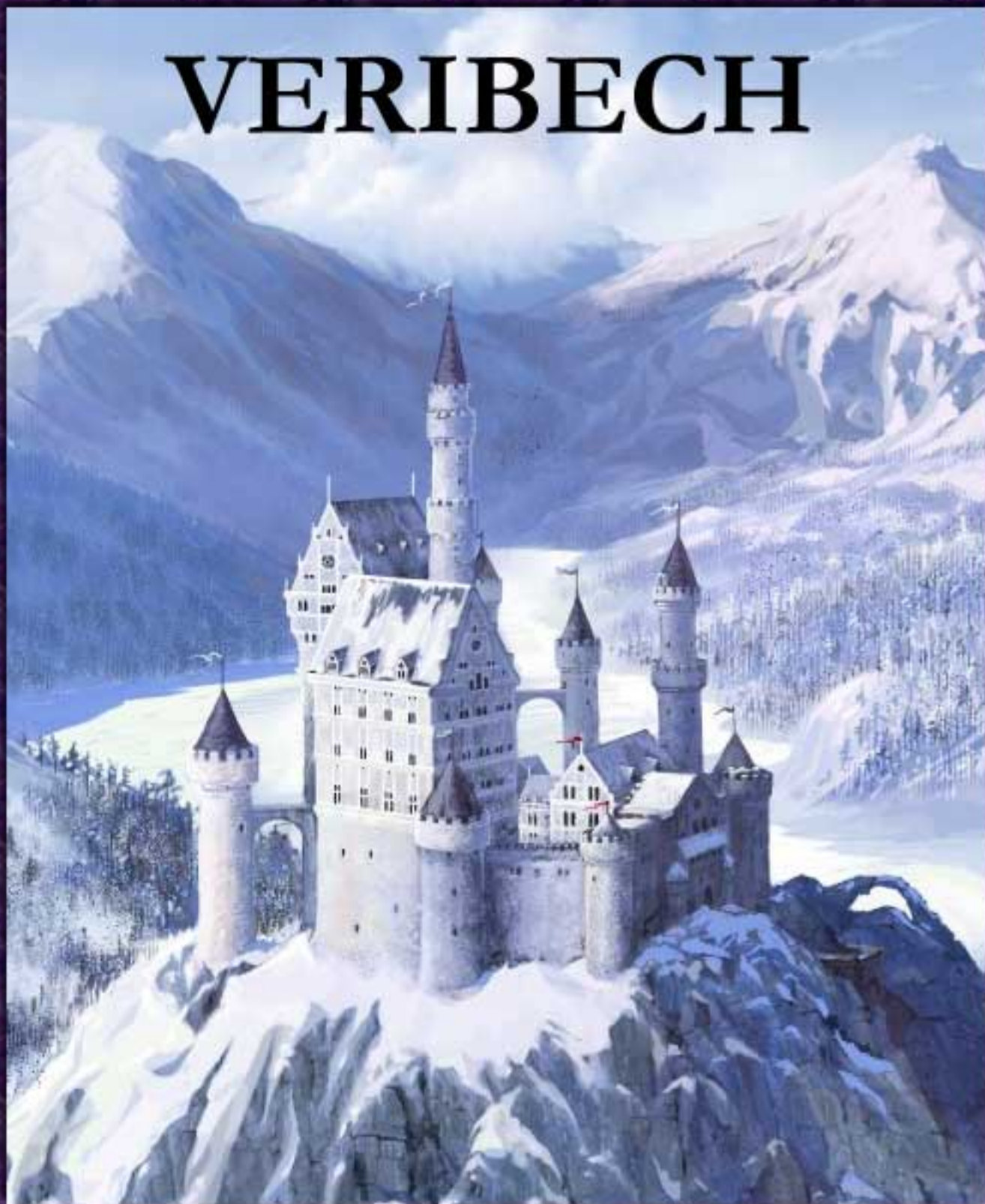


EARTHDAWN

VERIBECH



AN UNOFFICIAL EARTHDAWN PRODUCT



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VERIBECH

Fine School for adepts

Veribech is a well-renown school for adepts of all Disciplines. It opened its doors to the new generation of bold adventurers sometime while Barsaive was at war or during the chaos afterwards. The school has recruited many of the best mentors from around the world, and they teach talents, spells, skills, history, and other secret lore not easily obtainable anywhere else. It is designed to be a safe harbor for apprentice adepts, although more experienced adventurers also hone their skills at Veribech. If they look closely, clever students might uncover some of the school's secrets. For example: why did it disappear during the Scourge? How were so many experienced faculty gathered so quickly? Why is Veribech located in the Dragon Mountains? And who is this "Professor" whose claws reach so deeply into Veribech's affairs?

Authors' notes: Veribech is a new, unofficial Earthdawn location, but some of the people and places mentioned here have appeared in previously published Earthdawn adventures and sourcebooks (as referenced throughout the text). Others are further described in the Encyclopedia section on the Earthdawn Publishing Trust's website at www.edpt.org. If this school is too large for your campaign's Barsaive, we encourage you to enjoy reading about our Veribech. Then you might select a few mentors who are training students in the Dragon Mountains under the "Professor's" watchful gaze. A suggestion for a smaller school / secret society that could fit into many campaigns is offered in the Gamemaster's Section, p. 31.

LOCATION

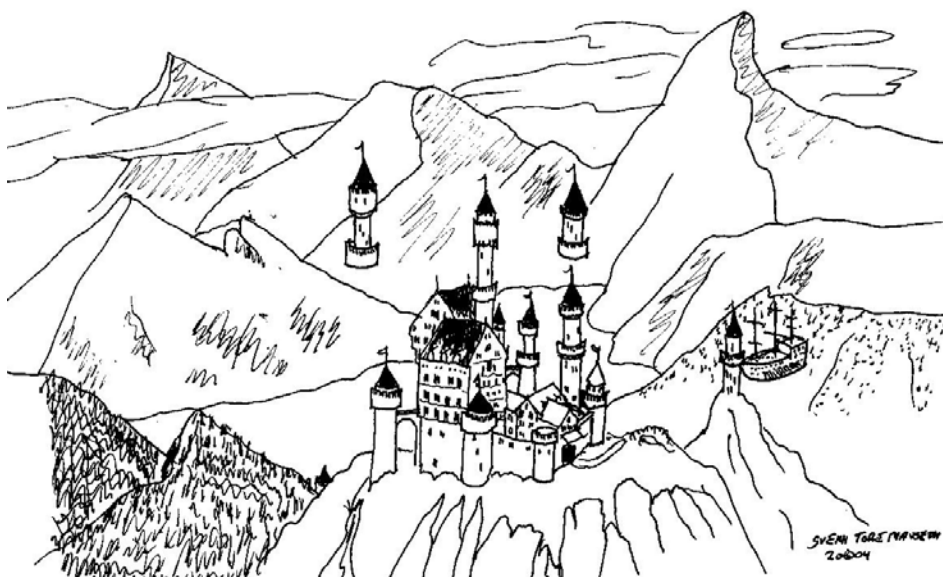
Veribech lies on an isolated plateau in the northern Dragon Mountains. The school and its surroundings are veiled by an illusionary "Shadow Palace" spell, which extends ten miles around the campus. (See the spell description in the **Companion**, p. 148). Veribech is very difficult to locate: if the headmaster doesn't want you to find it, you won't. For more details, see the School Grounds section on p. 17.

HISTORY

Fifty years before the Scourge, the Master of Illusions Mantor Sudsteph, a Fifteenth Circle gnome Illusionist, brought together as many promising adepts as he could. He believed that adepts could gain deeper insights into the magic underlying our world if they better understood their colleagues' worldviews. He hoped that a shared understanding of magic would allow everyone to survive and defeat the coming dangers. The school vanished shortly before the Scourge when Mantor traveled with the Time Bubbles, along with the rest of the goblins. (For more information about goblins and Mantor's background, see the **Goblins (General Information)** entry in the Encyclopedia.)

After the Scourge, Mantor sought out Professor Veribech (or simply "the Professor"). Mantor asked the Professor to help him protect the school from the lingering Horrors. The Professor created a miniature scale model of the campus, upon which they Named a permanent "Shadow Palace" spell. Professor Veribech personally guards this artifact, and the Shadow Palace spell will last as long the artifact remains intact.

Mantor then sent letters to many high Circle adepts, offering them faculty positions at Veribech. Knowledge of the school's reopening has spread quickly, as many of the school's staff travel regularly throughout Barsaive, seeking new students and contacting prospective teachers.





PROLOGUE:

Falling Out

—The tale of Sirius Sturdisnortle and
the Veribech admissions examinations.

Sirius gritted his teeth and grabbed hold of the rope with both hands. His palms were dripping salty moisture and his breath came out in short bursts through his huge nose. He ached to turn back but felt the piercing stare of the one-eyed instructor on his back. The instructor's name was Tearge, and he had terrorized Sirius as well as the other Veribech academy candidates during the last few days of training. He had proven himself to be bitter and resentful, snapping at people with the slightest provocation. The test trainers in the Travarian Veribech recruiting compound were not even faculty members. Nonetheless, Tearge treated the aspiring students like dirt.

Maybe he's bitter for never making it past the tests for Veribech himself?

"If it's all right with you, Mr. Sturdisnortle, we would prefer if you start today." Tearge's nasty voice lashed at him from behind.

Sirius put his vindictive thoughts aside. He would have to focus really hard to make it through this one.

"Try not to think of anything," a voice hollered from below.

As if that were possible! How can one think of nothing?

"Just close your eyes and go for it." He recognized the voice now. It belonged to the elven girl.

Easy for her to say, still it was worth a try. Sirius strained his lungs, taking slow deep gulps of crisp morning air. He then closed his eyes and tried to think of void.

That was a big mistake!

He was falling again, spinning out of control into the nothingness. His arms were flailing, trying to grab on someone's outstretched arm, onto a rope, onto thin air, anything, nothing.

And above him like always, etched against the skyline, were the astounded features of the troll. The Sky Raider probably only meant to frighten the small gnome. He never expected Sirius to jump off the Drakar. The troll bellowed something into the wind in Trollish, but like always Sirius was already too far away to hear.

It's not really happening, it's all in your mind. Focus! Focus! Nothing is real.

A moment of death was frozen inside his skull like

a fly trapped in amber.

His mouth was open, and he was aware that he was screaming. To his ears though, the cry out came small and distant, like another person was calling out of a deep tunnel. Other voices echoed around him now, calling his name. They were angry voices. For some reason he thought that funny.

"Why the bleedin' Death Sea did you made him try the rope? You knew the little fellow had a problem with heights!" someone said.

"Bloody Dis! No one told me he was going to freak out on me like that," Tearge's gruff voice answered.

"Yeah, well, now please help me pick him up, his kind may look small but the bastards are dense," the first voice said.

Strong arms grabbed Sirius from opposite ends and carried him, none too gently, across the hard cobblestones. His head bounced twice against stone, though for him the sharp pain offered a familiar reviving effect. Being beaten up was home territory for Sirius.

He didn't open his mouth to tell them he was alright though, afraid that if he showed too much coherence they might force him to try the rope again.

At last they slumped him like a sack of potatoes against a cold wall. He lay there in silence, sipping shallow breaths with his eyes still closed.

Focus Sirius, find the magic within you and you find peace. His uncle used to say that to him a lot during their tutoring sessions. He used that sentence as a mantra now, whispering it time and time again until he felt the courage to look inside.

A shift of perception and he was in the Astral, looking at his red, glowing body from without. His single spell matrix sparkled like a well-polished diamond exposed to torchlight. Slowly, so as not to disrupt its delicate structure, his astral hand reached inside and grabbed the spell lying there. In the mundane world, a small ball of light appeared in his hand. Sirius focused harder, making the light ball skip from one hand to the other. Going through the well-practiced drill helped him gather his disarrayed thoughts. In response, his astral body's Pattern stopped glowing red, turning into a bluish green shade signaling a more relaxed state



of mind.

"You can open your eyes now, they are gone," someone said.

He ventured one eyelid. None of the staff were in sight. The other Veribech candidates were strewn around the yard. Most were pretending to ignore him and each other. Desel Hantigton, son and heir to Lord Hantigton, was now trying the rope. He went at it with the air of indifference that Sirius so hated about him.

"Here, take this. Excellent for the nerves."

Sirius turned. The freckled face of the redheaded elven girl, the one that shouted advice at him, was inches from his. She held a ceramic bowl in her hand.

"Thank you," Sirius' voice was barely audible, "I don't think I could take in anything right now. Not without vomiting that is."

The elf smiled. "This is not anything, it is Keriar soup. Try it, you will feel much better, I promise."

What did she care how he felt?

"That ball of light is a neat trick. How did you do that? I did not think you to be an adept."

Sirius quickly closed his palm over the ball and it disappeared. "I'm not. It's just some basic Illusionist stuff I've picked from my uncle."

"Wow, then I guess you know exactly what kind of Discipline you will be studying at Veribech. But I am sorry, how rude of me." The elven girl bowed her head, "I am Elesinora Esselessar. My friends call me Eli."

Kindness from a foreigner and an elf on top of it was a new experience. Sirius was so shocked that it took him a few seconds before he realized that she was expecting the same gesture from him. "I'm Sirius, Sirius Sturdisnortle," he said finally.

"Sirius." She tasted the name, lingering on every syllable. "Why do not try the soup? It is excellent."

Sirius sipped the ceramic bowl. It had a strong flavor of milk. It was also quite good.

"Thanks, that really helped," he said.

"Then I guess it has done its part."

"I never ate elf soup before."

"I never met a goblin before. You are a goblin, am I right?"

"I'm a gnome."

"Is not that the same thing?"

It was a rude question to ask a goblin. Sirius first considered telling her so, but changed his mind. Her face had an openness about it such as he had never encountered before; he wanted to believe her bluntness came out of ignorance.

"No, well, yes, it's complicated," he said.

Above their heads, Desel finished crossing the rope. He jumped backward, somersaulted twice, and landed on his feet beside them. He looked around

waiting for applause. None came.

"Don't let Sturdisnortle fill you with crap, miss. Them midgets are all the same," Desel said.

"You know each other?" Elesinora looked confused.

"Sure," Desel said, "the entire Sturdisnortle family works for my dad, though I can't remember exactly how. Help me out here, Sturdisnortle. What's your dad's job at the Hantigton mansion?"

Sirius pictured his fist punching the smug smile off Desel's face. In the real world, he lowered his eyes. "My dad is the sanitation master."

"Ah yes, I remember now. He's the little runt that takes the shit out to the fields. He's the shit master."

Sirius gave him an angry stare.

"I don't know why they allow his kind to take the Veribech candidates' test," Desel said to Elesinora. "It's supposed to be the finest school there is for Adepts. Strange that they bother holding classes for goblins there."

"Actually," Elesinora said, "I do not think that Veribech has special classes for gnomes. Sirius will study with the rest of us. I know for sure that one of the professors is a gnome."

"Don't be ridiculous," Desel said.

Elesinora shrugged.

"Anyway," Desel pointed at the rope above them, "this goblin won't be studying anything, except shit piling with his dad."

"Why don't you lay off him?" Elesinora said. "The tests start tomorrow. You should be worried about your performance instead of his."

It was Desel's turn to shrug. "Just figured I'd warn you about the company you're keeping, miss."

"In that case, I thank you for your kind help, sir," Elesinora bowed, "but I believe I am capable of making my own decisions."

Desel returned her bow. "See you at the test then."

"What a prick," Elesinora said when Desel left. "Is he always like this?"

"Only on his good days. On the bad days he usually takes it out on the first person he comes across, sometimes that's me," Sirius said.

"Ouch. Can you not do anything?"

"What can I do? His father employs my entire family. Few people are willing to hire gnomes in Travar."

"I think that's awful."

Sirius scratched his head, "I don't like it either, but that's life for you Miss Elesinora. You're not from around here are you?"

"No, I am from Talea, it's all in the accent, and call me Eli."



Sirius' nose started vibrating, and he thanked the Passions for Elesinora's ignorance. A twitching nose on a gnome was the equivalent of a blush. "Desel is part of the reason I'm trying to get to Veribech," he said. "If I study there, people like the Hantigton family won't be able to kick me around."

"That's a good reason if I ever heard one."

"Thanks Eli, I never expected to meet someone as nice as you here."

"Don't mention it."

"And you were right too, Veribech does have a gnome professor. He was the one who gave me the Elemental coin." Sirius pulled out the precious item that served as an admission ticket to the Veribech test. The brown disk sparkled in the morning air.

Elesinora caressed the small coin. "I wish I had one of those, but non-Barsivians rarely get the coins. You don't know how hard it is to get admission without the proper reference."

"You don't have to tell me. You should have seen the face of the receptionist when he saw a gnome applicant. Before I popped out the coin, he was considering kicking me all the way to Urupa. I heard that they allow maybe one out of fifty people without reference each year. How did you manage?"

"Determination, I guess. I always knew I was going to Veribech. My father had a fit when he heard about my plans to become an Adept. He had already made arrangements to marry me off to a powerful noble. I guess I'm like you, the real reason I'm here is because I'm running from fate."

"What's so bad about marrying a powerful noble?"

"Let's just say that compared to my would-be

husband, Desel is all sugar and honey."

"Oh, in that case, I hope you pass tomorrow."

"Same for you."

Sirius raised his worried eyes to the rope. "My chances don't look bright at the moment."

"Nonsense, I saw you practicing on the flying carpet. You were the only one here who could direct it anywhere you wanted. Even that grouchy fellow Tearge had to admit you showed talent."

"Thanks, but that won't help me with the rope, Eli. A non-Adept candidate must pass all the tests to become a Veribech student, that's the rule here."

"Stupid rule. Why would someone with your brain ever need to walk a rope thirty five feet in the air between two buildings?"

Sirius sighed. "I wish I knew. Thirty five feet or five feet, it's all the same for me."

"That bad, huh? What happens when you are up there?"

"Hard to describe, and anyway you wouldn't believe me."

"Try me."

"I once took a shortcut down from a flying Drakar. I jumped."

Elesinora shook her head. "You jumped from a Drakar? You're pulling my leg, are you not?"

"I told you, you wouldn't believe me."

"Ok, Ok. Tell me the whole story."

"Troll raiders. They caught me just outside Travar. I was young and frightened and alone in a ship full of Name-givers the size of small hills, or at least that's how they looked to a seven-year old gnome. I thought they were going to kill me no matter what, so I jumped.





We were one and a half miles off the ground when I did.”

“That’s incredible! How did you survive?”

“I don’t know really. One moment I was diving like a stone, the next I simply stopped in mid air. My uncle said that I hit a pocket of true air, a one in a million chance, he says. My mother said Garlen reached out her merciful palm at the last moment.”

“You sound like you have a different opinion.”

“I think that the troll who frightened me, the one who caused me to jump—I think he was a wizard. I think he cast a spell on me at the last moment to save me.”

“Why would he do that?”

“Not sure really, but I’ll certainly ask him next time we meet.”

Elesinora gently put her arm on Sirius’ shoulder. “Wow!” she said. “No wonder you’re uncomfortable with heights.”

“Yes, every time I step on that rope I relive the fall. It’s like dying all over again.”

“Alright, but you know what people say about fear? You need to tackle it head on in order to overcome it.”

“You can tell those people when you meet them, that this gnome is ready to tackle anything, anytime, as long he doesn’t need to leave the ground to do so.”

Elesinora laughed and slapped his back. “You’ll do just fine tomorrow, you’ll see.” She pulled a beautifully crafted mandolin from one of her bags and started playing a soft tune. Sirius found himself drawn to her song even though he couldn’t understand a word of Talean. It made him a little warmer inside, despite the growing cold.

The sun was already hanging low in the west when Sirius finally made his way back from the training grounds to the Hantigton mansion. The snow had come early this year, and Travar looked like a fairytale kingdom made of white cotton. Sirius had no time to enjoy the beautiful sight. He was running and sweating hard despite the freezing temperature. At sunset, the mansion gates were barred and he still had ton of chores waiting for him before he could lay his tired head on a pillow.

Desel was probably already tucked by now. The young fop had a carriage waiting outside the testing grounds, but of course he didn’t even consider inviting Sirius to join him. Desel probably thought him too low even to ride in the back with the luggage.

Sirius made it back to the mansion all puffy. His uncle Yuldin was on the ground scrubbing the patio near the servants’ entrance. He straightened up when he

saw Sirius and smiled.

“How’d it go, tiger? Did you pass?” Yuldin asked.

“The actual tests start tomorrow, today was just practice and demonstration.”

“And how’d that go?”

“I did fine with the logic tests.” That was as far as he could make himself lie to the old gnome.

“How many tests are there?”

“Six, plus one you’re only allowed to take after you’ve passed all the others. Oh, and they also checked us today for Horror taint, so that adds to eight tests total.”

“Dazzled them with your drawing skills?”

Sirius smiled, “I never would have made that one without your guidance, uncle.”

“Oh, bugger that kid. We’re all very proud of you. But I don’t have to tell you that. You know we’d do anything to see you succeed.”

“I still have to pass the tests, you know.”

