection, they also benefit from the company's trail staff who administer the logistics and day-to-day needs of the caravan.

Omasu retains a small group of trusted lieutenants, who often travel with caravans in roles like trail captain, master merchant, guard sergeant, or chief scout. These positions allow them to blend in, yet take charge should the situation warrant it. They have been ordered to investigate recent abductions of the company's most experienced trail staff. There has been no contact from the kidnappers, but the Denairastas top the list of suspects.

There are rumors the company uses secret trade routes throughout Barsaive. Some claim the company has discovered safe passage through the Thunder Mountains to the Aras Sea, giving it access to Urupa when fighting among the t'skrang houses, river pirate raids, or meddling by other nations disrupts trade on the Serpent River. A few individuals claim to have been part of those caravans, and describe goods being hauled only so far by wagon before being transferred to beasts of burden for the most arduous leg of the journey. Omasu remains tight-lipped, and many disregard these claims.

The company's success has earned Omasu an effectively permanent seat at the Court of Chorrolis. Indeed, he first learned of *Triumph's* landing while at the Court. The subsequent incident, recounted by his fellow merchants as Omasu's Rage, resulted in his seat remaining vacant for a time, as no merchant was brave or foolish enough to take it up. Omasu has returned to the Court for brief periods, assuming his vacant seat and offering deals no merchant can afford to ignore.

## Personal Wealth and Estates

Omasu's personal fortune is incredible even by Travar's standards, and his wealth is on display inside the city and beyond. Omasu owns several estates, the greatest of which is on the eastern banks of the Byrose River, just south of Travar. It has its own wharf and airship dock. The surrounding grounds are mostly fields and orchards worked by former slaves, once indentured, but now granted full freedom.

The central building was restored from ruins abandoned before the Scourge. Here, in a courtyard open to the sky, Omasu built a simple shrine to the Ayodhya Liferock during the Theran occupation.

Omasu has estates in other major population centers throughout Barsaive, though the estate and warehouses in Vivane now lie in ruins. Some wonder what wealth remains beneath them.

The company's headquarters on the western edge of Chorrolis's March is as impressive as Omasu's other properties. The gate is a series of interlocking bronze cogs and ornate gears. As they open, the gears whirr and the cogs turn, each slowly climbing, or sinking, until there is a vertical stack of cogs at each side of the entrance.

The entrance leads to a cobbled courtyard flanked by warehouses, which can accommodate scores of wagons. Beyond the courtyard a white stone bridge, lined with decorative light crystal mounts of polished brass, leads to an artificial island where the offices are located. Made of Travar's iconic white stone, the long, rectangular building has an institutional look, set with regularly spaced windows and doors.

The warehouses have large arched windows and high vaulted roofs with crystal skylights. The interior ironwork supporting the roofs is seamless, with no sign of a rivet or weld. Each warehouse is packed with goods, their regimented storage bays brimming with cargo. In the larger warehouses, mezzanine storage levels span multiple floors. The place is a hive of activity throughout the day and late into the evening, with scurrying scribes, sweating laborers, braying beast of burden, and merchants doing business.

### *Omasu*

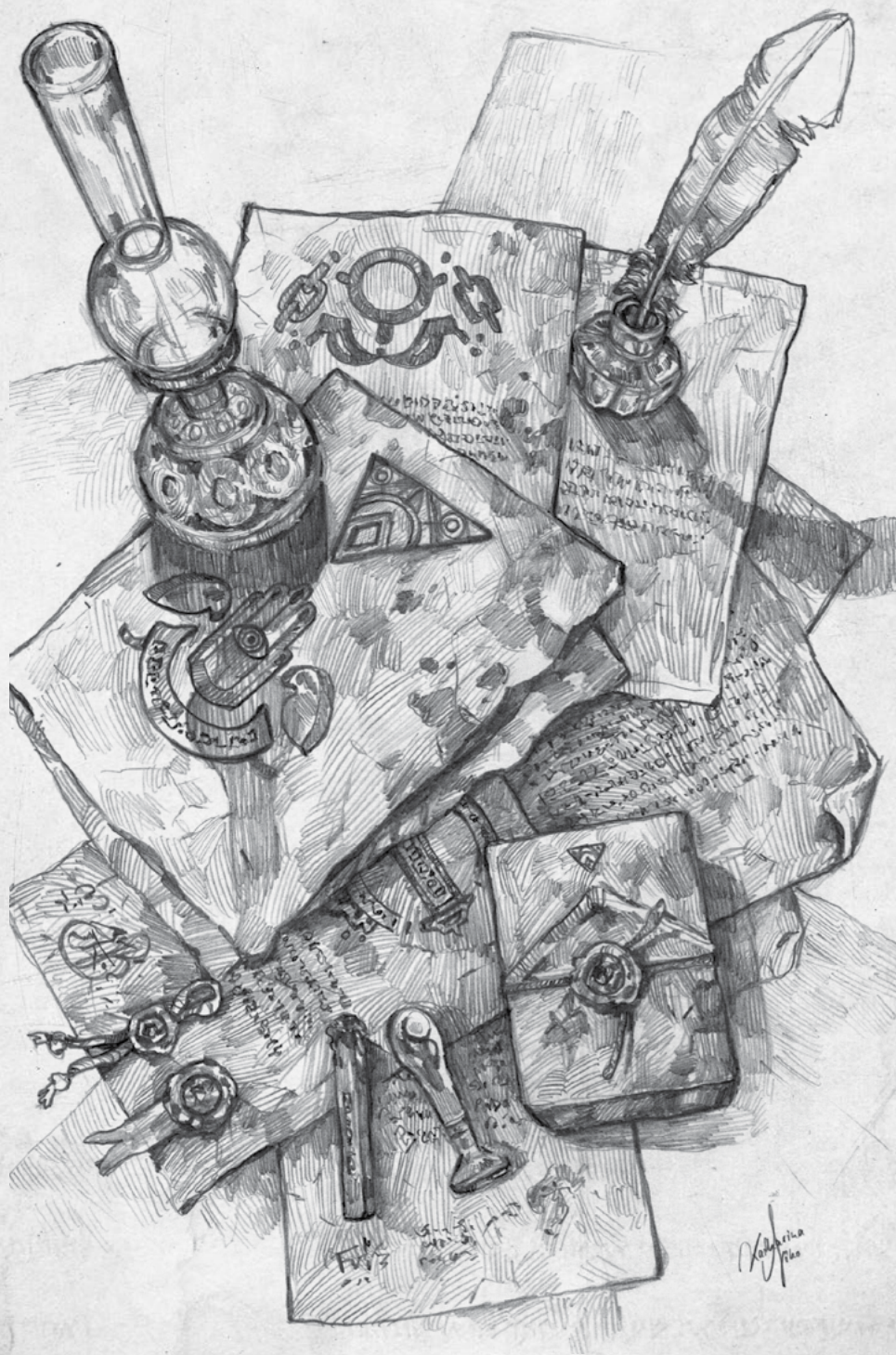
Still young by obsidiman standards, Omasu understands other Namegivers when they speak of premature aging. His skin, once a healthy deep blue, broken by veins of purple and flecked with crimson, is now the deep grey of weather-beaten rock. With much of his recent stress now lifted, he hopes his color will return. He often has nightmares of turning the same shade of white as Travar's walls.

While he was a Journeyman Troubadour before *Triumph* landed on his Liferock, Omasu spent the last few years pushing his Troubadour Discipline, taking it in directions he never thought possible.



### **Eleventh Circle Obsidiman Troubadour**

**DEX: 5     STR: 8     TOU: 6**  
**PER: 7     WIL: 5     CHA: 8**



*Madeline  
Pina*



## SECRET SOCIETIES OF TRAVAR

*Every city has secrets and Travar has more than most. These secrets are hidden beneath a web of half-truths, lies, and ignorance only the passage of time can weave.*

*Yet many are in plain view, disguised by Travar's greatest secret, the great façade. With all these secrets, it should be no surprise that, for good or for ill, secret societies thrive in Travar. To seek out Travar's secrets is to invite scrutiny from their guardians and court one of two outcomes: join them or die. One way or the other, you will become a ghost in Travar.*

• **Stenwolf Darkpath, Exiled Scout** •

### NAAMAN'S HAND

One of the most curious and unusual secret societies to operate in Travar is Naaman's Hand. Naaman's Hand is just one of many living legend cults dedicated to Naaman Y'ross, a legendary Theran hero who traveled Barsaive before the Scourge.

Imirisal Vemmarren, an elf Wizard and Nethermancer, founded the cult. Many believe him to be delusional with visions of grandeur. Imirisal is not dedicated to the cult of Naaman Y'ross because he wishes to keep the legend alive, or wishes to follow in his footsteps, but because he believes he is descended from the legendary hero by blood.

Imirisal has dedicated his life to discovering the final resting place of Naaman Y'ross and resurrecting him, so they can perform great deeds together as blood kin, and forever rid Barsaive of the Horrors and Theran interference. It is obvious why many believe Imirisal is delusional. If claims of blood ties and the resurrection of ancient heroes are not enough, his belief a legendary Theran hero will help end Theran interference in Barsaive is the icing on the cake. Imirisal is well versed on the legend of Naaman Y'ross, however, and may be privy to knowledge others lack.

Legends tell the heroic deeds of Naaman Y'ross across Barsaive. Many of the deeds attributed to him were performed in the Tara'var, most of which is now lost to the Badlands. While none of these deeds ever mentioned Travar, Naaman's Hand chose Travar as a base of operations for many reasons. Not only is Travar the closest major city to the locations of Y'ross's greatest deeds, its markets specialize in outfitting explorers. Perhaps, more importantly, Travar's libraries have more information on the area than any other in Barsaive.

Naaman's Hand spent significant time in Travar's libraries and it was not long before the group established their own library in the Western Tower of Old Town. The main library, also known as the Delver's Athenaeum, doubles as a front for the group. From there it plans expeditions and gathers information (see **Libraries of Travar**, p. 190).

Several years ago, Naaman's Hand thought they had successfully located Naaman Y'ross's final resting place. After performing a long and dangerous ritual, they resurrected not the legendary adept, but an elf called Alainyn. Grateful to be alive, Alainyn agreed to help the group search for Naaman Y'ross, claiming he had met Naaman before the hero embarked on an expedition into the Mist Swamps in search of an ancient city. Naaman's Hand have since launched several unsuccessful expeditions into the swamps.

Despite Imirisal's extensive knowledge of the legends surrounding Naaman Y'ross, he does not know the truth behind them. Naaman Y'ross was not one individual, but twin brothers who left Theran Vasgothia for Barsaive before parting ways. Because they performed great deeds under the same alias their patterns merged, fundamentally connecting them to one another and allowing them to share talents in ways no other adepts could.

Alainyn is one half of Naaman Y'ross. He keeps his identity hidden from Imirisal and Naaman's Hand, but uses his knowledge to help Imirisal's search. He knows once his brother is resurrected, he will feel whole. Alainyn knows his brother spent much time exploring the Mist Swamps before he died, but does not know why his brother was seeking a mythical ruined city.

Legends speak of Naaman's Demise, the hero's final resting place, but offer no clues to its location. If Naaman was in Travar when the citadel closed, the city could be Naaman's Demise. Naaman's Hand may be closer to the final resting place of Naaman Y'ross than they can possibly imagine.

During the water rebellion, a squad of devoted Theran soldiers held the Sanctum of Garlen. When the rebels arrived, they discovered the healers tending their wounded Theran captors. Surrounded by the slain lay an elf Warrior. His identity and why he was in Travar were a mystery, but it was clear from his appearance he was from Vasgothia.

After the fighting ended, the people of Travar gathered cobblestones that had been pried from the streets during the riots and constructed a cairn as a memorial to those who lost their lives, one cobble for each citizen. Of those who had died, only the Warrior adept could not be identified. He lies buried under the cairn. Each cobble is engraved with the Name of one of the dead. One cobble in the monument reads "The Vasgothian, Champion of Travar."

Two spells have been developed by Naaman's Hand to monitor what research is being done in their library.

### **Smudged Fingers**

*Wizard, Circle 2*

**Threads:** 2

**Weaving:** 6/11

**Casting:** TMD

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Rank hours

**Effect:** Reveals the previous passages read

This spell allows the caster to learn what passages within a book were previously read. The magician runs a thumb across the edge of each page in the target book, taps the spine and cover, then makes a Spellcasting test against the book's Mystic Defense, if the book does not have a specific Mystic Defense, the Difficulty is 6. If successful, the magician can learn pages turned by the last reader within the duration (excluding the magician). As the pages are turned by the magician, ink smudged finger marks temporarily underline any text that was read. Using this effect ends the spell and this effect must be used before the duration expires. If more than one person has read the book in the duration, only the most recent reader is revealed (unless extra threads are devoted to additional target, which will reveal that many most recent readers separately and chronologically).

**Success Levels:** Increase Duration (+2 hours)

**Extra Threads:** Increase Duration (days), Increase Duration (+2 hours), Additional Target (+1 reader)

### Pilferous Paper

*Illusionist, Circle 3*

**Threads:** 1      **Weaving:** 6/11

**Casting:** TMD      **Range:** 10 yards

**Duration:** Rank + 15 minutes

**Effect:** Creates a live copy of a document

This spell allows the caster to create a live copy of a document being written. The magician surreptitiously glances at the target document, runs a hand down the intended copy, briefly pantomimes writing with their finger and makes a Spellcasting test against the target document's Mystic Defense. If the target document doesn't have a Mystic Defense, the Difficulty is 6. If successful, anything written on the target document is replicated on the copy if the copy within the range of the target document. If anything is erased from the target document, the inscription is erased on the copy as well. Physical destruction of the target document leaves the copy intact, however. Any kind of medium suitable for writing can be used, such as wax or clay tablets, vellum, papyrus etc. so long as the caster can touch them when the spell is cast.

**Success Levels:** Increase Duration (+2 minutes)

**Extra Threads:** Increase Duration (+2 minutes), Increase Range (+10 yards), Additional Target (+1 copy)

## Adventure Hook: The Unknown Vasgothian

The player characters are asked to investigate and report on a group of scholars who have been asking questions about Naaman Y'ross. Alainyn is part of the group hiring the characters, as he wants to be first to discover information that could lead to Naaman's Demise and his brother. He also wants to be able to eliminate anyone that may interfere with his plans or reveal his identity.

During the meeting, the characters notice their employers all wear weapons and armor with distinctive designs and bear an identical symbol either around their necks, tattooed on their arm, or decorating their weapons. If the characters investigate the scholars they discover they share a similar dress sense and symbol. With a little investigation, they discover the symbol is used by those dedicated to the legend of Naaman Y'ross.

The scholars have been paying attention to a statue high on the Arena's wall. The statue bears an uncanny likeness to Alainyn, and the style of armor and weaponry match those worn by Naaman's Hand. The statue is a memorial to Travar's first Champion, the Unknown Vasgothian, the only Champion of Travar who never competed in the Arena.

How the player characters handle this information could make them powerful enemies or friends, or even spark a conflict between rival cults of Naaman Y'ross.

### *Imirisa! Vemmarren*

With each passing day, Imirisa!'s sanity crumbles and he becomes further detached from reality. His search for Naaman Y'ross began shortly after the Scourge, and he is aware his time is running out. His passion for his quest remains undiminished, but he finds the longer he stays in Travar the more distractions keep him from reaching his goal. He feels trapped, but leaving Travar is not an option. He feels the city still has secrets that will lead him to the greatness he feels destined for.

Of average height, Imirisa!'s hair is grey and unkempt, his fingers gnarled and twisted. His eyes have an otherworldly look and sometimes appear to catch the light oddly: a bright flash illuminating them before slowly fading. He emanates a cold feeling that by itself can empty a warm tavern. A powerful Nethermancer and Wizard, some believe he has reached this level of power by making pacts with dark power. Imirisa!'s talents are enhanced by the powerful group pattern of Naaman's Hand.

### **Thirteenth Circle Elf Nethermancer, Tenth Circle Wizard**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 8      WIL: 8      CHA: 7**

### *Alainyn (Naaman Y'ross)*

Like Imirisa!, Alainyn's sanity is on a knife-edge, though he holds it in check much better. While it has been several years since his resurrection, the experience was traumatic. The physical scars have healed, but the emotional scars linger. More than anything, Alainyn longs to be made whole and believes if his brother is not located

soon, his own pattern may start unraveling, for he was born in a time when the levels of magic were higher than they are today.

The longer Alainyn spends in Imirisal's company, the warier he becomes. He is certain Imirisal will seek to use Alainyn and his brother for his own purposes. He also grows wary of the Thera agents who have been watching the group for some time. They are privy to one of the few facts Imirisal isn't: that Alainyn's brother is Namman Y'ross. Despite his conflicting loyalties with Thera, he may have to act if he believes the agents might jeopardize Imirisal's plans to resurrect his brother.

Alainyn cuts a dashing figure. He is tall, with long hair and a square jaw. He has been given a second chance at life, and, despite his fear, is determined to enjoy it. The son of a noble, he quickly adapted to Travar's hedonistic lifestyle, dressing in expensive clothing, frequenting taverns and basking in the frequently told legends of the legendary Namman Y'ross.

Alainyn speaks with an accent befitting a noble, though he often pauses mid-sentence as if lost for words.

#### **Ninth Circle Elf Warrior**

<b>DEX: 8</b>	<b>STR: 6</b>	<b>TOU: 7</b>
<b>PER: 6</b>	<b>WIL: 5</b>	<b>CHA: 5</b>

#### **Omasu's Rage**

*Many can attest to Omasu's Rage that fateful day and much as I might wish otherwise, I was among their number. The sun had barely graced the Eastern Gate and already the city was in uproar. A crowd had gathered on the walls looking north along the river and I saw fit to join them. It took a moment to register I was witnessing the arrival of the Thera navy as they passed between Travar and House K'tenshin, a deliberate act to be sure. Some were but specks in the distance, but catching the morning sun they flashed like polished diamonds, reflecting like stars in the brightening sky. One vessel, despite the great distance, was clearly one of Thera's behemoths, pulled from the bowels of the earth and topped with a fortress.*

*Of course, this meant it would not be business as usual that day in the Tower of Commerce. Everything had changed and everyone knew it, but nothing could prepare me for what was to come. First and foremost, I had substantial collateral in Throalic bonds that I needed to divest myself of before word spread further. I had already presumed, incorrectly as it happens, the Therans were marching on Throal.*

*The obsidian merchant was already sitting in court at that early hour, surrounded, as always, by an entourage of slaves and retainers, and beset by those seeking his business. Omasu, as best I could tell, was enjoying himself. The traders and merchants were as frantic as ever I had seen them, and obsidimen often find the haste of us other Namegivers amusing.*

*Other than a wry smile at the successful closing of a deal, Omasu rarely conveys his true emotions. As a master manipulator, the Tower of Commerce is just another stage for his grand performance, negotiation his mystic art used to fool those with*

more greed than sense, convincing them they had got the better of the great Omasu on a business deal. At first I thought what happened next was one of those performances.

One of his retainers arrived unexpectedly, interrupting what looked to be a large business deal. This interruption was enough to silence all those surrounding the dais. Nobody interrupted a business deal in the court until concluded, nobody! There was a long pause. Omasu and some of his fellow obsidimen perceptibly stiffened, and it appeared as if they were listening to some unheard call. Omasu's remaining entourage suddenly put distance between themselves and their master as though they fled some unseen terror; the slaves all but groveling on the cold marble dais. This was enough to command the attention of every merchant on the trading floor.

It started as a low hum, barely audible to the ear, and while the obsidiman's lips were not moving he appeared to be humming a tune as he stared ahead in a trance. The tune became too low even for my keen ears, but I could feel the very floor vibrate under my feet. It was then I realized Omasu was singing. Slowly, fear rising inside me, my knees buckled.

I had been one of the last to remain standing. Perhaps only the thought of the loss I would suffer on those Throalic bonds kept me on my feet as long as I did. Gradually, the fear gave way to sadness and a great sense of loss. I felt tears freely running down my cheeks. I could feel panic also, a sense of urgency that, for some reason, felt alien to me, as if experiencing it for the first time. Then I felt a great hatred boiling inside me, something deep within me called for vengeance for the terrible deed against my family, though I was confused as to what terrible crime had befallen them.

And then I knew the Therans had done something truly terrible. The colored flecks and veins of the obsidiman's skin had changed from a deep blue to a crimson red and finally to the grey of weather-beaten rock.

The splintering of stone brought me out of my emotional state. Omasu had crushed the arm of the throne-like chair on which he sat with his bare hands.

Omasu, appearing to have composed himself, rose and walked over to his cowering slaves. He whispered something and to each he offered a ruby plucked from his horkla before striding off at a pace unmatched by his retainers trying to keep up with him. The last I saw of the slaves, they were surrounded by dozens of merchants each trying to outbid the others for the small fortune in treasure they each now carried. It was a vain attempt by those present to pretend it would be business as usual in Travar.

— Thogan Treasurestone, Merchant of Travar

## THE LIFEROCK REBELLION

The landing of *Triumph* on the Ayodhya Liferock shook Travar to the core. Even today, memories are fresh with subsequent events like the Battle at Wharf's End. Travar's merchants were usually happy to ignore politics in the wider region and trade with everyone, but a Theran fortress strategically placed to command the trade routes gave Travar's most powerful merchants pause. None more so than Travar's most famous merchant, Omasu.

When an obsidiman receives a call for aid from their Liferock, they must answer that call no matter where they may be or what they may be doing. In the case of the

Ayodhya Liferock, it soon became apparent it sat buried under the vastness of *Triumph*, which had been fused into the surrounding rock with powerful elemental magic. Learning of the Therans' actions, Omasu summoned the remaining brotherhood, numbering no more than a dozen. Like Omasu, they were young compared to those trapped, many having only begun their own explorations of the world.

Omasu and another obsidiman Named Granal, an Elementalist famous for his exploration of the Badlands, assumed the mantle of elders of the Ayodhya brotherhood. The remaining brotherhood swore a blood oath to free their Liferock and trapped brothers by any means necessary. Within days of the *Triumph's* landing, the Liferock Rebellion was born.

Omasu realized he had the resources and connections to organize and fund the undertaking. Without hesitation, he directed his personal wealth and the economic might of the Overland Trading Company to the task of removing the Theran presence from the region. The rebellion's activities took many forms, but the main thrust used Omasu's economic prowess and vast network of contacts to build a resistance to the Theran occupation. Omasu wielded economics and trade as his weapons of choice. How else does a merchant fight such a mighty foe?

The Overland Trading Company's caravans became the Liferock Rebellion's supply lines. Its merchants wittingly or unwittingly transported men, materials, and intelligence under cover as messengers, caravan guards, and trading goods. Not only did the Overland Trading Company provide logistics to the Rebellion, its economic clout ensured it influenced business with Theran Imperial forces in Barsaive.

Travar's most powerful merchants have their fingers in everybody's business, and Omasu was no exception. He called in favors, bribed the corrupt, offered protection on his caravans, and, in some cases, used outright intimidation to gain the leverage needed to dominate the market. Those who resisted found themselves subject to targeted sanctions. The uncooperative found markets flooded and were unable to make a profit, or found their loans unexpectedly called in. When financial pressure failed, Omasu hired those with unique methods of persuasion. These services were

### **Option: Prince to Pauper**

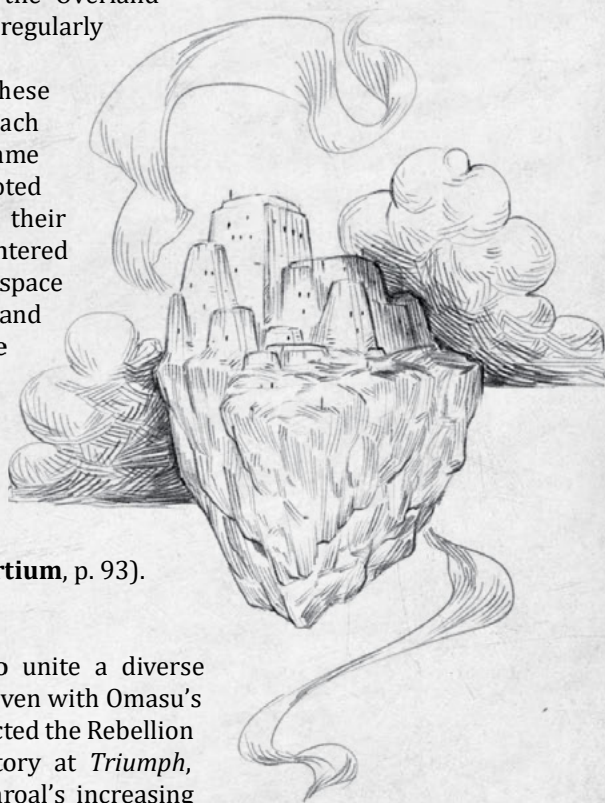
While the Liferock Rebellion was successful, that success did not come cheap. If the gamemaster wishes to use this option in their campaign, Omasu retains the reputation of a highly successful merchant prince, but his personal finances were severely depleted by the cost of the Rebellion's operations before and during the Second War.

Rumors are swirling in the Synod, and Omasu does his best to quash them, but it is only a matter of time before one of Omasu's rivals, Theran agents seeking vengeance, or even the Denairastas move to cripple the Overland Trading Company and, by extension, the Liferock Rebellion.

In this situation, Omasu's network continues to gather information, but the obsidiman is more focused on rebuilding his wealth, and the Rebellion has fewer resources to throw at problems.

often procured in Kratas, which the Overland Trading Company's caravans regularly visited.

The Therans moved to counter these operations, but Omasu countered each and created a complex financial game of cat and mouse. The Therans looted airships that drifted too close to their airspace for supplies. Omasu countered this by offering those merchants space and protection with the Overland Trading Company. To challenge Omasu's domination, the Therans offered preferential treatment to pro-Theran trading houses in Travar. Many were encouraged to use the services of the K'tenshin trade consortium, which Theran silver helped fund (see **The Consortium**, p. 93).



### Current Actions and Support

It takes a common enemy to unite a diverse group like the Liferock Rebellion. Even with Omasu's charismatic leadership, many expected the Rebellion to fall apart shortly after its victory at *Triumph*, but that did not happen. With Throal's increasing isolation, the trade roads have become dangerous and Omasu has diverted some of the Rebellion's resources to address the issue. The Therans may have retreated, but the possibility of their return remains. The Denairastas also cast a shadow over Barsaive's future, and the Rebellion's network is well placed to meet that threat.

The Liferock Rebellion is primarily focused on gathering intelligence from across Barsaive. Much of the information gathered is trade related, passing through the Synod where it doesn't draw much attention. The location, route, and cargo of any trading enterprise are important to both investor and competitor. This information, and the rumors and news that travel along with trade missions, can give insight into events in other parts of Barsaive.

The Liferock Rebellion is a complex operation spread across Barsaive, but has only a handful of trusted commanders at its core. These cells sometimes liaise with independent adept groups or allied organizations to coordinate operations, but often the Rebellion hires mercenaries and adepts without revealing to them who they are working for.

The Rebellion maintains its allies from the occupation. Garlthik One-Eye passes information he believes would be of use, understanding Omasu opposes attempts to make Travar a Throalic protectorate. The Throalic House Yilwaz provides logistical

support, along with minor support from other anti-Theran trading houses. Despite the dwarf kingdom's problems, the Eye of Throal and Arm of Throal trade intelligence with the Rebellion, and Omasu provides Throalic operatives with transport on the Overland Trading Company's ships and caravans.

One of the Rebellion's greatest allies outside Travar is House V'strimon, which was happy to see the Therans ousted from *Triumph*. V'strimon grants the Overland Trading Company preferential trading status, and provides its cargoes and employees transport on any V'strimon ship. House T'kambras also aids members of the Rebellion and operates safe houses along the Serpent River's banks, for they also have no wish to see the Therans return, or face domination by the Denairastas.

Many of Travar's merchants owe Omasu personal favors, or depend on the Overland Trading Company. Some of these favors and debts are freely repaid, others not so willingly. Omasu tries not to make any unnecessary enemies within Travar, as it is bad for business.

Of the larger trading houses, Fireforge Dumorjen (see p. 114) aids the Rebellion's cause the most by providing the Overland Trading Company space on his airships. The privacy of the Greycairn Docking Tower is perfect for men and supplies to enter and leave Travar without drawing undue attention.

Travar's Magistrates walk a fine line trying to uphold Travar's neutrality, and realize how precarious Travar's position is becoming. They fear Omasu's actions could drag Travar into conflict. For the time being, many merchants benefit from the deals and incentives Omasu offers, but if that changes they stand ready to take action.

## ORDER OF THE CRIMSON SKY

The crush of battle on the wharf was almost unbearable, the screams of the dying deafening, but the K'tenshin marines held their ground against the fierce assault from Travar's Champions. It was dawning on K'ansanar the raid on Travar had been ill-timed, coinciding with the run up to Travar's annual Founding Tournament when the city would have more defenders than any other. His marines were paying the ultimate price for this strategic error.

If the marines could retake *The Sentinel*, perhaps some degree of honor could be restored. The marines scaling the sides of the flagship were being held off by a handful of adepts still aboard. Hindered by the crush of warriors, their legs and tails pinned against the hull, it was a near impossible task.

The pressure was suddenly released as the flagship lurched, its mooring ropes severed. With nothing to brace against, several ranks of K'ansanar's troops were forced into the water, spilling over the end of the wharf like too much grain in a sack. Those with strength remaining valiantly attempted to swim for *The Sentinel*.

K'ansanar could feel the tide of battle turning against them. Travar's Champions pressed harder, sensing victory as the archers on adjacent wharfs unleashed a murderous hail of arrow fire that withered the K'tenshin flanks. Then there was no more wharf, just a brief sensation of weightlessness before the cold waters of the Byrose claimed K'ansanar and his men.

Being underwater was as natural as talking or eating, but the fierce battle had sapped much of his strength. From below, the watery sky was colored by the golden

glow of the sun's rays. Only the silhouettes of t'skrang marred its surface. Then the sky bled blood red, the archers on the wharfs cutting down his warriors without mercy.

Knowing only death waited above, K'ansanar activated his crop diver blood charm, swimming until he felt the Byrose's current embrace him, pulling him into the open river and back toward the Serpent and home. He carried with him the memories of his t'skrang warriors adrift in the crimson sky.

K'ansanar's return to House K'tenshin was not what he expected. On returning to his barracks, he was spirited away to a holding cell. After many hours of solitude, he was paraded in front of the enraged Shivalahala K'tenshin and several high ranking Theran officials. K'ansanar realized he should have stayed on the river's bottom.

Of those who had survived the debacle, Sergeant K'ansanar was the highest ranking. He was blamed for the mission's failure.

It should have ended in a warrior's death. The Shivalahala placed her blade on the back of K'ansanar's neck and he awaited its cold embrace. The Therans intervened, demanding disgrace over death, and K'ansanar lost his tail instead of his head.

### **Birth of a Secret Society**

Not all the t'skrang of House K'tenshin have forgotten the humiliation of the night raid on the Serpent River fleet, or the last stand at the Battle at Wharfs' End. Nor have they forgotten the abandonment of their Theran masters, or the harsh punishments handed out by the Shivalahala K'tenshin.

For Sergeant K'ansanar, those memories refused to fade. Humiliation festered to loathing, then hatred, and finally a thirst for revenge. K'ansanar had graduated the K'tenshin War Academy at the top of his class. His entire company was thought lost in a valiant attempt to recover the fleet's flagship. Turning up alive when presumed dead was not good for their image. Had K'ansanar known the loathing that would be directed toward him, he might have joined his comrades in arms at the river bottom.

Shamed by the Shivalahala, K'ansanar found himself homeless and starving, living at the mercy of others who still had sympathy, but it was his desire for revenge that truly kept him alive. During this time, K'ansanar was visited by a dark-robed t'skrang who convinced him he could make his dreams of vengeance a reality. Excited at the prospect of restoring his honor, K'ansanar met the mysterious t'skrang's terms. The t'skrang revealed himself as Raggok and gave K'ansanar a powerful talisman: a new tail so he could freely walk among the t'skrang in his quest for vengeance.

Soon after K'ansanar's liaison with the Mad Passion, the Order of the Crimson Sky was born. K'ansanar was not the only member of K'tenshin's military orders embarrassed or made scapegoats for the failures of the first war. Their bitterness called to K'ansanar, and, with Raggok's aid, he whispered dreams vengeance in their ears.

Like the Liferock Rebellion, the Order is one of Barsaive's newest secret societies. Its goals are not small. Only K'ansanar and his most trusted Lodge Masters know the true aims of the Order. Lower ranking members believe they are working to further K'tenshin's agenda, instead of undermining it.

## The Lodges

The Order is made up of cells known as lodges. The members of each lodge have little knowledge of the others. Each lodge has a Lodge Master who meets regularly with the other masters. The Vengeful Grand Master K'ansanar leads these meetings, and he directs the Order's operations.

Lodge members sometimes carry a signet ring to identify themselves to other members of a lodge. The signets are worn to lodge meetings and as a way of identifying other Order members when on lodge business. The ring is carved from bone in the shape of a severed tail, wrapping around the finger to form the band. It then coils on top of the band to form the setting for a dome of glass. Inside the dome is a red fluid with metallic flakes that swirl as if driven by a strong current. Through the misty liquid can be seen nine diamonds, the symbol of House K'tenshin.

The Order of the Crimson Sky has several lodges on the Serpent and Byrose Rivers. Each maintains havens known as lodge houses. The Order's largest lodge is within the Byrose Consortium. Set up after meticulous planning, its funding was drawn from the Shivalahala herself, convinced of its merits as a first step to restoring House K'tenshin's control of the Byrose River. Generous funding also came from Therans who see the Consortium as a counter to Omasu's domination of Travar's supply chain (see **The Byrose Consortium**, p. 93).

## K'ansanar's Vengeance

K'ansanar's plans for vengeance are audacious: Restore the honor of House K'tenshin, preside over the humiliation of the Shivalahala K'tenshin, tear down the long alliance between House K'tenshin and the Theran Empire, annex the Byrose River, and crush Travar and its Champions.

The Order achieved one of its goals during the Second War. During the assault on *Triumph* by forces loyal to Throal and the Liferock Rebellion, members of the Order turned on their Theran allies, aiding the Barsaivian forces.

The Order almost realized another goal that day. K'ansanar and his most trusted allies slipped into the War Academy. The Shivalahala K'tenshin was dragged to the training grounds by the dark robed t'skrang and her tail was removed. Or so K'ansanar thought.

The Shivalahala had a body double, about which K'ansanar knew nothing. When the real Shivalahala arrived with her elite bodyguard, a short battle ensued. With the odds stacked against them K'ansanar and his allies fled. Humiliating the Shivalahala remains one of his long-term goals, but with the K'tenshin-Theran alliance in tatters, the Order is now focusing its efforts on Travar.

### *K'ansanar*

Exceptionally large for a t'skrang, K'ansanar's heavy build and brute strength give him a naturally intimidating presence, and he exudes confident brutatilty. His skin color ranges from a deep blue to dark purple, the colors alternating in diagonal bands across his body. Despite being in his late eighties, his mind remains undimmed, and his energy seemingly boundless. He is fueled by his burning need for vengeance on the Shivalahala K'tenshin, Raggok has provided him the Gift of Jaspre, a cursed item

which, among other powers, allowed him to regrow his tail (see **Magical Treasures**, p. 291),

**Sixth Circle T'skrang Warrior, Questor of Raggok**

**DEX: 6      STR: 8      TOU: 7**

**PER: 5      WIL: 5      CHA: 7**

## THE PROTECTORATE MOVEMENT

**M**any use "Protectorate Movement" as a term for those who attend meetings and rallies, agitate among the people, or believe the Council Compact should be enshrined in the Code of Travar. While there may be a growing movement among Travar's common people, there are individuals taking advantage of this groundswell of popular opinion for their own ends.

The Protectorate Movement includes members working together in common cause, but for differing agendas. Those public face agitating, protesting and organizing provide a convenient smoke screen for those behind the scenes to interfere in Travar's inner workings and outside relations.

The Throalic expansionists want Throal to control Barsaive, and believe Travar is the next logical step of that process. They have the support of Throalic houses who wish to ensure the Therans do not return and see an end to slavery (such as House Yilwaz). While many in Throal see Travar as an important ally, and believe an alliance benefits both, others view Travar's merchants as greedy, self-serving leeches using trade routes, built and protected by dwarf sweat and blood, to line their own pockets.

For this reason, some expansionists wish Travar were a Throalic protectorate; then Travar would then pay its share and reduce the burden on Throalic taxpayers. Others believe Travar is better off as a Throalic protectorate than suffering under the yoke of Theran tyranny, which would be the case if the Therans return.

There is the idealist faction, which includes followers of Mynbruje seeking to balance the injustice they perceive, and anti-slavery groups, including followers of Lochost, who see the Council Compact as a way to rid Travar of slavery. Throal's House Byril'ah provides funding to some among the idealist faction.

Many in the idealist faction spy on Travar's wealthy elite, attempting to expose their crimes and guilty secrets in hopes another scandal will add momentum to the movement. The most prominent member of this faction is Nurnborg, the Throalic ambassador to Travar. Nurnborg is renowned for over-the-top speeches during his so-called "study sessions," which he uses to espouse the ideals and virtues of the Council Compact. Behind the scenes, he passes on any scandalous rumors he learns when traveling in the circles of power.

There are agents of powers whose agendas would be furthered with an alliance between Throal and Travar. The Denairastas, for example, wish to promote conflict between Throal and its enemies, and believe a declaration of Travar as Throalic protectorate would promote instability in the region.

Garlthik One-Eye tries to bring some balance. On one hand, he supports many of the Council Compact's ideals, and even funds those who actively spread those

ideals, particularly about slavery. On the other hand, he works to undermine Throalic expansion.

The Protectorate Movement is neither a true secret society, nor an authentic grass roots movement representing popular opinion. Travar's Magistrates dismiss it as long as it continues to simmer quietly. With the recent civil strife in Throal, the Magistrates feel they have no need to worry about perceived threats to Travar's neutrality.

## THE VAR'EIDYLLON TARA'VAR

**O**f all the societies lurking within the city's shadows, the *Var'eidyllon Tara'var* is the only one whose goals are specific to Travar. They do not serve the interests of foreign powers, or affiliate with other groups. Like the Liferock Rebellion and the Order of the Crimson Sky, the *Var'eidyllon Tara'var* is a relatively new organization.

The founding of the *Var'eidyllon Tara'var* is the tale of Cyanna the Earthweaver. Cyanna was last of five children born to a wealthy cloth merchant. Like many in Travar, Cyanna was a merchant at heart. Unfortunately, she wasn't a very good one. She was considered a failure by her four brothers, but Cyanna knew she was destined for great things. She felt it as she walked the streets of Travar, trying to prove herself and build on the family's fortunes.

Instead of trade, Cyanna found her calling as an Elementalists, and joined the staff of the Body of Five. Where she had always struggled to fit in with her family's mercantile efforts, she flourished among her colleagues in the Body of Five.

Unfortunately, one of her demonstrations went awry in front of Oman Odestrus, nearly injuring the Guild Master. As punishment, she had to organize and catalogue every item in the Body of Five's artifact room.

During this time, Cyanna made a discovery that changed her life forever. In the bottom of a box under years of detritus in a forgotten corner, Cyanna uncovered a collection of documents. She knew, just by looking at them, they were older than the Guild House Tower. She had discovered the journals of Ayesha Selestran and Xogad the Grim, one of the Body of Five's earliest Guild Masters.

Cyanna learned about Ayesha and Travar's founding, and it made her own understanding of Travar's history apocryphal at best. Though she could scarcely believe what she had read, she realized Odestrus did not know this version of Travar's history, or the true origins of his own organization.

Xogad's journals spoke of Ayesha's dying wish: The Ivory Codex must be buried with her in a secret location (see **Ayesha's Tomb** p. 17). His journals spoke of how the Codex's location could be discovered by bringing together the pieces of a great puzzle. Only when the riddle was solved would the location of Ayesha's tomb be revealed.

*Seek the puzzle, the parts in five; some parts dead, the rest alive. The parts lie scattered, a thing once whole, in another city lies one goal. The stolen cup, in tavern lies, secrets the poisoned chalice hides.*

— *Journals of Xogad the Grim*

Impressed at what the original Body of Five had sacrificed for the people of Travar, and disgusted at what they had become, Cyanna decided to follow in Ayesha's footsteps. The first step was to form a society, their purpose to find the pieces of the Guild Master's puzzle, discover the location of the Ivory Codex, and learn its secrets (see **The Ivory Codex** p. 280).

Cyanna believes Ayesha was wrong to interfere with the effect the Ivory Codex was having on Travar and its people. She believed it to be a great gift. Cyanna formed the *Var'eidyllon Tara'var*, which translates to "Remnants of Five." The society's goal is to find the Ivory Codex and let it once again chart Travar's destiny. In Cyanna's eyes, Travar was nothing more than a chess piece in the power struggle between Thera and Throal for control of Barsaive.

The *Var'eidyllon Tara'var* started as the original Body of Five did, with a small number of dedicated, wealthy individuals. It expanded, but remained a small organization of twenty-five members, a symbolic number. The organization has a hierarchical structure organized into groups called Cycles. Each member is recognized by cycle and number, with the Fifth Cycle at the top of the hierarchy. Cyanna's official title is First Mistress of the Fifth.

The *Var'eidyllon Tara'var* is a highly secretive organization, and concealing one's appearance is encouraged. Members rarely know the identity of those in their Cycle. The society's members are drawn from a cross section of Travar's people. The Fifth Cycle is drawn from influential and wealthy scholars. The other Cycles are more diverse, and include two questors of Upandal who have come to believe the Ivory Codex is a gift from their Passion.

The organization is in shambles after suffering a serious setback. Unknown assailants attacked the headquarters and several members were killed. Cyana triggered a contingency called the fifth protocol, scattering the Cycles and their research across Travar. The surviving members went to ground and stopped all but the most essential activities.

After the initial panic, Cyana tried to find the whereabouts of other survivors, but they remain scattered, their numbers unknown.

Cyana still doesn't know the assailants' identity, or why they attacked the headquarters. During her time in hiding, she has hired several groups of adepts to help locate other surviving members. She has spent time reflecting on the events that led to the current predicament. She believes, much as Ayesha did, the subtle influence of the Ivory Codex guided her to this point. Unlike Ayesha, Cyanna does not see this as sinister, but an attempt to lead her to the truth.

She has come to believe the members of the *Var'eidyllon Tara'var* were chosen by the Codex because of who they are, or what they know. Reflecting on the journals of Xogad the Grim, Cyanna thinks the Guild Master's puzzle is a message from the Codex referring to her organization. After all, they were once whole, and are now scattered across the city, perhaps beyond. Cyanna is certain reuniting the Cycles and discovering their identities will make the link apparent, and lead to the Ivory Codex.

*Cyanna Earthweaver*

Cyana is a slip of a girl barely out of her mid-twenties. Her blonde hair is kept short, which leads to her sometimes being mistaken for a young man, but it doesn't bother her. Preferring a functional approach, her clothing lacks the trappings of fashion. She believes those who follow the shifting trends of fashion are fools not in control of their destiny. She knows she doesn't have Ayesha's years of study and, when not guiding the efforts to reunite the society, does what she can to overcome that shortcoming.

**Sixth Circle Human Elementalist**

**DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

**THIEVES OF TRAVAR**

To be a thief in Travar is to be among a special, and occasionally desperate, group of people. In most of Barsaive, theft is frowned on, but in Travar it is a serious cultural taboo and the punishment for petty theft is often harsh.

Unsurprisingly, thieves in Travar have a different outlook than others of their profession. The city's mercantile culture leads many would-be thieves to become fences or engage in fraud or other financial chicanery. Like its merchants, Travar's thieves believe they are destined for greatness. This pushes Travar's thieves to elaborate swindles or plan grand heists.

Around the River Docks and Tent City, plenty of garden-variety thieves engage in all manner of illicit activities. Many will cut your throat as well as your purse strings, usually in that order. The Watch pay less attention to what goes on outside Travar, but once a year, in the weeks before the Founding Tournament, the City Watch scours the outside neighborhoods to drive off undesirable elements. This annual clearing of the criminal population has become known as the Purge.

Some thieves reside within the walls but operate outside the city as highwaymen. They strike in small groups, stealing the most valuable and easy to carry riches before returning to Travar to cash in their loot. These highwaymen take care to choose lucrative targets, for after they strike they must lie low until it becomes safe to take to the highways once again. Some highwaymen have paid operatives who frequent inns, disguised as merchants, to pick their marks.

While highway robbery is uncommon, it isn't good for business



and Travar's Magistrates take the issue seriously. To counter the growing threat, they have ordered a new unit of the City Watch called Road Wardens (see p. 77), and offer bounties for the capture of known highwaymen.

Many have noticed Travar's culture is infectious, and those who choose to stay for any length of time often begin to think like a native. Some thieves who spend significant time in Travar become distracted by the opportunities, or uncomfortably aware of Travar's taboo against theft, in much the same way as a visitor to a foreign land can pick up a local accent.

## Thieves of Renown

### *The Harbor Master*

Despite what the title suggests, the Harbor Master does not reside anywhere near the riverfront. His Name is unknown, and how he earned the title Harbor Master is a matter of debate. Some say it's because he harbors many wanted men within his organization. Others say it goes back to the days before the Scourge when his family owned the Old Harbor, and the title is passed down from generation to generation. Whatever truth, the Harbor Master is the most wanted man in Travar, as his thieves have been responsible for some of the most notorious heists in Travar.

The Overland Job is one example. As an Overland Trading Company caravan rolled through the mist laden streets one morning, they were re-directed by the City Watch through a series of side streets. When they reached their destination, over ninety percent of the goods were missing. Omasu, enraged, promised vengeance, but the *Triumph* arrived soon after and Omasu lost interest in the incident, at least for the time being.

### *Galdius Nightshade*

It is not clear whether desperation or fate brought Galdius to Travar. For years, he traveled Barsaive with a group known as the Elite Treasure Hunter's Guild. Wherever they traveled, Galdius found it difficult to find a mentor. He eventually found one in Kratas, but before he knew it, he had betrayed those he had traveled to Kratas with.

Galdius fled to Travar, since none of his companions had contacts there. Galdius now works alone, targeting rich merchants and other fat cats. He remembers what brought him to Travar, and will go out of his way to bring a fellow Thief to the Harbor Master's attention.

Galdius stands out in a crowd. There are few ebony skinned elves in Travar, and even fewer with silver eyes. He prefers interacting with as few people as possible, and often faces curiosity rather than disdain. Galdius prefers disdain; it's easier to deal with. His knowledge of Kratas and Travar often makes him the first point of contact between thieves from the cities.

### Attributes:

DEX: 7	STR: 6	TOU: 6
PER: 7	WIL: 6	CHA: 6

*The Slashers*

While not as terrible as their name suggests, the Slashers are one of the most infamous of Travar's crime gangs. They operate within Tent City, taking a measure of comfort the City Watch is more likely to ignore their comings and goings. They gained their unsavory title not by slashing people or purse strings, but because of the way they carry out their crimes.

The Slashers wield curved blades designed to cut through the hide or canvas of most dwellings in Tent City. With these blades, they can enter these homes in the dead of night and take what they want. The Slashers are also proficient at wielding these blades in combat.

*Emicia Volbrang*

The Slashers know their leader as the Night Blade, but her Name is Emicia Volbrang and her tale is one of Travar's riches to rags stories. Once heiress to a fortune built on the butcher's trade, Emicia showed great promise. As a business woman she earned respect working her way up and all but running the business single-handedly. When her parents vanished without a trace on a trade mission south of Travar, the business was hers.

Desperate to find out what happened, she spent much of the family fortune hiring adepts to investigate. When her funds ran low, she dipped into the business's coffers, and when that suffered, she cooked the books to avoid paying taxes. She came to the attention of the Black Bureau, was convicted of tax evasion, and exiled from the city. She left with only what she could carry, including a gutting knife gifted to her by her father.

While looking for somewhere to spend the night in Tent City, Emicia huddled under the eaves of a rich merchant's tent, taking shelter from the rain. She heard cries of pain coming from the tent and, not knowing what else to do, took her blade and opened the tent like slicing a throat. Inside the tent was unnaturally dark, and something stalked those lost in its darkness. She managed to drag several people to safety before something set upon her. She barely escaped with her life.

Those she had rescued gave her shelter. She never found out what was in the tent, but soon learned Tent City was a much darker place than she imagined. She started earning a living taking money from rich merchants and rescuing those forced to serve as their entertainment. Before she knew it, she was leading a notorious gang that became known as The Slashers.

Emicia is a small, homely looking human woman in her early thirties. Her thick brown hair is always tied back, covered by a headscarf to hide her knife. She wears traveler's garb and is always ready to move at a moment's notice. She is not an adept, but her skills with a knife are legendary in Tent City. Her appearance often lets her get the drop on those who mistake her for just another stray from the city.

**Non-adept Human Gang Leader**

**DEX:6      STR: 7      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 5      CHA: 5**





## FOREIGN RELATIONS

*There are some things about Travar that don't add up. It survived the Scourge while its neighbors perished. It sits on the edge of the Badlands, a corrupt region changed beyond recognition, yet its own pre-Scourge splendor survives untarnished. It's not central to Barsaive, yet trades with all. It's built from white stone when there is none to be found in any mine or quarry in the region. It's one of the richest cities in Barsaive, has no standing army, yet it never gets attacked. And then there's that crazy tournament. Is it any wonder outsiders take an interest in its affairs?*

*And that's just for starters, its merchants.....*

• Grind Ironbone, Elite Treasure Hunter •

### BLOOD WOOD

Many of Blood Wood's ranelles have been petitioning the Court to allow them to trade as they did before the Scourge. They argue trade has overcome fear and suspicion, bringing the shattered world together again. Unfortunately, the fledgling relations between Travar and Blood Wood got off to the worst possible start over a literally thorny issue.

Blood Wood sent an envoy to Travar for exploratory talks regarding trade and other issues. What these other issues were remain secret, but it is speculated Blood Wood was interested in commissioning a fleet of airships. The blood elves spent several days touring Travar's airship yards, as well as sights like the Arena and Tournament Circle. It was during these tours the citizens of Travar caught their first glimpse of blood elves. Rather than revulsion and fear, the elves inspired fascination and were soon the talk of the town.

When there is demand, Travar's merchants rise to the challenge. Within a few days of the first public sighting, the blood elves' loose clothing style became the latest fashion. It was not long before those with money to spare were adorning themselves with cosmetic thorns. Some, ever on the quest for attention, opted for blood thorns, a variation on blood pebble armor.

