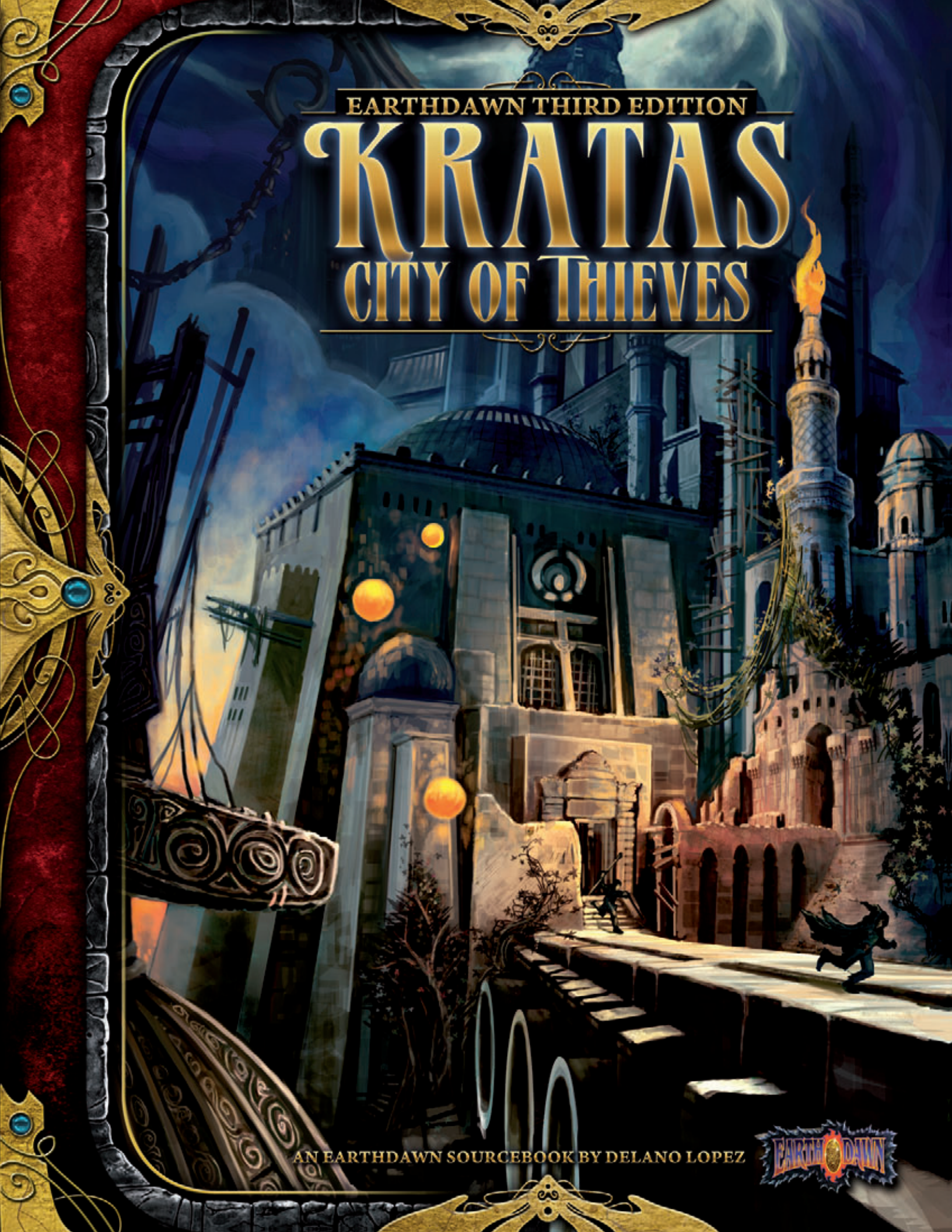
EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION

KRATAS

CITY OF THIEVES



AN EARTHDAWN SOURCEBOOK BY DELANO LOPEZ

EARTHDAWN



• THIRD EDITION •

KRATAS
CITY OF THIEVES

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• EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION •

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Contents

The spirit bound to this tome seems to enjoy juggling the page references when no one is looking. You won't find anything if the spirit doesn't like you. So handle this book with the respect it deserves, understood?

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records •

A KRATAN HAND 5

INTRODUCTION 9

WELCOME TO KRATAS 11
On the History of Kratas 12
Of the Early Settlements 12
The Growth of the Free City 13
The Magisterium of Kratas 14
Theran Overseers 14
The Rule of Erendis 14
Preparations for the Scourge 15
Scavengers of Disaster 16
Garlthik Arrives 16
The Brocher Appears 17
On Kratas Today 17
Everyday Life in Kratas 19
Protection and Extortion 19
Public Works and Services 19
Meet the Neighbors 21
Traps and Fortifications 21
Street Life 21
Finding Your Way Around 22
Places of Note 23
The Walls and Towers 23
Airship Spires 23
The Passions' Temples 23
Taverns, Inns, and Gaming Halls 23
Houses of Ill-Repute 23
Shops and Stores 24

OUTSIDE RELATIONS 29
Thera 29
Throal 30
The Blood Wood 33
Iopos 33
Jerris 34
Travar 35
Urupa 35
The T'skrang Aropagoi 36
The Great Dragons 38
Other Locales in Barsaive 39

GANGS OF KRATAS 43
The Force of the Eye 43
The Longing Ring 43
Gang Wars 44
The Death Rebellion 45
Garlthik One-Eye 46
On Garlthik's Gang 48
Brocher's Brood 54
Vistrosh 55
The Desperate Ones 64
Protection Gangs 65
Rangor's Reavers 66
The Bloody Fist 67
All-Breakers 69
The Forsaken 71
Other Gangs 72
Ghagin's Grandchildren 72
Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers 75
The Silent Shepherds 75
Joining a Gang 76
Joining the Force of the Eye 76
Joining Brocher's Brood 76
Joining Other Gangs 77
Other Organizations of Note 78
Weaponsmith Forges 78
Mercenary Bands 78
Ork Scorchers 78
The Grim Legion 78
Merchant Houses and Companies 78

CONFIDENCE TRICKSTERS IN THE CITY OF THIEVES 79

HILLTOP 82
On Manors and Villas 83
King of the Hill 84
The Temple of the Twelve 85
The Arena 86
Magistrate's Palace 88
One-Eye Manor 89

CLIFFTOP 90
Clifftop Towers 92
Surlnad's Tower 93
The Keep 94
The Noble Manors 95
The Quartermaster's 96
The Shuffling Heap 96
Kratas Mesa 97

THE GREENMARKET 98
The Mill 100
The Brewery 101
The Sheaf of Wheat Inn 102
The Bakeries 103
The Lamp Oil Tavern 103
Duchalia the Herbalist 103

TEMPLE PLAZA 104
The Temple of Astendar 106
The Temple of Chorrolis 106
The Temple of Dis 107
The Temple of Floranuus 107
The Temple of Garlen 107
The Temple of Jaspree 108
The Temple of Lochost 109
The Temple of Mynbruje 109
The Temple of Rashomon 110
The Temple of Thystonius 111
The Temple of Upandal 111
The Temple of Vestrial 111

THE STABLES 112
Woranga's Place 114
The Ork Tribes 115
The Skull Whargs 115
Herok's Lancers 116
Mercenary Units 116
Flek's Diggers 116
The Legion of Despair 116
Deteranis' Swords 117
Death's Thunder 119
Doombringers 120
Starlight Infiltrators 122
Hiring Mercenaries 122
Typical Scorcher Party 122
The Smithies 123
The Girded Arms 123
The Livestock Markets 123
Quarom's Mounts 123
Skinner's Way 123
The Flop Stalls 123

MERCHANT'S ROW 124
The Cutthroat's Rest 126
The Hard-Earned Coin 126
Screaming Basilisk 128
Serian's Sanctuary 128
The Riverboat 129
The Wasteland 129
Yoolgano the Distiller 130

The Drunken Dragon Inn 130
Melarie's House of Pleasures 131
The Dream Palace 131
Chorrolis' Cups 132
The Shattered Kaer 132
The Blooming Lily 133
Other Residents 133
The Overland Trade Company 134
The Dream Spire Company 134
House Chaozun 135
House Ludi 135
House Mikul 136
House Ueraven 136
House Yilwaz 137
House Neumani 137
Other Trading Houses 137

THE OLD KAER AND THE UNDERCITY 138
The Old Kaer 139
The Undercity 141
The Slop Pits 144
The Catacombs 144
Denizens of the Undercity 145

THE SCRABBLES 146
Fenghat's 148
The Fringe 148

THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT 150
The Watchtowers 152
The Old Slave Market 152
Yoorga's Mess 152
Head Hung Low Way 154
The Grim Legion 154

THE SAFEHEARTHS 156
Thront and Urranum 157
The Legend of the Silent Shepherds 158
The Silent Shepherds Today 159
The Bolthole 160
The Darks 161
The Blood Spire 162
The Heart's Ease Tavern 162
The Purple Barque 163

THE HAMMERSING 164
In the Hammersing 168
On the Weaponsmiths' Forges 168
B'rakorl's Emporium of Curiosities and Wonders 172
Reepnick's Dancing Threads 172
Ergan the Alchemist 173
The Enchanters' Crucible 173
The Winking Eye Jewelers 174
Upandal's Tool Belt 174
Tirzenalos the Lore Merchant 175

OUTSIDE KRATAS 176
The Axe in Hand Inn 177
Trade Routes 178
South of Kratas 178
Calamar Clearing 178
Flork's Woods 179
The Graybriars 179
Tellianas' Glade 182
Florque 182
The Dinganni Plains 183
North of Kratas 184
East of Kratas 184
The Tylon River 184
The Shattered Towers 185
Daiche 185
Portage 187
The Servos Jungle 187
West of Kratas 187
Ancient Ruins near Kratas 187

ADVENTURES IN KRATAS 190
Adventure Frameworks 191
Adventure Framework Format 191
Spy Games 192
T'kambras Coins 193
Quite the Spectacle 194
Trouble at the Temple 195
Campaigns in Kratas 198
Base of Operations 198
Explorers 198
Gang Wars 198
Thieves 198
Spies 198
Mercenaries 200
Assassins 200

SECRET SOCIETIES 201
Domestic Societies 201
The Brotherhood of Kra Tys 201
The Courtiers of Valvidius 201
The Magisterium Resurgent 202
The Undercity Delvers 204
The Kratan Branches 204
The Hand of Corruption 204
Keys of Death 205
Deniers of Death 206
Nemesis' Minions 206
Followers of the Twelve 206
The Liferock Rebellion 208

A DISCOURSE ON TRAPS 209

GAME INFORMATION 216
Kratan Characters 217
The Confidence Trickster 218
The Romancer 218
The Spy 219
The Cutthroat 220
The Burglar 221
The Assassin 222
The Slasher 223
Talents 224
Bribery 224
Close In 224
Flirting 225
Seduction 225
Skills 225
Close In 225
Intimidation 225
Talent Knacks 225
Act on Instinct 226
Arrow Catch 226
Astral Hideout 226
Commanding Gaze 226
Corner of the Eye 226
Empathic Connection 226
False Evidence 227
Feign Hit 227
Fool Thief 227
Fraud Mastery 227
Fragile Blade 228
Gory Shot 228
Guard Pockets 229
Improvised Shield 229
Listen 229
Lock Guard 229
Maim 229
Mastermind's Plan 229
Not So Fast 230
Plant Prison 230
Request Donation 230
Stalk 230
Tale of Terror 231
Track Mount 231

GOODS AND SERVICES 232
Shopping in Kratas 233
An Economy of Thieves 233
Purchasing Items in Kratas 234
Kratan Bargains 234
Kratan Merchandise 234
Common Magic Items 235
Amulets of the Eye 235
Smoke Bombs 236
Spider Gloves and Slippers 236
Arrow of the Assassin 236
Night-Black Blades 236
Smoke Cloak 236
Traps 237
Dart Drop Trap 237
Dog House Trap 237
Theran Scroll Case 237
Poison Needle Trap 237
Thief's Bane Chest 237
Poisons 238
Lethe's Tears 238
Blood Algae 238
Weapons 238
Mini Crossbow 238
The Silent Shepherd's Crook 239
Blood Charms 240
Blood Fingers 240
Blood Toes 240
Dexterity Booster 240
Dulcet Throat 240
Heat Sight Eye 240
Trap Initiative Booster 241
Blood Crystal Nail 241

MAGICAL TREASURES 242
General Treasures and Thread Items 243
Swords of Command 243
Shadow Bombs 244
Thread Spider Gloves and Slippers 244
Thread Flight Dagger of the Cutthroat 244
Thread Hook Hatchet 245
Whip of Dis 246
Thread Mini Crossbow 246
Legendary Treasures 247
Gears of Artificer 247
Hurmon's Crook 247
Mynbruje's Razor 248

CREATURES 250
Creature Descriptions 251
Anklebiter 251
Dinganni Falcon 252
Jaspree Spider 252
Leech Burr 253
Norikot 263

CHARACTER INDEX 255

GAMEMASTER CHARACTERS 265
Dwarf Thief 266
Elf Thief 267
Human Thief 268
Obsidiman Thief 269
Ork Thief 270
T'skrang Thief 271
Windling Thief 272

CHAPTER ONE

A Kratan Hand

The cards are dealt, son. It's up to you if you pick 'em up or leave the table.

• Golan, Ork Thief •

1



s I crested the hill, I saw the site of my destiny come into view: Kratas, the City of Thieves. It was all that I could have hoped for. Here I would begin to earn my legend.

The old citadel hugged close to the huge mesa looming up from the plains. The ornate roofs of grand mansions peeking over the top of the crumbling outer walls hinted at the great wealth to be had within. This was where I, Tid Mantel, Thief adept of the village of Goldwheat, truly belonged.

I should say *formerly* of the village of Goldwheat, for I hope never to return. Those bumpkins had not the sophistication to appreciate the glory that my Discipline impelled me to attain. Their childish insistence on property laws finally drove me to leave them behind. True, the headman made a show of banishing me after discovering his prize necklace in my room, but I planned my departure long before that incident. Anyway, I had already stolen everything worth taking in that pathetic village.

Quickly joining the line of herdsmen, teamsters, and merchants lined up at the gates to the city, I gave the guards from the Force of the Eye my ten silvers to enter, along with my toughest scowl. They gave me nothing but a bored look and a wave through, but I wasn't concerned. I may have been no one to them then, but it would not be long until all the thieves of Kratas knew the Name of Tid Mantel.

Leaving the merchants and herdsmen to their pack mules and sheep, I set out into the city. To my right was an old fortification, once imposing and solid, but now sliding into ruin. Dozens of Namegivers lolled around it, listlessly working through military maneuvers and packing gear. Standing nearest to me was a hard-looking human, discussing something with a few toughs. The words 'job' and 'silver' caught my ears, and I sidled over so that I could better listen in.

"You there, kid. You look healthy enough. Need a job?" he barked at me.

"That depends. What's the job and what's the pay?"

"Slow down kid. What can you do?"

"I, sir, am a Thief," I began. "I can—"

"Shove off then," he interrupted. "Last thing we need here is another lousy thief." He spun on his heels and stormed into the compound, yelling orders to the men there. They quickly pretended to be working harder than they were, and I left the churl to it. I would take no orders from such a man.

Continuing further into Kratas, I entered Drover's Square. Even with all my experience, I must admit my breath was taken away. All types of Namegivers were there,

as well as beasts I had only heard stories of. I was amazed at the nimble turns and spins the ork scorchers coaxed out of their mighty thundra beasts. I was just as amazed that they were doing them in the middle of a crowded city. One animal crushed a small market booth with a careless shrug. The proprietor barely escaped harm, but dared not confront the scorcher and his guffawing companions.

An airship was moored to one side of the square. I had only seen one such vessel before, sailing the sky far above my village, and now here was such a ship, close enough to touch and covered with a bizarre mix of paintings and carvings, with the heads of monsters hanging from its sides. Everyone, even the scorchers, was keeping a respectful distance from the airship, so despite my curiosity I thought it prudent to do the same and continue past.

On the north side of the square I encountered a t'skrang at a small table running a game of "stones and shells." He was surrounded by a small crowd and taking a lot of money from a frustrated ork, who by his leathers looked to be a scorcher. I was familiar with the game; I used to win it a lot in a booth at the harvest fair the local villages held every year. I stood on the edge of the crowd and watched. Soon I spotted the t'skrang's technique. Every third pass of the shells he would do a twirl with the left-most shell and, while the mark was looking there, he would switch the stones under the other two with his tail. I felt sorry for the ignorant ork, but that would serve him right coming to the big city. After a few more rounds the scorcher had lost all his money and stormed off. I knew I would only get one turn before the t'skrang knew I was on to his trick, so I took the chance to double my money. I threw all my silver on the table. Yet when the round was over, even though I watched the twirl, and saw his tail come up from under the table out of the corner of my eye, the blue stone was where the red should be.

I left the table puzzled and with no silver, but I reassured myself that I could steal more before the day was done. No sooner had that thought passed when I saw a richly dressed dwarf merchant stumble out of an alehouse. By his stagger and smell he was clearly drunk. It was an easy matter to bump into him and, while apologizing profusely, lift his purse from his belt. I ducked into a nearby alley and opened the purse. It was full of silver and gold—more than I had seen in my entire life. This was the way to be a Thief!

However, just as I was counting the coins, two Namegivers entered the alley. One ork and one elf, both clad in black, grabbed my arms.

"Where is your medallion?" the ork growled.

"What?"

"Your medallion." he snapped. Both he and the elf pulled amulets out from under their tunics, similar to those I had seen the guards at the gate wearing, and just as quickly hid them again. "You can't steal in Kratas without being a member of the Force of the Eye, and if you are in the Force, you have a medallion." I stammered something useless.

"We'll have to confiscate that," the elf said, deftly plucking the bag of coins from my hands. "Now, Garlthik will be happy if we simply kill you, but since you are young and



obviously naïve, we'll give you a break. You can join the Force, or leave town now." I knew better than to try to fight the legendary Garlthik One-Eye and his Force of the Eye. Yet this could also be an opportunity. If I joined the Force of the Eye, I had no doubt that I would soon come to the attention of the Master Thief himself, and once I've proved my ability, quickly rise through the ranks.

"I will join the Force." I said firmly.

"Excellent," the elf replied. "Probationary membership will cost you just one hundred silvers."

"But, I have no money, good sirs." I do not know whose face dropped quicker, the elf's or my own.

"Then you must leave." The ork took my arm and began to escort me to the gate.

"Wait a moment, friend," the elf said, halting us. "Perhaps we can do the young man a favor. I know I shouldn't but I have taken a liking to him. Maybe we can arrange a trade?"

"It's on your head," shrugged the ork. "I suppose those daggers might be worth a few coins." The two Thieves looked covetously at the matched pair of daggers on my hips.

"Please, if you want them, they are yours." I smiled as I said it, for even with their black enameled handles and inlaid designs, I knew they were not worth a hundred silver pieces.

"Done." The elf said as he took my blades. "Consider yourself a probationary member. Good luck kid." The two turned to go.

"Wait," I said. "Don't I get a medallion?"

"Not for probationary members," the ork said over his shoulder, as the two disappeared down a side alley.

Now that I was a member of the Force, I took to heart my newfound license to steal and began looking for another target. As the sun had almost set, many of the stalls in the square were closing and the streets beginning to clear. I knew that the best way to find valuables was to find people, so I looked for lights and listened for the sounds of music. This led me to a sturdily built tavern on the western edge of the square. Its sign showed a sword wrapped in leather straps, declaring in Throalic that this was the "Girded Arms." A number of well-armed and well-dressed patrons were entering, drawn by the glow of firelight through its windows. A group of ork Cavalrymen sat on their mounts to one side of the tavern, drinking *hurlg*. As I approached the tavern, one of them yelled out to me.

"Hey you, human! Come here." I hesitated. "Don't worry, we won't hurt you." I cautiously approached, keeping one eye on the well-lit tavern, ready to flee to its safety if need be. "Look, you're a Thief, right?" I nodded. "Well, we have a job for you." This caught my interest, so I edged closer. "My friend here recently lost his halberd and needs another." At this the orks stifled laughs and muttered something to each other in the orkish tongue (which, regrettably, I do not speak). "We'll pay you a hundred silvers if you can steal another one for him."

"That sounds acceptable," I replied. "Any ideas where I might find one?" One hundred silvers for my first job! Already my membership in the Force was paying off.

"Funny you should ask. That tavern over there has a bunch of old weapons and junk hanging on the walls. Right behind the bar there's a halberd. It should do, and the innkeepers won't miss it. What do they want with an old pole arm anyway?" This brought forth more laughter than I thought was warranted, but I don't pretend to understand ork humor.

"Consider it done," I cockily replied, and sauntered into the bar.

The Girded Arms was much as the orks had described—warm and well lit, with sturdy oak tables, benches sized for Namegivers from dwarfs to trolls, and a jumble of military paraphernalia cluttering the walls. A brithan head hung between a battered helm and a broken lance. Battle flags and standards hung from the roof beams. I saw the pole arm in question hanging right where they said it would be, but I was not going to be rash about this. I ordered ale, and sat at the bar to case the place.

The tavern was run by the oldest and roundest dwarf couple I had ever seen, and they both seemed to spend as much time talking with their patrons as serving food and drinks. The clientele were mostly soldiers and guards, with a few merchants and caravan masters among them. Once or twice a merchant would pair off with a soldier and head to one of the private rooms that lined the common room, to emerge some time later.

Biding my time, I waited for an opportunity. As the evening wore on the room began to fill, and a circle formed around the fireplace at the other end of the room. Warriors, young and old, swapped stories of battles, both historical and contemporary. The detailed and lengthy discussions of battle formations nearly made my eyes glaze over, but my patience was eventually rewarded; however, by this time the fire was down to the embers.

The female innkeeper was engrossed in a lengthy conversation with a tall, imperious elf at the fireside, her back to me. Many of the patrons were starting to leave. The male innkeeper disappeared into the back room for something, and I took my chance. Slipping off my stool, I slid silently behind the bar, crouched amid the dirty glasses, and quickly sneaked my hand up to grab the pole arm. It was better polished than I expected and the edge of the blade fairly gleamed in the light.

Then I felt a touch at my shoulder. A glance showed the edge of a dwarf sword at my neck; one simple flick of the wrist and my throat would be cut. How had the old dwarf woman managed to sneak up on me? And where had the sword come from? Suddenly the pole arm was yanked from my outstretched hand and the dwarf barman spun it around and down with astonishing speed. Like a scythe through a stalk of wheat, the halberd passed through my wrist like so much air. I saw my hand hit the floor of the bar, and then I fled into the street, screaming with pain. Collapsing in the dirt, I held my bleeding stump.

Through tear-filled eyes I saw the ork scorchers pointing at me and laughing. Bags of silver passed from hand to hand. They had clearly been betting on my success or failure. One of them, who had begrudgingly handed a large sack of coins

to her fellows, took pity on me. She spurred her horse over, dismounted, and began bandaging my wrist.

"Thank you," I stammered through clenched teeth. "Sorry you lost money on me."

"Don't worry about that, son. I'll most likely kill him next week and get my coin back anyway." I could only manage a confused look, so she explained as she continued to treat my wound. "I'm a Thunderer, and he is of the Clan of the Eighth Peak, the Metal Fist Scorchers. A few of us have been hired to escort a Circle Path caravan to Jerris. After drinking with him tonight, I found out some of his tribe have an eye on that caravan. So I'll either kill him, or he'll kill me—and in the last case, I won't be needing any coin, will I? Done. You should live now." She was back in her saddle before I could blink.

"Thanks for betting on me. Sorry I didn't make it." She snorted a laugh at me as she rode off.

"No one bet you would make it. I bet you would lose your head, not your hand!"



Rising to my feet, I stumbled down the street. All I wanted now was a place to sleep and heal. Unfortunately it had begun to rain. As I made my way down an alley, I saw the t'skrang from earlier in the day, the one who had run the "stones and shells" game. He was walking arm-in-arm and sharing a bottle with the ork he had fleeced, though now the ork was no longer wearing his scorcher leathers, but was dressed as a dandy. It dawned on me then why the red stone had not been where I had thought it was. *I* had been the mark, not the ork, and they intended me to see the switch all along. Then, when I was confident I could win, they didn't switch the stone when I was depending on it. I swore that I would get them later, but for now the rain was getting harder.

I managed to find a decrepit stable that was being used as a flophouse. The makeshift clapboard roof kept some of the rain out at least. Digging my last silver out of my boot, I gave it to the old dwarf who sat on a stool at the door. Then I found a dark stall, crawled out of my wet and bloody clothes, and collapsed in the dirty straw.

The pain in my arm kept me from sleeping, so I heard the thugs announce their arrival.

"Right, you scum. Rent has just been raised." Two huge trolls and a weasel-faced dwarf stood in the doorway. The old dwarf rose from his seat to object, and had his skull crushed by one of the trolls' clubs. The three thugs began rousing the drunks from their stalls and shaking them down for their last coppers. Luckily I had chosen the stall farthest to the back, and was able to slip out between two loose boards. Congratulating myself on a quick escape, I then remembered my clothes had been left behind in my haste. I spent the rest of the night wet and shivering in the ruins of an old corral, fighting off the rats with my bare feet.

When dawn broke, the rain stopped and I crawled out to see the new day, wearing only my undertunic. On the edge of Drover's Square I saw three heads mounted on pikes. As I came closer, I recognized the heads of the two members of the Force of the Eye who had given me probationary membership, as well as that of the dwarf whose pouch I had lifted. A burly troll wearing the amulet of the Eye, and carrying a massive axe over his shoulder, stood guard. I asked him what crime they had been guilty of.

"These three were running a scam, selling memberships in the Force of the Eye to would-be thieves. Can you believe some bumpkins actually fell for that? Normally Garlthik doesn't care who scams whom, or who steals what, but they were using *his* Name to do it. Nobody gets away with pretending to be part of the Force. As if you could just buy your way onto the Force of the Eye. Anyway, why do you care?"

"Actually, they had some daggers of mine. I don't suppose I could get them back, could I?" The troll just laughed and shook his head in disbelief. His look confirmed that, in his eyes, I was one of the bumpkins he had spoken of. I looked at my reflection—clothed in a puddle-dirty undertunic, rat-bitten bare feet, with straw sticking out of my hair.

"I just didn't expect so many thieves," I muttered to my reflection. And then he said the words that finally crushed me.

"Thieves?" laughed the troll. "You haven't met any thieves yet. This is just the Stables. It's mainly scorchers and sellswords here. Now, go further into Kratas—there you'll see some *real* thieves."

As I began the long walk back to my village, I wondered if I could still plow a field with only one hand.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

The chaotic bazaars, the dirty taverns, the surly guards. Best of all, the easy marks. It's great to be home!

• Jonjon Gondra, Itinerant Human Thief of Kratas •

The age of **Earthdawn** is an era of magic that existed thousands of years ago in our world's dim past. Magic touched every aspect of the lives of men and women of the Namegiver races: humans, elves, dwarfs, orks, trolls, windlings, t'skrang, and obsidimen. However, as the levels of magic rose, so did the dangers in the world. The rise of magic brought the Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devoured all life in their path.

For four centuries, the people of Barsaive hid underground as the Horrors devastated their lands during the dark time that came to be called the Scourge. Now, the people of Barsaive have emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels, ready to fight for life and freedom against the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes step forward to champion their land, arming themselves for their daunting task with powerful magical spells and treasures.

Through magic, skill, and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge. By doing so, they become Barsaive's living legends.

Kratas: The City of Thieves offers gamemasters and players an in-depth look at Barsaive's most disreputable city. Home to the clever and the desperate, the wealthy and the destitute, the fallen citadel of Kratas is the center of all mercenary and illegal activities in Barsaive. The legendary ork Thief, Garlthik One-Eye, controls the city through his gang, the Force of the Eye. Kratas is a veritable hub of information and stolen goods. Adventure and intrigue—both can be found here, in the dirty streets of the City of Thieves!

How to Use This Book

The first part of this book provides a general overview on the city, giving information on Kratas' history, its gangs, and the city's relations to the rest of the province of Barsaive. In a sense, these chapters lay the foundation on which this hive of scum and villainy is based and details how player characters can join the gangs of Kratas and become a part of this city.

The book's second part contains detailed descriptions of Kratas' various districts, including dozens of adventure hooks and gamemaster characters. Be prepared for a journey into the unimaginable depths of Barsaive's underworld, from the heights of Clifftop to the unexplored tunnels of the ancient Undercity beneath the ruins of Kratas' shattered citadel.

The lands surrounding the City of Thieves comprise the third part of this book, which details the nearby towns, the Kratas Mesa, the Dinganni Plains, and the trade routes that connect Kratas to the rest of the province. The book will talk about the various secret societies and cults and their shady business in and around Kratas.

Last, but not least, the final part of the book features rules for all the new traps, creatures, talent knacks, magical treasures, and goods and services available in Kratas. A comprehensive index helps you find things quickly.

The ***Player's*** and ***Gamemaster's Guides*** are required to use this book. While the ***Namegivers of Barsaive*** and ***Nations of Barsaive Volume Two*** books are not required to make use of the information provided in this tome, they offer additional information to help creating a rich and diverse background for Kratas' role in the **Earthdawn** universe.


Welcome to Kratos

CHAPTER THREE

I love the smell of Kratas in the morning.

• Twurall Ketz, Ork Troubadour •



o my dearest Apprentice:

Felicitations. I have written you this note so that, while you are away from my side attending your sister's nuptials, you would not be deprived of the opportunity to absorb more of my prodigious knowledge, and would benefit from my scholarly example. Expressions of gratitude are not necessary on your part. Suffice it that you understand the lengths to which I go to improve your understanding of our craft.

The subject of this missive is the lesson: Do Not Overlook the (Seemingly) Trivial. While I was in the Great Library yesterday, awaiting the delivery of a requested text, an adventurer entered with a box of pre-Scourge documents unearthed, she told me, from the ruins of an old village on the plains west of the Tylon River. The unfortunate woman was still covered with trail dust and bandages, and, along with her battered armor, wore an air of frustration and disappointment. As all of the librarians were busy at that moment, I obtained her permission to peruse her find. Alas, I did nothing to improve her mood when I informed her that the documents were the logs of the village headmen, and were concerned only with prices paid at market for the village's surplus agricultural goods, and similar minutiae, and thus were unlikely to obtain her much silver from the library. (Apparently, while well-versed in sword play and other martial talents, she had never had occasion to study the obscure variant of Landisian in which the headmen wrote.)

While the dejected explorer awaited the attentions of the librarians, I considered leaving the matter at that. I could not conceive how knowledge of this long-dead village's finances could further my studies. However, having nothing more at hand, I continued reading. (Never forget that we follow a Discipline, with all that implies!) Amid the notes of prices paid for eggs and plowshares, I discovered a curious memo. One season, the headman sent his son off to Kratas with the village's surplus produce. The son returned, having secured a much lower price than the previous season, and the headman had written an explanatory note that all of the merchants in Kratas had colluded that year to offer the same low prices to the farmers. At the end of this, he concluded by warning future generations to avoid that "city of thieves."

Here was something truly of note. Kratas had apparently been called City of Thieves before the Scourge, long before Garlthik transformed it into the literal Thieves' City we know today. I was tempted to dismiss this as inconsequential, but the ramifications continued turning in my mind. I gave a few coins to the bedraggled adventurer, and continued with my other affairs.

Later that evening, I had opportunity to dine with my friend Milisantia, the elven Troubadour. I chanced to mention the day's find to her over an enchanting meal of lightly poached squab, dried fruits, and a plucky, golden wine. She thought a

moment, searching her prodigious memory, and sang me a Dinganni ballad. Her mellifluous voice made beauty out of the rough chants of the Dinganni. It was one of their cautionary songs, designed to instruct their youth in morals, proper behavior, and such. This one was the tale of a naïve young daughter of the Dinganni who sets off to seek her fortune in Bartertown, only to be tricked by the savvy, scheming merchants out of her money, goods, weapons, and lastly even her clothes. She finally returns to the welcome of her people, shamed and disgraced, but much wiser in the ways of the world.

"That is how they sing the song around their campfires today, but this is how one clan used to sing it before the Scourge, Milisantia informed me. "I learned this version from an old Dinganni woman who passed away many years ago. " She then sang a variant of the song, in which the ill-used youth made her way, not to Bartertown, but to Kratas. As the youth left the city in disgrace, she cursed it over her shoulder as a "nest of thieves." Milisantia paused a moment to let that sink in, then said, " As you no doubt recall from my long discourse with you on pre-Scourge Dinganni, being a nomadic people, their word for 'nest' or 'den' really refers to any permanent living space, and was the same word that they used before the Scourge, for village or city."

Here, then, are two sources that refer to the pre-Scourge city of Kratas as a city of thieves. It has been assumed by most scholars that this sobriquet was earned after the Scourge by the hordes of cutpurses that flocked to its ruins. (I, in fact, had upbraided the author of the Great Library's tome Legends of Barsaive for committing this error in his relating the legend of Valvidius, the King of Thieves. He described Kratas as if it were today's literal city of thieves, which we know it was not.) While we know that pre-Scourge Kratas was a prosperous merchant town, and not run by thieves, we now also know that the more rural neighbors referred to it as a city of thieves, not for literal robbers, but for the aggressive negotiating tactics of its merchants. Could it be that the Name, however metaphoric, had some effect upon the city's future destiny? We know that after the Scourge, thieves flocked to the city from throughout Barsaive. Could this Name have had some subconscious effect upon them, or perhaps on the true patterns of Barsaive, producing this attraction? How subtle, yet powerful, are the ways of Naming!

This will require further study, of course, including perhaps a trip to Kratas upon your return. Until then, contemplate what great influence the way we Name things, and thus think about things, has on the world.

As ever, your mentor,
Pragolus, Traveled Scholar

—A letter from Pragolus the Elder to his Apprentice



In the History of Kratas

From its formation as a campsite for nomads, through its growth into a citadel, and eventual destruction during the Scourge, Kratas has a long history of rulership. This section describes how Kratas came about, and the events that shaped it.

Of the Early Settlements

The nomads of the broad plains south of the Tylon Mountains occasionally set up temporary camps to trade with the small farming villages in the area. One commonly used site for these camps was at the base of a broad mesa that rose 300 yards above the plain. The mesa was a useful landmark, and the lee side provided some protection from the elements. According to fragmentary records dating back to before the founding of Throal, this semi-permanent campsite was called Kratas, after the word for "mesa" in a now-forgotten tongue.

The first permanent structures were built at the site of present-day Kratas about a century before the founding of Throal. However, the settlement had no permanent residents; after completing their trades, the nomads and farmers would depart. This set a pattern in the way people thought of Kratas: as a temporarily useful place, but not a home. A word to describe this attitude, *joourlikan* (roughly translated as "just visiting," from the ancient Scythan), was eventually coined. This thinking would prove disastrous in years to come.

An ancient map recently discovered in a lost kaer in the western Tylon Mountains shows the Name 'Kra Tys' where present day Kratas stands. The age of the map indicates that a settlement of some sort stood there long ago. Fendler of Bakster, who got lost in the vast sewers of Kratas, spoke of ancient ruins deep beneath the Undercity. I believe a grand city stood there in the long-forgotten past, perhaps at the same time as the famed Yrns Morgath?

—Nevear of Travar

Preposterous! The map in question merely marks the location of the mesa, a landmark worthy of note. Fendler's tale of survival in the bowels of Kratas is doubtless influenced by the bout of Horror fever he caught while in the sewers. Nevear's theories of ancient empires are pure fiction, and his so-called evidence is flimsy at best. Hardly the work of a true scholar!

—Arvid Maneth, Associate Archivist of the Great Library

The Growth of the Free City

As the settlement prospered over the next fifty years, it became a target for bandits and ork scorchers. A wooden stockade was erected, encircling the buildings huddled against the cliff face. This wall, and its promise of added safety, encouraged others to build within it, eventually filling the space within. Thus began a process that would repeat over the years. As Kratas prospered, the population spread beyond the outer wall, and the settlement became a town, and then a city. The city's wealth drew attack from bandits and raiders, requiring a larger wall to be built. The stockade was eventually replaced with brick-and-stone battlements.

Kratas lacked a strong central authority to coordinate its construction, so the walls were haphazardly laid out, and old walls were not torn down as new ones were built. Moreover, as the residents of the town became wealthier, they began to fear theft from people in the newer sections, and so the internal walls were strengthened. Walls, battlements, and even moats ran throughout the city, and around some neighborhoods and wealthier houses. This gave Kratas the character that led to its description as a fortress city.

Shortly after the first stockade went up, a shrine to Chorrolis was erected. Even though all Passions eventually had their temples, the temple to Chorrolis remained the grandest. He was considered the patron Passion of Kratas, as the city was founded on trade.

By the first century after the founding of Throal, caravans traveling the land route from Landis to Throal, as well as merchants coming to or from the T'kambras *aropagoi* on the Tylon River, sought refuge and re-supply at Kratas. This contributed to the feel of Kratas as a frontier city from which anyone could profit, but which was not part of any larger state. To reflect this independence, people began to call it the "Free City of Kratas."

Unfortunately, these traders most likely brought the invae with them. Perhaps because of the city's association with Chorrolis, the invae established a strong presence in Kratas, building extensive lairs under the wealthy Hilltop neighborhood. The Invae Burnings resulted in pitched street battles and arson, pitting one neighborhood against another (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 212).

However, the aftermath of the Invae Burnings led to the first attempt at a formal government: the city council, made up of representatives of the various important factions within the city. Thus, the local farmers had a representative, as did the nomads, the dwarf merchants, the t'skrang traders, and so forth. The council was empowered to collect taxes, which paid to strengthen the city's defenses and supplement the volunteer militia with a full-time city watch.

A Timeline of the History of Kratas

Date	Event
ca. 1000 BT	First temporary trading settlements at Kratas
ca. 100 TH	Named "The Free City of Kratas." A stone wall in place around what is now Hilltop. The Invae Burnings hit Kratas particularly hard
216 TH	Theran traders enter Barsaive. Many trade for orichalcum and other goods in Kratas, but have little permanent presence in the city
281 TH	The Magisterium of Kratas rules nearby lands
316 TH	Magisterium's greatest extent under Orgon the Despot. The fortress of Florque built. Kratas' influence slowly declines in the years to come
405–443 TH	Orichalcum Wars. Kratas conquered and re-conquered by warring powers, changing hands many times
443 TH	Barsaive is made a Theran province. Theran administrator installed in Kratas
713 TH	Rule of Erendis. Harsh new laws and taxes imposed by Therans, as well as a new program of public works and improved defenses
1022 TH	Pian Colimantar becomes last Theran administrator. Lack of preparations for the Scourge becomes apparent
1045 TH	Parlainth disappears. Unprepared citizens of Kratas scramble to construct a citadel
1048 TH	Kratas seals its impromptu citadel against the Scourge
1416 TH	The *Earthdawn* discovers that Kratas did not survive the Scourge
ca. 1425 TH	Bandits start looting the ruins, establishing Kratas as base of operations
1453 TH	Garlthik arrives in Kratas, forming the Force of the Eye
1459 TH	Garlthik founds port town of Daiche on Tylon River
1482 TH	Vistrosh arrives in Kratas, forms Brocher's Brood

The Magisterium of Kratas

Despite its isolation, agents of Scytha, Landis, and other powers, sought to pull Kratas into their spheres of influence. To maintain their independent status, the city council created the office of the Magistrate of Kratas. The magistrate was initially empowered to enforce laws within the city and maintain its defenses. However, after Magistrate Teradorg discovered and expelled a cell of Scythan subversives in 267 TH, the office was authorized to deal with foreign governments, both diplomatically and militarily. Teradorg did an excellent job of playing the competing powers against each other, maintaining Kratas' independence.

His successors were more ambitious, and brought the lands surrounding Kratas under the city's rule, creating the Magisterium of Kratas. At its greatest extent in 316 TH, during the rule of Orgon the Despot, the city's territory spread from the Tylon River to the East, the foothills of the Twilight Peaks to the South, the Tylon Mountains to the North, and the Liaj Jungle to the West.

Orgon built a fortress at Florque, outside of Kratas, from which to rule his dominions. This allowed him to keep his wealth and supporters away from the Magistrate's Palace, which, while well protected from attack, was vulnerable to riot and siege by his own citizens.

Kratas did not have willing support from the lands under its rule, and Orgon overextended the city's resources. With its small military force spread out to maintain order across its holdings, the city was vulnerable to attack. Some of the southern villages, weary of Kratas' yoke, conspired to draw forces away from the city, alerting the Stoneclaw trollmoot that the city was poorly defended. The Stoneclaws hit the city hard, stealing much of its riches, and slaying its few defenders. As Orgon recalled his scattered troops to the city's defense, the Metal Fist scorchers, also alerted to the situation, rode these soldiers down, slaughtered them, and also had their way with the city.

The next several decades were spent rebuilding and attracting residents back to the city, many of whom fled the destruction. Kratas might have recovered and re-established its holdings, had it not been for two events: the Orichalcum Wars, and the subsequent domination of Barsaive by the Theran Empire.

During the Orichalcum Wars, Kratas was a vital trade center, and a prize to be taken by any of the warring factions. No longer just the victim of hit-and-run raids by scorchers and crystal raiders, the city was occupied repeatedly during the forty years of the Wars. The Magisterium of Kratas collapsed, and control of the city passed through the hands of Throal, Scytha, Wyrm Wood, Iopos, the T'kambras and K'tenshin *aropagoi*, Ustrect, and other powers, until the Therans finally took it following the battle of Sky Point.

Theran Overseers

When Barsaive was declared a Theran Province, the Therans installed an imperial administrator in the city. However, while the Therans ruled Kratas, it was never a Theran city in the same sense as Vivane (and later Parlainth). It remained a useful source of wealth, but the Therans—particularly the higher-ranking officials—considered themselves only temporary residents, continuing the tradition of *joourlikan*. The position of Administrator of Kratas was considered an uneventful waypoint on the career path of up-and-coming bureaucrats, and promising young Therans would be periodically rotated through for short terms. The administrator was given only the title *Undersecretary for Kratas, Department of Bursaries*, first under the authority of Vivane, and then under Parlainth; he was never *Lord Mayor*, as the city administrator of Parlainth was titled.

Further, during the early years of Theran rule, much of the day-to-day running of the city was left to the city council and magistrate, by this time heavily dominated by Throalic interests. Therans assigned to promote their families' business interests in Kratas set up affairs to be run as much as possible by Barsaivian surrogates, many of them members of the Throalic trading houses, or the t'skrang *aropagoi*, who were themselves on assignment away from home.

With Barsaive under Theran rule, Kratas became an important waypoint on the road from Vivane to Throal. Airships from Throal, Jerris, and the Theran fleet regularly docked outside the city. Airship travel increased with the opening of Parlainth in 543 TH, and the airships were a tempting target to scorchers and raiders. This led the Therans to build docking facilities and defensive positions on top of the mesa. They kept this strategic and prestigious land to themselves, and Clifftop (as the neighborhood came to be Named) provided a strong indication of who was in charge.

The Rule of Erendis

In 713 TH, a new Undersecretary for Kratas was appointed: an ambitious young elf of House Thaloss, Named Kitan Trulo. A fervent follower of Erendis—the Passion of Order, Bureaucracy, and Work—Trulo took his position more seriously than most, and reversed his predecessors' policy of keeping a light hand on the reins of the city. Inspired by his Passion, Trulo performed extensive improvements, becoming both the most loved and most hated of administrators. He improved the city's defenses and successful bandit raids steadily declined under his rule. He also enhanced the city's public works, including the sewers and aqueducts.

Trulo alienated many with the high taxes he levied—in coin and slaves—to pay for these improvements, and with the policies he introduced that served no purpose but his sense of order, such as banning draft animals outside of the Stables district. He also razed many historic buildings to make way for his construction projects, especially in the neighborhoods of the Old Citadel and Temple Plaza. He was resented by his underlings for the paperwork he subjected them to, and by the general populace for draconian laws, violations of which were punishable by enslavement.

However, Trulo's reinforcement of the city's defenses proved prescient, as his tenure saw a new addition to the waves of raiders, scorchers, and would-be conquerors assaulting Kratas: the Horrors. Within twenty years

of his arrival, the city suffered attacks by gnashers (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 291). These were followed over the next two centuries by occasional attacks from more powerful or insidious Horrors. While many casualties were suffered, the Horrors were always discovered and repulsed.

Trulo was promoted and transferred to Vasgothia in 765 TH. While few were sad to see him go, the citizens of Kratas could not deny that he left the city stronger. The administrators who came after him continued to follow his policies, though not as fervently, lacking his devotion to Erendis or the city. Indeed, most thought of Kratas as merely a temporary residence—an attitude that would ultimately prove the city's undoing.

Preparations for the Scourge

As the Scourge approached, the attitude of *joourlikan* among the ruling class of Kratas developed into a colossal problem. The Therans planned to retreat to Parlainth, the dwarf merchants to Throal, and the representatives of other powers to their own homes in Jerris, Landis, or the t'skrang *aropagoi*. They never considered building a kaer for Kratas, and gave little thought to the common Barsaivians who considered Kratas their home. Each power assumed the others would deal with the issue.

The common residents, on the other hand, assumed that the city council and the Theran administrators were making plans for their safety. The city's success at repulsing early attacks by Horrors reinforced the idea that Kratas was on the path to safely weathering the Scourge.

When the city's last Theran administrator, Pian Colimantar of House Thaloss, took office in 1022 TH, the city's plight was brought into stark and sudden relief. Thera had been sealed over a decade earlier, and attacks by Horrors were becoming more frequent and destructive. Theran officials began leaving Kratas, and other prominent members of the council left for their homelands.

Realizing that there were no plans for their safety, and with the Scourge looming ever closer, the common



residents of Kratas panicked. A brief but fierce wave of violence broke out, leading to even more rapid withdrawal by the wealthier residents, and another round of reinforcement between neighborhoods. While Theran troops quelled the worst of the violence, Colimantar brought an end to the revolt by promising to bring the matter before the Provincial Overlord.

During his annual report to Earsh Wearg in 1025 TH, Colimantar was informed that there would not be enough room in Parlainth for the population of Kratas. The citizens of Kratas were welcome to apply to Vivane for refuge, but only Theran nobles and their households would be permitted to shelter in the provincial capital. Colimantar was instructed to oversee the final evacuation of Theran property and citizens, and join those taking shelter in Parlainth.

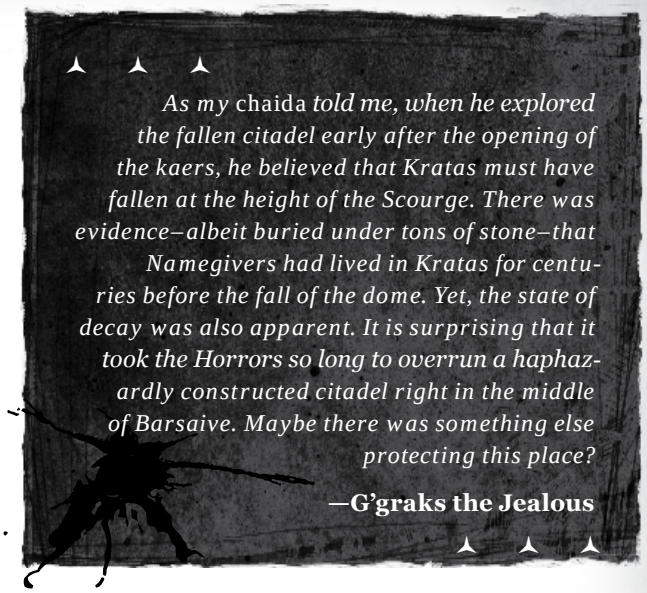
The news brought despair to the Kratans. An overland journey to Vivane would take weeks of travel, through terrain increasingly infested with Horrors. The only chance for survival was to travel on a Theran airship, and space was limited. It wasn't long before people began fighting for the few berths available. As the situation became more desperate, Colimantar was forced to seal off Clifftop by removing the elemental elevators that connected the Theran neighborhood to the city below. Other powers followed suit, reinforcing their enclaves and using troops to keep frantic refugees at bay while they pulled their people out.

As often happens in times of crisis, the otherwise unremarkable rose to the occasion. Dorma Torlisant, a minor Theran functionary assigned to Kratas after falling out of favor with her family, vowed not to abandon Kratas or its people. Torlisant announced that Upandal had appeared to her and instructed her to create a citadel by constructing a massive dome of stone reaching down from the face of the mesa to meet the top of the outermost walls of the city.

A heroic effort was made by the citizens to construct the dome and seal off the city. Chambers were carved deeper into the side of the mesa, to create more room for provisions, elemental water fountains, and gardens. Torlisant petitioned Vivane for last-minute assistance, and was able to secure the aid of imperial magicians in performing the *Rites of Protection and Passage*, placing wards on the city walls. In 1048 TH, the city was fortified and sealed against the Scourge.

Scavengers of Disaster

During the first voyage of the *Earthdawn*, its crew discovered that the citadel of Kratas had not survived the Scourge. The dome, and part of the cliff it had rested upon, had collapsed, raining huge chunks of stone upon the buildings below. Whether this was the result of hasty construction or a concentrated assault by Horrors (or both) was unknown, but once the dome collapsed, Horrors had swarmed in to feast on the residents. The explorers found thousands of skeletons, many showing signs of elaborate and prolonged torture. Horrors and their constructs still inhabited some parts of the city, but most had left in search of other victims.



As my chaida *told me, when he explored the fallen citadel early after the opening of the kaers, he believed that Kratas must have fallen at the height of the Scourge. There was evidence—albeit buried under tons of stone—that Namegivers had lived in Kratas for centuries before the fall of the dome. Yet, the state of decay was also apparent. It is surprising that it took the Horrors so long to overrun a haphazardly constructed citadel right in the middle of Barsaive. Maybe there was something else protecting this place?*

—G'graks the Jealous

After the opening of Throal, stories of the abandoned and presumably wealthy merchant city of Kratas began to circulate, especially among those Namegivers with more fluid concepts of personal property. Unlike the explorers who sought to bring news that the Scourge was over, or hunt the remaining Horrors to extinction, these were little more than grave robbers—and Kratas was one huge, open grave.

To their disappointment, these Namegivers found that the noble owners took most of Kratas' riches before the sealing of the city. While some wealth remained, would-be looters discovered it was easier to prey upon other explorers, since those who wandered too far into the city had a tendency to disappear. Whether they fell prey to Horrors, traps, or other scavengers was unknown.

Some of these bandits began using Kratas as a base of operations for staging raids and other criminal operations. Word circulated around Barsaive that the city, with its many places to hide and lack of authority, was the ideal refuge for those unable to live within the constraints of the law.

As more gangs claimed territory in Kratas, they began to prey on each other. An elaborate web of rivalry, alliance, and betrayal defined the city. Smaller gangs banded together for self-defense, and fought for larger pieces of territory, only to lose them to rival gangs or internal strife. The gangs only took breaks from fighting to leave the city, committing bandit raids and thefts in the area.

The wealth that raids brought to the city tempted merchants and farmers to travel to Kratas to sell life's necessities to the thieves. While they could command high prices, they took their lives in their hands to do so, and many were robbed or killed.

This state of anarchy existed until the arrival of the greatest living Thief in Barsaive: Garlthik One-eye.

Garlthik Arrives

Garlthik originally intended to retire peacefully to Kratas. When he arrived in 1453 TH, he was already past middle age in ork terms, and filthy rich. Unfortunately,

the gangs of Kratas would not leave him in peace. In response, the Master Thief formed his own gang—the Force of the Eye—and began crushing his opposition in the gang wars. Within three years, Garlthik had taken over half of the city.

Then the Therans returned to Kratas. During the Siege of Throal, they used Clifftop as a staging area, thinking the city was abandoned. Garlthik quickly negotiated a truce with his rival gang leaders and united the Kratans to repel this greater threat. The thieves and cutthroats used hit-and-run tactics to drive the small force from the city. Garlthik knew the Therans would return in greater numbers should they win the war, so he threw his lot in with Throal and those fighting the Therans, providing them with intelligence and other support.

After the Theran War, the truce ended and gang warfare resumed. Over the next twenty years Garlthik built his gang into the greatest criminal organization in Barsaive. He dominated the City of Thieves, and secretly sent branches of his gang throughout the province.

In order for his gang to survive, Garlthik found it necessary to shoulder some of the burdens of actually running the city. Most important was maintaining a minimal amount of protection for the non-criminal elements so that necessities such as food and water could be provided. He established the port of Daiche to ship his gang's stolen goods across the province, and the port became an important trade link for the resurgent city. He took the old title of Magistrate as an ironic joke, but in truth, he is the closest thing to a government that the city has.

The Brocher Appears

Garlthik and the Force of the Eye were running the city, expanding their criminal empire, and mopping up the last gangs to resist their rule, when a new power intruded. In 1482 TH, Vistrosh arrived in Kratas. A disgraced Blood Warder from the Elven Court, the blood elf assembled his own gang—Brocher's Brood—and established himself as the most tenacious and wily of Garlthik's rivals. To Garlthik's further consternation, the Brood engaged in the one act decreed by Garlthik to be illegal in Kratas: slavery.

The Force engaged the Brood in a protracted war. While Garlthik has driven Brocher's Brood underground, he has never been able to wipe them out completely. The enmity between the two gangs is a simmering undercurrent that occasionally boils over in bloodshed.

On Kratas Today

Despite his increasing age, Garlthik's hold on Kratas remains firm. The city continues to be a haven for thieves and bandits, and they prey on the province's trade caravans, straining the goodwill Garlthik earned from Throal during the Theran War. The City of Thieves has become so successful at its trade that the Force runs its own caravans, creating trading companies as fronts through which to fence its loot.

The city's reputation as a lawless place, where anything goes, has attracted other industries to Kratas. It has become the center of mercenary activity in Barsaive. Anyone with





enough coin can hire a small army of cutthroats from its taverns, or employ a more discrete assassin.

Thieves can steal secrets as easily as more tangible valuables, so Kratas has also become a focus for intrigues and espionage activities, attracting spies in service to all of Barsaive's major powers. Finally, members of living legend cults and less savory secret societies are drawn to Kratas, looking for the services the city provides, or basing their operations there.

After the Theran behemoth landed at Lake Ban, mercenary and espionage affairs increased, as anti-Theran forces, such as the Liferock Rebellion and the Eye of Throal, availed themselves of the city's more unsavory resources.

Garlthik prefers to maintain a neutral position in Barsaive's political rivalries, but the wily old Thief knows that a Barsaive controlled by Thera would have no room for a City of Thieves. As before, the Force of the Eye will aid Throal and her allies, if only out of self-interest.

Everyday Life in Kratas

Some hold that life in Kratas is never normal or everyday. While death lurks around every dark corner (and there are uncountable dark corners in this city), there are those who manage to survive and even prosper here.

Protection and Extortion

There is a saying that for every silver piece that changes hands in Kratas, Garlthik gets his copper. This is not literally true; many petty transactions are beneath his notice, and some inhabitants, like Vistrosh, actively evade his grasp. However, Garlthik and his gang prey upon most economic activity in Kratas. In some areas, other gangs collect extortion from the locals, then pay a tributary portion to the Force of the Eye.

In addition to the ten-silver-piece entry fee required of all Namegivers entering the city, anyone setting up a business in Kratas is required to pay ten percent of his weekly earnings to the Force of the Eye, or one of its tributary gangs. This includes traditional storefronts and independent operators working out of tavern booths. Attempts to evade these fees or under-represent earnings are common, and are one reason that many residents of Kratas are cagey about their business dealings, even when legitimate.

Thieves and other criminals in Kratas are expected to pay ten percent of their income to the Force of the Eye, although members of the Force only have to pay five percent to the gang.

While the gangs often refer to this money as "protection," it usually only secures protection from the threats of the gang itself. The Force of the Eye is not a police force, and exists only to protect Garlthik's interests. It is a naïve merchant who would apply to the Force for assistance in catching a mugger.

One notable exception to this rule is the Greenmarket (see p. 98). Early in the history of Garlthik's rule, a gang of toughs preyed upon the farmers who came to Kratas to sell their crops. After a few brutal assaults the farmers stopped coming, and the resultant famine led to vicious fighting between gangs over the dwindling food supply. Garlthik put down the fighting, and sent an emissary around to the farming villages with the heads of the offending gang members mounted on pikes in the back of a wagon.

This brought the farmers back to Kratas, and now the Force of the Eye protects them from interference. Garlthik has declared the farmers off limits, as long as they stay within the confines of the Greenmarket. All the gangs of Kratas respect this declaration, as no one benefits from starvation. On occasion, Garlthik will hire ork cavalries to escort farm caravans to and from their villages. This is not altruism on Garlthik's part, but self-interest. Kratas cannot feed itself, and the city's survival, and thus his own interest, depends upon a steady food supply.

This points to a larger dichotomy in Garlthik's management of the city. As he earns more of his income from extortion of legitimate and semi-legitimate businesses, it becomes more in his interest to maintain a well-ordered, safe city so that those businesses may prosper. However, chaos and anarchy are what drew him and many of his gang to the city in the first place. It is against his nature as a Thief to make the city too safe and well ordered, and doing so would drive away much of the city's clientele. As a result, Garlthik is stuck trying to maintain a controlled level of lawlessness.

Towards this end, he tries to encourage the more criminally inclined residents to think of Kratas not as a free-for-all zone where they can prey upon each other, but as a relatively safe haven to which they can return to with their ill-gotten gains. In addition, Garlthik dispatches the more unruly and rambunctious of the Force of the Eye on extended thieving expeditions to other cities, most notably Vivane, Jerris, Travar, Bartertown, and Urupa.

Public Works and Services

Garlthik's bagmen will sometimes refer to their collections as "taxes," but the Force of the Eye provides no services for these monies. Kratas' citizens are a self-sufficient lot by nature and necessity.

Water

Water is not always easy to come by in Kratas. Garlthik's gang controls the elemental water fountains within the Old Kaer, and charges a fee to draw water from them (see p. 138). The Therans built a series of aqueducts that collected runoff from the mesa and distributed the water throughout the city, but many of these were destroyed when the citadel dome collapsed. Local gangs control the distribution points that remain functional and charge a few copper pieces to fill water from them. The same is true of the few wells that are scattered around the city. Many poorer residents rely on water barrels that catch runoff from roofs when it rains, or go thirsty. Water theft is not uncommon.

Sewage and Garbage

Sewage and waste removal are also problems. The Therans built an elaborate series of sewers, and hired carts to haul away refuse. Many of the sewers are now blocked, and few wish to brave the depths of the Undercity to clear them. Residents often live in a building until their accumulated waste becomes unbearable, at which point they pack up and move to another spot.

The city is littered with trash piles. Residents who live close to the city walls often throw their garbage over the walls, resulting in unsightly dumps developing at the base. This also occurs with the interior walls separating the neighborhoods; many feuds have erupted over garbage being thrown back and forth over a wall.

The poor sanitation attracts rats and worse vermin, and disease is common. Fortunately the low population density prevents epidemics from raging.

Some of the wealthier residents of Merchants' Row have begun hiring trash haulers to remove their garbage to outside of the city walls.

Street Lights

There are no street lamps or light crystals left to light the streets after dark. The few light crystals that survived the Scourge were looted long ago. A few of the wealthier houses in the Safehearths and the Hammersing keep lights outside to better guard against burglars, and the better inns in Merchants' Row use lights to advertise their locations. Outside of those few areas, it gets quite dark in Kratas once the sun goes down, especially on an overcast night. Few people walk the streets at night with an open light source, as this advertises their presence to lurking thieves and muggers.

Prices

Nearly anything imaginable can be bought and sold in Kratas. However, the cost of doing business is high, since nearly every business has to pay protection to Garlthik, and for its own guards. Additionally, because many staple items are scarce, and few craftsmen wish to live in the city of Thieves, much must be imported. Ordinary items such as food, clothing, furniture, tools, and equipment regularly cost two to three times what they might cost elsewhere in Barsaive.

Bargains can often be found on more expensive items, because they are usually stolen, and lower prices are still profitable. Such luxury items can often be purchased at a substantial 'discount.'

Food

Food can be purchased in the Greenmarket, though like most goods in Kratas it sells for two to three times the usual price. Cook shops are abundant, though these are generally small stalls open to the street that sell simple fare such as stews, the ingredients of which are best left a mystery. These shops may or may not have stools for customers to sit on, are generally only open during daylight hours, and will have one or two guards present. Prices are typically about five copper pieces per meal.

One reason for the popularity of these cook houses is that many of the residents choose not to cook for themselves, so the smoke from their cook fires will not advertise their locations to neighbors. Many taverns serve simple meals, and a few of the better common houses have more elaborate fare, though there are none of the fancy *trisnari*, like one might find in Travar or Urupa.

Fire

Before the Scourge, the Therans maintained a fire watch. Many of the city's wooden and thatch houses were destroyed during the Scourge, and the stone buildings that remain are not as susceptible to fire. However, as residents of the Stables and the Scrabbles rebuild, the danger of fire grows.

Currently neither Garlthik nor anyone else maintains any preparations for fighting fires. Fortunately, a

TAVERNS, INNS, AND GAMING HALLS

Name	Noted For	Neighborhood
The Bolt Hole	Assassins	The Safehearths
Chorrolis' Cups	Merchants	Merchants' Row
Cutthroat's Rest	Cutthroats	Merchants' Row
The Darks	Traders	The Safehearths
Dream Palace	Drug Connoisseurs	Merchants' Row
Drunken Dragon Inn	Newcomers	Merchants' Row
Girded Arms	Mercenaries	The Stables
Hard Earned Coin	Gambling	Merchants' Row
Heart's Ease	Quiet Feet, Quite Fingers Gang	The Safehearths
The Lamp Oil Tavern	Traders	The Greenmarket
The Magistrate's Palace	The Force of the Eye	Hilltop
Rangor's Rest	Rangor's Reavers	The Scrabbles
The Riverboat	T'skrang pirates and Boatmen	Merchants' Row
The Screaming Basilisk	Performers	Merchants' Row
Serian's Sanctuary	Elite Thieves	Merchants' Row
The Shattered Kaer	Kaer explorers	Merchants' Row
Sheaf of Wheat Inn	Farmers	The Greenmarket
Wasteland	Drug addicts	Merchant's Row
Woranga's Place	Ork Scorchers and Cavalry	The Stables
Yoorga's Mess	Laborers	The Warehouse District

fire is one of the few events that could motivate the otherwise self-interested Kratans to work together. Also, a fire would most likely not cross the thick interior walls that separate the neighborhoods, reducing the overall risk fire poses to the city.

Shelter

One thing not in short supply in Kratas is shelter. Only half to a third of the available buildings in the city are inhabited. While legally much of the land and buildings belong to noble houses of Thera or merchant houses of Throal, the only property right currently recognized in Kratas is the right to what you can take and hold yourself. Garlthik destroyed the property records when he discovered them in the old administrator's office, though duplicate records were kept and may have survived somewhere in Parlainth or the Great Library of Throal.

Claiming an abandoned building is simple, though it may involve clearing the space of vermin, garbage, and traps left by previous residents. Additionally, many buildings were damaged by the collapse of the dome, so structural repairs may be necessary. Since there are plenty of empty buildings, there is little danger of others attempting to drive residents out, unless a building is especially attractive or desirable. This does not mean that new residents will be safe from thieves looking to steal any possessions they may have. Many residents leave the outsides of their houses looking ruined and garbage-strewn to avoid advertising their presence to possible thieves.

Meet the Neighbors

New residents of Kratas are beset with attempts to steal their possessions, con them out of their money, break into their houses, extort protection, mug them, or just kill them. If they manage to survive their first month or two, they will generally be accepted by their neighbors and, provided they pay the local gang and leave their neighbors alone, more or less left in peace.

Such acceptance does not mean friendship, however, and neighbors will not go out of their way to help each other. Kratans are expected to be self-sufficient and solve their own problems. Those who cannot are not respected, and are considered weak and easy prey.

Traps and Fortifications

Kratas' location on the plains made it an attractive target for scorchers and other bandits, so the residents did their best to fit as many people as possible within the protective walls of the city. The buildings were built very close to each other, and several stories were added over the years. Due to the lack of an organized military during the city's early construction, the citizens took responsibility for their own defense by adding fortifications and traps to their houses and places of business.

Almost every building from Kratas' early days has battlements on the roof, spikes on the walls, bars over the windows, arrow slits, murder holes, and other defenses. Some of the larger estates include their own walled compounds, gates, portcullises, watchtowers, and even moats. This led to Kratas being described as a fortress city before the Scourge. These defenses were further enhanced in preparation for the Scourge, and current residents have rebuilt or added to them since then, modifying newer buildings with salvaged parts and after the model of old fortifications.

Some thieves who have pushed farther into the ruins even claim that the Horror, Artificer, made a pass through Kratas after its fall. While this has never been proven, some devilishly clever traps remain set in the depths of Kratas.

There's a reason for It to trap kaers, but open city streets or ruins? No. Whenever people tell you they dodged one of Its traps somewhere in Hilltop, they add that they, just moments before, cleverly evaded a dozen grunts from the Force (who in turn were torn to pieces by Its trap), who were following them because they stole from Garlthik, who cast them out of the Force because they were too talented and a threat to his rule... Tall tales. There is no evidence in the entire city that It was ever there. With so many explorers and treasure hunters, we'd surely have seen some solid evidence by now.

However, there are rumors of odd traps in odd places all around. Places where they don't make sense; places where you wouldn't expect them 'cause there's nothing to be guarded. I know of people who allege that they've seen that metallic gleam. Where in the netherworlds does all this come from, you might ask? I believe they saw walls that looked like Artificer's handiwork, but all that proves is that they saw walls that looked like Its work. This does not prove that Artificer was ever here. Remember that there are some quite talented and powerful Illusionists that call Kratas home. What better way to discourage the nosy than to impersonate every thief's nightmare?

—Zemtarra, the Honest Charlatan

Street Life

There are few beggars in Kratas, not because there are not people poor enough to beg, but because Kratans are generally not the charitable kind. Begging is contrary to their ruthless ethos of self-sufficiency, and they suspect a beggar to be involved in some sort of scam or trick. This is often the case, as most of the beggars that do live in Kratas work to provide distractions for their partners, who may be pickpockets or other thieves.

There are also few children in Kratas. Most Namegivers consider Kratas an unsuitable place to raise a family, and those unfortunate children who do find themselves in Kratas are easily taken advantage of by its denizens, with many abducted and sold as slaves by Brocher's Brood.

Kratas is also not hospitable to street performers or the roving street vendors that travelers are accustomed to seeing in other large cities of Barsaive. Those that do live in Kratas tend to congregate in the more populated areas of the Stables, Merchants' Row, and the Greenmarket, as wandering the other areas of the city advertising wares for sale is a sure way to get assaulted.

The lack of beggars, children, buskers, and criers, as well as the tendency of most Kratans to keep their presence low key, lends a deserted feeling to the city. Though as many as fifty thousand Namegivers live in Kratas, much of it feels like a ghost town.



SHOPS AND STORES

Name	Noted For	Neighborhood
The Brewery	Beer	The Greenmarket
Bakeries	Bread	The Greenmarket
Reepinik's Threads	Clothing, Magical and Non-Magical	Hammersing
Various stalls	Foodstuffs	The Greenmarket
The Mill	Grain	The Greenmarket
Duchalia the Herbalist	Herbs, Potions, Poisons	The Greenmarket
Smithies	Horseshoes, Tools	The Stables
The Winking Eye	Jewelry and Gems	Hammersing
The Daggerwrights	Knives and Thieves' Weapons	Hammersing
Shops on Skinners' Way	Leathergoods	The Stables
Livestock markets	Livestock	The Stables
The Tinkerers' Forge	Locks, Traps, Thieves' Tools	Hammersing
Tirzenalos	Lore Merchant	Hammersing
Ergan the Alchemist	Potions, Blood Charms	Hammersing
Quaram's Mounts	Riding Animals	The Stables
Upandal's Tool Belt	Tools, Artisan Kits	Hammersing
Various storefronts	Trade Goods	Merchant's Row
Enchanter's Crucible	True Elements, Enchantments	Hammersing
B'rakol's Curiosities	Unusual Magic Items, Wonders, Knick-knacks	Hammersing
Blood Steel Forge	Weapons and Armor	Hammersing

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

During the reign of Erendis, the Therans tried to impose order upon the jumbled hodge-podge of streets that had grown up over hundreds of years. They assigned Names and numerical addresses to all the streets, even installing ceramic plates with Names and numbers on the corners of buildings.

Many of these plates were destroyed during the Scourge, and those that survived were removed during the years of turf wars between gangs, so that outsiders could not easily navigate through unfamiliar territory. Garlthik has continued this tradition, so that an invading army or rival gang cannot easily find their way to strategic points in the city.

This makes things difficult for visitors. Most directions are given as distances from common landmarks, and relative to the cliff, or Hilltop. For example, a residence might be described as 300 yards from the Temple of Chorrolis, going away from the cliff, or six doors down from the Heart's Ease Tavern, toward Hilltop.

The easiest way to find one's way around is to pay a local a few copper pieces to point one in the right direction. Unfortunately, doing so clearly identifies outsiders, who may be assaulted or otherwise preyed upon. Standing on a corner looking lost has the same effect. If you don't know your way around, you probably don't belong where you are.

Places of Note

Like all cities, Kratas has many areas of special note. The places presented here are important for Kratas on a larger scale. More and unique places can be found in the chapters detailing Kratas' individual neighborhoods. The gamemaster is encouraged to add to the places described in this and other sections.

The Walls and Towers

Because of the haphazard construction of Kratas' defenses over hundreds of years, the walls and towers are not uniform. They vary in thickness from two to more than six yards, and in height from four to ten yards. Towers are spaced along these walls with the distance between them varying by a hundred yards or more.

Only the wall around Hilltop has been more or less completely restored by the Force of the Eye. Other city walls are crumbling, and there are large gaps in many of them. Garlthik stations guards in some towers around Hilltop, but has nowhere near enough resources to man them all. Instead, he changes the guards' locations frequently, so that the residents never know which towers have members of the Force of the Eye within, watching them.

Airship Spires

Before the Scourge, airships could land in Temple Plaza, in Clifftop, or outside the city gates. When unloading large amounts of cargo, a ground landing was necessary. Airship spires were built for the convenience of ships picking up or dropping off passengers. These were tall stone towers, built within the grounds of the larger mansions. Small airships, such as airboats, would dock at the spires and ferry passengers to larger ships hovering above the city.

Before the Scourge, the spires towered over the city, peeking through the curving arches of the aqueducts. This was described as the glittering crown of the city, as the sun shone off the water running through the Aqueducts. Now, the spires and aqueducts are shattered, and the broken spires look like spears stuck in the cracked ribs of a dead animal.

The Passions' Temples

Questors and others seeking to pay homage should seek out the temples to the Passions that ring Temple Plaza, though only some of them have been restored to use. There is an abandoned temple to all twelve Passions in Hilltop, but neither the temple nor the neighborhood is open to the casual worshipper.

Taverns, Inns, and Gaming Halls

Taverns are crucial to the social and professional life of the City of Thieves. They are also an excellent place to find useful information or people. The sidebar lists some of the major taverns of Kratas, their primary clientele or attractions, and their locations within the city. Further details can be found within the appropriate neighborhood sections. In addition to the taverns listed, there are dozens of other minor or un-Named taverns scattered throughout the city, and many new ones open, and old ones close or change location, every month.

Houses of Ill-Repute

Prostitution flourishes in Kratas, though literal streetwalkers are rare, as this is a particularly dangerous way to pursue the oldest profession in Kratas. Most prostitutes prefer the safety of one of the numerous brothels, all of which pay for and receive protection from Garlthik. More casual prostitutes may work out of sympathetic taverns, and, in a city where everything is negotiable, many down-on-their-luck barmaids, entertainers, and even adventurers may casually slide into the trade if they receive a tempting enough offer.





Notable houses of prostitution include The Blooming Lily (p. 133), run by the Force of the Eye and located on Merchants' Row; Melarie's House of Pleasures (p. 131), a run-down brothel, also in Merchants' Row; The Purple Barque, the most luxurious whorehouse in Kratas, located in the Safehearths (see p. 163); and The Flesh Pit, where one can rent or purchase pleasure slaves, run by Brocher's Brood and moved about the city, described in the **Gangs of Kratas** chapter (p. 54). In addition, the devotees in the Temple of Astendar in Temple Plaza will perform acts of love for coin, much to the chagrin of more orthodox followers of that Passion.

Shops and Stores

Kratas has many shops that specialize in unusual items, particularly those of interest to thieves, mercenaries, and adventurers. At the gamemaster's discretion, the availability of items in which a given store specializes may be one or two levels lower than those specified in the **Goods and Services** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, p. 247.

The shops of the Hammersing are usually connected to artisans' workshops, and some of the goods for sale are made onsite. The shops of Merchants' Row sell goods made elsewhere.

Dear brother,

I read your last message with great interest. Let it be said that I follow your progress in Throal with great satisfaction. Your accomplishments in the past two years far outmatch my own where the subject of the short-lived is concerned. The dwarfs are the bulwark behind which all of our peoples will gather to rid our lands of the plague of the impertinent Therans. For this, it is important you school its young king on all aspects of the battlefield path, though much more in mind than in magic. That is what he needs the most: a strong mind, a warrior's spirit. I know that your access to him is limited, due to your special position, but be encouraged to involve yourself, even if it means the setting aside of other tasks. The fight against the ages-old forces you and I have sworn to eradicate—as is our duty as elders—is paramount, lest they call the most terrible of all enemies forth.

The most pressing concern, however, is the subject of Kratas, upon which you lightly touched in relation to the gathering of forces. From your remarks, I take it you do not consider the Kratans to be of any worth. Selfish, you say. And many other things you imply. That they would not act for a greater good. That they are not able to really cooperate; the very fact they are living in a city of outcasts and fugitives is proof to that. That they would neither want nor dare to sacrifice themselves for others. Not even for themselves. That in their hearts, they are cowards, mastering the art of evasion, not able to take the odds head-on.

My apologies... my view is different. I have been to Kratas many a time and took all the opportunities I could get to study its citizens. You cannot measure them by the standards of the dwarfs. The dwarfs, you see, are what you call heroes. Not in the common sense of the word, but as a society.

The hero is out on a quest. He strives to fulfill it by maintaining a firm conviction and being gifted with a strong will, neglecting his self to the point of sacrifice—if need be—to fight for a cause, an ideal, the stranger he calls a friend. He is a person of great morale, gifted with the ability to defeat the strong with the means of the weak. All of this

combines itself into the astonishing capabilities ascribed to heroes in the legends of the peoples of our lands. And although a subject of tales, heroes walk the streets and roads of Barsaive at this very moment. It is worth it to seek them out and win them for our cause. You have recognized this heroism in the dwarfs of Throal, and as you did not need to win them for the cause, started to build them up right away. And you are right in your assumption they will play the biggest role in freeing our land from the Therans.

But not the only one. Listen to any tale worth its Name—not the mere recount of the daily doings of various adventurers—and you will see that while the hero is the prominent protagonist, there also is an element thought little of, an element that the storyteller tries to arouse contempt for, especially in comparison to the hero. It is a contrast created on purpose. Still, this element plays an important role in the tale. It is not the antagonist itself, it is an element that works on the hero's side, but for all the wrong reasons. Still, where the cause of the hero is concerned, the ends often justify the means, and so the help from this element—let us call it the rogue element, because it can be of any sorts from thief to loner or individualist to outcast to dangerous criminal—is justified in the end, in the context of the legend as a whole. In the tale, this rogue will often accompany the hero through coincidence or some sort of foolish fate, and will have the chance to see for himself how much nobler the hero's path is, making up his mind in the decisive moment.

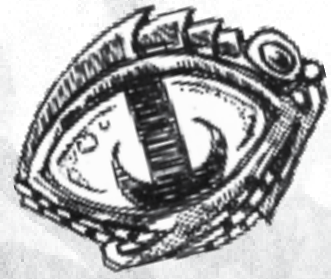
This is seldom heard of in reality, but is true in principle. To maintain his heroic nature, the hero has to refrain from certain activities, and his path does not offer opportunities to learn certain abilities. His very character might even hold him back. But there are tasks that need doing, and while the rogue does not have all the preferable traits of the hero, he has one thing in common with him: capabilities.

The rogue, you see, has a different kind of upbringing. His nature as an outsider, as the hunted, the unwanted, brings with it the ability to tread silently, to learn those abilities no other would ever need. It eradicates the scruples to do what has to be done. Most of all, it enables him to survive. The hero sacrifices himself to slay the Horror even if he should ultimately fail or die trying. The rogue gets away early enough to warn others—or survives the hero to bring back the spoils. You see, like the hero, the rogue has a sort of spirit, has a strong will. It just focuses on himself, on his personal safety or on his own advantage. But we can use that. The rogue will fight on our side because the Therans are the ultimate threat to his person, it is even to his advantage. And where this is untrue, we can offer such advantage. What use is a pile of gold once we return to sleep in the earth?

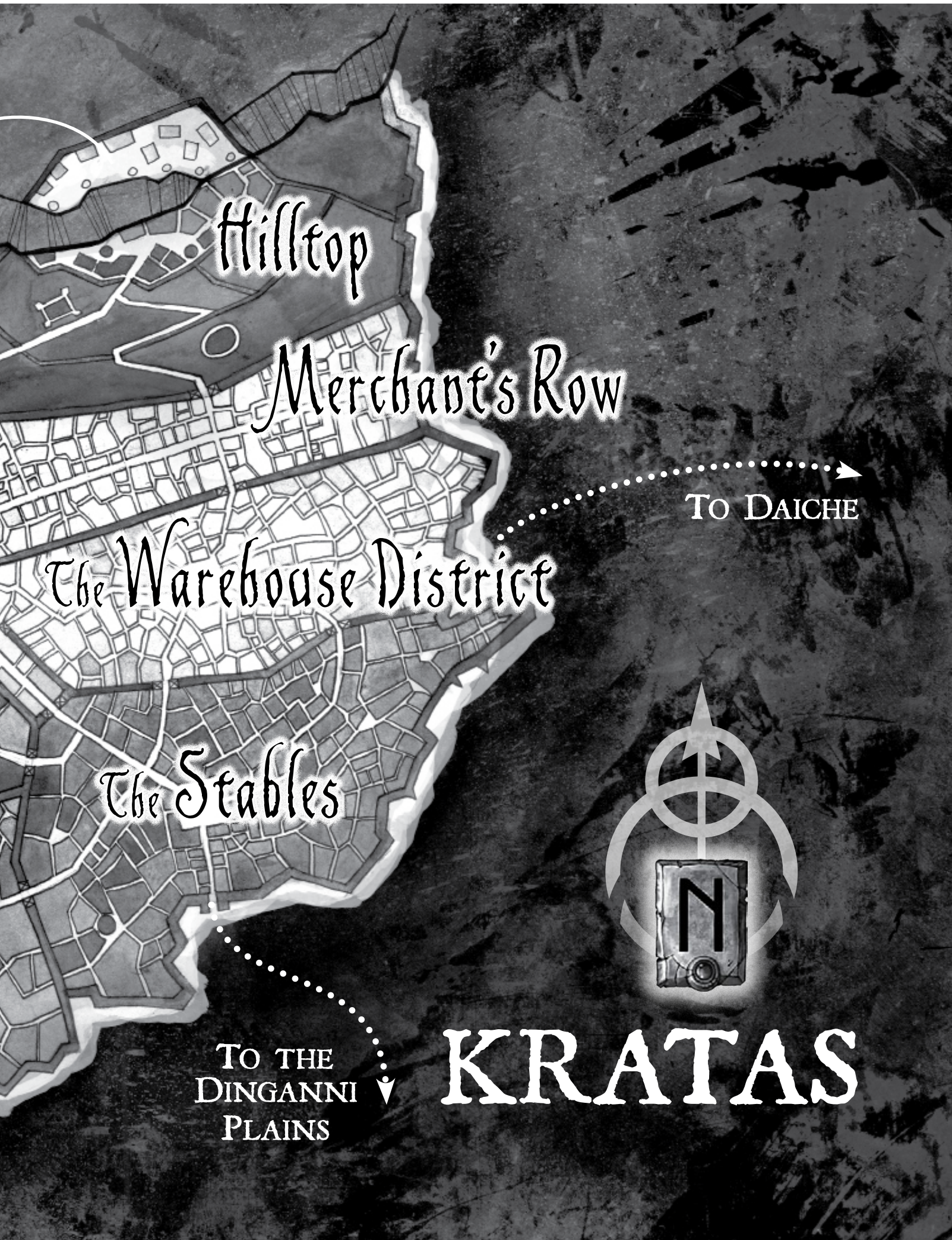
The citizens of Kratas are such rogues, like the Throalites are the heroes. Do not measure them by the same standards. Instead, assign each of them the tasks they are best suited for. For my part, I think I will employ these rogues ever more frequently, because their willingness can be enhanced so much more easily, and they still have a chance to become the hero in the end, retaining all their abilities. Can you say this of the principled hero?

With virtues and venerations,

Your brother.




Clifftop
Kratas Mesa
The Old Kaer
The Safehearths
Central Plaza
Hammersing
The Greenmarkets
The Scrabbles
To the Liaj Jungle


Hilltop
Merchant's Row
To Daiche
The Warehouse District
The Stables
To the Dinganni Plains
KRATAS

Outside Relations



Everybody's got 'n int'rest in Kratas, lad. That's why there's so many strangers comin' through. Only fair if we visit'em ourselves, too, ain't it? So, don't complain you got to haul all of that stuff back home...

• Horrd the Looter to his apprentice, on the way back from Travar •

Many of the powers that be in Barsaive have some interest in the goings on in the City of Thieves. These groups may have formal diplomatic relations with the city of Kratas, as well as spies and other agents working to advance their own agendas.



Thera

Thera maintains little active interest in Kratas, as most of the empire's attention is focused outside of Barsaive, and that which it does tender to Barsaive is concentrated more on supporting Vivane, with an eventual goal of recapturing and rebuilding Parlainth. Currently, Theran interests are more centered on Throal and the area around the *Triumph*, and these secondary interests have stepped up after the landing of the behemoth.

However, the memory of the Theran Empire is very long indeed, and the Therans have neither forgotten nor forgiven their defeat at the hand of Garlthik and his thieves of Kratas during the First Theran War. It is only a matter of time before the empire gets around to avenging this minor humiliation, and recapturing the city. In the meantime, the empire is content to allow Kratas to remain as it is: chaotic, underpopulated, and incapable of fielding any significant military force or developing as a serious threat to Thera.

Garlthik is strongly opposed to any Theran interference in the city's affairs and has refused entry or diplomatic status. Therans, their spies, and slavers are outlawed in Kratas, and a number of Garlthik's men are assigned to find and eliminate any who enter the city. Granting this, Garlthik does not wish to antagonize the Therans and bring them back to the city. He wisely fears their power, and the longer they are absent from the city, the more time he has to build up the city's defenses.

Danger notwithstanding, Garlthik has assigned at least one team of the Force of the Eye to the Barsaivian part of Vivane. This group spies on the Therans, and provides some assistance to the Barsaivian Resistance. The group's main occupation, though, is stealing Theran luxury goods to sell on the black markets of Kratas. Glanis Trul regularly rotates these agents out of Vivane, for fear of discovery by Thera's intelligence network.

Syt Lianad

The Force's most senior operative in Vivane is Syt Lianad, a Seventh Circle human Illusionist. She has successfully infiltrated the Barsaivian resistance, as well as some of the slaver rings, and even Vivane high society. She has accomplished this through several false identities and disguises. Lianad uses these contacts to gather intelligence, funnel support to the rebels and thwart the efforts of the Therans in the province. Of course, she also scopes out targets for theft by the dozen or so members

of the gang that live in Vivane. Lianad does not directly take part in any of these activities herself, as it has taken her too long to develop her covers to risk being discovered.

Theran Spies

Thera regularly sends spies into the city to gather information, often by using third-party intermediaries who have no knowledge of to whom they are passing the intelligence. Thus, the *akarenti*, or Spymaster of Vivane, General Illfaralek, employs an unknown number of Theran agents to gather information in Kratas. They mostly buy information from brokers and hire others to do the spying, rather than directly gathering the information themselves. To avoid Garlthik discovering them, the *akarenti* also rotates his spies, and disguises them as merchants, thieves, mercenaries, and so on. Because of this practice, however, the Therans have not cultivated a truly deep presence in Kratas, and so sometimes have only a superficial knowledge of its workings.

