

EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION

KRATAS ADVENTURES



AN EARTHDAWN ADVENTURE COLLECTION





• THIRD EDITION •

KRATAS ADVENTURES

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CONTENTS

Just to make this clear: bragging rights for being good at betrayal, corruption, theft, and bloodshed?

• MERROX, MASTER OF THE HALL OF RECORDS •

THE THIEVERY COMPETITION.....5

Running the Adventure.....5

Adventure Background.....5

Plot Synopsis.....6

Odds-on Favorite.....7

Setting the Stage.....7

Themes and Images.....7

Behind the Scenes.....7

Troubleshooting.....9

What to Steal?.....9

Setting the Stage.....9

Themes and Images.....9

Behind the Scenes.....9

Troubleshooting.....14

A Disgusting Proposal.....14

Setting the Stage.....14

Themes and Images.....14

Behind the Scenes.....14

Troubleshooting.....15

Visiting the Lore Merchant.....15

Setting the Stage.....15

Themes and Images.....15

Behind the Scenes.....15

Troubleshooting.....16

Into the Old Kaer.....16

Setting the Stage.....16

Themes and Images.....16

Behind the Scenes.....16

Through the Front Door.....16

Through the Tunnels.....17

The Records Storage.....19

Troubleshooting.....21

At Raggok's Feet.....21

Setting the Stage.....21

Themes and Images.....21

Behind the Scenes.....21

Troubleshooting.....23

Are You the Keymaster?.....23

Setting the Stage.....23

Themes and Images.....24

Behind the Scenes.....24

Troubleshooting.....28

Judgment Night.....28

Setting the Stage.....28

Themes and Images.....28

Behind the Scenes.....28

Troubleshooting.....31

Aftermath.....31

Awarding Legend Points.....31

Campaign Ideas.....32

Rumors and Research.....32

The Thievery Contest.....32

Favored Contestants.....32

Xok Steadyhand.....32

Terhik the Bold.....32

Surehand Calisan.....32

Silvian Ishtrian.....32

Greywing and Blackstone.....33

Garlthik's Treasure Vaults.....33

The Winking Eye Jewelers.....33

The Key to the City of Kratas.....33

DEADMAN'S CONTRACT.....34

Running the Adventure.....34

Adventure Background.....34

Plot Synopsis.....34

Dark Doings at the Bolthole.....35

Setting the Stage.....35

Themes and Images.....35

Behind the Scenes.....35

Troubleshooting.....41

Planning The Hit.....41

Setting the Stage.....41

Themes and Images.....41

Behind the Scenes.....41

Troubleshooting.....47

Keeping an Eye Out	47
Setting the Stage	47
Themes and Images	47
Behind the Scenes.....	47
Troubleshooting.....	48
One Shot at Glory.....	48
Setting the Stage	49
Themes and Images	49
Behind the Scenes.....	49
Troubleshooting	50
Garlthik's Funeral.....	50
Setting the Stage	50
Themes and Images	50
Behind the Scenes.....	50
Troubleshooting	51
Cui bono?.....	52
Setting the Scene	52
Themes and Images	52
Behind the Scenes	52
Troubleshooting	53
Blood Money	53
Setting the Stage	53
Themes and Images	53
Behind the Scenes.....	53
Sky Diving.....	55
Troubleshooting	56
Aftermath	57
Awarding Legend Points	57
HUNTING THE IMPOSTER.....	58
Running the Adventure	59
Adventure Background	59
Plot Synopsis.....	60
Act One: Pounding the Cobblestones.....	60
Act One Background	60
A Desperate Plea	61
Setting the Stage	61
Themes and Images	61
Behind the Scenes.....	61
Troubleshooting	62
Confronting the Black Hand	62
Setting the Stage	62
Themes and Images	63
Behind the Scenes.....	63
Troubleshooting	65
Weasel Stomping	65
Setting the Stage	65
Themes and Images	65
Behind the Scenes	65
Troubleshooting	67
End of the Trail	67
Setting the Stage	67
Themes and Images	67
Behind the Scenes	68

Breaking the Brotherhood	70
Setting the Stage	70
Themes and Images	70
Behind the Scenes	71
Troubleshooting.....	71
Act One Aftermath.....	73
Act Two: Death Walks the Streets	74
Act Two Background	74
A Wounded Bird	74
Setting the Stage	74
Themes and Images	74
Behind the Scenes	74
Troubleshooting	75
Making a List.....	76
Setting the Stage	76
Themes and Images	76
Behind the Scenes	76
Troubleshooting	77
Marked for Death.....	77
Setting the Stage	77
Themes and Images	77
Behind the Scenes	77
Death's Tears	77
Watch What You Eat	78
Always Watch the Skies.....	79
Watch Everything Else as Well.....	80
Troubleshooting	81
A Rendezvous with Death.....	81
Setting the Stage	82
Themes and Images	82
Behind the Scenes	82
Troubleshooting	86
Act Two Aftermath.....	86
Act Three: Underneath the Masks.....	87
Act Three Background	87
Out of the Mouths of Madmen	87
Themes and Images	87
Behind the Scenes	87
Troubleshooting.....	89
A Final Imposture	89
Setting the Stage	89
Themes and Images	89
Behind the Scenes	89
Troubleshooting.....	90
Unmasking the Imposter	90
Setting the Stage	90
Themes and Images	91
Behind the Scenes	91
Troubleshooting.....	92
Aftermath	92
Awarding Legend Points.....	93

THE THIEVERY COMPETITION

It is time to find out how good the Force of the Eye and Garlthik really are at "protecting" Kratas.

• FINELLIANIS, LEADER OF QUIET FEET, QUICK FINGERS •

The **Thievery Competition** is an adventure scenario designed for three to five high-Circle Journeyman to low-Circle Warden (Seventh to Ninth Circle) adepts of any Discipline. The adventure can be adjusted for lower Circle characters, see **Scaling the Adventure**, below. In this adventure, the player characters become involved in a competition sponsored by the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers gang to see who can steal the most valuable item in Kratas. Ambitious characters may plan their own heist or the characters can accept a behest from Xok Steadyhand to work for him to win the contest on his behalf. Once the characters procure the item they believe is the most valuable in all of Kratas, all they have to do is keep it from all the other thieves and gangs in Kratas seeking their valuables until the presentation marking the end of the competition.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The **Thievery Competition** is presented as a series of events. Each event is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible, the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

Each event is described in terms of an encounter, which contains four sections. **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players. **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter. **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each encounter. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Every year for the past twelve years, the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers Thieves' Compact sponsors a competition. (For more on Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers, see p.76 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*.) There is no monetary prize or trophy, merely bragging rights and the respect of one's fellow thieves, as well as the certainty that the exploit will be sung by the Troubadours of Kratas. Each year Finellianis, the head of the gang, announces a different theme for the competition, after which the competitors have a year and a day in which to steal the theme item. Thieves do not have to give up the goods stolen for the competition, and can sell them as they wish, but they must present them on the last day of the competition for inspec-

tion. Capable Illusionists are on hand at the judging to make sure the entries are what they appear to be.

Last year the theme was orichalcum coins: whoever brought the largest number of them was the winner. They had to be stolen of course; one couldn't just steal an amount of silver to buy orichalcum coins. Last year's winner was Terhik the Bold. The rumor was that he raided the Theran treasury in Vivane to acquire the two large chests that he returned with, each full to bursting with orichalcum. Terhik just smiled and wouldn't say. Previous years' contests have included stealing the largest emerald one could find (Finellianis likes the color green), stealing the most valuable live animal, stealing the most valuable book (the great library of Throal was particularly put out about that year's competition), the largest amount of living crystal, and so on.

This year's competition, announced almost one year ago, was to steal the single most valuable item in Kratas. This is a bolder move than some were at first aware. Garlthik is usually content to let the competition run, though he does not officially approve. It is actually to his benefit when the competition encourages the best thieves in Barsaive to steal things elsewhere and then bring them to Kratas to be sold. However, by limiting the competition to Kratas itself this year, Finellianis has made a subtle challenge to the authority of Garlthik and the Force of the Eye.

The deadline for the competition is only a week away. There has been a flurry of activity, as thieves work on their last-minute entries. Master Thieves who live in other parts of Barsaive have been returning to town in the past week. A number of houses in the wealthier parts of town have been burgled, though a number of thieves whose ambition outpaced their abilities have perished in such attempts. Terhik has rented a small warehouse in the Warehouse District and has it locked up tight with a twenty-four-hour-a-day guard.

Garlthik has stepped up patrols in Hilltop and around his other interests in town. While he has not attempted to stop this year's competition outright, he has encouraged his minions to make it as difficult as possible to conduct the competition in the city and to rough up anyone making an open show of his participation. Finellianis expected no less when she chose the theme.

Finellianis has also announced that creativity is allowed and a number of judges will decide on the value, as well as what constitutes a single object. For example, a chest of diamonds does not count as a single item, but the largest single diamond within that chest may be entered. However, a diamond tiara, made with several diamonds, would count as one item. Team entries are allowed, with a crew or squad entering one item jointly.

The Thievery Competition is called the "Open Invitational" because the competition is by invitation only, and is, paradoxically,

open to all comers. That is, any clever or ambitious thief who can steal an invitation is allowed to enter. Finellianis has a few extra invitations drawn up just for such wildcard spots, that she leaves in moderately well guarded spots. If one is the sort who waits to be invited to a party, then perhaps the Thief's way is not for him. Further, should one show up at the final presentation of entries without an invitation, but with a winning entry, the judges would not let such a silly thing as rules stand in the way.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The gamemaster has a number of options for getting the characters involved in the competition. If they are sufficiently famous (a Legendary Status of Journeyman or higher), they may receive an invitation themselves. Normally the invitations are given out the previous year, at the start of the competition, but if the characters have recently entered the city, Finellianis may make an exception and invite them to compete anyway. If they are not of sufficient Legendary Status to receive their own invitations, they may hear of the competition anyway, as it will be the source of much gossip and speculation as the deadline draws near. Finally, the encounter, **Odds-on Favorite**, below, provides a fairly straightforward introduction.

A sample text of an invitation to the competition appears below, but as invitations are drawn up individually, the text may need modification to make it apply more personally to the player characters.

Your exploits in the arts of pilfering and thievery have brought you to the attention of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers Compact. It remains to be seen, however, if you have the skills in larceny to compete against the very best in the field. You are hereby invited to submit your entry in the Twelfth Annual Kratas Open Invitational Thievery Competition, to be presented for judging at midnight of the twelfth day of Doddul in front of the Northern Gate of Kratas, next to the Keep on Clifftop. The person who presents the single most valuable object stolen from within Kratas itself will win this year's contest.

Finellianis

If the players are low-Circle Thieves or think that they are not capable of winning the contest, or if the group does not include a Thief or adept of another suitable Discipline, the gamemaster can bring the characters into the contest by having an experienced Thief hire them to assist with his entry. This option is outlined in **A Disgusting Proposal**, below. This takes the characters on a fairly linear progression through the adventure, as well, so may also be appropriate if the characters are stuck or lacking the initiative to come up with their own plan for winning the contest.

The characters may win by stealing the item that is, in the judges' opinion, the most valuable item in Kratas. There are a number of possible winning entries; see **What to Steal?** below.

The most valuable item in Kratas, however, is the Key to the City. This belonged to the Theran administrator and has become a Core Pattern Item for Kratas. This is of incredible importance to the city, and especially for Garlthik and Vistrosh, each of whom could potentially weave a powerful thread to the item. This could shift the balance of power among the city's gangs, and a magician could also make use of the key in Ritual magic that could affect the entire city.



SCALING THE ADVENTURE



The open-ended nature of this adventure allows it to be played by characters of varying Circles, as described in the introduction. This presents a challenge to the gamemaster when determining an appropriate level of opposition to the player characters. In the case of the Sewer Filth and the ghouls, simply increasing the number of opponents adequately addresses this issue.

The difficulty can also vary depending on whether the characters are going it alone, or whether they are working for Xok and are under his guidance. The latter case will make it easier for a lower circle group of characters to succeed. A low-circle party should be approached by Xok, and he should council them to keep a low profile. As relative nobodies, going after an unknown object, they can escape the notice of the more powerful Namegivers in town. In this case, the opposition in **Are you the Keymaster?** should only be minor thief. See that section for more.

In the case of the Named gamemaster characters, scaling the adventure requires more finesse. These foes are more than a match for a small group of Novice characters, but keep in mind that direct confrontation is not necessarily in the best interest of the gamemaster characters or the group. Ishtrian and P'trank will not kill the player characters unless their lives are in danger. Instead, they might steal the group's treasure and run, rather than face the characters in combat.

In the case of Greywing and Blackstone, they are very busy as the contest approaches, and so they do not devote their attention to the player characters full time, unless the group has killed a member of the Force of the Eye. If playing with a lower Circle group, use Greywing and Blackstone as a source of intimidation and suspense, rather than full-on assault. The player characters may periodically catch glimpses of the two keeping an eye on them from dark corners; the two Slashers do not consider a Novice party to be of much concern and are content to watch from a distance, unless the characters show themselves to be more of a threat. Make the first encounter with the two Slashers sufficiently intimidating that the Novice characters will wisely run from them, rather than trying to take them on directly.

A large group of Journeyman player characters, however, should be able to easily defeat Ishtrian or P'trank in direct combat. However, neither of these two criminals is foolish, and both assess their opponents carefully; they have no hesitation about fleeing from an obviously superior group—prize in hand, of course. The problem then for the group comes not in defeating the two Thieves in combat, but in catching them.

A high-Circle Journeyman or Warden group may be an even match for Greywing and Blackstone, but the Slashers' power can be easily augmented by reinforcements from the Force of the Eye. See the section on the Slashers on p. 50 of *Kratas: City of Thieves* for more information.

Finally, as this is an adventure especially well suited for Thief Adepts, you may make it more challenging for high-Circle characters by increasing the Difficulty Numbers to detect, disarm, and pick and disarm the locks and traps they encounter. Also, feel free to add more such traps and locks, as well as guards if necessary, to give the characters more opportunities to use their talents.

The characters can be put on the track of the Key to the City either by asking the lore merchant, Tirzenalos (see p.177 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*), or by being hired by Xok Steadyhand, an ork Thief, to help with his entry. The characters learn in **Visiting the Lore Merchant** the hint that they need to find the resting place of the last administrator of Kratas.

The best place to search for information pertaining to the location of the administrator's resting place is in the offices of the Old Theran Citadel. Sneaking into the citadel and finding this information is the subject of the encounter, **Into the Old Kaer**. After discovering the document that gives them the administrator's location, the characters must then recover his body, buried under a massive fallen boulder on the steps of the Temple of Rashomon. This is described in **At Raggok's Feet**.

Once they retrieve the Key to the City from around the dead administrator's neck, the characters have the most valuable object in Kratas, though they may not know it; they may be likely to assume the key opens a lock, behind which the most valuable object is kept. While they search for what the key opens, other competitors, as well as a crack squad of the Force of the Eye assigned to harass participants in the competition, try to take it from them. This is described in the encounter **Are You the Keymaster?**

Finally, with their entry in hand, the player characters arrive at the competition to present their entry, as do dozens of other thieves, in **Judgment Night**.

Rather than having the players work as a team, an alternative is to have them, individually or in small groups, try to each acquire an entry, thus competing against each other. The gamemaster could run each group's heist as a separate playing session and then bring them all together for the **Judgment Night** conclusion.

ODDS-ON FAVORITE

In this encounter, the player characters are made aware of the existence of the Thievery Competition and can choose to enter or place bets on the outcome. The following encounter can take place in any of the more upscale pubs in Kratas, wherever the group likes to hang out. Substitute the Name of your chosen pub for Serian's Sanctuary in the text below.

SETTING THE STAGE

It is a quiet afternoon in Serian's Sanctuary. You are enjoying a mug or two of Kratas' finest brew when a dwarf enters, dressed in a large, pointy hat and luxurious, fur-trimmed cloak. He takes a conspicuous seat at a table at the back of the bar. He pulls out a roll of parchment, covered in small, tightly packed scribbles, and an inkpot and quill. Some of the patrons look at him expectantly. He gently clears his throat. "In light of certain new information, the odds are now changed. Terhik the Bold is now the odds-on favorite. Any takers?" A buzz breaks out among the crowd, and one by one a number of them slide over to the dwarf's table and give him a handful of coins. He makes tightly cribbed notes on his roll of parchment after each transaction.



THEMES AND IMAGES

The lazy afternoon is interrupted by a sudden burst of excitement and a buzz of gossip and speculation. Once the characters are made aware of the contest, and as the deadline approaches, it should appear that the competition is the main topic of conversation among those in the know in the city. It enlivens the otherwise depressing atmosphere, at least among the city's elite criminals. Most of the rabble remain focused on their own problems, however.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The dwarf is Honest Dran the Bookmaker, one of the most trusted bookmakers in Kratas, and he is taking bets on the Thievery Competition. If he is asked about the competition, he looks over the group skeptically.

"You don't know about the Kratas Open Invitational Thievery Competition? I didn't take you to be that green. Well, every year the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers Thieves' Compact sponsors a competition to find the 'Greatest Thief of the Year.' This year's theme is to steal the most valuable single object within the city of Kratas. The thieves have a year and a day to compete, with the deadline approaching at the end of this week, so the competition, and the betting, are heating up. Speaking of bets, who do you like?"

If pressed for more details, Dran gives the characters all the information on the competition listed in the introduction, but he continues to try to persuade them to place a bet. If the characters still do not place even a token wager after pumping him for information, Dran has an Unfriendly Attitude (see p.93 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) towards them in future. If he is asked about the "new information" he tells the group:

"Apparently, Terhik has rented a warehouse and was seen late last night moving a large crate into it; the crate was covered with locks and chains. He even hired a few of Deteranis' best to keep an eye on the place. Some say the crate holds a solid gold statue, big as a troll. But whatever it is, it's sure to be worth a lot. He was last year's winner, too, so he's the favorite to win now. What can I put you down for?"

If the players ignore Honest Dran completely, he yells over to them after taking the last bets from the other patrons.

"Hey, you there! You look like you could use some easy money. Want some of this action?"

If the players still take no interest in learning about the contest, perhaps the adventuring life is not for them, but you may proceed on to **A Disgusting Proposal**, below.

HONEST DRAN THE BOOKMAKER

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (13): 6 TOU (14): 6
PER (16): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 3 Social Defense: 8
Death: 36 Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 28 Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 5

Skills

Avoid Blow (2): 7
Craftsman (Bookbinding)^A (3): 8
Deteranis' Swords Group^K (1): 8
Diplomacy (2): 8
Economics and Finance^K (5): 12
Embroidery^A (1): 7
Games of Chance^K (5): 12
Haggle (5): 11
Mathematics^K (5): 12
Melee Weapons (5): 10
Negotiation^K (2): 9
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Sperethiel*)
Streetwise (5): 12
Throwing Weapons (2): 7

^AArtisan Skill; ^KKnowledge Skill

Armor

Fur-Trimmed Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Damage 10), Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Striped, Conical Cap, Cloaksense Brooch, Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Quiet Pouch, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

None

Notes

As a dwarf, Dram possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

Commentary

Honest Dran is as honest as his Name says he is, which is a rarity in Kratas. He has earned the respect of the criminal fraternity in Kratas and has a number of favors

BETTING ON THE CONTEST

The player characters may wish to place bets on the contest, or at least check the chances of success the odds-makers are giving them and their rivals. They can place bets with Honest Dran, other bookies, or at the Force of the Eye's gambling hall, the Hard Earned Coin, (p.126 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*) where the manager, Eliander of the Sharpeye, posts his odds on a large board at the back of the hall. The current odds listed on the board at the Hard Earned Coin are:

- Terhik the Bold: Even odds.
- Molis the Nimble: 3 to 2
- Surehand Calisan: 3 to 1
- K'Tren of Bartertown: 5 to 1
- Thysel of Vivane: 6 to 1
- Regan of Jerris: 6 to 1
- The Corlaks Brothers: 6 to 1
- Silvian Ishtrian: 7 to 1
- Yuriet of Urupa: 8 to 1
- Zhunes of Travar: 10 to 1
- Team Padfoot: 12 to 1
- Xok Steadyhand: 15 to 1

These odds are given for those that it is believed were sent invitations to the competition, as well as legendary Thieves from outside of town that have been showing up in town as the deadline approaches. Members of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers are thought to be likely to win, not only because they are held in high regard in Kratas, but also because of their perceived home field advantage. Xok's chance of winning had been much higher, but when he arrived in town with the very obvious symptoms of his curse showing, his odds plummeted. Gamemasters should also feel free to add odds for gamemaster characters that the group may have met in previous adventures.

Honest Dran gives similar odds to those on offer at the Hard Earned Coin, or even slightly better, as Garlthik does not take as large a cut of the dwarf's earnings. However, he cannot handle extremely large bets. If the player characters were of sufficiently high Legendary Status as Thieves as to be given an invitation by Finellianis, there are already odds posted for them here. Note that if the player characters bet on themselves, essentially announcing that they are entering the contest, or otherwise let it be known (by indiscreet inquires about the most valuable object in town, perhaps) that they are in the running, or if they received an invitation from Finellias, Eliander of the Sharpeye assigns odds based on the characters' Legendary Status, as per the table below.

LEGENDARY STATUS

Non Thief	Odds	Thief adept	Odds
Zero	100 to 1	Zero	100 to 1
One	50 to 1	One	25 to 1
Two	25 to 1	Two	15 to 1
Three	10 to 1	Three	5 to 1
Four	4 to 1	Four	Even
Five	Even	Five	1 to 10

Note that if the player characters are working for Xok Steadyhand, the bookies only take bets placed on him, not on the Names of the characters.

earned with its more influential, and dangerous, citizens, should anyone try to unduly influence him. On days when he is carrying large sums, he hires bodyguards as he thinks necessary, with a preference for Deteranis' Swords (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p.117). A rounder-than-average dwarf, approaching the end of his middle age, he is easily recognizable in his flamboyant, fur-trimmed Espagra Scale Cloak and his striped, conical cap. He has not survived this long in Kratas on just his honesty; he carries a dwarf sword at his belt and he knows how to use it. Honest Dran is a non-adept dwarf bookmaker.

Where to from Here?

At this point, having introduced the player characters to the competition, the gamemaster can decide whether he wishes to direct them on a linear adventure, which, if they are successful, results in their recovery of the most valuable object in Kratas; or leave them to their own devices, which may or may not result in their winning the competition, but may be more entertaining for players who enjoy taking a more active hand in the game. The latter course most likely requires more improvisation on the gamemaster's part, and a thorough familiarity with Kratas is recommended, both on the gamemaster's part and that of the players.

Gamemasters wishing to run a linear adventure should skip ahead to **A Disgusting Proposal**, while those running a more free-form version should continue with **What to Steal?** below. Whichever way you go, once the player characters have their entry in hand, proceed to **Judgment Night**, below.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The worst thing that can happen here is for the players to take no interest in entering the competition. If that happens, you can move on to **A Disgusting Proposal** below. Alternatively, you can light a fire under the characters' collective butt by having them suddenly face money problems. Look into the characters' backgrounds and find something they care about, then place it under jeopardy that can be resolved with the jackpot or selling of loot. For example, the mother of one of the characters is a farmer, but scorchers burned her crop. She will lose the family farm and become destitute unless she can pay off her creditors.

Alternatively, an Illusionist, disguised as one of the player characters, recently took out a hefty loan from one of the loan sharks of the Force of the Eye and then skipped town with no intention of paying back the loan. The characters are accosted on the street by Kneebreaker and several toughs of the Force, with a reminder that they need to pay up by the end of the month or else. Kneebreaker has a piece of paper with one character's mark, an "X," on it by the sum and doesn't really

care if the character was impersonated; that's not his problem. Further, he has the Force of the Eye to back up his claim.

While the contest does not pay a prize, the characters can place a bet on themselves to win with Dran or at the Hard Earned Coin. As relative unknowns to the contest, the odds on them may be as high as twenty to one or more. For more information on wagering on the contest, see the **Betting on the Contest** sidebar.

WHAT TO STEAL?

What might be the most valuable item in Kratas, and where might it be found? This is not one simple encounter, per se, but a list of possible directions the players may go to from here that can lead to multiple different encounters. Their initial discussion can take place in a tavern, an alley, or in the characters' hideout if they have one. Adjust the description below accordingly.

SETTING THE STAGE

So now the game is afoot. You are going to try your lot against the big boys—the best thieves in Barsaive. As you gather around a table and start to make your plans, you see the eager gleam of anticipation in your companions' eyes. But where to begin?

THEMES AND IMAGES

The feel of this encounter should include excitement and scheming as the players plot their big heist. The gamemaster can add to the tension and urgency by having gamemaster characters remind the group that the experienced Thieves have been working on their entries for almost a year, while the player characters have only a week. The characters' decisions may also take them nearly anywhere in Kratas, so the mood may change as appropriate.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The player characters now have several options on how to proceed. They will likely begin to speculate on what could be the most valuable object in Kratas, and where it may be located. Such speculation was a common subject of gossip in Kratas a year ago when the contest was announced, and has been revived as the deadline approaches. The gamemaster can hand out information and clarify facts by having the characters



use appropriate Knowledge skills, especially those concerning Kratas directly. Some other leads can be found in **Rumors and Research**, p. 32.

Some of the targets that the characters may consider are described below. While effort has been made to anticipate the players' ideas, they are likely to come up with other ones not listed here as well, for which the gamemaster must be flexible and adaptable.

Once the characters have an entry in hand, you may go directly to **Judgment Night**, assuming that they have no difficulty holding on to their entry. However, you may also modify the events of **Are you the Keymaster?** So that the antagonists of that encounter are trying to steal whatever entry the players have come up with from the group, rather than the Key.

Merchants

The characters may think that, as some of the wealthiest Namegivers in the city, the merchants of the trading companies of Merchants' Row might own the single most valuable item in town. However, while many of the merchants have great wealth, those from outside of the city, such as the trading houses of Throal or the Serpent River aropagoi, store most of their treasure in their home communities. Certainly they would never dream of bringing a family heirloom or other prized possession to the City of Thieves. Moreover, they deal mostly in large quantities of goods, rather than individual, valuable items. Time spent picking the pockets of these merchants or breaking into their tavern rooms may yield some jewelry, coins, or gemstones, but even the nicest of these will not be worth more than a few thousand silver, which would not warrant a second glance at the judging. Some merchants may carry bags of gems or even gold or elemental coins for buying goods in town, but only one of these pieces could be entered in the contest.

The same is true of the warehouses of the merchants in the Warehouse District; many are full of trade goods, but no one piece of merchandise is that valuable.

Garlthik's Treasure Vault

Rumors persist that Garlthik has a vast treasure vault hidden somewhere within the city, filled with the booty gathered from his decades of theft, as well as his cut of all of the ill-gotten gains of the Force of the Eye. The truth of the matter is that Garlthik has multiple such vaults hidden throughout Kratas, as well as other hidden caches in the rest of Barsaive. Trusted members of Garlthik's inner circle know some of these, though each of them knows only of one and thinks that that one is the only one. Only Garlthik knows of all of the vaults.

Most of the contents of these vaults are useless for the competition, in that the vaults hold vast amounts of coins and jewels, of small value individually. However, the vaults also contain some artifacts, artworks, and legendary magical items: any of the legendary magical items described in the *Gamemaster's Companion*, as well as others the gamemaster may wish to include.

Finding one of Garlthik's vaults is extremely difficult, however. The path most likely to lead to success would be to join the Force of the Eye and earn the trust of Garlthik (for more information see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p.46). This would most likely take years, however, so is not practical for the purposes of the Thievery Competition. One could attempt to follow Garlthik or one of his trusted minions as he visits a vault, but this would be quite difficult. Garlthik is extremely careful when visiting his vaults, as are his followers. One of the vaults is hidden under One-eye manor in Hilltop. Another is in one of the abandoned manors of that neighborhood. Others are in the Magistrate's Palace, the Old Citadel, the Old Keep on Clifftop, a safe house in the Safehearts, and deep inside the Kratas Mesa, down a long series of tunnels off of one of the secret passages linking House Jotyn to the Old Cita-

del. Gamemasters should feel free to be creative in locating other vaults, both within Kratas and across Barsaive.

Garlthik's most vulnerable treasure vault, and the most well known, is in the basement of the Magistrate's Palace. This vault is known to Greasy Ingman, and since the beginning of this year's contest, Garlthik has allowed Ingman to let its location slip to a few others. (See p.89 of *Kratas: City of Thieves* for more information on Greasy Ingman.) This vault is stocked with several thousand silver and gold pieces, as well as dozens of gemstones and pieces of jewelry, though not one of them is anywhere near valuable enough to win the competition. Garlthik has also stocked this vault with replicas of any number of legendary magical items with the False Enchantment spell (see the *Player's Guide*, p.168) cast upon them to give them a genuine appearance. A fake Purifier, fake Lorm's Axe, and fake Nioku's Bow can be found here. A few contestants have already been fooled and stolen one or two of these, though Garlthik's men have tracked them down, killed them, and returned the items to the vault. Should the characters take one now, this close to the contest deadline, Garlthik lets them go, content to watch their embarrassment when the ruse is uncovered by the contest judges. Should they kill any members of the Force while stealing the item, Garlthik has them hunted down and killed after the competition.

Anyone sniffing around for Garlthik's vaults, or any other of the Force of the Eye's holdings, may draw the attention of Greywing and Blackstone as well (see p. 25 and p. 26).

Garlthik's greatest treasure vault is the one between House Jotyn and the Old Citadel. No one but Garlthik knows of its existence. It contains his most valuable items, though the passageway also includes extremely difficult traps with Detection and Disarm Difficulties of at least 25. When visiting this vault, Garlthik pauses in side passages hidden off of the main passage to wait for anyone who might be following him here. Should one succeed in following Garlthik, finding the secret door to the vault, and defeating all its traps, he may gaze upon Garlthik's secret vault.

Intricately woven tapestries, one showing the Queen of Wyrms Wood bowing before a dragon, hang on the walls. Sculptures, vases, and artworks of every kind fill simple wooden shelves. Silk-lined cases hold necklaces, medallions, amulets, diadems, and crowns. A single long black feather peeks out of the top of a wine glass. A number of shields are stacked atop each other in a corner; the top-most has the growling face of a bear embossed upon it. Swords of every description hang from wooden pegs in scabbards, some plain, others gilded and bejeweled. Other weapons—spears, axes, hammers, bows, and many others—stand in rows in racks. Seemingly mundane items are also scattered about: an egg, a ratty old fishing net, and a dirty woolen sock. Books, parchments, scrolls, and maps also are stored neatly in a bookcase here.

It is up to the gamemaster to decide whether items found here are actually magical or not, but Garlthik guards his treasures very carefully. Should a sufficiently high-Circle group of characters manage to get past the defenses they deserve to win the contest, so the gamemaster should leave something here, such as a powerful, unique magical item, of sufficient value to win the competition. However, it should be made obvious that the characters are not able to carry loads of items out of the vault because of constraints in time and accessibility, not to forget how dangerous it can be to carry loads of fine items through Kratas.

Should the characters succeed in stealing from this vault, Garlthik discovers it and comes looking for them. He does this on his own, however, and does not mobilize the rest of the Force, both because he has newfound respect for the characters, and because he relishes the challenge. He also wishes to avoid the loss of face that would result from such a revelation should the Force find out he was stolen from.



If Garlthik finds the characters and steals back whatever valuable item they stole, he replaces it with a non-magical duplicate, and waits for them to be shamed when they present the fraudulent item at the judging. Indeed, he attends the event in person and watches their embarrassment in disguise from the crowd.

Hard Earned Coin

While the Hard Earned Coin contains a great amount of coin, including some elemental coins and the regular gem stones used for currency (it is in the house's interest to pay out in large denominations, as to encourage big winners to bet large amounts), it does not hold any especially valuable items, nor do any of the other profitable businesses owned by the Force of the Eye, such as the Blooming Lily, the Screaming Basilisk, or any of the various front companies that buy and sell stolen goods on Merchants' Row.

One item of note to the contest, however, is the large slate board that hangs on one wall of the casino. It has an updated list of known or suspected competitors in the competition, and the odds on them. See the **Betting on the Contest** sidebar in the **Odds-on Favorite** section for current odds.

Temples to the Passions

In many cities and towns, temples to the Passions may contain the most valuable items of their communities, in the form of statues or paintings of the Passions, tapestries, rugs, altars, or ritual objects such as candelabras or chalices. Characters new to the City of Thieves might think that this would hold true in Kratas, but most of the temples here have been destroyed, or at least stripped of their furnishings. The Temple of the Twelve in Hilltop does still hold twelve giant marble statues of the Passions, each over fifteen feet tall and weighing thousands of pounds. They are worth thousands of silver pieces each, and should one succeed in stealing one, getting it out of Hilltop, and sneaking it to Clifftop, it would be quite impressive, but not of sufficient value to win.

The temples along Temple Plaza are potentially more promising, however the temples of Rashomon, Mynbruje, Jasree, Garlen, Thystonius, Lochost, Floranuus, Chorrolis, and Vestrial contain nothing of significant value.

The temple of Erendis does contain some small ritual objects of value: a book of many thousands of pages of rules and regulations for proper ritual worship, and an orichalcum ink well. The temple is locked and watched by the Force of the Eye. The objects are also likely cursed by Dis, and the theft of them could inspire his wrath, possibly even resulting in his sending a Harbinger to retrieve them.

The only possible entry from the temple of Upandal is the massive, ten-foot tall iron anvil that is used as an altar. It would be quite an impressive feat to steal it and haul it to Clifftop. While the temple is not heavily guarded, should someone succeed in stealing the anvil, all of the Weaponsmith forges join forces in attempting to get it back. Evading their attention while hiding and transporting a many-ton anvil would be a legendary feat.

The temple of Astendar contains a truly beautiful fountain in the central chamber. It has a marble statue of Astendar holding an urn on her head, from which water shoots, falling down into a gold pool shaped like a giant seashell. Keep in mind that the temple is open night and day, so there are always Namegivers in this area. Should the characters manage to steal this, water fed from the city aqueducts shoots up from the floor. More importantly, Cranta Warg (see *Kratas: City*

of *Thieves*, p.106) both tries to hunt down the thieves herself, as well as posting a bounty for their capture and the return of the statue. Her reward offer is unlimited services of the temple free of charge for a year and a day. She has many, many eager bounty hunters.

Winking Eye Jewelers

Obviously, when thinking of individual items that are extremely valuable, gemstones and pieces of jewelry come to mind. The best known jewelry store and the one likeliest to have the most valuable item is the Winking Eye Jewelers (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p.174). As such, it has been a frequent target of robbery attempts, especially in the months leading up to the end of the contest. One attempt was temporarily successful, but when Green Tarl discovered that an elaborate gold and platinum necklace had been stolen, he hired Thront and Urranum (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p.157) to get it back. They did, and made a very messy spectacle of the poor thief as well. The stains still haven't come off of the alley walls.

The most valuable item in the Winking Eye is a tiny, beautiful diamond necklace known as the Gift of the Fairie Queens. This is not a necklace in which diamonds have been set, but a necklace whose pendant and chain are carved from a single diamond. It is sized for a windling to wear. The pendant is a large oval, in which there is carved an extremely intricate image of Wyrms Wood. Individual trees, animals, and plants are carved and decorated with precious metals and powders made of crushed gemstones. In the center of this vista are miniature images of the Queen of Wyrms Wood extending a hand of friendship to the legendary Windling Queen. According to legend, this necklace was a gift from the Rose Throne to the Queen of the Windlings, though some claim that the windlings have no such queen.

Unfortunately for the characters should they try to steal this, Terhik the Bold has had his eye on the piece since the competition began and is in the final stages of executing his plan to steal it. He has smuggled in a master jeweler from Urupa. Every night for the last month he has broken into the jewelry shop and snuck the jeweler in as well, so that the jeweler can make a replica with which to replace the necklace once he has stolen it. Should the characters break in, they possibly surprise him in the act.

In this scenario, the characters surprise Terhik just when his jeweler has finished duplicating the medallion. Terhik has both the original and the forgery in hand when the characters enter. He quickly palms the original and then, if confronted or threatened by the players, tries to pass off the fake as the original, letting the characters have it, but only after putting up some convincing resistance.

Should the characters steal the fake from him, Terhik makes off with the original, and then indirectly provides a description of the characters to Green Tarl, letting them take the heat for his theft.

Apart from being finished or not when caught, there is one very subtle difference between the original and the fake: in the fake the Fairie Queens are thumbing their noses at the viewer, but the detail is so small it takes a Perception (12) Test to see. This is a joke on Terhik on the jeweler's part, but unless the characters know what the medallion is supposed to look like, they may not realize that this indicates it is a fake.

The forger, a dwarf from Urupa Named Tah Dregot, was kidnapped by Terhik, but now is enthralled with the caper. Not only is this the greatest excitement of his life, but he has been privileged to see one of the greatest masterpieces of his trade and match his skills against it. Dregot is loyal to Terhik now and wants him to pull off the heist and win the contest. Dregot thus goes along with Terhik when, if discovered in the vault, Terhik passes Dregot off as his assistant burglar.

Weaponsmith Forges

The characters might speculate that the Weaponsmith forges might hold some weapon or armor of great value. However, the forges deal mostly in volume, not individual items of great value.

The Blood Steel Forge might hold at the most a set of Crystal Plate or even an Orichalcum Shield. While quite valuable, neither would win the contest. Keep in mind that the Blood Steel Forge runs night and day, with many guards, and any such valuable items would be locked away behind some of the Tinkerers' Forge's best locks and traps.

Neither the Daggerwrights nor the Tinkerers' Forge contains any items of sufficient value to win the contest.

Art and Antiques

The characters might speculate that some grand artwork—a famous painting, an antique piece of furniture, or other such prized item—might win the contest. However, many such delicate artworks did not survive the Scourge, and the value of those that did is dependent upon what the market will bear. Barsaive does not have much of a market for such things, as the province is still rebuilding itself after the Scourge, and the wealthy invest most of their money in more practical matters than collecting antiques. Therefore, the thieves of Barsaive do not generally steal much in this line, and thus there is not a lot of it in Barsaive.

There is a small market in stolen art and crafts, but most of it is inexpensive, to be resold to the comfortable middle classes in Travar and Urupa. The true market for high-end artworks and antiques is in Thera and other parts of the Empire. Having said that, there is one antique collector in Kratas: Vistrosh.

The Blood Warder has an interest in ancient artworks and antiques, especially those made by elven artisans. He often sends these back to the Blood Wood as gifts to the queen, ostensibly to try to regain her favor. He has his eye out for any works made centuries before the Scourge by a master elven silversmith, Khiallen Daevenar, known to be one of Alachia's favorites. Most of Daevenar's works are at the Elf Court, so it is very rare to find one outside of the Blood Wood. A silver wine decanter by Daevenar is currently for sale in one of the pawnshops along Merchants' Row, though the proprietor has no clue as to its true value or pedigree. Should the players steal it, Vistrosh hears of it and send agents to attempt to recover it. See **Are You the Keymaster?** for information on Vistrosh's agent in the competition. If the characters manage to make it to the competition and enter the decanter, they do not win, but once the competition is over, Vistrosh, through his agents, offers to buy it from them for a generous price.

Death's Thunder

The characters may think to steal Death's Thunder, the airship of the mercenary group of the same Name. For more information on this, see the adventure idea **Stealing Thunder** on p.121 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*. Should the characters pull off the theft, the judges consider the ship to be one object, and it is, indeed, highly valuable. The hardest part of stealing the ship may not be the initial theft, but rather keeping it until the judging. It is a very big item, and hard to hide, and its crew are extremely determined to get it back. They are very resourceful, ruthless, and work extremely well together.

Magic Items

The characters might reasonably think that the most valuable item in Kratas is a magic item. Various valuable magic items may be found throughout Kratas; every shop or fence probably has at least one of any of the common magic items, or perhaps even thread items. None of these are valuable enough to win the competition. There may also be unique magic items of the gamemaster's choice in the city, as well as those unique items mentioned in the **Magical Treasures** chapter of *Kratas City of Thieves*, such as Deteranis' Swords. (Though an impressive theft, no one of these swords is that valuable without the others in the set.) The single most valuable magic item (except for the Key to the City) currently in the city

is Mynbruje's Razor (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 248), which is in B'rakorl's Emporium. The Emporium is heavily trapped, and B'rakorl is usually found there, even sleeping there at night on a small cot in the corner. Should the characters succeed in stealing the Razor, or any other item of hers, she not only uses her considerable powers to hunt them down herself, but may also hire Thront and Urranum to find the thieves as well.

Crown of Valvidius

Characters who know of the legend of Valvidius, King of Thieves may search for the Crown of Valvidius. Many others had the same idea after the contest was announced last year, and several expeditions were mounted to Florque to search for the crown. Others scoured the city itself, even breaking into some of Garlthik's strongholds, assuming that, as the closest thing to a "King of Thieves" that Kratas has now, he must have the crown. Garlthik, however, has never taken the title "King of Thieves," both because he thinks the title is cursed by Vestrial, and because he thinks it is antithetical to the nature of Thieves—a true Thief bows to no one.

All of these expeditions turned up empty, and many are glad that they did, as it is generally believed that the crown is cursed. It appears that the crown is not in Kratas, and if the crown were discovered outside of Kratas, it would not fulfill the criteria of this year's contest.

Stealing from Another Thief

The characters might do as others have, and rather than ferreting out an entry themselves, follow a likely competitor and steal his entry. This is completely valid by the rules of the contest and is expected by all of the serious competitors. All of the front-runners have taken precautions to protect their entries, the simplest being to store the item outside of the city. Entries must be stolen in Kratas, so if, after stealing the item in town, the thief hides it outside the city, a second theft of the item does not count.

Terhik the Bold, as the favorite to win, has taken the most elaborate precautions to protect his entry, by renting the warehouse mentioned in **Odds-on Favorite**.

If the characters decide to try to steal Terhik the Bold's entry in the competition, first they must discover the location of his warehouse. A successful Interaction or Bribery Test with a resident of the Warehouse District gives them the location. The warehouse

is located on the corner across from the old slave market and is guarded by two of Deteranis' finest, standing out front. There are also four more guards: two stationed on opposite nearby rooftops, one hidden in the alley behind the warehouse, and one hiding inside the warehouse itself. The warehouse is a single story, twelve-foot-high building with a single door facing the street. The door has a simple but sturdy lock, which requires a successful Lock Picking (15) Test to open.

The warehouse has only one room, 10 yards by 10 yards in size. Inside the room is a massive crate, 3 yards tall by 2 yards wide and 2 yards deep. The crate is wrapped in strong chain (Barrier Rating: Physical Armor 12/Death Rating 45) and locked with padlocks, which require a successful Lock Picking (18) Test to open. The wooden crate itself has a Barrier rating of Physical Armor 7/Death Rating 20. Inside the crate is not a giant solid gold statue, as the rumors would have it, but a hundred small chests, neatly stacked one on top of another, filling the crate. Each has a lock requiring a successful Lock Picking (15) Test to open. Additionally, one in five chests has a trap of some sort located on it. Sample traps include a poison needle that ejects from the lock into the hand of the thief, a cloud of acid that explodes from the chest, and a krillworm or other nasty beastie locked inside the chest. One unique trap, located near the bottom of the pile is a chest that contains within it what appears to be an enormous gem mounted on a post. The gem, which is a fake, is coated with a magical glue such that anyone who grabs it is instantly stuck to the gem, which is affixed to the post and to the chest. Thus the thief's hand is stuck within the chest, making it quite difficult to pick any subsequent locks until it is removed. The magical glue has a Dispel Difficulty of 13.

Each chest has a small trinket of some kind in it: a copper piece, a rock, a feather, a bone, or some similar item. Some chests contain taunting notes on scraps of parchment. For example: "Have you found what you are looking for?" "Keep trying." "Is this it?" In the last chest, at the bottom of the crate, is a crystal box containing a single red rose. This is not the Everliving Flower, but gullible adventurers may think that it is. The entire warehouse is a red herring. Terhik has set it up to foil would-be rivals. He made a colossal amount of money in last year's challenge, has simple tastes, and is committed to improving his legend by winning two years in a row. He actually has his entry—the Gift of the Fairie Queens, see the **Winking Eye Jewelers**, above—on his person, but he hopes the warehouse will distract his rivals.

Cheating

The rules for the contest are fairly simple, so it is difficult to break them. Almost anything is allowed, including interfering with other contestants' entries. Attempting to pass off as stolen an item that was actually purchased is against the rules, as is entering something that was stolen outside of Kratas. Other cheats might try to forge an item of great value, using the False Enchantment spell or other Illusionism abilities. However, the judges use Evidence Analysis, Dispel Magic, Detect Falsehood, and other talents and spells to attempt to catch such frauds.

To work around the requirement that an item needs to be stolen from Kratas, one could steal a valuable object outside of Kratas, bring it into the city, and sell it to someone else, and then steal it back, fulfilling the requirements of the contest. Or one could lure into the city someone who is known to have a valuable item in hopes of stealing it from them there. Neither of these is considered cheating.

One final option the unscrupulous might try is to fix the contest by bribing or blackmailing the judges, or possibly kidnapping them and substituting an impostor. This is quite difficult to pull off, but not necessarily impossible. The judges are powerful adepts and valued members of the Kratan community, with allies among



its gangs. Further, Finellianis will try to prevent any such tampering. The identities of the judges are not known ahead of time, but, as some have served in previous years, asking around might reveal some good guesses as to those who are likely to serve again. Finellianis does consider tampering with the judges cheating, and will disqualify any one discovered doing so.

Ask an Expert

Finally, the players might think to ask for expert advice on what could be the most valuable object in Kratas. While there are any number of lore merchants and information brokers working out of booths in taverns in Kratas, the best source of such information is Tirzenalos, a lore merchant who operates a shop in the Hammersing (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p.175). If the characters speculate about looking for a Lore Merchant, a simple Streetwise (6) Test would lead them to Tirzenalos. They might also want to consult Gremor the Black, but he considers the Thievery Competition to be silly frippery and has no speculation on what the most valuable item might be.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This section requires the players to show initiative by attempting to figure out what objects might be valuable enough to enter the contest. If they are stumped, you might drop a hint that would direct them toward Tirzenalos. Otherwise, you might have Xok enter the picture.

A reminder: as soon as the characters start working on their entry, they will begin to be followed by Shifty P'trank- see **Are you the Keymaster?**, below. From this point on, have the characters make periodic Perception Tests when it is dramatically appropriate to notice P'trank following them.

The players might also get fixated on stealing something that they think is valuable, but actually is not worth their time, or spend too much time hunting something that doesn't exist, or isn't in Kratas. A mentor character, a more experienced Thief, or someone very wise in the ways of Kratas might be used to lead them away from red herrings, possibly by gently ridiculing their ideas. Or, the characters could overhear others speculating about what might win. The players should keep in mind that last year's winning entry was a pair of chests full of orichalcum coins, each coin worth 10,000 silver pieces. Though this year's contest is different, that is the scale of value they should be thinking of.

A DISGUSTING PROPOSAL

In this encounter, the characters are offered a job assisting a Master Thief, Xok Steadyhand of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers, in securing his entry in the contest. Xok has recently been cursed, so is unable to pursue the prize on his own.

SETTING THE STAGE

Read the following aloud to a Thief member of the group. If there are no Thief characters in the group, change the text appropriately.

While making your way through the streets of Kratas, you notice a large ork moving toward you. He makes no effort to hide his intent. He is covered in a number of bandages and is carrying a sword. He strides straight up to you and addresses you by Name.

"You're a Thief, right? Well I need to hire a Thief. Simple job; pays well."

Before you can answer, he turns to the side, leans over, and vomits on the ground. He continues to spew for a while, his

body convulsing, loud retching noises echoing off the neighboring buildings. When he finally finishes, there is a large puddle of glowing green sick at his feet. He stands back up, wipes his mouth with a rag, sighs, and says, "So what do you say?"

THEMES AND IMAGES

The nature of Xok's curse should be comedic, as is his good-natured humor in dealing with it. Xok is charming and affable, and that should come through despite his current impediment.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This encounter can be used to rope the characters into the adventure if after **Odds-on Favorite** they do not wish to enter the contest, or if they are low Circle and quite reasonably do not expect to be able to compete. The group, or the member of the group with the best reputation as a Thief, is accosted on the street. If a character makes a successful Streetwise (11) Test or a Knowledge Test with a suitable skill, he recognizes the ork as Xok Steadyhand, a member of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers Thieves' Compact.

Xok introduces himself, and explains further.

"Look, I'm wanting to win the competition this year, and I have a good lead on the most valuable item in town. But I got cursed on a journey last month and won't be able to retrieve the item myself. 'Scuse me."

He leans over again and repeats the previous disgusting performance. After another minute or so of hurling, he continues.

"Passions, my jaw is starting to ache from that! Terrible curse for a Thief; I'll be in the middle of disarming a trap, and then that happens! Imagine trying to hold your hand steady during that. Can't sneak up on anyone either; makes too damn much noise. Even if I could, I'd leave a glowing trail behind me, unless I want to haul a backpack full of puke out with me on every job. Stinks too! Every guard dog for miles sets to howling. Had to fight my way out of that last gig, which is how I got so banged up. The questor of Garlen tells me it won't kill me and it should wear off in another month or so, but that won't be in time for the competition. I can pay you 2,000 silver each, but the benefit this will bring to your reputation here in town will be worth far more than that."

If the characters agree to work for Xok, there are two options from here. If Xok has not already gone to see Tirzenalos, the characters can accompany him there in the encounter **Visiting the Lore Merchant**, below. Gamemasters who wish to skip that encounter, which might be advisable if the players are eager to get to the action and avoid a long set-up, should assume Xok has already been to Tirzenalos and continue with the narration below.

"Great, great!" he says slapping you on the back. "Let's discuss the details at my place."

He leads you through the streets of Kratas to an unremarkable hovel. Once inside, you see that the furnishings are comfortable and elegant. He sits down next to which is a large barrel, covered with a lid. During the ensuing conversation, he lifts the lid periodically to send another dispatch within.

"Alright, I have it from an excellent source that, to find the most valuable item in town, we must find the resting place of the last administrator of Kratas, a Theran toff Named



Dorma Torlisant. The most likely place to find a record of what happened to his corpse would be in the offices of the Old Kaer. I can draw you a rough map. You may have to spend some time looking through those records, but getting into the kaer should be no problem for you; there isn't much of value in there, and it's only guarded by a dozen or so members of the Force of the Eye."

If the characters ask the identity of his excellent source, and they have managed to create a Friendly Attitude or better with Xok, who is a pretty friendly guy to begin with, he tells them about going to Tirzenalos the Lore Merchant and the ghost master ritual he performed, as described in **Visiting the Lore Merchant**. If the characters have somehow annoyed Xok, or he feels they are untrustworthy, he politely declines to answer.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Not much can go wrong here, unless the characters refuse the job. If they wish to haggle with Xok, he is not averse to that and does so aggressively, but he does not go above 2,250 silver each.

If the characters are not Thieves, he may still hire them. Change his dialogue as necessary, and come up with some way that their past exploits could be framed in the most criminal and underhanded manner, which often happens when legends are retold in Kratas. Rather than explorers, they are "Kaer Burglars." Rather than freeing a village from bandits and being rewarded by the grateful villagers, they were hired to assassinate some troublemakers. Any previous adventure can be cast in an appropriate light.