The blood elves were horrified by the trivialization of their people's daily suffering and sacrifice. Travar's merchants were enraged when accused of encouraging such behavior. Insults flew in both directions, and trade talks were cancelled overnight.

The fragile relations that currently exist are testament to Omasu's talents. The obsidianman soothed the blood elves' anger and helped them understand the people of Travar. He explained that embracing the elves' look and style was Travar's way of showing interest in the people of the Blood Wood. He acknowledged the offense they had given, but asked forbearance for the citizens' ignorance. A second envoy was sent to Travar to re-establish relations.

The Blood Wood has a small embassy for its emissaries, but until trade talks begin, the Magistrates have not yet appointed a Delegate to Blood Wood. The current emissary to Travar is the recently appointed Denilior Ni'hlagh of the Escalanas Ranelle.

The emissaries and staff appointed by the Elven Court have a short rotation compared to their emissaries in other cities. The reason is unknown, but some speculate Travar somehow quickens the onset of Wood Longing. Most scholars in Travar dismiss this idea. While Travar is a great distance from Blood Wood, this is an unlikely cause. It is more likely the fickle whims of Queen Alachia as another of *consortis* falls out of favor.

The emissary to Travar and his personal staff may change on a regular basis, but one is a constant. Jil'fe is charged with the continuity of relations, smoothing the transition and giving new emissaries time to find their feet outside Blood Wood

### *Jil'fe*

Jil'fe is not a blood elf, or at least that's what the Queen wants everyone to think. The story goes Jil'fe entered Blood Wood to give his allegiance to Queen Alachia, offering to undergo the Ritual of Thorns. The queen, impressed at this act, publicly decreed such was his display of loyalty he need not undergo the Ritual. Instead, he would be entrusted to help her emissaries to Travar adjust to life outside the Wood.

Only the Queen and a few of her most trusted Blood Warders know Jil'fe did undergo the Ritual of Thorns. The queen presented him with a powerful gift to help him better serve the Blood Wood, The Dagger of the Thorned Vine (see p. 293), which makes him appear as a normal elf.

Smaller than average, Jil'fe also has a dark tan from years spent outside Blood Wood. His shoulder-length brown hair is usually pulled back with a simple leather tie, and he dresses in simple, but elegant, scribe's robes.

### **Fourth Circle Blood Elf Archer, Sixth Circle Troubadour**

**DEX: 7      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 6      CHA: 7**

### *Denilior Ni'hlagh*

Many believe Alachia's emissaries don't stay long in Travar because they earn the Queen's ire. Denilior has found himself in Travar for that reason. More precisely, his wife earned the Queen's ire, and he expects a longer stay in Travar as a result.

He has recently become curious about Jil'fe's motives. To discover them he has hired adepts to spy on Jil'fe and report back to him. This intrigue is making his stay in Travar more enjoyable than he expected, and if he finds out what Jil'fe is up to, he may be able to regain the Queen's favor and return to Blood Wood.

Denilior is a young elf with long, golden hair and pale blue, almost silver, eyes. His thorns form distinct angular rings across his face, chest, and legs. He frequently attends artistic performances, and just as often complains how they pale in comparison to those back at Court.

**Non-adept Blood Elf Diplomat**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

**IOPPOS**

**O**f all the major cities in Barsaive, only Urupa is further from Iopos than Travar. Despite this great distance, the Denairastas still manage to cast their shadows on Travar's white walls. The beauty of Iopos may rival Travar's, but in Travar the people feel free speak their mind, an alien concept in Iopos.

After the assassination of King Varulus III, Travar, like other nations, realized the Denairastas had their own plans for Barsaive. Taking an interest in what happens within Travar's walls became a priority for the Magistrates, as they are certain Iopan agents have infiltrated the city. Knowing the danger they pose, the Magistrates are willing to pay a generous reward to anyone who can expose these individuals. Unfortunately, without a dedicated secret service, it is difficult to direct Travar's collective attention to a single purpose.

Indeed, this lack of a counter-intelligence organization allows Iopan agents to play their clandestine games in Travar unhindered. The Denairastas understand Travar may be the key to controlling the province. Travar's merchants, collectively, wield a subtler power than force of arms. The agents of Iopos in Travar push on the city's internal tensions to tear it apart from within.

It has come to light the recent death of Travar's delegate to Urupa may not have been an accident. The Ironcain and Firecain families are on the brink of open conflict as a result of the incident. The long running tension between House K'tenshin and Travar is also ripe for future manipulation.

The Denairastas' clandestine operations are surpassed only by those of Great Dragons, and the complexity of their plots is worthy of Vestrial's praise. Using Travar as the catalyst, they seek to provoke conflict in Barsaive, leaving the province open for conquest.

It is not surprising to learn Travar and Iopos have no official relation, and are unlikely to anytime soon.

Travar's merchants have always trod carefully with Iopos, but after Jerris's annexation, they have become wary of entering Iopos after several merchants from Jerris were publicly executed for not swearing an oath to the Denairastas family. Travar's merchants now sell their goods in market towns outside the city limits, to the t'skrang House Ishkarat, or through House Ueraven in Throal, who have a contract with Iopos.

Even with these fears, Omasu's caravans travel to Iopos several times a year and Juliak Merris's airships occasionally visit the city.

Competition for external contracts between the airship builders of Travar and Iopos is fierce, and many of Travar's shipbuilders have turned to their own underhanded methods. Without mediation, it is only a matter of time before it becomes more than just an unfriendly rivalry.



The Denairastas know the importance of Travar's trade networks. They are attempting to gain their own influence in the city by winning the Founding Tournament and having a magistrate pawn to further Iopos' goals.

Two Gold Branch members of the Holders of Trust operate a spy network in Travar called the Scions. One of them is Irros Denairastas, one of Uhl's cousins, but Travar's authorities do not have a description of him. They have a description of the other Gold Branch member, but do not yet know her name. Given the organization's title, they believe she must also be a member of the Denairastas clan. Some suspect they are one and the same.

### *Irros Denairastas*

Irros Denairastas is best described as one part Thief, one part Illusionist, and three parts psychopathic killer. He is a master of disguise and deception, but is psychologically unstable.

Irros arrived in Travar with his handler, Krinea Denairastas, one of Uhl's nieces, but he murdered her several months ago in a fit of rage. Determined to carry out his mission, and fearful of what will happen if Uhl learns of Krinea's murder, Irros has been impersonating her, going as far as directing operations in Krinea's stead.

Worryingly for all concerned, Irros has begun imitating his other victims, which has resulted in hauntings being reported in the city. He is of average height and build with short, reddish-brown hair and dark brown eyes. He seldom appears under his normal appearance, however, modifying it with his magical or mundane abilities.

**Ninth Circle Human Thief, Seventh Circle Illusionist**

DEX: 7      STR: 5      TOU: 5  
 PER: 7      WIL: 6      CHA: 7

**JERRIS**

**D**espite the rivalries of their merchant houses, Jerris and Travar have historically been cordial. Even in competing industries like airship construction, both sides maintained good working and diplomatic relations. The Magistrates of both cities promoted an atmosphere of cooperation and friendly rivalry, which extended to the merchant houses of both cities.

Under normal circumstances, trade would be reason enough for good relations, but the reasons for cooperation between Jerris and Travar go deeper than that. The rulers of both cities recognized they had unique problems more likely to be solved by working together.

With the province's Theran air fleet destroyed or scattered, neither Travar nor Jerris could be faulted for believing harassment of airship trade to be at an end. Unfortunately, the situation took a turn for the worse. Pirates once held in check by the threat of the Theran fleet now plague central Barsaive. To make things worse, Garlthik One-Eye has been supplying cargo manifests to emboldened crystal raider clans, redirecting their attacks from his own backyard. This causes problems for both cities.

Before the Iopan annexation, and in the spirit of cooperation, airships from Travar and Jerris traveled together for mutual protection. Both cities claimed to produce superior quality airships, but recognized healthy competition and cooperation increased the quality of design and the speed with which their airships were constructed. It was a badly held secret the shipwrights of Jerris and Travar were collaborating on a new design of trading vessel.

This atmosphere of cooperation has come to an abrupt halt. Not because the Denaristas forbade it, but because of a miscalculation on their part in the lead up to Jerris's annexation.

Iopan assassins opened the door to annexation by targeting important figures in the airship industry. The Denairastas had already been making overtures to Magistrate Byth Vesten, and when they suggested their agents could track down the culprits, their offer was gladly accepted.

Unfortunately, the assassins mistakenly killed some shipwrights from Travar, members of House Thanton. Despite pressure from Travar's Magistrates, House Thanton broke all ties with the joint initiative until the perpetrators were apprehended. Shortly after the Iopans arrived, the Magistrates realized Vesten was acting oddly. In the words of Xoros Honeyed-Tongue, they could "smell an Iopan rat," and reversed their position, backing House Thanton's decision.

The Magistrates also ordered closer scrutiny on the official program of joint flights, fearing the Denaristas might use it as an easy way of infiltrating Travar. Abandoning air trade, however, is not an option for either city. While the official program has been cancelled, individual merchants still see the benefit of safety in numbers and ships often arrive together despite leaving at different times.

Another recently cancelled joint project is research regarding the legacy of the Scourge. Travar borders the Badlands and Jerris the Wastes, areas that still fester, and on which restoration magic has little effect. Magic use in these areas can be unpredictable, and both cities had pooled their resources to create the Institute of the Phoenix, an organization dedicated to the restoration of the Badlands and the Wastes.

The Magistrate Council's delegate to Jerris is Wylen Stormbear. Stormbear witnessed the assassination of Thanton's shipwrights and has become aware Byth Vesten is under the sway of Iopan magic. Claiming fear for his life, Stormbear has requested several Champions of Travar to act as his personal bodyguard, a request Travar's Magistrates could not refuse.

Stormbear has been in contact with House Thanton and Omasu. Using the resources at his disposal, Stormbear is fomenting a rebellion of his own, and has arranged the deaths of some of the assassins. As a result, the Denairastas believe they have a leak in their own ranks.

Wylen's counterpart from Jerris is Hawk Greatgust, a retired airship captain. Hawk has a good reputation with shipbuilders in both Jerris and Travar, and was shocked at the murders. He has no wish to return home while it is under Iopan control, and has been resisting calls to return. It is only a matter of time before he is officially relieved of duty, but when that happens he intends to remain in Travar. He has also hidden the *Crimson Vintage*, his famous ship, as he believes it is only a matter of time before those in power in Jerris seize all privately-owned vessels.

### *Hawk Greatgust*

Often called "Dustcloud" by his friends, Hawk is renowned for captaining the *Crimson Vintage*, into the heart of the Wastes and returning to tell the tale. Hawk is a short, tough talking elf, with plenty of scars to show from his dangerous journeys. His fascination with the Wastes, and the Name of his airship, come from his grandfather's tales of the family vineyards that grew there before the Scourge.

### **Tenth Circle Elf Air Sailor**

**DEX: 8      STR: 6      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 7      CHA: 6**

### *Wylen Stormbear*

Born near Travar's Twilight Gate, as a child Wylen witnessed a farmer dragged from the road by a Horror that had emerged from the Badlands. Ever since, he has been devoted to finding a way to contain or reverse their spread.

Before joining the ranks of the Body of Five as an apprentice, Wylen spent time in Trosk finding out all he could about the efforts of Jaspre's questors. Later, Wylen became frustrated with the Body of Five's lack of interest in the Badlands and left to become the delegate to Jerris, a position that included a seat on the now defunct Institute of the Phoenix.

Wylen is in his late forties, rotund and ruddy-faced. Despite the seriousness of his situation, his jolly, carefree demeanor makes him friends wherever he goes.

**Fifth Circle Human Elementalist**

DEX: 5      STR: 5      TOU: 6  
 PER: 7      WIL: 7      CHA: 5

**KRATAS**

**T**ravar has no official ties with Kratas and that is unlikely to change. Garlthik One-Eye has no love for Travar's Magistrates or its merchants, holding their hypocrisy and double standards in contempt. The Magistrates supported an independent Barsaive, and they could lose everything should the Therans return. Despite this, they are not only happy to tolerate the slave trade in Travar, but also trade slaves to Theran merchants, giving the Empire more reasons to have an interest in the province.

In return, the Magistrates show nothing but disdain for Garlthik and the actions of the thieves of Kratas, especially with Travar's cultural views on theft (see **Crime and Punishment**, p. 41).

A few of Travar's trading houses regularly petition Garlthik to refurbish his city's old docking towers. The response to these inquiries, according to one merchant, is nothing short of hostile. Travar's merchants are frequently the target of kidnapping and subsequent ransom demands. Travar's merchants have demanded action from the Magistrates, but as there are no diplomatic ties with Kratas the outrage is heard only in Travar.

Fortunately, there is no direct antagonism between the two cities. Garlthik maintains spies in Travar to report anything that may compromise Travar's independence, which he does not wish to see change. Meanwhile, the Magistrates see Kratas as someone else's problem.

**Trade with Kratas**

Kratas is the one city any merchant is wary of. Only a few of Travar's merchants choose to engage in any kind of trading arrangement with the City of Thieves.

Trading with Kratas can be an exhausting, stressful, and profitless affair. To offset the risk of having their goods stolen, the merchant must ensure a high return from their cargo. The higher the cargo's value, the more appealing a target it makes, increasing the odds it gets stolen. With the increasing likelihood of theft, the merchant must ensure their cargo is adequately protected, creating a cycle of growing expense and reduced profit margin.

Many professional caravan guards charge a premium at the slightest mention of Kratas. Even trade not destined for Kratas often falls afoul of thieves using the city as a base of operations. The few merchants that do trade there usually come to an agreement with one of the city's various gangs, or Garlthik himself. The only large trading enterprise that regularly trades with Kratas is the Overland Trading Company. Most in Kratas know what's good for them and leave things alone to avoid angering Garlthik, but even Omasu's goods are stolen from time to time.

Kratas' thieves see Travar as a giant purse waiting to be pilfered. They call us "the Jewel of Barsaive," talking about the rich pickings for those daring enough to try. During the Founding, Kratan thieves flood our city to prey on visitors and citizens. Our job is to not let that happen.

Fortunately, we have a secret weapon. A couple years back, a new recruit noticed one of his hounds kept getting drawn to one of the holding cells with Kratan prisoners. Everyone knows Kratas has a unique aroma, which comes from the refuse in their streets. Kratan thieves carry this odor, and a trained animal can detect it where most folk could not.

The next year those our hounds picked out as coming from Kratas were detained and searched at the gates. Reports of petty theft were down that year. Sure, some folk from Kratas come just for the spectacle found themselves in chains. Small price to pay to keep folks safe.

With experience under our belts, us Hounds have only gotten better. Kratan thieves try to mask their stench. Taking baths. New equipment. Changes of clothes. Don't work. Our hounds catch plenty trying to slip through the gates.

I've heard some gangs send potential recruits to our city as an initiation. If they succeed, they prove they've got the right stuff. If not... then a nuisance is out of their hair, yeah?

— *Tirra Koup, Hound of Travar*

I'm surprised those mutts can smell anything, what with the self-righteous stench coming off their handlers. They see what they want, finding reasons to hassle folk who don't fit in. Their "jewel" ain't nothing but cut glass.

— *The Honest Rogue*

## The Force of the Eye

Garlthik One-Eye likes to keep abreast of the latest developments in Travar, and from time to time massages his own ego by having choice items stolen from the city's wealthier merchants. Stealing Niss Reeves's latest creation is something he particularly savors, which has led to a rivalry (see p. 67).

Garlthik directs his operations in Travar through Ranose Cutan, who manages around a dozen members of the Force of the Eye. While Ranose enjoys planning and executing high profile jobs, she is under strict orders not to provoke the authorities. Her main job is information gathering, which she does by masquerading as a merchant and mingling with the rich. She is also supposed to aid those



crusading against slavery in Travar, and often joins followers of Lochost to free slaves from the markets outside the city.

While she supports anti-slavery movements, Ranose also does what she can to limit the influence of the Protectorate Movement. While Garlthik supports their stance on slavery, he doesn't want Travar to lose its independence.

Ranose's gang has a working relationship with Travar's local thieves, and she is careful not to step on toes or ruffle feathers. She often uses them to fence items and pays well for information Garlthik may be interested in. Of course, some thieves in Travar do not welcome the Kratan interloper and go out of their way to make things difficult for her.

#### *Ranose Cutan*

Ranose grew up an orphan in Kratas. A protégé of the gang leader Gangin, she was introduced at a young age to the ugly side of the streets and learned hard lessons on how to survive. Garlthik has shown her a different path, but she has never forgotten her time in Gangin's orphanage. In her early thirties, she still retains her youthful appearance and attractive looks. Ranose enjoys operating out of Travar, but is growing concerned with some of her gang members who have begun going native.

#### **Eighth Circle Dwarf Thief**

**DEX: 7      STR: 5      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 5      CHA: 6**

## **T'SKRANG AROPAGOI**

**T**ravar's merchants conduct trade across Barsaive, and much of this trade is, at some point carried, along the Serpent River and its tributaries. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to learn Travar maintains friendly diplomatic relations with at least some of the t'skrang Aropagoi. Though when it comes to Travar's neighbor, House K'tenshin, relations can best be described as anything but cordial.

House K'tenshin has always been a thorn in the side of those transporting their goods along the Serpent River's South Reach. In the early days, Travar's traders had to cope with *bakshevas*, the t'skrang tradition of river tithes, and outright piracy. By the time the Therans arrived in Barsaive before the Scourge, House K'tenshin had perfected a system of tolls, taxes, and extortion. With the aid of their new allies, they extended this system further along the South Reach and Byrose River.

Rather than force the issue, Travar's merchants diverted much of their trade over land, crossing the rivers where they could negotiate cheaper passage with K'tenshin's rivals. They then continued to their destinations, often via trade routes known only to the individual merchants and trading houses.

While the Theran presence solidified K'tenshin's grip on the South Reach, it also offered a solution to the same, and was considered a blessing from Chorrolis. With a fleet of airships, Travar's merchants had a viable alternative to House K'tenshin's monopoly, and only used the South Reach to transport bulky lower value cargos such as ore.

After the Scourge, Travar only had one remaining airship, but the *nialls* of House K'tenshin had yet to emerge from their slumber, so trade naturally returned to the river. Once again, Travar's merchants saw a healthy return on their investments. It was not long, however, before K'tenshin woke, their Theran allies returned, and the old status quo enforced. House K'tenshin proved they were master of the South Reach, and once again Travar's merchants rebuilt their air fleet.

Relations between House K'tenshin and Travar took a dramatic turn when House K'tenshin was unable to stop Travar from breaking its blockade, sending much needed supplies to the besieged Kingdom of Throal via House V'strimon. K'tenshin saw this as a direct challenge to its supremacy and attacked Travar's river docks. Travar's response was swift and brutal (see **The Road to War**, p. 26).

After the first Theran War, Travar's efforts to relieve Throal did not go unrewarded. Part of House K'tenshin's reparations were to relinquish its control of the Byrose River, giving Travar access to free trade on the Serpent River. To take the edge off House K'tenshin's wounded pride, Travar's magistrates returned *The Sentinel*. While the Free Trade Compact led to resurgence of Travar's river trade, the city continued to expand its airship fleet, and airship construction becomes one of Travar's staple industries.

With the landing of *Triumph* on the Ayodhya Liferock, House K'tenshin once again gambled everything by allying themselves with the Therans. Bolstered by its Theran allies, House K'tenshin expanded its tolls.

This time, however, Travar became the focus of Thera's direct attention. The Shivalahala K'tenshin implemented General Carinci's plan to squeeze Travar into submission, while abiding by the letter of the Free Trade Compact. Unfortunately, this drove trade from the rivers into the arms of the Overland Trading Company. The profits were funneled to support the Liferock Rebellion. With Omasu and the Liferock Rebellion now in control of the behemoth, it is ironic policies implemented by Thera and House K'tenshin played a role in their downfall.

Despite everything, business today is good and many K'tenshin riverboats visit Travar to trade and offer ferry services across the Byrose. Indeed, many K'tenshin merchants, boatmen, and *nialls* rely on trade between Travar and the rest of Barsaive. Each year before the Founding Tournament, the Ippikos *niall* supplies flora and fauna from the Servos Jungle for the Festival of Color and the Meru *niall* benefits from Travar's plantations in the Servos Jungle.

The delegate of the Magistrate's Council to the House of Nine Diamonds is Freeman Run, a slave bought from House K'tenshin and given citizenship in Travar. He uses his position to organize trade from the *aropagoi* to customers of Travar's merchants so they can fulfill their contracts without having to run the profit-eating gauntlet of tolls and taxes imposed on the South Reach.

House K'tenshin's ambassador to Travar is Essalar Crazyblade, an ancient, infirm, riverboat captain. Crazyblade uses his position to direct a network of spies dedicated to manipulating the Founding Tournament, and attempting to discover the trade routes used by Travar's merchants to avoid paying K'tenshin taxes on river trade.

Travar maintains friendly relations with House V'strimon and House Syrtis, and while it has no official ties with House T'kambras, many of Travar's merchants do,

including Omasu. Not surprisingly, Travar has no relations whatsoever with House Henghyoke, who are considered, to quote Lord Alderac, "thieves with boats," and most of Travar's merchants consider House Ishkarat little better while they continue to practice the tradition of *bakshevas*.

### *Freeman Run*

Born Svergin Watersong, Freeman Run was snatched as a young man by K'tenshin slavers from a settlement near Reaper's Point on the Byrose River. This was shortly after the Battle at Wharf's End, and House K'tenshin had just appointed Essalar Crazyblade as their ambassador in a deliberate snub to Travar's Magistrates.

The Magistrates responded by sending a representative of House Achura to the K'tenshin slave markets. House Achura purchased every slave in the market, gave them citizenship of Travar and set them loose. Svergin found himself helping Travar's newest citizens settle or get to where they wanted to go. Impressed with his organizational skills, Travar's Magistrates appointed Svergin as their delegate of the Magistrates Council.

As a personal snub to his slavers, Svergin changed his Name to Freeman Run. His short, muscled stature bears the scars of his time in the slave camps; the worst of which he refuses to cover up. Over the years, he has ingratiated himself with House K'tenshin's younger generation, something which concerns the Shivalahala.

### **Non-adept Human Diplomat**

**DEX: 6      STR: 7      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 5      CHA: 5**

### *Essalar Crazyblade*

Fed up with his drunken antics at the K'tenshin War College, Essalar was sent to Travar in hopes he would cause as much trouble there. Essalar has no animosity toward Travar's people, and even enjoys his new retirement home. To that end, he hires others to do the work expected of him and reports their findings to his political masters.

Late in the evening a very drunk E'ssalar can sometimes be found making his way home from T'town, using a sword as a walking aid and challenging everyone he meets to a duel. During these jaunts, he swears vengeance on a Horror scholars can find no record of.

Essalar's once bright green skin has faded to a mottled yellow and he grows more infirm with each passing month. Despite his great age and failing health he still takes on the occasional student in his Discipline.

### **Eighth Circle T'skrang Warrior**

**DEX: 4      STR: 3      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

## THERA

The relationship between Thera and Travar was, at first, a relationship between equals, both sides benefiting from trade agreements. It soon became a relationship of subservience to a powerful master, which ended just before the Scourge with rebellion against an authoritarian regime.

In general, Travar has no interest in Thera except as a trading partner. While a few of Travar's trading houses are pro-Theran, and have historical connections to the Empire, they are a minority. With *Triumph's* arrival, these houses received preferential treatment from the Therans and continue to do so to this day, even with the larger Theran presence driven from Barsaive.

The Magistrates know Thera has an unhealthy interest in Travar. As sure as a t'skrang can swim, they know Thera's eventual goal is re-conquest of Barsaive. Some believe if the Therans return to claim their first province, Travar, not Throal, may find itself under siege. The Theran Empire has a long memory, and Travar's citizens fear the next time around Travar may suffer the fate of Vivane.

For now, Thera bides its time. Each year Theran agents offer incentives to any pro-Theran merchant willing to run for Magistrate. This meddling has so far been in vain. The incentives offered pale in comparison to the vast amounts spent by Travar's own merchants.

Despite everything, Travar continues to trade with Theran merchants who visit the city. There is no Theran ambassador in Travar nor is there a delegate of the Magistrates' Council in Thera.

The one Theran the merchants of Travar would like to see in the city, preferably hanging from the walls, is Kyrytus Galewitch. He is Captain of the *Defiant*, a kila that once patrolled the South Serpent River, now turned pirate. When Galewitch operated under General Carinci, he seized more cargo from Travar's airships than all the other captains combined. No longer bound by General Carinci's orders, Galewitch plunders at will. Captain Kyrytus and his crew are in league with The Consortium (see p. 93), which fences the cargo he captures.

### *Kyrytus Galewitch*

With many recent reprimands for overstepping explicit orders, especially regarding the harassment of the civilian air fleet in Barsaive, Captain Galewitch didn't have to think twice about betraying his Theran masters. With the Consortium already fencing appropriated cargo, Galewitch realized there were huge sums to be made by turning rogue. What he didn't know was the money was just a lure, for his actions were part of a plot by the Order of the Crimson Sky (See *Kansanar's Revenge* p. 141).

Galewitch is a Vagothian elf originally pressed into service by the Theran military, but who soon found a place in its ranks. Tall and tanned, with several scars on the right side of his face, and tattoos on his left, Galewitch is not to be trifled with. Despite his betrayal, he still wears his uniform into battle. He is as charismatic as he is ruthless, and has seen many battles and fleet actions.

Travar's magistrates have offered a large bounty for his head, but not as large as the one placed on it by Thera. His ship, the *Defiant* also has a bounty on it by various parties. Thera looks for its return, others its destruction.

**Eleventh Circle Elf Air Sailor**

**DEX: 7      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 7      CHA: 7**

**THROAL**

**T**he volume of trade conducted by Travar's merchant houses is disproportionate to the city's size. This economic clout ensures Travar has relationships with most other powers in Barsaive. The greatest of these is with the Kingdom of Throal, Travar's greatest trading partner. The relationship Travar has with Throal is treasured and complex.

Travar and Throal have a history of trade stretching back to before the Scourge. It was not until the Theran conquest of Barsaive, however, that significant trade flowed between them. When Travar submitted to the Theran Empire, Throal appointed House Byril'ah to administer Travar's affairs. This created a relationship between Travar and Throal that remains to this day.

House Byril'ah feels some lingering shame about the treatment of Travar's people in those final days, even if the measures did originate from King Varulus I. That may be why House Byril'ah contributed so much to the Council Compact and pushes for its implementation where it sees the opportunity.

Many Throalic families found themselves trapped in Travar. After the city opened it was only natural to restore links with their kin, further strengthening the bond between Throal and Travar.

Travar relies heavily on the trade routes built by Throal since the end of the Scourge. Since King Neden's death, this reliance has become an issue in both Travar and Throal. Throal's growing isolationism has resulted in many trade routes falling into disrepair. Travar's Magistrates find themselves pressured to help protect trade routes beyond its own borders. This level of protection would require a standing army, which the Magistrates consider a step too far, and believe would harm Travar's perceived neutrality.

Trade between Throal and Travar includes everything from everyday staples to magical artifacts. The Kingdom's population has increased so rapidly it is no longer self-sufficient, and relies on trade to make up the shortfall. Travar's farmlands produce more than the city can consume, and much of the excess is exported to Throal. Throal's Circle Path Company maintains office and storage facilities in Travar, and Travar's shipwrights are helping rebuild the Arm of Throal's navy after the losses incurred during the war.

Building warships for Throal once complicated the relationship between Travar, Throal, and Thera. Theran observers disputed Travar's claim of neutrality, highlighting Travar's part in breaking the siege of Throal and building warships for the Empire's enemies. Travar's Magistrates pointed out Travar's merchants traded with the Therans despite a blatant act of war by its K'tenshin allies. They have also stated they are more than happy to build airships for the Theran navy. Both the Theran and Throalic governments appear to consider this very bad humor.

The slave trade and the Council Compact are the two issues most likely to cause problems between Travar and Throal. Throal cannot stomach slavery, while

the Council Compact and Protectorate Movement divide Travar's people. Some Throalic factions push the idea of Travar as a protectorate to strengthen Barsaive's position should the Therans return. Since Neden's death, however, that support has cooled.

Throal recognizes the Therans have interests in Travar, and the Eye of Throal has expanded their own operations there. Like other powers in Barsaive, Throal understands having influence on Travar's affairs could shift, or maintain, Barsaive's balance of power. The Eye of Throal must tread cautiously, however, for trade between Travar and Throal is so intertwined it is hard to conceive of what the consequences would be if that relationship ceased to exist.

Travar's merchants look to Throal as an expanding market for their goods, and the citizens, uneasy at the thought of the Therans returning, find solace in the idea of Travar's alliance with Throal. All the while, the Magistrates strike a balance on what is becoming shaky ground.

The delegate of the Magistrates' Council is Bazana Gems-Dripping, previously the delegate to Jerris. Bazana is sharp dressed female ork who makes a big entrance and an even bigger impression. She unashamedly uses her position to further her own interests. It is no secret she holds designs on one day becoming a Magistrate. While Bazana fulfills her duties, she works the political circuit making friends to help further her ambitions. Unsurprisingly, the Eye of Throal has been courting Bazana through House Byril'ah, whose lavish parties she often attends.

Bazana's counterpart in Travar is a fitting match. Nurnborg is a male ork renowned for his animated speeches. He is especially passionate when lauding the virtues of the Council Compact in the city's taverns, which he refers to as "study sessions" in his official correspondence. The Magistrates know Nurnborg is a well-meaning rabble-rouser. His antics are tolerated because he performs an excellent job facilitating trade talks between Throal and Travar. Of course, Travar's Magistrates keep an eye on him, concerned he could become a target for a Theran or Iopoian assassin, which could do more damage than any trouble he may stir up on his own.

### *Nurnborg*

Flamboyant, emotional, and prone to giving spontaneous speeches, Nurnborg is driven by a passion few can match. An instantly recognizable figure, Nurnborg's



clothing always seem perfectly suited to the occasion, as if forewarned of the situations he finds himself in.

Now in his middle years, he feels time getting away from him and is more determined than ever to promote the Council Compact to the people of Travar. Throal's withdrawal from provincial affairs has him concerned, and dwarfs telling him to be patient sets of his *gahad*. He has recently found himself agitating as much in Throal as Travar.

#### **Non-adept Ork Diplomat**

**DEX: 5      STR: 6      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 6      CHA: 7**

#### *Bazana Gems-Dripping*

Bazana is a woman who knows how to get what she wants. Her charm is legendary, especially in diplomatic circles. Her outfits leave just enough to require imagination, yet are cut to enhance the grand entrances she is prone to making. Whatever the occasion, her body language is suggestive, the gleam in her eyes brimming with promise. She has the ability to make anyone feel wanted, or, if she chooses, inspire a fit of jealous rage. When her feminine charms aren't enough, she is a shrewd negotiator able to hold her own.

What Bazana really desires is to become a Magistrate, a goal she intends to pursue on her next rotation back to the city. Her self-assurance gives her the confidence to overcome almost any challenge.

#### **Non-adept Ork Merchant**

**DEX: 5      STR: 6      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 7      WIL: 5      CHA: 7**

## URUPA

**S**ome say Travar's merchants circle Urupa like birds of prey awaiting their next meal. Others use the less kindly comparison of the vulture.

Urupa and Travar are both peaceful city-states that thrive on trade, but that is where their similarities end. Urupa is a new city. It also maintains a sizable military force directly sponsored by its citizens. Urupa's elected leader, Chief Councilor Fellidra Jer, has held the post for many years, seeing Travar's Magistrates come and go. This complicates political relations between the two cities. Fortunately, trade and the two cities' trading houses anchor the relationship.

Urupa exports saltwater fish and luxury goods from beyond the Aras Sea to Travar. These include some of the unusual fashions Travar's people adopt. Travar's shipwrights have supplied many of Urupa's airships, and are currently negotiating for the contract to build three more vessels.

Many of Travar's merchants rely on trade with Urupa and some maintain a permanent presence in the city, referred to as trading missions. Xoros Honeyed-Tongue has a long-established mission in Urupa and currently holds the charter to supply fire cannons to the city.

Urupa shares two problems in common with Travar: Kyrytus Galewitch and House K'tenshin.

The pillaging of airship cargo by pirate crews, especially Galewitch, has resulted in many merchants turning to river transport, which is a boon for House K'tenshin. Urupa has several riverboats that avoid the South Reach of the Serpent River because of the high fees levied by House K'tenshin.

In a joint venture, the air merchants of Travar and Urupa are investing heavily in exploring safe, alternate routes to the Aras Sea. Direct flight over the Thunder Mountains has been achieved in the past, but high winds and frequent storms make the journey dangerous. Storm wraiths roam the peaks, and it is believed the Horror that created them still resides there. The Dragon Mountains tend to be avoided, as it is Mountainshadow's territory, and home to wyvern, younger dragons, and other airborne hazards.

The current delegate of the Magistrates' Council in Urupa is Ingot Ironcainr, eldest son of the Ironcainr dynasty. This is a recent appointment, as the previous delegate met with an unfortunate boating accident in Urupa's harbor. Ingot was appointed to the post despite the vehement, if not predictable, opposition of the Firecainr family.

Kavos Jul is Urupa's ambassador to Travar. Despite the difficulties of maintaining high-level relations, Fellidra and her councilors have a close working relationship with the current Magistrates, as their trading concerns have flourished in Urupa and they are well known visitors to the city. Indeed, for the last few years, Fellidra and the council of Urupa have received an invitation to the Founding Tournament from Travar's magistrates.

### *Kavos Jul*

In addition to representing Urupa, Kavos Jul is a scholar of some renown, having written several studies on the Scourge's effects on Barsaive and its people. Travar has always interested him, especially its ability to integrate different peoples into its culture, a problem facing Urupa.

He was delighted when Theran soldiers were given amnesty in the city, for it was the perfect case study for his project, and while it caused consternation in some quarters, it was largely ignored by the wider population. Such an act would have Urupa's citizens up in arms, and Kavos wants to learn why Travar is different.

His research has been hampered by a discovery made in the Labyrinth Library. He found reference to a warlike nation of t'skrang that lived just off the coast of where Urupa now stands, and who considered the area their territory. Beyond this document, he cannot find further reference to it. Kavos has not yet shared his discovery.

Kavos's appearance proclaims his scholarly interests. He has poor posture from hunching over books, and a bit of extra weight from lack of exercise. He is not interested in fine clothes or high society, which makes him stand out at the few official functions he bothers to attend.

### **Non-adept Human Scholar**

<b>DEX: 6</b>	<b>STR: 5</b>	<b>TOU: 5</b>
<b>PER: 7</b>	<b>WIL: 6</b>	<b>CHA: 5</b>

## VIVANE

**B**efore the Scourge, Vivane was Travar's greatest trading partner, greater even than Throal. With Theran airships significantly reducing the travel time, Travar's merchants took every opportunity to profit. In those days Vivane and Travar had good diplomatic relations.

Sadly, Vivane is little more than a ruin. Travar's merchants visit the outlying areas, but, with Vivane's economy shattered, the trade is a drop in the ocean compared to what it was, and is mainly in one direction. It is not without reason Travar's merchants can often be heard using the phrase "The passage to Merchant's Lament," which is either a literal reference to the journey to Vivane, or a metaphor used as part of a eulogy or other somber occasion.

Given the great distance and hazards of an overland journey, it is hardly surprising many merchants with smaller holdings are willing to sacrifice a percentage of their profits to join a larger outfit travelling to the ruined city. The most common is the Overland Trading Company, which can have dozens of individual trading caravans traveling under its wings. The benefits go much further than safety in numbers, and include experienced guides and professional caravan guards.

The route most often traveled is the old trade road from Portage, near Trosk, to Vivane. It is a long journey, requiring many weeks of travel and presents many dangers, not least the proximity of Cara Fahd. Some tribes there believe Travar's merchants are not trustworthy and fair game for raiding, which the merchants resent. Rumors say Garlthik One-Eye has been bribing raiding parties to keep to the south of the Portage road and away from Kratas.

## CARA FAHD

**L**ike the ork nation itself, diplomatic relations between Cara Fahd and Travar are in their infancy. Cara Fahd has not yet appointed an ambassador to Travar, which is unsurprising considering the distance between the two nations and the orks' focus on settling the land they have claimed.

The reasons go deeper, however. High Chief Krathis Gron cannot afford to lose educated orks when so much of the nation's future relies on more than courage and skill with a blade.

Despite the nation's short history, the Magistrate's Council has recently appointed Vogrin Fey, a Warrior and Champion of Travar, as its delegate to Cara Fahd. Vogrin is Travar's third delegate in as many years. The first, a windling Named Tobey Day-Eye, had a knack for triggering *gahad* wherever he went, and was returned to Travar tied to a giant messenger bat along with a message apologizing, but stating it was for the best.

The second, an ork moneylender called Ubris Goldholder, claims to have had a vision from Thystonius and resigned his position, embracing Cara Fahd as his new home. Travar's Magistrates realized they not only needed an ork to hold the position of delegate until relations normalized, but one who would not go native.

Not only was Vogrin a Champion of Travar, she is seeking a birthright unconnected to Cara Fahd. Travar's Magistrates have pledged to support her quest once her three-year term has ended.

Travar's merchants recognize Cara Fahd as having potential, and while the level of trade between the two nations is growing it's proving frustrating, for there are still difficulties to be overcome.

Some of Travar's most prominent merchants have suffered decreased profits since the ork nation's founding. Xoros Honeyed-Tongue has lost significant business, since many of his larger customers migrated there. While his order book is filling up, his profit margin is being eaten by the cost of transporting the product.

Many of the smaller tribes, who once visited Travar as part of their annual migration route, disdain Travar's merchants. They remember being denied entry to Travar, spending their time in Tent City watching fat, overdressed merchants swan through the gates unimpeded. In addition, merchants are often tarred with the stigma associated with Travar's stance on slavery.

Some merchants avoid the issue of having cargo snatched by not having any, instead selling services and experience rather than physical goods. The Xagal family have embarked on a joint mission with House Thanton, hoping to construct proper air dock facilities, and are looking into constructing airships for the ork nation.

Travar's merchants not only bring the goods of civilization, they return to Travar with cargos of lumber, the ebony and rosewood of Cara Fahd's jungles being particularly precious. Merchants also return with medicinal flowers, found only in the region's jungles. Livestock can be bartered for large quantities of rare lumber and other raw materials. Getting livestock to Cara Fahd, however, is difficult, as they must be protected every step of the way.

### **Adventure Hook: Resource Rush**

The characters are hired to protect the trading enterprise of Yibbitha Pretty-Penny, a merchant from Travar who has decided to set up business in Cara Fahd. Yibbitha's customers are the growing wave of miners and prospectors staking claims in the foothills of the Twilight Peaks.

Selling her wares and trading claims is extremely lucrative, inviting the attention of malcontents the characters must deal with as Yibbitha moves her business to follow the latest rumor of a gold or orichalcum strike.

Unfortunately for the player characters, Yibbitha is a con artist and swindler. She has been salting the mines in the area, planting small amounts of gold, silver, and other valuable minerals to entice the eager and desperate into buying the claim.

The characters are approached by a young ork whose family has lost everything after pooling their life savings to stake a claim and equip themselves. He believes the characters are Champions of Travar (which they may be) and they will do the honorable thing when he provides evidence of Yibbitha's scam.

Alternately, the characters are awoken one night by an angry mob of prospectors and find they are the center of attention. Yibbitha has vanished with the money. She discovered the game was up and left the characters to deal with the aftermath.

*Vogrin Fey*

About the time Cara Fahd declared its sovereign status, Vogrin Fey emerged from Kaer Helmholt at Stormdart Ridge in the Thunder Mountains. The kaer was built by the secretive Order of Kygruus Mul, a group of Warriors dedicated to preserving their martial traditions. Unsure if the Scourge had passed, Vogrin was part of a small group sent to scout the area. Spotting Travar from a distance, the group decided to return to Kaer Helmholt, sending Vogrin to Travar for news.



When Vogrin returned to the kaer, she discovered it open, her people slaughtered and the keepers of the Seven Traditions missing, along with several artifacts including Unshaken Word, the blade of the order's founder. Vogrin traveled to Travar to find help, only to end up competing in the Founding Tournament to earn favor.

Travar's Magistrates struck a deal with her. If she represented Travar in Cara Fahd for a three-year term, they would fund her quest for three years. Vogrin is a tall female ork, her tusks scrimshawed and head shaved. She follows a strict code of honor, and acts of cowardice set off her *gahad*.

**Seventh Circle Ork Warrior**

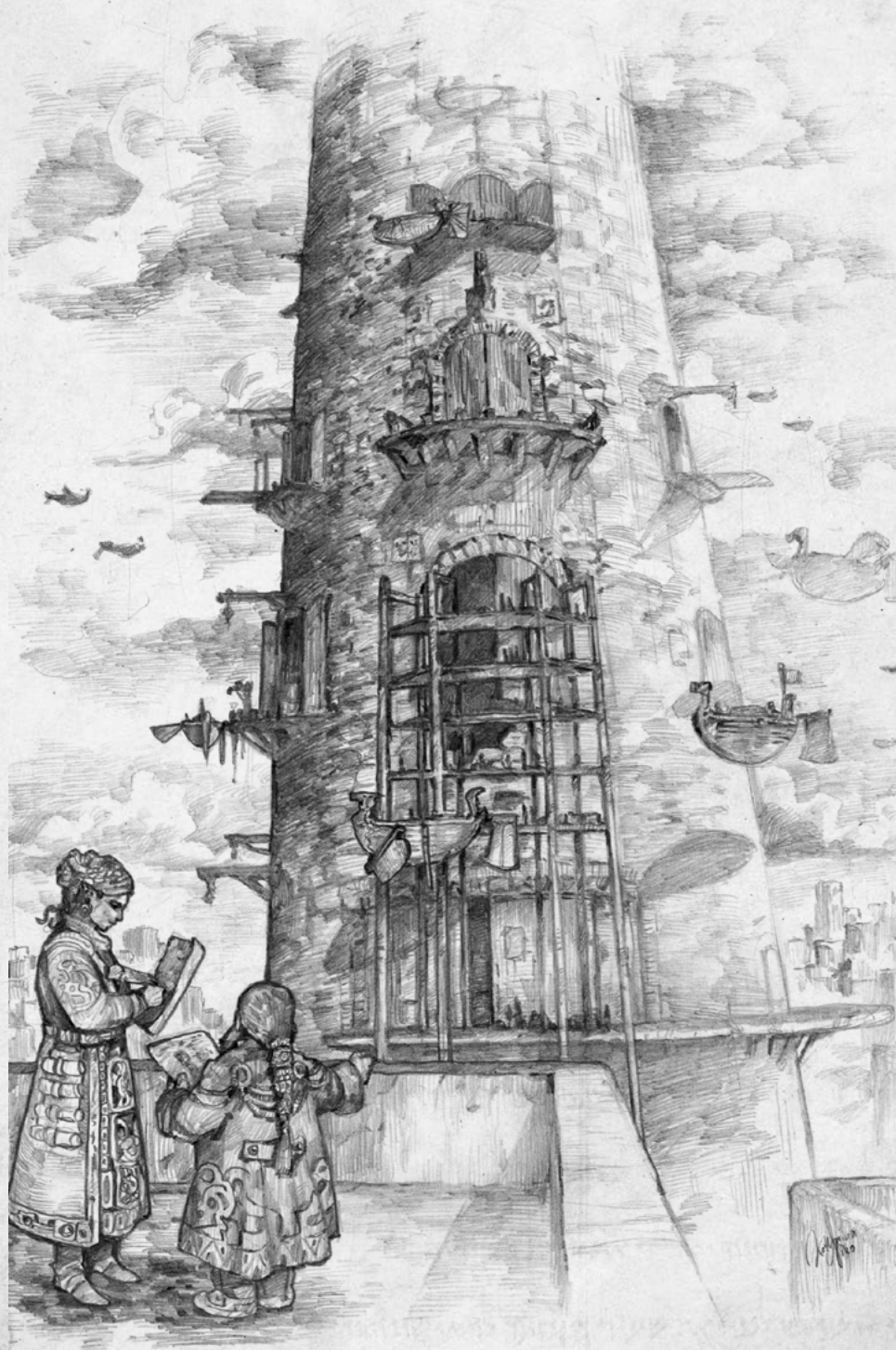
**DEX: 7      STR: 8      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 4      CHA: 4**

**CRYSTAL RAIDERS**

**T**ravar has no official diplomatic relations with the crystal raider clans. Any trade comes in the form of personal relationships between individual clans, and merchants who have earned their respect. Merchants who deal with the crystal raiders are often adepts, or are accompanied well paid guards not afraid of a confrontation.

To the large trading houses, they are seen in much the same light as the t'skrang of House Henghyoke or House Ishkarat. Yet Travar's smaller merchants usually give them a grudging respect. With the crystal raiders there is no skullduggery or swindle, no hiding in back alleys or behind tradition such as the t'skrang *bakshevas*. They are direct, and simply demand your goods, declaring your life forfeit if you try to negotiate further.

Despite the danger, some of Travar's smaller outfits have forged profitable relationships. A few managed this through negotiation, but most earned the respect of the crystal raiders by standing up to them, which lasts only while that clan leader is in power. More than one merchant has discovered that terms changed overnight after a successful leadership challenge.





## SIGHTS OF THE CITY

*Let me get this straight, you want me to tie a rope around my leg and do what? Are you completely insane? A ship has a gunwale around the deck for perfectly good reasons, besides, that rope will never hold my weight, I'm an obsidiman in case you haven't noticed. Oh, okay then, but once and once only, and if that rope breaks you can all consider yourselves unemployed!*

• **Juliack Merris, to the crew of the Crimson Dawn** •

### THE CITY WALLS

**T**ravar has two sets of walls. The inner, or old walls, mark the boundaries of what is affectionately known as Old Town and the outer, or new walls, encompass the expansion beyond old town and protect the entire city. The old walls are the original fortifications constructed by the Body of Five to protect what was then a bustling town and easy target from raiders.

The inner walls are constructed from locally quarried stone, and have a weathered, blue-gray tinge. Unlike the new walls, it is impossible to walk their length as the Body of Five's original towers divide them. The towers were an integral part of the wall's construction and block movement between sections. Access through the towers was possible at one time, but now the towers are privately owned and these access points are locked or bricked up. The walls of Old Town and the five towers are the only large structures in the city not constructed or faced with Travar's signature white stone, nor are they painted to blend in like many of the Old Town's remaining original buildings. Travar's main thoroughfares pass through majestic arched gateways in Old Town's walls.

Dating back to before the Scourge, Travar's outer walls have witnessed the passing of centuries and were designed to withstand whatever the Horrors would throw at them. They were commissioned to repel physical attack and to complement a protective magical dome. They were also designed to be a work of physical beauty, and like many other towns and cities at the time, a display of power and wealth.

Like the rest of the city, the outer wall is divided into sections by city gates. Each section has three watch towers, one in the center and one at each end next to the gate, so each gate is flanked by two towers. These watch towers are flat-roofed and designed to mount ballistae and fire cannons. The towers can maintain their own protective dome of air in times of war, a feature added after the Scourge in response to the attack by House K'tenshin. The domes are expensive to maintain, but are activated each year to mark the beginning of the Festival of Color and maintained throughout the two weeks of the Founding. During this time, the dome's hue matches the annual color.

Each section is well guarded, especially at night. The guard on the western walls is heavier, and roving patrols are common. It is possible to walk the entire length of

Travar's walls, with access stairs at regular intervals. The walls are open to public during daylight hours, and provide an excellent view. Old Town is the only part of Travar not visible from some part of the outer wall.

Before the Scourge, Travar's planned protection by a dome affected the city's growth. The buildings closest to the walls stand in their shadow and rarely rise above them. The closer one gets to the old wall and city center, the taller buildings become, forming concentric circles of height, with a few airship docking towers, built after the Scourge, breaking the skyline.

These tall central buildings often give travelers their first glimpse of Travar. From a distance in the morning mists or shimmering heat, many mistake them for massive city walls, forming an indelible first impression. As the traveler gets closer, the details become clearer, giving the illusion of the city rising out of the ground to meet them.

*Ink and quill seem such inadequate tools to record what I have learned or describe what I have witnessed. But I have no other tools at my disposal, and for that I can only apologize. To look on Travar from the skies, see the patterns the city paints on the landscape is to know Upandal has blessed you. The city is, without doubt, built by those inspired by Upandal, for the quality of construction is second to none, and its towers shine with an unmatched radiance.*

*To gain the best vantage point, I urged the captain take the airship to a great height directly over the city. If approached from a low angle—as any ship docking in Travar naturally would—much of the spectacular view is lost. At first the Arena stands out, and it is easy to see why it is known as the Eye of Travar.*

*It soon becomes apparent the Arena is but the center of a great wheel, with its rim the outer wall and the main thoroughfares its spokes, anchored to the hub of the old city walls*

— *The Journal of Arban Vex, Merchant Scholar*

## THOROUGHFARES AND AVENUES

Travar has five main streets collectively referred to as thoroughfares: Founders Way, Chorrolis' March, Selestran Way, The Divide (not be confused with the Great Divide, one of the city's neighborhoods), and The Cattle Drive. While at first glance they may look the same, each has its own distinct character.

### Founders Way

The full length of Founders Way, from atop the city walls to the gates of the Arena, is a sight to behold. Travar's streets are cobbled with fist-sized white stones gathered from the shores of the Aras Sea to match the white stone of the buildings lining the thoroughfare. These walls and cobbles take on a golden hue from sunlight reflecting off Travar's golden-domed towers.

Those regularly traveling or doing business on Founders Way often wear robes of the softest white and, like the streets, reflect the golden light. When parents tell their

children tales of Travar; they describe a city so wealthy the streets gleam with gold. Few realize how close to the truth they are.

Founders Way is the busiest of Travar's main thoroughfares and runs east to west from Thundergate to the Founding Circle in Old Town. It is lined with all manner of shops, businesses, and taverns and boasts some of Travar's most spectacular towers. From dawn to dusk, the entire thoroughfare is a hive of activity and can become bottlenecked at the busiest times of the day, especially at Thundergate and the entrance to Old Town.