His uncle waved his hand. “Nah, just a walk in the park for you, tiger. Now get along, get some sleep. It’s a big day for you tomorrow.”

“Sure, as soon as I finish my chores.”

“Nothing left for you to do,” his uncle said. “Rikkon and Benit covered for you today.”

Tears constricted Sirius’s throat when he thought of his family, how they were unconditionally giving everything for him, and how he was going to fail them all. Maybe he could run away to some desolate place where nobody knew him? Anything was better than facing the disappointment on their loving faces.

“Now what’s that beat up dogface for?” his uncle said. “You’re a Sturdisnortle, for Lochost’s sake. Walk proud like the tiger you are.”

Sirius nodded and managed a weak smile.

His uncle’s tone softened, “Whatever may happen, you’ll always be number one here.”

Was the old gnome a mind reader?

“Uncle...” he said.

“Yes kid?”

“About tomorrow’s tests...”

“What about them?”

“Nothing. I better run along and get some sleep,” he kissed the old gnome’s cheek.

“Just remember kid,” his uncle said before he left, “as long as you’re true to yourself you have nothing to be ashamed of.”

Sirius’ room was a very small alcove located just outside Desel’s room. He slept in there, in case the young lord needed something in the middle of the night. His younger sister, Benit, was inside. Her mother sent her to fill his position until his return. Sirius kissed the



bleary-eyed girl goodnight and told her to get back to her room. He then said his devotions to Lochost and Garlen and melted onto the mattress.

Despite his weariness, sleep evaded him. His mind was a jumble of thoughts, none of them pleasant. After almost an hour of yawning and twisting and turning, Sirius sat up. He was fighting a lost battle. From what looked like a small pile of very dirty rags he drew out his most precious treasure: the big volume of *Matrices-1 and the Theory of Illusions* by Professor Sudsteph of Veribech. The book was mostly theory, but it also contained three common First Circle Illusionist spells for practical practice. Sirius could recite them forward and backward now. He remembered his first attempt.

It was last winter, exactly a year ago. He had finished all his morning chores for the Hantigton estate and was on his way to see his uncle. The book was sitting on his uncle's kitchen table. It looked almost alive with energy and it almost asked him to open its pages. Nothing he had ever read prepared him for the experience. A manual of step by step spell-casting with tons of theory, mathematics, and even some drills at the end of each chapter. Sirius was mesmerized. The dry academic words felt like poetry to him. Looking up from the pages, he was surprised to find that the sun was already setting. He knew that he was going to get in trouble, but he just couldn't let go of the book. A dog-eared mark caught his eyes. The page read, "Chapter forty five, Mounjevour Stalchim's displacement spell version 7.81, matrix reconstruction.

A real magical spell! He had to try it.

It wasn't as simple as it looked though. Several instructions were too general. Others were only a reference to other chapters, and he had to flip back and reread in order to apply the theory to practice. It was the by far the toughest intellectual challenge he had ever faced, but his stubbornness wouldn't allow him to admit failure. After three hours, he had a stabilized spell matrix. He had made the first step. From here to casting the actual spell there was still a very long way, but he couldn't help but feel pride at his accomplishment. He was so preoccupied that he didn't even notice he wasn't alone anymore, until a heavy hand landed on his shoulder.

"By the great goblins, what do you think you're doing?"

"I, I, I'm sorry uncle," Sirius said. "It was just lying there on the table. I..."

"You could have asked me, this is not kids play! This is dangerous stuff. I thought you had more brain than this!"

"Let the kid be, he didn't mean any harm," someone said.

Sirius turned around to see a stooped stranger with a walking stick. He bowed politely as required in the presence of elders. "Thank you, sir."

"How did you like my book boy?"

"It was your book? I'm sorry sir." He gave the book back to the old gnome.

"No, I meant that it is my book, I wrote it."

"You wrote it? You mean you're..."

"Professor Sudsteph from Veribech, yes. Now answer the question, boy!"

"I, I, I couldn't keep my eyes off it."

"Hmmm," the professor said, "I like young critics, they have very little to compare too and therefore pass judgment lightly."

"No, the book was amazing. Truly amazing."

The professor took off his glasses. "I see you have practiced some practical knowledge too."

"Did he do any good?" his uncle asked.

"No, not really. His matrix thread stabilizing channels are all wrong, and they're leaky. The first spell that he attaches to it will scatter like dust in the wind."

Sirius hung his head. "And I thought I was making progress."

"Progress, my child? No, no, no. You were making much more than progress. You constructed an astral matrix web on your own after a single day of self-tutoring. Progress? I'd call it phenomenal if that weren't an understatement."

"I knew the kid had potential," his uncle beamed. "It runs in the blood."

The professor took Sirius' chin. "Yes, well, blood is essential. But potential can go to waste."

Sirius could feel the power radiating behind the two crystal blue orbs that bored into him.

The professor pulled a gleaming brown coin from the folds of his robe. "I'll make a deal with you, kid. I'll give you three more books besides this one. Make sure you know them all by heart before you even start with the one you read today."

Could this be true? Was the great professor giving him the book as a gift? Sirius bowed deeply. "Thank you sir, I don't know how and when I might be able to pay you back for your generosity."

"Well I do, so shut up and open your ears, boy. This true earth coin is for you to keep for a year and a day. At that time I want you to go to the recruitment office for Veribech and take the tests."

"Veribech, you mean the school for Adepts, sir?"

"No, I mean Veribech, the school for very gifted Adepts. Now make an oath you'd come."

It was a turning point in Sirius's life. People stopped calling him Jinxed Sirius (a nickname he had gotten after his accident). Instead, other gnomes treated



him with respect. His younger brothers' respect bordered on reverence. After all, Professor Sudsteph was the goblins' greatest hero, and he was an inspiration to the entire goblin race.

Sirius caressed the book's binding. It was a wonder that such a thing as ink on leather could contain the power to change a person's life so completely. With a sigh, he opened the heavy volume and flipped to the marked section where he last left off. He could recite most chapters by heart now, but he always enjoyed delving into them again, gaining a deeper understanding each time.

It was well past midnight when Sirius finally felt his eyelids growing heavy. He was about to put the book down when he heard voices coming his way. He identified the first speaker immediately as Lord Hantigton; there was no mistaking those commanding tones.

"Two hundred gold! You're trying to rob me?" Lord Hantigton said.

"Two hundred as a down payment, that's the price, my lord," a silky voice said.

"And will your man stay true to his word? I don't want any surprises. My son is going to pass tomorrow," Lord Hantigton said.

"My lord, unless your son is a complete dullard he'll pass tomorrow's tests. I'll make sure of that," another voice said. Sirius could have sworn he had heard it before.

"He better! You're extorting me for fooling some bookish school teachers."

"Let me assure you, my lord," the silky voice said, "that the Veribech academic personnel coming to see the tests tomorrow are anything but bookish. Some of them are quite dangerous people. One of them can hardly be classified as a person at all. My man is taking a big risk here. He won't just get fired if caught, his life is at stake."

"I'm paying you enough to take that risk."

"I'll be the judge of that, now if you may, where does that little gnome sleep?"

Sirius heart missed a few beats. Could they be talking about him? What other option was there? Whoever these people were, Sirius doubted they had good intentions. He blew out the candle he used for reading and his heat sensitive vision kicked in. There was a small ledge just below his alcove. Carrying his small boots in his hands to avoid needless noise, he jumped.

Someone grabbed his foot from behind and lifted him into the air upside down. Sirius kicked and scratched and cursed, but the person holding him had

the strength of an obsidian.

"Got you, you little Horror spawn."

"Let me go! I didn't do anything," Sirius cried.

"Shutup, you'll wake the place up."

"If you don't let me go I'll scream."

The person holding his leg turned him around. Sirius felt sick. He found himself staring into the hateful eye of Tearge, the instructor from the Veribech test compound. "Do that, you little shit, and I'll wring your ugly little neck faster than you can say Veribech."

"So let me see if I've got this right," Sirius said. "You want to help me pass tomorrow's tests?"

"The boy is catching on fast, Tearge. I told you he wasn't anything like that little daft lordling," said the man with the silky voice.

After capturing Sirius, Lord Hantigton led them into the library and left them, securing the door behind him. It was the mansion's most isolated room, located at the top of the mansion's highest tower. The thought of being this high was enough to make Sirius' stomach lurch.

Tearge brushed the scrolls off a reading desk and sat himself comfortably, his legs dangling from the chair his ugly face looked even uglier in the library's eerie illumination. Silky voice chose the room's shadows and kept his face hidden inside a voluminous purple robe. All that Sirius could discern about the man was that he was very tall and very thin.

"I don't understand. What do you get out of helping me?"

"That's our concern not yours," said silky voice. "Tearge, give the charm to the kid!"

The one-eyed instructor took out a small object and threw it at Sirius. It was a black cat-face pedant with green emeralds for eyes.

"What's this for?" Sirius asked.

"It's called Cat's Grace blood charm. It helps the wearer with balance and fear of high places. We figured you'd need a little extra help with the rope tomorrow. Try it, it welds itself into the skin painlessly."

Sirius let the pedant drop to the table. "That's cheating!"

"No one will ever know. Tearge will make sure of that."

"I don't care. It's still cheating."

"Listen, you ungrateful little worm," Tearge's face became a darker shade of red, "you'll do exactly as you're told or else I'll tear out that cheeky little tongue of yours and feed it to the rats."

Silky voice stood and raised his hands in a sign of peace. "Now, now. There will be no need for that. I'm sure Sirius is willing to listen to the voice of logic. Our



little friend is a gnome after all.” He fished out a massive looking volume from one of the shelves. “Do you recognize this book, Sirius?”

“Sure, that’s Captain Vaare Longfang’s *Journey of the Earthdawn*.”

“And do you know why you, like almost everyone in Barsaive, knows of the captain and her ship? Because unlike you, my friend, she never let questions like ‘Is this fair?’ or ‘Is this noble?’ hold her back. Wherever she saw a chance, she grabbed it by the neck.”

“That’s not true. You’re twisting things around!”

“Am I? Tell me, Sirius, isn’t going to Veribech the one thing you want more than anything in the world?”

“Yes, but not like this.”

“Now isn’t it true that unless you use this charm you will most assuredly fail? I’m offering you the key to your dreams. Why don’t you take the hand offered in friendship?”

Sirius suddenly felt the whole day’s events piling on his shoulders. He felt bile sliding up his throat. He hated Tearge, he hated this shifty man with the snake-like voice, but above all he hated his own helplessness. Tiredness and disgust brought up desperation. “What do you want from me, Theran?” he said. “You call yourself my friend, but you are anything but.”

“Ah, so the charade is off,” silky voice said.

“What did you think with that lovely accent?” Sirius said, “It’s obvious you’ve not been practicing enough. Here in the south we can smell your kind from miles off.”

“What did I tell you, Tearge, there’s more to this gnome than meets the eye.” Silky voice turned back to Sirius, “But you see, my little friend, that poses us with a problem. I can’t let you out of here before we have reached some sort of agreement, now can I?”

“You never intended to let me go in the first place. It doesn’t matter. You can threaten all you want.” From inside his boot Sirius removed a jagged knife and held it up high, “You don’t scare me, Mr. Theran, and I won’t cheat for you.”

“Oh but you will, Sirius.” The Theran shook his head at the small knife. “That is, unless you don’t want to see your beloved sister again.”

Sirius felt a wave of fear. “What did you do with Benit?”

“Nothing yet, we simply took the liberty, with Lord Hantigton’s permission of course, of transferring her and the rest of your relatives into a safe location. Though safe is a relative word. I must warn you, Tearge here is very eager when it comes to carving up flesh. He actually begged me on our way here to let him have some fun with the little goblins. I think I’ll let him start with that lovely sister of yours. Shall I tell him to bring

her up here so you can watch?”

Sirius stared at the Theran in horror. “Release them and I’ll do what you want.”

“No, little gnome, that is not how it goes. First you’ll do what I want, then I’ll release your family.”

For the second time today Sirius was falling into the abyss, and like always there was nothing to stop his dive.

A falling body increases its speed at a fixed acceleration of almost ten yards per second squared. At least it said so in *Book I of the Marvelous Gnomish Flying Machines* by Professor Mantor Sudsteph. Taking into consideration air resistance, a body falling from a height of one and a half miles will splatter onto the ground about twenty-two seconds after the beginning of its decent. For Sirius, twenty-two seconds was eternity.

Over the Drakar rail, the troll’s astounded face was staring at him in mute horror. He looked down, and the ground was still rushing at him with unimaginable speed.

When would it stop? Would he continue to fall until he crashed this time?

Above him, the troll as always was screaming at him, except that it wasn’t a troll anymore. It was Tearge.

The Veribech compound instructor was gloating. His one good eye shone green, like the emeralds on the cat pedant. In one hand he held small struggling bundle.

“Don’t harm her, don’t touch Benit!”

The instructor just laughed and drew out a crystal knife.

“Nooo...” Sirius screamed.

He sat up suddenly drenched in cold sweat, his heart racing like a charging Cavalryman Adept. He had a few seconds of vertigo where the room spun around him. Grasping out for anything familiar to help him regain focus, his hand closed on a smooth object. It was the cat pedant. Its emerald eyes shone in the darkness like twin evil stars. That part wasn’t a dream.

Sirius was in his parents’ room. He had fallen asleep there exhausted after he discovered that they were gone, like the rest of his family. The silky-voiced Theran hadn’t lied. He held twenty-four gnomes as hostages. Their lives depended on Sirius’ cooperation.

“As long as you’re true to yourself you have nothing to be ashamed of,” his uncle had said. But how could he stay true to himself if he was forced to cheat? On the other hand, how could he not cheat? How could he abandon his family to the mercy of these people? His family had sacrificed much so that he could take the tests.

And why shouldn’t he cheat anyway? He would



get to fulfill his dream and go to Veribech. None of his family would be harmed. The Theran said that no one would know. No one, that is, except the gnome he would have to face every day in the mirror.

What should I do? What would my uncle do in my place? What would Professor Sudsteph do if he were in my shoes?

A bird was singing outside, serenading the bright new dawn, and the snow-covered city greeted the sunrays with open arms. Inside the empty room, Sirius bent down on his knees and prayed to Garlen.

"What happened to you, Sirius? You look terrible. Did you not sleep last night?"

"Not much Eli. Bad dreams."

"Don't worry, it will soon be behind us."

"For bad or for worse."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing, I'm just tired Eli."

They were seated, like all the other candidates, on the benches surrounding a small arena. On the sand below stood a skittish pegasus. A skinny ork was trying in vain to approach it. He could never get closer than thirty feet before the magnificent creature would flee to another corner of the arena. They kept playing cat and mouse for five more minutes before the Veribech tester finally instructed the ork to sit down.

"I do not think Kreeosh passed that one," Elesinora said. "Shame. He looked like a nice fellow. These Veribech testers are really hard to impress."

"If you didn't impress them then I don't know who did. It came straight to you. You didn't even have to bribe it with apples like I did."

Elesinora made an attempt at a modest smile. Sirius thought she was overdoing it. "I think Desel did at least as good as I did with the pegasus test," she said. "You know that's funny. Yesterday he could not even get near the animal. I thought that if Desel would fail, then that would be it. We would be rid of him. Maybe he's not such a prick after all, if such a noble beast let him handle it."

And maybe Desel is a prick that carries a blood charm. If there's a blood charm to help people grow out of their fear of heights, there could be a blood charm to help a person tame a wild beast.

Elesinora tapped Sirius' shoulder and pointed with her head towards the group of Veribech testers. "There's an ancient looking gnome standing there. Is that the one you were talking about?"

"You mean Professor Sudsteph? Yep, that's him," Sirius said.

"Don't you at least want to go and say hello? I thought he was a family friend."

Ever since Professor Sudsteph had disembarked from the Veribech airship that morning, Sirius had wanted to get a private word with the elder gnome. Targe hovered constantly in the background, however, stalking him from the moment he stepped over the compound threshold. "No, I don't think that would be fair to do," he replied. "People would say I had favoritism."

"So what if they do? You know what the problem with you is, Sirius?"

"That I'm too good looking for women to resist?"

"No, you worry too much. You carry that constant, 'The world will stop tomorrow unless I keep carrying it on my shoulders' look. Lighten up, the world will not stop if you smile from time to time."

Sirius tried to force out a smile. It was hard to do, especially since he was trying not to cry, and it came out all crooked.

"You see," Elesinora said, "you've forgotten how it's done properly."

"Sorry Eli," Sirius said, "it's just that I'm hard pressed this morning to find things to be happy about."

"Well, you better find something quick. Your turn at the rope is coming next."

Sirius closed his eyes and allowed the sunrays to sprinkle their light on his face. The world was indeed resting on his shoulders. His small world and the people he shared it with had nothing but Sirius to depend on. With one hand on the rail, he started ascending the tower with the heavy steps of someone on his way to the gallows.

"Number fourteen! Sirius Sturdisnortle." The Veribech tester's singsong voice bounced around the small tower room. She was a tall human female with an air of indifference and style Sirius could only hope to imitate one day. From time to time, the woman's dark, clever eyes scanned the sky above the tower, as if their owner would have loved nothing more than to fly out of the stuffy room.

Will I ever be able to stand so casually on a ledge?

"Number fourteen!" This time the tester's voice had annoyance in it.

"That's me!" Sirius stepped forward and bowed.

"You know the rules of the test you are about to take?"

"Yes, milady."

"Well, in case you forgot, or didn't listen, or you're just plain stupid and didn't catch on when it was explained yesterday, this is the simplest test there is. We are standing now almost forty feet in the air in the Tower of the Wave. Across from us over that small piazza stands the Tower of the Flame. Between us



there's a thirty-five feet long rope. Everything clear so far? Don't nod, that was a rhetorical question, dummy. You must get to the other side by any means. And you have three minutes from the moment I turn that sand watch. On my mark, get ready!"

"Wait, wait! What do you mean by any means?"

"It means you should use whatever you can to get across."

"I don't have to cross the rope?"

"You can sprout wings and fly across for all I care, as long as you get to the other side, now get ready!"

"Can I simply go down the stairs and run the stairs to the top of the other tower?"

"I have to admit that's an original thought, though I wouldn't recommend it."

"Why? I'm better at running than I am with ropes."

"The doors to the tower of flame open only from the inside. No! The rope is your best bet kid. But I wouldn't be too worried about it if I were you. You know what they say, it's not the fall that kills you, it's hitting the ground." The tall instructor started laughing at her own old joke, then stopped and stared in amazement as Sirius bent on all four and started inching forward. "Oh by sweet Astendar's tits, what kind of material are they sending Veribech this winter?"

Sirius ignored her and continued crawling. He would need all his concentration.

Left hand then right foot then right hand then left foot. Here comes the rope, grab it. Don't look down, always forward.

The chilly air slapped his face. It was a sharp contrast to the heated tower room. *Left arm take the rope, right arm follow. Uncle, I'm doing this for you.*

Wind blew around him but the rope didn't budge an inch. It was heavy and broad. In fact, with a little skill and balance, a person could walk across it upright.

"Don't look down!" Elesinora cried from below, causing him to look down. The world started to spin and his thoughts became a blur. He looked forward and was hit by an unpleasant feeling of déjà vu. Across the rope, Tearge's hateful eye stared back at him. It very much reminded him of his dream last night.

Focus! Find inner focus!

"Hurry up, goblin, you can't sit around and play all day," Tearge shouted. For emphasis, the compound instructor dragged his finger across his neck, an unambiguous gesture.

That was enough! It sparked a flame inside Sirius, a wave of hatred he never knew he possessed.

You'll be my focus, you son of a bitch. Just a few more seconds and I'll show you just what being a gnome Illusionist is all about.

For his next move, he'd need to reach out for his boot knife. That of course meant he would have to let his hand off the precious rope.

Gritting his teeth, he forced his palm back inch by painful inch. With shaking fingers, he drew out the knife and started sawing at the rope.

"What the bleedin' manacles of Dis do you think you're doing?" Tearge screamed.

Sirius ignored him. Beneath his knife, rope hairs parted like small strings.

"You better start dragging your sorry ass over here!" Tearge's face was the color of a very ripe tomato, and his single eye almost popped out of its socket.

Sirius felt the last threads of the rope give way. "Catch!" he screamed at Tearge, letting fly a small object. The compound instructor instinctively reached out his arms to protect his face. The object bounced against his palm and rolled to the floor. Tearge stared at it, blinking stupidly. It was the cat pendant. At the same moment, the rope parted, but to everyone's amazement it didn't fall, but instead curled and snaked into the air, carrying the little gnome with it. Sirius let the power flow off his fingers, controlling the rope spell, riding it over the remaining distance. The stunned Tearge saw the incoming danger too late. He tried to duck but the rope lashed at him like a great constrictor snake and wrapped him in a crushing grip. Tearge screamed in rage and fear; his frantic movements carried him forward. He missed a step and went over the ledge, dragging with him both the rope and the gnome.

Sirius was falling again. It was becoming an all too familiar experience. The rope arced and stretched, eventually reaching its full length. The abrupt jerk loosened his grip and he fell backward. The impact came as a total surprise. After so many years of dreams with endless falling, the harsh touch of the ground was actually a blessing. Sirius sat up blinking, trying to clear the tears from his eyes. A sharp pain in his left ankle made him gasp.