Otherwise, the gamemaster can use a mistaken identity ploy. The characters resemble some group of Thieves that Xok wants to hire. Even if they straighten out the confusion, Xok offers them the job anyway. While an excellent Thief, he is a bit of a procrastinator and is desperate to get some entry for the contest, to save face among the rest of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers compact.

A reminder: as soon as the characters and Xok start working on their entry, they will begin to be followed by Shifty P'trank—see **Are you the Keymaster?**, below. From this point on, have the characters make periodic Perception Tests when it is dramatically appropriate to notice P'trank following them.

VISITING THE LORE MERCHANT

In this encounter, the characters visit Tirzenalos, the Lore Merchant, for advice on the most valuable item in Kratas. He summons his ghost master, a great Thief from before the Scourge, who gives the characters a hint as to the location of the most valuable object in Kratas.

SETTING THE STAGE

The distant ring of hammers on anvils can still be heard as you enter one of the side streets of the Hammersing, looking for the small shop of the Lore Merchant, Tirzenalos. As you approach the shop a weathered, old elf steps out of the doorway and greets you, seemingly aware of your intentions. He wears deep maroon robes, embroidered with gold and silver threads, and a white beard that reaches down to his waist. With a formal bow and wave of his hand, he bids you enter his home. The warm smell of old parchment and musty paper greets you as you enter. His office is dominated by a tall standing desk and is lined with ornately carved bookshelves, filled with neatly ordered rows of books and scrolls. He shuffles to stand behind his desk and peers over it at you.

"What knowledge do you seek?" he asks.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Emphasize the sense of mystery and awe and being in the presence of ancient knowledge. The ghost master is jocular and mischievous, a counterpoint to Tirzenalos' dry and reserved demeanor.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Once the characters ask about the most valuable item in Kratas, Tirzenalos responds:

"I know not the answer to your question, but I may know one who does. It will cost you a thousand silver pieces to find out, though."

If they agree and pay (Xok handles this if present), he shuffles towards the back of his office.

"With the wave of his hand, one of the book shelves slides to the side revealing a curtain behind. Just before he disappears through the curtain he looks back over his shoulder and says to you. "Wait here. And don't touch anything."

You wait in the outer room for what seems an eternity, then, after an hour or so, you here faint mutterings from within the back room, then what sounds like a second voice and a

whispered conversation. Tirzenalos calls out to you, "Come; join us."

As you enter the back room, you see a comfortable sitting room lined with tapestries and filled with the smoke of incense. In the room is a circle of richly upholstered stools. Sitting on the stool opposite the door is a pale bluish-white figure, partially translucent. The spirit, if that is what it is, has the form of an obese human male, with shaved head and thick beard and rings adorning his ears and fingers. He wears ghostly, flowing opulent clothing of a cut and style you have never seen before. He greets you with a broad grin as you enter.

"This is my ghost master," Tirzenalos explains. "Years before the Scourge, he was the greatest Thief here in Kratas. Ask him what it is you seek."

The characters should repeat their request here.

"Well now, why would you be asking about that?" He laughs before the characters can answer. "Now, I don't mind giving you a little help, but I won't just come out and tell you what to do to win the competition; that would take all the fun out of it. Wouldn't be sporting either."

If the characters protest that they paid for the exact information, Tirzenalos explains that this is the best he can do, and they can take it or leave it. If they try to haggle, the ghost master disparages them for unseemly behavior, not befitting ones who would claim to be among the greatest of thieves.

Once they have paid, the ghost master says:

"Here is my clue for you: find the resting place of the last administrator of Kratas."

He answers no more questions and disappears if pressed. If the characters ask Tirzenalos for further help, he can tell them that the last administrator, Dorma Torlisant, died during the Scourge, and there may be records within the Old Citadel. He suggests they search the offices in the Old Kaer, behind its central chamber.

He does not reveal the Name of his ghost master, even if threatened or offered money.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Not much can go wrong here, unless the characters attempt to assault Tirzenalos or refuse to pay for the information. Adjust the price down to within their resources if the characters cannot afford the thousand silver. If the characters are working for Xok, they either come with him, in which case he pays the fee, or he has already paid for and received the information, which is why he sends them to infiltrate the Old Kaer.

However, both of these encounters involve little action on the part of the players, so you might not want to subject them to two sequential episodes that mostly involve talking. Groups that enjoy more of the roleplaying and atmospheric elements of the game might find this of interest.

INTO THE OLD KAER

In this encounter the characters must break into the offices of the Theran bureaucracy in the Old Citadel and find the record of the last resting place of Dorma Torlisant. They may try to sneak, bribe, or bluff their way past the guards at street level, or they may venture through the tunnels of the Undercity.

SETTING THE STAGE

You are staring across the central square that is Temple Plaza at a looming stone fortress, the windows of its upper stories like eyes seeming to look suspiciously down at you and the rest of the city. Despite some cracks in its facade and broken crenulations on its battlements, it continues to perform the function for which it was designed: impressing and intimidating the residents of Kratas, unworthy of its weighty majesty. A small contingent of the Force of the Eye stop and collect a handful of coppers from the Namegivers who enter, water jugs in hand. All seem uneasy, and from your vantage point it appears as if the citadel is swallowing them down its darkened maw as they enter the massive doors of the building. Only the periodic return of these souls, staggering under the weight of their now full water jugs, loosens from your minds the image of being eaten by the fortress.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The Old Kaer was the site of the last-ditch struggle of many Namegivers during the Scourge, and so now has the haunted feeling of a graveyard. Emphasize this spooky feeling, as well as the danger of being caught by the regular patrols of the Force of the Eye. Suspense is key. If the characters enter or exit via the sewers, play up the dark, dank feel of the sewer. Fetid smells and dripping noises echoing out of the darkness; wet, slimy puddles underfoot.

BEHIND THE SCENES

For more information on the locale see **The Old Kaer and the Undercity** on p.141 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*. There are two main ways into the citadel: the front door, or through the Undercity.

If the characters are working for Xok, he discusses their abilities with them and recommends a path. For those with good social talents or exceptional stealth: the front door. For those with good lock picking and trap disarming abilities, as well as some competence at combat (one never knows what one might run into in the tunnels): the Undercity. Xok gives the characters a simple map of the Old Kaer, with the offices in question marked, as does Tirzenalos, if asked.

THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

Two members of the Force of the Eye guard the front door and there are further guards posted throughout the kaer. The characters can be allowed into the kaer as far as the central fountain if they tell the guards they are going to get water, and pay the fee to do so. The guards aren't stupid, and should the players forget to bring vessels in which to carry the water, the guards are suspicious, and do not allow them inside.

However, paying the water fee does not get the characters farther than the central chamber, after which they need to sneak their way through. Further, once they take more than twenty minutes to retrieve their water, the guards become suspicious and at least one ventures inside to look for them. The characters could attempt to bribe the guards in the central chamber to allow them into the offices. In this case, the guards balance their fear of getting caught by Garlthik against their belief that there is not anything terribly important left in the old offices.

Alternatively, the characters could try to take the guards out via combat, but should the guards go missing, or their dead or unconscious bodies be found, the Force assumes the assailants are somewhere in the citadel, and has it searched.

For opponents the characters encounter here, use the Force of the Eye Patrol statistics on p. 20. If the characters make their way past the central chamber, go to **The Records Storage**, p. 19.

THROUGH THE TUNNELS

If the characters wish to go through the tunnels of the Undercity, Xok can also provide them with a map from an entrance in the Safehearts, to the basement of the citadel. If they are not working for Xok, a similar map can be obtained from Tirzenalos or many others in the city, for a fee of 20 silvers. Alternatively, the characters can just find their way into the Undercity by exploring the basements of abandoned buildings or looking for places where the city streets have crumbled, exposing the sewers below. Should they enter without a map, the characters are eventually able to find their way to the citadel sewer-access, as it is at the end of a fairly large sewer tunnel and is directly beneath the old street-level entrance. However, this should take them longer, and at the gamemaster's discretion, may result in additional encounters with denizens of the Undercity.

If the characters follow Xok's or Tirzenalos' map through the Undercity, they encounter a gang of Foul Folk and traps set by the Force to prevent such intrusions.

First, the map takes the group from an abandoned basement in the Safehearts into the main sewer tunnel for that neighborhood that then connects with a tunnel running under the Temple Square, connecting to the Old Citadel.

The Sewer Filth

Unfortunately for the characters, and unbeknownst to their mapmaker, a gang of Foul Folk, the Sewer Filth, have set up an ambush in this tunnel for travelers. The Sewer Filth is a gang of

dwarfs and trolls corrupted either by Horrors, Mad Passions, or both. The core group of members was once a bandit gang, and they still prey on Namegivers. However, they are all quite mad, and have been reduced to an animalistic existence, eating rats in the sewers and even engaging in cannibalism. They live exclusively in the sewers now.

Sewer Filth members wear very little clothing, instead smearing themselves with the mud and slime that is found dripping down the walls and puddled on the floors of the sewer. They remain brutally clever and set ambushes by standing still against the muck-covered walls, blending in with the filth. The section of tunnel they are in also suffered severe damage during the Scourge and since, so its walls are jagged and full of holes, which make it easier for the gang to hide. Finally, this section of tunnel is pitch-black, with the Sewer Filth members using their Heat Sight to find any intruders.

Characters require a Perception (10) Test to see the waiting Sewer Filth members, assuming the characters are carrying torches or light crystals with them. Characters who are actively using Heat Sight require a Perception (7) Test or Astral Sight require a Perception (6) Test and do not require light. It is likely that the Sewer Filth members may achieve Surprise (see the *Player's Guide*, p.228) against the characters because they see any light sources the characters are bringing with them into the dark tunnel, and have Heat Sight in case the characters are going in with no lights. It is impossible for the characters to achieve Surprise against the Sewer Filth.

The number of Sewer Filth members should be divided evenly between dwarf and troll members.



SEWER FILTH MEMBER (3 PER CHARACTER)

Attributes

DEX (16): 7 STR (19): 8 TOU (20): 8
PER (9): 4 WIL (14): 6 CHA (8): 4

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0 Spell Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 5
Death: 44 Recovery Tests: 4
Unconsciousness: 36 Knockdown: 8
Wound Threshold: 13 Movement: 5 ^{DW} / 7 ^{TR}

^{DW} Dwarf Movement Rate
^{TR} Troll Movement Rate

Skills

Avoid Blow (6): 13
Climbing (6): 13
Dancing^A (3): 7
Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 7
Horror Lore^K (3): 7
Kratas Undercity^K (4): 8
Melee Weapons (7): 14
Parry (6): 13
Passion Lore^K (3): 7
Read/Write Language (1): 5—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Resist Taunt (5): 11
Riposte (6): 13
Scourge History^K (3): 7
Second Attack (6): 13
Sewer Filth Group^K (3): 7
Speak Language (2): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)
Swimming (5): 13
Throwing Weapons (6): 13
Unarmed Combat (8): 15
Wilderness Survival (4): 8

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Weapons

Spear (Damage 12; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Tattered Clothes

Legend Award

Seventh Circle (3 per PC)

Notes

Has the Heat Sight racial ability.

Commentary

The weapons of the Sewer Filth are coated with the same muck and slime that coats members' bodies. As such, any injury caused by them may infect the characters with a disease, such as Quaking Fever (see p.128 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

Rules

When surrounded by mud and slime, add +3 to the Sewer Filth member's Dexterity Step to determine his Detection Difficulty. Sewer Filth members gain a +3 bonus to all Toughness-Tests to resist Diseases.

Scaling

If the group is high Novice-low Journeyman status (Fourth—Sixth Circle), use 2 Sewer Filth members per character. Legend Award is Fifth Circle.

Should the characters look through the puddles of mud and slime in this part of the tunnels, they may find a handful of silver pieces (2D10), as well as the gnawed bones, torn clothing, and belongings of previous victims of the Sewer Filth.

Note also that, should the characters see the ambush, they can avoid it by finding other ways through the Undercity. The Sewer Filth does not pursue them, preferring to wait for less wary prey to arrive. Finding a detour should take at least an hour or so, and might involve other traps and creatures as well.



❖ GATE PIT TRAP ❖

Detection: 9

Disarm: 9

Initiative: 12/2D10

Trigger: Pulling or Pushing on gate.

Effect: The trap causes Step 10 Falling Damage (no armor protects against this damage) and an additional Step 12 damage from the stakes.

❖ DOOR DEADFALL TRAP ❖

Detection: 10

Disarm: 9

Initiative: 9/D8+D6

Trigger: Pressure Plate, Stepping on top step

Effect: The trap causes Step 15 damage from boulders, and possible Step 4 Falling Damage. Physical Armor protects against the boulder damage, but no armor protects against the Falling Damage.

The Sewer Gate

Once past the gang when using the map, or after a lengthy search if they are not, the characters approach the gate into the basement of the Old Citadel. The gate is closed, but not locked, and a rusty, old chain hangs free. The gate is trapped, however, and any push or pull on it triggers a pit trap under the characters' feet, dumping them into a pit built in a lower level of the Undercity, complete with stakes. Further, when the trap is sprung, the gate falls down in place over the top of the pit, trapping the characters with a loud clang that resounds through the tunnels. This noise alerts a pair of Force of the Eye guards from the citadel above, who come to check on the trap within a few minutes. The gate does not actually lock in place over the pit, and can be shoved aside after the characters have climbed up the 15-foot walls of the pit. A character must make a Strength (12) Test to shove it aside with one hand while hanging on to the wall with the other. Decrease the Strength Difficulty Number for multiple characters pushing at once, or for any clever techniques the players might come up with, such as a Namegiver pyramid.

Note that if a character beats the trap's initiative, thus feeling the floor giving way beneath his feet, the most likely way to jump to safety would be to grab on to the gate. If he does so, and makes a Strength (6) Test to avoid losing his grip when the gate slams down on top of the pit, he may be left hanging underneath the gate.

When the Force of the Eye guards arrive, they look through the gate to see who is in there. If the characters have not already escaped, the guards attempt to capture weak characters, possibly softening them up by shooting arrows down at them first if they seem too ornery, before using a hook and winch on their side of the gateway to haul the gate out of the way. They do not hesitate to try to kill anyone who appears as a threat, and if the group is too powerful or numerous, they retreat up into the citadel to get reinforcements before opening the pit.

If the group is captured, see the section on capture under **Are you the Keymaster?** If the characters let on that their target is the old records in the citadel, Garlthik becomes paranoid and has the security on those rooms increased, adding higher rating locks and more traps.

If the characters escape the pit and venture past the gate, they enter the first basement level of the citadel. This level contains massive storage rooms and workshops that were used by the Therans for maintaining the sewers. The remnants of carts, shovels, tools, rotting timbers, stones, and other debris fill these vast chambers. Further levels lie below, but the characters' interest lies in the floor above. The closest staircase to the upper level, a small spiral one, is easily found not too far ahead of the gate.

This staircase ends in front of a locked door (Lock Picking Difficulty Number 18) with no landing, merely a top step. The Force of the Eye has installed a trap on this door to keep intruders from coming up from the sewers. The trap consists of a number of large round stones suspended in a cavity in the ceiling above the top step of the staircase. When the top step is stepped on, the cavity opens and drops the boulders on the top step, causing Step 15 damage. Anyone Knocked Down falls down the staircase, suffering a further Step 3 damage. Further, the boulders do not stay on the top step, but bounce and roll down the staircase, possibly hitting anyone on the lower steps and knocking them down the stairs as well. A successful Dexterity (9) Test by anyone on the lower steps avoids the stones as they tumble down the stairs.

Once past this door, there are no further obstacles between the characters and their objective: the records storage room.

THE RECORDS STORAGE

This large room is lined with wooden shelves, full of what were once neatly arranged books and scrolls of imperial records. A number of these have been thrown about and ripped apart, but most of them remain in place on the shelves. If a character reads *Sperethiel* or *Theran* and makes a successful Perception (6) Test, he can see faded writing at the top of the shelves giving the dates of the records stored below, ranging from TE 1-10 on the far left, to TE 600-610 on the far right. On the bottom shelf of the rightmost case is a sheaf of papers hastily stuffed in place. This sheaf contains the journal of Rifquand (see sidebar) and has the information the characters need. A Research (11) Test is needed to find the letter with no knowledge of the record dates written on the shelves; if the characters translate the headings on the shelves and start with the right hand shelf, only a Research (9) Test is needed. With an Average result, it takes them an hour to find the proper document; a Good result takes them only 30 minutes; an Excellent result reduces this time to 15 minutes; and an Extraordinary result allows the characters to find it in only five minutes. A Good or better result also lets the characters find a book, *Interments of the Notable Deceased from 400 TE*, written in *Theran*. This is a record of burials in the catacombs under Hilltop. A search for *Torlisant* reveals no entry, suggesting that his body remains where he died.

For every five minutes the characters spend searching the records storage, there is a One-in-six chance that a patrol of the Force of the Eye will pass through the hallway outside the chamber. The gamemaster rolls a D6, and on a result of 1 a patrol approaches. This patrol consists of two human, non-adept members of the Force. Note that these rooms are normally dark, so if the characters have a light lit in the room when the guards walk by, the guards see the light, even if the door is closed, as the door no longer fits snugly. Note also that neither Heat Sight nor astral perception allow the characters to read the documents, though Low-Light Vision allows them to use less light. The guards travel with a light crystal as well, so if the characters post a lookout, they should be able to see the guards coming, and douse their own lights.

If the characters have done something to alert the guards to their presence, such as disappearing for a long time after paying their fee to draw water, or if they have set off any of the traps leading in here from the sewers, the composition of the patrol changes. In this case, two guards patrol the hallways with a light crystal, and, while not boisterous, they are not particularly stealthy, either. However, a dwarf Thief adept follows a couple of minutes behind this patrol, with no light, using his Heat Sight and his Silent Walk talent. This is to catch any intruders who may hide from the first patrol, but then come out of hiding when they think the coast is clear.

Should the guards sneak up on the group, they attempt to capture the characters if they appear weak or small in number, but if the guards discover a large, heavily armed group, they do not disturb the characters. Instead, one guard remains to watch and follow the characters, while the other leaves the area to get reinforcements.

The key document, a journal entry by a scribe, is reproduced below. The message has spots of dried blood on it.

"Gahmil, 3/4, TE 817

It is with a sad heart that I write this final entry. Today the dome fell. One morning last week we awoke to an awful howling outside the dome. It lasted for several days, and in the last few hours we heard voices, plaintive voices, begging to be let in. I hear that horrid cry, "Let us in!" echoing in my head still. Dorma Torlisant assembled the forces of the city in the central square to prepare a defense in case the city was breached.

Dorma Torlisant stood at the top step of the temple of Rashomon. From that perch she gave a stirring speech, both reassuring the gathered populace that the defenses of the city could not fail and rousing the fighters to fight to the last should they do so. Her last words were never heard as a great cracking sound of shattering stone echoed through the citadel. We all looked skyward, to see a crack widening in the great keystone that was the center of the dome. Then the stones began to fall. The first, as large as a thundra beast, landed directly on our leader, crushing her instantly. The rest of the dome began to collapse. Giant stones cascaded down on the city.

Just before the stones began to fall, I thought I heard a peal of otherworldly laughter that made me shiver where I stood. Then it was drowned out by the screams of panic and the terrible thunder of falling stones as we all fled indoors. Several others and I rushed inside the temple of Mynbruje, which has stood fast so far, despite several stones crashing into the upper stories. We have barricaded ourselves in, but we can hear the scurrying about outside the doors as the Horrors attempt to make their way in.

I fear that our refuge will not withstand their assaults for long, nor do we have sufficient provisions here to weather a long siege. Vidafo says that some others have made their way toward the Citadel and is suggesting we attempt to join them. We are preparing now to run that gauntlet. Even if we make it to our fellows, I know we will not last long. But perhaps one day Namegivers will return to this city and read of our fate. I leave this for you, whoever you may be. I am Rifquand, Scribe, Historian and questor of Erendis."

FORCE OF THE EYE PATROL (2)

Attributes

DEX (16): 7 STR (13): 6 TOU (16): 7
PER (16): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (13): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 5 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7
Death: 37* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 29* Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 11 Movement: 6

* Modified by Blood Magic

Skills

Acting^A (4): 10
Avoid Blow (6): 13
Detect Trap (5): 12
Detect Weapon (6): 13
Disarm Trap (5): 12
Force of the Eye Group^K (4): 11
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 11
Lock Picking (5): 12
Melee Weapons (6): 13
Parry (6): 13
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Resist Taunt (5): 11
Riposte (6): 13
Search (6): 13
Second Attack (6): 13
Silent Walk (6): 13
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
Streetwise (6): 13
Surprise Strike (7): 13
Throwing Weapons (5): 12
Trap Initiative (5): 12
Unarmed Combat (7): 14

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Broadsword (Damage 11), Bola (Damage 9; Range 12–24 yards/6–12 hexes; Entangle 9), (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Belt Pouch, 2 × Booster Potions, Healing Potion, Light Quartz Lantern, Thieves' Picks and Tools, Traveler's Garb

Loot

D8 × 8 silver pieces

Legend Award

Fourth Circle

Commentary

These human non-adept guards patrol the citadel and guard the entrance. They usually work in pairs of two, and occasionally with the dwarf Thief below.

FIFTH CIRCLE DWARF THIEF

Attributes

DEX (19): 8 STR (17): 7 TOU (18): 7
PER (19): 8 WIL (14): 6 CHA (9): 4

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 10 Spell Defense: 11
Mystic Armor: 5 Social Defense: 8
Death: 70* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 57* Knockdown: 7
Wound Threshold: 12 Movement: 5

Karma Points: 20/20

* Modified by Blood Magic

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Detect Trap^D (S): 13
 Detect Weapon (S): 13
 Disarm Trap^D (S): 13
 Durability [6/S] (S): 5
 Karma Ritual^D (S): 5
 Lock Picking^D (S): 13
 Melee Weapons (6): 14
 Picking Pockets^D (S): 13
 Resist Taunt* (1): 7
 Search (S): 13
 Sense Poison^D (S): 13
 Silent Walk^D (S): 13 (Shadow Hide)
 Surprise Strike (S): 12
 Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (S): 13
 Trap Initiative^D (S): 13
^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
 * Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch.

Skills

Acting^A (3): 7
 Avoid Blow (3): 11
 Climbing (3): 11
 Craftsman (Blacksmith)^A (4): 12
 Craftsman (Trapmaker)^A (4): 12
 Force of the Eye Group^K (3): 11
 Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 11
 Haggle (3): 7
 Kratas Undercity^K (4): 12
 Parry (3): 11
 Read/Write Language (1): 9–(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Riposte (3): 11
 Second Attack (3): 11
 Snares and Traps^K (4): 12
 Speak Language (2): 10–(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
 Streetwise (4): 12
 Unarmed Combat (4): 12
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 3; Init 1),
Buckler (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 14),
Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items

Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Booster Potion,
 Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, 2 × Craftsman Tools, Dwarf Winternight Cloak,
 Healing Potion, Kelix's Poultice, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

160 silver pieces

Legend Award

Sixth Circle

Notes

Has the Heat Sight racial ability.

Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity—only Tests
Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue

Commentary

This dwarf Thief runs backup for the human non-adept patrols, following them using his Silent Walk talent, using no light source, and relying on his Heat Sight to see. He is often able to catch those able to hide from the first patrol that think the coast is clear after they leave. He is also responsible for fixing broken locks and resetting traps triggered by those trying to sneak into the citadel from the Undercity below.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters may have trouble if none of them speaks *Sperethiel* or Theran. Most of the documents, and the filing system, in the records room are written in that language, but some are in

Throalic as well. The journal entry is written in Theran, but should that prove a game stopper, the gamemaster should feel free to have it written in Throalic.

Should the characters be discovered by the Force of the Eye but manage to escape, Garlthik assigns Greywing and Blackstone to hunt them down. However, should they actually kill any members of the Force of the Eye, Garlthik is very displeased and assigns additional forces to hunt down and kill the characters, even sending a squad to the judging of the contest. As this is a possibility, consider fudging the rolls should the characters enter into combat with the Force patrols, so that they merely knock the guards unconscious. If the characters are going to kill members of the Force, you may wish it to be a conscious decision on their part, rather than accidental.

AT RAGGOK'S FEET

In this encounter, the player characters must retrieve the Key to the City from the remains of Dorma Torlisant, which rest under a massive stone block on the steps of the temple of Rashomon in the Temple Square.

SETTING THE STAGE

There it sits across the square, just as Rifquand described it: a massive stone block the size of a Thundra Beast, wedged in the pile of cracked stone and tile that were once the steps to the Temple of Rashomon. The temple to the now-Mad Passion itself is just a pile of ruins today, but Namegivers of all types still give it a wary eye as they make their way across the plaza.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Most Kratans, inclined toward hiding in shadows, get nervous crossing open spaces and view each other with suspicion when moving through the plaza. Play up the suspicious looks the characters get from the other Namegivers, especially the Force of the Eye guards, for hanging about in the plaza with no apparent destination. If the group travels through the Undercity, the feel is similar to the feel of the tunnels in the previous encounter. Add a greater feeling of unease as the characters are near the Temple of the Mad Passion, Raggok, while working to retrieve the Key.

BEHIND THE SCENES

There are two main ways to get at the Key to the City: moving the stone at street level, or going in from the Undercity and digging it out from below. The main problem with the street-level approach is that the stone is at the front of a temple to a Mad Passion and most Namegivers, but especially the Force of the Eye, do not look kindly on anyone messing around with the temple. Indeed, most assume that the characters are questors attempting to rebuild the temple if they are seen moving the stone.

While nowhere near as bustling as it was before the Scourge, during daylight hours there are still dozens of Namegivers passing through the Temple Square and visiting its remaining temples. Additionally, there are two guards of the Force of the Eye stationed at the front doors of the citadel who have a view of the temple. There are also guards at the front doors of the Temples of Garlen and Astendar who do not confront the player characters directly if they see them working at the stone, but do alert the Force of the Eye.

Come nightfall, the foot traffic in the square dies down, but the guards remain in place. They are complemented by an Archer lookout stationed on top of the citadel and a roving patrol of four additional

guards of the Force of the Eye, whose specific job is to keep an eye on the temples of the three Mad Passions. Finally, there are Thieves visiting the Temple of Chorrolis after nightfall, some of whom are members of the Force and so report any strange goings on to the guards.

Further complicating the removal of the stone is its weight of 11,000 pounds. The group does not need to lift the stone; merely tipping it over will suffice. The easiest way to do this is to hook a team of draft animals up to it, but this is not very subtle. The stone does not budge to anything less than 24 steps of applied force. For example, three Namegivers of Strength Step 8 can attempt to tip over the stone ($8 \times 3 = 24$ Steps of total strength). The Namegiver or draft animal with the highest Strength Step makes a Strength (24) Test, adding a +2 bonus to the roll for every Namegiver or draft animal assisting. For example, the three Namegivers from the previous example would choose one of them to make the Strength Test at Step 8, and add a +4 bonus to the test. Using sturdy levers or crowbars gives a +4 bonus to the test, but the levers or crowbars must be extremely strong; a common staff will snap before the rock budes. When the rock is tipped over, it makes a loud crashing noise as well. Several types of magic may also enable the characters to move the rock; the gamemaster should reward the players' creativity.

The best ways to shift the stone without being noticed include staging a significant distraction elsewhere in the plaza, such as setting fire to one of the working temples, staging a massive fight, or releasing a dangerous beast; or to mask the doings with an illusion, such as the Innocent Activity or Nobody Here spells.

In the case of a distraction, the Temples of Garlen and Astendar both house powerful questors who might be pulled into any fracas in the plaza. Keep in mind that the guards of the Force are not naïve and are familiar with misdirection ploys, having been involved in many as Thieves themselves. Such a distraction might work, but only for a brief time.

An illusion stands a good chance of working, but if the characters have alerted the Force such that Greywing and Blackstone are on their trail, Blackstone's Illusionist talents may allow her to see through the trick. A combination of distraction and illusion might work best. If the characters choose to dig up from beneath the rock, they must first get to the chamber of the Undercity directly under the rock. It is not too difficult to find from the main sewer passage from the citadel, by counting the same number of paces down from the citadel and then left below ground, as it would take to walk from the citadel to the rock above ground. The ceiling of the chamber directly below the rock actually cracked from the fall of the stone, so the characters are able to find the spot fairly easily. There is also a wall to the basement of the Temple of Rashomon that follows the same line as the line of the outer wall of the ruins above. If the characters did not encounter the Sewer Filth in *Into the Old Kaer* above, or

if they did meet the gang members but did not defeat them, they should meet them on the way here with a similar ambush to the one described in the that encounter.

Once they are in the chamber under the stone, the characters can easily pick apart the ceiling, exposing the underside of the boulder and the remains of Torlisant. The initial fall of the stone reduced the Barrier rating of the ceiling to Physical Armor 6/Death Rating 20. However, breaking through the ceiling also undermines the support of the rock itself, causing it to fall through onto the miners underneath 1D6 minutes after the ceiling has been opened. This work as a trap with the following game statistics:

Torlisant's Dead Fall

Detection: 14/6

Disarm: N/A

Initiative: 10/2D8

Condition: Reducing ceiling Damage Rating to 0

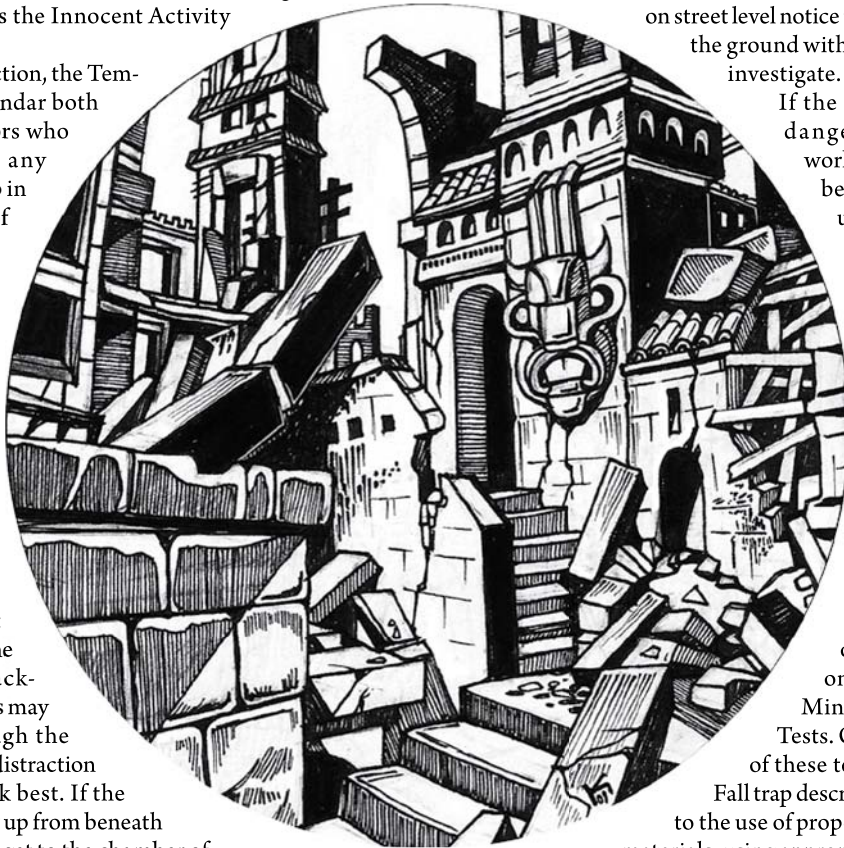
Effect: Torlisant's Dead Fall causes Step 30 Damage

The first Detection Difficulty is for any Thief using Detect Trap, because it is not a trap per se, with no trip wires, pressure plates, or other trigger mechanisms. The second number is for anyone using a Craftsman or Knowledge Skill related to mining or construction. Should the players merely ask if it looks like it might fall, kind gamemasters might allow a Perception Test in place of a Craftsman Test. Should the boulder fall, the guards on street level notice the rock disappearing into the ground with a loud crash and come to investigate.

If the characters perceive the dangers and difficulties in working beneath the boulder beforehand, they can try to use professional mining methods to get at Torlisant's remains. They need equipment and an appropriate skill in the areas of mining or construction, and have to make a successful Action Test using this skill against a Difficulty Number of 8. There should be several Action Tests for different steps of the work; the number of Tests should depend on the skill used, with the Mining skill taking the fewest Tests. On a roll of all ones on any of these tests, the Torlisant's Dead Fall trap described above is tripped. Due to the use of proper mining techniques and materials, using appropriate skills never trips the trap in any other case.

This method also necessitates hauling shoring timbers and tools into the sewer. Should the player characters not have the requisite building skills, there are Namegivers in Kratas who might accept payment, or otherwise be persuaded to assist them.

The chamber under the rock is next to the basement of the Temple of Rashomon, now under the influence of the Mad Passion, Raggok. As Raggok is the Passion of the undead, these basement chambers are rife with undead, including a pack of ghouls that are attracted to any noise made near their lair.



GHOUL LEADER (1 PER CHARACTER)

Attributes

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

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 9
Actions: 1 Spell Defense: 8
Attack (6): 13 Social Defense: 14
Damage: Physical Armor: 6
Claws (4): 10 (poison) Mystic Armor: 1
Death: 76 Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: NA Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 11 Movement: 5

Powers

Durability (6), Poison (SD 10; see text)

Loot

Jewelry worth D8 × 25 silver pieces (worth Legend Points).

Legend Award

Fifth Circle

GHOUL (2 PER CHARACTER)

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 4 TOU: 6
PER: 4 WIL: 3 CHA: 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 7
Actions: 1 Spell Defense: 5
Attack (3): 8 Social Defense: 7
Damage: Physical Armor: 4
Claws (4): 8 (poison) Mystic Armor: 0
Death: 54 Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: NA Knockdown: 4
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 5

Powers

Durability (3), Poison (SD 10; see text)

Legend Award

Fourth Circle (2 Per 1 PC)

Loot

3D6 silver pieces, taken from both tombs and victims.

Commentary

Ghouls are undead creatures created by the Horrors' arcane magics. To sustain themselves, ghouls must eat the vital organs of the living or recently dead. These ghouls live in the Kratas city sewers, crawling out at night to hunt their victims.

Rules

Ghouls react badly to sunlight, incurring a -2 penalty to their Attack and Damage Tests if forced to fight in full sunlight or its equivalent.

Ghouls generally travel in groups of 6–25 individuals. Though some travelers have reported seeing ghoulish hordes comprising as many as 100 members, such huge bands have become rare since the departure of the Horrors.

Poison: Ghouls produce a magical toxin called cacofian that remains inert until the ghoul strikes the target with a successful Attack Test to release the toxin. The poison takes effect for 6 rounds, or until dispelled or resisted. The poison does progressive damage, increasing in intensity for each round in which it remains active. In the first round, it inflicts 1 Damage Point. Over the next five rounds it inflicts 2, 3, 5, 8, and 13 Damage Points, respectively. No armor protects against this damage. When a ghoul dies, its cacofian becomes inert. Many Nethermancers have attempted to use this toxin, but none have succeeded.

Overall Legend Award

This is a Seventh Circle encounter.

Alternative Encounter

The gamemaster may not want to control this many foes at once. Instead of the above, use 2 Ghoul Leaders per 1 Character. Note that this is a tougher encounter, but they get more loot (worth Legend Points too). This is a Seventh Circle encounter.

**Scaling**

If the group is high Novice to Low Journeyman status (Fourth–Sixth Circle), use 2 Ghouls per character +1 Ghoul Leader. Overall Legend Award is Fifth Circle.

Once the characters have moved the stone or the ceiling beneath it, they discover the remains of Dorma Torlisant. Her skeleton was shattered into thousands of bone fragments when she was crushed, and her flesh has rotted away. Her suit of plate mail armor, once gilded and gleaming, is crushed flat like an old tin can, and her broadsword is snapped in several places. Her robes are shredded and tattered as are any of her other possessions or gear, except for the large iron key on a chain around what was once the neck of her suit of armor. The key is rusted, scratched, and dirty, but is otherwise in fine shape. There are no dents in it, which is a clue to attentive characters that this is a powerful pattern item, as these are virtually indestructible.

Once the characters have the key, go on to the next encounter, **Are You the Keymaster?** below.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters may have difficulty coming up with a plan for moving the stone. If they are working for Xok, he can help them. He splits the group into small groups, having one group set off a stink bomb, a variant of the smoke bomb, in Astendar's Temple (see the **Temple Plaza** chapter on p.107 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*). The commotion of patrons and employees of the temple spilling into the street in various states of undress is sure to distract the guards, at least for a moment. While they are distracted, another group of characters, riding past the boulder at just that moment on a dyre they have rented from the stables, throw a rope around the boulder, using the dyre to pull the rock over then dropping the rope and riding on. Finally, a third individual or group is waiting behind the rubble of the temple to grab the corpse of Dorma Torlisant or whatever lies with him, and then quickly scamper away. Have Xok this plan with the characters, and allowing them to help fill in the details. Alternatively, if the characters do not possess the necessary Stealth and Animal Handling skills, he suggests the Undercity approach, even suggesting the use of a miner to assist them.

ARE YOU THE KEYMASTER?

In this encounter, the player characters try to discover the importance of the key while trying to prevent it being stolen from them by others or running afoul of the Force of the Eye.

SETTING THE STAGE

You hold in your hands an old, rusty key. It is larger than most—a full hand's length long—and the complex shapes of its many teeth suggest it opens a lock of some complexity. It is affixed to a looped iron chain, also rusted and grimy, that could be worn around one's neck. Despite its appearance, there is a feeling of importance about this key, as if it opens something of note. Holding the key, you also have an uneasy feeling, as if eyes are staring at you from dark corners, coveting what you have.

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter should begin with a feel of mystery about the key and a sense of paranoia developing in the characters, as there really are others out to get the key. Towards the end, as multiple competing forces attempt to get the key, the encounter should take on the feel of a mad scramble, the characters running through one dark alley after another, each shadow hiding another potential thief and rival.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters have the key, now what to do with it? They may seek to use talents and skills such as Item History and Evidence Analysis on it. Using Item History is not possible because it takes one week of study before the first Test—more time than the characters have available. Using Evidence Analysis at best reveals that the key is either an item of personal importance to Torlisant or one associated with his office.

The players may seek to ask a lore merchant such as Tirzenalos or B'rakorl. For the information they can supply, see **The Key to the City of Kratas** in **Rumors and Research**, p.33. However, the greatest expert on keys and locks in Kratas is Rigart Squinteye, the founder and head of the Tinkerers' Forge. He is a very busy man and not very sociable, so getting in to speak with him may require good roleplaying, use of social talents and skills, and possible judicious application of silver to his underlings. However, once the characters get to the old man and show him the key, his demeanor changes drastically. He is greatly pleased to examine the key and happily tells the characters all he knows about it, in exchange for being allowed to examine and sketch a picture of it. He also cleans the key for them, dipping it in a bowl of some unknown solvent. Once cleaned, one can make out intricate patterns etched in the surface of the key.

Squinteye is able to tell the characters that the key is definitely of Theran manufacture and was made well over five hundred years ago. He also tells them that it is too large for a chest or common doorway, but would open a large gate or portcullis, or possibly a very large door. Further, he can tell from the pattern of the teeth that it is a master key, being able to open several different locks, which could each have their own separate key. Finally, the etchings appear to be part of a Theran system of enchantments that would have allowed the key to temporarily deactivate any magical wards that were placed on a lock. He is unable to tell without having the lock at hand whether such wards remain active.

The next step in finding out what the key opens is to try it in locks. The key opens any of the four gates into the city: those leading to

the Stables, the Greenmarkets, and Merchants' Row, as well as the gate on Clifftop leading to the landing areas on the top of the Mesa. It also opens the front doors of the citadel off of Temple Square and the doors of the Keep on Clifftop. It may open other large, Theran-made doors in the city at the gamemaster's discretion. The three gates to the city on ground level, as well as the doors to the citadel, are never closed and have a contingent of guards from the Force of the Eye present at all times. The door to the Keep, and its lock, were smashed by Horrors looking for prey during the Scourge. Thus, the only door currently locked by the key, and capable of being unlocked by it, is the gate in the wall on Clifftop. As it currently does not restrict anyone's movements (there are plenty of large holes in this wall), no one cares that it is locked.

Who Has the Key?

While the player characters are looking for something to unlock with the key, others are looking for them and it. In addition to the antagonists described below, the gamemaster should feel free to include any long standing rivals or enemies that the characters have made in Kratas prior to the adventure.

Greywing and Blackstone

First, Garlthik has assigned two of his Slashers, Greywing and Blackstone, to keep an eye out for any competitors and to harass any they find, possibly confiscating any entries and fining or banishing the contestants, or both. The two are rather busy as the end of the contest nears, keeping an eye on known competitors. They consider the assignment a bit of a lark, as it is much less dangerous than their usual duties of trying to ferret out traitors within the Force of the Eye, as well as hunting for members of Brocher's Brood, the Hand of Corruption, the Keys of Death, and other troublemakers in the city. Should the characters kill any members of the Force of the Eye in their thefts, Greywing and Blackstone drop their interest in any other competitors and dedicate their efforts to hunting the characters full time. They also are authorized to pull other members of the Force to assist them, including two dozen guards similar to those guarding the citadel. Also, the section on the Force of the Eye in the **Gangs of Kratas** chapter on p.43 of **Kratas: City of Thieves** contains information on other possible reinforcements that Greywing and Blackstone can call upon.

In their efforts to catch competitors, the two Slashers are also making the rounds of the areas in town that might house possible entries, such as the Hammersing and the Winking Eye Jewelers. They have assigned lookouts to keep an eye on the lore merchants and information brokers of the city, figuring that competitors might consult them. The two may acquire the trail of the group by any one of these methods. This also holds true for a group that has stolen an entry other than the Key to the City.

If the two Slashers discover that the characters have the key and think that the characters are unaware that they are following them, they follow the group, waiting to see what the key opens. If the Slashers are discovered by the characters, and the characters try to elude them, Greywing and Blackstone try to capture them, shake them down, and confiscate the key. If the Slashers get the key, they take it back to Hilltop and show it to Garlthik. He suspects it is of importance but does not put a high priority on investigating it; he has no interest in winning the contest himself. The key is then stored in a vault in the Magistrate's Palace in Hilltop, where the characters can attempt to steal it back. Any alternative entries that the characters have confiscated from them are stored there as well. Assume a number of guards and a high quality Thieves' Bane chest (see **Kratas: City of Thieves**, p. 42) as the bare minimum protection under which the key is placed. Also in this storeroom are other minor entries in the competition that have been confiscated by Greywing and Blackstone.



Silvian Ishtrian

In addition to the Slashers, Vistrosh also has a dog in this fight. Silvian Ishtrian is a dashing elf Thief and Swordmaster adept who, unbeknownst to most in Kratas, including many members of the Brood itself, is a member of Brocher's Brood. He carries out many secret missions on behalf of Vistrosh that the Blood Elf does not want connected to him. Every year, Vistrosh places an entry in the Thievery Competition, but only some members of the Brood are aware that his entry is his. The Brood has actually won a number of the contests, which is good for their morale, even if they can only revel in their victory in their secret lairs.

This year, Vistrosh conducted a ritual divination and discovered that the key is the most valuable object in Kratas, so he dispatched Silvian Ishtrian to retrieve it. Ishtrian arrives at the site of the key shortly after the characters. He is now tracking them and takes his first good opportunity to steal the key. Unlike the characters, he knows that the key is a Core Pattern Item for the city, and, once he has it, he does not waste any time trying to discover what it opens. His pride demands that he steal the key by himself, but should the characters prove dangerous to him in their efforts to get it back, he can call upon various hidden members of the Brood to get them off his back.

Should Ishtrian get the key, he lays low at a Brood safe house in the Safehearts. He keeps the key on his person at all times and only leaves the house to get meals at a nearby tavern. The house, while appearing dilapidated, has been refurbished by the Brood, with strong doors and locks, as well as magical wards that, if triggered, awaken Ishtrian. If his safe house is discovered, he does not retreat to any of the Brood's lairs, for fear of blowing his cover. Instead, he flees the city and makes camp in the hills to the North of the Mesa, not returning until **Judgment Night**, and then climbing the northern side of the mesa and entering Clifftop that way. Should the characters steal the key from him while he is outside of the city, it is not a valid entry.

Shifty P'trank

Finally, there is a third party that tries to take the key from the group. Shifty P'trank is a t'skrang Boatman and Thief adept. He is an independent Thief, not a member of any gang or organization. He is also at a loss to figure out what is the most valuable item in Kratas, so he has been planning on stealing someone else's entry. While P'trank was out stealing the silver necessary for a consultation with a lore merchant, the group (or Xok) visited and paid Tirzenalos. The lore merchant refused to sell his information a second time, and so P'trank feels that the characters have stolen his lead. He thus follows them and tries to steal the key, which he feels should rightfully be his. If he gets the key, he does his best to try to figure out what it opens. He has surmised that it is of Theran origin, so he sneaks up to Clifftop and goes from one Theran mansion to the next, trying it on any door or chest he can find, and looking for secret doors as well.

P'trank has been following the characters since they left Tirzenalos, so gamemasters can add suspense by having the characters catch glimpses of the t'skrang throughout the adventure. He does not act until the characters have the key. Alternatively, if the characters are going after another entry instead of the key, P'trank can stumble upon them when they are casing their target, and then try to steal their entry from them.

Any one of these competitors can steal the key from the player characters, only to have it stolen by another. For example, P'trank could steal the key from the characters, and when they track him down, he could be in the middle of being roughed up by Greywing and Blackstone. They could confiscate the key and place it in Hilltop, only to have Silvian steal it from there.

Once the characters have the key (or another entry), pay attention to who in the group has it and what precautions, if any, the characters make when traveling or going to bed. Also make note of how much time has passed since the characters began the adventure. The adventure starts with six days to go until the contest. If they take two days to get the key, that leaves four days and nights during which the key could be stolen from them.

GREYWING

Attributes

DEX (19): 8 STR (7): 4 TOU (15): 6
PER (19): 8 WIL (12): 5 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 14
Physical Armor: 5 Spell Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 4 Social Defense: 8
Death: 84* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 68* Knockdown: 4
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 3/8**

Karma Points: 48/48

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Flying Movement Rate

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Call Missile (S): 13
Detect Trap^D (S): 13
Disarm Trap^D (S): 13
Disguise Self (S): 13
Haggle (S): 11
Melee Weapons (S): 13
Lock Picking^D (S): 13
Picking Pockets^D (S): 13
Silent Walk^D (S): 13 (Shadow Hide)
Sprint (S): 5
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (S): 13
Trap Initiative^D (S): 13
^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Windsout Talents (Knacks)

Anticipate Blow (8): 16
Astral Sight (8): 16
Avoid Blow^D (9): 17 (Bounce)
Bird Song^D (8): 16
Creature Analysis (9): 17 (Creature Remains, Horror Analysis)
Durability [6/5] (8): 8
Endure Cold^D (8): 14 (Endure Heat; *Namegivers of Barsaive* p.226)
Evidence Analysis^D (8): 16
Karma Ritual^D (8): 8
Missile Weapons (8): 16
Safe Path^D (8): 16
Scent Identifier^D (8): 16
Search^D (9): 17 (Listen; *Kratas: City of Thieves* p.229)
Sense Poison^D (8): 16
Speak Language (7): 15—(Human, Obsidiman, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, T'skrang)
Spot Armor Flaw (8): 16
Surprise Strike (8): 12
Thread Weaving [Scent Weaving]^D (8): 16

Throwing Weapons (8): 16
Tracking^D (9): 17 (Astral Tracking, Identify Tracks)

Wilderness Survival^D (8): 16

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Alchemy (4): 12
Alchemy and Potions^K (4): 12
Botany^K (4): 12
Craftsman (Leatherworking)^A (4): 12
Creature Lore^K (4): 12
Force of the Eye Group^K (4): 12
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 12
Horror Lore^K (4): 12
Infiltration^K (4): 12
Read/Write Language (1): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, Windling)
Streetwise (4): 12

Tactics (4): 12

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Black Leather (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Weapons

Windling Pole Arm (Forged +2; Damage 10), 5 × **Darts** (Forged +1; Damage 6; Range 18–36 yards/9–18 hexes; Stinger (Head) venom SD 10; Step 10 Acid Damage following an attack causing a Wound with the dart), 5 × **Darts** (Forged +1; Damage 6; Range 18–36 yards/9–18 hexes; Lethe's Tears; SD 9; Paralyzation Effect Step 7), **Buoyant Box** (Rank 4; The box and its contents 10% normal weight; Divided into two compartments with 5 darts and 5 poison doses on each side), **Windling Bow** (Forged +2; Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Buoyant Quiver** (Rank 4; The quiver and its contents 10% normal weight; 39 windling bow arrows; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Buoyant Quiet Pouch (Rank 4; The pouch and its contents 10% normal weight; stores healing aids)

Equipment

Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), 2 × Healing Potions, Lethe's Tears (5 doses), 3 × Kelia's Antidotes, 2 × Kelix's Poultices, Leatherworking Tools, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch (gold), Stinger (head) venom (5 doses), Traveler's Garb

Loot

57 gold pieces in quiet pouch.

Legend Award

Eighth Circle

Notes

As a windling, Greywing possesses the Astral Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense racial abilities.

Thief Abilities

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity—only Tests

Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue

Windscout Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception—only Tests

Fifth Circle: Step Outside

Seventh Circle: Karma on any test to gather information that involves the adept's sense of smell

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Commentary

Greywing is one half of a team of Garlthik's enforcers, the Slashers. He has worked exclusively with Blackstone for several years, and the two work very well together. He is an accomplished Thief, but his talents as a Windscout are well suited to his job of hunting down and eliminating threats to Garlthik's rule.

He wears the de rigueur suit of black leather armor, though his is a set of thread armor, to which he has woven a Rank Four thread. In addition to a windling bow and pole arm, he has a number of throwing darts, each tipped with different poisons, stinger venom and Lethe's Tears being two of his favorites.

Greywing's wings have taken on the dull color of the ruined stone buildings of Kratas, hence his name.

Greywing is a windling Eighth Circle Windscout, and Fifth Circle Thief.