On Founders Way, the city's people, regardless of their wealth, can be found mixing together and going about their daily business. Many of the wealthy in Travar love flaunting their riches and Founders Way is the place to be seen. Some openly parade up and down the street with no other purpose. Even on a quiet day, rich merchants can be seen haggling with craftsmen and farmers, surrounded by entourages of fawning servants or men at arms. Many see a personal entourage as a status symbol and employ the beautiful, the hard, and the dangerous-looking to follow them about. Some ride in regal coaches pulled by animals decorated with finery, while others navigate the crowds in lavish sedan chairs infused with True Air, floating through the streets.

### **Taverns and Inns: The Mountain View**

*Situated in Old Town on Founders way is the largest of House Halla's inns. This complex was once the old Theran Garrison, the watch tower now the inn's dining rooms and ale house. The one thing you won't find is an actual mountain view. The taller buildings beyond Old Town block any possibility of that. The Name comes from a large mosaic on the dining room wall depicting the Thunder Mountains. Commissioned by the Theran commander at the time, it is said the tiles depicting each mountain come from that mountain.*

*Whether it was a purely decorative piece or had other uses is unknown. Shortly after the Scourge, it was noted the peaks of certain mountains would glow different colors from time to time, and the tiles depicting the sky would darken before a storm over the peaks, something that reportedly never happened prior to the Scourge.*

— Gallion Quickstream, Road Warden

### **The Cattle Drive**

In Travar's earliest days, farmers and herdsman would drive their cattle from the southern pastures along a trail to the livestock market where the Arena now stands. Named after this trail, the Cattle Drive is Travar's southernmost thoroughfare, and is still used by nomads and farmers to bring their flocks to the livestock market at Slaver's Gate.

During Travar's expansion, the Therans and their Throalic administrators brought a program of road building and almost thirty miles of the Cattle Drive beyond the city was paved with stone, linking many small towns and villages directly to Travar.

Today, only the first half-dozen miles of this road remains. It ends abruptly, continuing as it once did as a natural trail. Some believe those desperate to complete their kaers after the Closing used the road as a source of pre-cut stone, while others claim the Horrors obliterated all trace of it.

## The Divide

With the expansion before the Scourge, many of the wealthy living in the west found their property, once outside the walls, swallowed by the burgeoning city. Some sold their land to allow for new construction, while others were happy to retain their estates within the new city limits. Those who maintained their holdings built walls with the fashionable white stone. These estates naturally lined the western trade road that became part of the city, and the walls became a dividing line in what is otherwise an open city, giving the Divide its Name.

The Divide seldom suffers the congestion found on other thoroughfares. Almost all the homes and businesses are on the south side, since the walls lining the north side leave little room for them. Fewer businesses means fewer people, and few caravans leave by the Narid Gate, reducing traffic even further.

The walls on the northern side do not block access to the Great Divide. Many side streets lead to small huddles of houses and village-like cul-de-sacs, or simply meander along estate borders.

*In the early morning, walking Travar's streets can be an eerie experience. Just before sunrise the mists roll out across the Byrose valley. While the mists do not compare to those of the Mist Swamps, from the walls of Travar they are thick enough to obscure Tent City and the docks beyond.*

*The mist filters into the city and thins out, creating a ghostly atmosphere in the streets and reducing vision to fifteen or twenty yards. The sounds of Travar's early stirrings can be unsettling in the mist-filled streets, as it can be difficult to tell from which direction the sound comes. Those few who are up and about in those forsaken hours can appear as phantoms flitting in and out of existence.*

*Opening Travar's gates on a misty morning is an unsettling experience. The mists pour through the gates like an invading army.*

*When the mists are particularly heavy, the outer walls cannot contain them and they boil over the top, flowing down the walls and thoroughfares, filling the side streets and alleys with eerie tendrils. Fortunately, the mists rarely last beyond mid-morning, with the first rays of sunlight burning them away.*

— *The Journal of Arban Vex, Merchant Scholar*

## Selestran Way

Named after Travar's founder, though few know how it came about its Name, Travar's northwestern thoroughfare has a special place in the hearts of the indentured folk. The Twilight Gate was the last to remain open, allowing the last few refugees into the city. Even today, Selestran Way is lined with high-density housing.

Selestran Way has a rougher character than Travar's other main thoroughfares. The Twilight Gate market attracts large numbers of adepts, adventures, and mercenaries to the area, and the nearby compact housing leads to a somewhat lower standard of living compared to other parts of the city.

### **Chorrolis' March**

Travar's northernmost thoroughfare bears the Name of the Passion its people revere, and with good reason. Chorrolis' March is how most of Travar's merchants leave the city to export their goods across Barsaive. Any merchant with more than three or four wagons in their caravan knows it is quicker to leave via the Sky Gate in the north, even if they intend to make their way to the Byrose docks east of the city to transport their goods by riverboat.

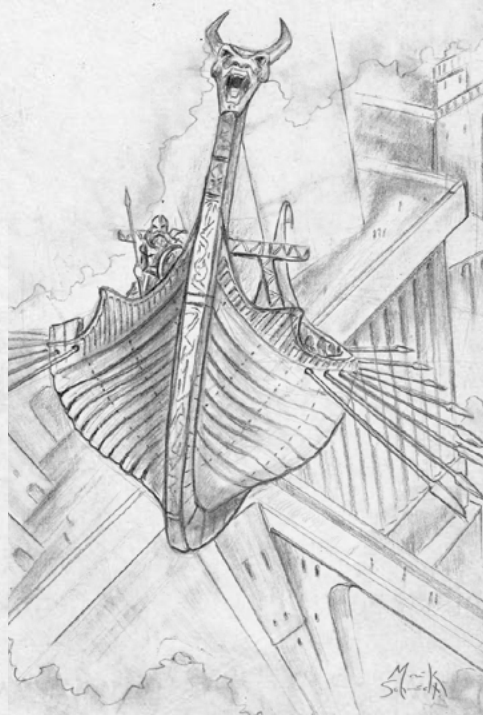
The caravans of the great trading houses carry much of Travar's exports along Chorrolis' March, and the largest are an awe-inspiring sight. When half the length of these caravans has passed through Sky Gate, the end cannot be seen on Chorrolis' March. Many of Travar's airships also drift along the sky lane above Chorrolis' March as they leave the city limits.

Chorrolis' March has numerous shops and businesses, and it is considered good luck to have business premises there. Indeed, the Overland Trading Company has its headquarters on Chorrolis' March, next the walls of Old Town.

### **Sky Lanes**

Travar's main thoroughfares double as designated sky lanes. All airships, except the Air Patrol's drakkars, are required to use them to enter and leave the city limits. These long, wide spaces are perfect for airships to navigate the city unimpeded, reducing the risk of collisions with Travar's many towers. When an airship leaves the sky lanes, they must lower their sails and use manual propulsion to reach their destination.

Not all of Travar's docking towers are conveniently located on the edges of its thoroughfares, and maneuvering by sail in the built-up confines of the city is nigh impossible due to strong updrafts between tall buildings. This is compounded further in adverse weather conditions, such as high winds. Captains use the sky lanes as holding positions when the city is filled with morning



mists, because they are easily recognizable by the open space between the towers and buildings lining each thoroughfare.

Air Patrol drakkars can cross the city however they see fit. Their sleek designs are a direct result of the need to pilot craft in the tight confines. They are often required to transport the City Watch or Travar's Champions during special operations. Sailing a drakkar is the quickest and quietest method when surprise is required.

## Avenues

Each of Travar's primary divides is bisected by an avenue. These run from one of the Five Towers of Old Town to the guard tower in the center of that divide's outer wall. They typically have the character of the divide they are in, lined with businesses, and occasionally homes appropriate to the neighborhood.

While not as valued as property facing the main thoroughfares, businesses located on one of the avenues can still make or break a merchant's fortunes based on local traffic. As a result, competition for these shopfronts can be fierce.

The avenue in the Commercial Divide is called Achura Avenue. River Side has Byrose Avenue, South Valley has Dragon Walk. The Great Divide has Grim's Passage, and the Industrial Divide has Serpent Avenue.

## DIVIDES

Running from each of the city's main gates before ending at Founding Circle, Travar's main thoroughfares effectively divide the city into five individual sections, known as divides. Divide has social connotations, for as in many other places the less fortunate are often corralled in their own areas.

When they can be bothered to think about it, those in power claim otherwise, saying the wealthy and the struggling can be found living in the same neighborhoods. Critics point out those less fortunate are often servants and indentured, and the wealthy frequently live in homes with tall towers, literally looking down on their neighbors.

As a rule, the closer to the outer walls the lower standard of living. There are no real slums in Travar, although some would argue the cramped housing along Selestran Way qualifies. Even these buildings, however, are outwardly tasteful and in keeping with the rest of the city, down to the ceramic blue tiles used across much of Travar.

There are, of course, those who live day to day in the streets and back alleys. The City Watch, at the Magistrates' direction, does what it can to keep these unfortunates out of sight, and they are often dumped outside the walls to find a place in Tent City. This allows the Magistrates a convenient dodge of pointing out the awful conditions critics describe are found outside the city walls.

With the Badlands encroaching on Travar's western borders, the wealthy have begun migrating to the eastern neighborhoods. This has led to property values in the west dropping, while those in the east rise.

## River Side

This divide has been shaped by its proximity to the Byrose River and those arriving by riverboat and ferry. River Side is a populous area catering to the many

visitors Travar receives each year. There are more inns, taverns, and stables in River Side than the entirety of the other divides combined. Many of these are located close to Founders Way.

River Side is liveliest during the evenings and late into the night. During the Founding, River Side is bustling night and day, and many of Travar's Champions can be found taking advantage of their title or trying to build a following to cheer them. Most of the duels between Champions occur in this divide, which attracts people to the area hoping they will witness such an event.

While they may not witness a duel, it is likely spectators will witness more than a few drunken brawls. It is not surprising patrols of the City Watch occur with greater regularity in River Side than most other areas.

The part of River Side closest to the Cattle Drive has fewer inns, instead housing most of River Side's permanent residents. Many feel they have more in common with the residents of the South Valley Divide than their high-spirited neighbors to the North.

### **South Valley Divide**

The South Valley Divide takes its Name from the Byrose Valley, but its residents simply refer to it as the Valley. It is the most densely populated area in Travar, especially in the western half of the divide. Toward the eastern edge, the dense housing gives way to more spacious homes and the small industries and businesses associated with the agricultural and livestock markets.

It is here and River Side where visitors are most likely to smell the stench of the tanner's yards and livestock corrals that lie to Travar's south. Much of Travar's butchers, granaries, and breweries can be found in the Valley, and while most of the flour mills have relocated to the river, a few of the old slave driven mills remain. These mills are now powered by beasts of burden, and still continue to produce flour. The Valley is home to one of the two shrines to Jaspreet in the city.

### **Great Divide**

The Great Divide is the westernmost divide and has more estates than any other in the city. During the Scourge the land was put to use growing crops, but has mostly reverted to well-tended ornamental gardens and tree lined avenues.

Many estates are walled off, and nowhere is this more evident than walking the length of the Divide, which is notable for the walls lining its northern side. Plenty of streets crisscross the Great Divide, even if they see less use than others in the city. These roads and streets are mainly used by those who live in the neighborhood, as few businesses worthy of note in the area.

In the Great Divide, you're likely to see servants and slaves going about their master's business, along with those residents of the few small communities in and around the large estates. There are a few public parks, and some of the estates are only semi private, open to residents of the neighborhood.

### **Taverns and Inns: The Magistrate's Tribune**

*The combined wealth of the Tribune's patrons is staggering, but there's more to this rich man's club than meets the eye. These people didn't accumulate their wealth simply by running a business. They have an uncanny knack of reacting to events before they happen. You don't think it odd House Dumorjen doubled their wheat production last year, when there already was a surplus, only for Throal's yields to collapse due to inclement weather.*

*Don't believe me? Let me tell you about the Oracle...*

— Ketra Dris, Inquisitor of the Black Bureau

*This place is a heist just waiting to happen. The art in the foyer alone would set you up for life.*

— Pliva, House Slave to Gaius Silar

### **Industrial Divide**

As the Name suggests, the Industrial Divide is home to some of Travar's heavy industry. Not all Travar's industry remained inside the city at the end of the Scourge, but the divide still retains the Name. The Industrial Divide is home to Travar's burgeoning airship yards, which are one of the city's largest employers.

Travar also has some of the largest stonemason yards in the region. Prior to the Scourge, Travar's merchants had hundreds of contracts and charters to supply skilled masons and all manner of finished stone, from the ornate gates that sealed the kaers, to statues of the Passions that would be given places of honor within them.

While the Scourge saw a decline in demand for stonework, the skills were put to use building the Arena. Today, the tradition continues and the stonemason yards produce everything from statuary and fluted columns to ornamental parapets and grotesques. Many of those who work in Travar's heavy industries live in the Industrial

### **Taverns and Inns: The Broken Cutlass**

*If you need an aircrew at short notice, The Broken Cutlass is the place to come. Just a stone's throw from the Twilight Gate, it attracts the right kind of clientele. On the face of it, hiring from the Cutlass might not seem the brightest idea, but despite its reputation, there are enough with a sense of honor to make even the boldest mutineer think twice.*

*Some are convicted pirates who have survived the slave pens. Many would give anything for the chance to take to the skies again. There are growing numbers of Theran airmen among the regulars, without doubt having seen brutal ship-to-ship combat. Despite the amnesty, the Cutlass is one of the few places they feel accepted. There's even a good number of former fire miners who have been burned by Death just once too often.*

*One way or another, they have all run out of luck. Give them a home on your ship, make them feel part of something again, and you will have the best damn crew an airship ever had.*

— Siren Skywhisper, Air Sailor, First Mate

Divide.

## The Commercial Divide

Home to some of Travar's most influential merchants, businesses, and financial institutions, the Commercial Divide is a ceaseless hub of business activity. From before the sun rises until long after it sets, the Commercial Divide drives Travar's economy and creates much of its vast wealth. While some claim more business deals are struck and contracts signed in the Commercial Divide each month than there are dwarfs in Throal, it has the ring of truth. Travar's merchants have a fascination for contracts and covenants for the most trivial of deals.

The most lucrative contracts are often sealed with an item known as the trading coin, a tradition specific to Travar. Merchants in the Commercial Divide can sometimes be seen wearing the coins of fulfilled contracts on ribbons, much as a soldier bears a campaign medal, and is considered by many a sign of reliability.

### Taverns and Inns: The Picky Palate

*The food in the Picky Palate has a unique taste for a reason and it's more than just the quality produce and skill of the cooks. The proprietors own a plantation west of the city that produces a berry that grows nowhere else. It is an extract of these berries that gives all their food that unique taste. Rumor has it this year's crop has failed due to soil depletion; a sure sign the Badlands has moved a little closer to Travar.*

— Tamber Winterleaf, Elf of the Marches

## GATES AND MARKETS

Unless a traveler arrives in Travar by airship, the first thing they encounter is one of Travar's busy gate markets, along with a bewildering throng of people milling about as if they have no other purpose than to impede traffic. Each of Travar's main thoroughfares starts at a set of gates in the city wall, each with its own unique market.

The gate markets are located inside the walls on both sides of the thoroughfare. During the Founding, the influx of visiting merchants cannot be accommodated and the markets often spill outside the walls, further adding to the mayhem. House Achura has a virtual monopoly on most of the gate markets, renting stalls to traders in the city.

Traders are welcome to set up their own stalls, but they must conform to sizes regulated by the Code of Travar, and traders must be up well before the crack of dawn to be guaranteed a good position.

### Thundergate

Located at the end of Founders way, Thundergate Market is the largest and most chaotic. Visitors often assume the market is Named because of the constant din of barter and the jarring rattle of wagons passing over the wooden duckboards winding through Tent City. The Name, however, predates Tent City and is a result of the gate's facing, east to the Thunder Mountains. When conditions are right, peals of thunder emanating from the mountain valleys can sometimes be heard over the tumult.

Situated in the most populous part of Travar, it is closest to the docks. Like all the gate markets it sells a wide variety of goods and produce, reflecting it is the focal point for merchants arriving from across Barsaive. It is a bazaar of foreign imports and local wares, arts and fine crafts. At some stalls a weary traveler can purchase food and lodgings in advance, along with carriage to take them and their luggage to an inn of their choice.

During the Founding, Thundergate Market is complete bedlam and is often the focus for pickpockets and the City Watch maintains a constant presence.

### **Slaver's Gate**

Facing southeast is Slaver's Gate. In the dead of night, when the market is closed, the gates are opened to march Travar's criminals to the slave markets outside the city.

Followers of Lochost often stand vigil on such occasions, lining the roadside with lanterns held high and heads bowed low, calling on Lochost to curse those responsible for the enslavement of their fellow Namegivers. On more than one occasion, slavers have been ambushed and the slaves freed. As a result, the City Watch escorts the condemned to the gate.

During the day, the mood is not so ominous and trade at the market begins early. Still, visitors to the city often believe it to be the slave market, due to the gate's Name. The market deals mainly in cotton and wool produced on nearby farms and plantations. Once a week it becomes a livestock market. Slaver's Gate is the only gate farmers are allowed to herd large herds of animals through.

### **Narid Gate**

The Narid Gate gains its Name from a phenomenon first discovered by the stonemasons who constructed the southwest section of the outer wall. In the distance to the west, at certain times of the day, they reported flashes of light, some describing it as diamonds sparkling in the air.

Travar's merchants investigated, but to their dismay discovered it to be the Narid River, plunging over a series of previously undiscovered falls. Today, the Narid is known as the River of Bones, and if its waters still plunge over the falls, the reflecting sun no longer betrays its location. The Narid Gate, however, has kept its original Name, no one daring to call it the bone gate or refer to the market as the bone market.

Like the Twilight Market, the Narid Market was once a market for agricultural goods. Since the Scourge, it has been in decline and is small compared to the other markets, and is sometimes called the Little Market.

There is so little traffic through this market the gates sometimes remain closed for days at a time, only opened when the guards spot someone directly approaching. The market mostly caters to the local population selling day-to-day goods and groceries. Because the gate remains closed most of the time, the City Watch patrol the market less frequently and it has become the place of choice for thieves to fence loot away from prying eyes.

## Twilight Gate

Located at the northwest end of Selestran Way, Twilight Gate was once known as Fortune's Gate because of the golden sunsets over the Tara'var, a land of seemingly endless bounty. In Travar, however, fortunes come and go and, with the creation of the Badlands, the sunsets are now purple-red.

The Name now reflects how the gate is the first to close each evening, usually an hour before darkness. Many in Travar see this as a cruel irony, as Fortune's Gate was the last gate to remain open until the Closing.

The setting sun is harbinger for increased patrols on the walls and creatures attracted to the city from the Badlands, which has become increasingly common in the last several years.

Once a busy agricultural market, it changed focus when farms and villages to the west were abandoned due to the encroaching Badlands. The market still sells produce from farms located close to the city, but its main trade now is expedition goods. Having diversified to cater to those exploring the Badlands, the Twilight Market is sometimes called Delver's Market, and has become the place to equip and resupply for any expedition out of Travar.

The market is often the first port of call for adepts returning from a successful expedition with treasures they wish to exchange for cash or other goods. Many merchants in the market sponsor their own expeditions, acting on bits of information gleaned from their customers.

## Sky Gate

Facing northeast, the Sky Gate is located at the end (some would say the beginning) of Chorrolis' March. The Sky Gate is Named for the many airships that use the northern sky lane, their shadows passing over the stalls below. Trading caravans also frequently leave from Sky Gate, even to get to the Byrose Docks, because Thundergate can be difficult to navigate on a busy day and Tent City is a frequent choke point despite efforts to keep traffic moving.

The market at the Sky Gate specializes in goods for heavy industries. Wholesale raw materials like copper, iron, lumber, and cut stone are sold in bulk and the market boasts the widest range of tradesman and artisan tools in the city.

House Achura does not have a strong hold on this market, as many of its stalls cannot hope to hold the weight and volume of materials offered. While the market does offer everyday goods to those who live nearby, most of the market is divided into large open lots by stanchions linked by rope or chain.

## Eternal Market

Travar's Eternal Market started out as a modest affair to cater to the needs of the hundreds of indentured House Achura found itself responsible for. The market was established on what little estate House Achura had remaining, several loose clusters of buildings spread throughout an overgrown ornamental garden. The area was cleared and buildings renovated to make way for market stalls and a few shops.

Over the years, the market expanded as House Achura bought up parts of the surrounding neighborhood when it could afford to. Property prices in the area were

kept artificially low, and the market drew indentured folk to work in the stores. This caused some tension, as wealthy landlords considered them uncouth commoners that lowered the tone of the area.

By the time the Scourge was over, the market had expanded considerably. With increasing volumes of trade, it became one of the most popular markets in Travar and opened every day of the week. As word of the Founding Tournament spread to the rest of Barsaive, the influx of visitors resulted in crowds roaming the streets at all hours of the night. The opportunity for profit was evident and the market remained open all hours the following year during the two weeks of the Founding. It was so successful that eventually the market simply didn't close.

Now called the Eternal Market, it remains open every day and night throughout the year. The market is barely recognizable from its humble origins. The ornamental garden has been replanted and restored to its former glory. The garden is surrounded on three sides by rows of shop fronts with brightly colored awnings. On the fourth side, a spectacular wrought iron arch opens onto Chorrolis' March. Throughout the garden are designated areas for independent traders to pitch their stalls. Overlooking it all are the stately homes of House Achura's families.

In the early evening, most of the grocery stalls give way to those of artisans, and many merchants make deals over a hot drink in the evening chill. There is even activity in the dead of night. The City Watch and air crews often visit it between shifts and many adepts in the city prefer to avoid the bustle of the daytime trade. Before the sun rises, the market fills with the smell of baking bread and smoked fish, and house servants are busy in these early hours acquiring the freshest foods for their master's pantries.

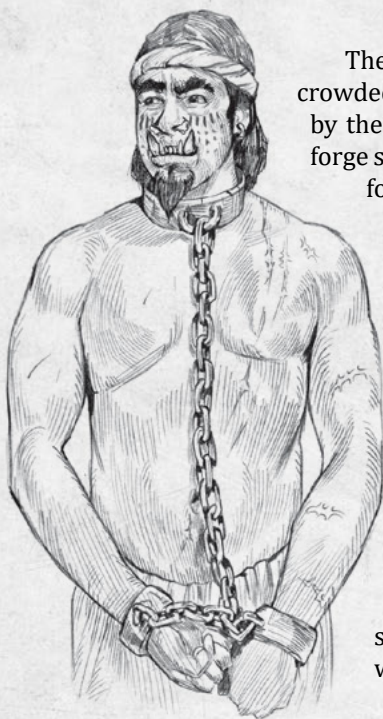
## THE FIVE TOWERS

**T**owers are commonplace in Travar and come in all shapes and sizes. Some are short and squat, only a few floors high. Others soar to breath-taking heights, topped with golden domes. Some are freestanding monuments built to display of power and wealth, or part of larger functional structures.

Despite the bewildering array of towers, when someone in Travar refers to the Five Towers these are the ones to which they are referring. The word "Travar" has its roots in an ancient language meaning five towers. Unlike the many white, golden domed masterpieces across the city, the Five Towers are quaint. They seem almost rickety in comparison, testament to a more functional age. Each tower boasts a conical, glazed blue tile roof and all five of the towers are integral to the old town wall.

The towers were once home to the Body of Five, built when they first arrived on the site that would one day become Travar. They were constructed to hide a set of foundation stones they had uncovered, each one housing an astral construct of unknown purpose (see **The Founding of Travar**, p. 14). Today, the towers are relics of the past, privately owned and converted into homes and businesses. Their secrets lie buried in depths unknown to their current owners.

The westernmost tower is the best known, and is one of Travar's most popular libraries (see **Libraries of Travar**, p. 190).



The northwestern tower is the noisiest and most crowded of the five. It is home to the Dragon's Forge, run by the Strugen family. The tower has been home to the forge since the Body of Five vacated it. The forge is known for its high-quality work, and many Weaponsmiths in the area come to train with the Strugen family.

The Dragon's Forge holds the exclusive contract to supply weapons to the City Watch, and these weapons bear a distinctive hilt. Only the City Watch is permitted to carry these weapons, and anyone else caught with one can expect a hefty fine. Depending how they acquired the weapon, they could even find themselves in the slave pens.

The shop attached to the forge maintains a stock of standard blades. These blades are stamped with the Dragon's Forge mark and not the smith who made them. They also have a selection of metal armor available, also stamped with the Dragon's Forge mark.

Many of the smiths in the forge are adepts, typically from Third to Fifth Circle. The current Master of the Forge is Iolaous of the Fifth, a Ninth Circle Weaponsmith and son of the great Druegr Axynrune. Druegr occasionally comes out of the upper levels of the tower, but rarely stays in the forge long and his appearance often causes a stir. Iolaous has three children, a son Philenus, and twin daughters, Annir'a and Bashir'a. The twins are both Elementalists, and often help with custom enchanting work.

The southwestern tower has recently been purchased as a private residence, but the new owner is not publicly known. Rumors abound, some ridiculous (as if Mountainshadow would want to live in Travar). Judging from the slaves working to remodel the tower, it is likely the new owner is not from Travar, and perhaps not even from Barsaive.

The northeastern tower is the home of the wealthy Coppertop windling clan. When the Body of Five abandoned the towers for larger, more ostentatious residences, the Coppertop clan moved in. The tower's entrance has been permanently blocked off at ground level and the door only remains for show to match the other towers. The windlings use the upper windows and the doors on the old town walls to enter and leave. Ar'gyn Coppertop is the current head of the clan and has plans to become the first windling Magistrate.

The southeastern tower is home to one of Old Town's most famous bakeries. People travel from all over Travar to purchase the fresh pastries and tarts it produces. The bakery has passed through several hands over the years. When he retired, the founder, rather than sell it to the highest bidder, held a grand baking competition where the winner took over the business. This started a tradition that has been followed to this day.

## TOWER OF COMMERCE

The Tower of Commerce is where the true power lies in Travar. While the Magistrates oversee the functioning of the city and implement policy, the Tower of Commerce is where the big trade deals and contracts are brokered. Indeed, Travar's Magistrates spend as much time in the Tower of Commerce as they do looking after the city's affairs. The tower was built as a functioning shrine to Chorrolis prior to the Scourge, and is a constant symposium of trade. Inside, deals are hammered out, new ventures and expeditions planned, money lent, and problems debated and solved.

Open to all, the tower can be a busy place. The ground floor is where most come, offering a thought and donation to Chorrolis in hopes he will bless their latest business venture. An annual membership fee, high enough keep out troublemakers and the simply curious, allows access to the upper floors. For a price, non-members can gain access to the upper floors if vouched for by a member, and the fee is worth it. In the Tower of Commerce, one can almost always find someone looking to buy or sell whatever is on offer.

The top floor is home to one of Travar's oldest and most important institutions, the Chamber of Vaults. Situated in the tower's dome, its vaulted ceilings are lavishly ornate and covered in gold leaf. Five ornate thrones arranged in a semi-circle on a small dais take up one side of the room. Called the Court of Chorrolis, custom has it a merchant looking to invest in a business deal takes a seat on the dais indicating they can be approached to consider any offers. In practice, only the wealthiest sit on the dais, as few have the resources to invest in the myriad proposals put before them.

It is possible to tell the most powerful merchants in Travar, because they or their representatives have an effectively permanent seat on the court. One merchant is reported to have said they sit like kings of old, the barons queuing to curry favor. With a nod or shake of the head, a merchant king can ruin a lesser merchant. If one of the most powerful merchants in Travar does not find merit in your proposal, who else is likely to aid your enterprise? Regardless, it does not stop the queues of petitioners in the Court of Chorrolis.

The Chamber of Vaults also has private rooms for those who wish to make deals away from prying eyes. In addition, it functions as a money lending and storage facility, and the largest currency exchange in Barsaive. A large, intricately carved wooden board depicting Chorrolis's cupped hands overflowing with coins dominates one side of the exchange. The board lists the various currencies common to Barsaive and a few beyond. Below each currency is an ostentatious abacus displaying the current conversion rates, as well as going rates for True elements. Travar's merchants recognize and trade in almost any currency.

Merchants mingle freely in the Tower of Commerce. One operating a small monthly caravan to Throal rubs elbows with those who run Travar's greatest companies and trading houses. This allows all merchants to establish contacts, find markets for their goods, and gather information. The networking, bribe taking, and information gathering in the Tower of Commerce has given rise to the Synod, a network of political and trading contacts that holds a vitally important role for Travar's security (see p. 91).

## Taverns and Inns: The Burning Drakkar

*"Even the blind could see her go down. It was a fireworks display I shall remember for the rest of my short life. Damn, she was a beautiful ship. It's a pity the captain refused to surrender."*

— Final words of Mercian Horde, crystal raider captain

*Found near the air dock, and run by children of crystal raiders pressed into indenture after destroying a Dumorjen galley in sight of the city walls. Salvaged pieces of the galley and the attacking drakkar are featured in the décor. It's a popular watering hole for airmen, and lowland trolls who dream of being great captains. Good food and tall tales can always be found here.*

— Dara Evenstar, Throal Air Marine



## Adventure Hook: Return to the Skies

The Burning Drakkar's trolls, looking to reclaim their legacy have been using the loft space to build a new drakkar, dubbed the Mercian Horde, in honor of the captain who led the original raid. They have been skimming profits from the tavern to fund the construction, and modified the roof to let the airship leave when it is done.

The player characters can be brought into this couple of ways. They might be investigating reports of construction noise from people in the area and discover the escape plans. They might be called to pursue the trolls when the roof is opened and the drakkar sets off on its maiden voyage.

Resolution requires the player characters to navigate conflicting motivations. Some of the trolls are torn between the desire to fly off and rejoin their moot, or staying in Travar with the life they know. House Dumorjen is unhappy if the trolls leave before their indenture debt is paid. They may argue the new airship belongs to them, as it was built with their resources, or try to extend the indenture to recoup lost profits from the tavern. Other merchants would prefer not to see a band of pirates threatening air travel.

## AIR DOCKS

Close to the Sky Gate in the northern part of the city is a small compound surrounded by a wall of white marble. The wall is decorated with carvings of airships sailing the skies alongside various flying creatures. Known as "the dock," it is home to Travar's Air Marshals and fleet of escort ships known collectively as the Air Patrol. Unfortunately, what is depicted on these walls could not be more different than what is behind them. The Air Marshals are officially a unit of the City Watch, but seem forgotten in comparison to other units. Perhaps it is well Travar maintains no standing army, for the lack of investment in what many consider its first line of defense is almost criminal.

Unlike its outer wall, the dock is a run-down, spartan affair. It has mooring space for Travar's air fleet, which consists of four galleys and six drakkars, though only the drakkars and one of the city's galleys dock here. The captains of the other three galleys prefer the private docking towers of merchant houses, which are better equipped to handle cargo and passengers. The Juliak Merris Trading Company sometimes provides a small donation to use the spare mooring space at the air dock during inclement weather. These small donations have allowed the Air Marshals to keep the dock functional.

The dock looks nothing like the private docking facilities of the great merchant houses. Laid out like a river dock, it has a series of rickety wooden wharfs and tethering points draped with fraying rope and rusting mooring chains. The wharfs are crisscrossed with gantries and walkways patched with repairs. The rest of the facility consists of the Air Marshals' headquarters and a collection of weatherworn shacks and storage warehouses. Portable stairways allow easy access to the higher levels at almost any point.

The headquarters is built on short pylons connecting directly to the raised wharfs, and includes a general office for running day-to-day business, with a waiting room at one side of the building. On the other side, a ready room is festooned with charts, maps, and a table with a grid to plot airship positions. At the back of the building is Air Warden Drimsby's private office, next to a bunkroom and canteen.

The shacks and warehouses are dilapidated, their windows long broken and boarded up. The storage shacks are unsecure, in disrepair, and liable to collapse at a moment's notice. The shacks hold materials associated with any dock: jars of pitch, tools, rope, and various scavenged spare parts. The warehouses lie empty most of the year.

Against the compound's northern wall stands the best-maintained and stable structure, the observation deck. Supported by pylons of braced iron, it stands above the rest of the compound and can accommodate several Namegivers. It is the only part of the dock that can be seen from outside the compound wall, and is accessible only via a series of exposed ladders and platforms. A red light crystal atop the platform shines at night allowing airmen to locate the dock in the darkness, and below the deck hangs a large crystal bell that can be sounded from the ground or the observation deck. Known as Usurper's Bell, it was taken from the sunken K'tenshin warship *Usurper* and has magical properties allowing its distinctive peal to be heard across

*Honorable members of the Magistrates Council,*

*Please forgive the brazenness of this letter, but I feel it is my duty as Air Warden to bring an important issue to your attention. As you are aware, the Air Dock is of vital importance, not only to the security of Travar, but for the escort and protection of airships within Travar's boundaries. I need not remind you, on several occasions in the past, Travar's Air Marshals and their crews have put their lives on the line, most notably during the first Theran War when House K'tenshin showed its true colors.*

*It is therefore with a heavy heart I must report years of underfunding and neglect have not only eroded the morale of my aircrews, but in some cases the airships themselves. Many are little more than patchwork repairs held together by a few dedicated craftsmen and the apparent will of the Passions. It is surely only a matter of time before Travar's aircrews are called upon to aid the city and will be found wanting for no other reason than lack of resources.*

*At the very least, I beg of you, if they are to meet their end defending the skies over Travar, they are allowed to do so with pride, dressed in smart uniforms as befitting the rest of Travar's guardians.*

*Yours,*

*Air Warden Gardius Drimsby*

*A loyal son of Travar*

Travar. Usurper's Bell is only rung under the direst circumstances when the city and its people are in grave danger.

## **The Air Fleet of Travar**

Travar's air fleet should not be confused with the merchant air fleet, which consists of myriad privately owned vessels. Travar's air fleet consists of six drakkars and four galleys, three of which do not play any part in the operations of the air patrol and almost never grace the wharfs of the dock. The fourth galley, the *Cloud Runner*, is the Air Patrol's flagship and is currently languishing in its dock. Due to lack of funding to carry out essential repairs, it is no longer fit for service.

## **Adventure Hook: Desperate Measures**

Air Warden Drimsby is growing more desperate by the day. A mysterious employer has been poaching his crews, offering them deals they cannot refuse. Hoping to bring them around with one of his patriotic speeches, Drimsby is surprised to learn they have all vanished.

With his patrol boats all but grounded, Drimsby hatches a desperate plan. He arranges for the City Watch to arrest some adepts on trumped up charges and comes to their rescue the next morning, offering them a fresh start as Air Wardens. He then persuades the Magistrates to have some of Travar's Champions shadow the new recruits to uncover the identity of the mysterious employer and the whereabouts of the missing airmen.

The Harbor Master (see p. 146) is planning a massive heist, one that will make the Great Overland Job look like child's play. His gang lured Drimsby's airmen (and

those of the target) away with the promise of silver and kidnapped them. In some cases, he kidnapped their families to ensure cooperation.

The Harbor Master plans to replace the missing crew men loyal to him. Delaying the target airship's departure until just before nightfall, he intends to relieve the ships of their most valuable cargo before they leave the city limits.

Depending on their reputation in Travar, the player characters can either be new recruits, or Champions tasked with following them. If tailing the recruits, the new recruits can discover the deception, and that they are being tailed by a group of adepts as an added wrinkle. Will the characters foil the Harbor Master's plans or take part in the greatest heist Travar has ever known?

## THE ARENA

The Arena is the centerpiece of the city and all the main thoroughfares lead to it. As mentioned earlier in this book, it was called the Eye of Travar by the first aircrews to leave the citadel after the Scourge. Whether viewed from the ground or the air it is a beautiful sight, and during the Founding becomes the focal point in Travar.

While not as tall as the surrounding buildings beyond the walls of Old Town, the Arena is no less impressive. It is one of the grandest pieces of architecture in Travar. Had the Arena been built before or after the Scourge, it likely would be much larger, but its size was limited by the stock of building materials stored within the citadel.

The Arena's outside is faced with the same white stone as most of Travar's large buildings. This façade is not uniform in height, instead rising and falling in a series of three sweeping peaks and troughs, not unlike an ocean swell. It reaches one hundred and ten feet at its highest point over the main gate, and seventy at its lowest along the southern wall. During the Founding, the walls are adorned by embroidered banners and long hanging garlands of flowers and leaves from the Servos Jungle.

The outer façade comprises of three distinct sections. The base is a concave slope rising upward from ground level, getting steeper until it becomes vertical. A popular children's game in Travar is called "champion." Children run at the wall as fast as they can, using their momentum to carry them up the steepest part of the slope, where they strike the wall with a piece of charcoal to mark the height. The Arena's staff frowns on this game, as it requires them to clean off the marks.

The middle section is made of multiple bands of columns and statues, each supporting the other, shrinking and growing with the height of the walls. The statues depict the winning Magistrates and their Champions. Each year the successful Magistrate and their sponsored Champions are immortalized, each carved from one of the remaining pillars. Once the carvings are complete, elemental magic is used to meld the statues with the walls.

Hundreds of years of the Founding's history is represented by these statues, each one in varying poses, reaching upward as if bearing more than just the weight of the Arena's roof. Each year during the Festival of Choosing, the statues slowly lift their faces to look outward across Travar, looking down again once a new Magistrate has been chosen.

The top of the outer façade is a lined rim of large slabs of white stone, the outer edges of which are engraved and gilded. This creates a dramatic effect when the sun

strikes the band of gold running the structure's circumference. The inner edges of the stone are carved with magical runes. When activated, they create an awning of Elemental Air matching the year's official color.

The Arena has five entrances, each corresponding to one of the main thoroughfares. The grand entrance is on Founders Way, with a series of five short arched tunnels extending from the exterior wall. On top, a railed stairway allows people to cross over the entrance tunnels to avoid pushing through the huge crowds that form during the Founding. The central tunnel is larger than the others and leads directly to the main gate of the arena. The smaller tunnels lead to the upper level seating in that part of the Arena. The other entrances are similar in design, but on a smaller scale.

### The Interior

While the outside of the Arena is an architectural wonder, the inside is functional in comparison, dispensing with unnecessary artistic embellishment. It is designed to hold a capacity crowd of 35,000 during the Founding. Due to overcrowding, this number is likely closer to 45,000, yet still there is an insatiable demand for tickets.

### The Qualification Pit

The qualification pit is an open elliptical area in the Arena's center. It is, from the perspective of spectators, where all the events are staged and the action takes place. The pit's base is constructed from individual sections allowing access from below. These can be raised or lowered as required to shape the landscape. The base is often set level at its highest elevation, covered with a layer of sand. When it is at its lowest, a structure known as the Castle is uncovered.

The Castle is an elongated dome running along the center of the qualification pit with a series of barred and gated portals at the ends and along both sides. These portals have various uses, but are generally used to release beasts into the pit.

The barrier between the pit and the Arena is one of the most important features. It not only offers physical protection for those sitting closest to the pit's edge, but hidden by the garlands of flowers are carved runes of warding protecting the seating tiers. On tournament day, if the seating tiers are viewed astrally, the observer would see them enclosed in a series of interconnecting protective bubbles.

In addition to the protective wards, the runes enhance the magic used by the Body of Five during events, including illusionary magic that magnifies the qualification pit from the spectators' perspective, making the champions appear larger than life. In the Arena, there is no such thing as a bad seat.

*Sitting close to the barrier on tournament day is not for the faint of heart. When some attack, or blast of flame misses its mark and slams into the wards, stopping inches from the crowd, the sound is deafening. The shockwave it creates can be felt throughout the Arena. This is followed by the roar loosed from the crowd, which is louder still, as they jeer those closest to the barrier picking themselves up off the ground and dusting themselves off, thinking they were about to meet their end. Sometimes the champions do it just to get a rise from the crowd!*

— Gringlebar, Bearer of the Burden, Lone Survivor of Kaer Throgranvale



### The Tiers

The seating tiers are arranged in five levels, with those furthest from the pit having the greatest capacity. Each tier is divided into five sections, the fifth having a reserved area above the People's Gate called Magistrate's Tribune. It is here the Magistrates, the Body of Five, the Master of Ceremonies, the People's Representative, foreign dignitaries, and previous Champions of Travar observe the tournament.

The seating is rows of terraced stone, except on the Magistrate's Tribune where comfortable chairs are provided. Each tier has its own access to the arcades, passages and stairways beginning at each of the Arena's entrances and circumnavigating the Arena.

Many of the larger arcades have purpose-built niches and alcoves called hoards, which are rented to merchants and hawkers who sell snacks, mementos, and trinkets. The most popular products are woven cushions stuffed with feathers, and thunder sticks, produced from airship industry off cuts. These mundane looking pieces of turned wood are enchanted to create a small flash of colored light and dull, sonorous boom when struck. The effect of thousands of thunder sticks being struck in unison is a spectacular experience.

### The Vaults

Under the qualification pit and much of the seating tiers are the vaults, a warren of rooms and passageways. This is where everything required for tournament events is stored and assembled. Spread throughout are rooms filled with large winches, hoists,

elevators, and mechanical and magical devices required for running the complex events. Much of it lies unused, the rooms forgotten and locked for decades or more.

At the very center of the vaults, at the base of the Castle, lies the menagerie. These purpose-built stables house the many creatures brought into Travar each year for the Tournament. Under the northern seating tier is the Champions' Enclosure, a well-guarded training ground and sparring hall with an armory containing almost every style of weapon. Once registered as Champions of the Tournament, any champion or sponsor may visit the enclosure at any time. Many of the wealthier merchants, however, prefer their champions to train in private facilities.

Regardless of where they train, on tournament day champions must remain in the enclosure as they wait their turn to compete, ensuring those last to compete in an event do not gain an unfair advantage. The enclosure has a dedicated area staffed by followers of Garlen, including questors from the Sanctum and those visiting Travar for the Founding. Many of the Arena staff are likewise skilled in the healing arts.

### **Adventure Hook: Dangerous Beasts**

While training in the Enclosure, the player characters are interrupted by Arena staff fleeing for their lives. A dangerous beast of the gamemaster's choosing is loose in the vaults.

Once the player characters have it contained, the Arena staff informs them the beast is not on the manifest for the upcoming Tournament. With a little investigation, the player characters uncover a smuggling ring that uses the Body of Five's acquisition teams as a front to move rare and dangerous creatures into the city for private collectors.

As the player characters follow the trail of clues, they discover some of Travar's most influential merchants are involved, but before the perpetrators can be brought to justice the player characters participate in the first round of the Tournament. Those involved in the smuggling try to ensure the player characters do not survive the event.

### **Tournament Circle**

The open area surrounding the Arena is known as Tournament Circle. This area is paved and terraced, gently sloping downward from the outer edge to the Arena walls. The paving stones are glazed blue to match the city's roof tiles. On each level, white stone fountains, memorials to those who died in the water riots, break the tranquility of the sea of blue glaze.

A pavilion lines the outer rim of the Tournament Circle. At most times of the day, people can be found relaxing here, enjoying the open space and indulging in the sunlight reflecting off the Arena's white stone walls. During the Founding, the pavilions become impromptu stages for performers who flock to the festival.

## LIBRARIES OF TRAVAR

Travar has a few unusual libraries. Scattered throughout the city, no one really knows how many libraries Travar has, but the number continues to grow. While many of these libraries are private collections, the right coin will grant admission to almost all of them.

Owning a library is a status symbol in Travar, and a few privately owned libraries are open to the public, all the better to flaunt the owner's wealth. Only a few of Travar's libraries are described here. The gamemaster is encouraged to develop their own.

### Library of the Arts

With the role the arts play in Travar's society, it is not surprising to find a library dedicated to the subject. The Library of the Arts is an unusual blend of exhibition hall, library, and museum.

Located on the northern edge of the Tournament Circle, the library contains many recognized masterpieces of literature, including an extensive collection of scored music and lyrics. These may not be of obvious interest to the explorer, but they describe the deeds of mighty heroes, terrible places, and wondrous items, holding untold clues to past events and forgotten locations.

Also found throughout the library are sculptures. These include the statues of noteworthy Therans that once graced the streets of Travar, pulled down during the rebellion. The carvings and inscriptions on these ancient works of art may offer clues or hold information worthy of note.

The Library of the Arts is Travar's official public library and wholly funded by the Magistrates' Council. Unlike the city's many private libraries, the Library of the Arts only opens for a few hours every day, and occasionally in the evenings. When it is open, it draws crowds eager to see the latest exhibition, and finding peace and quiet to study is difficult. After the library closes each day, many of the staff and visitors spill over into the tavern next door called the Chisel and Mold, which caters to the artisan scene.

### The Delver's Athenaeum

Located in Old Town's western tower, and described by explorers as the best library in the city, the Delver's Athenaeum specializes in pre-Scourge maps, documents, and literature on Travar and the surrounding area. The library's clientele recognize diligent research and knowledge are as important as strength of arms. The library offers competitive rates to those looking to sell maps and documents recovered from old kaers.

The Delver's Athenaeum is privately owned, though it is freely accessible to citizens and visitors willing to pay the reasonable fees it charges. Anyone wishing to peruse its archives can pay a daily rate, or annual membership subscription depending on their needs.

The library's clerks are helpful and knowledgeable, and for a few silvers will happily guide customers to the appropriate research material. Dazean Porvic oversees the daily operation of the library and boasts the ostentatious title of Administrator of

Contents and References. Oygrin Solityr is the senior librarian and known as Master Scribe and Archivist.

The library offers many services, like study booths offering some privacy, and access to writing and chart making materials. Those with an annual membership can avail themselves of a scribe's services, within reason.

The library is the front for the secret society known as Naaman's Hand, and is the brainchild of its leader Imirisal Vemmarren (see **Secret Societies**, p. 134). Within the tower, Naaman's Hand has a private archive where they store and catalogue anything relating to the legend of Naaman Y'ross. It is here they plan their expeditions and conduct detailed research.

The library's clerks monitor and note what others are researching, and the Master of Archives has developed spells to help the organization gather information on what other explorers are researching. Two of the most often deployed spells are Smudged Fingers and Pilferous Paper (p. 132).

## The Labyrinth

Located in the South Valley Divide, the Labyrinth is described as Travar's most brilliant, but useless, library. It is housed in a wide, domed structure that was a storage warehouse during the Scourge.

The Labyrinth is owned and run by Ajin Wyrdsight, a merchant who retired after one of his caravans got lost in the Badlands. One of a few survivors from that expedition, Ajin spent months recovering in isolation. He has spent the time since creating and running the Labyrinth. Many believe Ajin a Horror-scarred madman, but his library is a popular attraction, especially to those looking for something out of the ordinary.

The library fills the whole of the building, and the large bookshelves are laid out to form a complex maze. Each shelf is carved from an individual tree, decorated with carved, twisting columns and inlaid with silve filigree. They are so large each comes with its own ladder, and some of the tomes take two people to lift. The paths through the shelves wander and twist, and have been described as a tangle of befuddlement. Every so often, the scholar-come-explorer will discover a small, comfortable alcove with a table and light quartz lamp.

Ajin happily talks for hours about his library. He is helpful when asked if a book is in the library, but less helpful if asked where the book might be found. Most people have neither the time nor patience to explore the Labyrinth's depths, but some find it the best place in Travar to escape the bustle of everyday life, considering it a place of unique contemplation.

Some claim Ajin has the gift of foresight, and those who experience strange dreams often come to the library seeking answers. As the old librarian is fond of saying, "In the Labyrinth you do not find a book, it finds you. If you take your time you may even find yourself."

## RUINS UNDER TRAVAR

Buried deep beneath Travar are the ruins of an older city, a secret few are privy to. These ruins are nothing like the complex labyrinths of Kratas's Undercity or Braza's Kingdom, which lies beneath Throal. There is no convenient network of tunnels or caverns running the length and breadth of the city, used by those wishing to go about their business unseen.

When Travar was being expanded before the Scourge, parts of these ruins were uncovered. Most were not given a second thought, people assuming they were the remains of a building that had previously stood there, not realizing they predated Travar itself.

Some of the larger ruins became the foundations of Travar's most famous buildings, and perhaps the best example is the Vaults. Its chambers and storage areas are excavations of earlier structures. Many of Travar's houses have cellars using ruins discovered during construction. These consist of thick-walled chambers and often have multiple levels.

There is still much under Travar yet to be discovered, and it is possible explorers may find ancient treasures. There are many strange items of unknown origin and purpose in Travar, and these have usually been found in the city's cellars.

Most of the ruins are only accessible through privately owned buildings, many current owners unaware of their existence. Others are only accessible by digging for them, not practical inside the city walls and guaranteed to raise a few eyebrows. The gamemaster is encouraged to develop these ruins as something their player characters may come across from time to time during their adventures in Travar.

## THE SANCTUM OF GARLEN

Not only is the Sanctum of Garlen one of the most revered buildings in Travar, it is one of the oldest. Only the Five Towers are older. Like the Five Towers and the walls of Old Town, the Sanctum is constructed of locally quarried stone, its striking weathered blue-gray walls instantly recognizable against the white backdrop of the surrounding buildings.

To the people of Travar, the Sanctum is more than a place of healing, it is a place of rebirth, and a potent symbol of resistance against Theran rule. To this day, the Sanctum of Garlen remains associated with the Water Rebellion and the founding of modern Travar.

The Sanctum is open, with no gates on the wide entrance, which leads to the exercise yard. In the center of the yard, atop a plinth, is the Sanctum's most surprising feature, a fountain that is a shrine to Jaspre. The Sanctum was built around the fountain to honor a questor for providing a source of uncontaminated drinking water. Legends claim the questor linked the fountain's water source to an astral realm favored by Jaspre for its rolling hills and babbling brooks, and the water's purity aids in the recovery of the ill.

Today, water overflowing from the fountain is collected in large glazed jars, not a drop going to waste. The water is often ceremonially distributed during the Founding, to remind people of the city's history.



Surrounding the exercise yard are several roofed healing rooms, open to the yard save for curtains of netting across their doorways. In these rooms, healers tend to those recovering from wounds or disease. At the back of the yard is an imposing building of black stone known as the Tower of Souls, where the questors tend those with the most grievous injuries.

The Sanctum is a pilgrimage site for followers of Garlen and Jaspre. They make the pilgrimage from across Barsaive to collect water from the fountain, which healers use in their potions and poultices, and followers of Jaspre use to nurture and restore the land.

#### *Crixin Broal*

After seeing many in his recently opened kaer die from a terrible disease, Crixin fled in fear, but not before he was infected. He was found on the roadside

by followers of Garlen returning from a pilgrimage to Travar. They recognized the symptoms of poisoning associated with a fruit known to have been tainted by the Scourge.