All considered, I have nothing to complain about.

Limping, he started towards Tearge who was hanging a few feet off the ground. The instructor looked too numb even to try freeing himself. People were rushing at them and shouting from all directions, but Sirius paid them no heed. The rope snaked again and circled around the neck of the stunned instructor.

"Where is my family, Tearge?" Sirius was surprised at how calm and resolute his voice sounded.

"Sirius! What are you doing?" Elesinora shouted from behind.

"Stay away Eli, this is between me and Tearge." Sirius let more power flow into the rope. The loop



started squeezing Tearge's neck. Tearge's face changed hue to a bluish color. He was choking on his own weight. "What have you done with my family, snake?"

"Sirius, let him go, you're killing him," a familiar, kind voice said. He turned around, stunned. "Uncle?" was all he could say.

The old gnome was holding his little sister with one hand, and Professor Sudsteph stood next to them. "That human may deserve to die, but you don't deserve to have his blood on your hands. Let him down, kid."

Sirius felt the last waves of energy from the spell spatter. "Uncle, I didn't..."

"I know kid, I know, everything is all right now, everyone is safe. We can go home now."

Sirius wiped tears from his eyes, "I still have three more tests to take."

His uncle turned to the professor, beaming, "You see that? That's my boy, blood of my blood." To Sirius it seemed that the old gnome has grown taller by an inch or two.

Someone screamed with rage from behind. Sirius circled on his good leg to see Tearge charging at him, crystal knife in hand. Elesinora stepped forward, her mandolin held in front of her like a lance. A sharp razor jumped from a hidden compartment inside the neck. The shiny blade caught the crazed instructor in his one good eye, and was buried completely up to the hilt. Tearge's momentum carried him forward another step. He twisted the knife blindly and then with a shout of triumph, he slid it between Sirius' shoulder blade and neck.

Once again the ground came rushing forward to meet Sirius. He welcomed it like a long lost friend.

"How is the arm, Sirius?" Professor Sudsteph asked. The young gnome felt proud that the elder chose to call him by name instead of using kid or boy.

"A little inflexible, but much better, sir."

"Had a good rest?"

"Yes, professor, excellent." In fact, it was the best sleep he had in years, devoid of any falling dreams.

They were both standing on the hurricane deck of the Lochost's Falcon, one Veribech's several airships. Professor Sudsteph was leaning on the railing surveying the ground below. "Come and sit beside me," the professor said.

"No thanks, I'm good where I am. I think I'm over my fear of heights, but I would rather take it slow if it's all right with you."

"What? Oh sure, sure. Your loss though, the view is breathtaking."

They sat in silence for a while before the professor turned back, annoyed. "Well, out with it already, boy."

"I just wanted to ask..."

"Go on."

"What would the Therans have gained by me cheating on the test?"

"The right question would be: what would the Therans have gained from you carrying their blood charm on your body."

"I guess you have the answer."

The professor took off his glasses and wiped off the chilly mist before continuing. "The Therans have been trying to find the location of Veribech Academy for long time now. The blood charm they gave you was also an astral beacon set to activate at a certain time. Any Wizard worth his money could have followed it strait to Veribech. Good thing we caught it in time. By the way, your Theran contacted three more candidates besides you and Desel. They all succumbed, but once we saw your pendant and knew what we were looking for, it was easy to root them out. We have your integrity and your resilience to thank, not that I would have expected anything less from the nephew of Yuldin Sturdisnortle. How is your uncle anyway?"

"Fine, he's very happy that I got into Veribech. Oh, I forgot. My family sends you their best wishes and thanks for finding them all new jobs so quickly."

The old gnome waved his hand, "Nah, nothing that I wouldn't do for an old friend like your uncle. He was a great adventurer once. Funny! That Theran thought he could keep old Yuldin "Quick Fingers" locked up. Must have had a shock to find an empty cell."

"Yes, well about that Theran. Did you catch him?" Sirius asked.

"Sadly he gave us the slip. Don't look so downcast!" the professor said after seeing Sirius face. "If you're worried about your family, then rest assured, I have not left them without protection. They are under surveillance day and night. If the Theran even dares to show his nose, we'll be on him faster than you can say Veribech. We'll get him eventually, one way or the other. Look, we've arrived."

Sirius followed the professor's outstretched arm in wonder. At first he saw nothing but low clouds over a mountain range. Then the clouds abruptly parted, revealing a hidden valley. Resting like a beautiful baby in its mother's lap, a proud castle lay between snow-capped mountains. Its golden towers kissed the sky and winked at him, inviting him to discover the wonders within.

"Welcome to your new home, Sirius Sturdisnortle," the professor said.

At the Hantigton mansion library back in Travar, a very angry Lord Hantigton paced up and down the oil-



lamp lit room.

"Sit down, my lord," said the purple-robed, silky voiced man. "Let me refill your cup, it will soothe your nerves."

"Nerves? Nerves! You're talking about nerves? You sure have nerve showing yourself here after failing me so miserably. The Hantigtons are forever stained because of your incompetence."

"I can't show my face in public," Desel moaned. The young noble had been drinking heavily ever since he was kicked out of Veribech admission's tests and was suffering from a splitting headache.

"I'm sorry, but these things sometimes happen. I wasn't expecting the little gnome to succeed. I thought he would simply fold and rat out on poor Tearge. Guess I underestimated Sirius, it's easy to do."

"Wait a moment!" Lord Hantigton whirled in place. "What do you mean you thought he would fail? Why did you bother to give him the charm if you thought he wouldn't use it?"

"Oh, that was the beauty of it, I wanted him to fail."

The furious lord opened his mouth in amazement, "What?" he finally managed to spit.

"You know what a decoy is, milord? It's something you put out for display, so that when everybody is looking elsewhere you can do whatever you want behind their backs."

"Sirius was a decoy? I don't understand, what about Tearge?"

"Tearge was a peon, you sometimes have to sacrifice pawn to let your queen make its move. You of all people should know that."

Lord Hantigton grabbed his head, "But why? I don't understand. What did you stand to gain?"

"We are real slow today, aren't we, my lord," Silky voice poured another cup. "Our little gnome was the decoy I put in front of the real infiltrator, a simple smoke screen trick."

"So my son was just another decoy. You never intended him to pass the tests, it was all part of your plan, Theran."

Silky voice simply shrugged his shoulders at that.

"Well this is one plan you won't be seeing the fruits of," the lord snarled. "I'll see to that, you

treacherous dog." He reached for the family sword at his thigh but suddenly found that his hand wasn't obeying him. "Desel," he cried, "the Theran has put a spell on me."

No answer came; the young lord's head was resting on the table and he was snoring heavily.

"The drink. What have you put in our drink?" To his own ears, Hantigton's words sounded slurred, barely comprehensible.

"Nothing, my lord, it's just Keriar soup. Like I said, it's very soothing for the nerves. Well, actually, if you take too much, it can cause your nervous system to collapse, though I doubt if you have that long to live."

Lord Hantigton's legs began to betray him. He stumbled a few steps and then landed heavily face down. Silky voice grabbed one of the oil lamps and gently allowed it to kiss several books. The flames caught quickly on the dry paper and soon the entire bookshelf was burning merrily, sending out orange arms to its neighbors.

Elesinora stepped out of the purple robe and tossed it into the flame. "I guess this has done its part," she said. "I'm sorry, my lord, but since Tearge is dead, you and your son are the only loose threads that lead to me. If it is of any consolation, think of your death as a service to the greatest empire on earth."

The flames spread over the tables and the other bookshelves.

Elesinora bent down until she was face level with Hantigton. "Like I said, sometimes you have to sacrifice a pawn to allow your queen to make the real move. Good night, my lord. I have an airship to catch."

It took half an hour for people to notice the smoke, and by then it was far too late for the library tower. The entire top floor was already a roaring inferno. The southern wall soon collapsed, shooting firefly sparks into the cold night air, and servants were running in opposite directions issuing confused orders. Somebody noticed the tall elven stranger and shouted an order at her back. Elesinora gave him the thumbs up and continued walking as if nothing was amiss.

"Veribech, here I come!" she said to no one in particular and disappeared into the descending gloom.



SCHOOL INFORMATION

RECRUITMENT

So, you want to be an adept?

—Jerrith Bladeweaver, talent scout

Students are recruited to the school in many ways:

1. Veribech talent scouts are stationed in all the larger Barsaivian cities. When a potential adept catches their eye, the scouts offer him or her a medallion: an earth-coin with the student's portrait on one side and the headmaster's on the other. Students who give this medallion to the recruiting office in Travar are immediately tested for admission to Veribech.

2. The school also has scouts that journey throughout Barsaive (and beyond) to seek out promising candidates. During the summer, these scouts organize contests in small towns and larger villages. They carefully observe those who desire to become adepts and determine if any have the right abilities, attitude, and worldview. If the town is lucky, a student will be selected to represent it at Veribech. This person often becomes the promised one for his home village: a future hero! Many towns are very proud of those selected to become adepts at Veribech and hope to welcome their son or daughter back one day, should they live long enough to retire. (Of course, most towns hope their adepts will return before that time as well.)

3. Sometimes adepts who are not affiliated with Veribech also spot potential new adepts. A wizard might meet a young person with the right curiosity and intelligence to become a wizard, but not have time to train a student. Or a swordmaster could notice someone with the storytelling ability to make an excellent troubadour, but obviously not be able to train that person herself. These adepts might tell the potential students about Veribech and suggest they contact the Travar recruiting office.

4. Other times an adept may take on a student and then become unable to finish the student's training. Mentors also sometimes die—the life of an adept is often dangerous. Veribech scouts might inform such unfortunate students about the school.

5. Finally, people who are already adepts may be recruited as teachers or mentors, or be offered the opportunity to further their own training at Veribech.

THE ADMISSIONS TESTS

A rejected student complains to Oakleaf, the Director of Admissions:

—Not accepted! But I made the rug fly! I got out of the stupid maze, I didn't drop the burning egg even though it nearly fried my fingers off, and I even made that dumb beast eat sugar from my hand!

—But did you help your teammate avoid the trap that you so easily stepped over?

—Why? I noticed it, so I passed that test. He failed it.

—No, you did. Adepts are most powerful when they work together. At Veribech, we only train those who can work with others.

After an initial interview, promising candidates must pass a series of tests in Travar, to ensure they are suited for adept training. The tests also attempt to determine if the students are a good match for their intended Disciplines. Non-adepts must take all the tests, while novice adepts may select only those tests related to their Discipline. Adepts above Fourth Circle who wish to study at Veribech might take some of these tests, but usually they undergo a highly individualized interview process instead. In addition, all applicants must demonstrate their artisan skill. The eight admissions tests are:

1. The Flying Carpet

People with a strong sense of will can command a flying carpet. For some, a flying carpet simply lies limply on the ground, but anyone who is adept material should be able to make it move up and down, forwards and backwards, left and right. Those who are very good can direct the carpet to move in any direction. The occasional person can even adjust the carpet's speed or perform tricks with the carpet! (Willpower / Dexterity)

2. The Labyrinth

Everyone should have some sense of direction. Incoming students are shown the map of a labyrinth for 1 minute, and then they are placed inside that very maze. Most prospective adepts require several hours to find their way out. Some people emerge in 1-2 hours, while an exceptionally perceptive person walks straight out in about 10 minutes. Those still lost after 8 hours are rescued, given a good meal, and questioned about their suitability for Veribech. (Perception / Toughness)



3. The Tightrope

For this test, a tightrope is struck between two buildings. The line is fairly wide—it magically makes itself about an inch wider than the prospective student's foot. (Thus it is wider for a troll than for an elf.) Anyone who intends to become an adept must be both brave and nimble enough to walk along this line. Some students cross with flair, showing off their great agility. Others walk sedately and carefully, trying to forget how far down the ground is. Safety precautions are taken: an elemental air spirit is always on call, ready to catch anyone who falls—although the prospective students will hopefully not discover this! Windlings must have their wings rendered useless before taking this test, either by having them drenched in water or bound. (Dexterity / Charisma)

4. The Chimera Egg

The future apprentices must retrieve a chimera egg from a nest not far from the city. The egg is very hot, and those who are not tough enough will drop it. The egg becomes damaged if it is dropped several times, and a cracked egg means a failed test. Prospective apprentices are told to be stealthy and keep an eye out for the mother chimera. In truth, the Veribech faculty plants eggs (or rather egg shells containing true elemental fire) in an unused nest. Chimeras have been observed outside Travar, however, and many students have reported seeing one while talking this test. (Toughness / Strength)

5. The Axe in the Anvil

The incoming students must loose a battle axe from a large anvil. Those who are very strong simply strain their muscles and yank it out. Those who are weaker must use some ingenuity. There are ways to maneuver the axe so that it can slide out easier, and prospective adepts without great strength are expected to be smart enough to compensate for their weaknesses. As with the tightrope, this test is a magical illusion. It adjusts itself so that a troll who is a prospective Warrior pulls out a much larger and heavier axe than a windling who is a prospective Illusionist. (Strength / Perception)

6. The Pegasus

The school also has a young, skittish pegasus. Most people can calm the pegasus a little, although it usually remains nervous and only allows them within a few feet before jumping away. Those who have a way with animals or are naturally very sociable can approach closer and may even be able to touch it. (Charisma / Willpower)

Passing the Tests

In order to pass the above six tests, new, soon-to-be adepts must achieve a target number of 2; those who are already adepts must reach a target number of 2 times their Circle. Non-adepts roll the appropriate Attribute step for each test and may add any relevant skill ranks. Adepts may use talents, skills, and karma where appropriate. If an adept does not take all the tests, increase the target number by 1 for each test not taken.

Applicants may attempt each of the above tests twice. For the first attempt, they need an average success using the primary attribute associated with the test (listed first after the test descriptions). The second attempt requires a good success and uses the secondary test attribute. At the discretion of the selection committee in Travar, applicants need not pass every test, but those who fail must wait a year and a day to reapply. Non-adepts who are not admitted are usually sent home and told that the path of a bold adventurer adept is not for them.

7. On the Other Side

Prospective students who have passed all the previous tests face one final hurdle. Oakleaf, a Thirteenth Circle treeman Elementalist, takes groups of incoming students on a journey through astral space to a place called the Realm of the Woods, which is further described in the Gamemaster Section, p. 35. Here the applicants encounter a wide variety of things and must use all their abilities to work together as a team. Veribech seeks students who are willing to collaborate with and learn from others. The trip into the Realm of the Woods lasts anywhere from a few days to several weeks. Often the group must travel through an overgrown wood with secret ruins, cross ancient walls, avoid traps, meet (and possibly fight!) unusual creatures, parley with spirits, and so on.

Oakleaf observes the candidates carefully during this astral journey. Although the entire admissions committee must approve a prospective student's admission, when Oakleaf recommends that a student not be admitted, he or she is usually sent home.

8. Artisan Skill

The journey to the other side gives the first-time students their first Legend Point award, which they must spend on their first artisan skill. Before students are formally admitted to Veribech, they must display their artisan skill to the Headmaster and a handful of other professors.



SCHOOL GROUNDS

A crisp, cool lake for a morning swim, a hot sauna to ward away the evening chill, and the best library I've ever seen. How do they convince students to leave this place?

—Achsaran, t'skrang Wizard,
after visiting Veribech for a week.

The Veribech campus lies hidden on a plateau in the Dragon Mountains (see the map on the next page). Most of the school buildings are grouped together within Castle Veribech, below. A thick stone wall with several elegant, round towers surrounds the castle buildings, and two towers overlook the main entrance along the east wall. The smithy is conveniently located just inside the castle gates. (Many students drop off their weapons and equipment for repairs as they return to the castle after training.) Veribech's Great Hall takes up the entire ground floor of the school's largest building, and it bustles constantly with banquets, entertainments, and written examinations. The main library, where the books only open for those with proper access, is in the center of campus. Many faculty live in apartments above the library. Student dormitories are located both within and beyond the castle walls.

A small, well-tended road leads from the castle to the lake west of campus. The bathhouse by the lake, with its warm bathtubs, pool, and hot sauna, is a popular place after long classes or training sessions. An elemental fire spirit ensures that the water there remains warm and nice all evening long. A water spirit, called Wasying by the students, cleans the area every night. During the day, she lives in the lake and protects swimmers and boaters. Both of these spirits are very curious about Name-giver ways and love to chat with students and visitors.

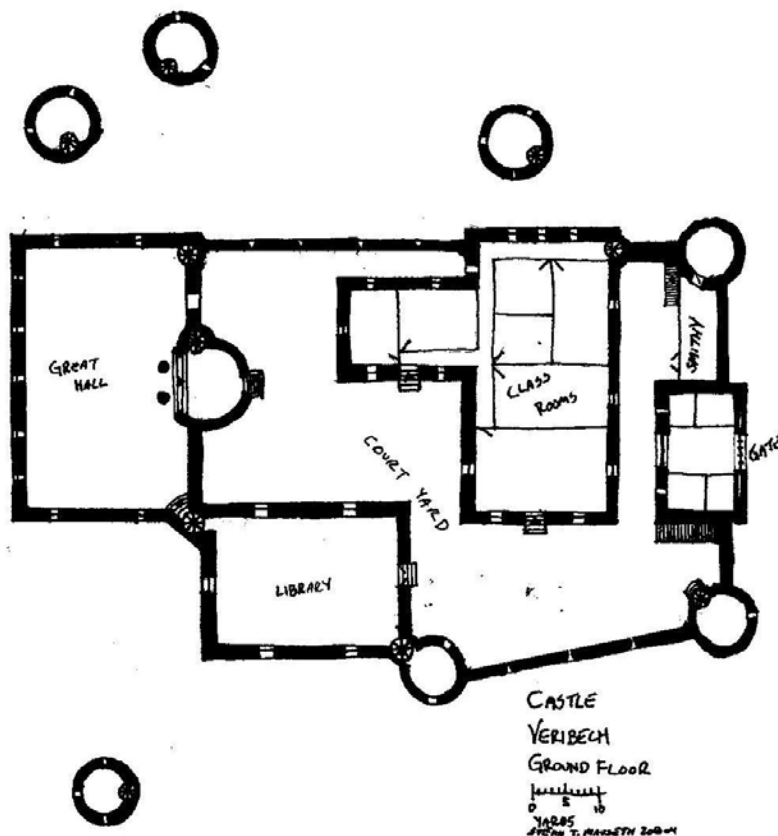
The opened kaer on the lakefront houses many Nethermancer and Thief students, and the Thieves train with the traps that still surround the kaer. A number of nethermancy classes also meet deep within the kaer, where the kaer's wards help protect the novice spirit summoners.

Many laboratories and other secret chambers are buried below the castle, and even many teachers become lost in the underground labyrinth. A direct underground passage links the castle with the kaer, and this journey is eased by a levitation chamber. After stepping onto a platform in the castle's gate

building, one speaks a command word, and then slowly sinks to the underground canal that connects to the kaer.

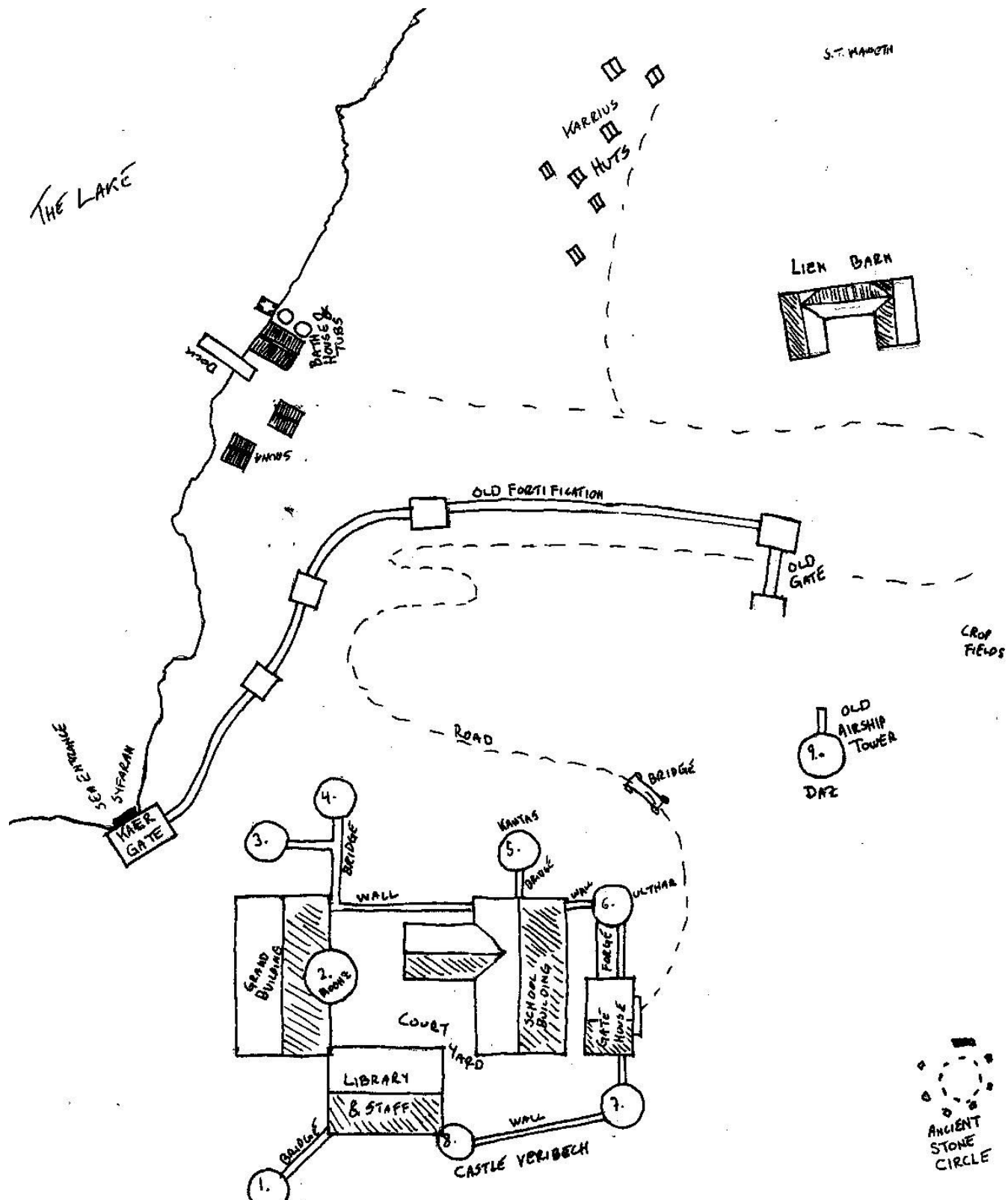
One may also step out of the levitation chamber at several places above the water level. For example, a passage leads to the old airship tower, where the school's airship docks. Before the Scourge, the school's north-western tower served as the dock. Then some unfortunate students crashed the ship during landing, damaging the tower and cracking the castle wall. After finishing the repairs, the headmaster decided it would be safer to convert a tower outside the castle into the airship dock.