BLACKSTONE

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (22): 9 TOU (18): 7
PER (17): 7 WIL (20): 8 CHA (12): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 3 **Physical Defense:** 10
Physical Armor: 7 **Spell Defense:** 11
Mystic Armor: 8 **Social Defense:** 10
Death: 72* **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 56* **Knockdown:** 9
Wound Threshold: 15 **Movement:** 5

Karma Points: 24/24

* Modified by Blood Magic

Illusionist Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow* (1): 6
Dead Fall^D (8): 16
Disguise Self^D (8): 15
Durability [4/3] (8): 8
Engaging Banter^D (8): 13
Enhanced Matrix (8): 8
Enhanced Matrix (8): 8
False Sight^D (8): 8
Fast Hand^D (8): 13
Karma Ritual^D (8): 8
Power Mask^D (8): 16
Read/Write Magic^D (8): 15
Resist Taunt* (1): 9
Slough Blame (8): 13
Speak Language^D (8): 15—(Human, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Spellcasting^D (9): 16
Spell Matrix D (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Thread Weaving (Illusionism)^D (8): 15 (Create Spell Matrix Object, Create Thread Item)
True Sight^D (8): 8
Willforce (8): 16

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Boots

** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Acrobatic Strike (4): 9
Acting^A (4): 9
Avoid Blow (4): 9
Force of the Eye^K (4): 11
Gangs of Kratas Group^K (4): 11
Infiltration^K (4): 11
Melee Weapons (4): 9
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Robe Embroidery^A (4): 9
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Obsidian)
Streetwise (4): 11
Tactics (4): 11
Unarmed Combat (4): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Illusionist Spells

Bellow of the Thundras, Blazing Fists of Rage^M, Catseyes, Dancing Disks, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, False Enchantment, Form Exchange^E, Great Weapon, Improve Karma^M, Light, Massive Missiles^E, Mind Fog^M, Monstrous Mantle, Other Place^M, Phantom Warrior, Shadow Spell^M, True Blazing Fists of Rage^M

^M Denotes spell in spell matrix

^E Denotes spell in enhanced matrix

Armor

Crystal Ringlet (Phys 4; Myst 4; Init 2)

Weapons

Two-Handed Sword (Forged +3; Damage 20)

Thread Items

Protective Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow +1 Rank Bonus),
Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; PhysDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus),
Spell Matrix Key (Rank 8; Usually attuned to Other Place),
Spell Matrix Mirror (Rank 8; Usually attuned to Shadow Spell)

Equipment

Alchemy Kit (carried for Greywing), Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Black Leather Gloves w/red flame pattern (Blackstone claims this to be the source of her True Blazing Fists of Rage, and maintains a False Enchantment spell on the item to convince others of its "magical" nature, usually choosing a Spell Defense of 7 for the gloves), Cloaksense Brooch, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, 3 × Healing Potions, Last Chance Salve, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb, 1 windling bow arrow (Greywing's)

Loot

340 silver pieces

Legend Award

Eighth Circle

Notes

As an obsidian, Blackstone possesses the Increased Wound Threshold and Natural Armor racial abilities.

Illusionist Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception—only Tests

Fifth Circle: Glamour

Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower—only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Commentary

Blackstone is a female obsidian with black skin. She is devoted to Greywing and works extremely well as his partner. Blackstone is an Eighth Circle Illusionist but looks and acts as if she were a Warrior, wearing crystal ringlet armor and carrying a massive two-handed sword. For her, this misrepresentation of herself is a great illusion, and she has even learned some fighting skills to support this. She refrains from most of the flashy Illusionist spells, like Dancing Disks or Monstrous Mantle, to avoid blowing this illusion. She even wears a pair of black leather gloves with a red flame pattern sewn on them, which she implies are magic, in case anyone sees her use True Blazing Fists of Rage. This deception on her part is also of great tactical advantage, in that foes assume she is the muscle and that Greywing is just the eyes and ears of the team, thus overlooking the windling's formidable combat skills. Magicians also typically do not expect her to be able to see through their tricks and illusions.

Rules

If Greywing and Blackstone are following a group of Namegivers they wish to capture or infiltrate, they employ the following tactic. Greywing hovers above Blackstone in a dark alley or other hiding place from which they can see their targets. Blackstone casts Improve Karma and Massive Missiles on Greywing (she keeps one of Greywing's arrows with her at all times for this purpose) and then Form Exchange on herself and one of the target group. Greywing then shoots the victim, who suddenly appears beneath the windling, in Blackstone's form, while Blackstone, now in the victim's form and place, sits quietly and listens in on the group's plans. If Blackstone is discovered she uses her Other Place spell to get away. Note that with Massive Missiles and Blackstone's Willforce, Greywing's Arrows do Step 29 damage, and he has Improved Karma to boot. The two Slashers have worked out a system of code words and hand signals so that Greywing knows which form Blackstone inhabits at any time.

SILVIAN ISHTRIAN

Attributes

DEX (20): 8 STR (12): 5 TOU (11): 5
PER (17): 7 WIL (13): 6 CHA (19): 8

Characteristics

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 5 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 4 Social Defense: 11
Death: 68 Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 54 Knockdown: 5*
Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 7

Karma Points: 24/24

* Silvian knows the Wound Balance talent

Swordmaster Talents

Acrobatic Strike (5): 13
First Impression (5): 13
Graceful Exit (5): 13
Heartening Laugh^D (5): 13
Melee Weapons^D (6): 14
Maneuver^D (5): 13
Parry^D (5): 13
Riposte^D (5): 13
Second Weapon^D (5): 13

Taunt^D (5): 13

Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving)^D (5): 12

Winning Smile (5): 13

Wound Balance (5): 10

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Detect Trap^D (6): 13

Disarm Trap^D (6): 14

Disguise Self (6): 13

Durability [6/5] (6): 6

Engaging Banter (6): 14

Karma Ritual^D (6): 6

Lock Picking^D (6): 14

Picking Pockets^D (6): 14

Search (6): 13

Sense Poison^D (6): 13

Silent Walk^D (7): 15 (Shadow Hide)

Slough Blame^D (6): 14

Surprise Strike (6): 11

Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (6): 13

Throwing Weapons (6): 14

Trap Initiative^D (7): 15 (Act on Instinct; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p.226)

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Acting^A (3): 11

Avoid Blow (3): 11

Brocher's Brood Group^K (3): 10

Climbing (3): 11

Craftsman (Leatherworking)^A (3): 11

Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10

Haggle (3): 11

Infiltration^K (3): 10

Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Sperethiel*)

Streetwise (3): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Leather Armor dyed dark red and black (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 13), **Short Sword** (Forged +2; Damage 11),
3 × **Flight Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes)

Equipment

2 × Booster Potions, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Craftsman Tools, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot

330 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

Notes

As an elf, Silvian possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Swordmaster Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Social Defense

Fifth Circle: Flourish

Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity—only Tests

Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue

Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception—only Tests

Commentary

Silvian is a charming, swashbuckling sort of Thief. Most think of him as a successful, independent operator. He is in actuality a member of Brocher's Brood. He can call upon the Brood for resources and reinforcements should he need to, but he must do this indirectly through blind message drops to avoid losing his cover, so there is always a delay of at least a few hours in getting such assistance. Ishtrian works a number of secret missions for Vistrosh, usually gathering intelligence or stealing valuable artifacts, but he has performed occasional assassinations as well. He is quite tall and thin, even for an elf. He wears a matching forged broadsword and short sword and carries three forged flight daggers. He wears threaded leather armor, dyed dark red and black, with a Rank 4 thread attached. Ishtrian is an elf Sixth Circle Thief and a Fifth Circle Swordmaster.

SHIFTY P'TRANK

Attributes

DEX (17): 7 STR (13): 6 TOU (14): 6
PER (13): 6 WIL (11): 5 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 3 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 9
Death: 66 Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 53 Knockdown: 6*
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 20/20

* P'trank knows the Wound Balance talent

Boatman Talents

Cast Net^D (S): 12
Climbing^D (S): 12
Durability [6/5] (S): 5
Engaging Banter (S): 11
Evaluate (S): 11
Haggle (S): 11
Karma Ritual^D (S): 5
Melee Weapons^D (6): 13
Pilot Boat^D (S): 11
Read River^D (S): 11
Steel Thought* (1): 6
Swimming^D (S): 11
Swing Attack^D (S): 12
Thread Weaving (River Weaving)^D (S): 11
Wound Balance (S): 11

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^{*} Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{*} Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Ring

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Conceal Object (S): 12
Detect Trap^D (S): 11
Disarm Trap^D (S): 12
First Impression (S): 11
Lock Picking^D (S): 12
Picking Pockets^D (6): 13 (Offguard)
Search (S): 11
Sense Poison^D (S): 11
Silent Walk^D (6): 13 (Shadow Hide)
Surprise Strike (S): 11
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (S): 11
Throwing Weapons (S): 12
Trap Initiative^D (S): 12

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^{*} Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Acting^A (3): 9
Fast Hand (3): 10
Gangs of Daiche^K (3): 9
Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 9
Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
Streetwise (3): 9
Unarmed Combat (3): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

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

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13), 2 × **Casting Net** (Entangle 10), **Knife** (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 8–16 hexes/4–8 yards), **Spear** (Forged +2; Damage 12; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Throwing Nets** (Range 8–16 hexes/4–8 yards)

Thread Items

Protective Ring (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

280 silver pieces in quiet pouch.

Legend Award

Fifth Circle

Notes

As a t'skrang, P'trank possesses the Tail Combat racial ability.

Boatman Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity—only Tests

Fifth Circle: Flow of Kiatsu

Thief Abilities

Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue

Commentary

Shifty P'trank is a t'skrang Fifth Circle Boatman and Fifth Circle Thief.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The player characters may, especially if they are of low Circle, have great difficulty in keeping the key from their rivals. If they are working for Yok, he can advise them to leave the city and wait to re-enter until right before the contest is over, thus invalidating the entry of anyone who steals the key from them outside Kratas. This puts off the Slashers and P'trank, but Silvian is sneakier than that. He follows the characters outside of the city, steals the key from them, and, if he has time, sells it to someone inside the city. He then steals it back, making it a legitimate entry again. Additionally, while safe from rival contestants outside the city, the area around Kratas is not necessarily safe from other dangers. The characters may fall prey to scorchers or others that care nothing for the contest.

JUDGMENT NIGHT

In the climax of the adventure, the player characters and the other competitors gather at Clifftop to present their entries and await the ruling of the judges.

SETTING THE STAGE

At last midnight has arrived, and the assembled thieves are gathered around the gates to the city on Clifftop. Finellianis jumps on top of a block of stone and begins to speak.

"Welcome, my brethren. We have gathered here tonight to recognize who amongst our select company is the greatest thief of this year. Let me remind you that the winner shall be the thief who presents the most valuable single item stolen from within the confines of Kratas. Now, who would care to begin?"

THEMES AND IMAGES

Assembled in one area are the greatest thieves in Barsaive, flamboyant rakes and murderous cutthroats. While members of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers Thieves' Compact are in a festive, celebratory mood, others in the crowd maintain a deadly, ruthless demeanor. Play up the variety in the different thieves and the sense of both competition and camaraderie. Some are dressed in solid black and utter nary a sound, while others are clad in silks and jewels and are gently ribbing their fellows. There are also a number of Troubadours present; there will be exploits worthy of song and story presented tonight. Make it clear to the players that the presentation of the group's entry is almost as important as the entry itself, and that showmanship is important for impressing the crowd.

BEHIND THE SCENES

There are several dozen thieves, associates, judges, Troubadours, gamblers, bookies, and spectators assembled here in a large circle around the rock Finellianis is standing on. Off to one side is an elaborately carved wooden table (stolen, no doubt), at which the judges sit. Several light crystals and candles are placed on the table, giving enough light for all to see the entries.

There are several dozen entries, the more spectacular of which are described below. Keep in mind, however, that the characters have little to do while the other competitors are presenting their entries. Thus they might get bored if you read all of the entries below, so feel free to skip any of them. The characters' entry should go last if they have the key, otherwise they should go either before Terhik the Bold or next to last, with Silvian Ishtrian going last, as described below.

Rival Entries

These may be read aloud to the players as written, but you may skip over or elaborate on any you wish. If the players seem excited to see what others have entered, feel free to describe any of the entries listed below.

The Everliving Flower

One brash, young human approaches the table and lays on it a wooden case, from which he extracts a crystal box, in which lies a single red rose. He holds the case up high for all to see and then hands it triumphantly over to the judges. Whispers abound in the crowd. Could this actually be what it appears to be? And why was it in Kratas? A quick wave of one of the judge's hands, and a few murmured incantations, and the rose within the case withers and dies. The judges shake their heads, the Thief's face turns red with embarrassment.

Deteranis' Sword

An ork approaches and sweeps aside her cloak, revealing a sword and scabbard at her waist. This raises no eyebrows until she removes the sword belt and holds it high for all to see. A gasp escapes the crowd as it is recognized; it is one of Deteranis' Swords. Light applause and murmurs of "well done" come from the crowd.

The Gift of the Fairie Queens

Note: If the player characters have stolen the replica of the Gift of the Fairie Queens, let them present theirs before reading the following and adjust the reading below as appropriate. If they have had nothing to do with Terhik's entry, then just read it as written. Should the characters have managed to steal the real Gift of the Fairie Queens, and Terhik has not managed to steal it back from them, then he remains silent during the character's presentation of it.

Terhik the Bold reveals a tiny velvet pouch hanging around his neck and pulls a small windling-sized medallion out of it. He passes the medallion to the judges. He also provides them with enchanted lenses carved of crystal, which they peer through while examining the object. Murmurs of admiration are heard from the panel. The medallion and its chain are carved from a single diamond and are embellished with

intricate patterns in silver, gold, and orichalcum. Carved in the medallion and painted in pigments made from crushed gemstones is a forest, so delicate that individual birds and leaves can be made out.

Terhik smiles and speaks out in a loud, clear voice: "This was created over a thousand years ago as a gift from the Queen of Wyrms Wood to the windling queen, or so the legends say. Stealing it was difficult, but even more so was creating the replica that now sits in the safebox of one of Hammersing's most prosperous jewelry merchants. I had to sneak a master craftsman into the vault so he could copy the piece, every night for many, many weeks. It had to be exact to fool the gem merchant's eye. I will not mention his Name so as to spare him the embarrassment of being fooled; I meant to take from him only his most valuable object, not his reputation."

Many cheers greet this presentation, and the judges huddle over the entry excitedly.

The Slave Girl

A young ork steps out of the crowd. Unlike much of the crowd, he wears no stolen silk finery and no pilfered jewels adorn his fingers. He holds the hand of a nervous, young elf girl dressed in a beautiful gown.

"This is my entry." The ork states simply.

There is an awkward pause, and one of the judges clears his throat. "It's certainly a nice dress, but hardly the most valuable thing in Kratas."

"Not the dress, the girl."

"Overlooking for the moment that a Namegiver is not an object, what makes her so valuable?"

"She was Vistrosh's personal slave."





There is a pause, and then the crowd erupts in raucous applause and cheers. The judges confer among themselves, with much shaking of heads. Finally, one of the judges, Cranta Warg, announces,

"You are disqualified, as neither is she an object, nor do we wish to endorse the slave trade by assigning her a monetary value. However, for the first time ever in the history of this competition, we have decided to award an honorable mention and bestow upon you the respect and admiration of all gathered here tonight."

This is met with an even greater round of applause than before.

Death's Thunder

Someone in the crowd yells out, "Look!" and points out past the edge of the cliff. Barely visible in the distance is an airship, recognizable by its odd silhouette as Death's Thunder. It flies jerkily toward the top of the cliff, as if flown inexpertly. As it approaches, you can make out a harried Namegiver running from side to side, pulling on lines and adjusting sails.

As the ship flies beneath a cloud, an ice spear, a flaming arrow, a spear, and a hawk hatchet rain down on the deck from above. A troll and an elf leap out from within the cloud, falling several feet to land on the deck, followed by a k'stulaami, a windling, and a dwarf with metal wings. The lone thief sailor fights a desperate but futile struggle against his attackers. He falls quickly, and the ship continues on a collision course toward the cliff and the assembled crowd.

Quick as thunder, the new crewmen grab the lines and tiller, and the ship turns hard to port and lifts enough to clear the crowd. As the ship sails past, the smiling crewmen salute the gathered thieves, then dump the thief overboard, his dead body landing at the feet of the judges.

After the excitement from this dies down, Finellianis calls out, "Any other entries?"

The Key to the City

The contest rules allow only one entry from a given Namegiver, though a team may enter an entry together. Alternatively, if the characters have stolen more than one possible entry, they may enter them as individuals, entering as many different entries as they have Namegivers.

If the characters do not have the key, let them present their entry and then read the following:

A pale-skinned elf, dressed in black and red leather from head to toe steps forward from the crowd. He carries himself proudly, though a perceptive eye may notice a slight limp he tries to conceal, as if recently wounded. He steps wordlessly to the center of the circle. From his pocket he pulls forth a large, rusty old key. He holds it high so all may see.

"That doesn't look worth much," one of the onlookers scoffs. The elf says nothing but walks away from the circle to the old city gate in front of which everyone is gathered. He stops before the gate, places the key in the lock, and gives it a slow, deliberate turn. For a moment nothing happens. Then with a mighty rumble, creaking, and groaning, the massive gate swings open.

"So what? What good is the key to an old gate?" yells the same heckler. One of the judges chuckles and shakes his head.

"Simpleton," the elf replies. "This is not just a key to this gate; it is the Key to the City of Kratas, the possession and sign of office of the Theran governor of the city. I am sure those of you well versed in the ways of magic may grasp the implications of this fact." Nervous, excited whispers pass among the crowd, and the phrase 'Pattern Item' is murmured more than once.

One of the panel of judges rushes forward to examine the object, and carries it back to his peers. They pass it among themselves and submit it to various magical tests. Their scrutiny complete, they declare it genuine.

"Well, if there are no other entries, we shall render a judgment. Clearly the most valuable object in Kratas is the key to the city. Congratulations." The assembled thieves applaud the elf, who bows graciously to the crowd, and takes the key back from the judges.

"Let me extend my congratulations, and may I ask, if it is not too indelicate, do you already have a buyer for this item, or may one submit an offer?" B'rakorl asks.

"Thank you for your congratulations, but I am sorry to say I already have an exclusive contract with my patron, and he is anxious to receive his prize. In fact, I must depart now to deliver it to him. Thank you again." The elf backs away from the crowd, bowing politely and waving away others who rush to him, pleading with him to sell them the key. The elf sprints towards the edge of the circle and disappears into the darkness.

The elf in the reading above is Vistrosh's man, Silvian Ishtrian. If the characters do have the key, the most dramatic way they can present it is, as Ishtrian does, to walk over to the old gate of the city. There are no longer any wards on it, as they were destroyed in the Scourge. If they insert the key in the lock on the gate, it opens surprisingly easily, though with some dramatic moaning and creaking. Keep in mind that if the characters are working for Xok, he presents the entry with them but he allows them to do the talking. The judges confer and award them the prize, as above.

The Judges

The judges, should the characters ask or should you wish to describe them, are as follows: Cranta Warg, Illusionist and questor of Astendar, is well qualified to judge works of art as well as to detect False Enchantments; Quellandar, a questor of Chorrolis and the proprietor of Chorrolis' Cups, is expert at assessing market values; Julericani Neumani, dwarf Wizard and merchant of a dwarf trading house, uses his Evidence Analysis Talent to make sure every entry was stolen within Kratas, and gives his estimation of value; B'rakorl, proprietor of B'rakorl's Emporium and expert on ancient artifacts and magical items; and Wuurliesaana, Elementalist and Purifier, of the Enchanter's Crucible, and also expert on magic items.

There is one further, informal "judge" present. Garlthik cannot resist attending, in disguise of course. The characters should have no reason to suspect that the old female ork Archer, complete with Targeting Eye, leaning on a bow on the outskirts of the circle, is actually Garlthik. He makes note of any thieves or adventures present that show promise, including the characters. If the characters have impressed him, he might hire them in future for other jobs, or he might invite them to join the Force of the Eye.

Should the characters have stolen items that belonged to one of the judges, the judge is of surprising good humor about it, as long as the characters give the item back after the contest. The judge may be willing to pay a token ransom, to avoid causing a Discipline crisis in the adept. However, a demand considered extortionate would not be met with good humor, and the judges do everything they can to get back their treasures, including simply assaulting the group after the contest is over, or hiring assassins to hunt the characters down later.

Following are the potential entries in the contest, in order of value, as determined by the judges. If the characters have stolen something that is not on this list, do your best to estimate where it would fall in the judges' opinions.

- The Key to the City of Kratas
- Mynbruje's Razor
- The Gift of the Fairie Queens
- Khiallen Daevenar's Decanter
- Death's Thunder
- The Fountain of Astendar (intact)
- The Altar Anvil of Upandal
- One of Deteranis' Swords
- Other unique thread items (these could vary in value, though none are likely to be worth more than Mynbruje's Razor)
- An orichalcum shield
- Other common thread items

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters may have done a heroic job stealing an item that is less valuable than the key, which Ishtrian presents, winning the contest. If you feel that the characters have faced enough danger and put in enough effort to win, go ahead and fudge the contest and have no one enter anything more valuable than the group's entry. However, this is a truly epic contest and should not be easily won. Just making a decent showing is a legendary accomplishment.

This encounter involves drama and roleplaying but little combat or action. If your players are inclined towards the latter, they can continue to struggle to get the group's entry in. It is not against the rules of the contest to pick a thief's pockets seconds before he turns in his entry. It is not officially an entry until it has been handed over to the judges. If the characters have lost their entry in **Are you the Keymaster?** they could attempt to steal it back before the thief turns it in. Note that Ishtrian approaches the meeting place from the North, entering through a hole in the wall very close to the meeting place.

The judges are not impressed with the thieving skills of someone who mugs their rival in the middle of the crowd, and it can be assumed that most of the contestants have friends present who rush to their aid should the characters try to attack them as they approach the judges' bench.

However, if the characters have the key and have not already dealt with Ishtrian or P'trank, either might attempt to pick their pockets while the crowd mills about.

If the characters have killed any members of the Force of the Eye and have been identified as the killers (including by entering an entry that was clearly obtained through the deaths), Terricia and a large squad of the Force are waiting. As soon as the contest is over they swoop in and attempt to kill the characters, no questions asked and no quarter given.

AFTERMATH

After the contest is over, most of the participants and spectators make their way down to the lower city, where celebrations last late into the night. If the player characters have made a good showing, Namegivers buy them drinks in the taverns of the Safehearts, while Troubadours take the stage of the Screaming Basilisk to sing their praises.

If the characters have won the contest with the Key to the City, the rest of their troubles begin. Silvian Ishtrian, on behalf of Vistrosh, makes any number of charming efforts to purchase the key for his unnamed patron. He is willing to pay the characters as much as 500,000 silver pieces for the key, or more, but he begins negotiations at 200,000. He is persistent, if polite, but should the characters rebuff him, he begins plans to steal it from them, by murder if necessary.

Meanwhile, Garlthik has seen the key and seeks to obtain it for himself. He dispatches Greywing and Blackstone to negotiate for the key, or steal it if necessary. If the characters have killed Greywing and Blackstone, Terricia and any others she deems necessary are dispatched to slay the characters and retrieve the key.

If the characters have been working for Xok Steadyhand, he considers the key his property, to do with as he will. He sells it to Ishtrian or Garlthik, and pays the characters their agreed upon amount, 500 silver each unless they haggled in **A Disgusting Proposal**, above.

Anything else the characters stole should fetch a good price as well, as the temporary notoriety of being entered in the contest adds to the item's allure.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

The Thievery Competition awards Legend Points in the form of Session, Adventure, and Legend Awards as outlined in **Awarding Legend Points** on p. 97 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*. The gamemaster can use the following guidelines when tailoring the awards:

The adventure goal is ambiguous, it might be perceived as submitting any entry into the competition, which it is, but also is submitting the key and winning the competition. Submitting an entry should award only the minimum Legend Award for the respective Circle, submitting the key and winning should award the maximum Legend Award. Submitting a noteworthy but losing entry such as one of Deteranis' Swords or the Altar Anvil of Upandal should award a regular, average Legend Award. Submitting an entry determined to be a fake, such as the false Everliving Flower or the forgery of the Gift of the Faerie Queens, should not award Legend Points for completing the adventure goal.

The gamemaster may award an additional Legend Award if the characters compete without too much outside help, such as without the help of Xok's team, or may let winning without outside help influence the amount awarded for individual deeds and heroics.

Note that the key is a treasure, and as such finding it is worth a Legend Award for Treasure.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

If the characters performed impressively, they could be asked to join the Force of the Eye, Brocher's Brood, or Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers, or be offered jobs by any or all of them. Alternatively, if

they killed or humiliated the agents of any of these groups, they could have gained powerful enemies.

The ambush tactics of the Sewer Filth suggest some higher intelligence controlling the gang. The players might want to investigate the leader, which might be a Horror or powerful cultist.

The characters might also wish to further explore the lair of the ghouls in the cellars of Raggok's temple, which might lead them to discover more undead and possibly the activities of Raggok's Deniers of Death (see the **Secret Societies of Kratas** chapter on p. 206 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*).

Finally, the day after the contest, the characters receive an invitation to next year's contest. The landing of the Theran Behemoth at Lake Ban inspired Finellianis' feelings of patriotism, and she announces that the objective of next year's contest is to steal the most valuable loot from a current Theran Imperial facility, such as the Behemoth Triumph, Vivane, Sky Point, or even outside of the Province. (Parlainth does not count, as it is not currently under the control of the Therans, and so stealing things from there will not hurt the Therans' ability to conquer Barsaive.) Alternatively, if the campaign is set before the landing of the Theran Behemoth, then the next year's contest is to steal the most valuable thing or things from a dragon's hoard.



RUMORS AND RESEARCH

During the course of the adventure, the player characters may hear the following rumors about the competition and the competitors, especially if they ask around. It is up to the gamemaster to determine the truth of these rumors.

The gamemaster may alter the tone and wording of the rumors, depending on which denizen of Kratas the characters are talking to. Note also that only the elite of the thieving community have in-depth knowledge of the contest, and that the average Kratan has only a vague awareness of the details of the contest and the competitors. The poor of the Scrabbles are far too worried about where their next meal is coming from to care much about the contest. The taverns of Merchants' Row, the Safehearts, and the Hammersing are abuzz about it though.

THE THIEVERY CONTEST

"Oh, it's good, clean fun. Lots of excitement, good opportunity for Thieves to challenge their talents, and only a handful get killed every year."

"What is Finellianis thinking, making the contestants steal things in Kratas this year? Is she trying to annoy Garlthik? Trying to get herself killed, more like it."

"The contest is fixed, I tell ya. Always has been."

"It's a front. Garlthik uses it to distract rivals; keep 'em busy chasing their tails, rather than taking him on."

"It's a front. Vistrosh really pulls the strings behind the Quiet Feet, and he uses the contest to subtly undermine Garlthik's rule. Making the goal stealing things in Kratas this year just proves it."

FAVORED CONTESTANTS

"My money is still on Terhik; what a score he pulled off last year!"

"The smart money is on Calisan; heard him around the Stables looking for mercenaries to help him with some scheme."

"The fix is in, and the word is it's Zhunes of Travar. Why else are her odds so low?"

"I sunk a bunch of coin on Xok Steadyhand, and now he's puking his guts up. Of all the rotten luck."

XOK STEADYHAND

"Xok is a heck of a Thief and a fun guy to carouse with. Never won the contest, though, and he's starting to look bad to the Quiet Feet. He's come close every year, but never close enough."

"What a joke. His latest foible just proves that he's the least talented of the Quiet Feet. If he didn't have the good sense to congregate with his betters, no one would know his Name."

TERHIK THE BOLD

"What a Thief! Have you heard about his warehouse? Can't wait to see what he's going to pull out of there."

"He's good but a little overrated. I also don't see the judges giving him the award twice in a row, unless he pulls off something truly spectacular."

"I'm not sure that the most valuable thing would need a warehouse or a giant crate. No, I don't know what the most valuable thing is, but I have some ideas, and, no, I don't care to share them."

SUREHAND CALISAN

"He's hungry to win this year, and he has some big scheme cooked up. He just got back in town after doing something for a few months in Jerris; no one knows what, but it was some sort of preparation for the contest. Then he's been sniffing around the Stables looking to hire some mercenary help. That could just be to throw folks off the trail."

SILVIAN ISHTRIAN

"He's a smooth operator and a bit of a charmer. He's independent of any of the gangs, even the Quiet Feet. Specializes in art and antiques, on commission for unnamed patrons throughout Barsaive. He doesn't steal something without already having a buyer lined up."

"He's quite good looking, in that slightly smug, slightly mysterious way elves have. He's got some secrets, but what Thief doesn't? He could steal my treasure any day."

GREYWING AND BLACKSTONE

"Oh they are some of Garlthik's heavy hitters. You do not want them on your trail. Greywing is the eyes, and Blackstone is the muscle."

"They were very successful as Thieves. They pulled off a number of good scores in Bartertown and Travar. Garlthik called them back to town to help clean up some troublemakers: rival gangs, cultists, that sort of thing. They've been quite successful at that as well."

GARLTHIK'S TREASURE VAULTS

"Are you kidding? Garlthik has got to have the ten most valuable things in Kratas in his vaults. He is the greatest Thief in Barsaive. Now if only you could find them."

"I hear he's got the Crown of Valvidius, the figurehead of the Earthdawn, even the Books of Harrow and the Everliving Flower in his vaults."

"They're a myth. Sure he has a bunch of loot, but he has to spend a lot of coin to keep the city going and feed his people. Any valuable items he can't use, he's going to sell as quick as he can. Big secret horde of legendary treasures? Ha. He's a Thief, not a dragon."

THE WINKING EYE JEWELERS

"Garlthik owns it, of course, why do you think it's called that?"

"I hear they have rubies as big as your head in there, and jewelry pieces that will make you cry with their beauty. I hear they lock a skeorx in at night to eat burglars as well"

"There are two smiths of the Tinkerers' Forge whose only job is making new traps for them."

THE KEY TO THE CITY OF KRATAS

If the characters show the key to any non-expert, or ask about keys and locks in general, they will be told:

"Don't know much about keys m'self, you should head over to the Tinkerers'. Those smiths know more about keys and locks than anyone in Kratas."

The key is magical only in that it is a Core Pattern Item for the city of Kratas. It has no other magical abilities. See the sections on Pattern Items on p.105 and p.117 of the **Player's Guide** for more information.

If the characters show the key to lore merchants or other experts, they receive the following information (asking Rigart Squinteye, however, gives them much more detailed information, as described in **Are you the Keymaster?**):

"I can tell you two things about it for certain: it is quite old, and it is definitely of Theran manufacture. Whatever lock it opens is going to be big and probably important."

DEADMAN'S CONTRACT

*Everyone dies eventually. At least, everyone should.
Some just need a little push.*

• JELTIANSA •

Deadman's Contract is an adventure scenario designed for three to five Warden adepts (Ninth to Twelfth Circle) of any Discipline, though the adventure can also be tailored to Journeyman adepts, see the Scaling the Adventure sidebar below. In this adventure, the player characters are offered a contract to assassinate a very prominent figure. They can choose to either accept the contract and attempt the assassination or to inform the target that a contract is out on his life. If the characters choose the latter, the figure commissions them to fake his assassination in order to ferret out who wants him dead. They must then escape the area and any vengeance, while also collecting the blood money, and possibly finding out more information about those who offered the contract.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Deadman's Contract is presented as a series of events. Each event is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes as he sees fit. Where possible, the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise. Unlike many adventures, which smoothly progress from one encounter to the next, **Deadman's Contract** is somewhat non-linear. If the characters decide to take the contract, then they will have much more freedom and control in determining where, when, and how the adventure will continue. This means that the players will have to take more initiative than they may be used to, and the gamemaster will have to be adaptable to their plans. It is very helpful to the gamemaster to familiarize himself with Kratas in general (see the *Kratas: City of Thieves* sourcebook) and Garlthik's movements and protections in particular.

Each event is described in terms of an encounter, which contains four sections. **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster may read aloud to the players. **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for the encounter. **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really happening that the characters may be unaware of. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Since the end of the Scourge, the dwarfs of Throal have been working hard to rebuild Barsaive. In the early frontier days, many were content to let Garlthik and his thieves run Kratas, as they had more important and more local concerns. Now, however, some of the dwarf trading houses are eyeing the city and their old holdings within it. Garlthik's success at making Kratas a profitable trading hub again may be his undoing, as these houses want the Kingdom of Throal to "liberate" Kratas and restore their positions within it. This group includes high ranking members of the houses Chaozun, Ludi, Pa'vas, Ueraven, Sarafica, and the banned house, Heovrat.

Chaozun resents the large cut of its profits in weapons dealing in Kratas, taken by the Force of the Eye in "taxes". Ludi is tired of losing shipments to Kratas-based raiders and wishes to drive the heretical thieves out of the Temple of Chorrolis. Pa'vas hopes that by regaining some of its pre-Scourge holdings in Kratas, it may regain some of its lost stature. Ueraven loses too many goods to Kratas' thieves and would like to reclaim the city as a transshipment point between Throal and Iopos. (Ueraven may also be working at the secret behest of the Denairastas, as part of a plot to weaken Kratas for their eventual takeover.) Sarafica's motivation for participating in the plot remains as secretive as the rest of the house's motives, but it may have to do with either its rumored intelligence network, or its alleged involvement with Dragons, or both. Heovrat wants revenge on Garlthik for his assistance in the house's defeat during the Death Rebellion. For more information on these houses, see *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*, p. 27.

These houses all know that the Royal Family of Throal owes a debt of gratitude to Garlthik and will never speak against him, so they have decided to take the next step themselves, by offering a contract to assassinate the head of the Force of the Eye.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

A human merchant of Bartertown Named Lordan has been sent by this coalition of merchant houses to place the contract with the assassins of Kratas. He meets with representatives of the various assassins in the Bolthole, a tavern in the Safehearts where those in the know go to get such jobs done. The player characters are invited to this meeting and learn of the target of the assassination in **Dark Doings at the Bolthole** (p. 35).

At this point, the characters choose whether or not to take on the job themselves, in **Planning the Hit** (p. 41), or to inform Garlthik about the contract, in **Keep an Eye Out** (p. 47).

Garlthik then decides to smoke out whoever put the contract on him by staging his own death, with the characters as the assassins, in **One Shot At Glory** (p. 48). After Garlthik has successfully staged his death, or has actually been assassinated, the Force of the Eye holds his funeral (**Garlthik's Funeral**, p. 50).

After the funeral, the player characters go to Bartertown to collect their reward, and, if working for Garlthik, discover who their employer was in **Blood Money** (p. 53). They may capture or kill Lordan, or trail him to discover the identity of those who commissioned the hit.

DARK DOINGS AT THE BOLTHOLE

In this encounter, the player characters discover that a contract has been offered on the life of Garlthik. Lordan, a human merchant, has invited them to a meeting of assassins in the Bolthole, where he offers the contract. The characters also meet other assassins there and decide whether they wish to take the contract. Trailing Lordan, though tricky, may reveal some clues as to whom he is working for.

SETTING THE STAGE

You have been waiting for an hour or more in the Bolthole, drinking its passable ale, watching the rest of the patrons, and looking for your potential employer. Most of the patrons are craftsman from the Hammersing, enjoying a quiet glass after a hard day's work.

The door opens and a human male in a gray, hooded cloak walks in. He nods at the barkeep and then looks around the room, making quick eye contact with a handful of other Namegivers and then with you. Smoothly, he makes his way across the tavern and disappears through a curtain into a back room.

Slowly, one by one, the other Namegivers make their way to the back room as well. First to follow is a wild-eyed t'skrang; then a gnarled, old dwarf leaning on a shepherd's crook; a dour obsidian; a heavily scarred ork; and an elegant elf woman. You follow. The dark room is lit by a single candle in the middle of a low, round table, surrounded by a circle of chairs. Your mysterious host bids you to sit.

Your host pulls out six envelopes from inside his cloak, each sealed with unmarked black wax. He hands one to each of you and says, "Before you open your envelope, keep in mind that you should not show its contents to anyone else. Your envelope may or may not have the same information in it as the others. Within it is a Name and a price. Do not say the Name aloud. If any of you wish to ask me questions, you may, but say nothing of whom your contract is on. I trust that even if you do not wish to fulfill your contract, your professional honor will prevent you from discussing it with anyone. Now, you may open the envelopes."

THEMES AND IMAGES

The dark, mysterious meeting and the room full of deadly killers should have a feel of barely restrained violence beneath a thin veneer of civility. When the envelopes are opened, there should be a sense of shock and surprise, even among the hardened cutthroats.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure varies greatly in difficulty depending on whether the characters decide to try to assassinate Garlthik or if they choose to inform him and then work with Garlthik in faking his death. In the first case, the characters should be of Warden level to have a reasonable chance of survival or success. However, a group of Journeyman characters could stand a chance at pulling off the second option. In the first option, the opposition is Garlthik and the Force of the Eye, as well as the rival assassins. In the second option, the opposition is only the other assassins. If playing with a less powerful group, the gamemaster should steer them towards the second option. A simple way to do this is to have Terricia contact the characters *before* they receive the assignment in **Dark Doings at the Bolthole**, below. Have Terricia tell the characters that the Force's spies have discovered that an important contract will be offered at the Bolthole tonight, and that the gang wants to find out what is going on. By spreading rumors that the characters are a powerful team of assassins, The Force has arranged for the characters to be invited to the meeting. They do not want to use a known member of the gang, so they are recruiting the characters. While the characters' participation is not voluntary, Terricia will pay them 500 silver for their trouble. Thus the characters will be working for Garlthik when they first receive the contract. If Journeyman characters get greedy and foolish and try to carry out the hit for real, they deserve the pounding they will get.

2

BEHIND THE SCENES

Prior to the scene above, the player characters need to be summoned to the Bolthole. While walking through the streets, an urchin bumps into one of the characters. When checking to see if the urchin has picked his pockets, the character instead discovers a note on his person. The note says merely, "If you are interested in a job, come to the Bolthole tonight." There is no signature, and should the group chase down the urchin, he tells them that he was paid ten silver to give them the note discretely, which they have now blown. If they threaten or bribe him, he gives them a physical description of Lordan, as he is described in the paragraph below, though the child does not know his Name or anything about the job. Once the group has gone to the tavern, read the **Setting the Stage** section above.

To make the climax of the scene more dramatic, you may write out the information on pieces of notepaper and place them in actual envelopes for the players to open. The note inside says: "Garlthik One-Eye, One Million Silver." A brief second after an envelope is opened, it and the note burst into flame and disappear completely. For further dramatic effect, the gamemaster may wish to write the notes on flash paper. Then, after they have been read, they can be consumed in a lit candle, present on the gaming table for this scene.

YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE

How did the player characters end up in such company? Perhaps they have done things that would give them a reputation as assassins, deservedly or not. Perhaps their past exploits have been twisted in the telling. Maybe the players play the sorts of Namegivers that would take on such a contract. Perhaps the characters are actually assassins.

At this point, the players have a decision to make, with three basic options. First, the characters may attempt to fulfill the contract and assassinate Garlthik. If they follow this path, go on to **Planning the Hit** (p. 41). Second, they might try to warn Garlthik and stop the plot. If they choose this option, skip ahead to **Keeping an Eye Out** (p. 47). Third, they may choose to do nothing, in which case you may want to proceed as if Garlthik has either been assassinated or has faked his death; go on to **Garlthik's Funeral** (p. 50). Even though the players have chosen to bypass the major part of the adventure, you can pull the characters into the chaos that ensues after Garlthik's death in the fallout found in **Garlthik's Funeral and Aftermath** (p. 50 and p. 57).

A further thought on linearity: if the player characters inform Garlthik of the assassination plot, he then roughly guides their actions from then on. If the players choose to try to kill him, they need to take the initiative to devise their own plan, and the gamemaster will need to improvise as necessary.

Lordan is using his Disguise Self talent to alter his appearance. This disguise has him appear olive skinned, middle aged, dark haired and eyed, and clean shaven. While in this disguise he never gives his Name. He answers any questions about the assassination, though he never reveals any information about himself or his employers. If any of the assassins start to Name the target out loud, he stops them and asks them to leave, even though all of the envelopes contain the same information.

Let the player characters ask any questions they want. If they don't ask if there is a date by which the contract needs to be fulfilled, the t'skrang does. Lordan replies that his employers are patient and are looking at the long term implications of the contract; they are not in a hurry. Also, he encourages everyone to take the time to plan carefully, as his employers do not want any bungled attempts to alert the target.

Once the assassins are finished with their questions, Lordan says, *"I do not expect an answer now, as I know some of you must confer with associates. Do not try to contact me, as I do not care to know of your plans ahead of time. We do not care how it is done, nor if it looks accidental or not."*

If they ask when they can be paid, he assures them that once the job is done, arrangements will be made. *"Meet me at the Red Blot tavern in Bartertown one month after you complete the job."*

As a token of good faith, he gives each Namegiver present a gem. These are sapphires of a uniform size and shape, mined and cut in Throal. A character who makes a successful Gem Appraisal (S) Test or another appropriate Test recognizes that such gems are usually valued at 1,000 silver pieces. *"Consider this payment for your time and consideration, and a show of the seriousness of our interest that this job is done."*

LORDAN'S MOTIVATION

Lordan acts as the middleman between the assassins and the employers to conceal the identity of the latter. His motivation for taking this job can be varied: a considerable amount of money (approximately 10% or 100,000 silver pieces); a Key Knowledge for a magic item; or even a luxurious house in one of the Inner Cities. He even may be a tragic figure: forced or blackmailed into the job—maybe his employers kidnapped a loved one or poisoned him with a slow-acting poison (and will give him the antidote when the job is done). The gamemaster has the final call as to what the truth is here.

Once there are no more questions, Lordan excuses himself, slips behind a curtain at the back of the room, and leaves out a back door. If anyone attempts to follow Lordan out the back door, they are given a disapproving look from the others, but none try to stop them. The other assassins return to their drinks in the main room of the tavern. After a discrete amount of time, each slips out the door, alone. Lordan hurries down the alley behind the Bolthole and waits a few yards away to see if he is being followed. He winds a twisted path through the Safehearts to throw off any tail and then makes his way to Chorrolis' Cups on Merchant's Row, where he is staying. Once more before he reaches his lodgings, he stops in another alley behind the inn and waits another five minutes to see if any follow. He then removes his gray cloak, dispels his Disguise Self talent, and returns to the inn dressed in his normal merchant clothes. See below for a description of Lordan's normal appearance.

Lordan

Lordan stays in town a few days, doing everything consistent with the life of a slightly shady Bartertown merchant. He eventually loads up a wagon full of goods and joins a caravan headed for Bartertown. This caravan heads to Daiche, where it ferries across the Tylon River and then follows the long, slow overland route that goes north of the Servos River and Jungle to Bartertown. While in Daiche, however, Lordan surreptitiously slips a sealed note to a riverboat captain he passes on the docks, using his Fast Hand talent. The note reads, *"The order has been placed with a number of the best weavers in Urupa. It may take some time to get an order of that magnitude delivered, but if you are patient, I am certain the job will be done."* There is no delivery or return address on the note, nor is there a signature. (Lordan made arrangements with the captain on his previous trip, and the captain already knows to whom the note is to be delivered in Bartertown. See **Blood Money** on p. 53 for more information.)

Once in Bartertown, Lordan slowly sells his wagonload of goods to various merchants around town. Other than that he keeps to himself, living in one of Bartertown's inns and visiting various merchants. He does nothing until the contract is fulfilled. Once it has been fulfilled, see **Blood Money** for his further activities.

Should the player characters attempt to follow the other assassins, each takes similar precautions to Lordan's to avoid being followed. However, unlike Lordan, the assassins are all hardened killers who, if they discover they are being followed, do not hesitate to kill the followers or to lead them into an ambush of their fellows.

Lordan has been in town for the last month or so, quietly asking around about assassins. The five other Namegivers present at the meeting in the Bolthole all have reputations as killers or go-betweens who work for other groups of assassins. None give their Names if asked by the characters, and they do not engage in anything but small talk.

Assassins

Fretant'k, the wild-eyed t'skrang, is an independent assassin who loves his job and is very good at it. He is a member of the Ishkarat *aropagoi* (see *Nations of Barsaive Volume Two*, p. 16) and wears the black obsidian dagger *g'doin'ya* of his house. A Perception (8) Test allows a character to notice it at his waist, and a Serpent River Lore (5) Test, or another similar Test, allows a character to recognize it for what it is. The dwarf is Roolan of the Silent Shepherds (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p.160), disguised to appear much older and more decrepit than he actually is. The obsidian, Duwgamu, has a reputation as a freelance assassin. He is actually in deep cover for Brocher's Brood, though Lordan does not know this. The battle-scarred ork, Hurnoc the Unlucky, is rumored to be connected with powerful assassins. He is in fact a contact for the local branch of the Keys of Death. The beautiful and elegant elf, Jeltiansa, is said to know people who know people who can have other people killed for a price. She is a member of the Hand of Corruption and a skilled assassin herself. For more information on the latter organizations see p.204 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*.

None of the assassins announce if they are taking the contract now or not. After they discuss the matter with their respective organizations, they make the following decisions. Fretant'k does not need to consult with anyone; he is eager to take on the job. The Silent Shepherds and Brocher's Brood both decline to take on the contract, as both consider the current state of affairs in Kratas conducive to their respective businesses and anticipate that the death of Garlthik might destabilize the city enough that

Throal, Thera, or Iopos might try to take control. The Shepherds neither act on the contract, nor violate their ethics by informing Garlthik of the plans.

Others

Vistrosh, however, while not wanting to take out Garlthik, is curious about these goings on. He orders Duwgamu to infiltrate the Force of the Eye as if he were going to kill Garlthik, and then attempt to discover who is behind the threat. He might even give Duwgamu orders to save Garlthik's life if necessary, to preserve the status quo. This decision only makes sense with the knowledge that Vistrosh's real priority is not running a criminal gang and taking over Kratas, but maintaining his cover and an environment where he can run the Blood Queen's intelligence network (see the **Gangs of Kratas** chapter on p.55 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*).

Both the Keys of Death and the Hand of Corruption take on the assignment, both for the significant amount of money it pays, and as revenge for Garlthik's efforts to hamper their activities in the city in the past. Both groups also view this as a potential opportunity to take over the city after Garlthik's death, running it toward the promotion of their own agendas.

LORDAN

Attributes

DEX (16): 7 STR (12): 5 TOU (13): 6
PER (16): 7 WIL (11): 5 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 8
Death: 71 Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 57 Knockdown: 5
Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 30/30

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow^V (3): 10
Climbing^V (3): 10
Conceal Object (6): 13
Detect Trap^D (6): 13
Disarm Trap^D (6): 13
Disguise Self (7): 14
Durability [6/5] (6): 6
Evaluate (7): 14 (Fool Thief; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 227)
Haggle (7): 13 (Covet Item)
Karma Ritual^D (6): 6
Lock Picking^D (6): 13
Melee Weapons (7): 14
Mimic Voice^V (5): 11
Picking Pockets^D (6): 13
Sense Poison^D (6): 13
Silent Walk^D (7): 14 (Shadow Hide)
Slough Blame^D (6): 12
Surprise Strike^V (3): 8
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (6): 13
Trap Initiative^D (6): 13
Versatility (4): 4

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
^I Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
^V Learned through Versatility talent

Skills

Acting^A (3): 9
Bartertown Black Market^K (3): 10
Bribery (3): 10
Fixing^K (3): 10
Forgery (3): 10
Gangs of Bartertown^K (3): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Search (3): 10
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)



Smuggling^K (3): 10
 Streetwise (4): 11
 Throwing Weapons (3): 10
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Forged +2; Phys 6),
Buckler (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 12),
Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items

Charismatic Brooch (Rank 4; +4 Charisma-only Tests)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, 2 × Booster Potions, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Dwarf Winternight Cloak, Light Quartz Lantern, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, 2 × Quiet Pouches, Trail Rations (2 weeks), Gray Traveler's Garb with Gray Hooded Mask ("Grayhood" in Kratas), Colorful Wealthy Traveler's Garb (Bartertown), Waterskin, Writing Kit

Loot

200 silver pieces, 6 gems worth 1000 silver pieces in second quiet pouch (initial payment for assassins).

Legend Award

Sixth Circle

Notes

As a human, Lordan possesses the Versatility racial ability. Lordan has used the Versatility talent to learn the Avoid Blow, Climbing, Mimic Voice, and Surprise Strike talents.

Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue
Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Commentary

Lordan is a Sixth Circle human Thief and smuggler from Bartertown. He acquired a reputation as a competent fixer working in the black market. This led him to the attention of Houses Ueraven Heovrat and the commission to hire the assassins. He is tall for a human and has a bright red beard and a boisterous laugh. He wears the colorful fashions of the dwarfs of Throal when in Bartertown, but he dresses more somberly in Kratas.

FRETANT'K

Attributes

DEX (18): 7 **STR (13):** 6 **TOU (11):** 5
PER (14): 6 **WIL (11):** 5 **CHA (12):** 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 12
Physical Armor: 11 **Spell Defense:** 9
Mystic Armor: 2 **Social Defense:** 9
Death: 68 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 54 **Knockdown:** 6
Wound Threshold: 8 **Movement:** 6
Karma Points: 24/24

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow* (7): 14
 Detect Trap^D (6): 12
 Disarm Trap^D (6): 13
 Durability [6/5] (6): 6
 Karma Ritual^D (6): 6
 Lock Picking^D (6): 13
 Melee Weapons (7): 14
 Picking Pockets^D (6): 13
 Resist Taunt** (1): 6
 Riposte* (1): 8
 Sense Poison^D (6): 12
 Silent Walk^D (7): 14 (Shadow Hide, Traceless Stride)
 Slough Blame^D (6): 11
 Sprint (6): 6
 Surprise Strike (6): 12
 Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (6): 12

Throwing Weapons (6): 13

Trap Initiative^D (6): 13

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
 * Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Dagger of Ishkarat
 ** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Climbing (3): 10
 House Ishkarat History^K (3): 9
 House Ishkarat Politics^K (3): 9
 Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Scarification^A (3): 8
 Search (3): 9
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
 Streetwise (3): 9
 Swimming (3): 9
Unarmed Combat (4): 11
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Forged +2; Phys 6), **Espagra-Scale Cloak** (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), **Buckler** (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Dagger of Ishkarat (Rank 4; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes; Avoid Blow +1 Rank Bonus; Riposte +1 Rank Bonus; PhysDef +1; see *Nations of Barsaive Volume Two* p.110), **Broadsword** (Forged +2; Damage 13), **Short Sword** (Forged +2; Damage 12)

Thread Items

Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, 3 × Booster Potions, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Light Quartz Lantern, Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Loot

130 silver pieces

Legend Award

Sixth Circle

Notes

As a t'skrang Fretant'k possesses the Tail Combat racial ability.

Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue
Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Commentary

Fretant'k is a member of the Ishkarat *aropagai* but is currently out of favor with his house for his erratic behavior and his tendency to pick fights with his fellows, that often end with their deaths. He now works as a freelance assassin and is not only good at this job, but has found that he loves it.

His skin is a mottled, dark green with blood-red streaks throughout. He has an unsettling, crazed look to the eyes and delights in bloodshed. Fretant'k is a Sixth Circle t'skrang Thief.

DUWGAMU

Attributes

DEX (16): 7 **STR (25):** 10 **TOU (20):** 8
PER (13): 6 **WIL (14):** 6 **CHA (10):** 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense:** 12
Physical Armor: 5 **Spell Defense:** 10
Mystic Armor: 5 **Social Defense:** 9
Death: 134 **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: 106 **Knockdown:** 10*
Wound Threshold: 16 **Movement:** 5

Karma Points: 30/30

* Duwgamu knows the Wound Balance talent

Warrior Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (10): 17
 Air Dance (10): 17
 Anticipate Blow^D (10): 16
 Avoid Blow^D (11): 18 (Arrow Catch; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 226)
 Body Blade (11): 21

Cobra Strike (10): 17
 Crushing Blow^D (10): 20
 Durability [9/7] (10): 10
 Earth Skin^D (10): 18
 Karma Ritual^D (10): 10
 Life Check^D (10): 18
 Melee Weapons^D (11): 18 (Armor
 Beater, Improvised Weapons)
 Missile Weapons (10): 17
 Resist Pain^D (10): 10
 Resist Taunt* (1): 7
 Second Attack^D (10): 17
 Second Weapon (10): 17
 Steel Thought** (1): 7
 Swift Kick (10): 17
 Temper Self^D (10): 16
 Thread Weaving (War
 Weaving)^D (10): 16
 Throwing Weapons (10): 17
 Tiger Spring (10): 10
 Unarmed Combat^D (11): 18 (Head
 Butt, Mighty Throw, Pin Down)
 Wood Skin^D (10): 18
 Wound Balance^D (10): 20

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may
 spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma.
 (Except when also a Discipline
 Talent)

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus
 from Protective Brooch

** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus
 from Protective Amulet

Skills

Brocher's Brood Group^K (5): 11
 Gangs of Kratas^K (5): 11
 Hunting (5): 12
 Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Silent Walk (5): 12
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Obsidiman)
 Streetwise (5): 11
 Tracking (5): 11
 Weapon Rune Carving^A (5): 10
 Wilderness Survival (5): 11

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Weapons

Thread Stone Troll Sword (Rank 4; Damage 23), Stone Broadsword (Forged +3;
 Damage 18), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 14; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes),
 2 × Troll Spears (Damage 15; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Medium Crossbow
 (Forged +4; Damage 20; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/30 medium
 crossbow bolts; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus),
 Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tools, Cloaksense Brooch, Healing Potion, Light Quartz
 Lantern, Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb, Waterskin

Loot

890 silver pieces

Legend Award

Tenth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Notes

As an obsidiman, Duwgamu possesses the Increased Wound Threshold and Natural
 Armor racial abilities.

Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Battle Rites

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on close combat Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Ninth Circle: Battlefield Awareness; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests; +1 Physical Defense



Commentary

Duwgamu approaches assassinations with the quiet determination for which his race is known. He is also secretly a member of Brocher's Brood and carries out killings that benefit Vistrosh as well.

His skin is a dark, mottled gray. His Silent Walk skill allows him to sneak up on his victims, and he can easily kill when unarmed, using his Body Blade talent. Duwgamu is a Tenth Circle obsidiman Warrior.

HURNOC THE UNLUCKY

Attributes

DEX (17): 7

PER (16): 7

STR (14): 6

WIL (9): 4

TOU (12): 5

CHA (7): 4

Characteristics

Initiative: 6

Physical Armor: 11

Mystic Armor: 4

Death: 82

Unconsciousness: 66

Wound Threshold: 9

Karma Points: 40/40

Physical Defense: 11

Spell Defense: 10

Social Defense: 7

Recovery Tests: 2

Knockdown: 6

Movement: 6

Scout Talents (Knacks)

Astral Sight^D (8): 15

Avoid Blow (8): 15

Climbing^D (8): 15

Conceal Object (8): 15

Direction Arrow (8): 15

Durability [6/5] (8): 8

Empathic Sense^D (8): 12

Evidence Analysis^D (9): 16 (False Evidence; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 227)

Karma Ritual^D (8): 8

Melee Weapons (9): 16

Missile Weapons (8): 15

Navigation^D (8): 15

Resist Taunt* (1): 5

Safe Path^D (8): 15

Search^D (9): 16 (Listen; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 229)

Sense Danger (8): 15

Speak Language^D (8): 15—(Human, Obsidiman, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang,
 Windling)

Sprint (8): 8

Thread Weaving (Scout Weaving)^D (8): 15

Tracking^D (9): 16 (Astral Tracking, Identify Tracks, Stalk; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 230)

Wilderness Survival^D (8): 15

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Acting^A (3): 7

Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10

Keys of Death Group^K (4): 11

Parry (4): 11

Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Riposte (4): 11

Scarification^A (4): 8

Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)

Streetwise (4): 11

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys
 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Buckler (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Flail (Forged +3; Damage 14), 2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20
 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes),
 Thread Longbow (Rank 4; Damage 17; Range 60–120 yards/30–60 hexes), Quiver
 (w/40 longbow arrows; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, 2 × Healing Potions, Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations
 (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Loot

390 silver pieces

Legend Award

Eighth Circle

Notes

As an ork, Hurnoc possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

Scout Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Enhanced Senses

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on companion's environment interactive Action Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Thief Abilities

Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue (Thief)

Commentary

Hurnoc might be considered lucky, as he was the sole survivor of a minor ork scorcher band that was wiped out when he was an adolescent. He was deemed "the unlucky", though, because three adventuring groups he joined were destroyed in their expeditions, with Hurnoc again being the only survivor. He acquired a reputation for bringing bad luck to an adventure, and no other group would let him join. He now pursues the solitary life of an assassin. No one is aware that he is a member of the Keys of Death, and that he was responsible for the misfortunes that befell his comrades.

Hurnoc's face is heavily scarred (some of the scars are self-inflicted to draw suspicion away from himself regarding his companions' deaths) and he dresses and smells like an ork scout who has been out in the woods for a long, long time. Hurnoc is an ork Eighth Circle Scout and Fifth Circle Thief.

His *Gahad* is triggered by people who take too long to die, and questioning the deaths of his companions. It is never triggered by calling him unlucky, or commenting on his smell, scars or appearance.

JELTIANSA

Attributes

DEX (18): 7 STR (12): 5 TOU (9): 4
PER (19): 8 WIL (17): 7 CHA (15): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 9 Spell Defense: 12
Mystic Armor: 7 Social Defense: 12
Death: 84 Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 66 Knockdown: 5
Wound Threshold: 7 Movement: 7

Karma Points: 36/36

Nethermancer Talents (Knacks)

Arcane Mutterings^D (5): 11
Frighten^D (5): 12
Read/Write Magic^D (5): 13
Spellcasting^D (5): 13
Spell Matrix^D (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spirit Hold^D (5): 12
Spirit Talk^D (5): 13
Summon (Ally Spirits)^D (5): 12
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy)^D (5): 13 (Create Spell Matrix Object, Create Thread Item)
Willforce (5): 12

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
^I Italized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Scout Talents (Knacks)

Astral Sight^D (9): 17
Avoid Blow (9): 16
Climbing^D (9): 16
Conceal Object (9): 16
Detect Trap (5): 13
Disarm Trap (5): 12
Disguise Self^D (9): 17
Durability [6/5] (9): 9
Empathic Sense^D (9): 15

RUMORS

Lordan

"Tall human, big red beard? Sounds like Lordan, a strictly small-time operator—smuggles wine and such into Bartertown."

"Lordan? Yeah, I've seen him around. I can even tell you where he lives, if it's worth my while."

"Grayhood"

"Never heard of him."

(Asking around in Kratas or Bartertown for someone that fits the description of the gray-hooded man gets no results, as Lordan invented that disguise for the occasion of the initial meeting at the Bolthole and has never appeared elsewhere in it.)

Fretant^k

"Crazy looking t'skrang? The rumor is his own aropagoi kicked him out for being too unstable and dangerous. Anyone who creeps out the Ish-karat has got to be pretty darn creepy."

Duwgamu

"It is said that Duwgamu has the same indefatigability that obsidian messengers have, but the message he carries is death."

Hurnoc the Unlucky

"Tough sucker; and he's known for pulling off some messy, messy kills."

Jeltiansa

"Don't know if she does the work, or if she is just the go-between, but word is that if you cross her palm with enough silver, people end up dead."

Endure Cold^D (9): 13

Evidence Analysis^D (10): 18 (False Evidence; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 227)

Karma Ritual^D (9): 9

Lock Picking (5): 12

Melee Weapons (10): 17

Missile Weapons (10): 17 (Placed Shot)

Resist Taunt^{*} (1): 8

Safe Path^D (10): 18 (Mastermind's Plan; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 229)

Search^D (10): 18 (Listen; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 229)

Speak Language^D (9): 17

—(Human, Obsidian, Or'zet, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)

Silent Walk^D (10): 17 (Shadow Hide, Traceless Stride)

Thread Weaving (Scout Weaving)^D (9): 17

Tracking^D (10): 18 (Astral Tracking, Identify Tracks, Stalk; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 230)

Trap Initiative (5): 12

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^I Italized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{*} Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Acting^A (5): 11

Hand of Corruption Group^K (5): 13

Infiltration^K (6): 14

Parry (5): 12

Read/Write Language (1): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Riposte (5): 12

Robe Embroidery^A (3): 9

Speak Language (2): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, Sperethiel)

Streetwise (5): 13

Throwing Weapons (3): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill



Nethermancy Spells

Arrow of Night^M, Astral Spear, Chilling Circle^M, Ethereal Darkness^M, Fatal Food, Pain^M, Preserve, Putrefy, Sculpt Darkness, Shadow Hunter, Spirit Dart, Spirit Grip, Wither Limb^M

^M Denotes spell in spell matrix. Note that Jeltiansa has 4 Spell Matrix talents and one Threaded Spell Matrix object for a total of five Spell Matrices.

Armor

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3),
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 13), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 9; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Light Crossbow** (Forged +3; Damage 12; Range 32–64 yards/16–32 hexes), Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)

Thread Items

Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus),
Spell Matrix Arrowhead (Rank 5; Usually attuned to Arrow of Night)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Elfweave Robe, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, 2 × Healing Potions, Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Loot

600 silver pieces

Legend Award

Ninth Circle

Notes

As an elf, Jeltiansa possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Nethermancer Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Decay and Renewal
Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on companion's environment interactive Action Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Blend; Karma on Recovery Tests

Scout Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fifth Circle: Enhanced Senses (Scout)

Commentary

Jeltiansa is a beautiful, but cold, elfen woman. She began her adventuring career as a Scout of the Infiltrator specialty, but on one mission she attempted to infiltrate the Hand of Corruption, hired by a noble family to find their daughter who they believed had joined the group. She succeeded in infiltrating the Hand of Corruption, but they succeeded in turning her to their way of thinking, and she now serves them as one of their assassins, taking jobs for coin to fill the group's coffers, as well as carrying out assassinations that advance the group's aims.

Since her conversion, she has been tutored in the ways of Nethermancy as well, which assist her greatly in her new profession. Jeltiansa is an elf Ninth Circle Infiltrator Scout specialist and Fifth Circle Nethermancer.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Lordan would normally only allow one representative of a group into the back room—whoever was first contacted by the urchin—most likely the member of the group with the most unsavory reputation. However, if the rest of the group does not want to wait outside, they may be present at the meeting, but their group is only given one envelope and one gemstone.

If the characters decide to attack Lordan in the tavern, he fights back. The other assassins present try to intervene to protect him, as killing a potential employer is normally bad for future business. Attacking him after they have trailed him out of the tavern may not be a bad idea, but he refuses to Name his employer, no matter what means they employ. Obviously, should the characters assault him, they will have difficulty collecting the blood money later.

If the characters attempt to trail Lordan and he notices them, he will take a more circuitous route to his inn, conveniently traveling past a gang of henchmen he has paid for this very purpose. Their job is not to kill the characters, but provide enough of a distraction to allow Lordan to escape. These thieves will flee at the first sign of losing the fight. Use the *buundavim* statistics on p. 56.

PLANNING THE HIT

In this encounter, the player characters plan and then carry out the assassination of Garlthik. Clever adventurers will spend some time studying Garlthik and his movements before trying to kill him. Otherwise, they can just rush in headlong, probably getting killed for their efforts.

SETTING THE STAGE

You know the stakes are now as high as any you have ever encountered. Even if you succeed, hundreds of the deadliest cutthroats in Barsaive will want your blood. If you do pull this off, you will be as rich as kings, and your legend will be forever sung. Your Names will be praised by some, cursed by others, but never forgotten, as long as the reign of Garlthik is remembered. Should you fail, you know that only death awaits you. So, what is your plan?

THEMES AND IMAGES

This encounter could take the space of a night huddled around a table in a dark corner of a tavern or could take months of careful planning throughout Kratas. Either way, play up the paranoia and danger of this enterprise; should it be heard that the characters are planning such a job, it will likely get back to Garlthik, after which Kratas will become a very unhealthy place for them to be. Have the characters notice members of the Force giving them the once over more than usual, mysterious figures in the shadows, etc.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The assassins should only have a remote chance of pulling off the hit if they are quite powerful and carefully execute a very clever plan. This is a truly legendary feat, and so it must be very difficult; Garlthik has survived more assassination attempts than he can count. Even though he has solidified his control on the city since the days of the gang wars, traitors within the Force who wish to take his place, as well as killers sent by rival gangs, still continue to plague him and keep his security detail busy. Vistrosh occasionally sends assassins after Garlthik, both to support the false impression that he is truly trying to take over the city, to keep Garlthik on his toes, and as an easy way to get rid of underlings he fears are disloyal or too ambitious.

Further, even though Garlthik appears to be aging, he is a Fifteenth Circle adept; even without his gang, he is a formidable opponent and, above all, a survivor.

This encounter details Garlthik's movements and his security precautions. The characters should attempt to discover as much of this information as possible in planning the attack.

Where is Garlthik?

One of the first difficulties the player characters may encounter is finding out where Garlthik actually is. Even though he is the acknowledged leader of the city, he rarely appears in public and does not easily grant audiences. In normal times, Garlthik switches his movements between his various hideouts, rarely sleeping in the same place two nights in a row. His typical daily schedule is as follows.

He wakes up around noon, eats a light breakfast, then travels to either the dining hall at the Old Citadel or the main courtroom in the Magistrate's Palace, where he meets for a few hours with his

top ranking advisers who report to him on their operations and receive orders and advice from him. The meeting place is never arranged ahead of time, but he announces it that morning, sending runners to summon his aides to meet him.

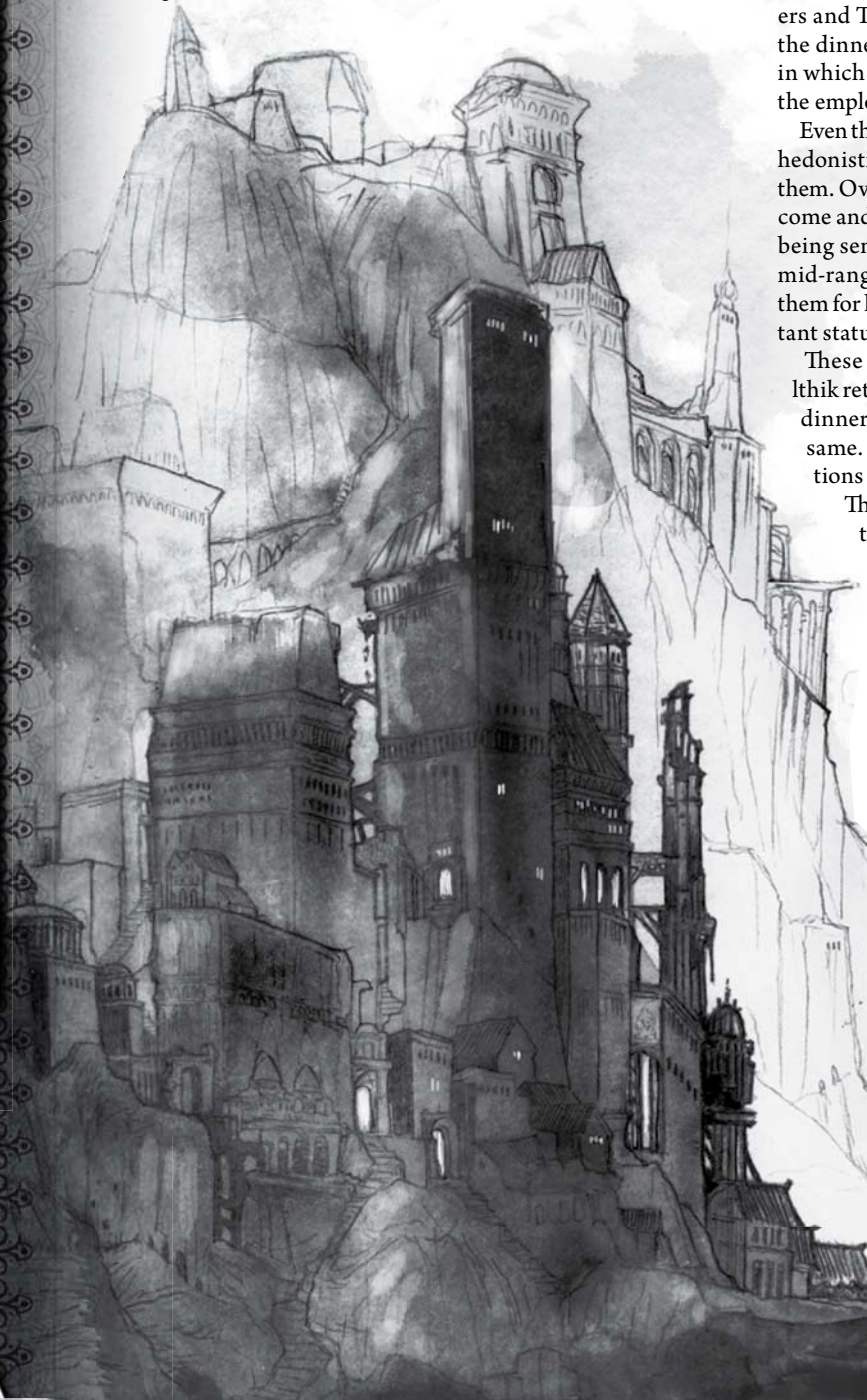
He then spends some time in recreation. This may include such leisure activities as practicing his Thief talents in the training rooms of the Magistrate's Palace, overseeing the training of up-and-coming Thieves, or helping promising burglars plan heists. He may also spend time "alone" in one of his apartments, reading, napping, performing his Karma Ritual, or spending time with one of his casual lovers. Even though he may be alone, his room is surrounded by his security detail.

Once the sun goes down, he has dinner with a larger number of his followers. This could be in the Magistrate's Palace, the Old Citadel, the dining hall in One-eye Manor, or in one of his other lairs. These dinners last for several hours and include copious amounts of food and drink, as well as entertainment such as dancers and Troubadours brought in for the occasion. Occasionally, the dinners happen at the Screaming Basilisk or another tavern, in which case the Force clears out all non-Force members, save the employees and performers.

Even though these dinners may appear at first glance to be merely hedonistic, Garlthik is actually getting serious work done during them. Over the course of the meal, different members of the Force come and go, reporting to Garlthik about new developments and being sent by him on missions. He also invites up-and-coming, mid-range members of the gang to the dinner, so he can assess them for himself. To be invited to one of these dinners is an important status symbol in the gang.

These bacchanalias last long into the night, after which Garlthik retires to one of his various apartments. The location of the dinner and the place where he sleeps that night are never the same. Like his morning meetings, he randomly picks his locations and does not give advance notice of his plans.

The gamemaster can randomly pick between these locations using the following table and rolling a D6.

- 
- 1—Magistrate's Palace
 - 2—The Old Citadel
 - 3—One-eye Manor
 - 4—"No-eye" manor
 - 5—Safehouse in the Safehearts
 - 6—"No-Name" manor

"No-eye" and "no-Name" manors are the nicknames of two large manor houses in Hilltop. Unlike One-eye Manor, however, these have no external markings to identify that the Force of the eye holds them, and only trusted members of the gang know of their locations. Moreover, while dinners in the first three locations are well lit and noisy, Garlthik keeps the revelry quiet and under wraps in the last three locations. Even when Garlthik is not present at One-Eye Manor, there are other members of the Force noisily carousing, so would-be assassins may think he is in residence.

Garlthik's Protectors

Normally, a squad of a dozen Journeyman adepts accompanies Garlthik wherever he goes. There are actually two such squads that take half-day shifts, but the composition of each squad is essentially identical. Garlthik is accompanied by one of these squads 24 hours a day. Should an attack happen during a dinner, Garlthik is also accompanied by a dozen or more mid-to-high-Circle adept members of the Force who are regularly invited, and, while not actively looking out for trouble, certainly join in to protect Garlthik.

The typical squad is led by a Seventh Circle elf Thief, with three lower-Circle human Thieves traveling on the edges of the group, looking for traps and other hazards. Four troll Warriors stick close to Garlthik, while two t'skrang Archers keep an eye out for snipers. Two magicians also stay close to Garlthik to provide healing and defensive magic, but first inspect any area they enter for magical dangers.

These bodyguards are a typical group, but the gamemaster may vary their numbers and composition, and even their Disciplines, to keep the player characters on their toes. There are at least two different squads that work in shifts. Other squads might include Scouts, Air Sailors, or Sky Raiders in place of some of the Thieves or Warriors. There are always some magicians present to look for magical threats and provide defensive spells and healing.

In addition to the gear listed, each of Garlthik's protectors wears an Amulet of the Eye and carries Healing Potions, Kelix's Poultice, Kelia's Antidote, and Last Chance Salves, which they can use on themselves or Garlthik, should he need them.

BODYGUARD LEADER SEVENTH CIRCLE ELF THIEF

Attributes		
DEX (20): 8	STR (12): 5	TOU (14): 6
PER (19): 8	WIL (12): 5	CHA (12): 5
Characteristics		
Initiative: 8	Physical Defense: 13	
Physical Armor: 8	Spell Defense: 10	
Mystic Armor: 4	Social Defense: 8	
Death: 76*	Recovery Tests: 3	
Unconsciousness: 61*	Knockdown: 5	
Wound Threshold: 10	Movement: 7	
Karma Points: 28/28		
* Adjusted by Blood Magic		

Thief Talents (Knacks)	
Avoid Blow* (8): 16	
Detect Trap ^D (7): 15	
Detect Weapon (7): 15	
Disarm Trap ^D (7): 15	
Durability [6/5] (7): 7	
Fast Hand ^D (7): 15	
Karma Ritual ^D (7): 7	
Lock Picking ^D (7): 15	
Melee Weapons (8): 16 (Deflect Blow)	
Picking Pockets ^D (7): 15	
Search (8): 16 (Listen; see <i>Kratas: City of Thieves</i> p. 229)	
Sense Poison ^D (7): 15	
Silent Walk ^D (8): 16	
Slough Blame D (7): 12	
Sprint (7): 7	
Surprise Strike (7): 12	
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving) ^D (8): 16 (Talent Linking)	
Trap Initiative ^D (8): 16 (Act on Instinct; see <i>Kratas: City of Thieves</i> p. 226)	
^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)	
<i>Italicized Talents Require Karma.</i> (Except when also a Discipline Talent)	
* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Boots	

Skills	
Acting ^A (4): 9	
Climbing (4): 12	
Force of the Eye Group ^K (4): 12	
Gangs of Kratas ^K (4): 12	

Read/Write Language (1): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Speak Language (2): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Sperethiel*)
 Streetwise (5): 13
 Throwing Weapons (4): 12
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor	
Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3),	
Buckler (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)	
Weapons	
Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 13), Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 9; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes)	
Thread Items	
Protective Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow +1 Rank Bonus)	
Equipment	
Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Elfweave Robe, 2 × Healing Potions, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Last Chance Salve, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb	
Loot	
210 silver pieces	
Legend Award	
Seventh Circle	
Notes	
Has the Low-Light Vision racial ability.	
Thief Abilities	
Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense	
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests	
Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue	
Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests	
Seventh Circle: Karma on companion's stealth Action Tests	

BODYGUARD FIFTH CIRCLE HUMAN THIEF (3)

Attributes		
DEX (16): 7	STR (12): 5	TOU (16): 7
PER (16): 7	WIL (10): 5	CHA (10): 5
Characteristics		
Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 10	
Physical Armor: 7	Spell Defense: 9	
Mystic Armor: 3	Social Defense: 6	
Death: 67*	Recovery Tests: 3	
Unconsciousness: 54*	Knockdown: 5	
Wound Threshold: 11	Movement: 6	
Karma Points: 25/25		
* Adjusted by Blood Magic		

Thief Talents	
Avoid Blow (5): 12	
Detect Trap ^D (5): 12	
Detect Weapon (5): 12	
Disarm Trap ^D (5): 12	
Durability [6/5] (5): 5	
Karma Ritual ^D (5): 5	
Lock Picking ^D (5): 12	
Melee Weapons (6): 13	
Picking Pockets ^D (5): 12	
Search (5): 12	
Sense Poison ^D (5): 12	
Silent Walk ^D (6): 13	
Surprise Strike ^V (5): 10	
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving) ^D (5): 12	
Trap Initiative ^D (5): 12	
Versatility (1): 1	
^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)	
<i>Italicized Talents Require Karma.</i> (Except when also a Discipline Talent)	
^V Learned through Versatility	

Skills	
Acting ^A (3): 8	
Climbing (3): 10	
Force of the Eye Group ^K (3): 10	
Gangs of Kratas ^K (3): 10	

Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
Streetwise (4): 11

Throwing Weapons (2): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Buckler (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 12), Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, 2 × Healing Potions, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Last Chance Salve, Light Quartz Lantern, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Fifth Circle

Notes

Has the Versatility racial ability. Has used the Versatility talent to learn the Surprise Strike talent.

Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue

BODYGUARD FIFTH CIRCLE ORK ILLUSIONIST

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (13): 6 TOU (12): 5
PER (16): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (13): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 8 Spell Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 6 Social Defense: 7
Death: 52* Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 39* Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 25/25

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Illusionist Talents (Knacks)

Disguise Self^D (5): 12
Dead Fall^D (5): 11
Durability [4/3] (5): 5
False Sight^D (5): 5
Karma Ritual^D (5): 5
Read/Write Magic^D (5): 12
Spellcasting^D (6): 13
Spell Matrix^D (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Thread Weaving (Illusionism)^D (5): 12 (Create Thread Item)
True Sight^D (5): 5
Willforce (5): 11

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Force of the Eye Group^K (3): 10
Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Research (3): 10
Robe Embroidery^A (3): 9
Search (3): 10
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)
Streetwise (3): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Illusionist Spells

Best Face, Detect Illusionism Magic^M, Disaster, Disguise Metal, Dispel Illusionism Magic, Displace Image, Ephemeral Bolt, Flying Carpet, Fun With Doors, Improve Karma^M, Improved Alarm, Light, Nobody Here^M, Rope Guide, Send Message, Stop Right There^M, True Ephemeral Bolt, Unseen Voices

^M Denotes spell in spell matrix

Armor

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

Weapons

Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Cloaksense Brooch, Embroidered Robe, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, Healing Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Last Chance Salve, Quiet Pouch, 6 yards of rope, Traveler's Garb

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Fifth Circle

Notes

Has the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

Illusionist Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Glamour

Commentary

The Bodyguard/Illusionist normally has Stop Right There, Detect Illusionism Magic, Improve Karma, and Nobody Here in his spell matrices. He uses Improved Alarm on any place Garlthik stops for a meal or to sleep. If combat breaks out, he uses Improve Karma on Garlthik and then on the Warriors. He can also use Flying Carpet on Garlthik's cloak to fly him out, should he need to be evacuated.

BODYGUARD FIFTH CIRCLE ORK WIZARD

Attributes

DEX (12): 5 STR (14): 6 TOU (13): 6
PER (16): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 5 Spell Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 5 Social Defense: 7
Death: 53* Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 40* Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 25/25

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Wizard Talents (Knacks)

Arcane Mutterings (3): 8
Astral Sight^D (6): 13
Book Memory^D (5): 11
Durability [4/3] (5): 5
Karma Ritual^D (5): 5
Read/Write Language^D (5): 12—(Or'zet)
Read/Write Magic^D (5): 12
Research^D (5): 12
Spellcasting^D (6): 13
Spell Matrix^D (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Steel Thought^D (5): 11
Thread Weaving (Wizardry)^D (5): 12 (Create Thread Item)
Willforce (5): 11

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Force of the Eye Group^K (3): 10
Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Robe Embroidery A (3): 8
 Search (3): 10
 Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)
 Streetwise (3): 10
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Wizardry Spells

Astral Sense, Astral Shield ^M, Dispel Magic, Divine Aura, Dodge Boost, Identify Magic, Identify Spell, Mage Armor, Mind Dagger, Quicken Pace, Relax, Sanctuary ^M, Shatter Lock, Slow ^M, Study Thread, Triangulate, Wall Walker, Wizard's Cloak
^M Denotes spell in spell matrix

Armor

Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Weapons

Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Cloaksense Brooch, Embroidered Robe, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, Healing Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Last Chance Salve, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Fifth Circle

Notes

Has the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

Wizard Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Book Mage

Commentary

The Bodyguard/Wizard uses his Astral Sight talent to inspect any area into which Garlthik is moving. Upon finding any suspicious magic in the area, he immediately casts Astral Shield on Garlthik. If he perceives any Namegivers who are direct threats to Garlthik, he threads and casts the Slow spell on them so that they cannot keep up with Garlthik

BODYGUARD FOURTH CIRCLE TROLL WARRIORS (4)

Attributes

DEX (14): 6 STR (19): 8 TOU (18): 7
 PER (11): 5 WIL (12): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 9
 Physical Armor: 6 Spell Defense: 7
 Mystic Armor: 4 Social Defense: 7
 Death: 76* Recovery Tests: 3
 Unconsciousness: 60* Knockdown: 8**
 Wound Threshold: 12 Movement: 7

Karma Points: 12/12

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Has the Wound Balance talent

Warrior Talents

Acrobatic Strike (4): 10
 Air Dance (4): 10
 Anticipate Blow ^D (4): 9
 Avoid Blow ^D (4): 10
 Durability [9/7] (4): 4
 Karma Ritual ^D (4): 4
 Melee Weapons ^D (5): 11
 Unarmed Combat ^D (5): 11
 Thread Weaving (War Weaving) ^D (4): 9
 Tiger Spring (4): 4
 Wood Skin ^D (4): 11
 Wound Balance ^D (4): 12
^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Force of the Eye Group ^K (2): 7
 Gangs of Kratas ^K (2): 7
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Search (2): 7



Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)

Streetwise (2): 7

Throwing Weapons (3): 9

Weapon Rune Carving ^A (2): 7

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3),
Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Troll Sword (Forged +1; Damage 15), **Troll Dagger** (Forged +1; Damage 12; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Troll Spears** (Forged +1; Damage 14; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Amulet of the Eye (2 Damage Points), Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Healing Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Last Chance Salve, Traveler's Garb

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Award

Fourth Circle

Notes

Has the Heat Sight racial ability.

Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

BODYGUARD FIFTH CIRCLE T'SKRANG ARCHER (2)

Attributes

DEX (19): 8 STR (13): 6 TOU (14): 6
 PER (16): 7 WIL (11): 5 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 11
 Physical Armor: 5 Spell Defense: 9
 Mystic Armor: 4 Social Defense: 8
 Death: 64* Recovery Tests: 3
 Unconsciousness: 51* Knockdown: 6**
 Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 20/20

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Has the Wound Balance skill

Archer Talents

Anticipate Blow ^D (5): 12
 Avoid Blow (5): 13
 Detect Weapon (5): 12
 Direction Arrow ^D (5): 12
 Durability [6/5] (5): 5
 Karma Ritual ^D (5): 5

Missile Weapons^D (6): 14
 Mystic Aim^D (5): 12
 Silent Walk (5): 13
 Sprint (5): 5
 Stopping Aim^D (6): 12
 Thread Weaving (Arrow Weaving)^D (5): 12
 Throwing Weapons^D (5): 13
True Shot^D (6): 14

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Arrow Fletching^A (3): 9
 Force of the Eye Group^K (3): 10
 Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10
 Hunting (3): 11
 Melee Weapons (3): 11
 Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Search (3): 10
 Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
 Streetwise (3): 10
 Wound Balance (3): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Weapons

Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Spears** (Forged +2; Damage 12; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Medium Crossbow** (Forged +2; Damage 14; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), **Quiver** (w/30 medium crossbow bolts; Forged +1)

Equipment

Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Cloaksense Brooch, Healing Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Last Chance Salve, Light Quartz Lantern, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Fifth Circle

Notes

Has the Tail Combat racial ability.

Archer Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Arrow's Eye View

Commentary

The Bodyguard/Archers use their Stopping Aim talents to halt attackers in order to give Garlthik time to escape, and only then do they attack to kill.

Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider the Bodyguards as a Ninth Circle (Group) encounter.

How to Do It?

This section anticipates strategies the player characters may use and various obstacles facing them. Sneaking in at night (or early morning) and trying to slit Garlthik's throat as he sleeps is a possibility, though the characters must first discover where he sleeps and make it past the guards, alarms, wards, and traps he has around him. Note that the magicians in his entourage cast Sanctuary and Improved Alarm around him wherever he beds down for the night. Also, take careful note of all the talents and talent knacks that Garlthik has to help protect him from such attacks (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 47).

A variation on this approach would be a simple frontal assault. A sufficiently large group of high-Circle adepts might try to fight their way through the various rings of defenders around Garlthik at the Magistrate's Palace or One-Eye Manor. However, in such locations it would be difficult to make one's way in without alerting Garlthik and his followers, especially taking into account the Amulets of the Eye. If such an attack is detected, and Garlthik considers it a seri-

A WORKING PLAN

The following is an example of a plan that might have a chance of working. The group is not expected to come up with this exact plan, nor should it be fed to the players, but it is given to the gamemaster as a benchmark for the efforts of the group.

Step One: Start a whispering campaign that Garlthik is dying and on his last legs, including speculation that Vistrosh is poised to take over the city when Garlthik croaks. This may entice Garlthik into making a public appearance to counter these rumors and assert his continuing control of the city.

Step Two: Give him an opportunity for such an appearance by staging a performance in the Arena.

Step Three: Hire a rival gang, such as the Forsaken or the Desperate Ones, to stage an attack on the Arena when Garlthik arrives. This will divert some of his guard to fight the attack and close off an above-ground escape.

Step Four: Have snipers, possibly including magicians using long range spells, attack Garlthik in the Arena, possibly killing him, but more likely driving him to escape through the Undercity.

Step Five: Attempt the actual assassination: an ambush set up in the Undercity beneath the Arena. Poison gas, True air and fire explosives, and mass-effect spells take out the remainder of Garlthik's guard, and then a combat team of high-Circle adepts attacks him all at once.

Such a scheme would involve months of planning, thousands of silver pieces, and the coordination of dozens of Namegivers, any one of whom might actually work for Garlthik and alert him to the plan. There are multiple places where this plan could fail, and Garlthik is rarely predictable.

ous threat, he does not simply wait in his chambers for the group to get to him. He flees along with his bodyguard to another location, while Terricia and others organize a counter attack, summoning dozens, if not hundreds of the Force to the original site.

In either of the scenarios above, even if the characters succeed in killing Garlthik, escaping the scene of the crime with their lives may prove more difficult. A long-range attack, such as sniping, might provide a greater chance of escape, but this will prove difficult as well. Garlthik rarely travels out of doors, preferring to make his way from one stronghold to another via the Undercity. Even when he is traveling above ground, it is usually amid the narrow streets and tall buildings of Hilltop, which give opportunities only to snipers perched on the closest buildings to his path of travel. As he varies his path every day, it is very difficult to predict his route. The most likely opportunities for sniping would occur if he were to attend an event in the Arena or address the city from the Old Citadel, though both occasions are rare these days. Also, in the case of a sniper attack, the attacker most likely needs to be able to finish Garlthik off with one shot. If he survives the first shot, he heads for cover, where his attendants are able to administer Healing Potions and a Last Chance Salve, if necessary.

It might be possible to ambush him when he travels, either above ground or under the city, but this approach faces both the problems of anticipating his movements and the ambushers being discovered by the regular patrols through these areas.

The assassins might attempt to poison Garlthik or employ other indirect means of killing him, such as trapping his rooms, or some delayed magical effect. First, they would have to somehow get access to his food or rooms; only members of the Force of the Eye get such access, and even when Garlthik is not in residence, there are guards on all of his rooms. Further, his bodyguards, including magicians, check all of his rooms before he enters them, both astrally and physically. Finally, Garlthik has talents and talent knacks that allow him to detect poisons and traps.

The assassins might attempt to engineer some catastrophic accident or disaster to befall Garlthik or his residence, such as stealing an airship and crashing it into his manor, dropping some colossal weight from Clifftop onto his building, or undermining one of his retreats so that it collapses. This would require both excellent timing and engineering skills and advance knowledge of when he would be present in which residence. Further, any large engineering projects would need exceptional camouflage to avoid detection.

Assassins might find it useful to infiltrate the Force of the Eye in order to get close to Garlthik or gather intelligence about his movements and defenses. See the section under **Joining a Gang** on p.78 of *Kratas: City of Thieves* for more information on joining the Force of the Eye. Remember that, once in the gang, the actions of a member can be monitored via his Amulet of the Eye, so any attempt at passing information on to co-conspirators is likely to be discovered. Such an undercover agent works best if all of his orders have been given prior to joining the gang and receiving an amulet. Remember also that the effects of breaking the Blood Oath sworn upon joining the Force of the Eye are unpleasant for the character breaking the oath.

A similar difficulty applies to any attempt to turn or corrupt a current member of the Force of the Eye into helping with an assassination attempt. Most of the Force are devoted to Garlthik, both out of personal loyalty and because, in their calculated self-interest, they benefit from his running of the city and the gang. Most fear the repercussions of Garlthik's death, thinking that he is all that keeps one of the stronger powers of Barsaive from taking over the city.

However, those few ambitious and ruthless enough to contemplate trying to take Garlthik's place are kept in check by their fear of Garlthik discovering their plans by way of the amulets. This is not to say that bribing a gang member to assist is impossible, just very risky, and the member in question will be extremely cautious about entertaining such thoughts. Both Terricia and Bleritis are content with the status quo and would not turn against Garlthik. The former because she knows that she will take over the gang with Garlthik's death and is patient enough to wait for his natural death, which shouldn't be too long in coming, and the latter because he is comfortable in an advisory capacity and knows that the second in command is rarely the target that a leader is.

Another ploy would involve the characters staging some sort of event to get Garlthik to expose himself in public in a vulnerable position, such as at the Arena or at the Old Citadel. A related tactic might be to stir up some sort of trouble: a fire, scorcher or Sky Raider attack, gang war, or other distraction that might force Garlthik to have a greater visible presence in the city and simultaneously distract his guards.



High Alert

To further complicate all of this, the group does not have months of uninterrupted planning. Remind the players that time is limited, in that others may also be trying to fulfill the contract. Even though the employers have set no time limit, if another group kills Garlthik first, any other plans will be moot.

In fact, two months after the contract has been given, the Keys of Death make their first attempt at killing Garlthik. Rumors circulate that a trusted member of the Force

of the Eye who had joined many years ago was secretly one of the Keys of Death. He was assigned to Garlthik's security detail and, at some secret coded signal, he was ordered to do it. He put on his Death Robes, slew a few of Garlthik's bodyguards, and then made his way into Garlthik's bedchamber. However, the old Thief heard him and slit the assassin's throat before he could blink—or so say the rumormongers.

Even though the Force does not yet know about the contract, the Keys of Death's attack is too close for them, and Garlthik's security is increased. After this attempt, he does not travel above ground at all but only through the Undercity. Further, an additional patrol of half a dozen guards travels in advance of his bodyguards, checking his path for traps, and thoroughly checking all of his dining and sleeping spots.

Paradoxically, Garlthik appears in public more after the assassination attempt, to reassure the populace that he has not been cowed by the attack. In fact, this "Garlthik" is another member of the gang, using Disguise Self or Illusionist spells to pose as Garlthik. Garlthik himself does not leave Hilltop for several months after the attempt, though his double appears in Temple Plaza and Merchant's Row, and possibly elsewhere in the city.

This state of high alert lasts at least two or three months after an assassination attempt. During the course of the players' preparations, feel free to have any of the other factions interested in the contract attempt the assassination. This not only makes it clear that the player characters cannot take forever, but also keeps Garlthik's protectors on their toes.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The biggest potential problem is the death of one or more player characters. This is a very real possibility, even for high-Circle adepts. Garlthik is quite dangerous by himself, and he has hundreds of Namegivers to protect him. Would-be assassins should be aware of the danger before they agree to take on the assignment.

A merciful way to deal with these potential deaths is for the Force to capture rather than kill the player characters, in order to find out for whom they are working. Garlthik would not be above reviving a dead assassin for questioning. Should the player characters be caught, and should they tell Garlthik about the contract, he conscripts them, on threat of death, into participating in the events of **Keeping an Eye Out**, below.

Another potential problem that the players may not anticipate is in getting away. Should the characters succeed in killing Garlthik, the Force of the Eye does not simply retreat in defeat. If the killers are present at the site of the killing, the remaining members of the Force chase them and, should they escape, nowhere in the city of Kratas is safe. The Force scours the entire city for the killers, and knows the city far better than anyone else. Any plan that does not include an escape plan is inherently flawed.

KEEPING AN EYE OUT

In this encounter, the player characters choose to notify Garlthik of the contract on his life. Garlthik in turn recruits them to help stage his death in order to flush out those who sought it.

SETTING THE STAGE

You have made your way cautiously toward Hilltop, the fortified neighborhood of sanctuary for the Force of the Eye. As you approach one of its heavily guarded gates, two burly troll guards eye you suspiciously.

"We must see Garlthik," one of you stammers.

"Yeah, everybody 'must see Garlthik.' Hilltop's off limits to you, so scram." One of the trolls says, with a fine balance of boredom and menace.

"But we have something important to tell him."

"You can tell us anything you have to tell him. We'll make sure he gets the message. Now, what's so important?" sneers the other troll.

"Tell him we're here to kill him."

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the sense of dread and danger that the characters should feel venturing into Garlthik's stronghold to tell him there is a contract on his life. The collection of ruthless cutthroats and killers assembled to hear their story should make them extremely nervous. When it comes time to carry out the fake assassination, the tension and fear of a mistake should be at the front of their minds.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If the characters are participating in this encounter after having tried to kill Garlthik, modify the **Setting the Stage** section appropriately.

The first difficulty the player characters face in this encounter is getting in to see Garlthik. If the characters have attained Warden Legendary Status, they may get an audience with Garlthik just by asking, though they are blindfolded when escorted to the meeting place and are checked over for any dangerous magical items.

If they are not of such Legendary Status, then they need to persuade multiple levels of guards in order to get such an audience. First, there are the guards at the gates of Hilltop, who, if convinced, summon a higher ranking member of the Force who questions the characters again. If he is convinced of their intent and the truth of their account, he blindfolds the characters and escorts them to wherever Garlthik is located. Once at the meeting place, the characters are questioned by Garlthik's bodyguard leader, and remain blindfolded. At this time they are disarmed and then brought in to see Garlthik. These encounters provide excellent opportunities for characters to use social talents and skills. Remember that Garlthik may be watching any or all of these conversations through the guards' amulets.

Once the characters are brought in to meet Garlthik, their blindfolds are removed. The group sees Garlthik sitting at a large table loaded with mounds of food and drink. Seated around the table are a dozen or so members of the Force of the Eye, some consuming dainty delicacies and sipping fine wines from stolen crystal goblets, others tearing lustily into hunks of nearly raw meat and swilling ale from crude earthen mugs. All look extremely dangerous, and all are looking at the group.

"So," says Garlthik, "tell me why you are going to kill me."

Even though he has heard their story already, he listens to it again, with he and others present asking questions for clarification. Terricia asks for a description of the person giving the contract, as well as for descriptions of all of the other assassins present. Garlthik asks about the money offered, as well as the details of the payment.

When the other assassins are described, Garlthik responds with the following.

"Well, well. Hmmm. We know who the dwarf represents. I don't think that she would accept such a commission, as she knows where her interests lie. Still, we should be on the safe side. Terricia, why don't you give Roolan a polite visit? Don't insult his honor by suggesting that he inform us of the contract; just make it clear to him that we know the offer has been made."

If the characters noticed Fretant'k's obsidian dagger, Terricia recognizes the t'skrang.

"The t'skrang is Named Fretant'k and is an independent operator. He was a member of the Ishkarat arpagoi—far as I know still is—but he's making his own way in the world. He could be tricky. He's known to be very good. Did a beauty of a job on a Denairastas noble last year, in the heart of Iopos, no less. Set the bed on fire while the guy was sleeping. We should keep an eye out for him."

"The obsidiman is also a good freelancer. The other two are suspected of being middle men working for someone else. Most likely one of them is a member of the Keys of Death."

Once the characters have finished telling their story and answering the questions, Garlthik falls silent and appears to be thinking. Wait for the characters to ask him what they should do next. His reply:

"What next? Well, I guess you're going to have to kill me."

Garlthik explains that, in order to find out who has put a price on his head, he is going to stage his own death, with the characters as the assassins. Then they collect the bounty and track down those who placed the commission. They also return the bounty to Garlthik, who pays them ten percent.

The characters might expect Garlthik to be grateful at this point, since they have told him about the contract. However, to Garlthik's way of thinking, telling him is an admission on their part that they are too weak to pull off the hit. Garlthik never respects weakness and so he bullies and menaces them as he sees fit. He is not offering them the job of faking his death, he is forcing it on them. In his mind, he is being generous in not killing them, and giving them a percentage of the bounty is further largess on his part. He has a little more respect for the characters if they took the initiative to track Lordan and can provide more information about him.

Garlthik, Terricia, and Bleritis then plot out the assassination. Though they do not ask for help, they do not ignore any good suggestions the characters have. The plan that Garlthik comes up with is as follows.

The Plan

Garlthik attends a performance at the Screaming Basilisk, after which he leaves out the front door. One of the characters is set up on a rooftop across the street with a crossbow. The rest of the group, milling around on the street outside, rushes at Garlthik, weap-

ons drawn. Garlthik's guard are in on the act and rush forward to meet this attack, fighting just to wound, not to kill. This leaves Garlthik exposed to the rooftop sniper. The sniper fires a special bolt, which has been enchanted so that when it hits it gives off hideous, Nethermantic magical energy that appears to kill Garlthik. The guards rush back to his corpse, and the group disappears back down the sewers, the sniper joining them by sliding down a rope off the back of the building into an open sewer passage. The group then meets a member of the Force who leads them out of the city via a secret passage, after which they make their way to Bartertown to collect the reward and find the conspirators. Garlthik assures them that nothing could be simpler.

It takes Garlthik a week or so to make the necessary arrangements. During this time the false assassins are free to go about their lives as usual in the city, but Garlthik warns them not to tell anyone, not even other members of the Force of the Eye, about the plot.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters might try to back out of faking the hit. If so, have Garlthik make it clear that their participation is not optional. The characters should be encouraged to contribute ideas to the planning of the hit, especially if they can creatively use their own special abilities. However, if any of their plans are too outlandish or unlikely to succeed, have Garlthik shoot them down. The characters might also, foolishly, attempt to kill Garlthik at this meeting. The gamemaster should make it clear that Garlthik and his gang are very dangerous adepts, who are still very suspicious of the characters. Should they attempt it anyway, unarmed as they are, then let them take their lumps.



ONE SHOT AT GLORY

In this encounter, the characters try to carry out the plan they have made with Garlthik to fake his assassination. The Force of the Eye makes a convincing effort to stop them, as do the other assassins who want to claim the prize for themselves.

SETTING THE STAGE

You lie in wait, crouched against the low wall at the edge of the roof, opposite the Screaming Basilisk taverns. It seems as if you have been waiting for hours, and the crossbow resting in your arms grows heavy. Sweat starts to drip down into your eyes, as you squint down the bolt at your target, the open doorway of the tavern. If everything goes according to plan, soon Garlthik will step out that door, and you will shoot him.

Wait...did you just hear footsteps behind you?

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the tension building as everyone gets in place, followed by chaos as the plan goes awry and the rival assassins get involved.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Agents of the Force of the Eye contact the characters when the plan is ready. One character is selected to be the sniper, while the rest take up positions in the street outside of the Screaming Basilisk. The Force have a crossbow with the special bolt in place waiting beneath a dark cloth on the rooftop, and a member of the Force of the Eye is waiting in the sewer to show the characters the way out of town. The bolt has been enchanted so that when it hits someone, it releases two spells. The first is an Illusion that appears as if black tendrils of evil energy explode out of Astral Space and plunge into the target's chest, accompanied by great howling winds and flashes of lightning. The second spell is the Nethermancer spell, Death Trance, which makes it appear as if the target is dead. This special bolt is clearly marked, as it has a black magical bundle tied behind its head with arcane symbols covering it. The bundle consists of the tiny skull of a small animal, covered with miniscule magical symbols. Stuffed in the skull is a leather bag filled with powdered bone, dried blood and herbs. Should the characters astrally examine it, they see powerful threads of Nethermancy and Illusionism magic tied to it. There is also a quiver of normal bolts lying next to the crossbow.

This set-up takes place at night, and there is a fair-sized crowd of Namegivers on the street, which is moderately well lit from the light of fires, lanterns, and light crystals spilling out of open tavern doorways into the street. A few things do not go according to plan.

Appearing in public is a calculated risk for Garlthik. As he leaves Hilltop so rarely these days, all of the assassins have agents waiting to inform them when Garlthik appears outside of his neighborhood. Garlthik spends an hour or so in the tavern before coming out. The various factions of assassins have been waiting for an opportunity like this, and, once word gets out that Garlthik has left Hilltop, they flock to Merchant's Row.

The Best Laid Plans...

Fretant'k has been staking out Merchant's Row since being offered the contract, waiting to take his shot at Garlthik. He notices the sniper on the rooftop and attempts to sneak up and kill him. The player characters may make Perception Tests with a Difficulty Number equal to the result of Fretant'k's Dexterity or Silent Walk Tests, as appropriate, in order to notice the t'skrang sneaking up on the sniper. However, if they take him out, they must do so without causing a ruckus, otherwise Garlthik would never step out into the street.

Once the characters have taken care of Fretant'k, and assuming they do so quietly, Garlthik steps out of the Screaming Basilisk, which is the cue for the characters on the street to engage in combat with the guards. The guards want to make this convincing, so they attack with full force, hoping to wound the false assassins. Once they have wounded a character, however, they switch targets, expecting the attacker to back off. The characters should be similarly careful to make the fight look convincing, but also to avoid killing the guards. If they do kill any of the guards, this could have repercussions in any future dealings with the Force of the Eye.

Once the guards have moved away from Garlthik, the sniper should be able to aim his shot. However, the characters may notice a large figure now moving out of the crowd toward the old ork. This is the obsidian, Duwgamu, who has been following Garlthik since the contract was offered.

Duwgamu has been given three orders by Vistrosh. First, perform surveillance on Garlthik and report his movements for an assassination team to come later. (This team does not actually exist, as Vistrosh does not really want Garlthik dead, but Duwgamu doesn't know this.) Second, prevent anyone else from assassinating Garlthik, as this would prevent the Brood from collecting the bounty. Third, if a good opportunity presents itself, he should kill Garlthik himself, but only if a very good opportunity arises. (Vistrosh does not seriously think this will happen, but, while he thinks it is in his best interest to keep Garlthik alive, he is not devastated should the ork die, and already has contingency plans in place. For more on Vistrosh's plans, see the **Aftermath** section on p. 57.)

Duwgamu is fairly sharp, and when the first attack happens, he recognizes it for the diversion that it is. He looks around for the secondary attack, including checking the rooftops for snipers. Should he see the sniper, he steps in between the sniper and Garlthik, even leaping in front of the bolt if necessary. Normally he would be fairly confident about surviving a single crossbow bolt, but the magical bolt in question lays him out.

If he fails to stop the bolt and it lays Garlthik out, then Duwgamu believes that Garlthik has been killed, and quickly flees the scene, to report the night's happenings to Vistrosh.

Duwgamu might use the Arrow Catch knack, but the spells enchanted on the crossbow bolt still go off and affect whoever is holding the bolt.

Once they have "killed" Garlthik, the player characters need to escape. Garlthik's bodyguards are in on the trick, and they surround his body defensively, not following the group. However, there are many other members of the Force of the Eye on the street who are not in on the scam, and they give chase. See the section on the Force of the Eye (p. 51 of *Kratas: City of Thieves*) for statistics on these gang members. There should be at least a dozen or so members of the gang trying to catch and kill the false assassins.

