

# EARTHDAWN<sup>®</sup>

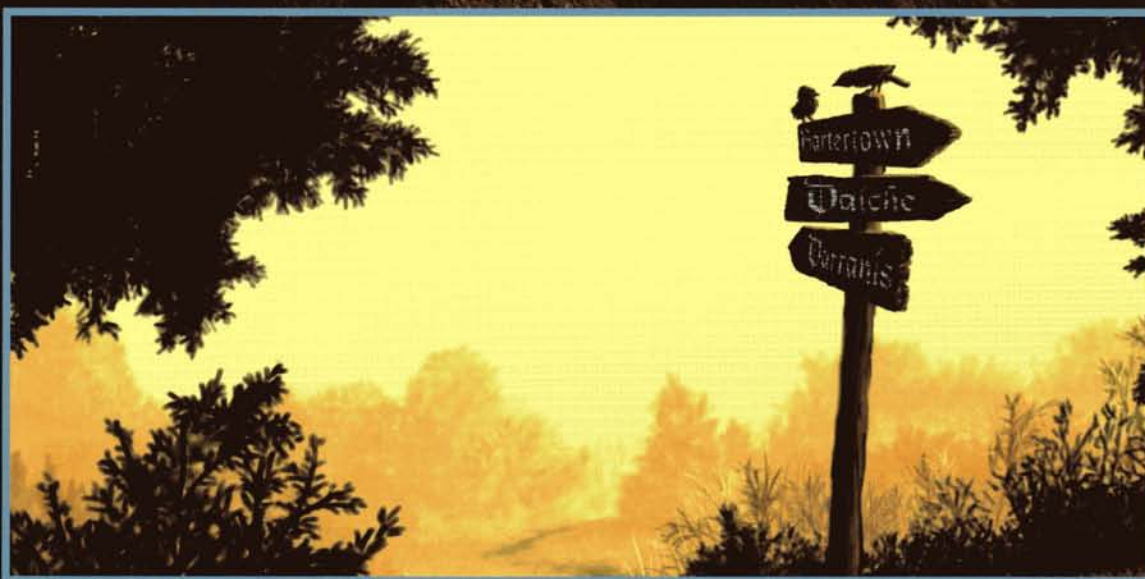
## THE WANDERER'S WAY

MAKERS OF LEGEND  
VOLUME TWO





# REDISCOVERY



Adepts are the heroes and legends of Earthdawn, striving to reclaim their Scourge-ravaged land with the magic only they wield. Some of these Adepts find in their wanderings that they are defined not only by their Discipline, but also by the other Name-givers and creatures they interact with. Air sailors crew the airships that fly the skies of Barsaive. Beastmasters use their magic to bond with animals. Scouts explore the wilderness and delve into hidden kaers. The self-reliant Thieves know how to sneak, and to steal. Troubadours serve as entertainers, storytellers, actors, and songsmiths. And the Montebanc introduces the art of manipulation practiced so commonly in the courts and cities of Arancia.

The Wanderer's Way: Makers of Legend Vol. 2 offers players and gamemasters an in-depth look at five Disciplines of Barsaive. This book describes each of these five Disciplines from the point of view of four different adepts, and introduces a new Discipline, the Montebanc. The Wanderer's Way also includes new talent knacks and new rules for using Disciplines in Earthdawn Adventures.



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VOLUME TWO





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## ON THE COMPILATION OF THE MAKERS OF LEGEND

*King Varulus the Third is often quoted as saying, "The Heroes of Today are the Legends of Tomorrow." And none are greater Heroes in Barsaive than Adepts. While the Great Library has sought to explore what it means to be an Adept, and the nature of the Adept's Way, it did so primarily through the eyes of a single representative of any given Discipline. With these volumes, the Makers of Legend series, the Great Library will seek to expand on the understanding of the most common Disciplines in Barsaive, as well as give some insight to Disciplines that are prominent in other lands. We have sought to perform this task by interviewing a number of different Adepts from each Discipline, or in some cases had the transcript of a Discipline's training sent to us.*

*If but one thing is learned from this compilation, it should be this: while each Adept sees the world through the eyes of their Discipline, no two individual's opinions on what it means to be of a Discipline will be exactly the same. Each Adept experiences their talents in a different way. Not only do a Warrior and a Weaponsmith have a different insight when using their common talent with melee weapons, two Warriors will also have differing views on their talents - though their views will likely be far more similar than a comparison between those of Adepts of different Disciplines. So vast are the possible differences in individuals' interpretations of their Disciplines that one who studies the broadsword to the exclusion of all other weapons, and one who prefers to fight with staff, axe, or whatever other means of war they have at their disposal may both call themselves Swordmasters.*

*Although this series provides a variety of different viewpoints on what it means to be a particular type of Adept, it is by no means the final word on the issue. Indeed, it may only be little more than a prologue. Collected in these pages are the viewpoints of a handful of Adepts. But just as there are thousands of Adepts in Barsaive, likewise there are thousands of opinions on what it means to follow a Discipline.*

*- Thom Edrull, 1513TH*





# CHAPTER ONE

## AIR SAILORS





## THE FREE TRADER

*This document was originally a letter sent to the Tansiardan merchant Isaak Norns from the Air Sailor, Gavet Staun. Though personal correspondence is often of little interest to the Library of Throal, Mister Staun distinguished himself in the War against Thera and was later killed in an aerial battle over the Servos Jungle. So, this letter has been archived and is presented here as an article of historical interest.*

— Gideon Morrow, archivist in residence at the Library of Throal

Dearest Isaak,

It was most excellent to hear from you again. It has been entirely too long since I have visited you and your House in Tansiarda. I am heartened to hear of your success in silver trade and I would be interested in further discussing the lode you mentioned in the Caucavic Mountains. Perhaps *The Star of Upandal* could again find service in the House of Norns.

I was particularly intrigued by the questions in your last letter regarding your son. I am pleased to hear that he is manifesting the talents of an Air Sailor. Certainly I wish to be kept informed as his talents progress. I do, however, also appreciate your concerns in this matter. Becoming an adept is never a small thing. However, it is a destiny that I have never regretted being given, and the path of the Air Sailor is something I have never wavered from. What does it mean to be a sailor on the seas of the sky? It would have been simpler, Isaak, if you had simply asked me to send you my soul.

I remember still with a clarity undimmed by the years the first moment that I saw a sky ship take to the air. I was only a young elf barely fifteen and the ship was only a humble aging mining drakkar delivering cargo to Bartertown. But still, as I saw the craft gently drift skyward and turn towards the west catching the wind in its sails, I knew that someday I would be aboard a sky ship headed away from my small home town. The sky was in my blood, and my heart was on the winds even as a child.

There is, for many, a tendency to think of Air Sailors as a lesser discipline. The Air Sailor, these detractors would dismissively claim, has arisen only recently with the development of the sky ship. It is more a fad than a discipline, they might argue. How little they understand.



Though the abilities of the Air Sailor have indeed adapted to the modern age, much as perhaps a Swordmaster adapted to the technological development of the blade or an Archer adapted to the technological development of the bow (whenever in the ancient past that they came to be), the yearning to travel and to explore has long been in the soul of Name-givers. I sense within me a long history stretching back through the ages before even the first sky ship took to the winds. There is a profound justification for this belief in the Talent, the Aid of Ages, manifested only by the greatest of Air Sailors. I have only once seen this mighty Talent at work, but when an ancient sky ship manned by long dead Air Sailors appeared to aid their still living comrades, I knew then that I was part of something grand and ancient.

Once, Air Sailors sailed the seas. Before there were ships, perhaps they roamed the lands - the truest of wanderers. I don't doubt that the discipline was then different in specific abilities. It has been reshaped as the pattern of the land shifted to include the first sea craft, and then the first sky ship. I call myself, by occupation, a free trader and in that title, Mister Norns, I have more fully and precisely described the path of the Air Sailor.

*I thought that most people would dismiss the Air Sailor as just a lesser cousin of the Sky Raider.*

— Leo Sarthain

*Air Sailors seem to hold their own against you just fine, Leo.*

— Maar Stonehorn

The Air Sailor is above all free. The sky ship exists to fly and so must we. The Air Sailor must move on, he must travel. An Air Sailor who has permanently stationed himself anywhere on the ground has betrayed his calling. He has left the open air. Just as I knew that day in my village that I would leave home, so too must every Air Sailor. I tell you this, not just to make you understand my discipline, but as a warning. I know only too well, Isaak, that you love your son. I know that you care for him deeply and would keep him safe from all the dangers of Barsaive. But if he is truly an Air Sailor, he will leave you. He will not be willing to settle in Tansiarda and follow in your footsteps as a city-bound merchant in the House of Norns. He will take to the skies. He will be free. And if you try to cage him, there are only two possible results, dear Isaak. You will destroy him or he will escape. Do the right thing, my friend, and let him fly.

*If this is a widely held belief, I'm surprised I haven't heard more legends of Questors of Lochost who follow the Air Sailor Discipline.*

— Byraun, Elemental and Questor of Jaspre

But are all Air Sailors then anarchists at heart? Do they value complete freedom without structure or law? Absolutely not, for every true Air Sailor knows the value of his Crew. The ship does not fly without the Crew. True freedom to fly requires a collective effort of Name-givers working together. As such, Air Sailors have a camaraderie that few other Disciplines can claim. I have occasionally heard the phrase 'as thick as thieves' bantered about. What foolish slang! If its author had any real wisdom it would be 'as thick as Air Sailors!' No other Discipline is so prone to cooperation and collusion. If it does anything to assuage your fears, Isaak, I can assure you that your son will not sail the skies alone.





It is well known that Air Sailors rarely speak ill of each other publicly. What is less well known is the reason for this closed-ranks mentality. It is not that personality clashes are not common within Crews. Like any Name-giver, some Air Sailors are simply unlikeable. But the Crew handles its own problems within the Crew. Disagreements within the Crew are not for outsiders. Those who violate this rule will quickly find themselves shunned by other Air Sailors and thought untrustworthy.

That said, the justice administered onto those who violate the law of the Crew is often harsh indeed. Let me give you a sad example from my own Crew. It was recently discovered that an Air Sailor aboard my ship, *The Star of Upandal*, was stealing from his fellow crewmen in order to pay off a debt he unwisely owed to some thugs in Bartertown. He was caught red-handed by the Boatswain and was brought before me to receive justice. We were at the time far away from civilized lands, and so it was impossible to turn him over to the authorities. But truth be told, even if that had been an option, I doubt I would have ordered it. This was a matter among the Crew, to be settled by the Crew. He had violated our trust and had caused accusations and quarrels amongst the Crew until he was caught. There was only one fitting punishment—he was hanged from the main mast and then buried in a manner befitting an Air Sailor. It may seem a harsh punishment for stealing what amounted to less than fifty silver. But his crime was greater than mere theft. He had betrayed the trust of his Crew. Not one of my men questioned the decision. They were owed a debt of trust and honor, and payment had to be collected.

That brings me to an important matter. I have at length discussed the ‘free’ part of ‘free trader.’ Let me now focus on ‘trader.’ Air Sailors expect to be paid for their services. It is by the power of our talents that the sky ships stay aloft. It because of the Air Sailor that the wilderness of Barsaive is crossed by trade ships. It is because of Air Sailors that Throal has the navy necessary to defend itself from the Theran Empire. Air Sailors may have deep loyalties to nations and ideals, but they also understand that they deserve fair compensation for their sacrifices. This payment does not always involve only money, some Air Sailors are happy to serve in exchange for recognition or commendation. But every one of us agrees that every debt must be repaid.

As a merchant, Isaak, I know that you can respect this mentality. But this tenet is often misunderstood as meaning that Air Sailors are entirely mercenary or greedy. And certainly some of my Discipline, like those of any Discipline, are servants of these vices. But most Air Sailors understand this in another way. When someone says their work does not deserve compensation, they are effectively saying their work is worthless. They are not showing nobility or altruism, they are insulting their profession. Air Sailors, as a group, are intensely proud of that profession. This further explains why most Air Sailors refusal to speak ill of each other in public. It would damage the profession we all hold so dear.

Of all the Disciplines, the Air Sailor is alone in not only being a calling, a way of life, but also a career. An Archer cannot make a living merely shooting arrows. An Illusionist cannot support himself simply casting his spells. They must apply their talents to some profession. An Archer must be a hunter, a soldier, or a bodyguard for example. But an Air Sailor can support himself well merely Air Sailing. You can trust in this, Isaak, as long as your son serves aboard an sky ship in even the lowliest role he will not go hungry and he will not be without reward for his labors.



With this ethic in place — a love for the freedom of the skies, a heartfelt pride in their profession, and a commitment to making sure all debts are repaid — it is this old Sailor’s opinion that Air Sailors are better equipped than any other Adept for the task of exploration. I know that your son mentioned his desire to become an explorer. And I know that you have asked me what you should say to him to make him put aside these foolish ambitions. I cannot say that I see the wisdom in following the road that lead the Earthdawn to remain lost even after all these years. But I also know this - even this free trader dreams of a day when I shall put aside the well-known trade lanes over Barsaive and head off into the unknown to find my legend.

The Air Sailor you see is born to the Wanderer’s Way. The sky harbors no boundaries and so the way of the Air Sailor harbors none as well. We have been given a great gift Isaak, one that can be hard for those who spend their days on the ground to understand. We have been given the sky. It is a great gift and one that must be repaid. The only way that we can settle this debt is to give the sky our life, my friend.

I hope that this letter has done something to answer your questions, Isaak. I will return to Tansiarda after this matter with Thera has been settled. I would be happy then to meet with your son and talk with him at length about the duty and the destiny of the Air Sailor. I wish, deep in my heart, that I did not have to go to war. I pray only for open skies and clear sailing. But Isaak, there is a debt to settle.

Sincerely,

Gavet Staun

Captain of *The Star of Upandal*, privateer of Throal, free trader, and sailor of the skies

## TO FEEL THE WIND ON YOUR FACE

*The transcript that follows is an interview of K'resta K'harro Syrta, one of the rare k'stulaami t'skrang, and the windling Braton Clouddrinker, both Air Sailors, prior to their enlistment to the crew of the airship Sparrowhawk. This interview was conducted by Captain Edjan Reldrek of the Sparrowhawk, and recorded by Jorg Estrahazz, the first mate. This account has been submitted to The Library's archives.*

— Millsian Troos, Archivist in Residence at the Library of Throal

**Captain Reldrek:** I don't know if First Mate Estrahazz has briefed the two of you on the *Sparrowhawk* or her mission, so allow me to introduce myself, and tell you a little about our vessel and her purpose. Then I can get to know the two of you better, and why you'd make good additions to the *Sparrowhawk's* crew. I am Captain Reldrek and what we need is a crew of the bravest and best Air Sailors who are willing to face the vicious Horror Clouds that have been rolling across Barsaive. Now, if this thought frightens you, then maybe you might consider work on a merchant vessel. No? Okay then, I like to get to know my crew *before* they join, so tell me about yourselves.

**K'resta:** I am K'resta K'harro Syrta, of the Sesslakai Aparagoi in the Throalic Mountains, and this here is my good friend—

**Braton:** Braton Clouddrinker. Pleased to meet ya. Are ya gonna tell them our past, K'rest? Or should I?

**K'resta:** Let's both tell it, that way we won't forget something the other remembers. I'll start. I was hatched from the k'stulaami of the Throalic Mountains, where I nourished the urges towards the sky that overcome all k'stulaami. It seemed only natural when I found myself on the path of an Air Sailing Adept. I *belong* in the sky. It is my home, and the life of an Air Sailor is an exciting and satisfying one. So when I reached my twelfth year, I set out to join the crew of some of the great Throalic airships.

**Braton:** And that's where she met me. Can I tell this part, K'rest?

**K'resta:** You tell it best, Braton.

**Braton:** Well, ya see, I am from a large family of windlings in the forests near Lake Vors. In my family, it is customary for all the brothers to go out into the world and make their fortune, whether it be in treasure, stories, or even girls. Anyway, so all my older brothers had left, and all my younger brothers were still waiting their day to leave the nest, as it were. So it was my turn to leave at last. I was an Adept set loose on the wind and it seemed that air sailing was to be in my future. Pretty strange because most windlings aren't seen as hardy enough for the labor required aboard a fine air sailing vessel such as this.

**Captain Reldrek:** That is often so, but in my own experience, where they lack in strength, windlings more often make up for in heart. Aboard a vessel under my command, there is often no better thing. Er...please continue with your story.

**Braton:** Thank you, captain. So, anyway, I made my way to Bartertown and found merchant ships that were looking for crew. The ships' owners often were skeptical about hiring a windling, but I managed to get enough work to make a living of it, though it was some time before I found anything permanent. It was going from ship to ship that I eventually met K'rest.

**K'resta:** It was the *Minty*. The first mate was such an ogre!

**Braton:** I thought he was a troll!

*K'resta and Braton laugh out loud.*

**Braton:** So we worked together on a few different ships. There weren't many windlings or t'skrang aboard these airships if there were any at all, and we became pretty good friends.

**K'resta:** That we did. Of course, that's not to say we haven't made other friends. Some crews can be pretty tightly knit.

**Captain Reldrek:** Aye, and good crews they be. What duties would you find yourselves likening to most? Were there any that you found your abilities most suited for?

**K'resta:** Braton was often assigned to scouting duties, especially in heavy cloud cover, because he could easily get above the clouds quickly. Also, his astral sight gives him an advantage in the realm of things magical.

**Braton:** Oh boy, could that be exciting. Other times, though, I was really more of a messenger boy. Ship to ship, especially. I dunno, though, I'd like to think it was my charm and good looks that usually got me sent as a greeter.

**K'resta:** Surely it was a factor, my friend. I, on the other hand, have usually been put to rigging work, or hull repair and maintenance. Rigging work is standard fare for any Air Sailor, but with the wind to catch in my k'stulaa, I could fiddle about the sides and undersides of the ship almost without an anchor line attached to me.

**Braton:** There's hardly a vessel in the sky that K'rest doesn't know aft to stern, headstay to hullwork. Sometimes I swear she could stand in the middle of the deck and tell ya exactly where your ship's problem was.

**Captain Reldrek:** That's a handy ability indeed.

**K'resta:** It was the *Gale's Bane*, though, where we found more permanent work. An air mining vessel. The captain, an ork named Dar Aralsthus—his crew called him Captain One Eye—despite being a hard and gruff old ork, there wasn't a single member of his crew he wouldn't have laid his life down for.

**Captain Reldrek:** Aye, I know old One Eye. We were buddies in the Throalic Navy. He lost his eye saving my sorry old butt. He'd get all huffy if I ever tried to thank him.





**K'resta:** Well, begging your pardon, I should like to hear that story some time if you're willing to share it.

**Captain Reldrek:** Another time. Please continue.

**K'resta:** Given our prior experience, we were both assigned similar tasks to those we'd become accustomed to. I was assigned to rigging and Braton was the boatswain's assistant. In a matter of months, we were both moved up to positions of greater responsibility. I became sailmaster of the *Gale's Bane*—

**Braton:** —and I was made the pilot's mate. As ya may already be aware, we Windlings are quite adept at aerial navigation. It comes naturally when ya spend most of your life in the air. The pilot, Ariane Whistlethorn, was easy enough to work for. It was hard to tell if she had a sense of humor at times, but she never seemed to get angry at anything, but that's an elf for ya. Anyway, in addition to keeping the charts and helping with the star readings, I somehow retained some responsibility for keeping the watch schedule, which was a duty I kept as boatswain's assistant. Oh, and as sailmaster, K'rest reported to Ariane as well.

**K'resta:** Yes, despite her fairly reserved manner, Ariane Whistlethorn was really a sweet girl. She pretty much left me to my duties of organizing the rigging and sail crew. I made sure that everything was kept in tip-top shape before and during launch. I made sure my crew was the best at what they did, and the quickest. We held competitions to keep ourselves at optimum capability.

**Captain Reldrek:** Yes, well, I know all about ship's duties, so what I'm wanting to ask you now, is what experience do you have with ship combat? I notice that there's been no mention of sky raiders or the like, and given the valuable cargo of an elemental mining vessel, well, tell me what you know.

**Braton:** Oh, we excel at combat, sir. There's no troll ship in the sky that we're afraid of. Or any other ship for that matter, but mostly troll ships. They're all a bunch of big blowhards.

**K'resta:** Ha ha! I assure you, Captain Reldrek, we have gotten into plenty of scraps with other ships. The two of us have never really been a part of the frontline defense. I mean, can you see a windling or a t'skrang holding off a troll? Let alone several? No, we were usually sent in to sabotage the other ship. We're quick and sly.

**Braton:** And small!

**K'resta:** Oh yes, small. We'd just have to find the right places to cut a rope here, or detach some boards there... You get the idea, I hope.

**Braton:** If K'rest could get into their rigging, woe be to them. No one can maneuver in the sails and ropes like K'rest can. Certainly not a troll. And me, well, I used a little bit of—what do ya call it, K'rest?

**K'resta:** Psychological tactics.

**Braton:** Right. Psycho-whoosits. Tactics. I would fly around and distract the raiders with my cheerful anecdotes and helpful criticisms.



Also, as being smaller and more mobile, we are better able to run commands and small equipment during ship defense.

**K'resta:** Sadly, however, it would be the merciless Pyrus Oakbone and the *Ravenous* that would be the end of the *Gale's Bane*. There was a lot of fire and smoke that day, and it was soon after the onset of the *Ravenous'* surprise attack that we would be overpowered. Captain Aralsthus would not be captured so easily, and with his final act, after telling all survivors to catch wind and abandon ship, he rammed the *Gale's Bane* head on into the *Ravenous*, bringing them both down into the rocky crags of the Caucavic Mountains.

**Captain Reldrek:** Well, well, well. It seems that the two of you do have quite a bit of experience aboard an airship, both with duty and some pretty high responsibilities. I think I can definitely use the two of you aboard the *Sparrowhawk*.

**K'resta:** Thank you, sir.

**Braton:** Ya won't be disappointed.

**Captain Reldrek:** I don't expect that I will. Now, let me fill you in on what your duties will be. I would like to assign the two of you to the rigging crew. You'll be answering to Sailmaster Janson. Be aware, though, that you should be well familiar with other duties aboard ship, should for any reason a certain position need to be filled with expedience. In addition to those duties, you will report Mr. Smalls, our Master At Arms. From him, you and the rest of the crew will train in preparation for Horror Cloud confrontation. You will be working with a variety of Adept, so it is important to understand each other's abilities and how to work effectively together. Do you have any questions?

**K'resta:** None, Captain.

**Braton:** Nope.

**Captain Reldrek:** Then, Lady, Gentleman, it pleases me to welcome you aboard the *Sparrowhawk*.



## THE SHADOW OF A PASSING AIRSHIP

*This journal of an unknown Jerris citizen with apparent ties to some sort of resistance force, was recovered from the wreckage of Cloudfarer, a drakkar destroyed recently by unknown means in the lands between Lake Vors and the Tylon Mountains (specific coordinates can be retrieved from the Exploratory Force's office). Only two bodies were found in the charred ruins; the fate and whereabouts of the rest of the crew and the cause of the Cloudfarer's destruction are currently unknown. Most of the book was severely damaged by fire, but the journal was surprisingly intact towards the center.*

- Tirein The Mapmaker, Lieutenant, Exploratory Force of Throal.

"Information is important, but secrecy is key. The first you need to get your job done. The second you need to stay alive."

Words such as these never rang so clear in my mind. I had taken my work with the Resistance somewhat for granted before, but I realized just how true this precept was for us. I have Captain Kerchiak Ironhorn to thank for the insight. While it is ironic that I should continue to keep a journal of the things I do, I have an unrelenting desire to tell someone of our deeds. Without this form of escape, the temptation to speak of these things out loud is too great. Perhaps this may well become my undoing one day.

I met Captain Ironhorn today during our morning briefing for this week's assignments as I was placed under his command. His group will be helping a ranking member of the Silver Clouds and her family to escape from the city. Her associations with the Resistance may have been uncovered, and the best way to ensure her safety and to protect the sanctity of the Resistance is to get her away from the city as soon as possible before those Iopans can act upon their information.

The troll captain is a mercenary Air Sailor hired specifically for this mission. He and his crew aboard the *Cloudfarer* have done a couple of missions like this for the Resistance before, so he is apparently an experienced hand at this. His outwardly neutral associations with any

one political faction make him an ideal candidate to carry out this job. I was to be his guide within the city, and also to protect the interests of the Resistance should any opportunity present itself.

I found it unusual at first that an Air Sailor would be hired for this job, but then it was revealed that the client and her family were to be transported far and away from Jerris, preferably towards Throal, where it would be less likely for anyone to recognize them. They would remain in hiding there for a few months as a precaution, and then the client would be brought back here to the Resistance headquarters to resume her duties.

I spent the afternoon with the captain to discuss our strategy. He had already gotten most of the logistics planned out, and many of the initial preparations had been taken care of. The plan was deceptively simple, and well thought out. After reviewing our roles a few times over, we found we still had several hours before we bedded down for rest prior to the mission. I decided to take the time to get to know Captain Ironhorn better.

In his own words, he wasn't anything as exotic as a spy, nor was he a part of any of the oft-whispered societies that have their fingers on the pulse of all that happens in Barsaive. Still, like them, he was one who operated from the shadows, more likely to wield a quick wit and unshakable calm rather than sword and might to get things done. He had worked for many Name-givers in the past, all of which had an urgent need to have something transported in secrecy.

When in my naïveté I tried to put a Name to his profession, instead of getting upset he bared his fangs at me in a toothy grin, musing over the title that I bestowed upon him: Smuggler. He assured me with a massive hand upon my trembling shoulder that while my guess was fairly close to being correct, he preferred the title Cargomaster of Risk. One look at my obviously perplexed expression caused him to burst out with uproarious laughter that rung out throughout the otherwise somber base, such that I feared would reach the accursed ears of the Holders of Trust's Copper Branch.

I found through my talks with him that he wasn't nearly as boisterous as I expected from someone of his background. He was surprisingly intelligent and clearheaded, but especially guarded and cautious in manner and speech. It took some cajoling to get him to



speaking more of himself, though admittedly my talents may be more to blame. I did truly wish to learn more about this intriguing Name-giver. His somewhat unorthodox views on what it meant to be an Air Sailor were of particular interest to me.

The Air Sailors' love of the open sky and of the feel of the wind upon their face were obvious with him from the way he kept turning up towards the ceiling of the stifling, underground kaer. His words and praises showed that he valued his ship and his crew above all else, and he had quite interesting views on laws and morals. His desire for the money and the excitement of transporting sensitive material or even contraband was certainly evident as well. He usually didn't do this work to spite anyone in particular, though there are certainly exceptions. He does what he does, because someone needs it done.

It was obvious there are boundaries that even he refused to cross. For example, the transport of slaves, he'd learned previously, could be extremely profitable. However, after several sour deals with Therans (he took care to note that these were for valuables that were probably stolen, not slaves), and after narrowly escaping becoming a slave himself numerous times, he was unwilling to deal with the Therans ever again, and certainly never to transport slaves. He even goes so far as to openly oppose Thera, including involvement with the war just last year. Though he did not use his ship in the air battles that ensued, he transported troops and performed missions that leaned more towards espionage and intelligence gathering. The actions of the Lopans too have evidently had their affect on his sensibilities, as his work with the Resistance might indicate.

*It's not just goods and Name-givers that Ironhorn carries. He's also willing to bring a message — written or verbal — across Barsave for the right kind of silver.*

— Yuriel

According to him, the transport of goods is relatively simple. Items can be easily hidden, even in the open. Mixing things amongst legitimate cargo, or secluding them into hidden holds and compartments is a matter of course, and Captain Ironhorn is certain that most, if not all merchant vessels had been involved in such things at least once in their lifetime. The captain merely makes a living out of it.

Transporting people, however, is much more difficult. This involves more effort to successfully pull off, but the rewards can be greater as well. For these jobs, the captain employs skilled forgers and disguisers in his crew and in many of the major cities throughout Barsave to help take care of the particulars, or he does them himself if none are available. In this mission, he would have to perform these tasks himself.

Hiding the clients out in the open is surprisingly effective. Whether it's disguising them as mates on the ship or as travelers booking passage upon his ship, the preparations are always carefully devised and designed to best fit the profiles of the clients. The use of falsified identification papers, the cover stories, and the elaborate theatrics involved would make any Troubadour proud.

In this job, two of the *Cloudfarer's* regular crew would remain at the Resistance base to be picked up later. The story was that the crewmembers had deserted, and the client and her husband, whose identities would be disguised, had been hired to fill those positions. The children are stowaways that were caught sneaking around the ship, and they are currently being held until a decision can be made as to what would be done with them. The children could be left as they

were, and the captain's authority over matters within his own ship was his argument to keep them aboard if the Lopans made mention about them. The information did not have to be advertised, of course. These were only to be used if an inspection was made prior to the ship's departure, and questions were raised. The captain had already seen to it that news of the *Cloudfarer* looking for able hands to fill vacant positions had made its rounds through the city.

Most of his crew is left uninformed about the specifics in any given job, more to protect them than anything else. However, they are all aware that there are often legal ambiguities involved in their work, and their discovery could lead to imprisonment, or worse, execution. Still, I found the crew to be exceptionally loyal to Captain Ironhorn and they perform their duties without question as evidenced by the crewmembers that were asked to remain behind. From what I heard them saying, the captain pays them well and treats them better. He has put his own safety on the line several times on behalf of his crew, and they are more than happy to return the favor. They all knowingly and willingly follow the path and beliefs of their captain. Witnessing such unwavering camaraderie is inspirational.

Air Sailors who follow the path of the smuggler tend to divert attention away from themselves or the things that they are trying to transport. They can't afford to have too many people prying into their business, as the less people know, the better. If people are too suspicious, then it becomes imperative to either fool those prying eyes, rush the timetable, or drop the job altogether. It's far preferable to abandon pride and run from a fight than it is to engage and risk being caught in the possession of something illegal.

The smuggler is also expected to be equally competent when working independently, as when he is working as part of a crew. Everyone has his or her part in any given job. Being able to operate alone is a vital factor in not drawing too much attention, and if anything goes wrong they cannot expect to receive help right away if at all. The captain is the one who takes in the most dangerous part of the job, which is typically the initial contact, the pickup, and the delivery. During these times, most of his crew are handling the legitimate aspects and transactions of their trade business, the *Cloudfarer's* cover.





There are times when a select few of the crew also take part in the job. The responsibilities of each individual are carefully planned out. Precise timing is essential, and if anything should go critically wrong with any of the parts, the job is cancelled. Their alibis and stories must be flawless, yet so simple that no one thinks twice about it. There are so many intricacies, that I am certain Captain Ironhorn merely touched upon the aspects of smuggling, and that there was far more to it than what he told me.

He admitted to the fact that many Air Sailor talents are not as conducive to smuggling than his more mundane skills, but he managed to develop knacks that were useful to him, an excellent indicator of the resourcefulness these people are capable of. What really makes him better suited for this work than a Thief or Scout Adept, though, would be the airship. Its ability to move people and items across all of Barsaive in such a short period of time makes it invaluable to those within his business. Its cargo capacity rivals that of many overland caravans, and like caravans, people can be hidden in and amongst the crew. It's the perfect transport device for anyone in the business.

We talked well into the night before he retired to get some rest before we set out for Jerris. It's only a matter of hours now before we leave, and perhaps for once since the time that I've been with the Resistance, I don't feel particularly anxious about the upcoming mission.

*There are some T'skrang Boatmen who have developed similiar knacks.*

—Terricia

With help from the Engineers, we snuck into Jerris through the sewers. Captain Ironhorn seemed somewhat nervous in the underground. He mumbled about there being something bothering him. His eyes darted towards every movement and his ears twitched at every sound. I thought this was because he had been involved in the smuggling business for far too long, and the paranoia was catching up to him. However, when I pressed him about it, he assured me that this was merely because he was operating outside his element. He was not used to crawling around sewers and tunnels. I had not known him for very long, but I could still see the evidence of weariness in his face.

When we arrived at our destination, it was still at least an hour before sunrise. Without a word, the Captain went to meet up with his client, while I proceeded to a nearby inn. The person who was at the desk knew who I was, and didn't ask any questions as I positioned myself at a bench by a window where I could watch the activity on the street. If I noticed any trouble, I could provide a distraction or some other form of assistance as necessary.

A rough-looking fellow accompanied by a small squad of Falcons came through from the direction of the docks mere moments after the captain had entered the home. They loitered around the area for a bit, and though I did not see any additional activity, when the group passed by again to return to the docks, there were three smaller figures that had joined them. The captain passed the window about two hours later with two rowdy-looking individuals. The mission was well under way, and I stayed at the inn as planned to keep an eye on the activity around the house. I ordered some breakfast and I'm updating my journal to pass the time.

*I never cease to be amazed by how much the Library of Throal makes available.*

—Kowlar

*You would likely be more amazed, still, by what we do not allow into the public collections.*

—Thom Edrull

I am on the *Cloudfarer* headed towards Throal. This certainly wasn't part of the plan, but the Silver Branch of the Holders of Trust had acted far sooner than anticipated. They weren't expected to take action for at least another day, but I caught wind of news that they had started looking for the client, and I had passed a squad of them traveling towards the general direction of the client's home while I was leaving the inn. I rushed to the docks to inform Captain Ironhorn of the situation right away. The ship had to leave before the client's absence was noted, and the city was locked down.