On the other hand, their presence in Kratas is primarily to gather intelligence on Throal, the Blood Wood, the t'skrang *aropagoi*, and Iopos, rather than on Kratas itself.

Typical Theran Spy

The Theran spy is a master of infiltration and subterfuge in urban environments. He is able to move about undetected while using his heightened senses as Scout to tail and observe others. He finds it very easy to blend into Kratas ever since multi-Disciplining as a Thief. If being a thief becomes inconvenient to his mission, he can easily change disguises acting as a roving mercenary or shady merchant. As a merchant, he often buys information through bribery or from information brokers and often hires other agents to get information for him that he cannot buy. The Theran spy is a human Fourth Circle Scout infiltrator specialist and Fourth Circle Thief.

Typical Messenger Spy

The Messenger spy delivers messages and packages for Thera. This is the perfect cover for him to spy on people, places, and events that happen en-route or at the location of the drop for the package or message. In Kratas, this spy is a liaison for Vistrosh and delivers messages between him and Theran operatives while keeping tabs on the blood warder. He can easily act as a deliverer of fenced goods to and from Kratan fixers to cover up these other operations. He has a lifetime Messenger contract with Thera to report everything he sees while delivering messages or goods even if it seems trivial or insignificant at the time. If anyone dares to try and stop him from delivering his cargo or messages or he is discovered in espionage, this Messenger has significantly improved his combat abilities by multi-Disciplining as a Warrior to fight his way out of these situations to avoid capture. The Messenger spy is a t'skrang Fourth Circle Messenger and Fourth Circle Warrior.

Theran Slavers

The other interest that the Therans have in Kratas is slaves. While Garlthik has banned the practice of slavery in Kratas, numerous Theran slavers work the countryside around the city, especially those with contacts with Brocher's Brood.

Prior to the landing of *Triumph*, only a few raiding parties had been sent into the area around Kratas, but nowadays the Therans have a stronghold closer to the city and have increased their pressure on the villages and small towns around Kratas. Vedettes carry captured Namegivers to the fortress city of Triumph and bring supplies, meeting with the slavers south of Kratas. Sometimes, though, a Theran slaver group needs to send someone to buy new supplies in Kratas (for example, when the next date with a vedette is too far away), usually via middlemen, who are mostly of Brocher's Brood. The slavers meet with the middlemen outside of Kratas and hand over gems and magic items for supplies and the occasional aid in manpower.

Slaver bands are a primary target for every Sky Raider drakkar that flies through the area. Many times, a planned raiding target has been abandoned in favor of an attack on Theran dogs and their lackeys.

—Tar Noor, Troll Sky Raider

Throal

The dwarf kingdom has a complicated relationship with the City of Thieves. Kratas and the Force of the Eye have lent Throal support in its conflicts with Thera, and Garlthik himself was instrumental in saving King Neden's life and Varulus' throne during the Death Rebellion. Thus the Royal Family owes a debt of gratitude to Garlthik, and will never act against Kratas while he remains in power.

This does not mean they are happy about the situation, however. The Force of the Eye and other gangs of Kratas regularly raid Throal's trading caravans, and otherwise steal from Throalic merchants. The throne is barraged with petitions from the merchant houses and trading companies to put an end to these depredations. Some also wish to regain their companies' holdings within Kratas itself.

Other merchant houses have put aside their resentments and have begun to re-establish trade contacts and operations within the city, and are willing to pay Garlthik's "taxes" because of the profits that can be gained from reselling stolen merchandise and weaponry shipped out of the city.

For his part, Garlthik's loyalty to Throal is only as deep as his distaste for Thera and his desire to keep Kratas independent. He has no interest in Kratas being annexed by Throal either, and supports them against Thera only as long as it serves his interests. He hasn't forgotten that he was once wanted by Throal, and briefly imprisoned there. The old ork does not begrudge this, and would have expected no less. He was a notorious Thief. He has no wish to repeat the experience, of course.

Throal and Kratas maintain diplomatic relations, and have exchanged ambassadors.

Diona the Swift

Kratas' ambassador to Throal is Diona the Swift. Her official title is Senior Slasher to Garlthik of Kratas; a more painful but accurate title might be "Troublesome Former Lover Who Has Been Sent Far, Far Away." Diona is a feisty ork woman with a penchant for brawling. When not attending official court functions, she spends her time breaking furniture in taverns throughout Throal. An adept of the Thief and Warrior Disciplines, Diona has befriended King Neden and promised to take him on an incognito tour of Kratas' most colorful sights. Tramon, the Ambassador General of Throal's Diplomatic Corps, considers Diona a bad influence on the king, and is hoping she will commit a crime serious enough to justify her expulsion from Throal.

Despite her loutish behavior, Diona is actually quite savvy and has been successful in carrying out her two secret assignments for Garlthik. The first was to befriend Neden, building further good will between the Force and the Royal Family in hopes of staving off an invasion in future. The second is to keep an ear to the ground and report on agitation against Kratas in the court and on the streets of Throal. Diona is an ork Fifth Circle Thief and Warrior.

Liltom

The Throalic ambassador to Kratas is a young dwarf woman Named Liltom. She received this less-than-coveted post after vocally criticizing Tramon, who happened to be eavesdropping in the next room. Her primary job is to petition Garlthik for the return of stolen Throalic goods, and the punishment of those who stole them. Her petitions are rarely successful, and Garlthik's henchmen sometimes rough her up for her trouble. Like most ambassadors to Kratas, Liltom is considering quitting His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps for a safer line of work. Liltom is a non-adept dwarf ambassador.

Liltom may look (and act) like a foolish young dwarf, who seemingly has not much success with her petitions, but she is more than that, believe me....

—Drogram, Dwarf Warrior



The Eye of Throal

In addition to Throal's official representatives, members of the Eye of Throal have a limited presence in the city as well. These spies so far use Kratas only as a base for gathering information about other powers in the province. After all, Garlthik does not make a secret of his fairly straightforward objectives: keep Kratas independent, and make lots of money. The crown of Throal is far more interested in gathering information on Iopos, the Blood Wood, the t'skrang *aropagoi*, the Great Dragons, and especially Thera, than to waste much effort on Garlthik.

The Eye of Throal also doesn't gather intelligence on the Force of the Eye because its Senior Gatherer is Garlthik's former student, J'Role the Honorable Thief. J'Role's reluctance to spy on his former mentor may be out of respect and professional courtesy, or it may be that he is still intimidated by the old ork, and does not wish to engage him in a battle of wits that J'Role fears he might lose.

Rivealani Neumani

The Junior Gatherer currently in charge of the Eye of Throal's efforts in Kratas is Rivealani Neumani, a precocious young member of House Neumani who is a humble clerk in that house's compound in Merchants' Row. She coordinates and gives support to the activities of other members of the Eye who move through the city, buys information on the black market of Kratas, and also hires freelance spies. Rivealani smuggles coded reports back to Throal in the caravans of her own and the other dwarf trading houses. Rivealani is a Sixth Circle dwarf Thief.

Bartertown

Garlthik has a natural interest in Bartertown, as his thieves both steal from its merchants, who lack the protection of the Arm of Throal and the Royal Guard, and smuggle stolen goods into its black market. Garlthik has a large number of thieves here, because the pickings are good, and for defense should the criminal gangs that fight over this town get it into their heads to try to muscle him out. He has agreements with both Magistrate Clystone and the gang leader Shadowswift, which allow his boys to operate unmolested in Bartertown. In the case of the former, Clystone knows that, should Garlthik stir up trouble, this will further encourage those who wish Bartertown to be annexed by Throal. As for the latter, Shadowswift is not stupid. He knows that Garlthik has been winning gang wars since before he was born, and that Garlthik One-Eye would most likely win in a fight for Bartertown's criminal underworld.

For its part, Throal welcomes Garlthik's depredations on the merchants of Bartertown, as he provides another reason for the city to join Throal. As long as Bartertown remains independent, Throal will do nothing to stop the Force of the Eye working there.

Garlthik knows the royal family is much less tolerant of thefts inside Throal itself, and does not wish to squander the good will he has with them. This is not to say that the Force doesn't operate in Throal, it just does so much more discretely, and in smaller numbers, than it does in Bartertown.

The gang leaders of Bartertown, and even Magistrate Clystone, sometimes hire muscle from Kratas to help in their own gang wars. The hardened killers of Kratas' gangs make the *buundavim* look like the cowardly bullies they are, further contributing to Shadowswift's fear of Garlthik muscling in.

Tuskeater

The current head of the Force of the Eye in Bartertown is a gargantuan troll Named Tuskeater. Tuskeater is obviously an Outcast Warrior, as her horns have been cut off. She is also covered with countless scars and is one of the most intimidating Namegivers in Bartertown. Her name stems from a fight with a rival during which, when the two had grappled each other to a stalemate, she ripped off his lower jaw with her teeth. Clearly, Garlthik's choice of her to represent the Force in Bartertown is intended to intimidate the other gangs of the town.

Because of the lawlessness of Bartertown, Tuskeater is open about her affiliation. This makes it easy for those seeking to fence goods, hire muscle, or have other dealings with the Force of the Eye. She also has a few dozen members of the Force at her beck and call in Bartertown. Their exact number fluctuates as they are often on their way to or from Kratas, or other towns in the province. These include thieves, enforcers, fences, and spies, most of whom are not open about their membership in the Force. Thus, nearly any member of the criminal underworld of Bartertown could be one of the Force of the Eye. Tuskeater is a Seventh Circle troll Outcast Warrior.



The Blood Wood

The Blood Wood does not deign to recognize diplomatically the lawless city of Kratas, and Alachia acts as if the city is beneath her notice. Garlthik has a similar distaste for the Elven Queen, tempered only slightly by their shared antipathy towards Thera. Neither party has sent diplomats to the other, nor have any blood elves shown up in Kratas that have been suspected of working for Alachia.

Nevertheless, Alachia does have her interests in Kratas: Vistrosh secretly leads her spy network, the Songbirds, from the city. To divert suspicion from him, she has an unofficial representative in Kratas: Oliaris Tenist. Tenist is in fact a decoy, as no one would expect the Blood Wood to not have some espionage agent in the city of spies. He is a foppish elf who can pass unofficial, back-channel diplomatic messages

on to Garlthik or the representatives of other powers in the city, and it is assumed that he can pass the same on to Alachia. He splits his time between spending money at the most luxurious taverns of Merchants' Row, and spending time in the shadier parts of town, such as the Cutthroat's Rest and the Bolthole, talking to even shadier characters. Most assume that he is the queen's spymaster in the city. Tenist knows that he is a decoy, but has no idea who Alachia's real spies are, and doesn't want to know. He doesn't even recognize the Name "Songbirds." Oliaris Tenist is an elf non-adept.

Garlthik does have a budding interest in the Blood Wood's black market. The Carithasca *ranelle* (the equivalent of an elven noble house) of the southern fringes of the Blood Wood runs a black market in luxury goods out of the fortress of Kaer Eidolon at the fork of the Serpent and Mothingale Rivers. The Carithasca smuggle elven artworks and magical treasures in exchange for luxuries otherwise unavailable in the Blood Wood, with the assistance of their t'skrang allies of the Syrtis *aropagoi*. The Elf Queen forbids such trade, especially the trade in goods from the Theran Empire. This prohibition has, of course, boosted the price these objects can fetch in the Blood Wood. The Carithasca and Garlthik do not deal with each other directly, but through Syrtisian intermediaries.

While Garlthik does not approve of buying objects from the Therans, he is all in favor of stealing them, and has increased the Force of the Eye's activities in Vivane accordingly. The Force of the Eye is not the only supplier or market for the goods smuggled by the blood elves, but it is one of the most lucrative and fast-growing ones. Because of this, magic items, herb and plant components of interest to magicians, and True wood from the Blood Wood can sometimes be found in the shops of Kratas.

Gertan'kl the Eel

Gertan'kl the Eel is a Seventh Circle t'skrang Boatman and member of the Force of the Eye. His skin is a mottled black and gray, from which he gets his name, though others say he is called "the Eel" because he is so slippery. Garlthik has tasked him with getting a piece of the black market pie entering the Blood Wood through the Carithasca *ranelle*. He is a charmer, and has extensive contacts up and down the Serpent River, with all the major *aropagoi*, the Carithasca, the Barsaivian black market in Vivane, the Scavians, and the Dinganni. He is able to maintain these contacts in part because of an array of fake identities he assumes. Among his possessions are a dagger, ring, bracelet and earring that mimic the *g'doinya* of the Ishkarat, Syrtis, V'strimon and K'tenshin *aropagoi*, respectively.

Gertan'kl rents space in riverboats and barges to smuggle goods up and down the Serpent and its tributaries, often disguising his contraband within legitimate shipments. He trades with the Syrtisians and the Carithasca, and he can call upon other members of the Force throughout the province to support his efforts. The Eel uses these trade contacts to gather intelligence on the Blood Wood as well. With his connections at Kaer Eidolon, Gertan'kl is the closest Garlthik has to a foothold in the Blood Wood.

The Eel also uses his knowledge of the black market to direct members of the Force to intercept his rivals' shipments. Not only does the Force get to steal the contraband, but by decreasing the competition, he can drive up his prices.



Iopos

Garlthik is deeply suspicious of the Iopans, and forbids any within the city. He is aware that the Denairastas' long-term ambitions include conquering the entire province, including Kratas. When a small group of Iopan "exiles" attempted to establish a community in Kratas, similar to the one they have in Throal, Garlthik had their throats slit. Whether he had proof of their perfidy, or was merely presumptive, is unclear. For that matter, the few operatives Garlthik sent into Iopos were quickly discovered and killed. Garlthik has avoided any further attempts, for fear of provoking the Iopans.

The Denairastas do not consider Kratas an immediate threat, and so are not currently plotting against the city or Garlthik's rule. They do, however, have an interest in using Kratas as a base for their espionage and subversion efforts throughout the rest of Barsaive. It is assumed that the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust (that is, the foreign espionage arm of the elite military and law enforcement force of Iopos) must have at least one operative working in the city. Garlthik has assigned a few of his men to discovering such agents, to no success.

Brekul Denairastas

Brekul of Jerris is a successful human cat burglar who has lived in Serian's Sanctuary and other inns of Kratas for the past several years. She disappears for weeks at a time, and then returns, flush from another big score. She is small for an adult human and quite lithe and limber, excellent for sneaking into places she is not wanted.

No one is aware that she is actually Brekul Denairastas, a niece of Uhl Denairastas, and a member of the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust. She also keeps secret that she is an Illusionist of Warden status. Whenever she does business for the Holders of Trust, she does so in disguise. She has spent years developing alternative identities in Kratas, and has at least half a dozen of these, of different races and Disciplines; some of her identities are even of the male gender. Any long-term resident could actually be one of Brekul's alter egos. When she officially leaves town for weeks at a time, she is usually just assuming one of her other identities. She has also used her human Versatility talent to learn some of the abilities of other Disciplines, to make her impersonations more convincing.

Her mission in Kratas is two-fold. First, she gathers intelligence on all the major powers for Iopos, through buying secrets and hiring spies. Second, she actively advances the interests of Iopos, by actions to weaken and



subvert the powers in the province. These range from whispering campaigns to sow distrust between allies, to raids and assassinations. In all of these actions, she uses intermediaries and third parties, to prevent these actions from being traced back to her. Further, when arranging these actions, she uses groups such as ork scorchers; Brocher's Brood; or other gangs, cults, and secret societies. She sometimes pretends be a member of one of these groups so her true motives will not be discovered. At other times she impliesthat she is an agent of Throal, Thera, or even the Blood Wood.

Her contacts with Iopos are limited, but she does use *aropagoinya* of the Ishkarat as go-betweens to receive instructions from Iopos, and send intelligence back to the city. As with all of her contacts, she meets with these t'skrang in disguise.

When not wearing her thief's leathers, she wears dark-colored silks, and lets her long black bangs fall in front of her gold-colored eyes. Brekul Denairastas is a human dragonkin Eleventh Circle Illusionist and Sixth Circle Thief.

Jerris

Jerris is interested in renewing Kratas' position as a way station for airships on the voyage from Jerris to Throal. A few years ago, the Trademaster General of Jerris sent a delegation to negotiate with Garlthik for safe passage and use of the old Theran airship facilities on Clifftop. He also hoped such an agreement would reduce the losses to the thieves and bandits of Kratas suffered in Jerris' trade with Throal. Unfortunately, the negotiations broke down over money. The Trademaster General wanted to pay only a token fee, feeling that Kratas should be grateful for the increased trade the agreement would bring to the city. Garlthik insisted upon rates bordering on extortion, and even subtly threatened the delegates with violence. Needless to say, the deal fell apart and the delegates left Kratas.

> *The delegates were such cowards, you wouldn't believe it. They were so afraid of the city and every Kratan they met that I wonder how they managed to survive in the city for more then a day without an army of guards.*
>
> **—Gillian, Human Thief**

Garlthik has at least one group of thieves working in Jerris, as he has in nearly every city in Barsaive. This group commits regular crimes, but also gathers information on Jerris' airship facilities and schedules. Garlthik usually sells this information to the Rockhorn, Skyseeker, and Firescale trollmoots. Garlthik hopes that by "gently" steering the crystal raiders to favoring attacks against Jerris' airship fleet, it will encourage the Trademaster General to return to the negotiating table in pursuit of a safe port in Kratas.

Fuml Pierco

For the past several years, this group of the Force of the Eye has been lead by an aging human Eighth Circle burglar Thief specialist known as Fuml Pierco. He is a talented shipwright, and has worked his way up in one of the shipyards. He has the downtrodden demeanor of most Jerrisians. Like many in this city, he spends his days building airships, and his evenings in taverns and gaming halls, just to be home early so as to not run into any troubles– the streets of Jerris are no place to be alone at night. No one but the Force of the Eye knows that his casual drinking and gambling acquaintances are in fact thieves, spies, and cutthroats. At these meetings he approves plans for burglaries of the wealthy shipyard owners, gathers and distributes intelligence about shipping routes, and handles all the other business of the Force in Jerris. Pierco occasionally leads the thieves in a caper himself, just to keep in practice.

Travar

Travar has little direct interest in Kratas, and has so far not sent a delegate of the Magistrates' Council to the city. The magistrates are dismayed that some of their trade falls victim to the gangs of Kratas, but feel that the City of Thieves is within Throal's sphere of influence and should be the dwarfs' concern.

Garlthik has a number of thieves working in Travar, as it is quite wealthy and prosperous. Garlthik views Travar's magistrates with disgust, and considers them hypocrites for their opposition to Thera, yet simultaneous tolerance of slavery in their town. Garlthik takes particular delight when his thieves steal works from Niss Reeves, one of Travar's current magistrates and a master jeweler.

There is a movement, primarily among the lower classes, to make Travar a Throalic protectorate, which Throal is subtly encouraging. Garlthik is of two minds about this possible future for Travar. Should Travar become a protectorate of Throal, the *Council Compact* would become official law, outlawing slavery and further distancing Travar from Thera, all developments of which One-Eye approves. However, he also fears that a successful annexation of Travar by Throal would encourage expansionist factions within Throal, who wish to increase its dominion beyond the Throal Mountains. Garlthik reasonably assumes that the expansionists would want to force Kratas to become a protectorate.

Therefore, Garlthik encourages the spread of the ideals of the *Council Compact* in Travar, but discourages any formal allegiance of Travar to Throal. Should the protectorate faction become too powerful in Travar, Garlthik might direct his teams there to actively work against them. Garlthik will not align with the wealthy merchant class on principle, however, as it maintains slavery as a legal institution in Travar.

Ranose Cutan

Ranose Cutan is a young, energetic, and outgoing dwarf Sixth Circle Thief who leads the two-dozen or so members of the Force of the Eye in Travar. She is eager to expand the gang's heists, and sometimes has to reign in her efforts, to avoid attracting too much attention. Ranose affects the persona of a merchant, and wears bright and colorful silks. She has cultivated contacts with the wealthy and powerful to keep an eye on political developments. Despite her charming outer appearance, she should not be underestimated. She is a "graduate" of Ghagin's Grandchildren, and survived many gang fights in the streets of Kratas before being recruited by Garlthik.



Urupa

Urupa is distant enough from Kratas to have little direct contact with, or interest in, the goings on in the City of Thieves. While Urupa knows that some of its trade is lost to the gangs and bandits of Kratas, it feels that these losses are only a small percentage of the total. Moreover, Urupa has good relations with Throal and is content to let Kratas be the dwarf kingdom's problem. Urupa and Kratas don't maintain diplomatic relations and have not exchanged ambassadors.

Garlthik appears to have the same attitude toward Urupa: it is too far away to be within his notice. This is merely a ruse, as he actually has a number of profitable thieves working within the prosperous trading city. Urupa is close to ideal as a thief's target. There is a lot of wealth coming into the city, including exotic luxury goods from across the Aras Sea. The city is still young, and, while Urupa is militarily strong, its city watch and intelligence forces are not very sophisticated. Adept Thieves easily evade the city watch, as the watchmen are primarily concerned with keeping order on the docks and between the ethnic neighborhoods of the city.

As long as the thefts are kept to a reasonable level, Urupa's citizens assume they are just the work of local thieves, and reluctantly write them off as a cost of doing business. The Force of the Eye is careful to spread its thefts around, so no single company will be aware of the true extent of the crimes.

Garlthik has also put out an offer of a substantial reward within the Force of the Eye for the first thief that can break into the fortress-like embassy of the mysterious People From Across the Aras Sea, and bring back information about their lands and motives. Garlthik does not have any particular concern for these people; he is just curious, and doesn't like secrets he isn't privy to.

There are fewer thieves of the Force in Urupa than there are in other cities—only about a dozen. However, they are more skilled than the average thief, and are able to work more subtly and independently than most. The senior thief is an elf burglar named Dri Murdugast. He is very good at his job, but exceptionally greedy, so much so that he is beginning to chafe at the percentages of his loot that he has to fork over to Garlthik. He is contemplating either making a play at deposing Garlthik and taking over the Force himself, or splitting the Urupa branch of the gang into a separate gang.

Garlthik is well aware of Dri Murdugast's inclinations, which is why Garlthik sent him to Urupa in the first place. Further, he has the second-in-command in Urupa, an ork Thief Named Grizeldo, spying on Murdugast. Should the elf finally go forward with either of his plans, Grizeldo will inform Terricia, and that will be the end of Dri Murdugast.



The T'skrang Aropagoi

The t'skrang *aropagoi* are active along the length of the Serpent River, and Kratas relies on them to ferry agents to different cities, and ensure the valuable cargos of the City of Thieves reach their destinations. However, since the establishment of the Theran fortress city of Triumph at Ayodhya, relations between Kratas and the *aropagoi* have become more complicated.

By closing the confluence of Lake Ban and the South Reach of the Serpent river with a blockade fleet, starting to collect tolls from all ships passing through it into K'tenshinian territory, and eventually sending its own trade

vessels, protected by Theran airships, down the Coil River to Urupa, House K'tenshin has practically broken the *Free Trade Compact*. And while the other *aropagoi* still can do business on the South Reach and the Tylon and Byrose rivers, paying the tolls makes it hard for them to be competitive, and makes smuggling virtually impossible. Garlthik does all he can to loosen the K'tenshinians' iron grip around his port city of Daiche (see p. 185), but he cannot stop doing business with them, or risk directing all of his goods through other channels.

House Ishkarat

The House of the Wheel occasionally sends ships, disguised as independent trading vessels (the Ishkarat never signed the *Free Trade Compact*, so cannot openly travel outside of their territory), down the southern reaches of the Serpent River, though only rarely do they venture so far into enemy territory as to dock at Daiche on the Tylon River to trade with Kratas. However, Kratas is not far from the Ishkarat stronghold at Lake Vors, and small groups of their *aropagoinya* make the journey overland through the Tylon Mountains. These claim to merely pass through the city, and usually spend some time carousing in the Riverboat Tavern, often scuffling with rival *aropagoinya*. It is generally assumed that they come to Kratas for reasons of espionage or other skullduggery.

The Ishkarat are not formally banned from the city, but Garlthik is aware of their alliance with Iopos, and fears they may be working with the Holders of Trust. Garlthik thus has them followed whenever they are around, so some of them enter the city disguised as unaffiliated Boatmen.

House Syrtis pays well for information on oncoming Ishkaratan ships. And even better for captured members of the aropagoi that are handed over to the House of the Dragon Moon. It's a dangerous business–Boatmen are usually good fighters–but very lucrative, if you don't mind the ethical problems...

—Gillian, Human Thief

House Syrtis

The riverboats of the House of the Dragon Moon are welcome in Daiche, and their crews are welcome in Kratas. They serve as go-betweens for smuggling goods in and out of the black market of Blood Wood, run by the Carithasca *ranelle*. Since the blockade of the South Reach, the Syrtisians more often travel to Kratas by land via Throal, circumventing the new K'tenshinian tolls.

Not only are the Syrtisians welcome for this lucrative trade, but also so that Garlthik can keep tabs on the political debates going on within the *aropagoi*'s High Chamber. Garlthik supports the Blue and Green Factions that argue for closer alliances with Blood Wood and Throal, respectively. Not only do these factions support the continued link between Syrtis and Blood Wood that facilitates the black market, they also weaken the pro-Theran Silver faction.

Garlthik's influence over House Syrtis is minimal, and consists mostly of smuggling deals with the pro-Blood Wood Wavram *niall*, and setting his thieves working the river to steal from the Fenestral and Brabant *nialls* of the Silver Faction. The inter-*niall* intrigues of this house sometimes reach into the back alleys of Kratas, where rivaling *nialls* hire spies to gather dirt on their enemies.

After the Maratha *niall* was defeated by the Ishkarat at the battle of Filen on Lake Vors in 1488 TH, the High Chamber dissolved the *niall* because of this disgrace. Some of the descendants of this *niall*, kicked out of their homelands around Lake Vors and banned from the house's central foundation, made their way to Kratas. Some were content to build new lives here and elsewhere, but others hold the High Chamber, which ignored their warnings about the growing Ishkarat threat, responsible for their *niall*'s disgrace. These bitter loyalists may be plotting to regain their *niall*'s position from Kratas. To do so would require driving House Ishkarat out of Lake Vors, and weakening the Maratha's rivals in Syrtis, both tall orders.

House V'strimon

Garlthik and the House of Reeds have a mutually beneficial relationship based on their shared enemies: House K'tenshin and their Theran allies. Garlthik encourages trade with V'strimon to undermine K'tenshin's stranglehold on the Tylon River. V'strimon in turn assists House T'kambras in its struggle with K'tenshin. Before the return of House T'kambras, V'strimon was reluctant to make the trip up the Tylon to Daiche, because, according to the *Free Trade Compact*, the Tylon was K'tenshinian territory, and the K'tenshinians were allowed to force *bakshevas*, or tribute, from foreign riverboats on the Tylon. Since the K'tenshinians now raise a toll anyway, it normally would not make that much a difference for a V'strimon ship on the South Reach if it went up the Tylon River or not, but the gunners behind House K'tenshin's fire cannons have been known to take many a ship on the Tylon for a T'kambrian one by default, especially if it comes from the House of Reeds. The K'tenshinian toll has reduced business opportunities for House V'strimon on the whole South Reach, though, and while V'strimon would like to support its allies from House T'kambras, the blockade makes it nearly impossible to smuggle any weapons or other needed assets to them by river alone, so smugglers rely on help from the Scavians, Dinganni (see **The Dinganni Plains**, p. 183), and overland routes to do so.

HOUSE HENGHYOKE

The mysterious pirate House of the Otter does not trade with Daiche, and its mute *aropagoinya* have not yet been seen in Kratas. Garlthik has an idle curiosity in discovering where the House of the Otter is from, and what its *aropagoinya* are up to, but he has not yet made serious attempts to investigate.

> *Well, after the first couple of spies he sent to investigate the origin of House Henghyoke returned in pieces to Kratas, he decided that it's not worth the hassle. Not that he won't pay good money for valuable information, but he's not willing to lose more of his men.*
>
> **—Gillian, Human Thief**

HOUSE K'TENSHIN

When Garlthik founded Daiche, he reluctantly entered into trading with the House of the Nine Diamonds. His reluctance stemmed from the K'tenshinians' historic relationship with Thera and involvement with the slave trade. However, he considered the establishment of Daiche essential to the survival and prosperity of Kratas, and so swallowed his distaste and dealt with the K'tenshinians.

However, with the resurgence of House T'kambras, Garlthik has gleefully diverted trade to the T'kambrians, and to a lesser degree, Syrtis and V'strimon. This benefits Garlthik not only because he wishes to weaken Thera and its allies, but also because competition on the Tylon drives down shipping costs and increases his profits. The K'tenshinians are aware of Garlthik's antipathy towards them, but have their hands full with other matters, and still make enough profit out of Daiche to not wish his ouster; at least not yet.

With their blockade near Lake Ban and the expansion of their war efforts against House T'kambras, the K'tenshinians had hoped to gain a larger portion of the trade with Daiche. But Garlthik has gone out of his way and is willing to take lower profits with the less efficient overland trade routes, the higher shipping rates of the other *aropagoi*, and the work through smuggler-intermediaries such as the Dinganni or Scavians. This is because, in the end, it enables him to haggle the K'tenshinians down on their rates. He has seen through House K'tenshin's strategy, though, and will not forget their recent business practices in the future.

Garlthik's other concern with the K'tenshinians is that they may be working to advance Thera's interests in the province, and are likely gathering intelligence in Kratas. He has not banned the members of the House of the Nine Diamonds from the city, but as he does with the Ishkarat; Garlthik has them followed while they are in the city. This proves difficult because of the sheer numbers of K'tenshinians that may flood in to the city when one of their vessels is docked in Daiche. Terricia concentrates her attentions on known members of the Naxos or Carinci *nialls* who enter the city.

ADVENTURE HOOK

*House Syrtis is suffering from internal disputes regarding its stance towards the Therans. Members of the pro-Theran Silver Faction (see **Nations of Barsaive Volume One**) regularly meet with Theran contacts in the City of Thieves, but these meetings have become increasingly dangerous. Members of the Silver Faction are usually protected by trusted groups of adventurers to keep a low profile and to avoid unwanted attention. For the next journey, the player characters are hired as guards for F'klanarra Darkwater, a leading member of the Silver Faction. The characters are left in the dark about the specific reasons for her journey to Kratas, but soon find out that another group of adepts is following them on their route to Kratas.*

If the player characters capture and interrogate one of the adepts, they find out that the other group was hired to uncover the identity of F'klanarra's contact and assassinate both of them. These rival adepts have been hired by a t'skrang named R'plenn, who turns out to be a member of House Syrtis, but of a faction opposing the politics of the Silver Faction. It's up to the player characters what to do with their newly gained knowledge.

Obviously, if they fail to capture a member of this rival group, it is likely the player characters encounter this group of adepts again during their assassination attempt on F'klanarra in Kratas.

HOUSE T'KAMBRAS

The rebirth of House T'kambras, which historically controlled the Tylon before the K'tenshinians destroyed the House prior to the Scourge, is closely tied to Kratas and Daiche. Garlthik used House T'kambras to force House K'tenshin's shipping rates down in the past. But when the Therans



returned and allowed the House of Nine Diamonds to limit the T'kambrian's support from House V'strimon and start a new offensive on the Tylon River, the T'kambrians simply could not match the K'tenshinians' rates any more, having to fight their way out more often than not. Garlthik goes out of his way to keep the House of Swift Waters in business and sees to it that Daiche is a safe harbor. While in the long run it might be a wise move to not let House K'tenshin fortify their monopoly, his real reason is to weaken the Theran-K'tenshin alliance.

There are conspiracy theorists throughout the province that see the Great Dragons pulling the strings behind all of the powers in Barsaive. For those who view the world in such a way, it is hard to believe that the independence of the City of Thieves, and Garlthik's long-lived reign, are not parts of some wyrm's nefarious plans. However, there is no actual evidence that any dragon sings Garlthik's tune, nor that Kratas and the Force of the Eye are anything more than they seem.

The Great Dragons

It can be assumed that those master schemers, the Great Dragons of Barsaive (see p. 124 of the ***Gamemaster's Companion***), must have their agents in the city of intrigue. However, none of these are known, and it is assumed that they move in and out of the city when needed. These agents are most likely to be the drakes of the dragons, though the drakes may hire other Namegiver underlings.

For his part, Garlthik has great respect for the dragons, and so hopes to escape their notice when at all possible, and would not interfere with their agents in the city, even if he knew who they were.

Other Locales in Barsaive

Garlthik has members of the Force of the Eye working in the towns and notable villages of the province, including Ardanyan, Tansiarda, Denlikiyan, Axalalail, Darranis, Farram, Haven, Marrek, Trosk, Servalen, and even, it is rumored, Glenwood Deep. Each of these towns has a contingent of only a half-dozen or fewer members of the Force of the Eye. None of them is important enough to have a high-ranking member of the Force assigned to lead it, but Glanis Trul makes regular visits to all of them. These gangs are mostly engaged in thievery and espionage, and report anything of interest back to

Garlthik. Because anonymity is scarce in small towns, Glanis Trul quickly rotates members between these towns whenever suspicions are aroused. None of these communities is large enough to have any delegates or agents at work in Kratas.

While the crews in these towns are mainly engaged in small scores, Trul has some of them working reconnaissance on some big jobs. Should these plans reach fruition, he would likely bring in more experienced thieves from Kratas to pull them off.

For example, he has Force members casing Denlikiyan to see if stealth could work where raids have failed to free Denlikiyan's shipwrights of their rumored hoards of gold. A handful of t'skrang and windling pickpockets and burglars ply their trades against the riverboat passengers and merchants among the rope swings and platforms of the hanging city of Axalalail. Similarly, a small group of dwarf and t'skrang members of the Force keep a finger in the weapons smuggling and espionage afoot in Darranis, as well as robbing the occasional merchant caravan.

Small gangs of the Force prey on the traders of Farram, and the questors of Jaspree in Trosk. A gang well versed in magical lore steals magical and alchemical goods from Marrek and gathers information on ancient magical secrets that are bandied about there. Glanis Trul is quietly building up the Force's strength in Tansiarda in anticipation of the great amount of trade that will travel through that town should it succeed in building its bridge across the Serpent. Garlthik's interest in the windling clans of Glenwood Deep is somewhat less obvious. Perhaps he keeps a few members there to recruit new members, as windlings are thought by some to be naturally inclined toward thievery.

Prior to the Therans landing their behemoth near Servalen, the Force of the Eye was deeply involved in the criminal activity in that rough-and-tumble town. Indeed, some of the residents had even hoped that the Force would come to dominate the town, as the Force's order as imposed in Kratas would be better than no order at all. Once the Therans took over the town, shutting down the brothels and taverns (in some of which Garlthik had an interest) and setting up slaving operations, Garlthik pulled out the members of the Force from Servalen. However, he secretly left a handful behind to keep an eye on the Therans, to help the resistance, and to be in a position to regain influence should the Therans leave.

Garlthik, as one of the first Namegivers to have discovered Parlainth, has knowledge of the lost city as great as anyone living. He maintains an interest in the city and its secrets, and so he has a small group of the Force of the Eye stationed in Haven. Thus, many an incautious adventurer can survive Horror constructs and ancient traps in the Lost City only to have his hard-won treasure stolen from his tavern room in Haven. Moreover, the Haven branch of the Force of the Eye also has standing orders to keep an eye out for certain artifacts from Parlainth should they surface in Haven. Exactly what Garlthik wants with these is unknown, but his interest may date from the months he spent roaming the city shortly after its reappearance.

In addition to all of these small gangs stationed in the aforementioned small and medium-sized towns, there are dozens of thieves of the Force of the Eye roaming the province alone or in small teams of two or three. These travel between the larger cities and the small hamlets and villages of Barsaive. They carry messages, steal and fence loot, gather intelligence, and generally keep an eye on the province. Thus, even the most remote small settlement might have a member of the Force of the Eye visit, disguised as a merchant, troubadour or some such, if only once every year or two.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Garlthik has sent a group of cutthroats to sabotage the construction of the bridge at Tansiarda to extort protection money out of the builders. If the player characters are members of the Force of the Eye or of any other shady reputation, they are assigned or hired by the Force to extort the bridge builders. The town elders are willing to pay the protection money, but things become complicated when members of the Wavram niall *of House Syrtis begin sabotaging the bridge themselves. They are opposed to the bridge both because it uses old t'skrang village towers as pilings, and because it threatens their business in transporting goods across and down the river. Thus, they cannot be bought off. The dwarfs refuse to pay protection as long as the sabotage continues, no matter who is perpetrating it. Further, the dwarf engineers are willing to pay to avoid a fight, but as their numbers include some powerful Elementalists, they fight back if their personal safety is threatened. If the player characters are not of a criminal bent, they could instead be hired by the town elders to stop the Force and the t'skrang saboteurs.*



From: *Yezethian Narlanth*
To: *General Ilfaralek, Akarenti of Vivane*

Esteemed General Ilfaralek,

Research in the Undercity is not going well, mainly because of poor accessibility. The Undercity is vast, and a slow, methodical approach has to be chosen so as to not get lost, while still striving to cover enough ground to find all entrances and passageways in a reasonable timeframe. A number of caverns have been discovered, but no major breakthroughs have been achieved. So I beg your forgiveness for yet another stalling report.

However, by chance I overheard an odd conversation while down there. I do not know whether these individuals just used the Undercity as their meeting grounds (considering how far they ventured, this seems unlikely) or if they were looking for something specific there. A transcript of part of their conversation is enclosed. Please note we could only hear them, and then only faintly, so I do not have any information regarding their appearance.. They seemed to talk in a dialect of Sperethiel, perhaps even multiple dialects. I tried to translate the Names they used to the best of my ability: while two of the subjects were only referred to by titles, "K'telan" means "First of Ears" (but can also be a normal Name meaning "Keen Ears"), "Ephran" is only known as a Name to me, but "Syalal" can also mean "sparrow".

In faithful service to the Empire,
Yezethian

K'telan: Give me that report already. If there is anything that might endanger our operations here or elsewhere, I must know it. You cowering fearfully in a corner is not exactly saying much. You look like one of those dwarfs.

Ephran: But... you'll make me go down there again. I mustn't go there again! Mustn't go down there again...

K'telan: Ephran! Get yourself together! Thirty years of training and you lose your cool because of some cave!

Syalal: Revered Watcher K'telan... if you had seen, and seen for the first time... you remember your first time facing a Horror?

K'telan: There's a Horror down there. So? You simply hire some adepts and lead them down there.

Ephran: But we did! We did! They're all dead! They turned into puddles of blood!

Guardian: Puddles of blood and a Horror you say? I have heard of this...

Syalal: Yes, esteemed Guardian. We led the adepts to where we had discovered the Horror's corruption, and let them walk in alone, true to our disguise. We heard fighting. After some time, the adepts returned, but as soon as they saw us, they... fell apart. As if melting instantly. Leaving only a puddle of blood and bits of flesh and bone. And after a few seconds, these turned to dust.

Comrade: Very well, Syalal. I've heard legends of this. Apparently, such a Horror is able to form bodies, even parts of bodies, as to mimic any living being it has ever seen. Such a Horror can fill this copy with consciousness, but a stagnant one only, to roam the world and follow up on the Horror's sinister plans.

Guardian: You make it sound as if it was just a theory, Comrade...

K'telan: The books speak of these. They were the most dangerous type of Horror after the last Scourge, because they would approach people in a Namegiver's guise, using these... avatars... and influencing them to do as they wished.

Comrade: Yes. And the real danger is in the possibility of having many, probably hundreds of these avatars acting at the same time.

Ephran: There's... there's more of them?

Guardian: Quiet! So. It seems none of you have first-hand experience with these. The real danger does not lie in numbers. As the Horror fills these beings with knowledge, they have a much broader scope than a regular Namegiver. When they travel to this world, they will pick a territory to lair in, and bind to it. As their kind feeds off of pain and misery, so does this type of Horror. Only the Horror feeds on even small amounts of pain over a very large area. It has not been observed that they use magic to bind. It may be a mental process—the knowledge of having caused misery seems to feed them. They have to be sure that it was them who caused that misery, though,

so they try to steer the place's fate by sending out their avatars, controlling Namegivers that are in a position to influence the masses, or are making decisions taking effect on people's lives.

Syalal: Are you implying this Horror has been here since before the Scourge, scheming in the underground?

K'telan: The books say they are among the first to cross the Void.

Comrade: Because their powers are so subtle, not requiring too much magic, and their desires are minimal. They do not pose too much of a threat to us, but can easily sway the young ones and the barbarians. They need not steer the daily business of a place, but will intervene at key moments, either taking the role of influential figures or higher beings, rendering bad advice.

Ephran: Passions! Is this... Is this the reason? For this place? To be as it is?

Guardian: Maybe. Although the Horror cannot take credit for all of it, I think. After all, the decision is always up to the one being fooled. And some Namegivers are fools on their own.

Syalal: We must stop it!

Comrade: No. It poses no threat to us. It will not interfere in our doings because it knows that it cannot fool us. This is why it destroyed its avatars when they saw you.

Guardian: Also, miserable as it is, this place serves us well. Not where our work is concerned, but there are other agents of ours active here. And they profit from this lawlessness and the desperation. These two matters are separate. Wait. In fact, I am ordering you to leave this Horror alone, but watch it. And if someone ever makes a move to kill it, try to prevent it if it does not pose too great a risk. We should keep the balance if possible, as long as it serves us.

Syalal: I see. "Only invoke change if it is necessary for you to achieve your goals. What is, is the natural order of things, and the most stable state of existence."

Comrade: Exactly. Let it feed, and it will be content. Now be off, you have work to do.

(Sound of them leaving)

Comrade: Do you think the Horror currently has a hold on any of the more important barbarians of this city?

Guardian: It is likely. We need to find out, even if we do not do anything about it. K'telan, that will be your task.

K'telan: Any other objectives?

Comrade: Try to keep the current order. Do not let the Horror expand its influence, but do not cut off its current ties either, unless the Guardian or I tell you to.

K'telan: It will be this way. Farewell.

(Sound of footsteps leaving in different directions)

Gangs of Kratos



CHAPTER FIVE

There are two kinds of societies formed by Namegivers, those for mutual protection, and those for mutual benefit.
In Kratas, there is only one.
• Pholaan, Throalic Merchant •

The most important powers in modern Kratas are its criminal gangs. Several of the most important gangs are described in this chapter.

THE FORCE OF THE EYE

To truly know one's way around modern-day Kratas, one must understand the gang that controls it: the Force of the Eye. And the key to understanding the Force of the Eye is understanding its namesake: Garlthik One-Eye.

Garlthik is beyond ancient by ork standards, and has outlived every other ork currently known in Barsaive. He was born around the time that Throal sent its first doomed exploratory mission into the world. However, Garlthik was not born in Barsaive, but only came to this province in what would have been late in any other ork's life.

He speaks little of his life before arriving in Barsaive. It is possible that he was born, as many of his age were, in a kaer not yet opened to the world, or he may have been born outside of a kaer. It is known that wherever he was born, it was closer, both geographically and politically, to Thera than to Barsaive. If he was born in Theran lands, he may have been born a slave, or enslaved at some point early in his life. This would help explain his strong aversion to slavery and his stand against the Therans, but if it is true that he was once a slave, he has not admitted this to even his closest friends.

Every ork despises slavery; it's in our blood, no matter if we've been enslaved ourselves or not!
–Gifrad, Ork Liberator

THE LONGING RING

Garlthik came to Barsaive sometime in the year 1452 TH. Previously, he had been working for a Theran Nethermancer Named Mordom Churran. Mordom had been cursed and blinded by his father, but was powerful in the ways of Nethermancy, and able to magically compensate for the loss of his sight by stealing and implanting Garlthik's right eye in the palm of his hand, through which he was able to see.

Mordom had come into possession of the Longing Ring, a magical ring made by Queen Alachia and the magicians of Wyrm Wood before the Scourge, which brought

Mordom and Garlthik to Barsaive. This ring was enchanted so that, when the magic of the world reached a "safe" level, the ring would create in its wearer a great longing for the lost city of Parlainth. The Therans had performed a great magical ritual that removed Parlainth, their provincial capital in northeastern Barsaive, from the physical world to another plane, and also from the memories and records of the world's Namegivers. The ring was part of a complicated plan to bring the city back to the world once the Scourge was over.

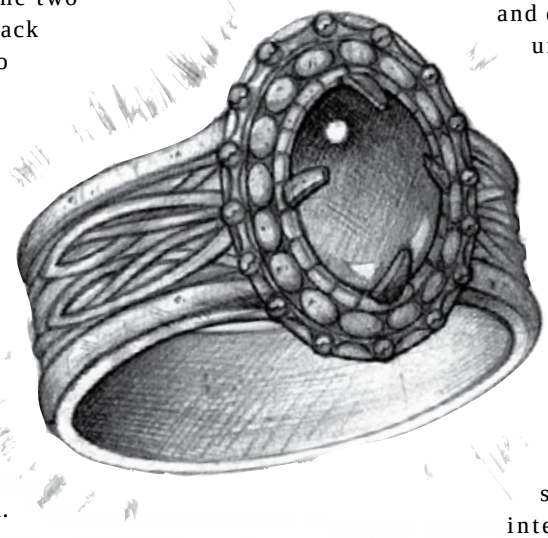
Alachia's motive for assisting the Therans in protecting Parlainth remains unclear; by this time she had forbidden all elves from accepting the Theran Rites of Protection and Passage, and had made her opposition to the Therans unequivocal. Perhaps the citizens of Parlainth offered her something she could not refuse for her help, or her assistance was part of some yet-to-be-understood political plot? Why the Therans needed her assistance, or trusted her after she had made her enmity quite clear, also remains a mystery.

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

Garlthik stole the ring from Mordom and fled to Barsaive to find the source of its longing, with Mordom in pursuit. Garlthik made his way north through Barsaive, stealing as he went, becoming a wanted man in the Kingdom of Throal.

In the village of Thyson, in the red hills of northeastern Barsaive, Garlthik met up with a young human, J'Role, whom he initiated as a Thief adept during the course of their adventures with the Longing Ring. Based on the descriptions of his exploits at this time, it is possible that Garlthik had already achieved Warden status in his Discipline.

After many adventures, the two Thieves managed to bring back the forgotten city of Parlainth to Barsaive, and kill Mordom in the depths of that ruined city. At this point, Garlthik and J'Role parted company, with Garlthik continuing to explore the ruins of Parlainth. He was the first explorer of the lost city and may still have better knowledge of it than anyone else. Rumors abound regarding the treasures and magical artifacts he may have taken from Parlainth.



GANG WARS

Having explored Parlainth and stolen great riches, but being a wanted man in the province, it made sense that Garlthik headed for Kratas, the thieves' paradise of the province. He was hoping to retire peacefully, but found himself reluctantly drawn into the gang wars that were raging through the city at that time. He would have been content to spend the last of his days in the taverns of the city, peacefully living off of his loot. However, covetous neighbors would not leave him be, and he was forced to defend himself and his booty.

After Garlthik defeated Grangor's Butchers, one of the most ruthless and predatory gangs, more criminals gathered around the legendary Thief, seeking his protection. He reluctantly agreed to lead them and created his own gang, the Force of the Eye. This was perhaps the most important turning point of his life, as prior to this he had always been a radical individualist of the most selfish variety of Thief. He was not inclined to be a follower or a leader, or to be loyal to any group. He had, in fact, betrayed his own protégé, J'Role, several times during their time together. Yet Garlthik seemed to have a natural talent for leadership, and his cunning mind lent itself to the stratagems of gang warfare. He quickly overcame his reservations and approached the takeover of Kratas with the same methodical determination and ruthlessness he would have previously applied to a jewel heist.

His first order of business was to take over Hilltop, the most highly fortified and strategically placed neighborhood of Kratas. From here he intended to launch a campaign to take over the entire city, but by this time, the events of the First Theran War were coming to a head; the Therans were poised for a frontal assault on Throal. Garlthik knew that, should the Therans retake the province, they would soon reclaim Kratas, and its days as a thieves' sanctuary would be over.

Thus, he threw his lot in with Throal, even though he was still wanted by its government. He negotiated a temporary truce with the remaining gangs of Kratas and devoted their collective resources to undermining the Theran presence in Barsaive. The thieves gathered intelligence, which they passed on to Throal, and committed acts of sabotage against the Therans throughout the province.

The Therans, unaware of just what Kratas had become during their absence, sent a small force to retake the city. The contingent would have been adequate to cover any comparably sized city of normal Namegivers, but the thieves had honed their street-fighting skills over years of inter-gang skirmishes. They rallied

under the leadership of Garlthik and drove the Therans from Kratas, tails between their legs. Of great dismay and embarrassment to the retreating Therans was the amount of their personal effects and military equipment that had been stolen from them while they occupied the city.

The participation of Garlthik and the thieves of Kratas in the First Theran War won them the gratitude and forbearance of the dwarf kingdom. Despite their continued preying upon the commerce of the province, the dwarfs have not moved against the City of Thieves since. While Garlthik's disdain for slavery is sincere, he also knows that taking a strong anti-Theran and anti-slavery stance also keeps him in the good graces of Throal.

After the Theran war, Garlthik spent years solidifying his hold on Kratas. While he has never completely driven out all rival gangs, he is now the acknowledged ruler of the city, and all others operate in it under the fear of his wrath.

Garlthik was so successful at running the city after the First Theran War that the Force of the Eye had many idle members, with little to do but prey on the citizens of Kratas. To provide something to do for these members of the Force, and to extend his empire, Garlthik began to dispatch gang members throughout the province, to steal things elsewhere and return with them to Kratas, and to fence stolen goods outside of the city. While thieves had always stolen and raided elsewhere, and returned to Kratas to spend their loot, Garlthik made this much more organized, with undercover branches of the Force stationed in major cities and small towns throughout Barsaive. This network also allowed Garlthik to gather intelligence of great value across the province.

THE DEATH REBELLION

The most dramatic application of this intelligence network occurred during the Death Rebellion of 1484 TH. Garlthik discovered a conspiracy involving Therans, and pro-Theran factions in Throal, to assassinate King Varulus III, and kidnap his son, Neden. Neden was kidnapped and dissected while still alive, and then reassembled using Nethermancy, by Garlthik's old employer and nemesis, Mordom. Although Mordom had been slain by J'Role in Parlainth years before, Theran agents secretly exploring the ruins of that city in 1459 TH had discovered his remains. Mordom had been resurrected by his followers and continued to work his evil schemes for the Theran Empire in Barsaive and elsewhere.

The dissection of Prince Neden was part of a complex magical ritual that allowed Mordom to control Neden's thoughts and actions. Mordom planned to use Neden to bring Throal back into alliance with the empire, and then place all of Barsaive back under the Imperial boot heel.

Garlthik discovered this plot, and Vistrosh's role in it, which was to carry out the assassination of Varulus. Garlthik foiled the assassination attempt and faked the reports of Varulus' death that made their way to the conspirators.

> *Vistrosh's role in this plot is rather intriguing. One would have thought such a formerly distinguished blood warden would be able to do a better job. Could it be this information was leaked intentionally and all part of some sinister, long-reaching plot of Vistrosh's or is it attributable more to his rumored madness and the sloppiness that may well entail? Could he have thought of leading on and then sabotaging the Therans to seek the favor of his queen once more, or simply be scrambling to prove himself to the world?*
>
> **—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal**

Curiously, Mordom had been instructed in the mind-control process by the great dragon, Mountainshadow, who then assisted J'Role in restoring Neden's soul and sanity. Indeed, Neden was recovered by Varulus in Mountainshadow's lair in the Badlands. It remains mysterious why Mountainshadow gave advice and assistance to a Theran agent, when the great dragon is a staunch enemy of the Therans. Perhaps he always intended for Mordom to fail, but in such a way as to forever turn Neden against the Theran Empire. If this was the case, he seems to have been successful.

Garlthik had discovered the location of the dragon's lair through his intelligence network (though perhaps Mountainshadow had intended for him to discover it) and tipped off Varulus to its location. While recovering his son, Varulus slew Mordom, for what is believed to be the final time.

When Garlthik learned of Mordom's demise, he snuck his way into Mountainshadow's lair (which was quite an accomplishment in itself), and finally retrieved his eye from Mordom's dead body. He also dismembered the Nethermancer's body and buried the pieces in separate graves to prevent his future resurrection. Garlthik has had the eye, now a pattern item for him, encased in crystal, and keeps it close to him at all times. The eye's long-time connection with Mordom has imbued it with Nethermantic magic, which provides Garlthik with esoteric knowledge and abilities.

Garlthik's participation in the First Theran War and his work against the Death Rebellion have endeared him to Neden and the Royal Family of Throal, such that they are unlikely to ever move against him, despite the mischief his thieves wreak throughout Barsaive. Wisely though, Garlthik keeps his activities in Throal itself very covert, to avoid losing this good will.

Many thought Garlthik's work against the rebels might be the last hurrah in his career, as he was already older than any ork in living memory. Yet he remains alive twenty years after that event, and to all signs retains just as strong a hold

on Kratas and the Force of the Eye as ever. The source of his longevity is the subject of much speculation. The Therans were known to use life-extending magic before the Scourge (indeed, the first Theran Provincial Overlord of Barsaive, Kern Fallo, ruled for 147 years before being recalled to Thera, and he was human). Perhaps in Garlthik's explorations of Parlainth, or in his years in Theran-held lands to the South, he discovered the secrets of Theran life extension. Or possibly his unfortunate association with the Theran Nethermancer, Mordom, and the latter's use of Garlthik's eye, somehow bestowed this mysterious longevity upon him.

Others look to the dragons for an explanation. Great dragons, such as Icewing, have been known to use their magic to extend the lives of Namegivers who serve their purposes. It is whispered that the long lives of the family of Varulus are due to a boon granted to Varulus I by Icewing, in exchange for some unknown favor or simple influence on the royal family.

Perhaps Garlthik was able to steal a potion that grants such life from Icewing or another great dragon. Or, more sinisterly, perhaps such a potion was given to Garlthik by one of the great wyrms, and he is being secretly manipulated from behind the scenes by one of the great dragons, toward its own secret agenda.

There also remains a legend that Garlthik sneaks into the realm of Death every night and steals another day of life. Most do not take this seriously, as Death's imprisonment under Death's Sea would most likely render this unnecessary.

With the landing of the Theran behemoth, *Triumph*, Garlthik has once again thrown his weight behind the anti-Theran forces. He has welcomed agents of the Liferock Rebellion into his city, both to share information and to keep an eye on them. He has also sent supplies and other support to the T'kambras *aropagoi*, so as to counter the influence of the Theran-backed House K'tenshin on the southern Serpent River. Should the K'tenshin gain control of the Tylon River, Garlthik's operations at Daiche would be in danger.



GARLTHIK ONE-EYE

Garlthik maintains a very careful balancing act between his life as a Master Thief, and his role as Magistrate of Kratas. As a Thief, he believes in freedom and cynical self-interest, yet as magistrate he must enforce order and subjugate other peoples' interests to his own, limiting their freedom.

He negotiates this contradiction in a few ways. First, he only enforces the bare minimum of law that is necessary to keep the city from falling apart, such as not bothering the farmers. Second, his continual fight against slavery, Vistrosh, and the Therans is in the service of greater freedom.

Finally, Garlthik justifies all of his efforts to improve Kratas and protect its residents, at least those loyal to him, as being a ploy to protect himself. As a young Thief he would not allow himself to get tied down to any one place, person, or possession. Now in his old age he tells himself that he only stays in Kratas as long as it is in his interest to do so. Despite the hundreds

of loyal followers, his great hordes of treasure, and the years spent protecting his city, he would leave it all in an instant if it became a burden. At least, that's what he tells himself. Believing any differently might bring on a talent crisis.

Garlthik now seems to show every one of his hundred-or-so years. His greenish-gray skin is faded and wrinkled like old parchment. He lost one of his tusks somewhere along the way, so only one yellowed fang sticks out of his mouth, giving him a lop-sided smile. His once-imposing frame is now shriveled and small, and his long hair has turned white. However, his appearance of febricity has not seemed to diminish his talents or his keen intelligence, as more than one would-be challenger to his rule has discovered to their dismay. This has only contributed to the rumors that his survival is because of some arcane magic.

Garlthik One-Eye is a Fifteenth Circle ork Thief.

Game Information

Attributes

DEX: (21): 8
STR: (16): 7
TOU: (15): 6
PER: (21): 8
WIL: (14): 6
CHA: (16): 7

Characteristics

Initiative: 11
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 10 (25) [N]
Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 19 (34) [N]
Social Defense: 15

N These values are used versus Nethermancy spells (see Thread Right Eye of Garlthik, below).

Death: 123[*]
Unconsciousness: 100[*]
Wound Threshold: 10
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 7[**]
Movement: 6

Karma Points: 75/75

* These values have been modified for blood magic
** Garlthik knows the Wound Balance skill

Thief Talents (Knacks)

Astral Pocket [D] (15): 23
Avoid Blow[*] (16): 24
Aura Armor [D] (15): 21
Bank Shot (15): 23
Chameleon [D] (15): 21
Climbing (15): 23
Conceal Object (15): 23
Detect Trap [D] (15): 23
Disarm Trap [D] (15): 23
Disguise Self (15): 23
Durability (6/5) (15): 15
Fast Hand [D] (15): 23
Gain Surprise [D] (15): 21
Gold Sense [D] (15): 23
Haggle (15): 22 (Covet Item)
Impossible Hide [D] (15): 21
Karma Ritual [D] (15): 15
Lip Reading [D] (15): 22
Lock Picking [D] (15): 23
Melee Weapons (15): 23
Picking Pockets [D] (15): 23 (Offguard)
Quick Shot (15): 23
Resist Taunt[**] (1): 7
Second Chance (15): 21
Sense Danger (15): 23
Sense Poison [D] (15): 23
Silent Walk [D] (15): 23 (Shadow Hide)
Slough Blame [D] (15): 22
Spellcasting[***] (1): 9
Sprint (15): 15
Steel Thought[****] (1): 7
Surprise Strike (15): 22
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving) [D] (15): 23 (Attribute Pattern, Ghost Ritual Master, Talent Pattern, Thread Masking, Unweaving)
Throwing Weapons (15): 23 (Improvised Missiles, Pin Up, Placed Throw)
Tiger Spring (15): 15
Trap Initiative [D] (15): 23 (Act On Instinct)
True Sight [D] (15): 15

D Indicates a Discipline talent. (The adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)
* Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Boots
** Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Brooch
*** Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Forest Robes
**** Talent modified by a +1 rank bonus from Protective Amulet

Skills

Acting [A] (5): 12
Alchemy (8): 16
Alchemy and Potions [K] (8): 16
Badlands Geography [K] (2): 10
Detect Weapon (8): 16
Dragon Lore [K] (2): 10
Embroidery [A] (5): 12
Force of the Eye Lore [K] (8): 16
Forgery (5): 13
Gangs of Kratas [K] (5): 13
Kratas History [K] (5): 13
Mapmaking [A] (5): 13
Navigation (5): 13
Nethermancy Lore [K] (5): 13
Parlainth History [K] (5): 13
Passion Lore [K] (2): 10
Read/Write Language (4): 12–(Dwarf/Throalic, Elf/*Sperethiel*, Ork/*Or'zet*, Theran)
Read/Write Magic (5): 13
Scourge History [K] (2): 10
Search (5): 13
Speak Language (9): 17
–(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Human/Scavian, Elf/*Sperethiel*, Ork/*Or'zet*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Streetwise (8): 16
Subterranean Parlainth [K] (5): 13
Theran History [K] (5): 13
Throal Politics [K] (2): 10
Tracking (5): 13
Wilderness Survival (5): 13
Wound Balance (8): 15

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Thread Buckler (Rank 4; Phys 3; Myst 2; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17), Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 6; Myst 3)

Weapons: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 15), 15 Daggers (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 x Flight Daggers (Damage 9; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), 2 x Hawk Hatchets (Damage 11; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes)

Thread Items: Forest Robes (Rank 6; Myst 3; SpellDef +3; Spellcasting +1 rank bonus; Spell Matrix (Earth Blend); 4 hidden compartments in the robe; Detection Difficulty 13; objects can only be removed by anyone other than the wearer with a Good result on a Willpower (13) Test), Protective Amulet (Rank 4; SocDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 rank bonus), 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), Right Eye of Garlthik (Core Pattern Item; Rank 15; The Right Eye of Garlthik grants the following abilities: Astral Sight ^{T} (15): 24; Lifesight ^{T} (15): 24; Orbiting Spy ^{T} (15): 24; SpellDef and Myst +15 versus Nethermancy spells only; encased in crystal; Kept in forest robe compartment), Shadow Bomb (Rank 4; Area of Effect 12 yard/6 hexes from center darkness; Dispel Difficulty 16), Spike Bomb (Rank 7; Damage 18; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes; Area of Effect 4 yards/2 hexes from center; Willpower (8) Test to reform bomb, 1 Strain Point for each subsequent try)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit (At One-Eye Manor), Amulet of the Eye and Crystal Monocle (2 Blood Magic Damage), Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Embroidery Tools, 4 x Healing Potions, Last Chance Salve, Leather Eye Patch, Light Quartz Lantern, Mapmaking Tools, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Orichalcum Pledge Coin (3 Blood Magic Damage; kept in forest robe compartment), Quiet–Fingers Gloves, Quiet Pouch, Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot: Gold earring (worth 250 silver pieces), Gold ring (worth 250 silver pieces), 1,000 silver pieces in quiet pouch and 5 gems (worth 1,000 silver each) sewn into the folds of his clothing on person, stash worth 100,000 silver pieces of various denominations both recently minted and ancient, gems, jewelry, art objects, etc (At One-Eye Manor).

Legend Award: Fifteenth Circle (Group)

Notes: As an ork, Garlthik possesses the *Gahad* and Low-light Vision racial abilities.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense
Twelfth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; +1 Recovery Test/day
Thirteenth Circle: +1 Karma step; Shadow Heal; +1 Spell Defense
Fourteenth Circle: +2 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Fifteenth Circle: +1 Recovery Test/day; +1 Social and Spell Defense

On Garlthik's Gang

The Force of the Eye is Garlthik's gang of thieves, now in the somewhat awkward position of being both a criminal organization and the closest thing to a legitimate government in Kratas. The Force currently numbers at least a thousand members, as well as several hundred informants and other employees of the gang. The primary difference between the full members of the gang and their underlings is that all full members of the Force wear Amulets of the Eye (see p. 235 for more information).

This means that informants are least trusted in the gang, as they cannot be directly watched by Garlthik, but their vital role in informing on the plans of those who wish the Force harm would not be possible if they openly wore their badges of allegiance. Other employees of the gang include servants and guards, who augment the numbers of the Force in patrolling the city. Such guards are always accompanied and supervised by full members of the gang.

The gang itself is divided into a number of different groups based on the functions they carry out. These activities convey different stature within the gang, and an individual may be moved and promoted or demoted between these groups during his time in the Force.

The Watchers

Least in stature are those that see to the mundane matters of governance (which are kept to the bare minimum) that keep the city functioning—at least for Garlthik's benefit. This group includes guards posted on the gates to the city to collect the entrance fees, patrols of the streets and sewers, lookouts posted on towers and walls throughout the city, and sentries posted on Clifftop and in the Old Kaer. Some members of this group also protect farmers in the Greenmarket, in order to maintain a steady food supply to the city. Others collect the fees from those getting water from the elemental water fountains in the Old Kaer, while still others guard the taverns, brothels, and other businesses owned by the Force of the Eye, although hired thugs that are not actually members of the Force, but are always supervised by them, guard some of these. Fully two hundred members of the gang are employed in this area.

The Collectors

Next in the estimation of the Force are the bagmen and enforcers who collect protection money from the tributary gangs and businesses in Kratas not owned outright by Garlthik. Those in the Force of more violent inclination tend towards this area of work, as there are often opportunities for roughing people up. Those of a stealthier bent consider this work to be beneath a true thief. At least a hundred members of the gang work under Morg Kneebreaker in this capacity.

The Fences

Above the collectors in status are those who perform work supportive of the true thieves: the fences who sell stolen goods and ship them out of town to other markets. Also included here are those who provide tools, training, and information to the gangs of thieves with which they ply their trade. The Force has such brokers established not only in Kratas, but in nearly every major city in Barsaive. Less than a hundred gang members work in these endeavors.

The Thieves

Next in importance are those that do the work that many see to be the true work of the gang: theft and robbery. These members may be lone operators, especially those of the cat burglar mindset, but are more often part of smaller teams of anywhere from three to a dozen thieves who work together to pull off burglaries and armed robberies. Some are more inclined to banditry—assaulting caravans, robbing merchant houses in broad daylight, and so on—while others are more subtle—picking pockets, burglarizing houses, or pulling confidence tricks. The former tend to work in larger gangs with more Warriors, while obviously the latter include more Thieves. Garlthik further divides these groups into two classes of skill and experience: those who can practice their craft in the relative safety of Kratas and its nearby environs, and those who are skilled enough to be sent out to towns and cities throughout the province. This second group is not only tasked with stealing goods, but also instrumental in gathering intelligence about happenings in the province, which members send back to Kratas.

As Garlthik's hold has tightened on Kratas throughout the years, he has focused more on sending gangs outside of the city to plunder elsewhere and return those riches to the city. All of these gangs are required to pay a third of their earnings to Garlthik, but he gives them guidance and support, as well as a safe means to fence their loot. At least four hundred gang members work in these groups, with more than half working outside of Kratas.

The Overseers

Finally, above this are the senior members of the Force who oversee all of the aforementioned activities and handle matters of internal security and external diplomacy. Internal security deals with perceived threats to Garlthik and the

ADVENTURE HOOK

When Varulus III slew Mordom, he acknowledged that Mordom had died more than once before, and that the Therans had a network of agents that worked to resurrect him each time. Varulus also said that his forces were working to hunt down these agents and destroy this network. Varulus believed that he was successful at doing so, and Mordom has not been seen since.

However, Mordom was not only a powerful Nethermancer, he was also very resourceful. He left long-term instructions with a group of agents from outside Barsaive province to find his remains and restore him to life after many years had passed, in case his other agents within the province were discovered.

Now Mordom is alive yet again, but he remains blind. He may be able to use another Namegiver's eye to see with, as he once used Garlthik's, but a part of his essence remains connected to Garlthik's eye. He returns to Kratas undercover, possibly using his Theran connections to work with Brocher's Brood, and attempts to steal back the eye. Mordom also wishes to revenge himself upon Garlthik for thwarting his plans in the past, and then seeks to regain his place in Theran society by advancing the Empire's goals in the province.

The return of Mordom is of great interest to Throal, not only because of the danger to the dwarf kingdom, but because his long-term nemesis (and Garlthik's former protégé), J'Role the Honorable Thief, is now the Senior Gatherer of the Eye of Throal, the dwarf kingdom's spy network (see ***Nations of Barsaive Volume One*** *for more information). J'Role, now an old man, may also be connected to these events, as he remains married to Kyrethe, Mordom's sister.*

If the player characters are not capable of confronting Mordom directly, perhaps his agents need Garlthik's eye, and the thread of Mordom's pattern connected to it, to complete the resurrection of their master. In this case, the agents may hire the group, possibly indirectly through Brocher's Brood, to steal the eye, not knowing to what end it will be used. Or, if the player characters are working for Garlthik, then they may be assigned to retrieve the eye once Mordom's agents have stolen it. The player characters will have to race to catch the thieves before the resurrection ritual is complete if they want to stop the Nethermancer returning to life.

Force of the Eye. These targets include not only potential traitors within the Force seeking to usurp the aging ork, but also rival gangs, chief of which is Brocher's Brood. The gang members who work as internal security are known as the Slashers, the enforcers and assassins of the Force.

The overseers also concern themselves with gathering intelligence on the balance of powers within Barsaive, keeping an eye out for any threats to Garlthik's rule in Kratas. Garlthik is aware that both Throal and Thera have claims to the city, and is wary of the expansionist tendencies of the Denairastas of Iopos and their Ishkaratan allies.

The Force is active in Bartertown, though not so much in Throal proper, as Garlthik does not wish to jeopardize the relative good will that currently exists between him and the dwarf throne. The Force has brokers, fences, and teams of thieves active in Urupa, Travar, Vivane, and Jerris. Garlthik has abandoned attempts to get teams working in Iopos after the first team was discovered and horribly (and publically) executed.

Terricia

Terricia is the Supreme Slasher of the Force of the Eye, responsible for eliminating any threats to Garlthik's rule, whether inside or outside of the gang. She is a ruthless assassin, and is quite proficient in the use of poisons and other forms of silent killing. Terricia is a Ninth Circle windling Thief.

As the most trusted of Garlthik's followers, she is generally assumed to be his chosen successor in the case of his death. That he has made her his heir apparent is surely a sign of Garlthik's great trust in her and faith in her loyalty, that she would not be tempted to hasten his departure from this world. Her loyalty is sincere and profound, as Garlthik saved her life many years ago. She is also almost as devoted as Garlthik to the city of Kratas and Garlthik's ideal of keeping it free from outside control, especially the Therans.

Terricia has black and gray wings, and wears leathers the color of night. She wears her pale hair short and spiky and has many tattoos and scars decorating her body. She looks older than most windlings, perhaps hinting at a hard life in her youth, for windlings' appearances do not usually age once they reach maturity.

She has an odd quirk of threatening to kill people around her as a joke. While this can be unsettling to the uninitiated, those who know her well know to take this as a joke. When she actually intends to kill someone, she would not be so kind as to give her target the benefit of a warning.

Bleritis

Bleritis is in charge of Garlthik's personal security. Some may confuse his and Terricia's responsibilities, but Bleritis is in charge of defense, while Terricia can be considered more offensive in her tactics. Bleritis supervises the groups of bodyguards that accompany Garlthik at all times, and inspects the defenses of the Force of the Eye, particularly Garlthik's headquarters and residences. He also tries to discover spies of other organizations or secret societies attempting to infiltrate the gang.

Bleritis began his career as a charlatan Illusionist. He was caught up in the gang wars of Kratas, and quickly perceived that Garlthik's side was the one to be on. Ever since, he has been a useful and loyal follower.

Bleritis is dark of skin, with a bald head and flowing white beard. His piercing gray eyes seem to look deep within a Namegiver's heart, and his stare alone has been said to loosen the tongue of a would-be traitor. It is rumored that Bleritis also roams Kratas in any of a number of disguises, listening for rumors of interest to the Force, as well as whispers of disloyalty. Bleritis is a Ninth Circle human Illusionist.

Morg Kneebreaker

Morg is in charge of the band of thugs that collect protection money from the merchants and innkeepers of Kratas, as well as all of the guards that collect the various fees for entering the city, drawing water at the Old Kaer, and other such activities. While Morg delights at breaking knees, heads, pottery, windows, doors, entire contents of shops—really, anything that can be broken—he has been promoted to his position because he also has the self-control to be polite to those who have kept up with their payments, encouraging the non-criminal community in Kratas to think of this more as tax, and less as extortion. The fact that his underlings respect his capacity for violence also means that he can keep a lid on their destructive urges as well.

Morg has expanded his interests into loan sharking, at exorbitant rates, and with severe penalties for non-payment. While this has proved profitable, it also gives him and his thugs more excuses for working off a bit of aggression against deadbeats.

Morg is immense and rippling with muscle, with larger than average horns. Many a welcher will flee as soon as he sees the tips of Morg's horns over the top of a crowd, usually running right into the arms of one of Morg's strategically placed henchmen. Morg Kneebreaker is a Seventh Circle troll Warrior.

K'tryklen

K'tryklen is a mottled red and orange color t'skrang, and wears numerous rings, bracelets, and necklaces on his tail. He is the Senior Fence of the Force of the Eye. His responsibilities include overseeing the shops on Merchants' Row that buy and sell stolen goods, as well as the front companies that bundle these goods together and ship them to markets throughout Barsaive.

K'tryklen maintains an extensive network of other fences in major cities throughout the province, where he can successfully pass off goods stolen from one city to another. He works closely with Glanis Trul and Sagramon Steeltoe to coordinate these efforts.

The t'skrang is also a questor of Chorrolis and is a leader within the community of thieves of Kratas who follow that Passion.

K'tryklen is a t'skrang Fifth Circle Boatman, Third Circle Thief, and Rank 5 Questor of Chorrolis.



Glanis Trul

Glanis Trul is in charge of the teams of thieves that are employed outside of Kratas, pulling heists and gathering information of use to the Force. Glanis spends much of his time traveling through the province to check on these teams and their support staff. In many major cities the Force maintains safe houses, and brokers who gather intelligence and provide other support for the teams of thieves. These managers remain under deep cover, and can safely remain in place while Glanis rotates teams of thieves between cities if they start to arouse suspicion.

Glanis Trul travels under the cover of a roving Troubadour, using his talents to spread songs and tales of the exploits of Garlthik and the Force of the Eye around the province, especially their forays against the Therans.

Glanis has long, flowing blond hair and usually wears colorful silks, though they are usually concealed under a dark gray traveler's cloak when he is not performing.

Glanis Trul is a Sixth Circle elf Troubadour.

Other Gang Members

Typical members of the Force of the Eye have Thief and Warrior skills. For every five to ten members, there is also an adept of Novice status. Higher-ranking lieutenants are Thieves or Warriors of at least Journeyman status. Other members are Illusionists, Troubadours, Scouts, and Swordmasters. Disciplines other than these are less common. Sky Raiders and Air Sailors are especially rare, as Kratas sees little airship traffic and Garlthik prefers to leave aerial raids to the crystal raiders, in order to avoid conflict with the savage trollmoots.

Typical Force of the Eye Gang Member

"The Force of the Eye is the power in Kratas, and you best not forget it, if you know what's good for you."

"Garlthik could steal the shine off the sun if it pleased him to do so."

"Did I neglect to mention the breathing tax? How forgetful of me. Now pay up."

The mostly ork gang members of the Force of the Eye are non-adept thieves and warriors who serve as the eyes and ears of Garlthik throughout the city by wearing the Amulets of the Eye. These are street-hardened thugs personally selected by Garlthik or his lieutenants to join the Force of the Eye. They are more powerful individually than the typical members of other gangs, and the sheer numbers of Garlthik's Force make them a threat even to adepts.

Attributes

DEX: (13): 6
STR: (15): 6
TOU: (14): 6
PER: (13): 6
WIL: (11): 5
CHA: (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7

Death: 34*
Unconsciousness: 26*
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 6

* These values have been modified for blood magic

Skills

Acting [A] (2): 7
Anticipate Blow (4): 10
Avoid Blow (4): 10
Climbing (4): 10
Detect Trap (4): 10
Disarm Trap (4): 10
Force of the Eye Lore [K] (2): 8
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 8
Haggle (4): 9
Lock Picking (5): 11
Melee Weapons (4): 10
Picking Pockets (4): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Search (4): 10
Silent Walk (3): 9
Speak Language (2): 8–(Dwarf/Throalic, Ork/*Or'zet*)
Streetwise (5): 11
Surprise Strike (5): 11
Throwing Weapons (2): 8
Trap Initiative (4): 10
Unarmed Combat (4): 10

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Weapons: Broadsword (Damage 11), Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment: Amulet of the Eye (2 Blood Magic Damage), Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, 2 x Flasks of Oil, Leather Gloves, Hooded Lantern, Peasant's Garb, Thieves' Pick and Tools

Loot: D10 × 10 silver pieces in belt pouch.

Legend Award: Second Circle

Notes: As orks, Force of the Eye gang members possess the *Gahad* and Low–Light Vision racial abilities.



ADVENTURE HOOK

Garlthik lost his right eye long ago, in his adventurous youth. The loss was more than an injury; Garlthik's eye became one of his pattern items, a vital part of his True pattern. A Theran magician Named Mordom stole the eye and used it to improve the power of his own magic against the ork Thief, but eventually the Theran magician became involved in the Death Rebellion and met his end at King Varulus' own hand.

Garlthik recovered his lost eye in Parlainth before Mordom's death, and has kept it close at hand from then on. Stories tell of how the eye's long association with the magician imbued it with part of Mordom's Nethermantic magic, and how it gave Garlthik visions and insights he had never had before. This wisdom is said to have allowed him to both gain control of Kratas and sustain his life for as long as he has.

The eye, which Garlthik kept in a crystalline container, was stolen recently by an elf Named Kobblad, an ambitious member of the Force of the Eye who has decided to betray Garlthik to Vistrosh in hopes of gaining greater power and prestige when Brocher's Brood takes control of Kratas. Kobblad believes his own legend will increase greatly when it becomes public knowledge that he stole from Garlthik, the Master Thief himself.

Before he can turn the eye over to Vistrosh, however, Kobblad is nearly cornered by other members of Garlthik's gang. In a panic, he secretly plants the eye amid one of the player characters' belongings, in a pack, pouch, or the like. When the Force of the Eye finally catches up with Kobblad, they discover he is no longer carrying the eye. They eventually find out where he put it, and then both the Force of the Eye and Brocher's Brood race to catch up to the unsuspecting player characters to recover Garlthik's eye.

The player characters discover the pattern item in their possessions at some point and must decide what they are going to do with it. Both gangs are ready and willing to kill to acquire the eye, and giving it to either side means making an enemy of the other. Vistrosh's efforts to gain the eye might involve agents of the Songbirds, as well as members of Brocher's Brood. Theran agents in Kratas might also wish to acquire Garlthik's pattern item, should they learn about it, and so the player characters may have to deal with a third potential enemy.

Areas of Influence

In theory, the Force controls all of the city of Kratas. In practice, its hold is not as solid in some neighborhoods as members would like the populace to believe. Hilltop and the Old Citadel are Force strongholds and members have a firm hand on the most lucrative commercial districts: the Temple Plaza, the Stables, the Greenmarket, the Hammersing, Merchants' Row, and the Warehouse District. There are parts of the Scrabbles, the biggest slum of the city, that the Force does not regularly patrol, and when members do enter, it is only in large numbers. Garlthik justifies this by saying it is not worth the manpower to fight over the crumbs with the vermin that infest that neighborhood. The Safehearths and Clifftop are the quietest and least populated neighborhoods in Kratas, and thus escape the Force's regular attention, though Garlthik will send infrequent and unpredictable patrols through even these neighborhoods, just to keep the residents on their toes. While the Force patrols the first levels of the Undercity, there are large parts of its depths that are outside of the Force's control.

The Force owns hundreds of buildings throughout the city. Some of its most important holdings are the Magistrate's Palace and One-Eye Manor in Hilltop; the Old Citadel off of the Temple Plaza; the old Theran Keep on Clifftop; and Melarie's House of Pleasures, the Hard-Earned Coin, the Screaming Basilisk, and Serian's Sanctuary on Merchants' Row. In addition to these, nearly every place of business in the city pays a portion of its income to Garlthik in protection money.

Amulets of the Eye

Though he keeps their origin secret, Garlthik discovered the Amulets of the Eye and the crystal monocle sewn under his eye patch, allowing him to see and hear through these magical items, in Parlainth. These items were originally designed by the magicians of Parlainth as a means to watch out for Horror incursions, and to keep control of a possibly rebellious populace. The triangular bronze plates with an eye carved in the center were to be placed on the tops of columns, pyramids, and other tall structures, so that the magicians could observe the entire city. The city was attacked and ravaged by Horrors before the plaques could be installed.

When Garlthik discovered a cache of hundreds of these plaques and their monocle, as well as a scroll explaining their use, he secreted them away, knowing they would be valuable, but not sure for what. Years later when he became a gang leader, he dug them up and had them fitted as amulets to give to his followers, bonding them to him and allowing him to keep an eye out for betrayal by them.

This enforces loyalty among his troops, for they never know when he may be listening to them or watching their actions. With hundreds of amulets currently being worn, the chances of Garlthik watching any particular amulet are small, but there may be powerful magic working within the monocle that looks for events of interest to Garlthik and draws his attention to them.

Those assigned to work undercover outside of the city are allowed to hide their amulets under their clothing, which blocks the amulets' sight, though Garlthik can still hear muffled sound through them. All others wear their amulets proudly, and are forbidden to take them off without permission. A member discovered obscuring or removing his amulet without permission is suspected of being up to no good, which could result in his death. A handful of the most trusted members are allowed to remove their amulets when going deep undercover in Brocher's Brood or other such organizations that would strip search for an amulet.

When joining the gang, all members swear a blood oath of loyalty to the gang. This special blood oath powers the amulet's magic and bonds the member to Garlthik and the rest of the gang. If a member takes any action contrary to the interests of the gang, he receives a Blood Wound, and the runic scar from it appears beneath the amulet. Garlthik's lieutenants regularly check their underlings for such scars. For more on this oath, see **Joining a Gang**, p. 76. For information on blood oaths in general, see the ***Player's Guide***, p. 123.

Garlthik has shared the secret of the amulets with Terricia, and has shown her the monocle and how to use it, in anticipation of her taking over the gang upon his death.



Rocher's Brood

While it is the second largest criminal gang in Kratas, Brocher's Brood differs from the Force of the Eye in many respects. The Brood is a gang of outlaws in a city of outlaws, and as such, members must keep their activities secret. Consequently, they do not engage in any of the extortion rackets of Garlthik and his tributary gangs. While they do raid and burgle local businesses on occasion, any attempt to establish regular pickups of protection money would expose them to capture by the Force. Obviously, they do not attempt to provide any of the public services that Garlthik's gang provides, minimal as such services may be.

Brocher's Brood has numerous gangs of thieves and bandits, similar to the teams of the Force of the Eye. Vistrosh dispatches these teams across Barsaive, yet he also encourages them to operate in Kratas, especially in assaults against the sources of wealth of the Force of the Eye. Perhaps even more so than the Force's teams, these teams are assigned to gather information as much as they are to steal loot.

The other way in which the Brood differs from the Eye is that members actively engage in slave trading. This alienates them from many of the residents of Kratas, especially many of the Thief adepts, to which freedom is a sacred virtue. However, there are a significant number of desperate and ruthless Namegivers in Kratas who have no such scruples, and will willingly engage in this lucrative trade. The vast bulk of this trade goes to the Therans in Vivane, Rugaria, and beyond. This means that the Brood has regular contact with agents of the Theran Empire, another fact that makes members unpopular with most Barsaivians.

ON WOOD LONGING

Since the Ritual of Thorns–powerful magic that turned Wyrm Wood into Blood Wood–the blood elves are linked to their forest by powerful blood magic. Blood Wood and the elves living there have become interdependent; the elves' blood nourishes the forest, while the forest nourishes blood elf culture and the protective enchantments placed on their bodies during the ritual. This connection has brought forth what is known to blood elves as the Wood Longing, a condition that would keep the elves in Blood Wood even if Queen Alachia would be willing to let them go. Whenever a blood elf leaves Blood Wood for too long, he develops the symptoms of Wood Longing, in three consecutive phases.

The first phase is the Wishing, during which the blood elf experiences homesickness at first, but eventually thinks of Blood Wood more and more, until he reaches the second phase. The second phase is the Obsession, it begins with the thought of Blood Wood completely filling the elf's mind, creating visions of Blood Wood, and eventually urging him to return to the forest. At this stage, almost all who suffer from Wood Longing cannot but return to Blood Wood, and might react violently if someone tries to stop them. If unable to return to Blood Wood, the blood elf eventually enters the third phase of Wood Longing: the Consumption. The longer he is kept away from Blood Wood, the weaker the elf grows, both physically and mentally. The later stages of the Consumption are marked by madness and, eventually, death.

The length of time a blood elf can stay away from Blood Wood and the length of each of the three phases vary, as do the exact symptoms of Wood Longing. Depending on the elf's strength of will, Wood Longing can set in and progress in a matter of months, or it can take years. But it cannot be avoided by any means known to the population of Blood Wood, and of the few blood elves that have left the forest without the Queen's consent, many have come crawling back before a year and a day has passed.

The early symptoms often depend on the elf's upbringing in Blood Wood. His thoughts and, if he develops any, visions, are often centred on places and events of his youth or similarly joyful times. Symptoms of later stages vary less, as they eventually drive the blood elf back to Blood wood with all force–or to madness.

Members of the Brood also engage in assassinations, both to advance the gang's own agenda and for the coin of clients. It is known in certain quarters that a word dropped in the right ear in the right tavern in the Safehearths can hire the expert services of the Brood in eliminating one's enemies. However, some prefer hiring the Silent Shepherds or even the Keys of Death or Hand of Corruption, as they find the Brood unsettling. Further, Vistrosh will sometimes barter his gang's assassination services for obscure favors or services on the part of the clients, which may not be called in for years. Some consider this a bargain, while others do not wish to be beholden to the mad Blood Warder.

Vistrosh also deals in knowledge, and is willing to buy and sell stolen secrets from his network, though he is also willing to barter for favors and secrets from his clients, as he does for assassinations.