An ancient wall extends from the kaer part way around the school. The rest of the wall has crumbled to dust, and its original extent is unclear. The purpose of the ancient stone circle is also unknown, although many adepts have visited it and attempted to decipher its secrets. The crop fields east of campus require remarkably little effort to cultivate; perhaps they have been magically enchanted. The barn and stables house many animals, from ordinary ponies and horses to thundra beasts and emus. More information about the school grounds may be found in the gamemaster section, and a contour map of the campus area is provided on p. 52.





MAP OF THE VERIBECH CAMPUS AND SURROUNDINGS





HOUSES

I'm sure everyone remembers their first day at Veribech. I walked to where my room should be and found nothing but a shadow. I looked up and realized I was going to be living in a flying building! Then someone came up behind me and said some nonsense word—and we started rising in the air! I was fresh out of the safe caverns of Throal—I nearly lost my lunch. The view from my room was amazing, although it took several weeks before I could look out the window without my head starting to spin.

—Kelrik, dwarf wizard, recent graduate of Veribech

Students live in one of seven dormitories. Each house was founded by one of the other members of Mantor Sudsteph's adventuring party. The houses are named after the companion's surname, and each is associated with that person's animal companion or familiar. An eighth house existed before the Scourge, but it remains closed. What Disciplines its inhabitants followed is not discussed.

NAME	TRAIT	ANIMAL	LOCATION	COLORS	MAIN DISCIPLINES
Syfaran	Success	Blood raven	Dungeon	Purple and Gold	Thieves & Nethermancers
Moonz	Power	Chimera	Flying tower	Black and Silver	Wizards & Archers
Kantas	Courage	Unicorn	Tower	White and Silver	Swordmasters & Illusionists
Ulthar	Invention	Storm wolf	Underground caves	Blue and Yellow	Weaponsmiths & Elementalists
Daz	Journey	Pegasus	Airship hangar	Green and Brown	Air Sailors & Sky Raiders
Lien	Love	Thundra beast	Outside barn	Red and White	Beastmasters & Cavalrymen
Karrius	Craftsmanship	Esparga	Huts by the lake	Brown and Red	Troubadours & Warriors

Syfaran consists mostly of Thief and Nethermancer adepts. These two Disciplines question the common folk's moral perspectives and need to find their own paths outside the mainstream.

Moonz is preferred by the calm and focused Wizards and Archers.

Kantas houses the sometimes haughty and always stylish Swordmasters and Illusionists.

Ulthar gives us many useful new items, created by Weaponsmiths and Elementalists.

Daz is for the travelers: Air Sailors and Sky Raiders.

Lien is for Beastmasters, Cavalrymen, those who take up familiars, and others who understand animals. Many of them sleep with their animal companions.

Karrius houses those who place a high value on art, history, and legends: Troubadours and Warriors.

Scouts love to discover new areas and may be found in all houses. While the houses contain adepts of only two main Disciplines, one does

sometimes find Warriors in Moonz, or Troubadours in Kantas. Other students choose to spend some time living among adepts with other worldviews, as a way to further their educations and prepare themselves for living with an adventuring band after graduation.

The sleeping quarters inside each house are organized by the adepts' status. New, novice apprentices initially share a room with someone who intends to follow the same path. At the end of the first year, once they have passed their initial exams, students move to larger rooms and may choose their own roommates. After formally declaring their intended Discipline, students may move into small, private rooms. First through Fourth Circle adepts have nicer, individual rooms. Visiting adepts of Fifth Circle or higher usually stay in the faculty housing's guest rooms. There are also provisions for older students (usually elves) who discover the aptitude for an adept path later in life and come to Veribech with a spouse (who must also have been accepted for adept training).

The dormitory common rooms contain study areas, a small library with books relating to the adept ways of the house's primary residents, paintings of former students and airboard champions, a comfortable sitting area by the fireplace, and a stockroom with equipment for the appropriate Discipline.





CLASSES

So, how many of you already know how to handle a sword? Yes, yes, you Warriors up front always raise your hands, and you Swordmasters so stylishly off to the side always nod. Humph! You lot learned how ordinary people use swords. Forget all that crap. Wielding a weapon isn't about holding it the right way or moving your feet into the proper stances. By the end of this class, even you Troubadours lurking in the back will understand: when adepts draw their swords, they call forth magic.

—Tjodl Blackhammer to the first-year students

Although many students have an idea of what Discipline they intend to pursue, the courses at Veribech offer an overview of a variety of Disciplines, so young people can be certain they are devoting themselves to the proper path. The first class period occurs before lunch, the second after lunch, and older students may have additional evening courses. Younger students take a number of shorter classes, and have as

many as three classes before and/or after lunch. They take classes with students from many Disciplines, and learn a variety of skills in order to become well-educated adepts. All students who graduate from Veribech take the classes listed below. Of course, students also spend a great deal of time learning the specifics of their chosen Discipline. More specific and advanced classes are listed in the next section.

REQUIRED COURSES

First year

- Artisan Skill
- Geography: Barsaive
- Gym
- History: Barsaive
- Karma and Rituals

Second Year

- Durability
- Geography: Thera & its Provinces
- Gym
- History: Scourge
- Magic: The basics

Third year

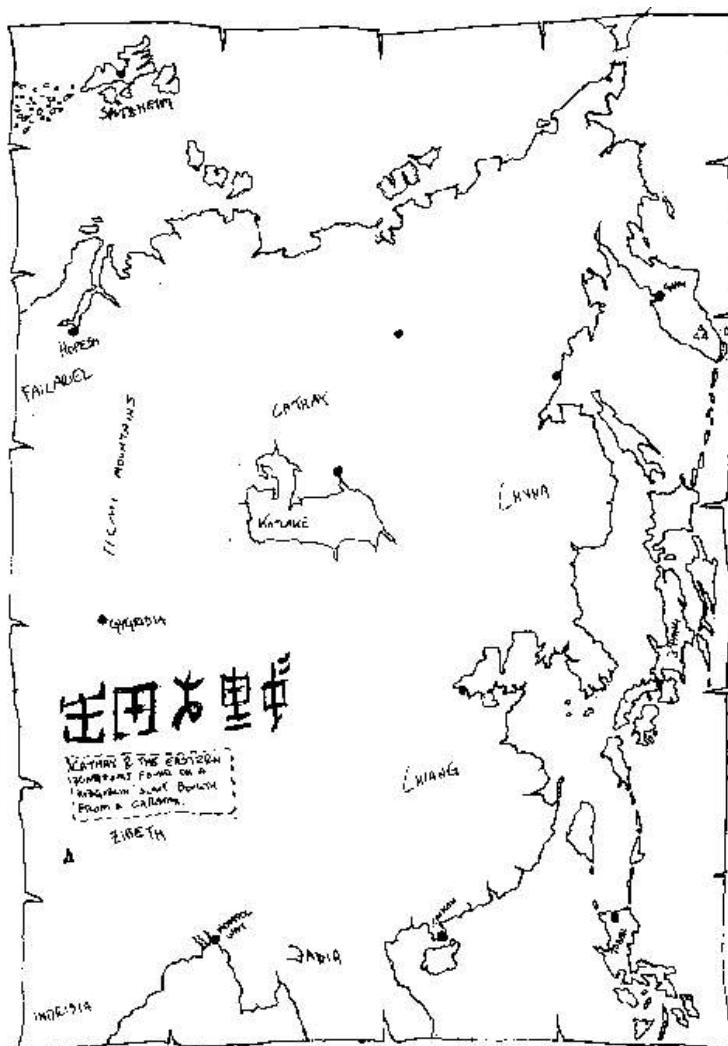
- Basic Heraldry and Etiquette
- Beasts and Dangerous Creatures
- Geography: Northern Kingdoms
- Gym
- History: Thera

Fourth year

- Geography: Cathay and the Far East
- Astral Studies
- Gym
- Herbs & Magical Plants
- Passions
- Thread Weaving

Fifth year

- Enchanted Items
- Gym
- Horrors





ELECTIVES AND ADVANCED COURSES

This section lists advanced and Discipline-specific courses, and provides some additional information on the required courses listed above. It is organized by subject area.

Arts and Crafts

After the Scourge, this subject area has become increasingly important, as all adepts must know an artisan skill. The school offers classes in a variety of different arts and crafts. Students are expected to practice their art during their free time (or by joining a club or other social group), so that they can demonstrate significant proficiency with their artisan skill during their graduation exam. Additional artisan skills may be taught by request or special arrangement with an instructor.



Regularly offered artisan classes:

Basket Weaving

Carving

Cooking

Dance

Drama

Embroidery

Engraving

Face Painting

Gem carving

Musical instruments

Painting

Poetry

Runic Carving

Sculpting

Singing

Storytelling

Tattooing

War Masks

Combat

Archery

Artillery

Art of the Blade

Swordsmanship

Defense

Mounted Combat

Unarmed Combat

Aim, how to fletch new arrows, make crossbow bolts and cure bow strings.

Fortresses and airship war-machines unveiled.

How to care for your blade (more info in the **Book of Blades**).

The basics of wielding a sword, as well as the arts of fencing and dueling.

Mostly held on the knight's battle arena.

In depth study into wrestling and martial arts styles, as well as claw shape instruction for Beastmasters.

Flying Training

Air Vessels

Small Flying Vessels

Practical experience on board the school's airship.

Airboards, carpets, brooms and other magical flying objects. Fun for all!

Geography

Barsaive

Including cities, kaers,
and the Serpent River

Thera and Theran Provinces

(Rugaria, Tilea, Creana,
Vasgothia, Marac, Indrissa,
and other provinces)

*(These areas are (or soon will be)
detailed in the EDPT*

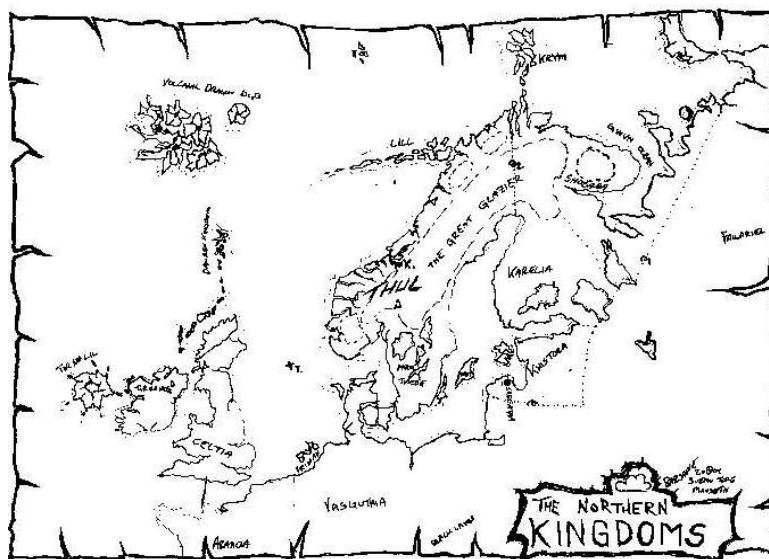
Encyclopedia.

Celtia and Thul

The Far East: Cathay and Jadia

Fekara and Other Unreachable
Places

Star-reading and Navigation





Gym

The apprentices improve their physical condition with all sorts of strength and endurance training. Even spellcasters must be fit enough to walk all over Barsaive, flee from enraged creatures, Horror constructs etc. Students of different races and Disciplines take gym together, so they can learn about the relative strengths and weaknesses of themselves and their future companions. While elves may be faster runners, a troll can likely bench press a great deal more weight, for example. Students also do rope dragging by their teeth, airboarding down hillsides, hull-jumping (see the **Terror in the Skies** adventure), and other activities.

Veribech graduates benefit greatly from their five years of gym class. They pay only half the legend point cost the first time they raise their physical attributes (Dexterity, Strength, and Toughness) as they rise in Circles.

History

Barsaive
Scourge
Thera

Recent history, and Barsaive before the Therans first arrived.
What was life in a kaer like? What happened above ground?

Magical Artifacts

Enchanting Items
Forging
Item History
Weapon History

The basics on creating magical items, including Pattern items.
The anvil clangs day and night from this class.
Legends about the many wondrous items in Barsaive
The secrets of blades, shields, armor, helmets, and other more unusual battle equipment.

Magic Arts

Astral Studies

This class provides an understanding of the other side and its many netherworlds. Offered to students of all Disciplines.

Astrology
Blood Magic

Blood Charms and Oaths, Depatterning and other effects of blood magic are revealed in this class.
For Wizards and Illusionists.

Divinations
Durability
Elements
Horrors

Basic and in depth studies on the true elements
What are Horrors? How do you fight Horrors and recognize their tricks?
How to avoid becoming Horror-marked and what to do if you do become Horror marked. Some professors watch this class for future Horror Stalkers, Purifiers and Lightbearers.

Illusions
Karma and Rituals
Knacks
Magical Defense
Nethermancy

Only the Illusionists themselves know where this class is held.
What is Karma? Also: how to form group patterns and take blood oaths.
Usually only taught to Journeyman adepts and above.
How to resist magical spells and Horror powers.
This class is held in a dark and quiet space, deep underground, which has even more astral protection than most of the school.

Spirits

Basics on both Named elemental and dead spirits are revealed here. After the first year, this class is divided into Elementalist and Nethermancer sections.

Thread Weaving

All apprentices gain an understanding of Thread Weaving, even though many of them will not be able to use the Thread Weaving talent until Fourth Circle.

Wizardry

This class meets in the highest room of the northern tower.

Passions

Different questors journey to the school to talk about their Passions. Questors of mad Passions are not welcome. It is rumored that some Passions have personally visited the campus to meet their future questors. Several of the faculty are questors, and they regularly teach about their chosen Passion.



Scout Classes

Beasts & Dangerous Creatures

How to avoid creatures and travel through the countryside without needlessly fighting animals.

Herbs & Magical Plants

Create potions (poisons!) and learn the effects of different plants.

Kaer Delving

All types of kaers and citadels are discussed, including the basics on kaer engineering, as well as some secrets about the Rites of Protection and Passage.

Mountaineering

Climbing and the use of proper equipment and clothing.

Tracking & Hunting

Not just useful for Scouts and Beastmasters!

Traps & Trickery

Specific information on traps used to protect kaers. In one section of this class, students practice their trap initiative against a Giant Trap Door spider illusion, as well as on other traps in the caverns below the school.

Politics & Tactics

Etiquette

Basics

The first year students master the etiquette rules that are expected of travelers in Barsaive.

Diplomatic

How to deal with mayors, lahalas, merchants, and other leaders.

Dragon

How not to be eaten should you meet a dragon! Taught by Veriana.

Royal

Proper forms of address, attire, and behavior for formal court appearances. (Or, should I take my sword?)

Law How do laws vary across Barsaive, and in various racial communities?

Politics

Strategy and Tactics

Warfare





EXAMS AND ADVANCEMENT

“Remove a pearl from Death’s finger. I want it on my desk tomorrow morning. Do that, and I’ll recommend you for advancement to First Circle.” That’s all her mentor had said, before winking and walking away. Luckily, she knew what he meant. Getting a “pearl” was no problem. One of the headmaster’s former traveling companions was buried near campus, and “pearl lilacs” grew on his grave. Of course, students shouldn’t be tramping around the gravesite after dark, but no one would see her, and she wouldn’t leave a trace, would she? Putting the flower in her mentor’s office by morning would be difficult, as his office was locked and trapped. She’d tried to break in before, and she’d always failed. She doubted even a full, First Circle Thief could crack his locks. She thought again about what he had said, and then she smiled. She was going to become an adept!

The next morning she walked confidently into her mentor’s office. “Where’s my pearl?” he asked.

“You know, it’s an awfully long trek over to Death’s Sea. You should be impressed that I’m back already.” They both laughed. She knew that even her mentor still became slightly distracted at that instant when he started to laugh. She seized the moment and slipped the flower out of her sleeve.

“Congratulations,” he said. “I knew a little lava wouldn’t stop you.”

When new non-adept students arrive at the school, they do not know any talents; they have only skills. They first start learning some of these skills as talents, and then they learn about the Karma Ritual and receive more detailed information about the different adept paths. After a full year’s study, they take their first exams (which may be mini deeds worth Legend Points). At the winter equinox, students who pass these initial exams go through a ritual to become Apprentices. During a ceremony half way through their study at Veribech, students formally declare what Discipline they plan to pursue. They display the talents they have learned, and demonstrate that they have mastered their Discipline’s Karma Ritual. Their future mentors watch this ceremony.

As is clear from the above course listing, students at Veribech learn a wide variety of skills, not merely their Discipline’s talents. Veribech ensures that its graduates are capable of working in many areas, from surviving in the Poison Forest, to exploring Parlainth, to navigating the political structure of Throal. Students who graduate from Veribech are at least First Circle of their chosen Discipline. Of course, First Circle adepts are still novices. They may be ready to face some challenges on their own, but they still have a great deal to learn about their Discipline. Many students continue to work with their mentors on special projects after becoming First Circle and do not permanently leave Veribech until they are Second, Third, Fourth, or even Fifth Circle. Many of these special projects involve travel away from Veribech and allow the adepts to gain experience and renown in Barsaive. Some students do leave the school shortly after attaining First Circle, often to work with a group of adepts as recommended by their former teachers.

After graduation, students receive a diploma and may add the title of *Veribech* to their Name (e.g. Blackgrim Bloodhorn of *Veribech*). Those who use the *of Veribech* title in their formal Name may add 1 Step to their Half Magic Tests. They also receive a special, free Karma talent knack, which is available only to Veribech graduates. This knack allows them to increase their Karma Step once per day, by a number of Steps equal to their Rank in Karma Ritual. Veribech graduates are often paid more for their services than other adepts are, assuming the employer has heard of Veribech’s reputation. The best student of the year also receives a Parlainth Scribe Pen. Sometimes former students and retired adepts donate their equipment to the school, to pass on to the next generation. Some lucky graduates receive these gifts as well.

Later on, adepts often visit (or revisit) the school to continue their studies and advance to higher Circles. To rise in Circle, experienced adepts train with their mentors and then take exams, which vary greatly depending on the student’s Discipline. They may take a test, make a journey, accomplish a deed, or do some other feat related to their scholarship—otherwise follow the Earthdawn advancement rules as usual.

When advancing from Novice to Journeyman, Journeyman to Master, or Master to Warden, a deed or quest, is required before students are considered worthy for the next step in their advancement. When students have successfully accomplished their deed, the school arranges a gathering for the entire school. The students undertake a ritual in front their mentor, the school’s headmaster, and in rare occasions even a Ghost Master—especially among adepts of Tenth Circle and higher. This ritual is a deed worth legend points.



OTHER THINGS TO DO

The school also has many extracurricular activities the students can join in the evenings and many of these groups take excursions off campus during the school year. Students often meet their future adventuring companions in these groups.