As I approached the ship, the captain stormed out and a rather loud, very one-sided argument began on the ramp where he accused me of trying to sell him counterfeit goods earlier. Other claims of my involvement with illegitimate business practices were thrown in my direction, and while I stood stunned at these accusations, others in his crew forcibly dragged me upon their ship. Confused and terribly afraid for my safety, I could do nothing as I was taken aboard, not even struggling as they forced my outer clothes off and tossed them overboard while tying me to the mast to the amusement of observers below. I wept and pleaded for my release as the ship lifted off and departed the city not moments later.

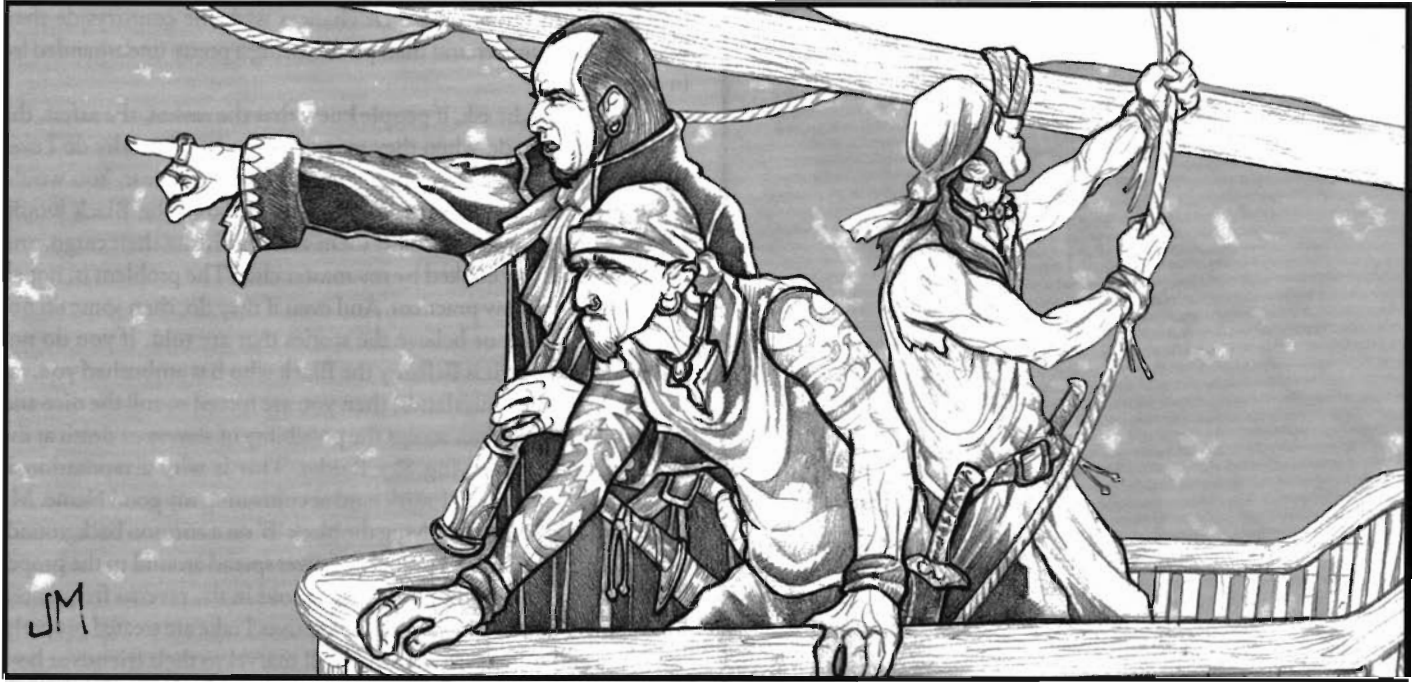
As the ship lifted up higher out of sight of the city, Captain Ironhorn came to me and unfastened my bonds, apologizing profusely for treating me the way he did. He had sensed the urgency in my pace and noticed the panic in my eyes as I had approached the ship, so he already guessed what had happened. The captain informed me that my own involvement could have been compromised. Too many people saw me rushing towards the docks, where I had no real reason to be. With this event utmost in people's minds, they might forget about that detail and about the new crewmembers that had climbed aboard earlier that day. That was why that event was staged, so he says. He also jokingly complimented me on my "fine performance." I have to admit that his quick thinking and the actions of his crew that flowed into his actions so seamlessly impresses me, but I do not believe that I shall ever forgive him for giving me such a fright.

I can't return to Jerris now. The need to leave the area was too great to risk circling back to drop me off at the Resistance base, so for the time being, I'm traveling with the *Cloudfarer* until it makes its return trip in a few months. A thrice-coded message was dispatched via falcon earlier, which will inform the Resistance of what had happened. At least if anyone investigating my involvement asked around, they would hear about the argument and detainment, and they would most likely write off any role I may have had. The most I should expect to face when I return is a little embarrassment and [...]

*The rest of the journal has been either rendered illegible, or complete sentences cannot be reliably formed from the words that survived.*

—Tirein.





## RUM AND THE CUTLASS

*The following letter was delivered by to the library by a common courier. The author, an airship captain of some repute, included a note saying that he had heard that this tome was being compiled and wanted to make sure that we included representatives of, to use his words, "The less effete branch of our Air Sailing family."*

— Merrox

My name is Sameel Bellamy. When working, I tend to wear black, and so I am generally known as Black Sam Bellamy, Bellamy the Black, or, if you have a habit of reading Theran wanted posters, "The accursed and most vile murderer, thief, and pirate Sameel Bellamy, known to make his lair in the Twilight Peaks." I take offense at that, personally - I am in no way vile. I am a pirate, that much is true, and those who see me will often end up missing their goods, their money, or their personal effects. But they will for the most part live to tell the tale, which is after all the most important thing, wouldn't you say?

## OF PIRATES AND PIRACY

Not all pirates would let you live. In fact, knowing just what kind of pirate you've run into might let you make a smart choice about whether you should run or just heave to and take your chances with surrender. Many Name-givers often forget that piracy still exists in our world. After all, airship travel is quick and generally safe, run by respected companies. What those respected companies won't tell you is that you travelers are often sharing the ship with cargo that is so valuable that it couldn't be transported by caravan or other cheaper means. The fact that these ships are often unescorted, inadequately defended, and unable to run away from the average pirate fleet naturally creates an economic imbalance in which we are forced by practicality to part these cargoes from their owners. Put another way, they're worth more than it costs to capture them. A lot more. One good score can set you up for a year. A great one, the stuff of legends, can set you up for life.

*"Never forget there are pirates!" Ha! People forget about you and your mighty fleet of two ships because they fear Sky Raiders!*

— Leo Sarthain

There are many different kinds of pirates. Most are in it for the money, although their methods differ. Some captains prefer to ambush a ship in the middle of nowhere, others choose to attack closer to civilization - a bolder move, but one that can spell doom for a complacent ship not yet watching for the hazards of the sky. Pirate crews have differing notions about victory, as well. Some take the defeated ships, and slaughter the crew to a man. Others merely take the cargo and speed off, confident in their ability to evade or outrun any pursuit the former owners could put up. If you're rich and can talk fast, they may choose to hold you to be ransomed. If a Theran or crystal raider ship catches you, expect to end up as a slave. The *Slaver's Ball*, for example, was the flagship of a private Theran fleet which specialized in capturing Throalic passenger ships and returning them to Thera as slaves.

*How dare he compare the rightful servitude of the newot to the Theran abomination called slavery? If I ever meet him in the skies, he'll regret those words.*

— Grindal Stoneshatter Stormcloud of the Ironmonger Moot

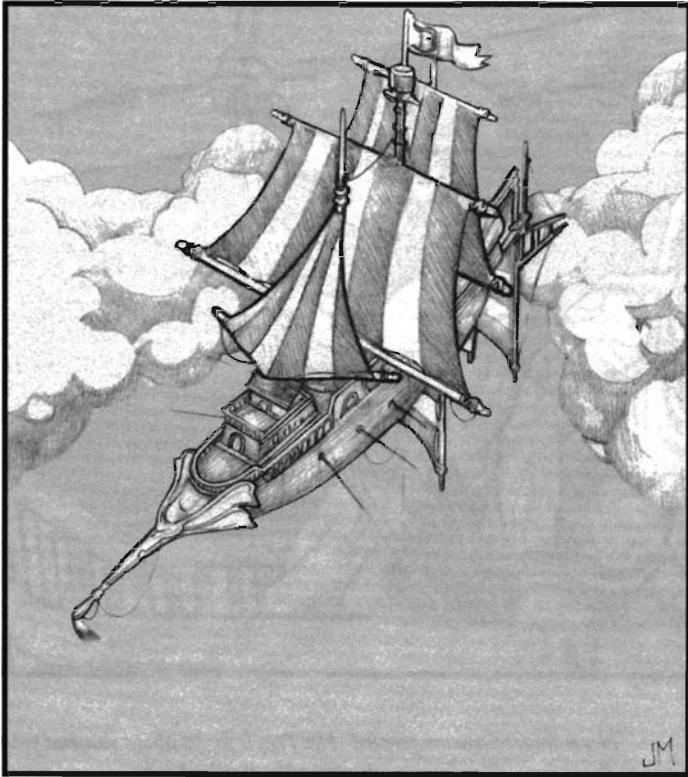
*Slavery is slavery, Grindal. It doesn't matter how old the tradition is, or how you dress it up. No Name-giver should ever be denied his freedom.*

— Kagola Bondbreaker Thundersky of the Thundersky Moot, Questor of Lochost, Leader of the Broken Chain

## THE IMPORTANCE OF REPUTATIONS

That's not how I operate, though. I've oft-times been called "The Gentleman Pirate," for my dashing way with the ladies as well as the way I treat those who I come across in my line of work. When I take a ship, my treatment of the prize is dictated entirely by their behavior. If





they surrender immediately, then I merely take their cargo and go on my way. I don't harass the crew or passengers, and quite often I'll invite one or more of them over for dinner in the captain's mess. If they run, well, I can't blame them. Everybody runs — I'd probably run too, if I were the sheep instead of the wolf. Running away means more effort for me, and that has to be compensated for in some way. You ran, and you took your chances, but you lost. For that, we'll take the cargo, any personal belongings of value from crew and passengers, and might even take hostage one of the passengers if the ransom amount sounds promising enough. The rest, however, will be sent along their merry way, crew, passengers, and ship all unharmed.

Then, there are those that fight. Those who do not fly the skies of Barsaive often have no idea just how expensive a ship battle can be. Every time my flagship's cannon fire, it as if we have just thrown two thousand silver pieces at the enemy. Repairs are tremendously expensive. Just for landing in their bay, they'll charge you two hundred silver, and repair costs easily hit three or four thousand for only moderate damage. Spread across my entire fleet, it is not uncommon for our expenses from a single pitched battle to total in the tens of thousands. These costs have to be recouped and so the penalty for resistance is, unfortunately, the loss of your ship. In this case, I'll put a prize crew on the ship - a small crew, undermanned but able to keep the ship in the air and moving forward - and clap the passengers and crew in chains and put them in my cargo hold for safekeeping. We generally drop them off in a day or two, leaving them with directions that will get them back to civilization in a day or two. The passengers get pretty unhappy when the chains come out, but when I point out that the alternative is a quick trip over the side of the ship, they usually calm down. Of course, I generally have four or five per ship who take me up on the offer - not suicidal types, mind you, just the Adepts with Wind

Catcher who'd rather take their chances with the countryside than with me. I can understand that, pirates being a pretty underhanded lot in general.

So, you might ask, if people knew that the easiest, the safest, the smartest thing to do when they see me is to surrender, why do I ever have to fight? I do have to fight, many times each year. You would think that anyone being approached by Bellamy the Black would simply stop, allow me to board them and confiscate their cargo, and enjoy a fine dinner cooked by my master chef. The problem is, not all know of me, and my practices. And even if they do, then some do not recognize my fleet or believe the stories that are told. If you do not know for sure that it is Bellamy the Black who has ambushed you, far from help, in the hinterlands, then you are forced to roll the dice and flee or fight, rather than accept the possibility of slavery or death at the hands of some bellowing Sky Raider. This is why a reputation is important - nay, crucial! I work hard at cultivating my good Name. My ships, all painted black, all flying the black 'B' on a crimson background, let all know me on sight. A supply of silver spread around to the proper Troubadours ensures that my tales are told in the taverns frequented by skyfarers. I make sure that all the captives I take are treated properly, with care and respect, so that they will marvel to their friends at how well the pirate captain Bellamy treated them, further spreading the word.

Once you have that good Name, as I have, others will try to take advantage of it. This is by no means a problem confined to the captains of the sky. Every hero of sufficient fame will likely run into this at some point in his career. The problem of the oral tradition is that while everyone in Barsaive has likely heard of Sameel Bellamy, relatively few have ever seen him. All know that I dress in black, but that is no obstacle to impersonation. Most often, I have found out that I have a double when my Troubadours tell me of stories they have heard, stories about me but which I had no part in—stories where the fake Bellamy slaughtered the passengers and crew who had willingly surrendered, expecting only to lose their cargo. You see, I have a sort of implicit contract with those who surrender to me - you know that if you surrender to Black Sam Bellamy, you will not be harmed. Once there begins to arise a question about your treatment, once you start wondering, "Will Bellamy kill us as he did in that one tale we heard of?" the contract is sundered, and all my hard work, all my effort at cultivating a reputation is destroyed. A reputation as a killer is worth little, a reputation as an unpredictable killer even less. As a Name-giver, you have the right and the responsibility to see that your Name is not being misused. I have no sympathy - none - towards these despicable Namethieves, and I allow them no quarter.

*I heard that the last impersonator he tracked down, a Sky Raider by the name of Kalthus, was thrown over the side from two thousand yards up.*

—Portallus, Elf Air Sailor of the Brigand's Bane

*So? Any Sky Raider worth his salt would just float down to the ground and think he'd gotten off pretty easy.*

—Gringnar the Bloody, Orcish Air Sailor of the Viper's Nest

*They were over Death's Sea at the time.*

—Portallus, Elf Air Sailor of the Brigand's Bane





## THE HEART OF A SHIP

The only thing more important than the world's perception of you is your crew's perception of you. The captain is the mind of a ship, but your crew is the ship's very heart. Both are needed to function properly, and you must never ignore them. A good crew, one that has given you their allegiance and more importantly, their trust, can be an asset of unimaginable value. Some crews mutiny, or fight constantly among themselves, and the result of this is weakness. These crews will be slow to work, slow to fight, and will question your orders, even those that must be followed immediately! On my ships, we have structure. Everyone, from the lowest swabbie to my first mate, has read and agreed to follow the Ship's Articles. We all know what the division of prizes will be, who outranks whom, and what constitutes an offense against the ship and the punishment therefore. We have but six offenses, and they are simple in nature: Disobeying Orders, Desertion, Rape, Gambling (aboard ship), Fighting, and Theft. We have structure, but more importantly, that structure is built upon respect. My men are capable, and I trust them to perform in the worst of conditions, and to follow my orders even when they seem suicidal, which, because I am responsible for the lives of all my crew moreso than the life of a single crewman, they sometimes are.

My crew knows that I care for them and trust in them, and for that they respect and trust me in return. This has allowed us to succeed in many situations where other ships would have been torn apart by internal divisions, and I have no greater power at my behest than that of my faithful crew. It is all any pirate - any leader of men - could ask for, and it is my most prized possession.

## GAME INFORMATION

Among Air Sails, there are those that believe that the strength of their crew is their paramount concern. If the crew is united and confident, no enemy can stand against them. These Air Sails may choose to replace the Taunt talent at 6th circle with the following talent, Bold Speech.

### Bold Speech

**Step:** Rank + Charisma Step

**Action:** Sustained

**Requires Karma:** Yes

**Strain:** 0

**Effect:** Among many crews of Air Sails, it is expected that the leader of the force give a speech before the battle. These speeches can inflame the crew, instilling them with a burning desire to achieve victory, no matter what the opponent or cost. An Air Sailor with the Bold Speech talent is especially effective at delivering these speeches, using his innate magic to enhance his natural speaking ability. Any Name-giver inspired by such a speech is certain to give his all in the upcoming battle.

To use this talent, the Air Sailor must spend at least two minutes delivering a rousing speech to his troops, and makes a Bold Speech Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the highest Social Defense of the people in the group he is trying to affect, modified by +1 for every additional person after the first. The single-minded determination incited by this speech gives all affected Name-givers a bonus to their Social Defense equal to the Air Sailor's rank in Bold Speech. This bonus lasts for one hour after the speech ends. Only those Name-givers who can both hear and understand the speech are affected by this talent, and they may only benefit from one Bold Speech at a time.



## CHAPTER TWO BEASTMASTERS







## THE CALL OF THE BEAST

*This document was written specifically for this work. In searching to capture the truth of the Beastmaster discipline, I noticed that within the Library of Throal there was a dearth of documents dealing with this often elusive and enigmatic path. So I sought out the famed Beastmaster, Harak Dor, (formerly of the Pact of Staurs) and interviewed him. He was suspicious of my motives, and I must confess that he did frighten your humble archivist quite severely. However, I did manage to get him to answer a few of my questions and I think what follows will prove quite interesting to anyone who seeks to more fully understand the discipline of Beastmaster.*

- Gideon Morrow, archivist in residence at the Library of Throal

Cowering city dweller, you think you can impress me with your fineries and your pleasantries? I am Harak Dor! I am called by others a Beastmaster!

*But, do you call yourself a Beastmaster?*

Hmm...a thoughtful question. It is true I have mastery over beasts. They obey my will and they do my bidding. I have done such since my initiation into the first circle. But am I truly their master? I say no. In truth, I am their pupil. They show me the greater truths. What scholar is wiser than the wolves of the forest? What sage knows more the birds of the air? Which book in your library remembers more than creatures of Barsaive? In their wildness I have glimpsed the true life! In their ways I am rediscovering what has been forgotten by Name-givers in their mad rush towards being civilized.

*So then do you believe that all civilization is madness?*

Civilization is the path of sheep. Once Name-givers were few and wild. By seeking civilization they have become many. This I respect, for in becoming many, they have survived and survival is truly the way of the wild. But they have also become weak, dependent on things outside themselves. Even amongst the Adepts, this is true. How effective would an Archer be without his bow, or a Swordmaster with his sword? But Beastmasters need nothing but their instincts and their wits. It is not an accident that the first weapon talent that the Beastmaster discipline learns is the art of unarmed combat. To learn anything else is to become a slave to your tools. Tools, cowering city dweller, are often the subtlest of snares.

*But aren't beasts your tools?*

*(At this point, Harak Dor took some offense at the question, and leapt at your humble archivist, causing me to spill my ink. I therefore was unable to exactly record the beginning of the next answer, so what follows at least the first part is a paraphrase.)*

Tools!? You dare compare the glory of the wild with your toys? No true Beastmaster would call the wild creatures mere tools! The beasts who aid me are my brothers. I have sought to learn their ways and to understand their wordless wisdom. No true Beastmaster would ever sacrifice his beasts like an archer sacrifices his arrows. I have had beasts doing my service meet with death. It was as if my heart was ripped

from my chest, such was my sorrow. I remember these fallen brothers well. I honor their memory!

Let me tell you the story of my brother. As a young man, I came to know a large wolf that lived outside the village I grew up in before I realized the folly of living amongst men and went to live in the wilderness. The wolf had no Name, as the beasts of the field speak a deeper language than mere words. But in my heart I called him Shadow Running, because he could run through woods as fast as a rabbit and yet be unseen and unheard. He followed his own discipline as much as any Name-giver, but his was the way of the Wolf. I strove to learn his way and make it my own. I was honored that he adopted a humble human to be his friend and in time his brother.

Later Shadow Running and I would ally with a group of other Adepts to deal with Theran slavers who had been troubling our land. In his jaws and by my hands, many Therans never saw their foul Empire again. In time, we would be amongst those who brought down the band of slavers under the ruthless Captain Tyr Carius. The bards of Landis still sing of the battle where we brought him low. We boarded their vedette and fought on the decks of their stone warbird. Shadow Running fought beside me as bold as any warrior.

It was in that battle that Shadow Running was slain. He died with honor true to his Way, true to our cause, and true to me. I would have done anything to trade my life for his and I avenged his death slaying every Theran whose arrows brought him low. I brought him back to his pack, and presented them with his corpse. I howled with his Nameless kin under the moon in tribute to my brother. I did not bury him. This is not the way of the wolf. I left him to the wilderness where the forest will turn his flesh into new life. It has been years since he left me and still sometimes I hear his ghost howling to me under the full moon.

Was Shadow Running my tool, city dweller?

*I'm very sorry. I mean no offense, but I find it interesting that you cooperated with other Name-givers. Were they all Beastmasters?*

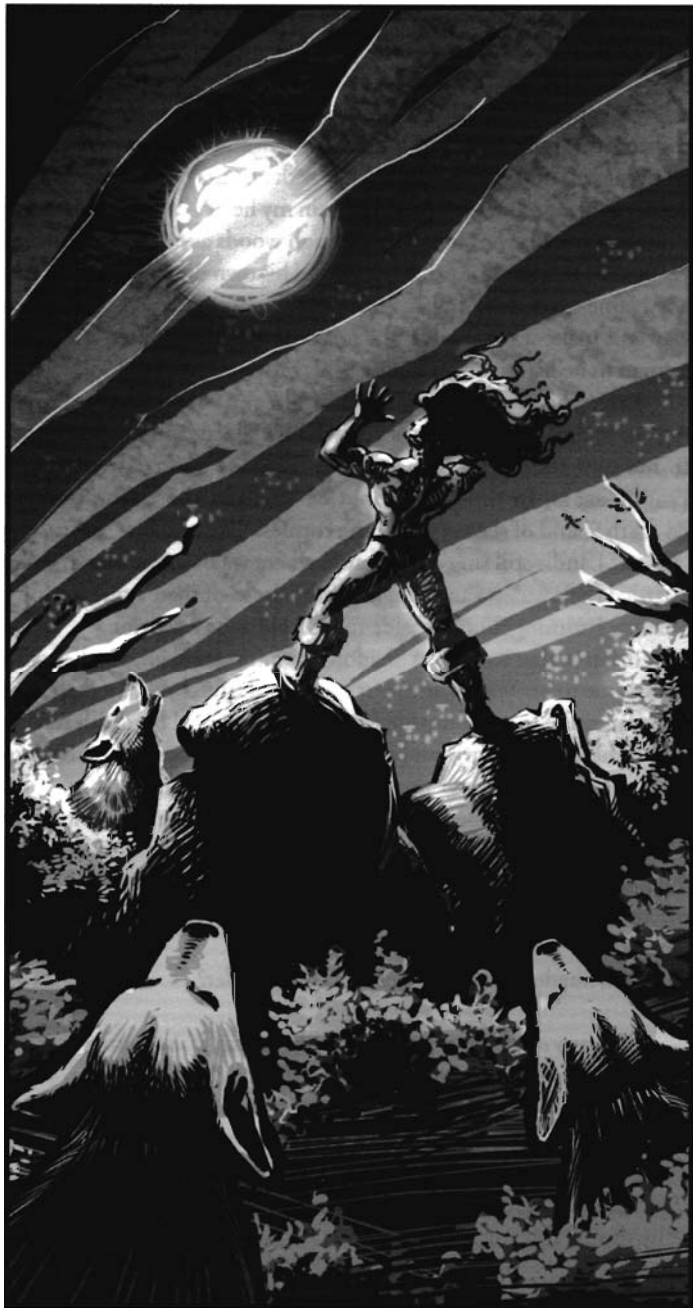
Of course not. In fact, I was the only Beastmaster in their company. In time the Pact of Staurs came to include a Sky Raider, a Thief, a Wizard, a Swordmaster and an Illusionist amongst its core members. Why should this surprise you?

*I mean no disrespect, but it just seems that Beastmasters are often more comfortable with animals than with other Name-givers...*

What a fool you are, city dweller. Have you heard nothing of what I said? How often have I heard this foolish notion. I am a Name-giver. I am a human. I am not a beast. I must behave like a man. If I tried to be a wolf, I would be poor wolf; just as if a wolf tried to pretend to be a man, it would be a poor man.

This does not mean that I do not have much to learn about being a man from wolves. I saw within Shadow Running a deep attachment to his pack. I saw the strength that this connection gave his pack. When Shadow Running sang to me, he told me stories of his pack more ancient and enduring than mere words could ever capture. He taught me that to find my own strength, I must find a pack of my own kind.

When Captain Carius struck the village of Staursfeld and carried half its population to be slaves in Thera, I found a purpose and a pack.



The Pact of Staurs was an oath that taken by several Adepts to hunt down the villain and bring back the prisoners. The Pact took us far and wide, to seek the wisdom of a defector from the Empire who knew the weaknesses of the vedettes, and deep into a broken Caer to find a long-forgotten weapon that made our victory possible. The legends of the Pact of Staurs are many. If I were to tell you them all, even you would run out of ink, city dweller.

But I tell you of the Pact not to regale with tales of our glory, but to make a point. Many of the Name-givers in the Pact follow paths that I see as folly. They have abandoned what is wild in them. But I also see within some of them a hint of wisdom. When the great Troll Skyraider Druegan went into a fury no one could stop him. I saw on his face the wisdom of the beast! I was honored to fight beside him and we saved each other's skin more times than I can count. I welcomed him into my pack.

And then there was a foolish dwarf Thief Named Haeden Cunningbeard. He seemed to revel in taunting me without end. I once almost opened him with my claws, so greatly he angered me. But he too served his purpose. His clever words opened many doors, and what his words could not open, his nimble fingers could. Without him we would have never penetrated Kaer Dallen. And so, though grudgingly at times, I welcomed him into my pack.

Ultimately, all Beastmasters follow a path of Name-givers, not of animals. Part of the wisdom of the wild is to accept what we are and to use what we have been given to survive. I look at the wolves and sometimes I envy them. I envy their focus, their certainty. I have never seen a wolf doubt that it should be a wolf.

*Are you saying that you have doubted that you should be a man?*

*(I should note that when I asked this question Harak Dor's eyes narrowed to slits and he sat quietly staring at me for several moments. I was forced to face the very real possibility that he might very well be considering doing something quiet violent. Instead, much to my relief, he eventually offered this answer...)*

You are sharp-eared, city dweller. The answer to that question is not a simple one. It is something that I have wrestled with all my life. I have traveled far and seen much and still I cannot answer this question. Why do some of the creatures that dwell in this land have Names and some do not? Why was I born a man when my heart cries out to be a beast?

My talents are transforming me into a beast. Recently, I gained the talent to lead them. I returned to the pack of Shadow Running and summoned them to commemorate the moon-anniversary of my brother. For a time I led them as their pack leader. They followed me as their alpha and we ran through the woods together. We hunted a stag and together feasted on raw venison. We climbed to the cliff's edge and howled at the night sky in moon-struck ecstasy. That night I was one of them. With every circle I gain, I am less and less a man. I wonder where it will end. Will there come a time when I am not a man at all?

Who writes our destiny, city dweller? Did the Passions put within me this burning fire for what is wild and bestial or did I kindle it myself as a child frolicking in the fields and forests of Staursfeld? I have joined a pack of Name-givers and found amongst them friends who I still value to this day. They are my brothers as much as Shadow Running ever was.

But their path is not mine. My path takes me further and further into the wild places of the world. I wander farther and farther away from the world of Name-givers. I am less and less a man, less and less a Beastmaster and more and more a beast.

*You do not sound like a beast to me, Harak.*

Perhaps you are right, city dweller. Perhaps I have already given up too much. Perhaps it is time for me to return to the Pact of Staurs and see what new crusade the quick-tongued Wizard Aerden has persuaded them all to embark upon. Perhaps...

Bah! I grow tired of these prying questions and your irrepressible stink. The stench of the sewers clings to you, city dweller. Run back to your towers of stone! Keep your festering towns! I am Harak Dor! In wildness, I will find the truth!





## ON BEING A MASTER

*The following transcript has been brought to us by a group of adventurers Named the Brotherhood of the Crimson Star. They are the words of Charcoalgrin's Unforgivables Named Kire Jeseret, who also calls himself the Master of the Beasts.*

— Merrox

That the Beastmaster exercises mastery over beasts seems almost a tautology. After all, the discipline is not called a Beast-brother or a Beast-imitator. We are Beastmasters. Still, many of my brother disciplines disapprove of the assertion that we are anything but cousins to the beasts. Even as they mentally dominate the beasts that serve them, they insist that the beasts are somehow willing servitors. They are not tools or servants, they are brothers who serve willingly. I would argue that this is simply self-delusion. Consider, for example my wolfhound Marden. Marden served me, yes. Why did he do this? Did he choose to follow me because he approved of my goals or methodologies? No, he served me at first because I trained him to serve. I convinced him that I was his pack leader and he was born to follow that leader. In time, I took away even that need, instead inspiring him by direct mental command.

*He sounds like a Questor of Dis!*

— Jeroval Iron투스

If I hadn't trained Marden would he have followed me? If I hadn't bonded with him would he have followed me into many combats so dangerous his life was at risk? The answer is simply no. He did not serve me by choice any more than a sword has a choice over who wields it. I did not give Marden or Jacoby a choice. They are my servants because I will it. I am their master. This is as it should be.

I briefly worked with another Beastmaster by the name of Harak Dor. He had with him a great wolf he called Shadow Running. He considered that wolf his brother. This is an attitude I find not uncommon amongst my fellow Beastmasters. It was clear to me that this was a lie. Shadow Running was a fine servant, slaying many enemies and defending his master tirelessly. I saw in Shadow Running much of the same strength that Marden had shown me. But I also saw his sorrow. Shadow Running stared wistfully towards the trees. He dreamed of returning to the woods and being a wolf again rather than a servant of Name-givers. He wanted to be wild and rut with his chosen she-wolf. He wanted to howl with his brothers. He wanted to be a wolf again. But this was not his destiny. He was Harak Dor's chosen tool.

I have no problem with Harak Dor binding Shadow Running or any wolf to his side. The Passions have made us Beastmasters. You would as soon ask Shadow Running not to use his teeth as to ask a Beastmaster not to use his command of animals. What I find distasteful is the self-deception. Harak Dor argued vehemently, almost violently, that Shadow Running served him because he wanted to serve. He had not been dominated into service, Harak Dor insisted. Ludicrous.

*Shadow Running was Harak Dor's familiar. I wonder if Kire understands the bond that can form between a familiar and their adept?*

— Hunting Mantis



We are what we are. We are the masters of beasts. To us has been given dominion over the lesser creatures of the Earth. So be it. We are empowered to use them, hopefully, for the good of our fellow Name-givers. There is nothing wrong with this. Name-givers have asked me if I ever feel sad that I led Marden to his death rather than let him live free along Marden Creek. You would as soon ask the warrior if he mourned taking the iron in the ground instead of turning it into a sword now broken. Before I met Marden he was merely a beast. I transformed him into my most valued tool. Yet, still, I miss him.

## A FOX IN THE HENHOUSE

*"I found this fascinating gem during my most recent visit to the Free City of Triumph. I believe that it will be worth watching how well the governing body of Triumph matures over the coming years. Seeing how the squabbles of a fledgling council can be brings a smile to the face of this jaded old dwarf. If only the audiences before King Neden could be this entertaining."*

— Traza Ilshiet, Associate Archivist, Great Library of Throal.

### Free City of Triumph Council Meeting

1513 TH

Recorded by Zarien Dulmoor, Senior Scribe, Triumph Administrative Sector.

Overseer Omasu presiding.

*Item Number 47, Subsection B*

**Speaker(s):** Representative Lirica Tyranus of the First District, Representative Harlis Grandor of the Third District, and Representative T'larin Swiftstream of the Fourth District.

In Regards To: The immediate revocation of all rights, rank, and privileges of Representative Amalla Maranti of the Seventh District from the Council of the Free City of Triumph.

**Omasu:** Please elaborate on the conditions of this grievous charge.





**Omasu:** What have you to say to this, Representatives Grandor and Swiftstream?

*Harlis and T'larin refrain from comment*

**Omasu:** In that case, Representative Maranti, for the benefit of those of us on the Council who are not familiar with your background and qualifications, please briefly describe your experiences and the reasons why you believe you are suited for a seat on this Council.

**Amalla:** I was born into a Maranti Family of Travar; my father even served a term as one of the city's magistrates when I was still young. Despite being unable to sponsor a champion in the subsequent Founding events, he was still a well-respected figure within the governing circles, and the Maranti family found itself embroiled deep in the city's politics even without the benefit of the magistrate's title.

Perhaps it was due to my natural affinity with animals that I would have an easy time interacting with many people as well. I spent more time with the family's servants than I did with my siblings. I remember that I often ran from my tutors to visit the smiths and vendors operating out in the streets of Travar, who welcomed me with smiles and open arms. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I had especially close ties with the stablemaster and those that worked under her. That was the kind of experience I had when I was younger.