The plan is for the player characters to meet up with their guide, a dwarf member of the Force of the Eye Named Cheldan, in the sewers. If they have had a rough enough time of it already, Cheldan meets them and quickly spirits them through the tunnels. The group hears the shouts of pursuers behind them, but Cheldan manages to lead them safely out of the city. However, if the characters have had too easy a time up to this point, Cheldan runs

afoul of one of the denizens of the sewers: Jeltiansa, of the Hand of Corruption, coming to reconnoiter Garlthik's public appearance, sneaks up on the dwarf and slits his throat. In this case, Cheldan is nowhere to be seen, and the player characters must find their own way through the sewers.

Jeltiansa does not try to impede the progress of the group but watches the characters pass from the shadows. The group may then be hampered in its escape by any of the typical hazards of the Undercity, such as a pack of wild dogs. Normally these would not be much of a threat, but the noise the ensuing battle generates is enough to call the attention of the Force of the Eye members that are pursuing the group. As the characters have lost their guide, they likely get lost, and may possibly encounter patrols of the Force, or other dangers while trying to find their way out. See the section on the Undercity on p. 141 of *Kratas: City of Thieves* for more ideas.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the player characters act arrogantly with Garlthik, he has them beaten up before continuing to work with them. He does not actually kill them, as he has become entranced with the legendary possibilities of stealing the price on his own head.

The characters might also have difficulty getting in to see Garlthik, in which case some of his men kidnap them, having heard rumors about the contract and that the characters were present at the initial meeting in the Bolthole. (Vistrosh let slip this information, as he doesn't want Garlthik dead, at least not yet.)

The activities of Fretant'k or Duwgamu may disrupt the plan. Garlthik's movements must appear credible to the witnesses on the street. For example, if there is a noisy struggle on the opposite rooftop, Garlthik's guards would not let him walk out onto the street. Further, if the first shot from the sniper does not hit him, he seeks cover.

If this set up is blown, Garlthik meets up with the false assassins later and berates them for their incompetence. He and his advisers then plan another fake assassination; once again with the characters' help. They wait at least a month, however, before staging the next attack.

Should the characters fail a second time to convincingly fake Garlthik's death, Garlthik considers them incompetent, and has no further dealings with them.

GARLTHIK'S FUNERAL



arlthik's body is burned in front of the assembled citizens of Kratas, and a new era begins in the City of Thieves.

SETTING THE STAGE

As the sun is setting to the West, the Central Plaza begins to fill with thousands of Namegivers. The walls around the square are lined with members of the Force of the Eye. Over the northern wall, one can see the top of the old keep. Built on top of it is a massive funeral bier. Made of logs and surrounded by bundles of hay, the bier is topped by the body of Garlthik, covered by a simple black cloth. One by one most of the elite of Kratas file past the funeral pyre. Cutthroats and mercenaries, burglars and pickpockets; each places on the body a small gift: a flower, a coin, a ring, or some other token, whose significance is known only to the giver and the deceased. A flock of birds flies overhead, each one carrying

a single black rose in its beak. The birds descend, place their flowers on the body, and fly off. [A final bird flies in and drops an orichalcum coin on the body.] An eerie, disembodied voice whispers through the crowd. "Sleep well, One Eye. You were a worthy adversary."

The sun has now dipped below the horizon, and just the last glow of dusk lights the scene. From within the keep a small flame appears. In the twilight you can just make out the small figure of a windling carrying a torch. She stops, hovers over the bier, and then drops the torch onto the straw. In moments the flames leap up, and soon the body is engulfed in a roaring fire. The effect among the crowd is stirring. Despite their jaded and cynical hearts, a wave of emotion flows through the crowd, and many a tear is seen in eyes that have not cried in many years.

From somewhere in the crowd a lone shout goes up. "Long live Garlthik, and long live the Free City of Kratas!" There is a pause, and then other voices echo the shout. Soon it has become a chant, as thousands of Namegivers join in. "Long live Garlthik, and long live the Free City of Kratas!"

Slowly the chant dies down, as do the flames, and the gathered criminals begin to shuffle off into the darkness. Many a toast will be raised to Garlthik in the taverns of Kratas tonight, but many a throat will be slit as well. All know that the sun will rise on a very different city come morning.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Sorrow and uncertainty pervade the air; despite his thuggish ways, Garlthik ran the city well. Old, jaded, battle-scarred warriors and cynical thieves weep openly at his passing. Elsewhere, the ambitious and paranoid sharpen their blades for the anticipated bloodshed to follow. A city already on edge is about to be pushed over that edge.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If Garlthik is actually dead, omit the sentence in brackets from the description in **Setting the Stage**. After Garlthik's death, Vistrosh performed the Ritual of the Ghost Master with Garlthik's Name. If he is truly dead, then the coin would be consumed. If he is not dead, the Ritual does not work, and the coin is not consumed. By dropping the coin on the body, Vistrosh is slyly giving a hint that he knows the truth.

The player characters may be viewing these events from the square. Should they not be present for the funeral (because they are on the run from the Force of the Eye and have left the city, perhaps), have them hear about the funeral from a traveling Troubadour somewhere on their way.

If the characters have killed Garlthik, or helped fake his death, then their next step is to move on to **Blood Money** (p. 53). This encounter can merely be a dramatic interlude to demonstrate the significance of the deed they have accomplished.

If they are to stay in Kratas, however, there are any number of possible side effects of Garlthik's real or fake death with which they could be entangled.

Reward Money

Terricia, now the head of the Force of the Eye, offers a 100,000 silver piece reward for Garlthik's killers. If the characters declined the contract, and did not see fit to warn Garlthik, they are not involved with his death, but do have a clue as to who pulled off the assassination. They can hunt down whichever of the assassins from the opening encounter succeeded in the contract.

Turf War

With Garlthik's death, real or not, the city erupts into gang warfare, both between and within the gangs. The worst hit are the tributary gangs of the Scrabbles. The Forsaken and the Desperate Ones, as well as Brocher's Brood, muscle in on the Bloody Fist, the All-Breakers, and Rangor's Reavers, each of which are also fighting



amongst each other and seeking to expand their territory outside of the Scrabbles. The Force is initially unable to support its subsidiary gangs, as Terricia is busy solidifying her hold on the Force of the Eye. Several members of the Force have been waiting for Garlthik's death in order to try to take control of the gang, and Terricia spends her first week or so in charge fending off their attacks. Terricia has a great advantage in this, in that she put out the rumor that the Amulets of the Eyes have ceased functioning with Garlthik's death, and she does not know how to use them. This is a lie, and she knows everything that the eyes can see. This allows her (and Garlthik, if he is still alive) to weed out a number of traitors.

While this is going on, the Force retreats to its stronghold of Hilltop, temporarily giving ground to its rivals. This retreat only lasts a month or so, after which the Force regroupes and retakes most of the city after its rivals have exhausted themselves fighting each other. If Garlthik is still alive, he leads this effort himself, shocking most of the city.

Vistrosh is the only one besides the assassins and the trusted inner circle of the Force that knows whether Garlthik is truly dead. If he is not dead, Vistrosh makes some token assaults on Force holdings, but does not risk overexposing himself. If Garlthik is dead, Vistrosh makes a ploy to take over Clifftop and the Safehearths; the blood elf is worried about the foreign policy implications of Garlthik's death and is trying to strengthen his position in anticipation of invading armies.

The player characters could get pulled into these struggles by being hired by any of the gangs in question. Additionally, any previous experience they have with these gangs colors how the gangs treat them now, whether as potential allies or enemies. If the latter, the gangs take advantage of the chaos after Garlthik's death to settle old scores with the group. Finally, an extremely dangerous city becomes even more so, and any group could be attacked merely walking the streets of Kratas. While this was always true to some degree, it is even more likely now.

Many of the relatively honest citizens of Kratas flee the city temporarily until the killing dies down. The characters might also be hired as bodyguards to protect the assets and lives of those formerly protected by Garlthik.

TROUBLESHOOTING

There is not much trouble that could happen here, though if the characters are wanted for the killing of Garlthik, they could be spotted should they show up for the funeral. It may be best to learn of it secondhand.

If anyone should attempt some disturbance at the funeral, he would most likely be killed by the remaining members of the Force of the Eye, which might serve him right.

CUI BONO?

In this encounter the player characters travel to Bartertown and try to find out who paid for Garlthik's assassination. If the characters are not working for Garlthik, and are not interested in discovering the identities of those who paid for the assassination, then skip this encounter and move on to **Blood Money** (p. 53).

SETTING THE SCENE

You stand on the edge of the Royal Road, outside the great gates of Throal. To your left, past the grim-faced dwarf guards, you can see the Grand Bazaar, the shouts of haggling reaching your ears. To your right, you see Namegivers scurrying to and fro between the ramshackle wooden buildings of Bartertown. No doubt there are many among those thousands who might want Garlthik dead. But who had the money and the audacity to attempt it? You're going to try to find out.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the hustle and bustle of Bartertown and Throal. Thousands of Namegivers jostle with each other in the Grand Bazaar, giving way to the quiet opulence of the great houses in the wealthier parts of the city that Lordan visits. Bartertown is dirty, grimy,



and dangerous, but nowhere near as much so as Kratas. The characters see plenty of decent, normal folk in Bartertown, mixed in with the cutthroats and thugs.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Bartertown is an independent town that has sprung up outside the gates of Throal since the reopening of the dwarf kingdom. It serves those merchants and others who wish to do business with Throal without paying the taxes due at the Grand Bazaar. Their refusal to pay these taxes means that they receive no protection from the Throal military or law enforcement. The magistrate of Bartertown, Clystone, attempts to enforce his own taxes, and everyone else attempts to avoid them. Gangs of extortionists and smugglers fight Clystone's men and each other over territory. A human Named Shadowswift heads the most powerful of these gangs. For more on Bartertown, see p. 99 of *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*.

Trailing Lordan

The most trouble-free way for the player characters to get the needed information is to arrive in Bartertown before the news of Garlthik's death. After Lordan hears of Garlthik's death, he visits his sponsors and collects the money necessary to pay the bounty. If the characters are aware of Lordan's actual appearance, then they are able to find him in Bartertown by asking around. He does not try to hide himself in his persona as Lordan the merchant.

Lordan has rooms in a boarding house in town and lives the life of a merchant and smuggler: buying and selling shipments of goods, arranging their transport throughout Barsaive, and paying protection to Shadowswift's gang. The news of Garlthik's death reaches Bartertown around a week after it happens. When Lordan hears the news, he makes his way into Throal to call upon Selenda of House Ueraven, the leader of the group that wanted Garlthik killed. He informs her of the death, and they make preparations to gather the money to make the payment.

A week later, Lordan visits the Brave Warrior, a tavern in Bartertown where one can hire mercenaries, and picks up his bodyguards, the twin troll Sky Raiders, Gortrash and Tralak. They accompany him into Throal, each carrying one wine cask that Lordan has given them. The trio makes the rounds through the wealthiest neighborhoods of Throal, stopping at the servants' entrance of several mansions. They stop at Selenda of Ueraven's house first, then the Five Sisters of Chaozun, and the houses of Vamban of Ludi, Mulkri Pa'vas (a minor noble of that house), and Zendes of Sarafica. Should the characters be following Lordan on his rounds, any passerby is able to tell them who lives in these houses. Each noble contributes a share to the blood money, which is stored in the wine casks. The contribution from House Heovrat has been given to Ueraven through secret channels and lumped in with theirs, so Lordan does not need to meet with a member of that family. The involvement of the Banned House is very difficult to discover.

The towering trolls are easy to follow in Throal, but Lordan is paranoid about carrying so much wealth with him and so is constantly looking out for muggers once they have picked up the first payment. Lordan makes his rounds in his normal guise as a merchant and, if stopped and questioned, says he is taking samples of wine around to show potential clients. The casks have been built cleverly so that the bottom section of each cask actually holds a small amount of wine, and he can pour a glass or two out of the spigot at the bottom.

Once he has all of the money, Lordan returns to his quarters in Bartertown, buries the casks under the floor boards, and leaves the Sky Raiders as guards, waiting until the rest of the month has passed.

Should the characters successfully follow him as he makes his rounds and take note of where he stops in Throal, they have gathered the information Garlthik needs to get his revenge, and they can pick up their loot at the appointed time with no problems.

Legwork

If the player characters have not penetrated Lordan's disguise, this encounter is difficult, but not impossible. The characters might decide merely to capture "Grayhood" at the pay off, and force the information from him. If so, skip to **Blood Money** below. Otherwise, the characters might be able to discover the information by carefully asking questions around town with judicious use of social Talents. The characters might pursue the following lines of investigation. Why did Grayhood decide to meet in Bartertown for the pay off? Assuming that the location is not merely coincidental, who in Throal or Bartertown would benefit from Garlthik's death? Who could afford to pay for it? Who could arrange it?

The characters could ask around in high society circles for the answers to some of these questions. If they think to follow the money, and make some inquiries among the financiers and money changers of Throal, a successful Interaction Test provides the following information:

"Young Mulkri of House Pa'vas went to House Elcomi, hat in hand, desperate to secure a loan of 150,000 Silver. He had to give extremely favorable terms, as he needed it very quickly, and was unwilling to say what it was for. No doubt he has some ambitious scheme to try to restore his family's crumbling fortunes, but he should take care not to bankrupt them in the attempt."

Note that this information can only be obtained from someone well connected with the powerbrokers of Throal, and such a person does not give this information lightly to scruffy adventurers, but should be approached with proper etiquette and the appearance of propriety. If the characters do get this information and then stake out Mulkri's manor, they see Lordan make the pick up as described above.

The characters could take the opposite tack, and ask around among the lowlife scum of Bartertown. Inquiries after "Grayhood" turn up nothing, as Lordan has never appeared in that guise in Bartertown. However, the characters can ask more generally, that if one had to arrange an assassination, who could handle the arrangements? A successful Interaction Test turns up Lordan's Name as a potential fixer. However, incautious inquiries may land the characters in prison, or worse. Similarly, but opposite to the contact above, this information is only given to a character who appears suitably nefarious. The characters can then try to follow Lordan or confront him directly.

Giving this information counts as doing a small favor (see **Interaction Tests** of p.95 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Treat the financier as having a starting attitude of Neutral, and a Social Defense of 8, while the thug has a starting attitude of Unfriendly, and a Social Defense of 7. Appropriate social skills and talents such as Etiquette and Streetwise can affect these Interaction Tests.

Any other clever ideas by the players that could result in the characters discovering this information should be encouraged.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Should they be stymied and unable to make any headway, the characters could find a local information broker, and simply pay for the information. The information broker maintains sources in the household staffs of all the noble houses. He could tell the characters that each of the five Houses mentioned above gave a large sum of money to Lordan, for an unknown reason. This will cost the characters 1,000 silver pieces, and they will not earn Legend Points for this.

BLOOD MONEY

In this encounter, the characters travel to Bartertown outside of Throal to collect their fee for killing Garlthik. Different complications arise depending on whether they are working for Garlthik or actually slew him. Either the Force interrupts the payoff to get at the killers, or the characters have been tasked with identifying those who paid for the hit from Lordan.

SETTING THE STAGE

Bartertown is a town full of brutal thugs, ruthless smugglers, and corrupt politicians, so it should be a cakewalk compared to Kratas. You have been sitting in the Red Blot, a tavern on the top floor of a warehouse, for a few hours, nursing your drinks and waiting for your contact. As the sun nears setting, the tavern has become quite busy, with dozens of Namegivers filling the room. At the top of the stairway appears the gray-hooded human you remember from the Bolthole in Kratas. Two trolls flank him, each also wearing a gray hood and carrying a small cask. He strides over to your table, and takes a seat. He smiles and says, "Well done."

THEMES AND IMAGES

By whatever route the characters approach Bartertown, the talk of the trail and taverns is all about Garlthik's death. The characters should be constantly looking over their shoulders for those seeking the bounty on their heads, even if they didn't kill Garlthik. The meeting with Lordan should be very tense, as everyone involved is quite nervous.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Whether the hit was faked or not, Terricia has placed a bounty of 100,000 silver pieces on the heads of the so-called killers, and all members of the Force of the Eye that might encounter them along the way try to collect it. If the characters did actually kill Garlthik, Terricia has also offered Thront and Urranum double that bounty to track them down.

Let the players choose the group's own path to Bartertown, though most routes from Kratas to Bartertown would pass through Daiche. This could be quite dangerous, as Daiche is still firmly under the control of the Force of the Eye, and news of the price on the characters' heads is heading there shortly.

In fact, the travel time of the rumors and news of Garlthik's death is important to the characters' survival. If Garlthik is really dead, Terricia puts the word out immediately. The news makes it to Daiche by galloping pony shortly thereafter. Only if the assassins leave Kratas immediately do they make it to Daiche before the news.

If the characters are actually working with the Force, Terricia waits a full day before announcing the price on their heads.

Caravan, riverboat, and airship alert other major cities. If the assassins have actually killed Garlthik, though, Terricia uses magical means to alert the branches of the Force in all of the major cities, including the group in Bartertown.

Orgalik (see below) follows the characters from Kratas, whether they killed Garlthik or not. In the former case, he is following them until he can find their employer (see **Option Two** below). If they faked the death, he is assigned to keep an eye on them to make sure they get the money and the information about their employer.

The characters could be attacked by members of the Force of the Eye or other potential bounty hunters as they make their way to Bartertown. See the section on the Force of the Eye (p.43 in *Kratas: City of Thieves*) for potential foes. If they have seen enough combat, move on to Bartertown.

ORGALIK

Attributes

DEX (17): 7 **STR (16): 7** **TOU (14): 6**
PER (16): 7 **WIL (9): 4** **CHA (10): 5**

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 10
Physical Armor: 11 **Spell Defense:** 10
Mystic Armor: 4 **Social Defense:** 8
Death: 76* **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 61* **Knockdown:** 7
Wound Threshold: 10 **Movement:** 6

Karma Points: 35/35

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Scout Talents

Climbing^D (3): 10
Detect Weapon (3): 10
Disguise Self (3): 10
Missile Weapons (3): 10
Navigation^D (3): 10
Search^D (3): 10
Speak Language^D (3): 10—(Human, Sperethiel)
Tracking^D (3): 10
Wilderness Survival^D (3): 10

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow (7): 14
Conceal Object (7): 14
Detect Trap^D (7): 14
Disarm Trap^D (7): 14
Direction Sense (7): 14
Durability [6/5] (7): 7
Fast Hand^D (7): 14
Karma Ritual^D (7): 7
Lock Picking^D (7): 14
Melee Weapons (8): 15
Picking Pockets^D (7): 14
Resist Taunt* (1): 5
Sense Poison^D (7): 14
Silent Walk^D (8): 15 (Shadow Hide, Traceless Stride)
Surprise Strike (7): 14
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (7): 14
Throwing Weapons (7): 14
Trap Initiative^D (7): 14

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Acting^A (4): 9
Force of the Eye Group^K (4): 11
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 11
Haggle (4): 9
Maneuver (3): 10
Read/Write Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)
Sprint (3): 3
Streetwise (4): 11

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3), **Buckler** (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17), **Espagra-Scale Cloak** (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Flail (Forged +3; Damage 15), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 11; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Medium Crossbow** (Forged +1; Damage 14; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/15 medium crossbow bolts; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Healing Potion, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Loot

380 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

NotesAs an ork, Orgalik possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.**Thief Abilities****Second Circle:** +1 Physical Defense**Fourth Circle:** Karma on Dexterity-only Tests**Fifth Circle:** Thieves' Tongue**Sixth Circle:** Karma on Perception-only Tests**Seventh Circle:** Karma on companion's stealth Action Tests**Commentary**

Orgalik is a young, up-and-coming member of the Force of the Eye who takes Garlthik's death personally. He grew up in Kratas and in the Force of the Eye, and thinks of Garlthik as a father figure. Indeed, there are rumors that Garlthik might be his actual father; the old ork is rumored to have sired numerous children in the casual, ork way. Orgalik is an ork Seventh Circle Thief and Third Circle Scout.

The Payoff

The player characters should eventually meet up with Lordan in the Red Blot tavern in Bartertown to receive their payment. The Red Blot is a popular, if seedy, watering hole located on the fourth floor of a warehouse. It has two entrances: a stone staircase that serves the floors of the warehouse below, that is locked after the warehouse closes at nightfall; and a rickety wooden staircase that hugs the outside of the stone building. The tavern has several dozen exits, however, in that its walls are mostly large open windows. Indeed, the tavern takes its Name from the results on the street below of the not-infrequent defenestrations that pass for entertainment.

The two casks that Lordan's guards are carrying are full of the following loot, evenly divided between them: 1,500 True earth pieces, 1,000 True water pieces, 300 True air pieces, 200 True fire pieces, and 250 gems each worth 1,000 silver pieces. This adds up to the promised one million silver pieces. The two casks weigh about twenty pounds each. The casks are essentially camouflaged treasure chests and have been built with tops that open easily with the release of secret catches.

Lordan gives the casks to the characters and shows them how the tops of the casks open to reveal the contents. He wisely warns them about revealing the contents in public, however, and should the characters dump them out on the table to count the contents, he nervously excuses himself and leaves.

Move to one of the three options below, depending upon the characters' actions in the earlier encounters of the adventure.

Option One

In this case, the player characters have faked Garlthik's death and are on a two-fold mission: get the payment and find out who paid for the hit. Getting the money is easy, as Lordan believes that the characters killed Garlthik, and is expecting to provide them with the promised payment. Getting the information is not as easy, however. Lordan does not just give the characters this information if they ask him, but powerful social talents or spells might coax the information from him without violence. His guards are not stupid, however, and try to disrupt any obvious attempt at mind control.

Should the characters resort to violence, Lordan's two troll Sky Raider guards protect him. Further, he has hired ten *buundavim* (gang members), who work for Shadowswift, to provide extra protection. These gang members are hidden among the crowd of the pub, surrounding Lordan's table in a circle. Should anyone draw weapons or lay a hand on Lordan, the *buundavim* attack.

Should a fight erupt and turn against him, Lordan attempts to flee with his troll bodyguards. He jumps on the back of one and the trolls leap out a window, landing safely. They then run away, trying to lose any pursuers in the back alleys of Bartertown. Once they

think they have lost any followers, they hole up in Lordan's hide-out—a simple, nondescript house on the outskirts of the town.

The characters might decide not to act against Lordan at the Red Blot, in which case the payment goes smoothly. Lordan thanks them and leaves with his bodyguards. Should the characters try to follow, two of the *buundavim* follow them as well, with the rest of the gang members following in groups of two or three spread out behind, so as to avoid too much attention. The *buundavim* were only hired to protect Lordan from assault, not to keep him from being followed (an oversight on Lordan's part), so they do not act until violence occurs.

Lordan walks several blocks away, checking to make sure that no one is following. He then slips into an alley and dispels his Disguise Self talent. His bodyguards remove their cloaks as well and follow behind Lordan at a distance. He makes his way through Bartertown, stopping at various shops and market stalls on his way, and then return to his lodgings—a set of rooms in a boarding house. Over the next few days, he goes about his business of arranging for selling his goods in Bartertown. He does not meet again with those who hired him to arrange the hit, so the only way for anyone to get that information is to capture him and get that information from him.

The *buundavim* were only hired for the night, so should the characters wait longer than the end of the night to attack, they only have to face Lordan's troll bodyguards. Should they wait for more than a month, Lordan feels that any danger to him has passed and dismisses the Sky Raiders from his service.

If the characters capture Lordan, they may try to get the information from him themselves, or they may turn him over to the Force of the Eye, who have access to magical abilities that get this information from him more easily. Orgalik happily takes Lordan off the characters' hands and escorts him back to Kratas. If the characters wish to return to Kratas and turn Lordan and the bounty over to Garlthik themselves, Orgalik accompanies them. If they do not wish to return to Kratas, Orgalik collects the bounty from them and returns it to Garlthik, though he pays the characters 10 percent of it for their troubles.

GORTASH AND TRALAK SIXTH CIRCLE TROLL SKY RAIDERS

Attributes

DEX (13): 6

STR (20): 8

TOU (18): 7

PER (10): 5

WIL (17): 7

CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5

Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 10

Spell Defense: 8

Mystic Armor: 9

Social Defense: 8

Death: 90

Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 70

Knockdown: 8

Wound Threshold: 12

Movement: 7

Karma Points: 18/18

Sky Raider Talents (Knacks)Air Sailing^D (6): 13Battle Bellow^D (6): 11Battle Shout^D (6): 11

Blood Share (6): 13

Durability [8/6] (6): 6

Fireblood^D (7): 14 (Flaming Wounds)Great Leap^D (6): 12Karma Ritual^D (6): 6Melee Weapons^D (7): 13 (Deflect Blow)

Parry (7): 13

Shield Charge^D (6): 14

Steel Thought* (1): 8

Steely Stare^D (6): 11

Surprise Strike (6): 14

Swift Kick (6): 12

Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving)^D (6): 11

Unarmed Combat (6): 12

Windcatcher (7): 14 (Sky Diving; see below)

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Crystal Carving^A (3): 8
Gangs of Bartertown^K (3): 8
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)
Sprint (3): 3
Streetwise (3): 8
Throwing Weapons (3): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1), **Thread Crystal Raider Shield** (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 5; Deflect 3/3; PhysDef +1; Shatter 18)

Weapons

Troll Battle-Axe (Forged +2; Damage 18; cannot use shield), **Troll Sword** (Forged +2; Damage 16), 2 × **Troll Daggers** (Forged +2; Damage 13; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Troll Spears** (Forged +2; Damage 15; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Traveler's Garb, Wine Cask (see The Payoff above for contents)

Loot

130 silver pieces

Legend Award

Sixth Circle

Notes

As trolls, Gortrash and Tralak possess the Heat Sight racial ability.

Sky Raider Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Strike Without Warning

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

BUUNDAVIM, THIRD CIRCLE WARRIOR, SECOND CIRCLE THIEF

Attributes

DEX (14): 6 STR (17): 7 TOU (15): 6
PER (13): 6 WIL (11): 5 CHA (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 9
Physical Armor: 5 **Spell Defense:** 7
Mystic Armor: 1 **Social Defense:** 6
Death: 65 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 51 **Knockdown:** 7*
Wound Threshold: 10 **Movement:** 6

Karma Points: 15/15

* Has the Wound Balance skill

Thief Talents

Climbing (2): 8
Detect Trap^D (2): 8
Lock Picking^D (2): 8
Picking Pockets^D (2): 8
Silent Walk^D (2): 8
Surprise Strike (2): 9
Trap Initiative^D (2): 8

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Warrior Talents

Air Dance (3): 9
Anticipate Blow^D (3): 9
Avoid Blow^D (3): 9
Durability [9/7] (3): 3
Karma Ritual^D (3): 3
Melee Weapons^D (4): 10
Tiger Spring (3): 3
Unarmed Combat^D (4): 10

Wood Skin^D (3): 9

Wound Balance^D (3): 10

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

Skills

Acrobatic Strike (2): 8
Acting^A (2): 7
Bribery (2): 7
Extortion^K (2): 8
Gangs of Bartertown^K (2): 8
Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)
Streetwise (2): 8
Throwing Weapons (2): 8

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), **Buckler** (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Flail (Forged +1; Damage 13), **Dagger** (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Throwing Axes** (Damage 10; Range 12–24 yards/6–12 hexes)

Equipment

Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Traveler's Garb

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Award

Third Circle

Notes

Has the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider Lordan, Gortrash, Tralak, and the *Buundavim* a Ninth Circle (Group) encounter.

Option Two

In this case, the player characters have killed Garlthik, and the Force knows it. The Force has followed them from Kratas and is waiting to discover the identity of the group's employer. The Force has contacted the local Bartertown branch, and local members help set up an ambush at the tavern, both to catch the assassins and to track down their employer.

As soon as the transfer of the casks takes place, the Force acts. First, Orgalik boldly walks in the front door, and straight up to the characters' table. He coldly accuses the characters of the assassination and asks Lordan if he is their employer. He then draws his weapon as a ploy to draw out Lordan's protectors.

Lordan makes a gesture, and his rented protectors at nearby tables rise and draw their weapons. As soon as they stand, twelve members of the Force of the Eye, who have quietly been taking their places behind the *buundavim*, Surprise Strike them, quickly dispatching the guards. These members of the Force of the Eye are local to Bartertown, so they recognize the *buundavim*, while characters from Kratas do not.

At this point, the characters will most likely fight, causing pandemonium to break out as other patrons scramble to escape. Half of the Force tries to capture Lordan to find out who he is working for, but the rest fight to kill Garlthik's assassins. Alternatively, the group may try to flee, and while half of the Force gives chase, the other half stays to secure Lordan, as his capture is more important to the Force at this moment.

Should the characters surrender, the Force gives no quarter, confiscating their weapons and slitting their throats. If the characters are winning the fight, Orgalik grabs Lordan and tries to escape with him. The characters, who have their blood money now, may have little interest in helping Lordan. If the characters defeat the Force, Lordan expresses his disappointment with them in being discovered, but he lets them take their money and he flees.

SKY DIVING

Talent: Wind Catcher

Rank: 7

Strain: 2

The Sky Diving talent knack allows an adept to carry another person with him and land safely when using the Windcatcher talent. The carried person must stay in physical contact with the adept to maintain the effect of this talent knack. Carrying a person with the character increases the difficulty of landing both safely and precisely; increase the result level for landing safely to a Good or Excellent result, and increase the Result Level for controlling the descent to an Extraordinary result.

Option Three

The least likely option is that the player characters have managed to kill Garlthik and have done so pristinely, leaving no trace of their identities. This should be extremely difficult to pull off, as the Force of the Eye employs every means at their disposal to discover the identities of the killers.

If the characters have intelligently managed to avoid leaving any trace, actively anticipating all efforts to discover them, it might be possible to get away cleanly. This should be very difficult and unlikely, but if you feel the characters have been careful enough and have earned the reprieve, reward them by having the exchange go smoothly.

If the Force has not discovered the killers and has no interest in capturing Lordan, then the transfer goes off without a hitch. Lordan gives the characters the two casks, thanks them for their work, then leaves with his guards.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter could be a bit anti-climactic after the struggle to kill Garlthik. This doesn't need to be a problem if the players have struggled mightily in the previous encounters; just make it clear to them that this encounter will be the denouement.

If the characters are having difficulty with the *buundavim* in **Option One**, you may have Orgalik and his minions, who have been watching the group, intervene to save their skins. The characters might also try to double cross Garlthik in **Option One**. They have been promised 10 percent of the bounty, but they may try to make off with all of it. If so, they would have to defeat Orgalik and the remaining Force of the Eye members. Further, upon learning of the double cross, Garlthik would put a price on their heads, and dispatch the best of the Force of the Eye's assassins to hunt down the characters.

AFTERMATH

If Garlthik is truly dead, the gang wars of Kratas last for months, and the player characters might seek to fight for one gang or another. An ambitious group might also take the initiative to try to take over the city itself. That would become an epic adventure in itself. See **Gangs of Kratas** chapter on p. 43 of *Kratas: City of Thieves* for the potential competitors.

Garlthik's death also opens up the city for possible capture by other forces, including Throal. The forces that sought Garlthik's death lobby the crown to put an end to Kratas as a haven for the bandits who prey on the kingdom's trade. The characters could be involved either in defending Kratas from such an invasion by the

Arm of Throal, or leading such an invasion, depending upon their political allegiances.

Vistrosh, as Garlthik's successor, does his best to keep Kratas a free city. First, using the Songbirds, he spreads rumors to both Iopos and Thera that the city is ripe for the taking, exaggerating the disintegration of the Force of the Eye, and playing up the desire of the average Kratan for a strong power to establish some law and order. Further, he hints to each that the other is planning just such an invasion—a clear threat to the other's territory. Then he starts a whispering campaign among the halls of Throal, that Kratas is rightly the property of the dwarf kingdom, and that if a foreign invasion is not countered, the prestige and legitimacy of the crown will suffer. Thus, he hopes to draw these three powers into a protracted, costly war over the city. He has the Brood lay low while this fighting is going on, but once the dust settles, they harass whichever occupying army still remains, hoping to drive them out. He forges a secret alliance with Terricia and the remnants of the Force of the Eye, to conduct this guerilla campaign. Terricia reluctantly accepts, on the condition that the pact remains secret, to avoid losing the support of those Kratans who still hate Brocher's Brood. She also considers the agreement simply one of non-hostility, not a true alliance, and both understand that it will dissolve as soon as the last outsider is driven from the city.

The mad Blood Warder's goal is to leave the city either free or in the hands of Throal. In the latter case, he is able to continue his activities as before, or even with greater ease than under Garlthik's rule. Vistrosh's last card to play, should he be unable to drive out either the Therans or Denairastans, is to have a contingent of elves and Syrtisian t'skrang from the fortress at Kaer Eidolon retake the city. Nominally this will be to "liberate" the city on behalf of Barsaive and the Blood Wood's Throalic allies. In effect, the Queen's troops remain, leaving the city under her control.

The characters participation in all of these events could be the basis for a grand campaign.

If members of the Force discover who placed the contract on Garlthik, they put contracts out on the lives of the dwarfs responsible. However, as the Force is aware of the possible political implications of assassinating prominent members of Throal society, they include the stipulation that the hits must not be traceable back to Kratas. Thus they must look like accidents, or unrelated acts of violence. The Silent Shepherds, among others, take up the contracts. The characters could get involved, either in trying to carry out Garlthik's revenge or trying to stop it.

If the characters have double crossed Garlthik in **Option One of Blood Money**, they have a price on their heads for the rest of their lives, and will be hunted by assassins and bounty hunters wherever they go in Barsaive, and possibly beyond.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Deadman's Contract awards Legend Points in the form of Session, Adventure, and Legend Awards as outlined in **Awarding Legend Points** on p. 97 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*. The gamemaster can use the following guidelines when tailoring the awards:

The adventure goal is either assassinating Garlthik or faking his assassination, both should be worth the same award for completing the adventure goal, although the characters only earn the Conflict Legend Points for defeating him if the actually assassinate him. Taking his belongings may also constitute Loot worth an award for finding Treasure. Discovering the identities of those who paid for the assassination may be worth an additional small Legend Award.

HUNTING THE IMPOSTER

Evil always has many faces.

• KRATAN ADAGE •

Urlmasu the Sullen warily made her way through the twisting, dark passages of the Undercity of Kratas. The obsidian Horror Stalker knew that these might be her last moments alive. Somewhere in the dark tunnels ahead there was a door that fit the key she carried, and beyond that door might very well lie her doom. Perhaps death was what she deserved...

She had followed the Horror known as Nemesis for thousands of miles—from Vagothia far to the West, down to this strange land they called Barsaive. She now moved hundreds of feet below the surface of its most notorious city: Kratas. It was no surprise that a creature as vile and deceitful as Nemesis would have a lair deep beneath this den of scum and cutthroats.

She finally arrived at a massive stone door at the bottom of a seemingly endless set of stairs. In the center of the door sat a keyhole, surrounded by ancient and mysterious runes. She knew at once that this would be the match for the key she had taken from one of the Horror's corrupted Namegiver servants. She took a deep breath and thought about what lay ahead. If it were merely another lair of the Horror's servants then she might survive, perhaps striking a blow against its operations and even freeing its victims. However, she had no delusions about her own prowess. If the Horror itself lay beyond the door, she knew this was the end. But such was the way of the Horror Stalker—she had known she would die at the hands of a Horror when she was first initiated into the Discipline.

She unlocked the door and carefully slipped the key back into her pack. She unlimbered a two-handed sword from her back, took a deep breath, and pushed through the entrance.

Something dripped, not unusual this far underground, the hollow echo mingling with the mocking laughter of a girl. The young, disembodied voice issued forth from the emptiness, sounding distant.

As the Horror Stalker's eyes adjusted to the darkness, she saw drops of water falling steadily from stalactites in the ceiling of the worked stone room, landing with audible plops into a large pool of water below.

"Wait," she thought, "those stalactites form over the worked stone blocks. How old is this chamber?"

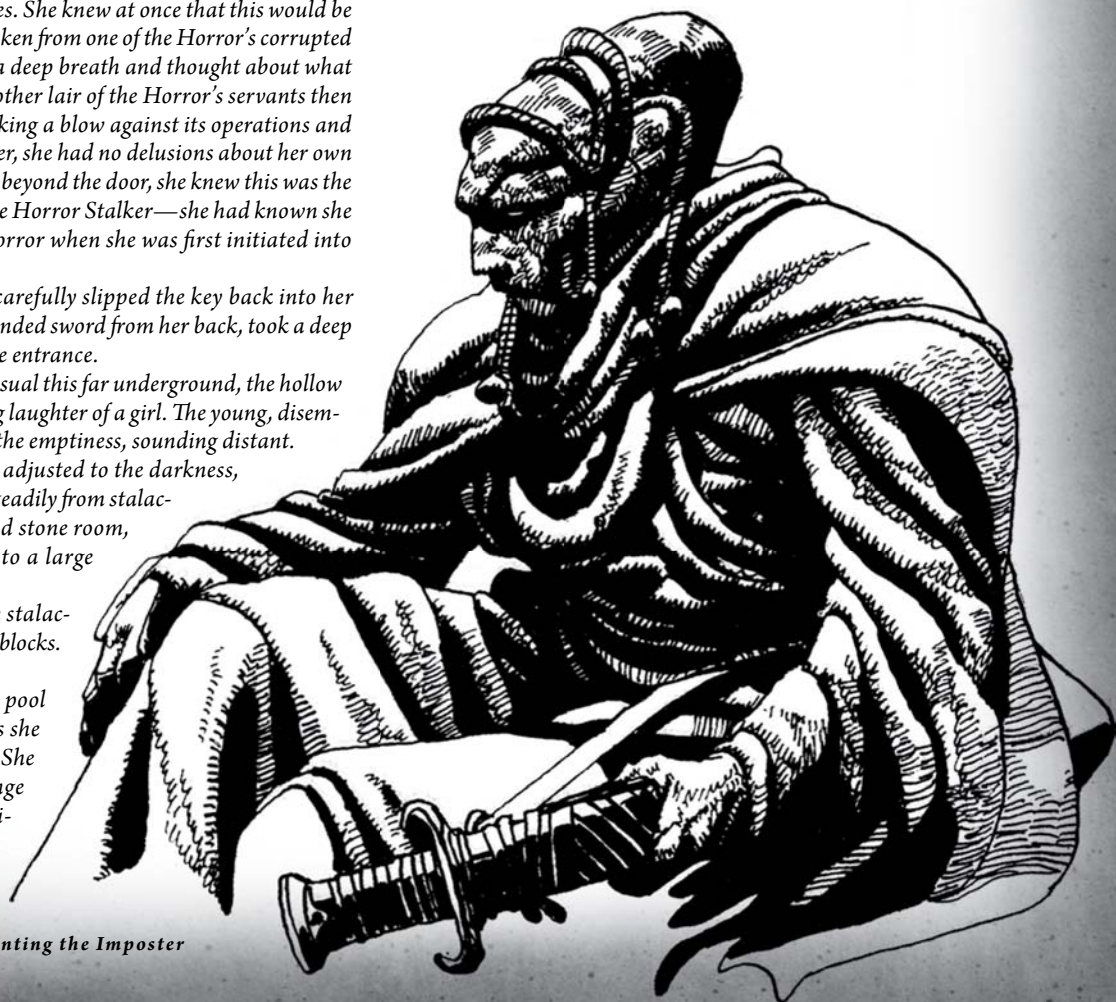
She moved to the edge of the pool and sudden alarm filled her as she gazed upon its inky blackness. She sniffed the air; the coppery tinge confirmed her dreadful suspicions: the pool was not water, but blood.

The cold laughter of the young girl turned suddenly dark and menacing. It seemed to come from nowhere, and yet everywhere. Urlmasu gripped the hilt of her sword tightly, turning in slow circles.

"Face me, Horror!" she issued the challenge, her powerful voice ringing off the walls, her creeping apprehension replaced by a sudden anger.

The laughter stopped, and something rose from the pool. The blood poured from the tall, thin shape, revealing a beautiful, slender human woman draped in white silk. She slid smoothly across the surface of the pool to step out onto the gravelly edge. Her eyes burned with a fierce blue light as she walked gracefully toward the stunned obsidian, who could not help but take a few tentative steps away.

"Ah, welcome Urlmasu, my friend. Thank you for so kindly walking into my trap." The woman smiled gleefully.



"I am not afraid of you, Horror, for I am not afraid to die," the Horror Stalker replied, summoning courage to her voice.

"I know you are not afraid to die. Do you think I lured you here to slay you? Oh no, you will live with me for a long, long time." At that, the Horror gestured toward a wall of the chamber. A dozen scarred, gaunt Namegivers were chained to the wall, unconscious and submerged up to their waists in the pool of blood.

The Horror Stalker cast a sidelong glance at the Horror's prisoners. "I am prepared for your tortures."

"Are you certain of that?" The human woman laughed, and then her skin began to shift, rupturing and spilling her organs, which wrapped around her and reformed. A moment later, Urlmasu found herself staring at a corpulent, middle aged dwarf. It was an exact copy of the village headman that she had slain a month before.

"You remember me, of course. All the terrors you saw me perform on those villagers? That was me, not the poor dwarf you killed. Do you remember his cries of innocence, the tears in the eyes of his family as you slew him in the village square?"

The monster shifted again, now taking on the form of a young t'skrang. "Or how about me? When you saw me poisoning that well? I did that, not the poor child you took such grim pleasure in killing."

"I never took pleasure in it!" Urlmasu protested, the reality of her actions taking on a great weight in the pit of her stomach.

"Oh, no? Not when you congratulated yourself on how strong you were? I know the sullen pride you take in your ability to do the hard work that others are too squeamish to do. You can lie to yourself, but you can't lie to me, I know you too well."

Urlmasu sagged, self doubt and guilt filling her great frame.

"Ah yes, your crushed self-righteousness is delicious..." the Horror grinned. The creature rapidly shifted its features through a set of Namegivers. Each was someone that the Horror Stalker had slain after she had seen them commit some crime. All had also, when confronted, protested their innocence. She knew now that they had spoken the truth. Far from defeating the Horrors, she had become the tool of one. Each face reflected back her sins; each face an innocent life lost. Urlmasu felt herself slipping into despair. The faces mocked her pain with their laughter. From somewhere within her a rage blossomed. Before her stood the vehicle of her pain and her failure; the murderer of children, fathers, and mothers.



With a mighty roar she charged the grinning, glowing-eyed human that once again stood before her. The swiftness of her change of heart surprised the Horror, and it raised its hands to cast a spell too late. The two-handed sword split the creature from shoulder to waist, and writhing, twitching organs spilled out onto the floor. With a mighty shove she kicked the creature backwards. It fell into the pool of blood with a tremendous splash.

Urlmasu quickly ran to the nearest captive, an elf. She split the chains that bound him with two quick slashes of her sword and gently lifted him from the pool. When his eyes flickered, she started to ask him his Name, but was interrupted by a roaring, boiling noise coming from the pool.

A massive pile of writhing organs and tentacles exploded from the pool in a great shower of blood and towered over the obsidian. Eyes, mouths, and claws wriggled on the ends of the tendrils. Angry laughter and screams from the mouths echoed throughout the chamber. Urlmasu knew that this was not Nemesis, but it did not matter—she would not survive this fight.

Hastily, she took the pack from her shoulder and pressed it into the elf's arms. Perhaps the map and potions it contained would help him survive. She shoved him in the direction of the door and then stood to face the Horror that looked down upon her.

The battle was joined. Urlmasu fought bravely but was outmatched. She would not allow herself to be captured as the creature's plaything. She fought on with every last ounce of her strength. As she lay hurt and

dying, she wished as her dying act that if she could not slay this Horror, she could at least injure it enough that the poor Namegiver she had freed could escape. At least she could have that one last victory.

Urlmasu raised herself from the ground, one arm limp at her side, broken and dislocated. One eye was swollen shut. Her blood ran down her face. She held her broken sword in one hand, and with one last roar of defiance, she leapt off the edge of the pool and into the Horror...



Hunting the Imposter is an adventure scenario designed for three to five Warden (Ninth to Twelfth Circle) adepts of any Discipline. In this adventure, the characters gradually discover that seemingly unrelated horrific events in Kratas are actually the work of a Horror, the Imposter, who lairs deep beneath the city. This Horror can create avatars, replicas of Namegivers, which it sends out to manipulate others.

The adventure is divided into three acts. In the first act, the characters are hired to find a kidnapped farm girl. In doing so, they uncover a cult, the Brotherhood of the Flesh, that has sacrificed the girl to Raggok. Unbeknownst to anyone, the cult is actually run by the Imposter.

In the second act, they stumble upon a branch of the Keys of Death (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 207), also secretly controlled by the Horror. The Keys attempt to kill the player characters in revenge for their disruption of the cult in Act One. At the climax of this act, the characters discover that the Keys of Death are being led by the farm girl (actually one of the Imposter's avatars) who was slain in the first act. This should both shock the player characters and suggest that the two acts are connected.

In the third and final act, the player characters discover a mad ancient elf, freed from the Imposter by a Horror Stalker. Through items given to him by the Horror Stalker, the player characters can track down the Horror. The Imposter sends an avatar disguised as the Horror Stalker to thwart the player characters. Finally the player characters confront the Horror in its lair, to slay it or be slain.

3

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE



Hunting the Imposter is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the characters, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

Each encounter contains four sections: **Setting the Stage** contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players, **Themes and Images** helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter, and **Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each encounter. The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

For hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, a dark secret has lurked deep beneath the city of Kratas. This secret is the Imposter, an ancient Named Horror. It has lain beneath the city, subtly influencing Kratas' development and history. While the Imposter can mark Namegivers, it prefers creating avatars to realize its schemes. The Horror is able to sculpt out of its mass a replica of a Namegiver or other creature. It has used this power to impersonate Passions, Horrors, and others to get what it wants. It appeared as the Passion Upandal before the Scourge to persuade a Theran supervisor of the city to not abandon Kratas, but instead to build

the great dome over the city, thus trapping the residents inside with the Horror during the Scourge. It keeps a number of Namegivers from before the Scourge alive, tormenting them endlessly.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Today the Imposter maintains many ongoing plots. Three of these are directly involved in this adventure and lead to the Horror's downfall. It regularly impersonates the mad Passion, Raggok, to manipulate a hedonistic cult of its followers, the Brotherhood of the Flesh. It has been spurring this group on to even more decadent rites, now involving sacrifice and cannibalism. One such sacrifice was an elf farm girl Named Pellisanta who was abducted from a nearby village. In **Act One: Pounding the Cobblestones** (see below), Pellisanta's fellow villagers hire the player characters to retrieve her. She was kidnapped by a band of brigands, the Black Hand of Vurgat, who then sold her to a member of Brocher's Brood Named the Brown Weasel. The weasel sold her to Ard Telak, a dwarf merchant and member of the Brotherhood of the Flesh. Pellisanta was then ritually slain by the Brotherhood in an abandoned mansion on Clifftop. The player characters will fail to recover the girl but should uncover the cult and confront its avatar of Raggok.

The Imposter also impersonates Death to manipulate a local branch of the Keys of Death. In **Act Two: Death Walks the Streets** (see p. 74), the Horror sends these assassins after the player characters to avenge the destruction of the Raggok cult. A windling Thief, Purple Finch, observes one of these Keys, a silversmith Named Prevar, as Prevar is visited by "Death." The Thief senses the avatar

astrally, which drives him mad. He gouges out his own eyes and is found a half-mad, battered wreck. While the characters track the source of the windling's madness, several of the Keys of Death make attempts on the player characters' lives, through poison, sniping, and enchantments. This culminates in a fight between the player characters and an assembled team of assassins of the Keys of Death, led by an avatar of Death. To confuse and horrify the player characters, the Imposter makes its avatar of Death take on the persona of Pellisanta, the dead farm girl.

The Imposter had also been impersonating the Horror Nemesis to torment an obsidiman Horror Stalker, Urlmasu the Sullen. It led her on a chase through the wild lands outside of Barsaive, tricking her into slaying innocent Namegivers she thought were Horror-marked. The Horror brought Urlmasu to Kratas to imprison and torture her. However, at the same moment the player characters were confronting the Keys of Death during Act Two, Urlmasu entered the Horror's lair and engaged it in combat. The Horror killed her, but not before Urlmasu performed a dying act to free one of the Horror's captives. This captive, a Theran elf Named Dowu Quantil, has been imprisoned since before the Scourge and is now raving mad. He crosses paths with the player characters, carrying clues to the location of the Horror. In **Act Three: Underneath the Masks** (see p. 87), the Imposter sends another avatar, now in the form of Urlmasu the Horror Stalker, to track down Quantil. When it encounters the characters, it attempts to join their group and lead them to the Horror, thinking that it will destroy them. This leads to a final showdown between the Horror and the player characters.

ACT ONE: POUNDING THE COBBLESTONES

In this act, the characters are hired by Alina, the elder of a village, to track down Pellisanta, an abducted elf girl. Unbeknownst to the characters or to the girl's loved ones, the girl has already been slain in a ritual by the Brotherhood of the Flesh, a degenerate cult of the followers of Raggok. While this is frustrating for the characters in the short term, it sets the stage for the discovery of even more horrible secrets later on. The feel of this act should be like a hard-boiled detective story, with the characters wading among the seedier elements of the city and following leads through its rain-soaked back alleys. Using stealth, bribery, intimidation, and blackmail, the characters may be able to make it through this act without combat, though plenty of opportunities for fighting exist if the characters are so inclined. In **A Desperate Plea** (see p. 61), the characters are hired to find Pellisanta, and discover that she was abducted. In **Confronting the Black Hand** (see p. 62) they find the bandits that abducted the girl, and then track the member of the Brocher's Brood who bought and sold her in **Weasel Stomping** (see p. 65), before finally learning of her death from a cultist who was involved in **End of the Trail** (see p. 67). If they are patient and wait for the next month's meeting, the characters may break up the local branch of the Brotherhood of the Flesh in **Breaking the Brotherhood** (see p. 70).

ACT ONE BACKGROUND

The first act involves the activities of the local branch of the Brotherhood of the Flesh, a cult following the Mad Passion Raggok. The local branch of the Brotherhood only numbers a dozen or so members who come exclusively from the ranks of the wealthy, and so their membership in Kratas consists of a number of prosperous merchants as well as some of the more successful thieves.

(Should the characters have any longstanding enemies in the city that the gamemaster wishes to establish as truly evil, these could be included among the members of the Brotherhood.)

On certain nights of the year, averaging once or twice a month, the Brotherhood meets at the ruins of House Medari on Clifftop. Here the local members of the Brotherhood of the Flesh have their bacchanalian rites in honor of Raggok. These usually include exotic gourmet foods, wines and other intoxicants, prostitutes and pleasure slaves, and ritual torture involving members, slaves, and homeless street kids or other indigents picked up off the streets. Occasionally these tortures get out of hand and result in death, and killings have become more common of late.

The servants, cooks, prostitutes, and musicians are all given a special potion before the banquet begins. This potion contains laésal (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, p.125) and other ingredients to wipe their memories clean. It allows them to continue functioning as normal, but they lose all memory of several hours before and after taking the potion.

Every three months, the ceremony is more intense and brings visitors from outside Kratas. Mysterious black airships alight on Clifftop, and other guests arrive by subtler, usually magical, means. These include powerful Therans from Vivane (and possibly from elsewhere in the empire), as well as others from throughout the province. Indeed, any wealthy Namegiver from any nation in Barsaive could secretly be a member of the Brotherhood, though in actuality only a few dozen are, as the cult is not as prevalent in Barsaive as it is in Thera.