-The Airboard League: Airboards are finely carved wooden boards that have strips of true elemental air woven into them, so that they levitate 5 to 20 inches above the ground. Many students use them at Veribech. With a little practice, a rider can lean left or right to turn the board, lean forward to make the board go backwards or slow down, and lean backward to raise the board higher or make it go faster. (Depending on the model, they move up to 150 yards per round on level ground and sail even faster downhill.) Airboards are as common as hot pots at Veribech, and come in different sizes and styles depending on the size of the buyer's pouch. Some models give more stability, others offer faster speeds or higher flying heights, while still others allow the rider to do graceful jumps and tricks. (More details on airboarding can be found in the New Skills and Magical Items sections, p. 42 and p. 49.) Good airboarding requires the Board Riding skill, or the Trick Boarding knack associated with the Trick Riding talent. Cavalrymen adepts find that many of their riding talents work well with airboards.

Veribech holds yearly championships for the highest speed, best jumps and most impressive style. Many students of various Disciplines are involved with these individual competitions. Each house also has an airboard team. These teams compete in monthly speed contests down a nearby mountainside, where anything is allowed, including pushing, making obstacles or traps, etc. The course is three miles long, including tunnels, jumps, rocks and three fixed obstacles.

Each team consists of six members: two speeders, two harriers, and two blockers. The speeders travel the entire length of the course, and their main goal is to reach the finish line first. The harriers start at staggered locations along the course. The opposing speeders do not know where they are—until they spring into action. The blockers are allowed on the course a fixed time before the race to make new, unexpected traps and obstacles for the opposing speeders and harriers. The airboard races cause many injuries to the competitors, and make a great deal of work for the school's Questor of Garlen and other healers. Nevertheless, the sport has spread quickly; many cities now have their own airboard teams, and a Barsaivian Major League recently opened.

-Drama: This activity helps students develop various Charisma-based skills, such as Acting, Artist, Conversation, Dance, First Impression, Flirting, and Haggle, as well as skills such as Acrobatics, Disguise, and Speak Language.



-Embroidery: Many magicians participate in embroidery groups, where they learn how to create matrices on their robes. Embroideries with the Veribech herald shield are somehow better than ordinary matrices when used within the limits of the school.

-Gourmet Cooking: Students with a fine nose and the taste for good food and drink can learn how to cook the highest quality foods. These students assist the kitchen staff with special dishes. They also learn how to distinguish between good homemade food and magically-made food from spells like Plant Food or the Emotion Food knack.

-Games: Indrissian Warchess, Thulish Basse, Gambling games (dice, cards), Darts, Blowguns, Bartewhips

-Investigation: A class for future officers, spies and forensics experts. Throal often recruits members for its secret organizations here.

-Study of Herbs and Potions: Some students have been known to brew alcohol or other "unofficial" substances on campus. Herbs that help clear the head or improve memory are also popular. This group is especially sought after during exam times, despite a certain school rule listed below.

-Ropes & Knots: Popular among the Air Sailors and Sky Raiders. They learn tricks, how to throw rope hooks onto targets and how to tie exact lengths of rope, as well as commanding magical ropes and lasso throwing.



-Sports:

-**Air Ballet:** Windlings with the wind-dance talent or skill, as well as others with the Air Dance talent may learn a very gallant and entertaining style of dancing. Those with the Air Dance talent may learn the Air Ballet knack and gain the magical ability to impress others with their dancing. (Read more under Air Ballet knack, p. 42).

-**Airboarding:** The students who join their house's Airboard team need to practice. An evening course meets twice a week for the Airboard team members, and more often for those who need additional practice. Others meet in more informal airboarding groups to exchange tips, tricks, or stylish maneuvers.

-**Dueling:** Popular among Warriors, Archers, Troubadours and especially Swordmasters. Here Swordmasters learn the most biting taunts and the cleverest fencing tricks. An insult knack may also be learned by high- Circled adepts.



-**Hull Jumping:** Students dive from an airship with a rope around their leg. (See the **Terror in the Skies** adventure for more information.)

-**Tossball** (Ork Soccer): A very violent and brutal form of soccer, in which players occasionally die. Mostly played by Obsidimen, Orks and Trolls. (See the Orks section on the Allen Varney homepage: http://www.allenvarney.com/ed_ork.html#02.)

-**Tower Duel:** Magicians stand in opposite towers and cast paralyzing spells on each other. Although the apprentice magicians are only casting illusionary spells, the spells appear very powerful and extremely impressive. These spells, learned especially for these duels, are specifically designed only to paralyze, not damage or

otherwise endanger students. All first Circle adepts, and advanced apprentices can learn the dueling spell, which is a weakened variant of the 6th Circle wizard Sleep spell. (For more information, see the Knockdown spell in the New Spells section, p. 44.)

-**Wilderness Survival:** This scouting group learns how to survive in the wilderness, how to recognize edible herbs, roots, fruits and other wild plants, and how to avoid poisonous plants and funguses. They also learn additional information on how to handle encounters with dangerous creatures, how to track and hunt, and how to set snares and traps. They often take off campus journeys to visit local fauna, which is especially valuable for those who do not have much experience in the wilderness.

-**Secret Clubs:** These clubs recruit members privately. One group meets in secret to learn about the background of dragons—and likely to be recruited to Mountainshadow's service. Another group practices certain "liberating" skills that are not emphasized in the formal Thief adept courses. The Oaknut club helps elves deal with the tragedy of the Blood Wood and likely recruits for the Seekers of the Heart. The gamemaster should feel free use other ideas from the **Secret Societies of Barsaive** sourcebook for other secret clubs.

SCHOOL RULES

These rules are rooted in common sense, but with so many different races and types of adepts together, they are strictly enforced. A large plaque on the school gates reminds everyone of the rules:

- §1: Respect the staff
- §2: Respect the other students
- §3: Do not cheat
- §4: Do not harm others
- §5: Outside visitors are not welcome
- §6: Stay quiet in class
- §7: No running in the halls
- §8: Students must live on campus
- §9: Drugs or other stimulants are not allowed.

Students who act suspicious may be put under a Clarion Call spell by Prof. Tirill or Headmaster Sudsteph himself and asked to explain themselves. Students who admit and regret their mistakes are usually given a warning and allowed to continue their studies. Discovery of herbal or magical stimuli that enhance a student's abilities during final exam period is particularly forbidden and will result in expulsion, however.



STAFF AND FACULTY LISTING

Some of the staff members are not ordinary Name-givers or adepts: spirits, fairies and even a dragon are found among the staff. Besides teachers, the staffs also includes a librarian, a head chef who ensures the students receive proper nourishment, a healer with her own hospital wing, a questor for Garlen, a gardener, and a building caretaker. Some of the staff listed below have been borrowed from previously published materials. If these characters have already appeared in an ongoing campaign, and they have died or do not fit into Veribech, the gamemaster should simply rename them and change any details as needed.

Mantor Sudsteph

Headmaster, Illusions

Mantor is the founder and headmaster of Veribech. More information about him is in section on the school's history and the Adventure Hooks section. He is also mentioned in the Goblin (General Info) section and the Pipes of Time artifact description in the Encyclopedia.

Kara Longsnout

Administration, Magic

Kara is always busy with paperwork and nothing would get done without her. She offers courses on magic.

Anzabathan

Horrors, Purifying, Trading & Mathematics

This shimmering, black crystal obsidiman is from the Blackheart liferock in the Twilight Peaks. He is Omasu's mentor. He is a questor of Chorrolis, and he runs a secret gambling room, from which he earns a nice side income. He does not teach regular classes, as he is often away from campus. As a Purifier adept, he still has many unfinished



tasks in Barsaive. He also advises higher Circle adepts about how to take care of the wealth and treasures they find on their quests. He encourages them make profitable loans and to invest in worthy businesses.



Ch'Elasom

Elementalism

This t'skrang appeared in **Blades** (p. 101) and is now a Thirteenth Circle Elementalist. She recently laid three eggs, which she keeps in her private quarters. She is planning a journey to her homestead in the southern Liaj Jungle, where her family will take care of the eggs. She will likely be asking several students to accompany her there soon.

Dalya Red Roses

Horrors, Beasts, and Wilderness

Dalya first appeared in the **Infected** adventure. She is an elf Beastmaster, who takes students on journeys, where they encounter different beasts and learn how to manage them. Professor Takaris often assists her classes on these journeys. As a former member of the Grim Legion, she also has significant knowledge about Horrors, law and justice.

Doctor Grim

Ork, Theran & Cara Fahd History

Doctor Grim is Cathon Grimeye's spirit. Before the Scourge, Cathon Grimeye was an orc prince in Cara Fahd. According to legend, his lance made a volcano in the last major battle with Landis, and then his spirit became locked into a Soulstone (see the **Blades** adventure). He is searching for his lost lance, as well as other Cara Fahd relics. A certain Veribech professor got his claws on the Soulstone and has promised to free Cathon's spirit if he offers lesions at the school for a decade and a day.



Garlthik Jr.

Urban Survival

Garlthick One Eye's nephew has worked with his uncle for the past 40 years and he is now teaching the next Thief generation. He offers intensive 1-week courses every other month. Some students have been known to visit Garlthik's uncle in Kratas.

Grell

Bloodpaining, Nethermancy, War masks

This goblin teaches the artisan skill of tattooing, as well as courses on nethermancy, the astral, spirits, and the goblin's fate during the Scourge. Grell taught at Veribech before the Scourge and is a close friend of the headmaster. He also has a strange, "playful" creature called an imp as a familiar, see p. 48.

Jerreck Escalanas

Soothsaying, Singing, Legends, Item History, Boardriding

An experienced dwarf Troubadour, Jerreck holds his classes in the uppermost room of the southern tower. He is also president of the new Barsaivian Airboard League. Characters can easily be threaded into his earlier adventures. For more information about him, see the Earthdawn novels: **The Longing Ring**, **Mother Speaks**, and **Poisoned Memories**.



Jollum Trixter

Troubadour, Cooking, Traveling, Spitting

Jollum is a bald quartling who owns a well-renown restaurant and inn called *Jollum's Steakhouse* located in Bartertown. His meals are legendary; his guests always leave happier and somehow healthier than when they arrived. He invented the Emotion Food talent knack to augment his Emotion Song talent. With this knack, his food inspires people and makes them friendlier toward their neighbors. He also knows a great deal about herbs, potions, and poisons. (Many young quartlings are notoriously interested in poisons—see the quartling entry in the Encyclopedia). Since Jollum must often take care of his steakhouse business, he offers a week-long, intensive course every other month. Students with an interest in cooking may apply for summer jobs in his Steakhouse. He

is planning to franchise other steakhouses in Travar, the Floating City and Urupa, and he is recruiting students for these new locations. He also has a twin spirit, Hollum. Hollum is a Druid, who takes care of the plants and stone circles in the Realm of the Woods and supplies Jollum with many exotic herbs and spices. (For more information about Hollum, see the Realm of the Woods section p. 35.)

Josef Liliali

Item Legends, Storytelling, Tail fencing, Karma, Serpent River Lore

Josef is a t'skrang Troubadour from the Floating City (see the **Serpent River** sourcebook). She also leads the drama group that performs nearly every weekend.

Karl

Air sailing and Sky jumping

First mentioned in the **Terror in the Skies** adventure, Karl is now a Ninth Circle human Skyraider. He leads air sailing and hull jumping classes. (More information about hull jumping is in **Terror in the Skies**.) Karl is also the captain of the school's private airship, *Gorm the Third*, a large galleon that can transport up to 100 passengers. The school uses the ship to transport students back and forth to Travar. Karl also transports goods and supplies for the school, using students as aircrew.

King Valurus, the First

History, Diplomacy, Heraldry and Politics

This dwarf spirit (Ghost Master) knows many interesting facts about pre-Scourge Barsaive, lost cities, items, and other legends. As long as the students bow to him and use his proper title ("Your Highness"), he is very cooperative. He is often seen in discussions with the Professor, and he seems to have known (and might still be in contact with) the Professor's brother. When confronted with his fate (that he is dead), he cries out, "Rubbish!" and declares a feud against that particular student. It is possible, although difficult, to appease the royal spirit.

Krothis Bullseye

Familiars, Mounts, and Mounted Combat

A Thirteenth Circle ork cavalrywoman and Krathys Gron's cousin, Bullseye was recruited as





to the “Shrine of Roses” in the Realm of the Woods to alleviate the ill effects of the wood longing. Veribech is a safe haven for Takaris, and he will do any thing to stay there. He is working closely with the Seekers of the Heart to improve the Ritual of De-thorning. Today he is an Eleventh circle Wizard and Tenth circle Warrior. He also knows something about the disappearance of Queen Alachia’s Everliving Flower.



Tantas Brocfang

Weaponsmithing and Weapon History

This orc Weaponsmith has a large smithy just to the right of the gate entrance. Future Weaponsmiths work with him to forge their own weapons and armor, as well as items for their fellow students. They also repair weapons, because students should not practice with damaged weapons. Weaponsmiths graduating from Veribech are expected to make their own armor and weapons, which they must use for at least a year and a day.

Tirill

Illusions & Head Librarian

Tirill is an elf Illusionist who teaches classes on illusion magic and on the history of Wyrn Wood. She never speaks of her own past, stating only that she lived in Throal during the Scourge. She also never speaks of her family. When someone once mentioned she looked so similar to the beautiful Queen Alachia (except for the thorns, of course) that the two of them could be sisters, her eyes flashed shock and hatred for a moment, before she composed herself well enough to laugh at the “complement.” More information on Tirill can be found in the Gamemaster section, p. 33.

Tjodl Blackhammer

Warrior & Artisan Skills

This troll enforces strict discipline in his classes and is a well-renown painter. His paintings are found in the official houses of many major

cities. He shares his painting techniques in an artisan class, which, oddly, takes breaks for forced marches. Tjodl believes in making students better soldiers as well as artists. Tjodl wields a very large war hammer, which has the ability to crush and shatter smaller weapons. He is a constant source of work for the schools’ Weaponsmith apprentices.

Varras

Archery, Artillery

Varras is a human Archer and a retired, high-ranking soldier from Throal. He is familiar with heavy artillery.

Venomtooth

Beast mastery, Blood Charms, Rugaria and Rural Stealth

A dwarf Beastmaster from the Theran province Rugaria, Venomtooth has used some disturbing Theran blood charms to advance her unarmed combat. She has changed her teeth into large crystal fangs, fitted with a poison sac charm, and now has a venomous bite. She unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate a leader of the Theran Sixth Fleet in Rugaria, and then moved to Barsaive.

Veriana

Geography

Veriana leads all the Geography classes. She’s a common dragon who was raised by Mountainshadow. She appears in class as a tall, beautiful human female, but she tells curious students what she really is. If a student does not believe her, she grabs him firmly with a claw and takes him on a flight outside. She often takes students on excursions to other lands, using a variant of the Nethermancer’s Gateway spell. The first years’ trip is a visit to the Northern Kingdoms.

Zamirica One-Knee

Scribe & Archivist

Since the senior archivist of the Throal Library Jerriv is exceedingly meticulous and demanding, Zamirica One-Knee, a stuttering dwarf (Throal p. 91), applied for a job at Veribech’s library. At Veribech, Zamirica’s stuttering has become less of a problem and it now only appears when someone mentions the Great Library of Throal.





FOR GAMEMASTERS ONLY!

THE FOUNDING OF THE SCHOOL

The original founders of the school were Professors Gorm and Bech, two masters of their arts: Gorm was an ork Nethermancer / Thief with an interest in dark, death patterns, the afterlife, and the astral; Bech was a multi-Discipline human adept, deeply interested in all the magical styles and also Name-givers' patterns. They traveled widely to pursue their research interests, and Gorm disappeared a long time ago, during one of his astral study tours.

The truth is that these two were both dragons. Today Bech is known as Mountainshadow. Gorm and Mountainshadow were twins from the same egg, and they both used variations of Vergi (Veri and Verji) as part of their first names while in Name-giver form. Mountainshadow, for obvious reasons, has discontinued this tradition. Aside from their brother Icewing, only a few other Great Dragons know this history.

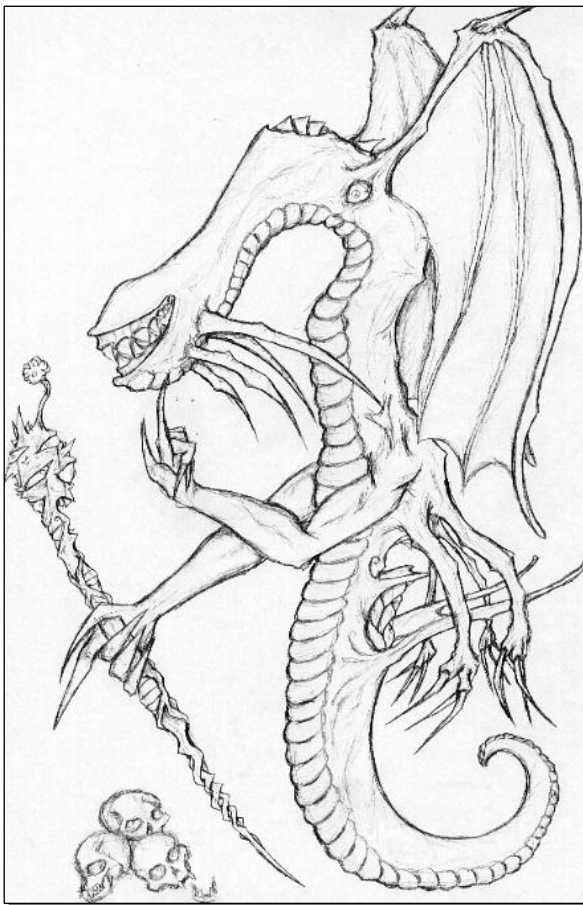
On one of Gorm's journeys, he opened a gate to an undiscovered realm, where he became trapped by an incredibly powerful Horror. After many millennia of torture, deformation, and disfigurement, he was transformed into the Horror's puppet. In his pain and misery, Gorm gave the Horror information about our world. This Horror now sends its pet "Horror Dragon" back to our world whenever it can. Why Icewing has a different version of this story is clear (see "How thing came to be" in the **Book of Horrors**). Why should Icewing reveal that a dragon's curiosity caused the Scourge?

After Gorm's disappearance, the original school remained closed for many, many years. About fifty years

before the Scourge, Mantor Sudsteph approached Mountainshadow with his dream to open a school that would bring together adepts of all Disciplines. The "Professor" and Mantor then founded a school on the ruins of Bech's old one. The school grounds are a place of power and bear the same Name as the old school, but today's students do not know of the school's ancient past.

Usun and Aban opposed the school's reopening (fearing it would make Mountainshadow too powerful). However, the school for assassins in Aban's territory did

weaken her arguments. After a lengthy discussion, Mountainshadow agreed that the other great dragons could each send one drake to the school to learn more about Name-givers' language, culture, and way of life. Mountainshadow made it clear, however, that those drakes must obey all the school's rules and not come within 10 miles of his lair's entrance, or he would execute them without additional warning.



ALTERNATIVE FOUNDING

If the Veribech described in this book is too large to fit easily into your campaign, consider instead the Veribech training camp.

Mountainshadow protected several villages during the Scourge, and these villagers are now fiercely loyal to him (see the Dragons' Network section in **Secret Societies of Barsaive**.)

Mountainshadow wants as many of these people as possible to be trained as adepts. He has invited several higher-Circle adepts to the Dragon Mountains and organized a training camp called Veribech for his servants. Pick a few trainers and whatever else catches your fancy from this book—several of the adventure hooks below could also work with this setting.



THE PROFESSOR

No one knows what the Professor teaches or what his Discipline is. Several students were once overheard discussing him:

—I saw him wave his hand and cast a spell of some sort, so he must be a spellcaster. I couldn't tell what Discipline the spell was, though.

—He must know them all. Everybody here respects him, even Veriana, Tirill, and Oakleaf.

—He can't know every Discipline. That's absurd. I've never seen him on an airship, so he's not a Sky Raider.

—I've never seen him wield a sword either, but I'm certain he's a Swordmaster.

—Why, because you're one, and you want him to mentor you?

—No, no. He just moves so gracefully; he must be a Swordmaster.

—I always thought he walks with the confidence of a Warrior.

—Did you hear that he walked out of Master Praylan's performance? That elf is a 14th Circle Troubadour! Everyone was completely enraptured, when the "Professor" suddenly got up, mumbled something about another appointment, and left. No one else even saw him leave. Only Praylan himself noticed him go, and he was shocked that anyone could escape his great performance. Praylan told me that himself!

—The Professor might be a Thief too. Did you see him that time when Prof. Garlthik was approaching him stealthily? The Professor just calmly spun around—and his cloak literally jumped away from Garlthik's fingers. It was amazing!

—And Garlthik nearly fainted at the Professor's smile! The Professor is so scary. I heard someone once tried to get into his office while he was away. He couldn't even speak about what happened. I wouldn't go near there. The Professor scares me even when he's not on campus!

—We'd better go, before he hears us talking!



Today Mountainshadow is one of the most important behind-the-scenes actors at the school. From Veribech he recruits many of his servants and also learns a great deal about what the lesser Name-givers are plotting. He uses his loyal allies at the school (including the headmaster) to give suggestions, quests, and other directions to a wide variety of adepts and groups.

Nicknamed "Far Scholar" by his fellow dragons, on campus he is simply called "The Professor," although a few teachers and ghost masters call him Professor Bech. He's rarely seen at the school, but when he does appear, even the headmaster is always very respectful towards him. Only a handful of staff members know the true identity of this "esteemed professor."