There were eight children in the Maranti family, and each one of us was brought up living and breathing the subtle games that nobles and politicians play. However, with so many children, we could not all be expected to fill critical roles in the family and in the city. Only the eldest few would be granted that favor. I, as the youngest child, was expected to go out into the world to find my own path. As an Adept, that path was much easier for me to travel than it would be for my other two siblings who were expected to do the same.

At first, I thought that adventuring would be the final destination of my journey. I had found myself teamed with a good, respectable group, and we shared many exciting times together. However, no matter how hard I tried, I could not keep myself from helping and leading people who needed direction. The training I had as a youth was deeply etched into my mind and body, and I would often become involved with another city's politics before I even realized what I was doing. After only two years living the life as a free-roaming adventurer, I went back to my father and requested permission to be an ambassador of the Maranti family, so to speak. I would represent the family in political and social functions in the more distant cities that others would be unable to attend. I continued to do this, even as an adventurer, and I found this to suit my personality ideally.

I have found that through my years of dealing with large groups of people, and my years as a Beastmaster, that Name-givers and animals do not differ as much as some would believe. Many creatures develop a complex social structure and serve roles within their own community, just as people do. As one who is able to use my abilities to influence these creatures and establish my role as a dominant presence to lead them, I find there are many parallels between this and my role as a council member in Triumph. Many different animal packs and people both need leadership, guidance, and protection. Without these things, they fall prey to such things as predators and dissention.

I had settled down to deal with more domestic matters for several

**Lirica:** This... this woman! She is barbaric, uncouth, and crude! Her mere presence within the Council tarnishes its name, and threatens to bring upon it an irreversibly negative reputation for harboring such uncivilized folk! She blatantly ignores protocol, possesses little respect for other council members, and regards her peers as inferior!

**Omasu:** And Representative Maranti, how do you plead to these charges?

**Amalla:** Beastmaster.

**Omasu:** Pardon?

**Amalla:** I mean to say that in response to these accusations, Representative Tyranus is the only member of the Council that I truly disrespect, because she holds a prejudiced view towards those of my Discipline. The others I view merely as sheep...

**Lirica:** See what I mean?!

**Omasu:** Please, wait your turn, Representative Tyranus. Please continue, Representative Maranti. And please refrain from using such comments.

**Amalla:** *(clears throat)* My apologies. That was uncalled for. Such a metaphorical comparison is rude and inappropriate, and an insult to a fine animal. I meant to say that I feel the others have thrown in their lot in regards to this matter because Representative Tyranus strong-armed them into doing so.

*Some chuckling in response from other Representatives*





years after my adventuring days had drawn to a close. Then there was the war of independence from Thera, which again changed the path in life that I would take. While many nations' leaders were drawn to the battlefield, many smaller, outlying villages found themselves either without guidance from their sponsoring countries, or they were in danger of being torn apart by the war and the deaths of their strong and young. Without planning things to turn out this way, I was again drawn towards the role of a people's leader, and helped them to maintain their resolve until the war had drawn to an end. Many of these villages are now part of what is known as the Free City of Triumph's Seventh District.

*Like many Beastmasters, Amalla downplays her role in the War.*

— Seelaz, Outrider for Terath's Chargers

I see that it was only natural that these people chose me as their representative. Many of these people are farmers, herders, and shepherds, and my innate abilities and knowledge helps me understand their needs and problems better than many others can. I am sure that you will find that most of the citizens of Seventh District hold no such grudges against me that Representative Tyranus has, and respect my abilities as their representative on the Council.

**Omasu:** Representative Tyranus, could you please cite specific events which lead you to believe that Representative Maranti is an inappropriate council member?

**Lirica:** There was the incident at the Council's riding expedition to the outlying villages last week! I can't even begin to describe how her actions corrupted the very image of the pristine Council!

**Omasu:** Please, try, Representative Tyranus...

**Lirica:** Right from the start, she attempted to bring shame to my name by using her ghastly powers to cause me to be thrown from my horse!

**Amalla:** If I may intercede, Representative Tyranus' substantial girth would have been too much of an encumbrance on the pony she was attempting to climb on. I was in the process of delivering the warning when Silverstreak reared...

**Omasu:** Silverstreak?

**Amalla:** The name of the mare, or at least that's what she told me.

**Lirica:** She made no attempt to warn me! That was her using her Adept powers to cause the horse to throw me and keep its distance from me! She has the power to talk to them, and tell them to do such things! She said as much herself just now!

**Amalla:** Actually, the statement about the mare telling me her name was a fabrication. I just wanted to elicit that response.

*Lirica stands up and makes a motion to lunge at Amalla. Harlis and T'larin grab her arms to hold her back. There is some uncomfortable shifting amongst other council members, though Amalla remains calmly seated.*



**Omasu:** Representative Maranti, I ask again, please refrain from using such comments.

**Amalla:** I apologize, Overseer. I will try not to do that again. I do admit that I did cause the pony to shy away from Representative Tyranus after the initial incident. I knew that it would only happen again, so my actions were done only under the best of intentions for both the pony and the Representative... though mostly for the pony.

*Chuckles from others in the Council. The Overseer is rubbing his temples.*

**Amalla:** I did nothing further once the stallion was brought out for Representative Tyranus to ride upon.

**Omasu:** And, dare I ask, *what* else has been done, Representative Tyranus, that leads you to believe that the removal of Representative Maranti from the Council is in our best interests?

**Lirica:** *(After a pause to calm herself down)* She... she dared bring dishonor to the noble sport of hunting by exploiting her... her powers.

**Omasu:** Do I even wish to know how, or why this should even be considered as a reason?

**Amalla:** She is just envious, because I managed to land the largest boar.

**Lirica:** It was still alive when you brought it in! And then it proceeded to chase me back towards the city!

**Amalla:** He was just... playing. I made him stop chasing her after a few dozen yards. Regardless, I realized early in the hunt that I had no



reason to kill anything I caught, as there would be nothing that I would have done with it. I took it to one of the village communities that evening instead, where I knew they could use it as food. Besides, I find that the festivals that they hold can be quite entertaining.

**Lirica:** She consorts with the commoners!

*There are murmurs of disapproval at Lirica's outburst from the other council members.*

**Omasu:** Representative Tyranus, I consort with commoners. If you are going to make such broad, unwarranted generalizations, I will dismiss this and all future complaints that you bring before this Council.

**Lirica:** I... I apologize, Overseer.

**Omasu:** Please continue, Representative Maranti.

**Amalla:** I have nothing else to add, other than Kiyuu enjoyed herself as well. The children absolutely adored her.

**Omasu:** Kiyuu?

**Amalla:** My faithful friend and companion since I was a child. In fact, I believe that if you should all look under the table, she has been nuzzling Representative Tyranus' foot for the past few minutes.

*There is some commotion as Lirica leaps out of her chair, screaming. Omasu has his face in his hands. Some council members excuse themselves momentarily.*

**Lirica:** It touched me! Get that thing away from me!

**Amalla:** That thing, as you call it, is a turtle. She is normally kept within a pouch in my riding clothes. Unfortunately, such luxuries are not available in these formal garments. Therefore, I allowed her to roam freely during the meeting. You should feel honored, Representative Tyranus. Kiyuu does not normally display such affection towards people.

**Lirica:** I do not care what it is! Take it away!

**Omasu:** Representative Maranti, please secure your... turtle, or I shall ask to have it removed from this room.

*Amalla picks up the turtle and places it atop her head.*

**Omasu:** What in the Passions' name...?

**Lirica:** It... It's staring at me!

**Amalla:** I thought it'd be ruder to turn her backside towards you, Representative Tyranus, though if that is what you'd prefer, I'd happily oblige.

**Omasu:** That is enough! The Council will adjourn for five minutes to discuss this matter and propose a resolution. The committee will reconvene and declare our decision then.

...

**Omasu:** While I am unable to fully comprehend the mind and behavior of those of the Beastmaster discipline myself, especially those of Representative Maranti, I have not heard anything today that discredits her ability to perform her duties as a member of this Council, other than her penchant for mischief and juvenile pranks. Though these traits are unbecoming of a council member, one cannot discount the fact that Representative Maranti does indeed have the support of the people in the Seventh District, and she has impressive qualifications besides that. The council has voted in favor of keeping Amalla Maranti as the representative of the Seventh District in the Free City of Triumph until the termination of her regular term in two years, at which point the position will be open to the populace for election. Also agreed upon by the Council today, as a result of the mockery of this session, I dare ask that no such requests be brought before the Council again. All future grievances of this nature are to be taken to the electoral forums, and it will be up to the people to decide a council member's fate. Next item on the agenda, *please*.







## THE WILL OF THE BEASTMASTER

*The following are the words of Kitiana, known as "The Frenzied" by the denizens of Haven, though I must confess that she seemed anything but as she told me of her view of the Beastmaster Discipline.*

— Presented for the edification of the reader by Blert Syrtis, Apprentice Archivist for the Library of Throal

I am a Beastmaster. I am a Windling. One by birth, the other by calling — but both are a part of who I am. Were I not a Beastmaster, I would be a far different Windling; and were I not a Windling, I would be a far different Beastmaster. As you read what I will say, be sure to keep this in mind.

## THE NATURE OF A BEASTMASTER

Dominate Beast. It's a talent that even a Novice can learn, and I can't think of a Journeyman who is not well on her way towards mastering it. But what does it mean? At the most base level, it is a Beastmaster asserting her will over that of a creature, showing that we are the alpha, the leader — the master. In most cases, Name-givers are in an excellent position to use Dominate Beast. Much of the time, they stand taller than the creatures they wish to control, and to the mind of a beast, height is size. Not so for a Windling. We must be all the more ferocious when we dominate beasts.

*Don't let Kitiana's even words here fool you - she can be ferocious. I'd swear that even Torgak's afraid of her.*

— Keli, the Storyteller of Haven

So it is with all of the talents, and eventually all of the Beastmasters. There will come a time in every Beastmaster's life when they will face a creature that is not only larger, but faster and stronger than they are. But in the end, a creature's physical strength won't matter. The will of the Beastmaster will overcome, and the creature will bow to the Beastmaster's domination.

So, what does it mean to be strong? Certainly physical strength isn't the answer. An Obsidiman is physically stronger than me, and a gargoyle stronger than the Obsidiman - but the gargoyle is easily bent to my will and the Obsidiman is no beast to be dominated, but a fellow Name-giver. And therein lies our strength - we Name. We think. We manipulate the magic of the world, not out of instinct, but through training, and out of a drive to succeed.

Some people think that Beastmasters train to become more like animals. Claw Shape. Lizard Leap. It's no wonder that people have that impression. Even the way many of us choose to comport ourselves - look at me for example. I'm covered with tattoos - spotted like a great cat - and wearing part of the pelt of a predator that I bested. But if we share the trappings of animals, it is because we know their importance in the Pattern of Barsaive - and the world. We train to further understand animals, not to become a beast.

Like all the other Adepts, those who train us are Name-givers, at least most of the time. The Adepts from whom we learn often have us watch creatures, and sometimes parrot their actions. When we are tested, it is against creature, against our teacher, and against the green of Jasprey himself. A Beastmaster must be patient to learn what nature has to teach, and observant as well. Rare is it that nature will offer you a

structured lesson, and it's the same with a Beastmaster. However, whereas Nature's lessons may be life or death matters, it's rarely that way when a Beastmaster is teaching. We're not beasts, after all.

A final word on training, and both Beastmasters and others should take heed. I've heard rumors of some Beastmasters who perform the Ghost Master Ritual, and instead of the spirit of a Name-giver, the spirit of a creature responds. Be cautious of the lessons these spirit animals would teach. Perhaps it is just the time that I have spent in Parlainth, but I would place more trust in the steadfast spirit of a Name-giver whose Name was known to me than I would in what claimed to be the spirit of a beast.

*The Great Animal Spirits can be powerful allies, and they are due proper respect. I mourn for the adept who would attempt to be their Master.*

— Lhot Blackmask

## THE HEART OF A BEASTMASTER

Dominate Beast. I spoke before on how a Beastmaster bends the will of a creature to her own. But a Beastmaster knows that an animal will not long remain a thrall of her will, and it would be folly to try. A Beastmaster cannot master the world, but instead must know that she is part of the world, and how to work with the world to reach her goals. To do this, a Beastmaster must know herself.

The first thing to know about one's self is that it is not a still thing. We learn, we grow. This should be obvious to any Adept. Just as our talents grow, so does a person. However, unlike the talents upon which we meditate, and thus have the most directed of growths, a person's self can change in the most unexpected of ways. This isn't a bad thing. Some Beastmasters attempt to master themselves, and choose their growth like an Adept would choose which talent they would meditate upon. If you ask me, they might as well try to master the world.

Look to the creatures. Does the wolf try to become a cat? No, of course not. The wolf grows to be a better wolf, and doesn't fight it. Don't misunderstand, change is good, and it can even be good to desire a change and strive for it. If there is some change you desire in yourself, make it! It may take work, it may take will — but if you know that the change is for the better, then strive towards it. A Beastmaster should have enough control over their desires that they should be able to choose some of their own changes in self. But trying to control every aspect of your own growth is a path to stagnation.

A Beastmaster should see the connections between Name-giver and beast, as well as the connections between creatures and the world around them. Many Name-givers, when traveling across Barsaive, would spy a creature whose pelt holds some value, and would instantly decide that it is time for a hunt. A Beastmaster should know better. There are times to hunt, and times when your hand should be stayed. The Espagra you see, whose scales are so very valuable in the Bazaar in Throal, fills a role that is more valuable still in the hinterlands of Barsaive. This is not to say that if a beast attacks you should not fight back. No, you should defend yourself with all of your might. But if there is a choice, I would council you against killing the creature unless you need his meat to live. Ours is a land that is still recovering from the Scourge, and pulling creatures from it makes the recovery all the more difficult.

A Beastmaster should live life to the fullest, though that phrase may mean something different to me than it would to a Throalic noble. To me, a full life means seeing all that nature has to offer - sleeping under the sky, living free of the crowd of the city, hunting for



my own food, clothing, and even the shelter I use for those times that Jaspree isn't in the mood to let me sleep under the stars. For me, living life to the fullest means also making sure that Barsaive is a better place when I am done than when I began. Tomorrow's children will awake to a Barsaive that is greater than my own, and that pleases me. It pleases me too to know that there are many other Beastmasters who on this matter share my desires.

## THE DUTY OF THE BEASTMASTER

The Scourge destroyed Barsaive, and Name-givers must make it whole once more. Look at a map of Barsaive. The Poison Forest. The Blood Wood. The Badlands. The land is scarred, and not nearly enough of us do what we can to heal the wounds. Obsidimen can feel the land's pain so deeply that many of them have dedicated their life to making it pure again. Likewise can Windlings see the damage that the Horrors have wrought. But Windlings and Obsidimen are not nearly enough - in fact, we're far too few. So it falls to the other Name-givers to heal the land as well. It falls on the shoulders of those who should see the nature for not only what it is, but what it could be. The responsibility lies with the Beastmasters.

*Not with the Beastmasters alone.*

— Kaja Lyles

It's not enough for a Beastmaster to live in harmony with the land. The Beastmaster must convince others to do so as well. Open their eyes to the importance of animals. Show them that wanton destruction doesn't help Name-givers, but in the end serves to make the positions of the Horrors more powerful. And, to those who ignore our words and would despoil the land - vengeance. Beastmasters, our claws are not here for show. If we must fight to defend the land, so be it. Mynbruje will guide our hands.

I have spoken often of Jaspree, and while he may be the Passion most closely tied with the Beastmaster, all of the passions are important to us. When I fly freely, the wind on my face as I race against a darting bird, I give thanks to Floranuus. We call upon Thystonius when we go to battle, and Garlen when we must tend our wounds. Through Astendar's grace, the pelt I wear is not some crude cloak, but furred clothing that offers warmth and protection while being pleasing to the eye. Many Name-givers believe that Upandal and Jaspree are in conflict. It is not so - Upandal and Jaspree may work in harmony. My shelter, and the homes of many windlings, elves, and obsidimen are at peace with their surroundings. Even the dwarfs and trolls in their mountains, and the scorcher on the plains, and T'skrang in their rivers can live without destroying nature around them.

Never forget the importance of Chorrolis. Even when living in tandem with Nature, we are Name-givers. It isn't necessary for us each to be good at everything, as there are others who have their own strengths, and we may trade with them. I confess that my hand is no good when it comes to tattoos, but I was able to trade a bone knife that I had crafted for the beautiful art that adorns my body today. It was a fair trade for both of us, and Chorrolis smiled upon the bargain, while the realm of Jaspree was unharmed by it.

If there is any passion that I follow with equal fervor to Jaspree, it is Lochost. While I have not spoken his Name until just now, all that I have said should show my reverence for him. When I speak of the glory

of Lochost, I speak not only against the overt slavery of Thera, but of a Name-giver's ultimate freedom to be true to themselves, and to change as the wind blows them. To those who would keep a Name-giver from being free — not just slavers, but all who stand in the way of a Name-giver's freedom — may Mynbruje grant them forgiveness, because I certainly won't.

It saddens me to say that there are some Beastmasters who hear the call of the Mad Passions, but I understand how it happens. Those who dive too deeply into a bestial nature are susceptible to the chaotic call of Vestrial. I wonder how many Beastmasters who claim to have seen Jaspree have instead seen Vestrial masquerading. Perhaps best not to dwell on it. Those Beastmasters who become too bloodthirsty in carrying out their duties are easily swayed by Raggok. As should all who administer justice, Beastmasters must temper their actions so that they are truly favoring Mynbruje and Jaspree — not Raggok. And finally, those who dwell too much upon a Beastmaster's domination of creatures, those who seek to dominate Name-givers and the world as well, they already serve Dis.

The Beastmasters — and for that matter, any Name-givers — who serve the mad Passions are our enemies. Those who harm the lands that Jaspree has given us are the enemies. But our greatest enemies are the Horrors. It was the Horrors who drove the three Passions mad, and the Horrors who inflicted greater harm on the land than any other. Do not throw your life away against them, but whenever the opportunity exists, deal a blow against the Horrors. It is the duty of the Beastmaster.

## A WINDLING AND A BEASTMASTER

I fly, I am free to go where I may. If the wind should carry word to a Beastmaster that they are needed somewhere, they should live in such a manner that they can answer the call. Though I am small, I am fierce. As I stand up to things that are bigger than me, so must all Beastmasters stand up to things larger than them. Nations would fell forests to feed their cities' growth, and it is up to us to make them see the truth of what they do. Windlings see more than most Name-givers, and are generally curious about things. I confess that I'm no different. But this is a trait that's desirable to a Beastmaster. It's not enough to pass through a wood or over plains — you should get a sense of the place. You're a Beastmaster, you can tell if things are right or wrong, and if they are wrong, well, you can make them right again.



## CHAPTER THREE

### SCOUTS





## WALK LIGHTLY, LOOK AROUND

*Watana Sobel is probably known to many, having earned quite a reputation for discovering lost kaers. He has probably freed more Name-givers from their underground waiting than any other single individual. He's worked with our Traveled Scholars extensively, and earned the distinction of Order of the Openers.*

— Thom Edrull

## THE FIRST STEP

Like the old saying “the day’s travel begins with that first step out the door,” so too does the life of a Scout begin with that first true step onto the path. Scout initiations are easier than most Disciplines. There’s no test of blood and battle, no peering into the netherworlds, or jumping off cliffs - well, not usually anyway - like in other Disciplines. For a Scout, it’s a simple test of perception, survival, wits, insight and endurance. While other Disciplines seek to weed out the weak, Scouts seek the strength within.

A sharp eye is certainly an advantage, for Scouts, or anyone. Not all dangers can be seen. Perception takes many forms. If you can’t hear the faint crumbling that portends a rockslide or feel the slickness of a stone or smell the decay of a dead animal in a pit trap, you won’t survive long in the wilds of the world.

For a Scout, it’s more than just the stimulus of color and sound, we sense with our whole body. We can feel the road, not just beneath our feet, but as it stretches out before us. The clouds tell a story of the coming storm even before we taste it when the wind picks up. An Elemental friend says they have a similar sense of things, especially when gathering their true kernels.

Even when we borrow the sense of a friendly animal, it becomes our own. It’s more than seeing through the eyes of a bird, it is also the soaring height, and understanding the perspective of one whose journey is on the air.

How I learned and teach it is the ability to open all your senses and reach out like the ripples from a rock tossed on a pond, experiencing what is all around you. As we say, “hear with your eyes, watch with your ears.”

## THE ROAD WITHIN

Exploration doesn’t always happen in the plains, mountains or cities. I’ve been to places not of this Earth, searched Death’s realm to rescue a friend taken before his time, delved into the past to find a truth hidden for generations, even searched for a vision of the Passions. Just as a Scout seeks to journey far afield, so he must also explore within himself. “A well traveled body is served best by a well traveled mind,” I always say.

*Rescuing friends from Death, traveling into the past, visions of Passions... Who says Scouts don’t inflate their own legends.*

— Tamri Dragonslayer

This is a spiritual discovery. The landscape of the psyche. Some people who never stay in one place are restless, or uncomfortable with themselves, or simply don’t know their path so they keep wandering, hoping to find it. A Scout may appear to have these qualities, but a good Scout will have made that journey of the mind, will know what he wants from this life, and will know himself. Many Name-givers have a knack for finding their way around, but a true sense of place and path, and therefore self, is a rare gift.

We all will periodically change our viewpoint, but as Scouts we understand that life itself is a journey with many turns, and that sometimes the road is hard and the path obscured. With a clear sense of self we can look beyond the immediate horizon and forge ahead knowing we’ll reach what we seek. We know when it is truly time for a change, and have the faith to simply start walking, knowing we will find our new road. Even if it means staying right where we are.

## “WALK THE JOURNEY, NOT THE ROAD”

That’s an old Scout saying, old even before the Scourge. The meaning is plain enough, and explains much of what some people see in Scout behavior. When we’re truly experiencing the Journey, whatever that is, the steps we take become sure, and we know where to place our feet and our hands without the slightest thought. Even what looks like a misstep will lead us to our true destination.

Take, for example, the first kaer I discovered, or rather found, since everyone living in it didn’t think I’d discovered it. My companions and I were en route to join a caravan to Travar. We were walking along the crest of a long hill to save time and get a view of the surrounding countryside for Scorchers. As fate would have it, I stepped upon a loose rock and went sliding down the hillside. Just goes to show that you never know where the journey will take you or when opportunity will strike. If I’d been too concerned with where I had intended to go and getting back on the trail, I might have missed the small patch of ironwork that revealed the kaer’s outer door under the soil my foot turned up. We did get to Travar, but it was to escort an embassy for the kaer.







*To honor our liberation from the Scourge, we built a fine stone path from the hillcrest to the kaer door. Watana's Path we call it.*

— Holdin Megent of Kaer Talltree

This sense for the Journey does keep us focused on our goals, but open to the possibilities for discovery that await us every day. A fine Archer I traveled with spoke often of their keen sense of focus on their target. While I appreciated her direct nature, Archers tend to think only in straight lines, whereas a Scout sees all the roundabout paths that must sometimes be treaded.

## THE WILDERNESS OF OUR PAST

Some Scouts aren't happy indoors or underground, but not me. The twists and turns of a ruined kaer are just as wondrous as winding mountain passes. A library is a vast forest of written mysteries, that to me thought lost forever a perfectly ripened fruit to quench your hunger for knowledge. During an investigation one chap thought I was a Wizard, I spent so much time in a library. If more Scouts did, you wouldn't hear so many tales of us getting into trouble.

*A real Scout wouldn't have to rely so much on what he found in books.*

— Hungan Refo

Scouts were very important in the early days of Kaer building. We explored the many caves first considered for shelters from the Horrors, our talents a great aid to map them and discover all their hidden reaches. Kaer Ironhome was saved from disaster by a Scout who discovered a tiny shaft which would have allowed a Horror to sneak into the heart of the community. We also helped find remote areas and concealed the paths and signs that might have lead a Horror to a kaer.

In the last days we scoured the land so no Name-givers would be left behind. "Far and wide, everyone inside" was the motto of the day. Dozens of Scouts died at the hands of the first Horrors, bringing others to safety so those families might live on to today.

## DELVING DOWN

Searching for signs of our still-sheltered brethren, and bringing them into the world. Creating new maps from old. Simply welcoming an isolated kaer village into civilization. Guiding an exploration of pre-Scourge ruins or a breached kaer. My Talents are challenged every day, a fine life for any Adept.

A well-designed kaer may be hidden in the natural environment. A strong door was a common defense, but much better if Horrors never found it in the first place. But there is usually something different about a kaer, especially a breached one. Hard to explain, it's an infinitesimal speck on a lens or the slightest bend in a mirror. You don't actually see it; rather, you just know it's there. Though some kaers are quite obvious or have become exposed over the centuries. I'm surprised more haven't been found already.

The nature of an opened kaer is a blend of both the urban and the wild. Built by Name-givers and filled with magic, but often a part of nature still. Blending with the noises and smells of a lost kaer can be a matter of survival, you never know what may have settled there, be it a Horror, a Wyvern, a pack of dire wolves or even hostile Name-givers.

Affinity for all our senses comes in very handy in a kaer, where there's often little light and sounds travel in odd directions. Others without any training can get very confused, the sights and sounds they imagine frightening them. Which isn't to say a Scout does not get scared. Very often we see and hear things others do not, and those sensations can produce fear enough for any Name-giver.

Finding a kaer is like a treasure hunt. They are both old and new. There is much work involved in finding one, then more work to explore one. It can take a delicate touch to coax out those inside. You can rarely open a kaer yourself unless it's been breached, and then it's probably too dangerous to do alone.

*How many 'lost kaers' have had their treasures removed by Sobel? Scouts are the cousins of Thieves, after all.*

— Burakas the Bold

*May jackals pick at your bones for suggesting such a thing.*

— Toruvo, scribe of Upandal

Finding an intact kaer and welcoming them into the new Barsaive... Oh, the wonders of the changes made over centuries, the sense of a new beginning, it is always joyous. I was born after my kaer opened, so I can only imagine the experience must be ten times greater for them. It is only matched by the tragedy of a kaer that simply died out. All those lives, often perfectly preserved in their magical tomb, gone.

Stepping into a dead or breached kaer, your senses come alive like it was a teaming jungle or a holiday in Bartertown. The past calls to you. The fallen dust shows the patterns of the final days. The taste of the air tells you when it was breached or when the elemental filters failed. The echoes of boots carry into the dark reaches where our ancestors lived and played. You can feel the hope and despair if you open your heart enough.

I've had to obscure the way to some breached kaers. A trying experience, since our methods are to show the way, but necessary to prevent the unprepared from disturbing what's inside.





## MANY STEPS

While Scouts are all fairly social, desiring to interact with new and interesting people, we have an urge to act alone sometimes. Often at the forefront and on point, we seek out the places no one else has walked, and will travel farther than others wish to go. We notice the interesting side roads along the way that most folk just pass by. “You can’t put blinders on a Scout,” as Timrik Fartraveler says.

Our relations are important. I tell my apprentices, “don’t let your wanderlust get the better of you.” We don’t necessarily follow the same road as everyone else, though we do respect our destination. If we find what we think is a better way, we’ve been known to improvise upon a plan of action. Mind you, we have the best intentions at heart, but it can cause some problems. I’m amazed by all the tales I hear of Scouts nearly killed by their own discoveries and wanderings, and by friends who save them.

## BEING FOUND

After the Scourge, Scouts had to get the lay of a land changed by centuries of neglect and ravaging, finding old landmarks and discovering new ones.

It’s a testament to our vital role that Scouts have thrived since the Opening. In some kaers the Discipline nearly died without new trails to blaze. The Passions saw fit to preserve our ways for they knew we would need them to help rebuild our world.

*In some kaers, many who would be Thieves were encouraged to be Scouts instead.*

— Grolak Redbeard of Throal

Much of what Scouts do involves being lost. Or as Gartan Longbeard used to say, “being right where you are, but not knowing

just quite where that is.” Good ol’ Gartan, we lost a fine teacher the day he died.

Many Scouts have a desire to help others and to find what has been lost. Of course, not getting lost is important to everyone, which makes experienced Scouts valuable to traveling Adepts, caravans or missions of exploration. Our place is often one of service, our nature leads us to help our easily-lost brethren and guide them safely to their destination. The role of Guide is a very important one to a Scout. And while others perform this function, for us it is a calling, a part of who we are.

We can relive our own experience of seeing a vista for the first time through the eyes of those we guide. Sharing our knowledge of the dangers and delicacies of the wild will mean it lives on and our fellow Name-givers will prosper and appreciate their surroundings. We can share our love for a place with others. For a truly wondrous place, it will enhance its Pattern, grow its Name, perhaps we will even have some part in its story.

Scouts understand the power of place. We know our own legend may grow with a place, much as a king’s Name will be tied to his kingdom’s fate. We may be fortunate like Hilgar of Jerris and have a pass in the Tylons Named after us, or be an example like Dueval Weston who led a caravan through a Badlands sandstorm and safely past a pursuing Horror.

They say to be a Scout is to “walk with a light step and an open eye.” Our task is to explore and discover, not to change. That being said, we don’t always leave everything we encounter untouched. It is a balance. We don’t dive in like Sky Raiders or make our marks like Swordmasters. A Scout seeks out a natural flow of the environment and to restore what should be if possible. While the fight for survival is a part of the natural order, if we can lead our friends around a conflict, we will. The world is dangerous enough without seeking out a fight. We seek to blend in, not stir things up. Though the latter is inevitable for any adventuring Adept.

We should also not spoil the wonders we find, for to do so would ruin the experience for the next Name-giver to follow our trail. A simple concept, but one so many people just don’t understand. We are lucky that so much of Barsaive is still unsettled. I fear that in a century or two, those of us with a true desire for exploration will have to leave the province to see something truly new and interesting. Such is the way of things, I suppose. Until then, I shall endeavor to experience it all.

*There will always be something new to explore, even within the halls of Throal.*

— Opal Greska

## THE EXPLORER

*The Kingdom of Throal recently sponsored an expedition into the Scythan mountains hoping to learn more about this dangerous and largely unexplored terrain. The leader of this dangerous expedition was the famed explorer, Halley Morgen. It fell to the Library of Throal the duty of interviewing the survivors of the expedition and trying to collate the findings of this ill-fated endeavor. This document is an excerpt of one of the reports of Morgen herself.*

— Gideon Morrow, archivist in residence at the Library of Throal





It must seem now that the entire undertaking was folly. With nine members lost and the Scythian mountains hardly explored at all, it is doubtful that history will remember the expedition that bears my name as anything but an abject failure. I must bear that burden. Still, I cannot say that even knowing what I know now I would have refused the opportunity. The greater tragedy would have been to risk nothing and sit idly at home — to leave the Unknown unchallenged. Even the sparse information we recovered is better than nothing, and hopefully the dangers that plagued our expedition will ensure greater success for future expeditions to the mountains. Even I would happily return if given the opportunity. Perhaps to the reader this enthusiasm to again cast myself into such danger must seem strange, perhaps even suicidal. All that I can say in my own defense is that even after the failure, I remain a Scout.

I have known that I was a Scout long before I understood what a Discipline or an Adept was. I was never content to be a humble farm girl. I was always wandering and always wondering what lay over the next hill. My heart was never at home. Out there, somewhere, was the Unknown. It was all I could think of. It was all I wanted to find. Wanderlust is a disease, an addiction, and once it takes hold it is never fully cured and never fully satisfied. Even now, with my closest friends dead in the bowels of Scythia, all I can think about is my next expedition.

Exploration has remained my passion and my calling from my formative years to the present day. It is a passion that I pursued into military service. I trained under the famed Captain Reeling and served under him for several years. He taught me much, and I owe him my life. Still, I cannot say I agree with all his doctrines. Later I would participate in the war against Theraan domination. I was at the battle of Sky Point and served with some distinction. It was here that I earned the right to lead an expedition. I tell you this not to convince you of my worth or to excuse the failure of my expedition. I tell you this to explain my path.

The ill-fated expedition to Scythia was not my first expedition, though it was my first expedition as leader. I was part of a Throalic expedition into the Servos Jungle hoping to trace the full length of the Servos River from its source to the Serpent River. The expedition was led by the Throalic explorer Joren Odrigal, a wise dwarf Scout who I counted as one of my closest friends and most valued mentors. Joren succeeded in this expedition beyond even the wildest expectations of his Throalic backers. Not only did the expedition discover the source of the Servos River, but it also documented more than a dozen ruins of various types along the length of the river. Even to this day expeditions have not been mounted to fully explore all of the sites discovered by the Odrigal Expedition.

*Any Adepts willing to take up the challenge implicit in that should make their desire known to His Majesty's Exporatory Force.*

— Mirial, Assistant to the Ambassador General

I bring this example to the forefront to make two points. First, everyone told Joren that his mission to the Servos was utter folly. He received much the same warnings that I did. Nothing but monsters, horrors and cannibalistic savages dwell in the Servos Jungle. The trek was suicide. What could there possibly be to gain by exploring the wilds of the Servos Jungles? I wonder how many of these critics have retracted their comments when they saw not only the treasure we recovered from previously lost ruins, but also the wealth of learning we

unearthed? Most likely none. The naysayers rarely retreat from their perch of negativism. Joren ignored these warnings not because he knew that he would succeed, but because he knew the cost of doing nothing - continued ignorance. He knew the risks and he considered them a small price to pay.