The branch of the cult in Kratas is stronger and even more degraded than other branches because it has been infiltrated and influenced by the Imposter. The Horror's influence has increased the severity of the group's rites, encouraging the cultists in ever darker and more hideous practices, including cannibalism. The

TIMELINE FOR ACT ONE

The following dates may be adjusted for a running campaign, but it is crucial that Pellisanta is dead and the characters have no chance of saving her.

The raid on the village of Bluefern was on the morning of the 27th of Charassa. Bluefern lies about 75 miles to the southwest of Kratas. The Black Hand rode hard back to Kratas, reaching the city by the late evening of the 28th. Vurgat contacted the Brown Weasel and sold Pellisanta to the Brood in the early hours of the 29th. Ard Telak had a standing order with the Brood for unusually attractive slaves, and so they contacted him and sold him Pellisanta on the night of the 29th. Telak had her kept in the slave pits of the Brood until he picked her up on the morning of the 30th, then he took her to House Medari on Cliff top. There, at midnight of the 30th, she was slain.

Meanwhile, the villagers of Bluefern spent the day of the 27th putting out fires set by the bandits, treating their wounded, and burying their dead. That night at a village council they unanimously decided to pool all of their resources to go to Kratas and attempt to ransom Pellisanta. The following day they loaded all of their valuables and remaining crops into a wagon and sent Alina and others to Kratas to sell the goods and ransom the girl. Traveling on foot, with their heavily loaded wagon, it took them four days to reach Kratas, not arriving until the evening of the 2nd of Rua. The next morning, the 3rd of Rua, they hired the player characters, at which point Pellisanta was already dead. Thus, no matter how quickly they complete their investigation, the characters have no chance of saving her. The next meeting of the local branch of the Brotherhood of the Flesh takes place on the 7th of Rua, though the larger meetings that attract members from outside the city only take place every third month (Charassa, Gahmil, Riag, and Doddul). For a calendar, see **Appendix** of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

Horror appears to them in the form of Raggok during the ecstatic heights of their rites.

The members of the group that are from outside the city come to Kratas expecting ever more decadent pleasures to sate their increasingly jaded tastes. Ard Telak, a dwarf merchant of Kratas, is the main procurer for the group and has benefited greatly from the patronage of Raggok, the Imposter, and the rest of the Brotherhood. He is under great pressure, however, to provide ever more depraved and exotic entertainments for the group.

At the ceremony marking the end of the month of Charassa (see the **Timeline for Act One** sidebar), Pellisanta was the centerpiece of the ritual. After being tortured by the Brotherhood, she was ritually slain and prepared as the centerpiece of a gourmet feast. After eating her, the cultists threw her bones off the edge of the cliff.

Pellisanta was abducted from her village of Bluefern by a bandit gang, the Black Hand of Vurgat, and sold to the Brown Weasel, a member of Brocher's Brood. The Brood then sold her to Ard Telak. The characters are hired by Alina, Bluefern's village elder, to ransom or buy back Pellisanta, not knowing that she is already dead. They must follow the chain of possession of the girl to dis-

cover her remains outside of the city. There is also a chance that the characters may discover and disrupt the next meeting of the Brotherhood, though this is not their primary mission.

A DESPERATE PLEA

In this encounter, the characters are hired by Alina, the head woman of the village of Bluefern, to rescue Pellisanta, one of the villagers, who was recently captured by bandits.

SETTING THE STAGE

The gamemaster should read the following aloud to the characters, when they are in the Greenmarket district of Kratas at the time.

Shortly after dawn, you receive a written note, delivered by a street urchin. It is written in Throalic and says simply:

"Please meet me at the Sheaf of Wheat Inn. I have been told you are trustworthy, and I have need of honorable Namegivers for an important task. -Alina"

When you enter the Sheaf of Wheat Inn, all the farmers' heads turn to look at you nervously. Ma Flyvie, the proprietor, gives you a stern look, as heavily armed adventurers are not usually seen here. A large, middle-aged dwarf woman with a worried face waves you over to her table. She is flanked by three strong-looking youths, and they are all dressed in the simple clothes of farmers. This must be Alina. When you sit, she gets straight to business.

"I have heard of your legendary feats of heroism. I have also heard that you know your way around this city of thieves. We need someone with your skills to help us. One of our village was stolen from us by bandits."

She then lays a bag of coins on the table.

"Her Name is Pellisanta. Please get her back for us. This bag contains all the wealth our simple village has. Spend what you need to buy her back if need be, and keep the rest for yourselves."

THEMES AND IMAGES

The characters should feel the villagers' desperation and sincere concern for their lost daughter. They should also sense the fear radiated by the other farmers in the bar—hushed voices, obedient glances, silence.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Alina is the head woman of the village of Bluefern, which is located to the southwest of Kratas. She is an elderly dwarf woman, simple but not naïve. She is accompanied by three tall, strapping farm youths: two human males and a female ork. These are not warriors and do not seek a fight. They are Pellisanta's best friends and all care deeply for her. The youths have bruises and cuts that look to be a few days old. They received these putting up an unsuccessful fight against the bandits.

Once the characters agree to look for Pellisanta, Alina gives a description of her and the bandits who took her. Pellisanta is a young elf girl of twenty years whose skin is cetharel—a pearlescent green hue—and who has naturally pale violet hair. This is a very rare, though natural, coloration. It also means Pellisanta is very distinctive in appearance and will be easy to identify.

The bandits were a group of about two dozen Namegivers. A handful, including the leader, rode war horses. The leader, a massive troll, threw Pellisanta over the front of his saddle. The bandits included humans, orks, dwarfs, elves, and t'skrang. The troll leader wore a massive black helm with wicked horns on it and black chain

mail armor. The rest of the gang wore tunics, each with a large black hand painted on the front.

If anyone asks about Alina around the Greenmarket, he obtains the following information:

"Oh, she's a tough old broad. Fights off ork scorchers and has been selling her goods here for two decades. Funny thing though, yesterday she came to town with the usual wagonload of produce but also had a cart full of other stuff to sell—plates, jewelry, some furniture, even old clothes. Looked like they were selling everything their village owned."

The bag does contain all of the wealth the village has managed to scrape together by selling nearly everything of value and digging up all its savings: 863 silver and 362 copper.

The next step, once the characters have agreed to take the job, is to locate the bandits. Finding this particular band of brigands can be done either with a Knowledge or Interaction Test. If a player character has an appropriate knowledge skill, such as Kratas Lore or Streetwise, he can make a test against a Difficulty Number of 6. Alternatively, the characters can ask around town to gather the information, but to do so requires making a Bribery or Interaction Test (see the **Gamemaster's Guide** p.95) against their chosen target's Social Defense. Each attempt at the Interaction Test requires the characters to "show their gratitude" to the person they ask (hardly anything comes free in the City of Thieves) and costs them a handful of silvers or some small item of equal worth; the gamemaster determines the specifics. The gamemaster can allow multiple attempts if the characters hope another contact might provide better information, but the Result Level required must still be achieved on a single Interaction Test (a second Average Result does not convey knowledge normally gained on a Good Result).

The information obtained depends upon the Result Level of the Knowledge or Interaction Test, as shown below. Each Result Level includes all of the information in the previous levels.

Average Result: The gang in question is called the Black Hand of Vurgat. It is led by a troll called Vurgat.

Good Result: The Black Hand numbers about a dozen or so regular members, mostly non-adepts, who live somewhere in the Safehearth. Vurgat is a troll Warrior.

Excellent Result: The Black Hand of Vurgat has a dozen core members but increases its membership with various hangers-on when going raiding. The gang has a hangout in the eastern side of the Safehearth. The gang came into a lot of money this week and the core members have been celebrating since.

Extraordinary Result: Vurgat is a bully and a coward, so he purposefully surrounds himself with minions that are no threat to him. His poor treatment of the band results in a high turnover and weak loyalty. The hangout is on the east side of the Safehearth, adjacent to the wall of the Central Plaza and a few hundred yards south of the cliff.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters should have no reason to cause trouble here, but should a problem arise, Ma Flyvie reminds them pointedly that the Sheaf of Wheat and all the farmers here are under Garlthik's protection.

The worst thing that could happen at this point is the characters not choosing to assist the villagers. The amount of money the village is offering is fairly small, especially when divided among a group of high-Circle adepts. Truly noble heroes should turn down the money entirely. If the characters seem reluctant, have Alina plead with them, stressing that Garlthik might hear of them being

PREPARING FOR ACT TWO

During this encounter, the gamemaster should discern where the characters are staying and taking their meals while in Kratas, if this has not been established already. If their arrangements change frequently, the gamemaster should keep track of them by pretending to keep an eye on their expenditures. The reason is to keep track of the characters' habits for use in Act Two, when professional assassins try to kill them (see **Marked for Death**, p. 77).

If having an eye on their characters' finances or habits makes the players suspicious, the gamemaster can pretend this is to see whether the characters expect the farmers to pay for their stay or, if the characters are new to Kratas, whether they get a feel for how things are done in the City of Thieves or not.

Another possibility is to handle these necessities beforehand by establishing accommodations for their entire stay so arranging them does not interfere with the flow of the adventure, although this method can come back later to haunt the gamemaster, so it is only advised if the group usually handles things in this manner while visiting cities.

helpful to the farmers feeding the city. If they still don't want to take the job, the farm boys taunt them ("Some heroes. Don't worry, Alina, we'll go look for her ourselves."). Should the characters still not bite, skip to Act Two on p. 74.

CONFRONTING THE BLACK HAND

In this encounter the characters try to discover from Vurgat what happened to Pellisanta. They can accomplish this in a number of ways, not all of which require combat. For this encounter it is assumed the characters have found the band's hideout, the efforts required by the characters to achieve this being determined by the Result Level achieved on the Knowledge or Interaction Test at the end of the previous encounter.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the character's reach the vicinity of the bandits' lair, read the following aloud to the players.

You see a thin wisp of black smoke wafting over the maze of ruins in the Safehearth. From that direction you hear coarse laughter and rough singing, punctuated by an occasional belch. Creeping up to peer over a ruined wall you see the gathered Black Hand of Vurgat. A dozen or so motley Namegivers are lounging around a campfire in the middle of a ruined building. Several tarps have been strung between the walls for a makeshift roof that keeps off a light rain. A fire pit has been made by pulling up some of the tiles and paving stones that had covered the center of the floor. A large troll is on one side of the campfire, sitting on top of a pile of furs and skins. All of the band are drinking and eating, though they all have axes, maces, and other brutal weapons close at hand.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the smell of half-cooked meat and unwashed bandits mixed with the light rain. The bandits are suspicious of anyone looking for them, especially since Garlthik could have them killed for slave trading should the characters rat them out. Thus, at any moment the situation easily could turn violent.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Black Hand of Vurgat, the gang that stole the girl from Bluefern, is a loosely knit group of brigands. There is a core of a dozen or so members that operates out of a headquarters in the Safehearths. Their headquarters is an old stone building with a collapsed ceiling. In place of a roof, the gang has strung a number of heavy tarpaulins between the walls of the old building. The ruins have been cleared of rubble beneath the tarps, and some simple furniture, rough-hewn tables, and simple cots have been installed. Several floor tiles have been pulled up in the center of the floor to create a fire pit, in which a large campfire is burning. The gang is big and tough enough that the bandits don't worry about attack and generally don't have any guards posted.

A number of the more casual members of the gang have taken their share of the loot and are spending it in the taverns and brothels of the city. The core of the group has bought a number of kegs of the brewery's best swill, as well as several joints of meat, and has been carrying on a week-long party in the headquarters. These gang members are coming close to spending the last of their gain from this raid and will be sobering up and heading out on a new raid soon.

When the characters encounter them, the dozen or so members of the gang are hanging out around a fire in the middle of their headquarters, eating, drinking, and singing raucous songs. They do not post a regular guard, as they have bullied and intimidated most of their neighbors. It is quite easy for the group to sneak up on the bandits, if the characters so wish. Clever parties might wait and watch. The carousing goes on till late at night, at which point the bandits are drunk. They fall asleep early in the morning, and are hungover if woken later. Impose a -2 penalty to the bandits' actions to reflect their inebriation if the characters wait before attacking.

If the gang is attacked, many flee if they have an opportunity, as they are not particularly committed to defending this piece of territory. Vurgat tries to negotiate, asking what the group wants. However, if the characters simply attack and give no quarter, the bandits fight back fiercely.

There are several ways that the group can obtain the necessary information. Most simply, they can attack the bandits, kill most of them, and ask Vurgat what happened to the elf girl. If they defeat the bandits and threaten Vurgat with death, he quickly caves and tells them (he is a coward after all, and the group may also wish to kill the bandits merely on principle).

However, the group can also gain the information in other ways. If the characters make a strong show of force but treat the gang leader with some respect, such that he does not lose face in front of his men, he may tell the characters what they want to know. They can attempt a Bribery or Interaction Test against Vurgat's Social Defense. However, he can be assumed to be hostile until persuaded otherwise. For him to willingly give up the information, the characters must not only persuade him that it is in his benefit (for example with a bribe of at least 200 silver), they must persuade him that they are not working for the Force of the Eye and will not inform on him to Garlthik. After all, for him to give up the information on Pellisanta would be to admit to a capital crime. Further, he is not supposed to tell anyone about Vistrosh's operations for fear of reprisal from Brocher's Brood. The group also has to persuade him that the Brood won't find out that he squealed, either.

If the characters do persuade Vurgat to tell them what they want to know, either through threat of death or bribery, he explains that he sold the girl to one of Vistrosh's men:

"Freaky lookin' elf girl? We sold her. Who do you think to? Only one gang's crazy enough to deal in slaves in Garlthik's city, and that's Brocher's Brood. Paid good silver for her, too. Don't bother lookin' for the Brood's slave market; if Garlthik can't find it, you sure can't. Besides, she's probably halfway to Thera by now."

If the characters press him for more details, he is reluctant to betray his contact in the Brood and may need further persuasion. If persuaded further, whether by threats or coin, he tells them that his contact is a human thief that he only knows by the Name "the Brown Weasel." Vurgat sold the girl to him at a meeting point in the Undercity, but it was only a passageway in the tunnels, not a hideout, so it is unlikely that the "Brown Weasel" is still there, though Vurgat can give the characters directions to the spot if they insist. If asked, Vurgat says that he has known Brown Weasel for years, and that the Weasel is known as a minor thief, fixer, and fence in the city. He suspects that the Brown Weasel is also a member of the Brood, but if pressed, admits that the Weasel has never said as much to him. He doesn't know where the Weasel lives, but says that "...he moves from tavern to tavern around town. You know, the kind of guy who finds you if you put out the word that you are looking for him."

Should the characters kill or drive off all the bandits and search the campground they find little of interest or value. Vurgat boards his grannlain in the Stables. The rest of the Black Hand's mounts were stolen from farms and were sold when they returned to the city. They will steal more for their next raid. The furnishings in the lair are all dilapidated and the furs are flea infested. The bandits' weapons and armor are serviceable but not particularly valuable. A Perception (15) Test might notice that the dirt around the fire ring is disturbed, and that the volume of earth scattered around the lair is more than would have been necessary for digging the fire pit. If the characters take the time to put out the fire, remove the logs and ashes, and dig up the fire pit, they find Vurgat's stash of loot: an old strongbox holding 1,600 silver and 150 gold pieces.

VURGAT, EIGHTH CIRCLE TROLL WARRIOR

Attributes

DEX (14): 6 STR (20): 8 TOU (18): 7
PER (10): 5 WIL (12): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 11 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 10
Death: 114 Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 90 Knockdown: 8*
Wound Threshold: 12 Movement: 7

Karma Points: 24/24

* Vurgat knows the Wound Balance talent

Warrior Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (8): 14
Anticipate Blow^D (8): 13
Avoid Blow^D (8): 14
Crushing Blow^D (8): 16
Disarm (8): 14
Durability [9/7] (8): 8
Karma Ritual^D (8): 8
Leadership (8): 13
Life Check^D (8): 15

Melee Weapons^D (9): 15
 Missile Weapons (8): 14
 Resist Taunt* (1): 6
Second Attack^D (8): 14
 Steel Thought** (1): 6
 Tactics (8): 13
 Temper Self^D (8): 13
 Thread Weaving (War Weaving)^D (8): 13
 Throwing Weapons (8): 14
 Tiger Spring (8): 8
 Unarmed Combat^D (9): 15 (Head Butt, Pin Down)
Wood Skin^D (8): 15
 Wound Balance^D (8): 16

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
 * Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch
 ** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Acting^A (4): 9
 Animal Handling (4): 9
 Battle Shout (4): 9
 Black Hand of Vurgat Group^K (4): 9
 Bribery (4): 9
 Brocher's Brood Group^K (2): 7
 Gangs of Kratas^K (2): 7
 Hunting (4): 10
 Navigation (2): 7
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Safehearts^K (4): 9
 Search (2): 7
 Slave Trade Routes^K (2): 7
 Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)
 Swift Kick (4): 10
 Streetwise (4): 9
 Tracking (2): 7
 Trick Riding (2): 8
 Wilderness Survival (2): 7

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Black Chainmail (Rank 4; Phys 11; Init 1; PhysDef +1; w/black horned helm)

Weapons

Pole-Axe (Forged +3; Damage 19), **Troll Dagger** (Forged +2; Damage 13; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Troll Spears** (Forged +3; Damage 15; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Medium Crossbow** (Forged +3; Damage 17; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/ 15 medium crossbow bolts; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus),
Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Cloaksense Brooch, Forge Tools, Fur Cloak, Healing Potion, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Quiet Pouch, Black Traveler's Garb

Loot

None (Vurgat's loot is in his buried treasure chest, see above).

Legend Award

Ninth Circle

Notes

As a troll, Vurgat possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Battle Rites
Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on close combat Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

AVERAGE HUMAN BLACK HAND GANG MEMBER

Attributes

DEX (14): 6 STR (16): 7 TOU (16): 7
 PER (11): 5 WIL (10): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 8
 Physical Armor: 6 Spell Defense: 7
 Mystic Armor: 0 Social Defense: 7
 Death: 37* Recovery Tests: 3
 Unconsciousness: 29* Knockdown: 7
 Wound Threshold: 11 Movement: 6

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Skills

Acting^A (4): 9
 Animal Handling (4): 9
 Avoid Blow (6): 12
 Battle Shout (7): 12
 Black Hand of Vurgat Group^K (4): 9
 Bribery (4): 9
 Gangs of Kratas^K (2): 7
 Intimidation (4): 9 (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 225)
 Melee Weapons (6): 12
 Parry (6): 12
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Riposte (6): 12
 Safehearts^K (4): 9
 Search (2): 7
 Second Weapon (6): 12
 Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
 Streetwise (4): 9
 Swift Kick (2): 8
 Surprise Strike (5): 12
 Throwing Weapons (3): 9
 Tracking (2): 7
 Trick Riding (2): 8
 Unarmed Combat (6): 12
 Wilderness Survival (2): 7

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Ringmail (Phys 6; Init 2)

Weapons

Hand-Axe (Damage 11), **Mace** (Damage 11),
Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes),

Equipment

Absorb Blow Charm (2 Blood Magic Damage), Belt Pouch, Booster Potion, Traveler's Garb, Tunic w/Black Hand on front

Loot

70 silver pieces

Legend Award

Third Circle

Commentary

If the Black Hand gang members are inebriated, the gamemaster can give them a Harried penalty to all actions to account for this.

Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider Vurgat and the Black Hand as a Ninth Circle (Group) encounter.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The worst problem the player characters could face is if they all get killed in combat with the gang, though the adepts should be of high enough Circle to have little problem with them. However, Vurgat is no pushover and if given the opportunity, he can rally his thugs into a decent fighting force. Should the characters have difficulty, make the gang more drunk and cowardly—they run away if it looks like they might get killed. Vurgat stands his ground

TRACKING DOWN THE BROWN WEASEL

It is assumed that the characters find the Brown Weasel easily after successfully completing the **Confronting the Black Hand** encounter through the information gained therein, and by making it known they want to speak with him. However, if the gamemaster wants the characters to track down the Brown Weasel or if the characters seem in a hurry to find the thief, the following proceedings can be used.

To find the Brown Weasel, the characters can employ a Knowledge, Streetwise, or Interaction Test as described under **A Desperate Plea** (see p. 61). As information about the Weasel is harder to come by, the Difficulty Number for any of these tests is 9 this time. With the Brown Weasel, an Extraordinary Result is actually required to find him just by making the test; it is more likely the characters have to spend a lot of money on getting their contacts to talk.

The information gained for successive Result Levels is presented below. It can also be used as the queue when handling the legwork by means of roleplaying, with the characters being sent from one tavern to the next, or as a means to initiate such an odyssey by giving the characters a place to start (an initial Good Result, for example, would start the investigations at the Drunken Dragon). Information on the taverns mentioned below can be found throughout the *Kratas: The City of Thieves* sourcebook.

Average Result: “Brown Weasel? Yeah, I know him—weasely looking guy. Last I heard he was picking pockets in the Drunken Dragon.”

Good Result: “No, he hasn’t been in the Dragon for a few days. Last I heard he was trying to palm chips at the Hard-earned Coin.”

Excellent Result: “He got kicked out of the Coin and went to drown his troubles at the Wasteland.”

Extraordinary Result: “He was in the Wasteland, but for the last week or so he’s been making shady deals in the Cutthroat’s Rest.”

rather than losing face in front of his men, but should his gang all flee, he bargains with the characters and then tells his men later that he drove them off.

More likely, the characters might accidentally kill Vurgat. If so, there is no physical evidence in the lair to follow Pellisanta further. Knowledgeable characters may be able to use Nethermantic means to speak to Vurgat after his death. Otherwise the player characters could get the information out of one of the surviving members of the Black Hand who was not present during the characters’ raid. If the characters went into the fray without even thinking of giving quarter or keeping someone to talk to alive, they might have to painfully track down such an individual in the taverns and brothels of *Kratas*.

If the characters do not get more information than the Name of the Brown Weasel (or if the gamemaster wants the characters to do more legwork), the proceedings found in the **Tracking Down the Brown Weasel** sidebar can be employed.

WEASEL STOMPING

In this encounter, the characters meet the Brown Weasel at the Cutthroat’s Rest and get him to tell them to whom he sold Pellisanta.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the player characters walk towards the Cutthroat’s Rest, read the following aloud:

Your feet are getting sore from pounding the broken flagstones of the backstreets of Kratas, going from one seedy tavern to the next. Your last source told you that the Brown Weasel has been hanging out at the Cutthroat’s Rest lately.

You shake the rain off your cloaks as you enter. The tavern is quite crowded at this time of night, but not at all raucous. Instead, the quiet murmur of whispered conversations drops to silence as nearly every pair of eyes in the room glances your way. After a quick pause, the assembled toughs go back to their booze and plots.

After a few moments, a pinched-faced human in a mottled brown cloak sidles into the pub. He slides shiftily from table to table, glad-handing, and flashing an unctuous, nervous smile. He whispers discreetly in the ears of the thugs he greets, and then swiftly slides on, like a weasel.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The tavern is dark, damp, and smoky. The assembled scum are not here for frivolity but for hard drinking, and even more serious plotting of skullduggery. The characters feel suspicious eyes on them every moment they are in the tavern.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The man who enters behind the characters is the Brown Weasel. He is a secret member of Brocher’s Brood who bought Pellisanta from Vurgat. He is cocky, fairly secure in his position in town. He makes good money in the Brood and receives the gang’s protection but keeps his activities quiet enough to avoid the attention of the Force of the Eye. After he purchased the elf girl, he took her to T’rebak (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p.61) who held her in his slave pits while the Weasel arranged her sale to Ard Telak, a dwarf merchant of Merchant’s Row.

The Brown Weasel is afraid of two things—the Force and the Brood. He will not admit to the characters that he is a member of the Brood for fear that they would turn him in to Garlthik. Further, he knows that should he betray any information about the Brood, the Brood itself would hunt him down for betraying its secrets. He is far more afraid of Vistrosh than he is of the characters, so he will never willingly give up the blood elf’s secrets.

The characters might try to directly attack or threaten the Weasel in the pub, but this would be a dangerous act with so many witnesses around. Perhaps a few of the patrons are good enough friends of the Weasel to leap to his defense, but more dangerous to the characters is that their identities would become known and relayed back to the Brood. The Brood cannot afford to have its members attacked as it is bad for morale. Should the characters assault the Brown Weasel in public, the Brood sends assassins after the characters. Moreover, the Brown Weasel knows that the crowd is watching his actions as well, so he does not give any information at all to the characters in public.

The best course of action would be for the characters to follow the Weasel, and once he is out of the public eye, try to bribe, blackmail, or threaten him. The weasel hangs out in the tavern for an

hour or so, having whispered conversations with a succession of Namegivers as he moves about the bar. After that he leaves and makes his way to one of the boarding houses off of Merchant's Row, where he beds down. The Weasel is cautious but there is one brief moment when he passes through an alley on his way home that the characters could grab him. He actively checks for people following him, however. Should he discover a tail, he does not go home but instead goes to a well lit tavern such as the Screaming Basilisk and waits there for anyone following him to leave. Should a tail be persistent, he makes his way into the sewers and then runs toward a "safe house" where half a dozen Brood thugs are waiting to pounce on any pursuers.

If the characters just approach the Weasel for a conversation, he obliges them, but is cautious. He has faith, however, that the Brood, and fear of it, protects him from most who would wish him harm. Physical threats do not affect him, and he cockily dismisses them by invoking the wrath of his powerful connections (*"People you don't want to mess with."*).

The characters might not realize this, but if they tell the Weasel that Vurgat told them that he is a member of the Brood and threaten to blow his cover to the Force of the Eye, the Brown Weasel quickly folds and gives the characters the information they want, provided they swear a Blood Oath not to reveal his allegiance. If the characters press him, he backs down on the Blood Oath demand. He could also be bribed once the characters make it clear what information they are looking for. He does not willingly give up any information about the operations of the Brood—he does not Name T'rebak or show the characters the location of the Undercity hideouts and slave markets that he knows of. However, Ard Telak is merely a customer, not a member of the Brood, so in the Brown Weasel's mind, telling the characters that the dwarf bought

the girl would not be a betrayal of the gang. In fact, the Brown Weasel attempts to direct attention toward Telak and away from the Brood. However, he does not give up a good paying customer like Ard Telak lightly and must be seriously threatened or bribed to give up the dwarf.

If the characters tell the Weasel that Vurgat told them that the Weasel was a member of the Brood, and if Vurgat was still alive after the characters left him, they hear rumors a few days later that Vurgat has been killed in a messy assassination. The characters are correct if they surmise that the Brown Weasel had the bandit leader killed for blowing his cover.

If the characters follow the Brown Weasel for several days, they see him spending time in the bars of the city, making various deals, passing along stolen goods and small messages, and engaging in petty thefts, none of which is relevant to the case of Pellisanta. After about a week, he ventures into the Undercity where he meets with T'rebak and several members of the Brood in one of their slave-holding pens. These shady characters get a group of a dozen slaves and take them out of the city under the cover of night, after which they sell them to a group of Therans. This could lead to another side adventure, taking on the Brood and the slavers, but the player characters would not find Pellisanta among the slaves. T'rebak and his escort are very careful about being followed. Should the characters attack and defeat them, T'rebak does not reveal the fate of Pellisanta unless he is in mortal fear of his life.

BROWN WEASEL FIFTH CIRCLE HUMAN INFILTRATOR SCOUT

Attributes

DEX (18): 7 STR (13): 6 TOU (13): 6
PER (16): 7 WIL (10): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 8 Spell Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7
Death: 65 Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 52 Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 25/25

Scout Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow (S): 12
Climbing^D (S): 12
Detect Trap (S): 12
Disarm Trap^V (3): 10
Disguise Self^D (S): 12
Durability [6/5] (S): 5
Evidence Analysis^D (S): 12
Karma Ritual^D (S): 5
Lock Picking^V (3): 10
Melee Weapons (S): 12
Search^D (S): 12
Second Weapon^V (3): 10
Silent Walk^D (6): 13 (Shadow Hide)
Speak Language^D (S): 12—(Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, T'skrang)
Thread Weaving (Scout Weaving)^D (S): 12
Tracking^D (6): 13
Trap Initiative (S): 12
Unarmed Combat^V (3): 10
Versatility (4): 4

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^V Learned through the Versatility talent

Skills

Acting^A (3): 8
Brocher's Brood Group^K (3): 10
Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10
Maneuver (3): 10
Parry (3): 10
Read/Write Language (4): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran)

INVESTIGATING TELAK

The characters may try to learn more about Ard Telak by making Knowledge, Streetwise, or Interaction Tests as described under **A Desperate Plea** (see p. 61), the tests are made against a Difficulty Number of 7.

Average Result: "Ard Telak? Yeah, he's a merchant and a nice guy to have a pint with. He has a rep as a straight arrow, at least for Kratas. He has little deals going on throughout the province."

Good Result: "Telak was a strictly small timer from one of the little farming villages around here until a few years ago, when he must have made some good contacts. Now he's a pretty big player. Seems to be fairly honest, too."

Excellent Result: "Telak knows folks from all walks of life; seems to have gotten in with some of the merchant houses of Throal. He's not from Throal but has made it in with them somehow. Has friends among the lizards, too. Some say he has some friends from the Southwest. You know, far southwest."

Extraordinary Result: "Ard Telak lost his beloved wife of many years in a scorcher attack on his home village five years ago. He fell into a very deep and dark depression, swearing vengeance on the world. He snapped out of it fairly quickly, though, and reapplied his efforts to his business, becoming more prosperous than ever."

Riposte (3): 10
 Slave Trade Routes^K (3): 10
 Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
 Sprint (3): 3
 Streetwise (3): 10

Throwing Weapons (2): 9
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Forged +2; Phys 6),
Thread Brown Cloak (Rank 4; Phys 2; Myst 2; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13), **Short Sword** (Forged +2; Damage 12),
 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Brown Hooded Mask, Cloaksense Brooch, Healing Potion, Mapmaking Tools,
 Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Quiet Pouch, Brown Traveler's Garb,
 Writing Kit

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Sixth Circle

Notes

As a human, the Brown Weasel possesses the Versatility racial ability. He is a Scout Infiltrator Specialist. The Brown Weasel has used the Versatility talent to learn the Disarm Trap, Lock Picking, Second Weapon, and Unarmed Combat talents.

Scout Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Enhanced Senses

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters are patient and track the Brown Weasel to T'rebak, they may get distracted by T'rebak's slavery ring. If so, have the Weasel discover their surveillance. He uses his contacts to discover for what the characters are looking (their conversation with Alina in the Sheaf of Wheat Inn might have been overheard by a spy for the Brood) and offers them Ard Telak to throw them off the scent. The gamemaster might hint that they can come back to break up T'rebak's operation after they fulfill their primary mission. Note that taking on T'rebak and his operation is tantamount to taking on the Brood, and thus is very dangerous.

If the characters fail to successfully deal with the Weasel and do not get him to give up information on Ard Telak, the gamemaster can insert more legwork at this point and require the characters to find out about connections between the Weasel and the merchant by consulting with their contacts in Kratas.

END OF THE TRAIL

In this encounter, the player characters discover the final fate of Pellisanta from one of her killers, the dwarf merchant Ard Telak.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the characters have met with the Brown Weasel and heard about the sale of the girl to Ard Telak, read the following aloud:

The Brown Weasel finally gave you the Name of the person to whom he sold Pellisanta: Ard Telak. The dwarf merchant was not hard to find.

Now you are watching him from across the common room of Chorrolis' Cups. He is cordially swapping stories over mugs of ale with a couple of dwarfs from Throal and a few t'skrang from off the Serpent. Maybe the Brown Weasel lied to you, as it is hard to imagine the jolly, avuncular dwarf as a peddler of Namegiver flesh. Of course, looks are deceiving, and only more so in Kratas.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Play up the incongruity between Ard Telak's grandfatherly appearance and manner and the scum the characters have encountered previously. Chorrolis' Cups is the warmest, homiest, most civilized tavern in Kratas, which should be juxtaposed with the squalid dens the characters have seen before. A fire crackles in the fireplace and smiling wenches deliver platters of food and foaming flagons of ale, while unobtrusive but impressive guards stand watch attentively.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If the characters confront Ard Telak at the table in front of the other merchants, he denies any involvement in the slave trade. His dining companions look embarrassed and try to excuse themselves, but Telak insists that they stay, as he has done nothing wrong and has nothing to hide. (His dining companions are no shadier than the average merchant of Kratas and have no knowledge of the Brotherhood of the Flesh.) Telak presents a very charming and disarming defense of himself, acting as an innocent man would ("So you say that the person who told you this was Named 'Weasel'? So, would you say he is a trustworthy man?"). He tries to persuade the characters of the not-implausible scenario that the Brown Weasel just gave a Name of someone he knew to throw the characters off the trail. Should he succeed in persuading the characters of this, he refrains from any Raggok-related activities as long as the characters are still in town and pursuing the case.



Should the characters get violent in the tavern, not only are the inn's guards ready to stop any fighting, but Telak also has his own bodyguards sitting at the next table over. If fighting erupts, the bodyguards try to pull Telak out of harm's way, letting the tavern guards confront the attackers. If the characters do get into a brawl in the tavern, Garlthik is not pleased with them, as the Cups pays him handsomely for protection and is one of the most lucrative bars in town. Moreover, a tussle in the Cups scares away some of the merchants that Kratas depends on for trade. He may send agents after the characters to demand restitution for the damage done.

The characters might wish to follow Telak rather than confronting him directly. He is accompanied by his two bodyguards at all times. One is Roog Tannant, an ork Archer; the other is Yoorg, an obsidiman. While traveling through the city, Tannant walks slightly ahead, looking for ambushes or snipers, while Yoorg follows closely behind Ard Telak. If attacked by a large group, Yoorg wades in among the attackers, while Tannant slings the dwarf over his shoulder and tries to sprint to safety.

When Telak is sleeping, his guards sleep in shifts in a small room next to his, so that one is always awake in the hall outside Telak's room. His routine includes spending time during the day buying and selling goods in the Hammersing, negotiating deals in Chorrolis' Cups and the Riverboat Inn with representatives of the dwarf trading houses and t'skrang *aropagoi*, arranging caravans in the Stables, and spending his nights in the taverns of Merchant's Row, especially favoring the Screaming Basilisk. He rents a small warehouse in the Warehouse District. He lives in Serian's Sanctuary and indulges himself in moderation at the Dream Palace, the Hard-earned Coin, the Blooming Lily, and the Temple of Astendar.

If the characters sneak into Ard Telak's room in Serian's Sanctuary while he is out (a difficult prospect, as even though Telak's personal guard will be with him, the Sanctuary has its own guards on patrol), they may find a small statue of Raggok as a ram-headed man in the locked chest in his room (Lock Picking Difficulty 12).

Should the characters confront Telak in private, they may be able to get the information from him if they offer him a substantial bribe (say 2,000 silver or more) and can reassure him with a Blood Oath, that they will not turn him in to Garlthik. He is very suspicious, and the characters have to make a truly heroic effort to get him to crack. Threats of blackmail are unlikely work, and should the group threaten to turn Telak in, he denies everything—telling the characters to go ahead and sing to Garlthik, as he has nothing to hide. As soon as the characters leave him, he attempts to flee the city before the characters can turn him in to Garlthik. He does not consent to go to Garlthik's with them, and he and his bodyguards fight against any attempt to capture him.

If the characters do attack him and defeat his guards, they have to threaten him with death to spill his secrets. Should he finally give in, though, he boasts of his exploits with glee. He does not Name any of his fellow cultists, but he does describe their rites in graphic detail, delighting in the discomfort this causes in the characters. If asked in this context about Pellisanta, he says, *"Ah yes, the cetharel girl. She was delicious."* if pressed, he explains that her bones were thrown off the cliff, directly east of House Medari.

Should the characters go outside the city, they find her bones, cracked and fractured from the fall, lying on the rubble under the cliff. Any skills, talents, or spells that the characters might use on these will confirm that they are Pellisanta's remains. Digging further amongst the talus field reveals more sets of remains. If the characters have managed to avoid any combat up to this point, or if they are inclined in that direction, the gamemaster may have the characters encounter a creature such as a molgrim or skeorx that has been attracted by the regular deposits of remains. The characters then have to defeat this creature before recovering the remains.



FEQWIN



If during their investigations the characters score a Good or better Result on a Streetwise or Interaction (but not Knowledge) Test, they hear about a young elf wench Named Feqwin who is acquainted with Telak. She works in Chorrolis' Cups and occasionally runs errands for Telak. She tells them that Telak is a great guy, always treats her well and with respect (*"Not with his hands all over you, like some of those merchants."*). She recently was hired by him to buy provisions for a party he was throwing for some business associates. She still has the list, if the characters ask. By examining the long list of provisions, they can estimate that three dozen guests were expected.

Feqwin thought that she was supposed to help serve at the party, but for some reason she can't remember. (In fact she did serve at the ritual, but the potion she was given erased her memory of it.) If the characters ask, she brought the food to a warehouse in the Warehouse District that Telak uses. (There is a secret passage in the basement of this warehouse that leads to the Undercity, and eventually to a passage up to Clifftop.) The list of foodstuffs includes several cases of wine; two casks of ale; ingredients for a field green salad garnished with crumbled cheeses and dried mice, turnips, leeks, and spices from Indrisa; three dozen quails and fruits to stuff them with; and honey, capers, onions, and apples to make a roasting sauce.

Perceptive players or a character with Knowledge of cooking examining the list might note that the list only contains the ingredients for a sauce for the roast, not the meat to be roasted itself. Should the characters notice and ask Feqwin, she says she noticed this herself and asked Telak about the roast, but he assured her that a hunter would be bringing a freshly killed deer to the party.

ROOG TANNANT NINTH CIRCLE ORK ARCHER

Attributes

DEX (19): 8 STR (16): 7 TOU (14): 6
PER (19): 8 WIL (9): 4 CHA (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 9 Spell Defense: 13
Mystic Armor: 4 Social Defense: 9
Death: 91* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 73* Knockdown: 7**
Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 45/45

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Roog knows the Wound Balance skill

Archer Talents (Knacks)

Anticipate Blow^D (9): 17
Avoid Blow (9): 17
Bank Shot^D (10): 18 (Backbiter)
Call Missile (9): 17
Detect Weapon (9): 17
Direction Arrow^D (9): 17
Durability [6/5] (10): 10
Eagle Eye^D (9): 17
Flame Arrow (10): 14 (Fire Arrow)

Impressive Shot^D (9): 17
 Karma Ritual^D (9): 9
 Long Shot (9): 17
 Melee Weapons (9): 17
 Missile Weapons^D (10): 18 (Placed Shot)
 Mystic Aim^D (9): 17
 Resist Taunt* (1): 5
 Second Shot^D (9): 17
 Sprint (9): 9
 Steel Thought** (1): 5
 Stopping Aim^D (9): 14
 Thread Weaving (Arrow Weaving)^D (9): 17
 Throwing Weapons^D (9): 17
 Trace Missile (9): 17
 True Shot^D (10): 18

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
 * Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch
 ** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Arrow Fletching^A (5): 10
 Creature Lore^K (5): 13
 Climbing (5): 13
 Gangs of Kratas^K (2): 10
 Great Leap (5): 13
 Horror Lore^K (5): 13
 Hunting (5): 13
 Kaer Lore^K (5): 13
 Mapmaking^A (5): 13
 Merciless Group^K (5): 13
 Navigation (5): 13
 Read/Write Language (1): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Search (6): 14
 Serian's Sanctuary^K (3): 11
 Speak Language (3): 11—(Dwarf/Throalic, Obsidiman, Or'zet)
 Streetwise (3): 11
 Unarmed Combat (5): 13
 Wilderness Survival (5): 13
 Wound Balance (5): 12

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3),
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 15), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 11; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Thread Medium Crossbow** (Rank 4; Damage 18; Range 60–120 yards/30–60 hexes), Quiver (w/ 30 medium crossbow bolts; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus),
Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Death Cheat Charm (3 Blood Magic Damage),
 Fletching Tools, Forge Tools, 3 × Healing Potions, Mapmaking Tools, Navigation
 Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Quiet Pouch, Strength Booster (2 Blood Magic Damage),
 Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot

550 silver pieces

Legend Award

Ninth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Notes

As an ork, Roog possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

Archer Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Arrow's Eye View
Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on ranged combat Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Create Arrow; Karma on Recovery Tests

Commentary

Roog's *Gahad* is triggered by any insinuation that he was responsible for the failures of the Merciless, or that the work of a bodyguard is a step down from adventuring.

YOORG NINTH CIRCLE OBSIDIMAN WARRIOR

Attributes

DEX (13): 6 STR (25): 10 TOU (22): 9
 PER (10): 5 WIL (14): 6 CHA (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense:** 9
Physical Armor: 11 **Spell Defense:** 9
Mystic Armor: 6 **Social Defense:** 9
Death: 133* **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: 106* **Knockdown:** 10**
Wound Threshold: 16 **Movement:** 5

Karma Points: 27/27

* Adjusted by Blood Magic
 ** Yoorg knows the Wound Balance talent

Warrior Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (9): 15
 Anticipate Blow^D (9): 14
 Avoid Blow^D (10): 16 (Arrow Catch; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 226)
 Battle Bellow (9): 14
 Crushing Blow^D (9): 19
 Detect Weapon (9): 14
 Disarm (9): 15
 Durability [9/7] (10): 10
 Earth Skin^D (9): 18
 Karma Ritual^D (9): 9
 Life Check^D (9): 18
 Melee Weapons^D (10): 16 (Armor Beater, Deflect Blow, Improvised Weapons)
 Missile Weapons (9): 15
 Resist Taunt* (1): 7
 Second Attack^D (9): 15
 Second Weapon (9): 15
 Steel Thought** (1): 7
 Temper Self^D (9): 15
 Thread Weaving (War Weaving)^D (9): 14
 Throwing Weapons (9): 15
 Tiger Spring (9): 9
 Unarmed Combat^D (10): 16 (Pin Down)
 Wood Skin^D (9): 18
 Wound Balance^D (9): 19

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
 * Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch
 ** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Climbing (5): 11
 Gangs of Kratas^K (2): 7
 Horror Lore^K (2): 7
 Kaer Lore^K (5): 10
 Merciless Group^K (5): 10
 Physician (5): 10
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Serian's Sanctuary^K (3): 8
 Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Obsidiman)
 Streetwise (3): 8
 Swift Kick (5): 11
 Weapon Rune Carving^A (5): 10
 Wilderness Survival (5): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Blood Pebble Armor (Phys 5; Myst 3; Init 1; 4 Blood Magic Damage),
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Flail (Forged +3; Damage 18), **Troll Sword** (Forged +4; Damage 20), **Two-Handed Sword** (Forged +5; Damage 23), **Troll Dagger** (Forged +2; Damage 15; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Troll Spears** (Forged +4; Damage 19; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Medium Crossbow** (Forged +4; Damage 20; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/ 15 medium crossbow bolts; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Healing Vial (Rank 4; 2/day: Recovery Test +10 bonus, Step 10 Recovery Test, or Heal 1 Wound), **Protective Amulet** (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus), **Protective Brooch** (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Carving Tools, Cloaksense Brooch, Forge Tools, Healing Kit (3 uses), Quiet Pouch, Physician Kit (3 uses), Traveler's Garb

Loot

550 silver pieces

Legend Award

Ninth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Notes

As an obsidiman, Yoorg possesses the Increased Wound Threshold and Natural Armor racial abilities.

Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Battle Rites

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on close combat Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Ninth Circle: Battlefield Awareness; Karma on Recovery Tests

Commentary

Roog Tannant and Yoorg were members of a powerful adventuring group, Named the Merciless. When the other members of the group were slain by a Horror in a supposedly empty kaer, from which these two barely survived, Tannant and Yoorg retreated to Kratas. After licking their wounds, they found that they could make a better and mostly safer living as high-priced bodyguards to the wealthy merchants.

ARD TELAK NON-ADEPT DWARF MERCHANT

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (20): 8 TOU (20): 8
PER (11): 5 WIL (11): 5 CHA (9): 4

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense:** 7
Physical Armor: 8 **Spell Defense:** 7
Mystic Armor: 1 **Social Defense:** 6
Death: 39* **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: 31* **Knockdown:** 8
Wound Threshold: 13 **Movement:** 5

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Skills

Avoid Blow (7): 12
Bribery (7): 11
Brotherhood of the Flesh Group^K (5): 10
Conversation (5): 9
Dancing^A (5): 9
Gangs of Kratas^K (2): 7
Haggle (7): 11
Melee Weapons (7): 12
Negotiation^K (5): 10
Party Coordination^K (5): 10
Passion Lore^K (5): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Serian's Sanctuary^K (5): 10
Speak Language (9): 14—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Obsidiman, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Streetwise (5): 10
Throwing Weapons (2): 7
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Forged +2; Phys 6),
Buckler (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Dwarf Sword (Forged +2; Damage 14),
Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 11; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Absorb Blow Charm (2 Blood Magic Damage), Booster Potion, Death Cheat Charm (3 Blood Magic Damage), Quiet Pouch, Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

350 silver pieces

Legend Award

Second Circle

Notes

As a dwarf, Ard possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

BREAKING THE BROTHERHOOD

In this encounter, the characters disrupt a ritual of the Brotherhood of the Flesh; encounter an avatar of the Horror, the Imposter; discover the fate of Pellisanta; and possibly save an abducted child. The characters only play out this encounter if they have taken four days to track down Ard Telak, or if they are patient and choose to follow Telak for that time, rather than confronting him outright.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the characters have followed Ard Telak until the 7th of Rua, read the following aloud to the players.

You have bided your time for four days, following Ard Telak from business deals to taverns to brothels. All of his behavior has been above board, if distasteful. Now he seems to be up to something more. Over the last two days he has been making preparations for a party: hiring a cook and servers, as well as prostitutes and musicians. He has also ordered provisions and has been receiving a number of small packages from shady characters. Now, with sunset, he has left his rooms, accompanied by his bodyguards, but rather than head for the diversions of Merchant's Row, he heads towards the dark streets of the Warehouse District.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Highlight mysterious figures gathering in the night, ominous drumming and chanting, and sordid debaucheries. In the course of the night's activities, the banquet should be relaxed and indulgent but should build to a frenzy, culminating in the appearance of the avatar of Raggok, who should be horrifying.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If the characters are patient, and watch Telak until the 7th of Rua without giving him reason to know he is under their watch, they are able to follow him to the next meeting of the local chapter of the Brotherhood. This is a smaller gathering and only includes the dozen or so members of the local branch. In addition to their regular entertainment of prostitutes and performers, the cult has also abducted a young human street urchin, Tik, whom they will

GATE TRAP

Detection: 12

Disarm: 13

Initiative: 12/2D10

Trigger: Pressure Plate

Effect: Gate falls and causes Step 18 damage to all characters struck by the gate.

EXAMINING THE AVATAR

The characters should not have any good reason to doubt the reality of the avatar at this point, but should any suspicious characters try to disbelieve it as an illusion, the effort fails. The Raggok avatar is magically sculpted from organs and tissue but is not illusionary.

The characters may attempt to sense the avatar astrally as well, though astral space here is tainted. What they perceive depends on their Result Levels and the means used. The Difficulty Number for this test is the avatar's Spell Defense.

Average Result: The astral imprint of the target matches its physical size and shape, but appears to be constantly shifting within. A cloud of astral energy overlays the imprint, as if a magical effect is active. The pattern of the target is too complex to make any sense of it.

Good Result: The pattern matches Raggok's appearance as a ram-headed man, with the skin on the head in a cycle of peeling off, revealing the skull beneath, and re-growing. Wounds open and close on the body, with insects and maggots crawling out of them and burrowing back into the flesh.

Excellent Result: There seems to be another pattern beneath that of the ram-headed image of Raggok. This pattern is of a roiling mass of organs and blood. Holes open up between these organs, revealing images of Namegivers being tortured and ripped apart, only to be made whole again. These scenes take place in front of images of otherworldly, ancient cities.

Extraordinary Result: In addition to the patterns, the beginnings of a band of astral energy can be seen trailing downward into the Undercity, dissolving it as it goes.

be torturing and sacrificing to Raggok, and then eating. The members, in their quest for greater thrills, have acquired a taste for Namegiver flesh, and will be eating it at most every meeting. Telak is looking for more exotic victims, however, and is already scouting out ways to get a naga or a manticores for the meeting with the powerful out-of-towners in three months time.

Should the characters wait before confronting Telak and then attempt to disrupt the ritual, they face several obstacles. Ard and his henchmen are looking for anyone following them through the Undercity. The secret passage through the cliff and into the basement of House Medari is trapped, and the trapdoor into the basement is locked. Ard sets the trap and locks the door behind him. The trap door is at the top of a long spiral staircase. The sixth stair from the top is trapped. If this step is trodden on, a spiked and grilled metal gate swings down from the ceiling, sealing off the passage and possibly knocking the intruders down the stairs. Several dozen small metal balls fall from the ceiling as well, to assist in the fall down the stairs. The passage was built as an escape route for the Therans in case of an assault on Clifftop. This trap was built by

the Medari, in case the route was discovered to prevent hordes of rebelling Barsaivians from sneaking into the stronghold.

Whether hit by the falling gate or not, all characters on the steps must make a Dexterity (8) Test to avoid slipping on the metal balls and falling down the stairs, for an additional Step 6 damage. No armor protects against this damage. Further, if sprung, the trap rings a bell inside the house, alerting the occupants. The lock on the trap door itself has a Lock Picking Difficulty of 12. If the bell has not been rung, there is no guard on the door or in the basement.

The ritual itself takes place in the main hall of the house. During the meeting, Ard's bodyguards are posted outside of the house so that they do not witness what happens inside, but also so that they can guard against anyone coming in from street level. Roog Tannant, the ork Archer, is posted on the roof of the building, keeping watch and covering his partner, Yoorg, the obsidiman, who is posted at the front door. Yoorg knows the guests, and thus knows who to admit to the party, though she knows nothing of the Brotherhood or the activities that take place inside.

In addition, other members of the Brotherhood in attendance may have brought along guards, who are similarly posted outside of the main hall to watch for intruders. Roughly half of the Brotherhood's membership in Kratas is made up of Journeyman Thieves, who are able to add to the defense against an attack. The other members are wealthy merchants, with only minimal combat skills. However, if an attacking group seems powerful and dangerous, the members of the Brotherhood flee, as they have no particular need to defend the ritual site.

If the characters wait until midnight when the urchin is ritually slain, they are treated to the appearance of "Raggok." In the center of the room, in a bone circle in which the slaying takes place, an avatar of Raggok appears: a blood-soaked human male with the head of a ram. This is not a true avatar of the Mad Passion but is one of the Imposter's. Should the characters slay this avatar, its body collapses into component organs, which in turn dissolve into blood that drains through cracks in the floor, making its way back to the Imposter's lair.

Should the characters storm into the ritual before the urchin is slain, Ard Telak cuts the child's throat, spilling his blood and summoning the avatar of Raggok to fight to defend the cult. When the child's blood hits the bone circle, the blood explodes in a cloud of smoke and fire, from which appears the grinning, roaring avatar, with blood dripping from its body. If the characters manage to quickly defeat the avatar and the cultists, they may be able to keep Tik from bleeding to death with spells or potions. If they do rescue the poor child, he is traumatized by the experience, and clings to his rescuers.