Because the Brood is banned in the city, members of the Force of the Eye will attempt to kill or capture Brood members on sight. Thus, the Brood's membership of about six hundred Namegivers can be divided into two groups: the known (to the Force) and the unknown. Known members of the Brood, such as Vistrosh himself, cannot move about the city at will, only in disguise or in areas neglected by the Force. Even with these precautions, they risk discovery, capture, and likely execution by the Force.

The utility of these known members in Kratas is limited. They stage occasional hit-and-run robberies and burglaries against Garlthik's holdings, and kidnap members of the Force for interrogations, before retreating to hidden lairs. Others work in Vistrosh's slave markets. Still others whose identities are discovered by the Force get sent to join the teams working outside of Kratas, though they still risk discovery, as Garlthik has eyes everywhere. Members of the Force of the Eye know about a third of the members of the Brood.

The unknown members of the Brood live in deep cover in the city, hiding as run-of-the-mill criminals, or other citizens of Kratas. Some of these remain passive gatherers of information that they pass on to the Brood. Many of these have spent years infiltrating the Force of the Eye, or other important organizations in town, and will wait patiently until they are given orders to carry out espionage, assassination, or other acts of sabotage. Others live normal lives by day, but meet up with gang members at night to perform thefts or killings at Vistrosh's command.

At least two hundred of the Brood—some known, some unknown—are employed outside of the city, in major cities and other important locations. Some of these work as brokers, and are in deep cover, providing passive intelligence and other support. Others are spies, thieves, and assassins, often traveling from one broker to another. They may also work as couriers, passing along packages of information and items, their contents unknown.

VISTROSH

The head and founder of Brocher's Brood, the Brocher himself, is Vistrosh, a blood elf of the Elven Court in Blood Wood. Vistrosh was a Blood Warder, one of the court magicians and defenders of the Blood Wood. He was also a high-ranking member of the Carithasca *ranelle*, one of the noble houses of the Elven Court.

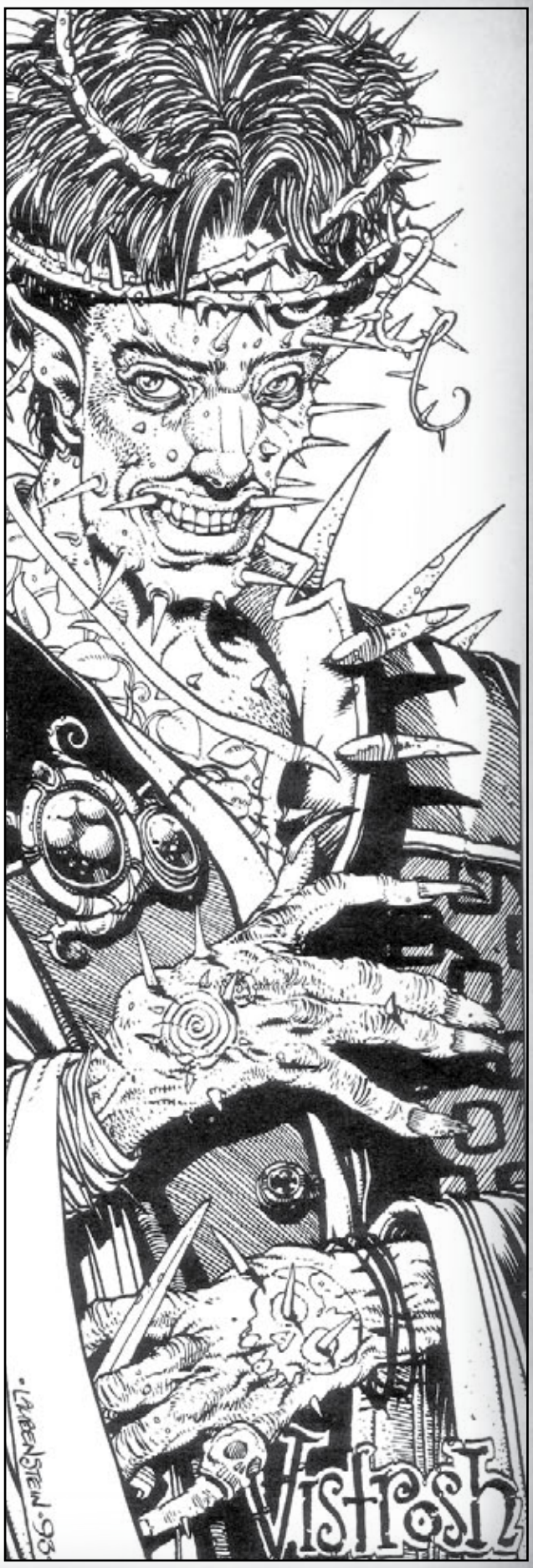
About twenty years ago, Vistrosh was banished from the court and the Wood by Queen Alachia and subsequently disowned by his family. No one knows what rule of elven court etiquette Vistrosh broached, but he has continually sent missives to Alachia ever since, pledging his fidelity and pleading for clemency, to no avail. After his banishment, he journeyed to the city of outcasts, and quickly began to form his own gangs of thieves, and contest with Garlthik for control of the city with a display of ruthlessness that is surprising even in Kratas. He saw an advantage to be gained by dealing in the one area of criminal activity not dominated by Garlthik—slavery—and seized it, perhaps spurred on by a blood elf's sense of superiority over others.

This is the account of Vistrosh's banishment that is whispered in shame beneath the blood-soaked arbors of Blood Wood, and recounted with glee over the ale-soaked tables of Kratas. It is the version that Vistrosh himself hints at to his followers, but it is not strictly true, though only Alachia and Vistrosh know the truth.

The truth, however, is that Vistrosh was sent on a mission by Alachia to form and run her spy network, the Songbirds. His selection for this post may be in part because his *ranelle's* involvement with the black market, of which Alachia must be aware, already gave him important ties to the underworld of Barsaive. Moreover, his family maintains trade contacts dating to before the Scourge throughout much of the world beyond Barsaive, which he undoubtedly exploits for the purpose of espionage.

Much of his erratic behavior only makes sense in the light of his most important motivation, which is gathering intelligence for his Queen, to whom he remains devotedly loyal. His petitions to rejoin the court contain coded information. He moved to Kratas because it is the center of the market in clandestine information in the province. His gang is merely an elaborate cover for his presence in the city, and his intelligence-gathering operations, although members often unwittingly assist the Songbirds. His madness is mostly a ruse (Alachia provided him with the magical means to resist the wood longing) to explain any behavior not in keeping with the interests of a simple gang leader. Even his dealing in the slave trade is to provide access to the Therans, which has been quite successful. Through his contacts with the slave traders of Vivane, Vistrosh has insinuated agents deep within the Theran Empire, the most important target of his espionage.

This also explains his gang's inferior position within Kratas. It is not really a priority for him to defeat Garlthik and take over the city, so he has not devoted much of his energy to doing so. He considers his skirmishes with Garlthik an amusing diversion at most. He sends assassins after the old ork every now and again, as well as staging raids on Garlthik's properties, but these are just to convince



both gangs that he is in the fight. If he should ever mount a serious attempt to oust Garlthik, he might not be guaranteed of success, but he would certainly be able to make a very credible attempt. In actuality, Vistrosh has calculated that it is in his best interest for Garlthik to remain in charge of Kratas. He knows of the Royal Family of Throal's debt of gratitude to Garlthik, and that they will never try to annex the city or clear it of its criminal element while Garlthik remains.

In fact, it would not have been beyond the far-seeing machinations of Vistrosh for him to have pretended to support the Death Rebellion to maintain his connections with the Therans, then let one of Garlthik's agents discover and thwart his plan to assassinate Varulus III. This would have both placed the Royal Family in Garlthik's debt, securing his position as Magistrate (and therefore Vistrosh's ability to use Kratas as a base of operations) and kept the pro-Theran faction out of power in Throal, which would, of course, be to Alachia's liking. Much as she has had disagreements with Varulus in the past, she certainly does not want the Therans gaining a foothold so close to the southern border of the Blood Wood.

Indeed, Vistrosh may have engineered the entire Death Rebellion to ingratiate himself with Queen Alachia once more. His strategy could well have been to undermine the Theran Empire's position in the entire province. He had contacts with the Therans through the slave market, and House Heovrat through the latter's dealing with the criminal underworld of Throal. This likely tipped him off to the pro-Theran faction in Throal, and the very real possibility that they could sway public opinion there into renewing the kingdom's old alliance with the empire. By tricking them into participating in a coup, he flushed them out into the open, aligning their politics with treason, and resulting in execution of their leaders and their abandonment by their Theran backers as incompetent. Furthermore, by allowing the assassination to be thwarted by Garlthik, Vistrosh appeared to both the Force of the Eye and the Therans as less of a threat than he really is, leading them to underestimate him in the future. If all this speculation is true, Vistrosh is surely a master manipulator, and one that may yet earn his place back into the Queen's good graces, if only to use his talents to her own ends.

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

Vistrosh's leadership of the Songbirds also explains his indifference to some of the day-to-day concerns of Brocher's Brood and Kratas. His interests as Spymaster go far beyond the gang warfare of the City of Thieves. The subjects of his intelligence gathering in Barsaive include all of the major political players, especially that of the Therans in Vivane and elsewhere, Throal and Iopos, and the great dragons. Also of interest to him are the doings of the other major cities, as well as the t'skrang *aropagoi*. He also has an interest in Parlainth, keeping an eye on what is discovered in its ruins.

Since the return of the Therans, Vistrosh has been concerned with the empire's doings at *Triumph*, as well as with the rise of the new nation of Cara Fahd (although he views the latter as a positive development, in that it places a potential buffer between the Therans and the nations of Barsaive). Vistrosh is also seeking the young girl Aardelea, recently spirited out of the province to places unknown by the Therans.

However, his interests, as well as those of the Rose Throne, extend far beyond the province of Barsaive. Alachia considers herself the rightful ruler of all elvenkind throughout the world, and so Vistrosh and the Songbirds keep a watch on other lands as well. Vistrosh has sent Songbirds to the Theran Empire's many provinces. He is also responsible for spying on the other elven communities, particularly Shosara and Sereathea, especially as the former is attempting to supplant Blood Wood as the home of the Elven Court. With his experience in subtle elven political intrigues, it is not surprising that he is not that aggressive in his scuffles with the Force of the Eye.

Vistrosh trains and mentors a group of magicians within the Brood. Their talents and spells are clearly of use to the gang's criminal activities, but Vistrosh also has them employed in magical research within the city, particularly in the Undercity.

Vistrosh has the disturbing appearance of all blood elves, but unlike most of his kind, who comport themselves with a practiced, dignified reserve, Vistrosh allows his emotions to run wild. This makes him even more unsettling, as his mood switches capriciously from glee to anger at a moment's whim. This keeps his followers on edge, as he takes his wrath out on convenient targets, and contributes to his reputation for being insane.

As for Vistrosh's Disciplines the gamemaster can choose between the following options:

Option One

Vistrosh is what he seems, in this regard at least. As is generally thought to be the case, he is an accomplished magician, having nearly attained Warden status in both Wizardry and Illusionism in his time as a Blood Warder, as an Eighth Circle Illusionist and Wizard. Furthermore he has studied the ways of a Thief, having just attained Journeyman status as a Fifth Circle Thief. Vistrosh is a *Dae'mistishsa*, or Free Follower, of the Paths of the elven Wheel of Life, and he is currently following the Thief Discipline (see **Namegivers of Barsaive** for more information on the Wheel of Life).

Attributes

DEX: (18): 7
STR: (8): 4
TOU: (13): 6
PER: (21): 8
WIL: (20): 8
CHA: (21): 8

Characteristics

Initiative: 7
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 6
Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 15

Death: 73*
Unconsciousness: 55*
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 7

* These values have been modified for blood magic

Karma Points: 32/32

Illusionist Talents (Knacks)

Dead Fall [D] (8): 16
Disguise Self [D] (8): 16
Durability (4/3) (10): 10
Engaging Banter [D] (8): 16
False Sight [D] (8): 8
Fast Hand [D] (8): 15
Haggle (5): 13
Hypnotize (8): 16
Karma Ritual [D] (8): 8
Mimic Voice (4): 12
Power Mask [D] (8): 16
Read/Write Magic [D] (8): 16
Slough Blame (8): 16
Speak Language [D] (8): 16
–(Human, Human/Scavian, Obsidiman, Ork/*Or'zet*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Spellcasting [D] (12): 20 (Anchored Spell, Gaping Wound, Name Spell, Spell Stacking)
Spell Matrix [D] (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) [D] (12): 20 (Thread Masking)
True Sight [D] (8): 8
Willforce (8): 16

[D] Indicates a 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* (6): 13
Climbing (5): 12
Conceal Object (2): 9
Detect Trap [D] (5): 13
Disarm Trap [D] (5): 12
Lock Picking [D] (5): 12
Melee Weapons (5): 12
Picking Pockets [D] (5): 12
Sense Poison [D] (5): 13
Silent Walk [D] (5): 12 (Shadow Hide)
Surprise Strike (5): 9
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving) [D] (5): 13
Trap Initiative [D] (5): 12

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent. (The adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)
* Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Bracers

Wizard Talents (Knacks)

Arcane Mutterings (8): 16 (Arcane Curses)
Astral Sight [D] (8): 16
Book Memory [D] (8): 16 (Remember Conversation)
Book Recall [D] (8): 16
Conversation (4): 12
Enhanced Matrix (8): 8
Enhanced Matrix (8): 8
Evidence Analysis (8): 16
Hold Thread [D] (8): 16 (Hold Multiple Threads)
Item History (8): 16
Lip Reading (8): 16
Read/Write Language [D] (8): 16

Remembrance of the Wood

Twelfth Circle Illusionist Spell
Threads: 4
Weaving Difficulty: 13/24
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 week
Effect: Remove Attribute Point loss and reduce wood longing below Consumption stage.
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

This spell is an Illusion. Alachia designed a special spell for Vistrosh to counter the effects of wood longing and placed it into a spell matrix staff made out of blood oak. The spell lasts one week, immersing a blood elf in the sight of the thorny woods, of the smells of the pollen and blood of the flora, and of the sounds of the fauna of the Blood Wood such that the blood elf actually feels at home in the Blood Wood. After one week, the blood elf's stage of wood longing is reduced to the Obsession stage for one week before returning to the Consumption stage and any Attribute Point loss from the Consumption stage up to that point is removed. However, for one week the blood elf is inundated with these images, sounds, and smells, and his ability to perceive the real world is minimal. Treat Perception Tests to notice happenings in the real world as Step 2/D4–1 during the duration of the spell. This spell cannot restore a blood elf to the beginning of the Obsession stage, the Wishing stage, or free of wood longing. During the spell's duration, most of Vistrosh's duties as leader of the gang are left to Caleb. The overuse of this spell may in fact be driving Vistrosh mad.

–(Human, Elf/*Sperethiel*, Obsidiman, Ork/*Or'zet*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Research [D] (8): 16
Resist Taunt [D*] (9): 17
Search (4): 12
Spell Matrix [D] (8): 8
Steel Thought [D**] (9): 17
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) [D] (12): 20 (Create Thread Item)

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent. (The adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)
[*] Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Brooch
[**] Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Ring

Skills

Acting A (4): 12
Barsaive Politics K (4): 12
Blood Wood Politics K (4): 12
Brocher's Brood Lore K (4): 12
Carithasca Ranelle Lore K (4): 12
Gangs of Kratas K (4): 12
History of the Elven Court K (4): 12
Kratas Undercity K (4): 12
Read/Write Language (1): 9–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Robe Embroidery A (4): 12
Slave Trade Routes K (4): 12
Songbirds Lore K (4): 12
Speak Language (2): 10–(Dwarf/Throalic, Elf/Sperethiel)
Streetwise (4): 12
Tattooing A (2): 10
Theran History K (4): 12
Throal History K (4): 12
Throwing Weapons (3): 10
Unarmed Combat (4): 11
Vivane Province History K (4): 12

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Illusionism Spells

Astral Shadow, Blazing Fists of Rage, Bouncing Blaster, Conceal Tracks, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Encrypt, Ephemeral Bolt, False Floor, Flesh Eater [M], Form Exchange, Fun With Doors, Illusion, Illusory Spell [E], Light, Nobody Here, Phantom Fireball, Rope Guide, Send Message, Silent Stampede, Switch, Tailor, Time Flies, True Blazing Fists of Rage, True Ephemeral Bolt, Unseen Voices, Wall of Unfire

[M] Denotes a spell currently in a Spell Matrix
[E] Denotes a spell currently in an Enhanced Matrix

Wizardry Spells

Blood Boil, Blood Lost, Call, Counterspell [M], Dispel Magic [M], Displace Self [E], Flame Flash, Ignite, Mind Dagger [M], Multi-Mind Dagger, Notice Not, Safe Opening, Shatter Lock, Silent Converse, Relax, Thorny Retreat, Trust, Vines, Wizard's Cloak

[M] Denotes a spell currently in a Spell Matrix.
[E] Denotes a spell currently in an Enhanced Matrix

Armor: Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Weapons: Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 10), Dagger (Forged+1; Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items: Buoyant Quiet Pouch (Rank 4; 10% weight of items inside), Protective Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow +1 rank bonus), Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; PhysDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 rank bonus), Protective Ring (Rank 4; PhysDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 rank bonus)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Elfweave Robe, Embroidery Tools, Illusionism Grimoire, Grimoire with Remembrance of the Wood spell scribed by Alachia (Vistrosh must grimoire cast this periodically to halt his wood-longing), Wizardry Grimoire, Healing Potion, Last Chance Salve, Quiet–Fingers Gloves, Rope (6 yards), Tattooing Tools, Waterskin, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot: Silver skull ring (worth 125 silver pieces), 780 silver pieces in quiet pouch.

Legend Award: Tenth Circle

Notes: As a blood elf, Vistrosh possesses the Low–Light Vision, +1 Spell Defense, +1 Social Defense, Armor Restriction, Pain Resistance, and Reduced Recovery Tests racial abilities. Vistrosh has 2 Permanent Damage from a powerful blood oath that prevents him from revealing the existence of the Songbirds or his part in that organization.

Discipline Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense (Thief); +1 Spell Defense (Illusionist/Wizard)
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity–only Tests (Thief); Karma on Perception–only Tests (Illusionist/Wizard)
Fifth Circle: Book Mage (Wizard); Glamour (Illusionist); Thieves' Tongue (Thief)
Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower–only Tests (Illusionist/Wizard)
Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests (Illusionist/Wizard)
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense (Illusionist/Wizard)

Option Two

As in so many other things, Vistrosh is more than meets the eye. While it is true he is an accomplished magician, nearly reaching Warden status in Wizardry and Illusionism as an Eighth Circle Illusionist and Wizard, and it is also true he is currently following the Thief Discipline as a Fifth Circle Thief, his past holds a dark secret. In a secretive magical group sworn to loyally serve the Queen, he is a high-ranking Warden Nethermancer having attained Twelfth Circle as a Nethermancer. Those few who know of this group, even inside the elven court, only know it as the Order of the Black Thorn. Vistrosh is using his knowledge of Nethermancy to mentor and teach other Nethermancers within the Brood. This is useful for his espionage activities, but he has also assigned these Nethermancers to mysterious research within the depths of the Undercity. To what ends and what role Vistrosh himself plays in this group are shrouded in nearly as many shadows as his current position as Alachia's Spymaster.

Attributes

DEX: (18): 7
STR: (8): 4
TOU: (13): 6
PER: (21): 8
WIL: (20): 8
CHA: (21): 8

Characteristics

Initiative: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 6
Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 16

Death: 87 *
Unconsciousness: 65*
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4
Movement: 7

* These values have been modified for blood magic

Karma Points: 48/48

Illusionist Talents (Knacks)

Dead Fall D (8): 16
Disguise Self D (8): 16
Engaging Banter D (8): 16
False Sight D (8): 8
Fast Hand D (8): 15
Graceful Exit (8): 16
Haggle (5): 13
Hypnotize (8): 16
Mimic Voice (4): 12
Power Mask D (8): 16
Slough Blame (8): 16
Speak Language D (8): 16
–(Human, Human/Scavian, Obsidiman, Ork/*Or'zet*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Spell Matrix D (12): 12
Spell Matrix (12): 12
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) D (12): 20 (Thread Masking)
True Sight D (8): 8

D Indicates a Discipline talent. (The adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Nethermancer Talents (Knacks)

Animal Possession (12): 20
Arcane Mutterings (8): 16 (Arcane Curses)
Armored Matrix (12): 12
Armored Matrix (12): 12
Astral Pocket (9): 17
Astral Sight D (12): 20
Bargain with Summoned Creature D (12): 20
Bone Compass D (12): 20 (Blood Compass)
Dominate Beast (12): 20
Durability (4/3) (14): 14
Elemental Tongues (12): 20
Frighten D (12): 20
Frighten Animals (12): 20
Karma Ritual D (12): 12
Lifesight D (12): 20
Lion Heart (12): 20
Matrix Strike (12): 20
Netherwalk D (12): 20
Orbiting Spy D (12): 20 (Astral Spy, Orbiting Watcher)
Read/Write Magic D (12): 20
Spellcasting D (13): 21 (Anchored Spell, Gaping Wound, Name Spell, Spell Stacking)
Spell Matrix D (12): 12
Spirit Dodge D (12): 20
Spirit Hold D (12): 20
Spirit Talk D (12): 20
Summon (Ally Spirits) D (12): 20 (Bind Spirit)
Summoning Circle D (12): 20
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) D (12): 20 (Create Spell Matrix Object, Create Thread Item, Talent Linking)
Willforce (12): 20

D Indicates a 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* (6): 13
Climbing (5): 12
Conceal Object (2): 9
Detect Trap D (5): 13
Disarm Trap D (5): 12
Lock Picking D (5): 12
Melee Weapons (5): 12
Picking Pockets D (5): 12
Sense Poison D (5): 13
Silent Walk D (5): 12 (Shadow Hide)
Surprise Strike (5): 9
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving) D (5): 13
Trap Initiative D (5): 12

D Indicates a Discipline talent. (The adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)
* Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Bracers

Wizard Talents (Knacks)

Book Memory D (8): 16 (Remember Conversation)
Book Recall D (8): 16
Conversation (4): 12
Creature Analysis (8): 16
Enhanced Matrix (12): 12
Enhanced Matrix (12): 12
Evidence Analysis (8): 16
Hold Thread D (8): 16 (Hold Multiple Threads)
Item History (8): 16
Lip Reading (8): 16
Read/Write Language D (8): 16
–(Human, Elf/*Sperethiel*, Obsidiman, Ork/*Or'zet*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Research D (8): 16
Resist Taunt D* (9): 17
Search (4): 12
Spell Matrix D (8): 8
Steel Thought D** (9): 17
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) D (12): 20

D Indicates a Discipline talent. (The adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)
* Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Brooch
** Talent modified by +1 rank bonus from Protective Ring

Skills

Acting [A] (4): 12
Barsaive Politics [K] (4): 12
Blood Wood Politics [K] (4): 12
Brocher's Brood Lore [K] (4): 12
Carithasca *Ranelle* Lore [K] (4): 12
Creature Lore [K] (4): 12
Gangs of Kratas [K] (4): 12
History of the Elven Court [K] (4): 12
Kratas Undercity [K] (6): 14
Order of the Black Thorn Lore [K] (6): 14
Read/Write Language (1): 9–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Robe Embroidery [A] (6): 14
Slave Trade Routes [K] (4): 12
Songbirds Lore [K] (4): 12
Speak Language (2): 10–(Dwarf/Throalic, Elf/*Sperethiel*)
Streetwise (4): 12
Tattooing [A] (2): 10
Theran History [K] (4): 12
Throal History [K] (4): 12
Throwing Weapons (3): 10
Unarmed Combat (4): 11
Vivane Province History [K] (4): 12

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Illusionism Spells

Astral Shadow, Blazing Fists of Rage, Bouncing Blaster, Conceal Tracks, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Encrypt, Ephemeral Bolt, False Floor, Flesh Eater [M], Form Exchange, Fun With Doors, Illusion, Illusory Spell [E], Light, Nobody Here, Phantom Fireball, Rope Guide, Send Message, Silent Stampede, Switch, Tailor, Time Flies, True Blazing Fists of Rage, True Ephemeral Bolt, Unseen Voices, Wall of Unfire

[M] Denotes a spell currently in a Spell Matrix
[E] Denotes a spell currently in an Enhanced Matrix

Nethermancy Spells

Astral Horror, Astral Spear, Astral Whisper, Blood Servitor, Bone Circle, Bone Dance, Bone Shatter [A], Command Nightflyer, Constrict Heart [M], Dark Messenger, Dark Spy, Death's Head [M], Detect Undead, Ethereal Darkness, Experience Death, Fatal Food, Fog of Fear, Foul Vapors [A], Friendly Darkness, Friend or Foe, Gateway, Globe of Silence, Grave Message, Last Chance, Life Circle of One, Pass Ward, Pocket Guardian, Preserve, Putrefy, Recovery, Restrain Entity, Restrain Horror, Sculpt Darkness, Sense Horror, Shadow Meld, Shadow's Whisper, Silent Darkness, Spirit Dart, Spirit Double, Spirit Grip, Spirit Portal, Step Through Shadow, Target Portal, Viewpoint, Wall of Darkness

[M] Denotes a spell currently in a Spell Matrix
[A] Denotes a spell currently in an Armored Matrix

Wizardry Spells

Blood Boil, Blood Lost, Call, Counterspell [M], Dispel Magic [E], Displace Self, Flame Flash, Ignite, Mind Dagger, Multi-Mind Dagger, Notice Not, Relax, Safe Opening, Shatter Lock, Silent Converse, Thorny Retreat, Trust, Vines, Wizard's Cloak

[M] Denotes a spell currently in a Spell Matrix
[E] Denotes a spell currently in an Enhanced Matrix

Armor: Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Weapons: Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 10), Dagger (Forged+1; Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Thread Items: Buoyant Quiet Pouch (Rank 4; 10% weight of items inside), Protective Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow +1 rank bonus), Protective Brooch (Rank 4; SocDef +2; PhysDef +1; Resist Taunt +1 rank bonus), Protective Ring (Rank 4; PhysDef +1; SpellDef +2; Steel Thought +1 rank bonus), Blood Oak Spell Matrix Staff (Rank 12; Remembrance of the Wood spell cast by Alachia inside (Vistrosh must cast this periodically to halt his wood-longing)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Elfweave Robe, Embroidery Tools, Nethermancy Grimoire, Illusionism Grimoire, Wizardry Grimoire, Healing Potion, Last Chance Salve, Quiet–Fingers Gloves, Rope (6 yards), Tattooing Tools, Waterskin, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot: Silver skull ring (worth 125 silver pieces), 311 gold pieces in quiet pouch.

Legend Award: Twelfth Circle

Notes: As a blood elf, Vistrosh possesses the Low–Light Vision, +1 Spell Defense, +1 Social Defense, Armor Restriction, Pain Resistance, and Reduced Recovery Tests racial abilities. Vistrosh has 2 Permanent Damage from a powerful blood oath that prevents him from revealing the existence of the Songbirds or his part in that organization. Vistrosh also has 2 Permanent Damage from a powerful blood oath preventing him from revealing the existence of the Order of the Black Thorn or his part in that organization.

Discipline Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense (Thief); +1 Spell Defense (Illusionist/Nethermancer/Wizard)
Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity–only Tests (Thief); Karma on Perception–only Tests (Illusionist/Nethermancer/Wizard)
Fifth Circle: Book Mage (Wizard); Decay and Renewal (Nethermancer); Glamour (Illusionist); Thieves' Tongue (Thief)
Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower–only Tests (Illusionist/Nethermancer/Wizard)
Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests (Illusionist/Nethermancer/Wizard)
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense (Illusionist/Nethermancer/Wizard)
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Otherworldly Control
Tenth Circle: Karma on controlled creature or spirit Action Tests; +1 Spell Defense

Eleventh Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical and Social Defense
Twelfth Circle: +1 Recovery Test/day; +1 Spell Defense

Caleb

Caleb is an old dwarf, who has been with Brocher's Brood since its formation. He began his career as a Thief, but has been tutored as an Illusionist by Vistrosh. Caleb is Vistrosh's most trusted adviser. Caleb runs many of the operations of the known members of the gang, and is in charge of security for the gang's hidden lairs in the Undercity and elsewhere. Caleb is a dwarf Fourth Circle Thief and Eighth Circle Illusionist.

T'rebak

T'rebak is a t'skrang of the Abanos *niall* of the K'tenshin *aropagoi*, or the House of Nine Diamonds. The Abanos *niall* specializes in slavery, and T'rebak uses his contacts within his foundation as the slavemaster of Brocher's Brood. T'rebak supervises the work of the teams of Brood slavers and brings slaves and potential buyers into the gang's hidden slave markets. He also arranges to ship large numbers of slaves to his *niall's* market in their tower at the Sixteen Towers, and to the Theran markets in Vivane and Vrontok.

Not only do T'rebak's contacts facilitate Vistrosh's movements of slaves to the Therans, but they have also allowed him to insinuate his agents into Theran areas to gather intelligence. Further, Vistrosh is aware that T'rebak is a double agent, reporting to General Illfaralek, the *akarenti*, or Theran Spymaster, in Vivane. This allows Vistrosh to feed the Therans misinformation through T'rebak when he so wishes. T'rebak is a t'skrang Sixth Circle Boatman and Fourth Circle Thief.

Kroptark the Immense

Kroptark is, as his Name suggests, an incredibly obese troll. He works under T'rebak in the slave trade. Kroptark however, runs the Brood's trade in *jaraleh*, or pleasure slaves. These are sold to the markets to the South, but can also be "rented" by the hour at the Brood's covert brothel, the Flesh Pit. Kroptark is a cruel as he is large, but he takes good care of his charges, not out of concern for their feelings, but because he prizes their value. Anyone damaging the "goods" will be gleefully stomped to death by the troll. Kroptark is a non-adept troll slaver.



Blagstern

Blagstern is a surly, but begrudgingly respected, ork Thief, who is a fixture in the pubs of Kratas when he is not pulling off thefts outside of the city. He is not only a competent Thief, but, unbeknown to most Kratans, he also coordinates the actions of the unknown members of Brocher's Brood in Kratas and beyond, organizing their heists and exploits. He also keeps an eye out for possible new recruits to the gang, though he will not contact them directly, for fear of blowing his cover, but will instead pass on their identities to the known members who will then contact the recruits.

Blagstern is well paid for his efforts, and his loyalty to the Brood is only because he believes it is in his best interest. He is greatly impressed by Vistrosh's power and cunning, and finds the structure of the Force of the Eye, with their amulets, to be stifling.

Blagstern is a Sixth Circle ork Thief.



Typical Brocher's Brood Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (16): 7
STR: (11): 5
TOU: (10): 5
PER: (14): 6
WIL: (12): 5
CHA: (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 4
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8

Death: 31
Unconsciousness: 22
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5*
Movement: 7

* Brocher's Brood gang members know the Wound Balance skill

Skills

Acting [A] (2): 8
Ambush [K] (2): 8
Avoid Blow (2): 9
Bribery (2): 8
Brocher's Brood Lore [K] (2): 8
Climbing (2): 9
Conceal Object (3): 10
Conversation (2): 8
Detect Trap (2): 8
Detect Weapon (2): 8
Disarm Trap (2): 9
Disguise (2): 8
Engaging Banter (2): 8
Fast Hand (2): 9
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 8
Haggle (2): 8
Interrogation [K] (2): 8
Lip Reading (2): 8
Lock Picking (2): 9
Melee Weapons (4): 11
Picking Pockets (3): 10
Read/Write Language (2): 8–(Dwarf/Throalic, Elf/*Sperethiel*)
Search (2): 8
Silent Walk (2): 9
Speak Language (2): 8–(Dwarf/Throalic, Elf/*Sperethiel*)
Streetwise (2): 8
Surprise Strike (3): 8
Tactics (2): 8
Throwing Weapons (1): 7
Tracking (2): 8
Trap Initiative (2): 9
Wound Balance (1): 6

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17), Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Weapons: Broadsword (Damage 10), Knife (Damage 6; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Disguise Kit, 2 x Flasks of Oil, Leather Gloves, Hooded Lantern, Thieves' Pick and Tools, Traveler's Garb, Waterskin

Loot: D8 silver pieces in belt pouch.



Legend Award: First Circle

Notes: As elves, Brocher's Brood gang members possess the Low–Light Vision racial ability.

Commentary

The mostly elf gang members of Brocher's Brood are skilled non-adept thieves and spies who fight the Force of the Eye and indirectly, without their knowledge or consent, help Vistrosh's Songbirds gather information through infiltration. Lacking the raw power and numbers of the Force of the Eye, Brocher's Brood gang members use their speed and stealth to ambush other gangs. Vistrosh often chooses new gang members based on how well they know the ins and outs of Kratas. Many Brocher's Brood members are in fact ex-members of Ghagin's Grandchildren who survived to maturity.

Areas of Influence

The Brood does not openly hold any part of the city as its turf, but it does control small parts of certain neighborhoods, on a temporary basis. Brood members have to keep a small public presence in the city so that individuals looking for their services (such as buying slaves, or hiring them for assassinations or other skullduggery) can find them. Thus, every few months or so, whispers will spread that a certain pub in the Scrabbles or a block in the Safehearths is the place to go to find Brocher's Brood. Once this becomes general knowledge, and cannot be ignored by Garlthik without weakening his control, the Force stages a raid and drives the Brood members out of whatever foothold they have gained. The Brood members then retreat to their secret lairs and safe houses, reemerging somewhere else a month or so later.

The Brood does control large sections of the Undercity, where most of the known members live, especially in the areas furthest from Hilltop, such as the Safehearths, the Greenmarket, the Hammersing, and the Scrabbles. Brood members can also use the tunnels of the Undercity to access their safe houses and facilities in other neighborhoods. At least one seemingly abandoned and sealed warehouse in the Warehouse District is the location for meetings of the Brood, only accessed through the tunnels beneath.

Slave Markets

Because of Garlthik's ban on slavery, Vistrosh's slave markets must be continually moved about the city to avoid detection. These are usually held in remote corners of the Safehearths or the Scrabbles, though occasionally in the Warehouse District or the Stables, or even, though rarely, in the abandoned Theran mansions on Clifftop. The safest venues, though of last recourse, are a number of hidden locations throughout the Undercity. Most of the Brood's slaves are usually purchased or captured individually, and then sold wholesale to Theran slavers, for resale back in the empire. There are few places in Barsaive where one can own slaves legally, so the number of customers wishing to purchase Namegivers for use in the province is small.

Despite rumors of a vast underground market, there is rarely a single slave market, per se. Instead, the Brood holds captives in small groups of two or three in disparate locations throughout (or near) the city, and only assembles them in one place when enough have been gathered to sell in a lot to a slave trader. Typically, such lots consist of one- to two-dozen slaves. Those seeking to buy individual slaves make their wishes and requirements known to T'rebak, and he arranges to bring them suitable slaves at secluded locations of his choosing. When enough buyers are in the city at one time, the Brood assembles a temporary market for an auction with multiple buyers and slaves, in an attempt to drive up the prices. Occasionally Brood members stage such an auction with their own operatives disguised among the buyers to bid up the price.

The exception to the rule regarding the existence of a regular market is the Flesh Pit. While this market must also regularly move, it does have two- or three-dozen slaves assembled in one place, usually one of the large, Theran-built, underground storage facilities. This is a combination of slave market and brothel that sells *jaraleh*—pleasure slaves—that can be purchased for life, or rented by the hour. It is run by Kroptark the Immense and has a dozen or so guards.

Woe betides every Namegiver who is recognized as a slave buyer; more than one has been lynched by a mob of Kratans. Many people deeply despise slavery and gladly take every opportunity to express this. It is rumored that [illegible] successfully placed a mole in the Flesh Pit crew, but I doubt that.

—Belphegor, Elven Scout

The Temple of the Twelve Passions

This old temple to the Passions in the Hilltop neighborhood is one of the Brood's meeting places. The Force and other Namegivers shun it because it remains dedicated to all of the Passions, including the three Mad Passions. For more on this, see the section on Hilltop.

Blood Spire

The Brood also controls the Blood Spire in the Safehearths, as it provides a path in and out of the Undercity, and a vantage point over the city. The Brood encourages the rumors of it being cursed (see the **Safehearths** chapter, p. 156, for more information).

The Desperate Ones

The Desperate Ones is a gang of cutthroats and brigands, which is comprised of only a few dozen members. They have acquired a reputation for being willing to do absolutely anything for silver. Until about a year ago, they were indistinguishable from any of the numerous other small gangs of thieves operating out of Kratas. Unfortunately, they were not very good thieves, as far as the traditional talents of stealth and burglary were concerned. Indeed, few members of the gang are Thief adepts. Then they hit on the idea of hiring themselves out as muscle in the interminable gang wars of Kratas. They had moderate success, fighting alongside one gang one month, then against the same one the next, but could not compete with the professional mercenaries of the Stables for any of the big jobs outside Kratas.

They still engage in this work, as well as sporadic attempts at burglaries and bandit raids, and any other unsavory work someone might hire them to do.

What has brought them their greatest success and notoriety is the racket they stumbled upon recently: kidnapping for ransom. Frustrated during a raid on a trading caravan that did not carry enough loot for their taste, the Desperate Ones grabbed one of the merchants and rode off with him. After successfully ransoming him back to his company for more money than they had ever seen, the Desperate Ones decided to pursue this line of work full time. They have carefully stalked and abducted well over a dozen wealthy merchants and nobles, and their family members.

This does not sit well with Garlthik for two reasons. First, kidnapping is too close to slavery for his taste. The Desperate Ones would argue, though, that while they do limit their victim's freedom, which is antithetical to most Thieves, they are not *forcing* them to do any work, thus they are not enslaving them.

Second, bringing the victims to Kratas while awaiting ransom has brought some unwanted heat down upon the city, especially from a recent kidnapping in which a minor noble of one of the Throalic merchant families resulted in the house petitioning the dwarf throne to clear out Kratas once and for all. Many merchants would write off stolen merchandise as a cost of doing business, and would not bother to track it down even when they suspect that it will show up in the markets of Kratas. However, these same merchants would go to nearly any length to retrieve a family member held in Kratas, including hiring mercenaries and trying to exert political pressure on Garlthik.

Garlthik has quietly made his displeasure known, and the recent abductions by the Desperate Ones have kept their victims outside of the actual city, hidden in the nearby countryside. The Desperate Ones do not have a set headquarters, or any territory from which they extort revenue. Representatives of the gang can be found in Merchants' Row, the Safehearths, and elsewhere. While they do not have a specific headquarters or hideout, they are believed to hang out together in various shifting or floating lairs. Most notably, it is believed that they have several bolt holes in the Scrabbles and the Undercity where they can hide their victims while awaiting ransom.

Scafali the Desperate

Scafali is one of the most ruthless and thoroughly amoral gang leaders in all of Kratas. While not sadistic or needlessly cruel, he has no scruples about engaging in any activity that will benefit him. Surprisingly, rumors suggest that prior to his engaging in a life of crime, Scafali was a respectable craftsman in Urupa. He is known to have summarily killed one of his gang members who asked about his past, and specifically what happened that caused him to change his way of life.

Scafali still wears the black cloak and leathers of a Thief, even though he has now surpassed himself as a Thief in his Warrior Discipline. Scafali is a human Third Circle Thief and Fourth Circle Warrior.

Unctuous Nurm

Nurm is the Desperate Ones' negotiator and broker. He handles not only deals with those who would like to hire the group for dirty work, but also the trading of ransom for victims. Nurm fancies himself a charmer, and wears fancy, if worn and dirty, Throalic fashions. He uses his Illusionist powers to escape from the wrathful, who would like to follow him to the Desperate Ones and their captives. Nurm is a Third Circle dwarf Illusionist.

Typical Desperate Ones Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (16): 7
STR: (14): 6
TOU: (14): 6
PER: (11): 5
WIL: (9): 4
CHA: (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6

Death: 36
Unconsciousness: 28
Wound Threshold: 10
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6
Movement: 6

Skills

Acting [A] (2): 7
Acrobatic Strike (2): 9
Avoid Blow (3): 10
Climbing (2): 9
Desperate Ones Lore [K] (2): 7
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 7
Melee Weapons (3): 10
Read/Write Language (1): 6–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 9
Speak Language (2): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic, Ork/*Or'zet*)
Streetwise (2): 7
Surprise Strike (2): 8
Throwing Weapons (3): 10
Unarmed Combat (2): 9

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17), Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Weapons: Bola (Damage 9; Range 12–24 yards/6–12 hexes; Entangle 9), Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Mace (Damage 10), Net (Size 6; Range 6–12 yards/3–6 hexes; Entangle 10), Sap (Damage 7)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Black Traveler's Garb (w/Hooded Mask)

Loot: D6 silver pieces in belt pouch.

Legend Award: First Circle

Notes: As orks, Desperate Ones gang members possess the *Gahad* and Low–Light Vision racial abilities.

Other Gang Members

Other Desperate Ones may be low-Circle Warriors, Sky Raiders, Scouts, or Air Sailors, though most are non-adepts. While of the fighting Disciplines, they think of themselves as a criminal gang, and so have a smattering of Thieves' skills, and prefer low-encumbrance armors, such as leather. They also wear dark clothing and hooded cloaks, as do many residents of Kratas.

Adventure Hook

A young member of one of the ship building companies of Jerris has been kidnapped by the Desperate Ones. The group has been hired to deliver the ransom of several thousand silver pieces, but the player characters are allowed to keep the ransom for themselves if they can kill the kidnappers instead, as long as they return the child safely as well. This is a good scenario to draw a group of adventurers to Kratas who might not otherwise find themselves there, such as a group of respectable non-Thieves.

Alternatively, if the group is in Kratas and of a more seedy reputation, the player characters are hired by the Desperate Ones to pick up the money from the representatives of the kidnapped family. The Desperate Ones are using the characters as go-betweens to avoid the scrutiny of the Force of the Eye. Unctuous Nurm does not tell the group what the money is for, though the person handing over the ransom does. Should the player characters have a crisis of conscious and attempt to save the victim and return the money, they may do so, but they will of course earn the enmity of the Desperate Ones. They might think that the best thing they can do at this point is bring about the safe transfer of the captive. Unbeknownst to the group or the Desperate Ones, the family of the captive has also hired Thront and Urranum (see the ***Safehearths*** *chapter, p. 158) to rescue its loved one. The bounty hunters do not care whether the player characters have been duped into assisting with the kidnapping or not, and attempt to kill them if need be, to free the captive.*



Protection Gangs

These gangs, while engaging in theft and robbery, get most of their money by demanding protection money from the people who live and work within their territories. They fight amongst themselves to expand their territories and thus the number of Namegivers off whom they can leech. These gangs each limit their activities to primarily one specific neighborhood or another.

Rangor's Reavers

Rangor's Reavers number about eighty Namegivers, and they control the southwestern section of the Scrabbles. They extort protection from those who live in their neighborhood, and fight with the neighboring gangs. They are a tributary gang of the Force of the Eye, paying part of their earnings to the Force in exchange for the right to control their neighborhood. They also trick the locals into racking up debts for food and water, and then force them to work these off over a long period of time. Their symbol is the dwarf symbol for the letter "R," which they paint on their cloaks and buildings in their territory.

Rangor is a disarmingly charming and affable old ork. He runs the Reavers out of his tavern, Rangor's Rest, in the southwestern section of the Scrabbles. Unlike the other inns in the Scrabbles, his has a large and welcoming, if crudely painted, sign over the usually open door. Strangers are actually welcome in Rangor's, though any obviously wealthy ones will be unceremoniously mugged. Rangor himself greets those who appear down on their luck or particularly naïve, and invites them to sit by the roaring fire. Rangor will push plates of wholesome, simple food and mugs of ale into their hands. If a recipient of this generosity asks what he will be charged, Rangor tells him not to worry about it. He offers such people a place to sleep for the night, and invites them to spend the rest of the evening drinking and swapping tales with the gang members around the fire.

When these unlucky victims awaken the next morning, they typically find all of their valuables stolen, and Rangor presenting them with a greatly inflated bill for the previous night's lodging and board, usually ten silver pieces or more. He insists that this is the going rate in Kratas, and insists that the rubes work off the money owed. Rangor also requires these people to stay in one of the gang's houses, and continues to charge them for food, water, and room. Rangor is still charming and tries to persuade the victims that he is doing them a favor by making this arrangement. The victims will never be able to work their way out of debt, though, and will be forced into virtual slavery.

These victims are assigned to one of the houses or other taverns owned by the gang, and start their indenture by doing the worst of the manual labor: mucking out privies and such. All the time the gang subjects them to brutal abuse. After a few weeks of this they may be sent to accompany a few of the gang as they shake down the locals. This continues until the gang gets bored, at which point Rangor offers the indebted one last chance to square things: if he does one last job, all debt will be forgiven. This is usually to kill a member of one of the rival gangs in the Scrabbles. The gang then leads the poor unfortunate to the border of the other gang's territory, and shoves him in, armed only with a knife. Most are quickly killed by the rival gang, though a few have actually succeeded in their task and survived. Most of these have then tried to flee the city, though a handful have returned to Rangor to become full members of the gang. Rangor may have as many as half a dozen such "servants" at any one time, but he is careful not to keep any one too long, and to keep careful track of their debts owed, to avoid any accusations of violating Garlthik's ban on slavery.

In addition to this scam, Rangor's gang collects protection money from the residents of its section of the Scrabbles, and commits petty thefts throughout Kratas. Gang members also keep running feuds with most of the other gangs of the Scrabbles, but are careful not to antagonize any one gang too much.

Rangor

Rangor keeps his fiery red hair long and in braids. He wears simple clothing and a disarming smile. He has the air of a well-meaning older brother or uncle about him.

Rangor is a non-adept ork gang leader.

Typical Rangor's Reavers Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (14): 6
STR: (12): 5
TOU: (13): 6
PER: (12): 5
WIL: (7): 4
CHA: (9): 4

Characteristics

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

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5
Movement: 6

Skills

Avoid Blow (2): 8
Extortion [K] (2): 7
Fast Hand (2): 8
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 7
Haggle (2): 6
Melee Weapons (3): 9
Painting [A] (2): 6
Picking Pockets (2): 8
Rangor's Reavers Lore [K] (2): 7
Read/Write Language (1): 6–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 8
Speak Language (2): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)
Streetwise (2): 7
Surprise Strike (2): 7
The Scrabbles [K] (2): 7
Throwing Weapons (1): 7
Unarmed Combat (2): 8

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17), Padded Cloth (Phys 2)

Weapons: Dwarf Sword (Damage 9), Knife (Damage 6; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes), Sap (Damage 6)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, 2 × Flasks of Oil, Leather Gloves, Hooded Lantern, Painting Tools, Peasant's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot: D6 copper pieces in belt pouch.

Legend Award: First Circle

Commentary

The mostly human gang members of Rangor's Reavers are non-adepts who have been conned by Rangor into owing him for as long as his life continues. Many are masochists who have been humiliated, beaten, and tortured, and yet still return to Rangor to serve him even when freedom by fleeing was a possibility. Their debt to Rangor has made them poor, resulting in them having inferior equipment to many of the other gangs.

THE BLOODY FIST

Members of the Bloody Fist pride themselves on their toughness and skill at unarmed combat, shunning weapons and armor. They also pay a percentage of what they extort from those in their turf as tribute to the Force of the Eye. They number only about sixty Namegivers, but they are some of the toughest fighters in town. Their symbol, a bloody fist, is drawn on the walls of their territory, though sometimes actual severed fists are nailed to walls or worn on cords around their necks.

The Bloody Fist controls the central area of the Scrabbles, but members also roam throughout the Scrabbles in small gangs looking for victims. Members of this brutal gang of sadistic thugs take as much delight in beating their victims as in taking their money. They have turned a disadvantage–their lack of good arms and armor–into a source of pride, as they disdain weapons in favor of unarmed combat.

An extremely broad and muscular dwarf Named Waliut leads the Bloody Fist. He is a bully of the worst kind, but a master of unarmed combat, and maintains control of his band of mostly orks and trolls by having bested most of them in fights. In addition to muggings and extortion, the Bloody Fist runs fights in its headquarters, the Hole. Formerly a large two-story house, the first floor has collapsed in the center, revealing an empty, stone-walled chamber in the cellar in which fighters compete.

There is usually at least a few fights in the pit every night, with members of the Bloody Fist fighting each other, as well as outsiders. Much drinking, shouting, and drumming on the floorboards by the gang usually accompanies these fights. Sometimes members drag someone in from the streets and force him to fight until he is defeated. The fights usually only last until unconsciousness, however, and the defeated is usually dumped outside the clubhouse.

Some Namegivers seek out the fights as an opportunity to test their mettle, and earn some money. No prize money is offered, but the fights are bet on heavily, and a good fighter with some money to stake could make out well. However, the fights are not open to just anyone, and one needs to safely make one's way through the Scrabbles. Also, the Bloody Fist is first and foremost a criminal gang, not a sporting club, and members have no compunction against merely mugging a potential fighter and taking his



ADVENTURE HOOK

Vyri, the eldest daughter of the ork baker Asram, has been missing for a week. The desperate baker hires the player characters to find her and bring her back to him. He knows that she spent a lot of time with Tsanjal Firehead, whom Asram despises as "untrustworthy, greedy, and lazy". He knows that the young elf lives in an old house in the Scrabbles, where the group eventually finds him. He denies knowing Vyri, but tells the truth if pressed.

Tsanjal works for Rangor's Reavers; his duty is to bring new recruits to Rangor. Vyri fell in love with Tsanjal, on which he prayed to convince her to join the Reavers. The player characters now have to deal with the gang to bring her back to her father...

ADVENTURE HOOK



While wandering through the Scrabbles, the group is surrounded by over two dozen of the Forsaken. Rather than attack, the Forsaken demand the player characters hand over all of their valuables. If the group fights back, the Forsaken attack to stun. After the player characters are subdued, or if they give in without a fight, the Forsaken make the group an offer: they will return the group's valuables if the adventurers do a little job for them. If the player characters have acquired a reputation for doing dirty work, however, the gang may forgo the ambush and just approach them with a straightforward job offer.

The Forsaken are attempting to move in on the territory of Rangor's Reavers in the southwestern section of the Scrabbles. Central to the Reavers' control of that area is a well that the Reavers charge the residents to use. The Forsaken want to poison the well, both to kill off some of the Reavers' members, and to deprive them of support and income from the neighborhood.

The Forsaken keep most of the group and valuables hostage, and send some of the group to poison the well. They explain that the Reavers know all the members of their gang, so they need outsiders to pose as new residents seeking to buy water. The Forsaken gleefully rough up the player characters to make them appear more like the down-on-their-luck types that live in the Scrabbles. The Reavers are a tributary gang to the Force of the Eye, though the Forsaken do not reveal this information to the group.

The Reavers keep a twenty-four-hour-a-day watch on the well, so the Forsaken give the chosen player characters a clay water pitcher, the inside of which has been coated with a slow-acting poison. The characters are instructed to approach the well, ask to fill the pitcher, and then stumble and drop the pitcher into the well. The character doing this should make appropriate Action Tests to pull this off convincingly. If he fails, the guard becomes suspicious and forces the player characters to drink the water from the well. The well is in the heart of the Reavers' territory, directly in front of Rangor's Rest, so the guard can summon a large number of reinforcements nearly instantly. The poison is slow acting, and has no immediate effect.

After twenty-four hours however, the poison does take effect, killing roughly half of the Reavers, as well as several dozen of the residents of that part of the Scrabbles. The Forsaken have no antidote to this poison, but players may be able to find such an antidote in other parts of the city. After the poison takes effect, the Forsaken invade the Reavers' territory and take control of it, killing off most of the Reavers. The Forsaken then release the hostages and their valuables with gratitude.

Rangor survives however, and flees the Scrabbles, taking refuge with Garlthik. While Garlthik does not care particularly much about the Reavers, the frontal assault by the Forsaken against his interests cannot be ignored without losing face. This leads to Garlthik sending the Force of the Eye into the Scrabbles, and a protracted gang war against the Forsaken that lasts several months. He also loans Rangor some of his heavy hitters to hunt down the people who poisoned the well, a description of whom was given to Rangor by the well guard before he died.

Rather than poisoning the well, the chosen player characters might attempt to go to Garlthik with the poison pitcher and the information about the Forsaken's plans. The Forsaken have one of their number tailing the player characters, so unless the player characters spot him and take active measures to lose the tail, the Forsaken are informed of any such attempts, and try to kill the hostages. If the players do succeed in contacting Garlthik or one of his high-ranking subordinates, they receive instructions to go ahead with the plan after removing the poison from the pitcher. Garlthik then instructs the Reavers to fake the deaths of a number of their members, and moves several members of the Force of the Eye into the Scrabbles. They set up with the Reavers an elaborate ambush of the Forsaken when they attempt to move into the Reavers' territory. The players, now in the good graces of the Forsaken are told by Garlthik to accompany them as they invade the Reavers, and to turn on them as soon as the ambush is sprung. The ambush is a success, and wipes out much of the Forsaken. Philank survives, however, and though he lies low for several months, his memory is long, and the player characters will have acquired an enemy for life.

money for themselves. Thus, would-be pit fighters or spectators are best advised to come only if accompanied by well-armed bodyguards.

The one exception to this is the Force of the Eye, to whom the Fist pays protection. Members of the Force of the Eye are allowed to pass safely through the Fist's territory, and often come to compete in, bet on, or watch the fights. Wealthy members of the Force or other powerful residents of Kratas sometimes sponsor promising fighters with cash for the bets and safe passage to the Hole. Their patronage usually nets them half of their fighters' winnings. While Garlthik is not enthusiastic about the fights, he encourages some members of the Force to attend just to keep an eye on the Bloody Fist.

A few months ago, a gigantic obsidiman Named Urmunn showed up unexpectedly at the Hole, seeking membership in the Bloody Fist. He quickly bested all of the Fist's toughest fighters, though he has yet to fight Waliut. He has said very little since his first day, and has revealed nothing about his past or his origins. Unlike most of the gang, he appears to take no vicious pleasure in beating others, but is coldly unemotional while devastating his foes. Neither has he shown any ambitions to take over the gang, which is a relief to Waliut.

Some of the older members, including Waliut, wear the amputated fists of their defeated enemies on cords around their necks as trophies.

Waliut

Waliut is nearly as broad as he is tall. He wears his jet-black hair and beard trimmed short, so no one will grab them in the Hole. He wears the giant fist of a troll, nearly as big as his own head, on a cord around his neck, though he removes this prior to entering the pit. His nose has been flattened numerous times, and he is missing several teeth.

Waliut is a Fifth Circle dwarf Warrior.

Urmunn

Urmunn is an enormous obsidiman, nearly nine feet tall, whose skin has a deep reddish, sandstone appearance, unknown among the obsidimen of Barsaive. This suggests his Liferock is from far beyond the province. His skin is also deeply gouged with several giant scars that appear to be from claws of some sort. He will not answer any questions as to the origins of these scars.

Urmunn is a Fourth Circle obsidiman Purifier.

Typical Bloody Fist Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (15): 6
STR: (16): 7
TOU: (16): 7
PER: (10): 5
WIL: (13): 6
CHA: (11): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7

Death: 39
Unconsciousness: 31
Wound Threshold: 11
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7*
Movement: 6

* Bloody Fist gang members know the Wound Balance skill

Skills

Avoid Blow (3): 9
Bloody Fist Lore [K] (2): 7
Body Painting [A] (2): 7
Extortion [K] (2): 7
Detect Weapon (3): 8
Fast Hand (3): 9
Games of Chance [K] (2): 7
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 7
Maneuver (3): 9
Picking Pockets (3): 9
Read/Write Language (1): 6–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
Streetwise (2): 7
Swift Kick (3): 9
The Scrabbles [K] (2): 7
Unarmed Combat (4): 10
Wound Balance (2): 9

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: None

Weapons: None

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Painting Tools, Peasant's Garb

Loot: D4 silver pieces in belt pouch.

Legend Award: First Circle

Notes: As t'skrang, Bloody Fist gang members possess the Tail Combat racial ability.

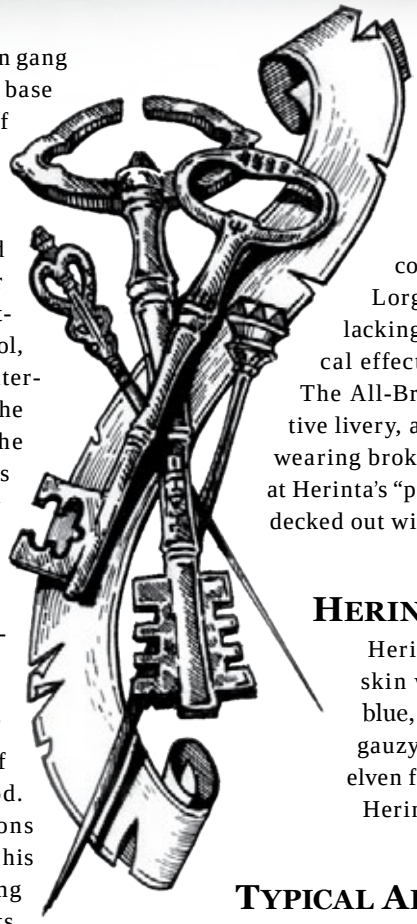
Commentary

The gang members of the Bloody Fist are non-adept warriors skilled in using their fists, kicks, and tail attacks to fight opponents in the Hole and rival gang members, and beat people of the Scrabbles senseless and then rob them when they fall unconscious. They disdain those who use weapons, and always attack those who wield weapons first in combat.

All-Breakers

The All-Breakers number about seventy-five, and control the northern section of the Scrabbles, though they have recently expanded their extortion racket into parts of nearby neighborhoods. They are also a tributary gang to the Force, but their ambitions to expand their territory are causing some friction. They do not currently mark their territory with a symbol.

The All-Breakers began as a protection gang in the Scrabbles and still maintain their base of operations in the northern section of that neighborhood. However, their leader, an ambitious young elf Named Herinta, has realized that the proceeds that can be bled from the impoverished of the Scrabbles are very limited. After poisoning the former leader, a dimwitted ork Named Lorg, and taking control, she has recently expanded the gang's interests into the more prosperous areas of the Hammersing, the Safehearths, and the Warehouse District. The All-Breakers specialize in the destruction of property and ruthlessly destroy the inventories, and even the buildings of businesses that refuse to pay them protection.



They continue to pay Garlthik protection to be allowed to work, although his original agreement with Lorg, while not expressly forbidding expansion out of the Scrabbles, was understood by both of them to be limited to that neighborhood. He is concerned that Herinta's ambitions will begin to step on the toes of some of his gang's extortion efforts. So far her gang has preyed only on newer establishments, so she has not taken money directly out of the pockets of the Force of the Eye, and Garlthik continues to receive his percentage. However, there is some grumbling in the Force of the Eye about her efforts, and Garlthik has dropped suggestions to her that she consider further expansion outside of Kratas. Herinta has either missed these hints entirely or chosen to ignore them.

Herinta is losing her affection for Garlthik as well. Several of her enforcers were recently wiped out by a contingent of Deterannis' Swords hired by a group of merchants to protect their warehouses. The merchants had refused to pay her protection and she had sent her goons to destroy their goods. She protested this resistance to Garlthik and was shocked when he was unmoved by her complaints. She had mistaken the nature of her arrangement, thinking that her payments to Garlthik secured for her his support in her efforts, rather than merely assuring his non-interference. Garlthik, for his part, has little respect for someone who cannot fight her own battles. It is this sort of blunder that has deterred Garlthik from enlisting the otherwise promising Herinta into the Force of the Eye.

Herinta also has social ambitions that match her professional ones. She grew up an uneducated street urchin, but aspires to the grace and poise of an elven noble. To this end she has purchased a number of fashionable gowns and fine elven jewelry. Unfortunately, she maintains the coarse manners and language of her upbringing, and cuts quite the ridiculous figure in her finery, at least to those with the refinement to appreciate her gross lack of proper etiquette. She has impressed the ignorant thugs of her gang, however, and that, combined with the increase in their profits under her rule, has earned her their devotion. She remains a ruthless and dangerous woman.

In her quest to improve the gang, she has considered changing its Name, as she thinks Lorg's Name, the All-Breakers, is simple and lacking class. However, she is wary of the magical effects that re-Naming the gang might have. The All-Breakers do not currently wear a distinctive livery, as Herinta abandoned Lorg's tradition of wearing broken bones as decoration. They congregate at Herinta's "palace": an old boarding house that she has decked out with gaudy baubles and chintzy fabrics.

Herinta

Herinta is a tall, striking elf with pale white skin with a hint of green to it. Her hair is icy blue, as are her eyes. She wears long, flowing, gauzy gowns that she thinks are the height of elven fashion, even when wearing her armor.

Herinta is a Fourth Circle elf Thief.

Typical All-Breakers Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (14): 6
STR: (18): 7
TOU: (13): 6
PER: (13): 6
WIL: (8): 4
CHA: (9): 4

Characteristics

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

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 6

Skills

All Breakers Lore [K] (2): 8
Arson [K] (2): 8
Avoid Blow (2): 8
Bone Carving [A] (1): 5
Climbing (2): 8
Extortion [K] (2): 8
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 8
Melee Weapons (3): 9
Picking Pockets (2): 8
Read/Write Language (1): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 8
Speak Language (2): 8–(Dwarf/Throalic, Ork/*Or'zet*)
Streetwise (2): 8

Surprise Strike (2): 8
The Scrabbles [K] (2): 8
Throwing Weapons (2): 8
Unarmed Combat (2): 8

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Leather (Phys 3)

Weapons: Broadsword (Damage 12), Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Climbing Kit, 4 x Flasks of Oil, Leather Gloves, Hooded Lantern, Peasant's Garb, Thieves' Picks and Tools, 2 x Torches

Loot: D6 silver pieces in belt pouch

Legend Award: First Circle

Notes: As orks, All-Breakers gang members possess the *Gahad* and Low–Light Vision racial abilities.

Commentary

The mostly ork gang members of the All-Breakers are non-adept thieves and warriors who use their fists and blades to get protection money from merchants. If this fails, they sometimes resort to arson and destroy warehouses and merchant inventories.

THE FORSAKEN

The Forsaken control the southeastern section of the Scrabbles and have been expanding into some of the Flop Stalls of the Stables. They charge protection money from those living under their rule. However, they do not pass any of this on to Garlthik, as they have declared their enmity to the Force of the Eye.

As the symbol of a gang composed of thieves and thugs who for one reason or another were thrown out of the Force of the Eye or were denied membership in Garlthik's gang, the symbol of the Forsaken is an eye with a dagger thrust into it, symbolizing the members' oath of enmity to Garlthik. The Forsaken mark their territory with this symbol, and sometimes wear it painted on their cloaks or armor as a sign of bravado. They are not foolish enough to flaunt this sign openly outside of their own territory, and usually only wear it in their territory when they are in large groups.

A human Thief, Philank the Forsaken, who was once a member of the Force of the Eye, leads the Forsaken. Why he was thrown out of the Force remains a secret known only to himself and Garlthik, but Philank continues to harbor a bitter grudge against Garlthik, and dreams of usurping the old ork's control of Kratas. While not a serious threat to Garlthik, Philank does control significant parts of the Scrabbles, and is pushing into parts of the Stables. Philank collects protection money from the unfortunates who live within his territory, and sends his thieves to steal throughout the city. When outside of their home territory, however, the Forsaken don't advertise their affiliation.

Members of the Force of the Eye generally regard the Forsaken with disdain, referring to their leader as "Philank the Forgotten" or "Philank the Frustrated." However, within the area he controls, Philank is quite dangerous, and he requires all of his gang to swear an oath of loyalty to himself and one of enmity to Garlthik and the Force of the Eye. To take such a stand in the city controlled by Garlthik requires bravery and no small amount of toughness, and the Force of the Eye does not enter the Forsaken's territory except in large numbers.

For now, Garlthik is content to let the Forsaken survive, as the area they control is not very lucrative, and dislodging them would be more costly than they warrant. He also encourages his tributary gangs, such as the Reavers and the All-Breakers, to skirmish with the Forsaken, keeping all of them occupied and out of his hair.

The Forsaken congregate in a number of taverns throughout the southeastern section of the Scrabbles, usually in groups of twenty or more. Philank also has taken over a large building for a headquarters, in which he lives, usually surrounded by several of his followers. This building has been heavily fortified and trapped. The whole gang meets here irregularly, perhaps a few times a month, for celebrating particularly rich scores, inducting new members, and organizing larger raids.

Philank maintains a number of safe houses throughout the Scrabbles where he has hidden much of his loot, and that he flees to in times of trouble. The Forsaken have also built numerous secret passages through and under the walls that separate the Scrabbles from the Stables and the Warehouse District, as well as some leading outside of the city.

Many of the buildings in the Scrabbles were built with upper stories that overhang the street below, in an effort to fit as much structure into the space as possible. The Forsaken have developed an ambush technique that takes advantage of this design. One of their gang throws a lariat through an opening in the floor of one of these upper stories around the neck of a person passing on the street below, usually targeting the largest member of the party. The other end of the rope over a roof beam and out a back window on the other side of the building, where two or more members of the gang wait. Once a successful throw has been made, the thrower shouts to his accomplices, who leap out of the window holding loops in their end of the rope, yanking the victim off of his feet by his neck. Still other members of the gang then burst out of doors and windows on street level to pelt the poor victim with rocks, darts, and throwing knives, while others may make quick dashes up to the victim to beat him with clubs or slash him with daggers and then run back out of reach. There are usually about a hundred members of the Forsaken at any given time, though their numbers increase when Garlthik rejects potential members of the Force of the Eye, and decrease when Garlthik makes an example of the members of the Forsaken caught thieving outside the Scrabbles.

On occasion, they leave the bodies of one of their victims in a public place with daggers in the eyes. Such a blatant

provocation inevitably compels Garlthik to send some of his Force of the Eye into the Scrabbles to inflict some damage on the Forsaken in order to save face. Philank usually only brings on such a confrontation when he is feeling strong and wants to fire up his minions. He usually manages to be elsewhere when the brunt of Garlthik's anger hits his gang.

Philank the Forsaken

Philank wears his black hair short, with a neatly trimmed beard and mustache. He has a very shifty and nervous feel about him, and is often looking over his shoulder. Despite this, he has a confident energy about himself. He flatters himself by saying he is "Garlthik's greatest living enemy," though that title truly belongs to Vistrosh. Philank is a minor nuisance to Garlthik at best. Philank is a Fourth Circle human Thief.

Typical Forsaken Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (14): 6
STR: (16): 7
TOU: (13): 6
PER: (14): 6
WIL: (12): 5
CHA: (10): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6

Death: 35
Unconsciousness: 27
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7
Movement: 6

Skills

Ambush [K] (2): 8
Avoid Blow (2): 8
Climbing (2): 8
Gangs of Kratas [K] (2): 8
Hunting (2): 8
Melee Weapons (2): 8
Missile Weapons (2): 8
Painting [A] (1): 6
Read/Write Language (1): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 8
Snares and Traps [K] (2): 8
Speak Language (2): 8–(Dwarf/Throalic, Ork/*Or'zet*)
Streetwise (2): 8
Surprise Strike (2): 9
Tactics (2): 8
The Forsaken Lore [K] (2): 8
The Scrabbles [K] (2): 8
Throwing Weapons (3): 9
Tracking (2): 8
Tunneling [K] (2): 8

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: Leather (Phys 3)

Weapons: Club (Damage 10), Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), 2 x Darts (Damage 8; Range 18–36 yards/9–18 hexes), Sling (Damage 9; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), Belt Pouch (w/ 15 sling stones)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, 2 x Flasks of Oil, Leather Gloves, Hooded Lantern, Painting Tools, Traveler's Garb, Tunneling Tools

Loot: D6 silver pieces in belt pouch

Legend Award: First Circle

Notes: As orks, Forsaken gang members possess the *Gahad* and Low–Light Vision racial abilities.

Commentary

The mostly ork gang members of the Forsaken are non-adept thieves who use ambush and tactics to assault and rob trespassers.



Ther Gangs

In addition to the gangs listed above, dozens of smaller gangs continually sprout up throughout the city. These minor gangs may have fewer than a dozen members. Most are solely concerned with plotting and carrying out thefts, burglaries, robberies, and muggings, either in Kratas or elsewhere. Others are bandit gangs that attack caravans near the city. Most have only a single building as a headquarters, and will generally not run afoul of the larger gangs. Some try to take over a block or so of neighborhood, and expand into extortion, resulting in their butting heads with one of the larger gangs.

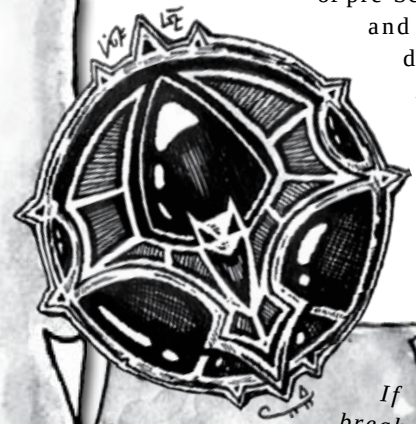
These small gangs often exist only for a few months or so, breaking up because of failure, being wiped out by rivals, or being absorbed into bigger gangs. Some gang members get killed in crimes gone badly, while a very few retire after making it rich with a handful of big scores. However, new gangs are always being formed. Many of these don't even bother to have Names, but some of the Names of minor gangs currently in use include the Thirteen Light-Fingered Gentry, the Vermilion Gang, the Skullpokers, the Foulest, Plorg's Thugs, the Roof Dancers, the Elegant Fingersmiths, the Donkey Stew Gang, the Sharp Dressers, Xenork's Daggers, the Espagra Teeth, the Corpsemakers, and Thalia's Gang of Thieves. The most prominent of the smaller gangs are listed below:

Ghagin's Grandchildren

Ghagin is a scrawny, old dwarf, small even by dwarf standards. His gang is a band of children, whom he has trained to beg, shoplift, pickpocket, and break and enter. Their hideout, which he laughingly calls "the Orphanage," is hidden deep within the Scrabbles. This large, old building has had all the doors and windows blocked, and is only accessible through a number of carefully hidden, small passageways that only those the size of he and his children can fit through. They

have a number of similar, though smaller, hiding places hidden throughout the Scrabbles and other parts of Kratas, so that they can hide from pursuers. They have also made a number of tiny passages through the walls that separate the neighborhoods of Kratas, and have even mapped out similar passages through the upper levels of the Undercity. Thus, they can seem to disappear and reappear throughout the city at will.

Ghagin refers to his gang as his grandchildren, and acts like a kindly, old grandfather around them. He keeps them moderately well fed, and their accommodations are adequate, if not comfortable. However, he is ruthless about exploiting them for his own benefit, taking every coin they steal, and beats them if they do not perform well. He also does not hesitate to send them into harm's way, not only sending them to steal from dangerous people, but also sending them to explore the more remote parts of the city. Ghagin is convinced that hordes of pre-Scourge treasure remain hidden, and has collected maps and other documents trying to find them. A number of his children have been kidnapped by Brocher's Brood members exploring the Undercity, or have been killed or maimed by traps found there.



ADVENTURE HOOK

Philank has put up with the taunts long enough, and has now resolved to go all in against Garlthik once and for all, and make his play to take over Kratas. He is not stupid, however, and knows that the Forsaken cannot defeat the Force all by themselves. His plan is to unite all the other gangs of the city. Because Philank knows that he and the other gang leaders are being watched, he uses the player characters as intermediaries to try to persuade the other gang leaders to join in. If the player characters are below Journeyman status, they are hired simply as couriers to carry sealed messages between the Forsaken, the All-breakers, the Bloody Fist, Rangor's Reavers, and Brocher's Brood, as well as dozens of minor gangs. In this case the player characters are just patsies, and do not know what they are up to unless they open the messages. Alternately, if the player characters are of sufficiently high Circle–Journeyman status or higher–Philank empowers them to negotiate on his behalf. Each gang leader demands different favors in exchange for his allegiance.

Obviously, the Force tries to stop the plan when Garlthik discovers it, which he does when Herinta of the All-breakers, pretending to go along with it, rats out the conspiracy to him in exchange for the concession of greater territory for her protection racket. Should Philank and the player characters succeed in uniting a large enough force, an all-out gang war could erupt. Vistrosh is cagey, implying his support for the plotters, and encouraging them, but then withdrawing his support at a crucial moment. The Blood Warder doesn't believe that the plot will work, and doesn't want to risk weakening his forces. He is more than happy to see the Force and the other gangs crack heads, however. Vistrosh extends his influence into areas formally controlled by these gangs in the aftermath, but for his own reasons he doesn't really want to see Garlthik deposed.

If an all-out war breaks out, much of the city shuts down, and gang members, including those of the Force, are only seen on the streets in large numbers. Many residents hunker down rather than being forced to pick sides. Switching sides is also common, especially as many of the gang members are secretly informers for Garlthik.

The player characters are encouraged by all sides to do so as well. Garlthik tries to end the fighting as quickly as possible, as it is bad for business. He uses his agents in the gangs to try breaking up the alliance by sowing rumors of disloyalty and treachery. If the fighting lasts for more than a week or threatens to get out of hand, Garlthik recalls members of the Force from outside the city, and dips into his considerable treasury to hire assassins and mercenaries, potentially including the player characters, if he is unaware of, or chooses to overlook their role in the plot.

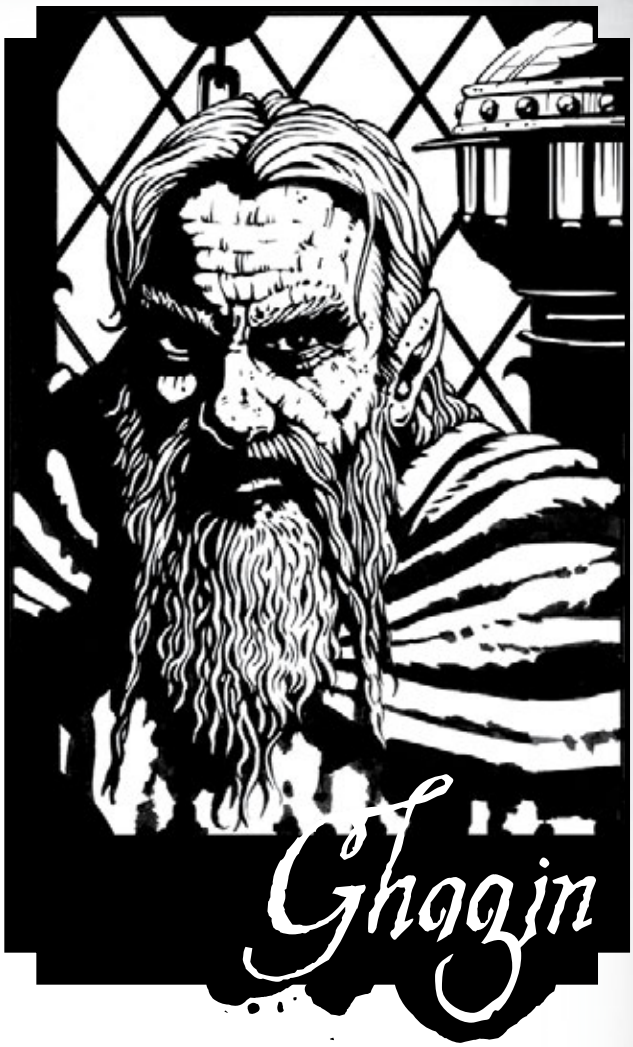
Ghagin rarely has problems with his kids defecting, because despite his rough treatment, they usually fare better with him than anywhere else in Kratas, which is a sad but true reflection on the prospects of children in the City of Thieves. Those of Ghagin's gang who survive their time under his tender care are thrown out of the gang when they reach physical maturity with only a handful of coppers. Ghagin tells them it is because they can no longer fit through their passages, but it is also because he fears that he can no longer physically intimidate them. Even though Ghagin has little interest in his kids' well being, he does train them well for life in Kratas, and a number of his graduates have gone on to become successful independent thieves, or prominent members of the Force of the Eye and other gangs.

Because of this aging, and deaths and kidnappings, there is a high turnover in the gang, so its numbers fluctuate greatly. There are usually a few dozen kids in the gang at any time, and Ghagin pays his kids a bounty for recruiting new members.

Ghagin keeps a thousand silver pieces or so hidden in his room in the Orphanage, but has far greater amounts of coins acquired from years of exploiting his children, hidden in well-concealed and trapped caches throughout the Scrabbles. He also has a valuable collection of maps of parts of the city, including some of the older sections and the Undercity, mostly drawn up by his kids. He keeps copies of these hidden in his caches, and one set in his room in the Orphanage.

Ghagin

Ghagin is incredibly scrawny for a dwarf, and is getting on in years. He has long white hair and beard, and his skin has grown tan, wrinkly, and leathery. His shabby, old clothes conceal both his armor and the considerable wealth he has acquired. Ghagin is a Fourth Circle dwarf Thief.



Typical Ghagin's Grandchildren Gang Member

Attributes

DEX: (14): 6
STR: (6): 3
TOU: (9): 4
PER: (14): 6
WIL: (7): 4
CHA: (7): 4

Characteristics

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

Death: 30
Unconsciousness: 21
Wound Threshold: 7
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 3*
Movement: 7

* Ghagin's Grandchildren know the Wound Balance skill.

Skills

Acting [A] (1): 5
Begging [K] (1): 7
Climbing (1): 7
Conceal Object (1): 7
Engaging Banter (2): 6
Fast Hand (2): 8
Gangs of Kratas [K] (1): 7
Kratas Undercity [K] (1): 7
Lock Picking (2): 8
Melee Weapons (1): 7
Picking Pockets (3): 9
Read/Write Language (1): 7–(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (1): 7
Slough Blame (1): 5
Speak Language (2): 8–(Dwarf/Throalic, Elf/*Sperethiel*)
Streetwise (1): 7
Surprise Strike (2): 5
The Scrabbles [K] (1): 7
Throwing Weapons (1): 7
Tunneling [K] (1): 7
Wound Balance (1): 4

A Artisan Skill; K Knowledge Skill

Armor: None

Weapons: Knife (Damage 4; Range 8–16 yards/4–8 hexes)

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Belt Pouch, Climbing Kit, Peasant's Garb, Thieves' Picks and Tools, Tunneling Tools

Loot: D4 copper pieces in belt pouch.

Legend Award: First Circle

Notes: As elves, Ghaghin's Grandchildren gang members possess the Low–Light Vision racial ability.

Commentary

The mostly elf children gang members of Ghagin's Grandchildren are non-adept thieves who have been taught their trade by Ghagin for his own benefit and self-interest. In exchange, the children have gained a mentor and a way to survive on the tough streets of Kratas, often orphaned after having lost their parents to the brutal gang wars.

Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers

The Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers is a Thieves' Compact, rather than a gang in the strictest sense. It is a loose-knit group of elite burglar-Thieves that mostly share a philosophy. Members believe that they are the true followers of the Thief Discipline, and that most others in Kratas have departed from its true path. Particularly, they feel that collecting protection money is work suitable only for thugs, and it sullies the reputation of the true Thief. Moreover, setting oneself up as figure of authority, as Garlthik has done, is contrary to a true Thief's motives. As such they neither collect protection nor pay it. They refuse to support the Force of the Eye in any way, including paying the fee to enter the city. Any member of the compact must sneak into the city, which is not of great difficulty for someone of the caliber of this group. A true Thief gathers coin with the deftness of his lock pick, the grace of his silent feet, and the nimbleness with which he scales a wall, not with a rough word and a brandished club.

Thus the members of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers are outlaws within the City of Thieves. This is as much a point of honor for them as it is a burden. They view Garlthik with scorn, but without malice; to their eyes he is the guard dog past whom they must sneak, without whom there would be little glory in the effort. His past history as a Thief merely makes him that much more challenging. Wisely however, the members of the group avoid confronting Garlthik directly, and use Kratas mostly as a base of operations for planning thefts elsewhere.

Members are all mid- to high-Circle Thieves, and are masters of stealth and burglary. While they are all proficient combatants, they view the spilling of blood in the commission of a theft as a sign of sloppiness, and it suggests that an error must have been made in the commission of the crime. Keeping that in mind, having conceded their error, they do not hesitate to resort to violence if necessary to make their escape.

The Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers numbers less than twenty thieves, who rarely work together on a single job. Rather, they share information and advice on potential scores, techniques, and fences, and form small partnerships of two or three thieves when numbers are necessary to pull off a heist. There is no formal hierarchy in the group, and no dues to pay. No one can order the others about; the only deference one gives to another is out of respect for his talents as a Thief. The only rules are that one must not steal from any member of the group, collect protection, or pay protection to Garlthik, nor may one become a member of any other gang.

Garlthik considers them a nuisance at worst, although he is not pleased with their flouting of his authority. As such, he has given standing orders to arrest any who openly violates his laws. However, he has not mounted the active campaign against them that he has against Brocher's Brood. Secretly, Garlthik has some fondness and admiration for them as he misses the life of the footpad, and somewhat regrets his success as ruler and administrator. He tolerates them as long as they pose no serious threat to his rule.

The founder and most prominent member of the group, and thus de facto leader, is an elven Thief Named Finellianis. She is a joyful, exuberant woman whose flamboyance belies her prodigious skill in the silent arts of the Thief. She is proud, though not arrogant, and is able to back up her boasts with the hard proof of her stolen prizes. Her disdain for Garlthik and Thieves of his ilk is matched by her desire to support young Thieves along the true path of the Discipline. Toward this end she founded Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers.

Members of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers have taken over a former merchant's mansion in the Safehearths as a private club. The building includes a large central meeting room, a kitchen, and several sleeping quarters open to any member of the group. The house is maintained and the members served by a handful of servants, paid for by Finellianis' generosity. There are also a few rooms in which the group collects locks, chests, traps, and other devices they have defeated in their crimes. These serve both as trophies of their exploits, as well as training tools for the less experienced members. Members of the group keep few of their valuables here, as most of them, including Finellianis, maintain separate residences elsewhere in the Safehearths where they often sleep, and store their loot and equipment. Finellianis is a Twelfth Circle elf Thief.

Other prominent members of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers include Ninth Circle ork Thief Xok Steadyhand, Eleventh Circle human Thief Terhik the Bold, Ninth Circle dwarf Thief Molis the Nimble, and Ninth Circle human Thief Surehand Calisan.

The Silent Shepherds

The Silent Shepherds are a clan of professional assassins, whose traditions date back to before the Scourge. They are considered the most discreet and reliable killers-for-hire in the city. The Silent Shepherds train in their secret compound in the Safehearths. For more information, see the **Safehearths** chapter, p. 156.



Joining a Gang

Characters, especially Thieves, wishing to make their way in Kratas may find it beneficial to join one of the gangs of Kratas. The two most powerful, and thus most attractive, gangs are the Force of the Eye and Brocher's Brood. Consequently, joining these gangs isn't easy.

Joining the Force of the Eye

To join the Force of the Eye is neither an easy task, nor a quick one. Someone wishing to do so must first find a full member of the Eye to sponsor him, and then earn the trust of the senior members of the Force. In order to win a senior's sponsorship, a would-be member might be required to do any number of tasks for that person, often working for a number of months before being considered. A potential sponsor might test an applicant in any number of ways before approving him, ranging from the menial and degrading to the dangerous.

Once an applicant has won the approval of a senior member in good standing, he is introduced to other members of the gang. Nothing further happens unless the gang perceives that there is currently a need for new members, particularly for those with the talents and skills of the potential recruit. If this is the case, however, a more formal process of evaluation begins, with several members of the Force testing the applicant. This process includes combat, as well as other tests of skills and talents. If the recruit is a Thief or Scout, climbing all the way up to Clifftop is a common test. On the premises of the Magistrate's Palace in Hilltop, there are a number of training and testing areas for the purpose of testing recruits. For example, there is a dummy whose pockets must be picked without ringing the bells covering it, as well as a number of chests with tricky locks to pick and traps to disarm. Also, the recruit may be tied up and thrown in one of the old Magistrate's jail cells, from which he must be able to escape. Another test might put the recruit into a room with a wooden floor that he must walk across silently. The floor's old boards are creaky and judges in the room below are listening for any noise. Of course, the Force of the Eye has a number of different tests, so a potential recruit won't know what to expect. Recruits from other Disciplines will be tested on their most appropriate talents, but all members are expected to possess at least some abilities common to thieves, such as being able to move silently or to trick others.