Second, this example proves just how little of Barsaive is truly explored. The fact that the Servos Jungle, the closest major woodland area to Throal, Barsaive's greatest kingdom, is still accurately described as "mostly unexplored" reveals just how much work is left for the Explorers to do. We live in a time when the Unknown does not just beckon to us, it surrounds us. This then, is my purpose and my dream, undeterred by failure or setbacks - I will be amongst those who transform Barsaive from an unexplored country into well-known terrain.

*Beyond two days ride from any major city, Barsaive becomes wilderness. The caravans of Throal and trading vessels of the T'skrang make us forget how far the bastions of civilization are from each other.*

— Dryzein Wureen of House Yilwaz

I hold one truth close to my heart and above all else. I was given my Discipline by the Passions. They did not give me my talents without a reason. I am here to fulfill some greater purpose though I am unsure exactly what that purpose may ultimately be. I can only guess and do my best to fulfill their will. As a Scout, I can be certain of only thing - my talents are geared towards the exploration of the Unknown. That is my Passion-decreed purpose. I will never betray it.

The desire to understand the Unknown is a driving force in the history of Name-givers. Perhaps, as some say, curiosity is even what fundamentally separates us from beasts. Ask a Beastmaster, for I cannot say for sure. But regardless, it is our desire to explore our world that has spread all the Name-giver races from one end of this world to the other. Of this I am certain. I feel within me that same primal urge writ large. My talents only serve to magnify that feeling and to validate it.

The way of the Scout is truly the Wanderer's Way. A Scout who stays at home in well-known lands is no Scout at all by my reckoning. They are wasting their talents. I have heard of Scouts who serve as city guides. I have known Scouts who escorted trading companies along well established trade routes. I have worked beside Scouts who were only interested in scouting for the military, and never exploring. These are all honorable professions, but they are not my way, and I feel deep down in my heart of hearts that somehow they have left the true potential of the Scout Discipline untapped.

We are at a unique time in the history of Name-givers. The Scourge, at its full intensity, is over. The world is ours to claim once again. Leaving the world unexplored and unclaimed is like having a chest full of priceless jewels right next door and refusing to claim it because you are too lazy to risk the walk. The Explorer understands this. The Explorer senses this deep down in their soul at a level deeper than mere knowledge. The Explorer believes this like an article of faith. Joren believed it. He believed it enough that he accepted my offer to join me on the expedition to Scythia. He believed it enough to sacrifice his life to ensure that the expedition survived.



## THE LESSONS OF SCYTHA

From all of my words extolling the virtues of exploration, is perhaps easy to imagine that exploration is somehow without danger. Let me assure you that this is not the case. In fact, only a few months ago, after most of the Warriors in my expedition had been slaughtered by Horrors and I was uncertain of how to escape now that our way in had been cut off, I felt certain that exploration would cost me my life. It was only because of selfless sacrifice and the Passion's own luck that my companions and I escaped Scythia alive. I have resolved that one way or another I will return to those forsaken mountains. But I will not return without being prepared.

Let me first lay plain our greatest mistake. There is a prevailing wisdom that the well-known Horrors of Scythia are to be found only in the subterranean depths. As long as you avoid the caves, tunnels and kaers, exploration should be simple, I was assured. This is simply false. The Horrors of Scythia are bold and common even on the surface. I was simply unprepared to deal with their numbers and ferocity. I wish this lesson could have been learned without the loss of life. But now that it has been learned, I will not waste this hard-learned truth. The next expedition will be larger and far more prepared for dealing with the Horror menace. I also will not return to Scythia without at least one experienced Horrorstalker on the expedition.

*Always maintain vigilance against the Horrors. Always. It is not just on the face of the Scythian mountains that they may "unexpectedly" appear.*

— Quinn Agair

Our second mistake arose from the first. We ventured too deeply into the mountains too quickly. Not realizing that we were penetrating

deep into enemy territory, we were far from well-known areas when trouble did strike. This mistake cost me dearly. Wandering in the mountains dodging Horror bands and searching for a way to escape cost two members of my team who could have been saved if only we had gotten them to a healer in time. One of those lost was a close friend who I served with Joren and I at Skypoint. Even now I still feel that I failed him. I doubt that I will ever truly escape that feeling.

The third mistake was trusting the surviving pre-Scourge maps of the ancient dwarven empire. I learned a valuable lesson in my travels. The Scourge did not just change the lives of Name-givers. It changed the very face of the earth. There were mountains entirely missing in Scythia, almost as if they had been completely leveled in the Scourge. There were paths covered in impassable rocks, and new paths opened. The maps were worse than useless. They created an illusion of certainty that you knew what was ahead. Let me assure you that no Name-giver can say with certainty what truly lurks in Scythia.

This is only the briefest summary of what was learned. However I have already submitted several detailed reports to the Scout master and would refer anyone truly interested in specifics to that office.

The future of Scythia is uncertain. It is right now the front line of the war against the Horrors of Barsaive. It is therefore surprising that we expect to win that war without knowing the battlefield. I am reminded of the wisdom of Captain Horus Reeling. "It is by seeing that we will crush the enemy." Surely this is not only true of defeating Therans, but also defeating the Horrors. The Scouts of Throal must play a central role in this phase of the war. The Scouts, the Explorers, will be the eyes and ears of the kingdom revealing once and for all the strongholds of the enemy. The central lesson of Scythia for me is that the Horror-infested realm is too important to let a single failure deter future expeditions. I am ready to return. I know that I am not alone in this conviction.

## AT WAR WITH THE UNKNOWN

The war with Thera is over, but still we are not at peace. You... me... all of us are at war with the Unknown. We fight against the darkness and ignorance that crowds us at the edge of our borders. We fight against our own fears, that intangible stuff that paralyzes us and leads us down the path of ruin. In my expedition to Scythia we lost a battle in that war. I cannot deny that. But that is no reason to abandon the war effort.

The Scout Discipline leads the charge against ignorance. We have always been the enemies of the Unknown. Whether on the battlefield or in the exploration of Barsaive, the Scout leads the way. This is inevitably a dangerous position. This is also a risk that I accept wholeheartedly. I believe it is a risk that any true Scout must accept.

I have heard the old saying again and again that "ignorance is bliss." What trite foolishness. Ignorance is only bliss for those who desire death. Ignorance is inevitably suicide. Certainly this is true of Scythia. I have repeatedly heard that because there are Horrors in those mountains we should avoid going to Scythia. I say that because there are Horrors in those mountains we must go to Scythia. If there is truly something in Scythia so horrific and terrible that it threatens us all, will we be better served by waiting until it decides to leave those mountains and to come to visit? Or should we take the battle to it?

By now I believe you know my answer.





## IN THE SERVICE OF MY NATION

*I once had the honor of sitting in on a lecture given by a Scout master of the Throalic army, the famed Captain Horus Reeling. Captain Reeling's name should be immediately recognizable to anyone familiar with the dislodging of the Coil River bandit group led by the so-called 'Lord Kiger.' I recorded this session precisely as it was given, editing out only militarily sensitive details and a few rather colorful expressions that I thought inappropriate for the library. This transcript does little to reflect the intensity of Captain Reeling in addressing his trainees, but it does perhaps give a look into the mind of one of Throal's most distinguished Scout Adepts.*

— Gideon Morrow, archivist in residence at the Library of Throal

**Training Address given by Captain Horus Reeling to an elite group of Scout Adepts. TH 1508.**

By the Passions themselves I have been given a breadth of power and talents most of you trainees (a rather colorful alternate expression has been omitted) will never have. I could be out there in the field changing the face of Barsaive. I could be out there dealing with bandit lords and Theran scum. Instead I am stuck here with a load of fine young men (these are my words; the captain chose to describe them by another more anatomically specific terminology). But because the world is run by scribes (again, not precisely how the captain described them) who enjoy feeding me fine food, I have been forced to try and train you. So listen up. I will not repeat myself.

What I tell you today, you must keep close to your heart. The Kingdom of Throal has wasted valuable resources training you and so your lives are finally worth something. You are Scouts, called by destiny to be something more than mere rank and file fodder. Wars are won by the seeing. Today I will tell you how to become the eyes of the army.

In the coming weeks, I will push you as hard as you have ever been pushed. And when you feel that you will break, and you turn to me and beg for relief, I will not relent. You are Scouts. You lead the way. You are the first to find and the first to see. In the field, you are point of the spear! In the coming days I will do you no favor by being easy on you.

A Scout is not a warrior. Your focus is not on killing the enemy. Your focus is on finding the enemy - knowing his strengths, knowing his weaknesses, and learning his plans - and surviving long enough to report back. In this, you do the enemy far more harm than any number of casualties a band of Scouts could inflict. When the Throalic Scout bands are at their best, they are invisible and all-seeing. I have heard it said that the way of the warrior is the way of action. Perhaps this is true. But the way of the Scout is instead the way of seeing. You there, what do you see in my hand?

*(At this point, Captain Horus Reeling drew a knife and picked one of the scouts.)*

The young scout answered cautiously, "A knife, Captain?"

"A knife, really... And is that all you see? Look closely at it."

"A sharp knife, Captain?" said the young scout with a wince.

*(Captain Reeling did little to hide his displeasure at this answer.)*



A sharp knife. And the fact that the knife has Theran heraldry on the handle is of no importance, then? The fact that there is blood dried on the blade escaped your notice? This knife is in fact a weapon taken from a Theran assassin who (several militarily sensitive matters are omitted here in the interest of Throalic security). But to you...to you it was just a knife! That is not seeing. You have seen its outer form, true. You have seen its blade and its shine, but you have not seen the truth. That is the Scout's mission above all else: to find the truth of a situation. You are the eyes of the army.

*Of course those sticky fingered dwarfs of Throal would see to it that the legend of an assassin who breached the halls of the kingdom would be silenced. It wouldn't do to show how vulnerable the kingdom is after so many of its best and brightest have left for Scythia.*

— Bayne

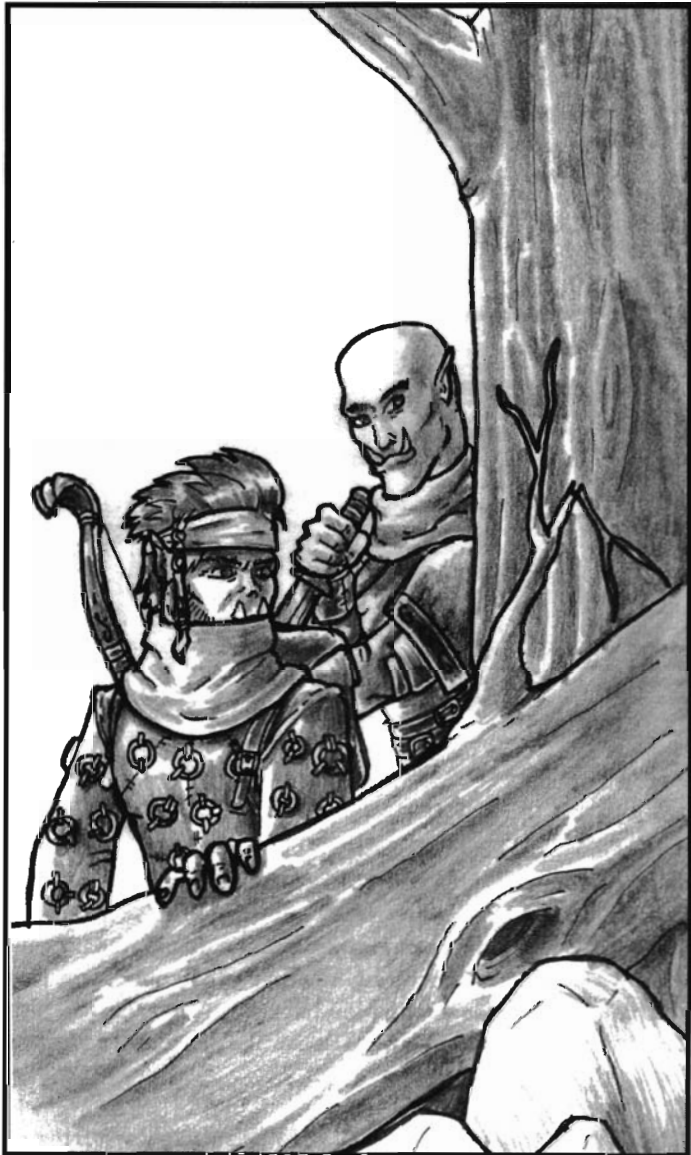
Know your enemy. Know his location. Know his intentions. Know his methods. Know him better than he knows himself and you will never be defeated. Defeat is the providence of the unknowing, the blind. We are the seeing. Our sight will make us victorious.

But it is not enough just to see. The Scout must see without being seen. The Scout trades in information and reconnaissance. The enemy too needs this information and is desperate for it. What I give you now is a universal truth. Seek the truth and find it out without revealing your position. This is the essence of being a Scout and it is the road to success both on the battlefield and in life.

You there, do you gamble?

*(He again pointed at another young scout)*

"Well, it is strictly speaking against regulations, captain..." the Scout said timidly.



"You lying piece of dirt (another of the Captain's colorful expressions has been deleted)! Do you think I don't know what's going on in the barracks after hours? Now, answer my fair and reasonable question!"

"Uh, yes, Captain, every once in a while."

"Of course you do. Now, when you play Two-Deck, what do you when you have a full court?"

"You keep quiet about it, Captain... try to get the other guys to up the bet."

"Is that what you do?"

*(He stared at the trooper suspiciously.)*

At last, a hint of potential. I was beginning to think the recruiters were entirely incompetent and untrustworthy. That is correct, Scout! You keep a plain face when you have the better hand. When you are strong, you try to appear weak. When you are weak, you try to appear like you've got the Passion's own deal. You try to deceive your enemy. We could learn a lot from Two-Deck.

But seeing and being unseen, though they are the heart of our

profession, they are not enough. The Scout is not an end unto himself. You exist because the army exists. You are part of a larger organism. The army is made of many parts - the infantry, the cavalry, the magic support, just to list a few. The Scout holds a special place amongst all of those parts. You are the part of the team that must often operate alone. The Wizard can count on the Warrior for defense while he weaves his spells. The Warrior can count on the Archer to provide him with arrow cover. But the Scout's task is ultimately one that all too often, he must perform alone. The path of the Scout does not just accept this truth, we embrace it.

*Many scouts in the service of Throal have weapons forged by the Army's Weaponsmiths and armor enchanted by its Wizards. "Alone" means different things to different men, it seems.*

— Zav, Outrider for Rejruk's Foxes

It has become fashionable by certain thoughtless individuals who couldn't find their prominent anatomical feature with two hands and a hint to compare Scouts with Thief Adepts. They often make smug remarks about how Scouts are simply Thieves who can fight. Do you know what I think of that?

*(What follows was a rather extensive airing of the Captain's concerns about this position. Suffice it to say that the Captain disagrees rather strongly.)*

That's what I think about that.

Thieves, whether murderous bastards like Lord Kiger or those allegedly in service to a good cause, are ultimately in it for themselves. They are looking out for number one. Today, I am telling you that this is not the way of the Scout. Every Scout, whether in the Throalic Army or operating independently, has a group who they are scouting for. They have given their loyalty to another group. Some do it for money, yes, but those are the worst kind of Scouts. Most Scouts find a cause, something worth doing the dirty and dangerous business of reconnaissance for. Today I am giving you that cause. Today I am showing you something worth seeing for. Today I am showing you how to serve your country and your king.

Your service will be needed. The life of the Scout is never boring. It is no secret that Barsaive is a dangerous place. It is no secret that there is trouble brewing to the South. It is no secret that the Therans someday are going to try to bring our kingdom back into their Empire. Already, they have no trouble sending Slavers northward to capture our people and drag them off in chains. War is inevitable. I do not know if you will be the Scouts who are charged to become the eyes of the army against this great enemy, but I will train you as if you are.

There is more to know, much more, and in the coming weeks you will learn. I will tolerate nothing less than total commitment. The way of the Scout is not learned by listening to grouchy old Scouts chew you out. The way of the Scout is learned by practice. You will also learn to hate me, but if you truly find the path of the Scout, then you will also in time come to see that this is only way. We begin tomorrow morning at the fourth call. Dismissed.

Transcript authorized by Captain Horus Reeling and Throalic Military Censor Dermun





## THE CHILDREN OF CITIES

Master Merrox,

*I write to you of a curious encounter that I had after traveling to Jerris to further research for the Great Library. After speaking with several members of the Iopan delegation within the city, interviewing their spellcasters for possible inclusion in the soon-to-come third volume in this series, I took time in a pleasant inn near the airship docks. Despite the comfort of the establishment, I could not shake the feelings of unease that the occupation of the city by the Denairastas' servants inspired in me. I had made up my mind to leave on the earliest possible airship when a voice from the table behind me warned me that I should not turn around or call attention to myself.*

*I confess that I was most surprised and, being only a Traveling Scholar and not a professional spy, I almost turned to look at the Name-giver that had addressed me. I caught myself in time, but not before I got the impression of a shadowy shape sitting with its back to me. A shape that had not been at the table when I sat down. In a quiet voice, I asked what the mysterious person wanted.*

*"You are the Scholar Russ," it said. When I confirmed this, it added, "You are in danger. The Holders of Trust want you - they believe you have engaged in espionage." I professed ignorance of any crime, but the figure cut me off with, "Follow me out the back, but wait to the count of twenty before you move." And then it was gone.*

*I cannot say why I believed his words. Perhaps it was the uneasiness that I had been feeling since entering the city. Perhaps it was the line of "traitors," publicly hung in the city square by the Iopan forces. Perhaps Lochost pushed me to follow. Whatever it was, I went out the back door after the figure, just as a group of Iopan guards came in the front door, looking for me.*

*I followed this mysterious Name-giver through the dark streets until he brought me to an unassuming building in a rundown part of the city that housed a small laundry. We entered through a side door, and he took me to a small room in the back. The interior was as dark as the streets, and even my natural dwarfsight could not make out many details of my benefactor's appearance.*

*Once we were hidden in the room, he told me that we would have to stay until daylight, when he would make sure that I would get out of the city. When I asked his name, he told me he was called "Goro" (the Sperethiel word for "stranger"). He told me that he worked with the "true people of Jerris" and that since Throal was an ally to his cause, he would tell me of those Scouts who call themselves infiltrators. These are his words.*

— Alanna Russ, Traveling Scholar

We're safe here, Scholar Russ. You needn't worry about that. Those of us who fight to free our city have made sure that you weren't followed or traced. The Holders of Trust have nothing to find you with that we cannot hide until morning. I'm sorry about the darkness, but this place is not supposed to be occupied. Light - even a small amount - could give us away.

I understand that you are taking down tales of Adepts. I have one for you. I am an infiltrator, a Scout of cities. I can tell you much about what it is to be such. I can tell you how it is to be a Child of the City.



### ON THE LIVING CITY

A city is a living thing, Scholar Russ. It moves, sings, laughs, and cries. It wakes and sleeps, and even as it sleeps, it murmurs and tosses, much as a Name-giver in his bed. It is born and it dies. And it Names itself, for those who make up the city are part of it, even as your lips and throat and voice are part of you.

A city is the sum of its parts and greater than that as well. Bartertown is full of merchants and mercenaries and thieves, but it is more than that. It moves with the very spirit of business of every kind, more so than any other marketplace. Caught between the dwarf kingdom and the rest of the world, the mixture of Name-givers and trade goods gives it a unique life. Such is the same with all cities. Each one is different, much as each Name-giver is different.

Understand that when I say "city," I mean all gatherings of Name-giver life. Villages, towns, even the larger skyships like kilas and behemoths, all of them have a life of their own. Wherever there are gatherings of Name-givers for trade and safety and leisure, there is a city.

Infiltrators, like all Scouts, use their senses to be one with their environment. As we stand in our city - whichever city it may be - we feel its life. We feel its breath on our skins. We hear its laughter and songs in our ears. We taste its tears on our tongues. And we see its life with our eyes.

The city calls to us, and we hear it. It tells us of the life and death within it, of the wrongs and rights, and it lets us make it strong with our actions. We are its children. We are infiltrators.

*This person is damaged. Russ was fortunate to escape from this madman with her life.*

— Phyrstul of Servon

*You've never really paid attention to where you live, then. Typical.*

— Knoesses Mar, Questor of Upandal

The infiltrator knows the city he lives in. He is aware of it at all times. As a result, it is his responsibility to keep his city well.

Now, I do not mean that the infiltrator has to protect the people of the city from crime. Crime is part of the life of a city. But, it is the infiltrator who must decide what he can let happen. Does he let theft happen, or does he stop it? Some infiltrators stalk the night, blending with the people of his city, protecting those he can from thieves and other petty evils. Others merely keep the worst from happening, the murders and other vileness that might attract the Horrors. Still others support the greed of Name-givers. In Kratas, infiltrators can be found working side by side with the forces of both Garlthik and his rivals.

It is up to the infiltrator in question. It differs from city to city, from Name-giver to Name-giver. An infiltrator in Kratas does not act the same as an infiltrator in the service of Throal, anymore than an infiltrator of Throal will act as an infiltrator of the City of Reeds. Each works within his own city to find what he must do to make the city prosper and be well.

## ON THE POWERS OF THE INFILTRATOR

The infiltrator is one with the city. He rides the currents of life like a fish in a stream, using the flow to his own advantage. His power comes from this awareness, like the power of all Scouts. Since he is aware of the city around him, he knows how the crowds see him. He moves in tune with them, providing no sign that he may not be known or even accepted in the part of the city that he moves through. He can sense the city both in the material world and astral space. No part of the city can be barred to him; locks open at his touch. He is aware of all parts of the city and all things that happen within it.

Right now, I can hear the Town Watch at the end of the street. Do not worry; they are more than five hundred feet away. They will neither find us, nor will they find the two Falcons that are two blocks over, picking up the information that I have left for them. I can feel the stealthy tread of a Thief that seeks to rob the payroll of a warehouse across the street. I can smell the drunk passed out in the alley on the other side of this wall. These are the powers of an infiltrator.

I can understand how it makes me sound like a voyeur. But all Scouts are, in a sense, voyeurs. We are aware of the world around us by our very Discipline; we cannot help but sense the goings-on of Name-givers around us. It would be like asking a Warrior to not fight, or a Liberator to leave Name-givers in servitude. An inconceivable impossibility.

Different Name-givers who are Children of the Cities make their way differently. Most infiltrators do so by using their awareness of the city to appear as a resident. Our awareness allows us to seem as one of the people of the community. We feel the city breath and move with it. We laugh when the city laughs, cry when the city cries. Because we act in the way of the city and its people, its people accept us as part of them, as part of the city.

Most of the time, this is easy. In a big city, like Jerris, many people do not know all of their neighbors. Even a colorful t'skrang can blend into the crowd. To the Name-givers that an infiltrator meets on the street, he is just from another part of the city. If done well enough, it is possible for an infiltrator to slip into a business, household, or even a tightly knit organization without arousing suspicion. Every person there merely believes that someone else invited him. In easier times, I often used this to get free drinks at local taverns. Now it allows me to save lives, including your own, Scholar Russ.

When an infiltrator cannot easily pass as a member of the community, he must actively steer himself through the current of city life, rather than allow it to carry him as it would another. With proper poise and action and relying on his awareness of the city as always, an infiltrator can put forth the appearance of knowing exactly what he is doing and where he is going. Few Name-givers will interrupt someone who appears to be on serious business, even if he is a stranger. Sometimes this is as simple as taking a direct path and not wandering and appearing lost. At other times, an infiltrator must put on the look of someone who is supposed to be wherever he is. A man walking cautiously down the hall of an embassy while carrying a large stack of papers might be an actual clerk on his way to the file room, or it may be an infiltrator making his way further past security.

*Son of a ... so that's how she did it!*

— Linarea of Urupa

## ON RELATIONS WITH OTHER SCOUTS

Other Scouts do not understand the life of a city. Because they do not spend their time listening to the pulse of a city all the time, they do not understand that it is a living thing. This is not to say that they are not skilled and worthy members of the Discipline. They simply do not understand what it is to feel the life of the city. They do not understand what their awareness of the world tells them, that the city is alive.

Let me give you an example, one that is close to my own heart. This city of Jerris has long been considered something of a dark place. Many people from other parts of Barsaive regard those that live here as dull, grim, and depressed. Scholars like yourself have theorized that it is because of our closeness to the Wastes, that the clouds of dust and ash that fall over the Poison Forest affect the city as well.

It is true that we Jerrisians are often a grim and quiet folk; I am not enough of a scholar to know if the Wastes influence us to be so. The city of Jerris is a quiet place, prone to brief, simple joys and long, deep silences. It breathes heavily, sighing under its many troubles and smiling only briefly. That was, until the Iopans came.

A Scout entering Jerris now would see a dull, unimpressive city. His senses would tell him that the Iopans have taken control and are enforcing their own laws, and that the people have become a captive population. He would know that many are resentful of the occupation by Denairastas' Holders of Trust. If he is good enough, a Scout might be able to tell where some pockets of the Resistance gather. He might be able to get in among them and either help or hinder them, depending on his own motives.

An explorer, I fear, would sense less than this. As used to the wilds as they are, explorers would sense little other than the oppression and depression of the Jerrisians. Most would only see the city as a gathering of dead stone and wood, unable to feel the pulse of the city they stood in.

An infiltrator, on the other hand, would feel the city struggle. To Jerris, the Iopans are a disease. It fights to reject them and re-establish its own health. The conventional ways that a city does this — either by sending forth its people in defense or by absorbing the newcomers' culture into its own — have not worked. Jerris grows frustrated. An infiltrator can sense the anger growing within the city. In a grim city like this, it is a slow burning fury, building to rage. When it erupts, the city will either be cured of its invading disease, or it will burn. If the people of Jerris are not helped, it will most likely be the latter.



An infiltrator senses all of this. He knows that he must help the city overcome this invasion, or else the city, as it is now, will perish. It is unlikely that Jerris will fall completely, but if the rage burns itself out without destroying the invaders, Jerris will not be the same afterwards. And so, an infiltrator like myself must direct the anger, helping the city purge itself. It can be as simple as giving information to the Resistance or helping the Falcons, or as unusual as helping a Traveling Scholar like yourself get out of the city safely. All these things keep the city well and keep the frustration Jerris feels from blossoming into rage and destruction.

*A curious perspective. I cannot say that I do not sense a community's unrest when I enter a city. The awareness of a Scout is such that reading a crowd is not impossible. But I have never heard it put in such words.*

— Rhynn Wayfinder, Scout

*Some Troubadours have spoken of crowds or mobs moving in concert like living things. I always thought of them as being poetic. Perhaps Goro merely extends this metaphor to communities.*

— Thom Edrull

## INFILTRATORS AND THE PASSIONS

Infiltrators speak with the Passions of the City. Upandal often smiles upon us when we work to preserve his inspirations. As the Builder, he not only helps Name-givers build their shelters from the elements, he also inspires them to design their cities and plan how streets are laid out, how neighborhoods are organized, and how life flows through a city. He is always favorable to those that act to preserve the strength of a city. I have personally felt his hand holding roof tiles in place just long enough for me to cross at a run, only to let them slide loose as my pursuers sought to follow. Upandal respects the Children of Cities, for by being the Passion of Construction, he is, in a sense, the grandfather of all infiltrators.

If Upandal is our grandfather, Garlen is our grandmother. As Passion of Hearth and Home, she smiles upon us as we try to protect where we live. As infiltrators working to keep a city well, we are working not only to protect our own home, but the homes of all of our community. Other infiltrators in Jerris — and there are others than I working with the Resistance — have felt her hand, sheltering them when they are alone and in pain. Garlen knows that we seek to heal more than just the wounds of the individual Name-givers harmed by the Holders of Trust and their lackeys; she understands that we seek to heal the city as a whole.

*At that, Goro fell silent, seeming to hear noise from the street. After listening to something that I could not hear, he told me to stay in the room and get some rest, and that he would keep watch out for danger. He disappeared into the darkness, and I did not see him leave.*

*I soon after fell asleep and did not waken until morning. Goro was nowhere to be seen, but a note on the table directed me to make directly for the Silver Clouds Shipwrights, and that Pighram Tor would get me out of the city. The windling shipwright was expecting me, and true to Goro's word, put me on the first airship out of Jerris. I cannot say who Goro was, what race he was, or even that he was a he, but his insight on the role of the infiltrator will remain with me until the end of my days.*

— Alanna Russ, Traveling Scholar



## GAME INFORMATION

### Infiltrator Scouts

Infiltrator Scouts vary from the standard Scouts described in the Earthdawn Second Edition rules to some degree, since they practice slightly different talents, Karma rituals, and advancement rituals.

A First Circle infiltrator replaces the Tracking talent with the Astral Sight talent; at Third Circle, Lock Pick replaces Astral Sight and Tracking replaces Sprint; and at Fifth Circle, Sprint replaces Lock Pick.

An infiltrator's Karma ritual resembles the average Scout's, except that the infiltrator is led blindfolded through the streets and alleys of a city or town. To complete the ritual, the infiltrator must return to her starting point by precisely the same route along which her colleagues took her. Finally, all rituals of advancement for the infiltrator take place within populated areas, such as the streets of a city or other urban settlement.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THIEVES



## THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF A THIEF

*This is indeed a special entry. Taramir the Trickster is a living legend to many. Considered a myth by some, the Name-giver to whom I spoke was most definitely real and not an illusion, though his (her?) ability could seem legendary to many. A... curious habit was abruptly ending the conversation and vanishing, then appearing later in a different guise. More than once returning with a "misplaced" item.*

— Ela Pono

There is a great deal that is unknown about Thieves. Even though some of our earliest heroes were Thieves, and it is a common enough profession among non-Adepts, much remains a mystery about us. Not that it'll change soon I imagine. Secrecy is a powerful force. And far be it from me to reveal the answers to such great questions as whether there really are guilds of thieves or if we can steal time from Death itself. And to answer what you are clearly wanting to ask, perhaps I know the answers, and perhaps not. Either way, simply telling you would not be very much fun, would it?

I've been called a spy, though I serve no earthly government or master. To be a Thief is to be your own self. Even though we work with others, share journeys and plans, and join group True Patterns, a Thief must come to realize that he can only truly rely on himself, that he can only be free when he can stand alone, even if he must be crouched in shadow.

*At this point he disappeared. Right then I should've known this would be a challenging entry.*

### BEING SET FREE

I did not seek to become famous, or infamous depending on your point of view, or even a great Thief, or much of a great anything. I would have been happy leading an ordinary life if it hadn't been for my eyes being opened to the Truth.

*The voice coming from behind startled me. The face was different, an ork this time, but the voice was the same.*

You could say I was a wily youth after that. My rebellious nature wasn't well suited to life in a place like Iopos, or Vivaine, and I was far too optimistic for the cold gray of Jerris. Pity what the stench of the Wastes has done to that fine city. Even my significant skill can't seem to lift those people out of their stupor. Though with recent events I believe they need my help even more.

I did set out on my own at a tender age. I suppose most Thieves do. And if someone can survive on their own before their rite of passage, then they can likely handle the rigors of our Way.

Which is not to say I've stayed away since. I still have a home, or at least a place I will always know and can always return to, if quietly. I left my old life behind, but my new life does include the old places and old friends. A few of them even know they are a part of it. And one more may learn after reading this fine tome.

A Thief lives free. No master, no rules, no laws save those he chooses. My goal, my joy, is to spread that freedom. A true Thief despises tyranny more than anything. If there is no movement within

society, nothing happens. Stasis is boring. A heavy boot that stomps out all originality and fun simply must be tripped up, if not thrown out altogether. Yes, my gift of theft is the gift of freedom. I steal power from the oppressor and pass along hope to the oppressed. Seeing the results is reward enough and if someone should happen to carry on my actions and share the wealth, then all the better. Some days, I really can't understand why I am feared by so many of those in power.

*He calls treason against the rightful rulers of the people a gift? His "gifts" have caused more damage than a small army.*

— Ponfius Denairastas

Thieves have been setting people free for centuries. We all know of the tale of the Thief who helped Astendar bring an old couple together over their children's interference. We even helped Icewing free a clutch of dragons from the slavery of Verjigorm. And even how the cleverness of Vestrial trapped Death and freed the Passions to create the world - a rather Thief-like thing to do, if you ask me.

And let us not forget, it was an act of theft that brought about the gift of the Adept's Way. The first brave heroes who stole into Passion's Hall and liberated the secrets of life for all Name-givers. The Passions rewarded those first heroes with secrets of the Disciplines and because of their cleverness the first Discipline learned and mastered was that of the Thief.

*Just like a Thief, to even steal a part of our legends.*

— Aurora Cystalsinger

I think I take this to heart as I teach others how to steal back their lives. The laughter at guards who make fools of themselves when caught in my nets or watching freed slaves reunited with their families makes all the danger worthwhile. Nothing is quite so satisfying as a good trick at a despot's expense, yes? I'm sure you heard of Captain Hennos of Vivaine and the incident with the snakes, or the generous delivery of Iopan military supplies to the needy expedition at Balos.