TIRILL'S BACKGROUND

If Barsaive had never been part of the Theran Empire, it would still be nothing more than a few scattered tribes and a handful of pitiful cities. We, er, the Therans gave Barsaive all the culture and magical knowledge that it has. Even today, Throal is nothing compared to the grandeur of Thera. Uh, at least that's what the Therans think. Barsaivian historians would phrase that a little differently, wouldn't they?

—Tirill, speaking openly after several glasses of fine elven wine.

Tirill's history is much longer and more complicated than she would like her students to realize. She lived in Wyrms Wood at the time when Elianar Messiah was banished from the Court. As one of his supporters, she left the Wood along with him. She later assisted with the founding of Thera and the Eternal Library. In fact, she created a lamp that provided a magical light, which made it safer to read and write about Horrors and prevented the madness that so many of Throal's scholars suffered when they wrote about the Horrors' secrets. This lamp also made an astral copy of all the books in the Eternal Library, which would protect them in case of fire, flood, or other disaster that might destroy the physical parchments.

As the Scourge approached, Tirill had no problem with selling the Rites of Protection and Passage to the colonies. She was adamant, however, that Wyrms Wood should receive a copy. Despite her old argument with the Court, her sister Alachia was now Queen, and Tirill felt Wyrms Wood should have all the information needed to build the best possible kaer. When Alachia refused to buy the Rites of Protection and Passage, Tirill personally traveled to Wyrms Wood. Alachia still refused the Rites—she wanted nothing to do with the Therans, not even her sister.

Tirill then tried to return to Thera, but other Theran leaders had heard that she had offered the Rites to Alachia for free, and they were furious. Tirill could not understand why these other Therans would want Wyrms Wood to suffer. Thera was certainly a powerful empire, but Tirill still believed that the magic and beauty of Wyrms Wood were unsurpassed. She hoped to be able to return to it someday, and perhaps even spend a few centuries as the Elven Queen herself.

Unable to return to Thera or Wyrms Wood, she disguised herself as a young Illusionist adept and traveled to Throal. During the Scourge, she supported the dwarf leadership in their plans to declare independence from Thera.

After hearing about Veribech, Tirill realized she could make some wonderful contacts at such a place. Her application to become a teacher was accepted at once, since "The Professor" knew exactly who she was. Soon after her arrival at Veribech, Tirill and the dragon

circuitously discussed the events of Thera's founding and Tirill's break with Thera and Wyrms Wood.

Mountainshadow realized she could make an excellent ally and even offered to help her extract revenge on several Theran leaders. Tirill was not happy about working with a dragon, but she agreed to stay at Veribech, after insisting that she would have complete control over the subjects she taught and that Mountainshadow would have no veto over the students she chose to mentor.



"The Professor" once asked Tirill if she wanted to teach a class on Theran history, but her heart is too conflicted. She helped make Thera a mighty empire, and she is proud of that work. Does she still want to return to the Grand Island? See the Adventure Hooks section below, p 38.

Tirill also has a familiar, a strange little flying serpent called a butterfly drake. It looks similar to a miniature dragon (see the New Creatures section, p. 46). Tirill is proud of her familiar and is always careful not to call it her "pet dragon."



THE SCHOOL'S LIBRARY

The Veribech library has a small collection of real, physical books, collected before the Scourge. Shortly after Tirill's arrival at the school, she retrieved her astral copies of the Theraan Eternal Library, and placed most of them in the Veribech library. Some books may only be available in Tirill's private collection, however. The Books of Harrow, for example, are only accessible to those who know Tirill or the Professor well enough. (See the adventure hook p. 40 and magical item description p. 50 for more on the Books of Harrow.) The astral copies of the books cannot be removed from the library (because they are only illusions). They disappear back to the shelf when they pass through the library doors.

GORM THE 3RD

Veribech School Drakkar

Speed: 12

Maneuverability: 10

Hull:

Amour: 12

Ramming: 20

Cargo: 120

Captain: 5

Crew Size: 30

Screw Skill: *

Crew Rating: 18

Morale: 58

Critical: 17

Damage:

Derelict: 54

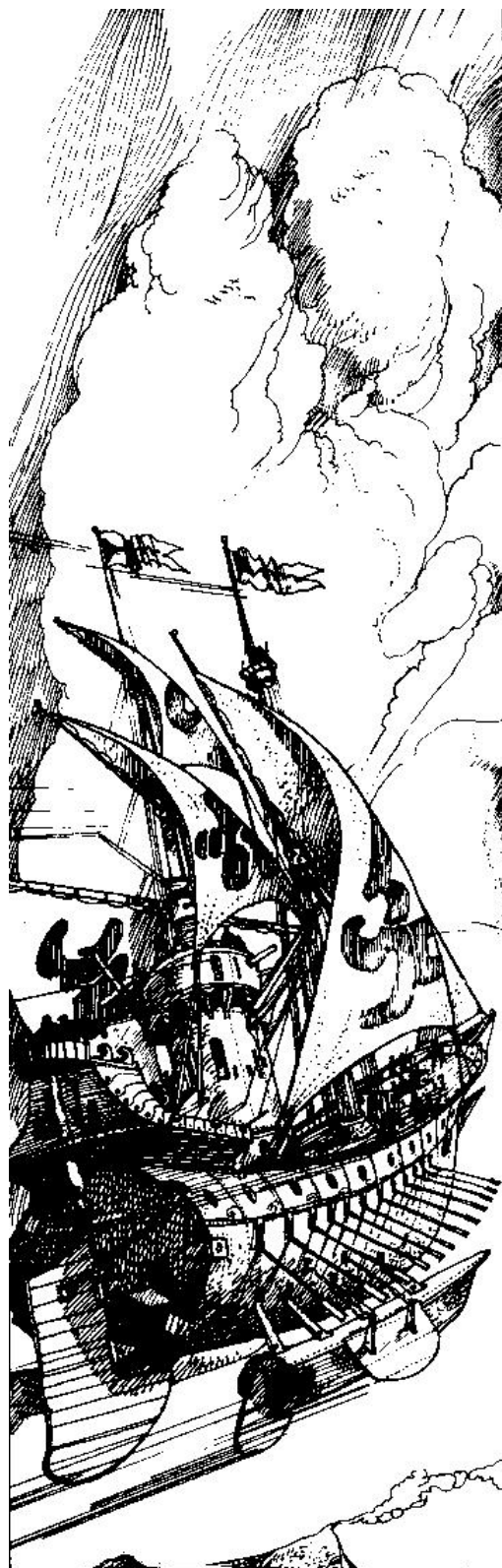
Destroyed: 61

Commentary:

Gorm the 3rd is named after a former professor at the school. The school's airship has been damaged nearly beyond repair twice, but the school's students have managed to rebuild it both times. It's a fast ship, but it has limited firepower and hull protection compared to other, larger Drakkars. The ship, a former Crystal Raider Drakkar, was donated to the school before the Scourge in a Sky Raider's will. One of the ship's former captains has been willing to visit Veribech as a ghost master to help train students and to show off some of his sailing tricks.

THE SCHOOL'S ASTRAL PLANE

To protect the school, Mantor and the Professor created a miniature school artifact, which today lies well protected in Mountainshadow's lair. This artifact makes the Shadow Palace illusion permanent and offers the school additional astral protection.





Within the school's grounds and buildings, the Shadow Palace spell allows both regular and astral space to be open to each other. This offers magician students an invaluable opportunity to see how their spells really work. Horrors would be readily detected (not that many make it through the school's wards). Spirits and elementals are also visible. The spirits of deceased adepts, i.e. Ghost Masters, are still transparent, but they feel solid and very cold to the touch. Some areas, such as restricted parts of the library, are only in astral space and can only be reached by those who know how to journey through the astral.

REALM OF THE WOODS

The Realm of the Woods is a safe astral realm often used by the school's teachers. The Realm mainly consists of large forests, but some hills, small lakes and rivers are found here as well. The Realm is protected by a Druid called Hollum, who ensures that all the Realm's entrances are securely warded against Horrors. He sometimes takes people to one of the Realm's many stone circles to cleanse them of Horror Marks. (More information about Druids is found in EDPT's Encyclopedia.) Hollum is Jollum's brother (see the Jollum in the faculty listing above) and he only allows visitors into the Realm who don't hurt the wood's plants and creatures. Many animals and strange creatures live in the Realm of the Woods, although none of them are threatening to the students.

The most prominent features of the Realm of Woods are a seemingly endless wall that was built as a border between two competing Elementalists, a large watch tower, and the "Shrine of Roses," which can assist blood elves who are sick with wood longing. The "Gardens of Garlen" are also rumored to be located here. These gardens are said to have a small temple to Garlen where anyone who is injured, sick, diseased, poisoned, or even on the brink of death can be healed. Questors of Garlen can also make direct contact with their Passion at this temple.



ADVENTURE HOOKS ON AND AROUND CAMPUS

Astral Dust

The school was closed for many, many years, and the first students must clean the school for astral dust (for a Legend Point award of course!). This job will require exploring the entire campus, including the towers and underground areas. This adventure allows the students become better acquainted with the school's grounds and campus. Could a forgotten hungry beast of some sort be waiting to feed again? Some tunnels might lead to a certain dragon's lair—and he probably doesn't want those tunnels discovered by others! Are any spirits from former faculty members still walking unused corridors?

Crab Feast

Mountainshadow has a breeding farm of cave crabs outside one of his lair tunnels. Some of these crabs have recently escaped and have started breeding in the tunnels near the school. A big "crab-feast" will be held for the bold students who manage to clear out these tough beasts! The Weaponsmith classes might try to make armor out of the Crab's hard shells.

Airboarding and the Bullies

If some students join their House's airboard teams, they certainly acquire a few new enemies from the school's other airboard teams. These bullies try to make life as difficult as possible for their opponent's, without be discovered by the professors. Many ugly tricks have been invented to make the opponents loose their next match, or to make them unable to attend a particular match. The spell Vice Versa was invented by a former Syfaran House resident, and is still available only to those who live at that house. The Shrink spell is only available to the Wizards at Moonz house. (This spell makes the target smaller, so it becomes harder for him to maneuver an airboard). The Illusionists of House Kantas know the Heavy Weight or Light Weight spell, and they use this spell to make their opponents too heavy for their airboards. These spells and some others are even allowed in some of the airboard competitions!





much faster than mail-doves, but they do not allow instantaneous communication. After some travel time, the astral sprite appears in the receiving mirror and relays a message. These mirrors are located in Kratas, Bartertown, Jerris, Travar and the Floating City. The school's mirror is located in the falconry floor of the school's eastern tower.

At some point the Kratas mirror disappears and some students are sent on a mission to recover the missing mirror. Do additional mirrors exist? Garlthik's contacts could be used to obtain information about who stole the mirror. One possibility—some Theran spies got their hands on it and are now examining it in Feshavian's headquarters in the Creanan city Chalimides.

ASSISTING FACULTY MEMBERS

Jollum's Tavern

Jollum has a tavern in Bartertown, and he often needs different types of herbs, plants, and rare creatures as ingredients for his secret recipes. Some of these herbs are only available in unusual and difficult to reach places. Students who seek out his herbs receive payment, a weekend at his inn (including food and drinks), and a Legend Point award, of course.

Maximus's Vengeance

After becoming involved with high-level Theran political intrigues (and making a terribly wrong decision), Maximus was demoted from general to slave. For almost a decade, he survived as a gladiator slave in the Creanan Colossodome located in the eastern Creanan city Chalimides. After many stunning

victories, he became popular among the crowd and earned the respect of his old rival, the new general of the Theran First Legion. Several years ago, General Feshavian oversaw his spectacular escape from a gladiator match. Maximus disappeared into the desert with the help of a large Jackalmen tribe. Many Jackalmen now view Maximus as the true leader of Creana, a development which General Feshavian did not anticipate and does not approve of. He offered 10 orichalcum coins to anyone who brings him Maximus's head on a plate, and in frustration not finding Maximus he killed Maximus's family in a bizarre way. Maximus has sworn a blood oath that he will one day extract his vengeance upon every single person who was involved in slaughtering his family.

However, he first decided to head north to find more allies. In the Dragon Mountains, he encountered and wounded several drakes who tried to keep him away from their master's land. Eventually, Mountainshadow himself appeared, in human form, and nearly killed Maximus. Mountainshadow spared his life, however, and offered him a position in his army. Several of Maximus's Jackalmen followers also joined as Maximus's personal soldier troop.

After an assassination attempt on him by some Theran student agents, Maximus decides to fight back and recruits the school's best students for a long and hot summer journey into the Creanan city Chalimides, where they will assist Maximus extract his vengeance against the Theran First Legion officer, General Feshavian. Maybe the players will also attend some gladiator matches, as gladiators or spectators in the Colossodome.

The Pipes of Time

The school's headmaster Mantor Sudsteph and Grell, a professor of nethermancy, were two of the leaders who organized the disappearance of the goblin race. Five master goblin magicians created artifacts, called the Pipes of Time, which allowed the entire race to disappear and be forgotten, much like Parlainth. Three of these master magicians were lost after "the return of the Goblins," and Mantor and Grell would like to find out about their lost brothers' fates. They also want to find the other three pipes—they must be kept out of the hands of those who would abuse them. More information about the pipes can be found in the Goblins (General Info) and in the Pipes of Time artifact description in the EDPT Encyclopedia.

Many people want to find these lost pipes. The two known pipes are well hidden by Professors Grell and Mantor. A number of other people know about the pipes, including several dragons, some elves (among them





blood queen Alachia), and a few Therans. Only Alachia has shown an interest in the pipes. She has sent soldiers out of her Wood to track down the grand mages, and rumors say that she has Balder the Quartling's pipe in her clutches. The fate of Balder himself is unknown. Another of the pipes was made by Nighteye, who became involved with Vestrivan, and Mantor has recently learned that several adult dragons and gremlins (another goblin variant) have become increasingly active around Vestrivan's lair south of the Twilight Peaks, near the lava rivers entering to the Death's Sea.

A Lamp for the Great Library

Tirill has created another lamp similar to the one she made in the Theran Eternal Library. As a former resident of Throal, she wants to help her friends at the Great Library. The lamp will improve everyone's Read / Write ability, granting everyone using its light +3 steps to their Read / Write Languages talent or skill. However, this lamp would also copy the books from the Great Library and put them in Veribech! If the characters learn the full truth of what this lamp will do, would they offer it to Throal? Would they tell Librarian Merrox about the lamp? Would Merrox want his collection copied to Veribech? On the other hand, Tirill could give Merrox access to all the books in the Eternal Library. What would he be willing to offer for that? What would Icewing say when he learned that his brother was seeking access to "his" library in Throal?

The Seekers of the Heart

Tirill is actively recruiting students to join the Seekers of the Heart, in the hope that the corruption can be removed from the Blood Wood. Tirill may also hire adepts to explore various parts of the Wood and bring out corrupted samples for her to study. She's been working with Takaris on the Ritual of De-thorning, and they may need assistance with that project as well.

Does Tirill still want to be Queen of the Wood? Could someone who has not undergone the Ritual of Thorns be Queen while the Wood is still the Blood Wood?

The Search for Masae Seorach

Tirill also desires to discover what happened to another banished elf from the Wyrn Wood: Masae Seorach (see the **Serpent River** sourcebook). Seorach was the captain of one of the elves' last warships, the Mallornica, which was sailing somewhere on the Aras Sea. He refused to destroy his ship and was banished from Wyrn Wood. Could he still be alive? Perhaps he's a very old elf who is now on the path of lords, waiting for

the opening of the path to Tesrae Ka'Mellakabal. Elven legends say that an elf searching for this path that never comes is the lost true Elven King. Tirill is quite interested in finding him—could they have been romantically involved? Was her sister Alachia jealous about their romance? Students may also be recruited by Shosaran (or other) ship builders to get a blueprint of the Mallornica, which Tirill might have in her private library collection.

The Theran's Offer to Tirill

The characters somehow intercept a letter from a Theran. (perhaps by searching a body). This letter offers Tirill the return of all her former Theran property, titles, rank, etc. All she has to do is betray "that dragon." The letter's full text is provided as a handout on the next page.

The letter is written in very fancy and formal Sperethiel. It is unsigned, although it is sealed with wax that was stamped with an ornate signet ring. An expert on heraldry would know that such exceedingly detailed signet rings are a sign of nobility in Thera, although some of the ring's

design is also reminiscent of heraldic symbols used by nobles in the Blood Wood. The specific design on the ring is unfamiliar and is not easily linked to an individual, group, or family.

This letter offers the gamemaster a way to inform the characters that Alachia, Tirill, and some Theran leaders are great elves, who rebelled many millennia ago against their former dragon masters.

Where do Tirill's loyalties lie after she learns of this offer? Does she want to return to Thera? Or does the letter enrage her, prompting her to send messengers to Thera rejecting the offer?





Most esteemed Lady Tirill,

Greetings and salutations. I wish to offer you my heartfelt congratulations regarding your faculty appointment at the most excellent Veribech School for Adepts. The school's reputation before the Scourge was well-deserved, and it is clearly attracting nothing but the best faculty and students in this era as well. You are an outstanding teacher, as several of us here would glowingly attest.

We miss you terribly, dear Lady. Much water has flowed under the bridge, and much unpleasantness which once burned so searingly has cooled to little more than a dying ember. Your estate, with all of its artwork and other items, is still standing, waiting for a Lady to command its halls again. Your seat on a certain council is also glaringly vacant—no one can speak with the conviction and wisdom that your distinguished voice always brought to our deliberations.

We have so much to offer you, dearest Lady. Is that "Professor" giving you what you are worth? Is he treating you well? We were amazed when we heard you were working for him, after all our efforts to free ourselves of their tyranny. Your sacrifices in that struggle have not been forgotten. Surely you remember what that quarrel cost, and what we gained with our victory.

Perhaps your servitude to the "Professor" is merely temporary, as the dissonance between ourselves will certainly prove to be. We have so much in common. It would be so easy for you to abandon those dreadfully chilly mountains and return to your lush, warm gardens here. We would ask only for whatever information you could provide to assist us in our efforts to terminate our enmity with your school's true headmaster.

The world is turning, the tendrils of the time of darkness are withdrawing, and the banner of progress is on the march. Will you be standing with us when our flag is raised in triumph? Or will you be cowering under someone else's shadow? You are a magnificent leader, Tirill. Contact me.



Skalle's Disappearance

When Skalle was a stage 1 giant tortoise, the Professor took him as a familiar. Now that he has become a stage 2 tortoise, he is no longer Mountainshadow's familiar, but his is still allied with him. (See the New Creatures description, p. 47.) Some might consider it foolish for Mountainshadow to have taken a giant tortoise as a familiar, because creatures who become familiars remain Pattern Items for the magician even after they are no longer familiars! Thus Mountainshadow likes Skalle teaching at Veribech, where he is well-protected and easy to keep tabs on. What if someone knew that Skalle was a Pattern Item for Mountainshadow? That person could capture Skalle, then tie threats to him and affect Mountainshadow. Perhaps some Therans discover this truth? Or perhaps the Outcast does?

QUESTS FROM "THE PROFESSOR"

The Lost Books of Harrow

In Gorm's lost lair in the Delaris Mountains, Elianar Messiah did not find all of Gorm's journals, and several of them remain lost. The Professor found references to these journals when he was studying the Book of Harrow. The players are sent on a quest to find some of these lost volumes. The Professor gave a well-detailed map, showing the location of the abandoned lair, or rather "kaer." Could ancient, imprisoned Horrors from Gorm's experiments still be in this lair? Will the adventurers set these Horrors free? Are additional volumes from Gorm's journals still legible? Or perhaps Gorm collected some information in memory crystals that Messiah was unable to read but Mountainshadow desperately wants. What else is in the lost dragon's ancient lair, and how many of its defenses and traps are still functional?