They tended Crixin and deduced wherever he had come from must be close by. They discovered Crixin's village and saved all but those too far gone. Crixin was hailed as a hero by his fellow villagers, but he was ashamed for abandoning them.

To make amends, Crixin devoted his life to following the ideals of Garlen, and has recently taken charge of the Sanctum as an act of devotion. Crixin is determined to learn all that he can during his stay in Travar before returning to his village to tend to their needs.

#### **Elf Questor of Garlen**

<b>DEX: 6</b>	<b>STR: 5</b>	<b>TOU: 6</b>
<b>PER: 5</b>	<b>WIL: 5</b>	<b>CHA: 6</b>





## SASHA TOMB

The long night was swift approaching, and the villagers of An Comar had been preparing for the Scourge, working hard for many years to pay for a place in the great citadel of Travar. Then, unexpected news arrived with a group of adepts in the village. The closure of the great citadel was imminent, and the villagers must prepare for what the elders had dubbed the journey to tomorrow. The small riverside village came alive with feverish activity at the news.

The woodsman Khai, wishing to escape the din of the village at such a late hour, left for the peace of the woods surrounding the village. He checked his traps for the last time, releasing those animals caught in his snares, wondering if he had done them a favor or not. He took in the sounds and scents of the woods, saddened at what would become of them.

As if summoned by his thoughts, he heard a terrible cry from beyond the woods. It could be heard across the moors, and in the village of An Comar, causing the villagers to pause their preparations in fear. Khai stopped under the boughs of a mighty oak, fearful. Only a Horror could make such a terrible sound. No beast Khai ever hunted made such a fell noise.

The wailing continued, and Khai's initial fear subsided. Listening carefully, Khai could tell the cries came from the village's old cemetery. As sudden as it began, the wailing stopped and Khai, picking himself up from his hiding place, approached the old burial ground.

All appeared normal to Khai's keen eye as he walked to the cemetery's center. The Tomb of Gulgrock, legendary adept, famous for the power of his Battle Shout, and who settled in An Comar to live out his final years. When he passed away, the villagers built a tomb befitting such a legend as memorial to his deeds. Khai could see the lock was smashed and the iron door pushed open. As he stepped forward, another terrible wail issued from deep within the tomb, louder than before. Khai fled, terror propelling him toward the village.

Khai found most of the villagers in the tavern, engaged in a heated argument with the village elders. He gave them the news they feared, a terrible beast lurked within the Tomb of Gulgrock. The villagers begged the elders to send adepts to face the beast. The elders turned down their requests, as the adepts had been sent to escort villagers safely to the great citadel of Travar.

Enraged the tomb was desecrated, and brave with strong drink, Khai told the village elders he would fetch his bow and face the creature. Fear may have taken him once, but he swore it would not take him a second time. Without further encouragement, several others joined Khai in his quest, marching on the cemetery, armed with rusting weapons and burning brands.

They slowed as they approached the tomb, the bravery of the drink deserting them. Khai stopped before the door, waiting for the terrible wail. When it was not forthcoming, Khai entered the tomb, the others a few paces behind.

In the heart of the tomb, Khai saw the hero's final resting place for the first time, a stone sarcophagus with a large sword placed along its length. At its head sat a woven reed basket. Khai stepped forward, peering into the basket by torchlight.

"It's a baby!"

The villagers were as stunned as Khai by the discovery. Unmoving, they stared at Khai, who in turn stared into the basket. An elderly woman Khai did not recognize stepped from the gathered crowd and lifted the baby for all to see. The child was wrapped in the simple birthing robes tied with a purple sash. At being disturbed, the baby cried out.

Gulgrock may have passed to Death's Realm, but his magic lived on, amplifying the child's cries. The villagers cowered, a response to the force and volume of the cry, but then realized they had nothing to fear.

"You must leave, for soon a darkness will descend," the woman said.

Khai placed his torch in a wall sconce beside Gulrock's tomb and murmured, "To light his path in the dark days ahead." The woman smiled at the gesture.

Khai left the tomb last and tried to shut the door, but it was jammed. The woman stepped forward and handed the child to Khai. He took a step backward, filled with a sudden fear, for he did not know how to hold a child, but after a moment he accepted the babe in his arms.

"Look after her," the woman added.

"What!" Khai replied, unable to disguise the panic in his voice.

"We must leave now," said a villager, "look!" An orange glow was shining on the horizon.

"They are torching the village," Khai murmured. He suddenly realized who the woman was and bowed his head.

"You are not from An Comar are you?" Khai asked, already knowing the answer.

The woman shook her head. "I will stay behind and make sure no evil enters Gulgrock's resting place."

As Khai and the villagers left the cemetery, Khai glanced over his shoulder. The door to the tomb was sealed and there was no sign of the woman.

They returned to An Comar for the last time and gathered their belongings before setting out on the road to Travar, the smoke from many burning villages painting the morning sky black.

"What will you call the child?" asked one of the villagers.

Khai looked down at the infant sleeping in his arms. "I will call her Sasha. Sasha Tomb."

In the distance, Khai could see lines of people making their way to the citadel. Its dome of air gleamed like a thousand diamonds in the morning sun. A commotion at the gate slowed the line, the villagers arguing with a dwarf scribe. The dwarf told them the village's debt had not been paid in full and until it had, each person must take the mark of the sponsoring house.

Khai stepped forward for the second time that day. He was the first of many to take the mark of House Dumorjen.

The descendants of An Comar are still indentured to House Dumorjen, and the tale of Sasha Tomb is part of their oral history. Most versions of the legend only have passing reference to the hero Gulgrock, instead focusing on how the people of An Comar came to survive the Scourge. Sasha features prominently in many of An Comar's tales of the early days of the Scourge, often playing a notable, if apocryphal, part in events like the Water Rebellion or the first tournaments.

The stories have traveled outside House Dumorjen, and drawn some attention to the area. One questor of Jaspre, Hyree, believes Gulgrock's Tomb was blessed by Garlen. It might provide a safe haven from the Badlands' corruption, providing a location to resupply for extended visits to the area. The tomb might also offer insight into ways the corruption might be healed or driven back. The other questors in Trosk admit her idea has some merit, but are reluctant to divert resources to search for the tomb without more to go on.

To that end, Hyree has been spending time with the descendants of An Comar, trying to determine where the village stood by studying their legends. She also keeps an ear out for stories of adepts returning from the Badlands, using the information they bring back to narrow down the tomb's location. She has a couple of likely locations, and is looking for ways to finance an expedition. She might use the promise of treasure (Gulgrock's sword, or some other thread item) to entice adepts to join her.

Here are a couple of options for what might be found at Gulgrock's Tomb if the player characters find it.

*Option One:* As Hyree expected, the tomb is protected by a powerful magic that keeps the corruption at bay. Astral space in the tomb is Safe (*Player's Guide*, p. 208), and the area around is protected like the Nethermancer spell Life Circle of One (*Player's Guide*, p. 320). Unfortunately, attempts to duplicate the phenomenon prove fruitless.

*Option Two:* Like everything else in the Badlands, Gulgrock's Tomb has been corrupted. The tomb has become infested with a Crystal Entity (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 483), and Gulgrock has been animated into a powerful undead construct.





## OUTSIDE TRAVAR

*The sights, the sounds, and particularly the smells of Tent City leave an indelible mark on any visitor. It is a melting pot of Namegivers from across Barsaive and even its kindest detractors have described it as unreasonably dirty. There is nowhere else in Travar you can see so many crammed into such a small space.*

*Unless you're unlucky enough to find yourself in the slave pens.*

• **Valis the Purse, Money Lender and Loan Shark** •

### TENT CITY

Many of those living within Travar's walls consider Tent City a blight on what is otherwise a beautiful city, and those visiting Travar for the first time are often shocked such a place exists. If the visitor arrives by river, they expect to step off the docks and walk straight through Thundergate. Instead they face the maze of docks before having their senses assaulted as they run the gauntlet of Tent City. It can make the bustle of the gate markets tame and welcoming in comparison.

Travar's docks existed in one form or another since the city's founding. Tent City, however, is a post-Scourge addition. Shortly after Travar's opening, other kaers had opened their doors to find a barren and scorched world. To these first pioneers, Travar's dome was a great beacon and the land around it appeared lush and fertile in comparison.

Attracted by the dome, the land outside Travar became a hive of activity. While Travar barred new arrivals from entering, they provided what aid they could. It was not long before tents and shelters sprang up between Thundergate and the river, the new residents taking advantage of the citadel's astral protections extending beyond the city walls.

Despite later attempts to remove what was dubbed Tent City, it continued to grow, forcing the Magistrates to relocate many to clear the road between the gate and the docks. The City Watch ensures nobody sets up camp on the road itself, but they rarely venture into the maze of muddy-decked pathways unless they have good reason. The constant traffic of people using the road to the river, which splits Tent City down the middle, often causes a choke point and seasoned travelers prefer to leave by the Sky Gate for travel to and from the docks.

The population of Tent City averages between two and three thousand, but at certain times of the year the population swells dramatically. During the Founding Tournament, the population can exceed five thousand, as many visitors arrive only to discover there is no accommodation available within Travar's walls. However, a yearly operation known as the Purge carried out by the City Watch just prior to the Founding drives off much of the criminal element, causing a temporary decrease in the population.

Tent City is a sea of tents and shelters, some little more than blankets suspended between two poles. Others are canvas tents, while those of the nomadic tribes are crafted from various animal hides. There is an unspoken rule in Tent City that no permanent structures are built, and the residents discourage any attempts to erect such structures. Tent City's population is transient in nature and its residents recognize permanent structures would lead to private ownership, rent, and eventually tax. While Tent City is part of Travar, it is not owned as are the buildings within the city, and it is harder for the Magistrates to remove those who can simply pick up their belongings and resettle anytime they choose.

Despite this, Tent City is more than just a random collection of tents, shelters, and wagons. It ranges from small individual shelters to larger family units, and even whole community encampments. Some are temporary overnight camps for merchants awaiting entrance to the city, while others are semi-permanent and include circled wagons, tents, and roped-off corrals.

### **Markets in Tent City**

Like Travar and the docks, Tent City has its own markets. Unlike the gate markets, the trading houses have little influence, as the different communities and traveling tribes run the markets.

In Tent City, markets can spring up or vanish overnight. Markets tend to spring up in areas that have been abandoned, creating an opening among the morass of tents. As the population shifts, markets will shift accordingly. Some markets are hard to find once they have moved, but others, such those selling smoked fish and meats, can be found by simply following one's nose.

### **Residents of Tent City**

It would be easy to assume Tent City's residents are the poor and destitute. While these can counted among those dwelling there, they are not the majority. Travar has many migrants who work outside the city, especially on the docks, along the riverfront, and in the surrounding farmland. These people make up much of the population.

The rest is made up of nomadic tribes and groups who call nowhere home, and those who wish to lose themselves among the masses. There is great diversity among the people, and there are many customs and traditions unique to Tent City.

Tent City is mostly self-governing. Its residents generally abide by Travar's laws, with a few individuals looked to for leadership in times of trouble. There are also some adepts in Tent City for reasons of their own, and it is a fertile recruiting ground for questors and other organizations, some friendly, some sinister.

Those who permanently reside outside Travar's walls typically have a different disposition than those inside and are more readily agitated by demagogues and provocateurs.

#### *Illynar Songsteel*

This long-retired Weaponsmith has become the voice and de facto representative of the people of the Tent City. He first moved to Tent City nearly thirty years ago from an outlying village as an initiate Weaponsmith. The prospect of plentiful work and the

abundant material of his trade attracted him, but Ilsynar also dreamed of forging a weapon that would be wielded in the Founding Tournament by a Champion of Travar.

After only a few months, Ilsynar packed up his tools and stopped practicing his Discipline, becoming another nameless face in the canvas sea. Years later, he emerged with a new role: helping Tent City's residents bring their grievances to Travar's rulers. The cause of this sudden shift of focus is unknown. Ilsynar does not appear devoted to any Passion, nor does he have any known benefactors.

In his early fifties, Ilsynar is an ebony-skinned dwarf with the paunch of middle age. He travels the decked walkways, welcoming newcomers, offering advice, dealing with grievances, and giving hope to the downtrodden. He is sometimes called the Forger of Men. Many residents have great reverence for him, and for them his word is law.



### Third Circle Dwarf Weaponsmith

DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 7	WIL: 7	CHA: 7

### Ilsynar's Secret

Shortly after arriving in Travar, Ilsynar visited the Arena to watch the champions compete. He hoped it would give him inspiration to forge the mighty weapon he dreamed off. Instead, Ilsynar had a talent crisis, brought on by a terrible vision. He saw how his weapon would bring victory to the champion who wielded it, but would then bring ruin to Travar in the hands of a terrible foe from the Badlands.

His friends believed he had experienced the phenomena known as Enemy at the Gates. Ilsynar, however, believed it to be more. Terrified of forging another weapon, he fell to despair. Then he realized the despair felt by so many in Tent City might be a result of the encroaching Badlands.

Inspired, he became determined to root out despair wherever he found it, and a champion of those in Tent City. If he could draw impurities invisible to the eye from a blade of iron, he could draw despair from a Namegiver's soul. Ilsynar vowed he would never forge another weapon until the people of the Tent City had thrown off the shackles of despair.

## Merchants

Many merchants call Tent City their home away from home. They travel Barsaive selling their wares, and often settle in Tent City until they strike a deal. Only then will they risk paying the toll for their cargo to pass through the gates.

Some of Tent City's merchants are wealthy individuals and the tents in their encampments are a cut above the rest, resembling battlefield pavilions complete with fluttering pennants and guards at the entrance. Most merchants, however, are small time hauling charcoal from the outlying villages. Travar and Tent City consume large amounts of charcoal each year, and while quantities come from the plantations in the Servos Jungle the bulk is collected from villages up and down the Byrose River.

## Tribes of Tent City

Nomadic tribes have, from time immemorial, followed migratory routes in the region that passed close to where Travar now stands. Many of these tribes disappeared during the Scourge. Some were lost to the Horrors, while others took shelter in kaers and became integrated, losing their cultural identity. Shortly after the Scourge, some of these nomads returned to their traditional routes, or at least those parts not lost to the Badlands.

During the month of Teayu, these tribes descend in large numbers on Tent City to trade, conduct tribal business, arrange marriages, conduct Naming rites, and settle debts of honor. These tribes carry with them an oral tradition that predates Travar. For those willing to listen, there is a surprising wealth of information to be gleaned.

## Ork Scorchers

Tent City is occasionally home to several self-styled tribes of ork scorched. Not surprisingly, their arrival raises eyebrows inside and outside Travar's walls. So far, the tribes have come and gone causing no more trouble than anyone else.

Many believe the scorched arrive to purchase weapons in Travar, most likely fire cannon from the forges of Xoros Honeyed-tongue, destined for Cara Fahd.

## The Grim Legion

Due to its proximity to the Badlands, Travar had the misfortune a few years ago of having multiple chapters of the Grim Legion on their doorstep. As the factions battled to be the official Travar chapter, one tried to prove it was the most zealous by accusing Travar's Champions of being corrupt.

The champions responded by purging the Legion's leadership. With the Legion in disarray, its leaders dead or in the slave pens, the Magistrates offered personal freedom of the city to any who could unite the feuding factions under one tent.

Purity Storm, a highly charismatic woman, stepped forward. She not only united the various factions, but also introduced The Great Hunt, an event that attracts chapters of the Grim Legion from across Barsaive (see p.203).

The Legion is barred from organizing or residing in the city as a group. The Watch keeps a close eye on their activities, shadowing individual members entering the city to take on supplies from the Twilight Gate market before an expedition.

*Purity Storm*

Riding a black charger and wielding the Nightshade Banner, Purity Storm cuts a striking figure with her long red hair and black leather leggings and armor. Originally from Travar, Purity understands the Magistrates are suspicious of the Grim Legion, and also understands corruption in Travar is not to be confused with the Scourge's taint.

Intelligent and driven, Purity not only has a powerful vision for Travar's chapter, but has wider ambitions for the entire Grim Legion. The Great Hunt is just one part of her plan. Each year it attracts more chapters from across Barsaive.

**Fifth Circle Elf Cavalryman**

**DEX: 7      STR: 6      TOU: 5**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 5      CHA: 8**

**The Great Hunt**

The Badlands attracts more than explorers delving for lost treasure and questors of Jasprea seeking to reverse the corruption. For the Grim Legion, it has become a proving ground. To that end, Purity Storm established the Great Hunt, meant to drive creatures lurking in the borderlands back into the Badlands, and destroy those that have become tainted.

The local Legion chapter spends much of the year scouting the edges of the Badlands, gathering intelligence and selecting targets. Cultist lairs, breached kaers, and Horror constructs are all considered fair game. Purity oversees the hunt ensuring the overzealous aren't simply pillaging and slaughtering anything they encounter.

The Great Hunt attracts Legion adepts from across Barsaive, and has a second purpose. Purity knows the Legion has Horror-tainted individuals in its ranks. What better way of purging them than bringing them together in the Badlands where accidents can be arranged.

**BYROSE RIVERFRONT**

**T** Travar sits raised above a spur of land overlooking the Byrose River. The river has raised banks, preventing flooding in all but the worst of years. Against these banks, Travar's riverfront, collectively called the Byrose Docks, spreads north and south of the city.

Elevated slightly on a network of thick pylons, wooden scaffolding, and planked walkways, the riverfront is a natural outgrowth of the city, extending almost a mile in each direction. Many of the structures, including the wharfs and warehouses, extend out into the river. This creates a vibrant business district sometimes called the sixth divide.

The riverfront consists of more than the docks where most ferry services, warehouse facilities, taverns, and brothels are found. To the south is the Old Harbor, followed by fisherman's homes and piers for smaller watercraft.

Beyond that stands Slaver's Dock, which nobody wishes to get close to. It is exclusively used to transport slaves to and from the slave markets. After Slaver's Dock, there are few buildings before reaching Travar's industries, such as the mills, that rely on river power.

To the north of the Docks is the t'skrang enclave of T'town, and beyond that more industry, which slowly gives way to river villages that dot the shores along the Byrose.

The far bank is less built up. The Eastern Docks include a ferry dock and a few piers. Beyond them, a small town is taking root, anchored around around a large inn. The Eastern Dock is also headquarters of the Byrose Consortium, with its own warehouse facilities.

Life on the riverfront is more sedate, perhaps the calming effect of the river. People spend more time talking to neighbors, swapping tales, or boating on the river for pleasure. There is plenty of money to be made on the riverfront, but people don't seem to be afflicted by the same pursuit of profit as those living behind Travar's walls.

## **Byrose River Docks**

The docks were one of the first structures built after Travar opened. A ferry station for crossing the river, still in use today, was built and the rest of the docks expanded from there. Just south of the ferry station are the fish markets. Each morning this area is the busiest and noisiest part of the docks as merchants haggle for the best of the fresh catch. The smell of fish pervades the market all day long, even after they have closed.

In addition to warehouses, local boatmen, fishermen, and dockworkers inhabit rickety houses, along with shops and small boat repair yards catering to them. The docks also boast a fair number of inns and brothels catering to those who arrive during the night and must wait until daybreak to enter the city. Underneath the docks is a maze of walkways, ladders, and access points, much of which ends up underwater when the river floods.

The most famous landmark is Wharf's End, the largest pier jutting out into the river's strongest currents. This was the site of one of the K'tenshin Navy's humiliating defeat during the Theran war (see p. 27). Tales of the Battle of Wharf's End are especially popular in Travar, and on principle, no K'tenshin captain would dock their riverboat there.

## **T'town**

T'town is the part of the Byrose Docks populated primarily by t'skrang. What started with a single fisherman building his house and shop on the edge of the docks has grown into a thriving t'skrang settlement.

T'town is as much a part of Travar as the divides inside its walls. Back when popular sentiment was that all t'skrang were K'tenshin marauders, the Magistrates recognized if people attacked the community, repercussions would come from all sides. They enacted the T'skrang Community Citizenship Code, granting all in T'town citizenship and allowing the City Watch to provide protection. While this subjected the town to the city's tax laws, there has been little trouble over it.

Those living and working on the riverfront don't view the t'skrang in T'town with the same suspicion as the rest of Travar. T'skrang are a common sight, which allows House K'tenshin to use T'town and Consortium facilities as cover for their agents in the city.

T'town has not grown much since the First Theran War, its expansion checked by industry to the north. Recent growth is out into the river, and many believe it is only a matter of time before Travar boasts its first proper t'skrang river tower. Most buildings and shops have access points on the main dock level, with living quarters in the traditional t'skrang style below. On the lower level are smaller walkways and docks used for fishing boats.

The only non-t'skrang construction is a flower shop on the north edge, attached to another building of t'skrang construction. A riverboat, *Sevan's Run*, hosting a crew in service to Garlen, is usually docked in this area as well.

### How Garlen Stole a Riverboat

Several years after the First Theran War, a questor of Garlen Named Sevan had visions of a beached riverboat, her crew close to death. Sevan immediately left Travar and ran along the riverbank. After many days, he found a K'tenshin riverboat on the banks of the Iontos River. It had been attacked and was beached in the shallows. The captain and crew were dying, clinging to life by the barest of threads, but with Garlen's aid Sevan helped them recover.

After the crew had recovered enough to pilot the riverboat, they returned Sevan to Travar. On their way back to their *aropagoi*, they performed a ritual, reNaming the vessel *Sevan's Run* and swearing oaths to Garlen. On their return, the crew were imprisoned and the ship impounded for the change. All attempts by the *aropagoi*'s best magicians to undo the Naming failed.

Three years later, the crew unexpectedly returned to Travar at the helm of *Sevan's Run*. Sevan joined the crew as their questor and travels with them, seeking out those in need of Garlen along the river. House K'tenshin still lists the ship as stolen and registered under its original Name, *The River Reaper*.

### The River Witch

Kona, known as the River Witch, owns the flower shop on the edge of T'town. She specializes in alchemy and antidotes, but many seek her out for other services, like curse removal and various charms. Many airmen in Travar possess one of her sailor's charms.

While many seek out her services, her abrasive manner makes her no friends, and rumors regarding past deeds do her no favors. Even the Sanctum of Garlen, for whom she sometimes provides treatments for unusual diseases or poisons, views her with caution.

She is the premier alchemist in Travar, and her services do not come cheap. Her shop is a veritable garden of herbs and a glass tank, which encompasses much of her shop's inner wall of her shop, contains various fish from the river.

She almost never leaves her shop except on the rare occasions she assists the Sanctum of Garlen. K'ona is aware these visits do not go unnoticed and that she is being watched, but by whom, she does not know. She is short and stocky, and despite her advanced age her dark hair is only showing the first touches of grey.

**Non-adept Human Alchemist**

**DEX: 5     STR: 4     TOU: 6**  
**PER: 8     WIL: 7     CHA: 4**

**Taverns and Inns: The Drowned Rat**

*The Piss and Pine would have been a better Name for this wretched establishment, for they are the two prevailing odors, the latter often losing to the former. The beer tastes little better than the smell, it's so cheap it can't possibly be making a profit, but the low cost ensures the Rat is crowded day and night. The crowd is used as cover for something just as unsavory as the beer. Just thank the Passions they don't serve food.*

— Tellenar Burblebrook, T'skrang Troubadour

**Old Harbor**

When Travar's Citadel closed, the dome protected all but one part of the city, known today as the Old Harbor. Some ruins remained when the city opened, and since then the it has been rebuilt and subsumed into the larger community of the Byrose



dockyards. It's most notable feature is the Riverclaw Tavern, built from a derelict K'tenshin riverboat destroyed during the Battle at Wharf's End.

The Riverclaw is fixed to a series of piles driven into the riverbed, and caters to those who work and live on the river and don't feel at home on solid ground. The riverboat seems to float in the water when the river level is normal, but when low, the pylons become exposed. When the river is running high, the tavern creaks and groans as it tries to pull free of its supports.

There are three drinking areas: two small but comfortable lounges, one of which is exclusive to those customers who have rented cabins for the night, and a large main bar, which attracts most of the tavern's business. The main floor is attached to the drive shaft running from the old fire engine to the paddle wheel, modified so it only rotates a few degrees port or starboard. As the river eddies turn the paddle wheel back and forth, the floor tilts, giving the illusion the boat is still plying the waters of the Byrose.

None of the regulars are quite sure who owns the tavern, as it appears to change hands on a regular basis. There has been recent speculation the tavern has been bought by a consortium of t'skrang, perhaps K'tenshin agents hoping to reclaim the Riverclaw for the *aropagoi*. Detractors point out repairs used heavy timbers, and were done without consideration for making the ship river-worthy again.

### Adventure Hook: Salvage

Throalic engineering guilds has long sought the secrets of t'skrang fire engines. A group of engineers have learned there is a fire engine, albeit damaged, in the Riverclaw Tavern. Determined to get their hands on the engine and return it to Throal, they hire the player characters to help them.

The player characters must scout out the tavern and smuggle the dwarfs aboard, get them to the engine room, and escort them safely back to land. This takes place over several nights, as it takes time to quietly dismantle the engine and get it off the boat.

During one of their forays, they stumble across a clandestine gathering of the Order of the Crimson Sky (see p. 139). Overhearing their plans, the player characters must decide whether to intervene and risk exposing the dwarf's efforts, or keep it secret to protect their employers.

## SLAVE MARKETS

The slave trade is one of the most divisive issues in Travar. Opponents see it as a mark of shame and hypocrisy. Even those who benefit from the slave trade are not always comfortable with it, but as with so many things in Travar, profit often trumps ethics.

Recognizing how strongly Travar's citizens felt about the issue, the Magistrates decided it was best to simply prohibit the slave trade inside the city proper. They believed this would put it out of sight, and therefore out of mind.

At first, this approach worked. The slave markets are positioned in a small dell behind a low hill between Travar and the Byrose River. While the slave markets can be

seen from atop the city walls, they otherwise only come into view when cresting the hill or from the riverfront and eastern edge of Tent City.

The markets are surrounded by a large wooden stockade and could almost be considered a small, fortified village. Inside, a dozen slave pens surround the main central plaza. Here the slaves are paraded before their prospective owners. There are three smaller markets with a closed-door policy, allowing anonymity for those who do not wish to be seen purchasing slaves in public. These smaller markets almost exclusively cater to the needs of the very wealthy.

Several flophouses serve the slaving gangs operating out of the market, along with businesses that provide trappings like chains, manacles, and brands. Some of the best bounty hunters and trackers can be found here, and for the right price they will hunt down any target, whether escaped slave, outlaw, or missing sibling.

There is a consequence to the Magistrates turning a blind eye to the slave trade. The Code of Travar is barely recognized inside the stockade, attracting renegades and criminals from Travar and beyond. Assault, theft, and even murder often go unpunished. The City Watch almost never visits the slave markets, as the merchants and slaver gangs have their own enforcers.

The stockade has a small wharf for river galleys and supply ships to dock. A rough-hewn stone and timber airship dock stands just outside the stockade. Airships only stay long enough to load or unload their cargo, as otherwise they are an easy target for followers of Lochost. The wreckage of the airship *The Wind of Chains* can still be seen where abolitionists brought it down in a coordinated attack. Unsurprisingly, the slave markets attract followers of Dis and many of their schemes are hatched in the relative safety of its walls.

While much of the population is transient, it is a permanent home to a few individuals and some notable slaver gangs. The Therans often use the stockade as a base for their agents in Travar.

An unspoken covenant exists between the city and the slavers. Taking slaves from within the city's territory is prohibited. After one group took slaves from some indentured villages, it brought down the wrath of the large trading houses. Travar's hypocrisy only goes so far.

### *Slave Master Stoneheart*

A small, wiry human, Stoneheart is the market's overseer, managing the pens and auctions. He is well respected in the slaver community and can hold his own in combat. The many scars on his face and arms attest to his surviving many engagements. He is almost never seen without his magical whip, Soulfinder.

### **Sixth Circle Human Warrior**

**DEX: 6      STR: 6      TOU: 8**  
**PER: 6      WIL: 5      CHA: 4**

### *Taskmaster*

This large, brutal troll is Stoneheart's right hand, and fiercely loyal to the slave master. No one knows the reasons for his loyalty, or anything else about him, for

that matter. It is said any slave who meets Taskmaster's gaze falls to their knees in obedience, all thoughts of rebellion crushed.

**Troll Questor of Dis**

**DEX: 5      STR: 9      TOU: 9**  
**PER: 4      WIL: 6      CHA: 4**

*Rook*

Rook, a flint-eyed human, leads the eponymous Rook's Renegades, and is regarded as the most ruthless slaver in the region. The group works for the Therans and many of them hail from different parts of the Theran Empire. Rook's Renegades are raiders of the worst kind, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake.

Throal has offered a bounty for Rook's capture, and have been increasing pressure on Travar's Magistrates to apprehend him. The Magistrates have thus far resisted, as Rook has yet to do anything within their jurisdiction that breaks the Code of Travar.

Rook has never had much empathy for other Namegivers, believing they bring cruelty on themselves and thus deserve it.

**Eighth Circle Human Thief, Fifth Circle Archer**

**DEX: 6      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 7      CHA: 8**

## BYROSE RIVER VALLEY

**R**unning from the foothills of the Dragon Mountains to the Serpent River, the Byrose River is Travar's lifeblood. It carries goods to and from the city, is an abundant source of food, and irrigates the many farms along its banks. Unfortunately, territorial disputes are constant source of friction between Travar and the t'skrang House K'tenshin.

The Byrose might seem insignificant compared to the Serpent River, but travelers should not mistake it for some backwater creek. Many tributaries from the Thunder Mountains feed into it, and from just south of Travar northward, it can easily carry warships.

The river descends through dangerous rapids and waterfalls before reaching the valley floor. As it heads north, it supports many small settlements. Many of these are t'skrang river villages, though some include other Namegivers. The village of Serpenhold, the southernmost known village, is roughly seventy miles from Travar.

Thirty miles south of Travar is an island known as Dead Man's Hill. It is a slender remnant of land just over two miles in length that temporarily splits the river into two channels. Large outcroppings of rock along its length cause strong back eddies, currents and standing waves, making navigation treacherous.

The island takes its Name from an event shortly after the Scourge. During a plague, bodies were collected and shipped to the island to be buried in a charnel pit. It was chosen because it was remote, uninhabited, and its strong currents would deter anyone from landing on it. Legends say ruins were found when burying the bodies,

but locals discourage anyone from visiting, saying it is haunted by the spirits of those buried there.

North of Travar, many villages have succumbed to the bullying and harassment of House K'tenshin. Many dispute the *aropagoi's* claim to the river in the wake of the Second War and the expansion of the Free Trade Compact. Towns and villages are under growing pressure to deal exclusively with the Byrose Consortium, even south of Travar.

The Byrose is an industrious river and all manner of craft ply its waters. Several t'skrang riverboats run irregular ferry service around Travar, stopping at smaller towns on the route. Most of these vessels are only making coin until their next shipments are ready to be loaded. Trips upstream are more expensive and less frequently traveled. When larger vessels are not available, it isn't too hard to find a boatman willing to ferry travelers across the river for a few coins.

While riverboat captains face increasing competition from each other in recent years, they still provide the bulk of shipping to and from Travar. Airships allow merchants to bypass the tolls levied by the t'skrang, but space is at a premium, putting air shipping out of reach of all but the largest merchant companies.

## THE BADLANDS

Few places are as terrible to behold as the Badlands. Even gazing on the corruption and devastation is enough to wither the soul. The Badlands are spoken of in hushed tones across Barsaive, lamenting a once beautiful and prosperous land of bustling towns and cities, now defiled by the Horrors. Legends say the Horrors took unusual delight in destroying all that Namegivers had built, punishing them for flaunting their magic.

Those who speak of such things miss the mark, rarely coming close to describing the utter corruption of the Badlands. For most, it is a far-off place, a dark legend to be experienced through fireside tales. To the adepts and heroes seeking its hidden treasures, it is often their final resting place. For a few, it is the source of torment at the hands of a Horror. To Travar, it is a malign, forsaken place, threatening to complete the corruption of the Tara'var.

The joy of Travar's people felt knowing they had survived the Scourge was quickly tempered. Of all the cities, towns, and villages in the area, they alone had survived. A few scholars have studied the Badlands closely, and put forward the controversial idea Travar's greed may have set the stage for the region's corruption.

### Naming the Badlands

The act of Naming focuses the world's magical energies, and potentially creates a powerful True Pattern. When Vaare Longfang Named the region the Badlands, she didn't do Barsaive any favors, least of all the people of Travar.

Scholars believe the negative connotations associated with the Name and its regular use strengthens its True Pattern. Some argue it is why the Badlands continue to spread, and cleansing its corruption such a difficult task. A few suggest the Name doesn't adequately convey the danger, as it still attracts the foolish and unwary. This

idea is soundly rejected, because if the Name holds power now, what effect would a worse one have?

### **Why the Kaers Were Breached**

The tales and legends of Barsaive are links to the past, offering insight into the truth. Some tales claim the Horrors created the Badlands because of the region's beauty, or the wealth of its people, but there were many areas of great beauty and wealth that did not suffer a similar fate. Other legends say the Badlands are due to the sheer number of Horrors that roamed the area during the Scourge. While this is true, scholars seldom ask why the Horrors would choose to gather in such vast numbers.

Before the Scourge, the Tara'var was dominated by humans, dotted with walled towns and cities not unlike Travar. These settlements states traded heavily with the Therans, bringing stability to the area after the Orichalcum Wars.

Travar's merchants struck a deal to distribute the Rites of Protection and Passage in the area, earning the trading houses vast profits. Existing defensive walls led many settlements to build citadels. Smaller towns and villages, unable to afford the more ostentatious protections, banded together to build more traditional underground kaers.

Travar's merchant houses pointed to Travar's own preparations, the magical dome of True Fire and Air. They convinced the wealthiest towns and cities magical protection through True Elements was superior to rock or cut stone. They encouraged others to follow Travar's lead, not because mixing True Air and Fire offered greater protection, but because it provided greater opportunity for profit. It was, bluntly, an ingenious but ultimately ruinous exercise in wealth creation.

When Thera announced the sealing of their island citadel, Thera citizens who planned to weather the Scourge on the great island began their migration. This had serious consequences for those relying on Thera for protection and trade, and many found themselves losing ward-smiths, the craftsmen who specialized in the Rites of Protection and Passage.

Thera's sealing set off a domino effect across the region. While Thera did not leave their vassals completely defenseless, some took the opportunity to seize what they needed by force. Exaggerated reports of roaming Horrors, and villages ransacked for raw materials, spread panic. Some sealed themselves in uncompleted kaers for fear of being attacked by other Namegivers. In some cases, nervous residents sealed themselves in, leaving their neighbors outside.

Many kaers still needed to add the final touches to their defenses and there was even greater demand for ward-smiths and rune-masons. The price of raw materials and skilled labor soared, and Travar's merchant houses stepped in to make up the shortfall, earning huge profits. This profiteering eventually led the Body of Five to ignite Travar's Storm Shield and prematurely seal the citadel (see p. 20). In the resulting panic, many other kaers followed Travar's lead. Dozens if not hundreds of kaers and citadels across the Tara'var ignited their protective wards.

Records recovered from the Badlands after the Scourge describe towns unable to complete their kaers and citadels. Travar's trading houses were supposed to supply much of the required manpower and materials, but the city's unexpected closure

removed those resources. Many closed their kaers believing that, even incomplete, the protections would be enough to protect them. Others desperately shored up their defenses with blood magic rituals, many of which went horribly wrong.

As more records are recovered, it is clear that, to some extent, the region fell because Travar abandoned it. Travar had offered deliverance with the Theran Rites, signed contracts and collected payment before, in the eleventh hour, abandoning all but a few to protect themselves from Theran reprisal.



Kaers with only the most basic protections fell almost as soon as the Horrors arrived. Well-concealed kaers lasted only until the Horrors found them. The citadels lasted longer, but presented a target in plain view. A few well-protected retreats held out for generations, but even they were eventually overcome. Almost every living being suffered unimaginably, and many believe the land's corruption is an echo of their torment.

*Brother Quirin put forward a disturbing theory regarding the continued expansion of those blighted lands. If the past suffering of the land's inhabitants is the source of the sustained corruption, that power might be further fed by the death and suffering of those adepts and scholars who venture inside its borders.*

*If true, it does not bode well for our efforts to heal the damage, or for the future of Travar and its people. Every failed expedition, every soul lost to its clutches could reinforce the pattern and strengthen the damage, pushing the taint ever closer to the city.*

*Jaspree grant he is wrong.*

*— Illuvio Marfell, Wizard and Questor of Jaspree*

## Exploring the Badlands

The Badlands are twisted and broken, every rock and stone splintered, sharpened to a razor's edge. During the day, the sun is blistering hot. A dull orb in the sky, its light filters through the tainted atmosphere giving the land a blood-red hue. A chill sets in as the sun sets, not only from the unexpected freezing temperatures, but also the hunting cries of the twisted denizens who call the Badlands home.

There is almost no clean water in the Badlands, and the air and earth leaches moisture from the body. After strength of body and mind, water is more valuable than any treasure. Even on the outskirts it is not unusual to stumble across the desiccated remains of the foolhardy. It almost never rains, but when it does, the deep gullies that give shelter from the day's heat become death traps, channeling flash floods.

Despite the lack of rain, storms are a common feature in the Badlands, filling the air with black and purple clouds that roll across the landscape. Explorers describe fearsome lightning, and glimpses of terrible things engulfed in the roiling clouds. Others tell of tentacles, wide as a house, hanging from the thickest clouds. Many scholars discount these details as hallucinations brought on by heatstroke, but others note the similarity to the Horror storm that destroyed Vivane.

Many adepts boast of exploring the Badlands, but such tales should be viewed with skepticism. Even the famous obsidiman explorer and Elemental, Granal, admits in his years of exploring the Badlands, he has yet to venture too far in. While some have spent weeks in the Badlands, they likely only traveled its fringes and what lies in its heart has yet to be discovered.

Each year, Travar's merchants sponsor expeditions to scout routes that could be safely traveled by airship. None have yet succeeded. There are reports of wrecked airships in the explored regions of the Badlands, their skeletal hulks easily mistaken for some great carcass stripped of flesh.

*Despite sightings of the Earthdawn in the skies over Barsaive, there haven't been any verified encounters with the lost airship in decades. I suspect the reason is she was lost to the Badlands.*

*We know the initial destination on that fateful voyage was Landis. From Throal, it is possible the ship encountered the Jerris air lane, which would have pushed them south, very near the Badlands. Since the Earthdawn only skirted the edges on an earlier voyage, Longfang might not have realized how dangerous it was to travel the skies over that blighted region.*

*Given the hazards of the Badlands, we may never know the truth, but the evidence seems clear enough to me.*

— Lieutenant Harl Broadwing, Royal Navy Navigator

*A distinct lack of evidence. And imagination, if you ask me. She's still out there! In Barsaive's darkest hour, she will return!*

— Breet Wisselrun

## Maps of the Badlands

After the Scourge, much of Barsaive was unrecognizable. Bereft of forests, and with most settlements vanished, only the mountain ranges and rivers remained. In some areas, the destruction was so extreme that even great landmarks were altered and ancient maps can only hint at what once was. The Badlands is one such place.

Ancient maps provide hints, and those hints were enough to attract adepts searching for lost treasures. Unfortunately, many came unprepared and met their end or were driven insane. Some came to believe pre-Scourge maps of the area were cursed with the same corruption as the land itself. People in Travar were soon destroying documents relating to the Badlands, forever hiding clues to locations of forgotten kaers and magic treasures.

Travar's scholars were outraged at the loss, but their cries fell on deaf ears. It was only with the realization the Badlands were growing the Magistrates ordered a halt to the disposal of these historical documents. Travar's libraries were tasked with collecting and protecting any remaining information. Today, any pre-Scourge map of the Badlands is a valuable find.

The effect of the Scourge can be clearly seen by comparing the few new, sparsely detailed maps that exist of the Badlands with older ones. One of the most notable differences is the course of the Narid River, now known as the River of Bones, has dramatically altered and led those attempting to rediscover it to the area known as Sorrow's Channel (p. 217).

## Lost Kaers

Some adepts believe they can simply walk into the Badlands and discover a lost kaer. They are sadly mistaken. Even with a map, many kaers were not located near the village that built it. In some cases, this is because multiple settlements worked together to build the shelter at a neutral site. In others, it was unknown if Horrors could read, and the residents sought any advantage they could for protection, not recording where the kaer was built. With landmarks altered, using maps for navigation is difficult, but they can provide clues on where explorers should begin. Diligent research pays dividends for those that travel such dangerous paths.

One of the most overlooked methods of discovering information on villages marked on pre-Scourge maps is found in the streets of Travar itself. Many streets are Named for places that no longer exist. Taverns are Named after great heroes, or locations that no longer resemble what they once were. Some communities preserved their heritage by oral tradition.

While dozens of ruined kaers have been discovered, no one has discovered any of the larger towns or citadels. They may have been completely demolished, or perhaps no one has yet traveled deep enough into the Badlands. Of the kaers that have been discovered, some have yet to be explored, infested by the minions and constructs of the Horrors that claimed them. Adepts who have successfully explored kaers in the Badlands frequently describe the terrible corruption within them. One example is found in statues of the Mad Passions.

In most of Barsaive, old statues only hint at the changes the Mad Passions suffered during the Scourge. Statues appear normal, until inspection reveals a smile has

become a sneer, or an expression of serenity one of confusion, sternness, or pain. In the Badlands, statues of the Mad Passions have been radically altered, more blatantly reflecting the fallen Passions' madness. The exact reason for these changes is cause for great speculation.

### **Influence of the Badlands**

The Badlands have a profound effect on Travar, shaping how the area has developed since the Scourge. The Byrose River's eastern shores are more heavily farmed, a result of the Badlands depleting agricultural land to the west. The loss of nearby markets has forced Travar's merchants to look farther afield for customers, and rely more heavily on river trade and the t'skrang *aropagoi*.

The encroaching Badlands presents its own problems, which Travar's Magistrates cannot afford to ignore. When first discovered, the Badlands was spreading slowly, perhaps a few feet per year. Those feet have become yards, and some frontier villages to the west have been consumed. People are leaving these villages in droves, swelling the population of Travar and Tent City.

After the Scourge, burying the dead once again became the norm for most Namegivers, but once the corruption reached these frontier towns, the corpses rose, digging their way free to torment the living. Settlers who stubbornly choose to remain are consumed by hatred and torment, their hearts and minds twisted. These victims roam a swath of land known as the borderlands. Normally content to linger in those outlying areas, some have been seen further east. A few have been discovered inside Travar's walls after committing some terrible deed.

For the first time in many years, seeds of mistrust and suspicion have taken root. While rituals of greeting are fading elsewhere, in Travar the practice grows as the Badlands spread. Strangers entering Travar via the western gates can expect to perform the ritual before they are granted entrance to the city.

Travar's adepts have searched the Badlands for many years to find lost kaers and treasures. Most come back only with their lives, if they come back at all. They wander Travar's streets as Horror-scarred madmen. Few return with enough to have made their ordeal worthwhile.

Of those trinkets brought back, some turn out to be cursed, unsuspecting explorers selling them to ignorant buyers. Authorities know of at least a dozen cursed items in the city and are actively trying to track them down, suspecting there are many more. Of course, not all these items are brought into Travar by returning adepts. Foul folk and followers of depraved cults purposely distribute cursed items in pursuit of their twisted goals.

A few scholars and adepts believe the Badlands may itself be some form of Horror, growing in power by feeding on the torment and pain it causes. They fear the only way to stop the corruption's spread is to stop Namegivers from traveling there. Considering the tales of treasure and lost cities, this is an almost impossible task. For now, the Badlands draw some of the most powerful adepts from across Barsaive to explore its depths.

As the Badlands spread closer to Travar's walls, some believe signs of its corruption are already manifesting. Each year, an increasing number of people report

a phenomenon known as Enemy at the Gates. Individuals with no apparent connection to each other experience the same recurring dream. An entity approaches the gates of Travar from the Badlands, baying hordes of terrible creatures at its heels, demanding entrance to the city.

## Trosk

Trosk is the last bastion of civilization before the Serpent River vanishes into the Mist Swamps. It stands in the ruins of what was once a port city on the river's south bank. A ferry service runs from Trosk's harbor to the river's far shore, used by those looking to avoid more traveled routes.

The residents are mostly devotees of Jaspree, followers and retainers of the questors who lead the village. They are dedicated to halting, if not reversing the spread of the Badlands. A few residents are not devoted to the cause, but are willing to supply those who are.

The questors rule the village with the iron grip, restricting the movements of those not faithful to Jaspree's cause. Anyone attempting to explore the wider ruins is closely watched. Spending the night in Trosk requires travelers stay in one of two inns, the Passions' Quest and Jaspree's Rage, both on the riverbank. Only Jaspree's faithful are allowed beyond the village after dark, as creatures from the Badlands often hunt the ruins.

Jaspree's followers in Trosk wear long, hooded robes of brilliant white cloth. The sight of these figures moving through the ruins gave rise to tales of them being haunted, which the questors encourage. Despite the restrictions imposed on visitors, the questors show great forbearance toward troublemakers. When pushed beyond a certain point, however, they can be merciless.

Trosk's most notable feature is a series of seven pools collectively known as the Cleansing Pools. Questors bathe in them in a ceremony before forays into the Badlands. They say bathing in the pools bestows Jaspree's blessing, focusing the mind and fortifying the questor against corruption. While the questors do not allow anyone to approach the pools, they do not stop anyone observing the ritual from a respectful distance.

The ritual order of the pools is Purity, Courage, Devotion, Contempt (for the corruption; the armor of contempt), Diligence, Commitment, and Sacrifice.

Whether the pools do what the questors claim is up to the gamemaster. The ritual may simply mentally prepare the participant for the journey with no specific game mechanical benefit, or it might draw Jaspree's attention and blessing (which is why only the faithful can participate). If you wish to have the pools provide a specific benefit, here are a couple of suggestions:

The ritual provides a +3 bonus to Wilderness Survival tests made in the Badlands for one week.

The ritual provides a +2 bonus to a character's Defense rating against powers or effects that grant a Corruption Point (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 456 for more on Corruption Points), or a +2 bonus to tests made to resist those powers. This bonus lasts for one week.

## River of Bones

Once known as the Narid, the River of Bones no longer resembles the idyllic river whose deep waters once meandered through the Tara'var. It flows from the western edges of the Dragon Mountains as it always has, but is now a raging torrent of white water racing through some of the deepest gullies in the Badlands before joining with the Iontos. These frothing white waters gave the river its new Name. When viewed from above, the gullies appear as deep wounds in the land, the river the exposed white of its bones.

The course change has left behind more than fifty miles of dry riverbed, much of it no longer recognizable, the towns it sustained all but obliterated by the Horrors. The river's waters now have a bitter, metallic taste and are nearly impossible to navigate. The river splits in places, its waters passing through diverging gullies that eventually reunite. Sometimes the waters vanish into holes, surfacing further downstream. Explorers believe these vanishing waters mark the entrances to breached kaers and abandoned mines. Some have tried to prove the theory, with no reported success.

## Sorrow's Channel

The first explorers who attempted to find the Narid River discovered only a dusty gully, haunted by the cry of a mournful wind. The ancient riverbed is littered with dozens of ruined t'skrang towers, their inhabitants vanished with the waters that once protected them.

Much of what can normally be seen of a t'skrang tower is a fraction of what is beneath the water. Without water to hide their bulbous bases, these towers look like giant teardrops, which perhaps explains why the riverbed is called Sorrow's Channel.

## Obsidian Hills

The Obsidian Hills are a source of much speculation. Reports from explorers who have been there describe an area covered in statues of Namegivers, each in a unique and agonizing pose. The statues do not cast shadows with the sun, instead, they creep slowly in different directions. Explorers touched by a statue's shadow experience severe pain, as if experiencing what the statue is depicting. Many have met their end after using the statues as shelter from the sun. Some speculate the victims themselves become statues.



The terrible tales told do not end there. A few groups have reported a place now called the Pathway of Souls, paved with stone from a nearby Liferock, its elemental spirit sundered by some terrible Horror. Within each paving stone, one member of the brotherhood can be seen, pawing at the surface of their prison, writhing in agony and madness.

The Horror responsible may still reside in the hills, feeding on its victims. One obsidiman reportedly survives, uncorrupted but driven to madness. He walks the path in a vain attempt to administer comfort to his brothers, unable to enter the dreaming, knowing one day he will have to return to what remains of his Liferock and join the torment of his brothers.

### Iontos River

The Iontos River cuts through the eastern reaches of the Badlands. Its waters are swift and treacherous as they navigate large rocks and shifting sandbars. The waters of the Iontos are not as corrupted as the lands they pass through, but the further it travels the fouler it becomes. Where the River of Bones joins the Iontos, the waters mix, tainting it with foul sediments and turning it a metallic red.

The Iontos River is longer than the Byrose, but except for the few miles before the Serpent, narrower and shallower. Explorers sometimes use it as a gateway to the Badlands, but its shores are dangerous. While many towns and kaers across the Badlands have been lost with no signs of their whereabouts, the banks of the Iontos are littered with ruins of pre-Scourge habitation, the bones of towns still visible. In these places, the remains of stone piers lurk beneath the surface, making navigation treacherous.

These settlements were frontier towns and outposts, and the Therans have some interest in the area. Like most expeditions into the Badlands, however, investigations don't end well. In addition to the navigational hazards, the waters hide aquatic Horrors and constructs. Many ships that set out do not return, their wreckage found days later floating downstream. A few simply vanish without a trace.

### DEATH'S SEA

Everyone in Travar knows the legends of Death's Sea, and most believe one day Death will be freed. They fear when Death breaks free of his shackles, his anger will be vented on them simply because of Travar's proximity to his domain.

Death's Sea is as terrible as it is beautiful, but despite the dangers, it is a source of profit Travar's merchants go to almost any length to exploit. With the increasing demand for True Fire, many ship owners are modifying their cargo vessels to endure the harsh conditions. Unfortunately, without skilled fire miners to properly operate these vessels, many return without cargo, or the crew they started with.

Travar's fire miners are a secretive, hardy bunch, easily recognized by their scarred and reddened skin, lack of body hair, and fearsome tattoos. Many also carry a sulfurous odor following them wherever they go. Notorious for their uneven temper, they do not suffer fools lightly in the air or on the ground. Travar's fire miners have a saying, "Death may take me, but I don't need a push from a fool."

Like the rest of Travar's airmen, fire miners seldom take to the skies without their air sailor charms, which usually offer some protection from the heat. They are also commonly equipped with tread lightly boots (see **Goods and Services**, p. 275), and able fighters, as piracy is almost as great a danger as gathering True Fire. A mining ship loaded down with cargo is a mighty prize for any pirate.