*He left while I recalled the tales, returning later as a t'skrang with the same tattoo.*

### THE HIDDEN LIFE OF A THIEF

My mentors initiated me by showing me how to live by my wits. I learned how to move past a barrier without any tools, to remain unseen in a crowd, to share the breath of another and not disturb their sleep, and to know when to leave. For a Thief must always have a way out, an exit, a retreat, a backup plan, a safe refuge. Don't go into anything without knowing the way out. If you must steal some governor's torque out of his bedchamber, you'd best know where all the halls lead, where you'll land if you jump out the window, where the secret passage under his bed will take you. Even in life, we all should find the way out of every bad deal, escape our oppression, find help and comfort when we need it.

A Thief is a creature of society. Society is our playground, our workshop; everyone is a client, everything an opportunity. We are not dependent on others, therefore our eyes are open to possibilities others would not even think to see. Name-givers we meet are all happy to do the work for us, they just don't know it yet. They will follow if we show



them the way. I can't tell you how many revolutions, rebellions, riots, and revelations have been prompted by the work of a single Thief.

*I wonder how many were his doing...*

— Lodur the Red

Very often, our objectivity means we are the only ones who see the truth of a situation. Some may say we manipulate others to our advantage. Rubbish. If the right path were obvious to you, wouldn't you do all you could to make it happen? Besides, we all have free will; nobody does anything they truly don't want to do. And even if they do, if the ends are just, what does it matter?

A Thief can free people of their burdens. If you cannot keep a thing, then did it ever really belong to you? If you cannot protect something of value, then you were a poor choice as steward. The Thief serves as a balance in society, moving value from those who have it to those who want it or can use it. Those who have it may not realize what they have, so our unique abilities do save much time. Imagine if we had to convince every corrupt noble that his stolen wealth would be much better allocated to his more worthy rivals or populace. It would take years to get anything done! A simple extraction in the dark of night where no one is hurt is a much preferable solution and, some might say, more honorable.

Please don't think all Thieves are dour and manipulative and skulking around in shadows. Some are quite friendly, open and engaging companions. You've probably had a Thief to dinner and not even realized it, they were such gracious company.

*Taramir is also a Troubadour. No Thief could cause as much havoc with the Therans and Iopans as he has. The persuasion I witnessed clearly require the talents of a Troubadour.*

— Endio Grav of Jerris

A Thief must always test himself. As we don't have the same pomp and circumstance about Circle advancement that the other Disciplines do, we strive for our own perfection and improvement of ability for its own sake. We choose to advance and be tested by an elder and the test will be unique and suited to our circumstance.

Having to be always on the move does prevent a certain setting down of roots. Our life can be a solitary one. Like some wild Shaman, Thieves benefit a community without being truly a part of it. We see society differently. We want to help, but for our own reasons. To be a Thief is to know the truth of free will, to understand our own strength, to know our own acts. We are individuals. We seek out other individuals as friends and colleagues and the rest we push in the right direction as best we can, or teach them a lesson, be it humility, generosity, or simply that their days are numbered.

A Thief does not have his identity tied up in things or property or in others. If I take your crown and you are no longer a king, then you never really were a king and won't be again until you realize that. If I break your chains and open the gates but you do not run into your new life, then you were always a slave and could be bound by a thread. If you are shown tyranny as plain as day and do nothing, then you deserve your fate. Do not blame the Thief for your own shortcomings; we are only here to help you.

## THE ART OF DECEPTION

Life is deceptive. We all hide what we don't want the world to see. Dangerous creatures camouflage themselves in the trees. The beauty of a rose makes us ignore its thorns. Our memories blend with our desires and emotions to create a reality we would rather have than the one that is.

Everyone deceives. And don't think you do not, scholar. I see you shaking your head. That woman there is not a Wizard.

*I turned, but saw no one. I turned back to find Taramir had changed into a robed woman.*

We've all told a small fib to turn the eye of a pretty young lady or fellow, or to be rid of an annoyance. Our leaders lie to suit their policies or to justify wars. Some merchants exaggerate the quality of their wares and some beggars their poverty. Some are able to see through it and others believe it all.

A good Thief will hear your lie coming before you even speak it, because he will know how to lie well himself. He may not call you on it, but he will know and use it to his advantage. He may not even ever lie to you. It's so much more satisfying to get what we want by speaking the truth. You would be surprised how many people will do what you want when you provide them with the facts and share your honest desire to improve the situation. If only more of those with power understood that.

*Facts, honesty, these a Thief does not know. Beware all their words.*

— Wodon Vertifor





Illusionists understand this and a crafty Troubadour will, as well. I've heard there's an entire philosophy based on the art of deception among our friends across the Aras Sea.

*Some friends.*

— Pino Gurimat

*Taramir forgot to mention he's also an Illusionist. That's how he can do all he does.*

— Varney the White

And the fine interweaving of deception and fact can bring about more of our goals than a picked lock or a quick thrust of a blade. Our leaders make use of this axiom year after year. Is it not fair that they live with the results of the same? I steal their tools to use against them. A fine tradition honed by generations of struggle.

## LIVE TRUE

The life of a Thief is a good one to emulate. Read the tales of Jema the Blind Thief, for example. Imagine all the good that would come from all the Name-givers of Barsaive standing up for themselves and breaking the shackles of bondage, an overbearing spouse, or a will-sapping job. If they would all go out and do something they truly wanted to do, that sense of freedom would inspire a generation. We could be rid of the scars of the Scourge before long. But I fear that few will heed my words. That is also the fate of Thieves; we are not always trusted even when we speak the truth.

*I looked up to see only the lost Hammer of Milnir with a note on pilfering from the Great Library.*

*I'd guess the Iopans' price on his head rose with this publication. Taramir will likely need all of his skill to survive the coming years.*

— A'leyaf Bloodelm

*If they send more like you, then I'm certain to have a pleasant retirement.*

— Taramir

## WORDS FROM AN HONEST THIEF

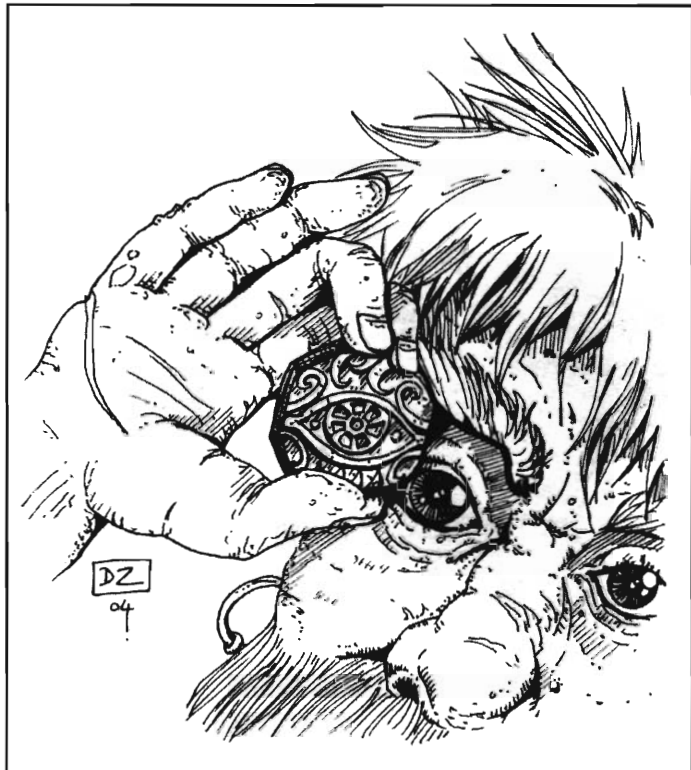
*The following deposition was taken by one of my assistants several weeks ago. The Name-giver, Garth Daxim, sometimes known as the Honest Thief, has recently become known for being the first ork suitor of Krathas Gron to be received favorably by the High Chief of Cara Fahd. In addition, Daxim is considered a friend by King Neden, due to tasks that the deceased King Varulus III set to him and his former group, the First Star Company. While in town recently, Daxim heard of our request for alternative viewpoints from Adepts and took time to speak his mind. His frankness was refreshing, but his attitude makes me question the motives of some of the Name-givers that we have given the label of "Hero."*

— Merrox

Well, where should we start? The Name's Garth Daxim. I used to travel with the First Star Company. Some of them were members of Throal's Exploratory Force. We did some things for His Majesty, King Neden, and his father. Of course, lots of people did.

I'm a Thief. I steal things, plain and simple. Ain't no "redistribution of wealth" or "stealing from those who don't appreciate what they have" here; that's for *vut*-brains who are afraid of thinking of themselves as criminals. And that whole "gift of theft" *quaalz* from your first book? Only a windling would think that made sense!

I'm a Thief. It's what I am; it's what I do to survive. It's how I kept from starving as a *kart* in Kratas. I was trained by one of One-Eye's specialists and His Honor gave me a job collecting taxes. Sometimes we took taxes out the front door and sometimes we took them out the back door. It's funny; folks call us Thieves dishonest, but we pay our dues. Your so-called "honest" businessman will cheat on his taxes any way he can.



*In Kratas perhaps, but we merchants of Throal pride ourselves on our fair dealings and honesty!*

— Verellik of House Ueraven

*Is that what you call it?*

— Traherva Va'tishna Vestrimon

Thieves are not so easily divided as that windling you talked to led you to believe. True, the trickster Thieves do exist, as do those who steal out of greed and selfishness. But remember, many Thieves become Thieves out of circumstance. It is not like an Air Sailor, who joins a navy, or a Warrior, who joins a militia. Many Thieves join the Discipline because they have to. Their choice is out of necessity, not some higher calling or need to follow an ideal. They simply must steal to live. This does not necessarily mean that they live to steal.

As I said, when I was young, I learned to steal to survive. The old woman that took care of me had seven other mouths to feed; the money I brought in off the street kept us in *quaalz* and bread instead of starving. I learned, at that young age, who to steal from as well. Beggars and other poor folk weren't proper marks; they had no more than we did. The merchants and food vendors had plenty and despite Mikbruug's (*This is the orks' Name for Mynbruje - Merrox*) lessons on compassion, they weren't about to give their surplus to some dirty little ork boy. So I took what I needed and gave the *buunda* by way of payment.

Had to learn to fight too, of course. Rule of the street is that you keep what you can take and hold on to. It's the same everywhere, not just in Kratas. It's part of every city where there are poor people who steal to survive and fight to keep what they steal. Don't give me that look, scribbler. You spend a few hours down in Bartertown and look, really look, at the crowds. You'll see the urchins and young pickpockets

if your eyes are keen enough. Even inside the gates, in the *dabnaat* tunnels, you'll find them, taking what they can to survive.

Why don't they learn a trade, you ask? They are. Theft is a trade, just as smithing or selling livestock. You think that Thieves are born with their skills? Huh. Not likely. You have to learn how to be silent and swift, how to lift the coin or the goods without the mark seeing you. And you learn fast or you learn to be fast. Otherwise, you get caught and worse.

A young Thief on the streets learns to watch and know his marks. He knows what types of people to steal from: Merchants mostly. Guardsmen rarely carry cash on them while on duty and they spend it fast on whores and drink. Soldiers' payrolls are too heavily guarded and they can be worse than guards when it comes to throwing their money away. Spellcasters are often suicide to steal from and adventurers are worse. Both are paranoid and likely to have something other than cash in that pouch that might decide to take a hand rather than give up a few coins.

## GROUPS OF THIEVES

If you get good enough to survive on the street, you usually attract attention. Now a Thief's not supposed to get noticed, but some people are very good at seeing what most don't see. Most folks focus first on the theft and only look at the Thief when he gets caught. And that's good; it keeps people from hunting you down and lets you get on with your daily business.

But there are those Name-givers who know to look for the Thief, rather than at the theft. Many of them are other Thieves. You get to where you know what to look for when you walk the same path. I suppose it's the same for Swordmasters and swords, Wizards and spells, and that sort of thing. Whatever the case, some other Thief is going to figure out who you are and that you're good enough not to get killed while lifting a melon for breakfast from the fruit cart at the corner. If you're good enough, they'll want you to help on some job.

Why? Because there's something else that being a Thief also teaches you: Sometimes you've got to work together. Four eyes are better than two and sometimes you need an ork who can break a troll in half, or at least look like he can. And then there's the matter of getting rid of the stuff after you lift it. You can't eat jewelry and no shopkeeper is going to take it in payment for a haunch of beef and a few onions. Working with a group lets you use other Thieves as fences and work with their contacts to get gear needed for a job. It also gives you any number of witnesses that will keep the law from nabbing you because no one knew where you were when the job went off.

*An alibi is one of the most useful things that an organization like the Eye can provide you.*

— Terricia

Bands of Thieves have many names. The Force of the Eye is the best known. Some call them "guilds," connecting them to organizations of more acceptable tradesmen, but Thieves can be as tightly organized as such a guild, or as loosely gathered as a street gang. And organizations can have smaller organizations under them. The Eye controls both the gangs and the government of Kratas. His Honor understands that the law cannot truly stop a Thief and controls both sides of the coin, so as to keep it firmly in his own pocket.





## THE POWER OF THE THIEF

Look at what the Thief does. He steals, of course, and all that he learns is focused on theft and how to escape after that theft. But many Adepts can steal, and do: Sky Raiders, at least those of the Twilight Peaks, make it their regular business, and Cavalrymen... well, let's say that the skull whargs aren't hunted by His Majesty's Army because of their lack of hygiene. But the Thief is different; his methods are quiet and subtle. And that is what gives him his power.

Most Disciplines rely on direct confrontation first and avoidance second. All of the war-making Disciplines, Warriors, Archers, and the like, confront their goals directly and seek to overcome obstacles in ways that often lead to conflict. Spellcasters rely on direct and often flashy methods to defeat foes, overcome interference, and decipher secrets. Even the nonviolent Troubadour must talk to an audience to convince it of his views.

The Thief does not confront his opponents unless absolutely necessary. His way is around obstacles, avoiding conflict. If a patrol of the Watch does not know that a Thief is there, then there is no conflict. And if they do know he is there, then he can conceal himself or, at worst, avoid their attempts to restrain him as he gets away. While it is impossible for you to avoid all conflicts and challenges that are placed in your path by Fate, a Thief excels in avoiding many of them, overcoming them by not dealing with them.

*This Daxim makes a solid assertion on the way a Thief thinks, but his logic is false. He does deal directly with those conflicts he describes, if only by taking the effort to avoid them.*

— Neyo Neyonicus, Solver of Mysteries

A Thief's power flows from one true thing: his self-reliance. Many believe that the Thief must be a solitary soul, lonely and uncaring. This is untrue; your windling got this right, at least. What a Thief must be is self-reliant. At no time can a Thief put himself wholly into the hands of another. A Thief must always have some way to do something himself, or do without if he cannot.

It sounds simple and many times it is. Many Adepts of many Disciplines prefer to be self-reliant. It is easier to live your life that way and often cheaper. But for the Thief, it is not just a matter of simple living. For a Thief, it is a matter of his very being. Without self-reliance, a Thief is not a Thief.

This means, essentially, that the Thief must always have the means to do something without support. This is, of course, open to circumstance and interpretation, but what I believe is that it means that the Thief must look at his life and never think that he must ask for charity or a favor. He can pay for help in a matter, but a Thief must never go into an action expecting someone to help him unconditionally. And what is more, he must never let anyone do something for him that he can do himself. Such is the reliance on self that a Thief requires to be a Thief.

But such self-reliance allows the Thief to do the most wondrous magic. To walk without tracks, to vanish without a trace, to slip past the hardest blow without injury, to take without being seen, these are the ways of the Thief. Such feats can only be performed with the confidence and self-reliance that a Thief must possess.

Some may ask why a Thief might join a group, either of fellow Thieves or of adventurers, if he is so self-reliant. It seems unusual for

such an independent Adept to help form a pattern with other Name-givers. The answer is quite simple. Thieves may swear blood oaths to others without worry, because no Name-giver can swear a blood oath unwillingly. The self-reliance of the Thief is not compromised by such an oath, because only he can make himself swear it.

## ON THE BRAVERY OF A THIEF

Thieves are some of the bravest Adepts in Barsaive. Ah, you have the same look that Titanstroke Greybeard had when I said this to the Council of Chiefs. The others were busy laughing, of course, except for Krathis. She just smiled, for I think she understood. But it is the truth. I never lie, after all.

Think on this: All those Disciplines where bravery is expected - Cavalrymen, Warriors, Sky Raiders - all have one thing in common above all; they train and act together. A Cavalryman is never alone; he always has a steed of some sort and they train together among the great cavalry companies. A Cavalryman and his steed are inseparable. Warriors and Sky Raiders and Air Sailors are trained in units, be they squads or crews, and Swordmasters are used to fighting with an audience. All of them think in terms of crowds and of groups. Even a duel has two people in it.

Thieves, on the other hand, are trained to rely on themselves first. Where a Cavalryman charges into battle astride his mount, a Warrior marches to war shoulder to shoulder with his fellows, a Sky Raider hunts for prizes with his crew, and a Swordmaster performs for any who will watch, the Thief stalks the shadows alone, relying only on himself. The Thief can expect no reinforcements to help him. He can depend only on his own skills and talents when on the job. Oh, he can have lookouts to watch for him and craftsmen to sell him tools, but none can pick the locks or scale the walls or stalk the mark for him. There is no one between a Thief and the darkness.

I have been told that this is fallacy. I have been told that a Thief will always have those whom he travels with to help him. I have been told that the Passions are always with a Name-giver. And I will tell you what I tell those who have told me this: I have been the Thief who cracks the doors to the kaer and when the wingflayers attacked, I was the sole target. No others were there. I have been the Thief that enters the houses of spies and I was alone against the traps and dangers. And as for the Passions, they are capricious and best left to questors. I'll respect them, but they've yet to show me more than the briefest help when I asked for it.

Tell me, which is braver: The Name-giver who fights his enemy face to face with his fellows all around him, or the Name-giver who faces dangers alone, unknown, and in the dark? Which is braver, the Name-giver that knows that if he falls, his Name will be remembered by his unit and friends, or the one that risks falling in the night, where no one can see him? This is the bravery of a Thief, to risk these things alone.

## THE THIEF'S CROSSROADS

Sooner or later, a Thief reaches an important point in his life. He either becomes skilled and lucky enough to pull off a profitable heist, or a series of profitable heists, or he becomes dead. Whatever the case, he finds himself in a place where he doesn't need to steal to survive anymore. In the latter case, he's not interested in this world anymore, but in the former, he has a choice. It's an important choice, because it shapes how he lives his life from then on.



On the other hand, if the Thief chooses the other path, he must seek out another reason to steal. No longer needing to steal to live, he must choose to apply his talents for another cause. This cause can be as unique as the Thief himself. Some Thieves who reach this point become tricksters. Others become spies, stealing secrets, or romancers, stealing hearts. Some rare Thieves choose to leave the Discipline entirely, seeking a new perspective to look upon the world from.

When a Thief reaches his crossroads, he must take his reputation into account. An unfavorable reputation can result in a horde of enemies lining up to attack him at a moment's notice. Too favorable a reputation can have him plagued with dozens of young Thieves seeking their own reputations by stealing from a so-called "Master Thief." It is best if the Thief can shape his reputation through his public actions. A good example of this, known to most Name-givers, is J'role the Honorable Thief. J'role is well known as a hero of the First Theran War, as well as being the Name-giver who brought Parlainth back to Barsaive. I have met the old man, and he is a kind, friendly Name-giver, full of humor and stories. But, he is also a Thief. He became a Thief to survive and he has stolen many things from many people over his long life. But people do not think of him as such. His reputation, gained in the service of Throal, is of the "Honorable" Thief, and it prevents those that might otherwise wish him ill from considering him a criminal. Likewise, it gives the impression that he steals only on matters of honor—hardly an appealing target to a young Thief seeking his fortune. Of course, much of J'role's reputation stems from the fact that he truly is an honorable man, much as mine stems from the fact that I never lie.

I have found, over the years, that to be a Thief is to always be learning. We are Adepts who advance into danger under cover of darkness and stealth and there are many things that hide in the darkness that we must know about or risk death, or worse. To stop learning is to die, when you are a Thief.

Pain is but one teacher and it is not a particularly good one. The tricksters insist on riddles and I must admit that there is merit in that, but too many cannot see that the riddle is a lesson. Sometimes, there must be the middle ground. It is important to look at what you teach your students, and what you are taught, and how it will be used. Train in a fashion that will develop those skills best. If you are a Thief, do not toughen yourself by fighting. The toughness of a Thief comes from sleepless nights crouched in the shadows, watching the mark. Do not learn to fight by dueling; no Thief should ever be caught in a duel. Fight to survive, using whatever is needed to get away from those that would do you harm.

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## HONOR AMONGST THIEVES

Amongst the many documents that were consulted to compile this tome, there were several new documents donated to our research by the Eye of Throal. Along with these documents came a request from Ambassador General Tramon on behalf of a human Thief Named Shir Callidus. Even if you are a Throalic citizen, it is doubtful that you've heard her Name or seen her here in Throal. She has been an agent of the Eye of Throal for nearly a decade and as I understand it, has rarely operated within the borders of the kingdom she's claimed as home. In the wake of the coup, she returned to Throal, heard of the preparation of this tome, and requested a chance to be a part of it. Master Merrox was very intrigued by her request and sent me to meet with her. The treatise that follows is mainly her monologue on the subject of what it means to be a Thief. In the points where I asked for clarifications, I have stricken the questions from the document and left only her answers. For an Adept whose bread and butter is stealth and subterfuge, she was surprisingly blunt. When we first met for the interview, I inquired as to why her Name was relatively unknown in Throal if she had served it so long. This was her reply:

*Does that worry you, that my Name can be unknown, if I have supposedly done so much? Names don't define us, Archivist Syrtis, as much as we like to think they do. As Name-givers, we tend to forget that, not wanting to believe that which makes us so different from the beasts and the Horrors can be fallible in any way. I am known by so many Names that I almost forget which one was given to me by my parents. A Name is only the starting point of a legend; it's the Pattern beneath that matters.*

I am somewhat saddened to know that there are legends like her whose stories we will never know, who have given much for us and our way of life, but whose tales are never told. Because of this, it is my honor to at least have been able to present her words to this kingdom.

— Presented for the edification of the reader by Blert Syrtis, Apprentice Archivist for the Great Library of Throal

What is it to be a Thief? There are as many answers to that as there are those who follow the path. I'll try to be as eloquent as I can be, but I have never been very good at stealing the glory of the Troubadours. Words aren't my craft, though I have been known to trade or steal them. At the heart of every Thief is theft, naturally. It's what we were Named for and where we began. Let me start there.

### THE CONCEPT OF THEFT

Stealing. Theft. Robbery. Appropriation. Reallocation. You can paint it with as many different words in as many different tongues as you want, but it always comes down to one definition: To take that which does not belong to you. While there are those amongst our number and amongst our detractors that would try to convince you of the absolutes of theft, I put before you that it doesn't possess a nature. Theft is a force, if you will, or a tool if you prefer. Of its own merit, it is neither good nor evil, gift nor curse.

*For a Thief of Knowledge, she sure doesn't understand much. It is a gift, despite her misconceptions. One which the world would be in a worse place without, despite the mischief that some cause!*

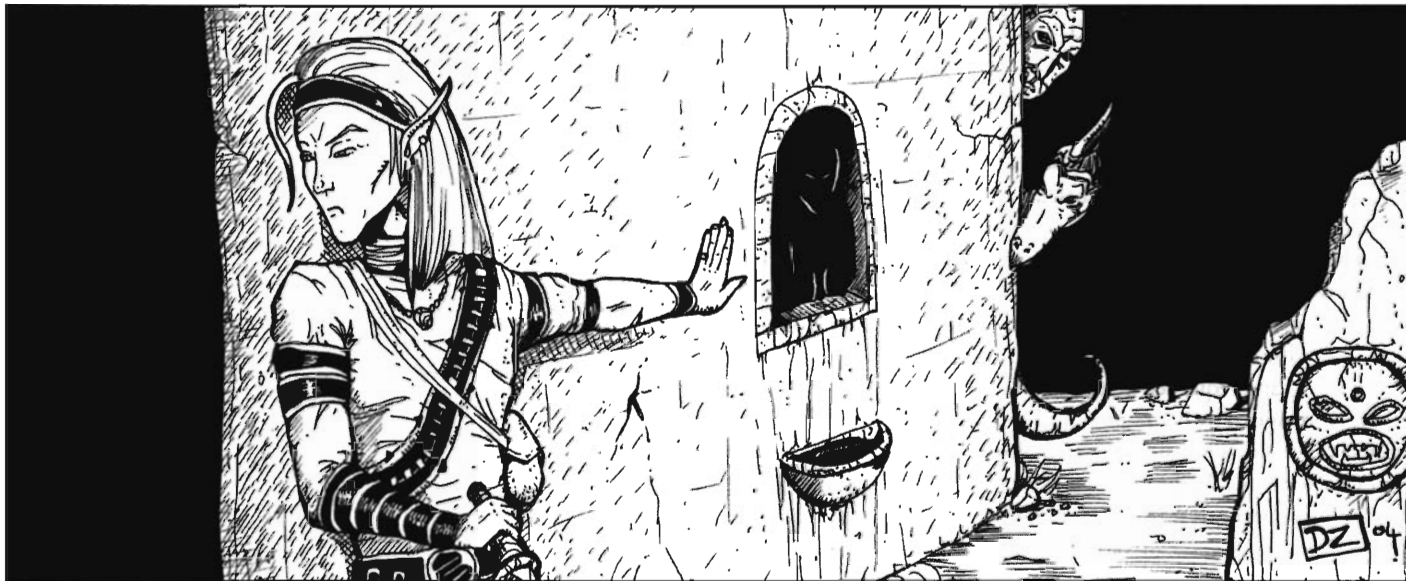
— Kosooti, Windling Thief

How can theft be a force? It is one of the fundamentals of nature. Simply living requires that you steal the life of another, be it plant or animal, to eat and continue your own existence. You might argue that plants do no such thing, but they thrive on the carcasses of generations of plants and animals that have come before them. In earlier times, all of our necessities came from stealing from other creatures. Death himself is the ultimate Thief, taking the life that was granted to each of us. If you believe in the legends of Barsaive's Passions, then without the force of taking what was not rightfully yours in the first place, we wouldn't have the Disciplines to begin with. The Passions weren't giving up those powers, Name-givers had to take them. It was only Garlen's soft-heartedness that kept us from getting stomped into the dirt for our audacity.

Yes, I agree that the reason we weren't stomped out is because Garlen saw that those who stole those gifts bestowed them on their people so that they may survive. It wasn't the act itself that was good. It was the legends that did it and the reasons why they did it. If they had kept them only for themselves and used those gifts to establish themselves as kings, for example, do you think Garlen would have been quite so forgiving, or able to convince the others of the same? The act of stealing wasn't what determined the morality of that legend, it was the reasoning.

The core of being a Thief is to be willing to use that force, to take that which doesn't belong to you. I know that look you try to hide; it seems wrong, doesn't it? It always means that you have deprived someone else of something and more often than not something that was rightfully theirs to begin with. If that idea angers you, then you'll never have what it takes to be a Thief. If that idea excites you, then I pray the Passions grant me that you'll never manifest as an Adept and be nothing more than a petty crook. They do enough damage without the magic of the world supporting them.





It's not a pretty fact. It's the reason why the Thief seems to have the greatest stigma of any of the Disciplines, despite my best mud-slinging at Nethermancers. If you've ever had anything taken from you, you know why. It is, however, what we do; every last one of us.

## SOCIETY'S OUTCASTS

The simple fact that we are Adepts of theft is the primary reason so many Thieves believe in the path of loneliness. Stealing has been outlawed by nearly every cultured system of laws that Name-givers have created, and for good reason. If everyone was free to simply take what they needed from others, no one would be willing to do the work to create what was needed. Why bother, if it would just simply be taken from you? A functional society demands that barriers be put in place and everything a Thief is, defies those barriers. No one truly welcomes a Thief into their town or their home. It's a rare Name-giver that is willing to come to terms with all that the Thief does and be accepting of them for that. I'm tempted to say that it's a rare Thief that deserves that kind of trust, but I must confess that the vast majority of other Thieves I have met have all been on bad terms.

Thieves can and should form bonds. Name-givers are social creatures. *Va!* After the Scourge, we should be pack creatures, unless you're a Scout that knows what to do or a Warrior that's walked from one side of the Death's Sea to the other, traveling alone is a quick way to get yourself killed. If all you have to trust in this world is yourself, all you'll ever think of is yourself. It's a short hop from that to being a useless son of a *brithan* that the world is better off without. Consider this: without the ability to steal time from traps, there would be countless adventurers dead without a Thief to guide them and countless kaers whose stories would have never been known, or whose unknowing denizens would have eventually been taken by the Horrors. Our abilities are much needed in this world against not only the Horrors, but other Name-givers as well. Thera, for example, or Iopos, or the twisted spawn responsible for the attempt on the king all come to mind.

I don't mean that you should never be alone. There are times when you are simply on your own, or your skill alone is what is needed for a given situation. Self reliance, however, doesn't mean you have to embrace the lone wolf theory of survival. Wolves run in packs for a

reason. If you're willing to work for something greater than yourself, you may be surprised by the acceptance you'll find.

## THIEVES AND LEGENDS

So how can one be a 'good' Thief? I'll assume you mean 'good' as in the eyes of society and not as in gifted. That gets back to what I was saying before of theft being a force without the polarity of good or evil. Like any force or tool, theft can be used towards attaining any goal. Whether or not it's good depends on who you're asking and the motivation behind the theft. Let me give another example of that, if I may.

Answer me this, scholar. Let's say that a Thief has stolen a substantial amount of money from a Throalic merchant. Was that good or not? Of course you side with the Throalic sentiment and immediately see the wrong in that Thief's deed. If you were to ask a Thera, they would likely say that it was no better than the lawless Barsaivans deserve for defiance. But it gets more complicated. What if I told you that Throalic merchant was using those funds to send missives to Thera, or reporting on the military strength here in Barsaive to, say, Iopos? See what I mean? It adds a whole new gob of worms to the question. The act of theft itself isn't the issue. It's the why behind it that matters.

Taking money, goods, or information from others who would use it to cause harm is a powerful way to defang a serpent. For example, imagine the deaths that could have been avoided if someone had managed to discover this coup well before those adventurers did? No deaths would have been preferable to the relatively few we had. My thanks, by the way, to those responsible, should they ever read this.

Becoming a legend for a Thief requires the same as any other Discipline: Be willing to do legendary things for reasons other than your own good. While it is true the deeds of the Thief are rarely popularized in song and tale, it does not make them any less important to our world. If it had not been for a great Thief, Parlainth would never have returned to us. Had it not been for a great Thief, Kratas would have torn itself apart long ago. Had it not been for the greatest Thieves of our stories, we would never have learned to be Adepts. When used towards such an end, the gifts of the Thief can leave a lasting legacy to those that come after them.



## THE FINDER

*The Great Library of Throal, of course, is constantly on the lookout for new acquisitions. The only way that the library stays current with works produced by non-Throalic authors is to maintain a brisk trade in foreign works. Unfortunately, this trade often brings your humble archivist into contact with unsavory characters. Usually, this is one of the least enjoyable tasks associated with working at the Great Library. However, recently, I met a most agreeable fellow named Darius Fisk, an elf Adept who has in the past sold to me several extraordinary pieces of pre-Scourge literature. What follows is an excerpt from a longer interview where I tried to ascertain the source of these extraordinary finds.*

— Gideon Morrow, archivist in residence at the Great Library of Throal

*So, you were about to tell me where you located the lost works of Seriden...*

Was I?

*Yes, you were.*

Ah, yes, I remember now. You see I was traveling through the... where was I? Oh, I can't quite place it. I remember that I was traveling with my good friend Argus of Biden, a fine Warrior of great capability but absolutely no appreciation for the gentle art of treasure hunting. To this man, every problem is just another fight. And let me assure that recovering the Lost Tomes of Seriden was not something that could be accomplished by combat. Not that the enterprise was entirely peaceful, mind you. Those cyclopean ghouls were not easily detoured...

But I digress. You know, it's ironic how many Thieves use their Discipline as an excuse for crime.

*Excuse me? What does this have to do with...*

I have heard many a Thief Adept put forward the argument that since their Discipline seems to lend itself to thieving, that the Passions obviously meant them to steal. This is, to my way of thinking, simple moral laziness. One could as easily argue that because a Warrior's talents lend towards combat and killing that the Passions obviously meant them to murder. Certainly no one believes that. I find the whole practice of theft abhorrent. I, myself, never steal.

*You're trying to convince me that you, a professed Thief Adept, have never stolen anything?*

No sir, I am not trying to convince you of anything. I was simply stating my own personal conviction. If you do not find that persuasive then what can I do?

*I suppose your statement would be more convincing if I hadn't met you by you selling me stolen goods.*

Stolen goods! What do you mean, sir? Are you implying that I stole the famed lost works of Seriden?