After passing these tests, the recruit is offered an Amulet of the Eye, and asked to swear a special blood oath of loyalty to Garlthik One-eye and the Force of the Eye. While swearing the oath, the recruit cuts himself and bleeds into a reservoir on the back of the amulet. This powers the blood charm contained in the amulet (see **Amulets of the Eye**, p. 235) and forms a bond between the wearer and the gang. Performing the oath causes 2 Blood Magic Damage Points. The text of the oath is as follows:

"As the night cloaks our deeds, so shall I hide this oath deep in my heart where no one may steal it. The Force of the Eye will be my family, and Garlthik One-eye my father. They shall see what I see, and hear what I hear. I shall never act against my father, Garlthik, or my brethren. I shall loyally do their bidding, and no promised silver or threatened harm shall turn me against my family."

While the recruit is now a member of the Force of the Eye, he may still not be fully trusted. He has to work his way up and will initially be assigned to guard duty or other support positions under Morg Kneebreaker or Greasy Imgan (see p. 50). Members of the Force of the Eye may still commit thefts and other crimes in Kratas on their own, as long as these do not directly interfere with the gang's interests. Indeed, young members are considered to be lacking in ambition if they do not engage in at least some petty larcenies.

The whole process may take several months, if not a year or more, before the young member is promoted to a position of higher status. He is under careful scrutiny by Terricia and her Slashers (and eventually even by Garlthik, using the power of his amulets) during this time.

Joining Brocher's Brood

If a character wishes to join the Brood, and approaches a suspected member of the gang, he receives a chilly reception. Usually the Brood invites people to join only after they have been under surveillance for a long time. It is unusual for people to approach the Brood, and this inevitably rouses suspicion. Eventually, persistence might be rewarded, and such a recruit might receive an opportunity to prove himself to the gang. Such an opportunity might consist of a simple task, such as delivering a small box across the city to a specified address, with instruction neither to open the package, nor to allow himself to be followed. Of course, a thug will follow the recruit, albeit a not-very-skilled and easily shaken-off thug. In addition, a senior member of the Brood will also follow the recruit, with the thug merely working as distraction from the second follower, who is much more discrete and much harder to notice.

The recruit might also encounter a band of muggers or any other hazards Vistrosh may decide to throw at him. If the recruit has opened the package, or failed to shake the first tail, the contact will not show up. Should the recruit try to make contact with his initial contact again, that member will refuse to talk to him.

If the recruit passes the test, he will meet the contact and be allowed to join the Brood. The contact will lead him through the twisted alleys of the Safehearths, blindfolding him before taking him underground. Finally, he will be led into a large room, where, surrounded by half-a-dozen masked members of the gang, he will be required to swear a blood oath of loyalty to Vistrosh and the Brood. Following this ceremony, he will be led down deeper into the cata-



ADVENTURE HOOK

Once the player characters have made even a small Name for themselves in Kratas, they find themselves the victims of a new con of Ghagin and his grandchildren.

Walking through a relatively quiet part of Kratas, the player characters are approached by a frightened-looking elven girl of roughly eight years of age. She sneaks out to them, eyes darting to the buildings around and grabs tightly into one of the characters' legs. She pleads, "Come quickly, my brothers are in hiding. We escaped and need help to find our parents. They are merchants, and we were taken our first night in the city. Please come with me and help us get to the bazaar, our parents surely haven't left us."

Sure enough the group finds two younger elven boys hiding in the shack she leads them to. Acting very timid, none of the children attempt anything suspicious. Any attempt at a search comes up with nothing and the children beg to stay the night with the player characters.

In the middle of the night, the girl approaches a character on watch and blows a potent sleeping poison in his face. The three children then take everything of value that they can before escaping into the night: jewelry, coin pouches, grimoires, and especially magically items. Heavy items, such as large weapons and armor, and cheap staples, clothing and food, are not worth the children's effort.

In looking for their things, the player characters may be swindled a few times, possibly even happening upon some graduates of Ghagin's Grandchildren. Eventually, rumors of this gang of children and their most recent safe house come to light. At first, the ten to fifteen children in the abandoned house try to accost the group, but act scared and feign gratefulness at the chance of being freed from their harsh master. The children may even hug the characters, which quickly degenerates into pickpocket attempts, before scattering into small crevices and alleys nearby this fake hide-out.

If a child is captured, or if the player characters sincerely wanted to help these children, one of them takes pity on the characters and sneaks into their lodging at night. First, the child reveals some of her plight, saying something to the effect of: "What, you gonna feed me and raise me for the next ten years?" Eventually, with respectful discourse the child tells the group the Name of the tavern and timing of the meeting Ghagin has with a local fence.

At the meeting, Ghagin has a few children on watch for any interference. The player characters have a chance to recover their magical items, grimoires, and other unusual valuables here. Their cash, however, is too well hidden. However, there are two complications. First, the fence is a member of the Force of the Eye, and the gang may not take kindly to such interference with their affairs. Second, Ghagin was taking this opportunity to unload a number of minor magical items he had collected over the years, one of which is an obsidian dagger. When word gets out of this dagger in particular, the Keys of Death take notice, for they have been looking for one of their members gone missing in the city.

combs, where he will meet Vistrosh himself. This encounter is usually brief but disturbing. The contact will introduce the recruit to his new master and Vistrosh will instruct him to go back to his normal life in Kratas, to wait for further instructions. Vistrosh may keep the recruit in deep cover for months without giving any instructions. Members of the gang who are not yet known to the Force of the Eye are valuable, and Vistrosh does not use them lightly.

That said, new recruits have little contact with the day-to-day operations of the gang, and know next to nothing about the other members. Eventually, a recruit is given a job, assigned to him through several anonymous go-betweens. Usually, these jobs are courier activities, carrying coded messages or packages from one place to another. Eventually, the recruit is given assignments to steal specific objects or kill someone, depending on his talents. The assignments become more complex over time, but successful recruits are rewarded handsomely. Should a recruit ever be discovered by the Force of the Eye and survive, he will be taken care of and assigned to work in the Brood's secret hideouts, assisting in the slave trade, sent on covert missions throughout the city, or even guarding Vistrosh himself.

JOINING OTHER GANGS

The smaller gangs are not as difficult to join, but their rituals and conditions vary. For example, joining the Bloody Fist requires fighting ten of their members, unarmed, in succession. In contrast, joining the Forsaken merely

requires a blood oath of enmity towards Garlthik One-eye. Only children can join Ghagin's Grandchildren. A recruit to Rangor's Reavers must put up with the humiliation of many weeks of menial labor before he can join. The best way to get in with the All-Breakers is to convince Herinta that one will add a little class to her gang.



Other Organizations of Note

In addition to the criminal gangs that dominate the city, there are many other notable organizations in Kratas. These groups are described in greater detail in the sections on the neighborhoods out of which they are based.

Weaponsmith Forges

There are three Weaponsmith Forges in Kratas. Each has developed its own specialty, and all are located in the Hammersing district.

The **Blood Steel Forge** is the largest of the three, and has a bustling business in armor and weapons, supplying adventurers and the mercenary bands. These Weaponsmiths create some weapons from scratch, but also buy, refurbish, and repair used weapons and armor "found" by the thieves and mercenaries. For more information, see **The Hammersing** chapter, p. 168.

The **Daggerwrights** make daggers, throwing knives, and other weapons and tools for thievery and assassinations. For more information, see **The Hammersing** chapter, p. 168.

The smallest of the three, the **Tinkerers' Forge** creates many ingenious devices for protecting and getting at valuables. These ingenious Weaponsmiths create locks, traps, and chests, and the tools that can be used to try to defeat them. For more information, see **The Hammersing** chapter, p. 168.

Mercenary Bands

Kratas is the base of operations for large numbers of mercenaries. Some of these are freelance individuals that form into ad-hoc squads. Others are members of permanent troops. These are all based out of, and described in greater detail in, **The Stables** chapter, p. 112.

Deterannis' Swords are the most elite, and expensive, of the mercenary bands of Kratas. They are led by Deterannis, an elven master tactician, who trains and drills his select soldiers regularly. For more information, see **The Stables** chapter, p. 117.

The **Legion of Despair** is a band of sell-swords that is everything Deterannis' Swords are not: unruly, poorly disciplined, and cheap. For more information, see **The Stables** chapter, p. 116.



Ork Scorchers

The ork scorcher bands that work as mercenary cavalries—the Thunderers, Herok's Lancers, and Terath's Chargers—all have representatives based in the Stables so that employers may contact them there to hire them. For more information, see **The Stables** chapter, p. 122.

The Grim Legion

The Grim Legion consists of fervent Horror fighters grouped in independent bands throughout Barsaive. There is no central command or authority, so some bands are corrupt, crazed, or incompetent posers. The Kratas chapter, Blossom's Squad, is none of these. This group of dedicated, veteran Horror hunters has its headquarters in the Warehouse District. For more information, see **The Warehouse District** chapter, p. 154.

Merchant Houses and Companies

A handful of dwarf houses, t'skrang *nialls*, and trading companies have cautiously resumed business in Kratas. This includes the Overland Trading Company; the Dream Spire Company; and the Dwarf Houses of Chaozun, Ludi, Mikul, Yilwaz, and Neumani. More on their activities can be found in the **Merchants' Row** chapter, p. 133.

Confidence Tricksters
IN THE CITY OF THIEVES

The Force of the Eye in Bartertown intercepted this letter. It was addressed to a "Reyga Sliva" and signed "Flekar the Patient." Neither person could be located and it is believed both were pseudonyms.

So I got your letter, kid. I take it from your questions about Kratas that you might be considering a move here. Let me warn you against it. And, no, I'm not trying to keep this fat plum all for myself. Kratas may be a paradise for most thieves, but it's the opposite for us. Oh sure, it's great to retire to if you've already made a big score somewhere else, as I have. But the pickings are slim here.

Remember, as confidence tricksters, we are the most skilled of all thieves. We don't pick pockets when people aren't looking, or bash somebody's skull in, in a dark alley. When we steal, our victims give us their money with handshakes and smiles on their faces.

The key to pulling off such a scam, as I have told you before, is picking the right victim, or mark. When a Namegiver gives us money it is because we have persuaded him that he will get a greater return later. Marks fall for this because they are greedy and gullible.

Now, Kratas is full of the greedy, but notably short on the gullible. Most Kratans, at least those who have survived living here for more than a week, are cynical and paranoid, which are the natural consequences of expecting someone to jump out from every alley and stab you in the back.

It's said in our profession that you can't cheat an honest man. Spend a little time in Kratas and you'll understand that you can't cheat an openly dishonest man, either. No, the ideal mark is a dishonest man who tries to pretend that he's honest. Such men are few and far between here. Let me give you an example.

I was in a tavern here—the Cutthroats' Rest—when I see two chuckleheads from out of town try to pull off the old "Rare Bird" scam. So the first guy—the 'seller'—comes in, looking down on his luck, carrying this scraggly looking, but colorful, bird—most likely a crow they'd glued some dyed feathers onto. The first guy says to the bartender that he has to go do some business, and asks the bartender to look after the bird for him for half an hour or so. Now in most towns, the barkeep would say, "Sure, no problem," not wanting to drive off a potential customer. But this bartender tells the guy what to do with his bird, and believe me, it wouldn't have been fun for either of them. (This should have been a clue to this yahoo that this was not a good mark, but I guess he was desperate.)

So he says, "Fine, I'll pay you a few coppers to look after the bird for me," to which the bartender agrees. So the first guy leaves, and five minutes later his partner comes in. He goes straight to the bird and starts ooh-ing and aah-ing over it. He gives the bartender the whole spiel about this being the incredibly rare and valuable Liaj red-breasted titmouse, and how much he could sell it for in Vivane. He was doing a good job too, laying it on thick, and I think the bartender believed him.

You know what's supposed to happen next? The 'buyer' asks the mark if the bird is his, and if so, says he'll pay him five thousand silver pieces for it. The bartender is supposed to say that no, it's not his, but he can get it for the buyer. Buyer leaves, says he'll be back in an hour. First guy comes back, bartender offers him two thousand silver pieces, in the hopes of then selling the bird to the buyer when he returns, making a quick three thousand silvers profit. Of course the buyer never comes back, the bartender is out two thousand silver pieces, and stuck with a worthless bird, and the two conmen meet up later and split the two thousand. At least that's how it's supposed to work, and I'm sure it did work for these guys that way in Travar, or wherever they came from.

But here's what happened in Kratas. When the second con artist—the buyer—says to the guy, "Is this your bird?" the bartender looks him square in the eye and, without blinking, says, "Yes, yes it is my bird."

I nearly spit my ale out my nose when he said that. That's what I mean about not cheating a dishonest man. This guy, your typical Kratan, had no qualms about just taking the

bird the first guy left with him. Then he starts in trying to haggle with the buyer! The buyer was stunned, 'cause he knows it's *not* the bartender's bird. He had to back out quick, hemming and hawing about not having the money on him, but saying he'll come back later.

So then, the 'seller' comes back in, expecting the bartender to try to buy the bird from him. Instead, the bird is nowhere to be seen. The 'seller' starts asking for his bird back.

The bartender says, "What bird?"

The seller replies, "The bird I paid you good money to look after."

"I'm not a bird keeper. This is a bar, not a stable."

"But everyone saw you take the bird from me." At that point, everybody in the place suddenly found the insides of their ale mugs fascinating. Bystanders generally don't intervene. The sturdy troll bouncers were another matter, but they were not on his side.

Finally, the conman catches on to the way things work here, and slinks out. Not only did he and his partner not make any money, they were now out the bird and the copper they had given the barkeep.

A really excellent mark will not complain or act against the con artist even when the con is revealed, either out of social embarrassment or because the mark is involved in illegal activity himself. For example, I ran an old bait and switch on a Throalic merchant who was smuggling goods into the Dwarf Kingdom. I sold him a hundred *duari* of t'skrang pickled fish, which he then smuggled through the underground rivers that lead into the mines. Of course, only a few barrels were full of fish. The rest were full of mud, with only a thin layer of fish on top. Once he discovered this, though, he couldn't complain to the authorities. Was he going to complain about me to the Royal Trading Commission and admit that the *duari* he was complaining about were smuggled past his Majesty's tax collectors? Not likely.

This defense won't work in Kratas, though, as nothing is illegal. Should you try such a scam on a merchant in Kratas, he won't bother to tell anyone in the Force of the Eye or worry about them finding out about his business dealings. Sure, the Force takes a cut but not to the level of taxing individual *duari* of goods. There are plenty of enforcers for hire in the city, and you'll soon get a visit from your mark, and some of this rented muscle.

I guess I misspoke; there is one illegal trade in Kratas: slavery. I suppose if you wanted you could try the bait and switch or other con on a slave trader, but I would recommend caution; the Force will hunt you down just for suspicion of being involved in the slave trade. Pleading that you weren't really going to sell slaves probably won't be convincing. Also, your mark would likely be either a Theran or a member of Brocher's Brood. Neither can move freely in the city, but they are dangerous enemies to have.

I once conned a young member of a dwarf trading house into investing in a non-existent silver mine. Made up fake deeds, dressed up some "miners" to give reports on the yield, gave him some ore, the whole deal. The mine I showed him was actually a defunct, but not abandoned mine, owned by a rival house. After I got his coin, I simply closed up shop, but I didn't flee town. Didn't need to.

He was hoping that this mine, if it yielded what I told him it would, would make his position in his house and in Throal society. I knew that he would be so embarrassed at falling for the scheme, that he would rather lose the coin than lose face in society, and status in his house. Believe me, his rivals in his house would use this information to destroy his reputation. It worked so well that I actually saw him several times at high society functions, even tipped my hat to him, and all he could do was fume silently at me.

Kratas has a form of society, but not of the sort in Throal. Sure, a thief might be embarrassed at being conned, but not so much as to not seek revenge. Any story of being taken advantage of by a shyster can be easily redeemed in the retelling by adding the postscript, "so then I tracked the lying bastard down and shoved a sword through his gut." Guaranteed to get a laugh here.

I once tried to do the fast change scam at a store here, more out of boredom than anything else. I started in getting change for a gold piece, then change for silver, and some of the silver to copper, then some of that back again—you know the trick—so fast as to end up ahead. Usually, the clerks go along even when they start to get flustered, because they don't want to accuse you of anything criminal, or to appear too stupid to follow the transaction. When I tried it in Kratas, as soon as she got confused, the clerk grabbed a dagger from under the counter and nailed the sleeve of my robe to the counter top with it. I stopped, slowed down and made sure she got the right change, and then slowly walked out. And the clerk, a human girl, wasn't any more than twelve years old at the most.

There is a constant small supply of new rubes coming into the city on whom one can pull little cons: farmers and merchants looking to sell their wares, as well as novice thieves, each of whom thinks he is going to be the next Garlthik One-Eye. Many of the new thieves are gamblers, and can be conned into fixed card or dice games. I have managed to sell a fake Purse Ever-Bountiful to a few of these greenhorns. Just sew a leather purse with a second hidden pocket, a little sleight-of-hand and you have easy money. (Now, I have never understood why someone would believe anyone would ever sell a device that duplicates money, but I've managed to persuade one or two.) These small fish might have enough coin to keep your belly full, but not anything worth the talents of artists of our caliber.

Should you be able to fix one of the gladiator fights, you could stand to make a killing, but the scuttlebutt around town is that Garlthik already does that. Another common type of scam that Garlthik frowns upon is impersonating a member of the Force of the Eye—the closest thing to a government here. The common rabble here are so intimidated by Garlthik's gang that if you did persuade them that

you are carrying out the gang's orders, they'll give you whatever you want. You had best run fast and far though, 'cause Garlthik hunts down any impersonators, and they say he has branches of the gang in every city of Barsaive.

Members of one other group that comes through Kratas can make good marks: adepts, adventurers, and heroes. Yep, battle-hardened warriors that think nothing of facing down a Horror in battle can be easily fleeced out of their hard-earned coin. See, these are heroes; they're better people than you or I. They risk their lives to make the world a better place. While not gullible or naïve, exactly, they are good people, and on some level, think most other people are good as well. Further, while many of them aren't greedy for wealth, many of them are greedy for other things: magical power, legendary items, or hidden knowledge.

There is a small industry in fake treasure maps, ancient pre-Scourge tomes (made just last week), and weapons of great renown. I can buy Purifiers by the dozen. One particular information broker here works with a certain charlatan. A group of adepts will visit the lore merchant, seeking information about a certain kaer or legendary item. Sure enough, a few days later a merchant will show up with just the piece of information or item the group was looking for. To avoid the adepts returning to seek revenge when they find out that they have been tricked, the treasure maps sold by these tricksters often direct the victims toward the suspected lair of a Horror, a dragon, a crystal raider trollmoot, or other deadly destination.

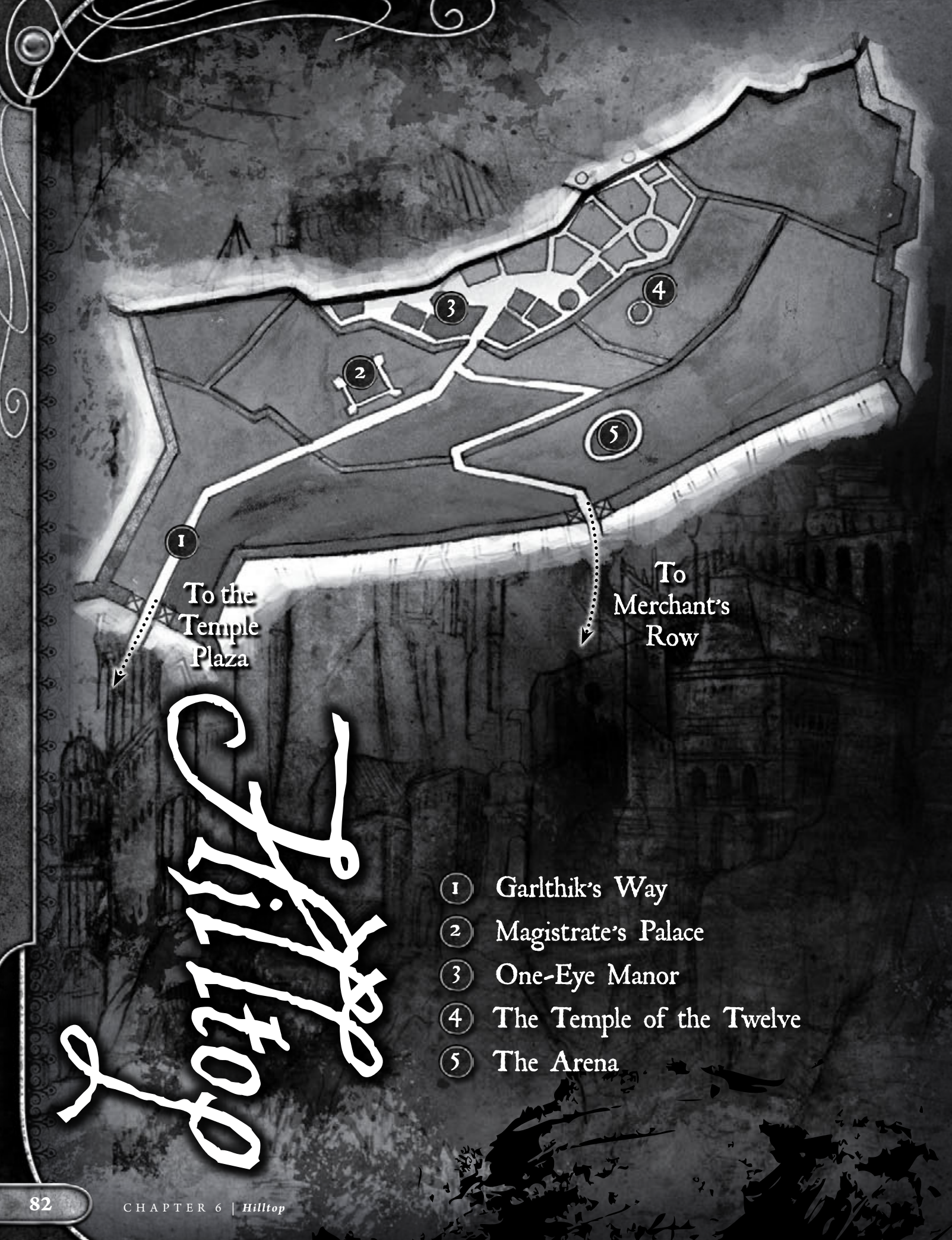
Charlatans, Illusionists that use their illusions for cons and scams, are of particular use in passing off fake magic items. However, be wary of the more powerful adepts, for they can see through such deceptions. There are also powerful Illusionists in Kratas (some are members of the Force of the Eye), who make extra coin on the side by inspecting items for false enchantments.

Speaking of coins, there is one advantage to a confidence trickster in working out of Kratas. I was working on a scam once that required some fake orichalcum coins—well, silver coins with a *very* thin coating of real orichalcum. I spent weeks in Travar talking with jewelers and metalsmiths, sussing out which one might accept such a job. Even after a generous bribe and many nights drinking, the one I chose turned me in to the authorities when I made it clear what the job would entail, and I had to hightail it out of there. Here in Kratas, the first metalsmith I approached made the coins, no questions asked. They cost a pretty penny, but they looked great. Should you ever need a forgery of any kind, the craftsmen you need can be found here. But you will have greater success employing their handiwork in some other town.

There is one great plum here that I don't mind telling you about. If you think you can pull it off, be my guest. If someone could con Garlthik One-Eye, that would be a truly legendary achievement. I have no idea how I would pull this off. He knows all the classic cons, and some we've probably never heard of. His security detail includes high-Circle Illusionists, sure to see through all but the most powerful charlatan's illusions. If you convinced him you had something he wanted, he would most likely just steal it from you. I've drawn up a couple of plans in my idle retirement, but I can always think of ways he would see right through them. Our most important skill is picking the right mark, and he is the worst possible mark in the world. Yet, I can't stop thinking about somehow making it work. To go down in history as the Namegiver who swindled the greatest living Thief!

I will add just one last note of caution to you, my former student. In your note, you made an off-handed reference to Vestrial. I know that before he went mad, he was the patron Passion of our profession. I also know that there are those, like some of your current associates, who think we should still seek his patronage. Let me give you this warning: he may very well assist you in pulling off some epic fraud, and he will delight in your success. This will only make the joke that much more amusing, in his eyes, at least, when he deceives and betrays you in turn. Those who dance with Vestrial always end up the butt of one of his jokes, and since the Scourge his sense of humor has become much, much darker.

Look me up if you come to town. Until then, may your marks be rich, fat, and slow, and may you leave Death himself holding the bag.


Hilltop
1
2
3
4
5
To the Temple Plaza
To Merchant's Row
1 Garlthik's Way
2 Magistrate's Palace
3 One-Eye Manor
4 The Temple of the Twelve
5 The Arena

From below, a high standard looks like arrogance.

• Old Theran Saying •



Hilltop is the oldest neighborhood in Kratas. When the city was a simple trading post, early settlers sought the defensive benefit of a small hill nestled against the great mesa. They built storehouses and a few simple dwellings on the top of the hill, and the nomads who came to trade built pens for their herds. The hill was encircled with a wooden stockade for defense, but the buildings and stockade were razed more than once in scorcher attacks.

As the settlement prospered, the original stockade was replaced with a stone wall. Additional pens and outbuildings were constructed, with a new wooden palisade built around the outlying buildings. As raider attacks damaged the growing city, the stone wall around the hill was repaired, rebuilt, and further fortified. As the land inside the wall became more secure, it became more valuable, leading to the construction of more and larger buildings on the hilltop. However, the walled neighborhood was still vulnerable to the drakkars of the crystal raiders, so many of the wealthier residents added additional fortifications. While many buildings and compounds are fortified throughout the city, it is Hilltop that is the most protected, and most strongly embodies Kratas' reputation as a fortress city.



N MANORS AND VILLAS

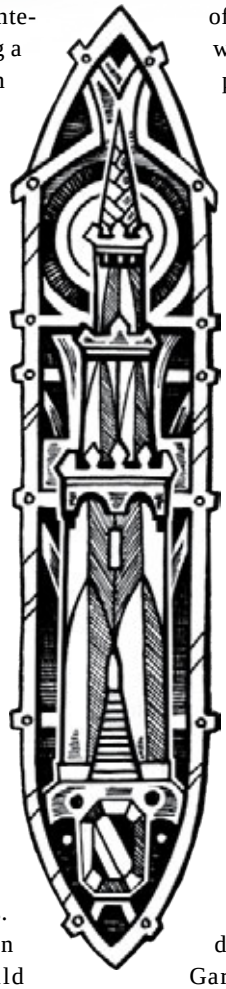
Even after the arrival of the Therans, when many old neighborhoods were razed to make way for the Empire's architecture, the old structures and families of Hilltop were too entrenched, and so were left in place. This was the location of the manors of the old, pre-Theran wealthy of Kratas.

A typical manor compound of Hilltop would be surrounded by a wall 6 yards high, covered with sharp metal spikes and barbs, but lacking any battlements or parapets. The guards would keep watch from towers at the corners of the wall, using bows and other projectiles to further discourage climbers. These towers also had stairs to the roof for guards to look for long distance attacks coming from across the plains or the skies above. A number of the manors even had drawbridges on some of the towers to meet those of neighboring compounds across a street or alley, allowing a means of escape should one compound be breached. A few of the richest compounds sported siege engines or even fire cannons atop the towers' roofs, with a few more with a single such protection on the central manse.

The gates to these compounds would open to the street only through a gatehouse with an outer and an inner gate. The outer and inner towers bordering this gap were equipped with murder holes for raining arrows, hot oil, and heavy rocks down on intruders. The inner gate opened into a small courtyard, with space for a garden in which to grow food to help wait out a long siege. Only a handful of very stout doors led into the towers,

which also had openings to attack intruders in the interior from above. One paranoid merchant even hung a series of hinged iron grills that could be pivoted from the walls into place to block off the courtyard from attack from above. It was rumored these grills also had poisoned spikes intended to impale Sky Raiders or other intruders.

The courtyard would lead to several buildings for storage and crafts as well as stables, although the stables would have been converted to other uses after the creation of the Stables neighborhood and the restriction on animals in the inner city in 715 TH (see the **Stables** chapter, p. 112). Finally, a large central manse (or two or three in some of the larger compounds) would dominate the courtyard. These compact towers would be several stories tall, and fortified with parapets, battlements, and the rare siege engine. The interior of one of these buildings would include a great hall for feasting, bedrooms for guests and family members, offices, kitchens, and massive stores of provisions and weapons to withstand a siege. Many of these would also contain inner gates and portcullises to seal off lower floors, staircases, and corridors from intruders. Many would have extensive basements to store supplies as well as passages out to each of the guard towers for discreet access. Often these basements held hidden chambers in which one could hide, to seal oneself up should intruders breach all the other defenses. Many manses were also riddled with secret passageways and traps, as well as arrow slits and murder holes.



During relatively peaceful times prior to the Scourge, such manor houses would contain the extended members of wealthy families, the servants necessary to attend to their daily needs, and handfuls of guards to patrol the parapets and roofs watching for thieves. In times of siege or major invasion, however, these families would invite in large numbers of their employees and other residents of the outer neighborhoods, and allow them to weather out the attack in their fortified compounds in exchange for their retainers assisting in manning their extensive defenses. This necessitated the storage of significant stockpiles of armaments in these compounds, of much greater quantity than was needed by the regular inhabitants. Located within the compounds would be storerooms of spears, bows, scores of arrows, sling bullets, swords, axes, shields, and simple armor. Higher-quality weaponry and armor, much of it magical, was also kept for the family members and the elite among their retainers, including adepts. Many months worth of provisions were stored here, as well as ammunition for the siege engines.

This strategy was often successful, but it meant that many of the most capable defenders of the outer neighborhoods would abandon them for the greater safety of Hilltop. Consequently, the outer neighborhoods would often be sacked and looted, if not at least partially razed, which did not sit well with those who were not afforded a place of safety within Hilltop, and were left to fend for themselves in the outer wards. This bred a resentment of the wealthy of Hilltop that festered for hundreds of years. Because of fear of internal insurrection, the placement of many of the manses' armaments was subtly adjusted so that they could rain down destruction on other neighborhoods of Kratas, if need be.

King of the Hill

During the gang wars that led to Garlthik's ascendancy in Kratas, the master Thief recognized the strategic importance of Hilltop, and one of his first objectives was to gain control of the neighborhood. There were many times during the following years that members of the Force would retreat to the safety of Hilltop, regroup, and renew their attacks on other gangs.

Today Hilltop is firmly in the hands of Garlthik and the Force of the Eye. Some of the manors were destroyed in the Scourge, but many survived, and Garlthik controls most of these. The Force of the Eye has quietly restored many of the compounds' defenses, though to a casual inspection it is difficult to tell which have been restored and which remain decrepit.

Garlthik and the Force try to keep absolute control of Hilltop. They have repaired the walls separating Hilltop from the rest of the city, and maintain regular patrols at all of the towers and gates. Unlike the rest of Kratas, where one's entry fee grants free rein and passage, only members of the Force of the Eye, or others with legitimate, and pre-approved business in Hilltop, are allowed past the guards at the gates to this neighborhood. Many of thieves in Kratas resent such restrictions, seeing imposing laws as out of place among outlaws.

Showing up at the gates of Hilltop and asking to see Garlthik or to join the Force of the Eye will result in being laughed at or receiving a thrashing, depending on the mood of the guards. A convincing story about doing work for another member of the Force might get one through the gates, though the visitor will be under close supervision throughout the visit.

Despite these precautions, a few unauthorized Namegivers manage to enter Hilltop. The greatest weaknesses in the neighborhood's defenses are its extensive Undercity entrances. While Garlthik has sealed many of these and has guards at the most obvious passageways, it is unclear if anyone knows the full extent of the underground

ADVENTURE HOOK

While at an inn in Kratas, the group is approached by a shady-looking dwarf, who introduces himself as Hunek. He of-fers to buy the player characters a round if they'll hear him out. He has acquired a map of a room that should still hold a large amount of treasure, but it's not a job he can do alone and he needs some relative outsiders to Kratas to be able to pull it off. He then requests they make a blood promise to keep the details he is about to share with them secret for a year and a day. They are free to refuse the job, but he can't risk word spreading too fast.

The treasure is locked in a secret vault in one of the unoccupied manors in Hilltop. Hunek claims to have come across old records of a rich family of House Neumani that lived in Hilltop before the Scourge. The family chose to weather the Scourge in Kratas believing in Upandal's call to build the citadel over Kratas. Thus, the treasure should remain there. However, he needs help both in getting into the manor and in dealing with any creatures that may be living in the manor and the vault itself. He also needs the player characters' ingenuity on getting into Hilltop to get to the manor.

Hunek is not telling the whole truth. He is actually a Thief adept exiled from House Neumani for his deeds. He had heard about the map of the manor and stole it as he departed. Agents of House Neumani are seeking him out and cause trouble for the group should they go along. Reaching the manor is difficult in and of itself, as the Force guards both above and below ground quite carefully. Inside the manor, the player characters encounter another group of adepts trying to beat them to their prize. All this commotion is also likely to draw the attention of the Force to the manor as well, making the job all the more difficult. To further complicate matters, Hunek never included anything in the blood promise about the group's share and may selfishly try and seek the hidden chamber himself, or flee with some of the booty should things become too dangerous.

chambers and passages beneath Hilltop. Those who do sneak into the neighborhood are well advised to keep a low profile, as the Force deals harshly with interlopers. Members of Brocher's Brood, who delight in defying Garlthik's will, are the most common offenders.

THE TEMPLE OF THE TWELVE

This building, one of the oldest, strongest, and most prominent in Hilltop, is a temple dedicated to the Passions as they were before the Scourge. It is a tall, domed, stone edifice, with numerous smaller chambers surrounding the central vault. Originally a wooden group of shrines at which passing merchants could worship, it was replaced with a stone structure as the permanent population grew. In the temple's central chamber are twelve large statues of the Passions, arranged in a circle and facing inwards. As space remained precious within Hilltop, the followers of the Passions agreed to share the space, even developing rituals that paid homage to the Passions collectively, not merely to one's favorites.

After the expansion of the city under the Therans, this temple fell into disuse, as most preferred to worship in the new temples constructed in the Temple Plaza. However, in times of trouble or unrest, the temple within the confines of Hilltop became useful again, and so was never totally abandoned. Like other buildings in the neighborhood, it was heavily fortified and provisioned. After the fall of the citadel dome, a group of survivors barricaded themselves inside, though they, too, were tortured and eventually slain after Horrors masquerading as the Passions were allowed inside.

The first explorers to search the temple after the Scourge discovered that while the pre-Scourge statues were still standing, the statues of the Mad Passions had been subtly altered, reflecting their insanity in ways impossible to avoid noticing, but difficult to pinpoint. The statues' unsettling demeanor, coupled with the remains of the Horrors' victims, led to tales of the temple being haunted. As a result, most Namegivers, including the Force of the Eye, give this place a wide berth.

In his typically perverse manner, Vistrosh has chosen the old temple as one of the Brocher's Brood meeting places. Vistrosh delights in conducting affairs so closely under Garlthik's nose, but he is no fool. He knows that the temple, deep in enemy territory, is strategically vulnerable. He uses the temple primarily for meeting with outsiders to avoid revealing the nature or location of his more secure haunts. Further, as he might need to abandon the temple quickly, he never stores anything of value there. To keep curious Namegivers from poking around, Vistrosh encourages rumors of the temple being haunted, and has not done anything to restore its physical

ADVENTURE HOOK

An agent of Brocher's Brood who is unknown to the Force approaches the player characters. He keeps his identity and loyalty secret, offering a large sack of golden coins if the group will spy on an important meeting of his rivals and bring him the details. A larger bag of coins awaits the player characters after they relay the details to him. He asks that they swear a blood oath to report back to him after their best efforts at espionage and he promises to give them quadruple the amount in the first sack in return for their troubles.

If this is agreeable, he provides them with a detailed map of some sections of the Undercity, starting from an entrance in Merchants' Row and ending at the place he wishes them to spy on. The route exits in what is supposed to be a secret passage near the meeting in question. The route itself is rather winding, often ascending and descending through various layers of the Undercity. The agent insists they stick to the route, largely to avoid the prying eyes of the Force, as well as his rivals' security.

After traipsing through the Undercity, the player characters find themselves in a pantry in the building in question. The map wasn't as good as the agent thought it was. Soon they hear voices as staff of the Force are coming to retrieve ingredients from this pantry for the meal that will follow the meeting of the senior members of the Force in One-Eye Manor. This meeting is what was sent to spy on by the Brood. Hiding from the cooks should be straightforward, but will reveal the true nature of the player characters' dilemma. Do they risk spying on Garlthik himself and being caught inside his manor? Do they try and steal a few things along the way to enhance their reputations? What of their blood oath and the promised rich reward?

If the player characters do manage to accomplish their mission and meet with the agent, he will insist that quadruple the original amount is what he must pay them due to the blood oath. Anything extra may tempt the magic binding the oath. What the characters may come to discover is this second bag, as well as the first, contains coins carefully minted out of an unusual material that only looks like gold; the number is exactly quadruple, though, for the little it's worth.

condition. It remains covered with dust, cobwebs, and rubble, just as when it was first reopened after the Scourge. When members of the Brood visit the temple, they don't stay for long, and are too smart to be surprised by the Force.

THE ARENA

While Kratas has always had taverns and inns for performers, the arena is the largest gathering place in the city, outside of Temple Square. In the earliest days of the city, the land that is now the arena was an open-air livestock market and corral. Horse races developed as a way for traders to demonstrate their wares, and then as entertainment in its own right. As the races became a more established part of market days, wooden stands were built around the market.

As the city expanded, and Hilltop became more prosperous, the livestock markets moved to outlying neighborhoods. The horse racing and gambling were lucrative, so the racing continued and larger stone grandstands were erected. Eventually, to collect admission from the spectators, the stands and race grounds were enclosed with high walls and gates. Like other buildings in Hilltop, these were soon covered with battlements and other defenses.

ON THE ARENA BEFORE THE SCOURGE

Once the arena became a financial concern, its owners sought to expand profits by hosting other entertainments in addition to the horse races. Thundra beast races, in which the participants were allowed (in fact, encouraged) to slam into the competition, were particularly popular. Windlings raced on zoaks, trailing colorful streamers so they could be seen from the farthest seats in the stands. Musical performances and plays were added, as well as dwarf sports when more Throalites began to live in the city.

The dwarfs of Throal played a sport called *hochavari*, the outdoor predecessor of the modern day *hach'var*. *Hochavari* developed from the post-battle victory celebrations of Scythan warriors, in which two teams of soldiers would attempt to drive the severed head of a defeated opponent between a series of pennants set upon opposite sides of the field using spears and their feet. The head was replaced with a leather ball, the spears became staffs, and target hoops mounted on posts added more of a challenge. It was otherwise informal; the number of players, the size of the field, the length of play, and even the number of balls in play varied from game to game.

When the Therans came, the performances became more refined and brutal. The plays and concerts became more lavish and complex, reflecting the tastes of Vivane and Parlainth. In addition, while wrestling, boxing, archery, and other martial competitions had always had a place in the arena, the Therans introduced actual bloodsports: duels between visiting nobles, gladiatorial combat involving both slaves and free Namegivers, and public executions were carried out in the arena.

In the decades before the Scourge—the heyday of Kratas in many respects—the arena was booked solid. A Theran epic with musical accompaniment would be performed under light crystals at night, while in the sand below the stage the blood of gladiators would not yet be dry.

Rumors persist that, during the Scourge, Horrors forced captured Namegivers to battle for their pleasure in the arena, but in particularly terrible combinations: a mother forced to kill her own children, a master torn to pieces by his slaves, and so on.

On the Arena After the Scourge

Since the Scourge, the arena has fallen into disrepair; nearly half of the seats have crumbled, and all of the luxurious fixtures added by the Therans have been looted. The arena is mostly abandoned these days, and some claim that the spirits of those executed here haunt the ruins at night. The chambers beneath the floor of the arena, which once held animals and the condemned awaiting execution, now connect to the Undercity, so one never knows what foul creatures or Namegivers might find their way into these vaults.

I once chased a group of thieves into the arena. I still don't know what they met there, but their screams still haunt me in my dreams. Whatever it was, it had no mercy with them. There's no chance I'll ever go down there again!

—Tar Noor, Troll Sky Raider

After Garlthik took over Hilltop, the Force of the Eye would hold occasional meetings or revels here, as it is one of the few places large enough for Garlthik to address all of the gang at once. These days such occasions are rare, though the Force still uses the arena for training and initiation purposes and members occasionally invite a particularly popular Troubadour or minstrel troop to perform here for the gang, especially if the act is too large to fit comfortably on the stage of the Screaming Basilisk.

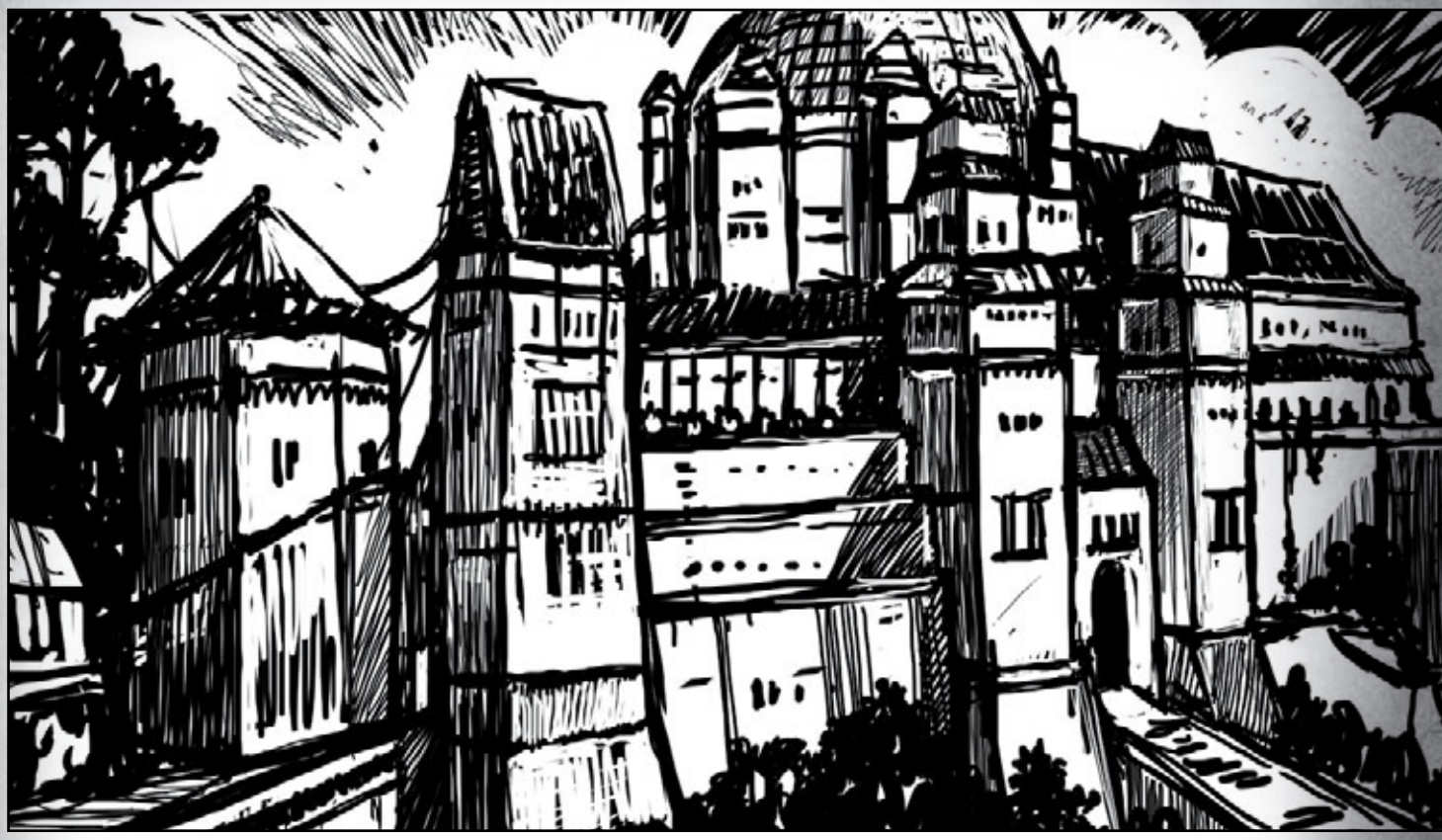
On the Arena Today

A couple of years ago, a dwarf Troubadour Named Telewerian arrived in Kratas and requested an audience with Garlthik. He claimed the spirit of a Troubadour from ancient Kratas told him to rebuild the arena and remount the glories of the past. With the promise of a large percentage of the take, he secured Garlthik's blessing to refurbish the arena and stage regular entertainments there. He faces many obstacles, not the least of which is the inaccessibility of most citizens of Kratas to the arena, due to the Force's control of the neighborhood.



Telewerian has had minimal success so far. There are no local performance troupes with the resources or talent to stage the spectacles of the past, and most Kratans are more comfortable listening to a minstrel in a tavern. Telewerian has resigned himself to the coarser tastes of modern Kratas, and has begun staging gladiatorial fights. These have proven popular, and are now held two or three times every month. Garlthik is mildly displeased with this development, though not for any reason he can put his finger on. Nevertheless, he sends a contingent of guards to check every fight, making sure those in attendance are cleared to be in Hilltop and all of the fighters are participating of their own free will.

Telewerian often lobbies Garlthik to open the neighborhood (and thus the arena) to a larger audience on fight days,



but so far Garlthik has refused. Telewerian complains that he is losing audience and fighters to the Bloody Fist's hole.

Player characters may choose to enter these matches for a potential prize of 50 silver pieces per match, though the purse may be larger depending on the fame of the combatants and the potential for a large audience. Fighters may also lay side bets on their matches, potentially earning much more. Matches are supposed to be fought to first blood, but a number of them have resulted in serious maiming or death. This has increased the popularity of the matches, much to Telewerian's dismay. He considers himself an artist, and hates being reduced to a shill for blood sports. Rumor has it he was forced to leave a promising career in Throal because of some scandal, and Telewerian refuses to discuss the matter.

Magistrate's Palace

When Kratas was still an independent city, it developed its own system of ad-hoc government, eventually settling on an elected city council. The council's system of laws and courts eventually incorporated elements from Landisian property law; the laws of the Dinganni tribes dealing with theft, assault, and other criminal offenses; and other sources. The council's offices grew over the centuries from a simple wooden hall to a massive fortified stone building including numerous offices, meeting rooms, and record vaults. Most crimes in Kratas before the Scourge were punished with execution or exile; the latter was sometimes accompanied by maiming to identify the type of crime committed. While the city had no use for a large prison for long-term incarceration, the council hall included a dozen or so small cells to hold the accused while they awaited trial.

The city council eventually appointed a magistrate to handle law enforcement, and as the office of Magistrate became more powerful (see the **History of Kratas**, p. 12), the council hall was expanded to include offices and living quarters for the magistrate. These additions were built on top of the council chambers, reflecting in architecture the political dominance of the magistrate over the council, and the building became known as the Magistrate's Palace.

Today, the Force of the Eye has commandeered the Magistrate's Palace for its own use, and gang members take great pleasure in the irony, given the original intent of the building. They plan robberies in the main courtroom, under the gaze of a now-defaced statue of Mynbruje. They converted the council chamber to a tavern where successful heists are raucously celebrated. They vandalized the jail cells, but Garlthik has restored a few, so they could be used by the Force to practice escaping. Other offices have been outfitted for training purposes with locked and trapped chests, desks, and cabinets. Other rooms have been equipped with dummies hung with sensitive bells, on which members can practice picking pockets.



The daily operation of the palace is in the hands of the steward of the Force of the Eye, an old dwarf Thief Named Greasy Imgan. Imgan is one of the oldest members of the Force, and has clear memories of living (and stealing things) in the Halls of Throal before they were opened.

Imgan supervises the tavern in the council hall, leading some to refer to him as "Senior Swill Slinger" rather than Steward. His responsibilities are much greater than that however, as he oversees the stockpiles of weapons and provisions throughout Hilltop, including the palace and One-Eye Manor. He is intensely loyal to Garlthik, but his Discipline demands that he steal some of that with which he is entrusted. Thus far he has managed to accumulate a small fortune, squirreled away in various hidey-holes around Hilltop. Garlthik is aware of the thefts, but does not begrudge his old friend skimming a little off the top. He is sure of Imgan's loyalty and knows he will not endanger the supplies of the gang.

Imgan is quite knowledgeable and willing to share his expertise with other members of the Force in planning heists. He can also help procure equipment for such capers, provided those asking for his help are on his good side, and the job is beneficial to the Force.

Imgan has a dozen or more members of the Force working for him as porters, cooks, servers, and clerks at any one time. Such positions, while necessary for keeping Hilltop running smoothly, are considered to be beneath the Force, but no other Namegivers are allowed access to the gang's headquarters. To stifle discontent, these positions are frequently rotated and sometimes assigned as punishment for minor transgressions, or as initiation for new recruits.



ONE-EYE MANOR

This is the largest and most heavily fortified manor in Hilltop. It belonged to a wealthy merchant family before the Scourge, but the ravages of the Scourge and the Force of the Eye have destroyed any identifying engravings. Now a large stylized eye hangs over the main gates of the compound instead of a family crest.

Garlthik seized the manor for its strategic benefit early in his battle to take control of Kratas, because it was mostly intact, and its defenses were easily refurbished. The manor is Garlthik's primary residence and the sanctuary of last resort should the Force face any serious threats. It is stocked with weapons and provisions to withstand a siege, and the creature comforts that befit the King of Thieves. Meetings of the upper ranks of the Force are held here, which usually involve lavish banquets. Only members of the Force of the Eye are allowed within the manor. Even the trusted non-members normally allowed in Hilltop are not allowed in the manor, with no exceptions.

While the manor is Garlthik's primary residence, and is heavily guarded, he often spends the night in other fortified manors in Hilltop. When Garlthik is in residence, Terricia supervises the facility. At other times it falls under Greasy Imgan's authority.

The greatest deed a Thief can accomplish these days is to break into One-Eye Manor and steal some of the immense riches the old ork has accumulated there. Whoever can do this will become a true Legend!

—Gillian, Human Thief

There are countless rumors about the manor, but it is too obvious to store anything of value there. Some claim that whoever makes it in there is rewarded not in gold, but with membership in the Force, but I do not believe so. I have heard that Garlthik thinks of these individuals as bad Thieves, for not seeing that the greatest treasures are never where everyone will expect them to be. These Namegivers seldom return from their visits.

—Mustog of the Last Chances


Cliffside
1 House Narlanth
2 House Medari
3 House Jotyn
4 The Keep
5 The Quartermasters
6 House Ippuli
7 Surland's Tower
8 House Gascilium
9 House Carinci

CHAPTER SEVEN

Looking up at Clifftop, you can get an impression of Kratas' glorious past. Today the city is merely a shadow of what it was.

• Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet •

After the end of the Orichalcum Wars and the Declaration of the Theran Empire, the presence of Therans in Kratas greatly increased. The peace allowed greater airship traffic in particular, and Kratas proved a useful stopover spot for the fleet. While Vivane was de facto capital of the province from 300–543 TH, Kratas was a useful forward observation post for explorers and merchants. Once construction began on Parlainth, and even more so after it officially opened as the capital, airship traffic through Kratas boomed, as Kratas is midway on the week-long trip by airship from Vivane to Parlainth. Additionally, Kratas became a destination in its own right when Theran merchants began exporting local goods (including slaves) from the area.

The central square could only hold so many airships, however, and Theran ships docked outside the city were a sure sign of wealth, and thus a target for raiders. After a merchant ship was sacked by a group of Metal Fist scorchers, ship captains began docking their craft on top of the mesa and moving cargo and people down to the city with elemental elevators. Soon, auxiliary warehouses, slave pens, and service structures were built on top of the mesa, followed by sleeping quarters, cook shops, and taverns to service the airship crews.

Shortly thereafter, having escaped the ork scorchers, several airships docked on the mesa were attacked by troll crystal raiders from the Scol Mountains. The trolls had always known of the Kratas mesa as a convenient docking spot, though they rarely spent more than a night there, as it spooked them for some indeterminable reason. However, they had no qualms about swooping in and pillaging the ships docked there.

This inspired a new round of fortifications on top of the mesa, including a long semi-circular wall cordoning off the section of the cliff top directly north of the city. Towers were built along the walls, the armaments of which were steadily improved over the years until they were finally powerful enough to deter even the most audacious crystal raider.

The height of one's residence had become a sign of prestige in Kratas by this time, with the oldest or wealthiest residents, especially those of the Throalic trading houses, taking pride in their manors in Hilltop. The impoverished or latecomers to the city staked out places downhill and away from the centers of power, commensurate with their status.

Once the defenses on the cliff top were secure, however, the Theran noble houses leapfrogged over the dwarfs by building mansions inside the fortifications on top of the cliff. This not only allowed them to be closer to their warehouses and ships, it also provided space to build grander houses, and gave them a way to escape the unruly rabble below.

Eventually, the Theran Houses Carinci and Ippuli built compounds for their roving explorers and adventurers, with House Ippuli even maintaining a small, though well-

stocked, tavern for its Troubadours to entertain their fellow nobles, whose tastes were far more refined than the patrons of the inns below.

Houses Jotyn and Medari maintained residences and offices within their mansions, for their nobles overseeing trade deals from throughout the province and beyond. House Gascilium also had an elaborate mansion from which it purchased and operated farms and ranches on the plains around Kratas. While a number of nobles from House Zanjan lived in the new neighborhood, now known as Clifftop, they all lived in quarters in the barracks of the troops they commanded; those of high rank had rooms in the administrative keep. Thus, they felt no reason to build separate mansions. Finally, House Narlanth was a relative latecomer to Clifftop, though its nobles quickly erected a most impressive structure that contained not only lavish living quarters, but magical laboratories as well. Exactly what House Narlanth's interest in the area was remained a mystery, but odd noises and flashes of light were seen coming from within its building at all hours, and members of the house were seen coming from and going to destinations all over the province, often with enigmatic packages.

Even though these manors all became fairly elaborate, they were always thought of as merely way stations for nobles assigned to temporary administrative duties in Kratas, and for visiting family merchants making deals or passing through. Thus, the houses were never considered to be permanent homes for Theran families, even though generations of their servants and slaves spent their lives there. As such, no effort was put into preserving the buildings during the Scourge, the Theran nobles abandoning them for Parlainth, Vivane, or Great Thera itself.

Never trust a dragon? I say: never trust a Theran! Many Kratans were sure that the Therans would protect Kratas from the Scourge; instead they were left on their own. The Therans could have saved thousands of souls.

—Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet

Clifftop was not included in the attempt at constructing the kaer, and was completely exposed to the ravages of the Scourge. While it suffered some initial damage, it was mostly left alone by the Horrors when they discovered that there were no Namegivers within to torment. Further, the Therans packed up all of their valuables when they left, so there was little to plunder when Namegivers returned after the Scourge. Also, the airships and elemental air elevators that had connected Clifftop to the rest of Kratas were no longer in operation. Clifftop today remains mostly desolate and abandoned, though a few Namegivers who have little use or fondness for others have found refuge in its ruins. Many thieves scale the sheer face to Clifftop solely to challenge their climbing abilities. A small cadre of Garlthik's Force of the Eye is stationed in the keep and watches the rest of Clifftop.

In addition to mansions and fortifications, Clifftop sported numerous warehouses and resupply and repair facilities surrounding the airship docking positions. Barracks were built for the Theran garrison, as well as a few modest cook shops and taverns for the airship crews. Sometimes airship traffic was so great as to necessitate the construction of additional facilities outside the walls for servicing airships when the docking spaces inside the walls were full. In such cases, military ships, considered better able to defend themselves, would dock outside the walls while more vulnerable merchant galleys would dock within.



Clifftop Towers

The southern edge of Clifftop had no wall, open both to the sky and to the city below. However, airships sailing into the docks on the edge of the cliff had to sail between a set of four massive, well-armed towers. The lowest level of each tower hung halfway over the edge of the cliff, and the wall on this side was open, allowing massive ballistae to be mounted on this platform. These mounts both rotated and tilted, allowing the ballistae to sweep the sky and, if need be, fire upon the city below.

The ramifications of this last capability, while never explicitly threatened, were not lost on the Barsaivian residents of Kratas. While Kratas may not have been officially a Theran city, the looming, ominous forces of Clifftop made it clear who was in charge.

The second level of each tower had a ring of fire cannons poking out of windows circling it. The third level was an open crenellated roof that had a single huge catapult and plenty of space for archers to fire from behind merlons. Each of these levels was connected by spiral staircases and trap doors, the latter serviced by a winch for hauling materials and ammunition between the floors and a storage area in the basement.

Finally, extending up the back (north side), of the towers were narrow extensions, wide enough for only a single Namegiver. Inside the top of each tower was a small room with large windows made of very thick, yet very clear crystal. The uninformed might think these were merely observation posts, but they actually acted as battle stations from which Theran magicians could fling spells at invaders, while being protected from enemy missile fire.

Similar towers were built along the semi-circular wall that enclosed the other sides of Clifftop, though their lowest levels were solid walls, without the ballistae or the openings for them.

Most of these towers are now in a state of disrepair. While generally structurally sound, many have crumbling merlons and broken doors, and their siege engines would require so much repair work to become operational that it

would be easier to start from scratch. Further, while the fire cannons remain in good condition for their age, they are much heavier than those usually found onboard ships; weight is not a limiting factor in a tower. Moreover, they were built in place and are firmly affixed to their pivots. Someone seeking to steal them would have to break large holes through the floors or walls of the towers to get them out. Finally, while there are plenty of rusted ballista bolts and catapult stones lying about, all of the valuable True air and True fire ammunition for the cannons was taken by the Therans when they abandoned Kratas.

Nowadays, these towers often house the typical vermin of Kratas, as well as bats, krilworms, and the occasional shadowmant.

SURLNAD'S TOWER

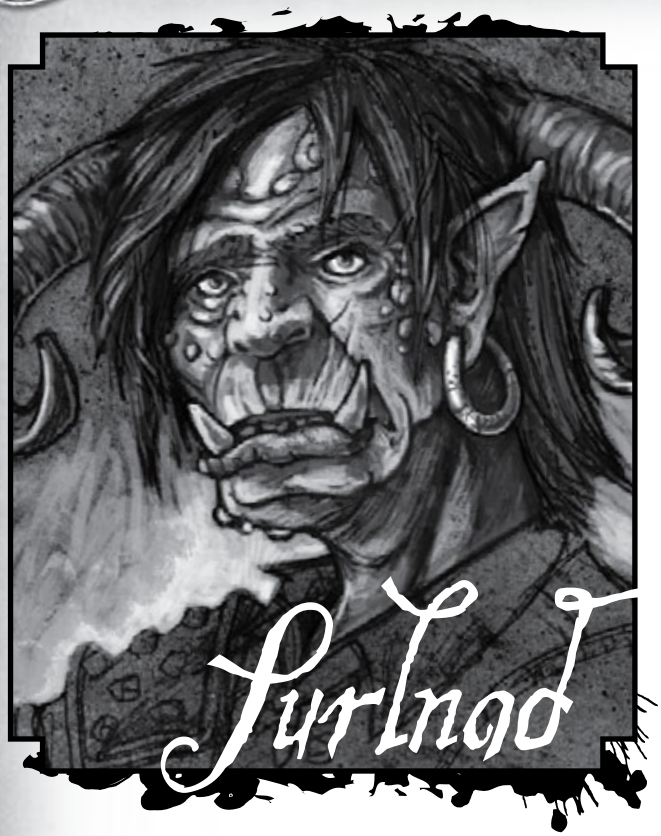
The tower that remains in the best shape currently has a lone resident, a troll Beastmaster Named Surlnad the Silent. Surlnad is a recluse; perhaps his horns having been cut off—a sign of dishonor among the highland trolls—has contributed to his misanthropy, or perhaps he simply prefers to live away from other Namegivers. Rumors persist that his clan cut out his tongue, though no one has confirmed this. What is true is that Surlnad has never been heard to speak. On the rare occasions when he enters the lower parts of the city, usually to buy supplies, he communicates with hand gestures and written notes.

Surlnad is not lonely, however, as he shares his tower with dozens, if not hundreds, of chakta birds (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.162). Unusual creatures for a Beastmaster to bond with, perhaps it is because of the chaktas' limited telepathic abilities that the mute troll is so attracted to them.

Surlnad arrived in Kratas many years ago, and has put much effort into repairing his tower; it is now nearly as sound as it was before the Scourge. Anyone attempting to enter uninvited would be foolish as Surlnad's flock defends its rookery forcefully, and the troll may have other beasts within as well. Moreover, Surlnad appears to live simply, so it is unlikely that there would be much worth plundering.

Garlthik is aware of Surlnad's presence, but considers the aging hermit harmless and is content to leave him alone.





Surlnad the Silent

Surlnad actually works for Vistrosh, though no other member of Brocher's Brood is aware of this. Vistrosh uses Surlnad's chakta birds to send coded messages to his agents across Barsaive. Surlnad is unaware of the meanings of these messages, thinking they are merely instructions regarding the criminal activities of Brocher's Brood. In fact, these messages are being sent to members of the Songbirds, concerning Vistrosh's espionage efforts. Surlnad is fiercely loyal to Vistrosh (who took him under his wing after the troll was cast out from his moot) and would *never* betray Vistrosh's trust. The troll is unaware that Vistrosh used his considerable talents as an Illusionist to frame the promising Beastmaster so that he would be cast out, even going so far as to encourage the moot elders to have Surlnad's tongue cut out—the better to keep Vistrosh's secrets. Vistrosh is very careful to never use the chakta birds to communicate with known members of the Brood, or to have any visible contact with Surlnad. There is a secret passage connecting the Undercity with the basement of Surlnad's tower, and Vistrosh has also added numerous magical traps and protections to Surlnad's home. Vistrosh provides Surlnad with the most elegant and sybaritic comforts in his tower (fine silk bedding, gourmet wines, and so on), which would be quite a surprise to those used to seeing Surlnad shuffling about the city in his old leather armor, spattered with chakta droppings. Surlnad is an Eleventh Circle troll Beastmaster.

Finally, as an ultimate ace up his sleeve, Vistrosh has fully refurbished the siege weapons of Surlnad's tower, though they still appear dilapidated. He has even stocked a supply of ammunition for the fire cannons. From Surlnad's tower, a rain of destruction could be sent down on Garlthik's strongholds in Hilltop, although Vistrosh would never resort to such barbaric measures unless his survival was at stake.

The Keep

Originally, the administration of Clifftop was based in a large keep at the north end of the neighborhood. The keep was equipped with armaments similar to those found on the towers, though more of them. It also had a crystal-windowed command tower with multiple positions for spell casters in times of battle, and a station for a marshal who would direct incoming ships to their appropriate docks. On the roof of the keep were also pens for griffins. Theran griffin riders would fly out to incoming ships to relay messages and guide ships into port, as well as flying occasional patrol missions.

Inside the keep were administrative offices, as well as living quarters and storage areas for provisions, should the occupants need to withstand a long siege. Also of note within the first floor of the keep were the entrances to a series of shafts for elemental air elevators. Theran Elementalists carved these shafts straight down into the solid rock of the mountain ending in chambers behind the central palace, in what is now referred to as the Old Kaer. These elevators were important not only for ferrying goods and people back and forth when airships were not convenient or available, but they were also useful as a potential escape route for the besieged, in case of attack from Sky Raiders above, or from the revolting rabble below. Massive stone doors could seal off these shafts top and bottom, and in preparation for the Scourge, removal of their elemental air disabled the elevators.

The shafts were breached during the Scourge, and now stand open to a sickening drop straight down. The Theran magic that created these shafts left them extremely smooth, making them very difficult to climb. However, since many residents of Kratas are capable of flight, whether windlings or magicians, the Force of the Eye always keeps a contingent posted on top of the shafts. This contingent usually includes a couple of Namegivers with Heat Sight, so anyone flying up the cold shafts will be seen in time for the guards to begin dropping some of their ample supply of rocks and spears down at him. The guards will generally assume anyone coming up the shaft is up to no good, until they can be persuaded otherwise. This also alleviates some of the tedium of an otherwise boring assignment.

The members of the Force of the Eye stationed in the keep also keep watch over Clifftop from the roof of the keep, and occasionally make desultory patrols throughout the mostly deserted neighborhood. Garlthik does not forbid others from squatting in Clifftop, but he generally wants to keep an eye on things, as the remote location might persuade the foolhardy to think they could get up to trouble here without Garlthik noticing.

Aside from the small detachment of the Force of the Eye, and the elevator shafts, the keep is empty of anything of interest.

THE NOBLE MANORS

Running along the inside of the northern wall are the manor houses of the Therans. Although the Therans thought of these as merely secondary dwellings, their rivalry both with each other and with the Throalic dwarfs on Hilltop below led them to put considerable effort into trying to outdo each other in grandeur. The manors are surrounded by a large wall and were once heavily fortified. Within the wall were elaborate gardens with sculpture and fountains, though the soil had to be flown in from the plains below; the smooth stone of the cliff top has never yielded to seeds.

The valuables in these mansions were all taken when the Therans left, though the mansions were locked, some even heavily trapped, to prevent the manses from being defiled by the presence of Barsaivian barbarians.

Since the Scourge, would-be thieves have broken into all the manors, though little has been found to make the effort worthwhile. Most of the furnishings were taken; the only things that remain were either too bulky to remove easily, or too mundane to be worth the effort. Some of the houses still have elaborate mosaics and frescos on the walls, usually of scenes of Great Thera, the Passions, or notable family ancestors. Many of these have been defaced in crude or disturbing ways, some by Horrors during the Scourge, others by vandals since.

The manors are still full of breathtakingly beautiful art, which not even the Scourge could twist. Not that many people in this city care much for that...

—H'atschi, Windling Wizard

ADVENTURE HOOK

While traveling on the plains several days out from Kratas, one of the player characters is approached by a chakta bird. The bird swoops near, circling around the player characters' heads, then projects a series of nonsensical images into the chosen character's mind: a dancing dwarf in a red tunic, three purple deer, and a tree on fire in the middle of a river. If attacked, the bird attempts to paralyze its attackers, and then flee. Any other response to the bird results in a repeat of the telepathic messages and then the bird flying away. These images are a request, in the ever-changing code of the Songbirds, for the player characters to meet a contact at a certain inn in a small village in a few days, though neither the chakta bird nor the players have any means of knowing this.

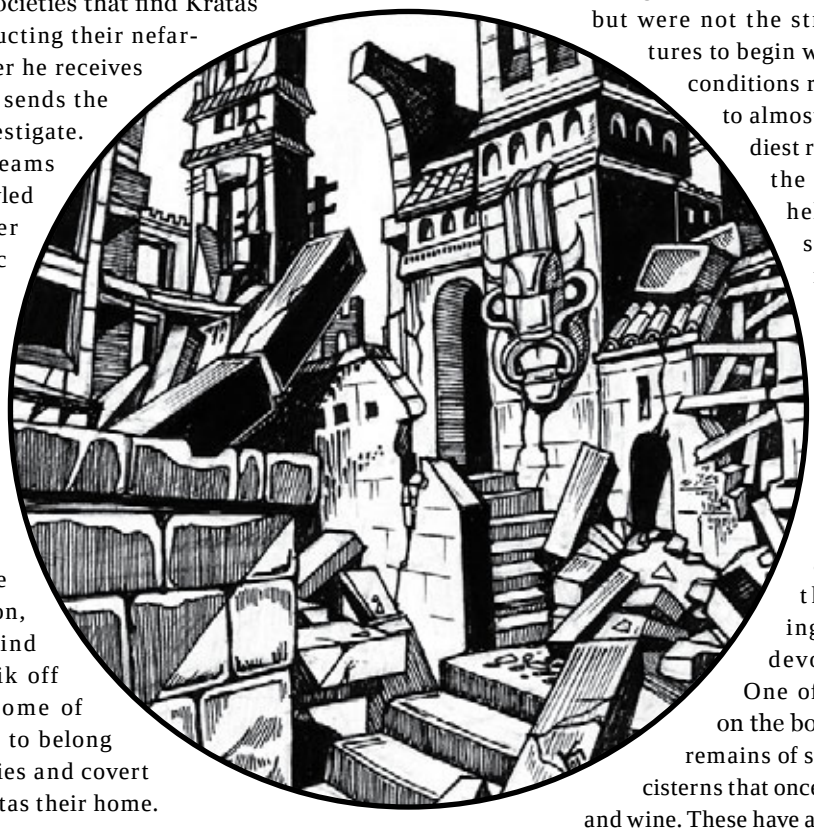
An hour or so later, the group comes upon another Namegiver traveling on the road, who bears a superficial resemblance to the character buzzed by the chakta bird; he is of the same race and gender, and wearing a similarly distinctive piece of clothing or equipment. This Namegiver is a member of the Songbirds, and was the intended target of the chakta bird's message. Apparently, the bird mistook the player character for the target and failed to deliver the message.

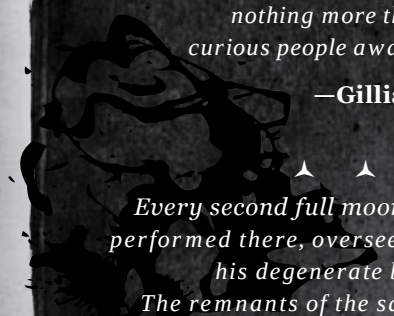
This Songbird, one Mykovic, notes the resemblance and having been expecting further instructions suspects a possible miscommunication. In passing, he makes a comment to the group about the crazy birds in the area, trying to test the waters. He initially keeps it to small talk, but becomes more obvious until seeming almost obsessed about the bird and its message. He even comes to the point of offering a modest payment, trying to act slightly crazy. Lastly, he may wait until nightfall and threaten the character in question with a knife at the throat to tell him what happened. Should the characters share the message, he takes his leave at a convenient point and continues on to the meeting. If followed, he tries to lose them, but is in a hurry and is not covering his tracks very well.

At the meeting with three other Songbirds, Mykovic quickly conveys what happened. The others loudly call him a fool and insist he stop this madness about chakta birds. They try and put the characters at ease, if they join the conversation, while Mykovic plays along as a madman. Depending on the characters' responses, the Songbirds may offer the characters a job delivering a package that Mykovic was carrying or hire a group of scorchers to rough them up in the evening, while they quietly go on their way. Regardless, the player characters are now known to the Songbirds, who keep an eye on them for a time as a possible asset or a possible threat.

Some of the manors are said to have secret passages leading from their basements to outside the city walls, or to long stairwells leading all the way down into the lower city. Rumors persist, however, that there are secret caches of valuables yet to be found. Others insist that the ghosts of their former owners haunt the manses. Still others say that strange sounds and lights observed in the manors at night indicate that they are being used as meeting places for the various secret societies that find Kratas a useful place for conducting their nefarious business. Whenever he receives such a report, Garlthik sends the Force of the Eye to investigate. Some claim that these teams have found blood, scrawled incantations, and other evidence of ritualistic activity.

In truth, some of these reports are due to Brocher's Brood members using the manors as meeting places. Often they are able to meet there unnoticed, but should they suspect they are likely to attract attention, Vistrosh will leave behind signs to throw Garlthik off the track. However, some of these oddities do seem to belong to various secret societies and covert elements that make Kratas their home.





Stories of ghosts and rituals are nothing more than a decoy to keep curious people away from the manors.

—Gillian, Human Thief

Every second full moon, dark rituals are performed there, overseen by Vistrosh and his degenerate bunch of followers. The remnants of the sacrifices are never found and only the Passions know what happens to them. I tried to warn the people of Kratas, but nobody believes me.

—Meicari the Mad

The Quartermaster's

A number of other buildings are to be found in Clifftop. These include simple barracks for the troops stationed there, slave pens, cargo warehouses, a smithy, a stoneworking yard, and other artisans shops for making repairs to airships, though these have all been stripped of any tools. Most of these buildings weathered the Scourge fairly well, but were not the strongest-built structures to begin with, so their current conditions range from rundown to almost collapsed. The sturdiest remaining building is the Quartermaster's. It held all of the necessary materials for resupplying Theran vedettes, from hard tack rations to fire cannon ammunition. All valuables were removed, of course, but the rotting remains of various unimportant stores remain, though the building appears curiously devoid of any vermin. One of the largest rooms on the bottom floor holds the remains of several giant ceramic cisterns that once held fresh water, ale, and wine. These have all been shattered into pieces barely larger than dust, though the stone scaffolding that once held them in place and allowed workers to fill them maintains their original giant urn shapes.

The Shuffling Heap

Another mysterious figure reportedly seen skulking around Clifftop has been described as "an eight-foot tall walking clump of debris and goo." It looks roughly humanoid, though it shuffles to one side, has an indeterminate number of limbs, and has leaves and vines or tentacles covering its body. No one has been able to see its face close up. It moves with uncanny quiet despite its lumbering appearance, and has been known to vanish quickly when seen. Some claim it is a giant bog gob, others a hideously deformed ogre or cave troll, while others speculate that it is a swamp elemental—some type of wood elemental or nature spirit—though why it is this far from a swamp no one knows. Others fear it is a Horror, though it has not been known to attack anyone. The more skeptical insist that such a creature does not exist at all, and that it is merely the product of too many dim shadows, suggestible minds, and mugs of *hurlg*.

Sightings have increased over time, however, with new reports suggesting that the creature (or another one of its kind) has been seen in the Undercity as well. No one has yet mounted a serious effort to catch this creature, as it so far appears to be harmless.



KRATAS MESA

The mesa that Kratas is built up against extends over three hundred yards nearly straight up from the plains on which it sits. It is much wider than it is tall, over five miles in diameter. The sides of the mesa are scored with long, deep cracks, making the climb not terribly difficult, though a test of endurance. The sides of the mesa away from Kratas are pocked with caves halfway up the cliff face or more, in which a number of flying beasts make their homes.

The top of the mesa is black rock, disturbingly flat and smooth as glass, as if some colossal scythe had cleanly sliced off the top of the mountain. The surface of the mesa is also extremely hard to dig into, and nothing seems to grow on the top of the cliff. Thus, one can stand outside the walls of Clifftop and stare across the top of the Mesa with nothing to block one's view of the other side. This unnatural perfection and lack of life makes the cliff top very unsettling. Despite the ease with which they can land their drakkars on the mesa, the troll crystal raiders would rarely, if ever, spend the night on Clifftop. Only the Therans were brave enough to construct permanent dwellings here. Decent folk know better than to live in such a place, however.

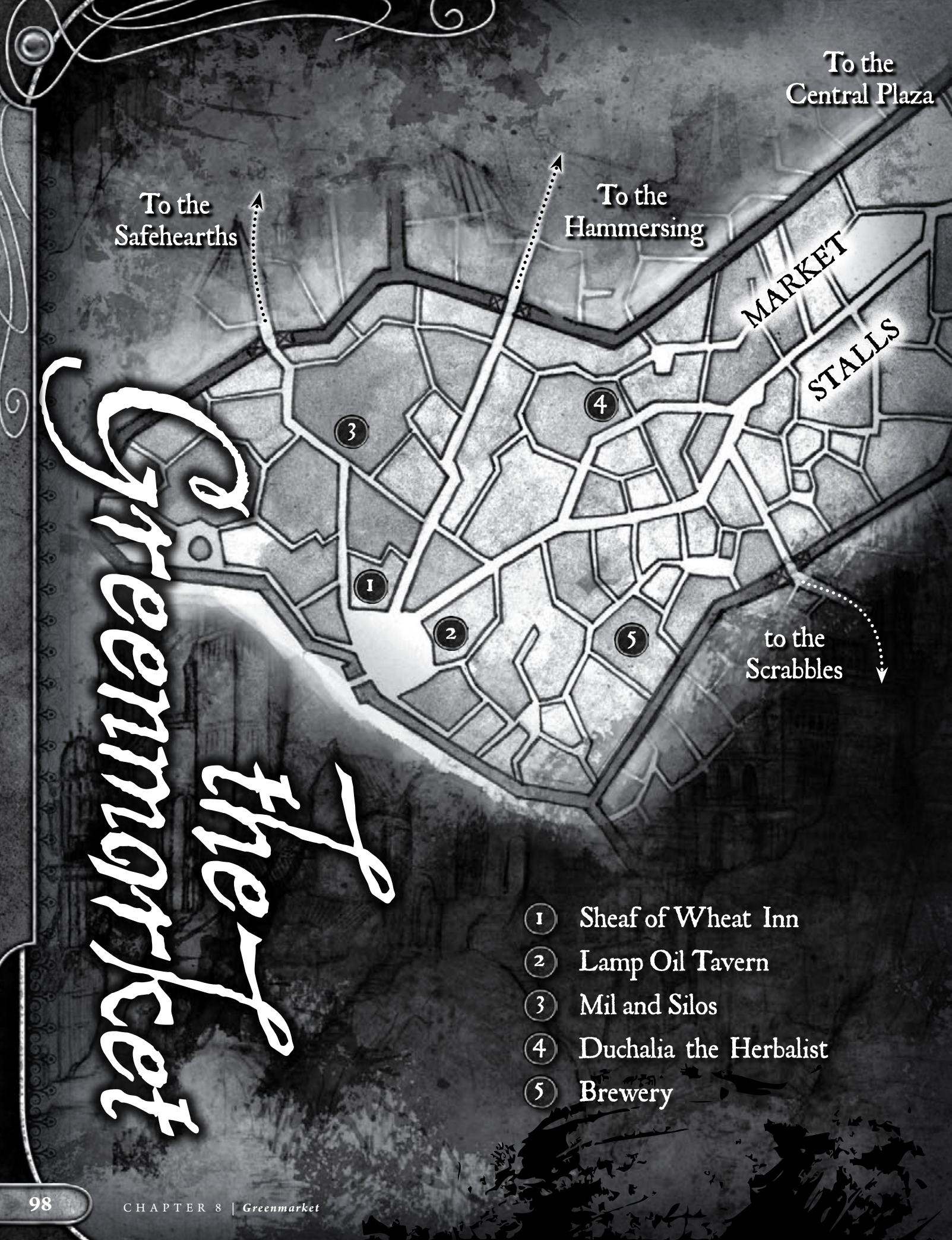
The Kratas Mesa is a natural locus of magical energy, and has been for thousands of years. As such, it has subtly attracted Namegivers for untold ages. The earliest settlements of what is now known as Kratas were unknowingly built atop the buried ruins of a much older city, and some parts of the Undercity have actually breached these ruins. This magical energy is not simply an incredible source of power, but seems to shape its use toward nefarious and destructive ends.

This may be because of the efforts of Horrors, or the attraction of Horrors to the city may simply be the latest manifestation of a deeper tendency. Either way, it is not coincidental that cultists, cutthroats, and assassins have flocked to the city, or that it was plagued by raids and sieges throughout its history.

Members of the Keys of Death (see **Secret Societies**, p. 205) believe that Kratas Mesa is in fact the Spire of the Thirteenth Passion, and when Death was trapped under Death's Sea, the top of the mesa was shorn off. As a result, many members of the cult consider a trip to Kratas as a pilgrimage. Furthermore, they believe that an ancient temple to Death was built at the base of the former spire (like the temples to the other Passions built at the bases of their respective Tylons) and is now buried somewhere under the city. Members of the Keys of Death have spent considerable time exploring the Undercity for the remains of this temple.

During a cloudy full-moon night I had business to take care of in the Undercity and stumbled over a half-dead t'skrang. When I stopped to have a look—to help him, of course—he gave me an ancient parchment, before he took his last breath. It was written in a language I did not know, so I sold it to a local scholar. Three days later, I heard that a fire destroyed the scholar's shop and killed him…

—Rowan Daggertree, Retired Human Adventurer



Greenmarket

CHAPTER EIGHT

The way Garlthik dealt with the farmers of the Greenmarket proves he has become a wise ruler of Kratas.

• Gillian, Human Thief •

The Greenmarket is one of the newer neighborhoods in Kratas. It is the closest neighborhood to the southwest gate. Before the Scourge, this was a neighborhood in which lived the farmers who tended plots near the city, and other farmers from more distant villages brought in their crops to sell at the market. The Greenmarket neighborhood was created by the Therans to enclose the informal farmers' market that had grown up outside the walls of the city, as it had suffered too many attacks by raiders and bandits.

On entering the Greenmarket from the southwest, the first thing one encountered before the Scourge was a wide, flat open area in which farmers bringing in produce unloaded their carts and wagons. The rules of the Theran administrator forbade draft animals from progressing further into the city, and the farmers had to leave their animals tethered outside the city after unloading, or take them around to the Stables neighborhood for stabling. Occasionally, farmers selling goods in bulk to merchants could transfer these goods here, in the loading area.

Most sold their goods locally, however, and so progressed further into the maze of stalls that made up the market proper, to sell their goods either to one of the local shopkeepers or directly to the locals.

The center of this neighborhood consisted of a broad marketplace filled with a labyrinth of booths and stalls at which the farmers sold their wares. These were each typically little more than a plank table covered with a simple cloth awning and piled high with wicker baskets. These baskets were filled with fruits and vegetables, grains, dried meats and cheeses, game birds, lizards, and nearly anything else a Namegiver could eat (though large animals were slaughtered and sold in the Stables). However, these booths were crowded as close as possible next to each other, with aisles only wide enough for a single Namegiver at a time to pass between the rows of stalls. This maze of stalls extended for hundreds of yards, and it was easy to get lost in it if one did not know where one was going. Further, the crowded conditions, where one could not avoid rubbing shoulders (along with nearly every other body part) with other Namegivers made it an ideal place for pickpockets.

Around the edges of this sprawling market were houses for prosperous local farmers, as well as those whose business dealt with food or farming. Mercantile shops selling seed and farm tools were located here. Additionally, several taverns existed to help the farmers spend the coin they had earned, and inns housed those whose farms were too far away to return to after market.

The neighborhood also held a mill, as well as several breweries and bakeries to process the grain that the farmers grew. Many of the houses here had small garden plots where the locals could raise crops, chickens, and such to supplement their diets or incomes.

After the Scourge, as local farming communities near Kratas began to produce more than they needed to feed themselves, a few brave farmers attempted to sell their surplus food to the thieves of Kratas. At the same time, the population of thieves in

Kratas began to grow as well. Some trade was conducted, but the city lived up to its Name as many farmers reported their crops or profits stolen. After a particularly brutal series of muggings, the farmers around Kratas stopped bringing food to the city altogether. A famine broke out in the City of Thieves, and many died of malnutrition, or in bloody fights over the scraps of food remaining. Garlthik, in one of his few truly magisterial moments, decreed that all farmers bringing food into Kratas were under his protection. He also publicly executed a number of the more egregious offenders and sent emissaries to the local villages to persuade the villagers to return to the markets.

These actions ended the famine, and most residents of Kratas now realize it is in their long-term interest not to molest the farmers. The Force of the Eye keeps a strong and visible presence in the Greenmarket, and will exact harsh punishment from anyone caught stealing from or assaulting the farmers. However, Garlthik's protection is generally assumed to have certain limits, as it only extends to farmers while in the Greenmarket neighborhood and is usually understood to only be in force during daylight hours. Thus, farmers are well advised to not wander out of the Greenmarket, and to either leave the city by nightfall, or find secure lodging in the well-guarded inns that cater to their business in the Greenmarket.

Around the gate leading out of the Greenmarket and into the Temple Plaza are often several unscrupulous Namegivers that will attempt to lure naïve country folk further into the city, tempting them with the pleasures of the taverns and gaming halls of Merchants' Row. Little good awaits any who give in to such enticements.

Garlthik's protection does not extend to the customers of the farmers. Residents of Kratas are expected to be able to fight for themselves, and because of this, many thieves and muggers prowl the Greenmarkets, waiting to pounce on their neighbors as they return home with their groceries. To avoid this of course, many shoppers either travel to the market armed or with guards, or sneak back and forth.

Most of the thieves who prey on the market's customers do not belong to any gang and prefer to work alone or in small teams. From time to time an enterprising bunch of cutthroats tries to form a protection racket to get a share of the other thieves' income, but thus far no such group has lasted for long. Either a combined attack by the "regular" criminals or the Force of the Eye when Garlthik suspects that the groups are about to prey on the farmers as well, drive out most of these groups.