Travar currently has a bounty on a pirate ship Named *The Horrid Cry*, whose crew has relieved many mining vessels of their cargos. It is believed the crew lairs either in the foothills of the Dragon Mountains or in some cliff-side shelter on the edge of Death's Sea. Despite the offered reward, there is no information on the captain, or whether they are motivated by anything more than profit.

A growing tradition, and expanding business in Travar, is the burial of the dead in Death's Sea (see p. 56). For those who tend to the dead and bereaved, it is an opportunity for business growth, and as word of the practice spreads, Travar's funeral homes are seeing business from beyond the city.

Not all are pleased with the new practice. Many of Jaspree's questors believe the body should be returned to the earth from which all life springs. Others worry delivering bodies to Death's Sea may speed Death's release, especially since the Keys of Death have taken an interest in the tradition.

The dead are not randomly dumped in Deaths Sea, but in a specific area known as the Burial Fields chosen for the strong magma currents that quickly consume the dead. The area has a secret: they are some of the richest lodes of True Fire. This wasn't true before the burials, and the connection is unknown. Fire miners have come to call the area the Reaping Fields and the True Fire taken from them as Death's Bounty.

### Adventure Hook: Reaper's Cove

The player characters are hired to investigate a wave of disappearances across the city. The only apparent connection between the victims is all were recently treated at the Sanctum of Garlen.

The kidnappers are a local sect of the Keys of Death. They have learned about the Reaping Fields, and believe the True Fire gathered there is the essence of Death himself. By sacrificing those who have cheated death, they can quicken Death's release.

If the player characters can uncover the plot and make it to Reaper's Cove in time, they may be able to prevent the next series of sacrifices.

## DRAGON MOUNTAINS

**S**outh of Travar, the Dragon Mountains mark part of Barsaive's southern boundary. The range gets its name because the great dragon Mountainshadow claims it as his domain. The Dragon Mountains are the source of the Byrose River, and a place of mystery, feared and avoided by most people.

Little is known of the Dragon Mountains other than it is a harsh, dangerous place. There is scant plant life on the northern slopes, and even the grass in the foothills is short and indigestible to all but the hardiest herd animals. Most creatures there

survive by eating each other. Dragons, wyvern, and other dragonlike creatures threaten the skies, leading fire miners headed for Death's Sea to skirt the western foothills, hoping to avoid notice.

Despite the dangers, those with excessive bravery or foolishness travel to the Dragon Mountains. Legends claim Mountainshadow sheltered hundreds, if not thousands, of Namegivers during the Scourge, and their descendants still enjoy his protection. Some explorers report the southern slopes are covered in thick forest and valleys teeming with game. If true, these present opportunities for merchants comfortable with the risk.

Other explorers seek forgotten kaers. The foothills of the Dragon Mountains were once populated with several villages, but how many survived is not known, and Mountainshadow may have sheltered them, rather than kaers. Travar and Throal have few surviving records to shed light on the truth.

The most reliable way for explorers to reach the mountains is to arrange passage on mining ships bound for Death's Sea. Most captains are willing to oblige for the extra coin, if it doesn't take them off course. Traveling up the Byrose is an option, but its southern reaches and surrounding land are poorly charted, presenting dangers beyond those offered by local wildlife.

When conditions are right, the glow from Death's Sea can be seen from the walls of Travar after dark. Clouds reflect the magma's light, appearing as an aurora over the Dragon Mountains, known as Death's Aura. Legends say that, when visible, Death is testing the shackles binding him, stretching them a little further each time.

This legend rings true with those living along the Byrose. The hot air over Death's Sea pushes the clouds over the mountains, bringing violent downpours to the Byrose Valley, which can cause sudden flooding. Unprepared Namegivers are caught and dragged to the bottom of the Byrose, finding themselves in Death's Realm sooner than expected.

## MIST SWAMPS

**T**he Mist Swamps lie just north of the Badlands, far from Travar. Despite the distance, many adepts looking to explore the Swamps start their journey in the city, since there aren't any closer major settlements where one can outfit an expedition.

Maps of Barsaive make the Mist Swamps appear an insignificant smudge compared to other geographic features. This often leads would-be explorers to disaster. To appreciate their size and eerie beauty, they are best viewed from the highlands to the north. From this vantage, they have a blue hue. Landmarks appear out of the mists, only to be swallowed up moments later. From the ground, these landmarks are useless since travelers are unable to see more than several yards in any direction.

The mists can extend dozens of miles inland, making it hard to tell where the Swamps begin. At the edge, sunlight manages to weakly pierce the mist, creating a glow that can trick the mind into losing any sense of direction. The trees lining the banks droop low, their branches laden with colorful mosses, dripping with water condensing on their fronds. This can be a source of clean drinking water, but explorers

should be cautious, as some plants, like wyrdmoss, secrete toxins or hallucinogens into the water.

Deeper into the Mist Swamps the heat becomes more oppressive and it is essential to bring a good supply of clean drinking water. The moisture-laden air soaks all but magically protected gear and prevents anything from burning. After a few days, signs of rot can appear on clothing and leather.

Visibility is a few yards at best. The fog can become unnaturally thick, and it is during these predators are most likely to attack. Their sight has become nearly vestigial, with their other senses sharpened to compensate.

Travelers can approach the swamps by land or the Serpent River. Approaching by land is best from the northern shore, avoiding the Badlands. The river allows explorers to penetrate the swamps more quickly, though back-eddies and currents makes controlling boats tricky. Canoes are the best way to navigate the swamps, as the countless, crisscrossing waterways make travelling the Mist Swamps on foot almost impossible.

The main reason explorers brave the Mist Swamps are rumors of a lost city. These rumors are based on an ancient map discovered in Throal during the Scourge. A few scholars believe it originated in Travar, but the only recognizable text from the map is "Yrns Morgath".

Evidence suggests the rumors are based on truth. Some explorers have found what first appeared to be nothing more than a half buried moss-covered rock, but closer examination revealed they were quarried stone. They were stained a dark tea brown like everything else that festers long enough in the Mist Swamps.

Another reason explorers brave the swamps is to loot salvage. The Serpent and its tributaries all empty into the swamps, with flotsam and jetsam finding its way there. The Quorth call the places this wreckage gathers ghost holes, and the name is apt. Broken timbers get wedged in place, surrounded by barrels, crates, and other waterlogged cargo. Vines and moss growing over the wreckage give the impression of bones draped with decaying flesh.

The greatest danger facing explorers to the Mist Swamps is the great dragon Aban. She claims the region as her domain, and does not tolerate interlopers. Many of the swamp's hazards are encouraged or enhanced by her magic. Many who have traveled there describe a feeling of being watched and those few who have encountered her and survived report they were unaware of her presence until she appeared out of the mists.

Another thing explorers might face is attention from Therans. While they rarely venture into the swamps, for fear of angering Aban, the Empire has long been interested in the lost city, and any ancient magical secrets it might hide. Some adepts who have returned from the swamps describe armed troops asking pointed questions about what they have found. These encounters are less frequent in recent years, but Theran agents still keep an ear out for interesting stories.

## False Earth

False earth is the term for huge floating beds of reeds and moss used by the Quorth, a tribe of humans living on the edges of the Mist Swamps. It can be found on the edge of open water, and is hard to distinguish from soggy marshland. Some areas have small trees growing on them, or are covered with grass and moss, making it indistinguishable from solid ground.

When standing still too long in these areas, Namegivers slowly sink into the water beneath. At first, puddles of water form around a person's feet. Before long, the traveler finds themselves knee deep in water. When the plant fibers become overstretched, unable to hold the weight, they give way, dumping the trespasser into the murky depths. With the weight gone, the terrain springs back, sealing the hole with little trace.

As protection from false earth, the Quorth travel the Mist Swamps with broad shoes woven from reeds, acting like snowshoes to distribute their weight and keep them from sinking.

## THUNDER MOUNTAINS

**E**ast of Travar lie the Thunder Mountains, a range of snow-capped peaks running from Urupa to the Dragon Mountains along the south-eastern border of Barsaive. They are Named for the low, booming peals that roll out of its valleys, giving rise to many different legends.

Some tales blame Death for the booming sounds, claiming the noise is Death's laughter, a warning he will soon be freed of his bonds. Darker tales say Verjigorm, Hunter of Great Dragons, is trapped beneath the highest peaks, though how the Lord of Horrors managed to be imprisoned is anyone's guess. While few pay credence to these tales, a few corrupt souls seek to free the Horror so it can wreak the vengeance it was denied during the Scourge.

A day's walk from Travar brings the Thunder Mountains into view, but it takes another four to five days travel to reach the mountains proper. Numerous kaers were built in the foothills, with many remaining undiscovered. While other kaers were likely built deeper in the range, there are few surviving records.

To Travar, the Thunder Mountains present a double-edged sword. On one hand the cool, moisture-laden air from the Aras Sea brings frequent rain to the Byrose Valley. The foothills and mountains are also rich in mineral wealth. On the other hand, the mountains limit access to the Aras Sea, and there are still Horrors and their constructs lurking in unexplored reaches. These creatures sometimes descend into the lowlands, causing terror and mayhem.

The foothills are dotted with tiny villages, small forests, and the spoil heaps of mines, some active, others long abandoned. The trading houses and consortiums run larger mines, but there are many independent operations. Together they provide the raw material for Travar's industry and export goods for Travar's merchants.

Settlements in the foothills are well concealed and easily missed. It is possible walk for days without encountering any sign of habitation. From the air, villages are more easily spotted and most are near well-traveled routes. While many welcome

merchants from Travar, the further away they are, the warier they become. A few villages truly hate the city.

Often referred to as the lost tribes, these settlements were abandoned by Travar during the Closing, forced to take shelter in unfinished kaers, or wherever they could find it. They passed this grudge from generation to generation. To this day, these villages do not tolerate anyone from Travar in or near their village, and often raid merchant caravans that stray too close.

Airships regularly travel to the Thunder Mountains to mine for True Air. Captains are reluctant to take their ships beyond the first great peaks, known as Thunder Ridge. While they are not the largest peaks, they are still imposing, and have their dangers.

Many are subject to regular storms, gales that drive snow and ice into the mountainsides, triggering avalanches. These are a frequent danger for those who land to take shelter. Most mining vessels only work the edges of these storms to harvest True Air, but a few risk entering them briefly. Deeper into the storm, more True Air can be found, increasing the potential reward.

There are other dangers aside from bad weather. Flying horrors and their constructs can lurk within storms, awaiting those foolish enough to venture to far from safety. Most notable of these are storm wraiths. These constructs have a burning hatred for all life, and attack any vessels they can catch.

At the southern end of Thunder Ridge, built on a wide spur, is a building airmen call the Monastery. It is a tall, walled fortress built into the mountain with no obvious access point. Some crews have sighted robed figures, with the glint of armor and weapons beneath the robes, standing as if expecting an attack. Any airships approaching the site are warned off by spirits guarding the area. No records of the structure's construction have been found, and most assume it is a forgotten citadel that survived the Scourge.

As unusual as it may sound, in addition to True Air and Earth, True Water is gathered in the mountains. In an area called the Blasted Ridge, a river plunges into a vast chasm. As the water crashes over rock outcroppings, the falls split again and again before disappearing into a cloud of rolling mist, earning them the Name Vanishing Falls. It may be the only place in Barsaive where an airship can be seen mining for True Water.

Crews use orichalcum-laced nets on long poles to harvest the elemental kernels, a testament to the skill of the crews who can maneuver to the edge of the falls. One wrong move, and the ship will catch the edge of the torrent, dragged into the depths below. Airmen believe a series of caves hides under the falls, for no river flows from the base of the ridge.





# THE FOUNDING TOURNAMENT

*The Founding is the greatest show in Barsaive. Just ask anyone from Travar.*

• Hop, Elven Scout, Champion of the Tournament •

The Founding is an integral part of life in Travar, and has been since shortly after the Water Rebellion. It draws spectators and participants from across Barsaive, is the social highlight of the year, and the hub around which Travar's politics turn.

This chapter provides an overview of the Founding. This information can be used as a backdrop or focus for adventures set in Travar. Suggestions are provided for gamemasters who want to involve their player characters in the tournament, with example themes and events that can be adapted to suit their campaign.

## THE TOURNAMENT IN TRAVAR

**T**he Founding Tournament occurs each year around the beginning of the month of Riag, though the exact date varies from year to year, and lasts just over two weeks. It is one of the most peculiar, yet entertaining methods of choosing political leaders in Barsaive.

Each year, dozens of would-be contenders spend vast sums of money and sponsor one or more adepts to champion their right to be Magistrate. The Founding includes the tournament, a week-long series of gladiatorial events, and two festivals. The Festival of Color officially opens the tournament and introduces the candidates and their champions. The Festival of Choosing celebrates the winners, appoints the new Magistrate, and officially ushers the outgoing Magistrate from the Arena.

### Festival of Color

Each year, the Festival of Color marks the beginning of the Founding Tournament. The festival is a series of shows and events throughout Travar, the greatest of which are held in the Arena. While the Founding has its origins soon after the Closing, the Festival of Color is a relatively recent addition. Shortly after the Scourge, word of the Founding Tournament spread throughout Barsaive, and thousands flocked to Travar to witness this unusual event.

Unfortunately, with thousands of bored and often drunk Namegivers in the city's streets waiting for the tournament to begin, trouble ensued. The Magistrates ordered the Body of Five to create a pre-tournament event to keep the masses occupied and, of course, part them from their silver. The Body of Five created the post of Master of Ceremonies. Each year, a questor of Floranuus fills the post, and they are responsible for overseeing the festival, the current master attempting to outdo the previous one.

The Festival of Color begins when the first wreathes of flowers and garlands are delivered to the city, and that year's color is revealed. Street merchants soon begin

hawking products in the appropriate color, from pottery and jewelry to cakes and pastries.

As events and performances take place during the festival, that year's champions travel the city, and sometimes beyond, trying to win fans to cheer them on during the tournament. Many champions visit the city walls where they can be seen alongside the City Watch, enhancing their perceived role as protectors of Travar.

The Festival of Color officially ends the evening before the Tournament begins with a grand parade along Founders Way. The Master of Ceremonies leads the candidates for Magistrate and their sponsored champions into the Arena, along with the People's Representative, an individual chosen by lottery as the citizens' official representative (see **People Power** p. 231). In the Arena, each candidate and their champions are introduced to the gathered masses. This is often accompanied by demonstrations of prowess by the champions, along with other entertainments. The ceremony ends with a grand banquet for the candidates and their champions, hosted by the outgoing Magistrate.

## The Tournament

The Founding represented a fresh start for Travar's beleaguered people. The first tournament was held in the open park in the city's center, a primitive event compared to the extravaganza it has become. There were no grand displays of magic or fantastic creatures, only a series of gladiatorial bouts on a hastily erected platform. Despite the early limitations and basic format, it was a resounding success. The Founding gave the people something positive to focus their attention on, seeing them through the darkest days of Travar's history.

Today, the Founding is one of the most spectacular events in Barsaive, attracting visitors from across the province. While visitors come to enjoy the spectacle, to Travar's citizens it is more than a public holiday. The Founding symbolizes freedom from Theran oppression, and choosing a Magistrate each year symbolizes change over stagnation and suffering.

For Travar's smaller merchants, the Founding is an opportunity to increase their profits. For the very wealthy, an opportunity to display the magnitude of their wealth, and basking in the awe such decadence generates.

The Tournament is steeped in gladiatorial spirit, but is more than a contest of blades. It is a collection of



events that can involve assault courses filled with traps, dangerous obstacles, and wondrous contraptions, designed to push the limits of physical endurance. Other events may require outwitting the opposition, whether by solving riddles and puzzles, or dueling with magical artifacts specially designed to entertain with stunning visual and auditory effects. Some challenges exhibit the taming of ferocious creatures.

Regardless of the challenge, Travar's people demand to be entertained, and their enthusiasm pushes adepts to their limits, and sometimes beyond. The events vary year to year, but whatever form they take, the events will be exciting, dangerous, and above all else, entertaining.

### **Festival of Choosing**

The Festival of Choosing begins on the morning of the tournament's final day with events throughout the city, while the final competitive tournament event takes place in the Arena.

After the winner is decided, the victorious champions are given the official title Champion of Travar on the grand stage of the Magistrate's Tribune, in an event filled with pomp and ceremony. This is followed by a farewell speech by the outgoing Magistrate, who then hands over the chains of office to the People's Representative. The two serving Magistrates and the People's Representative each sign a copy of the Code of Travar, then present it and the chains of office to the new Magistrate.

The outgoing Magistrate accompanies the new Magistrate and their champions on a three-circuit victory lap of the Arena, on a chariot or carriage drawn by some remarkable creature. The new Champions of Travar and the People's Representative then escort the outgoing Magistrate to the Arena gates where they must join the crowd gathered to watch the parade along Founders Way. This introduces the new Magistrate and their Champions to those unlucky enough not to get tickets for the Arena.

The Festival of Choosing officially ends with the People's Representative closing and barring the Arena's main gates. The partying and celebrations, however, go on all night and into the early hours of the morning.

### **Entering the Tournament**

The price of entering a champion is prohibitive, but it is a little-known fact any citizen of Travar has the right to champion themselves. This is not as expensive as sponsoring a champion, the preferred method of most merchants, but is still out of reach of many in Travar.

Some societies, taverns, guilds, and even indentured villages host events during the year to raise the entrance fee for a citizen or local celebrity daring (or foolish) enough to pit themselves against the adepts hired by the very wealthy. Having said that, on at least one occasion in the past the Founding has produced a people's Magistrate.



*I remember as a young child, we had this big fella, an ork from one of the farmin' villages up north. Well, this ork manages to trounce the competition somehow and became a Magistrate. He only served one term, but all the farmers loved him, for he changed the tax laws in their favor.*

— Tan'ryar, Tale Smith of Travar

Remember, the title “Champion of the Tournament” is not the same as the coveted title “Champion of Travar” despite almost everyone in Travar using “champion” to refer to either. Champion of Travar is a permanent title bestowed on those who win the tournament, and is considered one of Travar’s greatest honors.

To enter the Founding Tournament, the candidate presents their champion to the Office of the Guild for registration. The sponsor must not only pay the sponsorship fee for each champion entered, but a second fee (called an honor bond) for each champion. Merchants who sponsor themselves are not required to pay the honor bond. Once the payments have been made and the paperwork completed the champion may begin training for the tournament. Many of Travar’s wealthiest merchants register their champions the day after the Festival of Choosing, giving them a full year to prepare. All persons registered can officially go by the title Champion of the Tournament. The title becomes official from the moment the champion is registered for upcoming tournament and expires when the Peoples Representative closes the gates to the Arena during the Festival of Choosing.

Bearing the title Champion of the Tournament grants many benefits, but carries great responsibility. Any available persons bearing the title Champion of the Tournament must assist the authorities and defend Travar if called upon to do so.

Available champions who do not respond their sponsor's right to run for Magistrate that year.

## **Benefits and Drawbacks of Title**

Champion of the Tournament is more than an honorary title bestowed to complement the tournament's pomp and ceremony. Those who become champions may be called on to put their lives at risk on behalf of Travar's people. The title grants the bearer a range of benefits, but also carries drawbacks.

Champions are not required to pay any of the official city tolls or tariffs while holding the title, nor are they expected to pay any taxes or excise duty. This concession is a tax loophole that can be exploited, but most regard it as a desperate measure. By declaring themselves champions of their own cause, merchants can lawfully evade paying tax. Most who take this route, however, have not considered the consequences of their actions.

This loophole is often referred to as Shyfund's Folly, after Ranill Shyfund, the merchant who first tried to exploit it. One day Ranill had what he considered a sudden stroke of genius. He realized how much money he could save avoiding taxes as a champion. He walked straight to the Office of the Guild and registered himself as a Champion of the Tournament, with no intention of ever entering the Arena.

Exempt from tax for several months, he undercut his fellow merchants, and made tax-free profit in the process. Ranill's stroke of genius ended after reports of a Horror on the edge of the Badlands. Ranill was summoned to join a group of adepts to investigate the Horror's activities.

Filled with terror at the mere thought of confronting a Horror, Ranill refused the summons, and was later found guilty of failing to come to the Travar's aid in a time of need. His champion status was revoked, along with his tax status, and required to pay tax arrears, resulting in financial ruin.

The Magistrates keep the loophole open, knowing it generates a focus of righteous public anger during the tournament. There is nothing like the spectacle of known tax evading merchants debasing themselves in front of the people on tournament day.

Dueling is illegal in Travar unless it involves a champion. A duel must be official, offered and accepted in public. The stress of being a champion can become too much for some and erupt into unpleasantness. It often boils down to macho one-upmanship, or healthy competition that gets out of hand.

If a champion feels their honor has been slighted, they are well within their rights to publicly issue a challenge. Enough notice must be given to allow the authorities to cordon off an area for the duel to be safely witnessed. Word of a challenge can spread quickly, and some duels have drawn so many spectators that streets and markets have been cleared to allow the duel to take place.

A duel is always to first blood, unless one of the parties is not a champion. In this case, they are still bound by the first blood rule, to avoid killing a champion, but the champion is not. If a grudge between champions is not settled before the next event, and they come face to face in the Arena, serious bloodshed can occur.

While not always given, a champion can expect room and board to be paid for by their sponsor. The champion is often expected to stay in lodgings approved by the sponsor, so they know their champions' whereabouts when called on to aid Travar.

Becoming an instant celebrity takes most new champions by surprise, and many are unable to cope with it, especially young adepts whose heroic deeds have only started to be known. Most have never had to deal with fawning strangers, or the realization they are likely to be followed around the city by groups of admirers wanting to know everything about them.

Most champions gain celebrity status only after the tournament has begun. Sometimes, all it takes is getting past the first day, pulling an upset on one of the favorites, or performing some other remarkable feat. Celebrity can be a blessing and a curse, and it is up to the champion to use it to full advantage.

While registered champions are public record, some forgo public displays of prowess and grandstanding tours to garner support. They keep a low profile, allowing others to become the focus of public adulation, but anonymity ends abruptly on tournament day. Once introduced, they can expect more attention in Travar than they would experience in any other city in the province. Champions often find themselves approached by a stranger for some task, whether they are in a backstreet drinking den or at a dinner party.

Champions can expect invitations to the many state and private functions held by Travar's wealthy merchants and socialites. These events increase in frequency right up until the tournament begins. Some merchants encourage their champions to accept these invitations, considering it part of the deal. They realize the likelihood of their champion winning is remote, and use such invitations to gain access to the rich and powerful. They may find an investor or strike a business deal at these events, and shamelessly use their champions to better their own position.

Other merchants, especially those in serious contention, discourage or outright ban their champions from such events. Overindulgence can leave a champion wanting when it comes to competing the next day. The champion must also be on their guard, as rivals may take the opportunity to slip something into the champion's food or drink, and sometimes this is the only reason for the function. Only the most social of champions find the hobnobbing involved in these functions interesting. They are expected to make polite, and often boring, conversation with everyone in the room, give speeches and make toasts.

Hosting a function sometimes hides ulterior motives. In the guise of polite conversation, competing merchants extract information from bored, loose-lipped champions. They don't realize telling tales of their exploits offers insights to their skill, tactics, and abilities. Champions with their own agenda, however, can use these affairs to gain access to property and people of influence they normally would not have contact with.

A champion, while not entitled to it, can expect a discount for most basic services in Travar without having to ask. This discount can vary from five to thirty percent depending on the champion's status. A merchant who can reliably claim a particular champion regularly shops at their store can expect to attract more customers,

especially during the festival. This claim is particularly beneficial to proprietors of fashionable clothing shops, inns and taverns, and weapon or armor merchants.

### **People Power**

Ideas and suggestions are collected throughout the year at the Office of the Guild, a public office in the Guild House Tower. The Body of Five encourages public participation. Each year at least one suggestion from the public is included as a tournament or entertainment event during the Founding.

Lodging a suggestion grants entry in a lottery for tickets to the tournament and other festival events throughout the city. If a member of the public is lucky enough to have their suggestion chosen by the Body of Five or Master of Ceremonies, they win a family pass to every event in the Arena.

The lottery not only provides tickets to fortunate winners, it selects a member of the public to represent all of Travar's citizens. The winner is given the official title of People's Representative, and they sit with the Body of Five, the current Magistrates, and the Master of Ceremonies during the tournament to observe the proceedings. This is a symbolic gesture, showing the people are watching those who rule Travar.

### **The Value of Information**

The Body of Five goes to great lengths to keep details of the tournament secret. Despite this, there are many ways to discover information and clues as to what kind of events are being planned.

While there are only a few, Travar has merchants specializing in brokering information and, in the run up to the Founding, they pay handsomely for accurate intelligence. Those merchants with sufficient funds, or who choose to gamble everything on the tournament, freely spend money on anything that might give their champions an edge.

Of particular value is information about unusual objects commissioned from Travar's artisans, or unusual creatures recently imported to the city. The creatures that appear in the tournament each year must come from somewhere, be delivered by someone, and kept hidden until the tournament. The smallest morsel of information can give clues to what lies hidden under the Arena.

Some merchants not only sponsor a champion, but hire additional adepts to gather information on the tournament and their rival candidates. Spies infiltrating the Arena are a growing problem. These moles are not limited to adepts hired by Travar's merchants, but also outside powers hoping to place their own puppets in power. Thieves and spies target the Vaults where creatures and contraptions are stored, trying to glimpse what is hidden there. Each year, in the weeks before the tournament, enchanted awnings are pulled over the Arena to stop airship crews seeing the preparations necessary to make the Founding a success.

### **Obtaining a Ticket**

Tickets to the tournament are in great demand, and tickets on the black market go for a premium. The tickets worth the most are those for the opening ceremonies, and the final event. Demand for tickets is so great because the Arena was built to

comfortably seat 35,000 people, and while closer to 45,000 manage to squeeze in each year, Travar is a growing city, in addition to the thousands of visitors.

The Body of Five, after taking an allotment for their own needs, tries to distribute the tickets fairly. This invariably fails as theft, corruption, and greed interfere year after year.

The only success they have had is introducing a public lottery. Tickets for each day are assigned to a series of draws. The Body of Five directly oversees the lottery, reducing the likelihood of outside tampering. Unless the lucky winners are reasonably well off, they usually sell their tickets to the highest bidder. This practice does limit organized gangs controlling the market and pushing prices even higher.

Forged tickets are a growing problem, and much harder to control. They are the primary reason the Arena becomes so overcrowded each year. You don't get a ticket to the Founding unless you are wealthy and connected, a criminal, or just plain lucky.

*To compete in the Founding Tournament is a life changing experience, and to earn the title 'Champion of Travar' is to stand among those who have attained greatness. When I breathe my last, I may have forgotten battles fought, loves lost, and friendships forged, but I will never forget the Arena. It is a part of me, as my blood in the sand is a part of it. The roar of the crowd connects you with the Arena's magic, you need only embrace it. The magic is strong and feels old, older than it has any right to feel, heightening your awareness and helping you to push your abilities to their limits. It is not the people or the Magistrates who judge you, but the Arena. It looks into your soul, and in that instant you know if you are to win... or to lose.*

— Yalan the t'skrang, Champion of Travar

## DESIGNING A TOURNAMENT

The Founding Tournament is a major event and offers plenty of ways for the gamemaster to involve player characters, whether directly or indirectly. With indirect involvement the player characters might be hired to gather information, guard a location, or deliver an item. They can be employed by the Body of Five, merchants seeking an advantage, or might become involved through their own actions. Opposition includes rival merchants, agents of foreign powers, or other champions. While the motivations might be more political in nature, these adventures usually follow traditional formats, and will not be discussed here.

Instead, this section is for gamemasters who wish to involve player characters in the tournament as champions. It offers advice for creating your own tournament, and includes sample events that can be dropped into an existing game, or serve as inspiration.

Having player characters participate is not as simple as having them fight an opponent in front of a large crowd. The Founding Tournament is a series of competitive, entertaining, ceremonial events. Competing should not be easy, but it shouldn't be impossible either. The gamemaster should keep in mind what the player characters can do. Don't design events they don't have the talents or skills necessary

to complete. For example, there is point designing an event requiring the characters cast spells if none of them are magicians.

The gamemaster also needs to consider the Namegiver races. Windlings, for example, are likely to struggle if an event relies on physical strength, but the ability to fly may give them an unfair advantage.

When developing a tournament for the first time, the following process may help.

1. Decide on a Tournament Theme
2. Choose Number of Events
3. Create Individual Events
  - Choose or Create a Style
  - Determine Event Objective
  - Choose Number of Rounds
  - Describe each Event
  - Create the rules
  - Describe each Round
4. Other Details
5. Introductions

Each step is described below, demonstrating the process and offering suggestions at each stage.

Apart from facing a Horror or dragon, competing in the tournament may be one of the most difficult things player characters might do. What prevents the tournament from becoming a bloodbath each year is a magical device known as a brooch of yielding (see p. 285). All champions and Arena staff are issued one when entering the Qualification Pit. Creatures are often implanted with one, which protects and isolates them when they get defeated. Creatures are one of the most expensive elements of the tournament; having them killed in the first round is simply a waste.

## 1. Theme

Each year's tournament has a general theme. Individual events usually have a related sub-theme and a grandiose title to identify them. Themes can be of any kind and taken from any background material. For example, a general theme might be the five elements, with



individual events based on one or more of them. The champions may find themselves avoiding pits of spitting lava taken from the Death's Sea, or navigating a boat around the Arena on invisible currents of air. While not necessary, an overall theme can generate ideas for individual events.

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*Rachel decides for her next adventure the group will participate involved in the Founding Tournament. She decides the overall theme of the tournament will be the Dragon and Thunder Mountains, especially the mystery and legends that surround them.*

---

## 2. Number of Events

The Founding lasts for just over two weeks, but there is often a break in the competitive events held in the Arena to give the champions a chance to catch their breath and lick their wounds. It also gives the Body of Five and Arena staff time to prepare the next set of challenges. Traditionally, there are five individual events, but there can be more or fewer.

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*To keep her first tournament traditional, Rachel decides to go with five events.*

---

## 3. Create Individual Events

After the Body of Five has chosen a general theme for the tournament, they use the theme for inspiration for individual events. Each event has a style, an objective, one or more rounds, a description, and a set of rules.

### *Style*

There are many possible styles of event and even those that seem mundane, when mixed with a little imagination, can result in a memorable tournament. The styles described below are only some possibilities and can be mixed and matched.

- **Elimination:** This style is a straightforward knockout event; a free for all where those left standing qualify for the next round.
- **Rankings:** In this style, standings are determined based on certain criteria. For example, scoring a point for each objective achieved. The highest scores advance.
- **Cooperative:** Champions are broken up into two or more teams and must work together to succeed. Only members of the winning team, or the top teams, advance.
- **Individual:** This style requires a lone champion to wow the crowd with feats of great skill, wondrous displays using their talents, or deeds of strength, daring, and cunning.

- Time Trial: Champions have a limited amount of time to complete the objective. Those below a threshold are eliminated.
- Brain Teaser: This style relies heavily on problem solving. The champions must solve puzzles or riddles to reach the objective.

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*Still wanting to keep things simple, Rachel decides the first event will be an individual elimination round to reduce the number of competitors in the tournament.*

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### *Objective*

Events need an objective, whether as simple as capturing the opposition's flag, defeating a trap or exotic creature, or solving a complex puzzle. An objective can be helpful when creating events, but sometimes the objective is not clear until later in the design process.

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*In the first event, Rachel decides the champions must cross the Arena while avoiding various hazards and negotiating obstacles.*

---

### *Number of Rounds*

Rather than have all champions compete at the same time, an event might be broken up into multiple rounds. From a design perspective, this can keep the number of characters you need to keep track of more manageable.

In most tournaments, the first events are eliminations with multiple rounds. The same event is repeated multiple times, each time with a fresh group of champions competing to get through to the next round. Alternately, team assault events might run multiple rounds to give each team the same number of tries to attack and defend.

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*Rachel decides the first event of her tournament will have multiple rounds, repeated several times during the day so all the champions can take their turn.*

---

### *Describe the Event*

The event's description should explain the event's style, objective, and highlight any special conditions or rules that will come into play. The description can be used when the Master of Ceremonies is introducing the event to the crowd and champions.

---

*Rachel decides to use the basic premise of an egg and spoon race as an event, and gets to work fleshing it out. Keeping the general theme in mind, she gives it the grandiose title "The Clutch of Death: Escape from the Dragon's Lair."*

---

*The champions must choose an egg from a clutch in the dragon's lair, a mock cave constructed at one end of the Arena. They then place the heavy egg on an oversized spoon and transport it to water-filled "spawning pools" at the other end of the Arena by one of several trails.*

*If the player characters want information about the eggs, a successful Creature Lore (7) test gives them the following information:*

*1 Success: The eggs are dragonetta, large voracious lizards from the Dragon Mountains.*

*2 Successes: In their natural environment, hatching is induced by exposure to sunlight and jolting movement.*

*3 Successes: When moved and exposed to sunlight, the eggs leap out of their nests, breaking on the surrounding rocks and releasing the creature.*

*4+ Successes: The player characters should be given all the information in the creature description.*

---

### *Rules*

As with any competition, events require rules, which the Master of Ceremonies may describe when introducing the event. The rules do not have to be complex, but the gamemaster should give them careful consideration. The rules include any game mechanics and challenges of the event.

---

*Rachel starts creating a few basic rules for her event. For anything outside these rules, she will make a judgment call as the need arises.*

### *Spoons*

*The "spoons" are the upturned, shriveled limbs of some dragon-like creature, claws and all. The eggs may only be moved on the spoons provided, and while carrying the spoon, the champion is immune to fire. The spoons may be used as a weapon (Size 5, Damage Step 3). To lift the spoon with the egg into a carrying position requires a successful Strength (6) test.*

### *Eggs*

*The eggs must reach the spawning pools intact and undamaged. If a champion moves faster than their base movement rate, the dragonetta in the egg may sense the movement and choose to jump. Make a test with a Step equal to 4 plus the number of yards by which the champion exceeded their base movement. If the result is greater than the champion's base movement, the egg leaps out of the spoon, landing on the trail. Eggs landing on a rocky trail automatically shatter and release a hungry dragonetta.*

*To catch the egg before it shatters requires a successful Dexterity (7) test. Eggs falling on the sand do not shatter but must be placed back on the spoon before continuing. If an egg is damaged, another must be selected from the clutch.*

*Champions may attack the eggs carried by others. Eggs have Physical Armor 6, Death Rating 30, and a Wound Threshold of 10. Any single attack exceeding the Wound Threshold breaks the egg, as does exceeding the Death Rating. An egg with more than 5 points of damage is considered damaged and must be replaced.*

### *Trails*

*There are two basic trails, with multiple paths through each. The first are the "Blasted Dunes," constructed from fine powdery sand. The sand is deep enough to reduce movement rates in half. The second are the "Twisted Craggs," constructed from paved stone winding through a series of sharp rocky outcrops. There is no movement penalty along this trail.*

*Despite how they look, all paths are 100 yards long. The champions can choose a different trail from the one they started on, but must first return to the beginning of the one they are on.*

### *Winning*

*Champions may use non-lethal options to stop their opponents from reaching the spawning pools. Any champion who kills another is disqualified. The first five champions to reach the spawning pools in each round with an intact egg go through to the next event.*

---

## 4. Other Details

The gamemaster needs to decide on the year's color, as the Arena is decorated by flowers and garlands from the Servos Jungle. Each event is also worth Legend Points to those who complete the challenge.

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*Rachel opts for magenta as that year's color. The Arena—like the rest of Travar—is transformed by huge garlands of magenta flowers with the symbol of the Body of Five in flowers of the purest white.*

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### *Legend Awards*

The gamemaster should determine Legend Awards as suits their individual game. In addition to the standard awards for achieving objectives and overcoming obstacles, individual awards can be given for smart thinking, heroics, or bringing the crowds to their feet.

## 5. Introductions

With the events decided, only the introductions remain. Each year the Festival of Color introduces the candidates for Magistrate and their champions to the crowd. The gamemaster might even choose to introduce each of the characters in the style of a town crier or sports commentator.

Candidate introductions should include the merchant's Name, their trading house or company, and some of their greatest business acquisitions or other noteworthy facts. Introductions for the champions should include their Name, Discipline, where they hail from, and might include some of their past deeds.

The most notable opponents should be described, to make the characters aware of the competition they are up against, and the odds of winning. Describing the opposition can be a great way to introduce new gamemaster characters, whether are heroes or villains, while offering information about their past deeds. Player characters may discover they are competing against a long-term nemesis they thought dead, or facing a mentor responsible for initiating or training them in their Discipline.

---

*Now that Rachel has the first event covered, she puts some thought into how the player characters and their sponsor will be introduced. Their patron is Omasu. The obsidiman is not interested in becoming Magistrate, but wants to send a message to those in power. He has hired the player characters to compete, hoping they will lure out his enemies. Rachel starts with Omasu's introduction.*

*"Gentle folk of Travar, our next candidate for Magistrate is perhaps the greatest merchant to have ever lived. His negotiation skills are the stuff of legend, his pockets deeper than the royal treasury in Throal. You have all heard the rumors and dismissed them as idle gossip, but you were wrong. Born from the earth itself, Travar's favorite son, the great, the mighty, the wealthy, Omasu."*

*Before writing an introduction for her player characters, Rachel reads through their journals to remind herself of their accomplishments, and decides to start with the most outrageous character in the group.*

*"All in Travar know the great Omasu, yet he has chosen a champion who is all but unknown. That changes today. Known as the Vigilante of V'strimon, the Hero of Lang. He is a master of blades, he is a t'skrang whose Name is longer than his tail, the dashing, the daring, V'asgilgalileaf the Swordmaster."*

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## SAMPLE EVENT: ESCAPE FROM DRAGON'S RIDGE

### Style

This is an elimination event

### Objective

Champions dash through a maze of twisting pathways while their competitors aim to cut off their escape by triggering traps. Those who escape advance to the next event.

## Rounds

Each round lasts for three minutes and is repeated as required until the remaining champions are whittled down to a manageable number.

## Description

In the center of the arena is a tall, rickety scaffold. As tall as the Arena itself and appearing even taller due to illusion magic, the scaffold supports walkways, slides, sluices, ropes, poles, swings, ladders, and archways. The champions must make their way down to the Qualification Pit, passing through archways laden with diabolical traps.

## Rules

In this fast-paced event, the remaining champions are split into two groups. One group commands the ballista emplacements attempting to trigger traps and knock competitors off the scaffold as they navigate the paths. Once the round is complete, the champions swap positions and replay the round.

### *Scaffolding*

At the top of the scaffolding five narrow paths lead downward in a haphazard fashion. At various points, these paths split, or join with the other paths. They eventually merge into five single pathways before reaching the Qualification Pit.

### *Archways*

Where each path intersects or splits is an archway with a series of targets, each linked to a corresponding trap. Champions can take any route, even leaping from level to level, but they must pass through a minimum of five archways on their journey.

### *Traps*

As champions approach or pass through an archway, the opposing champions attempt to stop them using ballistae. Each archway has traps with targets to trigger them. The more dangerous traps have smaller targets, making them harder to hit. Targets come in three sizes: large (Physical Defense 8), medium (Physical Defense 11), and small (Physical Defense 14).

The gamemaster should assign each archway with whatever traps they wish (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 179), and should create new traps or give existing ones fantastical sounding names. Examples include:

- **Dragon's Maw** (medium target): This variation of the mantrap causes a series of curved bars to spring from above and below the archway trapping anyone caught in it. The bars resemble the fangs of a dragon's maw, and designed to impede rather than damage.
- **Switchback** (large target): Triggering this trap changes the path, leading any who travel on it back toward an earlier part of the course, causing delays.
- **Snakes and Ladders** (medium target): Triggering the trap swaps a rope, ladder, or pole for a giant snake disguised by illusion magic.

- Gauntlet (small target): The trap opens small windows in a long, narrow archway. Several crakbills (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 271) can breathe and peck at champions through the windows as they make their way through the passage.
- Last Chance Lounge (small target): The champion is dropped into a pit where a competitor eliminated in a prior event can return to the tournament if they can escape instead.

### *Reserved Actions*

Snaring a champion in a trap as they pass through an archway is the most efficient way to prevent them reaching the Qualification Pit. Reserved actions (*Players Guide*, p. 376) are needed to accomplish this. To be most effective, the trap must be triggered as the champion passes through the archway, but even with perfect timing the rules for trap initiative apply (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.180).

Champions with low initiative scores have other options, like targeting the champions directly, or triggering a trap before the champion reaches an archway. Triggering a trap prematurely is no guarantee of success, however, as champions don't know what the traps are. For example, the Dragon's Maw would simply block the path, not trap the champion, and an exposed pit trap can be avoided with an ability or talent test.

### *Tactics*

Escape from Dragon's Ridge requires some strategy. The champions are randomly split into two even teams, and then those manning the ballistae are paired off. This means there are more champions trying to escape than ballista crews to stop them. Crews may have different ideas about which champions should be targeted (to help their chances in future events), and may find themselves in conflict depending on where alliances lie. Champions running the gauntlet may come into conflict as they cross each other's paths.

### *Pathways*

The pathways can be anything the gamemaster wishes, the more variety the better. Narrow wooden bridges, funhouse-style slides or sluices of running water, ropes to swing across gaps, poles or ladders to slide down or climb up, along with other challenges, can all serve to impede or thwart champions. Some obstacles may be safe and simple, while others could be covered in grease or contain other dangers, requiring ability or talent tests to overcome.

### *Ballistae*

Ballistae are positioned on floating platforms slowly orbiting the scaffold. Two champions man each ballista to allow for swift reloading. The bolts are heavy and, rather than sharpened points, have soft padding.

The operators have the choice of trying to trigger traps, or shoot directly at the champions. Shooting at champions is more difficult, requiring an extra success on the

Missile Weapons test. A ballista bolt causes Step 12 stun damage, if a champion fails a Knockdown test they are knocked from the structure.

## Winning

Champions who reach the Qualification Pit within three minutes (30 rounds), and passed through at least five archways advance to the next event.

## SAMPLE EVENT: STORM OVER THUNDER RIDGE

The storms over Thunder Ridge are legendary for their ferocity and their rich deposits of True Air. The huge gusts of wind can take even the most experienced airmen unaware, sending them plummeting to their death. In this event, champions must move from ship to ship, collecting tokens while avoiding storm force blasts of wind.

## Style

This event is a race against time, earning points to advance to the next round.

## Objective

The champions must collect tokens from the decks of airships without being knocked overboard. At the end of each round, any champion who has not been eliminated goes through to the next round, scoring points based on the number of tokens collected. The more rounds each champion survives, the greater the chance to accumulate enough points and advance.

## Rounds

There are three rounds in this event.

## Description

The decks of six mock airships float above the Qualification Pit, surrounded by colored crystal tokens representing kernels of True Air. Each champion has a designated color and each airship has a net matching each color, but the nets have been mixed up and their mesh sizes do not correspond to the size of the tokens surrounding that airship. As the champions gather tokens, they must brace against violent gusts of wind that threaten to knock them overboard.

## Rules

### *Crystal Tokens*

Crystal tokens come in six sizes and are infused with True Air; each one collected is worth one point. Before the round begins, the gamemaster randomly determines which size token floats around each of the six airships. Champions can only collect tokens of their assigned color, but may claim the value of the tokens of any color carried by other champions. To do this, however, they must toss the champion carrying the tokens overboard, eliminating them. This is a risky strategy; they could be thrown overboard instead! Tokens come in five colors and at the start of each new round there are 100 tokens of each color distributed around the circle of airships.

Every ten tokens collected (not banked—see below) cause the champions to become lighter, reducing their ability to brace against a storm blast. Once a champion has collected tokens equal to their Strength Step times 5, the champion begins to float, losing any ability to perform actions requiring solid footing (such as jumping, melee combat, etc.).

A champion can return to the start position and unload their tokens before collecting more. Offloaded tokens are banked and count towards the champions score, even if the champion is thrown overboard. Starting on the sixth combat round, and each round thereafter, a random number of tokens fall to the floor of the Qualification Pit until none remain, at which point the round ends.

### *Nets*

The nets come in six sizes and the gamemaster randomly determines which net size is on which airship. Champions must collect tokens using the nets provided, and can only catch crystals in nets of the correct color; magic imbued in the nets prevents the capture of other colored crystals. The net's mesh must be smaller than or equal to the token's size or they pass through. Clever champions should realize the net with the smallest mesh can catch crystals of any size.

To gather crystal tokens, the champion must make a successful Dexterity or Melee Weapons (8) test, gathering 1 crystal per success. Gathering crystal tokens counts as a Standard action. A maximum of thirty-six champions compete in each round; with only 30 nets available, champions may need to fight to get one.

### *Storm Spheres*

Floating among the crystals are storm spheres, floating orbs the size of an ork's head, filled with a charge of Elemental Air. 1D6 combat rounds after landing on the deck of an airship, each champion is attacked by a storm sphere with an Attack Step 7. The Attack Step increases by one each subsequent round. When a champion moves to a different airship the process starts again.

On a successful attack, the storm sphere attaches to whatever it hits. 1D6 combat rounds later, it detonates a focused blast of air with a Step 7, +1 for every five tokens carried. The champion must make a Knockdown test against the result. Failure means the champion is blown overboard and eliminated. Once a storm sphere delivers its charge, it falls inert to the ground. Another storm sphere attacks in 1D6 combat rounds.

Storm spheres can be caught in a net and used as throwing weapons, attaching to whatever they hit. Storm Spheres can only be removed by discarding what they are stuck to (e.g. armor, clothing) or by a Dispel Magic (15) test.

### *Airships*

The airships are simple platforms of planked wood in the shape of a ship's hull, floating 20 feet above the Qualification Pit. Around the edges of each platform are the nets, and floating just out of reach are the crystal tokens and storm spheres. Each platform has an effectively unlimited supply of storm spheres.

The platforms have no railings, and their edges have been greased to keep adepts

from hanging on if they get knocked off. They are arranged in a circle, with three yards between the bow and stern, and each has a mast with a single rope to swing across the gap. No test is required to swing unopposed to an adjacent platform, but to swing across the circle to a non-adjacent platform requires a Dexterity (8) test. At the beginning of each round the champions are blindfolded and randomly assigned to an airship. The blindfolds are removed when the event begins.

#### *Round 1*

Starting on the sixth combat round, 2D6 tokens fall per combat round until none remain or all have been collected. Storm spheres start with an Attack Step of 7.

#### *Round 2*

Tokens fall at the same rate, but storm spheres start with an Attack Step of 8.

#### *Round 3*

Tokens fall at the same rate but storm spheres start with an Attack Step of 9. Each time any champion moves to an adjacent airship, 1D12 is rolled and on a result of 1 the airship flips upside down, dumping all on the decks overboard.

### **Winning**

Points for banked tokens are cumulative from round to round. It is possible for a champion to be eliminated by falling overboard and still have enough points banked to qualify for the next event. The event is run multiple times, with champions divided up equally. The 32 champions with the highest scores advance.

## **SAMPLE EVENT: DOMINION**

Dragons are solitary creatures who often lair in mountainous regions and battle over the territory where they build their lairs. Namegivers sometimes dispute these claims, leading to conflict between Namegivers and dragons. In this event, the champions represent the factions in this conflict, defending ground they hold while conquering new territory.

### **Style**

This is a cooperative, command-and-conquer style event between two teams of champions.

### **Objective**

The objective is to hold as much territory as possible before the end of each round.

### **Rounds**

There are three rounds in this event

## Description

The champions are split into two teams, Dragons and Namegivers. The Qualification Pit has thirteen large mounds of earth and rock representing mountains. At the start, each team controls four mountains, which they must defend.

The other five mountains are uncontrolled and up for grabs. Each has a magical item at the top, with different powers for attack or defense. This is a combat and strategy event and is more dangerous than simpler elimination events.

## Rules

### *Mountains*

Each of the thirteen mountains is steep, rocky, and approximately twenty feet high with a flat top large enough to hold 5 Namegivers. There is nothing special about the mountains initially held by each team, but each of the others have a magical item with unique powers at the top, guarded by a fearsome beast. Defeating the guardian releases the item from its magical restraints.

The other mountains are easily identified, their peaks decorated with props and illusion magic. These effects are for the benefit of the spectators and not intended to impede champions, though deep snow or strong winds may hinder movement. There are sixteen adepts in each team, with four on each mountain the team controls at the beginning of the event.

### *Mountain of Bones*

The Mountain of Bones is strewn with the bones of the dead. These are mostly the bleached bones of herd animals collected from the city's butchers. At the mountain's peak is a nest made from the rib cage of some giant creature. In the center of the nest the Dragon Bone Mace sits atop a pillar of bone. Guarding the mace are three silverback apes (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 255).

### *Mount Dragonfire*

This mountain appears to shimmer with heat. Hidden atop the mountain is the Staff of Smoke and Fire, guarded by a thunderbird (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 345).

### *Mount Winterfrost*

The peak of this mountain is capped in a thick layer of snow. In the center, a cairn of rocks holds the Sword of Hail and Ice, guarded by three ice flyers (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 303).

### *Stormhold Peak*

Above Stormhold Peak, suspended in a maelstrom of black and purple clouds are the Bracers of Storm and Flight, guarded by three storm crows (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 344).

### *Beastlord's Crag*

Atop Beastlord's Crag a ring of trees houses several cages holding baby genhis (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 288) and zoaks (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 359). In the center

of the ring guarding the Beastlord's Crown is his favorite pet, a jungle griffin (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 294).

### *Sands of Time*

In the center of the Arena a giant sand timer counts down to the end of the event. When the allotted time of 10 minutes (100 combat rounds) runs out the magical items immediately cease to function.

### *Magic Items*

Once a creature has been defeated, champions may use the associated item's powers, which are inscribed on them along with the command words. The items may be taken without defeating the creature, but the powers will not activate until the creature has been defeated.

Each item has powers for attack and defense. After a power has been used, neither power can be activated for Step 4 combat rounds. The defensive power can be used on any mountain, but only affects the mountain the wielder is defending. Each item also offers the wielder protection, which is active while the item is wielded and does not count as using one of its powers.

The items are powered by the Arena's magic, and do not function outside it.

### *Dragon Bone Mace*

Made from the bone of some dragon-like creature, this item grants the wielder +3 Mystic Defense against Nethermancy spells.