The characters should be unable to follow any leads to the Horror at this point, and might probably not make any sense of it at all, but might suspect it is not Raggok's influence at work here.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters successfully sneak up on the intoxicated cultists before they summon the avatar, the characters may be able to defeat them easily. However, these Namegivers are ruthless and dangerous, and if they are alerted to the characters' approach, or given a chance to recover, they mount a serious defense. They are survivors as well and do not give up their lives merely to defend the house. They retreat if their lives are in danger. The avatar should be able to give the group a good fight as well.

The characters might avoid this encounter altogether by either getting the information they need from Ard Telak or disrupting the cultists before the ritual. If the gamemaster wishes to play this encounter no matter what, he may make the schedule of the rituals irregular, and have the next meeting occur whenever the characters manage to track down Ard Telak. Otherwise, the gamemaster could have Telak summon Raggok wherever he might be when confronted by the player characters. It is imperative for the next

act for the Imposter to find out, either from its avatar or one of the Brotherhood of the Flesh, that the player characters are investigating its actions.

If the characters, having found out Pellisanta's fate, still do not show any interest in tracking down the rest of the Brotherhood or disrupting their activities, the gamemaster can have a wealthy patron hire the player characters to find Tik, who has just been abducted.

AVERAGE NON-ADEPT HUMAN BROTHER OF THE FLESH

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (10): 5 TOU (11): 5
PER (14): 6 WIL (16): 7 CHA (16): 7

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense:** 7
Physical Armor: 3 **Spell Defense:** 8
Mystic Armor: 2 **Social Defense:** 9
Death: 32 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Unconsciousness: 24 **Knockdown:** 5
Wound Threshold: 8 **Movement:** 6

Skills

Avoid Blow (2): 7
Bribery (4): 11
Brothers of the Flesh Group^K (4): 10
Conversation (4): 11
Dancing^A (4): 11
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 10
Haggle (4): 11
Melee Weapons (3): 8
Negotiation^K (4): 10
Passion Lore^K (4): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 7 — (Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (6): 12 — (Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, T'skrang)
Streetwise (4): 10
Throwing Weapons (2): 7

^AArtisan Skill; ^KKnowledge Skill

Armor

Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Weapons

Whip (Damage 8; Entangle 9), Dagger (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Quiet Pouch, Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

200 silver pieces

Legend Award

First Circle

BROTHER OF THE FLESH SIXTH CIRCLE HUMAN THIEF

Attributes

DEX (18): 7 STR (12): 5 TOU (16): 7
PER (18): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (16): 7

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense:** 11
Physical Armor: 5 **Spell Defense:** 10
Mystic Armor: 5 **Social Defense:** 9
Death: 75 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 61 **Knockdown:** 5
Wound Threshold: 11 **Movement:** 6
Karma Points: 30/30

Thief Talents

Avoid Blow (6): 13
Detect Trap^D (6): 13
Disarm Trap^D (6): 13

Durability [6/5] (6): 6
Evaluate (6): 13
Haggle (6): 13
Karma Ritual^D (6): 6
Lock Picking^D (6): 13
Melee Weapons (7): 14
Picking Pockets^D (6): 13
Riposte^V (3): 10
Search^V (3): 10
Second Weapon^V (3): 10
Sense Poison^D (6): 13
Silent Walk^D (7): 14
Slough Blame^D (6): 13
Surprise Strike (7): 12
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)^D (6): 13
Trap Initiative^D (6): 13
Versatility (3): 3

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^I Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^V Learned through the Versatility talent

Skills

Brotherhood of the Flesh Group^K (3): 10
Climbing (3): 10
Craftsman (Trapmaker)^A (3): 10
Gangs of Kratas^K (3): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 8 — (Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9 — (Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
Streetwise (3): 10
Throwing Weapons (3): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 12), **Hand-Axe** (Forged +2; Damage 11), **Sap** (Damage 6), **Whip** (Damage 8; Entangle 9), 2 × **Bolas** (Damage 8; Range 12–24 yards/6–12 hexes), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), **Net** (Range 6–12 yards/3–6 hexes; Entangle 12)

Equipment

Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Healing Potion, Hooded Mask, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

310 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

Notes

Has the Versatility racial ability. Has used the Versatility talent to learn the Riposte, Search, and Second Weapon talents.

Thief Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Thieves' Tongue
Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

"RAGGOK" AVATAR OF THE IMPOSTER

Attributes

DEX: 15 STR: 15 TOU: 15
PER: 15 WIL: 15 CHA: 15

Characteristics

Initiative: 15 **Physical Defense:** 20
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 20
Attack (9): 24 **Social Defense:** 20
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 11
Horns (9): 24 **Mystic Armor:** 11
Death: 74 **Recovery Tests:** 7
Unconsciousness: NA **Knockdown:** 15
Wound Threshold: 21 **Movement:** 7

Powers

Spellcasting (8): 23, Thread Weaving [Illusionism]^T (8): 23

^T Talent as power

Spells

Illusionist (Eighth Circle)

Equipment

Blood-soaked robe

Legend Award

Eighth Circle

Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider the Avatar and the Brotherhood of the Flesh members a Ninth Circle (Group) encounter.

ACT ONE AFTERMATH

The characters should recover Pellisanta's bones and return them to Alina, which completes their mission but likely leaves the group and Alina somewhat disappointed. The headwoman and her young companions are crushed when the characters tell them of Pellisanta's fate, but are grateful if the characters give them her remains. Alina considers this an adequate performance by the characters, especially if they make it clear that Pellisanta was already dead when they were hired. Thus, she does not ask for the village's money back, but if the characters offer to return the money, she accepts it, as the village is too poor to turn down such a gift. Should the characters give the money back, Alina and the villagers of Bluefern spread the tale of the characters' generosity, and they earn a Legend Point Award for heroics at the gamemaster's discretion.

If the characters return to Alina having learned of Pellisanta's fate from Telak without recovering her remains from outside the city, Alina asks the characters to retrieve them for her, both as final proof that she is dead, and so they may bury her remains in Bluefern. She tells the characters that they can keep the money given to them to rescue Pellisanta if they recover her remains.

If the characters have rescued Tik and have him with them when they meet Alina or otherwise tell her about the child, the headwoman offers to adopt the child and take him back to Bluefern. Tik eagerly takes her up on the offer. In any case, Alina takes Pellisanta's remains back to her village for burial.

Investigating the Brotherhood of the Flesh could lead to many future adventures, as the characters could track down surviving members of the cult throughout the province and into Thera itself. However, they also have earned themselves serious enemies, and surviving members of the cult might hunt down the characters to get their revenge.

For **Awarding Legend Points**, see p. 93.



ACT TWO: DEATH WALKS THE STREETS

The player characters discover a branch of the Keys of Death while avoiding their many assassination attempts. During the climactic showdown, the characters find that the Keys are led by what appears to be an incarnation of Death (actually one of the Imposter's avatars) that looks like Pellisanta, the dead girl from Act One.

Before playing this adventure, the gamemaster should prepare, as a handout to the players, a list describing the player characters, including their races and Disciplines, and any distinctive clothing and gear. The player characters discover this in **Making a List**, p. 76.

ACT TWO BACKGROUND

Purple Finch, a windling Thief and Troubadour, broke into a silversmith's forge looking for loot. Instead, he discovered a member of the Keys of Death, awaiting the appearance of his patron Passion. Finch hid in a cabinet and observed Death himself, supposedly imprisoned under Death's Sea, appear in the workshop. Purple Finch could not contain his curiosity and used his astral sensitive sight to examine Death. What he saw was the astral form of Impostor's avatar, a roiling mass of bloody organs, as well as a reflection of the Horror's True Pattern. This drove Purple Finch mad, and he tore out his own eyes.

The Imposter, upset with the player characters' disruption of the activities of his branch of the Brotherhood of the Flesh, has decided to set its branch of the Keys of Death upon the characters. Disguised as Death, the Horror has described the characters (particularly as they appeared in interactions with the Brotherhood in **Act One**) to members of its secret society around the city and instructed them to kill the characters. The Imposter is wary of the characters and is not certain that any of the Keys can actually succeed in their task. In the two days leading up to a meeting of the secret society (see **Making a List** on p. 76, and **Marked for Death**, p. 77), individual members of the Keys attempt to kill the characters in subtle ways: poison in their food, sniping from a distance, magically trapped items, and so on. However, the Imposter is taking the unusual step of collecting its assassins together to take the on characters as a team.

The Imposter gathers the Keys together at the Blood Spire (see **Kratas: City of Thieves**, p. 162) and appears to them in the form of Pellisanta, the young elf girl slain in **Act One**. To make this revelation as dramatic as possible, the gamemaster might want to present this act to the characters as if it were a separate adventure. Until they see the avatar in the guise of Pellisanta, it's unlikely they will realize that the two events are connected.

A WOUNDED BIRD

In this encounter, the characters meet Purple Finch, a windling Thief who has been driven mad by his astral viewing of an avatar of the Imposter. Finch has torn out his own eyes and is now being harassed by a group of troll thugs. The characters comfort him, which leads them to investigate the cause of his madness.

SETTING THE STAGE

Read the following aloud to the players:

As you sit in your favorite pub, you hear rough laughter from outside. Then there is a loud, wet smack and a bloody

wad shatters a window, landing on your table. Through the shattered window, you see a cluster of trolls roaring with laughter. The bloody, bruised object on your table moans and shudders. You see that it is a horribly injured windling.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The sudden intrusion should shock the characters. The callous, indifferent cruelty of the trolls is all too typical of Kratas.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The bloody mess on the table is Purple Finch, a renowned windling Thief and Troubadour. He is severely wounded, including several broken limbs and many cuts and bruises. He also is missing both of his eyes. Bleeding to death, the windling dies if not tended to quickly. When cleaned up and healed, he falls into a deep sleep. However, once he awakens, he begins to babble uncontrollably and claw at his eye sockets. He mutters low, to himself, "*blood, so much blood... made of blood... death... organs twisting... blood... teeth... eyes,*" and so on.

The trolls are simply a minor gang of thugs, not directly connected to the Keys of Death or even the Imposter. Purple Finch, flying blindly through the streets after putting out his own eyes, just bumped into the trolls by accident. The trolls, out for a night on the town and already tipsy, amused themselves by batting the helpless windling around like a ball. They have no serious enmity to him, do not pursue him into the bar, and soon wander off to seek other diversions. If the characters run out into the street to confront them, they are game for a fight. The characters might think that the trolls put out Finch's eyes, but if asked, they deny it, and they have no reason to lie, as they freely admit to beating the windling up.

Purple Finch is now quite mad, and it is quite difficult—if not impossible—to restore him to full sanity. However, the characters can question him, and patiently tease his story out of him. It comes out in small bits, interspersed with mutterings and screaming. The clarity of his account should be affected by the treatment and care the group gives him. If they treat him well and calm him down, the story flows much faster and more coherently. His story follows in brief, but can be embellished as the gamemaster sees fit.

"I had been casing Prevar's Silversmithy for a week or so. A week, a week... but I was the weak one, don't you see? I finally broke in, looking to steal some silver, of course. Breaking and stealing, stealing and breaking! No one was home, and I was stuffing my pockets with silver, stuff, stuff, stuff, when I heard someone coming. I ducked into a cupboard, and pulled the doors closed, but left a crack ... crack, cracking and breaking... I could peek out of. Bad Finch; shouldn't peek! I saw Prevar come home and empty a bag of silver flatware, jewelry, and such, on a workbench. The silver had some blood on it, no surprise there. Bad Prevar, bloody, bloody silver, Don't know if he stole it himself or just bought it from someone who did.

"However, he took off his heavy cloak, and was wearing a strange robe underneath. It was black, but with strange symbols all over it—the death robes of a Key of Death! He began to chant in some strange language. Chanty, chanty, bad dwarf. He took a bloody knife out of a sheath and began to draw symbols on the floor. Suddenly the room got much

darker, and I heard another voice talking to him. I shifted position, shifty, misty, bad Finchy ... to get a better look at who he was talking to, and saw a Namegiver wearing a long black robe and hood that covered its face. The figure in the hood claimed that it was Death itself. Bad, lying, deathy. Even the Keys know Death is trapped, right?. I couldn't resist the temptation to find out who was trying to impersonate Death, so I used my astral sight on it. Peeky, sneaky!

"It was unspeakable!

"It was no Namegiver, but was a pile of organs, shifting and rolling around on top of each other, none in the places they should be. Grotesque and twisted, like it was made of corrupted astral space. Thousands of years of torment and terror. Death is scary, but it should be peaceful, right? This was living and screaming undeath."

Finch breaks down again after this revelation, babbling and moaning incoherently.

The characters now need to decide what to do with the windling. The Temple of Garlen is willing to take him in, and after a few months of ministrations, will be able to restore him to some form of sanity. They might also ask around town about him and learn that he originally hails from one of the windling clans of Glenwood Deep. The player characters could arrange for passage on a riverboat or in a caravan heading in that direction to return him to his clan.

NON-ADEPT TROLL THUG

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (20): 8 TOU (18): 7
PER (10): 5 WIL (12): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 2 Physical Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 7 Spell Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 7
Death: 40* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 32* Knockdown: 8
Wound Threshold: 12 Movement: 7

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Skills

Avoid Blow (7): 12
Battle Shout (7): 12
Extortion^K (4): 9
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 9
Intimidation (4): 9 (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 225)
Melee Weapons (7): 12
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Riposte (7): 12
Second Attack (7): 12
Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)
Streetwise (4): 9
Surprise Strike (4): 12
Throwing Weapons (3): 8
Unarmed Combat (7): 12
Weapon Rune Carving^A (4): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3)

Weapons

Pole-Axe (Damage 16), Troll Dagger (Damage 11; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Absorb Blow Charm (2 Blood Magic Damage), Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Traveler's Garb

Loot

35 silver pieces

SHADOWING PREVAR

Instead of breaking into the smithy or in addition to that, the characters might try to follow Prevar around, either hoping to interrogate him, to simply learn more about his habits, or hoping he will lead them to other members of the Keys.

Prevar's activities in the next two days are fairly mundane. He spends most of his time in his smithy, working on silver craft. He normally only leaves the smithy a few times a day to eat meals at nearby taverns and to buy and sell silver goods. However, since his meeting with the avatar, he spends a few hours each night roaming the taverns of Merchant's Row looking for the characters. Since he is specifically looking for the group members, he gains a +2 bonus to Perception Tests to notice the characters if they are following him, unless they have disguised themselves. If the characters follow him without incident for two nights, he attends the meeting of the Keys of Death at the Blood Spire. During this period, however, the other members of the Keys of Death attempt to kill the characters as described in the next encounter.

If Prevar is captured and interrogated by the group, he first pretends to be an innocent smith, though he readily confesses to dealing in stolen goods. He claims no knowledge of the Purple Finch or anything that the windling described and is quite convincing, coming off as a harmless old man. If the characters don't buy it, he refuses to answer any questions, and instead tries to kill them or himself if he has no option for escape. He has a small vial of Death's Tears (see p. 77) on his person that he attempts to swallow if given the chance.

Legend Award

Fourth Circle

Notes

Has the Heat Sight racial ability.

Commentary

As the thugs are inebricated, the gamemaster can give them a Harried penalty to all actions to account for this.

TROUBLESHOOTING

There is little that can go wrong here. A rumble with the trolls may be entertaining, but is not likely to be a serious threat to the characters. Moreover, the trolls are not committed to defeating the characters, so they may retreat in the face of serious opposition.

The most serious problem that the gamemaster might encounter here would be if the characters choose to ignore Purple Finch. If they seem so inclined, they might be enticed by peppering a few references to "silver... great mountains of silver" and "weapons... so powerful," and the like into his crazed mutterings. Feel free to include oblique references to anything else that might be of strong interest to the player characters. Further, the gamemaster might mention to reluctant characters that this is all happening in public view, and their callous indifference will be noticed and might negatively affect their reputations.

The other problem is that for this act to continue, the group needs to find out where Finch had his horrible encounter. If the characters cannot coax the information out of him, then the gamemaster may have a confidant of the windling mention that he had been casing the smithy. Otherwise, Finch could just blurt it out in his pained mumblings if the characters are being dense.

MAKING A LIST

The player characters investigate Prevar's Smithy to discover his links to the Keys of Death. They discover that Prevar is a member of the Keys of Death and that the characters have been marked for assassination by the Keys. They may further discover that a meeting of the Keys is planned for two nights from now.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the player characters have taken care of the windling as best they can, and are following up on the lead they obtained from him, read the following aloud to the players:

You've been watching the smithy that Purple Finch went mad breaking into. A thin tendril of smoke floats lazily from the chimney, and a faint tapping echoes from within. Then the tapping stops, and a few moments later, a cheery looking dwarf, dressed in ordinary looking robes, steps out the front door, locking it behind him. He saunters down the street, whistling a jaunty tune. Now is your chance to get to the truth of Purple Finch's tale.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The cozy cottage workshop and Prevar's demeanor are in sharp contrast to the evils that lie within.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Prevar's Smithy is a fairly simple building. It contains three rooms and a basement. The small front room is nearly empty, just containing a table and two chairs. This is where Prevar meets with clients to buy and sell silver goods and to commission custom work. He keeps no items on display here and has a strong door, locked, between this room and his workshop beyond. This is to prevent potential customers from trying to steal from him while they are discussing business. He only brings one piece at a time out of his workroom into this parlor.

His workroom beyond is the largest room in the house and contains a small number of silver pieces that he is working on, as well as some silver coins and the tools he needs to carry out his trade. It contains several workbenches and cabinets and a small forge. He does not keep a large stock of goods here, as his shop is too obviously a target for thieves. (He rents space in a well-guarded and secured warehouse in that district for his excess inventory and keeps his money hidden in caches throughout the city.)

Most of his work is in buying and selling stolen silverware and jewelry, only occasionally making original pieces. He does do a lot of work in removing other smiths' marks from stolen items, and otherwise altering and disguising stolen work so it can be safely resold in other parts of the province. He also melts down old silver coins and other silver goods and recasts them into counterfeit Throalic coins. He doesn't short the amount of silver, but makes a profit by not having to pay moneychanger's fees. If the characters search his workbenches, they find the molds he uses for these counterfeits.

Up a small staircase and above the workshop is Prevar's simple bedroom, containing only a bed and a chest for his clothes. The chest has a hidden compartment in the bottom that holds Prevar's death robes. The Detection Difficulty to discover this compartment is 10. His bedroom has a few open windows, but there is a stout door with a strong lock at the top of the staircase. Prevar has also bricked up all of the windows to the workshop (though not the front parlor) so that thieves cannot break in. The locks on all of his doors have a Lock Picking Difficulty of 14.

The workshop has an old large rug lying on the floor. It was once quite ornate and elaborate but now is grungy and scorched in places from drops of molten silver. Observant characters might think that this rug is a bit incongruous for a workshop. If they move the rug they discover strange bloodstained ritual symbols carved into the wooden floor. There is also a trap door leading to a basement.

Prevar also keeps a "pet" norikot (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 253) as a guard animal. When Prevar is in his shop working, the creature is locked in the basement, but when he is asleep in bed up stairs, or when he leaves the shop, he lets the creature roam the workshop. If the characters break into the shop while Prevar is asleep, the beast's howling awakens the smith, who dons his death's robes before investigating.

The basement is sparsely furnished, mainly used to store wood for Prevar's forge and other materials he may need. It is also the norikot's nest, and is littered with its droppings, as well as the bones of Prevar's victims that the smith has fed to his pet. Unknown to Prevar, there is a hidden door in the basement that leads to the Undercity. The Imposter's avatar, disguised as Death, uses this door to visit Prevar. The Detection Difficulty for this secret door is 19.

A stack of parchments lies on one corner of a workbench. The pages on the top of the stack are sketches of jewelry pieces, goblets, pitchers, and so on. Beneath that is a sheet of drawings of other smiths' marks. Beneath that is an inventory of silver goods stored elsewhere—e.g. twelve forks, ten spoons, three dozen rings, and so on.

The last page is of most interest to the characters. It contains a description of the characters and is written in a different hand than all of the rest of these notes. The gamemaster should write this up ahead of time, including descriptions of all the group members: race, gender, physical characteristics, and notable clothing, armor, and equipment. This sheet also has an address and time: the Blood Spire, midnight, two days from now. The gamemaster should not write "two days from now" but whatever date in the campaign would be two days from the date the characters discover it.

This sheet was given to Prevar by Death—actually an avatar of the Imposter—at the meeting that Purple Finch observed. The avatar gave these notes to Prevar, in anticipation that the characters would find them on one of the assassins and be lured into its trap in the final encounter in this act.

PREVAR, NON-ADEPT DWARE SILVERSMITH

Attributes

DEX (16): 7 STR (15): 6 TOU (16): 7
PER (16): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (9): 4

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 6 Spell Defense: 9 [14] F
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6 [11] F
Death: 36* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 28* Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 11 Movement: 5

F When Prevar is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Skills

Avoid Blow (7): 14
Bribery (7): 11
Craftsman (Locksmith)^A (7): 14
Craftsman (Silversmith)^A (8): 15
Craftsman (Tailor)^A (6): 13
Embroidery^A (4): 8
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 11
Haggle (7): 11
Keys of Death Group^K (4): 11
Melee Weapons (7): 14
Merchant's Row Neighborhood^K (4): 11

Negotiation^K (4): 11
 Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Search (5): 12
 Second Weapon (6): 13
 Silent Walk (7): 14
 Speak Language (8): 15—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
 Streetwise (4): 11
 Surprise Strike (6): 12
 Throwing Weapons (2): 9
 Unarmed Combat (7): 14
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Padded Leather Armor (Forged +2; Phys 6)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14), **Dwarf Sword** (Forged +2; Damage 12),
Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment

Blood Crystal Nail (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 241; 1 Permanent Damage; w/one dose Death's Tears, see below), 2 × Craftsman Tools, Death Robes, Embroidery Tools, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

Two silver rings worth 125 silver pieces each, one silver necklace worth 100 silver pieces.

Legend Award

Fourth Circle

Notes

As a dwarf, Prevar possesses the Heat Sight racial ability. Prevar has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters should have little difficulty either breaking into the shop or defeating Prevar, especially if they have the drop on him. Should they break in while he is sleeping and awaken him, giving him time to don his death robes, he is much more formidable. Still, he is not much of a threat to a well-armed group. If the break in is going too smoothly, the gamemaster can have Prevar return unexpectedly from his errand, having forgotten something in the shop and returning a few minutes after he left. To cause maximum trouble for the characters, he could return right when the characters are fighting the norikot, the sounds of which alert Prevar to their presence, allowing him to sneak up on them.

The most serious problem that could arise is if the characters miss Prevar's notes on his workbench. If necessary, tell a player that his character notices some blood stains on one of the papers on the desk.

The characters may get in and out of Prevar's smithy and learn what they need without Prevar being any the wiser, especially if they post a lookout and think to copy the information from the parchment, leaving the original behind.

Don't let the characters get too distracted by the secret door in the basement. They should not be able to track the avatar back to the Imposter at this point in the adventure. If the characters do follow the path through the Undercity, tell them the trail suddenly stops over a crack in a tunnel floor, too small for a Namegiver to go through. (This is where the avatar dissolved itself and oozed through subterranean passages to rejoin the Imposter in its pool.)

Should the characters ignore the smithy altogether, proceed to the next section, changing the descriptions and events as required. However, it is important that they discover the parchment describing the meeting at the Blood Spire. If they do not get it from the smithy, have another Key of Death carrying a copy of the document attack the characters in **Marked for Death**, below.

DEATH'S TEARS

Type: Death

Onset Time: 2D6 minutes

Duration: D6 minutes

Spell Defense: 12

Step Number: 12

The poison called Death's Tears is unique to the Keys. The formula for making it is never sold, though small quantities of the poison itself might be; two doses cost 1,000 silver pieces. This magical poison causes terrible pain and internal bleeding; as it does its work, the victim coughs or vomits blood and weeps tears of blood. Once the poison takes effect, victims must make a successful Willpower Test with a Difficulty of 10 to overcome the wracking pains enough to take any action.

MARKED FOR DEATH

This is not a single encounter, as it includes the efforts of the Keys of Death to assassinate the characters over the next two days. One Key member attempts to poison the characters' food or drink, a second snipes at the characters from a distance with poisoned arrows, and the third devises an exploding package and has it delivered to the group. The characters' survival depends upon the precautions they take.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the player characters have found the parchment with their descriptions, read the following aloud to the players:

You hold in your hand a blood-spattered piece of parchment with detailed descriptions of yourselves, down to your gear, found in the possession of a Key of Death. It also mentions a meeting in two days' time. It seems as if someone wants you dead—and they are willing to use one of a dangerous band of fanatical assassins to do it. What is your next move?

THEMES AND IMAGES

Paranoia should be the order of the day. By the end of the second night, the characters should be checking behind every door, afraid to eat anything, and constantly looking over their shoulders for followers.

BEHIND THE SCENES

After the characters discover the parchment describing them in Prevar's Smithy, they spend the next two days being attacked by assassins of the Keys. Each member of the Keys of Death that lives in Kratas and is known to the Imposter has been visited by one of its avatars, posing as Death, and has been given the same information as Prevar: a description of the characters and orders to kill them. The Keys have also been told to assemble in two night's time near the Blood Spire.

At least three of these assassins manage an attempt to kill the characters before the meeting. Others take their time locating the characters and planning their attacks. The gamemaster should play out the following assassination attempts, though others of the gamemaster's invention may be added at his discretion. In order to properly play out these events, it is important that the characters decide how they spend the next two days. If they have killed Prevar in the previous encounter, they may not realize that there are

other Keys of Death with the same orders plotting their deaths and may not alter their normal behavior until after the first attack.

If the characters capture or kill any of the assassins, they find on the assassin's person a set of instructions identical to that given to Prevar: a description of the characters and mention of an appointment in two days' time at the Blood Spire.

WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

The first attack is a simple attack of opportunity. The next time the characters purchase food or drink, either from a grocer's, or in a tavern or cookshop, they have the bad luck of choosing the one in which a Key of Death works as a serving wench. The wench in question is Grafweena, an average-looking but reasonably personable elf. Indeed, if the characters have a regular tavern they frequent, she may be a regular server of theirs and knows them on sight. She wears a vial of Death's Tears (see p. 77) around her neck at all times and adds the poison to the characters' food or drink in a back room, out of their sight. She has enough in her vial to put a dose of poison in each character's food.

Once the group has been poisoned, Grafweena continues going about her regular business. If confronted by the characters and accused, she bursts into tears and protests her innocence. If pressed, she admits to having been distracted in the kitchen by a bottle of wine that fell off a counter. She put down the characters' food to clean up the mess, which must have given the poisoner the opportunity to poison the food. She is not wearing Death's Robes, but if the characters search her they may find the vial.

If the group has paused for over five minutes after the poisoning (such as to administer antidotes to each other, or make other attempts at healing) before first questioning the person who last handled their food, Grafweena takes the opportunity to slip the vial off in the kitchen and drop it in the bushes outside an open kitchen window.

If the characters remain convinced that Grafweena is the poisoner, she eventually clams up and says nothing. If interrogated roughly, she attempts to kill herself rather than give up any information about the Keys of Death.

The gamemaster may have to adjust the above encounter if the characters do not eat in public but instead buy provisions to eat at their headquarters. In such a situation, Grafweena works in the stall in the Greenmarket from which they buy their provisions, and they most likely do not discover the poisoning until after they return to their hideout. In which case, Grafweena has ample opportunity to hide all evidence of the poisoning. Further, she gives herself a small dose of the Death's Tears poison and then reports to the shrine of Garlen, where the characters find her recovering. Should they ask her, she says that a mysterious cloaked and bearded human stopped by her stall right before the characters did. This is, of course, a lie meant to throw suspicion away from her.

If the characters have a two-day supply of rations on their persons or in their headquarters that they obtained before the end of the first act of this adventure (see **Breaking the Brotherhood**, p. 70), and if they only eat those rations, they may avoid this assassination



attempt altogether. Otherwise, they suffer at least one poisoning attempt, because they have to eat or drink at some time. Should their living quarters be well known, or should they not take precautions to keep its location secret, Grafweena may break into their lodgings or hideout and poison their rations when they are out.

If the characters spend more than eight hours or so without eating, go ahead and skip to the second attack below and come back to this one when they go to eat.

BOLTS OF PIERCING

These are crossbow bolts that each have an unusually long and sharp head, made of a mysterious, otherworldly metal. The surface of the metal is an unusual, shimmering, slippery gray that seems to writhe back and forth. The triangular head tapers to a needle-sharp point. These do not do extra damage, but instead reduce by one the Result Level required to score an Armor-Defeating Hit (usually from Excellent to a Good Result). Yurlgok assumes that these were made for him by Death itself. (It is uncertain where the Imposter got these.) Yurlgok has coated the heads of all of his bolts with Death's Tears (see p. 77).

GRAFWEENA NON-ADEPT ELF KEY OF DEATH

Attributes

DEX (16): 7 STR (13): 6 TOU (10): 5
PER (16): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0 Spell Defense: 9 [14] F
Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 8 [13] F
Death: 29* Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 20* Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 7

* When Grafweena is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Skills

Acting^A (6): 12
Alchemy (6): 13
Alchemy and Potions^K (6): 13
Conversation (6): 12
Cooking^A (6): 12
Craftsman (Tailor)^A (5): 12
Embroidery^A (6): 12
Fast Hand (5): 12
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 11
Keys of Death Group^K (4): 11
Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (6): 13
Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Sperethiel*)
Streetwise (6): 13

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Equipment

Alchemy Kit, Vial w/one dose of Death's Tears, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice, Traveler's Garb

Loot

Silver necklace with a hollow opaque gem containing a vial (w/5 or more doses of Death's Tears inside) worth 250 silver pieces.

Legend Award

Second Circle

Notes

As an elf, Grafweena possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability. Grafweena has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

ALWAYS WATCH THE SKIES

The second attack on the characters is made by an ork sniper, Yurlgok the Pitiless. He is a mercenary Archer who works out of the Stables, but is also a Key of Death and assassin. He has been asking around about the characters and discovering their haunts. He has set up a sniper's nest in the top of one of the old guard towers near the characters' known locations. It takes him a while to set this up, but he was told of the characters before the Imposter visited Prevar; with the time it takes for the Finch to confide in the characters, and then for the characters to break into Prevar's smithy, Yurlgok has a number of hours to set up his ambush. He picks a tower that has an unobstructed view of the characters' headquarters or hideout, if they have one, or the inn they stay in, or any other location that the characters are known to frequent.

Yurlgok is a Ninth Circle Archer of the crossbowman specialty. He is equipped with a targeting eye blood charm, as well as a threaded medium crossbow to which he has woven a Rank Five thread. He has also been given two dozen bolts of piercing by the Imposter, which he has coated with Death's Tears. As he knows he might only get off one or two shots, he aims for two rounds (see **Aiming** on p.222 of the *Player's Guide*) and uses True Shot and his targeting eye whenever opportune, but he does not use Mystic Aim on the first shot, as he does not want his aiming mark to alert his target.

Yurlgok tries to hit the character he considers most dangerous first. These are, in descending order: characters who can fly to the tower to get at him (such as windlings), magicians, other Archers, combat-heavy Disciplines, and then all others. In addition to the information provided by Death, Yurlgok has asked around about the characters and their abilities before planning his ambush, and as they are of Legendary Status, he has a good idea which characters fit his criteria. The characters are most likely **Surprised** (see the *Player's Guide*, p. 228) by the first shot and cannot use any defensive abilities, but have a slim chance of spotting Yurlgok while he aims. The Difficulty Number for a Perception Test to avoid being surprised is 15. Subsequently trying to spot him after the first shot requires a Perception (12) Test. Using other abilities to spot Yurlgok are handled according to the abilities' standard rules.

Yurlgok fully expects that after he hits with his first shot, the characters will dive for cover. If they don't, and just stand around in the middle of the street or stop to administer aid to their fallen friend, he takes what additional shots he can at other characters. Otherwise, if the characters dive for cover blocking his arc or start toward the tower, he flees. He fully expects that his shot, combined with the poison, will take out one of the characters, and he is content to take them out one at a time. He has a rope ready at the opposite side of the tower. He throws the rope out the window and slides down into an open sewer and disappears through back passages of the Undercity. He has even gone so far as to rig up another normal crossbow on a trip line down another side passage. Thus, if the characters chase him into the sewer, they may trip the line, firing a bolt at them from out of the darkness while Yurlgok runs in the opposite direction, down a different passage.

If Yurlgok escapes, he carefully sets up additional ambushes over the next two days, trying to pick off the group one at a time. Anticipating that the characters are now expecting a shot from a tower or rooftop, he sets up his next shot from a basement window that has a view of a street near which the characters might walk by. He has set this up a good distance down the street from where he expects the characters to be, and has boarded up most of the window, leaving only enough room to see and out of which to shoot. He also takes two rounds to aim this shot as well. Make the same Perception Test to notice the attack as before, but add +2 to the Difficulty Numbers if the characters specifically say they are looking up for snipers towards rooftops, towers, etc.

There is a passage from this basement to the Undercity and an escape route. Note that it takes Yurlgok some time to scout out and set up this attack, so it takes place no sooner than about eight hours after the first attack.

After this attack, the characters most likely become paranoid, scanning both the sky and the ground for snipers. If they are still roaming the streets undisguised at this point, Yurlgok's third attempt is not at a distance but instead at close range. He has outfitted a wagon and hired a mercenary to drive the wagon slowly around the city, especially in the areas in which he believes the characters might be. The back of the wagon has a large crate in it,

CROSSBOW TRAP

Detection: 12

Disarm: 6

Initiative: 12

Trigger: Tripwire

Effect: Tripping the wire causes a bolt from the crossbow to fire at the triggering character who incurs Step 10 damage.

in which Yurlgok is hidden. He is facing the back of the crate, which has a small hole from which he can fire a bolt. He waits to fire until after the wagon has passed the characters, so that he can shoot one of them in the back. The driver then continues driving away, but slowly to not gather attention. There is also a trap door in the bottom of the crate and wagon that Yurlgok can drop out of, so that he can scurry away into the sewers. He has worked out a series of signals with the driver. Two quick kicks on the back of the crate means drive away as fast as possible. Yurlgok only attempts the shot from the wagon amidst other traffic, so that the wagon is not the only thing on the street. It takes Yurlgok another eight hours to arrange this.

Should the characters still not catch Yurlgok, and remain incautious in public after three attacks, feel free to have Yurlgok take pot shots at them from wherever seems appropriate until they either catch him, he kills them all, or the meeting with Death occurs.



YURLGOK THE PITILESS NINTH CIRCLE ORK CROSSBOWMAN SNIPER

Use Roog's stats from p. 69 with the following statistical differences:

Characteristics

Death: 90*
Unconsciousness: 72*
Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 13 [18]^F
Social Defense: 11 [16]^F

^F When Yurlgok is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets
* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Archer Talents (Knacks):

First Impression^D (9): 14
Long Shot (9): 17 [(14): 22] DR
Missile Weapons^D (10): 18 [(15): 23] DR (Placed Shot)
Silent Walk (10): 18 [(15): 23] DR (Shadow Hide)
Sprint (9): 9 [(14): 14] DR
Tracking (10): 18 (Identify Tracks)
True Shot^D (10): 18 [(15): 23] DR

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^F *Italicized Talents Require Karma.* (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +5 Rank Bonus from Death Robes

Skills

Craftsman (Tailor)^A (5): 13
Embroidery^A (5): 10
Keys of Death Group^K (5): 13
Melee Weapons (5): 13

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Weapons

Thread Medium Crossbow (Rank 4; Damage 17; Range 60–120 yards/30–60 hexes)
30 Bolts of Piercing w/Death's Tears (see below)

Thread Items

Death Robes (5 Rank 5 threads granting a +5 Rank Bonus to his Long Shot, Missile Weapons, Silent Walk, Sprint and True Shot talents)

Equipment

Embroidery Tools, Targeting Eye (2 Permanent Damage), Craftsman Tools, Vial of Death's Tears, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poultice

Notes

Yurlgok is a Crossbow Specialist and a Sniper who has accumulated ten Temptation Points (see *Player's Companion*, p. 23). Yurlgok has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Archer Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Social Defense

Eighth Circle: +1 Social Defense

WATCH EVERYTHING ELSE AS WELL

The Imposter sends a third assassin of the Keys of Death after the group: a dwarf Elementalist Named Flagron the Red. Flagron specializes in fire magic and has a flame red beard and a fiery temper to match. The Imposter is normally reluctant to employ magicians, as it fears they will be able to astrally sense its deceptions. However, Flagron has a deserved reputation for not being one of the most subtle or perceptive of Namegivers. He is rather singular in his focus, rarely looking deeper into things than needed. He is not to be underestimated, however. Flagron is a quite powerful and talented Elementalist, especially good at summoning and enchanting.

The first step he takes is summoning a number of Strength 1 Air Spirits to locate the characters. These are only instructed to find and survey the group from a distance, and then report the characters' whereabouts and movements back to him. It is difficult for the characters to avoid being discovered this way. Flagron is patient and summons as many spirits as he needs to find the characters. Attentive characters having some means of seeing into the astral plane might be able to detect one of these spirits watching them, and might be able to track the spirit back to Flagron when it reports to him in his home near the Enchanter's Crucible.

Second, Flagron tries to trap the characters' residence or other area the characters frequent that he has learned about from his spirits. He has developed a number of devices for such assassinations. They are crystal and orichalcum globes about the size of apples. He has trapped within each a Strength 5 Fire Spirit. Also enclosed within each globe, surrounding the spirit, are several kernels of True water. These kernels serve both to mask the heat and astral signature of the spirit, as well as to infuriate the fire spirit. Each globe is rigged with a push switch and a pull ring so that it can be set to be opened in a number of ways. A wire can be attached to the ring and attached to a doorknob, or run as a tripwire. Or, it could be buried under dirt, or placed under a floorboard, to be opened when the push switch is stepped on. Any object that the characters are likely to interact with, such as a door or chest, or even saddlebags, could be trapped with one of these devices. Flagron is cautious in stalking the characters and takes his time in choosing where and when to place his devices. Thus, the characters most likely do not encounter them until after Grafweena and Yurlgok have tried to kill them first.

When a globe is opened, the fire spirit first engulfs all those within range and attacks survivors with its spear power. Once its Engulf power has caught the surroundings on fire, the spirit is able to manifest physically as well.

Flagron has half a dozen of these devices and plants them wherever he thinks they are likely to kill the characters. They are expensive and difficult to make, so he does not waste them. If the characters defeat one of his spirits, or discover one of the globes and successfully disarm or avoid it, Flagron gets frustrated and sets up a ward using the Dragon's Breath spell. He only sets up one such ward however. If this doesn't work either, Flagron fumes but waits for further opportunities to kill the characters remotely.

By now the characters should be worried not only about being poisoned and sniped at, but about everything they touch and everywhere they walk. If the characters are quite careful about what they open and where they step, Flagron resorts to a despicable trick. He places one of his globes inside a small wooden box, rigged with a

wire so that when the box is opened, the globe opens as well. Flagron then hires a street urchin to deliver the box to the characters and open it for them. Flagron has paid the child several silvers but has told the child—a scruffy, ill-clothed human boy—that the characters will give him even more when he delivers them the box. The urchin eagerly approaches the characters and opens the box in their midst. Use the stats for one of Ghaghin's Grandchildren for the urchin if needed (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p.74, p.75). The engulf power of the Fire Spirit most likely kills the urchin, but should the characters save, or resuscitate the child, he gives an accurate description of Flagron. The Elementalist did not bother to hide his identity from the child, expecting him to be killed by the fire spirit.

FLAGRON THE RED, NINTH CIRCLE DWARF FIRE ELEMENTALIST

Attributes

DEX (11): 5 STR (15): 6 TOU (16): 7
PER (14): 6 WIL (21): 8 CHA (9): 4

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 6 Spell Defense: 10 [15] F
Mystic Armor: 7 Social Defense: 9 [14] F
Death: 77* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 59* Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 11 Movement: 5

Karma Points: 36/36

F When Flagron is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Elementalist Talents (Knacks)

Armored Matrix (9): 9
Avoid Blow* (1): 6
Cold Purify^D (9): 17
Durability [4/3] (10): 10
Earth Skin^D (9): 16
Elemental Hold^D (9): 17
Elemental Tongues^D (9): 15
Enhanced Matrix (9): 9
Enhanced Matrix (9): 9
Fire Heal^D (10): 18 [(15): 23] DR (Wound Heal)
Karma Ritual^D (9): 9
Metal Ward^D (9): 15
Read/Write Magic^D (9): 15
Resist Taunt** (1): 9
Spellcasting^D (10): 16 [(15): 21] DR (Anchored Spell)
Spell Matrix^D (9): 9
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Steel Thought (9): 17
Summon (Elemental Spirits)^D (10): 18 [(15): 23] DR (Bind Spirit)
Temperature^D (9): 17
Thread Weaving (Elementalism)^D (10): 16 [(15): 21] DR (Create Orichalcum, Create Thread Item, Weave Element)
Willforce (9): 17 [(14): 22] DR

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^H *Italicized Talents Require Karma.* (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +5 Rank Bonus from Death Robes

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Boots

** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Craftsman (Trapmaker)^A (5): 10
Detect Trap (5): 11
Disarm Trap (5): 10
Gangs of Kratas^K (5): 11
Keys of Death Group^K (5): 11
Melee Weapons (3): 8
Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Robe Embroidery^A (5): 9
Snares and Traps^K (5): 11
Speak Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Streetwise (5): 11
Throwing Weapons (2): 7
Trap Initiative (5): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Elementalist Spells

Boil Water, Burning Water, Cold Embers, Detect Elementalism Magic^M, Dispel Elementalism Magic^E, Dragon's Breath^A, Drastic Temperature, Earth Blend, Earth Wall, Engulf [Fire]^M, Fireball^E, Fireweave, Fire Hounds, Fire Spear^M, Fire Wall, Fire Whip, Flameshaw, Flameweapon, Flame Darts, Flame Strike^M, Fuel Flame, Great Sticky Vines, Inflamm Self, Living Wall, Moonglow, Porter, Repair, Resist Cold, Resist Fire, Small Slayer, Snuff, Spirits of the Death's Sea, Stone Cage, Sunlight

^M Denotes spell in spell matrix

^E Denotes spell in enhanced matrix

^A Denotes spell in armored matrix

Armor

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3)

Weapons

Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items

Death Robes (5 Rank 5 threads granting a +5 Rank Bonus to his Fire Heal, Spellcasting, Summon (Elemental Spirits), Thread Weaving (Elementalism), and Willforce talents),
Protective Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow +1 Rank Bonus),
Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; PhysDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Grimoire, Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

Orichalcum Jar (w/5 True water kernels). 6 Orichalcum Globe Traps with one True water kernel and a bound Fire Spirit.

Legend Award

Ninth Circle

Notes

As a dwarf, Flagron possesses the Heat Sight racial ability. Flagron has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death. Flagron is a fire Elementalist specialist, and gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting and Thread Weaving Tests when casting fire spells, but takes a –2 penalty on those Tests when casting spells of other elements.

Elementalist Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Fire and Ice

Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: Earth and Air; Karma on Recovery Tests

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters might get frustrated by the near constant attacks and feel that they are not progressing forward enough. If so, the gamemaster may skip some of the attacks and move on to the next section. Also, the gamemaster might save some of the assassins for later and have them continue their attacks on the characters during Act Three. He should not include those assassins in the next encounter or have them escape from that confrontation.

If the characters did not recover the note from Prevar's Smithy above that describes the characters and mentions the meeting in the next section, the gamemaster can place a similar note on the body of one of the Keys of Death that the characters defeat in this section.

A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

In this encounter, the Imposter has summoned all of his Keys of Death to the Blood Spire, to give them instructions to attack the characters. In fact, the meeting is an elaborate trap. While the Keys do not know this, the Imposter has purposely let the characters discover the meeting by leaving the notes about the meeting around so that it can ambush them. On of a whim of the Imposter, its avatar in this encounter takes on the shape of Pellisanta. This should confuse the characters and suggest that something larger is going on.

SETTING THE STAGE

When the time of the meeting at the Blood Spire arrives, read the following aloud to the players:

For the past two days, people have tried to kill you at every turn. You are on edge from peeking around every corner, looking for snipers from every rooftop, and checking everything you eat. Now, as the appointed hour approaches, you might learn why. Though sunset was hours ago, an image of the Blood Spire colored red by the rays of the setting sun still lingers. The spire, its broken shell sticking out of the Kratas skyline like a spear in a downed buffalo, seems to still be dripping blood onto the streets of Kratas. Surely this is a trick of your eyes.

Now, out of the corner of your eyes you think you see movement and hear just the whisper of footsteps. Shadowy figures are gathering in the dark corners and shadowy alleyways at the foot of the spire. At the top of the spire, a figure steps out of the darkness and to the edge of a crack in the crumbled wall. The figure is cloaked in the death robes of a Key of Death. An eerie, lilting voice drifts out from under the hood.

"Oh, my dear children. I thirst so for blood and the death of my enemies, yet you have failed me. But fear not my wrath, for I am Death and have foreseen this. You have obeyed me by coming tonight, and so have they. They are here, as well, hiding in the shadows and listening to me. Bring them to me so they may give me their proper tribute!"

At this, the hooded figure snaps its fingers, and a bright collection of lights appear in its hand. It laughs, and throws back its hood. The figure tosses the lights in your direction. They fly through the sky to hover over your heads.

Just before the lights left its hand, you could make out the face of the cloaked figure. You are shocked to see the face of a young elf girl, the pearlescent green tips of her ears sticking out of her pale violet hair. Could this be Pellisanta? How many young cetharel girls with violet hair could there be in Kratas? But she's dead, isn't she?

THEMES AND IMAGES

Paranoia inspired by the attacks of the previous encounter and the ominous setting should give way to the shock of seeing Pellisanta again, quickly followed by the rush of combat and the smell of blood.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This encounter is the climax of Act Two. The Imposter has set a trap for the characters and has assembled the Keys of Death to eliminate the characters once and for all. The Imposter's avatar has taken the form of Pellisanta, to enjoy the confusion and horror that this will cause in the player characters. It has used the Illusionism spell Spotlight to illuminate the characters. In the beginning of the fight, the Imposter merely observes from its avatar's perch on the spire, occasionally taunting the characters and harassing them with Illusionism spells. However, once the characters have defeated half of the Keys, the Imposter more aggressively enters the fight, getting in as close to the characters if necessary. If the characters try to flee the battle, the Horror rallies the Keys to chase the characters. The Imposter is committed to defeating the characters, as it is angry at them for defeating the Brotherhood in the first act, but also because it fears for its survival. It only toys with the characters as long as it is confident that it will win. Once the tide turns against the Keys, the Horror uses all its means to destroy the characters.

Prevar, Yurlgok the Pitiless, and Flagron the Red are present if they survived the previous encounters with the characters. In addition to these possible antagonists, there are several other Keys of Death present. More information on these members can be found below.

Because this group of the Keys of Death is led by an avatar of the Imposter, the group contains no one able to perceive astral space (except Flagron), as the Imposter fears that they could discover its subterfuge. This has the effect of making this group of Keys quite combat heavy.

The Keys are scattered about among the buildings near the spire, hiding in the shadows and waiting for instructions from Death. Shaymeraerth and Yurlgok (if present) are hiding on rooftops and snipe at any targets of opportunity that present themselves, cautiously moving toward the characters if need be to get a shot. Q'trank't, Tebian of the Red Rain, and Kronk the Skull Crusher are also poised on rooftops, but as soon as the Spotlight spell lights up the characters, these three run toward them, leaping from rooftop to rooftop if necessary, and then leaping down on the characters. She-who-shall-not-be-spoken-of, Xuunnarrd, Prevar, and Flagron the Red are hiding in alleys and doorways on street level and also rush toward the characters once the group has been illuminated.

Cautious characters may try to show up early and scout out the area, possibly finding some of the Keys in hiding. However, the Keys are very attentive and try to avoid confrontation until Death orders them to attack. Thus, they retreat from a hiding place if the characters approach. A very stealthy and cautious group might be able to discover the Keys and eliminate some of them before the hour of midnight. The Keys arrive between half an hour and five minutes before the appointed time. Each comes alone and arrives from a different direction. All are wearing their death robes.

The avatar keeps its Spotlight spell on the characters, casting it again if need be. The Imposter also harasses the characters as they fight the Keys, using Stop Right There, Blindness, Phantom Fireball, Bouncing Blaster, and Dancing Disks. Once the avatar enters directly into combat with the characters, it casts True Ephemeral Bolt as they approach, and then Bleeding Edge, using a sword to fight. While the Imposter is determined to destroy the characters, it is not concerned about the avatar itself and taunts the characters when the avatar is near destruction.

The characters likely want to disbelieve the appearance of Pellisanta, but her appearance is no illusion. The Imposter has sculpted an image of the girl from its organs and goo, which are magical in nature, but not illusionary. Note that astral space around the Blood Spire is corrupted. The amount of detail observed by a successful astral sensing varies depending on the method used and the level of success. Refer to the **Examining the Avatar** sidebar on p. 71, with the girl's shape, and beneath it Death's shape, replacing Rag-gok's in the descriptions.

If the characters slay the avatar, it collapses into a mass of twitching, undulating organs, which in turn dissolve into blood that seeps through the flagstones of the city toward the Imposter's lair. If they somehow manage to capture the avatar alive, it can escape by dissolving itself at will and seeping into the ground.

SHE-WHO-SHALL-NOT-BE-SPOKEN-OF, EIGHTH CIRCLE TROLL OUTCAST WARRIOR

Attributes

DEX (14): 6	STR (22): 9	TOU (17): 7
PER (10): 5	WIL (17): 7	CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 2	Physical Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 9	Spell Defense: 9 [14] F
Mystic Armor: 9	Social Defense: 10 [15] F

Death: 105* **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 81* **Knockdown:** 9**
Wound Threshold: 11 **Movement:** 7

Karma Points: 24/24

^F When She is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** She knows the Wound Balance skill

Outcast Warrior Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow^D (8): 14 (Bounce)
 Battle Shout^D (8): 13
 Down Strike (8): 17 [(13): 22] DR
 Durability [9/7] (8): 8
 Fireblood^D (8): 15 (Flaming Wounds)
 Great Leap (8): 14 [(13): 19] DR
 Karma Ritual^D (8): 8
 Life Check^D (8): 15
 Melee Weapons^D (9): 15 [(14): 20] DR (Armor Beater, Improvised Weapons)
 Resist Taunt* (9): 16
 Second Attack^D (8): 14 [(13): 19] DR
 Sense Danger (8): 13
 Shield Charge^D (8): 17 [(13): 22] DR
 Steel Thought** (1): 8
 Steely Stare^D (8): 13
 Swift Kick^D (8): 14
 Thread Weaving (Kava Weaving)^D (8): 13
 Throwing Weapons (8): 14
 Tiger Spring (8): 8
 Unarmed Combat^D (9): 15
 Wood Skin (8): 15

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^{It} Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)\

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +5 ranks from Death Robes

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Climbing (4): 10
 Craftsman (Tailor)^A (4): 10
 Firescale Trollmoot^K (2): 7
 Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 9
 Keys of Death Group^K (4): 9
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Scol Mountains Geography^K (4): 9
 Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Troll)
 Streetwise (4): 9
 Wilderness Survival (4): 9
 Wound Balance (4): 13
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Living Crystal Armor (Phys 6; Myst 3; Init 2; 5 Blood Magic Damage),
Crystal Raider Shield (Phys 3; Myst 3; Init 2; Deflect 3/3; Shatter 18)

Weapons

Troll Sword (Forged +3; Damage 18), **Troll Dagger** (Forged +2; Damage 14; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Troll Spears** (Forged +3; Damage 17; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items

Death Robes (Five Rank 5 threads granting a +5 Rank Bonus to her Down Strike, Great Leap, Melee Weapons, Second Attack, and Shield Charge talents), **Protective Amulet** (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus), **Protective Brooch** (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Forge Tools, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

340 silver pieces

Legend Award

Eighth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Notes

As a troll, She possesses the Heat Sight racial ability. She has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Outcast Warrior Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Kattor's Rebuke

Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on close combat Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Commentary

She-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Spoken-Of is from the Scol Mountains, possibly from the Firescale trollmoot. No one seems to know why she was exiled and sent away as an outcast. Unlike the rest of the Keys, She takes no pleasure in killing and seems resigned to it.