Surprisingly, much of the maze of market stalls survived the Scourge, while other areas were rebuilt. The vendors cluster next to each other for safety, and as the city yet holds less than half its original number, many sections of stalls are abandoned and remain in disrepair. Today one can wander through this labyrinth and around one corner find a bustling market, full of Namegivers elbowing each other and haggling with vendors. Around another corner, however, are seemingly endless rows of dusty, rotting, and shattered stalls. Some residents report hearing strange noises in these rows, others claim to have seen odd shapes moving through the stalls, especially at night, only to disappear around a corner. Such apparitions have scared off most people from salvaging the old stalls for firewood.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Not much is known about Fiktish'la's past, except that she is from the Tylon River—a fact that naturally leads to speculation and rumors. R'skaraska, a river pirate, pretends to know the story of Fiktish'la and is happy to share it after a couple of ales.

"During the Orichalcum Wars, a Theran galley with a hold full of that precious metal was destroyed in a battle over the Tylon River. The wreckage sunk to the deepest bottom of the Tylon. Fiktish'la and her crew found it a decade ago. However, before the crew was able to sell the loot, a mysterious disease befell them and they died one after another. Fiktish'la is, in fact, the only surviving member of that crew."

DRINK PRICES IN KRATAS

Drink	Price
Mug of Swill	1 sp
Mug of Good Ale	2 sp
Firebrew	3 sp
Cider	3 sp
Glass of Berry Wine	3 sp
Fishbrew	4 sp

THE MILL

When the Therans constructed the Greenmarket, they intended to make Kratas as self-contained as possible, and towards this end they constructed a large grain mill within the confines of the city. Mills built outside of the city in the farming villages could have been destroyed by raiders, which would have had serious impact on the ability of the city to feed itself. Locating a mill inside the fortified city protected it from attack. This also allowed the city to withstand a much longer siege than it otherwise could, as it provided the ability to store great quantities of grain. This unmilled grain lasted much longer than milled flour, and was ground into flour in small batches when needed.



However, locating the mill inside the city meant that neither wind nor water power could be used to turn the millstones. Instead, the mill relied upon animal power. Underneath the milling room were several circular floors containing large windlasses to which could be chained mules, oxen, or even Namegivers. They walked in circles, turning a central post that in turn spun the huge millstone overhead. At times more slaves than beasts were employed, and the hard work and dark, dusty conditions in the mill meant that few of them survived long. Petty criminals were sometimes sentenced to spend a few weeks or months turning the millstone, though a sentence of more than a year was generally considered to be a death sentence.

Garlthik has reopened the mill, though his ban on slavery means that the mill must be turned either by animals or paid volunteers. The mill will grind a farmer's grain free of charge for a year in exchange for a draft animal to turn the wheels. Also, desperate Namegivers can earn a few coppers a day at the backbreaking work of turning the windlasses. Turnover is high, as there are always plenty of desperate people in Kratas.

Some particularly sensitive Namegivers claim that grain milled in Kratas has a slightly acrid taste, and is a little off-color, as it is tainted with the blood that flew off the slave drivers' whips as they goaded the slaves to work themselves to death before the Scourge. Most people detect no such taint, however, and claim that those who do are deluded.

Adjacent to the mill are a number of large grain silos, which extended three stories above ground and an unknown number of stories below ground. These held strategic reserves of grain, the exact capacity of which was a closely guarded secret before the Scourge, as knowledge of their volume would allow an enemy to calculate how long the city could hold out during a siege. Only one is currently in use, and holds little grain, as most is consumed as soon as it is brought into the city. Some of the others remain unexplored; it is rumored horrid beasts lived off of their capacity during and after the fall of the citadel, and may still reside in their depths.

Dortan, a gravelly, old dwarf miller, currently runs the mill. He is a loyal member of the Force of the Eye, a brutal overseer, and a ruthless businessman. He is assisted by a couple of bruisers, and constantly bemoans the lack of muscle—be it Namegiver or animal—to turn the stones. He occasionally petitions Garlthik to reinstate the pre-Scourge tradition of assigning petty criminals to hard labor in the mill, but Garlthik resists this as being too similar to slavery for his tastes. Everyone in Kratas knows that the grain is Garlthik's property; he sells it to the bakeries of the city for a low price to keep Kratas fed. A few early attempts to steal the grain were driven back by the Force of the Eye. Garlthik made an example of the would-be robbers by punishing them severely, and today no thief is willing to make another attempt.

The Brewery

Before the Scourge, several independent brewers ran businesses in a corner of the Greenmarket neighborhood that produced a number of different brews: beers and ciders as well as distilled spirits. Now a few of the least damaged of these have been rebuilt and consolidated into one large, heavily guarded facility that has a monopoly on alcohol production within the city, although plenty of beverages are imported from the neighboring villages, and some of the fancier inns in town will bring in wines and liquors from around Barsaive via Daiche and the Serpent River.

The Brewmaster is Fiktish'la, a t'skrang from the Tylon River. The great bulk of what she brews she herself refers to as swill. Quickly brewed from whatever grain is cheapest at the time, the quality and taste varies greatly from mediocre at best to nearly undrinkable. This has a huge turnover, regardless, and is gulped down in the poorer taverns of Kratas as quickly as it is brewed.

Every time I have to drink beer in Kratas, my longing for good Throalic beer gets stronger and stronger.

—Drogram, Dwarf Warrior

ADVENTURE HOOK

Thus far, Duchalia has turned down all offers to create Elfbane, but this time it seems that the offer is just to good—or rather, the threat to her life is just too serious. She's not willing to hire thugs to end his life in an unpleasant manner, so she decides to brew the poison but secretly prevent her "customer" from using it.

For this, she needs the help of the player characters to get all of the ingredients for the poison. She sends them to the North Reach of the Serpent River to collect a handful of semaj *flowers. On their way back, the group is told to secretly collect as much mahogany trinrose as possible so that Duchalia can create the antidote as well. After the player characters return from the dangerous trip, Duchalia asks them to deliver the finished poison and then shadow her "customer" to see whom he wants to poison. If the player characters find out who the victim is, they are told to bring the antidote to him, with special greetings from Duchalia.*

Afterwards, Duchalia asks the characters to face the perpetrator and convince him to leave Kratas now and forever. She makes sure that words of his actions are spread in the streets, in order to prevent similar incidents in the future.

She also offers a number of specialty brews for more discerning palates. These include a strong, cloudy fruit cider, which packs a surprisingly strong punch. She also makes firebrew, a dark ale flavored with various local spices and peppers that makes one's eyes water and face sweat, but is quite popular with the scorcher crowd. She has also experimented with wines made from local berries and flowers, and is increasing the quality of these every year. Finally, when she can get the ingredients imported from the Serpent River, she makes a pungent, some say almost rancid, brew made from fermented fish. This is a taste that few non-t'skrang are capable of acquiring, but it remains highly sought after by the t'skrang community in Kratas.

Despite the patronage of the Force of the Eye, a heavy guard presence, and the stockade and numerous traps, many cannot avoid the temptation to steal some of Fiktish'la's stock. It is for these that she brews her "Thieves' Special Blend." This is in fact a slow acting but deadly poison that blends tastelessly into any of her drinks. At any given time there is an unknown number of barrels, bottles, or casks in the brewery that have had the Thieves' Special Blend added. She marks all of her barrels and casks with an elaborate code of symbols that only she is able to read, which allows her to avoid selling the poisoned brew. It is kept in stock only as a deterrent to potential thieves. She has made this practice well known, so that any thief knows he is taking his life in his hands by drinking any stolen brews. This also cuts down on pilfering by the help. Savvy tavern owners refuse to buy any of Fiktish'la's brews unless delivered by her crew, who are personally known to them.

The idea of poisoning a small quantity of drinks is in fact a very old method to drive off thieves that was used in Landis, Scytha, and even Cara Fahd before the Scourge.

—Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet

A gang that operates out of the Stables claims to sell an antidote for the "Special Blend." I wouldn't bet my life that it works, but a few people swear that it actually saved their lives. Might be the truth, or a clever way of advertising ... it's your call.

—Shiling Eversmile, Elven Swordmaster and Brothel Owner



THE SHEAF OF WHEAT INN

This large, comfortable, and well-guarded inn is located on the northern side of the unloading area, near the entrance to the Greenmarket. It caters to the farmers and merchants who come to sell and buy crops in Kratas, and to those who live too far away to return home after a day at the market. The inn advertises its heavy security and the fact that it is under Garlthik's protection. The sign hanging over the door displays an image of a sheaf of wheat under the watchful eye of the Force of the Eye.

The inn has a large, well-guarded corral for farmers' carts and wagons, and is surrounded by a high wall, complete with guard tower. The accommodations inside are plain, and the inn serves simple meals around a rough table. The conversation near the roaring fireplace centers on farming and all things agricultural, and were it not for the pole-arm-wielding guards and the high wall topped with spikes, one could mistake this for the common room of a country tavern in any farming village in Barsaive.

The inn is run by an old human woman, Ma Fylvie, who grew up in one of the farming communities near Kratas, and so can speak to the farmers of their concerns and has earned their trust. She keeps a careful watch on her customers with the eye of an experienced thief.

The Bakeries

Scattered throughout the Greenmarket neighborhood, though mostly clustered near the mill, are a number of small, independent bakeries. All receive protection from Garlthik, and many transport their bread and pastries by cart throughout the city. Otherwise unremarkable, the bakeries do attract many of the desperate and starving thieves of Kratas who hope to pilfer a loose bun or roll. Player characters who find themselves seriously down on their luck (or who are looking for someone who is) may find themselves among the small crowd of ne'er-do-wells who skulk near the bakeries. Garlthik's thugs occasionally break up these crowds and rough up their members, but, like rats, these hungry Namegivers come scurrying back. Members of the Force of the Eye generally find this duty distasteful, as it is too reminiscent of the city watch that harassed many of them in cities throughout Barsaive, and subsequently, they perform it with a notable lack of enthusiasm.

Garlthik does his best to keep bread plentiful, but the constant filching from the bakers' stalls and carts means that the price of bread is at least twice that of other cities. Many of the bakers have acquired a sharp eye for thieves and keep sharper knives at hand. Some also leave old, stale, and moldy bread where it can be easily stolen, as a form of bribe or perhaps charity for the hungry people lurking about.

Benignity can be found even in the darkest of places. As long as this remains true, Namegivers will be able to fight the Horrors.

—Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet

The Lamp Oil Tavern

The Lamp Oil Tavern is a simple and respectable tavern on the western edge of the Greenmarket. It serves hearty, plain fare and strong brews, primarily to merchants coming in from, or heading out to, the small villages southwest of Kratas. Relga, an ork widower, and his young human son, Jael, run it. Jael is an energetic and inquisitive boy, who spends his spare time exploring the Greenmarket neighborhood and the lands outside the southwest gate. Relga, while tough and streetwise, comes from a family of city-bred orks. His greatest worry is that Jael will be seduced by the allure of adventure.

Duchalia the Herbalist

Duchalia is a highly skilled elf herbalist. While not an adept, she is a questor of Jaspree and uses her abilities to maintain a large and varied herb garden within the walls of her compound. To the uninitiated, she seems an innocuous old woman who sells numerous herbs and potions from out of a window that opens from her house to the street. Dragon's tongue, serpent vine, and star root are particularly popular in Kratas, as is eyebright tea for human thieves (see **The Healing Arts** chapter on p. 19 of the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** for more information).

Those in the know are aware that Duchalia also makes poisons from the herbs she cultivates. Player characters in good standing with the elf may buy poisons from her. Duchalia could make Elfbane (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 124), but refuses on principle and does not even cultivate the plant.

She fetches a high price, but her poisons are worth the money. There's no better place to get any poison you want in all of Kratas!

—G'krat, T'skrang Scout

Duchalia is a good herbalist, but far from being the best. It happens too regularly that her poisons are too weak or don't work at all, to call her the best in town. If you know where to look, you'll find others of her profession throughout the whole city.

—H'atschi, Windling Wizard

Her house is modest, if cluttered. One room is converted into an artificial jungle, in which light-quartz crystals and kernels of True fire and water combine to create a climate similar to that in the Servos and Liaj Jungles. She has trapped many surfaces in her garden and house by coating them with fireleaf oil, which works on contact with skin. Duchalia's trade is lucrative enough, and her stock sufficiently valuable, that she employs six guards to work in pairs during 12-hour shifts to protect her and her compound.

She is always interested in acquiring useful plants or their seeds, and might either buy interesting specimens from adventurers, or hire such people to acquire them for her. In addition, adventurers make excellent customers, as she sells the majority of herbs and poisons that are available in Barsaive.

Temple Plaza

TEMPLES:

1. Erendis
2. Rashomon*
3. Mynbruje*
4. Thystonius
5. Astendar
6. Vestrial
7. Lochost*
8. Floranuus
9. Garlen
10. Jaspree
11. Upandal
12. Chorollis

*temple in ruins

Rebuilding the temple in Kratas? You must be joking, dear friend. Have you ever been to Kratas' Temple Plaza? It was erected following the plans of a questor of Erendis. He put the Passions in order! That whole place is not only fundamentally heretical, through Dis it also is cursed!

• Frent the Chaotic, during a meeting of the *olzim* of Lochost •

This area had merely been the spot where several major streets met at roughly the center of the town, surrounded by haphazardly built, tightly packed buildings. However, during the Orichalcum Wars, a group of scorchers and other mercenaries laid siege to the city and prevented Theran airships from landing in the fields outside and re-supplying the defenders. The siege was eventually lifted, but the Theran administrator wanted to prevent a repetition of this, and so ordered a large swath in the center of the city cleared, creating a clear space for airships to land. Eventually, as Kratas prospered, this area was paved and broadened.

Emian Gradon, a later administrator of Kratas, wished to add some architectural glory to the city in anticipation of the visit of the Barsaivian Overgovernor. However, lacking funds to pay for these additions, he decided that he would require the questors of the Passions to construct temples around the central plaza. In a somewhat surprising display of civic pride, the questors and *olzim* took the challenge seriously, and even began to compete as to who would build the most impressive temple to their Passions. These were also financed by donations solicited from the pilgrims that were passing through in increasing numbers to visit the twelve spires of the Tylon Mountains (for more information on the Tylon Mountains, see the **Outside Kratas** chapter on p. 176). The Temples of Chorrolis and Upandal became particularly elaborate.

Gradon himself was a high-ranking questor of Erendis, the former Passion of Order, Bureaucracy, and Work. When assigning the locations for each temple, he gave that of Erendis a place of pride, closest both to the mesa and the Imperial Palace. The rest were arranged according to his personal preference of the Passions: Chorrolis, Upandal, Rashomon, and Mynbruje were given secondary honors close to Erendis, while Floranuus, Lochost, and Vestrial (considered flighty and irresponsible by Gradon) were placed as far south as possible, with Thystonius, Garlen, Jaspree, and Astendar placed in between.

However, continued raids from the crystal raider trollmoots forced the questors to fortify their temples, adding battlements, heavy gates, and arrow holes. Eventually the walls lining the plaza became as heavily fortified as those on the outside of the city.

During the Scourge, the Temple Plaza was one of the few large open spaces left in the city. Large gatherings for festivals or meetings of the citizenry were held here, and when the dome began to fail, many made their last stand against the Horrors here. Giant stones fallen from the dome still litter the plaza.

Since the Scourge, the plaza is primarily used only as a transit point between the other neighborhoods. Many people in Kratas are uncomfortable with wide-open spaces, so the plaza remains abandoned most of the time. The temples that ring it, while mostly intact, are littered with the refuse of years of transients and squatters. A few questors have begun rehabilitating some of the temples, however. The temple of Astendar has been fully refurbished, and the temples of Chorrolis, Jaspree,

Thystonius, Upandal, and Garlen are in the process of being restored to their former glory.

Garlthik keeps a close watch on the temples of the Mad Passions to make sure that no one attempts to rededicate them. Despite these efforts, rumors abound of shadowy figures skulking around their ruins at night.

The Temple of Astendar

The Temple of Astendar once was a beautiful marble temple, with a large, central vaulted chamber in which performances to honor Astendar were held. Surrounding this chamber were a number of balconies that led to smaller rooms, used both as artists' studios and lovers' trysts. However, many questors of Astendar would be horrified at the uses to which these rooms are now put, as the Temple of Astendar is now the most elaborate and ornate of Kratas' brothels.

The pre-Scourge temple was refurbished and refitted to better serve its current uses by its resident questors. The twin ork sisters, Branka Warg and Cranta Warg, are Illusionists of high Circle as well as questors of Astendar. The two are followers of a sect that believes it is appropriate to perform or procure love acts in exchange for temple donations. Often, such questors will only perform these acts on certain feast days, and within certain proscribed ritual conditions. However, the Warg sisters have expanded this devotion to become full-time, year-round madams. While most other questors of Astendar would consider such behavior heretical, curiously the Warg sisters still seem to enjoy Astendar's favor.

The temple of Astendar houses a wide variety of Namegivers of both genders and almost all races. The Warg sisters have supplemented this variety by using their Illusionist abilities to provide customers with nearly any fantasy they wish—although for a very high price. As questors of Astendar, the sisters consider their business to be an art form.

Not long ago, however, Branka Warg went one step too far when she granted the wish of one patron and disguised one of her young elf girls to resemble the Elf Queen Alachia. Not much later, Vistrosh appeared in the temple and slew Branka, the customer, and the unfortunate girl masquerading as Alachia. Now Cranta is a sworn enemy of Vistrosh, although she is not foolish enough to attempt a direct attack against him and his gang. She is, however, very receptive to plans that would thwart his interests. Like most people in Kratas, Cranta pays protection money to Garlthik, and is on fairly good terms with him. However, neither is aware that one of Cranta's most trusted assistants, a human woman Named Millantia, is actually a member of Brocher's Brood, and was responsible for telling Vistrosh of Branka's transgression.

The Temple of Chorrolis

This temple was always prominent in the life of Kratas before the Scourge, as trade was the greatest *raison d'etre* of the city. The merchants of Kratas competed with each other for prestige by donating conspicuously costly decorations and accoutrements to the temple. This rivalry became particularly heated between the Theran noble houses and the dwarf trading houses of Throal. Thus the temple always featured the finest silken curtains, embroidered tapestries, gold braziers, crystal and orichalcum chalices, and other great works of art.

After the return of Namegivers to Kratas, the temple was one of the first buildings to be looted, though many of its finest or most portable artifacts had been taken for safekeeping to other temples of Chorrolis in Throal or other cities, before the ill-fated decision to convert Kratas into a citadel. Nevertheless, there were still enough gold fixtures and other valuables to be sacked from this temple, some of them adorning the private quarters of Garlthik and other high-ranking members of the Force of the Eye.

The position of Chorrolis within Kratas became an issue of great debate among the residents of and visitors to the city, especially among the dwarfs of Throalic origin who are generally prone to such philosophizing anyway. The conventional perception of Chorrolis throughout Barsaive's merchant community is that of a protector and patron of merchants, shopkeepers, and traders. As such, merchants often seek Chorrolis' intervention for protection from the deprivations of thieves and bandits. Indeed, fairly standardized rituals exist throughout Barsaive for invoking such protections; be it the blessing of a caravan journey or the opening of a new stand in any market. Many of these rituals have their origins in this very temple prior to the Scourge. Therefore, as the protector of all merchants, Chorrolis would have nothing but enmity for thieves.

Equally strongly held (at least in Kratas), however, is the somewhat heretical belief that holds Chorrolis up as the Passion of Greed and Acquisitiveness, and therefore the Patron of Thieves. A number of Thieves actually are questors of Chorrolis, much to the annoyance of the more orthodox followers among the merchants.

The debate between the two factions has split the followers of Chorrolis in Kratas. The traditionalists point to the folklore and legends throughout Barsaive, which say that Chorrolis disdains thievery as the act of a coward, and accuse the thieves of corruption and promulgating false beliefs. On the other side, the thieves argue that there is only a very fine line between theft and the aggressive bargaining and questionable business practices followed by many merchants. Furthermore, any questors of Chorrolis of the merchant faction currently in Kratas are hypocrites at least, in that they are either buying stolen goods from thieves, or are selling goods to thieves for ill-gotten coin.

Either way, both sides are participating in a market dependent on theft. Chorrolis himself seems to not have weighed in on the issue so far.

Because of this split, the temple of Chorrolis remains a hollow shell. Neither side is willing to make donations to restore the temple, because it appears certain that any refurbishments will end up stolen. Traveling questors have cleaned out the debris of the Scourge, and followers of both factions regularly use the temple for performing rituals. There is a tacit agreement that the traditionalists will use the temple during the daylight hours, to make deals and seek blessings on their caravans, while the thieves use it at night to plot capers and seek Chorrolis' blessing on those as well.

There is no resident questor in charge of the temple because of the lack of a steady flow of donations that would support such a position. Further, a single questor taking charge would always alienate the side of the schism he did not subscribe to. The most powerful questors regularly associated with this temple are Toomand, a dwarf merchant running regular caravans with the Force of the Eye, and K'tryklen, a t'skrang member of the Force of the Eye who is Garlthik's senior fence. Although the two have opposed views on Chorrolis, they deal with each other often. Also, Toomand is wise enough to not bite the hand that feeds him (for more information on these characters, see p. 51 of the **Gangs of Kratas** chapter or p. 135 of the **Merchant's Row** chapter).

There are no guards or locks on the temple, as it has nothing of value, and there are Namegivers in it at most times of the day and night.

The Temple of Dis

Prior to the Scourge, this was the largest and most impressive of the temples, reflecting the administrator's bias towards Erendis. Whether by coincidence or intent, the archway over the massive double doors at the front of the temple has crumbled so that the epigraph that once read 'Erendis' has only the last three letters visible. Taking this as an omen, Garlthik has had the temple's buildings sealed shut, wards placed on all doors, and the guards posted in the square ordered to keep a close watch. Garlthik would like to have this temple, as well as that of Vestrial, destroyed, but fears invoking the wrath of a Mad Passion in doing so.

Rumor has it that Vistrosh and other members of Brocher's Brood are actually questors of Dis sneaking into the temple at certain times of the year to perform their rituals.

The Temple of Floranuus

The Temple of Floranuus was built to a beautiful design: two broad-sweeping, abstract walls, representing wings or sails or waves, surround a pulpit that resembles either the head of a hawk or the prow of a ship. Unfortunately, questors of Floranuus are a flighty lot, and they were never known for their ability to stick with a project. Indeed, the Theran administrator finally paid to have the temple completed from his own funds after it sat as a half-finished eyesore for several years.

Today, the temple is starkly impressive in its simple beauty, all the more poignant for its one broken wing and cracked and crumbling stone. Questors of Floranuus do pass through often on their way to the Tylon Mountains, but despite many tearful resolutions, none have actually stayed long enough to restore this temple.

The Temple of Garlen

Because of the rough-and-tumble nature of Kratas, Garlen's temple is perhaps the most heavily visited of all of them. The temple serves primarily as a hospital, with several stories devoted to rooms with beds for the sick and injured, as well as one large room in the back of the building that is a chapel for rituals to honor Garlen and beseech her favor, complete with a hearth where soup is often pleasantly cooking.

The head of the Temple is N'geliana, an old elf woman, high-ranking questor of Garlen, and retired Thief. Questors of Garlen had saved her life more than once from injuries sustained in the course of her illicit career. When she got too old for thievery, she devoted her life to following Garlen's path. N'geliana may be that one truly rare thing in Kratas: a selfless, generous person.

Certain people suspect N'geliana of still being a member of Garlthik's gang, or of working as an information broker. If either of these rumors is true, her disguise as a questor of Garlen is a very good one. Not many people are more trusted than the followers of Garlen, and many severely injured people will lighten their souls when they face Death, telling all of their secrets.

—Belphegor, Elven Scout

She now supervises half-a-dozen or so other questors of lower ranks. Many have begun traveling to Kratas from other parts of Barsaive to study under N'geliana, as there are few places where one can get more first-hand experience in treating stab wounds, as well as many exotic poisons.



ADVENTURE HOOK

The player characters are approached outside of Kratas by questors of either Mynbruje or Lochost wishing to hire them to help restore the temple of their respective Passion in Kratas. The group has to escort a number of questors and craftsmen into the city, and guard them as they attempt to rebuild their temple.

If the characters are working on Lochost's temple, they are given the tacit approval of the Force of the Eye, though with no particular active support, and they may still have to fend off would-be extortionists and petty thieves. Brocher's Brood takes a more serious interest in attempting to halt the construction, first through subtle attempts at intimidation of workers and suppliers and work-site "accidents" and then, as Vistrosh becomes more frustrated, outright assassination attempts on the main questor.

Should the player characters be working for Mynbruje's questors, Garlthik is less pleased, and does not offer even nominal support. He does not go out of his way to attempt to stop the construction, as he is wary of earning the enmity of a Passion, but neither does he discourage others from doing so. In fact, many of Kratas' residents will attempt to stop the restoration. Their efforts range from petty harassment and vandalism to arson and assassination attempts.

Rebuilding and re-consecrating either of these temples takes several months at least. Should they succeed, the player characters are not only paid handsomely, but word of their role spreads throughout Barsaive, and other questors offer their assistance to the group in the future, should the player characters ever need it. Obviously, if one of the heroes is a questor of the Passion whose temple was restored, this task counts as a Zealous Act of Devotion.

If you need a skilled healer for your next mission, ask for F'kramir, the only t'skrang in the temple. He's equally skilled as a cat burglar and healer.

—Gillian, Human Thief

The economic realities of Kratas being what they are, the temple is required to charge fairly stiff fees for its services. Some of these fees go to pay for guards that prevent people from trying to finish off their enemies who may be recuperating inside. Further, the top floors of the temple were heavily damaged during the Scourge, and much of the monies that are earned by the healers are going to restore them.

While not naïve, N'geliana has been known, very rarely, to moderate these fees for truly worthy cases, and, of course, the Force of the Eye receives a deep discount. The temple also sells healing potions and antidotes.

N'GELIANA

Sadly, a truly selfless person does not seem to exist in Kratas. N'geliana is not quite the weary old woman she pretends to be. She is in fact a quite spry member of the Brocher's Brood, though none of the other questors of Garlen know this. She is occasionally spirited out of the Temple by Vistrosh to attend to the wounds of one of his gang, but far more importantly, she gathers information from the wounded under her care. She is very good at prying loose the tongues of the injured, both with her charming bedside manner, and with a variety of potions. This is one reason why she is particularly interested in treating the members of the Force of the Eye. N'geliana is a Fifth Circle elf Thief and Rank 5 Questor of Garlen.



THE TEMPLE OF JASPREE

The Temple of Jaspree consists of a simple circle of pillars surrounding an elaborate terraced garden with a plain stone altar in the middle. The pillars have all been restored, after being toppled during the Scourge, and the gardens replanted, though not with the same splendor as before. Though Jaspree is normally the Passion of peaceful farmers and gardeners, it is indicative of the character of Kratas that the two questors responsible for restoring Jaspree's temple here are Duchalia, an elven herbalist and maker of poisons (see the **Greenmarket** chapter, p.103), and Drannoquinn, a hunter of Horrors. Because of the reputations of these two, very few of the farmers visiting the Greenmarket make their way here, preferring to offer thanks to Jaspree in the simple shrines of their home villages.

Because there is little of interest to thieves here, as well as because of the fearsome reputations of its questors, the temple remains unmolested. Some Namegivers come here to enjoy the scenery, as it is the closest thing to a park in the city. Despite their professional and philosophical differences, Duchalia and Draanoquinn formed a strong friendship while restoring the temple.



The Temple of Lochost

Open worship of the Passion Lochost was prohibited under the Therans, so this temple was smaller and less ornate than all of the others. It also suffered greatly during the Scourge, so is now little more than a pile of rubble. An occasional thief or ork scorcher will come and pay tribute to this Passion at the site, as those who have spent time in jail or as slaves often revere Lochost, and many orks remember their race's enslavement and Hrak Gron's role in freeing them.

A few years ago, a Liberator came through and cleared up some of the rubble, weeding the grounds and erecting a small shrine on the spot before moving on. After he left town, the shrine was destroyed in the middle of the night. Though there were no witnesses, many speculate that members of Brocher's Brood was responsible, as their involvement in the slave trade would provide an obvious interest in keeping the influence of Lochost to a minimum.

Some residents of Kratas have petitioned Garlthik to rebuild the temple. While he has pledged to defend any who choose to do so, he is unwilling to invest the money himself, perhaps because he is reluctant to initiate that particular skirmish with Vistrosh at the moment.

The Temple of Mynbruje

This temple was severely damaged during the Scourge. Afterwards, because of Mynbruje's association with magistrates and constabulary, the thieves flocking to Kratas tore down the rest of the temple, thinking this would help create a thieves' paradise. Now all that remains is a massive pile of rubble, covering the old temple grounds.

It would take an extremely brave or foolish questor of Mynbruje to attempt to restore this temple, though succeeding would certainly count as a Zealous Act of Devotion. Key to re-dedicating it to its patron Passion would be finding the original ritual paraphernalia of the temple—an executioner's axe and a set of scales—which have disappeared since the Scourge.



The Temple of Rashomon

The temple of Rashomon, Passion of Leadership, Endurance, Tolerance, and Perseverance—now the Mad Passion Raggok—was hit particularly hard during the Scourge, as if the Horrors had some special hatred for this Passion. A number of followers of Rashomon, mostly community leaders and minor functionaries of the government, made their last stand inside this temple. Like the temple of Mynbruje, this temple is now only a colossal pile of rubble, presumed to cover the crushed remains of the pre-Scourge faithful. There are rumors that the giant gold statue of Rashomon that formerly dominated the temple interior is now a pile of melted slag buried beneath the rubble of the temple. If such a treasure truly exists, it is probably cursed either by Horrors, Raggok, or even both. Garlthik's guards keep a close watch on all of the Mad Passions' temples, which are officially off limits to everyone. The Force of the Eye will most likely execute anyone caught poking around the ruins immediately, even if he is merely a treasure seeker.

About a year ago, however, some Namegivers managed to sneak past the ever-watchful Force of the Eye, though not without attracting someone's attention. At dawn, an ork's mutilated and dismembered body was found scattered over the ruins of Rashomon's temple. Tattoos depicting swords and skulls on all body parts suggested that the dead ork had been a questor of Raggok. Further, the body parts were placed against stones in a way that allowed each to drain its blood into the ground, suggesting that the slayer of the questor was a member of the secret society known as the Keys of Death.

Garlthik was not pleased about evidence that members of either cult were working in his city under his gang's nose, although he took some solace at the thought that they were so far only killing each other. Despite the Force's investigation, no other evidence of questors of Raggok has yet turned up in Kratas.

A questor of the Mad Passions is not to blame for every evil deed. Kratas proves every day that ordinary, mundane Namegivers can be as evil as the maddest questor or darkest Horror.

—Gillian, Human Thief

THE TEMPLE OF THYSTONIUS

The Temple of Thystonius is a large, sunken stone ring surrounded by a few rows of benches and many statues of Thystonius in various active poses. Today many of the statues are broken, but otherwise the temple remains fairly intact. While there are no particular questors attached to the temple, there are still many followers that visit fairly often, particularly from the ranks of the mercenaries and scorchers of the Stables. Questors from outside Kratas often stop by on their way to the Tylon peaks. A common ritual conducted in the temple is to wrestle in the ring, and occasionally a follower may be found here waiting for someone to engage him.

THE TEMPLE OF UPANDAL

The most sturdily built of all the temples, and almost as impressive as that of Erendis, the temple of Upandal weathered the Scourge fairly intact. Today, its patrons are the Weaponsmiths and other craftsmen of the Hammersing neighborhood, though anyone wishing to pay homage to Upandal is welcome. This temple does not have any residing questors or caretakers, but many followers of Upandal attend to the temple, both for ritual purposes and to keep the building in good shape. Occasionally, rival Weaponsmith forges use the temple as neutral ground to negotiate resolutions to any conflicts.

The temple itself is a beautiful tribute to Upandal, with marble floors and solid granite walls covered with powerful-looking sculptures of Upandal on the outside, and with elaborate mosaics depicting heroic examples of construction and craftsmanship on the inside. The center of the temple is dominated by a gargantuan iron anvil, which is used as an altar. Followers often bring other ritual items, such as small golden hammers, as needed. As the temple itself is the artifact, there is nothing of value inside, eliminating the need for a permanent guard. If the temple could weather the Scourge relatively unscathed, it can surely sustain any kind of late night vandalism.

THE TEMPLE OF VESTRIAL

This temple is an imposing columned structure that suggests somber dignity. Beyond the large double entrance doors, an even larger set of portals opens to a grand staircase, at the top of which is yet another ornately carved set of doors. Off to either side of the staircase are doors leading into a maze-like series of small rooms used for various rituals. Before the Scourge, opening the set of doors at the top of the stairs caused the floor in front of the doors to drop into a ramp, dumping the individual into a mud pit behind the temple. This was considered hilarious for spectators, but also a humbling, spiritual experience for the victim. Today, should one manage to make one's way through those doors, one would find a series of sharp metal spikes hidden beneath the mud, as Vestrial's sense of humor has become much darker since the Scourge.

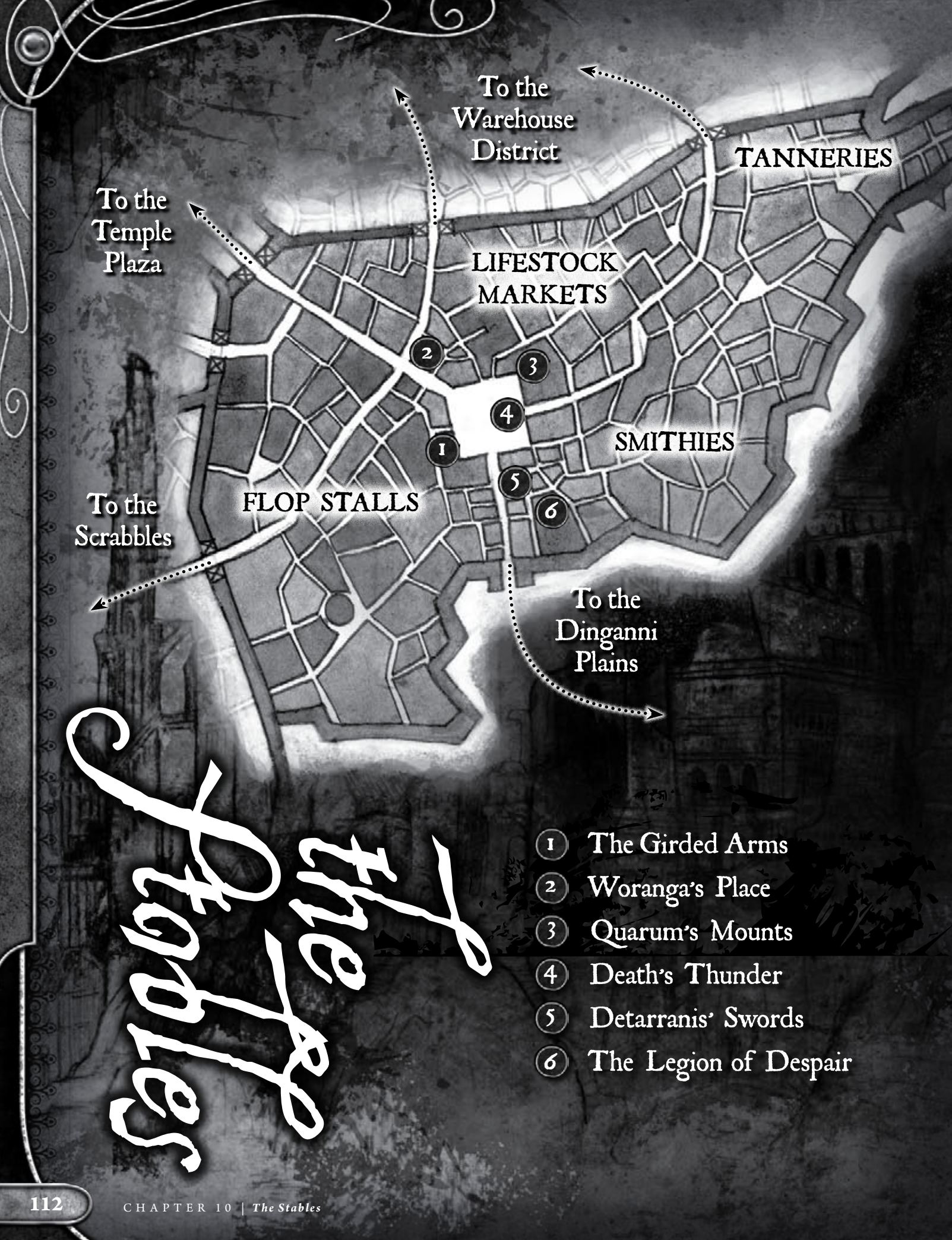
As with the other temples of the Mad Passions, Garlthik is concerned by the possibility of the temple attracting cultists, and has secured the building, keeping an eye on it around the clock. To get in, one would have to evade detection by the Force of the Eye and get past the seals, wards, locks, and traps put on the building. So far, Garlthik's guards have not observed any questors of Vestrial in Kratas.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The player characters witness a group of Kratans who drag a severely wounded t'skrang on a chain along the street. Obviously they plan to stone her to death, claiming that she is a questor of Raggok and responsible for many ills the inhabitants of the street had befallen since her arrival. The t'skrang, a female Named P'laktana, cries to the player characters to help her. She says she's innocent and only a humble merchant from northern Barsaive who wants to build a shop in Kratas. It's easy for the characters to stop the lynch mob and investigate the whole incident.

If pressed, most people find other explanations for the ills that happen to them; only two humans insist that P'laktana is guilty and responsible for all the trouble. Both, a pair of brothers by the Names Gelor and Essali, start a discussion with the player characters and try to convince them of the t'skrang's guilt. If it becomes obvious to the brothers that they won't be successful with words alone, Gelor tries to kill P'laktana with a Surprise Strike blow with his short sword, while Essali is completely surprised and unable to react.

It turns out that Gelor had a vision of Raggok lately telling him to wreak havoc in Kratas "to clean this whole place". Examinations show that Gelor possesses no questor powers.


To the Warehouse District
TANNERIES
To the Temple Plaza
LIFESTOCK MARKETS
SMITHIES
FLOP STALLS
To the Scrabbles
To the Dinganni Plains
1 The Girded Arms
2 Woranga's Place
3 Quarum's Mounts
4 Death's Thunder
5 Detarranis' Swords
6 The Legion of Despair

The Stables

CHAPTER TEN

If people tell you Mercenaries and Scorchers are bad company, they've probably never been to Kratas. Because in Kratas, in their company is actually the safest place you can be.

• Hestreph of Kiltar •

The Stables is the newest and largest of the neighborhoods of Kratas and is also the closest to the eastern gate. It is the first neighborhood visitors coming on the road from Daiche encounter. Before the Scourge, this neighborhood was used as a caravan staging area, and to a lesser degree, livestock market. The first Theran Administrator, Emian Gradon, declared that all pack and draft animals must be stabled in this area, which is separated from the rest of the city by another high wall. This effort to bring order to the chaos of the city resulted in keeping the rest of the city cleaner and clearer of traffic and noise. A small garrison of Theran cavalry was also housed in this neighborhood. Thus the neighborhood contained numerous stables, stockyards, and warehouses, as well as some tanneries and slaughterhouses. Additionally, there were several large open areas for assembling caravans. Chief among these was the centerpiece of the neighborhood, Drover's Square.

The roads of the Stables are unpaved, hard-packed dirt and are wider than those in the rest of Kratas. The broad Wagon Avenue runs diagonally through the Stables, from the eastern gate through Drover's Square, and onward northwest to the gate in the wall that separates the Stables from the Warehouse District. As horses generally don't care for stairs, most of the buildings in the Stables are single story. The Stables, then, is the most squat of the neighborhoods of Kratas, and has the most open feel. However, it is also the loudest and most pungent neighborhood. Visitors hear the bray of pack animals, the snort of warhorses, the shouted challenges of ork scorchers, and the frequent clash of arms. The smells of slaughterhouses, tanneries, manure piles, and unwashed mercenaries is an affront to all but the hardiest of noses.

Most of the buildings in the Stables were built of wood, so many have collapsed and rotted; others were destroyed by falling pieces of the dome. Some of the stables were built with the lower half of the walls in stone, and wood above, so they were easily rebuilt after the Scourge.

Today, the neighborhood continues to serve its original purpose as a staging ground for caravans, although many of these are now arranged by fences and are loaded with stolen goods, often being loaded onto stolen pack animals. Additionally, this is the favored area for the ork cavalries and scorcher bands, as there is room for their tents and mounts. As such, this has become the center of mercenary hiring in all of Barsaive. The scorcher bands often come here to purchase needed supplies (which no respectable merchant would sell in any other city), as well as to spend their plunder in the taverns. The cavalries also come here for recreation and to solicit business.

The population of this neighborhood fluctuates the most in Kratas: one month it may be only a few drovers, packers, skinners, and blacksmiths; the next it may be full of hundreds of ork scorchers and cavalry and their beasts. When the latter occurs, rivalries are high, as the orks seek to outdo each other in appearing the most rugged and tough. Riders who might otherwise enjoy the treat of a warm bed indoors

will eat, drink, and literally sleep in their saddles, even in pouring rain, rather than appear soft in the eyes of another tribe. With that many orks present, the chances of triggering someone's *gahad* are high, and fights are a daily occurrence. Garlthik tolerates such outbursts as long as there is minimal property damage. There is now a large flat area trampled clear of vegetation right outside the eastern gate that has become used for larger skirmishes and duels.

Such meetings of the cavalries and scorchers are also occasions for more peaceful pursuits, including impromptu demonstrations of trick riding and other talents, recruiting of new members, forging alliances, and the chance for romantic liaisons outside one's own band. This also provides excellent opportunities for Cavalryman adepts seeking training. To keep busy and to show their usefulness, sporadic groups from the cavalries, scorcher bands, and other mercenaries patrol the streets of the Stables and keep an eye out to protect potential customers. While their presence does discourage violence and lessens the need for protection rackets in the area, it does little to stop conmen, pickpockets, and other illicit activity.

To serve these riders, locals set up numerous stalls that are combinations of cook shops and ale houses. These are little more than shacks with open windows and awnings, for their customers ride up to the window to be served. Most of these are temporary and only appear when the scorchers are in town. Woranga's Place is the exception.

Woranga's Place

This tavern is run by a retired ork Cavalryman Named Woranga. She was born and raised in a small farming village south of Throal that included humans, elves, dwarfs, and orks. A bookish and curious child, Woranga learned as much as she could from her neighbors and from every book she could get her hands on. During her tenth year, however, her village was razed by the Elf Eaters scorcher band, who slew all of the inhabitants, save her. They took great delight in killing both the elves, and Woranga's parents, for daring to live with and raise a child among dirt-grubbing elves. She was spared, for the Elf Eaters felt that she was young enough to still be taught the true ways of an ork.

She took to the ways of the scorchers with the same intensity that she had applied to her previous studies, and discovered her true calling as a Cavalryman. She quickly became one of the most powerful and skilled scorchers in one of the most brutal and vicious tribes. Her exploits remain legendary among the scorchers of Barsaive. She retired only after having a leg torn off in her last epic battle against a rival horde.

Woranga's Place was once the largest tavern in the Stables. However, after the re-founding of the Ork Nation of Cara Fahd in late 1509 TH (see the **How It Came To Pass** chapter on p. 17 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***), the situ-



ation of the ork scorchers and the mercenary cavalries in Kratas changed drastically. Many of them, as well as some of the city orks, left Kratas to join the new ork nation.

The northern half of Woranga's Place is a large, comfortable tavern such as one would find nearly anywhere in Barsaive, with a large common dining room on the first floor; small, private dining rooms off of it; and sleeping quarters upstairs. The southern half of the tavern is a huge kitchen and taproom, which not only serves the tavern proper, but also serves scorchers outside. To accomplish this, the southern wall is one big counter, with a serving platform raised to the height of a mounted rider, under a large awning. There is even a small tower at one corner so the staff can wait on those riding dyres and other over-sized mounts.

Her unique position as a highly respected scorcher, who is also well versed in civilized ways, allows Woranga to perform services much more valuable than slinging *hurlg*. For small commissions she will help negotiate contracts between the cavalries and their non-ork clients, and the small, private rooms in her tavern are often used for such negotiations. She has also used her considerable stature among the scorchers and cavalry to keep conflicts among them to a minimum while they are in Kratas. For this last service she has received the gratitude and protection of Garlthik. The two are now good friends, and were actually lovers in the past, in the casual ork way. Patrons would be foolish to think of her as civilized, however. Despite her ability to converse easily with the most refined aristocrat, she is a tough and ruthless fighter, even on a crutch, and being treated as an inferior triggers her *gahad*, whether by scorcher, merchant, or any other Namegiver.

Woranga

During Woranga's early, formative years, she learned a great deal in her hometown, a small farming village south of Throal. She learned about agriculture and farming, flora and fauna, and barn raising and house building, and reveled in the tales of legends and heroes and comparing them to real histories. These skills came in handy after her induction into the Elf Eaters. She took her knowledge of the outdoors and applied it to survival in the wilderness. She took her knowledge of the history of Throal and the organization of Throal's armies to design tactics to counter their formations and strategies. She learned firsthand that knowledge properly applied is power, and quickly rose in the ranks of the Elf Eaters, building her legend with every day and every battle. She created Woranga's Place by using her knowledge of architecture and building from her youth and creating a solution to the problem of catering to clientele that do not like to eat and drink indoors and prefer the carpet of earth outside instead.

Ever since the loss of her leg, Woranga has not bonded with a new mount. Her injury has made it difficult to ride living animals. She refuses to get a crystal limb leg to replace her lost leg even though it could be easily obtained through the black market. She considers it a form of corrupt Theran magic. However, this has not stopped her from getting a death cheat blood charm, as her last battle brought her too perilously close to death for her comfort. It would be foolish to underestimate her despite her apparent disability. She still rides the waves, soars the skies, and glides over the land with her spirit mount when summoned. For those that have set off her *gahad*, one of her favorite tactics is to summon her air mount, fly up, and then rain a volley of arrows down upon the surprised offender. Woranga is a Tenth Circle ork Cavalryman.



The Ork Tribes

The exodus of many ork cavalries and scorcher tribes to Cara Fahd has significantly changed this area of the city. While still rather raucous at times, it is a shadow of its former activity. Many tribes have left completely, though this has made room for a number of smaller tribes to stop in briefly on their travels. Typically, one might encounter members of the following ork tribes in Kratas, who maintain a regular presence in the district.

The Skull Whargs

Kratas is within the area in which the Skull Wharg scorcher tribe roams. This tribe, run by Karak Bloodeyes, has around 4,000 orks, though as is typical of most of the ork tribes, only about a fourth of these are fighters, the rest being children, the elderly, and the other non-combatants who tend to the domestic chores. The tribe is further broken down into eight clans of around 500 orks each, with 150 in each clan being fighters. The Skull Whargs usually visit Kratas only to sell stolen goods and animals, to re-provision themselves, and to spend their loot in the taverns. A raiding party of only a dozen or so raiders may be present, celebrating a successful raid, or a full clan or two with all their families may be there. In the latter case, most of the non-combatants will camp outside the walls to avoid the entrance fee, and to have room for all their tents and animals.

Larger groups of Skull Whargs in Kratas have become a common sight in the past year, since the Metal Fist tribe (who viewed the area around Kratas as their homeland) left for Cara Fahd. When the entire tribe does meet for important events (such as inter-clan marriages or the ascension of a new clan leader), these meetings occur out in the field, not in a city. To hold such events in the city would be too civilized to the scorchers.

Herok's Lancers

Herok's Lancers, with 800 orks, including 200 fighters, can be hired from Kratas. Herok Shatterbone is their leader and is represented by Thumad Brokenthumb. Thumad is a Thief who was assigned to Kratas as punishment for filch-

ing too many of his comrades' possessions. His thumbs were broken as well, though they have since healed. He has actually thrived in Kratas, serving his tribe well as their agent, and has proven a savvy negotiator who drives a hard bargain. He thinks of any price he negotiates above the going rate as thievery, and thus in service to his Discipline. He also continues to exercise the more traditional talents of his Discipline, especially picking pockets. He bandages his thumbs and pretends that they are permanently crippled to keep people from being suspicious. He is also confidant that if his victims discover his thefts, they will be reluctant to attack the representative of an ork cavalry. He often frequents Woranga's Place and keeps an ear to the ground for those looking for a cavalry's services, often visiting them personally.

Thumad Brokenthumb

Thumad has a strong impulse to steal, bordering on kleptomania. This impulse often makes him steal even from allies who consider this behavior treacherous. This is what caused his thumbs to be broken and forced him out of the main company of Herok's Lancers. Acting as the representative of Herok's Lancers in Kratas has allowed him to sate his urge to steal whenever he wishes in a city of lawlessness. His kleptomania is only equaled by his cowardice. He feels he can steal with impunity since no one will see through his disguise as a cripple with broken thumbs. Even if they did see through his act, he feels invulnerable since only a fool would cross a representative of Herok's Lancers. Denigrating his Discipline and way of life is one of the few ways to set off his *gahad*. Thumad Brokenthumb is a Fifth Circle ork Thief.



Mercenary Units

When the ork cavalries left for Cara Fahd, a shortage of mercenaries became apparent, almost doubling any mercenaries' fees. Many of the non-ork mercenaries have sought to expand their lines of work to fill this need. These groups now more actively recruit new members.

Flek's Diggers

This unit of sappers is led by the charismatic ork Flekoran "The Mole" and consists of not more than a dozen men, all of them adepts. Most of the unit's members are dwarf Thief or Scout adepts, while Flekoran is a Warrior/Weaponsmith adept. He formed "Flek's Diggers" eight years ago, when he left a scorcher band (the exact reasons are unknown and he doesn't speak about them) and needed a new field of work. He soon realized that good sappers are a much-needed type of specialist, who can earn a lot of silver with their work. As time went on he recruited more members for the unit, up to the current roughly dozen men and women that now serve him. He's very picky when choosing a new recruit and hires only the most trustworthy candidates.

The unit is famous for its construction of networks of trenches as well as mining under fortress walls, but handles all the other tasks of a sapper unit nearly as well.

The Legion of Despair

This is the largest of the mercenary bands in Kratas, and can field anywhere from 300 to 1,000 able fighters. However, they are a ragtag bunch, and embody the worst qualities of mercenaries; they are only loyal to money, are quick to switch sides for a better offer, and are prone to desertion and looting. Their founder, a human Warrior Named Crentan, chose the band's Name intending for it to imply that its enemies would despair at its arrival, but many think it describes the level of desperation that is

required to join the Legion. Most of the Legion's members are non-adepts, and are humans, dwarfs, or orks.

Crentan has taken over the old Theran cavalry garrison near the eastern gate, though it is in disrepair. Gaps remain in the walls and pieces of the collapsed dome litter the courtyard. Several dozen members of the Legion live in the garrison, with the rest either squatting in abandoned buildings nearby or scattered in inns and flophouses throughout the city. Crentan is a very frustrated man, in that his dreams of leading a mercenary army that would be feared across Barsaive have not been fulfilled. He is egotistical and will not admit to himself that it is his own lack of leadership ability that is to blame. Instead he will take his anger out on his opponents in victory and his underlings in defeat. He should not be underestimated, however, as he remains a ruthless and dangerous man who commands a large number of fighters.

DETERANIS' SWORDS

Deteranis is an elven Warrior with a mysterious past. He carries himself with a noble, distant air, and enforces a strict discipline and order within his troops. He considers the study of warfare an art and pursues that study with vigor. He is a master tactician, and prefers assignments that provide opportunities for massed battles, though his men are adept at guerilla warfare as well. Few of the mercenary rabble that flock to Kratas are up to Deteranis' exacting standards, so he maintains only a core group of 100 men. These are almost all adepts, and are extremely loyal, for once having earned their commander's respect, he treats them well. His core group consists mainly of Warriors, then Archers and Cavalrymen, but also includes a number of Scouts, Weaponsmiths, and magicians.

Deteranis fled from Shosara after his plans for a coup were revealed. It is said that a very high bounty is placed on his head, but thus far no Namegiver has been able to defeat him in combat.

—Jendarak The Swift, Human Warrior

When jobs require more troops than Deteranis has available, he quickly hires temporary recruits, assigning them under the close supervision of his regulars. His men keep an eye out for those who show promise from these temporary ranks to join Deteranis' regular force. Any who behave below his expectations, such as by showing cowardice or engaging in looting, are swiftly dismissed, and in extreme cases, slain. With temporary troops added, Deteranis can swell his ranks to 500 or more soldiers.

Deteranis has great disdain for the undisciplined Legion of Despair, as well as the scorcher tribes, though he has some respect for the cavalries. When his troops are not employed he conducts them in elaborate drills and exercises on the plains outside of Kratas, though he takes precautions to avoid onlookers. Deteranis also experiments with new formations and deployments of his troops, so their number, equipment, and methods varies greatly.

Because of his regal manner and reluctance to tell anyone of his past, many speculate that Deteranis is a Theran, perhaps exiled or a spy. Others suspect that he comes from one of the elven nations beyond Barsaive, such as Shosara. He greets any such speculation with bemusement, but never comments on his past.

Deteranis has taken over a large walled compound on the south side of Drover's square that had been the headquarters of a dwarf trading company before the Scourge. This compound includes extensive stables, which once housed pack animals, and now hold the warhorses of the Swords; warehouses that have been converted to barracks; and a mansion that is now Deteranis' private residence, as well as a guard tower. The core of Deteranis' troops sleeps in the barracks here. Employers wishing to hire the Swords are welcome here, though Deteranis can often also be found in the Girded Arms.

Deteranis wears a very ornate set of thread plate mail, with intricate and ancient designs, the origin of which is the source of some speculation among the Weaponsmiths of Kratas. He uses thread magic heavily, and is always on the lookout in the markets of Kratas for other thread items that he can purchase from his profits. His most recent purchase was a silvered shield.

More important than these, however, are the Swords of Deteranis. These are five very ancient and ornate weapons, with a similar set of mysterious designs to that of his armor. The swords are of extremely high quality and also serve as pattern items for the Group Pattern of Deteranis and his four most trusted commanders.

Deteranis' Lieutenants

Deteranis' lieutenants all carry themselves in a professional and reserved manner, following their commander's example. They have formed a Group True Pattern (see the ***Player's Guide*** on p.120), and are all quite loyal to each other. They all have quarters in the mansion in the Swords' compound. Deteranis trusts them all completely, and keeps them well equipped and well paid. He also entrusts smaller missions to their leadership, so any one of them could be found leading groups of a few dozen soldiers, of mixed Disciplines. When they are assembled as one army, each commands his own contingent: Sillisimin commands the light infantry skirmishers of Scouts, Mooranad the heavy reserves of Warriors and Weaponsmiths, Tralimisent the Cavalrymen, and Y'krilna the Archers and magicians.

Sillisimin, an elven Swordmaster, keeps her armor well polished, which highlights her flaming red hair.

ADVENTURE HOOK



One night in the Girded Arms, the player characters are approached by a young elf Named Telow. After a few drinks he offers to sell them a dagger he has "found" that has been enhanced by a Weaponsmith. He starts by asking for 40 silver pieces, but can be easily haggled down as low as 10 silvers. While he tries to act indifferent about it, perceptive characters can tell that he is desperate to sell the dagger. If the characters refuse to buy it, he bids them good night, moves on, and attempts to sell it to another bar patron.

Telow's dilemma is that he is an apprentice in the smithies who has been sneaking into his master's forge at night and working on the dagger. Unfortunately, as he knows, the Weaponsmith forges in the Hammersing neighborhood forbid the blacksmiths of the Stables from making weapons, and enforce this rule strictly. Were they to find out, they would either kill him or force him into an involuntary "apprenticeship" that would be virtual slavery.

If the player characters don't buy the dagger, in a few nights they stumble over Telow's dead body in an alley. The person he sold the dagger to put two and two together and ratted Telow out to the Daggerwrights (the Weaponsmith forges have a standing offer for information of this kind). They in turn hired M'rantak, an assassin from the Silent Shepherds, to make an example of him. The characters may feel the need to investigate the death, but most people in Kratas are indifferent to yet another corpse.

If the player characters do buy the dagger, one of the other patrons in the bar notices the exchange, suspects what has happened, and again rats out Telow to the Daggerwrights. The Daggerwrights hire M'rantak to first get the dagger from the characters as proof of the violation, and then kill Telow. M'rantak approaches the player characters disguised as an arms merchant who wishes to both buy the dagger from them and buy more from the smith they got it from. He pays them generously for the dagger and asks for a Name and description of the smith. He pretends to be trying to find a cheaper source than the Weaponsmith forges and asks the group to keep it all quiet. Trusting players may think they are merely steering some business Telow's way, when they are actually sending him to his doom. M'rantak's contract does not cover killing the player characters, so they are not in danger unless they attack him. If they refuse to sell him the dagger and information, he attempts to steal the dagger, most likely while they are sleeping. He is also able to track down Telow from a description given by the barroom eavesdropper, so unless the player characters actively try to save Telow's life, they find him dead as above. If they sell the dagger and information to M'rantak, and do nothing else, they also discover Telow's dead body in an alley.

Diplomatic player characters might be able to negotiate the initiation of Telow into one of the Weaponsmith forges, particularly if they grease the way in with large amounts of silver. However, there is still the matter of M'rantak's contract. If the players successfully persuade the Daggerwrights to withdraw the contract, M'rantak is displeased with them. The best way to appease him is to offer him a comparable or better job.

She can occasionally be found carousing in the taverns, and when she has a few drinks in her, often seeks out any new Swordmasters in town to challenge them to duels. These are usually just friendly affairs, and are not fought to the death.

Mooranad is an obsidian-black obsidiman Warrior, with silver veins running through her skin. She is as deliberate and thoughtful as any of her race, and can devise a very well-crafted battle plan. She is Deteranis' protégé, being of the same Discipline, and having put more effort into studying strategy. She is trying hard to master Deteranis' lightning-quick ability to adapt his plans to changes on the battlefield.

Tralimisent is an elf with a pearly, iridescent cast to her skin, and shiny silver hair. She believes in elven suprem-

acy, and seeks out the most refined of everything in elven culture. She views her mission in life as being to prove that elves are better Cavalrymen than the crude orks, and so has much to compete against in the Stables of Kratas. Her objection is to the culture of the scorchers, not to the orks as a race, and has a few well-disciplined orks in her cavalry. She rides a beautiful white warhorse.

Y'krilna is a green, mottled t'skrang Archer with a luxuriant head crest. When wearing her fernweave armor she is nearly invisible in the woods. While silent in the forest, she is boisterous in the tavern and often goes carousing with Sillisimin. She also challenges other Archers to contests. She has a friendly rivalry and secret infatuation with Zoradan of the Death's Thunder mercenary group, stemming from the last time the two bands worked together.

Death's Thunder

Death's Thunder is a mercenary band with an airship for hire. The leader of the band is Foranal the Lost, a troll Sky Raider. She has had her horns sawed off, a sign of dishonor among the highland trolls, and her drakkar is clearly from one of the crystal raider trollmoots.

Death's Thunder is the Name of the mercenary band and is also the Name of its drakkar. The airship has been heavily modified, making it impossible to identify which trollmoot it came from, and is covered with a riot of bizarre paintings and trophies. The mercenaries have used their artisan skills to decorate it in a wild mix of cultural styles. Tales of the group's exploits have been carved into the sides of the drakkar in a number of different tongues, and the sails have been painted with scenes of the many places it has sailed. Heads of slain creatures, as well as captured enemy arms and standards, hang from the sides. The crew has also modified the ship in a number of other ways, described on p.120.

Death's Thunder can be hired to fight in a battle and to transport additional troops. The group has occasionally been subcontracted by Deteranis, and with the ship loaded with his best Archers, it can devastate a battlefield from the air. Alternately, they have also been used to land squads of ork cavalry behind an enemy's lines. However the ship and its crew do not come cheaply; the mercenaries may charge as much as 5,000 silvers for their services. They think of themselves as thrill seekers above all else, so they can only be hired to transport passengers or cargo if persuaded that they will encounter exceptional danger in doing so.

While the ship is excellent as support for a mercenary army, the crew's modifications have made it slower than a regular troll drakkar, yet it does not have the firepower of a Theran vedette or a Throalic galley. The crew is well aware of these limitations, and thus they attempt to avoid direct confrontations with any but the smallest and most lightly armed of airships.

Death's Thunder is usually docked to one side of Drover's Square. Even when out carousing after a successful victory, at least one of the crew stays on board the ship at all times.

Adventure Hook

Many factions and individuals in Kratas want to know more about the mysterious Deteranis, the elven commander of a mercenary band, thus far without any success.

When an unknown elven bounty hunter arrives in Kratas and spreads the word that he is after Deteranis to bring his head to Shosara, the bounty hunter attracts a lot of attention. Deteranis is confident that his new opponent is not capable of taking him out, but wants to learn more about him. With the help of an information broker as middleman, Deteranis hires the group to uncover the secrets of this bounty hunter.

The group quickly finds out that the bounty hunter goes by the Name Kalador the Dark, which leads them to the knowledge that he's well known in southern Barsaive for hunting down slavers. That is what brought him to Kratas: he's on the track of a particularly vicious slaver Named Ch'krask, a T'skrang Thief, who was last seen in the City of Thieves. Kalador simply makes a lot of noise about the bounty on Deteranis to conceal his true motives, while searching for his quarry. It's up to the group if they are satisfied with this information or if they help Kalador hunt down Ch'krask. Ch'krask is here to meet with Brocher's Brood about an upcoming influx of slaves, and he is in hiding in the Undercity with his personal guards during the discussions.

In addition, if he comes to trust them, Deteranis may hire the group to look into the reality of a bounty on his head from Shosara. However, he does not divulge why he is so suspicious.

Foranal the Lost

Foranal the Lost is an imposing and attractive woman who has managed to assemble a group of outcasts such as herself into a devoted and dangerous crew. When not wearing her crystal raider armor, she wears the dignified troll-sized versions of the latest Throalic fashions. Foranal the Lost is a Sixth Circle troll Sky Raider.



Elamian Sitalin

Elamian is a striking elf, who wears flamboyant, bright silks, but is rather shy. Hailing from the shipyards of Jerris, she left for the excitement of Kratas. Elamian is a Fifth Circle elf Air Sailor.

Tr'kalani

Foranal usually lets Tr'kalani handle negotiations for the crew. Tr'kalani's skin is purple in color, and his body is covered with scars. It is suspected that these (and the stolen fire cannons on board) may have something to do with why he is no longer working on a riverboat, but no one has obtained the full story from this otherwise personable t'skrang. As a *k'stulaami*, Tr'kalani will often tie himself to a rope behind the ship and glide behind, sometimes for the sheer joy of it, but sometimes with throwing spears in each hand. Tr'kalani is a Fifth Circle *k'stulaami* t'skrang Boatman.

Firewind

Firewind's skin has become a mottled mix of the many colors the ship is painted. The Windmaster's wings are fiery red at the top, fading to an icy silver at the bottom. She is as flighty as most windlings, with the addition of an explosive temper. Firewind is a windling Fifth Circle Elementalist and Third Circle Windmaster.

Zoradan

Zoradan is quite a taciturn Archer, even for a dwarf. He wears his black hair and beard in long braids, and wears black leather armor. Occasionally at night, Foranal flies the ship low and without lights, while Zoradan uses his Heat Sight to snipe at targets on the ground. Zoradan is on the verge of following the Sniper's Way, having accumulated 5 Temptation Points already, by killing five people in this way. Zoradan is a Fifth Circle dwarf Archer.

Death's Thunder

Speed: 9
Maneuverability: 8
Firepower: 9/15

Hull:
Armor: 11
Ramming: 18
Cargo: 100

Damage:
Derelict: 50
Critical: 16
Destroyed: 55

Crew:
Captain: 6
Crew Size: 15 (5; Death's Thunder members)
Crew Skill: 5
Crew Rating: 16
Morale: 54

Commentary

The crew has modified the ship in a number of ways. The aft has a loading ramp that opens like a slanted drawbridge. This allows the mercenaries to load passengers, cargo, or even cavalry and their mounts, though dismounted due to the low ceiling. An elaborate system of sails and specialized rigging, like one would see on an Aras Sea vessel, allows the ship to sail without banks of oarsmen. This not only enables it to fly with a smaller crew, but also gives room for the cabins described below. Two fire cannons, which appear to be stolen from a t'skrang riverboat, are mounted behind a set of concealed panels at the bow. They hang from harnesses that allow them to pivot and swivel, so they can be fired either straight ahead, to their respective sides, or even underneath the ship. The harnesses, while flexible, don't compensate for the kick of the fire cannons very well, making them difficult to aim. There are also numerous arrow slits and murder holes for archers to use, and a number of concealed cargo spaces both for smuggling and for hiding the crew's valuables. Finally, the mercenaries have built a large superstructure on the deck, reminiscent of that of a t'skrang riverboat, which contains small but comfortable staterooms for themselves and select passengers. The ship has become a pattern item for the group, and the mercenaries have all woven threads to it. In fact, in modifying and Naming it, the crew bound themselves to it with a special magical ritual Firewind deciphered, thus allowing them to fly it with a much smaller crew (use the number in parentheses).

Doombringers

While most mercenary companies care for their reputation, the company known as "Doombringers" chose the opposite route: they take jobs that most mercenaries wouldn't touch with a 10-foot-pole. Attacks on villages, kidnappings, poisonings and similar disturbing jobs are common for them. Rumors abound that the group even works with Theran slaver bands, but that hasn't been proven thus far. The Doombringers are led by the vicious

Klanatamrar, an elven Wizard of considerable power and with a complete lack of mercy. He commands roughly thirty men, mostly elves and humans, of whom only a small part are adepts, but all are trained to work together and have gained a reputation for being fearsome opponents. Their Name originates from their first series of attacks on villages in southern Barsaive, when survivors viewed them literally as bringers of doom, a Name the unit adopted heartily.

Since his first appearance and the forming of the Doombringers, many factions have speculated on why Klanatamrar formed his vicious mercenary company, but with no proof for any theory so far. The Wizard has never shown a sign of a Horror-Mark (such as failing an Artisan Test), nor does he seem to enjoy bloodshed and inflicting pain on others. Maybe he's just greedy and chose to settle on a niche market of the mercenary business.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Fineallis of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers Thieves' Compact has declared a competition among her companions: the winner is the one who, within a year and a day, steals the single most valuable object in Kratas. But she is very strict about the rules: only one object counts. Thus, a chest of elemental coins would only count for the one most valuable coin inside it.

Calisan Surehand has decided that Death's Thunder *is the single most valuable object in Kratas and means to steal it. He has spent the last few months in Jerris studying air sailing, and now that the deadline for the competition is only a week away, he has returned. He has spent the last few days casing the ship, and knows that it is never left unguarded. He approaches the player characters with an offer to pay them 1,000 silver pieces to lure the lone guard away from the ship. If asked why, he says that he merely wishes to steal a valuable object from on board, but doesn't say what or why. How the group lures the crew member off is up to the players' ingenuity, though Calisan does not wish blood to be shed. If the player characters are clumsy or unsubtle in their first attempt, the crew suspect something and leave the ship docked to a sky lattice created by Firewind, 120 yards above Drover's Square, making the player characters' job much more difficult. Once the characters succeed in luring the crew off, Calisan sneaks aboard. The player characters may then be surprised to see the ship lift off.*

Foranal and the rest of the crew hunt down the player characters unless they have somehow prevented the mercenaries from discovering their role in the plot. The airship is the most important thing in the mercenaries' lives and they are desperate and ruthless to get it back. They attempt to capture one of the player characters alive and threaten to kill him if he does not tell what he knows. Unfortunately for the player characters, Calisan has told them little. The Death's Thunder *crew agrees to let the character live if he can persuade them that he will help them find the ship.*

Calisan has hidden the ship in a clearing in the woods south of Kratas that he has prepared ahead of time with a large, camouflaged tarp to cover the ship. He has also hidden enough food in the clearing so that he can wait there until the deadline. He plans to wait until midnight of the last day of the contest and then fly the ship to the meeting place for the end of the competition, which is in Clifftop. If the player characters ask around for information about Calisan they are eventually pointed toward Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers. While the members of this group do not know of Calisan, they know of the competition and its meeting place, though they do not give up this information easily. This should require some persuasion or trickery on the part of the players.

Alternately, the player characters could just track a member of the thieves' compact to the midnight meeting. If they find out ahead of time and tell Death's Thunder, the mercenaries lie in wait for the ship, and attempt to board it as soon as it appears in the sky over Kratas. If attacked before the contest is won, Calisan fights desperately to keep the ship and win the contest, however once the contest is over and he wins, he cares little for the ship itself. Smart players may figure this out, and with diplomacy they could arrange for the ship to get back to the crew with no bloodshed. Calisan does not simply sell or give the ship back to its rightful owners, as this would be a violation of his professional ethics, but if someone appearing to be a third party offers to buy it from him, he willingly gets rid of it as he has little use for it now, and it is a bit conspicuous. As such he takes far less than its true value for it.

If the players decide that the Death's Thunder *would make an excellent base for a group of adventurers and try to keep it for themselves, the* Death's Thunder *crew will do anything to get the ship back, including calling in every favor they have in Kratas, which includes help from Garlthik and Deteranis.*

What better way to form an army of loyal soldiers then masquerading as a mercenary company?

—Gillian, Human Thief

Starlight Infiltrators

These mysterious Namegivers form one of the most unusual mercenary companies in Kratas. They're led by the t'skrang Warrior D'klarr'raan, who never fights with a weapon, only his bare hands, feet, and tail, a fighting style all members of his unit have to learn. This makes them perfect for infiltrating towns and castles to spy on the enemy defenses and sabotage them. They never fight in open combat, but instead try to flee whenever they're engaged directly by enemy forces. D'klarr'raan follows no obvious scheme when turning down or accepting offers from possible employers. He is know to turn down an offer "because the star told me," while he may accept it a few days later "when the stars are right." The same goes for the places his unit should work. His men seem to share his opinions or completely trust his judgement, as they never question a decision he made.

Members of the Starlight Infiltrators rarely talk with outsiders, but visit the Pits occasionally, a fact that has led to many speculations about their relationship with the Bloody Fist. D'klarr'raan always wears a pitch-black cloak that is embroidered with small gems that resemble a star pattern in the dark sky, but a pattern that is unknown in Barsaive. His followers dress in a similar fashion, mainly with dark cloaks and blackened leather.

This t'skrang is surely free of Horror taint, but I'm afraid he's a servant to darker masters or ideals. All his mumblings about the stars being right has to mean something. And nothing good...

—Gillian, Human Thief



Hiring Mercenaries

The price for hiring a mercenary is dependent on a number of factors: experience and skill, equipment (including mounts), the length of service, the potential danger involved in the job, and the haggling abilities of the negotiators. Additionally, when hiring an established group of mercenaries, one rarely hires each one individually, but instead pays the commander, who usually negotiates a price for the entire unit.

For example, a non-adept equipped with leather armor and a spear could be had for as little as 10 silver pieces a day, or perhaps 50 silver pieces per week. If he brings his own horse, this might increase the price by a few more silver pieces (note that many mercenaries may ride to battle, but will dismount for actual combat). This would be for an assignment like routine guard duty or accompanying a caravan. Something more dangerous, such as lifting the siege on a small town or assaulting a bandit stronghold, in which combat is virtually certain, may as much as double a mercenary's fee.

Some of the more dedicated Cavalrymen will insist on negotiating separate fees for their mounts, usually equal to their own, after haggling. While this is sometimes a negotiating trick (*"Sure, we agreed on fifty silvers for me, but now we have to talk to Ironhoof—unless you just want me on foot?"*), for others it is a sincere show of respect for their partners in arms.

Never underestimate the respect a Cavalryman shows for his mount, even if this means that you have to pay twice the fee for his services. He surely is worth the extra money.

—Jendarak the Swift, Human Warrior

As a mercenary's skill and experience increases, so does his fee. An Initiate can generally command 100 silver pieces a week; a Novice, Journeyman, or more experienced adept considerably more. Thus the typical scorcher party shown below could be hired for around 1,000 silver pieces a week (including mounts), while 50 of Deteranis' best men, commanded by him personally, could cost 30,000 silver pieces or more per week. Haggling is the rule in Kratas, so any mercenary will most likely start by asking for a much higher rate, particularly from people who appear to be new to the city.

Typical Scorcher Party

A typical ork scorcher party consists of six Ork Scorchers from the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** p. 87, worth 20 silver pieces a piece (10 for the ork, 10 for the mount); two Novice adept officers, Third Circle ork Cavalrymen from the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** p. 93, worth 200 silver pieces a piece (100 silver pieces for the ork, 100 for the mount); one Novice adept magician for magical support, a Second Circle ork Elementalist from the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** p. 94, worth 180 silver pieces; and a Journeyman adept commander, a Fifth Circle Ork Cavalryman from the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** p. 93, worth 400 silver pieces (200 silver pieces for the ork, 200 for the mount). The subtotals are 120 silver pieces for the non-adept grunts, 400 silver pieces for the adept officers, 180 silver pieces for the magician, and 400 silver pieces for the adept commander for a total of 1,100 silver pieces for a week.

The Smithies

A number of blacksmiths and wheelwrights operate within the southern and eastern sides of the Stables, but these are all run by non-adepts and are expressly forbidden by the local Weaponsmiths' forges from producing any weapons or armor. They are limited to fixing wagons and making horseshoes, pots and pans, and other useful implements. The Daggerwrights enforce this prohibition with force when necessary, and have worked out the necessary protection agreements with Garlthik, that he will support them in their monopoly.

The Girded Arms

This tavern and inn caters to those who don't care for the rowdiness of Woranga's Place, but still have business in the Stables. The dining room is smaller and quieter than Woranga's, and there are more sleeping accommodations. The Girded Arms is run by a couple of dwarfs from Throal, and its clientele include merchants assembling caravans as well as those seeking to hire non-ork cavalry mercenaries. The walls of the tavern are covered in old military trophies and insignia, banners, shields, and such. The dwarf owners, Torad and Liandan, are old veterans of the First Theran War, and often take turns swapping old war stories around the fire with their patrons. Torad and Liandan have grown old and fat together, and like many old couples have grown to look quite a bit alike. They are friendly and talkative with their patrons, but never seem to need to talk to each other. Instead they communicate with nods, glances, and subtle hand signals, and each always seems to know what the other is thinking.

The Girded Arms is an excellent place for mercenaries to find work, and for those who need their services to hire them.

The Livestock Markets

Along the north side of Drover's Square are a number of corrals and stables that serve as the livestock markets of Kratas. Local farmers and Dinganni herdsmen bring their animals here to sell for slaughter, much as they did before the Scourge. Caravaneers can also buy pack mules and horses to haul wagons. However, as with much in Kratas, there is a thriving market in stolen mounts, particularly brought in by the Skull Wharg scorchers and other bandits who beset unwary travelers on the roads outside Kratas. Many of these animals may end up slaughtered for food or leather, but the best are sold to mercenaries and adventurers as mounts. It is not uncommon for the same mount to be sold and resold in these markets, stolen from one owner after another. This has lead to the creation of what is called the 'Kratas Brand'—a large, solid circle branding iron used to obscure previous brands. Stabling mounts at any of the established places of business in the area is usually safe, though somewhat more expensive than elsewhere in Barsaive. Temporary stalls and flat-out thievery are all too common and soon separate the unwary from their mounts.

Quarom's Mounts

Quarom is an immense troll Beastmaster who specializes in selling rare mounts, and who has no qualms about receiving stolen animals. Quarom is gruff with Namegivers but gentle with beasts. Having had difficulties finding mounts big enough for his own bulk, he has devoted himself to finding the best in unusually large and small mounts. Troll Cavalrymen seek out his thundra beasts, dyres, granlains, stajians, and elephants, while dwarf Cavalrymen come for the troajins, huatas, and huttawas, and windling Cavalrymen the kues and zoaks. He has even been known, on rare occasions, to sell griffins. Quarom drives a hard bargain, however, and while one can expect to almost always find what one is looking for, one can also expect to pay twice the normal rate for these beasts. Equally inflated prices also apply to stabling fees at Quarom's Mounts, but many Cavalrymen swear by his quality care and security.

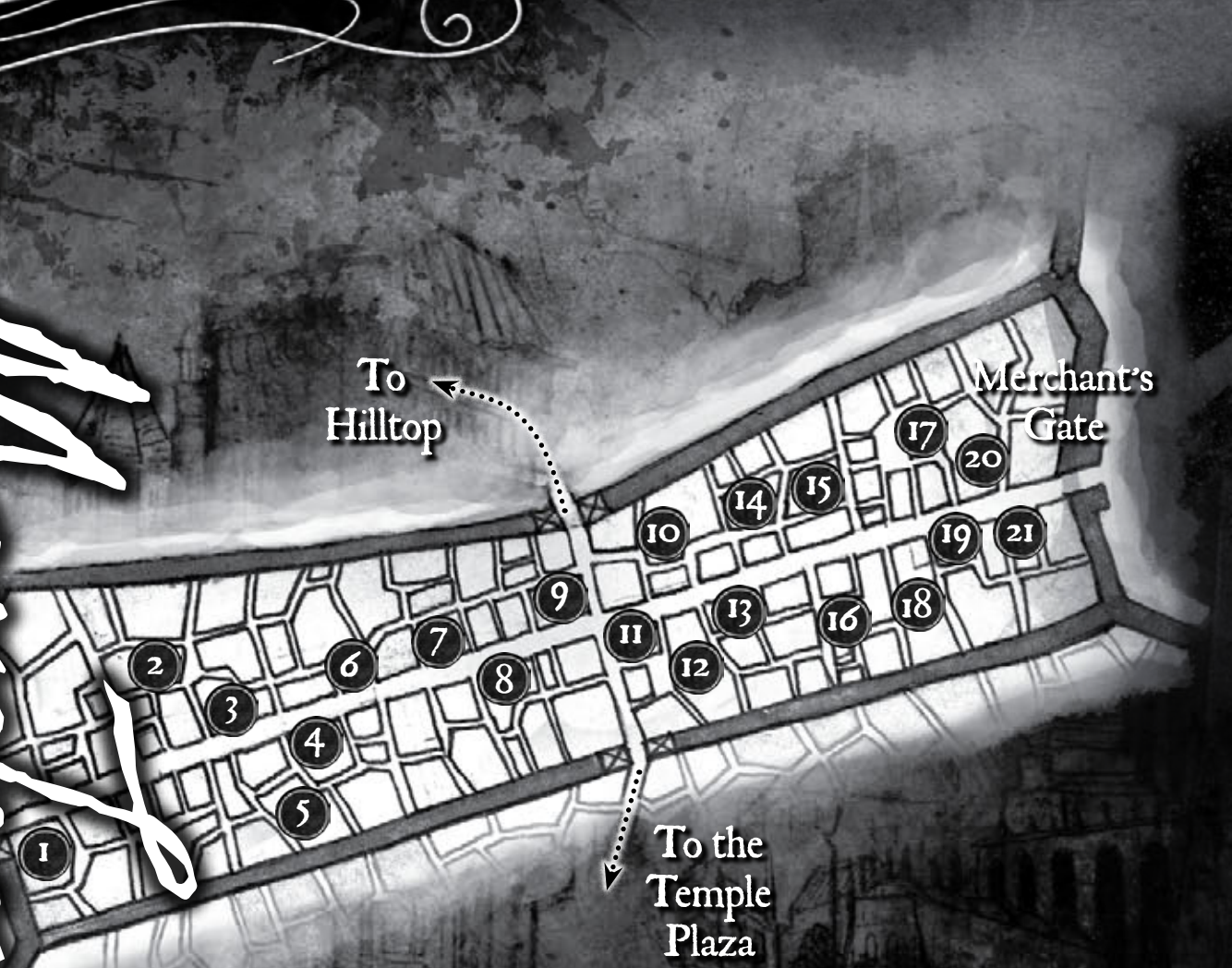
Skinner's Way

East of the livestock markets on the north side of Drover's Square are a number of slaughterhouses, tanneries, leather workers, and saddle shops. The road running between them is appropriately named Skinner's Way. Along this road one can buy saddle, tack and harness, and other leather goods, including leather armor. The stench from the tanneries is overpowering, however, and few linger here for long. Collecting Garlthik's protection money from the profitable businesses here is usually assigned to newer members of the gang or those otherwise out of favor with the boss.

The Flop Stalls

South and west of Drover's Square is a maze of old stables. Many are falling over and in disrepair, but a number of them have been converted to cheap housing. Several are run as flop houses, with nothing but straw thrown into the old horse stalls for accommodations. Such squalor only costs a few copper pieces a night, but security is poor. A number of these nearest the wall separating the Stables from the Scrabbles have been taken over by the Forsaken gang and the operators must pay the gang protection. While Garlthik is aware of this encroachment, so far the profits from this operation are so minuscule that it is not worth his time to put a stop to it or muscle in for his cut.

Merchant's Row



1. Dream Spire Trading Co.
2. House Neumani
3. The Cutthroat's Rest
4. House Chaozon
5. The Wasteland
6. House Yilwuz
7. The Hard-Earned Coin
8. Overland Trading Co.
9. House Ludi
10. House Mikul
11. The Blooming Lily
12. The Screaming Basilisk
13. House Ueraven
14. Dream Palace
15. Chorollis' Cup
16. Serian's Sanctuary
17. The Riverboat
18. Melarie's House of Pleasures
19. The Shattered Kaer
20. The Drunken Dragon Inn
21. Sargan's Supplies and Sundries

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Now look at this. Throalic trading houses and the thieves of Kratas keeping each other company, living door to door, doing business behind closed doors. According to the residents of the dahnat, *they're not too different anyway.*

• Eskatrack of Throal, Questor of Mynbruje •

Prior to the Scourge, this neighborhood housed the offices of the merchant companies that traded in Kratas. The row was conveniently situated between the Warehouse District (where the merchants stored their goods), the Stables (where they could arrange caravans), and Hilltop (where the more prosperous merchants lived). Merchants' Row is both the Name of the street running from east to west, and the neighborhood surrounding it.

Both sides of the street were lined by buildings of various trading companies and dwarf merchant families. To have a building on this street was once a sign of legitimacy and importance for any merchant, and developed into a degree of rivalry spurning the trading companies into building impressive facades on the fronts of their buildings. A typical building on the row was two or three stories tall, broad and wide, made of stone with an elaborately carved stone facade with the Name of the company or house that owned it. Each building housed at least an office, a meeting room, storage for smaller trade goods, a room to hold records and contracts, and a vault for the owning company's funds.

However, as with much of Kratas, most of these houses were merely branches of companies based elsewhere, and so their commitment to Kratas was not deep. This was reflected physically in that most of these buildings were not as sturdily built as their facades, some merely made of wood or brick behind their stone fronts. Thus, after the Scourge, many of the once proud facades still stand, opening only to piles of rubble and gutted basements.

Before the Scourge, the neighborhood also held several large, comfortable taverns in which the merchants and their scribes and clerks could take their meals, as well as make business deals. Additionally, behind the taverns and offices were a number of boarding houses in which lived the clerks and junior members of the trading companies, who could not afford the wealthier quarters in Hilltop.

Since the Scourge, many taverns have opened their doors under the control of the Force of the Eye. The previously sedate and luxurious locations for business dealings are now garish, noisy, and dangerous. Other houses of diversion have been opened within some of the old merchant headquarters buildings. Several competing shills immediately accost the visitor when entering Merchant's Row, all touting their taverns' virtues and specialties. These hawkers are very persistent and will not relent unless credibly threatened with violence, or until one has succeeded in steering his charge into one of these taverns.

While these taverns are fiercely competitive, they all pay protection to the Force of the Eye, and some are owned outright by Garlthik. Thus, no matter where a thief flush with ill-gotten gains chooses to spend his coin, some of it always ends up in Garlthik's pockets.

Many of the taverns offer accommodations as well, though it is often hard to sleep with the near-constant carousing going on. Off the row a number of

DANCE OF THE PASSIONS

	Dis (1)	Mynbruje (2)	Upandal (3)	Garlen (4)	Floranuus (5)	Chorrolis (6)
Vestrial (1)	–2	–3*	–1	–1	–1	–1
Lochost (2)	–3*	–1	0	0	0	3
Raggok (3)	–2	–1	–1	–3*	–1	–1
Astendar (4)	–1	1	1	1	2	2
Jaspree (5)	–1	1	1	1	1	1
Thystonius (6)	–1	0	0	0	2	1

* ends round, must pay out



Payouts	Total Chances
–3	3 (1 in 12)
–2	2 (1 in 18)
–1	12 (1 in 3)
0	6 (1 in 6)
1	9 (1 in 4)
2	3 (1 in 12)
3	1 (1 in 36)

old boarding houses have been reopened, for a slightly quieter night's rest.