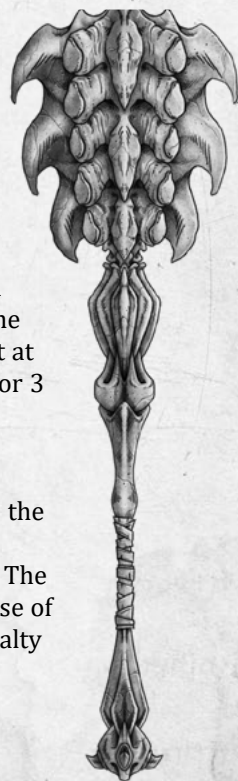
**Defense:** The wielder's mountain is covered in a thick mist that creates a Fog of Fear, as the 3rd Circle Nethermancer spell (*Player's Guide*, p. 327), using the Frighten Talent at Rank 6, based on the wielder's Willpower. If the wielder knows the talent at a higher rank, they may use that instead.

**Attack:** Bone Shatter as the 6th Circle Nethermancer spell (*Player's Guide*, p. 334) with no thread weaving required. If the wielder does not have the Spellcasting talent, the item provides it at Rank 6. The wielder can add a +2 bonus to the Spellcasting test for 3 Strain.

### *Staff of Smoke and Fire*

This ebony quarterstaff is warm to the touch and grants the wielder +3 Physical Armor against fire-based attacks.

**Defense:** The staff produces a cloud of choking smoke. The wielder makes a Step 14 test and compares it to the Mystic Defense of each enemy on the same mountain. Those affected suffer a -2 penalty per success to all tests.



**Attack:** The wielder targets an adjacent mountain, wreathing it in fire for 3 rounds. On the first round the flames are just hot, giving champions a chance to abandon the mountain. On the second round the flames grow in intensity, dealing Step 8 damage (reduced by Physical Armor), and on the third Step 16. The duration of the flames can be extended for a cost of 3 Strain per round.

#### *Sword of Hail and Ice*

This silver sword is cold to the touch and grants the wielder +3 Physical Armor against cold-based attacks.

**Defense:** The sword covers one of the mountains in ice for 1D6 rounds, like the Icy Surface spell (*Player's Guide*, p. 276). The steep slopes set the target number for the Dexterity test to 15.

**Attack:** Creates a hailstorm that rains down on any other mountain, like the Blizzard Sphere spell (*Player's Guide*, p. 281), causing Step 12 damage each round for three rounds (reduced by Physical Armor). The duration can be extended for a cost of 3 Strain per round.

#### *Bracers of Storm and Flight*

This set of golden bracers grants the wielder +3 Physical Defense against ranged attacks.

**Defense:** The wielder summons 1D6 storm spheres, which attack targets of the opposing team on the same mountain as the wielder. The storm spheres function as described under the Storm at Thunder Ridge event with an Attack Step of 10, or they can be thrown with Throwing Weapons. The wielder can increase their base Attack Step by taking Strain; each point of Strain provides a +1 bonus.

**Attack:** The wielder can fly above the Qualification Pit at the same speed they could walk on the ground. Flying costs 1 Strain per round, and if the wielder suffers Knockdown, they are forced to land. Once grounded, the wielder cannot take off again without another use of the power.

#### *Crown of the Beastlord*

This crown of woven vines grants the wielder protection from powers of manipulation and illusion, granting them a +3 bonus to Sensing tests, and +3 Social Defense.

**Defense:** The wielder has control over 1D6 of the caged creatures from Beastlord's Crag, which can be directed to defend the mountain the wielder is standing on.

**Attack:** The wielder has control of 1D4 flying caged creatures from the Beastlord's Crag, which can be directed to assault another mountain.

## Winning

At the end of each round, the team holding the most territory wins. Each mountain is considered held if at least one member of a team stands alone on the peak. If there are members of both teams on a peak when the round ends, neither team scores.



Each champion on the winning team earns a point. After each round the teams are mixed up and another round is played, divided up evenly between the remaining champions. At the end of the event, those with two or more points advance.

Between rounds, each champion is given one hour and a single healing potion to recover. Champions may use talents and spells they know during this time, and may assist other champions as they wish. Recovery is done before new teams are selected, which adds an additional layer of strategy to the game, as champions carrying significant damage from the previous round can be a liability for their team in the next.

## **SAMPLE EVENT: THE LAST DRAGON RIDERS**

When dragons clash, they often duel in the skies until one is killed or submits. This event recreates these duels with champions riding flying lizards. It is unlikely dragons ever carried riders on their backs, but this fact is unimportant to those demanding entertainment.

### **Style**

This event is final-round elimination event, with the last one flying winning the tournament.

### **Objective**

Knock opponents out of the air.

## Rounds

This event has only one round.

## Description

Armed with magical weapons provided by the Body of Five, and riding espagra specially bred for the event, champions battle for control of the skies over the Arena. The dragon riders must perform crowd-pleasing stunts to recharge their weapons each time they wish to use them. For those knocked out, a terrible creature awaits them below the clouds in the Qualification Pit. The winner becomes Champion of Travar!

## Rules

### *Espagra*

Bred especially for the tournament, these beasts are larger than average. They are controlled with a headband of domination, an item devised by the Body of Five linking its mind and abilities to the rider. The saddle and harness are infused with True Air to compensate for the rider's weight.

By using a Standard action, the rider can direct their espagra to attack another or their rider, but this causes standard damage instead of the stun damage done by the weapons provided by the Body of Five. If a rider or their mount fails a Knockdown test, they fall and are eliminated.

The rules for mounted aerial combat (*Player's Guide*, p. 395) apply. Game statistics for the enhanced espagra are:

<b>Dex:</b>	8	<b>Initiative:</b>	14	<b>Unconsciousness</b>	57
<b>Str:</b>	7	<b>Physical Defense:</b>	15	<b>Death Rating:</b>	66
<b>Tou:</b>	9	<b>Mystic Defense:</b>	15	<b>Wound Threshold:</b>	13
<b>Per:</b>	6	<b>Social Defense:</b>	11	<b>Knockdown:</b>	11
<b>Wil:</b>	10	<b>Physical Armor:</b>	5	<b>Recovery Tests:</b>	3
<b>Cha:</b>	6	<b>Mystic Armor:</b>	6		

**Movement:** 10 (Flying 16)

**Actions:** 3; Bite: 15 (15), Claws x2: 16 (14), Tail 17 (13)

Powers and Special Maneuvers as normal (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 282).

### *Magic Weapons*

The riders are only allowed to use the weapons provided by the Body of Five, but they may use any armor, protective items, or protective spells they wish, which work as normal.

The weapons are powered by the wielder's ability, so weapons are used as normal, but a weapon's Damage Step is half the result of the Attack test; the greater the strike the greater the damage. Champions may each choose up to two weapons: melee weapon, missile weapon, gauntlet (unarmed attacks), or wand (which uses Spellcasting for its Attack tests). The weapons have dramatic effects on a successful strike, like peals of thunder and flashes of colored light, but deal Stun damage (*Player's Guide*, p. 383).

Weapons must be powered up before they can be used to attack. This is achieved by performing stunts and maneuvers over the Arena. Melee weapons require three power points to attack; missile weapons and wands require four. Ranged attacks with the weapons suffer no range penalties, and may reach across the Arena.

### *Headband of Domination*

Each headband of domination sports a large feather, which, if removed, affects the mind link between the rider and beast. The rider must pass a Willpower (6) test to avoid losing control. If control is lost, the espagra flies to its perch above the Arena and waits until control is restored, which also requires a Willpower (6) test.

Feathers taken from other dragon riders each provide a +2 bonus to tests to perform maneuvers. Taking a feather requires a Standard action and successful Dexterity (10) test. Picking Pockets or similar abilities may be used at the gamemaster's discretion.

The headbands can also provide protection. Every power point spent reduces the Damage Step of an attack by 1. This gives champions a defensive option when they may not have enough power to attack.

### *Maneuvers*

To power their weapons, champions must perform maneuvers. More difficult or dangerous maneuvers provide more power points. Each maneuver has a set Difficulty Number, and the Step Number used for the test is the sum of two Attribute Steps. Each additional success earns the rider a bonus power point.

#### *Flyby*

Attributes: Toughness and Charisma

Power Points: 3

Difficulty: 7

The champion flies a full lap of the Arena, low over the seating tiers. This maneuver takes three combat rounds and is the safest because awnings provide the dragon riders with full cover from attacks from above and partial cover for any other attacks. The only penalty for failure is the character does not earn any power points.

#### *The Ring of Fire*

Attributes: Toughness and Willpower

Power Points: 4

Difficulty: 8

The rider guides their mount through a ring of fire in the center of the Arena. While the fire is just for show, failure to pull off the maneuver spooks the mount, which returns to its perch. The character must pass a Willpower (6) test to urge the mount to again take flight. Each feather from a headband of domination provides a +2 bonus to this test (including the character's own). This maneuver takes one combat round.

*Victory Roll*

Attributes: Dexterity and Willpower

Power Points: 5

Difficulty: 9

The rider circles the Arena, pulling a series of spectacular rolls. Failure results in both the mount and rider becoming dizzy and disorientated, and are considered Harried for the following two combat rounds. This maneuver takes two combat rounds.

*Vertical Dive*

Attributes: Perception and Strength

Power Points: 7

Difficulty: 10

The rider flies high, then rolls into a vertical dive and pulls up before just before crashing. Failure results in the mount failing to pull up in time, and disappearing into the mists. This maneuver takes two combat rounds.

*Salute the Five*

Attributes: Charisma and Strength

Power Points: 9

Difficulty: 11

In one graceful maneuver, the rider performs a loop at each end of the Arena, forming a figure eight. The rider starts the maneuver by flying through the ring of fire, performing a half roll just before the apex of the loop in front of the Magistrate's Tribune, then swooping back down and passing through the ring of fire for a second time to repeat the loop and half turn at the other end of the arena. Failure results in the mount crashing.

The gamemaster should decide, based on the test result, where the crash occurs; the larger the margin of failure, the worse the result. Champions who fall in the Qualification Pit are eliminated, otherwise the champion and their mount each take Step 10 damage, +1 for each point by which they failed the test. To get their mount under control, the character must pass a Willpower (8) test to urge the mount to again take flight. Feathers provide bonuses as described above. This maneuver takes three combat rounds.

*Low Flying*

Attributes: Dexterity and Perception

Power Points: 11

Difficulty: 12

The champion guides their mount around the pit, flying low and dodging attacks by the tentacles writhing in the mist. If the champion fails, they are snatched by the tentacles and pulled into the mists.

### *The Pit*

The bottom of the Arena is covered with a layer of thick mist. All that can be seen are occasional glimpses of tentacles writhing in the mist. The mist is enchanted to make onlookers fear it so they put their all into winning, whatever political deals they may have brokered. Anyone thinking to take a dive and let another win will likely have a change of heart.

Champions knocked into the pit land on a large net and are pulled to safety, but illusions make onlookers see body parts and armor being thrown into the air and hear the terrified screams of the dying.

### **Winning**

The last champion in the air when all others are eliminated is the winner of the Founding Tournament and earns the title Champion of Travar. Riders on perches trying to regain control of their mount are considered eliminated if only one champion remains in the air.







## ADVENTURES IN TRAVAR

*Adventure can be found everywhere in Travar. Why, just getting through the gates is an adventure! If you fail to find an adventure, fear not!*

*Somebody will undoubtedly sell you one.*

- **V'asgilgalileaf, t'skrang Swordmaster, Vigilante of V'strimon, Champion of Travar •**

**T**his chapter advises gamemasters on how to use the Merchant City in their **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns, helping them take advantage of the opportunities Travar provides.

The wealth of Travar's citizens is as legendary as its white walls and golden domed towers. The city's culture is focused heavily on trade and the pursuit of profit, which is both a strength and a weakness. Merchants looking for opportunities can be open to new ideas, and those willing to take a risk can benefit from that flexibility. On the other hand, those concerned with their bottom line can turn a blind eye to suffering, if it benefits them.

These conflicting drives result in a city on a knife's edge. The great houses espouse noble ideals, talking about how Travar offers anyone the freedom to succeed, while ignoring how their own success came by exploiting others. The city presents a peaceful and prosperous front, concealing the truth, even to itself.

This façade conceals more than the corruption lurking in the halls of power. Foreign powers look to exploit the city and its wealth for their own ends. Cults and cartels take advantage of Travar's selective justice. Outside the city walls, the Badlands serve as reminder that in Barsaive, corruption has more than one meaning.

Travar offers endless potential for adventure. Its walls hide secrets to be discovered. The Founding Tournament drives the politics and scheming of obscenely rich merchant houses, some of whom will stop at nothing to expand their power and protect their bottom line. "Cut throat competition" is not just an expression.

Adepts may instead want to explore the beautiful and terrible places outside Travar's walls. Lost knowledge adepts recover could tie into the city's secretive past, informing and shaping Travar's future, and perhaps the rest of Barsaive.

## CAMPAIGNS IN TRAVAR

Travar wields economic power disproportionate to its size and its average citizens are comparatively wealthy. This combination of power and wealth, along with the spectacle of the annual Founding Tournament, attracts heroes and villains alike to Travar's white walls.

## Base of Operations

Travar can simply serve as a base of operations. In this case, the city doesn't serve as much of a focus, instead acting as a haven the player characters return to after adventures elsewhere, to rest, train, and spend their loot. Some of Travar's markets specialize in outfitting and equipping those with a taste for exploration. Travar is surrounded by some of Barsaive's least explored and most dangerous regions such as the Byrose River Valley, the Thunder and Dragon Mountains, the Badlands, even Death's Sea and the Mist Swamps.

Using the city as a base allows player characters to take advantage of Travar's status as a center of trade. The merchant caravans and airships of the great trading houses can provide access to locations across Barsaive, and, for those willing to pay attention, a source of information on current events.

## Exploration

Adventuring, treasure hunting, exploration, delving, or tomb raiding. Whatever you call it, Travar is a good starting point for campaigns focused on discovering forgotten kaers or recovering lost treasures. Travar is surrounded by some of the most dangerous regions in Barsaive, each offering opportunities for exploration.

Locations like the Badlands, where scores, if not hundreds, of lost kaers remain undiscovered, or the Mist Swamps, with its rumors of a lost city, are the most famous. While most adepts journey to Travar in hopes of finding riches or fame in those regions, the Byrose Valley and nearby mountain ranges hold their own share of secrets for those brave enough to search for them.

## The Great Trading Houses

The great trading houses are powerful entities. Their influence affects everyday life in Travar, and together they have influence across Barsaive. Campaigns involving the great houses should involve more than the characters acting as caravan guards. These humble beginnings might serve as an introduction, but there is more to offer.

The trading houses compete for power and profit, and a campaign involving them is, by Travar's nature, a political campaign. Player characters might serve as agents of a house, troubleshooters sent to deal with problems outside the remit of regular envoys or diplomats. They could be freelancers, used when an employer needs plausible deniability. Houses can be divided by internal power struggles, and characters might find themselves working for one faction of a house against another.

Involvement in the city's politics might mean the characters become entangled in the web of favors, bribery, and corruption that passes for business as usual. They might uncover plots by those hiding behind Travar's façade of peace and unity, whether agents of foreign powers, or followers of dark cults.

## Champions

A campaign might focus more heavily on the annual Founding Tournament, but there is more to becoming a Champion of the Tournament than competing in the Arena. Travar's merchants expect more from their champions than daily sparring practice.

Some adepts seek the patronage of wealthy individuals and organizations in return for their talents. Finding patronage in Travar can be easy, as would-be Magistrates eagerly offer support to those willing to champion their cause in the Arena. Player characters with a reputation can find themselves courted by multiple candidates.

In addition to competing, player characters will be given other tasks. Whether seeking family heirlooms lost during the Scourge, or taking part in the politics hiding beneath the spectacle, being a champion is seldom dull.

If that is not enough, Travar often calls on its champions to protect the borders and outlying villages from bandits, Horrors, and other threats. They might be tasked with rooting out enemies within the city.

In return for the player characters' services, patrons offer food, accommodation, equipment, training, and other resources that can help characters advance in Circle.

## **The Streets of Travar**

Despite the opportunities for exploration and the glamorous lifestyle offered her champions, Travar is equally suited to a grittier campaign style in the city streets. For those wishing to remain hidden in the shadows, Travar's thieves are always on the lookout for those with the talent and audacity to pull off spectacular heists.

As a neutral city, Travar can provide shelter to those wishing to hide from the authorities of other nations. It is easy to get lost in crowded markets or among the masses in Tent City. The player characters could be bounty hunters searching for their quarry, or work the other side of the fence with the City Watch. The Air Patrol is always short on skilled manpower and welcomes those willing to assist.

Another option for adepts starting out in and around Travar is to be one of the indentured folk. These individuals owe their allegiance to one of the great trading houses and, while not technically slaves, their options are limited. This can combine aspects of street-level and merchant campaigns, and highlight the hypocrisy of Travar's stance on slavery, and the status of the indentured. A long-term goal of such a game might be to overthrow or reform the indenture system.

## **Secret Societies**

Campaigns based in Travar can involve Travar's secret societies. Depending on the game's focus, these groups can be allies or adversaries, and be involved in exploration, political, or street-level storylines.

The player characters could become involved with the Var'eidyllon Tara'var (see p. 143) as they seek to uncover the forgotten secrets of the Body of Five. They might be hired to locate the scattered members of a council, or charged with hunting down the secret society's unknown assailants.

Hatred and revenge are powerful motivations for the Order of the Crimson Sky (see p. 139). K'ansanar risks everything to bring Travar and House K'tenshin to their knees. Only steadfast heroes have what it takes to stop these goals.

The Liferock Rebellion (see p. 136) may have succeeded in ousting the Therans from Barsaive, but it hasn't been dismantled. Much of the rebellion's activities are planned in the relative safety of Travar, maintaining the organization's intelligence network, and working to protect Barsaive's freedom. Its leaders harness the surplus

of adepts drawn to city each year. Not every adept finds a patron, and there are always scores of hungry adepts looking for work.

For a different approach, the first fractures may be showing in the rebellion now its primary goal is achieved. The player characters may find themselves working for one of the factions whose agendas are now at odds with the leadership, and infighting threatens to destroy what Omasu has built.



## Badlands

Campaigns focused on the Badlands deserve special consideration. Any such campaign should portray the harsh realities of the region. It is not a place for casual exploration and should not be traveled lightly. Characters should return knowing they are lucky to be alive with their sanity *mostly* still intact. As time passes, the borderlands grow more tainted and dangerous and should be challenging enough to deter all but the most resolute.

The Badlands is a terrible place. Danger lurks everywhere and the environment alone is enough to kill those unprepared for it. Wildlife adds to the danger, as creatures must be tough and fierce to survive the inhospitable land. Then there are the Horrors, their constructs, foul folk, and the ever-present taint and corruption.

Campaigns in the Badlands can focus on exploration of kaers and citadels built in that once prosperous land, discovering their treasures, and defeating the Horrors that still lair there. A more scholarly approach could focus on discovering that Travar's greed and avarice ultimately sealed the Tara'var's fate.

The restoration of the Badlands could be the goal of an epic campaign. The player characters could join those who quest in Jaspre's Name to reverse the spreading corruption. For those who prefer a grittier style, a Badlands campaign could focus on the Grim Legion as they bring death and retribution to those unfortunate enough to become tainted and seek to battle the evil lurking in the Badlands' hidden heart.

## ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventures are provided in an adventure framework format. These serve as outlines that fall somewhere between the basic adventure hooks presented elsewhere in this book, and fully developed adventures. Gamemasters can use these as a starting point, fleshing them out in more depth to suit the needs of their campaign. Alternately, they can be used as an example of how to plan the outline for adventures of your own devising.

### Setup

The *Setup* describes the beginning of the adventure; how the player characters get involved. It also includes any important background information or events that set things in motion. In some cases, this is the longest and most involved part of the framework.

### Events

There are multiple *Events*, each describing a scene or conflict that occurs during the adventure. It often presents a situation that serves as an obstacle. It might be a mystery requiring investigation, combat or another kind of physical challenge, or something else entirely. Later events are frequently a consequence of player character actions, or progress the antagonist's plans in some way.

## Climax

The *Climax* describes the adventure's resolution. It describes the most likely results based on player character actions, but it is possible the conclusion could be significantly different. It all depends on the choices the player characters make.

## Sequels

*Sequels* are stories that might happen after an adventure. They might include ideas for campaign arcs, feature gamemaster characters introduced in the adventure (as friends or foes), or follow up on possible consequences. Using these ideas as a foundation for future adventures can provide a sense of continuity to a campaign.

See the *Adventures and Campaigns* chapter, starting on page 99 of the **Earthdawn Gamemaster's Guide**, for more information about creating and maintaining a long-term campaign.

## THE PRICE OF PASSAGE

*The past is a relentless beast, and it cares not who pays its toll. The beast may toy with you, slowly revealing its presence, or it may strike without warning. Mark my words, all our deeds come back to haunt us. Someday, the people of Barsaive will learn the true price they paid for their protection and passage.*

— Unknown Theran traitor's last words at the gallows

The player characters find themselves caught up in pursuit of an artifact that offers information about a lost kaer in the Badlands, but also clues to a secret some prefer remains hidden. This secret reveals the cost paid to ensure Thera's safety and dominion, and the Scourge's dangers are not as far removed as people might think.

## Setup

The Therans knew more about the coming Scourge than they revealed. The Books of Harrow told of Named Horrors that could defeat their wards. If they wanted to survive the Scourge, they needed to do more than erect powerful defenses.

Their solution was simple, yet terrible. Select kaers were provided modified versions of the Rites of Protection and Passage. Instead of protecting their inhabitants, the wards attracted certain Horrors. After laying waste to the kaer, the Horrors became trapped; sacrificing some lives to potentially save countless more. Theran magicians believed the Horrors would retreat to the netherworlds when the magic level subsided.

Unfortunately, the Therans did not anticipate the Badlands, where the region's corruption sustains at least one of the trapped Horrors. As adepts search for lost treasures and forgotten lore, it is only a matter of time before someone accidentally releases it, spelling certain doom for Travar and the Byrose Valley.

The Therans have been searching for the Horror-trap kaer in the Badlands. Their search is complicated by changes from the Scourge and the destruction of so many documents in Travar connected to it. A few weeks ago, they discovered an ancient map in records recovered from another kaer, putting their goal closer than ever.

Unfortunately for the Therans, one of their slaves on the expedition, a Scout adept Named Yasu, saw the map as an opportunity for freedom. She stole the map and fled to Travar, hoping to sell it for passage to Throal. Yasu found Travar full of con men dealing in fake maps, and, unable to get enough for passage, struck a deal with local elfen merchant Gavalion Silversong.

Gavalion is running for Magistrate and looking for adepts to champion his cause. He convinced Yasu to be his champion, promising her safety and, should she still desire it, passage to Throal after the tournament.

The Therans caught up with Yasu, attacking her while she was on an errand to deliver finalized trade agreements to the Tower of Commerce. She escaped, but was mortally wounded in the process and eventually collapsed in an alley, where an opportunistic street thief, Duron, took anything that looked valuable. Which included the trade agreements, and the map.

### **Event One: A Dead Body and a Job Offer**

The player characters are out and about early one morning when they are attracted by a commotion in a side street. They discover a small crowd of onlookers around the body of a thin dwarf woman. The City Watch is not yet on the scene, so the player characters have a chance to investigate.

The woman looks like she was in a fight, and died from blood loss after suffering multiple stab wounds. Evidence Analysis, or similar investigative talents or spells, reveals while she died here, it was not where the attack took place. Player characters can also learn her body was searched and the only identifying mark she has is a Theran slave brand on her shoulder, hidden by the sleeves of her shirt. Clutched in her hand is a scrap of dirty cloth, torn from some garment and stained with her blood.

Questioning those gathered tuns up a helpful older human woman who says she was hanging some laundry out to dry on her balcony when she looked down and saw the "poor girl" being attacked. She yelled at the attacker and he ran off, carrying something. She found the girl dead when she went down to check if she was all right. The old woman is sure the cloaked individual killed her and claims the scrap of cloth matches the cloak he was wearing. She points out the direction he ran without prompting.

The old woman is mistaken: Duron came across Yasu's body and believed her to be dead. The Scout wasn't quite gone, however, and grabbed at the thief when he searched her for valuables. Combined with the old woman's yell, this scared him off. His threadbare cloak was torn when he pulled away, leaving a bit in Yasu's hand. These additional details may be uncovered with appropriate investigative talents or spells.

At some point during the investigation, Gavalion arrives and identifies Yasu. He discovers the trade agreements are missing and becomes very upset. Gavalion offers the player characters a reward for tracking down the thief and retrieving the documents, as his fortunes hang on their successful delivery. He offers what information he can about Yasu and how she came to be in his employ, playing up his role in protecting her, and lamenting what her death means to his chances in the tournament.

As the player characters wrap up their investigation, the City Watch shows up and takes over. The death of a registered champion is worrying and it isn't long before the Watch locks onto the old woman's tale that she was killed by the man in the cloak. Gavalion does his best to press his case with them about the missing agreements, but the sergeant points out the thief is likely to fence anything of value, and discard everything else, which probably includes the agreements.

If Gavalion hasn't hired the player characters yet, this is a great opportunity to do so. The Watch sergeant isn't happy with the idea of freelancers mucking about in a murder investigation, but won't stop Gavalion from throwing his money away on what she sees as a fruitless endeavor. She does advise the player characters, however, not to get in the way of the Watch's job.

### **Event Two: Duron's Trail**

Depending on the results of their investigation, the player characters have a couple of leads to follow. They may have deduced the cloaked thief didn't kill Yasu, and are interested in tracing her steps back to find the real killers. This avenue, unfortunately, does not offer much additional information. They can find the site where Yasu was attacked by the Therans, but other than some bloodstains and confirmation there were multiple attackers, there are no clues to their identity and no witnesses to the attack, as it happened shortly before dawn. This also doesn't bring them any closer to recovering Gavalion's documents.

The more successful path is to try and track down the cloaked figure. With the right talents, tracking him down might be easy. Otherwise, while the dirty cloth from the cloak is not unique, it is distinctive. If the player characters head in the direction the old woman indicated and question witnesses, there are enough witnesses to keep the player characters on the right path.

Indeed, as the player characters get closer to Duron's tenement in the River Side district, they might learn some additional information about the man. He is a merchant whose fortunes turned a few months back, when one of his trade expeditions went down with a riverboat that sank. The resulting losses dropped him into poverty, with little but his once fine cloak as reminder of the circles he once walked in.

### **Event Three: Hot Pursuit**

The player characters are not the only ones interested in tracking down Duron. The Therans who initially attacked Yasu are still after the map, and one of them was part of the rubbernecking crowd while the player characters were investigating the scene. They have also been following their own leads, unaware their actions in the city are being watched as well.

Effriyl, a Denairastas agent in Travar, has followed the Therans, knowing they are after something valuable but not sure what it is. She saw Yasu attacked by the Therans, and managed to follow when she escaped. Duron came along and took the satchel before Effriyl could seize it for herself. She followed him back to his home and made her move.

The player characters arrive at Duron's home to hear sounds of a struggle and a cry of pain quickly cut short. If they enter, they open the door to see Effriyl, a sandy-

haired human in leather, going out the window with a scroll case in her hand. The satchel lies open on the floor with the trade agreements scattered about.

This should prompt the player characters to give chase; while they can easily recover the trade agreements in Duron's apartment, they can't be sure Effriyl didn't take one or more of them with her.

The details of the chase are left to the gamemaster. Effriyl is a Thief adept, of a little bit higher Circle than the player characters, and does her best to shake any pursuit. She might try to lose pursuers in a crowded market, climb walls or towers to help her escape, set up an ambush to wound or knock down one of the player characters, delaying them, or any other appropriate tricks.

## Climax

Either when the player characters catch up with Effriyl (if things go well for them), or just as she's about to get away (if the chase has gone poorly), the Therans appear. They arrived at Duron's home just as the chase began and moved to set up their own ambush.

This leads to a three-way battle, with Effriyl trying to escape while the Therans (who should be roughly equal to the player characters in power) and player characters try to stop her, each looking to end up with the scroll case themselves. This can lead to temporary and shifting alliances, where one person helps another only to betray them in the next breath. Neither Effriyl nor the Therans are interested in the fight dragging on. The longer it lasts, the more likely the Watch gets involved. This could mean the player characters end up with the map if they stall, or find some other way of drawing official attention to the fight more quickly.

If the player characters end up with the scroll case, they open it not to find more trade agreements, but an old map depicting the Badlands as it was before the Scourge. It shows a portion of the Iontos River, with an old Theran road and stronghold and a nearby kaer. A series of recent notes in fine Theran script have been added, correcting for changes wrought during the Scourge. Written beside the kaer on the map are the words, "Azolat the Devourer."

If asked, Gavalion recalls Yasu mentioned the map to him, but he didn't think it was anything important.

## Sequels

If the player characters end up with the map, the Therans are still interested in obtaining it. Depending on the circumstances, they might make another play to steal the map, or approach the player characters and provide a modified explanation of what it is represents (without revealing how the Therans trapped the Horrors on purpose), to keep them from pursuing it and releasing the Horror.

Successful investigation into the map leads to the Delver's Atheneum, known for its collection of information about the Badlands before the Scourge. This might tie into the legend of Naaman Y'ross, putting the cult behind the Atheneum in conflict with the player characters.

If word of the map gets out, is likely to draw attention from other interested parties, including Purity Storm and the Grim Legion, other adventuring groups, or even agents of Mountainshadow, who recognizes the map's significance.

If the player characters set out to find the kaer, they may free Azolat, especially if they aren't fully aware of what they are getting into. The Horror attempts to escape into the Badlands to gather strength before turning its attention to Travar. Hopefully, the player characters realize their mistake and hunt the Horror down, or the Horror may have marked them.

To those who know about kaers and warding, information in the lost kaer hints at the Theran plans to trap Named Horrors. Clearly there are more lost kaers out in the world, hiding danger of which few are aware. This forms the basis of a major campaign arc as the player characters try to track down these locations, which can be found not only in Barsaive, but other parts of the Theran Empire.

With Yasu dead, Gavalion asks the player characters to be his champions, offering to fund some goal of theirs in return. This leads to greater involvement in Travar's politics and events around the Founding.

Depending on what happened during the climax, the Therans or Effriyl could return as antagonists in future adventures. If Effriyl dies, that draws the attention of Irros Denairastas (p. 152), throwing a wrinkle into any plans the player characters might have in Travar.

## FESTIVAL OF HORRORS

*You're allergic to flowers? Well my good fellow, you have come to the wrong place, but found the right merchant, for I have a salve for that. Yes, just rub it in your eyes; the itching and burning are all part of the cure. Now, while you wait, let me tell you about the Festival of Color. No, the flowers don't move, that's just the ointment in your eyes, sir.*

— *The Last Words of Freesia Larkspur, Merchant and Florist*

Each year, the Festival of Color marks the opening of the Founding Tournament. The Festival is not only an important event for Travar's citizens, but also the t'skrang of the Ippikos *niall*. Each year, the t'skrang supply huge quantities of flowers from the Servos Jungle, woven into great vine-like garlands, to decorate Travar's walls, buildings, and the Arena. The Festival is an economic boost to the *niall*, securing the livelihoods of hundreds. The t'skrang pride themselves on swift delivery and the quality of the flowers they supply, but this year, mysterious disappearances have been hampering their efforts.

### Setup

Captain Kipos owns and operates a small fleet of riverboats, barges, and ferries. Each year, she fulfills her charter with the Ippikos *niall* by transporting their flowers to customers in Travar. Even with the occasional encounter with pirates, the deliveries would arrive in Travar on time.

This year, disappearances have delayed shipments and caused mutiny among her crews. The captain has taken personal interest, and has direct command of her

flagship, The Rage of Roguehawk, Named for a pre-Scourge hero infamous for his bad temper.

Unknown to Kipos, Arbariel the Earthcursed, a questor of Raggok, has been traveling aboard her ships with a small group of foul folk disguised as merchants. Arbariel has struck a deal with the Passion to spread the seed of a pumpkin patch Horror (see **Creatures**, p. 303) in exchange for power. Arbariel has been boarding vessels docked at trading posts in the Servos Jungle with cargos of jungle fruit, each hiding a Horror seed. The Horrors, aided by Arbariel, are responsible for the disappearances aboard Captain Kipos's vessels.

To investigate the disappearances, Kipos hires Raven Fiendbinder, a bounty hunter from Travar's slave markets, to travel incognito on her ships. Raven has grown suspicious of Arbariel's activities, and is on the mad questor's trail. As additional security, Kipos is seeking adepts to travel on the Rage of Roguehawk to maintain order and protect her crew, cargo, and ship.

### **Event One: The Rage of Roguehawk**

The player characters are hired by Captain Kipos to protect her vessel during the weeks before the Festival of Color. During this time, the riverboat makes several trips between Travar and the village of Whitewater in the Servos Jungle to collect cargo. The player characters may board at any point on the journey, but no significant events occur until Arbariel and his co-conspirators, and later Raven, board the vessel.

Whitewater is a small trading post on the Serpent River, and is one of the ports used to collect flowers for each year's Festival. When the Rage of Roguehawk docks in Whitewater, the crew begins loading the cargo awaiting their arrival, which includes Arbariel, the foul folk, and their cargo of fruit. The fruit is packed in large boxes, one of which contains the Horror's seed, which can take on the shape, color, and texture of any other large piece of fruit, making its detection almost impossible with the naked eye.

The flowers are transported in purpose-built frames. As they are being loaded, a t'skrang comes running out of the jungle screaming, frantically waving his hands and tail. The trees shake and thrash behind him, and moments later an ogre (or other suitable challenge) crashes out of the trees in pursuit.

The t'skrang heads toward the jetty to escape underwater. The player characters must prevent damage to the cargo remaining on the dock. After they resolve the situation, the Rage of Roguehawk is ready to sail. Arbariel and his retainers use the confusion to avoid scrutiny when they board with their cargo.

### **Event Two: Blood of the Raven**

The Rage of Roguehawk collects passengers and cargo as it travels to Travar. The day after the riverboat leaves Whitewater, the captain picks up several passengers, including Raven Fiendbinder. Raven is known to the captain and some of the crew, but not the player characters. Raven intends to get a look at the crew and passengers. To do this without arousing suspicion, he plans an altercation with a crewman he is on good terms with, drawing everyone on deck at the same time.

The player characters hear Raven begin a heated argument with a member of the crew. The crewman claims Raven made disparaging remarks about the legend of Roguehawk, claiming he was nothing more than a drunkard and a wife beater. The commotion draws quite a bit of attention, giving Raven the opportunity to see who is on board, which includes Arbariel and his minions. The player characters can defuse the situation, but if the situation threatens to turn violent, the captain insists no blood be shed on her riverboat.

In the early morning hours, Raven pokes around Arbariel's cargo, looking for evidence the merchant is not all he appears. Arbariel discovers him, and before an alarm can be raised, Raven is killed. His head is fed to the Horror, which makes it stronger. It disguises itself as a garland of unopened flowers rather than fruit.

The blood in the hold is discovered before the cult can clean it up, raising the alarm and rousing the player characters. Investigation reveals the bounty hunter is missing, was likely killed, and the body dumped overboard. Depending on how the earlier conflict was resolved, suspicion might fall on the player characters.

### **Event Three: The Battle for Roguehawk**

As the player characters investigate, some clues point to Arbariel's involvement. Checking the cargo against the manifest will reveal some of his fruit is missing, along with the presence of the new flowers. A more extensive search of the ship will uncover valuable items looted from Raven in the luggage of one of Arbariel's followers. Also found will be items taken from Kipos's missing crewmembers.

When Arbariel's followers are confronted, they draw their weapons and attempt to take the ship by force. Arbariel joins them, but if the fight goes against them, they throw themselves overboard on Arbariel's signal.

Arbariel wears a crop diver blood charm, allowing him to breathe underwater. Arbariel's followers wear similar charms, but Arbariel tampered with them and they don't work. This is Arbariel's insurance that his followers won't be captured and forced to talk. When they jump overboard they are swept under by the current and drown.

### **Climax**

The captain throws a feast in honor of the player characters to thank them for their help. During the meal, she explains Raven was on board to track down those who ended up murdering him. She laments his death, and gives Raven's payment to the player characters, telling them they earned it.

The player characters should be led to believe the adventure is over, and the gamemaster might even award Legend Points to foster the feeling of a "job well done." They should not suspect a Horror lurks in the ship's hold.

The adventure can end in two ways. The player characters are awoken by the screams of a passenger or crewmember in the hold, where they discover the captain's headless corpse. The Horror, now appearing as a large garland of flowers, attacks them. Alternately, the player characters wake up to find the flowers spread over the entire ship, which is now a giant pumpkin patch Horror!

## Sequels

If Arbariel escapes, he may become a recurring nemesis for the player characters. He might continue his quest to infest Travar with Horror seed, or simply seek revenge on the adepts who thwarted him. One of Arbariel's Horror seeds may have already made it to Travar, and the player characters arrive in the city to learn of more disappearances. They realize the walls of Travar have been decorated with Horrors hiding among the greenery, and must act before they begin feeding openly.

## FATE FORGER

*Hammer and tongs! Is there nothing sacred upon this earth? Is there nothing the Horrors cannot corrupt? Is there nothing they cannot poison, or taint with their evil caress? It would appear not!*

— Loric Ironblood, Weaponsmith and Champion of Travar

The people who inhabit the lands south of Travar are, by nature, a suspicious lot, something of an essential survival trait. However, after many successful adventures in the area, the player characters have earned their trust. They are recognized as heroes, reaping the benefits that come with such recognition. Yet that heroic status has an expiration date. As the player characters travel the area, they are made less welcome until they are once again treated with fear and suspicion.

Eventually, they learn of misdeeds and villainous acts performed by other heroes, some of whom the player characters personally know or have traveled with. As they decide what they should do, an old employer begs them for help. The player characters soon learn the misdeeds of others are linked to the acts that made them heroes.

## Setup

This adventure framework involves the player characters in two separate, but connected, storylines. The first adventure sets up the second. They are separated by an unspecified amount of time, which the gamemaster can use for other quests. This allows time for tales of their actions to spread.

Before the Scourge, people worked feverishly to complete their kaers as the first Horrors appeared. Travar's merchants hired powerful adepts to protect their interests in various mines, kaers, and villages. Brand Flamefounder, a Weaponsmith known as the Spirit Smith, was one of these. After an encounter with a Horror killed most of his group, Brand was inspired to craft a blade with the purpose of slaying the Horror.

Rather than return to his own forge, he stopped at the closest town, southwest of Travar. The local smith was honored to have a legendary Weaponsmith use his forge, and the event drew a great deal of attention from the townsfolk. After taking several months to forge the blade, Brand left to hunt down the Horror.

The final preparations for the Scourge included the blacksmith relocating his forge to the kaer. Shortly after, the kaer partially collapsed, the damage too great to repair in what time remained. Instead, the town's residents secured shelter in Travar. The kaer was abandoned, including the forge. It remains buried somewhere in the abandoned kaer.

In the first adventure, the player characters are hired to retrieve the anvil used to forge Brand's blade, becoming heroes in the process. In the second adventure, the characters discover the anvil is cursed and must help their employer undo the damage.

### Event One: A Fateful Day

The player characters are hired by Loric Ironblood, an aged Weaponsmith and Champion of Travar. Loric works for the Strugen family at the Dragon's Forge, one of Travar's armories (see **The Five Towers**, p. 181). Loric has learned the location of the anvil on which the Brand Flamefounder forged a magic blade shortly before the Scourge. he hires the player characters to recover the anvil from an unfinished kaer southwest of Travar, near the Badlands.

Loric offers an extremely generous payment for retrieving the anvil, as well as a heavy discount on goods from his forge. If the player characters question his generosity, he tells them he let slip his discovery while boasting to a rival in a local tavern. After he sobered up he realized his mistake and wishes the player characters to set out immediately in case his rival, or anyone else who might have overheard, acts on the information.

Loric supplies directions to the village of Bells Crag, two mules, and a small cart to carry the anvil back to Travar. He has also secured the services of a local Scout who will meet the player characters in the village.

### Event Two: The Making of Heroes

Bells Crag was indentured to House Achura after a section of their unfinished kaer collapsed. The village council, now close to paying off their debt, wishes to keep the anvil a secret. The payment offered by Loric is enough to pay that year's indenture tax, and they are afraid House Achura will claim the anvil if they learn of its existence, leaving the village in the lurch.

When the player characters arrive they are regarded with suspicion, but after they meet with Loric's Scout, a female dwarf Named Findel, in the tavern, the atmosphere becomes a little friendlier. As the Scout describes some of the difficulties reaching the kaer and the area's dangers, the tavern is attacked. The raiders are foul folk, and attempt to burn the tavern after they have got what they came for. They arrive on mangy looking mounts, some riding double. They have been raiding villages to the south and steadily working their way north.

After defeating the foul folk, the player characters become heroes in Bells Crag and word of their deeds starts spreading to other villages in the area.

### Event Three: Fate Forger

The journey to the kaer goes smoothly, but travel gets more difficult the further they travel into the borderlands. To spice up the journey, the gamemaster might have them encounter tainted or corrupted wildlife that has emerged from the Badlands.

The kaer is located at the top of a gully of jagged rocks just beyond the site of the original village. Gaining access to the kaer is tougher than expected as the raiders have set up camp at the entrance, and taken slaves from villages they have raided.

Findel informs the player characters there is an alternate route, but it would take a couple days to journey around and through the hills.

The gamemaster should make it tough, but not impossible, for the player characters to enter the kaer. The foul folk in the encampment have planted a pumpkin patch Horror at the top of the gulley for protection, which complicates approaching from Findel's alternate route. When they have no further use for their slaves they throw them to the Horror for sport. They keep several pumpkin heads in baskets so they can grow a new patch whenever they move on.

Getting into the kaer is the hard part. Once inside, it is a matter of avoiding further rockslides and finding the forge. The anvil lies on its side in the center of the forge. Though coated in dust, the anvil is in good condition and an inscription, which reads, "Fate Forger," can be easily seen.

### **Event Four: Everything is for Sale**

During the return journey, the player characters are approached by a group of merchants and their bodyguards. The merchants wish to purchase the anvil, openly admitting they are Loric's rivals and represent a consortium that holds considerable stock in Xoros Honeyed-Tongue's weapons industry.

If the player characters decide to sell the anvil, the initial offer from the merchants will be a little bit more than their payment from Loric, but the player characters might be able to haggle for more. If they decide not to sell, the merchants are disappointed, but believe their failure is a reflection on their own bargaining skills, rather than player character honor. Undeterred, they return to Travar and try to purchase the anvil directly from Loric.

Whatever the outcome, the anvil arrives in Travar and the player characters are recognized for the part they played.

### **Event Five: Full Circle**

This event is the first in the second storyline, and assumes the player characters have visited several villages south of Travar, and enjoyed the hospitality accorded to heroes for their part in defeating the foul folk in Bells Crag.

The follow-up begins when a moneylender hires the player characters as bodyguards to protect him during a trip he makes each year to the southern villages. The merchant is collecting interest payments on the previous year's loans, and brokering new loans. He has chosen the player characters as they are well thought of in the area.

As the small caravan travels south, it becomes apparent something is not right. The player characters discover the atmosphere has changed since their last visit; everyone keeps to themselves and looks at the player characters with suspicion. No one is willing to talk, or even buy the heroes a drink in the local tavern. People pay their loans in full without question or excuse. This is normally good business, except no one wants any further dealings with the merchant, and future business dries up. Further south, suspicion is replaced with fear, until eventually the caravan is refused entry.

When the caravan reaches Bells Crag, where the player characters are best known, they learn what the problem is. They don't receive the usual warm welcome, but the villagers are still willing to talk and do business. The player characters learn several adventurers, well respected in the area, have committed terrible deeds, including murder. The residents of the area are rightly terrified. To the player characters' dismay, some of those Named by the villagers are known to them personally.

### **Event Six: Between the Hammer and the Anvil**

Travar is welcome sight as the player characters escort the dejected moneylender home. Not long after they return, Loric Ironblood comes looking for them. If they player characters sold the anvil, agents of Xoros Honeyed-Tongue contact them instead.

Loric is agitated, and has an unusually disheveled appearance. After the player characters returned Fate Forger to Travar, Loric forged a few quality blades on the anvil, but it was difficult to use, and with many orders to fill, he simply did not have time to master it. Loric returned to his own anvil, simply telling customers their weapons had been created on Fate Forger.

This minor deceit has so far saved Loric's reputation, and maybe even that of the player characters. Loric has heard the reports of heroes becoming villains. He realized he had forged a blade on Fate Forger for each of those heroes. The anvil is Horror marked, as are the weapons forged on it.

Nobody has made the connection yet because dozens of heroes believe their weapon was forged on the legendary anvil. Loric begs the player characters help him recover the cursed weapons before the trail leads back to Fate Forger and those connected with it.

### **Climax**

Loric wishes the player characters to recover all the weapons he forged on the tainted anvil, but the one he is most concerned about currently is in the hands of the eccentric Swordmaster Chessa, known as the Peacock. Not only have her recent actions been questionable, she has entered the Founding Tournament.

What worries Loric is Chessa has been bragging about the blade he forged as she tours Travar's taverns. The player characters will not be the first who have tried to take her blade, and she recognizes them as soon as she sees them; she knows the legend of Fate Forger and the part they played in it. When Chessa discovers their plans to take her blade, she publicly challenges them to a duel. The rules of dueling champions protect Chessa, but allow her to kill those after her weapon, unless they are also registered Champions of the Tournament.

Duels occur only a few times a year, and in the weeks before the Founding Tournament, can draw significant attention. Senna dueling one of the heroes who recovered Fate Forger is no exception. The terms of the duel are up to the gamemaster, but Chessa is affected by the curse and may choose to fight to the death rather than give up her precious blade. Regardless of the outcome, the heroes and the Peacock become the talk of the town.

## Sequels

Recovering the other weapons forged on the cursed anvil can form a larger campaign arc. The adepts wielding the weapons should be a fair match for the player characters, and those corrupted might have unusual abilities that draw on the Horror's power.

The player characters might seek out the Horror that cursed the anvil, research the fate of Brand Flamefounder and the Edge of Travar, the sword he forged. Grexian Redrock (see p. 65) would undoubtedly take an interest in adepts pursuing this goal.

Should the player characters be forced to kill Dancing Senna, they may make an enemy of her sponsoring merchant, unless they agree to replace her as Champions of the Tournament.

## LEGAL DOCUMENTS

*The Code of Travar is a complex, convoluted and ludicrous work open to the individual interpretation of those fools who practice it. Produce a law book and quill if you wish, but when I produce steel and ink it with your blood, be assured there is little room for interpretation of my intent.*

— Balsor Ohbrinagh, Champion of Travar

As a recently discovered kaer prepares to enter the world, merchants from Travar and Throal squabble over first contact rights. Meanwhile, the residents of the kaer discover they have unlikely allies in the Therans.

## Setup

Before the Scourge, House Achura invested funded the construction of kaers in areas of rich mineral resources. Namegivers granted protection in these kaers became indentured to mine the mineral wealth, stockpiling it to pay their debts and build a new life after the Scourge. When Travar sealed the Storm Shield, some of these kaers were left unfinished and the residents abandoned. The kaer at Thunder Point is among them.

House Achura released funding for the completion of the kaer, but the money never arrived at its destination. Believing they had been forsaken, the residents sought help elsewhere. The Passions smiled on them, and they secured funding from a Theran magician exploring the region.

Rather than return to Parlainth, the magician lived out the rest of her days in the kaer. The years passed, and when the magic level stabilized, nobody in the kaer knew if the Scourge was over. Fearful it continued outside, the residents left the entrance sealed.

While exploring the Thunder Mountains, some dwarfs from Throal's Guild of Delvers stumbled upon the sealed kaer and initiated contact. Since negotiations with a sealed kaer can take time, they sent a detachment to the nearest city, Travar, for extra supplies.

House Achura learned of the discovery, and recognized the location as one mentioned in an old contract. Not happy with losing out on potential profit, they send their own envoy, which includes the player characters.

This adventure has some potential for combat, but is more focused on role-playing and negotiation.

### **Event One: Escort the Envoy**

The player characters are approached by representatives of House Achura, offering them a job escorting an envoy to a newly discovered kaer. The group might have helped the house in the past, might have earned a reputation in the city from successfully locating other forgotten kaers, or even be called upon as champions.

The kaer is located near Thunder Point, several days travel from the city. Their employer asks the characters to escort the envoy to the camp where some other members of the house are already established, and offer any other assistance required. The player characters are not told the kaer has already been contacted by the dwarfs.

### **Event Two: Thunder Point**

The player characters arrive at the unopened kaer just as hostilities break out between the Achura merchants already on site and the Throalic dwarfs. The player characters should intervene to prevent any serious bloodshed, and try to sort out the problem.

The dwarfs explain they discovered the kaer and were working to encourage the residents to leave. They had sent a group to Travar to get supplies. House Achura presents the contract signed by those who founded the kaer generations ago.

The contract indicates the residents of the kaer agreed to mine for mineral wealth during the Scourge in return for the resources to construct the kaer. House Achura wants their due. If the residents do not fulfill their end of the bargain, Trade Law supports indenture for the kaer until it can repay the debts to House Achura.

The residents of the kaer communicate by a special device in the entranceway. It consists of tiles with the most common Throalic and Theran words inscribed on them, as well as tiles that allow individual words to be spelled out. As each tile is touched, the corresponding tile in the kaer glows, and vice-versa.

The residents of the kaer support the dwarfs' story and indicate they were thinking of emerging. When they learn the new arrivals are from House Achura, they change their mind. The contract may be valid, but has no way of being enforced until the kaer opens. The residents are happy to wait.

### **Event Three: Imperial Demands**

As recriminations fly between the parties, they are interrupted by the arrival of an airship. Instead of merchants, it carries an armed delegation of Therans, who demand all parties relinquish any claim to Thunder Point.

Unless the Therans are forced to the negotiating table, they take over and negotiate a settlement with the kaer's residents, granting them protection from any other parties. Fortunately, they are a small contingent, and a long way from reinforcements. If questioned, they offer additional information.

Theran explorers in Parlainth recently uncovered an old journal belonging to a Theran magician, Eminasa. The journal describes her plans to abandon Parlainth for the kaer at Thunder Point. The Therans even have one of the original copies of

the kaer's design, drawn up by House Achura's architects, with additional notes from Eminasa. Needing to work out what it would take to complete the kaer, she had returned to Parlainth with a copy of the plans, leaving it behind when she fled the city.