Q'TRANK'T EIGHTH CIRCLE T'SKRANG BOATMAN

Attributes

DEX (17): 7 **STR (13):** 6 **TOU (14):** 6
PER (13): 6 **WIL (13):** 6 **CHA (14):** 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 11
Physical Armor: 8 **Spell Defense:** 9 [14] F
Mystic Armor: 5 **Social Defense:** 9 [14] F
Death: 82* **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 66* **Knockdown:** 6**
Wound Threshold: 10 **Movement:** 6

Karma Points: 32/32

^F When Q'trank't is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Q'trank't knows the Wound Balance talent

Boatman Talents (Knacks)

Cast Net^D (8): 15
 Climbing^D (8): 15 [(13): 20] DR
 Disarm^D (8): 15
 Durability [6/5] (8): 8
 Great Leap (8): 15 [(13): 20] DR
 Karma Ritual^D (8): 8
 Lion Heart^D (8): 14
 Melee Weapons^D (9): 16 [(14): 21] DR
 Missile Weapons (8): 15
 Pilot Boat^D (8): 14
 Read River^D (8): 14
 Second Weapon^D (8): 15 [(13): 20] DR
 Speak Language (7): 13—(Human, Obsidiman, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, Windling)
 Surprise Strike (8): 14
 Swimming^D (9): 15 [(14): 20] DR (Dive)
 Swing Attack^D (8): 15
 Thread Weaving (River Weaving)^D (8): 14
 Throwing Weapons (8): 15
 Unarmed Combat (8): 15
 Wound Balance (8): 14

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^{It} Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +5 ranks from Death Robes

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Craftsman (Tailor)^A (4): 11
 Creature Lore^K (4): 10
 Gangs of Daiche^K (4): 10
 Keys of Death Group^K (4): 10
 Navigation (4): 10
 Read/Write Language (1): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Sail Embroidery^A (4): 10
 Silent Walk (4): 11
 Speak Language (2): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
 Streetwise (4): 10
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

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

Weapons

2 × **Barbed Net** (Damage 8; Entangle 14), **Broadsword** (Forged +3; Damage 14),
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12), 2 × **Barbed Throwing Net** (Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes; Entangle 11), 2 × **Dagger** (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Medium Crossbow** (Forged +3; Damage 14; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 yards),
 Quiver (15 medium crossbow bolts)

Thread Items

Death Robes (Five Rank 5 threads granting a +5 Rank Bonus to his Climbing, Great Leap, Melee Weapons, Second Weapon, and Swimming talents),

Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Light Quartz Lantern, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

340 silver pieces

Legend Award

Eighth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Notes

As a t'skrang, Q'trank't possesses the Tail Combat racial ability. Q'trank't has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Boatman Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Flow of Kiatsu

Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on Action Tests aboard riverboats

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Commentary

Q'trank't plies the Serpent River and works any riverboat that will have him. He quickly moves from one crew to another to prevent anyone from connecting him to the killings he performs in every port he visits, sometimes even killing fellow crewmembers before departing on another ship.

XUUNARRD NINTH CIRCLE OBSIDIMAN WARRIOR

Use Yoorg's stats from p. 69 with the following statistical differences:

Characteristics

Death: 131* **Spell Defense:** 9 [14] F

Unconsciousness: 104* **Social Defense:** 9 [14] F

^F When Xuunarrd is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

Warrior Talents (Knacks):

Avoid Blow^D (10): 16 [(15): 21] DR (Arrow Catch; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 226)

Crushing Blow^D (9): 19 [(14): 24] DR

Melee Weapons^D (10): 16 [(15): 21] DR (Armor Beater, Deflect Blow, Improvised Weapons)

Tiger Spring (9): 9 [(14): 14] DR

Unarmed Combat^D (10): 16 [(15): 21] DR (Pin Down)

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^I Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +5 Rank Bonus from Death Robes

Skills

Craftsman (Tailor)^A (5): 11

Embroidery^A (5): 10

Keys of Death Group^K (5): 10

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Thread Items

Death Robes (5 Rank 5 threads attached to his Avoid Blow, Crushing Blow, Melee Weapons, Tiger Spring, and Unarmed Combat talents)

Equipment

Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools

Notes

Xuunarrd has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Commentary

Xuunarrd is an obsidiman mercenary who hangs out in the Stables looking for work. He accepts nearly any job, at nearly any price, just for the chance to shed blood. He lives frugally, so can afford to work cheaply. This annoys the other mercenaries of the Stables, as he undercuts their prices.

TEBIAN OF THE RED RAIN SEVENTH CIRCLE HUMAN AIR SAILOR

Attributes

DEX (18): 7

STR (18): 7

TOU (14): 6

PER (11): 5

WIL (14): 6

CHA (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6

Physical Armor: 11

Mystic Armor: 6

Physical Defense: 11

Spell Defense: 10 [15] F

Social Defense: 10 [15] F

Death: 76*

Unconsciousness: 61*

Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3

Knockdown: 7**

Movement: 6

Karma Points: 35/35

^F When Tebian is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Tebian knows the Wound Balance talent

Air Sailor Talents

Air Sailing^D (7): 13

Avoid Blow^D (8): 15

Climbing^D (7): 14

Distract^D (7): 12

Durability [6/5] (7): 7

Empathic Sense^D (7): 12

Great Leap (7): 14

Haggle^V (4): 9

Karma Ritual^D (7): 7

Melee Weapons^D (8): 15 [(12): 19] DR

Missile Weapons (7): 14 [(11): 18] DR

Navigation^V (4): 9

Resist Taunt^D (8): 14

Riposte (7): 14 [(11): 18] DR

Silent Walk^V (4): 11

Steel Thought** (1): 7

Surprise Strike^V (4): 11

Swing Attack^D (7): 14 [(11): 18] DR

Throwing Weapons (7): 14

Thread Weaving (Air Weaving)^D (7): 12

Unarmed Combat (7): 14

Versatility (4): 4

Windcatcher (7): 13

Wound Balance^D (7): 14

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^I Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^V Learned through the Versatility talent

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +4 Rank Bonus from Death Robes

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Craftsman (Tailor)^A (4): 11

Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 9

Jerris History^K (4): 9

Keys of Death Group^K (4): 9

Read/Write Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, Theran)

Rugaria History^K (4): 9

Sail Embroidery^A (4): 9

Speak Language (3): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Theran/Rugaria)

Sky Point History^K (4): 9

Streetwork (4): 9

Theran Military Organization^K (4): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3), **Buckler** (Forged +1; Phys 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17), **Espagra-Scale Cloak** (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 15), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 11; Range 24–48 yards; 12–24 hexes), **Longbow** (Forged +3; Damage 15; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (40 longbow arrows; Forged +1)

Thread Items

Death Robes (4 Rank 4 threads granting a +4 Rank Bonus to his Melee Weapons, Missile Weapons, Riposte, and Swing Attack talents), **Protective Amulet** (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus), **Protective Brooch** (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Light Quartz Lantern, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb

Loot

210 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

Notes

As a human, Tebian possesses the Versatility racial ability. Tebian has used the Versatility racial ability to learn the Haggle, Navigation, Silent Walk, and Surprise Strike talents. Tebian has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Air Sailor Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Collaborate

Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on airship Action Tests

Commentary

Tebian is a Theran who was born in Rugaria Province. He was conscripted into the Theran navy and forced to serve in many foreign lands before ending up at a post in Sky Point. After slaying the commander responsible for his conscription, he deserted the Theran navy, and found his way to Jerris. With Jerris as a starting point, he crisscrossed Barsaive through sailing on many vessels and built a network of contacts with the Keys of Death in every Barsaivian city, with the Kratas network as his latest project.

KRONK THE SKULL CRUSHER, EIGHTH CIRCLE ORK SKY RAIDER ASSASSIN

Attributes

DEX (17): 7 STR (22): 9 TOU (20): 8
PER (10): 5 WIL (9): 4 CHA (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense:** 12
Physical Armor: 9 **Spell Defense:** 9 [14] F
Mystic Armor: 9 **Social Defense:** 9 [14] F
Death: 106* **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: 82* **Knockdown:** 9**
Wound Threshold: 13 **Movement:** 6

Karma Points: 40/40

F When Kronk is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Kronk knows the Wound Balance talent

Sky Raider Talents (Knacks)

Battle Bellow^D (8): 13
Battle Shout^D (8): 13
Bribery (8): 13
Down Strike^D (8): 17 [(13): 22]^{DR}
Durability [8/6] (8): 8
Fireblood^D (9): 17 (Flaming Wounds)
Great Leap^D (9): 16 (Flying Kick)
Karma Ritual^D (8): 8
Melee Weapons^D (9): 16 [(14): 21]^{DR} (Armor Beater)
Momentum Attack^D (8): 15 [(13): 20]^{DR}
Parry (8): 15
Resist Taunt* (9): 13
Shield Charge^D (8): 17 [(13): 22]^{DR}
Steel Thought^{D**} (9): 13
Steely Stare^D (8): 13
Swift Kick (8): 15
Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving)^D (8): 13
Tiger Spring (8): 8 [(13): 13]^{DR}
Unarmed Combat (8): 15
Wound Balance (8): 17

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)

^{DR} *Italicized Talents Require Karma.* (Except when also a Discipline Talent)

^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +5 Rank Bonus from Death Robes

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Climbing (4): 11
Craftsman (Tailor)^A (4): 11
Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 9

Keys of Death Group^K (4): 9

Missile Weapons (4): 11

Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Sail Embroidery^A (4): 9

Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Or'zet*)

Streetwise (4): 9

Throwing Weapons (4): 11

Trollmoots^K (4): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Crystal Ringlet (Phys 4; Myst 4; Init 2), **Thread Crystal Raider's Shield** (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 5; Deflect 3/3; Shatter 18; PhysDef +1)

Weapons

Flail (Forged +3; Damage 17), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 12; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 13; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Medium Crossbow** (Forged +3; Damage 17; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (15 medium crossbow bolts)

Thread Items

Death Robes (5 Rank 5 threads granting a +5 Rank Bonus to his Down Strike, Melee Weapons, Momentum Attack, Shield Charge, and Tiger Spring talents), **Protective Amulet** (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 Rank Bonus), **Protective Brooch** (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Traveler's Garb

Loot

340 silver pieces

Legend Award

Eighth Circle

Notes

As an ork, Kronk possesses the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities. Kronk is an Assassin Sky Raider specialist (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p. 223). Kronk has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Sky Raider Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Strike Without Warning

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapons Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Commentary

Kronk was a *newot* of a trollmoot at one time, but his bloodlust was so great that it disturbed even the trolls and he was exiled. He is the most blatantly bloodthirsty of the Keys. His *Gahad* is set off by any discussion of trollmoots, as he believes his was superior to all others. Unfortunately for those wanting to avoid this, no one knows which one was his.

SHAYMERAERTH SEVENTH CIRCLE ELF WOODSMAN ASSASSIN

Attributes

DEX (19): 8 STR (13): 6 TOU (12): 5
PER (18): 7 WIL (14): 6 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense:** 11
Physical Armor: 5 **Spell Defense:** 11 [16] F
Mystic Armor: 5 **Social Defense:** 10 [15] F
Death: 81* **Recovery Tests:** 2
Unconsciousness: 66* **Knockdown:** 6**
Wound Threshold: 9 **Movement:** 7

Karma Points: 28/28

F When Shaymeraerth is targeted by a fear attack, use the Defense values in brackets

* Adjusted by Blood Magic

** Shaymeraerth knows the Wound Balance talent

Woodsmen Talents (Knacks)

Anticipate Blow^D (7): 14
Avoid Blow^D (7): 15
Climbing (7): 15 [(11): 19]^{DR}
Durability [7/6] (7): 7
Karma Ritual^D (7): 7
Melee Weapons (7): 15
Missile Weapons^D (8): 16 [(12): 20]^{DR}



Mystic Aim (8): 15
 Safe Path^D (7): 14
 Search (7): 14 (Listen; see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p.229)
 Silent Walk^D (8): 16 [(12): 20]^{DR} (Shadow Hide)
 Sprint (7): 7 [(11): 11]^{DR}
 Spot Armor Flaw (7): 14
 Stopping Aim^D (7): 13
 Surprise Strike^D (8): 14
 Thread Weaving (Forest Weaving)^D (7): 14
 Tracking^D (8): 15 (Identify Tracks, Stalk (see *Kratas: City of Thieves* p.230)
 Wound Balance^D (7): 13

^D Discipline Talent (The adept may spend Karma on this Talent)
Italicized Talents Require Karma. (Except when also a Discipline Talent)
^{DR} Number in brackets indicates a talent modified by +4 Rank Bonus from Death Robes
^{*} Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Skills

Alchemy and Potions^K (4): 11
 Craftsman (Tailor)^A (4): 12
 Gangs of Kratas^K (4): 11
 Hunting (4): 12
 Keys of Death Group^K (4): 11
 Read/Write Language (1): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Speak Language (2): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, *Sperethiel*)
 Streetwise (4): 11
 Wilderness Survival (4): 11
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14), 2 × **Daggers** (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 × **Hawk Hatchets** (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), **Elven Warbow** (Forged +3; Damage 14; Range 48–96 yards/24–48 hexes), Quiver (40 elven warbow arrows)

Thread Items

Death Robes (Four Rank 4 threads granting a +4 Rank Bonus to her Climbing, Missile Weapons, Silent Walk and Sprint talents), **Protective Brooch** (Rank 4; SocDef +2; SpellDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 Rank Bonus)

Equipment

Alchemy Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Embroidery Tools, Traveler's Garb

Loot

210 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

Notes

As an elf, Shaymeraerth possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability. Shaymeraerth is a Woodsman Assassin specialist. Shaymeraerth has 2 Blood Magic Damage from a Blood Oath to the Keys of Death.

Woodsman Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Hunter's Strike
Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on companion's defensive Action Tests

Commentary

Shaymeraerth failed to prevent the destruction of her village by a group of bandits from Kratas (actually sent by the Imposter). She tracked the bandits back to Kratas and killed them all one by one. After her demonstration of skill as an assassin, the Keys of Death recruited her to their cause. She was easily convinced since she had no one and no village to return to. Besides, staying in Kratas would allow her to slay even more of the bandits in the City of Thieves and prevent what happened to her village from occurring again.

Overall Legend Award

For simplicity, the gamemaster can consider this Keys of Death cell a Tenth Circle (Group) encounter.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The worst that can happen is that the characters do not come to the meeting, perhaps sensing a trap, or perhaps out of cowardice or indifference. In that case, the Imposter continues to send Keys of Death assassins after the characters until the Keys are successful or the characters leave the city. Having assembled the Keys in one place at the Blood Spire, the Imposter, as Pellisanta, leads them against the group.

Another difficulty may be matching the opposition in this fight to the characters. There should be at least one Key of Death present for each one of the player characters. The gamemaster should adjust the number of foes to provide a tough challenge to the group. If more foes are required, feel free to copy the stats of one or more of the Keys described in the cast of characters, and give them a "twin" or sibling with nearly identical stats. Since they are not in one group, the gamemaster can easily insert additional foes and have them slink out of the shadows and join the fray when needed. If fewer are needed, just eliminate some of the ones listed.

ACT TWO AFTERMATH

The characters should be disturbed by the appearance of the avatar shaped as Pellisanta. If they deduce that the events of Act One and Act Two are somehow connected, they should be confused. Encourage them to talk out the possibilities. A successful Cults Lore, Passion Lore, or other related Skill Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 reveals that the Keys of Death and the Cultists of Raggok are bitter enemies and would be unlikely to be knowingly working together.

If the characters had tested the remains of Pellisanta in Act One, confirm if asked that those were her remains. If they give a description of the avatar to any of the villagers of Bluefern, it matches that of Pellisanta. Hearing that Pellisanta is still alive, or being used as a tool by Death causes the villagers great distress, however.

By this time, if the characters have seen both avatars dissolve and leech into the ground, they might think they should explore the Undercity. This leads them into Act Three.

Even if the characters defeat the avatar, some of the Keys of Death who were not present at the final battle might continue trying to hunt them down, in Act Three or in later adventures. Further, many of the Keys of Death in Kratas do not live in the city all the time but could be encountered outside the city later, and some members might have been out of town when the battle took place. Orders to kill the characters may have already been left for them at a drop in town awaiting their return, or orders might find them out of town.

For **Awarding Legend Points**, see p. 93.

ACT THREE: UNDERNEATH THE MASKS

In this act, the characters are drawn into yet another mystery involving the Imposter and finally discover the secrets of the Horror.

ACT THREE BACKGROUND

The Imposter has spread itself too thin, and this may lead to its downfall. The Horror always has multiple plots transpiring, and one of them came to fruition ahead of schedule, distracting it. For years, the Imposter has been impersonating Nemesis (see the *Gamemaster's Companion*, p.161), and leading an obsidian Horror Stalker Named Urlmasu the Sullen on a wild goose chase throughout the province. The Horror took delight in tricking Urlmasu into thinking various innocents were corrupted, and then tricking her into slaying them, only to reveal the mistake to her and delight in her revulsion. The Horror misjudged taunting a Horror Stalker however, and underestimated her prowess and determination. Urlmasu was able to track the Imposter (still thinking it to be Nemesis) to Kratas and actually discovered and entered its lair. The Imposter had given Urlmasu clues to this end, so that it could imprison and torment her.

The Horror Stalker arrived sooner than the Imposter had intended, in fact at the same moment that it was directing the actions of the Pellisanta avatar in the climactic battle of Act Two. While the Horror was able to defeat Urlmasu, it was not before she had used a dying act (see the *Player's Guide*, p.126) to wound the Horror and free one of its captives. This prisoner is Named Dowu Quantil and is an elf of Theran origin. He was a minor Theran official before the dome fell and spent the Scourge in the Imposter's lair suffering indescribable tortures, where the Horror has used its powers to keep this poor soul alive for centuries. Dowu is now stark raving mad. Superficially, he may resemble Purple Finch from Act Two (and it is hoped the characters notice the similarity), but his madness goes far, far deeper. Dowu Quantil encounters the characters and gives them clues that, with additional research, they can follow to the Imposter's lair.

Meanwhile, the Imposter has created an avatar in the form of Urlmasu in order to hunt down and retrieve Quantil. The characters encounter this avatar while researching the Horror Stalker, or while in the Undercity on the way to the Imposter's lair. Finally, the characters track the Imposter to its lair and fight it in a final climactic battle.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF MADMEN

The characters are recovering from the battle in Act Two when they meet the mad elf, Dowu Quantil, who was recently freed from his hundreds of years of torment by the Horror, the Imposter. He deepens the mysteries of the adventure and provides another lead for the characters to follow to the Imposter.

Setting the Stage

As the characters recover in the Temple of Garlen, read the following aloud:

You lie on the simple but comfortable beds of the Temple of Garlen, as Questors busy themselves caring for you and a few other battered Namegivers. This being Kratas, you've paid dearly for their care.

The doors of the temple suddenly swing open and four scorchers move quickly but respectfully into the room. Each carries one corner of a blanket held taut between them, on which a burden lies. The orks carefully set the blanket down on a nearby bed, and then back warily out of the temple. On the bed you see a naked, wild-eyed elf. His pale body is covered in scars and dried blood. His hair is gray and his face is lined with wrinkles. He clutches a leather satchel to his chest and babbles loudly in a strange accent and an oddly familiar but incomprehensible tongue. Metal shackles bind both his wrists, with broken chains dangling from them.

He starts violently and stares horrified as two of the healers approach him. With soothing words and a calming potion, the pair of questors gets the poor elf to lie down. They begin to clean his body and treat his wounds, though he continues to murmur incoherently.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Dowu Quantil's mad eyes and crazed babbling is unsettling, and contrasts with the calm and comfort of the temple.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This encounter is written assuming the characters were injured in Act Two and that they have sensibly chosen to recover from their injuries at the Temple of Garlen, in the center of Kratas. If your characters have not done this, you may have to relocate this encounter to wherever they have chosen to recuperate. Alternatively, they may have picked up on the fact that both avatars in Act One and Act Two dissolved into the earth and may want to search for them. If so, the gamemaster can have the characters encounter Quantil wandering lost in the tunnels of the Undercity.

Quantil can only babble insanely, and only in ancient Theran. He may have known other languages at some time in the past, but he is in no shape to recall them. He never learned Throalic or any dwarf dialect, considering it beneath him. His language is a clue that he is very, very old and that he has been isolated from the rest of the world for a long time. The players or their characters might assume he is an immortal elf (if they know of such things), but he is actually kept alive by the Horror.

Should the characters succeed in translating Quantil's babbling he repeats variations on the following incessantly:

"The blood, the blood—the horror—stop! Stop! Must build the dome—rebuild the dome—the dome! Make it stronger, thicker—stop the blood! So deep, so deep. They claw and scratch at the dome, calling out 'let us in, brother, let us in.'"

Quantil desperately clutches a leather satchel to his chest and must be gently coaxed into releasing it. He will be crazed to care

about getting it or its contents back, however. The pouch itself appears to be recently made—fairly clean and stiff, new leather. It contains four items of interest: a healing potion, a last chance salve, a map of the Undercity, and a large, rusted key (see below for more detailed descriptions). Urlmasu the Sullen gave this pack and its contents to Quentil when she freed him.

Quentil has been Horror-marked, and this can be detected by making an Excellent Astral Sensing Test against the Imposter's Spell Defense, the higher Result Level being due to the great age of this Horror-mark (refer to **Detecting Horror Marks** on p.274 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). When viewed, the Horror-mark looks like a large spot of blood on the elf's pattern, constantly changing shape. The gamemaster can have the sensing character notice similarities between the Horror-mark and the patterns of the avatars in Acts One and Two to give yet another clue to the connection of these seemingly separate incidents.

The ork scorcher who brought the elf in found him crawling and babbling in a back alley. Their tribe teaches one to both respect and fear the mad, and that to leave him in distress would risk drawing a curse of madness down upon themselves. They know nothing else about the elf, except where they found him: in a corner of the Safehearts, near the mesa.

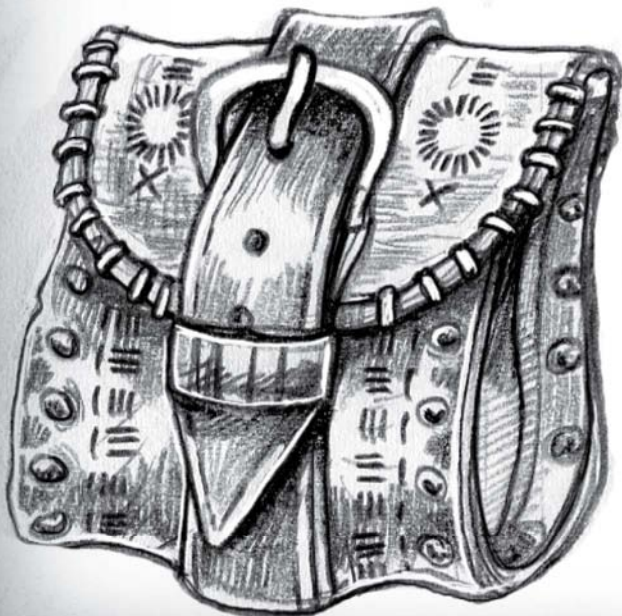
The characters have some detective work to do. There are five basic clues they can follow up on. The mad elf and his language, the satchel, the potions, the key, and the map. Successful Kratas Lore (8) or Streetwise (10) Tests give them the locations of the various craftsmen and information sources below.

The Satchel

The fact that the leather is clean and stiff suggests the bag is newly made, and thus was likely bought in Kratas. Should anyone put it on, they notice that the strap is very long, fitting a troll or obsidian.

The best place to look for leather goods is on Skinner's Way in the Stables neighborhood. Next to the slaughterhouses and tanneries there is a cluster of a few dozen saddleries. If the characters show the satchel to the craftsmen here, the first few queries return indifferent grunts and shrugs. Eventually, someone mutters, *"Don't know, looks like dwarf work to me."*

Persistence pays off, for at the end of a row of anonymous workshops, an old dwarf Named Fikan recognizes the work as his. *"Oh, yes, I made that. Sold it to an obsidian a few weeks ago. See this here? I had to add a longer strap to it, on account of how tall she was."*



If asked, he describes Urlmasu. *"Her skin was a dusty, sandstone brown, with patches of rusty red color. Not a pattern I'd seen before on any of the rock folk hereabouts. Didn't talk much, but I could tell she wasn't from around here."* If asked how he could tell, he replies. *"Well, she asked me where she could buy some healing potions. I gave her directions to Ergan, of course."*

Fikan, a non-adept, is somewhat awed by the legendary status of the characters. He does not charge them anything for his information, but tries to sell them something from his selection of backpacks, scroll cases, and such. This is more for the prestige of having sold to the characters than it is for the money.

The Potions

There are two potions in the satchel, in identical glass vials. One contains a clear salve, while the other has a green liquid: a last chance salve and healing potion, respectively. They are not labeled, but they are made from fairly standard recipes and so are recognizable by anyone who has used them before. Alternatively, they can be identified by Analysis with the Alchemy skill (see the *Player's Guide*, p.91).

Asking around at any of the various potion shops or alchemists results in being told that these bottles and potions look to be the work of Ergan the Alchemist (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 175), who lives in the Hammersing neighborhood. If merely shown the two potions, Ergan confirms they are his, but that he sells too many potions to remember who bought each one. Should he be asked about an obsidian of Urlmasu's description, he remembers her. For fifty silver he tells the characters that she also bought some red firefly chalk from him and asked him where she could get a map of the town. He directed her to Tirzenalos the Lore Merchant.

The Map

The map is on a large roll of parchment and appears to be recently drawn. It looks to be a map of a section of the Undercity, but it has few coded reference points, and it is unclear which direction is which. The main body of the map is painted in bright colors and with clean lines representing tunnels and passageways. On top of this, however are hastily scrawled notes and symbols, written with charcoal. These notes are written in Throalic, but in the very large hand a troll or obsidian would use. Most of the notes merely indicate that the area was checked but nothing was found there. As the notes are dated all in the last few weeks, it is obvious which is the most recent.

If the characters show the map around and ask where such maps are made, they are eventually directed to Tirzenalos the Lore Merchant (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 177). If shown the map, he only confirms that it is his work for 100 silver pieces. For a further 200, he describes the person to whom he sold it and tells the characters her Name. He also explains that Urlmasu the Sullen asked for a map of a particular section of the Undercity. She didn't tell him what she was looking for. He also says that she had asked about any other Horror Stalkers in the area, and he directed her both to the Grim Legion (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 156) and the Darks (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 163). Finally for 300 silver he identifies the reference points on the map so that the characters can use it to negotiate the Undercity.

The Mad Elf's Language

If the characters cannot translate the babblings of Quentil they may wish to take a phonetic version of his speech around the city to have it deciphered. Tirzenalos and other lore merchants, scholars, and sages (oddly enough, this includes Deterannis, see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 119) are able to identify it as ancient, pre-Scourge Theran, and translate it.

Quentil Himself

The characters might think of taking the elf around to various experts. The questors of Garlen allow this only after he has had some time to recuperate, though they are not able to cure his madness.

Suspecting that Quentil is Horror-marked, the characters might want to take him to Berry Blossom's squad of the Grim Legion. The legion first insist that the entire group performs greeting rituals (see *Player's Guide*, p. 88) before talking with the characters. They also sense the elf astrally and may discover his Horror-mark. If that happens, the Grim Legion suggest that they put the poor sod out of his misery and offer to kill him humanely. They do not insist, but they refuse to allow Quentil or the characters into their headquarters.

Should the characters ask the Grim Legion about Urlmasu the Sullen, the Grim Legion say that she visited them, asking about the Horror, Nemesis, and the Undercity. She also showed them the key and asked if they had any idea what it might fit. The key appeared to be extremely old and did not look like anything that they had seen in their explorations of the Undercity.

The characters may think to take Quentil to the Darks. Many of the patrons are able to translate and identify his language, as well as discovering his Horror-mark. Interestingly, should the characters mention Urlmasu, in the Darks, or give a description of her, some of the patrons mention that she was in the Darks, asking about Nemesis and the Undercity.

No matter where they take Quentil, no one in Kratas recognizes him. Should the characters go so far as to travel to the great Library of Throal, a Research (12) Test discovers an ancient woodcut print of the Theran delegation being received by the court of Throal. The print includes the images and Names of dozens of Namegivers, including one Dowu Quentil, a minor Theran official. The print is dated 781 TH.

The Key

Should the characters take the key to various lore merchants or the Tinkerer's Forge (see *Kratas: City of Thieves*, p. 172), they only learn that the key appears to be very old and is not of any identifiable origin. It does not appear to be of ancient Theran construction or design, for example.

The Shackles

The characters may take Quentil to a Weaponsmith or blacksmith, both to have his shackles removed and to find any information about them. They are very old and simple, and no smith in town recognizes them as anyone's work. Any smith can remove them easily. They have been riveted in place, and there is no lock or key-hole on either of them.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter is fairly simple and straightforward. Its purpose is to provide the characters with more information about the Horror and clues that they can follow. The worst that could happen is that the characters, weary from their previous encounters, ignore Quentil or his satchel. In this case, use his madness to drive the plot. Have him take an interest in the group, pestering them directly, yelling at them in ancient Theran, and thrusting the satchel in their faces. If the characters are too battered to immediately follow up on these clues, delay this encounter until they are almost finished healing and are about ready to leave the temple.

Should the characters reach a dead end a helpful gamemaster character might give them a bit of information. For example, a dwarf Traveled Scholar Named Paragalos might have the print from the great library on his person and share it with the characters after they meet him at a lore merchant's, or in the Darks. Should the characters show no interest in following up on this, proceed to the next encounter in which the Imposter sends an avatar out after Quentil and the characters.



A FINAL IMPOSTURE

The characters encounter another avatar of the Imposter, this one disguised as Urlmasu the Sullen, the obsidian Horror Stalker.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the characters have found all the information they can regarding Quentil and the contents of his satchel, they should follow the map into the Undercity of Kratas. When they have reached the region of the Undercity shown on the map, read the following aloud:

You make your way through the musty, muddy tunnels of the Undercity, following the map. Ahead in the passage you hear a faint shuffling noise. Peering around a corner, you see a large obsidian, with dusty sandstone skin speckled with reddish spots. She carries battered weapons and appears to be wounded. She notices you.

"Who is there?" she asks with suspicion in her voice.

THEMES AND IMAGES

The Imposter is very good at what it does, so the avatar cultivates an aura of a powerful and trustworthy ally. She encourages the group to go and fight the Horror with stirring speeches.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This section assumes that the characters have followed the map found in Urlmasu's pouch into the Undercity. If they haven't, the avatar can approach the characters wherever they may be in the

city. If they are still in the Temple of Garlen, it goes there looking for Quantil.

The avatar's first mission is to locate Quantil, for the Imposter wants the elf, one of its favorite playthings, back. However, once the avatar encounters the characters, it tries to persuade them to join it in attacking a Horror, one of the minions of Nemesis. This is a trap, of course. The avatar plans to lead them to the Imposter and then betray them to it.

If the characters encounter the avatar in the Undercity, it first greets them with suspicion, to better throw off their suspicions. Should they show it the map and possessions of the Horror Stalker and tell of meeting Quantil, it warms to them. The avatar tells them her Name, Urlmasu the Sullen, and explains that she had tracked minions of the Horror Nemesis to Kratas. The key, which she had taken from one of the Horror's followers far outside of Barsaive, opened a vault in the Undercity, which housed prisoners and a powerful Horror, a minion of Nemesis. She was able to free one of the prisoners and gave him the pouch to help him escape. Then the Horror attacked her, and she barely escaped with her life. She did manage to wound it, however.

Most of this story is true, except that the real Urlmasu was never actually tracking Nemesis, but rather the Imposter pretending to be Nemesis. Further, when the real Urlmasu fought the Horror she fought to the death, rather than running away. Unfortunately for her, it was her death. The avatar has taken on the shape of Urlmasu to retrieve Quantil. However, it now attempts to persuade the characters to join it in taking on the Horror.

It is important that the gamemaster plays the avatar as if it is Urlmasu until the moment of betrayal. The Imposter has been playing with Urlmasu for years and so knows much of her story and can provide details of her life. The avatar pleads with the characters to join it in fighting the Horror, having heard of their legendary deeds.

By now the characters have seen impostures of Raggok, Death, and Pellisanta. It is likely that they are suspicious of the obsidiman. Thus, the characters might want to astrally sense the avatar. Doing so follows the same procedure as with the other avatars; see the **Examining the Avatar** sidebar on p. 71.

If the characters slay the avatar, it collapses into a mass of twitching, undulating organs, which slowly dissolves into blood that seeps through the flagstones of the city toward the Imposter's lair. If they somehow manage to capture the avatar alive, it can escape by dissolving itself at will and seeping into the ground.

The characters may not trust the obsidiman enough to join with her but may not be so suspicious as to attack her, especially if they have not achieved an Excellent Result on an Astral Sensing Test against the avatar. In this case, the avatar wishes them well and leaves. It then attempts to follow them, hoping to attack at a moment of vulnerability. It can also re-sculpt itself into another Namegiver form to avoid detection and get close to the characters.

TROUBLESHOOTING

It doesn't matter whether the characters believe the avatar or not, though the former results in a more difficult combat in the final encounter. Should the characters have no interest in following up on the Quantil and Urlmasu leads; the Urlmasu avatar can just attack them wherever they may be. The dissolution of the avatar on its death should convince them that the three acts are connected, and that they may face continued attacks until they resolve the situation.

Should the characters kill the avatar, but still have no interest in hunting down the Horror, the Imposter tries to get them killed another way. It sends avatars, in the shapes of members the group, to commit attacks upon members of the Force of the Eye, in front of numerous witnesses. This gets the full fury of Garlthik and the

Force of the Eye to come down on the characters, until they can clear their Names.

UNMASKING THE IMPOSTER

In this final encounter, the characters enter the Imposter's lair and engage it in combat.

SETTING THE STAGE

Once the characters have followed the map through the Undercity, dealing with the Imposter's latest avatar, read the following aloud to the players:

You have made your way through the depths of the Undercity, to the last unmarked spot on the map. A trapdoor lies open in the center of the floor, disturbing a thick layer of dust. A long stone staircase descends into the darkness below. It ends at a landing in front of a mighty stone portal. A keyhole is set in the middle of this door, surrounded by runes in an unknown script.

When you insert the key, the giant stone door creaks open. Beyond the open doorway you hear a dripping noise, as if there were a light sprinkling of rain. A large circular room of worked stone appears beyond the open doorway. Ancient runes are carved upon the walls. From stalactites on the ceiling, drops of blood drip into a massive red pool in the center of the room. Bones, skulls, organs, and tissue, from Namegivers and other creatures, rise, float, and sink in the pool of blood. On the far edge of the pool are the unmoving bodies of several Namegivers, shackled so that they are submerged up to their waists in the pool.

From the roiling mass of gore, a single eyeball breaks the surface and points itself at you. A mouth emerges from another part of the pool, yards away. A voice from the mouth says: "Welcome and greetings. Whom do I have the pleasure of addressing?"

While it might make tactical sense for the characters to not waste time talking and just attack, it is hoped they answer with their Names. After all, these sorts of epic confrontations prior to battle are great stuff for legends. If the characters ask the Imposter its Name (or even if they don't ask) it replies, "I am Death. I am Nemesis. I am Rashomon, Erendis, and Vestrial. I am Ristul, eternally corrupting. I am the Great Dragon Icewing and the Great Hunter Verjigorm. I am Elianar Messias. I am all of these and more. I am older than all. I am everything and nothing. And I am your doom."

At this, a giant maw opens in the pool, and with a horrific roar, a huge glob of blood, tissue, and organs is spat onto the ledge that surrounds the pool. These organs congeal and coagulate, piling on top of each other, taking on the shape of a Namegiver. An eyeball crawls out of the mass of gore and rolls up the front of the figure until it reaches the top, where it burrows a socket in the front of what is now becoming a face. Thick gray skin wells up out of the mass, covering the body, and a mouth, nose, fingers, and toes form.

The creature now looks to be a perfect copy of an ork—not just any ork, but Garlthik One-eye. A pair of wicked-looking daggers shoots out of the pool. The Garlthik creature catches them, looks at you, smiles, and charges. As he does so, you hear another roar and another blob of blood and gore lands upon the ledge.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Describe the sound of dripping blood, the smell of gore, and the terrifying Imposter itself. Its greatest power is the perversion of the avatars taking the shapes of the loved ones of the characters, or their greatest nightmares.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters can discover the entrance to the lair by following Urlmasu's map to the spot most recently checked on her map and searching from there. They can easily see firefly chalk marks on the walls, marks written in Throalic that correspond with those on her map. Or, if they are following the Urlmasu avatar, it leads them there.

This is the climactic battle of the entire adventure. The Imposter is a very dangerous foe, though it is quite mad, so may not always act strategically, instead preferring to taunt and play with its foes.

The Imposter can fight the characters directly, lashing out at it with giant tendrils of gore, topped with fangs and claws. It can also cast spells at the characters, but most of its spells are illusionary, and the time for trickery is past. It prefers to fight the characters with its avatars and creates one a round until there is one for every character present.

The Horror has a limited telepathic ability that allows it to find the images most disturbing to the characters. Thus its avatars take the shape of whatever would be most disturbing or intimidating to the characters: their patron Passion, a dead family member, former adventuring companions, other members of the group, the characters themselves, enemies, or loved ones. Use your imagination and knowledge of the characters.

However, the energy of creating the avatars causes the equivalent of a Wound to the Horror, one for each avatar currently active. The avatars themselves do not suffer this penalty, however. Once an avatar is destroyed, and its mass is reabsorbed into the creature, the Wound is healed.

The Imposter also tries to knock opponents into the pool of blood that is itself. The avatars fighting on the ledge try to knock the characters they are fighting into the pool. The Urlmasu avatar, if present, attempts to sneak up behind the characters and knock them into the pool. Further, the Imposter attempts to drag characters into the pool with its tendrils.

Once a character is the pool, the Horror tries to drown the character in itself, pulling him under with its tendrils and crashing waves of its bulk down upon the character. This counts as a Water Condition of Difficulty 13. Review the rules for swimming on p.102 *Player's Guide* and drowning on p.109 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*. This is in addition to any attacks the Horror may be making on the character.

The Namegivers shackled to the far wall are another complicating factor to the melee. Stray shots or large area effect spells may hit and injure (or even kill) these innocents.

Though it lives in this giant pool, the Imposter can drag its bulk out of the pool by its tendrils and chase after the characters should they flee. The Imposter does not wish the secret of its existence to get out, and so does not let the characters get away.

Damage:	Physical Armor: 25
Bite, Claw, or	Mystic Armor: 23
Tentacle (3): 21	
Death: 161*	Recovery Tests: 11
Unconsciousness: NA	Knockdown: 19
Wound Threshold: 27	Movement: 5
Karma Points: 30/30	Karma Step: 12

* Adjusted for the Horror's use of its Extend Life power.

Powers

Astral Sight (3): 17, Corrupt Karma (3): 23, Create Avatar (15), Disguise Self^T (6): 20, Dream Shape (3): 23, Extend Life (3): 23, Forge Horror Construct (3): 17, Horror Durability (8), Horror Mark (3): 17, Spellcasting (8): 22, Suppress Horror Mark (6): 20, Terror (3): 16, Thread Weaving [Illusionism]^T (8): 22, Thought Worm (3): 17

^T Talent as power

Spells

Illusionist (Eighth Circle)

Legend Award

Twelfth Circle (Group)

Commentary

Many Horrors have been attracted to Kratas throughout its history, and at least one of them still exists: Mrolnatxinislk the Imposter is a powerful Horror living deep beneath the city. It bears some resemblance to a bloatform (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.286), and may be a variant of that type of Horror. Its physical form is a great, roiling pool of blood and tissue, from which various body parts (eyes, mouths, hands, claws, tentacles, etc.) surface briefly before being reabsorbed. When the Horror speaks, its voice sounds like multiple different voices speaking together, while faint voices screaming in pain can be heard in the background.

The magical power of Kratas may have allowed the Imposter to manifest in the city earlier in the magical cycle than Horrors did elsewhere in Barsaive. It was already in place beneath the city, working its silent efforts on behalf of the Invae during their appearance in Barsaive (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p.221). The Imposter claims to have lived under the Kratas Mesa since before the First Age. While this is doubtful, it has certainly lived there since well before the Scourge. It appeared to the enemies of Orgon the Despotic as Vestrial and organized their rebellion. It visited Kitan Trulo as Erendis. It was the Imposter that appeared to Dorma Torlisant in the guise of Upandal and persuaded her to build the dome over the city, thus trapping a large population of Namegivers within easy reach of the Horror for the duration of the Scourge.

The dome plans that it gave Torlisant were flawed by design, to allow fellow Horrors to enter and torture the Kratans. The Imposter fed off the misery inflicted on the city's residents by its foul kin, as well as the Horror's own tortures. Most recently, the Imposter appeared to Telewerian, encouraging his staging of gladiatorial contests. It is the Imposter's interference that causes the "accidental" deaths and maimings.

Unknown to the blood elf, the Imposter is also feeding on the misery caused by Vistrosh and Brocher's Brood—especially their slaving operations. It would attempt to protect Vistrosh from harm if it knew of any danger to him. However, the Horror dares not risk sending an avatar to Vistrosh or otherwise contacting him directly because it fears that a magician as powerful as Vistrosh could detect its true nature. For this same reason, the Horror steers clear of magicians in general, and even fears the Astral Sight of windlings (for example, it would never send an avatar anywhere near Terricia).

The Imposter's grip on reality is not stable. Its action of constantly assuming new personalities and reabsorbing them has left the Horror somewhat confused about its identity. Sometimes the Imposter actually believes it is Death; other times the Horror insists that it is a corrupted Liferock spirit.

Rules

The Imposter is extremely subtle, patient, and paranoid, which accounts for its great longevity. It prefers not to control its victims directly, for fear that powerful magicians or Horror Stalkers could track such means to its lair. It instead chooses to support Namegivers who perform actions of their own free will, which are also to the Horror's benefit. The Imposter is convinced it is keeping Garlthik alive, but its loose grip on reality adds a great deal of uncertainty to this belief. Regardless of the truth about Garlthik's longevity, the Imposter certainly wants the old ork to remain in control because of the misery and suffering that are daily occurrences in Kratas. The fear and pain of every mugging victim, and the anger and loss felt by everyone who is robbed, feed the Horror. If Garlthik were to die and someone more benevolent were to take over, instituting law and order and actually improving the lives of the city's residents, this would both deprive the Horror of sustenance and increase its chances of being discovered.

The Horror has also used its Extend Life power to keep alive a dozen Namegivers that were residents of Kratas during the Scourge. They are kept imprisoned within the lair of the Horror, subjected to hundreds of years of unspeakable torture and now completely insane.

THE IMPOSTER

Attributes

DEX: 11	STR: 18	TOU: 22
PER: 14	WIL: 20	CHA: 13

Characteristics

Initiative: 6	Physical Defense: 15
Actions: 3	Spell Defense: 19
Attack (7): 18	Social Defense: 17

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 11 TOU: 9
 PER: 8 WIL: 8 CHA: 8

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense:** 10
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 10
Attack (9): 17 **Social Defense:** 10
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 11
 Troll Sword (10): 21 **Mystic Armor:** 4
 Unarmed (9): 20
Death: 50 **Recovery Tests:** 4
Unconsciousness: NA **Knockdown:** 11
Wound Threshold: 17 **Movement:** 5

Powers

Spellcasting (8): 16, Thread Weaving [Illusionism] ^T (8): 16
^T Talent as power

Spells

Illusionist (Eighth Circle)

Armor

Body Shield (Forged +3; Phys 8; Init 2; Deflect 4/0; Shatter 21)

Weapons

Troll Sword (Forged +4; Damage 21)

Equipment

Peasant's Garb

Legend Award

Eighth Circle

Commentary

This is the avatar the Imposter has created from the slain obsidian Horror Stalker, Urlmasu.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This should be a very dangerous and potentially lethal encounter. The Imposter is a powerful, Named Horror and has survived for centuries. It is quite possible that some or all of the characters could die. Yet these are the dangers legendary heroes face, and they should be aware of them going into this encounter. Should the characters be on the verge of losing, and the gamemaster does not wish this to happen, Berry Blossom's squad can arrive at the last moment to save them, but in this case the Imposter should escape as well.

AFTERMATH

Once the Horror is slain, the blood that makes up the bulk of its mass drains out of cracks in the bottom of the pit in which it resides. The pit is about thirty feet deep. Once the blood has drained out, a reeking pile of organs and gore remains in the bottom of the pit. The sides of the pit are covered with scrawled carvings of the Horror's ramblings. These are written in all known Namegiver tongues and in widely different handwriting. Reading these thoughts is disturbing, and would take the characters days to read them all. A cursory reading gives the characters the following information:

- The Horror alternately claims to be, or to have impersonated, many powerful and legendary creatures and Namegivers in the province, including other Horrors, Passions, and Great Dragons.
- It claims to remember events long before the Scourge, such as the foundings of Throal and Thera.

CREATE AVATAR

Step: Rank

Action: Standard

Type: Magical

The Imposter can create avatars of itself. The Imposter takes a Wound to activate this power. The avatar's maximum Attribute Steps are equal to the Imposter's Create Avatar Rank, although the Horror often chooses lesser values depending on the Namegiver the Horror wishes the avatar to mimic. A large chunk of the Horror's body the size of a Namegiver can ooze out of its mass and take the form of any creature as large as an obsidian. The Imposter can make this body take on the appearance and mannerisms of any Namegiver it has Horror-marked, and can create believable new personas as well. The Horror imbues these avatars with part of its consciousness so that it can send them forth to do its bidding while remaining aware of their activities, but does not have to actively control their every action. Once an avatar's mission is completed, it is reabsorbed into the main mass of the Horror, and all of its experiences and memories become part of the Horror's consciousness. In addition, the Wound from creating the avatar is healed.

An avatar's internal structure is still that of a shifting, random assemblage of bones, muscles, and other organs, so if the construct is severely wounded, its unnatural composition will become obvious. Astral sensing one of the avatars detects a strong and corrupted magical presence. Once an avatar is slain, its body collapses into a pile of gore, which then desiccates into dust. The part of the Imposter's consciousness that was imbued within the avatar magically returns to the Horror, and the Wound taken in creating that avatar is healed. The Imposter can also willingly destroy an avatar remotely, to prevent it from being followed.

EXTEND LIFE

Step: Rank+WIL

Action: Standard

Type: Magical

The Imposter is responsible for Garlthik's recurring dream in which he steals a day of life from Death every night. The Horror uses its Extend Life power to keep the Master Thief alive beyond his normal life span. The Imposter takes 1 Damage Point to use this power, and makes an Extend Life (12) Test. If successful, the Extend Life power extends the life of the target for a year and a day. The Horror can renew this power at the end of its duration. If the Horror heals the Damage Point or fails the Extend Life Test, the effects of the power end, and all the years of prolonged aging immediately catch up; if the target has lived beyond his normal span, he immediately turns to dust.

- Its more recent writings, those carved over the top of older ones, have been obsessed with Garlthik, delighting in some trick it has played on him.

Also, hanging from hooks on the walls of the pit are various props and costume pieces that the Horror used for its impersonations. Though this is not a dragon's hoard, searching through these could reveal a number of good quality weapons and common magic items, as well as 8,000 silver pieces worth of coins and jewelry in various pouches and packs. The gamemaster may also find it useful to include any item in the pit that he might wish to use as a hook for further adventures. The Imposter had tendrils in many plots throughout the province and beyond. For example, there could be intercepted communiqués from agents of the Horror, Nemesis, detailing one of its plans.

The gamemaster may think the Imposter is too good a villain to give up and want to use the Horror again in a future adventure. In this case, make the Imposter dual natured. When its physical body is destroyed, its astral form retreats, perhaps following the blood flowing through the cracks in the floor. The Imposter then lies low, taking years to reconstitute its physical form, at a lair far from Kratas. The player characters could then encounter the Imposter again. It could be re-introduced as the secret power behind some other villain—imagine the characters confronting the head of a cult to a Mad Passion or Horror, only to have the villain dissolve as an avatar after its defeat.

Alternatively, the Horror could seek revenge on the characters by impersonating them. It would do its best to destroy their reputations by performing heinous deeds against powerful factions, disguised as the characters. While in the midst of another adventure, the characters are suddenly pursued by Thera, or the Blood Wood, or the Eye of Throal, as wanted criminals. When trying to clear their Names, they can eventually discover the Imposter's deceit.

In the short term, the gangs of Kratas and members of the Force of the Eye fight amongst themselves for control of the city and the gang, respectively. Vistrosh mounts an attack on the Force's strongholds, while lesser gangs fight for larger chunks of turf. The streets of the city run with blood and the farmers and merchants flee the

violence, further stoking the bloodshed as the thieves fight over the dwindling food supply.

In the long term, the anti-Theran forces in the province lose a powerful ally. Moreover, Thera, Throal, and even the Denairastas all consider taking the city. Thus, the City of Thieves may cease to exist as such. The gamemaster might wish to play out all of these events in his campaign. The player characters might enjoy trying to maintain order in the city. Or they might want to mount their own campaign to take control of Kratas, either to run it for their own benefit, or to turn it over to whichever political power they sympathize with.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p.97 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, a gaming session awards two to five Legend Awards, with an additional sixth Legend Award in the session concluding the adventure. A single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's Circle. For example, a Ninth Circle character receives from 4,800 to 14,200 Legend Points per Legend Award.

One of these Legend Awards is for Conflicts (defeating opponents); this covers the Legend Awards for the opponents the characters face in the individual sessions. One Legend Award is for completing the session goal. Provided the characters play one act per session:

The session goal for Act One is discovering the fate of Pellisanta and returning her remains to Alina.

The session goal for Act Two is encountering the avatar of Pellisanta, and defeating her and the Keys of Death.

The session goal for Act Three is discovering and defeating the Imposter. This is also the adventure goal, so it awards an additional Legend Award. In addition, the valuables found in the Imposter's Lair count as Treasure worth Legend Points, justifying a Legend Award.

Legend Awards for Roleplaying and Heroics are awarded at the gamemaster's discretion, as are Legend Awards for Treasure in Acts One and Two.





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We accept electronic submissions only. Each entry should come as a separate file (please use any of the following formats for your entries: DOC, RTF, TXT, or PDF). Your full name and email address should be provided clearly on the first page of the entry and/or in the header/footer. All pages should be plain white Letter- or A4-sized paper with one-inch margins all around, and set in a Times Roman type no smaller than 10 point). Using the default settings of your word processor is usually a good idea. Please pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation—use our Submission Handbook as a guide.

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