If one has money, one can have a very good time on Merchants' Row, as nearly any whim can be catered to in one establishment or another. There are a dozen or so taverns and inns operating along this street with new ones opening frequently. The more noteworthy ones are described below.



HE CUTTHROAT'S REST

This is one of the seediest taverns in the city, which is quite an accomplishment in a city of seedy taverns. It does a brisk business in swill, and has very little else to recommend it. It does have the advantage of location over its rivals, being set on one of the busiest corners of Merchants' Row. It has a few rooms for sleeping, but most of its patrons wander in off the street, drink too much too quickly, and then stumble off into the night.

One patron of interest can usually be found in a shabby booth near the back door. This is a Sixth Circle dwarf Traveled Scholar (see ***Namegivers of Barsaive***) Named Gremor the Black, so called because of his disposition and the color of his beard and eyes. Gremor is an information broker, specializing in the political espionage and trade secrets of the province. He buys and sells information at a rapid pace, and each night his booth is visited by mysterious cloaked figures who whisper in his ear and exchange packages under the table.

Gremor settled in Kratas a few years ago, after spending many decades roving the province, as is fitting for an adept of his Discipline. He is still known to disappear from the city for several weeks at a time, but he always returns. The dwarf sometimes works out of other taverns as well, but the Cutthroat's Rest is his favorite. Gremor presents himself as a neutral middleman, who will find out anything for anyone if the silver is plentiful. Others are skeptical of this claim, and suspect that he actually works for the Eye of Throal or one of the many other spy organizations in the province. If so, he has kept his allegiance well hidden, and no one has discovered any evidence that he is more than what he claims to be.

Garlthik does not trust Gremor, and so has him followed most of the time he is in the city. Gremor is aware of this, but has given up on attempting to shake his followers off.

Gremor could serve as a potential employer for adventurers, sending them to gather obscure bits of intelligence throughout the province, though the employees would have to be content not knowing to whom the information will ultimately be given.



HE HARD-EARNED COIN

While one can almost always find a pickup card or dice game in any one of the taverns in Kratas, the Hard-Earned Coin specializes in gambling. This wide, low-ceilinged room has several dozen tables for dice and card games spread throughout. Waiters bring drinks and simple food to these tables. The clientele consists of serious gamblers, some of them professionals. The tables are well lit, though the rest of the place is not, and there is no music or other distractions.

The Hard-Earned Coin is owned by the Force of the Eye, and has a dozen guards who are members of the Eye stationed throughout. Furthermore, many of the Force spend their recreational time gambling here, so should any disturbance break out, many of them are on hand to back up the guards.

The manager of the Hard-Earned Coin is Eliander of the Sharpeye, a semi-retired Sixth Circle elf Illusionist. He is a member of the Force of the Eye and an accomplished thief, while not a Thief adept. He has used his Illusionist talents in the past to assist Garlthik and the Force in pulling off some of their most spectacular thefts. Now he uses his skills to try to prevent others from cheating. Eliander supervises the dealers and croupiers in the tavern, but he also mingles amongst the patrons, often in disguise.

Should Eliander catch anyone cheating, the mildest punishment he will administer is cutting off the offender's hand and banishing him from Merchants' Row. Indeed, about a dozen withered hands are nailed over the entrance to the tavern. Should the crime be particularly egregious, or should the thief put up strong resistance when caught, the guards will not hesitate to kill the offender. In addition, anyone who consistently wins a lot of money from the house is banned from the Hard-Earned Coin under suspicion of cheating.

Be sure that Eliander is likely to hire a couple of thugs to bring back his money. In the end, the house always wins...

—Gillian, Human Thief

Walk the Paths

There are a number of different card and dice games played at the tables here. Some are played against the house, while others are played against other players, in which case the house takes ten percent of the winnings.

One game, called Walk the Paths, involves the use of so-called elven path cards. These cards have illustrations of various stages of the Wheel of Life, and items associated with, and obstacles encountered along their paths. Using these cards for games of chance is a matter of some debate and great contention among followers visiting the tavern. Such consideration is of little concern to the gamblers, of course, and many play their games with decks of particularly bawdy or irreverent illustrations. Few players have the patience or inclination to play the game, often mocking it as "Crawl the Paths." This game can take hours, if not days, and involves assembling incredibly complex patterns of cards, and a complicated scoring system requiring knowledge of elven epic poems. It is said that players can gain spiritual insight by playing the game, and possibly even divine the future. It is also possible to wager incredible sums of money on these games, as there are innumerable opportunities to raise the stakes during the game. Eliander is an avid Walk the Paths player but it is rare that he can find opponents of sufficient skill and erudition to play.

The Dance of the Passions

This game requires two different six-sided dice, each of which has symbols for six of the Passions. One die is marked with symbols of Vestrial, Lochost, Raggok, Astendar, Jaspree, and Thystonius, while the other is marked with glyphs representing Dis, Mynbruje, Upandal, Garlen, Floranuus, and Chorrolis. There is one active player, and the dance continues until he rolls an ending pair.

The premise of the game is that the Passions are all switching partners in a great dance; some Passions dance well together, others will refuse to dance at all. The player rolling the dice pays an ante, usually one silver piece, and then rolls the dice. Each roll gives a new set of dance partners and each of the thirty-six combinations has a specific payout.

The game was easier before the Scourge, but now any pair that contains a Mad Passion, except those described below, loses the player one point. Any roll containing two Mad Passions loses two points. Additionally, Lochost and Mynbruje are reluctant partners, and so their pairing will also cost one point.

Any roll containing Chorrolis or Astendar (except their pairings with Dis, these still count for negative one point), gains the player one point. Additionally, there are a few pairings that dance especially well together, gaining two points. These are Chorrolis and Astendar, Floranuus and Astendar, and Floranuus and Thystonius. Finally, there are three pairings (known as ending pairs) that are so opposed to each other that they will refuse to dance, costing the player three points and ending the dance. These are Dis and Lochost, Mynbruje and Vestrial, and Garlen and Raggok. There is also a special pairing called the "Thieves' Kiss:" Lochost and Chorrolis. This pair represents eluding capture for a lucrative theft, gaining the player three points. Other parings are neutral, and will neither add nor subtract points, but the player can continue to roll.

When the dance ends, the player and any paying spectators must immediately pay up any negative balance. Each point is equal to their initial ante. They will also be paid out their ante for every point they have gained. The player may only exit the game and be paid out when one of the three ending pairs is rolled. It is generally a good idea to quit when one is ahead. Because they may end a round owing substantially more than their initial ante, players are often required to place ten times their initial ante on the table to cover their losses. After the dance ends, the game goes to another player, though if there is no other waiting, the first may ante up again, and continue with a new round.

There are a large number of possible side bets that players and spectators can play. These include, but are not limited to, betting on a specific Passion or combination coming up. Some dice tables have a grid work of the possible combinations carved into them. Spectators can also "ride

the questor's tail" by laying down an ante, and pay out, or get paid as if they were the player.

Note that this is not just a game, however, in that the Passions bet on may be meaningful. One can bet on any Passion, of course, but even in Kratas, betting on a Mad Passion is often looked down upon.

The version described above is played in the Hard-Earned Coin. Another variant involves two or more players playing against each other, and is often played in the streets and back alleys of Kratas. Each player puts an equal amount of money into a pot. Then each takes a turn throwing the dice once. Each keeps a running total of their points earned or lost only on his own throws. When one player throws an ending pair, that player loses three points as usual, the round ends, and whichever player has the highest total of points wins the pot. Side bets are usually not accepted in such a game.



CREAMING BASILISK

The Screaming Basilisk is Merchants' Row's grandest place for performances. One wall of the tall central room is taken up with a large stage. A large stuffed basilisk hangs suspended over the stage by ropes hung from the ceiling, its mouth open and its eyes shut. Troubadours, musicians, jugglers, clowns, and dancers all take turns on stage, performing for free room and board from the owners, as well as whatever coin might be thrown at them from the crowd (which is usually not much).

There are persistent rumors that the basilisk is actually alive and held in torpor under the effect of a permanent Nethermancy spell, as a surprise for a person long forgotten. Dispelling it might result in the basilisk's awakening, which will most likely kill everyone present. Fortunately, no one has managed to gather the knowledge required to undo the spell.

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

The Screaming Basilisk does not offer lodgings for customers, but it does have a large communal room upstairs that performers can sleep in, in lieu of receiving any fee for their performances. The Screaming Basilisk has a large kitchen, which serves simple foods of the meat-on-a-stick variety. It also serves copious amounts of swill, though higher-quality beverages are also available. Food and drink is slightly more expensive here than elsewhere in Kratas, but the entertainment is free.

While the owners are not particularly picky about who performs—anyone who is patient enough can usually get a spot on stage—the patrons are not shy at heckling any subpar performance with jeers and catcalls. The truly awful are pelted with chicken bones, half-chewed hunks of meat, and empty ale steins. The savvy Troubadour will perform a set of an hour or so here to get a bed and a meal, and then perform again elsewhere to earn coin.

The owners are a set of identical dwarf triplets Named Rogan, Logan, and Trogan. They take shifts managing the bar, so for those who do not realize they are siblings, it may appear that the same dwarf is always there, as the Screaming Basilisk never closes.

In addition to the owners, the Screaming Basilisk has a staff of three cooks, a dozen serving wenches, and half a dozen guards. A number of the performers are adepts, mostly Troubadours and Illusionists.



SERIAN'S SANCTUARY

Serian's Sanctuary houses the greatest thieves from out of town. Thieves who have pulled off big scores are known to retreat to the Sanctuary, lying low in comfort until the heat is off. Serian can arrange to fence any stolen goods or have new equipment supplied, all from the comfort of the client's own room if he so wishes. Each guest room has its own lockable chest, although Serian will also store swag in the inn's vault for a small fee. The location of the vault is held secret. There is an unwritten understanding of professional courtesy that the patrons will not steal from each other while in the Sanctuary. Anyone caught violating this will be slain.

The Force of the Eye owns the Sanctuary, and Serian is a member. Some members of the Force from out of town often stay there while visiting as well. Non-members are welcome, and any particularly promising thieves may be recruited by Serian to join the Force of the Eye.

Off the lobby is a luxurious tavern room, often lively, but not raucous. Troubadours perform here often, while charming waiters cater to the patrons' appetites. Many a robbery has been planned on the overstuffed couches of this lounge, by the Force of the Eye as well as by other, independent operators.

The building is windowless, and is heavily guarded by hired goons and members of the Force of the Eye. Despite the civilized trappings, many of the patrons are wanted elsewhere for very serious crimes, and may be extremely dangerous.

You better bring your own guards if you plan to stay here. Only a fool would trust an agreement between Thieves, or that the Force of the Eye makes for trustworthy guards. And fools don't live long in Kratas.

—Gillian, Human Thief

The Riverboat

As the Name implies, this tavern caters mainly to t'skrang. The outside of the tavern has been designed to look like a riverboat, complete with rigging and mock fire cannons. The theme continues inside, with rope ladders extending from the balconies that ring the central room.

Once this was a relatively quiet place, serving a handful of t'skrang who made Kratas their home. Since the Force of the Eye has been cultivating contacts along the Tylon and Serpent Rivers, more t'skrang Boatmen and pirates have been visiting the city to sell stolen goods and re-equip themselves, and for shore leave. Most use the Riverboat as a comfortable base from which they foray out to the other entertainments of Merchants' Row.

These days, the Riverboat is often full of rollicking, carousing t'skrang, especially when a boat or two are docked in Daiche. There is an unstated, though understood, truce in effect between the rival *aropagoi* and the pirates while in the Riverboat, though this is not in effect in the rest of Kratas. Furthermore, while surrounded by other Namegivers, the t'skrang Boatmen feel a bond of race and profession such that they will readily leap to each other's defense. Thus, a t'skrang pursued by enemies can always retreat to the safety of the Riverboat, assured that his fellows will join in fighting off the pursuers. In fact, such intrusions are usually considered a welcome contribution to the night's entertainment.

The Riverboat has a large kitchen specializing in the fare of the Serpent River. On the second floor, opening onto a balcony that runs around the entire large common room, are small individual rooms and spacious communal sleeping rooms, outfitted with hammocks. Since the influx of Boatmen, the proprietor, Ck'tenal, has brought in half a dozen t'skrang prostitutes of both sexes, to serve her clientele, who often find a shortage of their own race in the other brothels around town.

There is no stage or scheduled performers, but the t'skrang will frequently burst into spontaneous sea shanties or bawdy poems of the river. These are often led from the crow's nest on the top of an old mast that is the centerpiece of the main room's décor. Despite the majority of the patrons being t'skrang, the Riverboat is popular with other Namegivers as well, who visit to vicariously experience the passion and vigor of the t'skrang.

Ck'tenal is a large, elderly female t'skrang, who is called "Captain" by her customers and employees. Her exact background, and her relation to the Serpent River remain unclear; she does not wear the token of any *aropagoi*. She is gregarious and warm to all, and appears as a straightforward and simple innkeeper. She does, however, seem to be rather well informed about the goings on of the Serpent River and among the *aropagoi*. For a reasonable fee, she can be persuaded to deal in such information, and can also arrange to fence pirates' loot, or book passage or other services on the river.

She employs a dozen or so other t'skrang. She doesn't employ any full-time guards, as there are usually at least a dozen t'skrang Boatmen in the Riverboat who will happily deal with any troublemakers. Ck'tenal is a Fifth Circle t'skrang Boatman.

The Wasteland

The Wasteland was once a series of small apartments for low-level employees of the merchant companies operating out of Kratas. Now it is a haven for drunks and other addicts. Not a tavern per se, it is rather a number of small houses, many falling apart, and the shared lots between them. Any time of the day or night there are dozens of Namegivers getting drunk, sleeping, or trying to purchase their latest fix.

There is no proprietor of the Wasteland; no one charges rent, and many people give it a wide berth. However, there are half a dozen independent operators that prowl the Wasteland, selling alcohol and other drugs to the inhabitants. The life expectancy of residents of the Wasteland tends to be short, but that is true in Kratas as a whole. Many of the "patrons" of the Wasteland are on their last legs, and some have become demented through years of abuse. Others claim that some of the residents are Horror-tainted foul folk, and were driven to drink by the Horrors. Some of the desperate souls here might have knowledge of Horrors or other information of interest to adventurers.

These poor wretches live in this area not only because they can easily get what they need here, but also for collective safety. While any one resident may be no threat, someone trying to rough up the locals may find himself quickly surrounded by a horde of derelicts, hurling bricks as well as crazed insults and spittle.

Despite the concerns of some of Merchants' Row's more respectable citizens, Garlthik has little interest in clearing out this area, as he feels the residents are not hurting anyone but themselves. They aren't costing the Force of the Eye anything, and they would most likely form up somewhere else anyway. The truth is that the Force is actually getting a cut of the profits.

One wonders that it works, but it does. The inhabitants of the Wasteland are the exception to the rule, believe me. Not many inhabitants of our lovely city have more honor than these people. Speaking only of the long-time residents, of course.

—Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet



Yoolgano the Distiller

Portions of the floors of some of the dilapidated buildings have collapsed into the sewers, so that the Wasteland extends a bit into the Undercity as well. In one section of the sewers beneath the Wasteland a truly vile human alchemist Named Yoolgano lives and distills his own alcohol. He and his liquor are both filthy and fetid, and only the truly desperate will pay him the few coppers he asks for his wares. Yoolgano the Distiller is infected with a Horror known as a dread iota (see the **Horrors** chapter on p. 290 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***), and is working to spread its corruption. The putrid puddles throughout the cellar in which he lives are infested with dread iotas. He uses this water in every bottle he brews and sells, sometimes passing along a surviving dread iota or two to his unfortunate customers.

Yoolgano

Yoolgano has been infected by dread iotas and has lost –3 points from all Attribute values permanently in the time he has been infected so far. Yoolgano can gain access to the dread iotas' Karma through their Karma Tap power whenever he brews his vile liquor, when he attempts to sell the noxious brew to others, convince others that the drink is 'safe', and to defend himself if he is attacked.

The Drunken Dragon Inn

The Drunken Dragon Inn was one of Kratas' nicest taverns before the Scourge. It retains the colorful mosaic of its namesake on its front wall: a whimsical green dragon rolling on its back, ale spilling from a tankard clutched between its paws into its grinning maw.

However, most people know that dragons are among the most dangerous creatures in existence, and should a dragon ever manage to somehow become drunk, any sensible Namegiver would give it a wide berth. Similarly, those wise in the ways of Kratas know to treat this pub in the same fashion.

Today the Drunken Dragon is known for its cheap accommodations. It is also the tavern on Merchants' Row closest to the Merchants' Gate. Thus, its clientele are often those most fearful to venture further into the Thieves' City, and those who take a false sense of security in knowing that they are only a few yards away from the outer wall.

A number of robbers in the neighborhood are aware of this tendency, and make a regular habit of preying on the patrons. The proprietor, a surly human Named Bordol, sometimes directs thugs to the rooms of his wealthier clients, for a cut of the proceeds.

Melarie's House of Pleasures

Melarie's House is a brothel, though neither as artful as the Temple of Astendar, nor as cheerful as the Blooming Lily. This is a much more squalid and unseemly place, with patrons and employees being desperate and down on their luck. The prices here are lower than elsewhere, as Melarie makes her profit on volume. There is a simple, dark, dirty barroom, and several small low-ceilinged rooms down narrow corridors. A number of bouncers not only keep the clients well behaved, but also move the traffic along. No one is encouraged to linger. Many of the employees are downright surly.

The whores here are also notorious for stealing any valuables their clients may have on them. Protests of this behavior to the management receive nothing save a swift boot out the door. The wary only bring what coin they expect to spend with them, though the truly wise avoid this place altogether. Melarie's shills are some of the most aggressive, and spin the boldest lies about the beauties and comforts that can be found within.

> *This is the only brothel I know where you need to bring a guard along to keep watch over your valuables while you are, ah, enjoying the company of a lady.*
>
> **—Drogram, Dwarf Warrior**

Only player characters with a taste for the sordid would usually find themselves in this depressing place, though if one is seeking someone in particular who may have fallen on hard times, this might be a good place to start one's search.

The Dream Palace

The Dream Palace provides its patrons with a variety of substances, some herbal, some magical, that can induce hallucinations, euphoria, and torpor. The proprietor, Kree'klin Silvertail, considers himself a connoisseur of these substances, and can make recommendations to his customers like a fine sommelier. Some of his clientele are wealthy dilettantes or jaded adventurers, merely seeking a novel diversion. Others are of a more mystical bent, and are seeking enlightenment or access to otherworldly insights.

The accommodations cater to either taste. Salons are furnished with plush couches, elegant artworks, lush tapestries, and carpets for the sybarites, while plainly furnished, clean monastic cells serve for the wisdom seekers. Magicians have been known to use these rooms for ritual magic and

Adventure Hook

A few concerned members of a Throalic merchant family approach the player characters. They wish to hire the adventurers to find and bring home their dear nephew, Usterius, who was working in their offices on Merchants' Row in Kratas. They provide his Name and a detailed sketch, along with a modest amount of silver to begin the search.

While investigating, the player characters discover that Usterius was known for long, late night disappearances. Showing his picture around the taverns and hideaways of Kratas is more trouble than it's worth, as Usterius had a number of friends and acquaintances among the toughs of Kratas, from the Scrabbles all the way to Hilltop. Thugs and even some of the smaller gangs give the player characters a hard time on this wild goose chase. Finally, the group is pointed in the direction of Gremor the Black. For the right price, Gremor remembers that Usterius was a frequent patron of the Dream Palace, always looking for a better and bigger rush.

Those at the Dream Palace are thoroughly unhelpful, until a lowly servant there approaches the group later for a bribe. It seems Usterius stumbled out of his room in quite a stupor on his last visit a few weeks ago. The servant suggests Usterius is lost in the back alleys of Merchants' Row somewhere and if he can't be found there to start looking for the body in the sewers.

Usterius has become one of the more recent additions to the Wasteland, and the residents are very defensive and protective of him in his weakened state. The residents' reactions alone should set off suspicion, which may lead to questioning that sets off the residents, who try to chase the group off with bricks. In his stupor, Usterius has come afoul of Yoolgano's wares and become infected with a dread iota. Once it realizes the player characters are aware of it, the Horror does all it can to convince or force Usterius to get away from them. Taking him to the temple of Garlen to remove the Horror before returning him to his family will be no easy task.

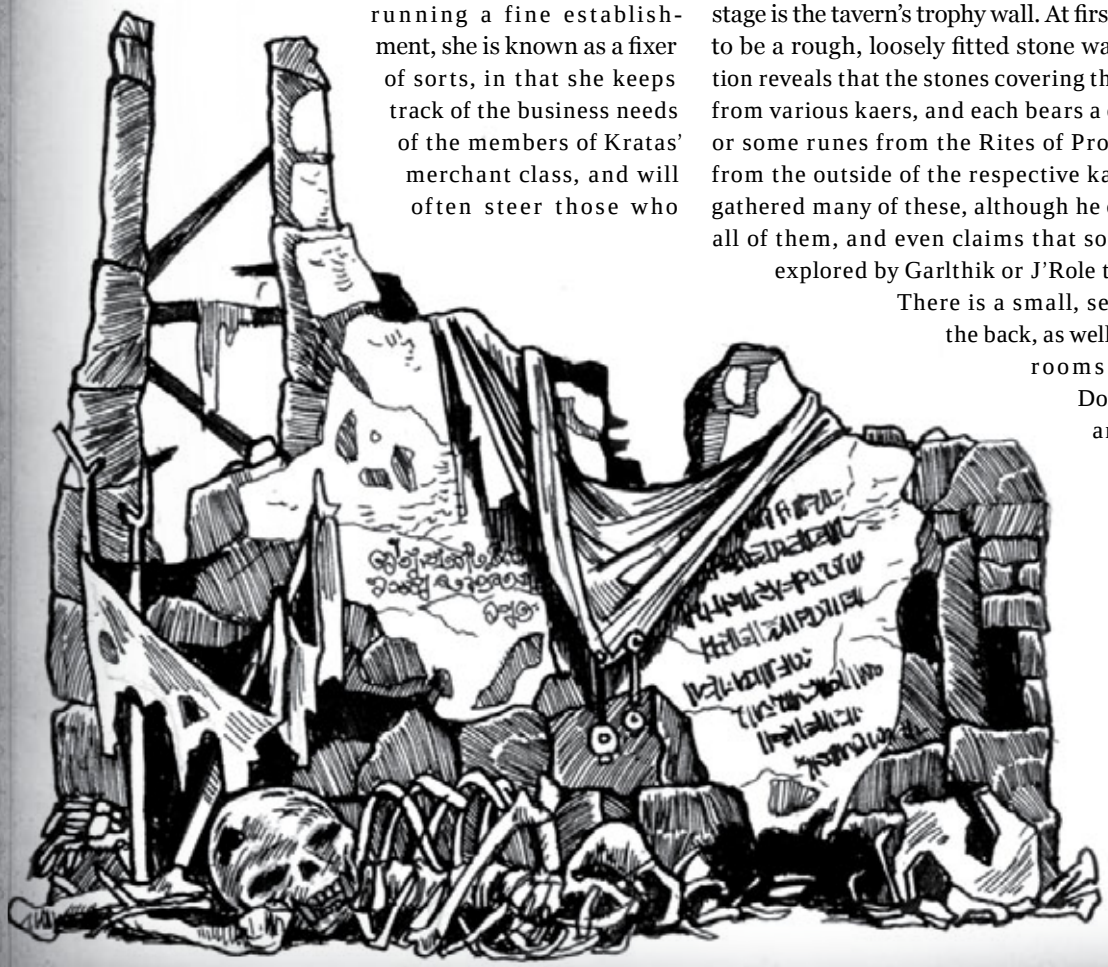
divinations, with or without the assistance of Silvertail's wares. Many of the rooms have skylights, allowing the patrons a view of the stars.

Kree'klin is surprisingly ethical in his work, and serves only recreational, not habitual users. Any addicts will be turned away, and directed to the Temple of Garlen. Unfortunately, many find their way into the Wasteland instead. Kree'klin pays protection money to the Force of the Eye, and employs a number of discrete, but burly, guards.

Chorrolis' Cups

This tavern is the one attempt at recreating the Merchants' Row of long ago. Chorrolis' Cups caters to the merchants and traders that have begun to cautiously return to Kratas. The décor is elegant and restrained, the ambiance quiet, and the food and drink sophisticated. Often a lone musician plays a lyre softly in one corner. Many merchants frequent this place to arrange business deals or merely for a respite from the chaos that is Kratas. Were it not for the large number of heavily armed guards posted both inside and out, one could almost forget that one is in the City of Thieves.

Quellandar, appropriately enough a dwarf Questor of Chorrolis, runs Chorrolis' Cups. In addition to running a fine establishment, she is known as a fixer of sorts, in that she keeps track of the business needs of the members of Kratas' merchant class, and will often steer those who have mutually beneficial interests toward each other. There are half a dozen guards around the place at all times, as well as a cook and three waiters.



The Shattered Kaer

The Shattered Kaer caters to kaer robbers, and other explorers and adventurers. If one wishes to hire an experienced kaer delver, or just hear riveting stories of the reopening of kaers and citadels, this is the place to be. Many of the customers are of the traditional adventurer bent, and may have reason to be in Kratas, but are not necessarily criminals themselves.

Dorelius Hobble is the proprietor of the Shattered Kaer and is himself a retired human adventurer. He is missing a foot and a hand from a particularly vicious trap that he ran into on his last adventure a number of years ago. He maintains a surprisingly upbeat attitude, and will reminisce fondly of his adventures, being openly envious of those planning more. Dorelius has an extremely extensive knowledge of kaers, particularly those in the area around Kratas. He can also help adventurers new to the city by directing them to the shops in the Stables and the Hammersing where they can stock up on needed equipment.

The tavern is one large, simple room, with a small, raised stage at one end for Troubadours to perform. Behind this stage is the tavern's trophy wall. At first glance, this appears to be a rough, loosely fitted stone wall, but closer inspection reveals that the stones covering this wall were all taken from various kaers, and each bears a carved Name or sigil, or some runes from the Rites of Protection and Passage from the outside of the respective kaer. Dorelius himself gathered many of these, although he can tell stories about all of them, and even claims that some were from kaers explored by Garlthik or J'Role the Honorable Thief.

There is a small, serviceable kitchen in the back, as well as half a dozen small rooms for rent upstairs. Dorelius employs a cook and two servers.

Despite Hobble's sunny attitude, the Shattered Kaer has a slightly melancholic and nostalgic air about it. This is in part due to the presence of a handful of old timers that gather to reminisce about their past days of glory. There is also an unspoken aware-

ness in both young and old that even though new kaers continue to be discovered throughout Barsaive, the time of kaer plundering may have already reached its apex some years ago, and the heroes of today are not those digging up Barsaive's past, but those striving to construct its future.

Dorelius' Name can be found in many tomes that deal with the exploration of kaers. In fact, the man was one of the best when finding and disabling traps. It seems he found his master in the last one he encountered, though. Despite this, he's always eager to teach a few tricks to a promising young adventurer.

—Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet



Dorelius Hobble

Dorelius Hobble is a retired human adventurer. Although he laments the end of his kaer journeying days, he refuses to replace his lost hand and foot through any kind of magic. Some rumors say that he lost the hand and foot through a magic trap and has developed a fear of magic as a result.

The Blooming Lily

The Blooming Lily is the largest of Kratas' brothels. A stunningly handsome Eighth Circle human Troubadour Named Franicalis runs it. Franicalis is a member of the Force of the Eye, and the entire operation is run for Garlthik's benefit. More important than the substantial profits the place brings in is the information that Franicalis and his staff pry out of the customers. To this end, the brothel's small rooms are outfitted with peepholes and hidden chambers for spies, and the kitchen stocks a large supply of intoxicants and potions designed to loosen tongues. Indeed, spies of Garlthik's may direct persons of interest to him into the Blooming Lily towards this end, and Franicalis knows to treat such people to a particularly decadent and generous time.

The Lily has a huge tavern room in the center, which seems to always have a raucous party in full swing. One end of the room has a large stage on which singers and dancers perform. Around this center room are many small rooms, formerly offices, now outfitted with beds and used for liaisons, as well as a kitchen. There are four bouncers, a cook, a barkeep, three serving wenches, and two-dozen prostitutes.

Other Residents

In addition to the taverns, pubs, inns, brothels, and gaming halls of Merchants' Row, there are actually merchants here. Some of the old dwarf trading houses and other merchant companies have extended a cautious foot back into trading in Kratas. Initially lured by the lucrative trade in stolen goods, others make a handsome profit in importing necessities for the thieves and mercenaries of Kratas. Some of these merchant houses have moved into their old pre-Scourge offices and headquarters, though their operations remain only a small fraction of the size that they were before the Scourge. They all pay protection to the Force of the Eye, as well as employing many guards. Despite this, they consider it prudent to keep a low profile and do not generally advertise their presence in the City of Thieves. Some of them have not been able to move back into their pre-Scourge properties (for example, the Blooming Lily used to be the headquarters of House Ludi), and have had to make do with constructing new buildings or refurbishing other abandoned facilities, often on side streets off of the main row.

The following companies and houses maintain a presence in Kratas. Any of them could be potential employers for adventurers.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A series of murders has occurred in Merchants' Row, and rumors abound that the killings are the work of the Keys of Death (see p. 207). The victims all had their throats slashed and were left face down on the ground so that their blood would seep into the earth. Some merchants are growing concerned about the "blood killer," as they've dubbed the mysterious assassin, and are talking about leaving town. The merchants are necessary for Garlthik's fencing operations, so he has assigned some of his Slashers to investigate. The player characters get involved when a friend or acquaintance of theirs is killed. This victim is clutching a scrap of black cloth embroidered with a few Nethermantic symbols: a sure sign the Keys of Death are responsible.

Britaine, a Slasher assigned to find the killer, is extremely cooperative in investigating the murders. If the player characters go to him with their evidence, he requests their assistance in tracking the killer. Local rumors say Britaine is afraid of the Keys of Death and what they might do to anyone who looks too deeply into their activities. In truth, Britaine is actually a member of the death cult himself. He is concerned because the killings are not the work of any member of the Keys he recognizes. He fears that a new, rogue element in Kratas will ruin the work of the other cult members, who customarily work more covertly. Britaine hopes that tracking down the killer will keep the other members of the Keys safe from discovery. Anyone who stumbles too close to the Slasher's secret will end up as the next victim of the "blood killer."

The true assassin is a Theran agent Named Solon, a Thief sent to Kratas to stir up anger against the Keys of Death among the leaders of the Force of the Eye. If the Keys feel forced into a corner, the Therans believe they will strike back against Garlthik, inviting reprisals and putting the death cultists in an excellent position to become genuine agents of the Theran Empire in Barsaive. Solon eventually tries to implicate Britaine as the blood killer, putting the player characters in the odd position of defending a member of the Keys of Death against the Therans or vice versa.

THE OVERLAND TRADE COMPANY

Omasu, leader of the Liferock Rebellion, maintains a very small and discreet office here, using it mainly to arrange legitimate business with the outlying villages, as well as for a brief stopover for caravans traveling through the area. Omasu generally does not deal in the more illicit trades associated with Kratas. Since the landing of the Theran behemoth, the Overland Trading Company has greatly expanded its activities in Kratas, as the Liferock Rebellion needs the intelligence, weapons, and other unsavory services available in the city. The company representative in Kratas is an obsidiman Named Ournuuu, who is often wrongly assumed to be a member of the Ayodhyan brotherhood.

THE DREAM SPIRE COMPANY

This ambitious multi-racial trading house from Throal has begun expanding its operations in and around Kratas quite aggressively in the past years. It has recruited many formerly independent merchants, particularly non-dwarfs, who are not allowed to join the dwarf trading houses. The company offers these recruits the safety of larger numbers, and pays protection as a group to Garlthik. Dream Spire does some business in stolen wares, but also uses Kratas as a base for selling goods from Throal to the villages of the plains outside of Kratas.

The company has a small set of offices along a side street in Merchants' Row, as well as some warehouse space in the Warehouse District, and a corral for caravan animals in the Stables. Members do not keep much money in their offices, as they send most of their profits back to the home office in Throal as quickly as they can.

The head of the Dream Spire Company in Kratas is a charming, yet no-nonsense human woman Named Ionella, a distant cousin of Oberh, the head of the company in Throal.



House Chaozun

House Chaozun does a brisk business in Kratas dealing in its primary stock in trade: weaponry. When there is a glut of weapons in Kratas, House Chaozun will buy up the excess cheaply and sell them throughout the rest of Barsaive. Conversely, when there is a shortage of weapons in Kratas, House Chaozun will import weapons from its sources in Throal.

Much of the house's dealings are done with the Blood Steel Forge and members maintain good relations with both the forge and Garlthik, to whom they pay the customary 'taxes.' House Chaozun maintains offices in Merchants' Row, as well as a large warehouse close to the Stables, from which members sometimes deal directly with the scorchers and mercenaries of the Stables. The head of the house's branch in Kratas is a young dwarf woman, Rehellian, who is herself a Fourth Circle Weaponsmith. She is a member of the house, and supervises half a dozen dwarf *j'havim* clerks. The house also employs a dozen guards for its offices and warehouses.

Rehellian only deals in large quantities of mundane weapons, though she is always on the lookout for legendary and magical weapons. Any of the latter will be sent directly back to House Chaozun in Throal.

Rehellian has living quarters in the house's offices on Merchants' Row, though she also maintains a small house and office next door to the Blood Steel Forge in the Hammersing. While convenient for business, this has also led to rumors that she has taken one of the Weaponsmiths of the forge as a lover, though the rumormongers cannot decide on which one.

House Ludi

Unlike House Chaozun, which has thrived through specializing, House Ludi prospers by having a finger in any profitable enterprise. Ludi is also known for its devotion to Chorrolis, and the members of the house that have been assigned to Kratas have been instrumental in cleaning and minimally restoring the temple to Chorrolis in the Temple Square (see p. 104). Most high-ranking members of House Ludi are questors of Chorrolis, and the current head of house business in Kratas, an unctuous dwarf Named Toomand, is no exception.

Toomand's business is mainly with the Force of the Eye; he exports stolen goods and imports necessities and luxuries desired by the thieves. Toomand, like his predecessors, views his time in Kratas as merely a stepping stone to further advancement within his house. Thus, while he seeks to wring as much profit as he can out of Kratas, he has no long-term interest in improving the city, or his house's presence, beyond what is necessary to do business. He secretly despises the thieves of Kratas, whom he views as barbarians, but he is careful never to make his feelings known. Like all others that came before him, he seeks only to make what money he can from Kratas, and then return home.

House Ludi maintains a modest presence in Kratas, with its offices, warehouses, and stables off in a side alley, as well as significant dock space in Daiche. Toomand employs a handful of clerks, as well as numerous guards and caravaneers.



House Mikul

As this very successful trading house concentrates much of its commerce in eastern Barsaive, it only has a small presence in Kratas, though members have managed through flattery and substantial bribes to Garlthik to recover their old, pre-Scourge headquarters on Merchants' Row. This house is known for its willingness to deal with anyone with the coin to do so. It is flattering to Garlthik that Mikul's representatives always accord him the respect they would give any head of state, but his fondness for them is tempered by their tolerance of the Therans and slavery.

This house does not specialize in any one type of merchandise, and trades the 'previously owned' goods of Kratas throughout its extensive network that extends throughout eastern Barsaive, including as far as Travar and Urupa. Members purchase these goods with coin and with other trade goods, from Throal and eastern Barsaive.

House Mikul's current representative in Kratas is a middle-aged dwarf woman Named Vooxona. She is an experienced and respected *j'havim* of the house, but is not a full member yet. It is a reflection of the minor import accorded to this post that a full family member is not assigned here. Vooxona hopes to use this position to gain enough prestige to be allowed to marry into the family, and so is dedicated to building up the presence of House Mikul in Kratas. While she dresses in practical breeches while working, she is always dressed for meetings with Garlthik and other senior members of the Force as if she were attending the court of King Neden himself. This flatters both the old ork, and herself, though she is not naïve enough to miss the snickers of the other cutthroats.



House Ueraven

House Ueraven had a significant presence in Kratas before the Scourge; its headquarters on Merchants' Row were in one of the largest and most impressive buildings. Now this building has been taken over by K'tryklen, a t'skrang and main fence of the Force of the Eye. Thieves who are members of the Force can sell their loot here for a good price, while non-members get significantly worse deals. Some items can also be purchased here, though most of the goods are either sold in bulk to shops throughout Kratas, or packed up and shipped to fencing activities in other cities around Barsaive.

House Ueraven has a sporadic presence in Kratas at best. This is because its members are reluctant to deal in the chaotic environment of Kratas, and because Garlthik is highly suspicious of the house. Ueraven is an anti-royalist house, opposed to the policies and personage of King Neden, with whom Garlthik has an alliance. Further, House Ueraven has a reputation for underhanded dealings. All this means that Garlthik keeps members of House Ueraven under extremely tight surveillance when they do occasionally venture into Kratas.

So far the handful of merchants of the house have done nothing but confirm Garlthik's suspicions. The last two trips into the city have seen the Ueraven "merchants" engage in very little trading and a lot of skulking around in dark alleys meeting with possible agents of the Denairastas, and possibly even with members of Brocher's Brood. Garlthik hasn't banned them entirely from the city, as he thinks he may be able to gather information useful to King Neden by watching them. Relaying such information will keep the dwarf king on his good side, and thus help put off those Throalic factions who wish to clean up Kratas.

House Yilwaz

House Yilwaz is a minor, but up-and-coming trading house. The members of House Yilwaz are motivated as much by their anti-Theran and anti-slavery beliefs as they are by their desire for profit, if not more so. Kratas is not a major focus of their business, but they trade here in part to throw their support behind Garlthik and his strong stand against the Therans and their slavery.

The representative of Yilwaz in Kratas is Turnarak Ironeater (Named so for having once bitten through a pair of leg irons), an ork Liberator (see ***Namegivers of Barsaive***) who married into the family when rescued by one of the house's caravans. Despite her surprising mastery of dwarf court etiquette, Ironeater was assigned to Kratas because some of the old-guard families refused to deal with her as an equal in Throal. She bears no ill will toward the family, as she knows that she can do more good for the cause of freeing slaves in Kratas than she could in Throal. Moreover, many of the Throalic-born members of the house, despite their sincere intentions, are not well equipped to deal with the denizens of Kratas. Her husband, a dwarf Named Treegan Yilwaz, leads the house's caravans between Kratas and Throal, so they see each other for joyous and raucous reunions every month or so.

Ironeater does her best to strike good trade deals, but also to outfit heavily armed caravans to spread the influence of the house south into the realms closer to Theran-held lands, partially for trade, but also in the hopes of encountering slavers to fight.

Ironeater has great disdain for the Theran-accommodating (she would say collaborating) House Mikul, and does her best to show up Vooxona at Garlthik's court. She is not above undermining the Mikuls' efforts, and might actively thwart their plans should the opportunity present itself.

She has active hatred for Vistrosh and his Brocher's Brood, however, and manufactures opportunities to thwart their plans. She does not plan a frontal assault on them, however, as she is a realist and knows the blood elf is vastly more powerful than she is. She did manage to intercept and liberate a shipment of Vistrosh's slaves a few months ago, to the delight of both Garlthik and House Yilwaz.

House Yilwaz had no property in Kratas prior to the Scourge, and now maintains only a small office in Merchants' Row, as well as some warehouse space.

House Neumani

House Neumani is the boldest of dwarf trading houses. Many of the house's merchants are adventurers and even adepts, so they gravitate toward Kratas not only for trade, but for the same reasons that other adepts do: adventure and excitement, as well as equipment and knowledge. House Neumani uses Kratas as a base for exploring the areas to the west of Kratas, and blazing new trade routes with the surrounding areas.

Neumani was a minor house before the Scourge, and so had no resources within Kratas to recover. Nevertheless, members' adventurous attitudes have thrived in the rough and tumble milieu of the city. Unlike most Throalic merchants who view Kratas with distaste, the Neumani enjoy their time here. Their headquarters are an old, large rooming house down a back alley off of Merchants' Row. The first floor is taken up by offices and storage for trade goods, while the second floor has rooms for the employees of the house, both those stationed there as well as those visiting. The heavily trapped and warded basement includes an extensive collection of adventuring gear for equipping the adepts of the house, as well as a map room containing an excellent collection of maps of the surrounding areas.

The current representative of the Neumani is a dwarf Wizard Named Julericani. While itching to get back out in the field and explore, he keeps himself occupied not only by arranging trade deals, but also by keeping an ear out for the rumors, plots, and schemes that are hatched in Kratas. He is a regular visitor to the Darks, and often uses the resources of the house to acquire magical items and information that may be of use to House Neumani.

Other Trading Houses

In addition to these large trading houses, there are a number of smaller, fly-by-night companies that spring up and just as quickly disappear in Merchants' Row. Some of the current ones are the Eyelash Merchant Company, Full Force Traders, Respectable Mercantile, and Wink and Nod Brothers. Most of these are thinly disguised front companies for the Force of the Eye when its members wish a veneer of respectability for some business, such as when moving large amounts of goods to Bartertown, Jerris, or Travar. Each of these also operates small storefronts, where adventurers can sell their loot, and buy other goods. Some, however, are outright scams, often playing upon a mark's assumption that he is dealing with the Force of the Eye.

Old Kaer and Undercity



CHAPTER TWELVE

There's places in Kratas the boldest
Thief doesn't dare venture.

• Fastrech Kenlijahu, Explorer •

Everywhere the Theran Empire expands, it leaves marks of its mighty civilization. Next to the grand achievements of sewer systems and aqueducts benefiting the population, however, the Therans erect huge fortresses that remind the same population that any resistance is futile. In Kratas, it becomes obvious that neither of these Theran influences withstands the gnawing teeth of time without the manpower to back them up.

The Old Kaer

During the era of Theran control of Kratas, the Therans razed one of the newer neighborhoods of shanties that had grown up to the West of and down the hill from the original settlement on Hilltop. In place of this small neighborhood, the Therans built a fortress from which to administer the city. The back of the keep was flush with the cliff side, and in front was a wide area cleared for troops to muster and airships to land. This parade ground was eventually walled in and became Temple Plaza. The keep was expanded and further fortified over the years. In order to weather periodic sieges, the governors dug back into the hill to build storage vaults for rations. Successive generations of administrators expanded these vaults, adding elemental water fountains and armories. After the Orichalcum Wars began, and the garrison was established on Clifftop, vertical tunnels were dug connecting the keep with the garrison.

When the citizens of Kratas decided to ride out the Scourge, they turned to the old keep as the cornerstone of their citadel. They expanded the storage and living quarters dug into the mountain, and installed light-quartz-lit gardens for growing food, but not enough to support more than a small fraction of the city's population. Many of the last survivors of the dome's collapse managed to hold out here for a number of years, living as if in a kaer, which led to this area's current Name: the Old Kaer.

The Old Kaer is split into two main sections: the old keep outside of the cliff face, and the excavations carved behind it, though a Namegiver traveling through its corridors would notice only the lack of windows when moving into the interior sections.

The keep overlooks the center of the city. Six stories tall, and covered with imposing battlements and fortifications, its windows are little more than arrow slits, and the remains of siege weapons litter its roof. The first two floors housed barracks and armories, now gutted and empty. Beneath these are basement levels that contained offices, workshops, and storage for the various public works handled by the Therans, such as the aqueducts and sewers. The middle floors housed administrative offices for the bureaucrats that oversaw the city and its trade. These have been looted of anything of obvious value, though

much decaying, old furniture remains, as well as reams of old documents. Also on these floors were courtrooms and a few holding cells, now defaced by thieves because of their importance to Mynbruje.

The upper floors contained the living chambers for the overseer and other important officials. These were much more opulent than the barracks below and, while initially looted, are now firmly under control of the Force of the Eye, having been more or less restored. The overseer's apartments on the top floor are now one of Garlthik's living quarters. He spends at least a few nights a month here, but with no regular schedule. Garlthik and other high-ranking members of the Force of the Eye often use the overseer's dining hall for meetings, at which they plot their business. At the front of the apartment is a grand balcony that oversees Temple Plaza, from which the overseer used to address the citizens. Now Garlthik occasionally appears on this balcony, keeping a watchful eye on his city. Even when Garlthik is not in residence, a dozen servants and guards live in the quarters to keep an eye on things. The apartments are well stocked with food, drink, and all the creature comforts the Force could desire.

Each floor also has corridors leading back to the rooms carved into the cliff. The upper floors connect to further storage chambers, and rooms that were quarters for the overseer's personal guard. These are said to hold some of the Force of the Eye's loot. Also joining these levels are the bottoms of the elemental elevators that connected to the Theran fortress on Clifftop (see p. 90).

The middle floors inside the cliff contain further bureaucratic offices and records storage, as well as holding pens for criminals and slaves.

The lower floors contain food storage chambers to withstand a long siege, including elemental water fountains and gardens. Numerous stairwells, both within the mountain and in the keep, connect the different floors and levels. These stairwells are heavily fortified in case of attackers getting inside the citadel, with heavy doors and gates available to seal off levels, as well as murder holes opening above each landing, allowing defenders to rain arrows, boiling oil, and other nasty surprises down on invaders. While many of these defenses are abandoned, the ones nearest Garlthik's apartments are manned and in working order.

Deeper within the lower levels carved into the cliff, the orderly structure breaks down, with many of the passages connecting to the various levels of the Undercity. It is believed that several of these lead beneath Hilltop, and that the Force uses them to travel between their hideouts in that neighborhood and the Old Kaer.

Most of these deeper levels have been looted, especially of the light crystals that were used to illuminate them. Lighting is sparse, and of the few crystals that remain, most are damaged, creating dim and eerie illumination and strange colored light.

One of the few remaining things of interest to the general public is the presence of elemental water fountains. Clean drinking water is at a premium in Kratas, with most of the aqueducts wrecked and the wells controlled by gangs. The Force of the Eye controls the elemental water fountains



and charges residents a minimal fee of 1 copper piece per person for all the water one can carry out of the kaer in one trip, though the gang charges obsidimen and trolls 2 copper pieces because of their greater carrying capacity.

To get to the fountain, one pays the fee to a member of the Force of the Eye at the entrance to the keep, then passes through the main passage: a large vaulted corridor, the ceiling of which is dotted with murder holes. Heavy doors leading off the corridor are locked and boarded shut. Passing into the cliff itself, the fountains stand in the middle of a poorly lit, cavernous hall from which dark passages lead off in many directions. Half-a-dozen Force of the Eye members guard the entrance to the Old Kaer, and the fountains themselves. This is one of the least glamorous jobs in the Force, and so the guards assigned to it are often surly and bored.

The chambers close to the fountains are sometimes used as cheap, temporary brothels or drug holes. The guards know this and get their 'piece of the pie' for turning a blind eye. Undoubtedly, the brothels cater to people who are unconcerned about the bearers of their pleasure, or who want to get everything as cheaply as possible. Everyone else visits the established adult entertainment houses in Kratas.

—Shiling Eversmile, Elven Swordmaster

Despite the creepy nature of the Old Kaer, the hostility of the guards, and the cost of the water, several hundred residents of Kratas still avail themselves of the fountains each day, with the crowds being especially thick at dawn and dusk.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Larana, the youngest daughter of a local member of the Force of the Eye, has been missing for two days. Traparan Quickhand, her father, hires the player characters to search for her. As a prominent member of Garlthik's gang, he has many enemies, whom he suspects to have kidnapped Larana. However, the player characters soon find out that none of the usual suspects are responsible for Larana's disappearance. Instead, they discover she was seen close to the Catacombs shortly before she went missing.

Together with the player characters, Traparan explores the Catacombs (an adept with the Tracking talent might come in handy) until he finds her in a small chamber that has been converted into a cell. Daklaam, a human Wizard, captured her for use as a guinea pig for his experiments; he has been attempting to develop new blood charms that increase the reflexes of their wearers. The group finds the girl strapped to a wooden table, with strange blood charms attached to her chest, legs, and head, barely alive. Daklaam gives the player characters a hard fight, possibly with help from Namegivers loyal to him (who are equipped with all sorts of blood charms), but flees if it becomes obvious that he and his gang are losing the fight.

THE UNDERCITY

Beneath Kratas exists a Byzantine labyrinth of cellars, sewers, storerooms, tunnels, and secret passages. While even the most experienced Namegiver may get turned around or lost, the tunnels are roughly arranged into levels, based on the history of the city and the characteristics of the tunnels.

The first level (in descending order) includes cellars, basements, and sewers. Most of the buildings in Kratas were built with at least one basement level. Some of these were even close enough to the surface to have small, usually barred, windows set at the very tops of their walls, to allow in sunlight. In many of the older parts of the city, such as Hilltop and the Safehearths, the cellars are what had been the ground floors of buildings built in previous eras of the city; much of the older city is built on top of earlier versions. Prior to the arrival of the Therans, there were no central sewer systems, although some ditches had been dug in the streets, through which effluent ran. When the Therans began constructing sewers, especially in the poorer parts of the city, they roofed over these streets, creating a new ground level above. Thus, in some parts of the sewers, one can still see what appear to be old, boarded-up storefronts. In other parts of the city, the main lines of the sewers were dug under the streets, parallel to the main streets above. Off these main lines are numerous smaller passages, connecting to individual houses and businesses, into which small pipes empty.

The lower levels of the Undercity are filled with all kinds of ugly vermin. Of course, the rumors are often exaggerated. The best story I heard is about a leech rat running loose in the sewers riding one of the shadowmants, waiting to jump off onto a promising adventurer.

—Rowan Daggertree, Retired Human Adventurer

ADVENTURE HOOK



*An epidemic has begun to spread throughout the Scrabbles. Hundreds of residents are coming down with a variety of noxious and lethal illnesses. Garlthik has reason to believe that a plague lizard (**Gamemaster's Compendium**, p.329) has found its way into the sewers beneath the Scrabbles. To protect the greater population, Garlthik has offered a reward of 1,000 silver pieces for the creature. This small fortune has inspired a horde of down-on-their-luck folks to venture into the sewers, with little success and many further infections. The Force of the Eye has been turning away dozens of fortune seekers trying to pass off harmless, if unusual, lizards as the pest. Each of the minor gangs of the Scrabbles is sending teams into the tunnels, and setting watches on the sewer exits, hoping to waylay the successful hunters before they can collect the reward. The player characters can hunt down the plague lizard, but they will have to fight off both other vermin and rival fortune seekers. There are several options the gamemaster can choose:*

***Option One**: Garlthik was mistaken; the cause is not a plague lizard, but is in fact a type of Horror construct known as a plague (**Gamemaster's Guide**, p.XX). Player characters expecting a plague lizard may be no match for the much more powerful Horror construct. Luckily for the player characters, the plague tries to avoid combat if possible—after infecting them, of course. The group may need to seek out assistance in hunting down the plague, most likely from the Grim Legion or a Horror Stalker.*

***Option 2**: After catching and killing the plague lizard, anyone examining the creature carefully will discover a chain around its neck, suggesting that someone once kept it in captivity. Further investigation reveals that Roongarn, a crazed troll Beastmaster, is breeding these creatures deep in the tunnels near the slop pits, with the intention of loosing them within the major cities of Barsaive. The lizard infecting the Scrabbles was released as a test, with Roongarn mistakenly suspecting that no one would care about the deaths of the scum living in the Scrabbles. Hunting Roongarn down and destroying his creatures is an unqualified 'good act.' Roongarn will not surrender. However, he has a dozen plague lizards chained up in pens that he feeds offal from the slop pits. If he fears he will be killed, he will retreat to the pens and release the lizards, before fighting to the death. Scrawled in excrement on the walls of the pens are the mad ravings of the Beastmaster, which rail against the "filth of the world" and the need to "cleanse its corruption." Anyone asking around about Roongarn discovers that he was well-known around town, generally dismissed as crazy or Horror-touched, and had been spending most of his time of late in the sewers. Ominously, he was recently seen around the Stables asking wagonwrights about getting cages "big enough for a thundra beast" mounted on wagons, though at the time this was not considered a suspicious question from a known Beastmaster.*

The main passages are ten feet tall, arched, and wide enough for three Namegivers to walk abreast. The smaller side passages are only eight feet tall, and can only fit one Namegiver at a time—comfortably for a dwarf, but a tight squeeze for trolls or obsidimen. The small feeder pipes could fit a windling, though most would loathe entering them, for fear of wetting their wings (not to mention the smell).

The Therans were concerned about invaders using these tunnels so they placed numerous gates throughout. Some passages were even trapped, including deadfalls that if triggered could not only crush an invader, but seal off the tunnel. Further defenses were added prior to the Scourge, and some of the traps and wards in more remote areas of the sewers may still be active.

Most basements and cellars were on the same level as the sewers, and passages connecting to them were easily constructed. These were constructed for numerous reasons: for merchants to smuggle goods out of the sight of Theran tax officials, for young folk to slip out of basement rooms at night without their parents' knowledge, and even for a few brave souls who tried to sneak fugitive slaves out of the city. In the Warehouse District, the sewers were put to more mundane uses, as they were often used for carting goods between the basements of nearby warehouses.

Since the Scourge, much of the Therans' careful organization has been subverted throughout Kratas, especially in the Undercity. Holes have been broken through from one cellar to the next, some left gaping, others carefully disguised. Some passages have collapsed, while others have been walled over. Thus, what should be straight passages are now cul-de-sacs, and it is also possible to travel nearly from one side of the city to the other with only brief sojourns in the sewers proper.

Below the first level is a series of subbasements and tunnels. The subbasements were for additional storage, and usually not for living quarters, as they received no sunlight, although many dwarfs did not mind. The subbasements were less common than the basements of the level above, so they are scattered less uniformly. Tunnels were dug connecting a number of these subbasements, for the same reasons the tunnels connecting the basements above were constructed, and in the older sections of the city these may also connect to even older, now buried, buildings.

Today this level has been expanded by many of the residents of Kratas who wish to travel unseen beneath the city and avoid the more heavily traveled and patrolled sewers.

Below this level lies the very hard bedrock on which Kratas rests. Most casual construction does not continue below this, but with the assistance of skilled dwarf miners, or Elementalists, the wealthy were able to construct passages and hideaways even this deep. The rooms found here were often hidden and trapped, constructed either for hiding the most precious goods of merchants or the treasures of the wealthy, or well-stocked chambers in which to hide out, in case a siege was successful and marauders breached the city's defenses. Other chambers on this level appear to have been built for ritual purposes by the numerous cults that were attracted to Kratas even before the Scourge. Finally, the Therans built some areas on this level for mysterious military or magical purposes, and some of these connect with the areas beneath Clifftop and the Old Kaer.

Beneath the layer of bedrock there is rumored to be a network of naturally occurring caverns that connect to the Undercity. The extent of these caverns is unknown, and as they hold little of interest to most thieves, those who stumble upon them usually give them little attention.

A fourth level of the Undercity does exist. In fact, what could be termed a fifth level exists as well. The fourth level is a series of natural caverns carved by the same underground streams that feed the wells of Kratas. These twisting passages and chambers may be inhabited by any of the creatures that inhabit the third level of the Undercity, though the pickings are even slimmer this deep, as there are few food sources to sustain many predators. There are only a small number of places where the third level has broken through into these caverns. A few unfortunate Namegivers have managed to end up here, with a number of them becoming permanently lost. In a very few places, passages connect to chambers that lead down even deeper. These passages all appear to have eroded naturally, accidentally spilling into these chambers.

—Rowan Daggertree,
Retired Human Adventurer

ADVENTURE HOOK

A questor of Lochost approaches the player characters and requests their assistance. She is venturing into the Undercity to root out a band of Brocher's Brood's slavers. Posing as a slaver, she has had some contact with the band, and is close to discovering their hidden slave market. She also says that this is the same band that she thinks is holding her younger brother. The questor offers to pay the player characters, but truly noble characters may shun the pay for such a worthy cause. She needs some people to pretend to be slaves so she can get into the market. The player characters are to be shackled together, armed with concealed weapons, and led by her to the site of the slave trade. Once they are at the market, she will free them, so they can attack the slavers and free the other slaves.

Unbeknownst to the player characters, she is, however, actually a questor of Vestrial and a confidence trickster, trying to scam both the slavers and the group. The player characters will doubtlessly be surprised when they are turned over to the slavers for a chest of gold coins and their shackles do not open, after which the questor blows the hapless player characters a kiss, and flees with her money. The slavers will be equally surprised when the player characters manage to escape their shackles and draw their concealed weapons. By the time the dust has cleared, the trickster is long gone with the slavers' gold, and whatever pay she had promised the group. (If the player characters insist on pay ahead of time, she complies, but the player characters later find out that her silver coins are really only copper, coated with a thin layer of silver, worth only a fraction of the promised amount.)



Throughout the Undercity are written numerous letters, numbers, arrows, "X's," and other cryptic symbols, many of them written in firefly chalk (***Player's Guide***, p. 263). These marks are codes used by various gangs that give directions through the maze that is the Undercity. They change frequently, and other gangs are not above erasing or modifying their rivals' marks.

I have heard of ruins lying below the deepest levels of the Undercity. As one goes progressively deeper, ruined streets and tunnels lead into a number of gigantic connected chambers that house a vast ancient city, complete with houses, buildings, and streets. Some of the buildings are oddly shaped, with no obvious functions, made of an unknown type of stone. The proportions of the buildings seem out of kilter, and many of the buildings have strange symbols carved on them, although not in any language known in Barsaive. Many of the buildings have windows, although there appears to be no source of light in the chambers (like the light quartzes that one would expect in a kaer, for example). The center of this ancient city is rumored to be a massive ziggurat, supposedly featuring an elaborate system of carved lines and symbols on the outside, with holes drilled to the inside. I was told that, inside the ziggurat, behind a set of humongous double doors, is a single empty chamber. Carved on the floor are many dots that line up with the holes carved in the ceiling, along with marks next to each dot. The entire structure could be a calendar and observatory, because the holes correspond to the positions of the stars in the sky. No one seems sure when this observatory was built, but it must be older than recorded history.

—Rowan Daggertree,
Retired Human Adventurer

The Slop Pits

While no part of the sewers can be said to be pleasant, the area under the Stables is by far the foulest of the lot. The sewers all run downhill toward this area, and the beasts of the Stables add their own burden to the sewer. The sewers end in a number of large underground tanks, collecting the sewage in one place. This was part of a Theran plan to recycle waste as fertilizer for the nearby farms. There was once a system of winches and buckets to raise the manure to the surface and waiting farmers' carts. Now these mechanisms are destroyed, the hatches sealed over, and the waste festers horribly in the pits. Most residents, even members of the Force of the Eye, avoid this area, not only because of the horrible stench, but because of rumored foul creatures that live in the pits. Those desperate to avoid detection may flee to the Undercity near the slop pits, but it is said that the smell lingers with such a person for days.

Garlthik has considered hiring people to work as muckers and transport the waste to the farmers. He knows that Throal has a similar system that works and is willing to pay handsomely for this stinking work. He hopes that the farmers will pay enough for the fertilizer to make a profit of the business. Another option is to rebuild the old Theran system of winches and buckets, but that would call for an engineer, and there currently no person able to manage this task in Kratas.

The Catacombs

Disposing of the dead is a problem for any city. The residents of Kratas come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, each with their own methods of dealing with the bodies of the departed. Many, particularly the nomadic humans and orks of the plains, cremate their dead on funeral biers. In the past, wealthy Therans and other foreigners had their remains sent home to their families. However, many dwarfs who could not afford to ship their loved ones back to Throal, or who had begun to identify as Kratans and who wished to return their dead ones to the earth, buried them in the catacombs.

In the early years of the city's history, when it was merely a trading post, some of the dead were buried in simple graves outside the wooden stockade. Many of the grave markers were destroyed by nature or raiders, and when the city expanded, many neighborhoods such as Merchant's Row and the Safehearths were inadvertently built over these graves.

In later years, folks were loath to bury their dead outside the walls for fear of attack or vandalism by marauders. But as space inside the walls was always at a premium, no land could be devoted exclusively for use as a cemetery. Instead, the dead were buried under the houses in special vaults in or beneath the cellars. Over many years, these crypts filled up with generations of the dead, piled on top of each other, the desiccated bones of ancestors shoved farther back in the crypt to make room for the more recent corpses.

Many of these crypts also used the dwarf tradition of the death window: a small glass or crystal window over the face of the deceased. This can be an eerie sight to suddenly encounter when wandering through the subbasements of Kratas.

While tombs may be encountered scattered throughout the Undercity beneath the older parts of the city, there is a particularly dense, interconnected concentration of crypts underneath Hilltop, referred to as the Catacombs. Not surprisingly, rumor has it that this area is now full of undead, as well as the site of occult rituals of secret societ-

ies. Others insist that it is worth braving these dangers for the treasures that were buried with the dead. Still others insist that any such valuables have been looted long ago. Whatever the truth of these rumors, because of the location of the Catacombs beneath Hilltop, the Force of the Eye keeps a fairly close watch on the catacombs, and sends regular patrols through the crypts.

Denizens of the Undercity

Within the Undercity exist any number of creatures and Namegivers, which are potential dangers to explorers. Few are restricted to the Undercity, but many make their lairs there, traveling out at night to hunt. Moreover, as there are many entrances to the Undercity, a creature's lair or hunting ground may include parts of both the surface city and multiple levels below. Still, there are general patterns of infestation.

> *There's a food chain down there. The rats live off the waste of the Namegivers above, even though two-thirds of the city remains unpopulated. The dogs live off the rats, and there are larger creatures living off the dogs. The food chain of the Undercity can only support a fairly small number of larger predators, in my opinion. Some of the Horrors may be able to feed off the Namegivers living above, but Kratas is not Parlainth, and it's definitely not teeming with Horrors.*
>
> **—Rowan Daggertree, Retired Human Adventurer**

The first level of basements and sewers contain many rats, bats, spiders, snakes, and other common vermin, though as the city itself remains underpopulated, many sections of the sewer are similarly deserted. The rats of Kratas live in as harsh and brutally competitive an environment as the Namegivers above, and so are significantly tougher and more aggressive than the average rat. Most are merely nuisances to well-armed and healthy adventurers, but a bleeding, wounded Namegiver in the sewers may quickly find himself harried by these vermin. Another danger from encountering these minor creatures is the sound of dispatching them may alert others in the tunnels to one's presence. Finally, many rats carry diseases more dangerous than their claws and teeth.

Shadowmants nest in the first and second levels, though they mostly hunt outside of the city during the night and sleep hanging onto the ceilings or walls during the day. Because of their dark coloration, they blend well into their surroundings, especially when asleep. Thus, a person moving stealthily may pass by or underneath a sleeping shadowmant without waking it up, or even being aware of its presence. There is also at least one swarm of krilworms that lives within the sewers, and primarily hunts outside of the city at night. One is most likely to encounter shadowmants or krilworms around sunset or sunrise, as they are leaving from, or returning to, their nests.

Some claim that the lower levels of the Undercity, especially the catacombs, are inhabited by undead created from the bodies and spirits of Namegivers slain in the Scourge, and animated by Horrors. Sightings of cadaver men and ghouls have been reported, as well as less credible suggestions of demi-wraiths and shadows (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 166 and p. 218). Others claim that some of the Horrors that ravaged Kratas during the Scourge retreated into the Undercity and remain there to this day. Rumors abound of Horror constructs or minor Horrors in the lower levels, though cynics claim the recently seen jehuthra was "only" a giant spider of the same kind as those found in the Servos Jungle.

Of possible greater danger or interest are the Namegivers that roam the Undercity. Many thieves and gangs use the Undercity for traveling around through the city, including the Force of the Eye. The Force maintains fairly regular patrols through many of the main passageways of the sewers, as well as many of the tunnels of the second level. Other Namegivers are not forbidden to be in the Undercity, and members of the Force will not automatically harass those they encounter there, unless they happen to be in a bad mood. They are mostly on the lookout for members of Brocher's Brood, who rely heavily on the lower levels of the Undercity to avoid Garlthik's attention.

In addition to Vistrosh's gang, numerous cultists and foul folk seem to be attracted to Kratas and the Undercity. The astral space of Kratas is generally Tainted, but in parts of the Undercity it is actually Corrupt (***Player's Guide***, p. 110). Further, there are many down-on-their-luck residents who have ended up in the Undercity merely for lack of a better place to live. Unfortunately for visitors, it is often hard to distinguish whether the filthy, babbling Namegiver shuffling towards one is merely a harmless indigent or a Horror-corrupted madman.


The Scrabbles
To the Temple Plaza
To the Warehouse District
THE ALL-BREAKERS
5
3
THE BLOODY FIST
To the Stables
To the Greenmarkets
THE FRINGE
4
1
THE FORSAKEN
RANGOR'S REAVORS
2
1 Rangor's Rest
2 The Orphanage
3 The Hole
4 The Forsaken's Headquarter
5 Henrieta's Palace
appropriate boundary of gang territory

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Never judge a book by its cover...

• Gillian, Human Thief •



The Scrabbles are the second most recently formed neighborhood after the Stables. Before the Scourge, this area housed the poor manual laborers who did most of the grunt work in the city. It reached its maximum population with the massive influx of workers required to build the dome over the city, becoming overpopulated. Many of the houses are smaller than those in other neighborhoods in Kratas, most buildings being built on a small base area; still the buildings are two or three stories tall. The neighborhood is tightly packed, with narrow streets and tiny alleyways. The Scrabbles had a high population density as most of these residential buildings held many tiny apartments with poor families sharing single rooms.

During the Scourge, the Scrabbles suffered extensive structural damage due to the fact that the houses, while mostly made from stone, were built cheaply and often in a haphazard fashion. Even after their destruction it is apparent that these apartment houses once resembled each other; in fact, houses in an area were often identical to one another. Today, the Scrabbles district is divided into territories controlled by various extortion gangs, all of which, save one, pay protection to Garlthik. With its narrow alleys that get extraordinarily dark very early and the infighting among the gangs who divided this neighborhood up, the Scrabbles is like a cliché of Kratas. This might be one of the reasons why so many newcomers settle here: they come in at the Stables and, from hearsay and various reports, expect the rest of the city to be like the Scrabbles anyway. When they find out about the differences, though, among other weighty reasons they still stay because the architecture of the Scrabbles offers some unique features. While the houses are not built like private fortresses, single individuals or small groups can easily defend or protect one of the flats from trespassers, as most of them only have one door and only small and narrow windows, if any. The maze of alleys that runs through the Scrabbles also makes an ideal fallback to lose pursuers from anywhere else in the city.

This unique architecture makes the Scrabbles hard to control for the Force of the Eye, which is why the gang does not seem to have any presence here. It is a last haven for smaller gangs who wish to do business without being constantly watched by the Eye, though they still pay protection largely because Garlthik could move into the Scrabbles if he really wanted—although it would cost him much—and because the Force can make things hard for them in other parts of the city.

Like all of the gangs in Kratas, the gangs of the Scrabbles have lookouts posted on the borders of their territories, so any strangers wandering into a gang's area are spotted and followed, and their presence swiftly communicated to the gang's leaders. As they live off of the poorest people in Kratas, the gangs of the Scrabbles are rather impoverished themselves, and are thus badly equipped. Most of the gang members have no armor, and use only knives, daggers, clubs, and saps, with the occasional sling. What they lack in skill and equipment they make up for in numbers, however. While one or

two might attempt a pick pocketing, they will only attack a well-armed party in groups of a dozen or more.

There are few businesses in the Scrabbles, as it is mostly a residential neighborhood for the truly destitute. Most of the residents work in badly paying, often piecemeal jobs in other parts of the city, and only return here to sleep. There are a number of very simple taverns in the Scrabbles, but these are primarily hangouts for the gangs in whose territories they are located, and do not have signs advertising their presence, or even formal names. Strangers are not made to feel welcome, and any who wander into one might be forced to buy drinks for all of the gang members present, if they are not simply mugged and killed.

The Scrabbles is a place where people come because they fail or are not wanted elsewhere and, not being real thieves or otherwise capable of doing work here, also fail in Kratas. Their hopes are torn asunder and what little they are able to do to make their lives better is taken away by the gangs of the Scrabbles, who are composed of failed Namegivers themselves, just with a lot more brawn. Once, an inhabitant of the Scrabbles might have longed to get to Kratas, now he longs to get out of the Scrabbles. And while there are plenty of empty houses throughout the city, protection rates are higher everywhere else. The inhabitants of the Scrabbles are the underclass of Kratas. And while people like them exist in every major city of Barsaive, the low overall standards of Kratas make their existence here much more horrible. Then again, for some it is a better choice than a death sentence or wasting away hiding in the wilds.

The territory of the Scrabbles is currently divided up as follows. The All-breakers control the Northern end, the Bloody Fist rules the center, Rangor's Reavers claims the Southwest, and the Forsaken are hunkered down in the Southeast. (These gangs are described in greater depth in the **Gangs of Kratas** chapter on p. 42.) These borders fluctuate with the perennial gang warfare that racks the Scrabbles, and new gangs may arise and try to carve pieces out of these gangs' turf.

In the far south of the Scrabbles, wedged uneasily between the territories of the Forsaken and Rangor's Reavers lies the one chunk of the Scrabbles not claimed by any of the gangs: the refuge for the cursed and outcast called the Fringe.



ENGHAT'S

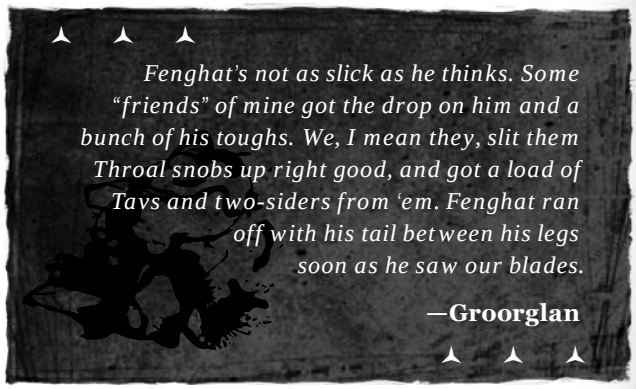
ear the gate to the Stables, a middle-aged human called Fenghat established a unique Kratan business, one that would not be possible anywhere else. Fenghat grew up in the Scrabbles, but set out for the world early, learning the ways of the Scout. After a good deal of adventuring, he realized that there were plenty of bored nobles and rich merchants' sons who wanted their share of it, but would never be able to do real adventuring due to the lack of magic abilities, instead paying for quite a few drinks for only hearing about them. One day, Fenghat took his chances when he heard a group of young Throalites talk about the thrills of the City of Thieves. He offered to guide them through the city, showing them all the exciting places. Fenghat made a small fortune with it. The Throalites were so intrigued they told their friends about the trip, who in turn wanted to have their own Kratan experience.

One thing lead to another, and now Fenghat shows Namegivers from across Barsaive through Kratas every month or so. Some get exclusive tours but most come in small groups. The price for a tour is negotiable, but as only the rich are interested in such frights anyway, is quite high. Often, Fenghat will hire other locals for a small performance, who try to sneak up and steal from his customers, just so the customer can have a 'real' Kratan encounter. He has a knack for spotting what a person wants to see, and simply arranges for his customers to see what they want to see.

In addition, he always takes a jaunt through the Scrabbles with his tours, with various cuts given to the local gangs and residents for protection and various shows. It is rumored a gang there tried to cross him once and repented after he skipped their territory for a number of trips. The money he brings into this poor district is certainly welcome and some there see him as a local hero and inspiration, as well as one they can turn to in times of dire need.

While his guided tours bring in a lot of money, Fenghat follows other lines of work on the true path of his Discipline. He is a true insider, and if anyone except Garlthik knows all of the secret passages, the hidden routes, and the concealed entries throughout the city—instead of just a small part of it—it is him. As in the circles of bored nobles, he is well known among people who have to do secret business in Kratas, but are not stealthy themselves. For the right price, he can bring anyone anywhere in Kratas unseen.

It is known to some that Fenghat does not pay the Force, and there are plenty of rumors as to why, although Fenghat does not talk about that matter. No member of the Force seems to ever have employed him, safely entered his house, or talked to him. It could be that the Force does not bother him because Fenghat attracts rich outsiders, and so is an asset to the economy, but it is not their style to exempt anyone from taxes.



Fenghat's not as slick as he thinks. Some "friends" of mine got the drop on him and a bunch of his toughs. We, I mean they, slit them Throal snobs up right good, and got a load of Tavs and two-siders from 'em. Fenghat ran off with his tail between his legs soon as he saw our blades.

—Groorglan

THE FRINGE

Fringe—hardly any other word is spoken in Kratas with so much awe and in such a trembling voice. This part of the city is located at the farthest point south of the citadel and is home to those Namegivers that are only called "the Removed" by other Kratans, because they have been

removed or removed themselves from their former life, from their homes and families alike.

The Removed belong to the small number of Namegivers who have come through encounters with Horrors and live to tell about it. Most of them bear clearly distinguishable traces of these encounters, which are witness to horrible rituals, terrible torture, and sometimes even sacrificial rites. Victims of a well-known power of the Horrors that shifts the skin are common in the Fringe, as are Namegivers that were simply disfigured by Horrors taking delight in acting in a more physical manner—a manner not any less torturous for their victims, however. These Horrors often disfigure parts of the body that are linked to the victim's sense of self, like a Swordmaster's sword-arm or a dancer's feet and legs.

These visible marks alone make the Removed outcasts in all of Barsaive. But even if the desecration of their flesh were hardly visible, most Barsaivians would still believe that any who survive an encounter with a Horror must have made a deal with those horrible creatures that bear responsibility for this suffering, or are still haunted by it, attracting the netherworldly beasts every now and then, endangering everyone in the vicinity.

Indeed, some of these unfortunate souls were cursed with terrible capabilities that affect all life around them using every possible effect the Horrors, with their cruel imaginations, could come up with. When venturing into the Fringe, the visitor must be prepared for the worst, even if the area's inhabitants are not as dangerous as the rest of the world believes them to be.

The Removed live by themselves, under the constant vigil of the Force of the Eye. They are not allowed to leave the Fringe, but most of them do not want to do that anyway. It is likely they are far more aware of the danger surrounding them than are others, and avoid all contact with outsiders; in the past there has also been violence towards them in other parts of the city.

Besides any physical marks, many of the Removed are mentally unstable, not only due to direct intervention by the Horrors, but also the personal and social effects of whatever was done to them. Many wandered the wilderness alone for years before coming to Kratas and are either too talkative or shy away from any contact with other Namegivers. Some see curses that enable them to harm others as a weapon to use; some even see them as a gift that evens their other problems out. Lots of them have strange visions at all hours of the day, hear voices—not necessarily those of a Horror—or suffer from strange quirks or outright insanity. In their ranks there are also many adepts who have lost the paths of their Disciplines and closed themselves to the world under the impact of the Horrors. Now, they struggle to cope with the burdening effect this takes on their personalities, their worldviews disturbed and their purposes shattered. The main problem every one of the Removed and any visitors face, is to judge whether strange behavior is the result of a Horror's influence or just a—probably curable—mental condition that came as a result of their outcast status.

So they formed their own tightly knit community, where everyone helps the others as best as he can. They have even elected one of their own as their speaker, who stands up for their interests: the elf Raehlacain, one of the few Removed who is mentally as well as physically unharmed, at least as far as others can notice. He conducts business with the Force and negotiates with Garlthik or one of his representatives when necessary.

Garlthik seems to pity the Removed, and so they have found a home in Kratas, the least hospitable of all places. To a certain extent, the Force of the Eye even protects the Removed and the Fringe. Although it is not really necessary to provide physical protection by putting up guards, as even the hardiest criminal shies away from entering the Fringe or even touching one of the Removed to extort something. Fear of the nature of some of their curses is enough deterrent, as touching a Removed can be the beginning of one's own misery. Still, Garlthik puts out the word that the Removed are not to be harmed or taken advantage of; anyone who does so gets into trouble when dealing with the Force.

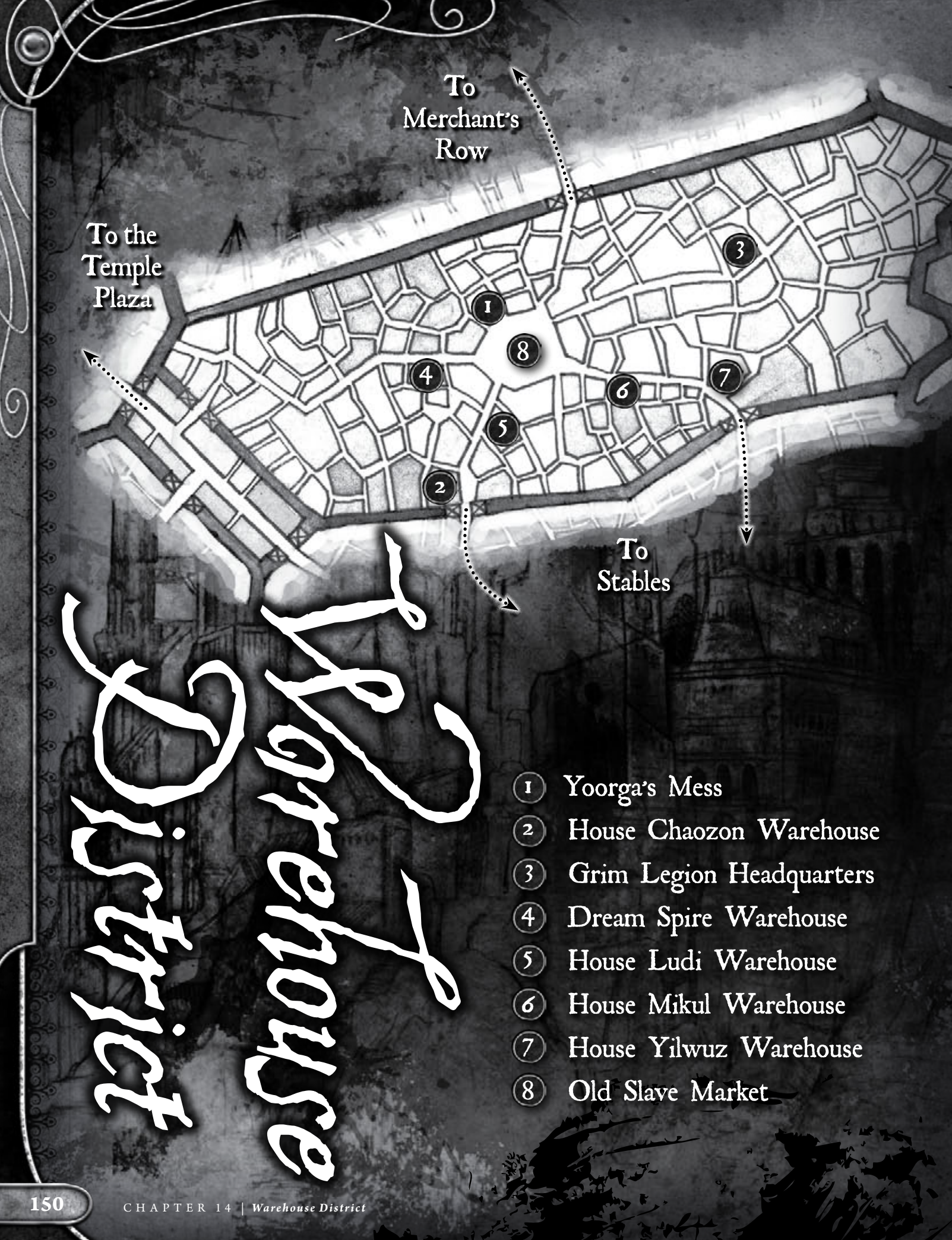
Whether Garlthik has any motive besides pity remains unclear, but it seems he also knows about the invaluable information concerning the Horrors that the Removed have collected through their experiences, and that this knowledge attracts numerous adepts on the search for a particular piece of information, who in turn leave their money in his taverns and shops, and some in the pockets of the Removed, of course.

I saw the features of a man whose face was no longer that of a Namegiver. They seemed as if they had melted in the heat of some unearthly fire and had cooled in an entirely wrong location. His left eye was hanging almost as far down as his jaw-line, while the right corner of his mouth extended nearly to his ear. The man—the creature—paused for a moment in mid-motion, but then continued to sweep the street. For a moment I saw his crippled hands emerge from his long linen dress. Several of his fingers were grown together. I lowered my head, but my heart beat up into my throat and I had to concentrate on every step to get away as fast as possible.

—He'klak of Ca'renn

I once ventured into the Fringe by accident and saw two women approaching from the other side of the alley, but they stopped before they passed me and began to chatter in hushed tones. One, a young elf maid who must have been beautiful once, wore a simple dress that looked as if it had been dunked in fresh blood. This was a rather fitting image, as I noticed that her face and body were covered in deep cuts that were bleeding continuously. The other one, an old woman with snow-white hair, seemed unharmed, but then I saw dark smoke and hair-fine lightning move across her skin. The younger one seemed intent on not touching the older one, as if even the smallest brushing would have unspeakably dire consequences for the both of them.

—Goobrosh, Legion of Despair



Warehouse District

1. Yoorga's Mess
2. House Chaozon Warehouse
3. Grim Legion Headquarters
4. Dream Spire Warehouse
5. House Ludi Warehouse
6. House Mikul Warehouse
7. House Yilwuz Warehouse
8. Old Slave Market

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Occasionally, there's a Kratan who thinks he can still find a warehouse filled with pre-Scourge valuables, ready for the taking. Usually, these people are drunk, and will break their necks trying to scale a warehouse wall. Although sometimes, they just run into someone's knife.

• J'stresh Ken'tresh T'kambras •

This district was established by Kitan Trulo in 718 TH as part of his central plan for the city. He attempted to pack as much storage space within its thick, heavily guarded walls as possible, to deter bandits and scorchers from raiding. As part of his distaste for draft animals, and to obviate the need for larger streets, animals larger than ponies or mules were banned from the warehouse district. Thus, a fleet of donkey carts and Namegiver slaves serviced the warehouses. This allowed the towering warehouses to be built almost on top of each other, with many only separated by alleys big enough for a single cart to squeeze through. The warehouses closest to the Stables were used for bulkier items, and so were built larger and cheaper, usually out of wood, with perhaps a stone base to the wall running halfway up the first floor to keep out the vermin. The warehouses closer to the central square housed the smaller, more valuable items that would have been sent by airship. Most of these were built of stone, with tiled roofs, and were further divided inside by iron grates or wooden walls into smaller storage areas for individual merchants to keep their wares separate.

A typical warehouse is two or three stories tall, though many don't have separate floors, in favor of racks reaching to the ceiling, reached by ladders or rolling gantries. Those with separate floors often have large winches mounted on the ceiling, and large trap doors opening between the floors so that goods can be hoisted between the floors. Many houses feature commodious basements accessible this way as well. Some of the warehouses, especially the smaller, sturdier ones, are connected to each other by underground tunnels, through which workers can push small carts, depending on the transfer of goods made in deals by the merchants above.

Today most of these warehouses are abandoned, and many of the wooden ones have collapsed, leaving only their stone foundations remaining. A few have been converted into squats, similar to the flopstalls of the Stables where, for a few coppers, a person will find an empty corner to sleep in and the relative safety of numbers. Others have been taken over by small gangs of thieves as their headquarters, but none of these have tried to control the neighborhoods like those of the Scrabbles. The warehouses remain firmly in the control of the Force of the Eye, and any businesses within them pay protection to Garlthik. The warehouses generally make poor long-term residences, as they have few amenities, and for security reasons, were built with few windows, mostly placed high upon the walls and too narrow for most Namegivers to squeeze through.

Finally, as more merchants have begun to operate within Kratas, a number of these warehouses have been refurbished and converted back to their original purpose. The trading companies and the dwarf trading houses mentioned in **Merchants' Row** (p. 124) each maintain one or two warehouses in this district. In addition to paying high protection rates to the Force of the Eye, they also use large numbers of guards, mercenaries, traps, and guard dogs to protect their goods. Despite these precautions,

some brave, skillful thieves manage to make off with some of the wares, much to the merchants' consternation.

The Watchtowers

The warehouses being built so closely together presented two problems. First, the warehouses obscured a clear view of the sky from the ground, potentially preventing one from seeing approaching crystal raiders. Second, thieves could easily leap from one roof to another. To prevent both of these problems, a series of watchtowers were erected throughout the district. Some of these were built on the tops of the warehouses, while others were free-standing, but they all reached at least ten feet above the roofs of the warehouses. Each was large enough to fit up to four Namegivers, usually watchmen and archers. Most were also equipped with large light crystals and signal bells.

Most are rickety, if not collapsed now, but a few near the refurbished warehouses have been rebuilt, and are currently manned by guards employed by the merchant companies whose warehouses they oversee.