The Professor's Astral Quests

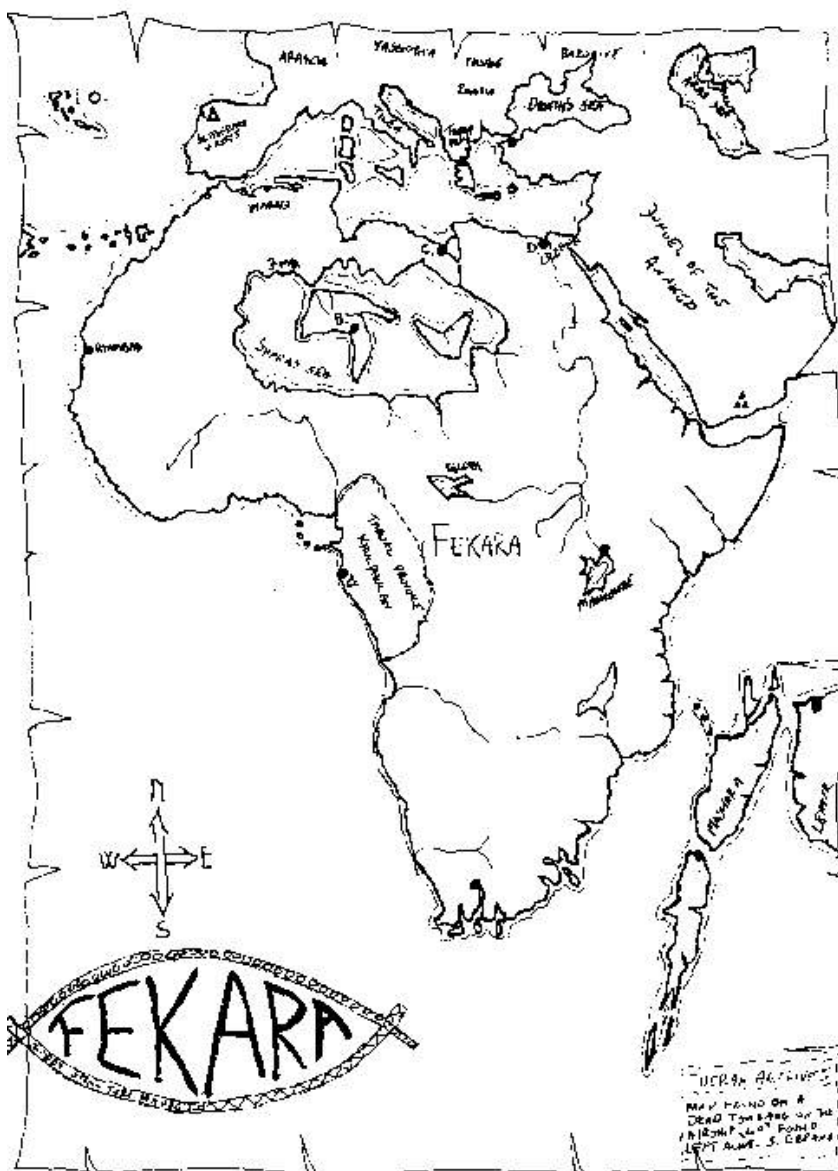
The Professor has recently acquired access to his lost brother's ancient books and wants to find out more about his brother's travels. He's looking for a group to send into the astral to explore realms that his brother once visited. (The adventuring party likely doesn't know the

true history behind this quest.) They could also be searching for parts to build an astral traveling vehicle, which will assist in future journeys.

Could others also be searching the astral for similar information and objects? There are rumors that Therans created an astral vehicle before the Scourge, several parts of which might have been recently uncovered in Parlainth. Perhaps Charcoalgrin knows about these astral vehicles.

The Black Pyramids

Ancient pyramids from the Age of Dragons stand intact in several places: central Fekara, western Lemur, the Indrisian Mountains, the sinking continent of Mu,





the Gniza Pyramids in Creana, Throal (a group of seven pyramids are located in the deepest part of Braza's Kingdom), Celtia, the glacier of Thul, and perhaps other places. They lay abandoned and unused for ages, although a few dragons know about the pyramids, including Icewing and Mountainshadow. They had just started using them before the arrival of the Horrors.

All the pyramids are similar in size and style, and they are covered with blank slippery stone. Their entrances are very difficult to discover if one does not know the appropriate spells and passwords. Each pyramid contains a gate room that connects to one of

the other black pyramids. People traveling through the gate are transported to the sister pyramid's arrival room.

The dwarves of Throal discovered a pyramid in Braza's Kingdom shortly before the Scourge and founded colonies near the pyramids located on the continents of Lemur and Fekara. Contact with these colonies was impossible during the Scourge. When will Throal reopen the trade routes to the lost colonies, now that the Scourge has ended? How these pyramids work and what magic they use is unknown. They were probably created by the dragons in the Age of Dragons. Icewing taught King Valurus I the first two passwords

for the Lemur gate and the Fekara gate. King Valurus I might mention these pyramids to some of his students in one of his classes. Would students be interested in exploring new continents? Would the school want them to undertake such dangerous journeys?

Professor Bech also knows some other passwords and secrets about the black pyramids, but don't reveal them just yet! (*More information to come in future Gazetteers on EDPT.*)



Kvernwing

Kvernwing is the oldest and greatest dragon in Thul. He lives in the mountains a few miles south of Nidheim. He has several unique dragon-power knacks, including Frostbreath. He appears among Name-givers as a Skald adept (a Troubadour variant), the very gallant troll named Rockjaw Frostbreath. (More on Kvernwing in the forthcoming **Gazetteer: Thul**).

Kvernwing is interested in Veribech, as he is considering helping the Barsaivian dragons against Thera. He is carefully watching as the Therans encroach ever closer to his lands in Thul. He has sent several Name-givers and a drake to Veribech, to learn about Barsaive and Thera, and to strengthen ties with Mountainshadow. Mountainshadow should certainly reciprocate by sending some adepts to Thul – who will he send?



GAME INFORMATION

CREATING NON-ADEPT CHARACTERS

Characters may begin a campaign at Veribech as students who are not yet adepts. These characters start with attributes and skills, as per the usual rules, but they have not yet learned the magical ways of talents. While studying at Veribech, students can purchase additional skills, or talents which may be used as skills. Students acquire 6-8 ranks of knowledge skills per year at Veribech. They should have at least 1 Rank in skills associated with all the required courses. Depending on the students' interests, what advanced courses they took, and how well they paid attention in class, they could have up to 5 ranks in any knowledge skill.

Students also acquire 1-2 skill points per year in non-knowledge skills, often in skills which complement their Disciplines. For example, all spellcasters learn the basics of fighting and have at least 1 rank of the Melee Weapons skill, while Warriors often pick up experience with hunting, walking silently, or making good first impressions. Even if they do not earn many "Legend Points" at Veribech, students do gain skill ranks through late nights pouring over books and hard days of training. Veribech graduates have completed a diverse course of study and are much more knowledgeable and broadly trained than the usual First Circle Adept.

When the students go through the ritual to become First Circle adepts, any of their skills which are also First Circle talents for their Discipline (such as Melee Weapons for a Warrior) become talents. Those talents which they haven't already bought as skills may now be purchased as talents using the usual rules.



NEW SKILLS

Airboard Riding Skill

Step: Rank + Dexterity Step

Action: Yes **Requires Karma:** No **Strain:** 1

The Airboard Riding skill allows the character to ride and maneuver an airboard. With this skill, a character knows how to increase and decrease the airboard's speed, turn it in swings, make jumps, avoid

obstacles, and do other tricks and maneuvers with it. Any character who wishes to ride an airboard must have at least Rank 1 in Airboard Riding. The Airboard Riding skill works with all airboards. The target number for successfully riding the Airboard is 5, modified by the complexity of the maneuver being attempted. See airboards in the Magical Items section, p. 49. Cavalymen do not need this skill, as they can use the Trick Boarding talent knack instead.

NEW KNACKS

Air Ballet Knack

Warrior

Rank: 3

Talent: Air Dance

Strain: -

This knack allows Warriors to dance very gracefully and thereby impress onlookers, or at least one specific onlooker. This knack improves the Warrior's Charisma tests, along the lines of the Winning Smile talent. Thus the strong, but not terribly handsome Warrior may impress a lady with his Air Ballet, by using his Air Dance talent step instead of his Charisma step.

Emotion Food Knack

Troubadour

Rank: 5

Talent: Emotion Song

Strain: -

This knack allows the Troubadour to combine his Cooking artisan skill with his adept magic. When he uses this knack, anyone who eats his food receives the same effects as from an Emotion Song Test. (For the Test, roll Cooking Skill + Emotion Song + Charisma vs. the target's Social Defense.) (Jollum Trickster is the only person known to practice this knack.)

Insult Knack

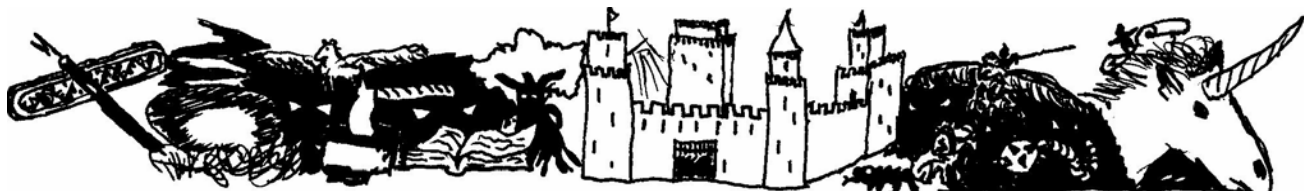
Swordmaster & Troubadour

Rank: 7

Talent: Taunt

Strain: 3

This knack creates a longer lasting taunt, i.e. an insult. If the person who makes the insult wins the duel in which the insult was spoken, the insulted person becomes humiliated by his defeat and remains angered by the insult. The insulted person is at -2 steps to all interactions with the insulter for a year and a day or until the insulted party wins a subsequent duel.



Trick Boarding Knack

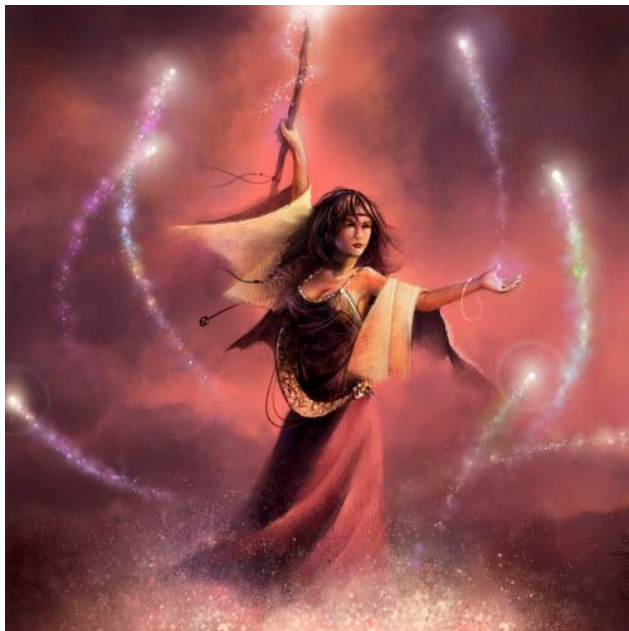
Cavalryman

Rank: 3

Talent: Trick Riding

Strain: 1

Like the Trick Riding talent, but for airboards.



SPELL MANIPULATION KNACKS

These specialized knacks help the magician to manipulate his or her spells in one way or another. They are available at Veribech to magicians of higher Circles.

Blink

Rank: E7, I5, N8, W6

Talent: Thread Weaving

Strain: 3 x the number of spell threads woven

The magician is so experienced at thread weaving for a particular spell that he can finish the thread weaving with a blink (i.e. closing his eyes for 2 seconds). Thus the magician can cast the spell after all other actions at the end of the round (on an initiative of 1). The magician takes strain of 3 x the number of threads the spell requires (he also must make the usual Thread Weaving test). This knack may only be used with spells 1 Circle below the magician's Circle, which have been in his spell matrix for at least 1 month.

Bloodforce

Talent: Willforce

Rank: E8, I8, N5, W6

Strain: 2+

First, the magician takes a wound (but no damage). Then, for each second strain taken (up to his Wound Threshold) the magician may add one to his Willforce step. (If the magician takes enough strain to suffer a wound, he does not take 2 wounds from this talent knack—he suffers only the 1 wound from initially invoking this knack.)

Improve Range

Talent: Spellcasting

Rank: E7, I5, N8, W7

Strain: 2+

The magician doubles the spell's range by spending 2 Strain. The magician may spend 4 additional Strain to double that range again, and another 8 Strain to double it a last time if desired.

Magician's Touch

Talent: Spellcasting

Rank: E7, I5, N7, W6

Strain: 2

The magician may increase the range on spells that have the touch range only. Through a pocket in astral space the wizards stretching his touching arm. The new range is the magician's Willforce test in yards.

Multi Targets

Talent: Spellcasting

Rank: E7, I8, N8, W6

Strain: 2*

The magician may cast a spell, which usually affects only 1 target, on multiple targets. For each extra target, reduce the spell's Effect step by 1. The magician may target a number of targets up to his rank in Spellcasting. The magician also takes 2 Strain for each target beyond the first one.

Prolong

Talent: Spellcasting

Rank: E5, I8, N6, W7

Strain: 1

For 1 Strain, the magician extends the duration of his spell by one round, hour, or day (as per the spell's original duration). He may only prolong a spell once.

Twin Threads

Rank: E9, I8, N10, W7

Talent: Thread Weaving

Strain: 2+

The magician may attune two spell matrices to the same spell and then simultaneously tie threads to those two spells. Separate Thread Weaving tests are required, and they must all succeed in order for the threads of



both spells to be tied. The magician takes strain equal to the total number of threads simultaneously woven.

Twin Spellcasting

Rank: E10, I9, N11, W8

Talent: Spellcasting

Strain: 4+

For 2 Strain per spell thread, the magician may simultaneously cast the two spells whose threads were woven with the Twin Threads knack. Two separate effect tests are rolled. Example: a Wizard attunes two matrices to Doom Missile, a spell with 3 threads, and then simultaneously ties threads to both spells for 6 Strain with the Twin Threads knack. With the Twin Spellcasting knack, the Wizard may then cast both Doom Missile spells in 1 round, for an additional 12 Strain. Or the two spells can be cast in subsequent rounds for no additional Strain.

NEW SPELLS

Create Airboard

Elementalist

Threads: 3

Range: Touch

Effect: See Text

Casting Difficulty: 10

Circle: 4

Weaving Difficulty: 8/16

Duration: A year and a day

The Elementalist weaves true elemental air onto a finely carved board. This spell includes the entire process of creating an airboard. An average Thread Weaving success creates an ordinary airboard with up to +2 bonuses, an excellent success creates a board with up to +3 bonuses, and an extraordinary success creates a board with up to +4 bonuses.

Knockdown

Wizard, Nethermancer, Illusionist, and Elementalist

Circle: 0 (see text)

Threads: 0

Weaving Difficulty: N/A

Range: 60 yards

Duration: 1 round

Effect: (see text)

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

This spell is a weakened variant of the Sixth Circle Wizard spell Sleep. It is used for duels between the school's student magicians and it sounds very powerful, looks extremely impressive, and seems potentially deadly. However, the spell is specifically designed only to paralyze the opponent for an instant, not to damage or otherwise endanger him. It affects only 1 target, and it lasts for only 1 round after the spell is cast.

Before they are First Circle, apprentices can't cast normal spells. Knockdown, however, is a special Zeroth Circle spell. It may only be "cast" in certain rooms at

Veribech. These rooms have been prepared with a special Named spell that enables anyone who is currently learning the Spellcasting talent to "cast" this spell. Adepts with the Spellcasting talent at Rank 1 or higher may also learn this "spell" if they wish to participate in the dueling games at Veribech.

Heavyweight or Lightweight?

Illusionist

Circle: 2

Threads: 0

Weaving Difficulty: NA/11

Range: 50 yards

Duration: 10+Rank Rounds

Effect: Willforce+10

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

This spell raises or lowers the target's or object's weight by an amount in pounds equal to the wizard's Effect Test (down to minimum of 1 pound). Only available to the Illusionists at House Kantas.

Shrink

Wizard

Circle: 3

Threads: 2

Weaving Difficulty: 11/18

Range: 1 yard

Duration: 2+ Rank Rounds

Effect: -5 steps to Strength and Toughness

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

The Shrink spell reduces the target to half his or her normal size and deducts -5 from his Strength and Toughness for the duration of the spell (down to the minimum of 1). As the target's Toughness decreases, so does his Wound Threshold, Unconsciousness and Death Ratings. The target's clothing and armor also changes size. Other equipment which is merely held (rather than worn) does not change size. This spell may be cast only once on a target, i.e. the target may only be reduced to half size, not to quarter size. Only available to the Wizards studying at the House of Moonz.

Vice Versa

Nethermancer

Circle: 3

Threads: 1

Weaving Difficulty: 9/15

Range: 32 yards

Duration: Rank Hours

Effect: See Text

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

When this spell is cast upon a magician, the next spell he casts will have the opposite effect (sometimes with disastrous effects):

- Damage spells heal
- Elemental spells trigger the opposing element (fire becomes ice, etc.)
- A fly spell causes someone to fall
- Bonuses become penalties
- Light becomes dark, etc.

This spell is only available to the Nethermancer students at Syfaran House.



Ritual of De-Thorning

Elementalist

Circle: 12

Threads: 4

Weaving Difficulty: 18/27

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Effect: See Text

Casting Difficulty: 20

Screaming echoed off the trees. Blood soaked his skin and gushed onto the ground. He wished the screaming would stop. He could handle the pain—the thorns had ripped his flesh for his entire life. The blood didn't bother him either—the warm red liquid had always seeped from his skin. But the sound was too much. Someone was in agony, and he wished that person would shut up! The blood warders would hear.

Several days of screaming. Nonstop. He dreamed the Wood was calling him, pulling the blood from his body, taking it all while it still could. He was selfish; he was arrogant. The Wood needed him. His people needed him. How could he leave them, taking away his life blood, their life blood? The Wood had protected them all from the Horrors, and it asked so little in return. Just a few more drops, drip, drip. Just a few more heartbeats...

He was screaming; he was crying. His home, his heart's true home didn't need his blood. The Wyrn Wood was reNamed, but it wasn't destroyed. If only the screaming would stop, then he could...

He opened his eyes. His throat was dry and sore. He brought his hand to his neck, touched it, and nearly screamed again. His neck, his fingers, his face—they were soft! The ritual had worked, but his hand was still bleeding. A shiver crept down his spine as he realized his life blood was still empowering the Blood Wood's corruption. Something in the trees laughed, while the pain returned to his now thornless wounds.

The Ritual of De-Thorning attempts to remove the thorns from a blood elf that has undergone the Ritual of Thorns. This ritual lasts 1 week and the blood elf must lie down for that entire week with open wounds. The ritual is still experimental, and during the ritual the wounds on many blood elves become infected, leading to permanent scars or even death. Others lose so much blood during the ritual that they cannot recover. The ritual is also very difficult to cast: the plant spirit and the magic of the Ritual of Thorns resists the de-thorning. If the caster does not meet the casting

difficulty target number, the thorns drive more firmly into the blood elf's skin, causing even more excruciating pain than the blood elf suffered before. Even if the caster does meet the casting difficulty, the thorns are removed only from one portion of the target's skin (i.e. one limb, the chest, the back, or the head.) The caster then rolls a die for each other portion of the target's skin. There is a 50% chance that the thorns in that region will be pushed in further and hurt excruciatingly. With a good success, the thorns are removed from 2 portions of the target's skin, and there is only a 25% chance that the pain will get worse in the other areas. On an excellent success, the thorns are removed from 4 areas and there's a 10% chance it will get worse in other areas. An extraordinary success removes the thorns from 5 areas. The ritual may be cast multiple times on a single person, in the hope of removing the thorns from a blood elf's entire body. If the ritual fails in an area of the body, the thorns there become even more tightly bound to the blood elf's Pattern, and this ritual is unable to remove them.

Even if the thorns are removed, some of the wounds continue to bleed, as if the thorns were still present. A new ritual must be cast to try to close these wounds. The Ritual of De-Thorning does not remove the plant spirit from the blood elf's True Pattern, so the elf continues to suffer from wood longing. This ritual is only a first step and work to improve it is continuing. Note that Professor Takaris was been extremely lucky to have the thorns removed from his entire body, and he is only able to survive at Veribech because Oakleaf takes him regularly to the Shrine of Roses in the Realm of the Woods.





NEW CREATURES

Butterfly Drakes

The visiting wizard noticed Tirill's familiar Astarlia, a feathered butterfly drake with shimmering blue and gold wings. "What a gorgeous pet dragon you have!" he said.

"Why thank you." Tirill smiled. She loved thinking of her familiar as a dragon. "I personally don't use the term 'pet dragon,' however. Astarlia is a butterfly drake, not dragon-kin. But she is very beautiful, is she not?" Tirill smirked again.

She clearly remembered the day several years ago when she had made the one, completely innocent comment that the noble's pet looked like a miniature dragon.

Well, perhaps she had dropped the term "pet dragon" in a few other ears as well. Eventually a random merchant in Issyr offered her a "pet dragon," and how could she refuse? The creature was beautiful. Tirill hadn't spoken the words "pet dragon" in years—wasn't it strange that everyone at Veribech knew the term anyway?

Some of these creatures look like overgrown butterflies, with a length of 1 - 3 feet and a wingspan of 2 - 5 feet. Others have wings like a dragon, while still others look more like bats, windlings, or insects. Many are transparent, and their wings glimmer with all the



colors of the rainbow. Others have feathered wings and are similar to birds.

Rich people in the southern lands consider having a butterfly drake to be a sign of great status. Butterfly drakes are also popular as familiars among Illusionists and Wizards, since they can have more than one spell matrix. Some magicians enjoy boasting about owning a "pet dragon," and butterfly drakes may well like being considered dragon-kin. What actual dragons think about the term "pet dragon" is unknown.

These creatures can live up to 200 years, and many elves who desire a familiar seek out butterfly drakes, so that they can bond with a creature who will live as long as they will. (Additional rules regarding familiars are in the **Earthdawn Companion**.)