*Well...I...*

I take this as a grave insult, sir. I did nothing of the sort! I did not steal those artifacts at all. I simply found them. Do you know what the definition of a thief is? One who takes that which is not lawfully theirs. That is not my way. You see, good archivist, I am a finder of the lost. In fact, if I had my choice, I would not be known as a Thief Adept at all. Instead, I much prefer the moniker of a Finder Adept.

Finding is my profession, my calling and my passion. The world is full of lost treasures, good archivist. The world is full of ancient wonders long denied to us. What would happen if we were to leave these treasures to the mercy of the elements? They would, in time, be reduced to simple sand and mud. How much longer would the lost works of Seriden have survived in the ruins of...

*Of...*

It escapes me. Regardless, let me assure you that I have stolen nothing. Further, finding is not just a methodology for garnering wealth legally, it is a universal truth. The Archer often speaks of hitting the target. The Warrior often speaks of life as conflict. The Beastmaster often speaks of the wisdom of beasts. They all believe that they have found the truth. What they have all overlooked is that it is not the truth that is important, but the finding itself.

*So the arc is more important than the target? Interesting viewpoint.*  
— Jeri Silvermane

We are all looking for something, right, good archivist? Certainly. Take you for instance. You are always looking for more works to be in your library. If I were to tell you that I had an inside track on the resting place of the Governor's private library in Vivane, you would be interested in finding that, right? You might even be able to talk the Throalic government into financing an expedition with a finder with a proven track record. Am I right?

*Perhaps...*

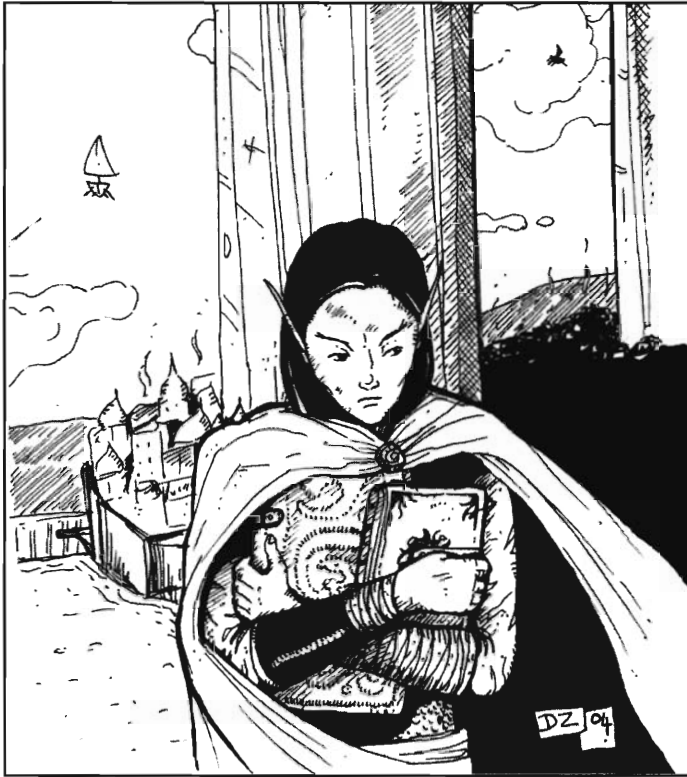
I can sense your intense interest. We can discuss that later. As I was saying before, life is all about finding. You have to decide what you want and then you have to do what it takes to find it. Love, money, glory, enlightenment... whatever. Nothing worth having is ever just handed to you. You have to go out there and find it. That's what I'm all about.

*Look I don't see what any of this has to do with Seriden...*

It has everything to do with Seriden. You want to know how I found the resting place of books long thought wiped out, right?

*I suppose that I do.*

All right, then, a little patience my good archivist. Now where was I? Ah, yes, finding. The Passions have given to me a mission, Gideon. I am on a sacred quest. I'm not a questor, but I am questing. I am finding what has been lost. I am bringing wonders back to the world of Name-



givers. It's good work. The best work. The light in the eyes of men like you is what make Name-givers like me know we're on the right path.

Finding is the universal key that fits every lock. When I negotiate with someone, I know that I must find what they want to hear. When I disable a trap, I know that I must find the method of defeating the mechanism. Even when I enter into a fight, I know that I must find my opponent's weakness. But I find nothing that I haven't earned. Thieves steal. Finders are an entirely different matter.

It is not that thieves don't find things, my good archivist. Indeed they will find many valuable trinkets in the pockets of their victims. It is their motivation for the finding that I take issue with. Stealing is finding only for the sake of personal profit. Finders look at the larger picture. Finders realize that personal profit is not by itself evil. Personal profit only becomes a sin when it becomes the only goal. When one is willing to sacrifice the wonders of this world for short term gain then one has betrayed the code of the finder. You are merely a thief.

*So, you're telling me that under no circumstances would any 'Finder' steal anything? I'm finding that hard to swallow, Darius. I've known far too many treasure hunters.*

I didn't say that every finder maintains the high ethical standards that I do, my good archivist. I am not so naive nor do I believe that you are. There are some finders, fellows who appreciate the value of finding, but who use their Passion-given talents for despicable purposes. They're out there, my friend, and it would be foolish to deny it. Often their hearts begin in the right place. They are committed to finding the lost treasures of this world. But the Passion of greed catches them. It is a powerful lure. I would be lying if I said I hadn't heard its siren call. The same talents that can find the world's lost wonders can also steal wonders long ago found.

But this is what separates finders from thieves. Finders may occasionally stray. They may fail, as any Name-giver may, to live up to their own ideals. But they are ultimately dedicated to something greater than mere profit. They are concerned about something more important than the weight of their purse. Finding is a calling, good archivist. As I said above, it is a Passions-given quest. A finder is someone who has realized that curiosity is not a curse, but a gift.

There are however some exceptions to my usually hard line against thievery.

*Ah, here we go, the inevitable rationalization of why stealing is somehow justified.*

That is a very cynical quip, my good archivist.

*As I said, I've known many treasure hunters.*

I see. Give me a moment then to explain myself. Wonders can be abused and then it becomes the finder's mission to end this abuse. I could explain this all day to you and it would not be as clear as even a single example. Before the war, a Theran slave ship raided a small town in southern Barsaive named Coerldon. Coerldon's only claim to fame was its grand library. They housed many unusual and rare volumes of great antiquity. The Therans descended on the township greedy for gold and slaves and wiped it from the map. Every man, woman, and child was either killed in the savage fight or hauled off in chains. Worse, the library was pillaged, its wonders doubtless headed back to the heart of the Empire to pad out the personal collection of some Theran noble house. These works — none of them were lost. The Therans knew precisely where they were. And by Theran law, they were lawfully seized. Certainly, they would have considered me a thief for reclaiming them. But when I heard of the sack of Coerldon, it goes almost without saying, my good archivist, that Theran law did not deter me.

I would much later track down that very vedette which had sacked Coerldon, docked at Sky Point. Using some connections with resistance fighters I made my way in. There I found the loot had been delivered and awaited further shipment in a nearby warehouse. I found my way deep into the enemy's camp and recovered a number of remarkable works. Of course, it was a good thing that Argus of Biden came along when that Theran legionnaire stumbled upon us...

*And that is where you found the works of Seriden? They had been stored away in the library at Coerldon?*

What? Oh, no, my good archivist. That is an entirely different tale. As I mentioned, my exploits in Sky Point happened before the War. No, I found the works of Seriden in an entire different site much more recently. Patience, scholar, I'm getting there.

As I was saying, theft is sometimes justified when wonders are abused. There was no doubt in my mind that the valued treasures of Barsaive being hauled off to the Theran Empire and denied to its people was a clear case of such abuse. And besides, the War cleansed me of any wrongdoing. It clearly established that the Therans hold no jurisdiction in Barsaive and so the theft in question was no theft at all. A legal technicality, to be sure, but one that's important to a high-minded fellow like myself.







You see the problem with being a finder Adept is that people often project the bad habits of other thieves on you. I see that even you, my good archivist, are not immune to this. They assume that because they've met one Thief who was unable to resist carrying off their valuables...

*Or many.*

Yes, well, just because of a couple of bad apples, it marks the whole lot of us. Like the works of Seriden, for example, you assume that they were stolen when in fact it was nothing of the sort. In fact, it took me many years of intense research and pursuit to track down those volumes from their hiding place. My search began where the journey ended here in the Great Library of Throal. People assume that the work of a finder happens only in taverns and dungeons, but often as not a library has served me far better than any dank ruin.

Regardless, it was here that I found a book of ancient history describing that the poet and philosopher Seriden had a hideaway, a private estate if you will, on the Tylon River in what is now the Servos Jungle. The estate was hidden, as Seriden tolerated no intrusions while he was immersed in his work. But with some creativity, I was able to extract its location.

It was quite a journey, my good archivist, and the full details of the trip would test even your sagacious patience. Suffice it to say that in time, I and a small band of companions located the hideaway, defeated its erstwhile guardians, solved the riddles left behind by old Seriden himself, and found our way into his sanctum sanctorum. It was there I found the works of Seriden, my good archivist. I have marked the exact location on this map here, which I am willing to sell you at a very reasonable rate. Of course, you could try instead to backtrack my own path from the hints I gave you. It should be quite an adventure. It was for me. However, there is no reason for the wheel to be reinvented if you think we could do business.

*We'll see. I'll have to discuss it with the Master of Expeditions.*

Of course, my good archivist. I await your decision anxiously. Please mention to the esteemed Master of Expeditions that I think, within that ruin, you could discover much of historical interest. Of course, you won't find any more books or obvious treasures. Those I have already found. But still, there is much there. It is remarkable how intact the estate was, given its pre-Scourge construction.

*That is what you had to report? An already looted estate? Couldn't you have merely written a letter? That discovery sounds hardly worth of...*

I can see your disappointment, my good archivist. I agree with you entirely. That discovery is unworthy of your time, yes. In truth, I have misled you somewhat. I do not actually wish to talk about any further works of Seriden. I have found all that I could find. Instead, I have made another most remarkable discovery that I thought I should share with you.

*And that is?*

Ah, well, that's an interesting tale...

*(At this point, I sighed heavily and shifted in my chair, prepared for another long exposition on the nature of finding.)*

You see I recently discovered that the librarians of Coerldon did not keep all of their most valuable works in the town-proper. Instead they maintained a cache in a cave in the nearby hills. Likely the cache is trapped to keep out invaders, but special collections might be found inside. I believe that I have located a clue to the location of the cache and I was hoping to finance an expedition. Now this is where you come in...

*Never steals? Ha. Quaalz for brains.*  
— Garth Daxim



## CHAPTER FIVE TROUBADOURS





## TO WALK WITH THE PRINCES OF MEN

*The following entry was sent to us via letter by Monda Grantt, known to some as The Sage of Travar.*

— Thom Edrull

I was still a child when my family, powerful merchants in Travar, had a Wizard examine my pattern to see if I had the gift to be an Adept, as my father before me. I did and a number of potential instructors, bewildering to my young mind, were then paraded before me. In the end, it was a Troubadour, Hugh of Silver Bridge, that became my tutor. Hugh taught me not only my Discipline, but much I would need to know to prosper in Travar society.

When I was a young man, eager to bring prestige to myself and my family, I competed in The Founding. But that wasn't enough to sate my tastes. I fought off Sky Raiders aboard merchant airships and I was even a central figure in a voyage of exploration planned to fly across the Aras Sea. However, harsh storms, and though it pains me to say, desertion of much of the crew, led to that voyage never leaving. It is perhaps a blessing of the Passions that it did not, because it was after that failed expedition that I entered fully into the politics of Travar, parlaying my failure into a greater success.

### A SAGE IN COURT

Some would say that I am a favorite of the Magistrates of Travar, but I would say that I am fortunate enough to count them among my friends. The charm of a Troubadour can sway the hearts of many, but it is the character of a man that will win and keep strong friendships. Through word and deed more than talent, I keep my friends close to me and by doing so can effect the greatest good in Travar. Do not think that I have a lack of respect for traveling minstrels. Though I prefer to build relationships over months and years, I understand the power of enlightening a village through story and song, then moving on. Both their lives and mine are important and the most good is done when there are Troubadours walking each path.

A Troubadour has a talent for administration that few men can match. I have in my time been appointed to the position of Warden of the mines owned by the City of Travar, made a steward in charge of arranging expeditions to lost kaers, and, even though I am no Warrior, made the captain of Lord Destri's guards. You must realize that in Travar, the captain of a magistrate's guard is a position that requires more a sharp mind than sharp steel and training in oration will serve you better than experience in deadly combat. It is the duty of the captain of the guard to see to it that they are competent and well-trained, but it is not the captain's duty to be the fiercest combatant. It is the captain's duty to attend to the magistrate and to be the best leader of the guard.

*Only in a city where rulers are determined by the Founding would a Troubadour be made Captain of the Guard.*

— Chott One-Tusk

This is not to claim that my fortunes have always risen. When I was married to Dame Victorya, who was favored by a powerful merchant lord, his influence caused me to be made a virtual prisoner within the gilded halls of Travar. It was only through working with Air Warden

Drimsby during the months leading to the War against Thera that my star began to rise again. One of the privateers was especially successful and returned to Travar with a hold filled to capacity with Elemental Air and Fire. A Theran mining vedette had been taken and its entire cargo was brought back to Travar. However, a dispute broke out over the division of the spoils. There were several merchant lords involved and even a magistrate. When I was called by Aramus the Aged to mediate the disagreement and I did so successfully, my status was restored.

I attribute my success in court not just to my skills as an orator, but to my voracious appetite for information. When speaking, I realize that even when talking with a single man, I am a performer and he is my audience. Does it surprise you that a Troubadour who considers himself more sage than singer would still hold that opinion? A sage is not necessarily a librarian who hoards knowledge in books. It is my belief that while all information has some value, when knowledge of some subject is put to active use then, is when it becomes most important. For example, if you learn the location of an unopened kaer, that is one thing. It is another thing entirely when an expedition to that kaer is organized and Name-givers who have been living underground their entire lives are brought the news that the Scourge has ended and are coaxed to the surface.

### A SAGE ON GATHERING KNOWLEDGE

Entire books have been written on the best ways to make use of a library. It does not take a Troubadour to be able to glean knowledge from books. In fact, many fine librarians are not Adepts at all, but just Name-givers dedicated to learning. The advice I will give to you on libraries is simple: if you are not expert in drawing the relevant information from books, then hire the services of these dedicated men and women. In a library, few talents will serve you as well as they.

Everyone expects that a sage would suggest that books are the best place to turn for knowledge. I suggest something different. Books are a good place to turn for history, however even books that are written about our own times are out of date. It is the nature of a book. For example, if a person wrote about his experiences at the Siege of Triumph, even recorded them as they were taking place, then by the time these writings were catalogued in a library, the siege would have been long past. While there is important knowledge to be gained from books, if you want to get information about the now, rather than the then, you must turn to Name-givers and listen to what they have to say.

Most Troubadours develop their talents of entertaining, and thus speaking, far more than they practice their skills at listening. This is evident even in the talent Names. People say that they have meditated on the Speak Language talent, not that they have meditated on the Understand Language talent. It is a shame, really, because I believe that many are missing a great amount of what the Troubadour Discipline could offer them.

*Ah, but to master a Taunt, a Troubadour has to listen? How else will he be able to know how best to sting his opponent? I think you give others of your Discipline too little credit.*

— Xachary, Finalist, Haven Swordmaster Tournament of 1512TH

You do not have to be a Troubadour, or even a sage in particular, to listen well. How many of you have spoken with a sage who does not even look up from his books when you ask your questions, and maybe



passers-by, or considering the threat of the armed Name-giver who seems to be watching you. A mind focused on the speaker is one that is receiving information. In short, shut out distractions from without and within to concentrate on what the speaker is telling you. If you're really listening intently, you'll feel tired when the speaker is finished. Listening is an active, not passive, experience.

## A SAGE ON SELLING KNOWLEDGE

Much of the information that is exchanged between speakers and listeners is in the form of stories of personal experiences, or tales of experiences that have happened to others. Most of these exchanges are done voluntarily, without much coaxing at all, often because people realize they will be able to gain information in the same way when they need it. The speaker also knows that what they are saying will possibly gain them prestige and they gain a personal satisfaction from that. Hence, what is good for the listener is also good for the speaker.

Silver is a powerful motivator and many people believe that buying stories is the best way to get a speaker to talk. At the same time, many speakers believe that their stories should not be told if they are not first paid. However, the exchange of coin does not always work to everyone's benefit. A market cannot operate efficiently unless prospective buyers have information about the goods for sale, but what if the product itself is information? You can inspect a printed book before purchase. But how can you inspect a story before you hear it? There is a cost, in time or silver, in verifying the quality of information. That is why people are often willing to pay for a reputable storyteller: They can expect that what he says is useful and accurate.

But is coin really necessary to motivate speakers? The answer is, of course, no. Gift exchange systems have a long history going back to forms of barter used before the development of coinage. In the circles of the merchant lords of Travar, there is a competitive element where each merchant tries to outdo the other in generosity. In the equally competitive ceremonies of certain tribes of ork scorchers whole communities participate in exchanges spread over several days involving everything from blankets to steeds. Cultural activities such as dancing, initiation into groups within the tribe, and — most importantly for the point I'm making — storytelling also took place during the ceremonies.

Traditionally, markets had both social and economic functions. The great bazaars of Barsaive are an arena for gossip, political haranguing, philosophical inquiry, and hard bargaining. Everything from apples to crystal plate are for sale and talk, or information, is always free — and sometimes priceless.

*Many times, the Olzims of Throal share this valuable flow of "free" information.*

— Cibonicus

All this illustrates the point that the exchange of knowledge need not be tied to the exchange of coin. Do not be afraid to seek information if the only thing you have to offer is the possibility of giving information of your own at some point in the future. Likewise, do not jealously hoard the information you hold, only doling it out in small tastes, awaiting payment for each morsel. If Troubadours have one thing completely right, it's that they know knowledge is meant to be shared and a story's true value is in the telling.

not even when he responds? That is a sage who is not listening to you. Every motion of his body says that his book is more important than whatever it is you're saying and you should really just go away. Carry that into your own experiences. The first step to listening, really listening, to somebody, is to show an interest in what they are saying.

How do you show an interest? It's in your body and in your face. Everyone knows that you hear from your ears, so turning your head such that both ears can listen, thus fully facing the person who is talking, is the first step. Your eyes notice things that your ears will not: facial expressions, what they're doing with their hands, the way they're standing, how they're holding their own eyes. Hence, the second step is to look at the person to whom you're listening. I know, it sounds so simple, but so many Name-givers fail to really look at somebody who is talking to them.

A successful listener will stop talking, except for the purpose of listening. Talking is important while listening, but only to draw out the information you want. Asking questions that guide the speaker is more important than offering your own opinion on whatever is being said. Mind you, I'm not saying that this is the method for making good conversation. No, directing the speaker is an important part of listening for information. Thus can the mouth be used to receive, rather than give, knowledge.

The final skill you must master to be a successful listener is to move your mind to concentrate on what the speaker is saying. You cannot fully hear what it is they are telling you when you argue mentally or judge what they are saying before they have completed. An open mind is a mind that is receiving information. You cannot fully hear what the speaker is telling you if you are noticing the shape of women









as it did. No questions whether our lives were worth the risk of saving another Name-giver's soul from becoming a construct of the Horrors. When it came down to Reimann and I to make the final gamble, the cards that would seal all our fates hadn't finished sliding across the small cart before we flipped them over simultaneously. There was magic in that moment, mother, the stuff of legend and of life.

I don't intend to forget it.

## THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND PURPOSE

Sometimes, I forget that our enemies aren't just the Horrors and those willing to side with them.

"Sparky" is destroyed, finally, as well as Omar and his cronies. It was at a terrible price, mother. Jerrold is dead, as is Max. Reimann, Suron, and I have some interesting scars from whatever Horror-tainted poison Andwar was using. Most of the original group laid the blame for Jerrold's death at K'taam's feet. I can't fault K'taam's reasoning; I don't think any of us but him could have dealt with Jerrold as a cadaver man, but his lie about Jerrold's last words has hurt the trust the others had in him.

*Fenris had an irritating habit of giving nicknames to any Named Horror that the Seekers ended up fighting. As if even that much of a Name wouldn't draw their attention on you. The Horror he is referring to was Named Cinder and was a corrupted fire elemental. According to the Seekers, when I met them long ago, it was destroyed along with the cultists known as the Blue Flame that considered it their patron.*

—Tirein the Mapmaker

*Nicknames, as long as you do not over use them, are a rather safe way to refer to a particular Horror. Better than using their real Name, anyway, if they have one.*

—Quinn Agair

*I find it curious that I've become a voice of reason. Now that's a scary thought, isn't it?*

—Quinn

*Terrifying.*

—Tirein

In the aftermath of the Blue Flame's defeat, the Seekers almost unraveled. I think Prospero considered himself responsible for all of us, perhaps because of a promise he made you and the others that none of you are telling me about? He took Jerrold's death the hardest, blaming himself for ever agreeing to come to Parlainth in the first place. I reminded him that Jerrold understood the dangers of Parlainth. Better than the rest of us, I think, aside from K'taam. And he was still willing to stay, despite that danger. I reminded him that had it not been for us, including Jerrold and Max, many more would have died by the Blue Flame's hands. We've done a surprising amount of good since our arrival, even in Haven.

Reimann, Suron, and K'taam were not far from coming to blows over the whole incident. Part of it is their anger over Jerrold's death, but only part. You know Reimann's view of liars and I'm not sure Suron has ever trusted K'taam. While I agree that K'taam's methods are at times questionable, I don't doubt that he has ever tried to be anything other than helpful to us. Of all of us that arrived in Parlainth, I know he was closest to Jerrold and grieves for him. However, as a son of Haven, K'taam holds a certain cold practicality that the rest of us lack. I hope it's something I never attain. I have no doubts that he acted in the manner that he thought was best for us all. Locklin had already sided with K'taam's and after my explanation, Reimann was willing to forgive him for Jerrold's death, though not the lie. I don't think Suron was convinced and only agreed to pacify me, but I'll take what I can get.

To be honest, I didn't realize that I had been responsible for the resolution at the time. It was only the morning after that Locklin came to me. "Where would we be without our Troubadour," he asked me. "Home now, with dry shoes, I'd wager," was my reply, figuring it would make him laugh. The laugh of a windling is generally a good way to start the morning. Instead, he smiled, and perched upon my shoulder. "Probably, my friend. Probably."

I've never had the notion that Troubadours can be the conscience of our peoples more clearly illustrated for me than during that time. For a moment, let's ignore the theory that we as Troubadours are the embodiment, the very soul of society. There are far too many people that would be insulted by my attire and its current state if that were entirely true. While I'd always understood the theory behind it, I'd





never been able to point out specific instances of how Troubadours alone could claim such things, particularly myself.

Grief, despair, and misunderstandings can tear us apart just as easily as cruel magics and blades, given half a chance. If, when acting upon our conscience, Troubadours are the best warriors against such things, then I'm thankful you taught me to be one.

## THE FRAGILITY OF HOPE AND FREEDOM

I'm writing you from the road to Throal today. Zoahr has chosen to remain in Parlainth, thinking that we will not find enough Horrors to fight under the contract of the Dwarf Kingdom. I hope she keeps herself alive long enough for us to return. It was quite a debate, too, on whether the good we were doing in Parlainth was worth the price we were paying for it. I must admit it was hard to see at times; the city is so overrun with Horrors that it looks like no headway is being made at all. Haven is forced to be a hard city by its surroundings and I think that only lends strength to the Horrors it manages somehow to keep out. While it's true part of me wished to stay with Zoahr and fight the enemies we have been beating our heads against for so long, I am very glad to be on the road away from that place again.

I think Parlainth was the wrong place for me, anyway. All that are there are jaded adventurers, or become so after a few short weeks, sometimes even days. The Adepts that roam the dark paths of that lost city already know the need for legends and are looking to carve their own, like we were. Those that are willing to listen to us are already on the proper path and those that won't have hearts too hard for me to persuade, at least with my current understanding of the ways of things.

I'm hoping it's for the best, regardless. We've managed to make a Name for ourselves and we're now going to see if there isn't a more active role that can be taken to better the lives of the peoples of Barsaive. Throal seems to be the place for just such activities. Sadly, the number of new tales I've heard in Parlainth is barely double to those I've written myself about the exploits of my companions, or the exploits of those

we've met. Our land still seems to be in need of those willing to go out and inspire not just by word and tale alone, but by action and deed. Like you, father, and your companions, we're going to make a difference in this world.

"So long as there are those who were willing to fight and lay down their lives, if necessary, to make the world a better place for those who come after them, there will be legends. So long as there are those whose hearts can be stirred by the words of a Troubadour, then those legends will never die."

*When I asked Magistrate Valishea of this quote, she said that it had been something passed down to her as a Troubadour of her kaer. It is attributed to the Passion Mynbruje, speaking to those first Adepts that stole the secrets of the Disciplines from the Passions themselves.*

— Blert Syrtis

You told me that, remember? I intend to be both Troubadour and legend.

## GAME INFORMATION

### Sojourner Troubadour

The view of the Troubadour as more adventurers than entertainers, courtiers, and fonts of wisdom was not a view held by Fenris alone, but rather a small renaissance amongst the Troubadours emerging from their Kaers to find the world in the condition it was. Their numbers are significant, but as Blert points out, they are usually off adventuring and generally not easy to locate. However, finding a master willing to teach this particular path shouldn't be that difficult.

Any Adept following this path of the Troubadour may, but is not required to, make the following talent substitutions: At Sixth Circle, replace Haggle with Avoid Blow and at Eighth Circle, replace Graceful Exit with Lion Heart.



## LET ME TELL YOU A TALE

*The following is a "story about a storyteller." The storyteller himself has asked to remain anonymous, so that the story itself might rise to its fullest potential.*

— Maxes Roan, Troubadour, Historian

## ON BECOMING A STORYTELLER

As long as I can remember, stories have been more than words to me. They have been what is real, what is true. When I was young, this belief was unproven, more of an emotion than a practiced philosophy. It was sustained mostly by a feeling that my own life only made sense in that it evolved as a story of its own. It was only when I chanced to meet a Troubadour in Throal that my belief crystalized. When listening to that storyteller, I was instantly a part of not only the audience, but the story, as well. At that moment, the story was more real than anything else in Barsaive and for many years since, I have gladly pursued the truth of the story.

It was somewhere near the center of the Grand Bazaar of Throal where I noticed, among all the tumult of movement and talk, what appeared to be an orderly group of Name-givers who were deeply absorbed in something seemingly invisible and I felt drawn towards them. The not inconsiderable group of people, so absorbed that they did not notice my arrival, were listening intently to an ork speaking in a low, clear voice. He had features of a cast so old that it seemed beyond the measure of antiquity. His skin was like ancient parchment, covered with innumerable creases and lines as of sensitive writing describing a

long record of complex experience of life, its hurt, injury, conflict, and, perhaps even most demanding, the pull of its pleasures. It was the face, indeed, of someone who had made his final peace with chance and circumstance and so could speak without impediment or interruption, because the words that came to him were not so much his own as those of finalities and necessities of life speaking through him.

I could not follow the words of the storyteller exactly because of my inadequate knowledge of his tongue, but from him the language of the orks sounded like an ancient one, in keeping with the primordial nature of his function as a storyteller. I understood just enough to be held entirely in that "Once upon a time" atmosphere where the story transforms into a timeless now, wherein past and future are instantaneous. I was able to follow the tale less through words, but more through gestures and the expressions on the faces of the rest of the audience, for whom the world of the Grand Bazaar was utterly abolished.

*I know the ork of whom the author speaks. Seek him in the Bazaar of Throal, and be willing to give a few hours of your life. I promise it will be an enriching experience.*

— Breabus T'lon

After the telling was completed, I remained after all others had left. I was not concerned that many of the shops of the Bazaar were closing for the evening; instead I felt that departure would be an offense to the storyteller and the other listeners. I attempted to convey to the ork the dream that he had awakened, but I found myself faltering, fumbling over words. I did not ask to accompany him, nor did he ask for my company, but when he journeyed forth from Throal I traveled with him so that I could listen to his tales and learn the wonders he had to teach. As we walked through Bartertown, the sun set on the worlds we had left behind us, and the ork asked me to tell him what I had heard when he spoke.

When I finished my response, which I recognize now was my first story that spoke the truth, he asked me to become his apprentice.

## ON WEAVING A STORY

A storyteller is a performer. Just as a musician must carefully tune his instrument, so must a storyteller prepare his tales for the telling. Some Troubadours prefer to allow their magic and the moment to govern the way they weave a story; they know the high points they wish to cover, but the path they take to get there varies greatly with the mood of the audience. I have found, however, that by spending time in preparation, learning every nuance of the narrative and readying turns of phrase, the Troubadour can guide the audience's mood rather than be led by it. We use our stories to develop a relationship with the audience. We can see and, in fact, communicate constantly with our audience during a storytelling performance. A good storyteller will acknowledge and adapt to the audience's feedback, but a true Troubadour will have a strong hand in what those reactions have been.

The methods a Troubadour chooses for telling a story depend greatly on the story itself. The first step is examining the tale and deciding what purpose one intends it to have. The methods of comedic storytelling are different than those for tragic, though each can have elements of the other. We determine whether a sequence of events is of prime importance, or whether one or more characters are our central element. Once we know what it is we wish to achieve, we can go about making sure that it happens.







A story's introduction is crucial. A Troubadour has only the first scant minutes of a tale to draw the audience in. If they fail, then whatever end the storyteller is reaching for will be all the more difficult to achieve. The dramatic and the mysterious can gain attention during the beginning of a tale, but the introduction should neither overpower nor obscure the intent of the story.

While simple narration is the most commonly employed tool of the storyteller, it is best used when the plot of a story is simple, or has many familiar elements. As the tale journeys further from what the audience knows, then emphasis, pause, and repetition become more and more. You've all seen the joy of a crowd singing a song that they all know and love. A good storyteller can evoke the same feelings by drawing their listeners into participating in the story itself.

When telling a story, one must be sincere, selling the story as a merchant pushes his wares to feed his family. It's not enough to say something is sad, a good storyteller will feel sad about it! A Troubadour must believe in the power of his story with his whole heart and then his enthusiasm will carry itself into the audience. But, passion for the story is not enough. The storyteller must use all of his talents to ensure that he keeps the audience's attention.

The visual aspect of storytelling is as important as the vocal. Of course, storytelling requires control of one's voice, but there's much more to it than that. The body language of the storyteller can be as much a part of the story as everything else. Knowing when, and how, to directly meet the eyes of one of the audience is vital, as is choosing how to use gestures to bring your tale alive. Objects, be they works of a painter to illustrate your tale, or items you use to emphasize a point — like brandishing a sword as you pantomime the thrust of a hero vanquishing a great foe — can be a vital part of effective storytelling.

*Or a comical one to a trained eye.*

— Sabex Whiteclaw

In the end, a storyteller wants his message to come through. If the audience doesn't get the point of a parable, laugh at a joke, or feel sadness at a tragedy then the storyteller has failed. If a story is trying to convey a message, then that message must be struck with fiery intensity. And when a tale is done, a Troubadour with a sense of the dramatic will exit with a flourish, leaving the audience with their thoughts lingering on the point that was just made.

## ON PRESERVING KNOWLEDGE

A storyteller is not merely a performer, but also a teacher. The legends of Barsaive, its heroes, their tribulations, and the lessons that can be drawn from them are kept alive by the telling of stories. Stories continue beyond the end of the war and the life of the warrior. They outlive the roar of fire cannons and the ringing of steel. They survive the depravations of the Scourge. It is stories that guide our progeny, nurturing them with the values and principles that they will need to become independent thinkers.

The Great Library of Throal is all well and good if you're in Throal, but on the plains of Barsaive, it's far more common for the elders to pass on their knowledge through story. There are two ways to make a person remember something: by weaving the memory with pleasure or by weaving it with pain. While there are some tribes in the



Servos that punctuate important lessons with pain, most Barsaivans choose to use a more pleasant method. Storytelling makes education attractive to the learner. Attractive knowledge gains the student and keeps him. It enlarges his memory and his mind, whereas dry knowledge cultivates the memory at the expense of the mind. Learning can be memorable and simplified by means of a well-told story. Topics that seem dry can be made to come alive.

Because these stories are often not written, but remembered by the storytellers and the audience, the story can change slightly with each retelling. This is not a bad thing. These stories become more fluid, more dynamic, and more alive than those that have been set in a particular telling through writing.

Stories are a way in which Name-givers make sense of the world in which they live. The story itself is a primary form of conveying the values and traditions of a culture. Hence, the stories of the orks of Cara Fahd are decidedly different than the stories of the elves of Blood Wood, but each are an essential means of transmitting the knowledge and wisdom of the old to the young.

Even if the story is about an event or person that never truly existed, the story can tell the audience about something that is true. The listeners can tell the truth of a story by how it makes them feel. Stories that convey the truth take the audience on a journey in their minds and with their feelings. Stories help convey possibilities, they tell of heights that might be reached. When an audience hears a story that is true, they keep it with them. It becomes a part of who they are and, in part, they become a part of the story.