The Old Slave Market

Prior to the Scourge, one of the central features of the Warehouse District was the slave market. This large, paved area was surrounded by raised platforms, each of which was fitted with iron rings to which slaves could be shackled. Slaves were bought and sold here in great numbers by the Therans. Often merchants would use the ones bought here to load and unload donkey carts in the warehouses that give the neighborhood its Name. The warehouses that ring this market most closely were used for storing these slaves, as the iron rings set in the floors and walls and the curiously persistent bloodstains on the floors eerily attest. The slave dealers would whip any unruly slaves into submission behind the walls of these storehouses; publicly flogging a slave one wishes to sell only serves to advertise that he may be troublesome. Some Namegivers claim that at these warehouses one can still hear faint screams and sounds of whips late at night. In any case, these buildings remain in states of disrepair and are largely abandoned.

Now, the slave market is used for hiring manual laborers. Down-on-their-luck Namegivers with few prospects lounge around on the old auction block, waiting to be hired for daily work: mostly loading and unloading goods in the few warehouses that are in use. Many of the potential employers here will use unscrupulous methods to cheat their hires out of their wages, and many disputes over these have erupted into blows. A few bored members of the Force of the Eye stand watch over the market, but they have no interest in being judges and cannot be entreated to enforce any labor contracts or to intervene in brawls unless they threaten to become riots. Every Namegiver in Kratas has to fend for himself. Many of these attempted negotiations devolve into stalemates, with each party wanting to get paid, in coin or labor, before the other, not trusting the other to fulfill their end of the bargain.

Astral space at the old Slave Market is one of the most corrupted areas in the whole city. Not only did the suffering of all the enslaved Namegivers have a negative impact on it, but also the time of the Scourge, when only the Passions know what happened there. I certainly don't want to know, I can assure you. The only advice I can give is to avoid astral space there whenever possible.

—Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet

Yoorga's Mess

One of the large warehouses near the slave market has been converted into a giant cook shop and alehouse, selling swill and stews of dubious composition to the day laborers who manage to earn a few coppers each day. The décor is non-existent, the service overworked, and the menu extremely limited, but it is convenient and dirt-cheap. Yoorga, a sweaty, corpulent human, makes his profit through volume and very little expenditure on ingredients. He employs a couple of shills outside his doors to direct customers in from off the streets, though anyone appearing to have more money than a simple laborer will be swept up by competitors working for the lavish taverns of Merchants' Row. The rumormongers suggest that Yoorga's shills are also paid to round up rats and stray cats for his stew pots.

Cats and dogs are not the only thing hat Yoorga's men are looking for. If you want to get rid of a body (living or dead) you know whom to ask.

—Krolok, Ork Nethermancer

ADVENTURE HOOK

A number of warehouses have been set on fire. These had also recently been approached by a Namegiver from the All-Breakers (see p. 71) looking to collect protection money. One of the merchant companies whose warehouse was burned has hired the group to investigate and scare off the All-Breakers. If the player characters confront the All-Breakers directly, they meet some resistance to their attempt at intimidation. After a fight, however, the All-Breakers insist that they had nothing to do with the fires, or the extortion attempts.

Should the player characters attempt to investigate first, before heading off half-cocked to the Scrabbles, they find that there is one warehouse that was threatened that has not been torched yet. Should they stake out this warehouse, they may catch the arsonist in the act. If they trail him back home, or otherwise persuade him to tell them the truth, they discover he is a member of the Forsaken (see p. 72) masquerading as an All-Breaker, attempting to bring the wrath of Garlthik down on the gang.

If the group attacks the All-Breakers first, the arson stops, as it has accomplished its purpose, and the Forsaken take advantage of the weakened state of the All-Breakers to muscle into their territory. The player characters are paid by their patron at this point, as the fires have stopped, but may not appreciate being used by the Forsaken if they have figured out what happened. This situation could develop into a protracted fight between the group and the Forsaken.



ADVENTURE HOOK

The player characters are approached by an honest, but opportunistic member of House Chaozun. He has a rather unusual proposition for them. He's researched a magic item that was once in his family that he wishes to reacquire, and he will pay handsomely for it. The complication is in where it resides. He has tracked it down to the memorial displays on the walls of Blossom's Squad's warehouse. He has had a replica created from the manuscripts he has found describing the item, which he is willing to provide to the characters.

The characters are faced with a hard situation and difficult opponents. Blossom's Squad will not part with the item willingly, as it honors a dwarf hero who fought bravely with them for many years. Any intrusion into their space, especially with obvious intent, will result in a pitched battle with the Squad on their home turf. Sneaking in will not be easy due to the numerous reinforcements to the structure and a number of Pass Words, including a few anchored Pain and Tears of the Scourge spells. The Bone Circle with its accompanying bone spirit and the senses of the felux in residence are also against any intruders.

If the player characters are successful in reaching the memorial walls, they find their replica is rather inaccurate and there are two pole arms on the walls that seem to fit the description. Knowledge of the dwarf's size and other effects should point to one of these if they did their homework beforehand. However, the switch will be all too obvious. Soon the Squad comes looking for the item and seeking vengeance for dishonoring one of their own.

If the job is refused, the player characters can find themselves entreated by a clerk of House Chaozun to stop the robbery of said item from Blossom's Squad. Grim Legionnaires once saved his family and he pleads with them to intervene in his superior's selfish plot. Gaining the trust of the Squad members will not prove easy and approaching them will likely cause them to shore up their defenses all the more. Helping the Squad to fight off the thieving team of adepts that did take the job may well be a war on two fronts.

Head Hung Low Way

This is the Name of the street running from the Stables, through the Warehouse District, through the Old Slave Market, and into Temple Plaza. The Name comes from the manner in which long lines of slaves chained together walked along this road. They were unloaded from wagons in the Stables, left a brief time in the market, and then shuffled on to the waiting Theran airships tethered in Temple Plaza. A Questor of Lochost who traveled through here attempted to re-Name the street "Head Held High Way" by mounting a number of sturdy signs along its length. The Name didn't stick, however, as the signs were quickly stolen after the questor left town.

The Grim Legion

The Grim Legion is a loose-knit group of individual bands of Namegivers throughout Barsaive, dedicated to hunting down the Horrors. They are recognizable for their distinctive black armor decorated with silver studs and their professed ruthless devotion to destroying Horrors. There is no central authority or organization over the Legion, so each band is free to operate as it sees fit. This means that within the Legion there are some bands that are merely blowhards pretending to be hardened heroes, and others that are dangerous, half-crazed fanatics that will kill innocents rather than risk the possibility that they might be Horror-touched. Yet others are opportunists who use the fearsome reputation of the Legion to bully poor villagers in order to 'requisition' supplies for their fight against the Horrors. A few bands, however, are honest, and competent, dedicated Horror fighters.

Those aware of some of the seedier aspects of the Grim Legion might assume that a band based in the City of Thieves would be one of those who misuse the Legion for their own benefit, be it coin or inflated egos. Nothing could be further from the truth. The hardened cutthroats of Kratas are not easily impressed bumpkins, and would not stand an attempt at intimidation, even from those who claimed to fight Horrors face to face. Further, the city's predatory residents quickly pick apart anyone in Kratas who cannot back up his bravado. Rather, the band of the Grim Legion that operates out of Kratas is one of the best in all Barsaive.

On Blossom's Squad

Around ten years ago, Berry Blossom was as flighty and carefree as any windling. She was a member of a traveling band of windling performers, using her Illusionist abilities to provide backgrounds and special effects to support the plays and dances of her troupe's Troubadours, Winddancers, and other players. Her life was blissful, roaming the province with good friends, bringing joy and beauty to delighted audiences.

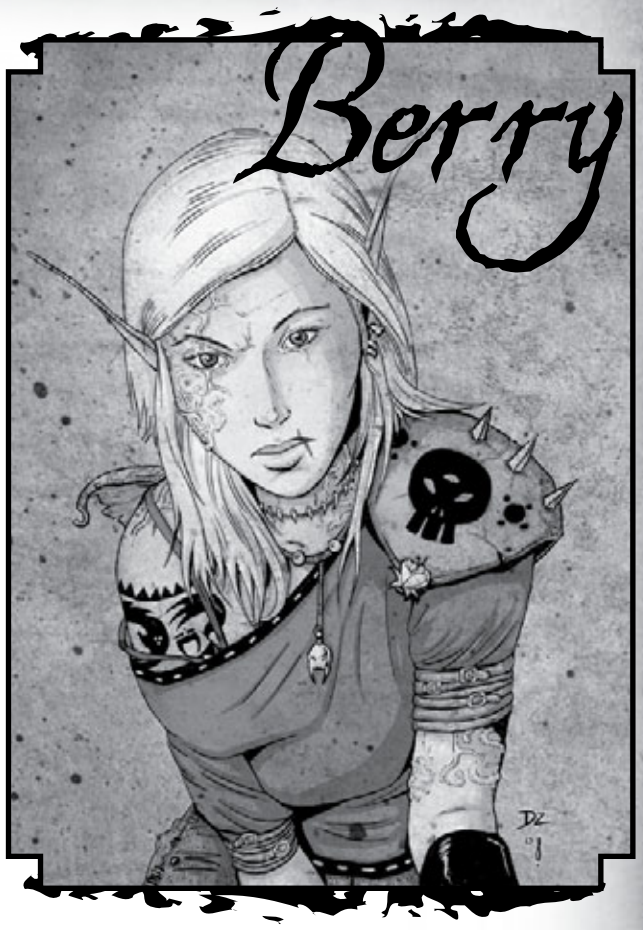
Then, en route to a performance in Kratas, Blossom's troupe encountered a Horror, which ripped her wings off.

It tortured her friends to death in front of her eyes, then tortured her and left her for dead. Several days later, when she was finally able to stand, she gathered all of her costumes and frippery and burned them on her friends' funeral pyre. Shunning her former life of merriment and frivolity, she dedicated her life to fighting the Horrors. Shortly thereafter she founded her own branch of the Grim Legion. She also turned towards a second Discipline, that of the Horror Stalker (see the ***Namegivers of Barsaive*** sourcebook). While she now rarely uses her Illusionist abilities to create diverting pleasantries, she has found her original Discipline useful for penetrating the illusions and deceptions of the more subtle and clever Horrors.

Her once beautiful body is now covered with scars, and even worse in a few places where the damage done to her has not fully healed. Berry Blossom is resourceful and relentless in pursuing Horrors, and has gained the respect of most of the residents of Kratas. Petty taunts about her lack of wings or her effete Name do not faze her; with Horrors about, the insults of street thugs are beneath her notice. She will aggressively defend herself if assaulted, however. A bully looking to rob her once assaulted her. After the thug slit his own throat, the rude comments about the walking windling seemed to dry up. Berry Blossom is a windling Eighth Circle Illusionist and Fifth Circle Horror Stalker.

Berry Blossom and her band of the Grim Legion, known as Blossom's Squad, have selected a warehouse three stories tall as their headquarters. The warehouse in question is easily identified, as the outside of it is covered with elaborate runes and wards intended to fend off Horrors. The interior is one large, open room with a loft on one side. The loft features a communal sleeping space, while underneath are storage areas for equipment and supplies, including a fairly extensive collection of documents and books on the Horrors. The latter are stored in sturdy, well-locked, and trapped cabinets. The rest of the wide, open space is a training area, with some targets and wooden dummies. Save for the far corner, where there is a small chimney with a fireplace, complete with a hearth, and a small, but serviceable forge. The walls, door, roof, and floor have all been strongly reinforced with sturdy timbers. When not off hunting down a specific foe, the group often practices fighting maneuvers here, and as such they work extremely well as a team, complementing each other's strengths and protecting their weaknesses.

Berry Blossom is a little paranoid about members of the Legion becoming Horror Marked or tainted (it was a Horror-corrupted member of her performance troupe that was responsible for its demise), which is one reason why they share sleeping quarters and there is no appreciable privacy in the warehouse. She also encourages the members of her band to become questors, not only because this provides various practical abilities, but because she believes that the Horror-touched are unable to manifest questor abilities. Thus, this provides another method of assuring that her band remains free of Horror taint.



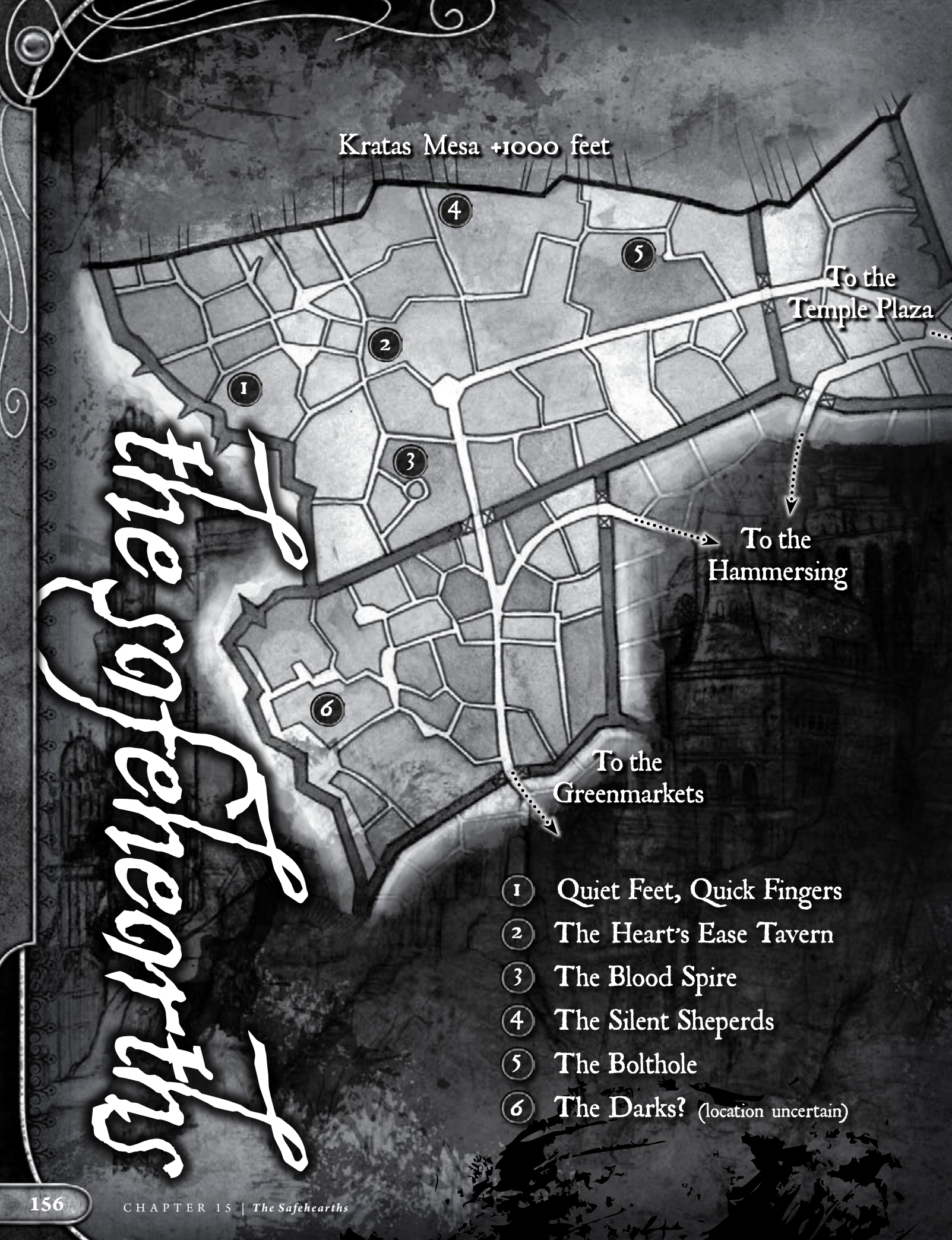
Hanging high up on the interior walls are testaments to the history of Blossom's Squad. Some of the mementos are trophies—skulls, horns, claws, and so on—of Horrors slain by the group, as well as plaques, parchments, and other gifts given by grateful Namegivers saved from Horrors by the Legion. Other memorials commemorate former members of the Legion who were slain in combat against the Horrors. There are a dozen of these: usually a weapon or shield of the fallen, with a simple banner embroidered with his Name.

Berry Blossom and the other members of the Grim Legion generally hold the thieves of Kratas in contempt, viewing them as selfish, self-centered, and foolish when there are still Horrors about. Berry Blossom does have a grudging respect for Garlthik, both because he is a survivor, like herself, and because he has shouldered much responsibility for caring for the welfare of the city's residents, when she knows it is against his nature.

For his part, Garlthik is pleased to have Blossom's Squad around. They don't cause trouble, they are uninterested in gang politics, and they spend a fair amount of money on supplies when in town. Further, while Garlthik would never admit this publicly, he remains a little uneasy about the presence of Horrors in Kratas. When he and the other old timers took over the city, they had to clear out some fierce leftovers from the Scourge, and he was never entirely certain that there weren't some holdouts still within or around the city.

Despite this, Blossom's Squad's members spend most of their time in Kratas not hunting for local Horrors, but preparing for, researching, or recuperating from encounters with Horrors elsewhere in Barsaive. So why have they chosen to base themselves in Kratas? For one, the adventurers and thieves who make the city their home assure a thriving market in the sorts of weapons, equipment, and information that the Legion may be interested in. Additionally, the presence of a high number of adventurers in town allows the group to conveniently find trainers when necessary. More importantly, the Grim Legion is usually only welcome in a town when the residents fear imminent danger from Horrors. However, at other times, the Grim Legion is feared or despised almost as much as the Horrors themselves. In the larger cities of Barsaive the local governments view Legionnaires with suspicion and encourage them to move on. The thieves and mercenaries of Kratas are generally extremely tolerant. If a Namegiver is neither a potential victim, nor a threat, the cutthroats and brigands are content to ignore him. This makes the City of Thieves a welcome haven for the Grim Legion.

Blossom's Squad currently has six other Grim Legionnaires. All are experienced adepts, are fiercely devoted and loyal to each other, and, while as morose and gloomy as any Legionnaire, are as well adjusted and stable as one can expect from people who have witnessed the atrocities and faced the dangers they have. Additionally, they have formed a group True pattern, and each has woven at least one thread to it. Each member of Blossom's Squad has one of the silver studs of their armor shaped like a blossom. These studs, which are difficult to find among the others unless one knows where to look, are their group pattern items.


The Safehearths
Kratas Mesa +1000 feet
To the Temple Plaza
To the Hammersing
To the Greenmarkets
1 Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers
2 The Heart's Ease Tavern
3 The Blood Spire
4 The Silent Sheperds
5 The Bolthole
6 The Darks? (location uncertain)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Name is surely a joke—
nothing is "safe" in Kratas.

• Gragok, Ork Sky Raider •

The Safehearths is the second oldest residential neighborhood in Kratas. It started as a collection of shacks huddled against the first wooden palisade wall around the first settlement. As the city prospered, so did this neighborhood, and eventually it became the home of many of the long-term residents of the city. As Hilltop grew more swanky, many of the less wealthy residents moved to the Safehearths. It became the neighborhood of choice for newcomers, those driven out of Hilltop by the higher rents, and those displaced by Theran building projects, like Temple Plaza and the fortress. In the space of a hundred years from the building of the Temple Plaza, the Safehearths became too expensive for the average resident of Kratas, who then sought housing in the Greenmarkets or Scrabbles neighborhoods. Thus, the Safehearths became home to the well-off middle class of Kratas, those small merchants, *j'havim*, and lower officials who couldn't afford to live in Hilltop, but were above the clerks of Merchants' Row. Ironically, some criminal elements found a home in the Safehearths even before the Scourge, concentrated in a certain infamous tavern.

Today, the Safehearths is one of the quieter neighborhoods in which to live in Kratas. Most of the local craftsmen have taken up residence here and enjoy the calmer atmosphere of the taverns and places of business here, rather than the revelry, bustle, or squalor of other venues. The Force of the Eye has enough traffic through here to keep the peace and leave the craftsmen unmolested enough to be tolerable, as long as protection is promptly paid.

Thront and Urranum

Throughout Barsaive, Troubadours tell stories of desperate thieves who flee from angry pursuers, believing that if they can only reach the safety of the walls of Kratas then they will have made good their escape. Unfortunately for many of them, the reality of the situation is not that simple. While Garlthik will certainly protect any member of the Force of the Eye from retribution (as the other gangs in the city will also protect their own), Kratas is not a guaranteed sanctuary for just any thief entering. Nevertheless, it would be a brave or foolish member of a local constabulary that would pursue his quarry into Kratas. Any officer of the law who identified himself as such within the bounds of the city would most likely be assaulted just on principle by any number of thieves and thugs.

However, there are two residents of the Safehearths who have seen to it that a number of thieves and cutthroats have had to face their victims' wrath. These two are a pair of bounty hunters who work as a team: Thront, a huge troll Fifth Circle Archer and Sky Raider, and Urranum, an even larger Seventh Circle obsidi-

man Warrior. Being a bounty hunter in a city of thieves is a dangerous proposition, thus Thront and Urranum keep an exceptionally low profile.

Many thieves have a deep hatred for the two bounty hunters, and were they not just as feared as they are loathed, they would have to fight off more daggers in dark alleys than they already do. They are savvy enough to keep on Garlthik's good side and thus do not go after any members of the Force of the Eye. They also spend a great deal of time outside of the city, hunting down contracts, but always return eventually, not only because they often find their quarry in the city, but also because Kratas is where they feel at home.

Thront and Urranum are skilled at tracking down and capturing thieves because they were both brigands themselves in the past. Some speculate that they were so successful as brigands that they became bored, and thus changed to man hunting. Though not cruel, they are ruthless and relentless, and follow their profession only for its monetary reward, and not out of any sense of justice. The two of them have not shed the trappings of their background, and so are often looked down upon by the respectable citizens who require their services.

Thront and Urranum maintain a comfortable house in the Safehearths, hidden within a burnt-out ruin.

The Legend of the Silent Shepherds

Many years before the Scourge, there lived a young human shepherd Named Hurmon the Quiet. Hurmon tended his herd outside one of the many small farming villages that used to exist near Kratas. He was content to spend his days alone in the field with his animals. His nights were spent in a corner of the village tavern, where he listened to the stories and songs of his neighbors with quiet contentment.

But one day his tranquil life was disturbed. As he returned to the village from grazing his sheep, he saw tendrils of smoke silhouetted against the setting sun. He ran. As he crested the last hill, he saw that his small village had been razed to the ground. He searched among the smoldering ruins in the dwindling twilight but found no survivors, only the mangled corpses of his friends and neighbors. He had no doubt as to what had happened; for weeks they had heard rumors that a warlord Named Kroktuul had been ravaging villages to the south.

As dawn broke the next day, Hurmon left his sheep to graze amid the blood and ashes, and went forth armed only with his shepherd's crook to find those who had destroyed his home. Having tracked many a lost lamb, he was able to follow the tracks of the raiding party with ease. After three days, he reached a forest, within which was hidden the warlord's lair. The brigands had built an imposing stockade, diverting a large stream to serve as a moat. Hurmon waited patiently for nightfall while listening to the brutes enjoy their spoils.

Hurmon may have had nothing with him but his shepherd's crook, but Thystonius seemed to guide his movements that night. He first used his crook to vault across the moat, and then, hooking the top of the wall with it, quickly pulled himself up and over the wall. Once inside the stockade, he crept stealthily between its log buildings, working his way toward the largest, where he suspected Kroktuul resided.

As he slipped between two buildings, he heard the drunken ramblings of a pair of brigands who stumbled towards him. He quickly threw his crook so that it landed on the rooftops, spanning the gap, and leapt, grabbing the shaft and pulling himself up to perch on the crook. The brigands passed beneath, unaware of the young shepherd who gazed down at them.

Hurmon finally made his way to a window at the back of the largest building in the compound. He peeked through it to see a burly ork covered in scars, pawing through the small pile of coins and jewelry that had come from the village of Hurmon. This could only be Kroktuul.

The warlord sat at a small table, his back to the window through which Hurmon spied. Hurmon carefully eased his crook through the window, until it was poised over the head of his prey. With a quick jerk he dropped the crook over the neck of the ork, and pulled back with all his strength. The chair on which the ork sat tipped over backwards, and the ork's head hit the hardwood floor with a loud crack.

Kroktuul was stunned, gasping for breath on the floor. As quick as a wolf snatching a lamb, Hurmon leapt through the window and killed the warlord with his staff.

Just then, one of Kroktuul's guards, having heard the noise, burst through the door, sword in hand. Quickly, Hurmon spun his crook around, catching the guard behind his feet and yanking them out from beneath him. Just as quickly, he was out the window and running toward the stockade wall. Once more he hooked the top of the wall and flung himself over into the moat beyond. The rushing stream carried him past the shouts of his pursuers and into the darkness beyond.

His vengeance did not bring him happiness, and though he returned to his flock, a quiet anger burned within him. At the same time, rumors of his deed began to spread, and eventually those who wished someone dead sought out the silent shepherd, who now roamed the plains of Barsaive. His first supplicants told Hurmon a story of an evil man who needed to be slain for the good of all, and he was moved to act. Hurmon soon found that he could slay a Namegiver with as great ease, and as little qualm, as he could slaughter a sheep.

His first petitioners gave him a gift of silver coins to show their gratitude, and it was then that Chorrolis had his turn at Hurmon's ear. Hurmon agreed to other killings in exchange for coins, and soon people throughout the land came to dread the vision of a lone shepherd wearing his heavy, hooded cloak and carrying his crook.

Hurmon became wealthy and moved to Kratas. Here he commissioned a Weaponsmith to craft him a new crook, topped not with a wooden hook, but with a sharply curved metal blade. He could still use this to scale walls, and trip

opponents, but it was much deadlier. He was known to take a head off in one stroke.

As his legend grew, other would-be assassins sought him out to ask him to train them in his arts. He eventually formed a school and a guild of assassins, who called themselves the Silent Shepherds.

One day Hurmon disappeared, never to return to Kratas. Some of his followers claim that he traveled throughout the lands beyond Barsaive, forming other clans of the Silent Shepherds. Others of his followers insist that he has not died, but roams the earth still, taking people when they least expect it.

THE SILENT SHEPHERDS TODAY

In a large, but otherwise nondescript, compound nestled against the cliff in a dark corner of the Safehearths is the headquarters of the Silent Shepherds. Hurmon built this compound when he first began training others. Few know its true nature, or who lives there. From the outside, the complex looks much like any of the large walled residence compounds in this neighborhood.

However, it is full of secret passages and carefully disguised weaponry, as well as hidden lookout points and traps. In addition to living quarters, the compound has a large training room hidden in the basement and a substantial armory. In the central hall of the main building, a simple old shepherd's crook hangs on the wall, which is claimed to be Hurmon's original.

There is a myth that when they are on a job, the Silent Shepherds always use crooks and wear large, darkly colored hooded cloaks, like the one Hurmon wore years ago to protect him from the elements while he watched his sheep. While this is not true, the Shepherds like others to believe that it is. This has led to more than one innocent shepherd being accosted when wandering too close to a neighboring village.

If a job only calls for stealth, the Shepherds may wear their cloaks, but they also have an extensive collection of costumes and disguises when infiltration is called for. They all receive extensive training in the arts of disguise. They often dress as peasants, beggars, or other simple folk to avoid drawing attention to themselves, but they can also pose as merchants, or even nobles when need be. While all the current shepherds train in the use of the crook, they also train in many other weapons besides. They are not followers of a Passion, and are not a living legend cult, and so are not limited in their methods of killing. Instead, they use whatever is best suited for the job.

The Silent Shepherds never meet with clients directly at their headquarters, but Roolan (see below) regularly makes the rounds of the taverns in town, and it is known that if a message is left for the Shepherds at the Bolthole, for example, they will arrange to meet



the client in a convenient inn or tavern. Roolan will claim at such meetings that he is merely a go between and will often appear in disguise.

The Shepherds prefer not to perform missions in Kratas because they are dependent on the goodwill of their neighbors, especially Garlthik, for their safe base of operations. Moreover, they generally like to appear neutral in the various gang struggles in the City of Thieves. This is not to say they will never perform an assassination in Kratas, merely that they will carefully consider how it affects their position in the city before accepting it.

Additionally, the few Namegivers in Kratas that can afford the extremely high prices that the Shepherds charge usually have their own methods of taking care of enemies. To cultivate clients outside of Kratas, and to facilitate carrying out contracts in the rest of Barsaive, the Shepherds maintain safe houses and contacts in all of the main cities throughout the province.

There are currently about two-dozen Silent Shepherds. Most are human Thief adepts, though many learn additional skills or have a second Discipline, usually Warrior or Archer. The Silent Shepherds live in the clan headquarters, although a handful at any given time are scattered throughout Barsaive, carrying out assignments.

The Silent Shepherds have a sense of tradition and continue to use euphemisms like "shearing" and "culling an animal from the herd" for their work. They also have a strong sense of confidentiality, and will never reveal the identity of a potential employer, even if they turn down the job. Once they accept an assignment they cannot be bought off.



It is said that Roolan is close to Garlthik in mastering the magic of their Discipline. He's certainly a skilled Thief, but I personally doubt that he has advanced as high as the old ork. Anyhow, Roolan is deadly and dangerous. One should avoid crossing his path. And may the Passions help the Namegiver who becomes his next target.

—Gillian, Human Thief

Queaana

The current leader of the Silent Shepherds is an ancient elf Named Queaana. Her exact age is unknown but she occasionally speaks as if she knew Hurmon personally; perhaps this is merely pretense on her part. She looks like a small, frail old woman who walks stooped over a cane. She has been known to show surprising speed and strength when needed, however. She rarely goes on jobs these days, but instead leads the clan and instructs the others. She is a tough and ruthless trainer, but treats her students with great affection when not running them through their paces. Queaana is an elf Twelfth Circle Thief and Eighth Circle Warrior.

Roolan

Number two in the organization is a charming dwarf Named Roolan. He is a master of disguise, and has a chameleon-like ability to blend into any crowd, whether it is the most brutal street gang in Kratas, or the highest society affair in the Theran quarter of Vivane. He is an avid student of languages and accents as well. It is he who most often handles negotiations with clients. Roolan is a dwarf Eighth Circle Thief and Fifth Circle Illusionist.

Xelliana

The best assassin of the shepherds is a human Ninth Circle Archer and Third Circle Elementalist Named Xelliana. She is incredibly patient and will lie in wait for a target for days. She prides herself on being able to take out most targets with a single shot. Xelliana has designed and constructed the Arrows of the Assassins, which she uses on particularly difficult assignments.

The Bolthole

The taverns in the Safehearths are generally quiet places that cater to the local clientele of craftsmen. Most of them are simple places for the weary to get a mug of ale and a hot bowl of stew after work, before heading home. They shun the noise and excitement of the grand beer halls of Merchants' Row, the boisterousness of the inns of the Stables, and the hostility and despair of the pubs of the Scrabbles.

To all outward appearances, the Bolthole appears to be just another of the anonymous pubs of the Safehearths. Indeed, one could spend a pleasant evening there and be none the wiser. However, to those in the know, the Bolthole is the place to go if one is looking to commission an assassination. If one merely wants someone disposed in a back alley, there are places throughout Kratas, particularly in the Scrabbles, where that can be arranged fairly cheaply and openly. However, for those looking to eliminate the rich and powerful, and avoid having it traced back to them, the Bolthole is the place to go. The Bolthole achieved this reputation because of its rumored proximity to the headquarters of the Silent Shepherds. Other assassins sought it out as a place to ply their wares.

The proprietor of the Bolthole is a middle-aged t'skrang Named S'lannthash. He keeps a clean, quiet pub and keeps his nose out of his patrons' dealings.

The t'skrang certainly knows more than he would admit. All you need is a way to make him share his secrets...

—Krolok, Ork Nethermancer



HE DARKS

The Darks is only the most recent Name for the most peculiar and unique tavern in all of Kratas. Hidden deep in the Safehearths, it is located in a windowless basement and can only be accessed by an unknown number of secret entrances, which follow meandering staircases and passageways, camouflaged in the walls of back alleys. A pair of sputtering oil lamps hung from its low-timbered ceiling lights the tavern. The room has the feel of being entirely composed of dark, smoky corners. A simple bar fits in one of these corners, and the rest of the furniture is an odd collection of old tables and chairs, no two of which match. All are apparently very old, but otherwise vary from the rough hewn to something that might not be out of place in a throne room.

The barkeep is a very tall and very pale elf with jet-black hair and dark eyes. He says very little, has never told anyone his Name, and is unclear as to whether he is the owner of the tavern or just an employee. He often appears distracted by his own thoughts, as if he is reliving some distant memory. Despite the chaotic appearance of the bar, he has never been known to be unable to find a dusty bottle of whatever libation is requested under the counter.

What make this otherwise unremarkable tavern noteworthy are its clientele and their conversation. The patrons of this bar are all those who seek knowledge of the esoteric and occult. They are a select group, and there are never more than two dozen in the pub at one time. Nethermancers and Horror Stalkers are seen here often, as well as Wizards and Illusionists of more morbid and philosophical taste. Others in attendance are at least suspected of being questors of the Mad Passions, Horror-touched, or members of various secret societies or cults. Some of the patrons appear masked, robed, or covered in dark mists or other obvious illusionary disguises. It is customary in the Darks to not attempt to astrally sense or otherwise probe the disguises of others; such discretion will be equally extended to all. It is speculated that some of those so obscured may not be of the Namegiver races at all, but could include drakes or agents of the great dragons, or even some Horrors themselves. Others suggest that these may merely be Illusionists with delusions of grandeur.

While there are many places in Kratas where one can buy and sell information, the Darks specializes in magical lore, knowledge of the Netherworlds, Horrors, the Scourge, and the Mad Passions. In addition to whispered deals being made over specific snippets of information in the dark corners, conversations, or even free-flowing debates will occasionally break out in the center of the bar, roaming over larger issues of magical theory and the nature of the universe. These tend to focus on the darker aspects thereof, and the patrons feel free to discuss topics such as the Horrors, which would most likely get them lynched elsewhere in Barsaive. (And not without good reason either; the Names of Horrors and Mad Passions thrown about casually in this place do carry some real danger with them.)

The patrons tend to be both well versed in magical theory and also rather paranoid. As such, they are aware of the vulnerabilities of Naming such a meeting place. Therefore, there is an understanding that they will attempt to avoid giving the place a Name by limiting the amount they refer to it, and by frequently changing the term by which they refer to it. Thus, patrons have called it "the Spot," "the Locale," "the Place," "the Saloon," "the Cellar", "the Pit," "the Mists," and will come up with similar Names in the future. This technique appears to have been successful, in that no one has managed to weave any threads to the place. (Indeed, any threads woven to the Safehearths or Kratas in general seem to have no effect in the Darks.)

The existence of the Darks is not very well known within Kratas. One usually only finds the Darks when directed to it by a previous patron, although some claim to have stumbled on to it by accident. Some others who have been to it before must have fallen out of favor with the mysterious barkeeper, for the secret passage that they have used to gain entrance has disappeared, replaced with a solid wall. There seem to be almost as many secret entrances as there are patrons, and those who have tried to follow others out of the bar inevitably find themselves in a different part of the Safehearths than those they tried to follow.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Jem'Bklak is a young t'skrang Wizard with an interest in blood magic. He's always searching for what he calls "rare blood," and what brought him to Kratas were the rumors about the blood-spilling airship towers. After many months of research, he is sure that the tower will "bleed" when certain star patterns are right, which only happens every twenty-one years. The next time will be in five nights. He wants the player characters to come with him to the tower to protect him when casts a special spell to start the bleeding. What Jem'Bklak doesn't know is that he was Horror-marked and his new spell won't cause "the Bleeding," but open a rift in astral space, through which swarms of mindless Horrors will come to bring destruction and suffering to Kratas.

"The Darks is actually a small part of one of the Netherworlds. I believe that it may compose the entirety of a netherworld, as no one has yet found a way out of the bar that does not exit back into the Safehearths. The hidden doors to the bar are pairs of small astral portals, almost instantly transporting one to the netherworld. Only the most sensitive of Namegivers can detect this happening, as it occurs so quickly. Rumor has it that the portals appear randomly, and are operational only at certain times, and for certain people."

—Caelarion, Elven Nethermancer

"There are several theories on the Darks. One is that the Passion Mynbruje created it to provide a forum for seekers of the truth, increasing their knowledge of the darker aspects of reality through the free exchange of ideas. Another option is that a powerful Horror lurking beneath the city maintains this area to keep a close watch on those who try to find it."

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

"The esteemed Gravin and the not-so-esteemed Caelarion may be close to truth, as there have been rumors among former patrons that on occasion, someone has found his way into this place from another mysterious door in another far away place when in great need of specific knowledge."

—Zemtarra, the Honest Charlatan

The Blood Spire

In a corner of the Safehearths stands one of the few remaining airship spires that survived the Scourge intact. It is a two-hundred-foot tower that tapers to end at a small landing, at which airships used to dock. The inside of the tower once held a small elemental air elevator, which is no longer in operation. The tower is rumored to be cursed, and takes its Name from a legend that dates to the early days of the exploration of Kratas after the Scourge. According to the legend, the spire would spill great torrents of blood from its cracked summit, which would trickle down the sides of the tower and sink into the ground, as if the spire were an arrow or dirk piercing the side of a great beast.

This has not been observed in the past several years, though suspicious stains remain on the sides of the tower. Others tell tales of ghostly airships, crewed by undead or Horrors docking at the tower at night, only to disappear when the foolish try to investigate.

Legends tell of desperate Namegivers striking a deal with a mysterious figure, only to become crewmembers of the Ghost Ship in the end. Whenever the ship docks at the Blood Spire, a new member joins its crew.

—H'atschi, Windling Wizard

The spire does regularly get struck by lightning whenever there is a thunderstorm over the city. Some say this is the wrath of the Passions, punishing whatever transgression brought a curse down on this site. The mansion that the spire once served has long since burned to the ground. The open doorway at the base of the tower shows that the spire also reached down into the basement, as there is an open shaft leading to the Undercity. The few foolhardy enough to climb down to investigate have never been heard from again.

The Heart's Ease Tavern

This very comfortable tavern dates to before the Scourge, and has been refurbished by an ancient-looking elf, Soliteris. Soliteris occasionally makes comments suggesting that he frequented this tavern before the Scourge, but no one takes these comments seriously. He is a retired Sixth Circle Troubadour, who will occasionally regale his patrons with songs and stories, mostly dating to long before the Scourge.

This is a quiet tavern, but is popular with the residents of the Safehearths, and one can find members of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers compact, as well as others relaxing here. Soliteris also passes on messages, and has a reputation for reliability and discretion in these matters.

The Heart's Ease has one historical note of distinction: before the Scourge, when Kratas was a city of merchants, this tavern was known to the underground as a haven for criminals. As such, it was the tavern in which the legendary Valvidius announced his thievery competition that led to his crowning himself the King of Thieves. This may be why it is popular with the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers and it is said that Finellianis devised her tournament over several tankards of ale here after Soliteris had recited the story of Valvidius aloud one night.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A handful of enterprising merchants come to the conclusion that an airship tower will increase the amount of airship traffic to Kratas and open up new business opportunities for them. They hire adepts to repair the elevator and clean the tower of everything that might live inside it. While a group of Elementalists tries to repair the elevator, the player characters are hired to protect them from everything that may lurk in the tower. Gang members, outcasts, Horror-marked mad Namegivers, predators, and even minor Horrors may confront the group, but the biggest threat awaits them in the basements of the tower: a twisted human Nethermancer works on creating new, improved humans. He feels threatened by the interest in the tower and tries his best to drive the Elementalists and the player characters away from the tower, with the help of his creations. Humans with grotesque blood charms will confront the group and try to keep them away from the tower.



THE PURPLE BARQUE

No other place in Kratas allows such unpunished and unmindful relaxation as the Purple Barque. Nobody needs to fear poisoned wine or making the acquaintance of a gleaming dagger from behind. If there is something like neutral ground in this city, where anybody, regardless of his membership in gangs, or who knows which other groups, can afford to keep only one eye open, then it is the Purple Barque.

The airship has seen better days and is hardly airworthy—the barely two yards above the ground that it remains floating can only be ascribed to the goodwill of the Passions. But the exterior is deceptive, as is often the case in Kratas. Hull and superstructure contain the most expensive brothel in the city and every one of the maids could rival a queen in beauty. The Name stems from the purple sails that are covered in glowing crystals at night. A long time ago, this was the personal ship of a Theran noble; now it is the possession of Madame Veniah Indirijan, an elf Fourth Circle Illusionist and Third Circle Elementalist and former slave whose beauty is sung far beyond Kratas. They say that Veniah took bitter revenge on the Theran for the years of servitude and took his ship, his manhood, and his life—in that order.

At the bow of the Barque hangs a golden cage, in which lies a skeleton. The word on the street says that these are the remains of the aforementioned Theran and that Madame had him hanged there to scorn him. Others say that the skeleton is meant to deter bilks.

A curious mix of Illusionism and Elementalism magic creates fog under the ship's hull, and creates the impression that the ship is floating on an airy cloud bed.

A friendly Elementalist tried to explain the uncommon nature of the Purple Barque to me, but even if I tried to record this here, it would bore every righteous reader of this document. Instead, empty a crock of wine to his memory and let the cloud be cloud. The same magic ensures that the purple sails always look like they billow in the wind.

—Rowan Daggertree, retired adventurer

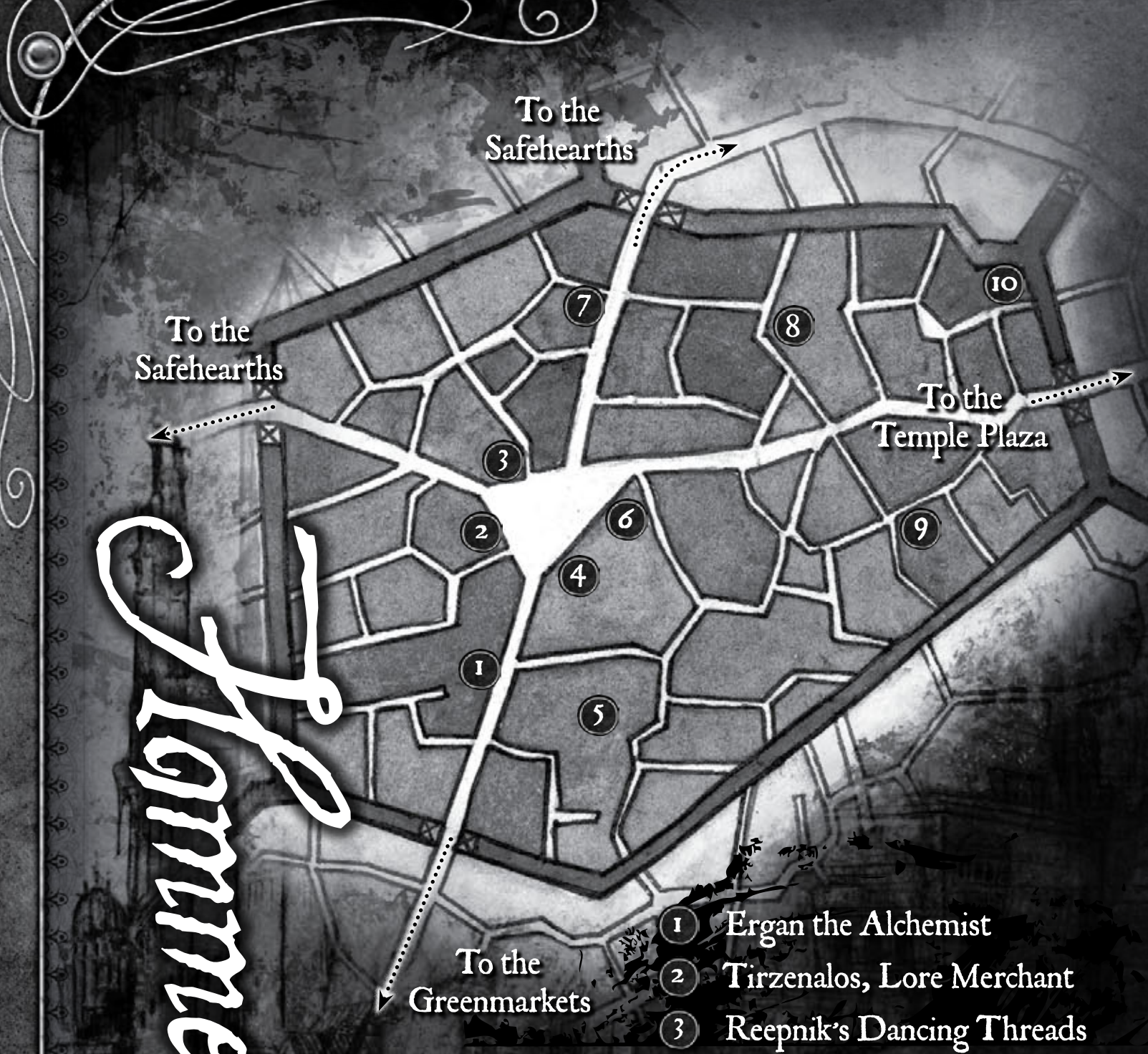
Sky Raiders tend to grin dismissively at such theatrics, because every competent eye can see that the Purple Barque will never fly anywhere again.

—Belphegor, Elven Scout

One can't be sure of the atmosphere here. Is the supposed neutrality due to the Madame's charming of Garlthik and others, the rumored threats of standing contracts with the Shepherds, or some mysterious magic brought back from the far-off land of Marac. That uncertainty keeps some even more paranoid... to their loss I say!

—Speltan

The Hammering



1. Ergan the Alchemist
2. Tirzenalos, Lore Merchant
3. Reepnik's Dancing Threads
4. Upandal's Tool Belt
5. Tinkerer's Forge
6. Blood Steel Forge
7. Daggerwrights
8. Enchanter's Crucible
9. Winking Eye Jewelers
10. Brakoral's Emporium

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

You spend your whole life inventing thieves' tools and hope they don't use them to break into your own house. You simply have *to invent better locks at the same time...*

• Ryger Squinteye, Tinkerers' Forge •



Rain poured down heavily that night, drenching every corner of every back street and alley of Kratas, a city with more than its fair share of back streets and alleys. If one had been perched atop one of the many half-ruined spires that studded the crumbling walls of the city, one might have seen that night a young and very wet dwarf running through the labyrinth known as the Hammersing. What made the dwarf even more comical than a desperately running dwarf usually is was the over-six-foot-tall package wrapped in oilskins improbably strapped to her back.

Sorella turned the corner, skidded on the wet cobblestones, and threw her small body flat against the nearest building. Panting, she tried to regain her composure. Her chest heaved and her throat burned with the exertion of having ran as fast as only one in fear for her life can. Her back and shoulders ached from the weight of her burden. *By the Passions*, she thought, *what am I doing in Kratas? I'm a Scout, not a Thief. Oh, sure go to Kratas, there's always work for mercenaries in...*

Sorella hated surprises, she always felt groundless and out of control, with no plan of action. The desperation and the pressure to think on her feet when she was out of her element were almost too much. She was aware that her entire life could depend on her next decision. It just didn't seem fair that people she didn't know should want to kill her for mysterious reasons. Where to run next? She hadn't hurt anyone; she had just tried to make some money. It wasn't fair that she should be in this position, having to play a guessing game for her life. Suddenly, the calm voice of Drebban, her mentor, entered her thoughts.

Stop whining, child. Play with the cards you are dealt, or quit the game. You really don't have a choice, now do you?

Sorella took a deep breath, closed her eyes, and practiced the visualization her mentor had taught her. She saw the Path of Scouts stretching out before her. All the places that she had been before stretched out behind her, ahead only the unknown. She reviewed where the path had led so far.

When she had arrived at the rendezvous point, she saw her fence, Grimy, kneeling on the wet cobblestones, his hands tied behind his back. Burly orks and trolls that she knew as members of the Force of the Eye surrounded the weasely human. Lying on the ground were two well-dressed elves, bleeding, either dead or unconscious. She assumed that these were the buyers who had been lined up. Grimy was desperately pleading for his life.

"I didn't know they were Therans!" he shouted above the rain. So that was what had brought the attention of the Force. The one crime in the City of Thieves was dealing with slavers, or those that profited from it.

One of the trolls had seen her watching from across the square.

"There it is!" he bellowed and pointed.

Damn, she thought, *It, not her. That means they know why I am here, and want the spear. Maybe they know why the Therans were willing to offer so much for it?* She turned and ran like a scared rabbit.

You must focus on where the path has led you now. You are in the land of thieves, so act like one.

She opened her eyes and surveyed her surroundings. Several streets away she heard her pursuers searching for her. She spotted a brightly lit square in the wall across the alley. Set low within the worn stone was a small wooden door, hinged at the top. The smell of some animal unknown to her surrounded the door. *Great, a pet's door. Well, if I must take a chance, chances must be taken.*

Sorella pushed her bundle through the door and crawled in after it.

The room beyond the door was filled with shelves and cabinets. As her eyes adjusted to the gloom, she saw that the shelves were stuffed with boxes, vials, scroll cases, bags, packs, and every other sort of container. Scattered among them was the oddest collection of miscellanea that she had ever seen. Skulls of creatures she didn't know existed, a flute that seemed to require more fingers and mouths than any one Namegiver could provide, and strange gourds carved in bizarre patterns rested on piles of loose scraps of parchment and bundles of cloth.

A glass ball the size of a piece of fruit caught her eye. It glowed faintly, implying some internal heat. As she picked it up she saw that it was filled with water, with a small pile of metal slivers at the bottom. *Oh,* she thought, *I saw one of these as a child, but it had flower petals in it.* Uncharacteristically for one fleeing for her life, she stopped to shake the globe. Oddly, the slivers refused to fall properly, but bounced around erratically inside the globe before settling to the bottom.

"I wouldn't drop that if I were you." The voice startled Sorella so much that she nearly did. She turned to see an elderly t'skrang sitting at a table, idly leafing through parchments on the far side of the room. A small, faint light crystal gave just enough light for Sorella to see that the t'skrang's gray skin was dried and flaking, a sign of very old age. Without looking up from her work, the t'skrang muttered in a voice as dry and cracked as herself, "Quite dangerous, that. Nasty piece of work."

The old t'skrang slowly put her work aside and stood to greet her guest. "My Name is B'rakorl, welcome to my emporium." As she walked toward the startled dwarf, she began picking objects up off the shelves. "And what can I get you, eh? Perhaps a crossbow? Fine Theran manufacture." She held in her hand what looked like a miniature crossbow affixed to a vambrace. Silver buckles and highly polished black wood gleamed in the faint light. "No, much too small for you, eh? What am I thinking?"

She rummaged more quickly among her wares, getting more animated as she approached. "Or how about a Norikot horn? Or is it a tusk? Good for what ails you, if you get my meaning. Heh, heh, heh." The t'skrang pulled a yellowed spike about a foot long from under a moldering tapestry, and grinned conspiratorially at the dwarf. Faint, rust-colored blood stains still covered the sharp point of the fang.

By Garlen, what could she possibly think ails me?

"Or perhaps a toy?" The old t'skrang's eyes lit up as she picked up an intricately carved tin butterfly and quickly wound its key. Sorella recognized the toy as the sort made by certain t'skrang craftsmen on the Serpent River. The butterfly's wings began to flap, and Sorella knew that if one released a catch on the back, the spring-loaded tin plates would flip around and transform the toy into some other flying creature: a bird or dragonfly, perhaps even a windling. Sorella had always wanted one as a child, but had been far too poor. The son of the village headman had had one, but would never let her play with it.

The t'skrang pulled the catch. The plates flipped and reversed and the toy formed a krilworm, its wings still flapping. Bright scarlet blood was painted on its tin fangs. The unexpected monster startled Sorella so much that she almost dropped the globe once again. She had forgotten that she still held it, and now, flustered, placed it back on its shelf.

"I am sorry, but I don't have time for toys. I need..."

"No time for toys?" B'rakorl interrupted. "That's the saddest thing I've ever heard." The genuine sorrow in the old t'skrang's voice silenced Sorella. The two women looked each other in the eyes, wordless.

"Well, perhaps you are looking to sell instead, eh?"

"Actually, yes—I am." Surely this old woman couldn't afford to pay what the Therans had offered, but if Sorella could at least get something for it, she might also get the Force of the Eye off her back. She felt a touch of guilt, as she wondered if by selling the spear to the t'skrang it would bring trouble on her. Yet, if the old woman had survived this long running a shop in Kratas, she could probably take care of herself. Besides, she probably paid protection to the Force; she'd be all right.

"Let's see what you have, then. Come over to the light." Sorella picked the bundle up off the floor and followed B'rakorl over to the table. She laid the skins on the table and untied the cords. As the leathers fell away, the t'skrang's eyes widened.

A huge piece of living crystal lay on the table. A cold gleam shone along its sharp edge. The bulk was carved into the shape of a human woman in flowing robes and a crown. Along her back, and extending several feet above her head, ran a long, wide blade. From under her feet a square piece extended.

"It's a spear head. I think for troll crystal raiders of the Twilight Peaks. See the tang at the bottom? That's where it would be attached to a shaft."

"No, I don't think so," B'rakorl stated. "It's too big and heavy for a spear head. The size of shaft needed to fit that tang would be too thick for even a troll's hands." The t'skrang flicked the edge of the blade with one claw, making a low chime rumble forth from the crystal. She paced in circles around the table, appraising the piece from every angle.

"And that carving. It's a human; an unusual symbol for trolls." She took a light crystal from the folds of her robe, lit it, and used it to illuminate details for the dwarf. "See the stars on her crown and the scales in her hand? Those

signify Mynbruje, an unlikely Passion for crystal raiders, I would think. That hourglass in her other hand; that's very uncommon..." B'rakorl paused, a look of realization spreading over her face.

She snatched a book from off a nearby shelf, and flipped through it quickly. Sorella could just make out the title on the ancient book: *A Compendium of Exotic Styles from the Barbarian Kingdoms of Barsaive for the Eclectic Tailor and Fashion Connoisseur, This Twelfth Year of the Theran Empire*. "Yes, the robes are definitely an Ustrectian cut..."

"Might I ask where you, ah... acquired this item?"

"I just found it in a small cave, north of the Delaris Mountains, south of the Liaj Jungle."

"Just a cave? No guardians or magic wards?"

"No, but the cave mouth was in a stream bed. The stream had recently been dammed upstream from the cave by some beavers. Before that, it would have been covered by the stream for who knows how long."

"Was there anything else in the cave?"

"Only some scraps of parchment. But they were totally ruined by water damage. Why, is this important?"

B'rakorl laughed. "Important?" She paused and looked the dwarf square in the eyes, and then said, with no trace of age or infirmity in her voice, "You really have no idea what you have here, do you?"

Sorella was tempted to try to bluff something, and then thought better of it.

"No, no I don't."

"Well, let me tell you a story...

"Many, many years ago, a few centuries before the Scourge, a group of heroes of several races became known for fighting the increasing numbers of Horrors encroaching on Barsaive. The heroes' gracious demeanor and selfless courage did much to heal the divisions that remained in the land despite, or perhaps because of, the long-term Theran occupation. Many in the western parts of the province looked up to them, and many powers were eager to sponsor them to improve their standing with the peoples of the oppressed province. Throal equipped them with an airship and smaller states gave them provisions and crew, while Thera gave them intelligence and magical support. It was rumored that their leader was a powerful questor of Mynbruje, and as such, they slew Horrors and, just as importantly, brought relief to the Horrors' victims.

"However, after an epic journey far to the west of the Delaris Mountains, they returned a changed crew. Some say that they were betrayed by one of their Theran supporters, used as pawns in some political machinations. Or, it was speculated, they had some disturbing exposure to the effects of Theran slavery, having discovered a brutal work camp or some such thing. Others said that they had discovered some horrible secret that drove them mad or that they were corrupted by the Horrors. Whatever befell them, they returned to Barsaive even more grimly determined to rout out the Horrors, but also just as set in destroying the Therans. They were successful in destroying many Theran vessels much stronger than their own. The heroes had now become renegades, striking from a hidden base against both Horrors and the Therans and their allies and then disappearing seemingly into thin air.

"Adoration turned to scorn, as most felt their grudge against Thera petty and self destructive in the face of the coming Scourge. While a few isolated areas still held them in high regard, Thera and Throal both sought to destroy the heroes and dismantle their legend. It was forbidden to speak of their exploits, and documents describing them were destroyed. This was not done merely for spite but from the Therans' belief that the heroes' patterns would accrue magical power as their legend grew. This is why very few stories of them still exist, and we know few of the Names of the crew or other details about them.

"It was said that their devotion to Mynbruje, their compassion, was their final undoing. One night, as they were in pursuit of a particularly nasty Horror, in turn being pursued by a Theran *kila*, they flew over a Klek village that was under attack by ork scorchers. They stopped their pursuit to aid the villagers, and the Therans overtook them. The Horror, sensing an advantage to be gained, turned on the two vessels as well. The crew of heroes succeeded in pulling off a desperate maneuver. They were able to impale the Horror on their figurehead, and ram their ship into the Theran vessel, trapping the horror between the two crafts. A battle of titanic proportions ensued, with mighty magic thrown on all sides. Finally, a huge explosion lit the night sky over the Klek village. Stone pieces of the Theran ship rained from the sky, but no trace of the galley or the Horror were found.

"One scrap of lore has survived to this day: a description of the figurehead upon which they impaled the Horror. I believe that this is that figurehead. It was said to have been carved by the master crystalsmiths of Ustrect, and enchanted with extremely powerful magic by the best magicians of Wyrm Wood as their contribution to the heroes' vessel. You didn't expect that, did you, young one?"

B'rakorl chuckled again. "Now, Chorrolis would dictate that I take advantage of your desperate situation to offer you a pittance to take this legendary treasure off your hands. But, I am feeling oddly compassionate today, so let's see what I can dig up to pay you with. And don't worry about Garlthik's men pursuing you; I have a trap door that leads to tunnels that will take you safely back to the Stables." Sorella was only mildly surprised at this point that the wise old woman knew so much about her and her situation. "I presume that you are staying over there, as you aren't really much of a Thief, now are you? One last piece of advice from an old woman: take the very generous sum I am about to give you, and leave this city. It's no place for those who aren't certain they belong here."



The relentless rain could not dampen Sorella's spirits as she walked home toward the inn where she lodged. It was no problem finding her way through the eerily empty tunnels under the city, once the t'skrang had shown her how to read the secret directions hidden in the graffiti on the tunnel walls. She had wisely subdued her Scout's desire to explore the many side tunnels she passed, and was grateful of her restraint when she heard disturbing noises issuing from them.

She had followed the safe path and now her pockets were loaded with more money than she had ever seen in her life. She had seriously underestimated the resources of the t'skrang. She had been paid far more than the Therans had offered. B'rakorl had apologized for not having enough silver in her shop to pay her with, and hoped she didn't mind taking Throalic gold coins. Not even the headman in her old village had ever had a gold coin, much less a gemstone like the ones that B'rakorl told her would make up the bulk of the payment. The old t'skrang had been exceedingly generous, even paying her a little extra to sketch a quick map of the cave's location. She had even given her free of charge the one item from her stores that Sorella had wanted to buy.

I should take her advice, Sorella thought. *I'll take this money and go to Bartertown, get a job escorting those fat merchant caravans. With this money, I could start my own scouting company, or even my own caravan line. Not a big one, but still... now how does this thing work?*

Perhaps if it had not been raining so hard she would have heard the footsteps behind her. Perhaps if she had remembered Drebban teaching not to forget the path you are on when scouting out the path ahead she would have paid more attention to her surroundings. Perhaps if she had lived in Kratas longer she would have known to walk dejectedly on the streets. A spring in your step is a sure sign to the always-hungry eyes that watch from every shadow that you have something worth taking.

Or, perhaps if she had not been so preoccupied with B'rakorl's gift, she would have sensed something was wrong. The knife slid into her kidney, and she pitched forward toward the cobblestones.

It's not fair. Absurdly, this was her last thought.

One of a thousand faceless cutthroats went home a rich man that night. It mattered not whether the gold went to feed his starving family or was spent on gambling and ale; Sorella's lifeblood still spilled out onto the cobblestones.

The rain continued falling unsympathetically on yet another dead body in yet another back alley of Kratas, the City of Thieves.

Lying a few feet in front of her now sightless eyes and inches from her outstretched fingers, a tin butterfly slowly beat its wings one last time and stilled.



N THE HAMMERSING

Before the Scourge, the Hammersing was the location of the craftsmen's and artisans' workshops of Kratas, as well as the small specialty shops that provided the people with all of the necessities and luxuries of life. These workshops made and sold nearly every common household object: furniture, pottery, glass, textiles, clothing, tools, and utensils. Today, most are abandoned. The workshops that remain primarily manufacture weapons and thieves' tools, while the stores deal in stolen goods.

Much of the Hammersing is composed of a number of workshops clustered around open courtyards that allow for the delivery of raw materials. Many of these shops are open to the courtyards but can be shuttered closed at night. Further, one or two of the buildings in each compound also open to the street, allowing passersby to buy finished wares.

In addition to the notable establishments listed below, there are dozens of other shops scattered throughout the Hammersing. Most shop owners deal at least in part in stolen goods, often reworking them to disguise their source. There are also humble workshops that provide many of the necessities of life that are not valuable or handy enough to support a trade in stolen goods, yet are indispensable. These include makers of simple furniture, pottery, and clothing. Most of these artisans barely scrape by, and their stores and wares reflect this. Some may actually prosper but are careful to disguise this fact, and still appear impoverished.

ON THE WEAPONSMITHS' FORGES

There are currently three Weaponsmiths' forges in operation within the Hammersing, each of which has its own specialty. This avoids any direct competition, and the three groups of Weaponsmiths are all on good terms with each other. All are under Garlthik's protection. Should anyone foolishly attack any one of the forges, the other two groups would not hesitate to defend their brethren of the anvil. They will even occasionally work together, such as happens when the Blood Steel Forge has a large order to fill. Nevertheless, each has its own closely guarded, secret techniques.

The three forges are like a sea: calm on the surface—and only on it. A clever Thief knows how to play the three forges against each other.

—K'latmar, T'skrang Thief of Yistane

While forges in other cities are often aggressive about defending their privileges and markets, the ones in Kratas are downright thuggish about it. They will ruthlessly force any independent Weaponsmith who tries to set up shop to either leave or join one of the forges, which includes paying proper dues. They also ensure that the blacksmiths of the Stables only make horseshoes, farming implements, and other hardware, not any weapons. As they pay protection to Garlthik, and give the Force of the Eye discounts, Garlthik gives them free rein to enforce their control of the trade in the city.

Many Weaponsmiths in Barsaive view Thieves with disdain, as the diligent work ethic of the smith is antithetical to the 'get something for nothing' attitude of the thief.

This, combined with distaste for the brutal business methods practiced in Kratas' forges, has led most elder Weaponsmiths to eschew Kratas in favor of other cities.

Thus the forges in Kratas, rather than being led by a group of more or less equal elders, are each dominated by one strongman of an elder.

Being a petty cutpurse or mugger is easy, but being a legendary Thief requires a great deal of dedication, planning, training, and hard work. More than simply pounding away at an anvil day after day.

—Glindella, Human Weaponsmith



The Blood Steel Forge

Walking into the main courtyard of the Blood Steel Forge, one sees and hears a riot of activity. On one side donkey carts are being unloaded of wood, coal, and iron ore, while opposite them wagons are being loaded with neat bundles of nearly identical swords. Dozens of spears and halberds rest in orderly rows in racks on another side of the square. A group of battle-hardened mercenaries surrounds their leader as he cautiously swings a new axe back and forth, testing its heft and balance, while a young Weaponsmith looks on expectantly. Another novice Weaponsmith is haggling with a couple of ork scorchers over a pile of dented armor and beat up weapons still freshly bloody. Columns of smoke rise into the air from numerous forges, and everywhere is the constant banging of hammer on steel. Some say they can detect the smell of blood mingled in with the smoke.

The Blood Steel Forge is the largest forge in Kratas and deals in weapons and armor, particularly serving the mercenaries and scorchers of the Stables. If one is looking to equip a small army, or unload the equipment one has looted from one's defeated opponents, this is the place to go. The Blood Steel Forge does a brisk business in buying used gear, repairing and refurbishing it, removing any identifying marks, and reselling it. Generally, the Weaponsmiths will buy used weapons and armor for half of the regular price and resell it for one-and-a-half times the normal price.

The Weaponsmiths of the forge make new weapons as well; these are serviceable if unspectacular, with an emphasis on quantity over quality. The elder of the Blood Steel Forge is a massive obsidiman Named Krugmaar, whose silvery skin is flecked with blood-red stones. Krugmaar is a stern but fair master, with a talent for making money. He has the novices of the forge assigned to the refurbishing duties, while the journeymen members manufacture an array of simple swords, axes, spears, armor, and shields. Krugmaar himself usually works on special commissions of thread items and the like, when not managing the day-to-day business of the forge, or negotiating bulk sales with mercenary leaders or merchants. Additionally, as the Name of the forge would suggest, Krugmaar and the other high circle Weaponsmiths here are skilled Alchemists, and use that skill to make blood charms as well, particularly the more martially inspired ones. Krugmaar has been experimenting recently with incorporating blood charms into some of the weapons he makes, but this is a very expensive and time-consuming venture. He has few clients in Kratas with the money and patience to commission such a work. Krugmaar knows that his profit now lies in volume, not quality, and so begrudgingly works on these projects only in his spare time. Krugmaar is an Eighth Circle obsidiman Weaponsmith.

I once bought a blade made by Krugmaar. Not one of the expensive ones, but one of his common ones. Let me say it this way: three strikes and I was out. Luckily my opponent fell with my last strike.

—Shiling Eversmile, Elven Swordmaster

The Blood Steel Forge maintains the largest compound in the Hammersing, having converted some neighboring shops into warehouses that store a huge collection of weapons. The forge is so successful that the smiths work in shifts, with a few novices at least working at all times. The fires of the Blood Steel Forge are never put out. The forge also employs a number of guards at all times to keep thieves from raiding its warehouses. The novices sleep in simple quarters on the grounds, while Krugmaar and the more experienced smiths retire to more comfortable digs in the Safehearths at night.

The Blood Steel Forge has four journeyman members, six novice members, and five apprentices, for a total of sixteen Weaponsmith adepts, including Krugmaar. Each of the jour-

neymen also has his own specialty: armor, bows, swords, or the like. The forge also employs two dozen non-adept guards and manual laborers.

The Daggerwrights

The Daggerwrights' forge is open only at night, to better serve its clientele. During these starlit hours, dangerous-looking Namegivers in dark cloaks and hoods look over arrays of darts, knives, and daggers displayed on black silk-covered tables under the very close scrutiny of novice Weaponsmiths. The sound of hammers on steel alternates with the dull thud of throwing knives flinging into wooden targets on the forge's practice range.

The Daggerwrights make weaponry for thieves and cutthroats, specializing in knives and daggers. The founder of the Daggerwrights is a human woman Named Glindella. She began her career as a Thief, though she was never satisfied with the blades she could purchase. Years of tinkering with knife designs and studying the art of smithing led her to her second Discipline as a Weaponsmith. She now is mostly retired from thievery and has become quite successful selling to thieves. The members of the Force of The Eye are top customers of the Daggerwrights' work. Glindella is a human Ninth Circle Weaponsmith and Seventh Circle Thief.

The Daggerwrights sell a mind-boggling variety of dirks, knives, daggers, throwing knives, flight daggers, hawk hatchets, and other throwing weapons. They also create and sell Glindella's inventions including the Thread Flight Dagger of the Cutthroat, Thread Hook Hatchet (see p. 245 in the **Magical Treasures** chapter), and Night-Black Blades, among others (see p. 236 of **Goods and Services** for more information).

Glindella has eight other Weaponsmiths working under her command: two journeymen, four novices, and two initiates. Glindella and the journeymen sleep in the Safehearths, while the novices and apprentices sleep in the forge. Along the side of the central courtyard, several wooden targets have been set up at various distances for customers to test their new throwing weapons. Because of the nature of their customers, the Daggerwrights keep strict control over their movements. The courtyard with the throwing range and the front shop are separated from the workspaces, storage areas, and living quarters by locked doors. The more valuable items that the forge makes are kept in these locked areas, and are only shown to customers by request.



The Tinkerers' Forge

The Tinkerers' Forge is the smallest of the three forges in Kratas. It specializes in lock picks and other thieves' tools as well as locks and chests. The founder and eldest member of the Tinkerers is an old dwarf Named Ryger Squinteye. The Tinkerers are engaged in an ongoing competition against themselves, to devise ever more difficult locks and traps, as well as the tools to defeat them. Ryger, or one of his fellows, will work late into the night constructing a chest or padlock, and then challenge one of his fellows to defeat it in the morning. All of the Tinkerers have some degree of skill in picking locks, though they will also bring in Thief adepts to test their toughest works. Squinteye is particularly proud of his creation, the Thief's Bane Chest (see the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 237). The Tinkerers can be hired to devise custom traps for a patron's home or place of business. Ryger, in addition to being a Ninth Circle Weaponsmith, is also an Eighth Circle Elementalist, allowing him to add various enchantments to his locks and chests. There are only six members of the Tinkerers' Forge: Squinteye, two other journeymen, two novices, and one apprentice.

The Tinkerers' Forge consists of five two-story buildings clustered around a courtyard. The buildings are all connected by a wide, ten-foot high wall, topped with one-foot tall spikes spaced every half a foot. Strung between the wall and buildings at the height of the wall is a net of metal cables, sealing the courtyard off from anyone trying to climb or fly over the wall. Each of the buildings has a door opening into the courtyard, though there are only two doors opening to the outside. Each building has windows to the outside, though only on the second floor, and each window has shutters and bars. One large set of double doors opens to the street, through which all deliveries and customers arrive. The other door is in a dark alleyway on the opposite side of the compound.

ADVENTURE HOOK

*The snow globe Sorella picks up in B'rakorl's Emporium contains a wingflayer (see p. XX of the **Gamemaster's Guide**). This is a weapon of terror designed to be dropped from an airship on an insurgent village, or launched by siege engine into a fortress. It will shatter at the slightest blow, releasing the Horror.*

B'rakorl approaches the player characters with a most important job: to find a missing snow globe. She mentions it contains a plague that would ravage Kratas if released and that she will pay handsomely to have it recovered intact. Hidden in B'rakorl's shop is the only clue to the identity of the thief: a dark piece of fabric that appears to be the ripped corner of a robe of some sort. In fact, this is from the Death Robe of a member of the Keys of Death (see p. 217).

A somewhat renegade band of the Keys of Death found out about this globe and saw the potential to wreak havoc in Kratas, possibly making a good deal of money for their cause in the process. They stole the globe and sent a ransom letter to the Force of the Eye, threatening to use it, unless a large chest of gold coins is left at a certain location in Clifftop and all Force members clear from the area for a day. They have refitted a catapult in Clifftop with the snow globe, ready to hurl the globe down into the streets of Kratas far below, whether Garlthik pays up or not.

Also in motion are the Deniers of Death, who have found out about this plan and wish to keep the globe from being used to prevent such bloodshed all at once in Kratas. Secretly Orliana also wants the globe for herself, to study the wingflayer, thinking she might eventually be able to use the snow globe as a weapon that not only destroys, but raises the dead that are left in its wake. She has dispatched most of the adepts and undead servants of her cult to hunt down this cell of the Keys of Death and report to her. Any encounter with the Keys of Death, especially if in Clifftop, draws a number of the Deniers of Death into the fray as well.

Lastly, Garlthik has little intention of letting himself be pushed around so easily. The senior members of the Force of the Eye and their most trusted underlings are all searching for the globe and preparing hidden ambushes throughout Clifftop. Garlthik has also ordered a custom-made chest from the Tinkerer's Forge for the payment to be left in Clifftop, and the traps set to spring the second time the chest is opened are designed to ensnare and paralyze the opener, while sounding an extremely loud alarm.

Where and when the player characters come into this situation is left up to the gamemaster, but the stage is set for a tangle of conflicts, be they in the days leading up to the night of the ultimatum or fighting in the heat of the exchange in Clifftop itself. Any number of other groups that are active in Kratas may also hear of and desire the globe. Rotasan and the Liferock Rebellion may want to use the globe against the Therans, for example.

The building is covered by barbed spikes, similar to those that are mounted on many buildings throughout Kratas. However, these are actually traps. Each spike is mounted on a short shaft, which rests inside a metal tube buried in the wall. The shaft is spring loaded and when triggered will fire straight upward. Either brushing against one of the spikes or stepping on the stones between or around one of the spikes triggers the trap. Thus, a thief climbing the wall and trying to step over the spikes is likely to get a spike fired into his leg, or worse. Additionally, the spikes are barbed, and each is attached to a four-foot long chain hidden within the tube. Ripping the barb out is usually very painful, but since the spikes are coated with a paralytic poison, it's unlikely anyone would get a chance to do so. Would-be thieves hanging off the wall by spikes, paralyzed before they have even entered the compound, are a sight we have encountered more than once in the past.

—Korog Irontooth, Ork Thief and Member of the Force of the Eye

The courtyard of the Tinkerers' Forge is surprisingly quiet, though it is cluttered with chests, boxes, and crates. Oddly shaped bits of scrap metal lie about. Arrayed around the courtyard are a number of small workshops, all carefully hidden from view behind curtains to prevent onlookers from learning the secrets of the Tinkerers' traps and locks. One might hear from behind these curtains a fine tapping or sawing, and the occasional sound of a trap being sprung, possibly followed by an oath. A lone apprentice waits to fetch one's requested goods. As he slips behind the curtain, one might catch a quick glimpse of a wizened dwarf squinting over a workbench, fiddling with strange bits of steel and wire.

Typical Kratan Weaponsmiths

Use the gamemaster character statistics on p. 76 of the ***Gamemaster's Companion*** for average members of any of the three forges. Members of the Blood Steel Forge might have slightly higher combat talents, as well as the Alchemy skill. Members of the Daggerwrights will most likely have picked up some degree of skill in Throwing Weapons as well. Members of the Tinkerers' Forge will have Lock Picking and Disarm Trap as skills, or for the human adepts, as talents learned through their Versatility.

B'rakorl's Emporium of Curiosities and Wonders

B'rakorl's Emporium is a seemingly tiny, ancient-looking house tucked in an unassuming corner of the Hammersing. While no sign advertises what is within, the shop is fairly well known to the locals, who can easily direct one to it. Moreover, B'rakorl is known as a rather eccentric and colorful character.

The interior of her shop is crammed chock full of dust-covered merchandise, stuffed onto rickety shelves, overflowing out of baskets and boxes on the floor, and hanging from the rafters. Some people even claim that the shop appears to be larger on the inside than on the outside. Negotiating the aisles is tricky, and finding something specific is nearly impossible for anyone except B'rakorl. Her selection of goods appears to have no reason or order. She is likely to stock powerful magic items next to the ridiculous, the trivial, the inane, or the sublime.

She is as eclectic as her wares. Having achieved Fifth Circle in the Troubadour Discipline, she is also Third Circle in both the Weaponsmith and the Illusionist Disciplines. B'rakorl is at least 75 years old, with skin of a grayish blue color and with pale green spots. She's known to exaggerate her infirmities and senility to throw customers off guard.

Reepnick's Dancing Threads

Reepnick's shop is in a large, well-kept cottage, with a painted image of multicolored glowing threads being woven together hanging over the door, proclaiming the Name "Dancing Threads." The main salon is artfully decorated and lined with racks of clothing, bolts of cloth, paintings, and gilt-edged mirrors. There are even a number of pet crickets kept in gilded cages scattered about that provide melodious chirping.

Reepnick is a flamboyant windling whose many-colored wings match the rainbow of bolts of silks, damasks, and other fine cloths that lie in neat racks along the walls. He is quite meticulous and skillful in his tailoring, and has a loyal following among the more fashionable and foppish of Kratas. Alas, these number few in Kratas, so Reepnick supplements his business by carrying a large supply of garments that are prized more for their practicality than their style. Some of these are made on the premises, though Reepnick will also buy those "acquired" by others. However, his refined sartorial tastes will trump any practical considerations. For example, he has been known to refuse to buy or sell a perfectly useful pair of thread boots because he thought the color was unflattering.

Reepnick will buy bolts of luxurious fabrics that adventurers may have stumbled upon. He will also pay a good price for any espagra hides brought in. His cottage contains workspaces as well as living quarters for himself and his numerous assistants. These assistants are all windlings, mostly young, even adolescent. As is their nature, any given one will come and go at will, sometimes only spending a week or a month in Reepnick's service. He vaguely refers to them all as his "cousins."

Reepnick relocated his shop to Kratas from the Barsaivian quarter of Vivane five years ago. When asked why, his noncommittal response is, "There was a misunderstanding."

A hapless Wizard, misinterpreting the Name of the shop, once wandered into Reepnick's looking for lore on thread magic. "Welcome, esteemed sir!" Reepnick, an especially energetic windling shouted at him while flying straight at his face, pulling short to hover inches from his nose "What have you come for today? Foolish me, that is obvious of course. You need something respectable to replace your current disaster of a wardrobe. I don't know what unfortunate confluence of desperate circumstances led you to resort to looting the corpses of the dead to clothe yourself, but no matter that now. Clearly as a man of sophisticated taste you have taken the first opportunity to rectify this horrific situation and avail yourself of the finest tailor in all Barsaive." Before the befuddled Wizard could explain the misunderstanding, Reepnick clapped his hands once, and a flurry of windlings flew out from inside cabinets, behind bolts of cloth, and under tables. The tailor's winged assistants quickly stripped the Wizard down to his skivvies, and then in rapid succession tried on him a bewildering array of tunics, breeches, robes, caps, and cloaks, each more colorful and outlandish than the last. "None of these strike me as you. We'll have to customize something for you." A chorus of "Hurrah! Custom-made!" burbled from his windling assistants as they pulled out tapes and fluttered around the Wizard, measuring every dimension of his frame.

—Morthon, Troubadour of Kratas

Reepnick

Reepnick is more than just a tailor. He is a freelance intelligence agent and broker. He previously worked with the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane, although he left after a botched operation almost got him killed. He now mostly works for the Eye of Throal, but, while he does have a general dislike for the Therans, he is more motivated by self-interest than politics or ideology. Reepnick is a windling Eighth Circle Windscout and Third Circle Elementalist.

Ergan the Alchemist

Ergan is a Vorst Journeyman (see ***Namegivers of Barsaive***), though only Fifth Circle, as he has devoted most of his energies over the last few years to mastering the alchemical arts. He arrived in Kratas a number of years ago and began working—with the determination characteristic of the Vorst—on building an alchemical workshop. While he is proficient in mixing all common potions, which are generally praised for their high quality, his passion of late is blood charms. Blood charms fit well with a Vorst's desire to secure any and all possible advantage.

Why Ergan left the Vorst village is a mystery, but one quickly learns in Kratas not to inquire about another's past. Moreover, as the Vorst are so few in number, few Namegivers have seen one and thus would be able to recognize Ergan's background. Nor are most in town aware that he is actually an adept, as he is not one to advertise such things.

Ergan's selection of charms is second to none in Kratas in quality, and is second only to that of the Blood Steel Forge in quantity. He rarely deals in second-hand goods, as he dismisses most other alchemists' work as slipshod. Ergan has a number of his own products applied to himself, and he employs a pair of troll guards that are heavily covered with blood charms. They are often posted outside the shop as much for advertising as for security. They are an unforgettable and unnerving sight, as each has one eye of amber, the other of quartz, and other blood charms prominently attached on his neck and wrists. An astute observer knowledgeable in such charms might realize that while these might make them formidable opponents, the amount of life magic sustained to attach this many charms would enervate them considerably. If they cannot end a fight quickly, they may not be able to endure much punishment.

Ergan has taken on a number of apprentices over the years, although few can deal with his meticulousness for long. His current apprentice is Hunarla, an adolescent dwarf girl who serves customers in the front of the shop while Ergan works in the workshop in the back.

Ergan has all of the common blood charms listed in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 257 of the ***Player's Guide*** available for sale. Darksight eyes are particularly popular with the humans and t'skrang who wish to be on an equal footing with other Namegivers on the darkened streets of Kratas. Horn needles are also a top seller considering the prevalence of poisonings in the city. Ergan also makes and stocks most common potions and poisons,. and will buy raw materials that he needs for his wares.

The Enchanters' Crucible

The Enchanters' Crucible is not so much a store as it is a collective, social club, and workshop, although one can buy or sell enchanted goods here on occasion. The Crucible provides a space in which magicians and others can work on creating enchanted objects. The compound contains a large central courtyard surrounded by numerous small workshops. The courtyard holds a simple forge, a kiln, a loom, and numerous summoning circles, including bone circles. The workshops hold workbenches, tools, and raw materials. There is even a small library of books on enchanting.

An enchanter who wishes to join the Crucible must first apply, which involves an interview with two or more of the established members, and a little demonstration of his abilities, to assure a basic competency and honest intentions. If he passes the interview, for a monthly fee of 100 silver pieces, the enchanter has access to the workspaces of the Crucible, and can buy raw materials, including True Elements.

In addition to access to tools and materials, the Crucible also provides invaluable expertise and advice to its members, and many spend time here talking late into the night about the finer points of enchanting before undertaking to create an item.

Many thieves and adventurers mistakenly think that enchanted items can be purchased off the shelf here or, more commonly, that they can fence stolen enchanted goods. Unless a particular magician has a specific use for an item, the Crucible will not buy enchanted goods. Namegivers seeking either of these services are best advised to try the various merchant companies of Merchants' Row, or an establishment like B'rakorl's Emporium.

Most enchanters found here are either busy on projects for their own use, or are working on specially commissioned items for specific customers. Thus, there is little available to purchase for someone just off the street, but should one wish to commission a special work, one is likely to find a willing enchanter here.

The membership of the Crucible is constantly rotating, as enchanters enter and leave Kratas. There may be anywhere from four or five to a dozen or two members at any one time. Most are Elementalists, with some Wizards and, Kratas being what it is, an unusually large number of Nethermancers. There is also the occasional Illusionist, Weaponsmith, or other adept, as well as alchemists, making use of the facility. (Note that any Weaponsmith working out of the Crucible will be free to make items for his personal use, but should he start selling his works, the Weaponsmith forges will force him, upon threat of death, to join one of them, or pay them a hefty cut of his profits.)

The current owner of the Crucible is an obsidiman Eleventh Circle Elementalist and Sixth Circle Purifier Named Wuurliesaana. She is of indeterminate age, but has been working in the Enchanters' Crucible for more than a decade, having taken over its operations from the orig-

inal adventurers' group that established the place. She handles the membership fees, keeps the place well stocked, and assigns workspaces, but she is not the "boss" of the Crucible, and has no interest in directing the activities of its members. With an obsidiman's patience, she has been working on enchanting only one item since she has been in Kratas. While she is more than willing to engage in esoteric discussions of the finer points of enchanting, she will not reveal any information about her own project. Those who have carefully observed her at work think the object she is working on is a large rock, but no one knows toward what end it is being enchanted.

The Enchanters' Crucible might appear to be a likely target for thieves, and to decrease the likelihood of thefts, the members do not advertise its presence outside of magical circles, nor is there a sign identifying the building. Despite the valuable store of raw materials, including True Elements and orichalcum, the Crucible has not seen many attempts at thefts, in part because it is known that the enchanters do not store many finished goods here, but more so because of fear of what magical protections the magicians have placed here. Rumors persist of magical wards as well as powerful guardian elementals and spirits bound to protect the compound. Finally, should one succeed in stealing from the Enchanters' Crucible, one would also gain the ire of several powerful magicians (many of which are members of the Crucible, at least periodically).



The Winking Eye Jewelers

Jewels are a thief's dream: small, valuable, and usually easily fenced. Thus, there is a large market in stolen gems in Kratas. Much of this trade is done quickly and quietly at dimly lit tavern tables between anonymous dealers and their customers who are anxious to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Others can fence or buy jewels at any of a number of establishments on Merchants' Row, or from various storefronts here in the Hammersing.

However, the Winking Eye is Kratas' only shop that specializes in jewels and jewelry. One can buy and sell loose stones here, but the proprietor, Green Tarl, considers himself a connoisseur of jewelry design and craftsmanship, and so is eager to buy complete pieces. In most other establishments in Kratas, necklaces, bracelets, rings, and the like will be bought to scavenge the gemstones and melt down the precious metal. One can often get a better price for elaborate pieces at the Winking Eye than elsewhere.

Tarl is a skilled craftsman himself, and both make beautiful pieces and modified stolen pieces so that they will not be easily recognized when resold. He also has a small collection of magical jewelry pieces, such as thread brooches and rings.