Attributes

DEX: 10	STR: 2	TOU: 2
PER: 9	WIL: 5	CHA: 8

Initiative: 12

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 12

Damage: *

Number of Spells: 1

Spellcasting: *

Effect: *

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 11

Social Defense: 12

Armor: 1

Mystic: 5

Knockdown: 8

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 30

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconscious Rating: 21

Creature Durability: 1-6

Combat Movement: 40

Full Movement: 80

Powers: (step equal to the Drake's Willpower step):

Fly, Astral Sight, Fire breath

Astral Manifest (Similar to the spirit power Manifest, the butterfly drake may leave the physical plane and manifest on the astral plane for a number of rounds equal to its Willpower step, see Manifest in the **ED Companion**.)

Butterfly drakes also have 1 Spell Matrix and may learn 1 spell (any kind) which they may cast with their Spell Matrix.

Legend Points: 350

Loot: Wings worth 1D20 Gold

Price: 3500 silver

If familiar: The butterfly drake's spell is learned by the magician who binds it as a familiar. The magician may still give her familiar a Spell Matrix, as per the usual familiar rules. Thus the butterfly drake may have two spell matrices.



Emus

These large, non-flying birds are common mounts in the Southern Lands. They have razor-sharp beaks and sharp claws on their toes that can rip up the stomach of their targets. They grow up to 14 feet high and may carry Name-givers up to Troll size. Emus eat both meat and plants. When hunting, they instinctually rip up their target's stomach and eat its guts first. (In game terms, they prefer to make called shot at -3 steps to their attack step). Even tamed emus can be dangerous when they are hungry.

On an excellent or better armor defeating success when biting with their sharp beaks, emus may snap a limb off their target, if the emu's STR step is above the target's TOU step. On an excellent or better armor defeating success when kicking with their leg claws, they may puncture and rip open the target's stomach.

Attributes

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

Initiative: 9 **Physical Defense:** 10
Number of Attacks: 2 **Spell Defense:** 7
Attack: 14 **Social Defense:** 7
Damage: Bite: 12
 Claw: 16 **Armor:** 2
Number of Spells: - **Mystic:** 0
Spellcasting: - **Knockdown:**
Effect: - **Recovery Tests:** 4

Death Rating: 50 **Combat Movement:** 50
Wound Threshold: 15 **Full Movement:** 100
Unconscious Rating: 43

Powers:

Jump:
 +5 Movement (75/150) in the first combat round
 +5 Damage in the first combat round

Legend Points:

Loot: Toes that could be used as daggers and beaks that could be used as knives.

Giant Tortoises

Like the ancient great dragons, the giant tortoise is one of the oldest living creatures in the world of Earthdawn. Their strong shells protect them from nearly any attack, including from dragons or Horrors. During the Scourge, most giant tortoises entered into a deep hibernation, so that any Horror powerful enough to

enter their shells still could not penetrate their minds. Many of the older giant tortoises have pictures of wards, charms, or other magical illustrations painted on their shells from earlier civilizations. Whether Name-givers made these paintings on their own initiative or at the request of the tortoises is unknown. Many strange stories about the tortoises' history arise from these paintings.

As they age, they become very aloof and detached from the rest of the world. Unlike dragons who often meddle in the affairs of Name-givers, an ancient giant tortoise is more likely to stick his head out of his shell, realize the little races are at war again, and then draw his head back in to wait out the ruckus. Young giant tortoises are more interested in the world, and some even work with Name-givers as familiars. Once a tortoise is 100 years old (at stage 1), it may become a familiar. The tortoise is very slow, and is generally favored by reclusive wizard scholars, rather than adventuring battle mages. Once the tortoise is 1000 years old (stage 2), the creature has accumulated too much wisdom to remain a familiar to a Name-giver. At this time, tortoises usually start to retreat from the world and want to settle down in one place.



Giant Tortoises are very rare in Barsaive, but are more common in the Southern Kingdoms, Fekara, and the in Far East. They have several powers similar to dragon powers. More information on giant tortoises is available in the EDPT Encyclopedia.



Stage 1 Tortoise

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 10 TOU: 10
PER: 12 WIL: 16 CHA: 11

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 3
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 16
Attack: 5 Social Defense: 15
Damage: Bite: 12 Armor: 14
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic: 9
Spellcasting: 16 Knockdown: Immune
Effect: casting spell Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 51 Combat Movement: 13
Wound Threshold: 15 Full Movement: 25
Unconscious Rating: 44
Powers: Spells, Astral Sight, Tortoise Durability (6/5)
Legend Points: 100

Stage 2 Tortoise

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 15 TOU: 14
PER: 17 WIL: 20 CHA: 15

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 4
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 22
Attack: 7 Social Defense: 20
Damage: Bite: 17 Armor: 18
Number of Spells: 2 Mystic: 13
Spellcasting: 20 Knockdown: Immune
Effect: casting spell Recovery Tests: 6

Death Rating: 68 Combat Movement: 14
Wound Threshold: 20 Full Movement: 28
Unconscious Rating: 59
Karma Step: 12 / 2D10
Powers: As above, Dream Link, and Suppress Magic
Legend Points: 1000

New Tortoise Power: Dream Link

Tortoises can contact Name-givers within a one mile radius by sending them dreams. With a successful Spellcasting test against the target's spell defense, they can also put Name-givers in their line of sight into a vivid dream-like illusion. Those affected by this power feel like they have just awakened after being transported wherever the tortoise wishes. Sometimes the illusion's "scenery" is a place the tortoise has previously visited. Most often, tortoises display a floating sky high above the target's head. After giving the target a moment to acclimate to the illusion, the tortoise's head appears in the clouds and begins speaking.

Imps

The small shadow scurrying across the desk gave a muffled squeak of delight. She had found the desk of an elf who was learning to write Sperethiel! The imp yanked a tiny quill from her belt and added a few more flourishes, especially to the most detailed and complicated runes. Then she flew over to the inkwell. Damn! It was closed with one of those new twist-off caps. Did the students really think they could foil one of her favorite tricks? Hah! The imp skipped over to the student's quill and coated it with purple dye. Then she scampered back through a crack in the wall and waited until the student returned. Soon after the elf started writing, he exclaimed something unrepeatable. The imp disappeared into the wall, snickering.

These small creatures are often familiars to Nethermancers or high-Circle Thieves. They come from the astral side, stand 3 to 5 inches tall, and have dark skin and bat-like wings. They are nocturnal creatures, and many who see them suspect they are some sort of malevolent fairy or windling, which may be true. Or perhaps they are somehow related to will-o-wisps.

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 1 TOU: 2
PER: 8 WIL: 3 CHA: 3

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 8
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 10
Damage: Bite: 3 Armor: 0
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic: 3
Spellcasting: 7 Knockdown: 6
Effect: * Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 30 Combat Movement: 60
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Movement: 120
Unconscious Rating: 21

Powers: Astral Sensitive Sight, Flight

Astral Manifest (see butterfly drakes, above)

Creature Durability: 0-5

Legend Points: 150

Loot: None

If familiar: Imps may learn 1 spell and carry it in their own Spell Matrix, as butterfly drakes do. The spell must be learned by the Nethermancer that has bound it as a familiar. The Nethermancer may cast the imp's spell as an extra spell in the same round that he or she casts another spell.



MAGICAL ITEMS

Airboards

Airboards come in many different sizes and styles, depending on the buyer's size and the size of her money pouch. Some are more stable, others are faster, and some are armored. Examples of the models available at the Issyrian bazaars are shown in the chart below.

The size column shows the size range of each style of airboard. Airboard sizes are:

- 1 for windling size, can carry up to 50 lbs
- 2 for dwarf and goblin size, can carry up to 200 lbs
- 3 for human and elf size, can carry up to 250 lbs
- 4 for ork size, can carry up to 400 lbs
- 5 for troll size, can carry up to 800 lbs
- 6 for obsidiman or larger size, up to 1200 lbs.

If the weight of the rider (with all armor and other equipment) is 10 lbs above the maximum carrying capacity, the board takes -1 step to maneuver and stability and +1 to speed. If the rider is 20 lbs above the maximum weight, the board sinks to the ground. Smaller riders may use larger boards, but they take -1 step to the maneuver difficulty and -1 to speed for each size step too small they are.

The hover column gives the height (in inches) that the board levitates above the ground.

Riders add (or subtract) the airboard's stability step to their Airboard Riding skill step when attempting to maneuver the airboard. The target number for controlling an airboard is normally 5. If the rider is attempting a difficult maneuver, the target number should be higher, for example: going around a curve +1, hard curve +2, jumping +3, avoiding blows +4, or avoiding traps +5.

Airboards move relatively slowly on level ground, but quickly accelerate when gliding downhill. They have 5 levels of speed. On level ground, or when first gliding downhill, airboards move with Level 0 speed: 5 yards per round + the airboard's Speed Bonus x 5. Thus

a Speed Master board has a maximum speed of 25 yards per round on level ground.

When racing downhill, airboards spend 1 round at the Level 0 speed, and then accelerate to Level 1 speed, which is $25 + \text{Speed Bonus} \times 10$. After 1 round at Level 1 speed, the airboards' speed doubles every round until they reach their maximum, Level 4, speed. Thus the standard board moves at Level 0: 5 yards / round, Level 1: 35, Level 2: 70, Level 3: 140, Level 4: 280. The Speed Master moves at Level 0: 20 yards / round, Level 1: 55, Level 2: 110, Level 3: 220, Level 4: 440.

With a successful Airboard Riding test, the rider may change the airboard's speed by 1 Level per round. If a rider going downhill does not want the airboard's speed to increase, an Airboard Riding test is also required. The target number for a successful Airboard Riding test increases by 1 for every speed level.

When Airboard Riding skill tests are failed, the rider might fall off or crash the airboard. Falling off a fast moving airboard is dangerous and potentially deadly. Riders take the same damage as if they fell from a great height, where the airboard's speed divided by 5 equals the falling height (in feet). Airboard riders can wear special armor (such as helmets or knee and elbow pads woven with elemental air). Such armor can reduce the falling damage taken by 1-6 steps. If the rider is wearing armor that reduces the damage taken by 3 or more steps, the armor makes the rider clumsier, and his Airboard Riding skill step is reduced by 1.

When airboards crash, they may take damage. An airboard has a base damage rating of 10. Add the airboard's armor to find its total damage rating. If an airboard takes more damage than its damage rating, elemental air starts leaking out of it, and the punctured airboard must be rewoven with elemental air before it can fly again. Airboards taking damage twice their armor rating are so damaged that they are cannot be repaired.

Prices are in silver pieces.

Type	Size	Hover	Stability	Speed	Armor	Price
Issyrian Master	3-4	8	+1	+2	+1	650
Jump Board	2-4	12	+0	+2	+2	180
Scorcher Board	4	8	+2	-1	+4	200
Speed Master	2-4	5	-1	+3	+0	270
Standard Board	1-6	5	+0	+0	+2	100
Throal League	2-4	8	+1	+1	+2	350
Troll Board	5	8	+1	+1	+3	200
Vivane Glider	3	12	+1	+1	+1	500
Windling Board	1	16	-2	+4	+0	250



Astral Reading Lamp

Tirill's lamp is a very special and clever invention. It is a large crystal chandelier, which shines down brightly upon the readers below. The lamp has a Named "Light" spell on all its crystals, which continue to glow even if no threads are tied to the lamp.

Thread 1 Cost: 500

Key knowledge: Know the lamp's Name

Everyone (not just the person who tied the thread) gains +3 steps to his Read and Write Languages test as long he reads under the lamp's light.

Thread 2 Cost: 800

Astral beings passing through the area illuminated by the lamp now cast a physical shadow. Thus spirits, elementals, Horrors, or anything else which could normally only be seen via astral sight cast a shadow visible to anyone observing the lamp light. Thus astral beings who don't want to be detected keep their distance from this lamp.

Thread 3 Cost: 1300

Key knowledge:

Know Tirill's secret love and why she lost him.

The lamp now scans all the books in the area where its light shines. Even closed books that catch a ray of its light are copied into astral space. These copies may only be retrieved by the person who has tied three threads to the lamp.

Books of Harrow

Written by Gorm, the first six volumes were discovered by the founders of Thera. These books describe the unnamed and unspeakable Horrors and the their astral dimensions. They contain rites and other spells regarding summoning, binding, and commanding these Horrors. The four lost volumes, which are written in Orcish describe Gorm's journeys to the astral dimensions where he first encountered the Horrors. They also describe how the dragon is becoming deranged and transformed into something unspeakable. Horrors are attracted to these volumes and people who read them without the proper precautions will summon Horrors. The second volume also contains a description of how to make the astral vehicle Gorm used during his astral travels.

The last volume is a dragon memory crystal, which can only be read by dragons. This crystal includes all the information from the ten earlier volumes. Any dragon who reads this crystal without proper protection will become Horror-marked by the crystal's creator:

Verji Gorm.

Gorm's lost journals contain spells and rituals regarding Horrors, reveal secrets about their powers, their home world, and their mission in our world. Players reading from these books get +5 ranks in Horror Lore for each volume read. Reading a complete volume of Gorm's journal is exceedingly dangerous, however. Many readers of these books have become insane and committed suicide, assuming they did not become servitors for the Horrors they read about and unwittingly summoned.

Parlainth Scribe Pens

Feather pens used for calligraphy, drawing, and writing, Parlainth scribe pens are a popular item among Veribech students. These pens were common magical items before the Scourge and they give the writer +2 steps to their writing skill or talent. The pens also give bonuses to writing correctly in foreign and unknown languages.

A few Parlainth spirit scribe pens also exist. These pens grant an additional +1 step bonus for each thread rank tied to the pen (Legend Point cost Rank 1: 100, Rank 2: 200, Rank 3: 300). Also at Rank 3, the pen can bind a spirit to itself. A Nethermancer or Elementalist who knows what the pen does can summon a spirit before tying the Rank 3 Thread. Then that specific spirit will become bound to the pen. The pen will find and bind the closest spirit as soon as the Rank 3 Thread is woven; the user does not have to summon a spirit first. This pen could prove dangerous in Corrupted and Tainted areas, since an astral Horror could become bound to the pen! The user can now ask the spirit questions and the spirit can answer by writing with the pen. If the spirit does not wish to communicate, the user may attempt a Contest of Wills to impose his will on the spirit. Summoners may use their Willforce and Karma for this test, while other adepts make regular Willpower tests vs. the Spirits Willpower plus Spirit Strength Rating.

Parlainth spirit scribe pens were made in Parlainth before the Scourge and some might still be found there. Others are located in other ruins scattered around Barsaive, as Parlainth did trade these pens with other Thera cities.

School Miniature Artifact

This artifact was made as a focus for the Naming of the Shadow Palace spell that protects Veribech. The artifact and the special Shadow Palace spell ensure that only those who are expected by the headmaster will be able to find Veribech.



This artifact is an exact, small scale replica of the school campus and its surroundings. By looking carefully at the artifact, the viewer can see where different people are as they move about the campus. Intruders can be easily detected with the artifact. The headmaster Mantor has a copy of this artifact in his office. The original artifact upon which the Shadow Palace spell was named is protected by Mountainshadow himself.

Sprite Mirrors

A sprite is bound to a mirror, and this sprite may be sent to another mirror that has been magically bound to the first mirror. The messenger sprite appears in the mirror as a person with the same appearance as the sender. The sent message appears in the receiving mirror within a few seconds after being sent.

SUMMARY OF VERIBECH GAME BENEFITS

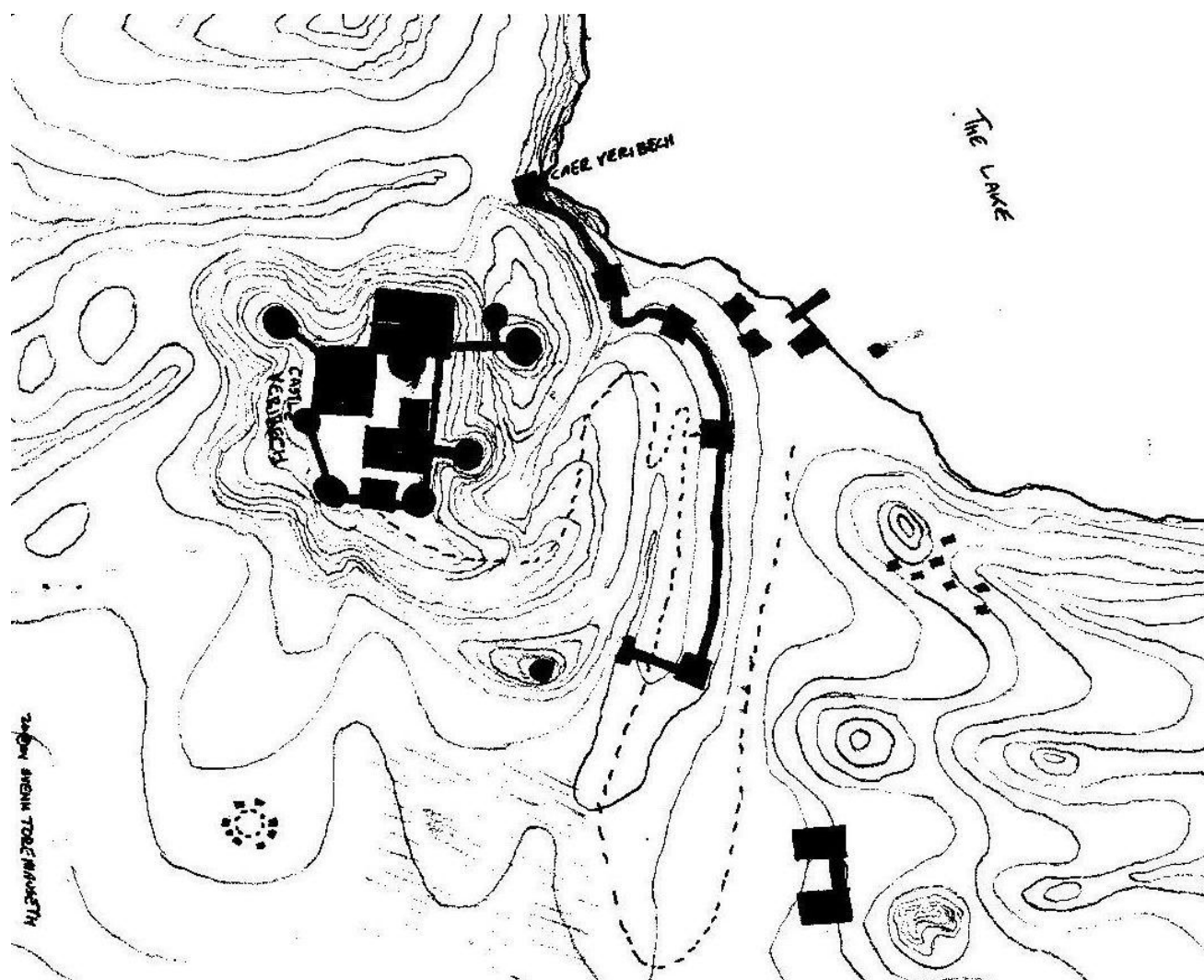
- Half Magic bonus when using “of Veribech” as part of the graduate’s formal name. Add +1 step to all Half Magic rolls.
- Special knacks and spells available only at Veribech.
- Free standard airboard.
- Astral Space is very clear at Veribech, so 1 success level lower is required to understand and learn new spells on the Veribech campus.
- Gym classes: a Veribech graduate spends only half the required Legend Point cost to raise physical attributes (Dexterity, Strength, or Toughness) the first time each of these attributes is raised.
- Veribech graduates have many knowledge and other skills which do not need to be purchased with Legend Points, but instead are earned by adept’s time spent in classes.

*Good luck in your travels, young adepts.
We hope the Troubadours will be singing your exploits soon.*

—Mantor Sudsteph, Headmaster
at Veribech’s graduation ceremonies



CONTOUR MAP OF THE VERIBECH AREA





VERIBECH SCHOOL FOR ADEPTS...

I'm sure everyone remembers their first day at Veribech. I walked to where my room should be and found nothing but a shadow. I looked up and realized I was going to be living in a flying building! Then someone came up behind me and said some nonsense word-and we started rising in the air! I was fresh out of the safe caverns of Throal---I nearly lost my lunch. The view from my room was amazing, although it took several weeks before I could look out the window without getting dizzy.

-Kelrik, dwarf Wizard,
recent graduate of Veribech

Want to be an Adept? Want a greater perspective on magic than one mentor can provide? Veribech's philosophy is that

Adepts should not be trained alone: they can better serve the world if they understand many worldviews, not just their own narrow Discipline.

Veribech offers courses in history, etiquette, and politics, as well as magic and the students' Discipline Talents. The school is located in the northern Dragon Mountains and is not affiliated with any Barsaivian government. However, the school is somewhat secretive about who was behind the school's founding and who is allowed to recruit Adepts on campus. And is there really a dragon on the school's faculty?

This book describes the school's campus, lists its unusual faculty, and provides an extensive course listing. It offers adventure hooks for both

Veribech graduates and visitors to the school. Veribech provides a starting location for new campaigns, as well as a place for established parties to make contacts and learn information that is available nowhere else.



Second Edition

Lfg

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