## Climax

Negotiations are likely to be tense and could erupt into violence. The Therans explain there are items in the kaer that belong to the Empire, and recovering them is not negotiable. The kaer's residents confirm they have the magician's possessions.

House Achura demands the terms of their contract are complied with, but the kaer's residents state that while they did begin to mine the kaer, the mining caused a portion of the kaer to collapse, mining was abandoned, and they don't have the payment. They blame House Achura for building a kaer in an unstable area. House Achura denies responsibility for bad mining practices.

Meanwhile the Delvers Guild and the trade consortium from Travar claim first contact rights, earning them a commission from Throal, as well as a cut of any potential trade agreements.

The player characters must find a solution. Do they side with their employer, or back the dwarfs? What sort of complications do the Therans add? Perhaps they support the kaer's decision to remain closed, since the parties outside are more interested in what they can get out of the affair, instead of helping them. Of course, even if the kaer's residents can happily survive a few more decades, the Scourge is long over and there is no more need to hide.

There is no clear answer, and it is likely somebody will be disappointed with the outcome. The potential wealth inside the kaer might be too much for some of the parties, and greed may cloud their good sense.

## Sequels

The aftermath of the adventure depends on how the player characters handle the situation. If the kaer opens, they will be hailed as heroes by its residents for negotiating a settlement. The leader of any outside factions who lose out (or feel they lost out), might become a rival in the future, while those who achieved their objectives can become allies.

The new settlement will likely need protection, and advocates in their corner when dealing with the wider world. If the player characters arranged matters so the kaer remains independent, they might take on that role, at least for a time.







## GAME INFORMATION

*Windlings are annoying, everyone knows that. Even the ones I like are annoying, and I'm patient for a dwarf. Windlings in Travar are more annoying than most, not only do you have to listen to their jabber, they expect you to buy their overpriced tat at the same time.*

• **Horkh Gemcrusher, Elite Treasure Hunter** •

**T**his chapter provides game rules and mechanics for various elements described in this book. It covers equipment, magical items, spells, and creatures. As always, these are suggestions and guidelines. Their influence on an individual campaign is up to the gamemaster, but can be used as-is or serve as inspiration for your own creations.

## GOODS AND SERVICES

"In Travar, everything is for sale." As described elsewhere, it is not just goods and services for sale, but justice, lives, and loyalties as well. Of course, just because something is for sale doesn't mean you won't have to pay dearly for it. Travar's merchants make it their business to know the market value of almost anything. While everything is for sale, the gamemaster is the final arbiter on the availability and cost of goods and services.

### An Economy of Scale

Much of Travar's economy relies on agriculture and the manufacture of goods for export. Many everyday goods are produced on a mass scale, and thus are cheaper in Travar than other cities. Food, clothing, leather goods, and transport are good examples of this and average prices can be ten to fifteen percent cheaper than elsewhere in Barsaive.

### Accommodation

Some services are more expensive in Travar. Property values rise as the population grows. There has been little new construction since the end of the Scourge, and this shortage is reflected in the price of lodgings at inns inside the city walls. On average, prices are double what would be expected elsewhere in Barsaive, and during the Founding Tournament the cost of lodgings can easily quadruple as demand outstrips supply.

With the cost of lodging so high, almost all establishments provide a breakfast or main meal as part of their standard accommodation package. Some of the best package deals can be found in the inns run by House Halla, as the price includes guarded transport between House Halla inns, meals, and stabling for animals if

required. Many find it cheaper to find accommodation outside the city and pay the toll when they pass through the gates.

There are many reputable inns and taverns along the Byrose River whose prices are a fraction of those inside the city, though even their prices can climb during the Founding. There are also places to stay in Tent City, an option preferred by those on a budget. Hostelry tents that function as large dorm rooms can be found, but like everything else in Tent City, they are transitory. It's not unusual to return and find your accommodations have moved to a new location.

### **Barter, Hagggle, Trade**

Regardless of the marked price of an item or service, player characters are advised to not finalize a transaction without haggling. Travar's merchants expect some form of financial joust. While failure to engage in such a contest is not taboo, it makes an individual stand out. Like scavengers, Travar's merchants can recognize the weak and infirm—from a financial perspective—and failure to haggle marks a visitor, or someone desperate. With a few subtle hand gestures, merchants can alert each other to those individuals, who can then expect to pay higher prices than they would if they had simply haggled.

## **COMMON MAGIC ITEMS**

In addition to the common magic items found in the *Player's Guide*, the following magic items are unique to Travar and can be found in the city's markets.

### **Boundary Stones**

This minor item was developed to help alert travelers of hazards approaching their camp at night. A typical set consists of five semi-precious stones, but larger sets are possible (and comparatively more expensive).

The stones in a set are magically linked as part of their creation. When placed on the ground, each stone links to the two nearest stones, generating a magical field between them. When something crosses the field, the stones emit a sound to alert those nearby.

Most sets are designed to only detect creatures or intruders larger than a given size (typically cat-sized or larger), so the alarm doesn't go off when insects or other small wildlife enter the warded area. The stones do not determine the direction of the intrusion, or discriminate between friend and foe, and must be within 20 yards of another stone to generate the magical field.

The item's ability to detect intrusion isn't absolute, as they must be set up appropriately. They are useful tools, but those who rely on them overmuch can still be caught off guard. Boundary stones provide a +2 bonus to Perception tests made to notice creatures or Namegivers crossing the boundary.

### **Divining Rods**

This item is typically a short wand of rare wood infused with True Water. Using one provides a +2 bonus to Wilderness Survival tests made to find water.

## Homing Compass

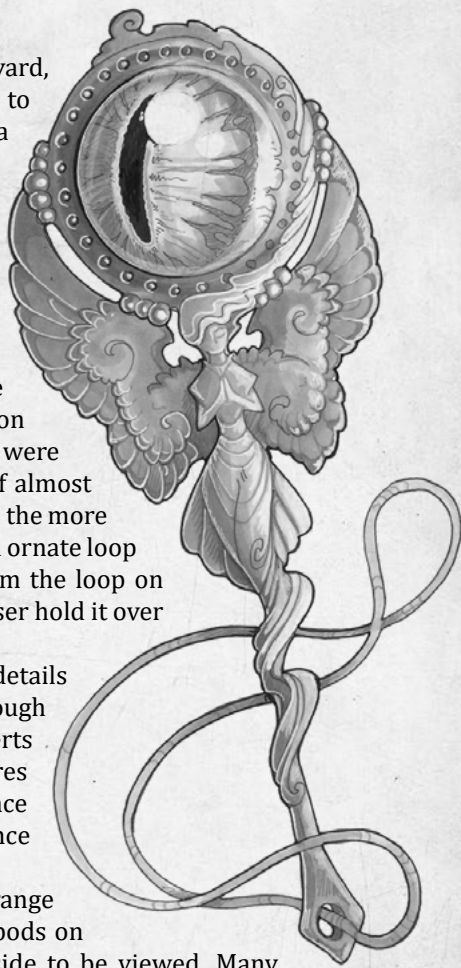
Traditionally worn around the neck on a lanyard, the homing compass is a metal disk small enough to be held in the palm of a child's hand. Mounted on a pin in the center of the disk is a metal arrow tipped with a bit of the same stone that makes up Travar's walls. The arrow can pivot around the pin, and will always swing to point toward Travar. Using the compass provides a +2 bonus to Navigation tests.

## Monocucleye

Commonly used in the Arena during the Tournament, the monocucleye enhances the vision of the user, allowing them to see things as if they were closer than they are. It is made from the eyeball of almost any creature, but for the discerning citizen of Travar, the more exotic the creature the better. The eyeball is set in an ornate loop attached to a short rod. The eyeball protrudes from the loop on one side and is concave on the other, allowing the user hold it over their own eye.

The monocucleye is perfect for picking out details that would otherwise go unnoticed at a distance, though the range is limited: beyond 250 yards the item reverts to the user's normal vision. The monocucleye requires some concentration to be used, and cannot enhance ranged attacks or spellcasting, nor does it enhance astral sensing.

Larger versions of the monocucleye, with a range of up to 1000 yards, can be found mounted on tripods on Travar's walls, allowing the surrounding countryside to be viewed. Many visitors to the city are disconcerted to see what appears to be a living eyeball moving about on its own accord within its artificial setting.



## Tread Lightly Boots

Traditionally used by fire miners, tread lightly boots spread the wearer's weight over a larger-than-normal area using a cushion of True Air. This allows for longer stays on a fool's island. These areas of cooled rock float on the molten lava and are prone to breaking up at the slightest disturbance.

Tread Lightly boots have been put to other uses by adventurers and the thieves of Travar, as they muffle all but the heaviest

Item	Price	Rarity
Boundary Stones	175	Rare
Divining Rod	100	Unusual
Homing Compass	200	Rare
Monocucleye, Small	150	Rare
Monocucleye, Large	500	Very Rare
Tread Lightly Boots	200	Rare

footfalls. They provide a +2 bonus to attempts made to mask the wearer's footsteps, but do not suppress other noises the character may make.

### True Air Infused Items

More of a service than an actual item, this was developed to allow explorers to reduce the weight of their gear. This allows them to carry more provisions, or bring back more treasure from an abandoned kaer or ruined citadel. Gear must be infused with True Air during its construction, it cannot be added later. This reduces its weight by 25%, but doubles the cost of the item.

### BLOOD INKS

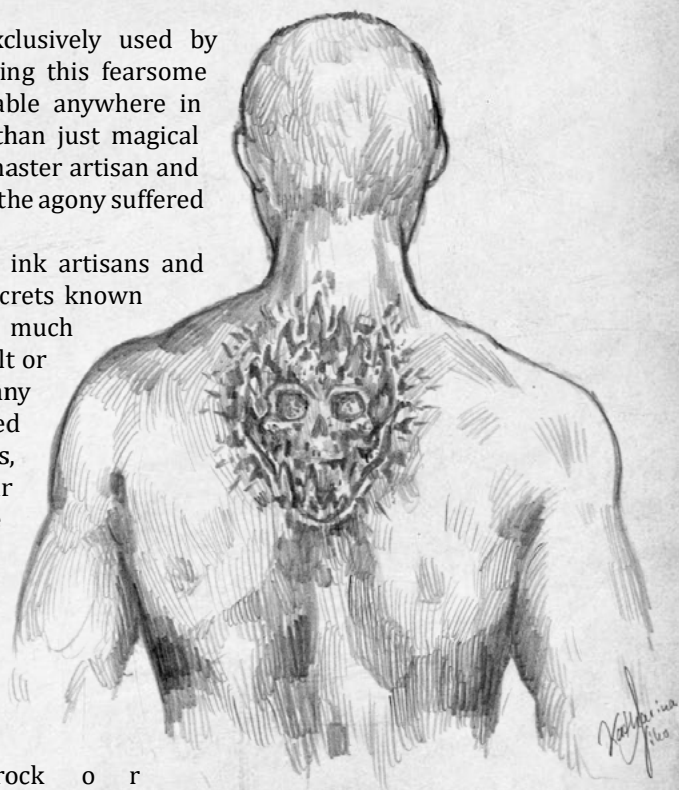
**B**lood inks are almost exclusively used by Travar's fire miners, making this fearsome bunch instantly recognizable anywhere in Barsaive. Blood inks are more than just magical tattoos. They are the mark of a master artisan and enchanter, and are a testimony to the agony suffered by the recipient.

The identity of these blood ink artisans and where they can be found are secrets known only to Travar's fire miners, so much so that many consider them a cult or secret society. However, given many fire mining ships are undermanned and happy to employ new recruits, it is not too difficult to join their ranks and gain access to the knowledge.

Fire miners display their blood inks with pride. To be inked in such a fashion is testament they have survived an encounter with Death in his own domain.

Only when a fire miner receives a terrible burn from the molten rock or some other hazard associated with Death's Sea are they considered worthy of blood inking. Receiving blood ink is a painful experience; the blood ink is applied by needles of living crystal on the blistered, cauterized flesh. The inking process slowly heals the burn, but at a cost. The recipient chooses to forgo healing some of the damage, which becomes Blood Magic Damage, the amount determined by the blood ink chosen. Blood ink is permanent, so the Blood Magic Damage can never be healed.

Travar's fire miners openly display their blood inks, for they are awe-inspiring works of art. All blood inks are themed on fire, whether a fire breathing dragon, creatures with flaming wings, or a flaming skull representing their encounter with



Death. Many of these blood inks appear to burn with an ethereal fire, which can be unsettling to onlookers.

Some sample blood inks are presented here. The gamemaster is encouraged to work with their players to develop additional types.

## Flaming Stride

*(2 Blood Magic Damage)*

Those marked with flaming stride ink can leave a trail of flaming ethereal footprints on any surface they cross. The length of the trail is equal to twice the character's Willpower Step in yards. Experienced fire miners know one wrong step on a fool's island could be their last. They use this blood ink to leave a trail to safely guide new recruits across the surface. The ethereal flames are cool to the touch and last two minutes. Each use of flaming stride costs 1 point of Strain.

Flaming stride ink often takes the form of twisting, serpentine flames covering a series of smaller individual burns caused by the splatter of exploding magma.

## Conflagration

*(2 Blood Magic Damage)*

The cargo of a fire mining ship is a lucrative target for pirates and conflagration ink helps deter would-be pirates by giving fire miners a modicum of defense. For 1 point of Strain, ethereal fire spreads across the fire miner's body, which lasts for 3 rounds. If the fire miner damages his foe, the ethereal fire moves to engulf them.

The fire miner may then take 2 Strain and the ethereal flames burn the victim for Step 4 damage. Due to their ethereal nature, Mystic Armor reduces the damage dealt. The flames only burn for one round and are then extinguished, and cannot be used to set fire to flammable objects. The wearer must reactivate the ink to use it again.

Conflagration ink often takes the form of a fire breathing creature spewing sparks and flame from its maw.

## Heat Shield

*(3 Blood Magic Damage)*

There are few places hotter to work than directly above Death's Sea. The heat shield ink allows a fire miner to endure the blistering conditions much longer than would normally be possible. The heat shield ink offers an additional 2 points of Physical Armor against any heat-or fire-based damage and can be stacked on top of existing Physical Armor. The additional armor does not protect against any other form of damage.

The heat shield ink often takes the form of a flaming tribal style across the chest, back, or upper arms.

## Blistering Flesh

*(3 Blood Magic Damage)*

To be scalded by molten rock is a terrifying and painful experience. For those who survive and choose to take on blood ink, the blistering flesh ink is usually the first chosen, symbolizing the encounter with Death. For 3 Strain, the wearer's skin appears

to blister and burn, gaining a +3 bonus to Making an Impression or Intimidation tests (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 144).

The blistering flesh ink is almost always a representation of Death wreathed in fire. Often it takes the form of a flaming skull, or a figure with a scythe dressed in a robe of dark flame.

## BLOOD CHARMS

Blood charms are magical items powered by the blood of Namegivers. There are several charms unique to Travar, especially among airmen. For more information on how blood charms work, see the *Player's Guide*, p. 415.

"Air sailor charm" is a catchall term for the many different varieties of blood charms traditionally used by Travar's airmen. Despite their different functions, all such charms are carved from small fragments of marble left over from Travar's pre-Scourge expansion. Travar's airmen are a superstitious lot who seldom leave the city without some form of charm. Even non-magical charms are crafted from the white marble and many airmen (adept and non-adept alike) claim they have unusual properties or exhibit unusual behavior, such as a rise in temperature the closer they are to Travar.

### Blood Thorns

This item is a variant of blood pebble armor (*Player's Guide*, p. 412), but is more decorative than protective. As described on page 149, it was a fashion trend inspired by the elves of Blood Wood.

Blood elves find the decoration insulting; worsen the Attitude (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 142) of any blood elves interacting with the wearer by two levels. Namegivers outside Travar are also likely to be unsettled. Attempts by the wearer to Intimidate non-blood elves outside Travar gain a +2 bonus.

Implanting the thorns causes 3 Blood Magic Damage. The armor provides 3 Physical Armor, 4 Mystic Armor, and an Initiative Penalty of 1.

### Last Grasp

This unusual blood charm comes in two parts and is an air sailor's last gambit should they ever be unfortunate enough to fall or be thrown overboard. The first half is embedded beneath the skin in the palm of the hand causing 3 Blood Magic Damage. The second half, known as the anchor point, is ritually embedded on the airship in a place of the air sailor's choosing, normally the ship's gunwales.

The charm can be activated as a Free action for 3 Strain, which causes a large but fleeting attraction between the wearer and the anchor point, giving one last chance to grasp the vessel. Even from several feet, the effect is great enough to pull the wearer toward the airship. This gives the wearer a +3 bonus to any tests made to avoid falling off the ship the anchor point is attached to.

## Thick Skin

This blood charm is made from thin wafers of marble engraved with the elemental symbols. It protects the wearer from exposure associated with air sailing, such as the extreme cold at high altitude, or the stifling heat above Death's Sea.

During implantation, the wearer chooses the number of hours the charm will work (no greater than their Toughness Step). This determines the amount of Blood Magic Damage caused (e.g. a two-hour duration causes 2 Blood Magic Damage). Once activated, the character does not suffer from exposure as described in the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 194. This does not protect the character from cold-or heat-based attacks, powers, or spells, only exposure to the elements.

Item	Price	Availability
<b>Blood Inks*</b>		
Flaming Stride	150	Very Rare
Conflagration	300	Very Rare
Heat Shield	200	Very Rare
Blistering Flesh	250	Very Rare
<b>Blood Charms</b>		
Blood Thorns	250	Very Rare
Last Grasp	100	Rare
Thick Skin	150	Rare

\* Prices for Blood Inks are for those who have not earned them through working as a fire miner.

## TRANSPORT AND SERVICES

Because of its status as a significant trade hub, transport from Travar is easy to come by. The large number of airships and riverboats plying the skies and waters around the city results in slightly lower prices for travelers seeking passage. Long distance travel can run five to ten percent below prices found in other parts of Barsaive, and ferry service across the Byrose can often be found for a few copper coins.

There are also services in Travar not typically found elsewhere in Barsaive. The major trading houses and companies employ specialists in contract law, but some individuals can be hired as independent contract specialists, willing to review and even negotiate contract terms on behalf of a client.

Another unusual service is professional hanger-on. Many rising stars in Travar's merchant class hire an entourage to travel with them. This is especially common among those looking to pursue a Magistrate's seat, or move up in the Synod. A large group of followers indicates wealth, which can attract a higher class of champion, or the interest of other wealthy merchants.

Item	Price	Availability
Chariot	25	Unusual
Coach	60	Average
Palanquin - Standard	20	Average
Palanquin - Ornate	100	Unusual
Palanquin - Magical	800	Very Rare
Exotic Beast of Burden (Arena Beast)	7,000+	Very Rare
Contract Services	75-150	Unusual
Entourage for Hire	5 per person	Average
Messenger/Runner (within Travar only)	3	Average

## MAGICAL TREASURES

*Travar is a trove of legendary treasures imbued with powers few can comprehend, let alone wield. A few are among the most ancient in Barsaive, and it is perhaps fortunate these items do not fall into the hands of the unworthy, or the uneducated. For good or ill, and for no other reason than to inflate the ego, it is the greed of Travar's merchants that keep these treasures hidden away in dark cellars and dusty storerooms as frivolous acquisitions for their private collections. Treasures that do fall into the hands of those who can wield them should be thoroughly examined, for many have lingered throughout the Scourge in the Badlands and stink of its terrible taint.*

— Artacus Carbh, Wizard of the Body of Five

## THE IVORY CODEX

The Ivory Codex and Cycle of Five are powerful tools at the gamemaster's disposal and can be used as much or as little as they deem appropriate. There is more to the Ivory Codex than meets the eye, and even those who conceived of it did not fully understand what they created. It is responsible for many of the unusual phenomena found in Travar: from many citizens believing themselves to be merchants, their unwavering belief they are destined for greatness, or the recurring theme of five throughout the city. With a little creativity, the gamemaster can add new phenomena to influence events the player characters become involved in.

### All is Dust

The Ivory Codex is a powerful magical artifact, a remnant of a once great civilization from the previous age of magic. At the height of its power, this civilization prepared itself to face the Horrors, but they feared the end of the magic on which their civilization was built, and the loss of their knowledge and wisdom. What they feared most, in their vanity, was all memory of what they had created would become nothing more than dust swept away by the passage of time.

They knew magic would eventually return, so the leaders of this civilization brought together the greatest minds to create an enduring legacy. That legacy would come to be known as the Ivory Codex, a series of five tablets; one for each of the civilization's five great city-states.

The Codex was created from the finest marble, flecked with orichalcum that naturally imbued it with magic. This magic was enhanced in great rituals performed by the most powerful magicians in the realm. Each tablet was a time capsule recording the greatest endeavors and lore of each of the five city-states, intended to rest in the location of its respective city until the return of magic allowed them to call out to Namegivers gifted in the magical arts and be rediscovered.

The magicians performing the ritual had their own ideas about the function of the Ivory Codex. They imprinted an echo of each city's True Pattern into its tablet, and gave the tablets the ability to influence and manipulate the patterns it encountered. The Codex is full of knowledge and power, but the price for those who would learn its secrets is a subtle influence intended to recreate the ancient civilization.

What had been conceived from a good-natured gift of knowledge to future generations (and cultural vanity) became something else. Nothing of its like had been created before and none could tell if the plans of the traitorous mages would come to pass. The fear was not only might the glory of the civilization be recreated, but so might its greatest mistakes. At one time the city-states endured hundreds of years of brutal war and terrible bloodshed, surrounded by enemies on all sides.

Destroying such a powerful artifact was deemed impossible; the connection with the civilization's True Pattern could lead to unforeseen disaster. Fortunately, each tablet's manipulative ability depended on the location of the city it represented: the further from the city, the less powerful its influence. A bearer was chosen from the greatest heroes of the realm, and the Ivory Codex was carried to a sacred place away from the five city-states. This hero was sealed in a warded chamber, and sacrificed his life to power a ritual intended to bury the knowledge of the Codex. The sacrifice also blocked the Codex's ability to call out to those able to unlock its secrets.

The Codex, designed to awaken as the magic returned, remained dormant, shielded by the warded chamber. Only its chance discovery by Ayesha freed it of its bonds (see p. 13). The ritual provided by the spirit of the ancient hero was intended to keep the artifact's influence in check, rather than unlock it. Unfortunately, the ritual did not work as the spirit intended and some of the Codex's powers were unlocked.

The Ivory Codex was closest to the location of the fifth city, and thus the fifth tablet was dominant over the others. Over a long period of time, the magic of the fifth tablet subtly manipulated events, forcing the Body of Five to move to the former site of the fifth city. By the time Ayesha realized there was more to the Ivory Codex than the knowledge of a forgotten age, the Codex had grown in power and was shaping Travar into a city unlike any other. Ayesha was never able to prove her theories and, not knowing what the Codex intended, instituted measures to ensure its power was kept in check. Her dying wish was the Ivory Codex be sealed in her tomb as it was with its ancient bearer when she first found it.

## The Cycle of Five

The Cycle of Five is the manifestation of the Ivory Codex's power. Ayesha spent much of her time trying to unravel its mysteries and find ways of containing its influence. The power of the Ivory Codex grows as it slowly influences and manipulates those around it until they cause some historically significant event. Each event increases the influence and power of the Codex. The number five often appears as a clue to the artifact's influence.

The gamemaster should decide to what degree the Codex is still influencing events in Travar. The artifact awakened later in the magic cycle than its creators intended, but even with its reduced influence, it is responsible for much of how Travar looks and feels today. These effects go unnoticed by the common people of Travar, but first-time visitors often feel them, gaining a sudden sense of purpose for no apparent reason. Those who have visited the city often remark on this feeling, along with the unusual cultural attitudes of Travar's citizens.

Thanks to Ayesha's foresight, the Codex's powers are held in check with only residual effects such as that feeling of being destined for greatness. This reduced influence means a gamemaster can, if they wish, ignore the Codex as a campaign element, leaving it as an inert relic of a forgotten age.

The Ivory Codex is perhaps Travar's greatest secret, and no one knows its current location. Only the Var'eidyllon Tara'var and perhaps Ayesha's old enemies even know of its existence. Ayesha's enemies have no clue what it is, other than a powerful artifact they were denied hundreds of years before. The Ivory Codex is not something player characters should casually stumble upon, but it could be the focus of an epic campaign of discovery. The gamemaster is encouraged to decide what knowledge is contained within the Codex and what powers are available to the player characters should they uncover it.

### The Ivory Codex

**Maximum Threads:** 5

**Mystic Defense:** 18 **Tier:** Master

The Ivory Codex is a set of five marble tablets, each containing the magically encoded knowledge and lore of one of five ancient city-states. The power of each individual tablet is dependent on its location and currently only the fifth tablet is able to make use of its magic. The Ivory Codex is also the key to long forgotten astral constructs that lie buried deep under Travar. These constructs helped protect Travar against the Scourge, but they are now dormant (see **The Five Towers**, p. 180).

Given the right conditions, the tablets of the Ivory Codex shape their own destiny and manipulate those who seek to learn their secrets. As a result, the artifact does not have Key Knowledge in the traditional sense. Instead, characters using Item History or similar powers to investigate the Codex are guided to learn information or perform deeds that further its purpose: the recreation of the forgotten society that made it.

In addition, the powers and knowledge granted to those who weave threads to the Ivory Codex vary: the user gains power and knowledge that further the artifact's purpose. The Body of Five was granted knowledge that helped them protect Travar,

and thus the Codex, from the Horrors. They learned the secrets of the construction of Earth Gates (see p. 288), powerful runes of warding, and previously unknown techniques of construction using True Elements.

As a general guideline, the Codex may grant bonuses to Patterncraft, enchanting, ritual spellcasting, arcane knowledge, or research tests, and may also act as a core pattern item for Travar (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 217).

The Ivory Codex is powerful artifact, but its power is not immediately obvious because it works subtly, over time. It would not reveal its presence with a short-term display of power. The abilities and knowledge it offers to those who use it depends on their character and strength of will. The weak-willed are offered only what it takes to influence their actions, while strong-willed individuals are tempted with greater knowledge and the promise of deeper secrets.

## GREYCAIRN'S LEGACY

**G**reycairn Dumorjen commissioned two swords, one for each of his sons. Bequeathed to them on his deathbed, each sword represents the equal claim of the sons and their families to the estate of House Dumorjen. Each sword is forged from the same materials, gathered at the same time.

After the blades were completed, they were taken to a temple of Garlen high in the Throal Mountains and the Weaponsmith petitioned for a blessing, usually performed by the highest-ranking questor present. For reasons known only to the Passion, Garlen appeared and blessed the blades.

The swords are typical single-edged dwarf swords. The pommels are a circular piece bearing the mark of House Dumorjen on one side and the Weaponsmith's mark on the other. When held in the light at an angle, a panoramic view of the Throal Mountains is etched into the blade. The guard of each is an elongated triangle inset with six gemstones, three on each side. The Firecairn sword has rubies, while the Ironcairn sword has emeralds.

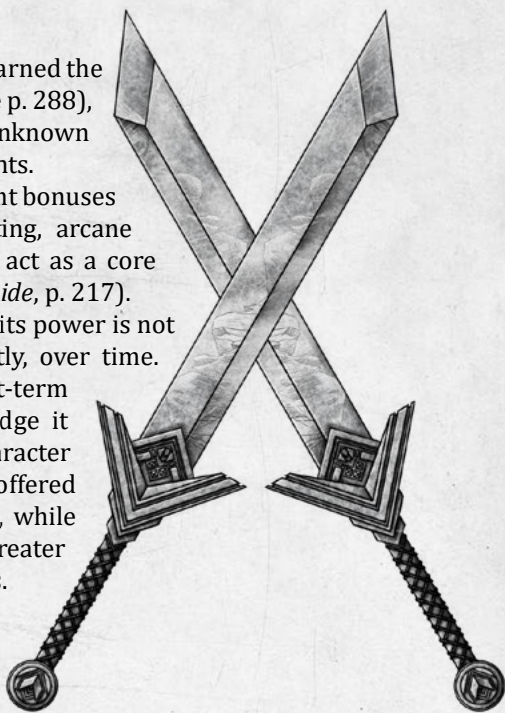
The swords were resistant to damage or any signs of age or wear, until the tragic day the blades met in combat. Each sword now bears the scars of that encounter, and have resisted all attempts to restore them to their original condition. The damage cannot be repaired until the two families reconcile. Each sword's powers are identical, except where noted below.

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Mystic Defense:** 14 **Tier:** Warden

**Thread Rank One**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the sword, either Dumorjen's



Ruby Blade or Dumorjen's Emerald Blade.

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 5.

### **Thread Rank Two**

**Effect:** The owner gains +1 Rank to Distract (Ruby Blade) or Maneuver (Emerald Blade).

### **Thread Rank Three**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the Dumorjen scion the sword was made for.

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 6.

### **Thread Rank Four**

**Effect:** The owner gains +2 Ranks to Distract (Ruby Blade) or Maneuver (Emerald Blade).

### **Thread Rank Five**

**Deed:** Both owners must be members of House Dumorjen (whether by birth or adoption) and travel to the shrine where Garlen blessed the swords. There, they must swear a blood oath before the Passion, putting an end to the feud between the two lines. This blood oath is similar to an Oath of Blood Peace, and costs 2 Blood Magic Damage. If the oath is ever broken, any benefits to this Thread Rank or beyond are lost.

**Effect:** When the owner of Dumorjen's Ruby Blade uses Distract, for 1 Strain they grant the owner of the Dumorjen's Emerald Blade a bonus to Physical Defense equal to their penalty from Distract. The owner of Dumorjen's Emerald Blade can use Blood Share at the equivalent of Rank 3 on the owner of the Ruby Blade as long as they are within Thread Rank x 5 yards, and can only shift damage to themselves. If the owner already has Blood Share, they gain a +3 Rank bonus, but only on this enhanced effect.

### **Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 7.

### **Thread Rank Seven**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the Weaponsmith who crafted the swords.



**Effect:** The owner gains +1 to Physical Defense and +3 Ranks in Distract (Ruby Blade) or Maneuver (Emerald Blade).

### Thread Rank Eight

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 8 and the owner gains +2 to Physical Defense.

## BROOCH OF YIELDING

These items, created by the Body of Five, are what keep the deaths of Travar's Champions in the Arena to a minimum. At the start of each event, each champion is issued a Brooch of Yielding as they enter the Qualification Pit. The Body of Five claim the tradition is based on the honor system practiced by the knights of ancient Landis; no harm must befall any knight who yields at tourney or on the battlefield.

Whether the present-day Body of Five knows it or not, that claim is false. During the construction of the Arena, the Body of Five decided it would be the last place of refuge if the citadel were ever breached. The brooches were for the protection of those adepts risking their lives attempting to seal breaches in Travar's defenses.

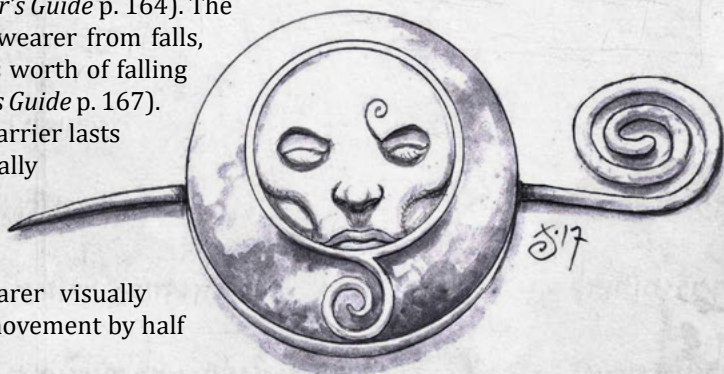
Activating the Brooch of Yielding envelops the user in a powerful magical field, protecting them from harm and forfeiting further participation in the tournament. The brooch draws its power from the magical runes and wards lining the interior of the Qualification Pit, as well as the city's walls, and does not function beyond them.

The arena staff also uses these items for protection when working in the Qualification Pit. The brooches are the property of the Body of Five and are carefully controlled, though over the centuries a few have been misplaced and, on rare occasions, one may appear in Travar's markets, or be handed down as a family heirloom.

The brooches are powered by the magic of the Arena, and can be used by anyone regardless of their magical aptitude (or lack thereof). Due to the nature of the tournament and the magic involved, a small number of brooches have developed into thread items. Weaving threads to these rare items further increases the brooch's protective capabilities.

The brooch can be activated at will by the wearer, and it activates automatically when the wearer falls unconscious. When activated, the wearer is surrounded by a magical barrier with Physical Armor 7 and Death Rating 20 (see *Gamemaster's Guide* p. 164). The brooch also protects the wearer from falls, preventing up to 10 yards worth of falling damage (see *Gamemaster's Guide* p. 167).

When activated, the barrier lasts five minutes, which is usually enough time for the Arena staff to come to a champion's aid. The barrier impedes the wearer visually and physically, reducing movement by half and the wearer is Harried.



For gamemasters who want a threaded version of the item, we provide the following example:

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Mystic Defense:** 13 **Tier:** Journeyman

#### **Thread Rank One**

**Key Knowledge:** The brooch is Named after the champion who wore it just after Travar opened and won the tournament where it became a thread item. The owner must learn the Name of the adept.

**Effect:** The owner adds +1 to their Physical Defense.

#### **Thread Rank Two**

**Effect:** The owner adds +1 to their Mystic Defense.

#### **Thread Rank Three**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the candidate who became magistrate after the champion's victory.

**Effect:** The owner gains +1 Physical Armor.

#### **Thread Rank Four**

**Effect:** The owner gains +1 Mystic Armor.

#### **Thread Rank Five**

**Key Knowledge:** After winning the tournament, the champion led a trade expedition near the edge of the Badlands. The company encountered a Horror, and the champion drove it off, though they were badly wounded in the fight and died not long after seeing the caravan to safety. The owner must learn the Name of the Horror.

**Effect:** For 2 Strain, the owner gains +2 Physical and Mystic Defense against Horrors and Horror constructs. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank.

#### **Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** The owner gains +1 Physical Armor and +1 Mystic Armor against Horrors and Horror constructs.

## SOULBINDER

**T**his horrid weapon is a whip with a bone handle and ten-foot tail braided from thundra beast and obsidiman hide. It was crafted by Adenaar, a Theran questor of Dis who operated in Barsaive after the Scourge. He was renowned for his ability to break willful slaves, and his signature whip is associated with his work, which led to it becoming a legendary item.

Adenaar died when his slaver band encountered a Throalic patrol during the First Theran War. One account of the incident claims Adenaar wasn't killed, but proclaimed, "I will never be Death's slave!" and the whip claimed his spirit. The whip passed to his lieutenant, and over the years passed through several hands before finding its way into the hands of Slave Master Stoneheart (see p. 208).

Another tale claims one of the whip's previous owners was a dwarf Scout with no interest in slavery, instead using its powers to capture criminals alive. The adept was found dead one morning, strangled with the whip. There was no evidence of an intruder and the investigation was closed. The whip disappeared from the magistrate's office during the investigation, turning up a few years later in the hands of a new owner.

Without any threads attached, the whip has the game statistics of a normal whip (*Player's Guide*, p. 433). The whip's powers only function while the owner possesses it. If the owner is disarmed, the whip behaves as a normal whip and any magical effects on its victims end.

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Mystic Defense:** 13 **Tier:** Journeyman

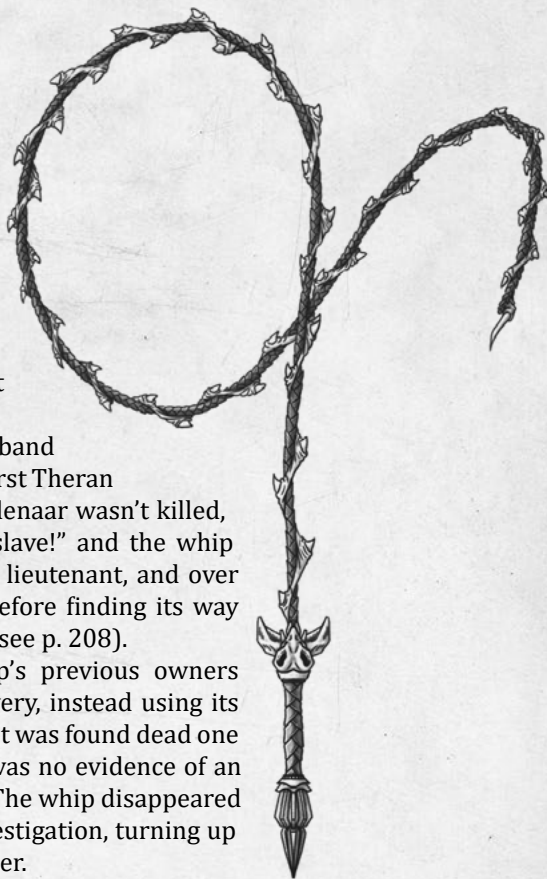
### Thread Rank One

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the Name of the whip.

**Effect:** The owner gains a +2 bonus to Intimidation tests if the whip is displayed on their person.

### Thread Rank Two

**Effect:** The whip seems to possess a mind of its own and actively seeks to trap and constrict. The owner no longer needs an additional success to entangle an opponent with the whip.



**Thread Rank Three**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the first owner.

**Effect:** The whip strengthens and cannot be cut. A target entangled by the whip may not add a weapon's Damage Step to escape attempts.

**Thread Rank Four**

**Effect:** The whip gains greater control over its form, allowing it to stretch and grow ever tighter. The Entangling Difficulty of the whip is 12 and its reach is equal to the owner's thread rank in yards.

**Thread Rank Five**

**Key Knowledge:** The handle is made from the arm bone of a questor of Lochost who ran afoul of Adenaar during one of the slaver's first expeditions in Barsaive. The owner must learn the Name of the questor.

**Effect:** The whip now offers only despair. Targets entangled by the whip may not use, or benefit from, talents and abilities that prevent or resist fear or intimidation, offer encouragement, or increase Social Defense. Passive bonuses to Social Defense (such as those from Discipline progression or thread magic) still apply as normal.

Additionally, the owner may spend extra successes on the Attack test to reduce the target's Social Defense by 1 per success. This effect lasts while the target is entangled, and for the owner's thread rank in minutes after release.

**Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** The whip can now spread its misery more effectively by multiplying. The owner can use the **Misery Loves Company** ability as a Simple action. For 3 Strain after the owner entangles a target, they may keep the target entangled with bonds of mystic force and use the whip to entangle further targets. No more than the owner's thread rank in targets may be entangled by the whip at one time. These additional targets are subject to the whip's other powers as if they were bound by the whip itself.

**EARTH GATES**

The earliest members of the Body of Five learned many ancient magical secrets from the Ivory Codex. Among the greatest of these was the knowledge to construct permanent teleportation portals called Earth Gates. Many were constructed, but, as with all secretive things, most are now lost, buried, or simply forgotten. Those that remain accounted for are still under the control of the Body of Five. Two Earth Gates link the Guild Master's villa with the Guild House Tower, and several more are stored under the Arena. These are often used in tournament events, but are always carefully hidden by a physical façade and powerful illusions.

For Earth Gates to function, there must be at least two active gates. At the time the thread is woven, the owner connects their gate to another gate. Prior to the Scourge, it was not uncommon for a series of gates to be daisy-chained, allowing individuals to teleport effortlessly across the city. The same owner does not need to activate each gate in a chain, but the owner can control who can travel to their gate by using command words. The gates do not appear to be affected by range, but tests



by the Body of Five found they become ineffective a short distance outside the city walls. Most gates are controlled by a command word, and the traveler must know the command word for a gate to use its link to travel.

Earth Gates are a circular ring of stone, primarily the white marble that makes up so much of Travar's architecture. The ring is usually set vertically in a stone base of similar materials. Earth Gates are usually ten feet in diameter, decorated with mosaics of abstract arcane symbols of semi-precious stone. When active, the space within the ring shimmers with a cloudy, white haze.

**Maximum Threads:** 1

**Mystic Defense:** 18

**Tier:** Master

### Thread Rank One

**Key Knowledge:** Each of the Earth

Gates are Named after the location they were originally intended for. The owner must learn the gate's Name.

**Effect:** The owner can link to another Earth Gate they are aware of, allowing travel to that gate. They can also set a command word (or phrase) to restrict travel on that link to those who know the command word. Command words are not a requirement; if no command word is set, anyone can freely travel to the gate.

The owner can add, remove, or change the command word as often as they wish, but it takes a Standard action. They may also change the destination of the link to another active gate by making a Thread Weaving (18) test. Both these actions require the owner to be within Thread Rank x 10 yards of the gate.

### Thread Rank Two

**Effect:** The owner can disable the gate, making it appear inactive to any linked gates. No one can travel to or from the gate, even if they know the command word allowing travel. While inactive, the gate cannot be set as a destination for other gates, or be the target of abilities, like the Rank 3 power, **Scrying Eyes**. The owner can reactivate the gate at will. Use of this power takes a Simple action, and the owner must be within Thread Rank x 10 yards of the gate.

**Thread Rank Three**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the gate's creator.

**Effect:** The owner gains access to the **Scrying Eyes** power, which allows them to use the Earth Gate as a looking glass, using any destination gate as an eye. This provides the user a bonus equal to the Thread Rank to any Perception tests made through the link, but they are otherwise limited to what is within sight of the destination gate; if it is in a dank cave or dusty cellar, there will not be much to see.

**Thread Rank Four**

**Effect:** The owner can establish a link with an additional Earth Gate, subject to the restrictions and limits described under Rank One. This link can have its own command word restricting travel.

**Thread Rank Five**

**Key Knowledge:** In addition to Travar's traditional white marble, each Earth Gate is constructed with a mosaic of polished stone from the Thunder Mountains. The thread weaver must learn the Name of the mine the material comes from.

**Effect:** The owner gains access to the **Surface Merge** power. On command, the gate merges with almost any surface (such as a floor, wall, large rock, etc.). The surface must be large enough to accommodate the size of the gate.

Detecting the Earth Gate when merged requires a Perception test against a Difficulty equal to the Earth Gate's Mystic Defense (18). The gate can still be used by anyone who knows where it is located. The owner can enter the gate without traveling and be concealed.

**Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** The owner can establish a link with an additional Earth Gate, as described under Rank Four.

**Thread Rank Seven**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Discipline of the gate's creator.

**Effect:** The owner gains access to the **Master Gate** ability. This allows the owner to travel to any gate in the extended network, without needing to travel each individual link. The weaver may also use **Scrying Eye** on any gate in the network, subject to the normal limits described under Rank Three. The user must still know the command word (if applicable) to the destination gate. Only the owner has access to these benefits.

**Thread Rank 8**

**Effect:** The owner can establish a link with an additional Earth Gate, as described under Rank Four.

## THE GIFT OF JASPREE

**L**ike the people of Barsaive, the Passions prepared for the coming Scourge. While Passions like Jaspre and Upandal understood Namegivers would need the Passions' help to rebuild the world, Rashomon (now the Mad Passion Raggok) knew first they must survive, believing the key to survival was the perseverance of the Namegiver spirit. If the Namegivers succumbed, the Passions themselves would not survive the Scourge.

Rashomon created twelve powerful talismans to help Namegivers weather the coming storm. From their most devoted followers, each Passion chose a champion to carry one of these precious items into their kaers. Collectively these items were known as The Twelve Gifts of Rashomon.

Some scholars speculate the talismans became corrupted when Rashomon was driven mad, leading to the kaers' destruction. Others believe Raggok's madness is the result of the kaers that held the gifts falling to the Horrors. Whatever the case, Raggok collected the items after Scourge and offers them to those following its twisted ideals.

K'ansanar, leader of the Order of the Crimson Sky (see p. 139), currently holds the Gift of Jaspre. It is a bracelet of knotted copper, interwoven with an unknown metal some believe originated from one of the netherworlds. As with all Raggok's Gifts, the item's original powers have become corrupted. Once a thread is woven, the bracelet grows or shrinks to fit the wearer's limb.

**Maximum Threads:** 1

**Mystic Defense:** 14 **Tier:** Warden

### Thread Rank One

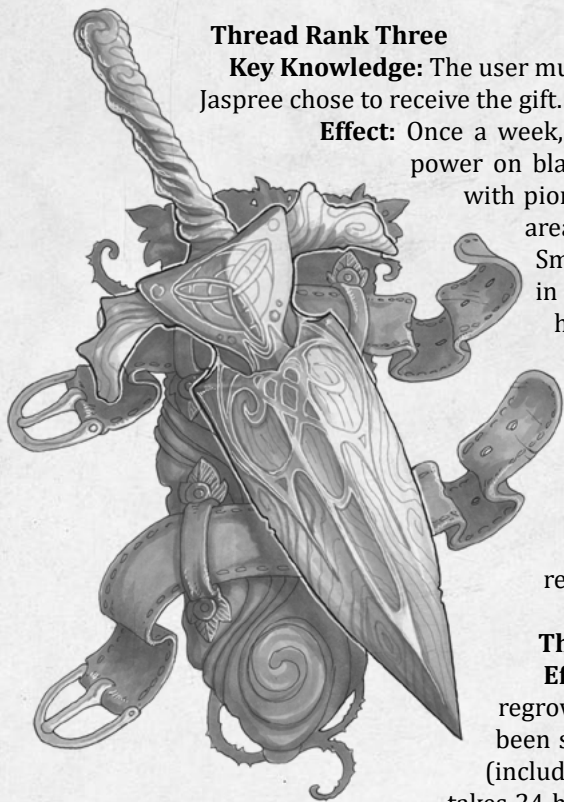
**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the item is the Gift of Jaspre.

**Effect:** This power once created a magical dome over tilled fields, keeping the air and soil warm to promote growth and extend the growing season. The item now creates an area of below freezing temperatures up to Thread Rank x 10 yards square, which lasts for 24 hours.

The weather will heavily damage, if not kill, fragile plants (especially food crops); only the hardiest plants endure. Surface water gradually freezes over and any rain instantly turns to snow or ice. Unprepared Namegivers can suffer the effects of exposure (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 194) if they spend extended time in the area without appropriate protection.

### Thread Rank Two

**Effect:** This power originally provided the ability to resist disease, but Raggok's corruption has twisted this to infect instead. This power may be used a number of times per day equal to the Thread Rank for 3 Strain. By touching the victim's exposed flesh, the owner inflicts a fast-acting wasting disease. The disease is debilitating, has a Step equal to the owner's Willpower+Thread Rank, an interval of 4/48 hours, and duration of 2 weeks (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 186 for more on disease).



### Thread Rank Three

**Key Knowledge:** The user must learn the Name of the individual Jaspree chose to receive the gift.

**Effect:** Once a week, the owner can use the bracelet's power on blasted or barren land to colonize it with pioneering plant species. The affected area is Thread Rank x 10 square yards. Small flowers and shrubs appear in just a few minutes and over 24 hours, larger scrub plants become established.

Raggok's curse manifests during the full moon. The plants become sickly, grow unusually wicked thorns, and become poisonous if consumed. This effect is permanent; the plants do not revert to normal after the change.

### Thread Rank Four

**Effect:** Once a month, the wearer can regrow any limb, wings, or tail that has been severed or damaged beyond repair (including effects like Wither Limb). This takes 24 hours, and the subject must first be

fully healed of all damage and Wounds, other than Wounds directly associated with the affected limb.

Raggok's corruption has led to a major curse associated with limbs restored by this power. Each month, during the full moon, the limb shrivels and takes on a skeletal, wasted appearance, driving the recipient mad with pain. The recipient must make a successful Willpower (14) test, or they suffer from a craving for Namegiver blood. Once they have consumed enough blood (enough to kill the average Namegiver), the limb returns to normal and the pain fades. On a successful Willpower test, the blood craving is resisted, but the recipient receives a -3 penalty to their actions for the duration of the full moon, which lasts three days. The owner of the Gift of Jaspree is unaffected by the curse.

### Thread Rank Five

**Key Knowledge:** The user must discover the location of the kaer the gift was originally intended for.

**Effect:** This rank originally allowed the user to summon spirits to help care for the land, but the spirits are now corrupted. As a Sustained action taking three rounds, the owner takes 3 Strain and makes a Perception+Thread Rank (10) test to summon a Strength Rating 3 wood spirit (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 400 for information on wood spirits).

Add the spirit's Strength Rating to its Physical Attribute Steps (increasing Attack and Damage as well). Instead of its normal powers, the spirit can inject its victim with damaging poison of Step 6, and an interval of Thread Rank/1 round.

### Thread Rank Six

**Deed:** The bearer must get revenge on an individual with some degree of authority over them. The nature of the revenge should at least be in line with the individual's original offense or action, as perceived by the owner.

**Effect:** The bearer may animate the dead as per the Animate Dead Horror Power (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 458). The user's Animate Dead Step is their Willpower+Thread Rank, with the Thread Rank as the maximum number of cadaver men they can control.

## DAGGER OF THE THORNED VINE

**T**he Dagger of the Thorned Vine is a wooden blade crafted from Oak Heart, the mighty tree in the center of Blood Wood, and its sheath, a bracer made of sharp thorny vines. It is a normal dagger without any threads attached.

**Maximum Threads:** 1

**Mystic Defense:** 14 **Tier:** Journeyman

### Thread Rank One

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the dagger.

**Effect:** When a thread is attached, the bracer's thorns pierce the skin, attaching to the owner and causing 1 Blood Magic Damage. Once attached, a blood elf owner can withdraw their thorns beneath their skin, causing them to appear as a normal elf.

### Thread Rank Two

**Effect:** The owner adds +1 to their Social Defense.

### Thread Rank Three

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the dagger's creator.

**Effect:** The owner gains +1 to their Mystic Defense.

### Thread Rank Four

**Effect:** The owner gains +1 to Interaction tests.

### Thread Rank Five

**Deed:** The owner must be granted permission by the ruler of Blood Wood to visit Oak Heart and incorporate a portion of it into the blade or bracer. There is always a cost associated with this permission.

**Effect:** For 2 Strain, the owner blends seamlessly into a crowd, increasing the difficulty to detect them by the thread rank. This effect ceases to function if the owner performs any actions that draw attention.

**Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** For 2 Strain, the bracer exudes the pain felt by all connected to Blood Wood, granting a +2 bonus to any test causing fear or Intimidation. Blood elves with their thorns displayed gain a +3 bonus instead.

**THE EDGE OF TRAVAR**

The Edge of Travar is the creation of Brand Flamefounder, a legendary Weaponsmith from before the Scourge. The broadsword's blade is etched with stylized patterns, giving the impression of roaring winds. Stylized waves make-up the guard, and each side of the hilt is inset with an elongated oval of the white marble used in Travar's construction. The pommel is set with an orange fire opal.