## WHISPERS

*There are few things within the Great Library of Throal that I have felt the need to add the following statement to, but this small chapter is one: Reader beware.*

*The following view of what it is to be a Troubadour was added to this book after its creation by unknown agents. It is a particularly caustic and bitter view of what it is to be a Troubadour and disturbing in the message it portrays. Despite this fact, at its heart is a truth that simply cannot be ignored.*

*In the interest of objectivity and the willingness to show all views, we have left this writing intact as part of this tome. I urge the reader to look past the cynicism and disruptive message and look for a more constructive way to interpret the gifts of the Troubadour the writer tries to convey.*

*To those angered by the misdirection and inflammatory comments of the writer, we offer our apologies and note that these views are not endorsed by the Throalic government.*

— Merrox

*To those reading this document, I give you greetings. Who am I? Let's just say that I am a scholar concerned with presenting to you, the reader, all aspects of the story. The scholars of Throal seem to enjoy documenting what it is to be a Name-giver within the small area of Barsaive and how the Adepts of this quaint locale view their world. With this tome, they were aiming to broaden the original view of the Disciplines that they had presented years ago, so that a view closer to the truth would be preserved for the future peoples of Barsaive. An admirable goal, by all accounts.*

*Despite that, however, they are not being entirely truthful in their treatment of the Disciplines. I have, therefore, taken it upon myself to present to you the view of the Troubadour that I am most familiar with. The words that follow are the words of a Name-giver I know well and whose Name, along with my own, I will withhold for many reasons. You need not believe me when I say that there is much of this truth you seek in his words. Your heart will know, regardless of what your mind may be able to accept.*

*It has been whispered that the Troubadour was the gift of the Passion we know as Vestrial. Truth? I leave it to you, the reader, to decide.*

— A Concerned Citizen



## THE LIE THAT IS TRUTH

Truth. A simple word and a simple concept. To hear society explain it, it would seem to be desire of every Adept, the goal of every scholar, and the heart of every matter. It is described as both horrible and beautiful, cruel and kind, a blessing and a curse. Supposedly there exists a truth for every tale, situation, or experience that Name-givers have ever encountered. Surely, if one were to encounter the truth, it would have a certain feel to it, a certain purity that would allow us to identify it as unaltered truth. Right?

Let's have a small taste and see if there is truth to that theory. Contemplate the following:

Eleniar Messias was the only scholar of this Age who, through the discovery of documents that survived the previous Age, knew of the coming of the Horrors and gave his life in discovering as much as he could to save the world from such a tragedy again. Or, Eleniar Messias was sacrificed so that his blood could be used to cement the foundations of an Empire whose power was based on a rebellion against the previous Age and whose insight into ancient knowledge allowed them to rally the young and naive races around them under the banner of protection.

As you read those, does one ring true to you? If so, are you sure it is not just your knowledge of Barsaivan history that speaks for you? Or is it possibly your hatred of Thera that makes you believe the other could be possible? Either way, neither is entirely true.

Truth is a malleable thing. Theoretically, there exists at the core of any situation this truth everyone seems to seek, but if there is such a thing, it is beyond the grasp of Name-givers. Yes, even to those born from fire, though they'd say anything to convince you otherwise. To every situation, there are as many versions of the truth as there are Name-givers to tell it. Often more, since what a Name-giver chooses to remember or to say will change with each audience they present it to.

I can hear some of the scholars screaming now about their blessed histories. Who do you think wrote those histories? Whoever was responsible, I can tell you that one or more Troubadours had a hand in the final version and there are none more adept at shaping the truth than Troubadours.

Illusionists dream of being able to do what Troubadours do with an off-handed phrase. Weaponsmiths aspire to be able to shape metal to their desire like Troubadours smith words. There isn't a single Discipline that can cut deeper or more viciously than the Troubadour with a song, not one that could make a nation tremble and fall like a Troubadour with whispered phrases.

Perhaps you still are not convinced. I, too, once clung to the notion of truth as inviolate. After all, Mynbruje is the Passion of truth! Everyone knows that Mad Passions are easily recognized. It would be disastrous to think that an entire people could be fooled into following one, would you not agree? What could possibly free them of such tainted notions?

Consider this, then. Three elves, for the love of their society and their Queen, risked everything to find the lost gift known as the Everliving Flower. Finally successful in their endeavor, they brought it back to their Queen, showing that elf and blood elf still shared one blood, one society, one throne. Or, perhaps, a motley group of Adepts were willing to risk their lives to discover this artifact for the courts of Blood Wood. However, since the court saw them as little more than mercenaries and hardly the inspiring rescuers needed to attempt to





heal the vast rifts in elf society, their tale was lost under the deluge of loyal Troubadours willing to spin a different skein. I know which truth Blood Wood likes. It was composed by one of their best.

## THE NEED FOR FICTION

If Troubadours are nothing but liars, why would they even exist? Naïveté, I find, is the trait in us that amuses me most. How much better the world would be if the truth was known to all!

Were we to have the truth we so desperately seek, we would be destroyed by its absolutes. Without the stories and songs so heavily crafted by the Troubadours of this Age and others, what hope would you have? Do you still truly believe that anything less than the recession of magic can rid us of the Horrors? That brave adventurers could eventually cleanse our land of all traces of the Scourge and reclaim this world for Name-givers alone? If so, you and your rulers should kiss the feet of the Troubadour that sold you on that story. Of course we can succeed where an empire and the Passions themselves have failed! Just look at Vagsothia for your inspiration.

The best lie of all is hope. Hope lets us believe that there will be more than there can ever possibly be to this world. That we can all live in peace, for example. That the Horrors can be driven out before the might of our legends. That your kingdom or your empire can save you from those that do not believe as you do. That your government will never fail, never become corrupt. That the Passions can save us. Without the belief that these things could be true, we would be reduced to the animals we know we are and be bent on nothing but our own survival.

Opinion is the truth of the people and the true medium of a Troubadour. We write, we sing, and we tell tales to manipulate and shape the opinions, views, and truths that society lives by. We are the blood of civilization and the soul of a society. If you wish to know the state of a people, look to their fiction and see what lies beneath.

We are the power, but we are only as powerful as you let us be. Do not blame me for the darkness you find in your heart. All I have done is shown you what lies there. Many think they wish to see the truth and it is our task to give you what you wish to hear.

This, then, is the true path of the Troubadour.

*Now that you have read what this Adept has to say, I ask that you consider one more thing. If you have been swayed by the words of this Troubadour at all, or if it has caused you to question what you believe, stop and think upon what you know and what your heart tells you. While truth is, sadly, at times as malleable as this Adept claims, it has ever been the way of the world since Ages past. Hope is not a lie; it is a belief. Our ability to reason and to believe is what separates us from the animals this one equates us to and it should not be lightly cast aside. In all Name-givers there exists an ability to weigh right and wrong. Consult your heart and your mind and decide for yourself whether your beliefs should be kept or replaced. Then remember that changing the beliefs of another is a great responsibility, whether you chose to accept accountability for it or not. No Troubadour worthy of the name would undertake such a thing lightly, or without, I hope, just cause.*

—Yassal



## GAME INFORMATION

In actuality, this chapter was removed from the final tome on three separate occasions. Despite the best efforts of the Eye of Throal, the Arm of Throal, and the scholars of the Great Library to catch the ones responsible, no one could be found entering or leaving the library, nor was anyone seen physically doctoring the book. Yet, after a week of being on the shelves, invariably the chapter would show up again. Rather than continue to try and remove it, the tome was studied to make sure that the words of this chapter contained no magical methods for corrupting the reader. Once as satisfied as they could be, several agents of the Eye were assigned to monitor the book's pattern and make sure it did not develop anything more sinister than sedition and the chapter remained as part of the completed tome with warning from Merrox. It has inspired a greater bounty on the head of Ruanen, who many believe is the responsible party.

Not all Troubadours that follow this path are necessarily destructive and evil. Some believe that inspiring others and leaving better testaments to those that honestly tried to make a difference in their world is a worthy enough goal to bend the truth. Some believe that the ability to deceive others is all that keeps their people safe from the other power-hungry Name-givers of the world, like Iopos or Thera. Still others think that the masses will remain ignorant and that the only way to get them to do what needs to be done is by sugar-coating the means to achieve the ends. Regardless of their personal beliefs, it isn't hard to find a Troubadour that follows this path if one looks.



## CHAPTER SIX MOUNTEBANK







*Part Illusionist, part Thief, part Troubadour, all liar. And like an infection of Dread Iotas, the Mountebank Discipline is spreading across Barsaive. These are the words of Henri Therriot, the Mountebank crewmember of the Earthdawn who brought the Discipline to Barsaive.*

— Ela Pono

Some people say it's all about the silver, but they're missing the point. Silver is only a means to an end. Power. Prestige. Luxury. That's why we do what we do. And nobody's better at snatching it all up than the Mountebank. Swordmasters have some of the right ideas, but even the Gallant are too interested in their blades. Thieves are close, but they're too preoccupied with being alone, not to mention they usually place far too much importance on physical goods. Some Troubadours almost hit the mark, but while they can make people dance to their tune, they're by and large missing that essential larcenous heart.

Were I not beyond the mere seeking of silver, there's no way I would tell you about my Discipline. If it were coin I was seeking, it would be better for me if you didn't know. But now, it's to my advantage if Barsaive knows of the Mountebank. I wouldn't want any of my students threatening my position, and if this tale makes them have to work a little bit harder, so be it. They'll be better for it.

## CHOOSING TO MANIPULATE

I was born into the peasantry of Arancia. The politics of the province soared far above my lot in life, which, as far as I can tell, was to serve the nobles. It shouldn't surprise you to know that I decided that wasn't the life for me. Gambling was the easiest way to earn a quick pinch of silver, easier still if you were of a conscience to not find holding all of the best cards for yourself to be distasteful. There are a thousand different ways to gamble and a thousand more ways to cheat at every game.

It was a troll who took me under his wing. Does that surprise you? The trolls in Barsaive are so shaped by the crystal raiders. Even the lowland trolls define themselves by what is different between them and their highland cousins, rather than by their own standards. In Arancia, there are no trollmoots. Trolls are a part of city, or village, life, just as any other Name-giver. So in Arancia, my friends, there are not only troll Mountebanks, but also troll Thieves.

A knight in the service of a minor lord had scarred me for no reason more than that I had shown too much interest in the lady of his choice. At the time, there was no hope of me defeating him in a duel, so I sought my revenge at cards. My only concern was taking him for everything I could, at any cost. I used every trick at my disposal and was defeated at every turn— not by the knight, but by this troll who was playing, as well. As the night wore on, the opponent at the center of my thoughts changed. It was no longer the knight. True, he was destroyed by the battle of wits taking place at the table, but the true challenge before me was the troll. I played as well as I could have, but I was bested. But in me the troll saw a spark. A combination of desperation and ingenuity, a willingness to lie, cheat, and steal to achieve my goals. By morning, he was my master and I his apprentice.

## A LIFE IN MOTION

Barsaive lacks many of the perks of civilization possessed by the rich provinces of Thera. I miss the airship traffic between Arancia, Talea, Creana, and the Great City of Thera itself. The games with the wealthy that traveled on those airships are without match. Of course, I

haven't yet had the opportunity to match wits against elves in the Blood Queen's court, so perhaps I will yet recant. But it was on Thera airships that I learned the Discipline of the Mountebank and airships will always be my love.

I struck out on my own in Talea, where I passed myself off as an Arancian noble who had lost his lands due to the scheming of my peers. Talea is no stranger to the weave of power among the gentry, so they were eager to believe my tale. There was a keep that was thought to hold little value by the local nobles, so I offered a duke a contract promising thousands of pieces of Arancian silver for both it and just over a hundred pieces of Talean gold to cover my expenses until my fortune arrived. I then sold the keep to a buyer I had waiting - for what would have been a loss, if I'd ever intended to pay the duke. Much richer than when I arrived in Talea, I left for Creana.

I suppose it's worth mentioning that the duke did send somebody after me. What I had done could be politically embarrassing, so he couldn't have a loose end like me running around. The team he sent was quite skilled and they did find me. However, I convinced my captors if word of how I deceived the duke got out, then confidence in him would be shattered and his position in Talean society would fall. I insisted that I would keep the duke's confidence and my silence could be bought for a mere thousand silver more. And as a Mountebank is skilled in getting people to do as he desires, they not only freed me, but also returned to their duke substantially poorer.

*Not everybody that's after you will be so easily deterred.*

— A friend from Marac

Creana treated me well. I was able to get by there for a number of years before the siren song of vast wealth called to my ambitions once more. This time I chose a moneylender as the target of my attentions. I arranged for a Thief to pick his pocket, which in turn allowed me to be the hero that recovered his purse, which naturally won the moneylender's good graces. Speaking in confidence with the moneylender, I told him of a magic item I had acquired in Indrisa, an alchemical box that could transform sand into gold.

I had of course had commissioned a handsome mahogany box to suit my purposes, enchanted with Named Illusionist spells to hide its contents. This did three things: Made it inherently valuable, made it verifiably magical, and concealed the fact that it did no alchemical transformation. I demonstrated its workings to the moneylender, inserting a gold coin into one slot, and poured a handful of sand into a funnel on the box's top. As I adjusted several knobs, I explained that the process took six hours, and then entertained my guest for the intervening period. After the time had passed, we returned to the box, and I turned another pair of knobs. Dutifully, the box produced a pair of identical gold coins. I gave the moneylender both of them and allowed him to perform whatever tests he would like to see that the new coin was in fact gold. Of course, the second coin had been concealed in the box before the test and the sand now took its place. The moneylender purchased the box from me for nearly the price of a drakkar. At the time, I believed I had precisely six hours to flee from Creana. As it turned out, the moneylender attempted to make the box work for weeks before discovering the truth of the matter. By that time, I was already busy in the Great City of Thera itself.



## THE PILLARS OF ORICHALCUM

While I believe the mahogany box earned me the most silver, selling the rights to draw orichalcum from the Pillars of the Great City of Thera is certainly what earned me the most prestige and, I might add, the enmity of the Theran government. As you may or may not know, constant warfare is a strain on Theran coffers. Behemoths and kilas require extraordinary resources to construct and maintain. Hence, funding the military might of Thera is a common topic of discussion and more than once the sale of orichalcum rises to the surface. Thera has a vast sum tied up in three pillars of solid orichalcum that, while quite decorative, serve no real purpose. So, the sale of this magical element to any of the various powerful groups of magicians in Thera is, in certain circles, quite desirable.

The bureaucracy of Thera is vast, so it was not difficult to “appoint” myself the Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Artifices and Iconography. I sent letters with my “official seal” to representatives of five magical colleges, inviting them to meet with me to discuss a potential contract with the government. When meeting with them, I revealed that the government had indeed determined that it would sell the pillars of orichalcum, stressing that since this could cause quite a stir, they should remain quiet about it.

For a Mountebank, the joys of a bureaucracy are the fees. I knew that my chances of collecting the entire sum for the sale of the pillars were almost nonexistent, but for months I collected processing fees from these five colleges as they bid for rights of ownership. When the

*Earthdawn* arrived in Thera, I knew it was time to bring the game to a close. I secured my place on the crew and then chose the most gullible of the colleges. I completed the sale of the Pillars and collected a handsome down payment the same day that the *Earthdawn* departed the Great City of Thera.

## THE EARTHDAWN AND BARSATIVE

I’ve traveled around the world on the *Earthdawn* and, as an elf, I’m one of the most experienced of her crew. I’ve seen the best and the worst that this world has to offer. For the time being, I’m offering my services to the Great Houses of Throal and bringing the Mountebank to Barsaive. I like to consider that I’m not dissimilar to other retired gentleman thieves. Gone are my days of deception for coin, now I truly play the game of kings.

*It is pleasing that Henri is willing to put his considerable Talents to work for the good of others, even if his motives are ultimately self-serving.*  
— Gwai-fa

I’d tell you a tale of what I’ve done recently, but that would only make life more difficult to me. What I will say is that I’ve found many fine students of the Discipline during the little more than a year that I’ve been here. As common wisdom suggests, a fool and his money are soon parted. And now there are Mountebanks, ready to take advantage of that truth.





## TENTH CIRCLE

**Recovery Test:** The Mountebank gains 1 additional Recovery Test per day.

**Social Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Social Defense by 1.

**The Shut Out:** The Mountebank may give a short speech that allows them to spend a point of Karma on an Intimidation Test (see ED2, pgs. 332-333)

### Talents

Diplomacy

Slough Blame (D)

## ELEVENTH CIRCLE

**Spell Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Spell Defense by 2.

### Talents

Detect Falsehood (D)

Detect Weapon

## TWELFTH CIRCLE

The Mountebank may spend a point of Karma on any interaction test.

### Talents

Safe Thought

Puppeteer (D)

## THIRTEENTH CIRCLE

**Karma:** Increase the Mountebank's Maximum Karma Points by 25.

**Physical Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Physical Defense by 1.

**The Sting:** The heart of the Mountebank's art is being able to manipulate others. The Sting allows the Mountebank to orchestrate social situations on a grand scale. The Mountebank may use The Sting to spend a Karma Point on another character's social action. While the most common use of this allows the Mountebank to add his Karma die to another character's social test result, the Mountebank may also choose to subtract his Karma die from the social test performed by another character.

### Talents

Defense

Detect Influence (D)

## FOURTEENTH CIRCLE

**Social Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Social Defense by 2.

**Spell Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Spell Defense by 1.

### Talents

Exit Portal (D)

Ghost Speak

## FIFTEENTH CIRCLE

**Physical Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Physical Defense by 2.

**Spell Defense:** Increase the Mountebank's Spell Defense by 1.

### Talents

Second Chance

Puppet Master (D)

## NEW TALENTS

### Convincing Speech

**Step:** Rank + Charisma Step

**Action:** Sustained

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** None

The Convincing Speech talent uses a character's powerful voice to arouse an audience to a basic emotion such as fear, love, hate, happiness, anger, or joy. The audience directs the basic emotion at the subject of the speech: If the character talks about a king, the audience feels the emotion about the king.

The character makes a Convincing Speech Test against the highest Social Defense in the audience. The success level determines how many members of the audience the character affects. An Average success indicates that one-quarter of the audience is affected by the speech. A Good success affects half the audience, an Excellent success affects three-quarters, and an Extraordinary success means that the entire audience is affected by the speech.

The effects of the speech last a number of days equal to the character's rank in Convincing Speech. During that time, affected characters are more susceptible to suggestions related to the emotion of the speech. Characters making such suggestions add 2 steps to any Interaction Tests (see ED2, pg. 332). Characters making suggestions counter to the Convincing Speech suffer -2 steps to Interaction Tests.

If a character fails a Convincing Speech Test, the crowd is not swayed by the speaker's words and the character may not use Convincing Speech against members of that crowd for seven days. Consecutive uses of the Convincing Speech Talent do not have a cumulative effect.

### Distraction

**Step:** Rank + Charisma Step

**Action:** Yes

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** 1

The Distraction talent causes any item thrown to emit lights and sound to draw a target's attention away from the Mountebank. The character makes a Distraction Test against the target's Social Defense or, in the case of a group, the highest Social Defense in the group, +1 for each additional target. If successful, the target watches the distraction for a number of rounds equal to the Mountebank's Distraction rank. This reduces the target's Perception step to notice anything else by the Mountebank's Distraction rank. Any direct action taken against the target during this time instantly negates the effect, but Interaction Tests may be made against the target during this time without causing the effect to end. The item causing the Distraction may be thrown up to 30 yards, but all targets affected by the Distraction must be able to see it once it lands. A character cannot suffer the effects of more than one Distraction at a time. Once the duration of the Distraction completes, the targets are aware that they were under the effects of a talent.

### Exit Portal

**Step:** Rank + Willpower Step

**Action:** Yes

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** 4

Exit Portal allows a Mountebank to enter or escape from any prison or room, an invaluable asset for one who flirts so frequently with





the law. By placing his hand against a door or wall that he wishes to bypass, the Mountebank makes an Exit Portal Test versus the Spell Defense of the wall (or the Effect Test of any wards placed on the door or wall). On a Good success or better, the Mountebank creates a portal into astral space, and may step through to get to the other side of the door or wall. On an Excellent success, the Mountebank's Exit Portal use will not trigger any magical alarms that may have been protecting the wall. The maximum thickness that the Exit Portal may allow passage through is a number of feet equal to the test result.

#### False Potion

**Step:** Rank + Willpower Step

**Action:** Yes

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** 1

The False Potion talent allows the character to use one of his available Recovery Tests to create a potion used for curing the symptoms of illness or the pain of injury. The Mountebank uses an action and spends the Strain to mix a drop of his blood with at least 8 ounces of water in a cup, vial, or flask. The mixture instantly becomes a False Potion. When someone drinks a False Potion, the Mountebank makes a False Potion Test against the Toughness step of the character who drank the potion. If successful, the penalty caused by wounds or illness is reduced by 1 step for 24 hours. A Good success reduces the penalty by 2 steps, an Excellent success by 3 steps, and an Extraordinary success by 4 steps. A character can only benefit from one False Potion at a time and the Mountebank may only have a number of False Potions readied equal to his rank in False Potion. A False Potion retains its magical ability for one week after it is created. The Mountebank may choose the color of the False Potion when it is created. False potions are normally sold for 50 silver pieces, unless the Mountebank can bilk a mark out of more for it.

#### Fool's Gold

**Step:** Rank + Willpower Step

**Action:** Yes

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** 1

The Fool's Gold talent allows the Mountebank to create visual and aromatic illusions on top of other objects. The illusions may be no larger than the size of a troll, they can only have visual, taste, and smell components, and they must conform to the shape of the items they are enveloping. The Mountebank makes a Fool's Gold Test and the result is the Difficulty Number to see through the illusion. To maintain an illusion created with the Fool's Gold talent, the Mountebank must have a line of sight to the illusion. Un-maintained illusions will fade after a number of minutes equal to the Mountebank's step in Fool's Gold. Illusions created by Fool's Gold cannot directly cause damage, although their effects may indirectly be quite harmful (making a rotted rope appear whole, changing the words of a contract, or causing a rock to look like a nugget of gold).

#### Puppeteer

**Step:** Rank + Willpower

**Action:** Yes

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** 1

The Puppeteer Talent allows the Mountebank to telepathically control the movements of another character's body. The Mountebank makes a Puppeteer Test against the character's Social Defense; if the test



is successful the Mountebank dictates all movements of the target's body and can even force the target to use any talent based on Strength or Dexterity. Any talents a character uses while under the influence of the Puppet Master talent are at -4 steps. However, the target is still in control of his thoughts and his speech. The duration of the control is a number of rounds equal to the Puppeteer talent rank. If the victim wishes to break free of control, he must make a Willpower Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the Mountebank's Puppeteer step. This Willpower Test may be attempted every round. Puppeteer has a range of 110 yards. The target is aware of the fact that he is being controlled and may once per round attempt to make a Perception Test against the Spell Defense of the Mountebank to determine who is controlling him. The Mountebank must maintain line of sight with the target, or the effects of this power end.

#### Puppet Master

**Step:** Rank + Willpower Step

**Action:** Yes

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** 3

The Puppet Master talent allows the Mountebank to control the thoughts of another character. The Mountebank makes a Puppet Master Test against the Social Defense of the target and if the test succeeds, the target will carry out orders wholeheartedly. Actions that would be harmful to the character or his loved ones allow him to make a Willpower Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the Mountebank's Puppet Master step. Any talents a character uses while under the influence of the Puppet Master talent are at -4 steps. The duration of the control is a number of minutes equal to the character's Puppet Master rank. If the target was not ordered to perform any actions that were against his nature, then he will not realize he was under the influence of the Puppet Master talent. Otherwise, the target will realize that his mind was controlled when the duration of the Talent has ended. Unlike Puppeteer, the Mountebank must vocalize his commands to a target under the sway of Puppet Master. Puppet Master has a range of 110 yards. The

Mountebank does not need to maintain line of sight for this talent to function, but the target must be able to hear the vocalized commands.







## AIR SAILOR TALENT KNACKS

### AERIAL STRIKE

**Talent:** Acrobatic Strike

**Rank:** 5

Aerial Strike is a knack that has been picked up mainly by Air Sailors who are able to fly. When flying, or using the Gliding Stride talent, an Air Sailor may spend 1 point of Strain to get a 2 step bonus to their Attack Test when using Acrobatic Strike.

### DETERMINED ASCENT

**Talent:** Gliding Stride

**Rank:** 7

The Determined Ascent knack allows an Air Sailor to push the limits of the Gliding Stride talent. Normally, an Air Sailor using Gliding Stride is limited to a height equal to 10 times the character's talent rank in feet. With the use of Determined Ascent, an Air Sailor may continue traveling upwards at his usual rate beyond this limit. This knack costs the Air Sailor 4 points of Strain for each round the Air Sailor exceeds the usual height limit of Gliding Stride.

### DOUBLE LEAP

**Talent:** Great Leap

**Rank:** 5

The Double Leap knack grants the Air Sailor the ability to make a mid-air Great Leap. The Adept may make a Great Leap Test while airborne at the cost of 3 Strain. As per the Great Leap rules, the combined movement of two Great Leaps is performed as a Full Movement and may not exceed the character's Full Movement. The combined vertical distance, though, may be up to the full jump distance, instead of one-half. The Air Sailor may use the higher of the two Great Leap Test results for their Physical Defense.

### ESCAPE

**Talent:** Air Dance

**Rank:** 4

The Escape knack can be used in place of Air Dance during combat initiative, if the user's sole purpose is to flee from the fight. The Escape knack may be used in the same round as any other action. Prior to the start of a combat round, the character must designate a target opponent. If the Air Dance Test equals at least twice the opponent's initiative, the character using this knack may spend 2 Strain to take an extra action to move a distance equal to his or her Combat Movement at the end of the round, or 3 Strain to take an extra action to move a distance equal to his or her Full Movement at the end of the round.

### EXPERT GUNNER

**Talent:** Missile Weapons

**Rank:** 8

An Air Sailor with the Expert Gunner knack is a master of firing ship-to-ship weapons such as fire cannons and ballista. Use of the Expert Gunner knack costs the Air Sailor 1 point of Strain, but allows the Air Sailor to fire at targets smaller than a ship without taking the usual 3 step Called Shot penalty to his Missile Weapons Test. (see *ED2C*, pg. 195)

### EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT

**Talent:** Air Sailing

**Rank:** 5

An Air Sailor can often do the work of several Name-givers with a Good success or better on their Air Sailing Test. No matter how capable

the Air Sailor is, however, the ship may still be shorthanded. After making an Air Sailing Test with a Good success or better, the Air Sailor may use this knack to do the work of additional rowers. The Air Sailor must announce how many additional rowers he is going to substitute for (beyond those granted by the result of the Air Sailing Test) and then takes 5 points of Strain for each rower he is substituting for. This Strain is applied all at once and may cause Wounds, although it will never cause a Knockdown.

### FLANK SPEED

**Talent:** Air Sailing

**Rank:** 9

The Flank Speed knack allows an Air Sailor captaining an airship to push his vessel beyond its usual limits, giving a bonus to either the ship's Maneuverability Rating or its Speed Rating. The captain makes an Air Sailing Test against the original value of the rating that he wishes to increase. If successful, the Air Sailor adds 4 to the chosen rating, representing his unusual ability to wring more power from the ship. If the test fails, the ship was not able to withstand the stress of the captain's demands and takes an immediate critical hit.

*The Freedom's Fire was in deep trouble. They just barely managed to avoid flying directly into the Horror Cloud that had swept in fast from the east, but the ghostly drakkars that had moved in ahead of the Horror Cloud were slowly taking their toll on the beleaguered galley. All eyes turned to the grim-faced captain of the ship, Arle Berke. "Faster, boys! Pour on the speed and we'll be out of this in no time!" The Freedom's Fire had already taken two critical hits, leaving it with a Speed Rating of 6. Arle made his Air Sailing Test against the ship's undamaged rating of 8, rolling a 13, for a success. The Freedom's Fire has a Speed Rating of 10 for the remainder of the ship combat turn.*

### FLUSTER

**Talent:** Taunt

**Rank:** 9

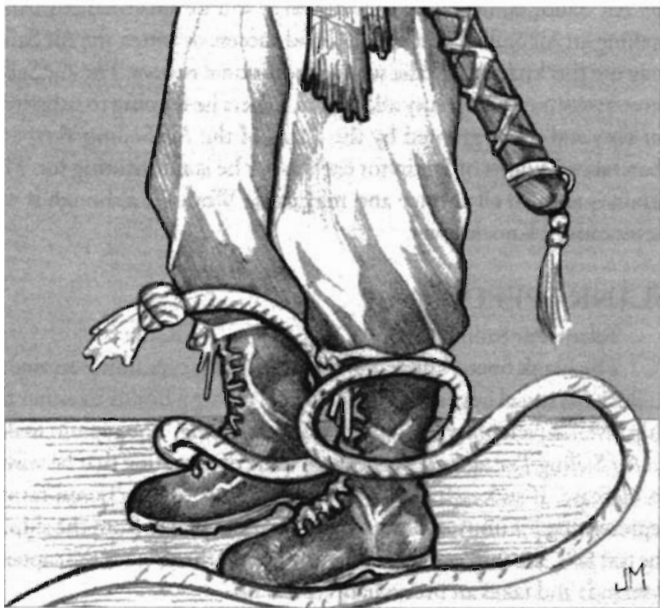
Use of the Fluster knack distracts a target by speaking words that strike a particular chord in his mind, inflicting upon him doubt and frustration. On an Excellent success or better with a Taunt Test against the target's Social Defense, the Air Sailor can spend 1 point of Strain to activate the Fluster knack. The target then cannot perform any tasks that require an Action for one round. For each additional round afterwards equal to the user's rank in Taunt, the target suffers from a -1 to all actions and movement is halved. If the target takes any damage from an attack within Fluster's duration, these effects are negated. Only one Fluster can affect a character at any time, and the effects cannot be combined with the normal effects of the Taunt Talent.

### INTERCEDE

**Talent:** Resist Taunt

**Rank:** 9

No Air Sailor would stand idle while one of his friends is being disparaged. Using the Intercede knack, an Air Sailor can attempt to stand up for someone who has just been targeted by an Interaction Test (such as a Taunt). The Air Sailor makes a Resist Taunt Test as if he were the target of the Interaction Test. If the Air Sailor succeeds, he has defended the target and the Interaction Test fails. If the Air Sailor's Resist Taunt Test fails, however, both the Air Sailor and the original target suffer the effects of the Interaction Test.



### ONE MORE CHANCE

**Talent:** Throwing Weapons

**Rank:** 8

After a failed Throwing Weapons Test, the Air Sailor may use an action and spend 2 points of Strain to cause the thrown weapon to fly back to his hands. This knack can only be used if the weapon missed the target. If the thrown weapon is more than 300 yards away, One More Chance does not work.

### RAPID DESCENT

**Talent:** Wind Catcher

**Rank:** 4

The Rapid Descent talent knack allows an Air Sailor to gain further control of the Wind Catcher talent. The user falls faster than normal, actually using the winds to speed his fall, and then brakes at the last moment. This allows the user to fall up to 200 yards per Combat Round, twice as fast as normal. This is especially useful in assaults, when air time means vulnerability to missile weapons. However this maneuver is risky. Instead of a 6-12 to achieve a safe fall, the needed range is increased to 8-14. Likewise, a result of 15 or more allows the character to direct his fall exactly as described in the Wind Catcher talent. This knack costs 1 Strain. If the character has both Rapid Descent and Wind Gliding (see below), these two knacks can be used together without additional penalty or strain.

### ROPE TRICK

**Talent:** Air Sailing

**Rank:** 6

The Rope Trick knack gives an Air Sailor a minor form of telekinesis over rope, born of endless practice with the rigging aboard airships. At the cost of 1 Strain, the Air Sailor may cause any rope within 20 yards to move at his command for 1 round. This rope manipulation may be used to untie knots, cause distractions, or entangle opponents. If Rope Trick is used to entangle, the Air Sailor must first get a Good success on an Air Sailing Test against the target's Physical Defense. The target resists with a Strength Test against a target number equal to the Air Sailor's Willpower step. If the target fails, he suffers a -1 step penalty to all Dexterity-based Tests. In order to keep the effect going, the Air

Sailor must continue expending Strain at the rate of 1 per round. If he stops, the ropes go limp and fall away. The captured target gets a new Strength Test every round as well.

### SHINING BLADE

**Talent:** Melee Weapons

**Rank:** 6

The Shining Blade knack may only be used in the daylight, with a weapon that has a polished surface, such as metal, stone, or the like. When the Shining Blade knack is used, the character makes a Melee Weapons Test against the target's Physical Defense that causes no Damage. On an Excellent success or better, the target is partially blinded by a flash of light reflected off the weapon and suffers from a penalty on all actions equal to -1 step per level of success (-2 for Excellent and -3 for Extraordinary) and can only move at one quarter of his Combat Movement or risk tripping or running into something. If the target attempts to move any faster, he must make a Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the Air Sailor's Melee Weapons Test, or suffer the effects of a Knockdown. The effects of the Shining Blade last for one round. Shining Blade has a range equal to a number of yards equal to the character's Melee Weapons talent rank and its effects may be avoided by any talent or spell as any other Melee Weapons attack (Avoid Blow, Parry, etc.). Skills cannot be used to avoid the effects.

### WATER WALKING

**Talent:** Air Dance

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack allows an Air Sailor to use Air Dance to cross small bodies of any liquid without leaving even a ripple. Using the Water Walking talent knack allows the character, by spending 2 additional points of Strain, to gain a round of Full Movement hovering an inch above the liquid. This talent knack applies to any liquid, even dangerous ones. The character must move a distance equal to his Combat Movement Rate while using this knack. He may not stand still.

### WIND BLAST

**Talent:** Tread Wind

**Rank:** 10

This talent knack allows a character to use the same effect that allows the winds to support him to knock opponents to the ground. This blast of wind extends for 3 yards around the character using it. Everyone within 3 yards must make a Knockdown Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the result of the Tread Wind Test. Failure means the character is knocked down. (see ED2, pg. 220). Using this talent knack costs 2 Strain.

### WIND GLIDING

**Talent:** Wind Catcher

**Rank:** 4

The Wind Gliding talent knack allows an Air Sailor to gain further control of the Wind Catcher talent. The user takes advantage of winds to glide great distances, allowing immense horizontal movement. This allows the user to move up to twice the distance fallen away from the normal drop site. However this maneuver is risky. Instead of a 6-12 to achieve a safe fall, the needed range is increased to 8-14. Likewise, a result of 15 is necessary to direct his fall as this talent knack allows. This knack costs 1 Strain. If the character has both Rapid Descent (see above) and Wind Gliding, these two knacks can be used together without additional penalty or Strain.





## BEASTMASTER TALENT KNACKS

### ANIMAL SENSE

**Talent:** Borrow Sense

**Rank:** 6

When the Animal Sense knack is used, the character develops an animal's 'sixth sense' to get a vague feel for a person's general intentions. To use this knack, the character spends 1 Strain and performs a Borrow Sense Test against another person's Social Defense. On a Good success or better, the character is able to get a rough idea of whether that person's intentions in their current situation are for good or for ill.

### ASPECT OF THE STATUE

**Talent:** Chameleon

**Rank:** 4

This talent knack allows a character, regardless of background, to use the Chameleon talent to look like a stone statue. The effect is so convincing that, with practice, the character can even make chips, cracks, and (at the user's option) mimic moss growing on his stone illusion. The Difficulty Number to detect this ruse is the result of the Chameleon Test. This talent knack causes Strain as normal for the Chameleon talent.

### BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS

**Talent:** Creature Analysis

**Rank:** 5

The use of the Behavioral Analysis knack can help a character determine the source of a creature's particular emotion. The character makes a Creature Analysis Test against the Social Defense of the creature he is observing that is within a range equal to 10 times his rank in Creature Analysis in yards. On a Good success or better, the character is able to determine the cause of that creature's excitement or agitation. Using this ability on creatures costs 1 point of Strain. This ability has a chance of working with Name-givers as well, but the Difficulty Number is the target's Social Defense + 5 and it costs 2 Strain to perform.

### CALM ANIMAL SERVANTS

**Talent:** Frighten Animal Servants

**Rank:** 5

The Calm Animal Servants talent knack allows a Beastmaster to counteract the Discipline talent Frighten Animal Servants. The Beastmaster makes a Frighten Animal Servants Test against the highest Social Defense of the animals that have been frightened. A successful test means that the duration of the talent's effect is shortened by the Beastmaster's rank in the Frighten Animal Servants talent. Using this talent knack costs 2 Strain. This knack may be used repeatedly to further reduce the duration, but each use requires an action and 2 points of Strain.

*The Beastmaster Harak Dor has Frighten Animal Servants at rank 5 and the talent knack Calm Animal Servants. His trusted wolf, Running Shadow, has a Social Defense of 5. A rival Beastmaster with Frighten Animal Servants at rank 6 successfully spooks Running Shadow. Harak Dor responds by using his Calm Animal Servants. He succeeds and subtracts his rank 5 from the 6 rounds of effect. Running Shadow will only be spooked for 1 round instead of 6.*



### ENVENOM

**Talent:** Venom

**Rank:** 7

This talent knack allows the Venom talent to be used to envenom items. The character can, by taking an action, draw a weapon across his arm or hand, causing 2 points of Damage. His blood becomes a contact poison that clings magically to a weapon or item for rank rounds. For the poison to take effect, it must either be ingested or injected (e.g. through a cut or injury). If this occurs, the target suffers normal Damage from the Venom talent (see ED2C, pg. 42) for one round only (not the usual rank rounds). If a weapon is envenomed, then the weapon still does its normal Damage plus the effects of the poison. An item can only benefit from one Envenom at a time. Using the Envenom knack costs 2 additional Strain.

### FIND THE NEST

**Talent:** Borrow Sense

**Rank:** 5

While successfully borrowing the sense of an animal, the Beastmaster may make another test and spend a point of Karma to know where the animal's nest or den is and how to get to it from the animal's perspective.

### GROWL

**Talent:** Howl

**Rank:** 4

The Growl knack allows the character to emit an intimidating growl, which causes an opponent to give pause to what they are doing. The character spends 1 Strain and then performs a Howl Test against the opponent's Social Defense, or in the case of a group, the highest Social Defense, +1 for each additional target, at a range equal to the character's Howl rank in yards. On a successful Howl Test, the target's initiative test results are reduced (to a minimum of 1) by the Beastmaster's rank in Howl until the end of the following round.







## TALON SHAPE

**Talent:** Claw Shape

**Rank:** 5

With Talon Shape, a character is able to grapple an opponent, as well as cause damage at the same time. To use this knack, the character must spend 2 Strain to achieve the Talon Shape, and an additional 1 Strain per round to maintain the knack. The character makes an Unarmed Combat Test (or Dexterity Test) against the opponent's Physical Defense. On a Good success or better, the character successfully grapples the opponent and the razor tips of the Talon Shape gouge into the opponent's flesh. The Damage Test is equal to the character's Claw Shape step. For each round that the opponent attempts to escape, his struggling causes additional Damage equal to the Claw Shape rank. This Damage is reduced by armor as normal. Otherwise, normal grappling rules apply (See ED2, pg. 223). When the grapple hold is broken or released, the Talon Shape disappears.

## TRACK ANALYSIS

**Talent:** Tracking

**Rank:** 5

The talent knack of Track Analysis extends the information that a tracker gains from using his Tracking talent. After a successful Tracking Test is made and the luminous footprints appear, a Beastmaster with Track Analysis may try to interpret exactly what the tracks mean. The Beastmaster must make a second successful Tracking Test and expend another point of Strain (as is normal for using the Tracking talent). If this roll is again successful, he can determine the quarry's height, weight, race, and sex, if the quarry is running or walking, and if the quarry is heavily loaded or lightly equipped. At the gamemaster's discretion, other information may be available as well.

## THE WISDOM OF BEASTS

**Talent:** Develop Animal Sense

**Rank:** 10

This knack represents a Beastmaster who has been using the senses of animals for so long, that he thinks like an animal. With this profound understanding comes a knowledge and sympathy for beasts that few Name-givers can ever claim. To any Skill Test that relates to animals or the wilderness (for example Fishing, Hunting, Wilderness Survival, or Knowledge: Wild Animals) the character may add 2 steps. Using this talent knack costs no Strain.

But this understanding does not come without costs. The Beastmaster has traded something essentially civilized for this wisdom. Those who bear this talent knack often seem particularly bestial and uncivilized. Beastmasters reduce their Charisma Step by 2 for all Interaction Tests (except Intimidation) with Name-givers.

## SCOUT TALENT KNACKS

### DEPTH OF SHADOW

**Talent:** Silent Walk

**Rank:** 6

The Depth of Shadow talent knack allows anyone with the talent Silent Walk to focus and further deepen shadows even more than the normal talent allows. To use Depth of Shadow, the character must be stationary and must expend 2 Strain. The character must be standing some place shadowy. With the use of this ability, the character seems almost to fade from sight and even those passing within reach of the character may easily fail to see him. The character may make a Silent



Walk Test with a 2 step bonus as long as he doesn't move. This roll is their difficulty to be detected for as long as they hold perfectly still. Taking any sort of physical action is assumed to entail movement and dispels this effect.

### DETECT AMBUSH

**Talent:** Detect Trap

**Rank:** 6

The Scout can detect a trap consisting of an ambush of one or more people. The knack focuses on the intent of those around the Scout and can detect an ambush up to 100 feet away. The detection difficulty is based on the lowest Spell Defense of the ambushing group. If the ambush is meant for the Scout specifically (or his group), then it costs 2 points of Strain. If the ambush is just intended for the next person to come around the corner, then the Strain cost is 3.

### ETHEREAL SNATCH

**Talent:** Ethereal Weapon

**Rank:** 10

This talent knack extends the usefulness of the already potent talent, Ethereal Weapon. Using this talent knack, the character must first make a successful Ethereal Weapon Test against the Spell Defense of the container or the item being snatched (whichever is higher) and take 2 Strain as normal. But instead of attacking with the weapon, the character uses the weapon to reach into a closed area (for example a locked chest) and pull other items no larger than the weapon itself into astral space and then out of the container. This method can penetrate no more than a foot of solid material. Done successfully, this ethereal effect disturbs neither the integrity of the material nor activates traps triggered by disturbing or breaking into the container. Ethereal Snatch cannot penetrate living items.



## FIND THE NEST

While successfully borrowing the sense of an animal, the Scout may make another test and spend a point of Karma to know where the animal's nest or den is from the animal's perspective.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

This knack allows an Adept to help others climb by highlighting good hand holds and pointing out the easiest route. If the Scout spends 2 Strain, the path he climbs for the next 100 feet becomes highlighted with a faint yellow glow. Anybody following the highlighted path gains a 3 step bonus to their climbing checks; this bonus applies for every climbing check made while following the Scout's path. Scouts may use this knack on easy to climb objects, such as ladders, too. The highlighted path remains for 1 hour or until dispelled by the Scout (the latter does not require an action, only a thought).

## HIBERNATE

The Scout creates or finds a den where he's protected from the worst of the elements. He meditates for an hour to put himself into a hibernation state to survive for long periods of cold weather. Make an Endure Cold Test; half that result is the number of days the Scout may Hibernate. When the Scout enters hibernation, he determines how long the hibernation will last. Use of this knack causes the Scout to take one Wound. Upon reawakening, the Scout will be tired, hungry, and have only 1 Recovery Test per day, recovering the rest at one per full day of food and rest for every five days spent hibernating. Rather than recovering, the Scout may choose to once again enter hibernation, but this will cause another Wound.

## LOCATION AWARENESS

Instead of searching for a safe path to a destination, the Scout may get a better sense of where he is. The Scout makes a Safe Path Test against a Difficulty Number from the table below to determine his position. In the wilderness, the Scout will know his location to within an accuracy of one mile; in a city, kaer, or other more confined location he will know his location to within 100 yards.

Location	Difficulty Number
Familiar Area	4
Safe Wilderness	5
Safe Confined Area	6
Open Wilderness	7
Open Confined Area	8
Tainted Wilderness	10
Tainted Confined Area	12
Corrupt Wilderness	16
Corrupt Confined Area	20

## POISED TO REACT

This talent knack allows a character to take a round and prepare to use Trap Initiative. In that round the character must take no other action and must not move. Then next round, if they activate a trap, they may add 2 steps to their Trap Initiative Test as they are more prepared to react.

## READING THE ARCHER

This talent knack allows the character, after a successful use of the Trace Missile talent, to try and analyze the skill of the archer who fired the shot. Immediately after successfully using Trace Missile, the character may (without taking another action) expend another point of Strain and make a second Trace Missile Test against the Spell Defense of the archer. If this second roll succeeds, the character may learn what talents the target used when firing the missile being traced (Mystic Aim, True Shot, etc.), as well as whether the target is a non-Adept, Apprentice (First Circle or half-Adept), Novice (Second-Fourth Circle), Journeyman (Fifth-Eighth Circle), Warden (Ninth-Twelfth Circle) or Master (Thirteenth-Fifteenth Circle). This talent knack costs 1 point of Strain to use. In order to successfully use this talent knack, the target must be at least partially visible.

## THE SHORTEST PATH

Sometimes, a Scout needs to get somewhere fast, even if the route isn't completely safe. This knack allows the Scout to contact an elemental spirit and find out how to get somewhere quickly. By spending 2 points of Strain, the spirit contacted will tell him the fastest way to get from where he is standing to where he needs to go. The spirit understands inherently that the path must be one that the Adept can take. However, the range is much shorter than normal. Roll a Safe Path Test as usual and multiply the result by 10. The product is the total number of



yards that the spirit can lead the Scout. After that, the Adept is on his own. Travel time up to the point that the spirit ceases to lead the Adept is be halved.

This knack is best used in cities or other close settings, since the shortest path out in the open is, obviously, a straight line. Generally this path will result in traveling along unorthodox routes, such as across rooftops, through shops, across private property, and the like. The gamemaster should encourage tests reflecting the nature of the physical activity (Climbing, Sprint, Avoid Blow, etc.). Any potential danger that might be encountered will be minor (guards, dogs, etc.), since the spirit is still working under the base effect of the Safe Path talent. The Scout can lead other Adepts along the route, but the gamemaster should keep in mind that they also must make any tests that the Scout has to make and any hostile encounters that he avoided due to speed they may have to fight their way through.

### SILENT RUN

**Talent:** Silent Walk

**Rank:** 5

For 3 points of Strain, an unencumbered Scout may Silent Walk for a Full Move for 1 round.

### SILENT SHADOW

**Talent:** Silent Walk

**Rank:** 5

This knack allows an Adept to help others move unseen and unheard by leading them along. If the Scout spends 2 points of Strain per character following his path, then those characters can benefit from the Scout's Silent Move. Anybody following the Scout's path gains a 3 step bonus to their Hide or Silent Walk skill or talent checks, but their skill or talent step cannot be increased to a higher number than the Scout's talent step. The character must remain within their Combat Move distance of the Scout to receive this bonus.

### SUDDENLY STILL

**Talent:** Trap Initiative

**Rank:** 5

Many traps are activated by movement. With Suddenly Still, the trap will remain set after it has been triggered, so long as the Scout remains almost perfectly still. The Scout may maintain this stillness for a number of rounds equal to his Trap Initiative rank and then the trap affects him as normal. The Scout may speak while he is performing this knack, but if he takes any other action, the trap affects him. Use of the Suddenly Still knack costs 1 point of Strain.

### TRACELESS WALK

**Talent:** Silent Walk

**Rank:** 6

Rather than being hard to detect while moving through an area, a Scout using Traceless Walk leaves almost no trace and becomes very hard to track. Use the result of a Silent Walk as the Difficulty Number for any tracking attempts. The character does not gain the normal benefits from Silent Walk while using Traceless Walk. Characters using this knack may move at their Full Movement Rate.

### TRACK ANALYSIS

**Talent:** Tracking

**Rank:** 5

Track Analysis increases the amount information that a tracker gains from using the Tracking talent. After a successful Tracking Test, a Scout with Track Analysis may try to interpret exactly what the tracks

mean. The Scout must make a second successful Tracking Test and expend another point of Strain (as is normal for using the Tracking talent). If this test is again successful, he can determine the quarry's height, weight, race, and sex, if the quarry is running or walking, if the quarry is heavily loaded or lightly equipped, and if the quarry knows they are being followed. At the gamemaster's discretion, other information may be available as well.

## THIEF TALENT KNACKS

### CITY OF SECRETS

**Talent:** Streetwise

**Rank:** 7

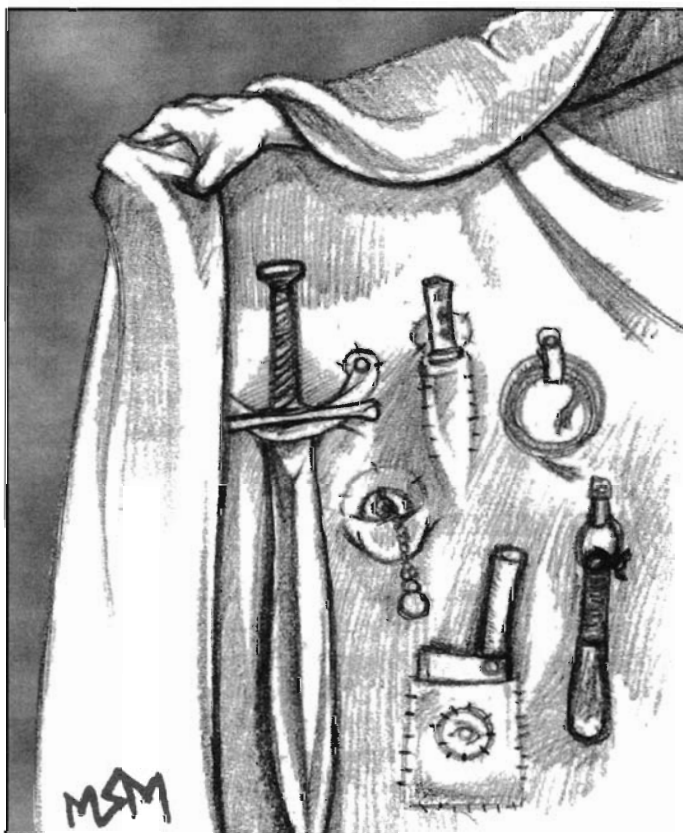
This talent knack extends the sort of information that can be acquired using Streetwise. In order to use this talent knack, the character must make an Excellent success or better on his Streetwise Test. Then the character must spend a full day exploring the city, listening and observing. After this process is completed, the character gains a deep insight into the city. The character begins to sense what is "really going on." The character then receives a number of secrets about the city equal to his ranks of Streetwise. These secrets are strictly up to the gamemaster and can be useful or entirely unrelated to what the character is currently working towards.

### CONCEAL ARSENAL

**Talent:** Conceal Weapon

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack allows a Thief to conceal more than one weapon or small item using the Conceal Weapon talent. The Thief must expend 1 Strain as normal for using the Conceal Weapon talent and must total the sizes of all weapons or items when subtracting from the result.





## DEPTH OF SHADOW

**Talent:** Silent Walk

**Rank:** 6

The Depth of Shadow talent knack allows anyone with the talent Silent Walk to focus and further deepen shadows even more than the normal talent allows. To use Depth of Shadow, the character must be unmoving and must spend 2 Strain. The character must be standing some place shadowy. With the use of this ability, the character seems almost to fade from sight and even those passing within reach of the character may easily fail to see him. The character may make a Silent Walk Test with a 2 step bonus as long as they do not move. This roll is the Difficulty Number to be detected for as long as they hold perfectly still. Taking any sort of physical action is assumed to entail movement and dispels this effect.

## DETECT AMBUSH

**Talent:** Detect Trap

**Rank:** 6

The Thief can detect a trap consisting of an ambush of one or more people. The knack focuses on the intent of those around the Thief and can detect an ambush up to 100 feet away. The Difficulty Number is based on the lowest Spell Defense of the ambushing group. If the ambush is meant for the Thief specifically (or his group), then it costs 2 points of Strain. If the ambush is just meant for the next person to come around the corner, then the Strain cost is 3.

## FOOL SELF

**Talent:** Safe Thought

**Rank:** 10

You believe your own lie. Very good for convincing others, but the downside is you really believe it too and have to reconcile any contradiction in your own head. Take 2 points of Strain and make a Safe Thought check against your normal Spell Defense to change a fact in your mind. Something integral to your own history will require an Excellent success. A Thief may choose to set a trigger that will cause his memories of the truth to return, but doing so causes the Strain caused by this knack to remain until the memories return. The trigger can be a phrase, or seeing something or someone, or almost any event that the Thief can imagine. Extensive use of this knack can cause psychological damage.

## FORGET YOU JUST SAW ME

**Talent:** Gain Surprise

**Rank:** 8

This potent talent knack extends the already considerable power of the Gain Surprise talent. The character must spend 1 point of Strain and succeed at a Gain Surprise Test against anyone who has just seen him. If he succeeds, then they forget they saw him. Knowledge that the character was ever there is immediately suppressed. The character has two rounds to get out of sight or the effect will fade. Even if the character gets out of sight, the effects of this knack fade in a number of minutes equal to the character's rank in Gain Surprise.

## FRAME UP

**Talent:** Slough Blame

**Rank:** 7

This talent knack allows more focused use of the Slough Blame talent. Instead of having to wait for someone to make accusations, the Frame Up talent knack allows the Thief to preemptively focus suspicion on a chosen victim. This knack requires 2 Strain in addition to the cost of the Slough Blame talent. To be successful, the character must make a Slough Blame Test against the Social Defense of either the scapegoat or the person the Thief would like to believe the scapegoat's guilt (whichever is higher) +1. The effects of this talent knack last for a number of minutes equal to the character's talent rank. After the effect fades, both parties will likely be suspicious that they have been manipulated.

## GEM SENSE

**Talent:** Gold Sense

**Rank:** 5

This talent knack extends the Gold Sense talent to include precious gems. The Thief must meditate for half an hour to reattune his talent to gems instead of gold and if the Thief wishes to search for gold again it requires another half hour of re-attunement. This talent knack detects gems in much smaller concentrations (gems as small as one quarter of a pound can be detected), though the knack detects the largest weight of gems, not necessarily the largest value of gems. Otherwise, this talent knack functions exactly as the Gold Sense talent.











## TROUBADOUR TALENT KNACKS

### BARDIC WILES

**Talent:** Bardic Voice

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack allows the Bardic Voice talent to not only charm an audience but to make them think that whatever the Troubadour has suggested was in fact their idea. At the end of Bardic Voice's duration, the targets will not know that they have been affected by a mind controlling effect. This can usually save the Troubadour quite a bit of trouble. This talent knack, however, does not overcome the central limitation of the Bardic Voice talent. Even though the targets think it is their idea, they will still not take greater risks than the Troubadour himself is willing to take. Use of Bardic Wiles requires an Excellent success on the Bardic Voice Test.

### DEEP HYPNOSIS

**Talent:** Hypnotize

**Rank:** 8

This talent knack extends the Hypnotize talent. Using it allows the post hypnotic suggestions to last for a number of days equal to the character's rank in Hypnotize instead of hours. Every deep hypnotic suggestion costs the character 3 Strain and requires an Excellent success on the Hypnotize Test. Like the Hypnotize talent, this talent knack requires speaking in a language that the target understands. In order to plant a Deep Hypnosis suggestion, the character must still succeed at Interaction Tests against the target as normal.

### DIPLOMATIC SABOTAGE

**Talent:** Diplomacy

**Rank:** 8

This dangerous talent knack allows a character to use the soothing and calming magic of Diplomacy to make diplomatic situations far worse. By pointing out difficulties and differences under the guise of working them out, then pointing out how they can't be worked out, the Troubadour can quickly turn an improving situation into imminent war. This talent knack works exactly like Diplomacy except that it works exactly in reverse. Instead of moving the attitude of gamemaster characters toward Neutral, it moves them away. An Extraordinary success with Diplomatic Sabotage immediately sets everyone affected to Hostile. The effects of this knack can be offset by someone else successfully using the Diplomacy talent. Also, if your Diplomatic Sabotage result in a Poor failure, then everybody in the situation is completely aware of what you were trying to do.

### FINDING THE LINK

**Talent:** Thought Link

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack lets Troubadours attempt to identify who has used Thought Link against them. This is potentially very useful information as Thought Link allows for social attacks and distracting false information to be fed to a character. When the Thought Link talent is used against him, successful or not, the Troubadour may roll a Thought Link Test against the Spell Defense of the initiator or the Difficulty Number to disbelieve an illusion disguising the sender, whichever is higher. If that roll is successful, the character receives a hazy image of the person initiating Thought Link. Then, with the identity of the contact revealed, the character may choose to open their mind without resistance or activate a defensive mental talent knack

such as Shielding the Thoughts (see below for details). The use of this talent knack requires 1 Strain.

### KNOW AUDIENCE

**Talent:** Empathic Sense

**Rank:** 5

With the Know Audience knack, the character can sense the most predominant attitude in a given audience towards a single subject. For example, if the character wanted to know how the current tavern patrons felt towards the king, he could attempt to discern that information. To use the Know Audience knack, there must first be at least two people present in addition to the character. The character then spends 2 Strain and makes an Empathic Sense Test against the highest Social Defense in the audience, adding one to the difficulty for every ten people. If successful, Know Audience reveals the popular opinion prevalent in the audience, but not who believes what. For example, while the six locals may not like the king, the five veteran adventurers do and may have something to say about it. All the character will know on a successful check is that the majority of the audience views the king unfavorably.

### MEMORY SONG

**Talent:** Emotion Song

**Rank:** 5

Memory Song is a specialized version of Emotion Song. The Troubadour using this knack must be playing a song or telling a tale that describes events which they observed personally. Under those conditions, Memory Song gives the character an additional step bonus to their Emotion Song for enthralling the audience. When the character is specifically swaying the audience's emotions towards himself or other subjects of the song that the character knows personally, the character earns a 2 step bonus, instead. Use of Memory Song costs 1 point of Strain.





## THE PIERCING TRUTH

**Talent:** Taunt

**Rank:** 5

This talent knack enables a character to refine his taunts using information relevant to his target. In order to use this talent knack against a target, the character must know three personal facts about him that he could not have gained merely by looking at him. With this information, the character may spend 1 point of Strain to add a 2 step bonus to their Taunt Test. For example, the Troubadour could use this talent knack if they knew the name of the target, the target's mission, and that the target's father just died. The benefit from this talent knack is lost if any of the facts cited by the PC are actually false; if the Taunt test fails, then the target is immune to Taunts from the Troubadour for one week.

## SEEING THE MANIPULATED MIND

**Talent:** Detect Influence

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack allows the character to use the Detect Influence talent to detect not just Horror influences, but any mental influence from talents or spells. With a Good success, the character can tell if the target has been influenced by magic in the past 24 hours. It does not reveal how the character was influenced or if they are still influenced. An Excellent success reveals if the target is still being influenced. An Extraordinary success reveals the type and kind of influences that have affected the character in the last 24 hours.

The following talents count as mental influence: Animal Bond, Animal Leadership, Animal Possession, Animal Training, Arcane Mutterings, Bardic Voice, Champion Challenge, Dangerous Shot, Diplomacy, Dominate Beast, Emotion Song, Empathic Command, Engaging Banter, First Impression, Frighten, Frighten Animal Servants, Gain Surprise, Howl, Hypnotize, Impressive Shot, Impressive Strike, Incite Mob, Incite Stampede, Lasting Impression, Mind Wave, Rally, Slough Blame, Taunt, Truth Skit, and Winning Smile. Other cases may exist at the gamemaster's discretion.

## SHIELDING THE THOUGHTS

**Talent:** Thought Link

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack allows the Troubadour to keep others out of his thoughts. Thought Link, after all, allows for social attacks and distracting false information to be fed to a character. Using this talent knack, the character may add +3 to his Spell Defense, at his discretion, solely for the purposes of keeping Thought Links out of his mind. However, this talent knack does not grant the character any information about who is trying to contact him. The use of this talent knack requires 1 Strain. This knack has a duration of one hour.

## SIREN'S SONG

**Talent:** Emotion Song

**Rank:** 4

This talent knack allows the character to use Emotion Song to help with the Seduction skill. During a normal application of Emotion Song, the user focuses on a single target and makes a second Emotion Song roll. The target is singled out; perhaps the performer focuses his attention on them. Still, the Emotion Song talent goes on as normal. The target must be in the audience being affected by the Emotion Song and must be able to see or hear the performer. If the performer makes an Average success against the target's Social Defense, then the performer gains a +2 step bonus to all Seduction Tests for the next 24 hours against the target. This effect is cumulative with any bonus that comes from a successful Emotion Song roll. When using the Siren's Song knack, the Emotion Song talent does not have any effect on other members of the audience other than the target of the Siren's Song.

## THE UNCONTROLLABLE MOB

**Talent:** Incite Mob

**Rank:** 7

This talent knack allows a skilled rabble rouser to make mobs (once successfully incited) much more difficult to defuse (using the Defuse Mob talent knack) or to control (using the Incite Mob talent). By making a second, successful, Incite Mob test and expending 2 Strain, the Troubadour adds his own rank in Incite Mob to the Social Defense of the mob for the purposes of resisting control or defuse attempts. This second test to turn a mob into an Uncontrollable Mob may only be attempted once. If the test fails, it remains an Incited Mob as normal.





## MOUNTEBANK TALENT KNACKS

### DEFUSE MOB

**Talent:** Incite Mob

**Rank:** 7

The Defuse Mob knack enables a Mountebank to attempt to calm and disperse a mob. The Mountebank makes an Incite Mob Test against the highest Social Defense of the mob's members. The size of the mob determines the success level needed; see the Incite Mob talent description (p 100, ED2). Using this knack costs the Mountebank 2 Strain.

### FALSE ANTIDOTE

**Talent:** False Potion

**Rank:** 4

The False Antidote knack allows the Mountebank to create a False Antidote instead of a False Potion. The Strain is spent as normal when creating a False Potion, but instead of negating the pain of a wound, the False Antidote adds the Mountebank's False Potion Rank to the Poison Resistance Test of the character who drinks it. The magic of a False Antidote lasts for 24 hours. After that time, the effects of the poison return. A False Antidote counts towards the total number of False Potions a Mountebank may have created at any time, and only remains magical for one week. False Antidotes normally sell for 100 silver pieces, unless the Mountebank can bilk a mark out of more for it.

### FALSE WOUND

**Talent:** Dead Fall

**Rank:** 5

A Mountebank may use the False Wound knack to make an attack against him far less lethal. The Mountebank makes a Dead Fall Test with a Difficulty Number equal to the result of the Attack Test that hit him. If he receives at least a Good success, then the attack's Damage step is reduced by the Mountebank's Dead Fall rank, though the Mountebank still appears to have taken the full Damage from the attack. This effect is an illusion and may Disbelieved. The Difficulty Number for this Disbelief Test is the character's Dead Fall step. A Mountebank may use False Wound on every attack targeted at him in a given round. Use of the False Wound knack costs 3 points of Strain.

### HERE'S THE DEAL

**Talent:** Haggle

**Rank:** 7

The Here's the Deal knack allows a Mountebank to glance at an object and know its value. The Mountebank makes a Haggle Test against the item's Spell Defense. If he achieves a Good success or better, the Mountebank knows the item's approximate value in silver pieces, within a 25% margin of error.

### HYPNOTIC BANTER

**Talent:** Engaging Banter

**Rank:** 9

The Hypnotic Banter knack allows a Mountebank to use Engaging Banter on more than one opponent, adding 1 Strain and +1 to the Difficulty Number for each additional target. For example, if the Mountebank were to engage five people in Hypnotic Banter, it would cost him 5 Strain points and the Difficulty Number would be equal to the highest Social Defense + 4.



### MIRROR SWAP

**Talent:** Disguise Self

**Rank:** 7

The Mirror Swap knack allows the Mountebank to swap appearances with another person for the cost of 3 additional Strain. The Mountebank makes a Disguise Self Test against the target's Spell Defense. If he achieves an Excellent success, the two figures (the target and the Mountebank) swap appearances for a duration of rank rounds. An Extraordinary success means the effect lasts for rank minutes. The Mountebank may dispel the Mirror Swap effect at will.

### SEEING THE MANIPULATED MIND

**Talent:** Detect Influence

**Rank:** 6

This talent knack allows the character to use the Detect Influence talent to detect not just Horror influences but any mental influence from talents or spells. From an Average success the character can tell if the target has been influenced by magic in the past 24 hours. It does not reveal how the character was influenced or if they are still influenced. A Good success reveals if the target is still being influenced. An Excellent success reveals the type and kind of influences that have affected the character in the last 24 hours. An Extraordinary success reveals who actually used the influence against the target. The identities are revealed as mental images in the mind of the character using this talent knack.

The following talents count as mental influence: Animal Bond, Animal Leadership, Animal Possession, Animal Training, Arcane Mutterings, Bardic Voice, Champion Challenge, Dangerous Shot, Diplomacy, Dominate Beast, Emotion Song, Empathic Command, Engaging Banter, First Impression, Frighten, Frighten Animal Servants, Gain Surprise, Howl, Hypnotize, Impressive Shot, Impressive Strike, Incite Mob, Incite Stampede, Lasting Impression, Mind Wave, Rally, Slough Blame, Taunt, Truth Skit, and Winning Smile. Other cases may exist at the gamemaster's discretion.

### SPOT FAST HAND

**Talent:** Fast Hand

**Rank:** 8

This knack allows a Mountebank to spot the use of the Fast Hand talent on those in his line of sight. The Mountebank must declare that he is using the Spot Fast Hand knack and spend 1 Strain for each minute he does so. The Mountebank makes a Fast Hand Test to spot the talent use by others. A Good success against another person's Fast Hand result is needed to spot its use. This knack is also useful against pickpockets. Increase by 1 the success level needed for a successful Pick Pockets attempt against a character using Spot Fast Hand.





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