Brand started work on the blade after many of his companions were killed by a Horror. The Nethermancer Grexian Redrock helped by negotiating the assistance of a powerful spirit. Unfortunately, the Horror had been subtly twisting the threads woven by the Weaponsmith; instead of binding the spirit, Grexian's pattern was bound to the sword. At the end of the ritual, Grexian's lifeless body fell to the ground and the Horror manifested, taunting Brand on yet another failure.

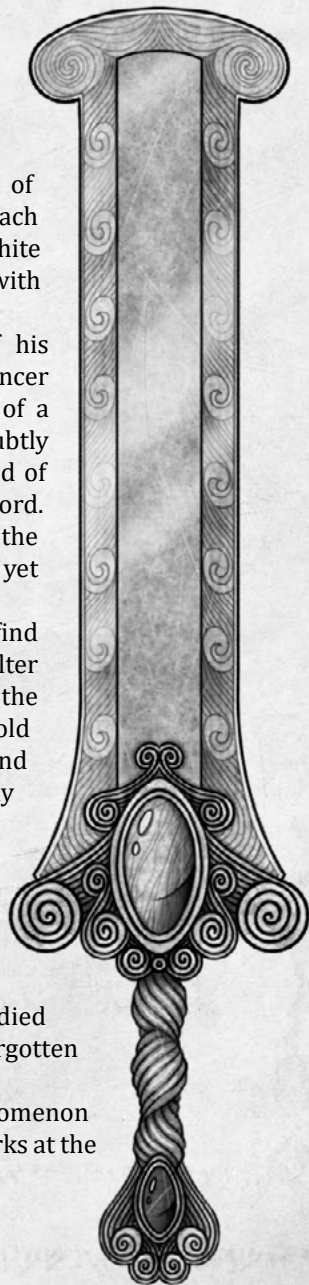
After Brand's disappearance, Grexian awoke to find himself alone in the wilderness, and managed to find shelter in a small kaer near the Thunder Mountains just before the Scourge. As the years passed and he didn't succumb to old age, Grexian came to believe his life was somehow bound to the blade. The truth is more complex: Grexian is an ally spirit and part of the sword, divided from its pattern by the Horror's magic.

Gyrexian rightfully believes his fate is tied to the sword, though not for the reasons he believes. He has no idea where the Edge of Travar currently is, and Brand's fate is unknown. He may have found shelter in a kaer, but thus far no record has turned up. It is likely he died in pursuit of the Horror, and the Edge of Travar lies forgotten with his body in the wilderness.

As for the Horror, some believe it behind the phenomenon known as Enemy at the Gates, while others speculate it lurks at the heart of the Badlands, fueling their growth.

**Maximum Threads:** 2

**Mystic Defense:** 16 **Tier:** Master



**Thread Rank One**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the sword.

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 6.

**Thread Rank Two**

**Effect:** The owner may store a number of Karma points in the sword up to their thread rank. The owner may freely transfer Karma between their normal Karma pool and the sword as a Standard action and may spend Karma from the sword as if it were in their Karma pool.

**Thread Rank Three**

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn Brand Flamefounder crafted the sword.

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 7.

**Thread Rank Four**

**Effect:** The owner may spend 1 additional Karma point on any test on which they can normally use Karma. This Karma point must come from those stored in the sword.

**Thread Rank Five**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the blade was forged at Bell's Crag.

**Effect:** The owner can use the **Edge of Travar** ability as a Simple action for 2 Strain. The orichalcum veins glow and wind up the blade, appearing as though blown by roaring winds. Additional successes from close combat Attack tests do +1 damage per success (typically a total of +3) until the end of the round.

**Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** The owner can use the **Frostfire** ability as a Simple action for 2 Strain. A cold blue flame flows along the blade until the end of the round. During this time, each additional success on Attack tests with the sword used to increase damage reduces the target's Physical Defense by 1 until the end of the next round. These are not cumulative, only the largest penalty applies.

**Thread Rank Seven**

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the spirit bound to the blade is Grexian Redrock.

**Deed:** The owner must return and bind the spirit to the blade, undoing the Horror's magic.

**Effect:** The owner can use the **Spirit Ally** power as a Free action for 3 Strain. The spirit grants the owner otherworldly Perception for thread rank rounds. During this time, the owner cannot be Blinded, Blindsided, and ignores the first instance of being Harried.

In addition, Horrors and Horror constructs cannot surprise the owner. Spirit Ally does not need to be active for this effect.

### Thread Rank Eight

**Effect:** The spirit within the blade seethes at what has been wrought, protecting the owner against Horrors and their powers. The owner gains +2 to Mystic and Social Defense against Horrors and Horror constructs. If the **Edge of Travar** power is active, successful attacks against Horrors and Horror constructs always inflict an additional Wound. The attack must deal at least one point of damage (after armor) for this additional effect.

### Thread Rank Nine

**Key Knowledge:** The owner must learn the Name of the Horror that killed Brand's companions.

**Effect:** The spirit within the blade now seeks revenge against Horrors and Horror constructs. The owner gains +2 to Attack and Damage tests against Horrors and Horror constructs. If the **Frostfire** ability is active, the penalty is also applied to Horror or construct's Mystic and Social Defense.

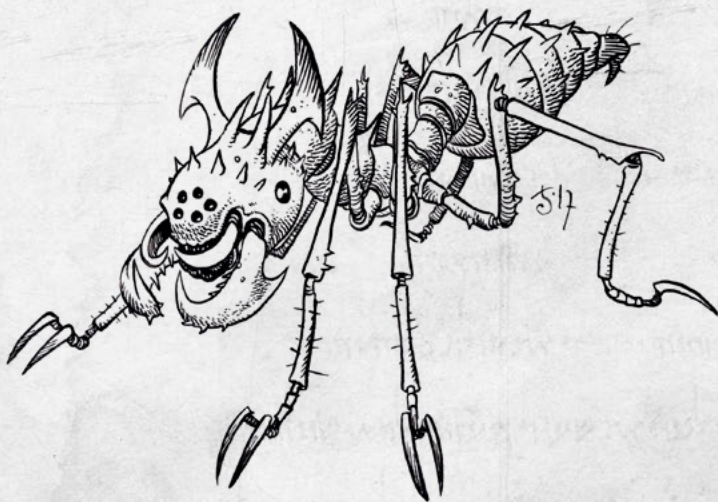
### Thread Rank Ten

**Effect:** The sword is Damage Step 8. If the **Edge of Travar** and **Frostfire** abilities are both active, armor does not protect Horrors or Horror constructs from damage caused by the sword.

## CREATURES

*An entire tome could be written on the twisted and terrible denizens of the Badlands, and even that would fall short of describing the sheer variety of malign, corrupt life that dwells there. Of the myriad known Horrors, Horror constructs, and hideously corrupted creatures, only those that directly affect Travar are given mention. Creatures unique and beautiful can be found in the rivers, mountains, and verdant valleys surrounding Travar. Explorers would be wise to give these a wide berth where possible, for many are as dangerous as those lurking in the Badlands.*

— Barallas Grimjaw, Expeditionary Scout



## Ant, Red

The origins of these creatures remain uncertain, but some scholars suggest they are born from the corruption of the Badlands. Others believe they are Horror constructs, and yet others think the species is nothing more than a giant cousin of Barsaive's common ants.

Red ants range in size from 8 to 12 inches long and their bites deliver a powerful poison that eventually immobilizes the victim.

**Challenge:** Novice (First Circle)

**DEX:** 6      **Initiative:** 6

**Unconsciousness:** 11

**STR:** 3      **Physical Defense:** 9

**Death Rating:** 13

**TOU:** 2      **Mystic Defense:** 8

**Wound Threshold:** 3

**PER:** 4      **Social Defense:** 9

**Knockdown:** 9

**WIL:** 6      **Physical Armor:** 5

**Recovery Tests:** 1

**CHA:** 4      **Mystic Armor:** 2

**Movement:** 8

**Actions:** 1; Bite: 8 (6)

**Powers:**

*Poison (7):* If the red ant's bite causes damage, the victim must resist debilitating poison ( *Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 171). The poison is Step 7 [Onset: 1 min, Interval: 5/1 min, Duration: 15 min].

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Defang (Opponent)*

## Chaos Hounds

The chaos hound earned its name from the chaos and panic caused when these Horror constructs first assaulted Travar's walls. Tales from that time describe them having an intense hatred of bright lights. Reflective objects, whether the tiniest baubles or large reflective surfaces, would draw their ire. Some believe this explains why they attacked Travar's walls with such fury, and why they are rarely encountered outside the Badlands, where the sun and stars seldom break through the haze obscuring the sky. On the rare occasion the moon or stars can be seen, the hounds' bestial, ear-splitting cries can be heard echoing across the Badlands.

These normally solitary creatures claim broad territory and spend considerable time digging deep, complex lairs, preferring raised rocky outcrops where they can watch their territory for signs of intrusion. As dangerous as they are individually, they become a real threat when, for reasons unknown, they form large packs and lay waste to whole swathes of land before returning to their individual territories.

Physically powerful, these constructs resemble earless hunting dogs the size of a large bear. Their hide is made from a thin, black membrane with a metallic sheen that writhes as if some multi-limbed creature within seeks to escape. With oversized paws sporting wicked serrated claws, the chaos hound is a formidable foe in combat. Its claws are just as adept at climbing and rending rock as they are rending flesh. The creature's thickset jaw is filled with long teeth that grind together creating a hideous

squeal that can set any Namegivers' nerves on edge.

Beyond their physical prowess, however, chaos hounds pose another danger. Their presence can warp astral space, making casting go awry. Magicians have been known to have spells intended for the construct to affect them instead.

Like some other Horror constructs, chaos hounds feed on the suffering and negative emotions they inspire in Namegivers. Chaos hounds torment their prey by marking them, then patiently stalking them. The hunt can extend over the course of weeks, months, or even years. The creature starts providing subtle clues to the victim something is wrong, or some danger lurks close by. Gradually, the chaos hound makes its nature and intentions known, even going as far as killing its victim's companions to further isolate its prey. Once the victim has reached a suitable state of distress, the creature reveals itself to close in for the kill.

**Challenge:** Journeyman (Sixth Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 8	<b>Initiative:</b> 10	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 66
<b>STR:</b> 9	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 14	<b>Death Rating:</b> 80
<b>TOU:</b> 8	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 13	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 12
<b>PER:</b> 7	<b>Social Defense:</b> 12	<b>Knockdown:</b> 11
<b>WIL:</b> 6	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 7	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 3
<b>CHA:</b> 7	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 4	<b>Karma:</b> 6 (24)

**Movement:** 14

**Actions:** 2; Claw: 16 (17), Bite: 14 (19)

**Powers:**

*Awareness (13)*

*Ambush (10)*

*Climbing (15)*

*Cursed Luck (12)*

*Great Leap (14)*

*Fury (2):* Only applies when the chaos hound is running in a pack (see Summon Pack, below), or affected by Enrage or Provoke.

*Harvest Energy (12):* If a character is suffering from fear or paranoia, the chaos hound can make a Harvest Energy test against the victim's Social Defense. Each success restores one point of Karma.

*Horror Mark (12):* The chaos hound's creating Horror can mark victims through the hound, using the listed Step. The chaos hound gains a +2 bonus to Stealthy Stride tests and automatically succeeds on Tracking tests against the victim.

*Spell Backlash (9):* This power allows the chaos hound to warp astral space, redirecting spells back at the caster. If the chaos hound is targeted with a spell and the Spellcasting test does not exceed the Spell Backlash Step, the spellcaster is affected by the spell as if successfully cast against them with one success. Multiple instances of Spell Backlash cannot affect the caster from the same Spellcasting test, for example, an area effect spell cast against a group of chaos hounds.

*Stealthy Stride (14)*

*Summon Pack (Standard):* A chaos hound can attempt to form a pack. It makes a

growling, high-pitched cry that carries for 10 miles, summoning all chaos hounds to form a pack.

*Tracking (13)*

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Enrage (Opponent):* May only be used if the opponent has a shiny weapon.

*Muzzle (Opponent):* An opponent may spend an additional success from an Attack test to prevent the chaos hound from using Summon Pack until the end of the next round. If this attack causes a Wound, Summon Pack may not be used until the Wound is healed.

*Pounce (Chaos Hound)*

*Provoke (Opponent):* May only be used if the opponent has a shiny weapon.

## Demonshrew

Demonshrews are large, mouse-like creatures that reach about a foot in length when fully grown. They have deep red, unblinking eyes, dark gray fur, and reside primarily in the Badlands where they dig burrows to escape the heat. These burrows hold small family groups from which they venture out at night to feed on the blood of other creatures.



They are patient, stealthy predators who use their sense of smell to find their prey. Demonshrews wait until their victims fall asleep, then bite them and inject their venom. Once affected, the venom causes bleeding wounds that allow the demonshrew to track their prey until they succumb to blood loss.

Demonshrews are suitable as animal companions.

**Challenge:** Novice (First Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 8	<b>Initiative:</b> 10	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 14
<b>STR:</b> 3	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 12	<b>Death Rating:</b> 17
<b>TOU:</b> 3	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 10	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 4
<b>PER:</b> 8	<b>Social Defense:</b> 7	<b>Knockdown:</b> 5
<b>WIL:</b> 3	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 0	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 1
<b>CHA:</b> 5	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 2	

**Movement:** 18

**Actions:** 1; Bite: 10 (5)

**Powers:**

*Enhanced Sense [Smell] (4)*

*Poison (8):* If the demonshrew's bite causes damage, the victim must resist deadly debilitating poison (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 171). The poison is Step 8 [Onset: 1 hour, Interval: 10/1 hour, Duration: 24 hours].

*Stealthy Stride (9)*

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Defang (Opponent)*

## Dragonetta

Native to the Dragon Mountains, dragonetta can grow large enough to bring down prey of almost any size. Fortunately, scarce food in the Dragon Mountains naturally limits their size. Dragonetta hatchlings, however, might be more dangerous to unsuspecting Namegivers than adults.

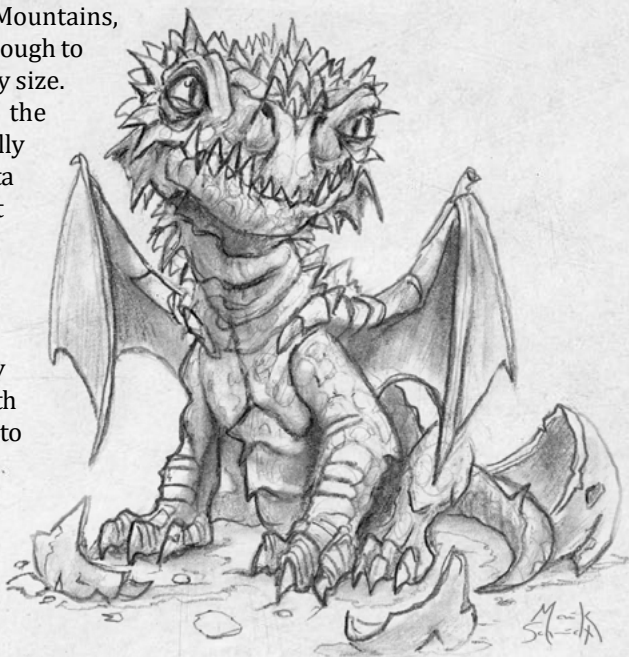
Dragonetta eggs are laid in a soft nest surrounded by jagged rocks and covered with loose debris. When ready to hatch, the mother removes the debris, exposing them, and abandons the nest. The eggs, flecked with small amounts of gold, reflect sunlight and attract predators to the nest site.

A few minutes after exposure the hatchlings wake up and wait for their meal to come to them.

The shells of the eggs are tough and much larger than the hatchling inside. When it senses strong movement, such as a predator attempting to break the shell, the hatchling causes the egg to jump—sometimes as high as three feet—before shattering on the sharp rocks near the nest. Once free of the shell, the hatchling attacks whatever disturbed the nest, whatever it might be.

The dragonetta gains its name from the dragon-like features it is born with. These features fade as it becomes an adult and can properly protect itself. Hatchlings have functional wings and, while they cannot fly more than a few yards, the wings allow the creature to leap great distances, and safely drop from great heights. From the moment a hatchling leaves the egg, it can breathe fire; an ability many Namegivers discover when attempting to steal eggs from the nest.

After its first year or so, the dragonetta's wings slowly shrivel and drop off, shortly followed by its ability to breathe fire. Its features resembling more of a common lizard, even if it is a large predatory one, rather than a dragon.



Dragonetta are suitable as animal companions. The game statistics provided here are for a hatchling.

**Challenge:** Novice (Second Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>Initiative:</b> 8	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 28
<b>STR:</b> 8	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 9	<b>Death Rating:</b> 34
<b>TOU:</b> 6	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 8	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 9
<b>PER:</b> 6	<b>Social Defense:</b> 7	<b>Knockdown:</b> 10
<b>WIL:</b> 7	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 4	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 5	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 3	

**Movement:** 12

**Actions:** 2; Claws: 9 (10), Bite: 8 (11)

**Powers:**

*Creature Power (9)*

*Fire Breath (10):* The dragonetta hatchling can breathe fire on a single target within 10 yards. It makes a Creature Power test against the target's Mystic Defense. If successful, this inflicts physical damage equal to the result of a Fire Breath test (+2 per additional success on the Creature Power test).

*Great Leap (9)*

*Willful (2)*

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Clip the Wing (Opponent):* Since the dragonetta hatchling cannot fly, use of this option reduces its Great Leap rating by 6.

*Douse the Flame (Opponent):* An opponent may spend two additional successes from an Attack test to prevent the dragonetta hatchling from using its Fire Breath until the end of the next round. If the damage causes a Wound, the ability cannot be used until the Wound is healed.

*Pounce (Dragonetta)*

## Pencarrig

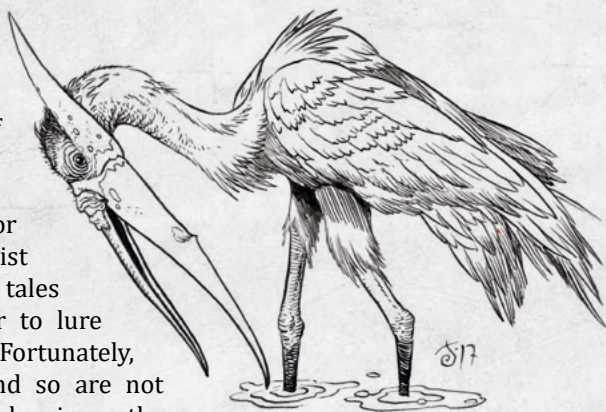
Before the Scourge, Barsaive's marshes and waterways were inhabited by a variety of water birds, including pencarrigs. Their long legs and splayed feet gave them excellent mobility over uncertain ground, while their sharp eyes and long, pointed bill made them effective predators of frogs, fish, and occasional lizards. They would spear their victims with their bill, then toss the prey into the air, catching the falling meal in their beak.

After the Scourge, the birds are still present, but changed. Pencarrigs have been tainted by Horrors, possibly deliberately. Their anatomy remains more-or-less the same, but their plumage, formerly a brilliant white tinged with blue at the edges of the wings and tail, is now dusky gray and the highlights are the reddish-brown of dried blood.

Their feeding habits have also changed. While they still hunt amphibians and fish, pencarrigs now hunt larger game. They hide in the dense marsh grass and make a sound like an anguished moan. The sound plucks at the heartstrings, urging the listener to assist the injured person. Pencarrigs use the moaning to lure people into marshy

ground, where they become trapped, and the birds feed on them. Pencarrigs attack by striking for the eyes and throat with a beak capable of stabbing through a frog in one stroke.

Only those of strong will, or with magical protection, can resist the moaning cries. There are tales of the birds working together to lure groups to their watery graves. Fortunately, pencarrigs do not migrate, and so are not found outside their native marshes in southern Barsaive.



Pencarrigs are suitable as animal companions.

**Challenge:** Journeyman (Fifth Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 7	<b>Initiative:</b> 9	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 40
<b>STR:</b> 5	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 14	<b>Death Rating:</b> 45
<b>TOU:</b> 5	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 15	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 7
<b>PER:</b> 6	<b>Social Defense:</b> 13	<b>Knockdown:</b> 5
<b>WIL:</b> 6	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 2	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 7	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 6	

**Movement:** 4 (Flying 18)

**Actions:** 1; Beak: 18 (13)

**Powers:**

*Ambush (10)*

*Enhanced Sense [Hearing] (2)*

*Enhanced Sense [Sight] (2)*

*Entrancement (12):* The pencarrig's cries can be heard up to 40 yards away. Each additional pencarrig in a flock using Entrancement adds +1 to the Step. The lead pencarrig makes an Entrancement test against the target's Social Defense. If successful, the target moves toward the lead pencarrig, regardless of any nearby dangers. Each round, the target may make a Willpower test against the Entrancement test result. If successful, they are no longer entranced and gain a +5 bonus to Social Defense for the rest of the day when targeted by Entrancement, as well as Willpower tests to resist the power.

*Precise Strike:* The pencarrig inflicts an additional point of damage for each additional success on an Attack test (typically +3 instead of +2).

*Stealthy Stride (15):* As the skill, *Player's Guide*, p. 170.

*Willful (1)*

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Clip the Wing (Opponent)*



### Pumpkin Patch Horror

Found throughout the Borderlands, these Horrors feed on the flesh, blood, and pain of the unwary. To the untrained eye, it looks like a patch of ripe pumpkins, or similar gourds, complete with creeping tendrils and leaves beginning to wilt. It is rumored pumpkin patch Horrors are responsible for leeching nutrients from the soil, which may help spread the Badlands' corruption.

These Horrors are often in league with foul folk, willing to share power with those willing to help lure victims into their patch. They often allow their fruit to be harvested and taken to the home of some unsuspecting villager. Too many villages have woken up to discover a family missing from their blood splattered home, but fail to notice the pumpkin patch that grew in the garden overnight.

It usually waits until its prey is within the patch before revealing its true nature. As it attacks, the skin of each pumpkin peels back as if flayed to reveal wild, hate filled eyes and a maw filled with row upon row of long, razor sharp teeth. These pumpkin-sized maws rise on the vines connecting them and attack from all directions.

When the Horror kills, its tendrils grow outward as its victim's blood soaks into the ground. Items not digestible are buried beneath the ground, hiding evidence of the truth, but sometimes the Horror will use a shiny bauble or coin to lure victims into its patch.

The game statistics provided here are for a typical example of the Horror, covering about two square yards and having 4 pumpkins. Larger variants have been found covering more area and having more pumpkins.

**Challenge:** Novice (Second Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 7	<b>Initiative:</b> 9	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> NA
<b>STR:</b> 6	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 9	<b>Death Rating:</b> 36
<b>TOU:</b> 5	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 9	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 7
<b>PER:</b> 7	<b>Social Defense:</b> 7	<b>Knockdown:</b> NA
<b>WIL:</b> 6	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 3	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 6	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 2	<b>Karma:</b> 4 (16)

**Movement:** 0 (see below)

**Actions:** 2; Bite: 10 (8)

**Powers:**

*Awareness* (9): The Horror can sense the approach of potential victims through vibrations through the ground.

*Ambush* (5)

*Dead Fall* (8)

*Drop the Tainted Fruit* (Standard): The Horror can willingly drop one of its pumpkins. This reduces the number of Actions the Horror has by one. The fallen pumpkin uses vines as legs, gaining Movement 14. It will flee the area to sprout a new patch anywhere but here. The head has Death Rating 12 and Physical Defense 11, but otherwise has the same game statistics, including sharing its Karma pool.

*Enhanced Sense* [Touch] (2): Tremorsense

*Harvest Energy* (10, Free): If the Horror inflicts a Wound on the target, it gains an additional point of Karma.

*Horror Mark* (10)

*Karma Boost*

*Silent Walk* (9)

*Tendrill Drag* (10, Standard): The Horror makes a Tendrill Drag test against a target up to 10 yards away. If successful, the target is entangled (see Entangling Weapons, Player's Guide p. 391) with a DN of 8, and the Horror tries to drag them into the patch. Each round (including this one), the Horror makes a Strength test against the target's Strength Step, and drags them 2 yards per success.

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Sever the Head* (Opponent): An attacker can spend two additional successes from an Attack test to sever one of the pumpkin heads from the Horror. This frees the head as indicated under the Drop the Tainted Fruit power.

## Wing Rats

Prior to the Scourge, Travar was famous for its large flocks of street pigeons, which would alight daily in the city's squares and parks. Loved by most, the birds were tame and street vendors made money selling cups of seed to feed them. On the other hand, the rich and wealthy living in Travar's towers considered the birds nothing more than a nuisance, responsible for fouling the ledges where they roosted at night.

The Rites of Protection and Passage considered public health, and not long before the erection of Travar's Glimmer Dome, those that hated Travar's street pigeons pointed out Theran texts considered them vermin and had the animals driven out.



Ironically, the Scourge corrupted the pigeons into the very things they were said to be: rats with wings. Wing rats are a twisted cross of pigeon and rat, found in flocks of twenty or more. They resemble a pigeon covered in a mix of tatty feathers and fur, with a beak better suited to tearing flesh than pecking seed. Many have a vestigial pair of rodent-like arms protruding from their breast, and most sport a foot-long rodent tail.

Soon after Travar opened, the first flocks of wing rats arrived. Some believe it brought rightful shame on the city that treated the creatures with undeserved disdain. The first few attempts to remove them proved disastrous. It was soon discovered, while disturbing, they were mostly harmless if left alone.

Despite their obvious corruption, wing rats only attack if provoked, and even then, tend to swarm the target or flee, rather than attack. Flocks found in the Badlands are more aggressive. Some questors of Jaspree believe the reduced aggression of local flocks as a sign the Badlands' corruption is not absolute.

**Challenge:** Novice (First Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 7	<b>Initiative:</b> 9	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 17
<b>STR:</b> 2	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 12	<b>Death Rating:</b> 21
<b>TOU:</b> 4	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 4	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 6
<b>PER:</b> 3	<b>Social Defense:</b> 4	<b>Knockdown:</b> 2
<b>WIL:</b> 3	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 0	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 1
<b>CHA:</b> 3	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 1	
<b>Movement:</b> 2 (Flying 16)		
<b>Actions:</b> 1; Bite: 8 (5)		

**Powers:**

*Swarm* (Standard): A group of ten wing rats can swarm an individual, causing Step 10 Damage each round with no Attack test required.

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Clip the Wing* (Opponent)

**Withered**

The withered are emaciated Namegivers reduced to a bestial existence. Their degenerate forms were altered so they are no longer capable of walking upright or using tools, but rather crawl close to the ground, like lizards. Their skin is dry and leathery, their eyes black, and their mouths are filled with sharp fangs. They no longer understand any form of language, but are social and hunt in packs.

The tale of their creation is a tragedy that underscores the cursed nature of the Badlands. They were inadvertently created by a magical ritual performed during the Scourge. Due to last minute refugees, poor preparation, and the increased challenges of isolation, the citadel of Gavorton found it could not support their population after it was sealed. Once their supplies ran out, famine was rampant. After exhausting all other options, and fearing rioting, the elders designed a ritual to alter the physiology of their subjects to subsist on less and be resistant to hunger.

The ritual worked, but there were side effects. One fifth of the affected populace degenerated into the form of the withered, and the pain drove them mad, causing them to attack anyone nearby, including friends and loved ones. Weakened from months of hunger and unwilling to attack these creatures who were once family and neighbors, the remaining residents soon came to a painful end. The withered spent

decades feasting on the carrion of their families and the small groups of survivors hiding within the citadel, until the dome fell from lack of maintenance.

The withered now roam the Badlands in packs of up to 20. They are not territorial, but are protective of their own kind, in addition to being very aggressive when hungry. Fortunately, due to the ritual, a single meal may appease their hunger for a week or more. However, once hunger pangs start, the pack aggressively hunt to satiate the group.

**Challenge:** Novice (Third Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>Initiative:</b> 7	<b>Unconsciousness:</b> 33
<b>STR:</b> 6	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 11	<b>Death Rating:</b> 39
<b>TOU:</b> 6	<b>Mystic Defense:</b> 9	<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 9
<b>PER:</b> 5	<b>Social Defense:</b> 8	<b>Knockdown:</b> 10
<b>WIL:</b> 5	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 0	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 3	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 3	

**Movement:** 14

**Actions:** 2; Bite: 13 (13)

**Powers:**

*Ambush (5)*

*Awareness (10):* As the skill, *Player's Guide*, p. 129.

*Fury (2)*

*Great Leap (6)*

*Stealthy Stride (12):* As the skill, *Player's Guide*, p. 171.

*Teamwork:* Opponents are Harried by one less opponent if at least one other attacker has this power.

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Enrage (Opponent)*

*Hamstring (Withered)*

*Pounce (Withered)*

*Provoke (Opponent, Close Combat)*



# GAMESMASTER CHARACTER INDEX

Name	Page and Chapter	Description
Adze Xagal	P. 110, Trading Houses	Thin, aging dwarf. Angry and cantakerous.
Alainyn	P. 134, Secret Societies	Tall, square-jawed, resurrected elf. Hedonistic and nervous. Warrior.
Alderac Windspear	P. 63, Organizations	Tall, blond human. Egotistical and flamboyant. Current Magistrate. Swordmaster.
Artacus Carbh	P. 71, Organizations	Pale and scruffy human. Manic and excitable. Member of the Body of Five. Wizard and Warrior.
Auldwind Shadowsinger	P. 73, Organizations	Middle-aged ork. Ambitious. Appearance enhanced by illusions. Member of the Body of Five. Illusionist.
Bahl Ghorn	P. 100, Trading Houses	Young, dark-haired troll. Horns curve around and obscure his face. Head of House Achura.
Bazana Gems-Dripping	P. 163, Foreign Relations	Driven, seductive ork. Travar's delegate to Throal.
Blackcairn Dumorjen	P. 118, Trading Houses	Portly, blond dwarf. Open hearted and eccentric. Head of the Ironcairn faction of House Dumorjen.
Breht	P. 121, Trading Houses	Short, portly human. Enthusiastic. Heir to House Halla. Questor of Chorrolis.
Cassius	P. 121, Trading Houses	Tall, hawk-featured human. Driven and showy. Heir to House Halla. Swordmaster.

Name	Page and Chapter	Description
Crixin Broal	P. 193, Sights	Quiet, devoted elf. Head of Garlen's Sanctum and questor of Garlen.
Cyanna Earthweaver	P. 145, Secret Societies	Young, blonde dwarf. Inexperienced but practical. Leader of the Var'eidyllon Tara'var. Elementalists.
Denilor Ni'hlagh	P. 150, Foreign Relations	Young, golden haired blood elf. Artistic. Public emissary of Blood Wood.
Elemon Matos	P. 106, Trading Houses	Bookish human. Quartermaster for house Avara.
Emicia Volbrang	P. 146, Secret Societies	Small, brown-haired human. Founder of the Slashers.
Essalar Crazyblade	P. 159, Foreign Relations	Yellow and green skinned t'skrang. Veteran and drunkard. K'tenshin delegate. Warrior.
Everwind Matos	P. 102, Trading Houses	Tall, balck-haired elf. Arrogant and cunning. Head of Matos family. Illusionist.
Fireforge Dumorjen	P. 114, Trading Houses	Stooped, elderly dwaf. Head of the Firecainr faction of House Dumorjen.
Freeman Run	P. 159, Foreign Relations	Muscular human and former slave. Organized and direct. Travar's delegate to House K'tenshin.
Gaius Silar	P. 120, Trading Houses	Aging, bald human. Adventurous. Head of House Halla. Swordmaster.
Galdius Nightshade	P. 146, Secret Socieites	Silver eyed, ebony skinned elf. Solitary but helpful. Thief.
Gardius Drimsby	P. 80, Organizations	Aging, immaculate dwarf. Frustrated and driven. Commander of the Air Marshals. Air Sailor.

Name	Page and Chapter	Description
Greixian Redrock	P. 65, Organizations	Older, weathered human. Self-serving. Current Magistrate. Secretly an ally spirit.
Grogel Ilsyn	P. 107, Trading Houses	Small, tempermental windling. Head of Ilsyn family. Nethermancer.
Hawk Greatgust	P. 154, Foregin Relations	Short, scarred elf. Rough and straghtforward. Captain of the Crimson Vintage and delegate from Jerris.
Ilsynar Songsteel	P. 200, Outside	Ebony-skinned, overweight dwarf. Welcoming and friendly. Counselor of Tent City. Weaponsmith.
Imirisal Vemmarren	P. 134, Secret Societies	Old, wild-haired elf. Losing his grip on sanity. Leader of Naaman's Hand. Nethermancer and Wizard.
Iroldak Darklore	P. 74, Organizations	Lean, sharp-featured human. Greedy and indulgent. Member of the Body of Five. Nethermancer.
Irros Denairastas	P. 152, Foreign Relations	Average, brown haired human. Agent of Iopos. Murderous and deceptive. Thief and Illusionist.
Jil'fe	P. 150, Foreign Relations	Tanned, brown-haired elf. Devoted agent of Blood Wood.
Juliack Merris	P. 126, Trading Houses	Ancient, weather-worn obsidiman. Curious and scholarly. Warrior, Elementalst, and Wizard.
K'ansanar	P. 141, Secret Societies	Large, blue-skinned t'skrang. Brutal and vengeful. Founder of the Crimson Sky. Warrior and questor of Raggok.
Kavos Jul	P. 164, Foreign Relations	Stooped, portly human. Scholarly. Ambassador from Urupa.

Name	Page and Chapter	Description
Kona	P. 205, Outside	Short, stocky human. Abrasive. Skilled alchemist known as the River Witch.
Krion Avara	P. 105, Trading Houses	Middle-aged, grey haired human. Cautious and conciliatory. Head of Avara family. Warrior.
Kyrytus Galewitch	P. 160, Foreign Relations	Tall, dark-skinned elf. Former Theran officer turned pirate. Captain of the Defiant. Air Sailor.
Kysis Matos	P. 104, Trading Houses	Short, ruddy-faced elf. Impetuous and direct.
Malindria Matos	P. 103, Trading Houses	Slim, long-haired elf. Carefree and vulgar. Air Sailor.
Morakki Ilsyn	P. 108, Trading Houses	Scarred windling. Former head of Ilsyn family and current Spymaster. Thief.
Niss Reeves	P. 67, Organizations	Immaculate, middle-aged troll. Outgoing. Former magistrate. Weaponsmith.
Nurnborg	P. 162, Foreign Relations	Middle-aged dwarf. Flamboyant and verbose. Ambassador from Throal.
Nymia Eldernight	P. 72, Organizations	Tall, red haired human. Reclusive and scholarly. Member of the Body of Five. Elementalist.
Oman Odestrus	P. 70, Organizations	Shoulder length greying hair. Dresses in "adventurer" fashions. Leader of the Body of Five. Wizard.
Omasu	P. 129, Trading Houses	Blue-grey skinned obsidiman. Stoic merchant prince. Troubadour.
Purity Storm	P. 203, Outside	Tall, militaristic elf. Dedicated and direct. Head of local Grim Legion chapter. Cavalryman.
Pyrite Xagal	P. 109, Trading Houses	Lean, balding dwarf. Head of the Xagal family. Weaponsmith.

Name	Page and Chapter	Description
Raahl Ghorn	P. 101, Trading Houses	Tall, red-haired troll. Imposing. Warrior.
Ranose Cutan	P. 157, Foreign Relations	Youthful, hard-edged dwarf. Agent of Kratas. Thief.
Rook	P. 209, Outside	Flint-eyed human. Ruthless slaver. Leader of Rook's Renegades. Thief and Archer.
Rupert Rostan	P. 76, Organizations	Portly, patient human. Clerk for the Body of Five. Wizard.
Sensha Ghorn	P. 101, Trading Houses	Practical, red-haired troll. Trade envoy for House Achura. Archer.
Skycairn Dumorjen	P. 114, Trading Houses	Tall, straw-haired human. Heir to the Firecairn faction of House Dumorjen. Wizard.
Stoneheart	P. 208, Outside	Wiry, scarred human. Cruel slave master. Warrior.
Taskmaster	P. 208, Outside	Large, brutal troll. Loyal and fierce. Questor of Dis.
The Harbor Master	P. 146, Secret Societies	Elusive leader of thief gang.
Thysiss	P. 96, Trading Houses	Tall, blue-green t'skrang. Dresses in bright colors. Officer of the Byrose Consortium. Warrior and Archer.
V'nedgia	P. 95, Trading Houses	One-armed t'skrang. Brooding and calculating. Officer of the Byrose Consortium. Scout.
Viciene of Tharl	P. 106, Trading Houses	Bronze-skinned human. Master at Arms for Avara family. Warrior.
Vivius Ilsyn	P. 109, Trading Houses	White haired windling. Passionate and energetic. Warrior.
Vogrin Fey	P. 167, Foreign Relations	Tall ork with shaved head and etched tusks. Honorable. Travar's delegate to Cara Fahd. Warrior.

Name	Page and Chapter	Description
Wylen Stormbear	P. 154, Foregin Relations	Rotund human. Jolly and carefree. Travar's delegate to Jerris. Elementalst.
Xoros Honeyed-Tongue	P. 64, Organizations	Overweight, aged ork. Mellow, but charismatic and driven. Current Magistrate.
Yespis	P. 95, Trading Houses	Short, blue-green t'skrang. Fidgety. Matriarch of the Byrose Consortium. Thief and Warrior.
Zorsha Xagal	P. 111, Trading Houses	Frail, dark-haired dwarf. Secretive and haggard. Wizard.





# INDEX

## A

Accommodation	273	Badlands	257
Adventure Frameworks	257	Badlands, The	210
Adventure Hook		Bahl Ghorn	100
Cooking up a Storm	118	Ballistae	240
Dangerous Beasts	189	Barter, Haggle, Trade	274
Desperate Measures	185	Base of Operations	254
Hart Dar the Gilded	33	Bazana Gems-Dripping	163
Healing Waters	47	Beastlord's Crag	244
Now You See It, Now You Don't	116	Benefits and Drawbacks of Title	229
Reaper's Cove	219	Better The Enemy You Know	28
Red Tape	46	Birth of a Secret Society	140
Resource Rush	166	Blackcairn Dumorjen	118
Return to the Skies	183	Blistering Flesh Ink	277
Salvage	207	Blood Charms	278
The Unknown Vasgothian	134	Blood Inks	276
Adze Xagal	110	Blood Thorns	278
Air Crew Culture and Tradition, On	54	Blood Wood	149
Air Docks	184	Body Of Five, The	68
Air Fleet of Travar, The	185	Boundary Stones	274
Air Marshals, The	79	Bracers of Storm and Flight	246
Airships	242	Breht	121
Alainyn	134	Brooch of Yielding	285
All is Dust	280	Bryose Riverfront	203
An Ancient Land	12	Burial at Death's Sea	56
Ant, Red	297	Burning Drakkar	183
Arbiters	41	Byrose Consortium, The	93
Archways	239	Byrose River Docks	204
Arena, The	186	Byrose River Valley	209
Artacus Carbh	71		
Artistic Decoration, On	54	<b>C</b>	
Astendar	44	Campaigns in Travar	253
Auldwind Shadowsinger	73	Cara Fahd	165
Avara Family, The	104	Cartel Families, The	99
Avenues	174	Cassius	121
Average Citizen, The	34	Cattle Drive, The	171
		Champions	254
		Chaos Hounds	297

## B

Charms, On	57	<b>E</b>	
Chorrolis	44	Earthdawn, The	24
Chorrolis' March	173	Earth Gates	288
City Walls, The	169	Economy of Scale	273
City Watch, The	76	Edge of Travar, The	294
And Travar's Champions	78	Elemon Matos	106
Watch Today	76	Emicia Volbrang	147
Cleansing, The	25	Enemy at the Gates	216
Code Of Travar, The	39	Entering the Tournament	227
Commercial Divide, The	177	Escape from Dragon's Ridge (Sample Event)	238
Common Indenture Contract, The	38	Espagra	248
Common Law	40	Essalar Crazyblade	159
Common Magic Items	274	Eternal Market	179
Conflagration Ink	277	Events	257
Corsair Tower, The	126	Everwind Matos	102
Council Of Five, The	70	Exploration	254
Create Individual Events	234	Exploring the Badlands	213
Creatures	296		
Crime and Punishment	41	<b>F</b>	
Crixin Broal	193	False Earth	222
Crown of the Beastlord	246	Fate Forger (Adventure Framework)	265
Crystal Raiders	167	Festival of Choosing	227
Crystal Tokens	241	Festival of Color	225
Current Actions and Support	138	Festival of Horrors (Adventure Framework)	262
Cyanna Earthweaver	145	Firecairn Faction	113
Cycle of Five, The	282	Fireforge Dumorjen, The	114
Cycle Of The Magistrates' Council, The	62	First Magistrates And The Cycle of Five, The	15
		Five Towers, The	180
<b>D</b>		Flaming Stride Ink	277
Dagger of the Thorned Vine	293	Floranuus	46
Death Of A Scholar	17	Flyby	249
Death's Sea	218	Force of the Eye, The	156
Demonshrew	299	Founders Way	170
Denilior Ni'hlagh	150	Founding Of Travar, The	14
Describe the Event	235	Founding, The	23
Designing A Tournament	232	Freeman Run	159
Dis	45		
Divides	174	<b>G</b>	
Divide, The	172	Gaius Silar	120
Divining Rods	274	Galdius Nightshade	146
Dominion (Sample Event)	243	Gardius Drimsby	80
Dragon Bone Mace	245	Garlen	47
Dragonetta	300	Gates and Markets	177
Dragon Mountains	219	Ghorn Family, The	100
Dumorjen Against Dumorjen	112	Gift of Jaspre, The	291

Goods and Services	273	Ivory Codex, The	13, 280
Great Divide	175		
Great Hunt, The	203	<b>J</b>	
Great Trading Houses, The	254	Jaspree	48
Greixian Redrock	65	Jerris	153
Greixian's Secret	66	Jil'fe	150
Greycairn Docking Tower, The	115	Journals Of Shiellen Woodsong, The	11
Greycairn's Legacy	283	Juliack Merris	125
Grim Legion, The	202		
Grogjel Ilsyn	107	<b>K</b>	
Guild House Tower, The	75	K'ansanar	141
		K'ansanar's Vengeance	141
<b>H</b>		Kavos Jul	164
Harbor Master, The	146	Knife Throwing, On	58
Hawk Greatgust	154	Kratas	155
Headband of Domination	249	Krion Avara	105
Heat Shield Ink	277	Kyrytus Galewitch	160
High Law	40	Kysis Matos	104
Homing Compass	275		
Hounds of Travar, The	78	<b>L</b>	
House Achura	97	Last Dragon Riders, The (Sample Event)	247
House Dumorjen	111	Last Grasp	278
House Halla	119	Legal Documents (Adventure Framework)	269
House Thanton	122	Legend Awards	237
How Garlen Stole a Riverboat	205	Libraries	190
Hull Jumping	59	Delver's Athenaeum	190
Hull Jumping, On	58	Labyrinth Library	191
		Of the Arts	190
<b>I</b>		Liferock Rebellion	136
Ilsynar Songsteel	200	Lochost	49
Ilsynar's Secret	201	Lodges, The	141
Ilsyn Family, The	107	Lord Alderac Windspear	63
Imirisal Vemmarren	134	Lost Kaers	214
Indentured Folk, The	36	Low Flying	250
Indenture versus Slavery	38		
Industrial Divide	176	<b>M</b>	
Influence of the Badlands	215	Magical Treasures	280
Interior, The	187	Magic Items	245
In The Grip Of Chorrolis	52	Magic Weapons	248
Introductions	237	Magistrates' Council, The	61
Iontos River	218	Magistrates, The	32
Iopos	151	Magistrate's Tribune	176
Iroldak Darklore	74	Malindria Matos	103
Ironcairn Faction, The	117	Maneuvers	249
Irros Denairastas	152	Maps of the Badlands	214

Markets in Tent City	200	People Power	231
Matos Family, The	102	Personal Wealth and Estates	128
Merchant Houses, The	32	Picky Palate	177
Merchants	202	Pilferous Paper	133
Mist Swamps	220	Pit, The	251
Monocculeye	275	Preparations For The Scourge	18
Morakki Ilsyn	108	Price of Passage, The (Adventure Framework)	258
Mountain of Bones	244	Prince to Pauper	137
Mountains	244	Protectorate Movement	142
Mountain View	171	Protector's Heirs, The	120
Mount Dragonfire	244	Pumpkin Patch Horror	303
Mount Winterfrost	244	Purity Storm	203
Mynbruje	50	Pyrite Xagal	109
<b>N</b>			
Naaman's Hand	131	<b>Q</b>	
Naaman Y'Ross	134	Qualification Pit, The	187
Naming, On	56	<b>R</b>	
Naming the Badlands	210	Raahl Ghorn	101
Narid Gate	178	Raggok	51
Nehr'esham and the Books of Harrow	12	Ranose Cutan	157
Nets	242	Rebellion and the Time of Hiding	20
Niss Reeves	67	Residents of Tent City	200
Number of Events	234	Ring of Fire, The	249
Number of Rounds	235	River of Bones	217
Nurnborg	162	River Side	174
Nymia Eldernight	72	River Witch, The	205
<b>O</b>			
Obsidian Hills	217	Road To War, The	26
Obtaining a Ticket	231	Road Wardens, The	77
Old Harbor	206	Rook	209
Oman Odestrus	70	Ruins Under Travar	192
Omasu	129	Ruling Family, The	99
Order of The Crimson Sky	139	Rupert Rostan	76
Orichalcum Wars, The	19	<b>S</b>	
Ork Scorchers	202	Salute the Five	250
Other Details	237	Sample Event	
Overland Trading Company, The	127	Dominion	243
<b>P</b>			
Passions and Questors	43	Escape from Dragon's Ridge	238
Pathways	240	Storm Over Thunder Ridge	241
Pencarrig	301	The Last Dragon Riders	247
People Of Travar, The	31	Sanctum of Garlen, The	192
		Sands of Time	245
		Scaffolding	239

School Of Shadows And The Body Of Five, The	14	Thunder Mountains	222
Secret Societies	255	Thysiss	96
Selestran Way	172	Thystonius	51
Sensha Ghorn	101	Tiers, The	188
Skycairn Dumorjen	114	Tolls & Tithes	39
Sky Gate	179	Tournament Circle	189
Sky Lanes	173	Tournament, The	226
Slashers, The	147	Tower of Commerce	182
Slave Markets	207	Trade Law	40
Slave Master Stoneheart	208	Trade with Kratas	155
Slaver's Gate	178	Trading Houses and Companies, On	89
Slaves	36	Transport and Services	279
Smudged Fingers	132	Traps	239
Sorrow's Channel	217	Travar And The Theran Empire	19
Soulbinder	287	Tread Lightly Boots	275
South Valley Divide	175	Tribes of Tent City	202
Staff of Smoke and Fire	245	Trosk	216
Stormhold Peak	244	True Air Infused Items	276
Storm Over Thunder Ridge (Sample Event)	241	T'skrang Aropagoi	157
Storm Spheres	242	T'town	204
Streets of Travar, The	255	Twilight Gate	179
Sundering, The	112	<b>U</b>	
Sword of Hail and Ice	246	Upandal	52
Synod Language	92	Urupa	163
Synod, The	91	<b>V</b>	
<b>T</b>		Value of Information, The	231
Tactics	240	Var'eidyllon Tara'var	143
Taskmaster	208	Vaults, The	188
Taverns and Inns		Vertical Dive	250
The Burning Drakkar	183	Vestrial	52
The Drowned Rat	206	Viciene of Tharl	106
The Magistrate's Tribune	176	Victory Roll	250
The Mountain View	171	Vivane	165
The Picky Palate	177	Vivius Ilsyn	109
Tent City	199	V'nedgia	95
Theme	233	Vogrin Fey	167
Thera	160	<b>W</b>	
Thick Skin	279	Water Rebellion, The	22
Thieves of Renown	146	Weathering The Storm	23
Thieves of Travar	145	Why the Kaers Were Breached	211
Thoroughfares and Avenues	170	Wing Rats	304
Throal	161	Withered	306
Thundergate	177		

Wylen Stormbear

154

**Y**

Yespis

95

**X**

Xagal Family, The

109

**Z**

Xoros Honeyed-tongue

64

Zorsha Xagal

111



# TRAVAR

- 
- 1.0 Arena (The Eye of Travar)
  - 2.0 The Five Towers
  - 3.0 The Great Divide
  - 3.1 The Divides
  - 3.2 Narid Gate Market
  - 4.0 Industrial Divide
  - 4.1 Selestran Way
  - 4.2 Twilight Market
  - 4.3 Air Docks
  - 4.4 Sanctum of Garlen
  - 4.5 Library of the Arts
  - 5.0 Commercial Divide
  - 5.1 Chorrolis' March
  - 5.2 Skygate Market
  - 5.3 Eternal Market
  - 5.4 Graycainr Docking Tower
  - 6.0 River Side Divide
  - 6.1 Founders Way
  - 6.2 Thundergate Market
  - 6.3 Corsair Tower
  - 7.0 South Valley Divide
  - 7.1 Cattle Drive
  - 7.2 Slaver's Gate Market
  - 7.3 The Labyrinth
  - 8.0 Old Harbour
  - 9.0 The Slave Markets

# travar – the merchant city



## jewel of the south

THE WHITE WALLS OF TRAVAR WEATHERED THE SCOURGE BETTER THAN MOST. THE CITY HAS BEEN A CENTER OF TRADE SINCE BEFORE THE SCOURGE AND STAYED OUT OF THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN THROAL AND THERA.

BUT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SECOND THERAN WAR THROAL IS NO LONGER THE BEACON OF HOPE AND FREEDOM IT ONCE WAS. THE DWARFS STILL TRADE, BUT TRAVAR'S MERCHANT HOUSES SEE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO LINE THEIR POCKETS, AND THAT BRINGS GREATER INFLUENCE IN BARSAlVE.

GREATER INFLUENCE BRINGS GREATER ATTENTION. TRADE IS CRITICAL TO POST-WAR REBUILDING EFFORTS, AND THOSE WHO CONTROL TRADE CONTROL BARSAlVE. FOREIGN POWERS — THROAL, IOPUS, THERA, AND MORE — LOOK FOR WAYS TO USE TRAVAR'S MERCANTILE STRENGTH TO THEIR ADVANTAGE.

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