The shop is laid out simply, having only one door to the outside in its thick stone walls. All windows and side doors have been bricked up. Two guards flank the door, and only allow one individual in the store at a time. They communicate with guards inside through a small hatch in the door, which can only be opened from the inside. Two more guards stand watch on the roof of the building, armed with crossbows.

Four massive guards fill the four corners of the front parlor. A simple wooden counter has a small display of sample gems of standard monetary amounts, as well as a few rings, necklaces, and bracelets. A clerk handles all transactions at the counter, under the watchful eye of the head of security, an elven Fourth Circle Illusionist and Third Circle Thief Named Vrenat the Keen.

Behind the counter is another locked door that leads to a small workshop and storeroom, which has a grilled window and small hatch leading between the two. Tarl is usually working in this room, but he passes requests out through the hatch, and comes out into the front room to serve any customers that are looking for something special.

Behind the workshop is the vault: a large stone room lined with iron. It has a single metal door, with multiple locks and traps. Around the walls of the vault are numerous chests and cabinets, each with its own locks and traps. It is well known that the Winking Eye is the biggest customer of the Tinkerers' Forge, whose Weaponsmiths are constantly improving the locks and traps of the vault.

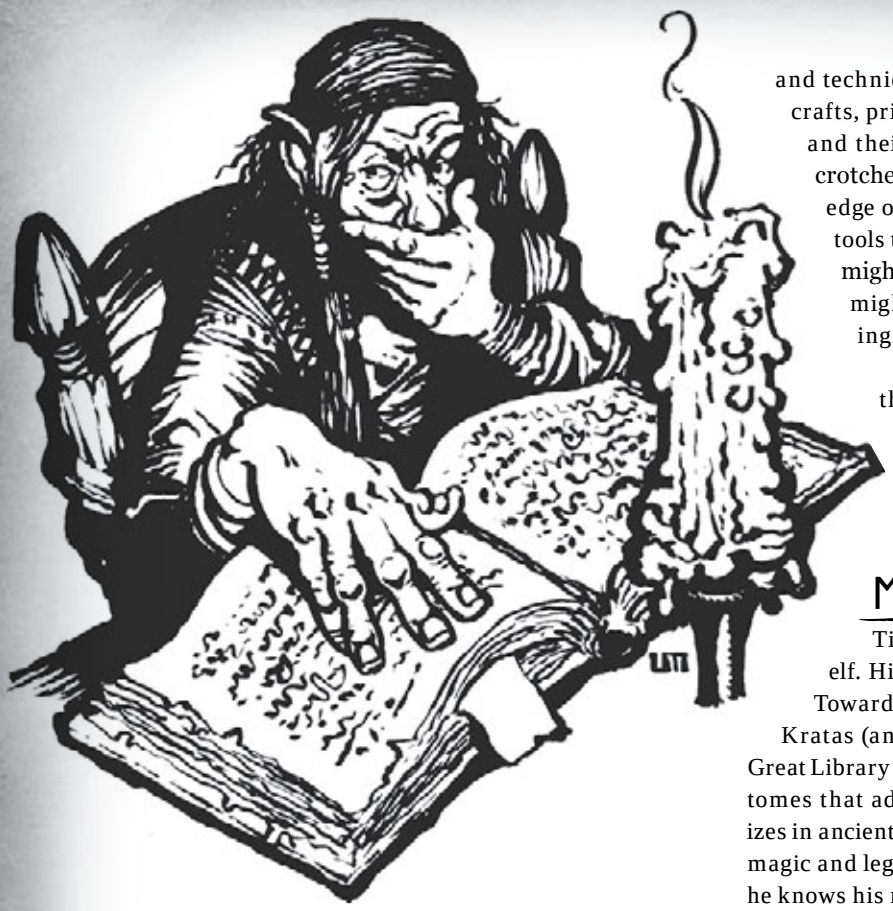
The store closes at nightfall, but several of the guards spend the night outside and inside the store. The Winking Eye also pays heavy protection to the Force of the Eye, which serves to discourage some would-be thieves as well.

The neighborhood immediately around the shop, however, is extremely dangerous, and muggings are very common. Muggers assume people in this area are either carrying gems or the coin to buy them, so those without business in the immediate vicinity make a point of staying far away.

> *Tarl is also the one to go to if you want something stored safely. He does not advertise this, as his rates are quite high and he has little free storage space, but his customers are handpicked anyway. You do not want some mysterious magical thingy being stored in your own treasure vault by a stranger, after all...*
>
> **—Korog Irontooth**

Upandal's Tool Belt

Upandal's Tool Belt is a store that serves the artisans of the Hammersing as well as the rest of Kratas' population. The Tool Belt sells tools and kits for nearly any artisan skill imaginable. The store's owner does not manufacture these tools; he purchases them from people who have 'found' them, as well as down-on-their-luck adventurers who may be forced to pawn their tools.



The store will buy tool kits for half of the normal price, and sell them again for one-and-a-half times that price. Adventurers needing a short-term loan can hock their tools for fifty percent of their value, and buy them back within the month for only one hundred percent of their cost. After the month expires, the tools will go up for sale to the first person who will pay one hundred and fifty percent.

Occasionally, especially if scorchers or bandits have raided caravans out of Throal, the store builds up enough inventory to send shipments of tools out of Kratas to be sold in other cities—usually Bartertown via Daiche. The store also stocks all sorts of general adventuring equipment, at similar markups, though the owner shies away from thieves' picks and tools, and climbing gear, for fear of stepping on the toes of the Weaponsmith forges.

The proprietor is an old dwarf questor of Upandal Named Gortoo Nargan. He shuffles slowly between the dust-covered shelves, muttering to himself. He is considered by some to be a bit touched in the head, especially as he has been known to occasionally pay very high prices for what appear to be old pieces of rusted junk. The few other questors of Upandal that come through Kratas question his devotion to their Passion because he profits from the theft of other craftsmen's tools, thus preventing them from serving Upandal.

However, Nargan's true passion, and what drew him to Kratas, is tools. He is a connoisseur and collector of fine and ancient tools; the more obscure and specialized the better. He has a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of tool designs and techniques, and is a skilled artisan in a number of crafts, primarily so he can better understand the tools and their use. Most view him as a money-grubbing, crotchety old coot, but those with sufficient knowledge of tools can get him engaged in discussions of tools that last many hours. Such conversationalists might get the benefit of discounts on tools, but also might discover which tools Nargan might be willing to pay top coin for.

Nargan has made some attempts at repairing the shrine to Upandal in the Temple Plaza, but he often gets distracted looking for just the right tool to finish a particular job.

TIRZENALOS THE LORE MERCHANT

Tirzenalos is an elderly, though still vivacious elf. His business is buying and selling information. Toward this end he has assembled the best library in Kratas (and one of the largest in Barsaive, outside the Great Library of Throal), and is always willing to buy ancient tomes that adventurers may have discovered. He specializes in ancient lore and legends, particularly those involving magic and legendary items. This is at least in part because he knows his market in Kratas, and he has acquired a reputation as the man to go to when a Thief has stolen a thread item and wishes to discover its Key Knowledges. Tirzenalos does not deal much in current affairs, as he equates modern political secrets with overripe fruit: they spoil and become obsolete before one can make good use of them. He refers such seekers to Gremor the Black, in the Cutthroat's Rest on Merchants' Row. Tirzenalos prefers information with a longer shelf life.

He is also expert on pre-Scourge Kratas, and has stolen a number of scrolls and books from the old government offices in town. He has assembled the most complete maps anywhere of the city and Undercity, though these are compiled from old construction records, and do not include more recent modifications, or constructions that were not recorded by the authorities. He will not sell full copies of his maps to anyone, as he is sure they would be quickly duplicated, but he will sell directions to specific locales.

Many assume that, because he is an old elf with a working knowledge of enchantments, he is some sort of magician. He is in fact a Sixth Circle Thief of the spy variant (see p. 219), and knowledge is what he covets most. Most of his tomes are stolen, and he is willing to pay for texts that he knows are stolen. He is not above hiring thieves to steal books that he has his eye on.

Tirzenalos' dwelling is also his place of business, and is clearly marked with a painted sign of an open book displaying his Name. The front room of his simple house is his office and library, and the back room is his sleeping quarters. He has bartered information about magical lore and enchantments to various magicians in the city in exchange for their placing powerful wards on his home.



Outside Kratos

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Kratas is a hideout for thieves, but hiding from *thieves works only for a limited time. Luckily, there's all kinds of hospitable places all around it. Well, some of them are...*

• Philank the Forsaken •

While Kratas is known as the City of Thieves, its influence stretches beyond its high walls into the surrounding area. This chapter details Kratas' outposts like Daiche, landmarks to be visited on one's way to the city, and the lands of the peoples living around Kratas, many of them in daily business with the city's inhabitants.

THE AXE IN HAND INN

Immediately outside of Kratas, only a mile away on the old Theran road heading southwest to Vivane, lies the Axe in Hand Inn. This is the last place to stay before entering the city proper. Many of those staying here have business with people from Kratas but fear to spend the night inside the city, or have been banned by the Force of the Eye from entering for one reason or another. Others are on their way either to or from Daiche and don't want to bother spending the 10 silver pieces to enter the city for the night.

The inn is so close to Kratas that it is by no means safe from the thieves of that city. Some wags claim that the Name of the inn describes the recommended sleeping posture while staying there. The inn is sturdily built, with ironbound doors. The proprietor, a young, rough-looking human Named Nandra Finch, does not guarantee any protection to her patrons or their belongings. One of the ten small single-occupancy rooms here can be rented for 5 silver pieces, and meals with ale can be had for 4 silvers; ale alone costs 1 silver piece. Occasionally the inn has a Troubadour performing in the common room. The one unusual amenity offered here is a luxurious bathhouse built around a hot spring. Use of the bathhouse is included for one person with the rental of a room, but the use by additional persons costs 3 silver pieces each.

> *If you want "company" while using the bathhouse, ask Nandra; she usually knows one or two people who are willing to pleasure your desire for company.*
>
> **—Gragok, Ork Sky Raider**

Nandra is professionally courteous, but not overly friendly with her clientele. She has seen too many die to care much about their business.

Trade Routes

Kratas was once the center of trade in this part of Barsaive, and not all of that was via airship or the Serpent River. Several overland caravan routes crisscrossed the countryside, some winding their way to the gates of Kratas. Some of these have been neglected, and are rarely traveled these days. In some areas the tracks are hard to see, and can sometimes even be lost outright. Other areas have seen an increase of traffic in recent years, and have been worn into the countryside again by thousands of feet, hooves, and wheels. Most of these remain simple dirt tracks, but in some places on the old Theran roads, the traffic has worn the tracks down to the paving stones, which had been buried during the Scourge.

An old Theran road sneaks into Barsaive from Vivane, north through Landis, and to the west of Cara Fahd and Ustrect. Where it passes north of Ustrect, it forks in two; one path heads east along the north edge of the Twilight Peaks and onwards to Portage, the other north and east to Kratas. There is little direct trade between Kratas and Vivane these days, but travelers find the road useful for visiting the small villages along the route, as well as the newly founded nation of Cara Fahd. Slavers sometimes use the road for returning their captives to Vivane, although they do so only under cover of night.

Barsaivian traders have also revived several old routes. One trail heads west from Kratas, running south of the Tylon Mountains, across the northern spur of the Dinganni plains, before it hits the Liaj Jungle where it heads north and west over the jungle to finally meet up with Jerris. This trail takes nearly a month to walk, and remains little traveled these days.

> *It may be Jerris' isolation on the other side of the Liaj Jungle and the Delaris Mountains that led to its heavy focus on airship construction.*
>
> **—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal**

A new trail, little more than wagon wheel ruts, runs along the side of the Liaj Jungle and connects the old Theran Road with the Jerris to Kratas trail. A similar one runs north from Jerris, past the western edge of the Tylon Mountains until it reaches the North Reach of the Serpent River. This trail was in use directly after the Scourge, to link the areas around Kratas with the villages of the Maratha *niall* of the Syrtis *aropagoi* near Lake Ban. However, since the Ishkarat *aropagoi* conquered these lands in 1488 TH, this path has been all but abandoned.

Villages are very sparse along these trade routes as one gets further from Kratas. Thus travelers cannot count on a warm bed on many of their nights on these trails. The village of Starford is the closest to Kratas, only about ten miles away on the Old Theran Road to Vivane. The traffic on these trails has only begun to pick up with the founding of Cara Fahd, as most of Kratas' trade still heads east through Daiche.

South of Kratas

Heading south or southwest from Kratas leads one to the forest that border the southern edge of the Tylon Mountains. This is one of the un-Named forested areas of Barsaive. These forests are rather temperate, drier and less dense than the Servos or Liaj Jungles. These forests are not unbroken, and have alternate copses of trees with large, irregular clearings. While the region itself has no Name, individual woods and clearings have been Named, such as Calamar Clearing, Flork's Woods, the Graybriars, and Tellianas' Glade.

A number of farming villages have sprung up within these forests, supplementing trade income from their crops with that from forestry as well, selling wood for building and fuel to Kratas. These villages have suffered the depredations of the bandits from Kratas and the regular attacks of ork scorchers. The villagers build their houses of stout timbers and surround them with heavy stockades. These stockades are built between living trees, and further camouflaged with leaves, tree branches, shrubs, and sometimes even Illusionism magic. Further, many of these villages have questors of Jaspree that reinforce the stockades with their powers. These precautions may not hide the villages from Namegivers walking right next to them, and there may be noises or telltale columns of smoke from cooking fires, but it does make them very hard to see from a distance. These villages also often have watchtowers hidden in tall trees. If one finds a clearing with large, well-tended fields of crops, but with no buildings nearby, one can be fairly certain there is a village hidden within a near-by wood. Also hidden carefully within these woods are the dwellings of several windling clans.

In addition, scattered around in clearings and in the open areas north of these woods are a number of farming villages. They make their living off the land and sell the excess in the Greenmarkets of Kratas. However, they are rather paranoid and wary of outsiders, demanding proof of freedom from taint and keeping a close eye on them throughout their stay. These towns usually have stakes, pit falls, and a number of traps and intentionally rough terrain to ward off riders and scorchers. Their houses also have arrow slits and thick, metal-bound doors. Most of these farmers carry weapons, and can be surprising adept with slings and staves. Some even sport crossbows and short swords.

Calamar Clearing

A tall pole with an old, tattered banner stands in the middle of this parched and dry clearing. At its base is an inscription reading: "Those of Kaer Calamar survived the Scourge to find their once fertile land utterly changed and laid waste. They

have moved on in the world, seeking a new home." The clearing in particular had once been very fertile land, but after the Scourge was found by the emerging occupants to be parched. The elders felt their homeland was now cursed and the people set out into the world seeking a new home. The strange thing is that no one has ever found any record of settlers coming from a kaer with a Name like Calamar. In addition no signs of a kaer or a mass exodus have been found, despite the efforts of explorers and looters. Nearby settlements have spoken of the sounds of caravans at night, as if the lost ghosts of Kaer Calamar are still searching for a new home.

Flork's Woods

The woods bearing the Name of a troll Wizard Named Flork are avoided by those who know anything about them. They appear elegant, with a stark beauty, but those who enter almost never leave. Upon entering the woods one feels as if eyes were everywhere. The wind whistles unnaturally, and not a sound of man or beast is heard, save the painful echoing of those made by the trespassers. One next finds that one is lost, and even tactics such as leaving crumbs or marking trees fails, as somehow marks are moved or duplicated elsewhere in the woods. Travelers can walk for days on end without finding a way out of the woods.

The astral space in Flork's Woods is terribly corrupt, causing spells to fail or careen off course. It is even rumored to harm those merely looking into astral space. All manner of astral Horror is said to stalk the woods, waiting for an unsuspecting Namegiver to poke his head in.

The astral space in Flork's Woods is as bad as what I've seen deep in the Wastes: twisted and tattered beyond repair, giving one a headache lasting days.

—H'atschi, Windling Wizard

The woods are a result of a most unfortunate happening at the hands of Flork himself. Flork is said to have begun as an idealistic, bound up in his honor and seeking to regain the prestige of the troll race in the eyes of the world. He poured out books and scrolls describing the ancient kingdom of Ustrect, longing to recreate those glorious days. It was then that his muse found him. The little voice would point out the next interesting scroll or aid in his deciphering of long-dead languages or intricate ciphers. He felt powerful, as if his knowledge might coalesce into the restored kingdom. He felt as if the land had lain fallow too long, and his muse agreed, leading him to a strong expanse of woods to use. Walking the land, he saw the damage of the Scourge there, still marring astral space with its taint. His muse spoke again, pushing him to study and understand the corruption. It was the voice that led him to the spell, and helped him redesign and refine it.

How Flork longed to establish this wood as a haven for magical study, healing, and the troll people. He began to prepare for the ritual to cleanse the astral space nearby and establish an astral barrier to protect the woods for ages to come. As he was nearing the end of his preparations he sent letters far and wide throughout Barsaive declaring his vision of Ustrect reborn, and called upon troll, and a few non-troll, magicians, adepts, questors, and healers to come and enjoy the fruits of his labor in establishing the place.

Little did Flork know that his muse was none other than the Tempter himself (see p. 166 of the ***Gamemaster's Companion***). He had twisted Flork's modifications to the spells to be used. He helped Flork in the casting of both types of spell, and then revealed himself and his deception and reveled in the troll's shock and dismay. More pleasant to Tempter still were Flork's ineffectual attempts to warn off the incoming peoples. It is said that, driven mad, Flork finally took his own life in despair, but the wood lives on in a dark, hideous shadow of powerful spells gone terribly wrong.

I heard tell of a grizzled troll running from library to library, frantically searching for clues to reversing damage to astral space and the taint of the Horrors. Each time he was pointed to old and dangerous manuscripts, and each time he turned away in disappointment and frustration. It seems he no longer trusted what should have been the most obvious solution. Worse still, it seems the spirits of those first healers and questors still roam the woods, enraged by their corrupted state and yet unable to free themselves.

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

The only people that venture into Flork's Woods are those treasure hunters foolhardy enough to charge into such an evil place. The reward they see, that of the goods and magical knowledge from Flork's private residence and research tower, is buried in the middle of the woods. No one has yet returned with detailed descriptions of the tower and fort. Those few who have returned at all consider themselves fortunate enough to have escaped with their lives from the outskirts of the woods.

The Graybriars

A very large copse of imposing, old, gray trees; there is a serene, but foreboding air about the Graybriars. Many travelers venturing through the forests stop here to ponder matters of import to their lives. A rare soul even comes here for a pilgrimage, camping in the woods for time. Only very rarely do visitors suspect these woods are not as empty as they seem. A woodland village of elves abides in the trees, and their Woodsmen and guards keep watch over any visitors to steer them clear of the village and to protect their

THE LEGEND OF VALVIDIUS, THE KING OF THIEVES

You've never heard that expression before—to pull a Valvidius? You've not spent much time in Kratas, have you? A Valvidius is a glorious swindle-but also one that could leave you dead because you made the wrong folk angry. I'll tell you the tale, and then you'll understand. (Buy me a cup of ale first, friend-storytelling's thirsty work.)

It all happened centuries before the Scourge, of course. Valvidius was a dwarf Thief, and even his bitterest rivals called him the greatest thief of all time. For it was Valvidius who stole the Three Rings of Harpfast from under the noses of a thousand guardsmen; and it was Valvidius who stole the Egg of Lost Desire from the private treasure vaults of Barsaive's first Theran Overgovernor. Yes, Valvidius was truly a great thief, and he knew it. But by the time he reached middle age, he'd pulled off so many wondrous exploits with so little difficulty that he was beginning to get bored. Even the thought of robbing the Theran treasury at Parlainth left him cold-it wasn't worth his talents. (Lucky for the Theran rats in Parlainth, that's all I can say.) Valvidius racked his brains for some piece of thieving that would give him a real challenge, and finally he came up with a truly fantastic swindle.

On one dark night, hidden from all eyes in his private study, Valvidius scribbled a piece of verse on a parchment scroll. When the ink was dry, he dipped the parchment in tea to make it look weathered, then frayed the edges and folded it to make cracks in the middle. When he was finished with the scroll, he took





a common metal crown—the kind metalsmiths usually begin with to make duplicates of precious treasures—and painted it all over with some gold leaf he'd stolen from the famous Banchus Jewel House. Then he hid the crown and the scroll in his traveling bag beneath a couple of dirty jerkins and went to bed. The next day, he went off to the capital city of Landis, letting it be known that he expected rich pickings.

About a month later, he came back to Kratas in a state of high excitement. Knowing the word would spread through the Thieves' City faster than fire in a dry hayfield, Valvidius went to the Heart's Ease Tavern and announced that he'd found an ancient scroll that spoke of a sure way to win the Passion Vestrial's favor. (In those days, of course, Vestrial was sane, and most thieves had a soft spot for the trickster Passion.) Valvidius read the scroll out loud to all assembled: it said that to earn Vestrial's undying love, all the greatest thieves in Barsaive must meet and crown a King of Thieves. In the next year, everyone who wanted to be king must perform their most audacious thefts and then gather in the old fortress of Florque—near Kratas—to show off their booty in a grand Thieves' Festival. The best theft would win the crown of the Thief King.

So all the thieves went off in search of treasures to steal, for each one wanted to be the Thief King. And while they were gone, Valvidius went to their guards and servants and retainers. He spoke soft words to them and passed out gold and silver here, there, and everywhere. When the year was almost up, Valvidius took the crown he'd made and went to Florque to wait for his fellow thieves.

The Thieves' Festival was a rousing success. The thieves of Barsaive showed off precious objects by the dozens: magical javelins from Thera, rare orichalcum coins bearing the faces of kings dead for centuries, the diary of the great dragon Usun, and many other wonders that few Namegivers had ever looked upon. Of course, each thief had brought bodyguards and retainers to protect what he'd brought. They all wanted to be king, and not one of them was taking the slightest chance of having his treasure stolen from him. The thieves and their bodyguards talked and argued endlessly over which theft deserved the crowning glory, until Valvidius mounted the great stone dais in the middle of Florque's Great Hall.

Into the sudden silence, he said, "Now comes the time to crown the greatest thief of all. Look with favor upon me, 0 Vestrial!"

And he pulled a beautiful golden crown from behind his back and placed it on his own head. The other thieves, furious, called to their bodyguards to fight, but the bodyguards all fell to their knees and hailed Valvidius, King of Thieves! Then they took the precious things that the other thieves had stolen and placed them in a huge pile at Valvidius' feet. Valvidius had pulled off the greatest theft of all time-he had stolen the loyalty of the master thieves' henchmen, along with all the booty his rivals had stolen from others.

For many years Valvidius ruled Kratas from his stronghold in Florque, and those who served him prospered. Then one dark night, when Valvidius was in his treasure vault savoring the fruits of his long-ago victory, the stone walls grew bright with a strangely colored, shimmering light. A strong wind began to blow through the windowless treasury. Valvidius stood firm, clutching his crown to his chest and muttering, "Never. I will never leave my treasures!" The wind blew harder, and the light grew blinding. A look of fear crossed Valvidius' face, and he cried out, "Vestrial! I meant it as a jest. I thought only to please you!"

"Betrayal does not please me," said a voice that shook the earth. "You have stolen that which you had no right to steal-the sworn word of common men. There is only one punishment for such effrontery." With a sound like a thousand thunderclaps, the light exploded-then fell a terrible silence.

The next day, Valvidius' vaults stood empty. No one could find a trace of the wonderful treasures, the coffers full of coin, or any trace of Valvidius himself-save for his crown, bent and half-melted into a long oval shape. Funny thing, though-the tin crown Valvidius had gilded to fool people had turned to real, solid gold. They say the Crown of Thieves still exists, and that it's worth several fortunes. But no one knows where it is, of course. Me, I don't know what to believe. I've shared a flagon of ale with plenty of folk who've gone looking for it. But I've not seen any of them come back...

forest. Occasionally small bands of elves will venture to Kratas or to the Serpent River, but they are careful not to give away the location of their forest. The elves value it for its serenity, to be sure, but it is also a place of old magic, as some ancient stone ruins suggest. It is a place of elemental power, and an occasional pilgrim actually brings a tithe to the elements here, which the elves respect and leave to its purpose. Despite their weathering the Scourge, the ruins remain untainted, and the astral space around them is quite pristine. Only reverent visitors are permitted to stay near the ruins for long, as the elves see it as part of their duty to the woods to watch over and honor these ruins as well.

Tellianas' Glade

Located near the southeastern corner of the un-Named forests, one can easily reach Tellianas' Glade by venturing north off the trail to Vivane from Kratas, just before leaving the forests. Coming upon this glade gives one the impression of a peaceful, undisturbed meadow amongst some healthy wooded areas. Despite this almost cozy feel, the glade is actually of a fair size. With a small hill exactly in the middle that gently slopes down to the trees, which ring it in a well-formed circle, it seems a wonder for it to be so symmetrical. This is the first clue that this is not just any other glade.

In Kratas, those who know of Tellianas' Glade tell conflicting stories of the place, giving it a rather colorful reputation. One may hear glowing praise of it from one Kratan, and glowering disdain from another. Some recommend stopping there and even pitching camp for the night, while others warn that it should be given a wide berth if they overhear mention of its Name.

There once was a band of cutthroats, delighted at their latest acquisitions from a passing caravan, traveling back to Kratas through the forest. They came upon a lively festival in Tellianas' Glade, with windlings partying and carrying on. They boisterously joined in, but were quite rowdy and disruptive. The windlings got them quite drunk for their intrusion, and postponed the rest of the festival, cleaning out every last trace of their presence while the thugs slept off their keesris. The cutthroats awoke the next morning with no sign of any festival... and no sign of anything save their undergarments! Everyone got quite a laugh as they came back to Kratas, let me tell you.

—Morthon, Troubadour of Kratas

Tellianas, a wise and engaging Wind-dancer who wanted the windling villages throughout the wood to stay united in case of trouble and to help preserve and renew windling culture outside of the kaers, instituted a number of festivals and gatherings in the place that is now known as Tellianas' Glade. These festivals occur on a somewhat regular basis, about four times a year, during which competitions of all sorts are held, with a vast array of food and drink as well. Many of the local farmers and peasants drop everything to take part in the festivals, bringing their own bounty to share, and the windlings welcome them with open arms to share in their celebrations. While the non-windling locals are unable to join in many of the physical competitions involving aerial stunts, a number of tests of skill and agility don't require wings at all. In addition, the storytelling and joke contests have even been won on occasion by the farmers, to the bemusement of all. In months of Strassa and Veltom, the most important of competitions occur and take center stage. The various Wind-dancers and elders of each of the villages hold a series of elaborate and trying *sleerahs* for the females of their villages who would like mates. These are most entertaining for the windlings and outsiders alike, who often give gifts to the new couples in the spirit of the celebration.

In contrast, most of the time, the glade lies quiet and tranquil. The nearest windling village, Arriown, borders the glade itself, and it is the residents' duty to watch over the glade. Unfortunately for unsuspecting passersby, especially those of arrogant or shady affect, the windlings often enjoy this duty of guardianship too much. However, those of humble estate or in true need will find the hospitality of Arriown to be quite sincere and welcoming.

Florque

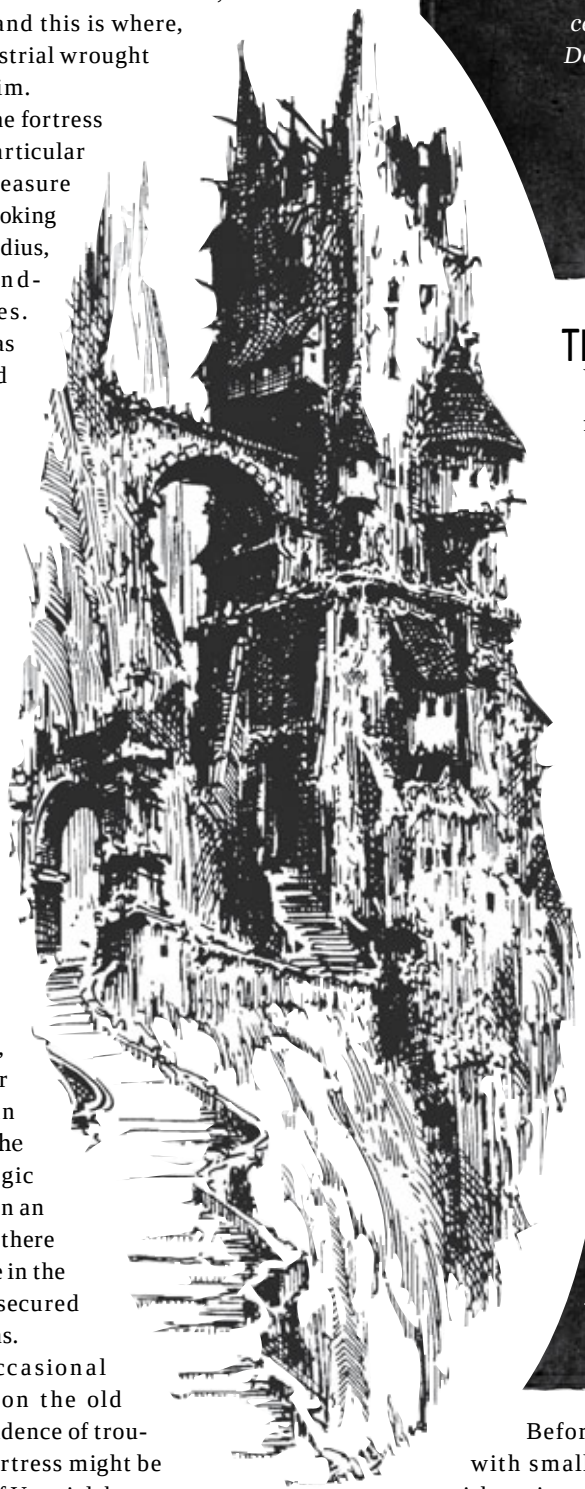
During the City-States period (see **Welcome to Kratas**, p. 12), Magistrate Orgon the Despot engaged in a campaign of conquest. Central to his strategy was the building of an enormous fortress outside of Kratas in which to base his large standing army. This fortress, Named Florque, was a symbol of Orgon's dominance of the area. Four massive gates and drawbridges opened to the four cardinal directions; through these gates his armies would pour to suppress resistance throughout the surrounding lands. A tall central tower allowed Orgon to see for miles in all directions, particularly to keep an eye out for any large groups of rebels heading south from Kratas itself, a mere ten miles away. A moat surrounded the fortress, and trees were cut down all around to provide a clear view of approaching armies. Orgon was afraid of attack by airship, so his castle did not have large open courtyards like many castles. Instead, he built gigantic arched vaults over his barracks and parade grounds.

Today, the moat is dry, and trees have grown up to the edge of the fortress. Only the central tower peeks over the thick forest. The walls are incredibly thick, so even though the exterior is crumbling and covered in vines, the building remains mostly intact. At the center of this fortress is the Great Hall, empty and foreboding. This was the site of Valvidius' crowning of himself as the King of Thieves some time in the sixth century after the founding of Thera. Some suspect that this site remains cursed by Vestrial.

In the basement of this fortress are dungeons, originally built by Orgon for holding his prisoners. Some of these dungeons were torture chambers—Orgon was not

called "Despot" without reason. Valvidius had some of the dungeons converted to an extensive treasure vault after he moved into the abandoned fortress. He spent many of his last years in these windowless tombs, fawning over his loot, and this is where, according to legend, Vestrial wrought his displeasure upon him.

After the Scourge, the fortress was ransacked, with particular attention paid to the treasure vault. The thieves were looking for the treasures of Valvidius, especially the legendary Crown of Thieves. However, the vault was as empty as the legend said it would be, and no one living claims to have found the Crown of Thieves. Some of these early explorers never returned, and others came back with tales of encountering undead, Horrors, and other evil in the vast dark vaults of the empty fortress.



Should a full-scale war break out in Barsaive, the competing powers might seek to take control of the fortress, though the fortifications installed by the Therans on Clifftop, if rehabilitated, would be of much greater importance. The Theran airship fleet has made the fortress of less strategic importance than it was in an earlier era, especially as there is nothing of importance in the area that could not be secured just as easily from Kratas.

Garlthik sends occasional patrols out to check on the old fortress, looking for evidence of trouble. He fears that the fortress might be of interest to questors of Vestrial, because of its association with the legend of Valvidius, or that questors of Dis might revere the site because of Orgon the Despot's oppressive reign. There are whispered rumors that Garlthik is afraid of the crown being found in some forgotten corner of the fortress, and used by a usurper to turn his gang against him.

Many brave souls disappeared in the area around the castle, never to be seen again. Astral space is said to be corrupted there, certainly influenced by the deeds of the Despot and again, later, by the Scourge. Being assigned to a patrol that heads to the castle is a sign that you are falling from Garlthik's favor.

—Rowan Daggertree, Retired Human Adventurer

THE DINGANNI PLAINS

The Dinganni Plains, though somewhat far from Kratas, have increased in importance to the city, as it has become more involved with the Dinganni people, hiring them as guides, escorts, and smugglers. About four days' walk south of Kratas, the forests peter out, giving way to a vast prairie covered by waves of wild grasses and small clusters of scrub brush. These plains stretch south to the Mist Swamps and the eastern spur of the Twilight Peaks, and east from the southern Tylon River to the Liaj Jungle and the Shroud of Ustrect in the West. It is easy to get lost on these plains, which is surprising for those used to navigating their way through labyrinthine jungles or mountain passes. The problem with the plains is their vast uniformity, with an utter lack of landmarks.

The Therans occasionally marked trails through the plains by driving large wooden stakes into the ground, which could be seen for miles in these flat lands. None of these survived the Scourge, however.

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

Before the Scourge, these plains were dotted with small farming villages, often every few miles, with various affiliations with the surrounding powers. However, during the Scourge many of these villages' small kaers failed and others' descendants were absorbed into those of larger cities. Now a traveler might encounter such a village only once every thirty or more miles. They are simple places, with mud brick huts and wooden palisades, with surrounding fields and grazing areas.

The plains take their Name from the Dinganni, a tribe of human nomads that travel these prairies. The Dinganni are taller than most humans, and nearly as hearty as dwarfs or orks. They roam the plains in bands of seventy-five to two hundred Namegivers. These bands are formed of necessity, as a too-large group would devastate the countryside. New bands are formed as they prosper, and individuals sometimes move between bands. The Dinganni consider themselves part of one big tribe, and their bands do not fight amongst themselves (as opposed to the scorcher tribes).

There are other important differences between the Dinganni and the scorchers, though these may not be apparent to the causal observer. At first glance, they are both bands of fiercely independent, heavily armed nomads, skilled in combat and horsemanship. Indeed, the two groups often fight when they encounter each other.

However, there the similarities end. For one, peaceful travelers have nothing to fear from the Dinganni. In fact, the Dinganni are renowned for their hospitality, and many a lost or wounded traveler owes his survival to Dinganni largesse. Those who wish to take advantage of the Dinganni should not confuse their generosity with weakness or naiveté; they will fight viciously if threatened, and all Dinganni, even the children, are armed at all times.

Another feature that distinguishes the Dinganni from the scorchers is the second of their five laws: "Do not steal that which belongs to another." Therefore, the Dinganni do not engage in raiding of any sort. Their livelihood is gained through hunting the fauna of the plains; foraging for wild plants; and a small amount of herding, mostly sheep and goats. They have also augmented their livelihood in recent years by working for Garlthik One-Eye. To avoid the K'tenshin trade monopoly on goods being shipped out of Daiche, Garlthik hires Dinganni to smuggle goods to the riverboats of rival *aropagoi*, or the barges of the Scavians on the Tylon River. Some even escort caravans all the way to the small town of Portage, where the Tylon and Serpent rivers meet.

If one is seeking to travel these plains, one could not do better than to hire a Dinganni as a guide, though the tribesmen may not always be available when wanted. Escorting others is only a sideline for the Dinganni, and they have their own reasons and destinations for their wanderings. Some individual Dinganni are allowed to leave the tribe for short periods of time to learn the ways of other Namegivers, and it is these that may be the most readily available as guides. The punishment for violating the laws of the Dinganni is exile, and so some of those seeking to hire themselves out as caravan guides may be criminals, shunned by their people. The rest of the tribe will not seek to hurt such an exile, but a group guided by one will not be welcome in a Dinganni camp, and will not benefit from the legendary Dinganni hospitality.

—Gravin Bakor, Historian of Throal

While all Dinganni are trained in horsemanship, they actually have very few horses, in part because of their unwillingness to steal them. Despite the justifiable pride taken by the scorchers in their skills in breeding livestock, a good number of their mounts are stolen. Each band of Dinganni may have as few as ten to twenty mounts. These are reserved for the use of only the best horsemen in the band, and are used as much for hunting down the fleet-footed antelope of the plains, as for the defense of the tribe.

For more information on the Dinganni, see the ***Namegivers of Barsaive*** sourcebook.

North of Kratas

Heading north from Kratas leads to the foothills of the Tylon Mountains within a day's walk. This range runs east to west about three hundred miles or so, and about a third of that distance north to south. Travelers should note that the distances marked on the maps of Barsaive in days walking are as an airship flies, and that walking or riding through the rugged mountains can take many times that of crossing the same distance on the plains.

The mountains are split into a northern and southern range by the Tylon River, which runs from west to east between the ranges, before turning south through Daiche Canyon. The Tylon Mountains gradually rise to a height of over a mile above the plains below. They include many large, Named peaks such as Mount Jhaesaan on the eastern side of the south ridge. Deep and narrow valleys twist between these mountains. However, the centerpiece and namesake of the Tylon Mountains is the cluster of twelve needle-like spires ("tylons" in *Or'zet*) located in the center fifty miles or so of the mountain range.

For more information on the Tylon Mountains, see p. 65 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***.

East of Kratas

Heading east of Kratas leads one to the town of Daiche, Daiche Canyon, the Shattered Towers of House T'kambras, the Tylon River, and, beyond that, the Servos Jungle.

The Tylon River

The Tylon River, which runs swiftly down from the Tylon Mountains, is the largest tributary in the Serpent's South Reach. The upper reaches of the Tylon, which stretch from the river's source to the four-hundred-foot falls at Daiche Canyon, flow through densely forested hillsides and verdant valleys that are considered some of the most beautiful wilderness in Barsaive. The Tylon's lower



reaches meander through the rugged Dinganni plains. At the southern end of Daiche Canyon lies Daiche, a town of trade and controversy.

THE SHATTERED TOWERS

Since the rebirth of House T'kambras, there has been renewed interest in the site of its former village towers. Thieves from Kratas, particularly t'skrang, had long ago explored the ruins, above and below water, looking for valuables. Since the return of the *aropagoi*, agents of House K'tenshin have been seen in the ruins looking for any clues as to the possible whereabouts of the new T'kambras central foundation. These towers are clearly visible across the Tylon from Daiche, and some Daiche residents and visitors report seeing strange lights and hearing ghostly noises from the towers late at night. As many of these sightings have been made from the outdoor tables of taverns that line the docks of Daiche, they may not be that credible.

DAICHE

Daiche is a town built around shipping. Its docks can support a dozen t'skrang riverboats or Scavian barges at once, as well as numerous smaller vessels, although there have never been that many in town at once. There are over a dozen large warehouses, including one each owned by the Overland Trading Company, the Dream Spire Company, and the seven dwarf trading houses that have interests in Kratas (see the **Merchant's Row** chapter on p.124 for more information). Some of the *nialls* of the T'kambras, K'tenshin, and V'strimon *aropagoi* have warehouses here, and employ agents to make deals with the other merchants to transport their goods around the province, or sell goods to them here. Garlthik and the Force of the Eye own the remaining warehouses. Many of the merchants buy goods from the Force's representatives here in Daiche, as they feel it much safer than traveling into Kratas itself. Sagramon Steeltoe, one of Garlthik's trusted lieutenants, generally keeps better order here, in part because there are fewer places for thieves to hide. Pickpockets are common, as well as burglaries of the warehouses, and each merchant house is responsible for guarding its own warehouse. Knifings and muggings are rare, however. Most of the violence in the town is restricted to fights among the dockworkers and Boatmen in the riverside taverns, and is usually not directed at the merchants.

> *Poisoning is common, too. It doesn't leave much evidence and isn't as obvious as a knife in the back.*
>
> **—Gillian, Human Thief**

The town is too small for distinct neighborhoods like those in Kratas, but it is clearly laid out. The docks line the west side of the Tylon. North and south of the docks are half a dozen waterside taverns, catering to the sailors and Boatmen. These all have outdoor tables set on a boardwalk over the river, and when brawls break out between the t'skrang, they often continue into the river itself. These taverns are named the **Fire**

Engine, the **Broken Paddlewheel**, the **Oar and Rope**, the **Rusty Hook**, the **Green Boatman**, and the **Duari of Blood**. These inns do not offer much in the way of lodging, as most of the Boatmen sleep onboard ship, and the dockworkers that frequent them have permanent dwellings elsewhere.

The docks are only minimally equipped as a shipyard, though a crew willing to do the work itself can perform minor repairs and maintenance here. Most prefer not to, as they would be quite vulnerable to attack by enemy riverboats if docked here for a long time.

West of the docks lie the warehouses, and then up a small rise is the castle of Sagramon Steeltoe. This is not only his residence, but also an impressive fortification. Its central tower looks down on the docks, and it has a number of catapults and fire cannons mounted on it that can repel pirate attacks on the docked ships. Its weapons can reach all the way to the far shore of the Tylon, and can also be swiveled to hit invading landward armies (Firepower: 20/20). The tower can be considered a ship for purposes of combat, though it can never be sunk. Of course, it cannot be boarded. Its one disadvantage over the riverboats is that it is manned by guards of the Force of the Eye, who are not as well trained or quick in using its weapons as a crew of Boatmen would be.

Sagramon Steeltoe

Sagramon Steeltoe is one of Garlthik's most powerful lieutenants besides Terricia and Bleritis. Hiding from Sagramon in Daiche is practically impossible for most Namegivers, as his considerable experience as a fence and supervision of the construction of the port town means he knows almost every alleyway and warehouse. He works closely with Glanis Trul and K'tryklen in order to move stolen goods from Kratas to Daiche to be loaded on ships and sold at other ports or loaded on caravans and taken to other cities. Sagramon is a dwarf Eighth Circle Thief and Fourth Circle Warrior.

The Road to Kratas

The road to Kratas runs from the docks, through the warehouses, under the shadow of the castle, and into a small group of inns. These comfortable inns cater to the merchants, and are much less rowdy than those of the docks. In addition to meals and drinks in their common rooms, they have bedrooms for rent as well. There are only four of these, the **Giggling Dwarf**, the **Purple Orchid**, the **Golden Tankard**, and **Steeltoe's Pub**. All of the taverns in Daiche are actually owned by the Force of the Eye, and Steeltoe takes his cut before passing the proceeds on to Garlthik. There are also a few simple, un-Named stores that sell groceries and other necessities. Behind the taverns are a number of simple, but well-built, houses. Some of these house single families, while many of them are filled with single dockworkers and the other Namegivers that perform the menial labor that is necessary to keep the town running. Past the stores and inns there is a small number of corrals,



blacksmiths, and stables for those running caravans west to Kratas or into the rest of Barsaive. The services here are limited, though, and Steeltoe runs a number of wagons that shuttle goods from here to the Stables of Kratas, where one can buy all the pack animals and wagons one might need.

Finally, the road to Kratas passes through a gate in the wall that surrounds the entire town. This wall was originally made of wood, but is being gradually replaced by stone, and watchtowers are being added as well.

Portage

At the bottom of the Tylon, where it meets the Serpent, lies the small village of Portage. This village serves as a docking point for ships on the Serpent River that are picking up or dropping off cargo bound for or coming up the trade route from Vivane. As this town is on the Serpent, not the Tylon, it is open to all *aropagoi* under the Free Trade Compact. Garlthik has been hiring ork scorchers to harass the caravans taking this route lately, to encourage them to travel through Kratas and Daiche instead. This scheme has been successful; the traffic to Portage is slowly drying up.

The Servos Jungle

On the other side of the Tylon River is the Servos Jungle. Small villages, mostly inhabited by t'skrang fishermen, are sprinkled along both sides of the Tylon, but once past these, civilization as it is known to most Barsaivians is quickly left behind. The Servos Jungle is an imposing and foreboding place, and there are no trade routes or trails through it. Though as the airship flies, Kratas and Bartertown are not far away, the jungle is virtually impassable; nearly all Namegivers would sail hundreds of miles down the Tylon, around the Serpent, and up the Coil, rather than travel on foot through the Servos.

For more information on the Servos Jungle, see p. 62 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***.

West of Kratas

Heading west from Kratas, the trail to Jerris leads south of the Tylon foothills, and north of the woods and clearings of the un-Named forest. Once past the forest, the northern spur of the Dinganni Plains extends up toward the Serpent River. Crossing the river, one finally reaches the Liaj Jungle, home of many dangerous creatures, including the dragon, Usun, and the wild Namegivers known as the Tamers. The road to Jerris detours north around the Liaj Jungle to avoid these hazards.

Heading south, one reaches the northern fringe of the Shroud of Ustrect, the forest that covers the ruins of the ancient Troll Kingdom.

Along these paths still roam a number of ork scorchers. First, the Skull Whargs have taken to wandering these paths now that the Metal Fist tribe has left for Cara Fahd. Usually only one or two clans at most, of approximately 150 orks, will be this far out, as their territory was previously more towards Throal. Second, some traders have claimed being raided by small bands that claim to be of the true Metal Fist tribe. They have been said to strike from among the Tylon Mountains and to retreat there again, losing any pursuers in the rough terrain. While this seems unlikely, speculation has abounded that the Metal Fist clans associated with the Spires of the Mad Passions had a number of dissidents that spoke out against the move to Cara Fahd.

Not far from this trail is a small village about three days' walk from Kratas, Named Moonsbane. This village is notable for its militia. They are highly skilled at repelling ork scorchers, and thus at fighting cavalries in general. A trench topped with wooden stakes surrounds the village, and a pair of towers with a drawbridge is the only easy means across. In addition to farming, the village survives on the output of its bowyers and as guides and mercenaries. The bowyers here make some of the finest crossbows and short bows, selling their wares in Kratas and twice a year in Jerris. It is said that they hold a grudge against anyone of the village of Starford, being able to pick out their accent in an instant.

Further past Moonsbane, is a small mining camp in the foothills of the Tylons. Here, a number of natural caverns and caves aid the efforts of the dwarfs attempting to dig riches from the earth. A number of mishaps have characterized the camp, and the unrest has led to violence among the miners in the recent past. While the residents of Moonsbane are suspicious of the dwarfs carrying taint or of their reasons for exploring such an isolated place, their silver and gold are still certainly welcome.

Ancient Ruins Near Kratas

Within ten days' ride of Kratas are the ruins of Ustrect; those of the ancient Kingdom of Scavia; the ancient legendary city of Yrns Morgath, somewhere beneath the Mist Swamps; and another, yet un-Named, city within the Servos Jungle. Because Kratas is a large city relatively close to all of these sites, many explorers, scholars, and Living Legend cults stop in Kratas to gather equipment, and research their quests among the city's rumormongers and information brokers. The presence of these seekers means that there is also a lively market in maps to these sites, legends and tomes about them, and even artifacts claiming to be from them.

15th Day of Doddul, 1509 TH

Today, I met that girl Veskalra at the Drunken Dragon. Twenty-something elf from Travar. She's a real looker, so I sit at her table and start a conversation. Very enjoyable company. Apparently, she's been in town for two weeks already. Came here to find someone instructing her in 'the art of the cat burglar.' Well, she's definitely got the looks of one. Slender and all, and for sure very lithe and flexible. She might be what I'm looking for. Had an appointment, so we agreed to meet at Serian's tomorrow.

16th Day of Doddul, 1509 TH

Met Veskalra again. Serian's was more to her taste. She said she could tell it was a thieves' place. Well, the patrons don't exactly hide it, either. Quickly, she jumps to the topic of her choice: crime and learning it. But I'm interested in other things...

She doesn't have family in Travar anymore. Never had a father; mother died back in that Rakken incident. Was a second mate on a trading ship. Since then, she's been on her own. Earned a living picking pockets. But no more purses. She wants to make some real money, the type of money people don't carry around. But she isn't stupid; she knows that you're not the perfect thief because you can cut a purse. She knows she needs a trainer, someone who might also judge if she's got what it takes to be an adept. Not unlikely with at least her mother being one. Asks if I know my way around Kratas, and can introduce her to some people, or show her Kratas' ways. I sure can. But it takes time. And she will be surprised. We'll meet again in two days, same place.

18th Day of Doddul, 1509 TH

She's definitely got people skills. When I came in, she had already convinced one of the patrons, an adept from Throal as it happens, to buy her a couple of drinks. Okay, it's usually not hard around here for a pretty girl to get a free drink, but he was an obsidiman...

She says she's already made some friends. Friends. Seems she still doesn't know too much about this place. Says she met an elf by the Name of Hespaan who promised to find her a teacher. Hespaan... Wasn't that one of Gestren's pseudonyms? If so, definitely not the company I want to see her in. He works for Veniah and the Barque. I might need to act more quickly than I wanted. Will meet her tomorrow.

19th Day of Doddul, 1509 TH

Sometimes I wonder why, in a city like this, it's all about trust. You can't trust anyone, and yet you always try, at least, to make people trust you. Some things just can't be done when people are constantly suspicious of each other.

Veskalra... I think I earned her trust today. A necessary thing, given that we'll need to work closely together in the future. She's got what it takes, and I'm glad I could find someone like her. I might be in some trouble if I hadn't. That's one of the good things about Kratas: If you're looking for someone with certain skills, you just have to wait a little while, and someone will stop by eventually. Took a bit long this time, though.

Veskalra is definitely someone with skills, and that's what I need. Tomorrow, dinner at my place. We got to celebrate our new partnership.

20th Day of Doddul, 1509 TH

I had her sent a new, fine dress for the evening. And right when she arrived at my house, she said that had I not told her of my...er... preferences, so to speak, she might have suspected I was trying to seduce her with all the gifts, help, and attention. A bit too straightforward. But she's naïve and unspoiled, and we can work on that.

Still, I jump right in at that point, and bring up the seduction business. I tell her how all-powerful femininity is; how easily man's will is crushed with a smile or a blink of the eye (and how much I envied that because things are 'oh so complicated for someone like me'... somewhat cliché, I know...). And I inquire into her experiences in this field of expertise. Apparently, she's got some, mostly to get a roof to stay under for the night, back in Travar (there's no lack of deserted houses here, so no necessity to walk that path). Still she seems to like doing it. And she doesn't suspect I have any other reason to talk about that matter except for keeping conversation going.

Because we're having a fine meal. That sort of meal where you have t'skrang fish for starters, honeyed chicken as the main course, and an Uyglar for dessert. The sort of meal that costs a fortune in her eyes and by her standards. And strong Bukarian wine. Red Bukarian wine that hides the slightly bitter taste of Dreglat'amal root. And that root will make my magic-induced words sound sweeter than they already are. And it will open her mind to my suggestions. It won't

control her (that would be too easy anyway; even a Troubadour needs some sort of challenge every now and then), but it will anchor the points of view and the opinions I feed her so deep in her mind that she'll find it hard to develop contrary ones later. It's all the more important that I give my best at presenting them. The magic is strenuous, but it has been worse with some of the other girls.

I tell her how all magic, even that of the Thief, is dogmatised. How a Thief sees every one of his gains, the ones he has to work for at least, as a kind of theft. And that as a result, everything he does to get something is the art of thievery. And the more elaborate his plot, the better a Thief he is. That when you break into a house, you overcome objects only, and that the true Thief can steal with a word, a smile, or the blink of the eye (how brilliant of me to draw that connection from before, isn't it?).

By the end of the evening, she no longer thinks of herself as a potential cat burglar. She has adopted the philosophy I fed her: of the Thief who doesn't cut the purse with a knife, who doesn't sneak around in the vault, who doesn't climb a wall to draw out the bag of gold from under the merchant's bed. She likes the kind of Thief she is now, practicing her subtle skills so men give away their gold willingly. Acting, like all forms of deceit, is theft, after all.

It is fun to manipulate. It reassures me of my own path by showing me how easily you can use the dogma of another path to turn its followers around. Thieves are especially foolish when it comes to that. Maybe she really is one.

26th Day of Strassa, 1510 TH

Veskalra has been working at the Lily for a month now, and she's popular with our customers. Well, the new ones always are. But she is skilled. She has not only managed to be busy and earn me some money half the day, every day, for this entire month, she's also had a couple of customers that had excellent information. I watched her pry it from them as if she'd done if her entire life. Same for the rest of the trade.

Best of all is she's young enough to last for another year or so before I have to drop her rates to standard, and she'll probably maintain that level for another five.

There are endless forms of art, but none so elegant and beautiful as mine.


Adventures in Kratos

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Heroes! In Kratas! By the Passions, boy, where do you get such crazy ideas?

• Duntac, Dinganni Cavalryman •

This chapter advises gamemasters on how to use the City of Thieves in their **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. Utilizing the presented material in adventures and campaigns can be challenging, but this section will help gamemasters take full advantage of the unique opportunities Kratas can provide.

Kratas is known as the City of Thieves for good reason, and can be a harsh and unforgiving place. The city is home to many secretive and dark elements in Barsaive, as well as being a hub for trade in reclaimed or otherwise illegal goods. The intrigue and open conflict between groups vying for control of various parts of Kratas, and Barsaive at large, offer an array of opportunities for player characters to become embroiled in sticky situations. In addition, the city's mysterious past, from the effects of the Scourge to the presence of buried ruins to ancient legends are rife with potential for adventure. However, it is still a city, with bakers, millers, traders, craftsmen, and those down on their luck or rejected from society elsewhere. These facets and more throughout the book provide numerous possibilities for campaigns in and around the great City of Thieves.

Adventure Frameworks

The following adventures are presented in an adventure framework format. Adventure frameworks serve as blueprints that outline the basic events of a storyline, which the gamemaster can flesh out according to his own tastes. The framework is a middle step between the brief adventure ideas and hooks presented elsewhere in this book and fully dramatized adventures like ***Ardanyan's Revenge***. If you like lots of dialogue and narration prepared in advance, you can create your own detailed notes to supplement the adventure framework. If you prefer to run your game by the seat of your pants, simply glance at these outlines, get the adventurers into trouble, and enjoy the fun.

Adventure Framework Format

No two gamemasters design adventures in the same way. Some prefer to plan for every possibility they can foresee in advance, leaving as little as possible to chance. Others prefer a looser style, where they plan the most significant events in the adventure and improvise the rest. To aid gamemasters in preparing adventures, we have devised the adventure framework format. Gamemasters can use this format to plan out the events of an adventure while maintaining as much flexibility as they like. The four parts of the adventure framework are the **Setup**, **Events**, **Climax,** and **Sequels**.

Setup

The **Setup** describes how the adventure begins and how the characters become involved in the story. This section may also include events that have led to the adventure and background on other ideas touched on in it. This section is often the longest and most detailed in the framework.

Events

Each **Event** describes an encounter or event that occurs during the course of the adventure. These events may include situations that pose problems for the characters, actions by the adventure's antagonists, creature encounters, or simply unexpected occurrences. Events are the obstacles or problems the player characters must overcome to complete the adventure successfully.

Climax

The **Climax** is the conclusion or resolution of the adventure. It describes the most likely resolution based on actions that the gamemaster expects the players to take, and so it may differ considerably from the way the adventure actually ends. Because player groups often take unexpected actions, we suggest that the gamemaster plan for more than one possible climax.

Sequels

Sequels are stories that might happen after the adventure or as a result of the adventure. Sequels may be adventures that feature the same gamemaster characters or include a magical item discovered in the first adventure. Sequels help create a sense of continuity in a campaign.

See the **Adventures and Campaigns** chapter, starting on p. 99 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***, for more information about creating **Earthdawn** campaigns and maintaining campaign continuity.

SPY GAMES

The war between the Force of the Eye and Brocher's Brood is always seething under the surface, the conflict continuing with little apparent headway made by either side. Vistrosh maintains this precarious position through cunning and utter ruthlessness. Should the characters seek to be involving in the Brood, they are swept up into Vistrosh's machinations and sent to infiltrate the Force of the Eye. However, death looms on every side as they are thrown into a lose-lose situation, forced into maintaining conflicted loyalties just to survive.

Setup

Should any player characters decide that they wish to join or infiltrate Brocher's Brood, you may use the following adventure, or the players could be approached and recruited into the Brood.

Once the player characters have joined the Brood, Vistrosh summons them for an audience. He looks piercingly into the characters' eyes, and then laughs uproariously. He tells them that their mission is to infiltrate the Force of the Eye. As new members of the Brood, they are yet unknown to the Force of the Eye, and are thus well suited for a mission like this. Once in Garlthik's gang they should lay low until contacted by their handler.

Event One

The player characters should do their best to join the Force of the Eye. After joining they are given relatively minor assignments for a few months, slowly working their way up in the ranks of the gang. Then, one day, an old beggar woman bumps into one of the characters in the market place. The player character finds that the woman has dropped a note in his pocket, instructing the group to meet a contact in one of the taverns that night, and the code phrase to use for identification to the contact. When reporting to their contact, the player characters are debriefed in the tavern on their activities in the past few months. The contact then congratulates them on their work, and tells them to continue. The player characters are not shadowed on their way to and from the meeting, but the bartender is an informant of the Force of the Eye, and has been told to look out for them. He recognizes their contact as a Brood member, so the player characters' cover is blown.

Event Two

The next morning the player characters are commanded to appear before Garlthik to be given a new assignment. When they arrive, they are set upon by the gang and unceremoniously trussed up, then thrown in separate rooms and interrogated by Terricia. The player characters have been compromised in an elaborate scheme of Vistrosh's. One of Garlthik's advisors is an agent of Vistrosh, who Garlthik believes he has turned into a double agent, supposedly spying on Garlthik for Vistrosh, but actually feeding Garlthik Vistrosh's secrets.

In fact, this advisor is really loyal to Vistrosh. In order to maintain Garlthik's trust, he gives Garlthik information every so often. The player characters were only recruited into the Brood in the first place in order for them to be sacrificed in this way. Unless the characters can persuade Terricia otherwise, she extracts all the information she can about Vistrosh's operations from them—which is not much—and then has the characters killed.

Event Three

The only real hope the player characters have in persuading Terricia not to kill them, is to convince her to let them become double agents for the Force of the Eye. If they succeed, and try to resume working for Vistrosh as if nothing has happened, Vistrosh knows, because it was his agent that tipped Garlthik off, and if the player characters aren't dead after that, they must have been turned. However, he does not wish to tip his hand, and so leaves the player characters under deep cover, for fear that trying to move against them would alert Garlthik that his operation has been

penetrated. Vistrosh uses the group as a means of sending Garlthik false information about the Brood's activities. Once Garlthik begins to suspect the quality of the information given to him by the player characters, Vistrosh considers their usefulness ended, and gives them a mission against Garlthik that he knows they will fail, such as attempting to kidnap Terricia or steal an important item from One-Eye Manor. Vistrosh hopes this will get the characters killed, maybe taking out some of Garlthik's men as well.

Climax

Unsurprisingly, this adventure has a number of ways in which the characters can get killed. In fact, unbeknownst to them, that is their alleged fate from day one: to be killed. It is this type of ruthlessness that has enabled Vistrosh to thrive in perhaps the most dangerous position in all of Barsaive. Any characters attempting to pull a fast one on him soon realize that he is no amateur.

T'KAMBRAS COINS

The characters are hired to search for a Pattern Item of House T'kambras by an unlikely agent of the House. With a journey out to the Shattered Towers, and a dangerous hunt within them, their guide at last finds the item, an elemental coin. After a clandestine hand-off, they act as decoys and become frontline fighters in T'kambras' ongoing battles with House K'tenshin.

Setup

While in Kratas, the player characters are hired by an agent of House T'kambras to escort her on her search for one of the lost Pattern Items of the t'skrang *aropagoi*. The city has become a hotspot for spies of many t'skrang houses, most notably House T'kambras and House K'tenshin, who are engaged in a bitter feud since the return of House T'kambras twelve years ago. A middle-aged ork woman who introduces herself as Ekarra approaches the group and asks them if they are interested to work for her as bodyguards. If the player characters are interested, she tells them that she is a Troubadour adept, currently working for House T'kambras, and commissioned to find the Pattern Items of the House. She offers the player characters a generous sum of silver if they agree to travel with her to the Shattered Towers (where she assumes one of the Pattern Items to be located) and act as her guards. She is willing to negotiate the payment for the group and to equip the player characters with rations and booster potions.

If asked for more details, she tells the group that House T'kambras employs a handful of non-t'skrang agents, because House K'tenshin is actively looking for T'kambras' agents and non-t'skrang aren't as readily suspected to be in that role. Ekarra has been fascinated by the history of House T'kambras and became an expert in this field over many years of study and research. She knows all of the written records about the House that can be found in the libraries of Throal, Travar, and the other *aropagoi*, as well as some books that she recovered from an old library in Kratas recently.

She wants to help the T'kambrians to get back their Pattern Items to rebuild their house to its former glory. The only Pattern Item that Ekarra was able to locate up to now is the Coin of Elemental Water that is possibly still located in one of the Shattered Towers. Even though the towers have been explored over the years, she is confident that the Coin hasn't been found yet. Her research showed her that it is located in a part of the Shattered Towers that is still sealed from the Scourge, and is only accessible via a secret level.

If the player characters accept her offer, she will order them to be ready by the next morning to begin the journey to Daiche and then upriver on board an independent t'skrang merchant ship.

Event One

The group travels to the Shattered Towers, undercover in a merchant caravan. The merchant demands to make a stop in Daiche to trade some goods, which requires the group to stay in the city for a day or two. During their stay, a group of K'tenshin spies notices the group. The spies do not suspect any of the group's true intentions, but routinely investigate what the characters are doing here, especially as they don't seem to be passing through to Kratas. The spies will not see any connection between Ekarra and the group (unless the group drags her into the city), and will not even take much interest in her.

The player characters will find out that they are being watched, and the remainder of this event is determined by their actions against the spies. They can confront them (verbally or physically), play a trick on them, or even ignore them.

Event Two

The journey from Daiche to the remnants of the Towers is calm and should lure the group into a false feeling of safety. From Daiche onwards, the group travels by riverboat. When it arrives at its destination the player characters have to use a small rowboat to reach the bank of the Tylon River. While doing so, they awake Tentacular Kelp, that attacks the rowboat and the characters.

Once inside the towers, the gamemaster should make the search for the Coin challenging and keep the player characters on their toes the whole time. It should be located deep inside the towers, likely far below the Tylon's surface.

The Shattered Towers offer the usual dangers of exploring, like debris blocking passages (or even raining down on the group), obstacles that have to be overcome by climbing up or down, passages filled by water and requiring one to dive through them, or even traps around sensitive areas, like the hiding place of the Coin. Gamemasters should tailor any combat opposition to the group, as the setting of the Towers does not require any specific opponent. The group might encounter creatures that use the Towers as a lair (such as shadowmants), spirits (elemental spirits or spirits of the former residents gone insane or become corrupted, for example), Horror Constructs (like a colony of ghouls), or even a Horror itself.

Climax

Several days later, the group's ship meets with a merchant ship of House T'kambras, where the Coin is handed over to another agent of House T'kambras, a human woman Named Lyria. Ekarra and the player characters receive an ordinary elemental coin, which they are to transport to Jedayden Westhrall and thus act as a decoy for spies of House K'tenshin. If pressed, the player characters are instructed to give the agents of House K'tenshin a good fight, but lose in the end and let them rob the coin or hand it over. The more believable the group makes this defeat appear the better.

Sequels

It is quite possible that more than one Pattern Item for House T'kambras exists, and Ekarra is able to locate another one. Being impressed by the player characters' approach, she hires them for another dungeon crawl somewhere along the Serpent. Maybe one of the items even has to be stolen from a K'tenshin vault. The item could be a banner, a riverboat steering wheel, a lute once belonging to the *shivalahala*, or something else entirely.

Also, with the Pattern Item, House T'kambras might want to start to rebuild the Shattered Towers, using them as a base of operations to spite House K'tenshin, which is weakened by its massing of troops along the Lake Ban front. The first step is to clean a small area close to the towers from dangers that might exist there (more creatures and traps) and build up a base camp for construction workers and guards. The K'tenshinians try to prevent this, but probably cannot spare the troops and ships to attack once the base is established, most likely resorting to sabotage.



Quite the Spectacle

Not many know the details of how Garlthik keeps a literal eye on his gang members, but a member of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers has found what he believes to be an item similar to that which Garlthik must use, during his explorations of Parlainth. He brings the crystal monocle to Kratas, hoping to extort a great deal of money from Garlthik, but is quickly in over his head. He dumps the item on an unsuspecting character, making the group the center of attention of many factions in Kratas. Where the item ends up and if the characters are blamed depends on their actions.

Setup

Terhik the Bold ventured into Parlainth in search of treasures. In the ruins of a magical laboratory he found a number of interesting objects. What caught his eye most was a pile of what appeared to be Amulets of the Eye, and beside them a crystal monocle that was similar in style. He returned to Kratas determined to get a high price for the crystal monocle from Garlthik, as well as bragging rights for manipulating the ork's gang. Terhik's boldness was his undoing in this venture, however. Word got out in some circles about the monocle and led to the Force hunting him down. He decided to meet the gang head-on, but after a failed meeting with a Force representative, he finds himself taking to the streets in a panic with the Force in hot pursuit.

Event One

As the player characters are walking through the streets of Kratas, they notice a large number of Force of the Eye gang members moving through the area. A commotion erupts not far behind them and a desperate figure bolts into them, crashing through them. In passing, he plants the crystal monocle on an unsuspecting character, even as gang members follow him in crashing through the characters. The Force has no patience for them being in the way, but will not slow from chasing their quarry unless attacked. The player characters may notice they are being followed after this unexplained encounter, as a number of shadowy figures try to keep tabs on them. Finding the crystal monocle later may also arouse their suspicions.

Event Two

The next morning, a young ork greets the player characters and invites them to Herinta's palace for a business proposition, going so far as to offer them a small bonus upfront for agreeing to come. Herinta plays up her importance in the city and offers them a deal, they give her the crystal monocle and she will give them a large sum of money. If they would stay on as guards, she'll pay them double the amount at the end of the week.

As the characters are considering this, a few members of the Forsaken burst into the meeting room and sounds of fighting are heard echoing in from the hallways. A full-out attack by the Forsaken is underway as Philank sees the monocle as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring down the Force of the Eye. During the ensuing battle, Herinta and Philank lose track of the player characters for a time in the press of the combatants. Taking a discreet exit may be just the thing at this point, but siding with either gang most likely turns the tide in that gang's favor, as both gangs have only few adepts, and those they do have are of low Circle.

Event Three

Wherever the player characters stay, much of the city of Kratas is searching for them, and many palms have to be greased if they decide to keep the monocle and go into hiding. Any number of petty thieves or thugs try to accost them or pick their pockets in hope of finding the monocle, even as they leave Herinta's palace. Despite their best precautions, the members of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers are aware of them and want the monocle as well, now that Terhik has told them of it. Through burglary, brute force, social engineering, bribery, or a bit of all four, Terhik and the Thieves' Compact do their best to steal the monocle back from the player characters, even as other gangs and the Force of the Eye itself are after them.

Event Four

After a time of struggling against all these forces in Kratas, a shadowy figure approaches the player characters and claims to be Bleritis, a senior member of the Force of the Eye. He demands the monocle and says he will grant the

CURSE OF LETHARGY

The Curse of Lethargy is a Major Curse (see p. XX of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***) affecting a target's concentration, morale, and will to act. It is cast upon a place and affects targets staying in that place for extended periods. The curse does not start to take effect right away, though, as its effects are quite subtle. The more time the target spends at the cursed place, the more it falls under the curse's influence.

For every full interval of 5 hours a target stays in the cursed place, a Curse Test with the curse's step of 12 is made against the target's Spell Defense. Once a number of successful Curse Tests equal to the target's Willpower step have been made, the curse starts to take effect, and the target feels dizzy and tired, reducing its work capabilities by a quarter. If the target returns to the cursed place and another Curse Test succeeds, the target become more tired, halving its work capability. Should it still return and another test is successful, the target becomes nervous and quarrelsome. A fourth successful test causes absolute mental fatigue in the target; it will have no motivation to do anything at all. The curse begins to wear off after one week away from the cursed site. For each day after one week without a successful Curse Test, reduce the number of initial successes by one. Once this brings them below the target's Willpower step, it is free of any impediments.

A target that has been subject to this curse can be detected with a successful Astral Sensing Test against the cursing Horror's Spell Defense. If this curse is unknown to the examiner, a Good result is needed to identify it as a Horror's curse.

The Curse of Lethargy can be dispelled once its pattern has been studied, as if it were a Twelfth Circle spell (the time and materials needed to study the curse are up to the gamemaster; at the gamemaster's discretion dispelling the curse requires a ritual that may itself require additional components).

player characters amnesty if they will publicly declare that the monocle has been destroyed before fleeing the city, otherwise they will continue to be hunted down. In actuality, this figure is Caleb, Vistrosh's right hand man in Brocher's Brood, hoping to get the monocle for himself. If the group has lost it, he is visibly disturbed, but says his offer stands for three days, after which time the player characters will be held responsible.

Climax

After giving the player characters enough time to squirm, one way or another Garlthik arrives at an inopportune time, with the real Bleritis and a large number of bodyguards and gang members in tow. He demands to know where the monocle is and to have it at once. If the player characters don't have the monocle, but know who does, Garlthik sends them after it. A number of his best enforcers are sent as well, but the characters had better get it first. Once the monocle is in Garlthik's possession, he is relieved, but none too happy with the player characters. Garlthik interrogates the player characters, holding the monocle as he does so. From nowhere, a magician appears and a burst of energy causes the monocle to shatter, surprising everybody and sending Garlthik into a rage. The ork storms after the caster, leaving the player characters momentarily forgotten, and able to escape.

Sequels

Terhik hasn't given up and was able to go deep into hiding in the Undercity. He approaches the characters and hires them to accompany him to Parlainth to seek out another crystal monocle there, beginning with a certain magical laboratory he remembers. Word of his leaving with a group of adepts spreads, and Garlthik's agents in Haven are ready to waylay the player characters, should they come across anything in the ruins.

Alternatively, the player characters are soon approached by Garlthik with an offer, which they had best take. He commissions them to journey to Haven and contact his men there. They are then to lead a campaign into Parlainth to recover and destroy any more crystal monocles they may find, bringing him all the pieces for verification. It is quite possible that Vistrosh or the Therans learn of this and send their own men to intercept the group, further complicating things.



TROUBLE AT THE TEMPLE

A windling questor of Floranuus is journeying through Kratas and visits the temple to Floranuus. He despairs at its condition and commits a large sum of money to repairing it, hiring a number of local workers, purchasing tools and materials, and hiring the group to supervise and manage the site. The windling departs the city, leaving the player characters in charge, with more than enough money for the job. But things start to go wrong almost immediately, and just keep getting worse. The player characters need to find the cause for all of the disturbances and strife amongst the workers, while dealing with Kratas' usual day-to-day larcenous difficulties. And they need to do it quickly; in Kratas, even that much money doesn't last long...

Setup

Eee'kaal, a windling questor of Floranuus who stops in Kratas on a journey to the North, arrives at the temple and realizes that much work is needed to bring it to the glory of pre-Scourge times again. The windling knows his own inability to stay at the same place for extended periods and seeks people who are able and willing to repair the temple. He hires local craftsmen and workers for the job, offering a generous payment and the opportunity to earn money without danger of losing life and limb, and buys a substantial collection of tools and construction material for the repairs. Eee'kaal also hires the player characters. They are supposed to act as overseers, making sure no one endangers the workers or steals from the construction site, and also controlling the workers themselves. Eee'kaal leaves Kratas the day after he hires them. On that morning, one of the player characters finds a pouch when waking up. The pouch contains the money the player characters agreed upon with Eee'kaal, the payment for the workers (about 65 gold pieces; each worker earns 2 silver pieces per day, and the repairs will take 15 workers 3 weeks), and an additional 20 gold pieces. The pouch also contains a letter from Eee'kaal, in which he says that Floranuus and his nature urge him to move on, and that he trusts the player characters enough to leave them their pay as well as that of the workers, and a small amount in case of emergency, should more workers or materials be needed.

Event One

Once the player characters have decided to do the job they were paid for, they find out that while the construction materials have already been ordered and paid for, they have not yet been delivered. The merchants supposed to deliver them have learned that Eee'kaal has left town, and are trying to take advantage of the situation. It may take some additional persuasion to get them to fulfill their contracts. This is Kratas, after all...

The player characters need to get this done as quickly as possible, though. The workers have been hired and expect to be paid. Each day it takes the group to convince the merchants to deliver eats away three of the emergency gold pieces...

Event Two

Once the repairs start, the first two days go smoothly. Soon, however, the usual quarrels begin: headmen argue, and the player characters have to mediate so the repairs go on as planned. The next day, tools and some more valuable materials are missing and a couple of workers do not show up again. The others suspect these two have stolen the missing pieces. It would cost the player characters another 10 gold pieces to buy new materials and tools, so they might want to track the missing workers down (but they can't all go, as some of them need to stay with the workers, and even at night someone has to guard the construction site). However, one of the missing workers is merely sick; the other has indeed sold off the equipment and hides in the Scrabbles with a bag of money.

Event Three

With every passing day, more and more workers work more and more slowly, as if they're lacking motivation. At the same time, they become more nervous and fights break out over minor issues. The tension between the different occupations and even races becomes obvious and every small incident is used to start a fistfight. The player characters have their hands full calming down everyone. With each day that passes, more workers don't show up, and the player characters have to track them down. While most of the workers simply stay at home (without a good explanation as to why), others are missing work because they drank too much the day before. Most of them can be convinced to return if a serious effort is made.

Event Four

On the twelfth day of work, no workers show up at the construction site at all. If the player characters visit them at their homes, they find the workers afraid of the mere thought of returning to the construction site to continue the work. Threats don't work, and neither does withholding their payment. The workers cannot explain what frightens them, but they refuse to return to work. If a player character examines a worker astrally, he sees a lingering magic presence in the worker's pattern if he beats the Spell Defense of the Horror responsible for all this misfortune (see **Climax**, below). A Good result identifies it as the effect of a Horror's powers or curse.

If the player characters try to hire other workers, they're out of luck. Rumors about the cursed temple and how it affects everyone who's working there have made the rounds in the streets of Kratas, leaving only the insane and desperate willing to work there—for a much higher payment then the original one, of course...

Climax

To solve this mystery, the player characters need to examine the grounds of the temple itself. During the Scourge, a Bloatform (see p. 286 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***) took perverse pleasure in using its powers to place a curse on the temple. The temple of the Passion of revelry and motion is now cursed, so that everyone who stays here eventually becomes tired, nervous, and eventually frightened to do

anything. Refer to the **Curse of Lethargy** sidebar on p. 195 for more details.

Once the curse is discovered, the player characters can devise a plan to break it. Breaking the curse requires studying its pattern and dispelling it. This requires the help of a powerful Wizard, and if there is none among the player characters, they have to find one and convince him to come along to lift the curse, owing him a favor in return.

As an alternative, the gamemaster can determine that the curse is broken when the Horror that caused it dies, as the curse nourishes the Horror. In this case, the Horror still lairs nearby, possibly in the Undercity below the temple, and the player characters need to defeat it to break the curse and enable the workers to return to work.



AMPAIGNS IN KRATAS

Many groups of adventurers may find themselves in Kratas for an adventure or two, but gamemasters may wish to base an entire campaign in Kratas. Several types of campaigns are well suited to the city, and a long-running campaign could include more than one of the following.

BASE OF OPERATIONS

Kratas makes an excellent base of operations for nearly any other type of campaign, as long as a group has the coin, and can scare off the local thugs. It is an excellent place to recuperate and re-equip between adventures, as nearly anything the group might need—healing, information, gear—can be had for a price here. It is especially well suited for those exploring the ancient ruins of the province, as there are a number of important sites within ten days ride of the city, such as Ustrecht, Scavia, Yrns Morgath, and un-Named ruins in the Servos Jungle and Mist Swamps. See the **Ancient Ruins Near Kratas** section on p. 187 of the **Outside Kratas** chapter.

EXPLORERS

At first glance, it might seem incongruous to set an exploration campaign in the middle of a city. However, Kratas itself is a massive breeched citadel, and there are many tiny pockets of the city that remain unexplored even today. There are dark corners of the Safehearths, the Greenmarket, the Scrabbles, and Clifftop neighborhoods, for example, yet to be explored. But this is especially true of the Undercity. A group could spend years mapping out and exploring all of the city. In doing so the player characters could encounter any number of criminals, cultists and foul folk, undead, Horror constructs, and traps. The rewards for this trouble could be loot and magical treasure, as well as lost pre-Scourge lore about the city and the surrounding area. The exploration of the city could also yield information about unopened kaers that remain in the countryside around Kratas.

GANG WARS

For an unusual, and not traditionally heroic, type of campaign, the player characters could become embroiled in the gang wars of Kratas. They could join one of the established gangs (see **Joining a Gang**, on p. 76), or they could form their own gang and try to carve their own piece of turf out of Kratas. They would face resistance from the local citizens within their territory, and would be pressured by neighboring gangs to either join them or become tributaries. They could also be hired or otherwise persuaded to ally themselves with one gang in its wars with its enemies. As soon as they appear to be a threat, other gangs will try to wipe them out. At the same time, as their territory grows, other Namegivers will try to join the gang for protection and opportunity.

The further from Hilltop the gang is, such as in the Scrabbles or the Safehearths, the more likely the player characters are to avoid the attention of Garlthik. As they rise in power and influence, the characters would eventually have to come to grips with the Force of the Eye. The end of a truly epic gang war campaign could be an effort to eliminate Garlthik and take over the city entirely.

While such a campaign would rely heavily on combat, the characters could also rely on guile and subterfuge to turn rival gangs against each other, and avoid the wrath of the more powerful gangs. As the gang grows, leadership of gamemaster characters will become important, too.

THIEVES

What better place for a crew of Thieves than Kratas? In addition to the specialized thieves' gear that can be found in the city, Thief adepts can also find training in talent knacks and for Discipline advancement from higher Circle Thieves.

Kratas is best as a place out of which Thieves work, rather than one in which they work. While Low-Circle Thieves can survive by preying on the average citizens and merchants that visit the city, for the big scores it is better for a party of Thieves to use Kratas as a base of operations from which to plan heists.

Most of the choice loot in Kratas itself is held by high-ranking Thieves like Garlthik and Vistrosh, or the members of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers. Unless the player characters are similarly talented, they would be better served by preying upon the wealthy of Throal, Travar, Jerris, and the other cities of Barsaive.

SPIES

Kratas is also a center of espionage activities in the province, and a campaign built around espionage could easily be based in the City of Thieves. In the most straightforward version of such a campaign, the player characters secretly work for one of the espionage agencies, such as the Eye of Throal, the Song Birds, the Theran *akarenti*, the Gold

Branch of the Holders of Trust, the Dragons' Network, or even the Liferock Rebellion. In this type of spy campaign, the characters are loyalists to their employers. They would also have cover identities, likely as thieves or adventurers and would receive assignments from a superior, possibly through a cut-out or blind drop.

These assignments could include gathering intelligence on the powers that be, such as military capabilities and plans, political leanings or embarrassing foibles of leaders, and secret alliances. While not strictly espionage, the characters might also be assigned to steal magical artifacts, grimoires, or Pattern Items; plant false information; blackmail; sabotage installations; or commit assassinations. (This could overlap with an assassins campaign, described below.) The player characters could also be assigned to keep an eye on, and when possible, foil the efforts of the other espionage agencies. In turn, those agencies may be assigned to watch, and thwart, the efforts of the characters.

Alternatively, the player characters could be freelance spies. Rather than working for only one agency out of loyalty and conviction, they may take assignments from any one of the many agencies on a case-by-case basis. In such a scenario, the characters are far less trusted by their employers, who reveal much less of their plans to the characters. It is likely that the characters do not even know for whom they are working. Enterprising freelancers could also gather intelligence on their own initiative, and then sell it to the highest bidder on the underground intelligence market in Kratas.

If the players have a strong appetite for intrigue and skullduggery, consider the following variation. Unbeknown to their fellows, each character is secretly a member of a different intelligence agency, and has received secret instructions that may conflict with those of the others. It is best if these conflicts are introduced slowly over many adventures, after the player characters have come to trust each other. These intrigues could be played out beneath the surface of any other type of campaign, but this requires very careful planning on the part of the gamemaster. If done properly, a simmering level of paranoia can be created.

In any type of espionage campaign stealth and spy skills are of great import, as well as social and diplomatic skills. Of course, when things go badly, combat skills are needed as well.

MERCENARIES

Kratas is known throughout the province of Barsaive as the market for mercenaries. The player characters could join one of the established companies in the Stables, or they could set up their own company. In the former case, the owner of the company would give the characters their assignments. In the latter, the characters would have



to vie with the other companies for employers who come to the Stables.

Possible jobs include escorting caravans and protecting communities from the depredations of scorchers, crystal raiders, and Theran slavers. The player characters might also be offered less savory jobs, such as helping one village annex the farmland of its neighbor. Would-be princes with spare coin, or loose promises thereof, might try to carve their own domains out of the Barsaivian countryside on the backs of soldiers-for-hire. Jobs such as these should test the morality of more heroic characters.

Finally, as political tensions in the province increase, the demand for soldiers of fortune rises as well. The *aropagoi* might hire mercenaries to fight in their conflicts, while communities near Iopos, including Jerris, might seek help resisting Denarastian expansion. As they move closer to outright war, both Thera and Throal could hire mercenary soldiers as well. Other cities, such as Travar or Urupa, might want to beef up their forces to try to remain neutral in the coming conflict.

ASSASSINS

A decidedly unheroic campaign involves the player characters playing assassins. They could be given these assignments by a spymaster, (see **Spies**, above) or as part of their duties as members of one of the city's gangs, or they could try to join the Silent Shepherds. Otherwise, the characters could be freelance assassins. It is known in certain circles that Kratas is the place to go to hire killers, and the characters would be among those. Each adventure, an employer would hire the player characters to kill someone. These adventures could be tied together as a campaign by the after effects of the killings. The relatives or friends of the victims might come seeking vengeance, in the middle of another job. Perhaps the characters might start with scruples by only targeting those who deserve it, or not targeting the defenseless. Their ethics may be tried by deceptive employers, or innocent bystanders, adding moral conflict. Furthermore, as the characters' legend and infamy grows, they are sought after both by groups of heroes wishing to rid the province of their evil and by more powerful employers. The latter may include political agents or secret societies, which entangle the player characters in the politics of Barsaive, possibly forcing them to take sides.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

Secret Societies

All right, boy, I'll tell you what you want to know, but remember this: knowledge is power, and power corrupts.

• An overly curious Troubadour's last words •

There are many secret societies active in Kratas. Some have interests particular to the city or its environs, while others merely find the city a useful resource for information, supplies, and recruits to carry out their larger agendas.

Domestic Societies

The following groups are secret societies that have a special interest in Kratas. This interest can be tracked back to the city's history and legends, current politics, or future interests.

The Brotherhood of Kra Tys

On certain nights—without any identifiable pattern—mysterious rituals are performed on the Kratas mesa. Whenever a meeting occurs, usually about once or twice a year, observers from Clifftop or the occasional airship passing by witness red light not emanating from fire, but rather from some magical source, at the middle of the plateau, reflecting off its black rock.

Garlthik has been aware of these happenings for over 25 years and has investigated the matter. However, due to the irregularities of the meetings on the mesa he has not discovered much. While no traces of activity are ever left on the mesa itself, there are always increased numbers of obsidimen in the City of Thieves after these night-time illuminations. Businesses run by the Force have standing orders to report whenever a larger number of obsidimen is seen in Kratas, so that Garlthik can anticipate one of these meetings and send someone to have a closer look at them. He is not yet sure if he should contact any obsidimen that might be participants in these meetings; he is not worried about what they might do if he were to contact them, but does not wish to alert them to his interest, either.

Being ever watchful, the Therans have also noticed the odd illuminations, at first suspecting the obsidimen to be supporting the Liferock Rebellion in some manner. What they have found out is that, while they share the Dreaming and some of them play minor roles in the Liferock Rebellion, the obsidimen meeting on the mesa are not connected in any way outside of their mysterious night-time activities. The Therans have developed a theory based on the fact that these meetings were unheard of prior to the Scourge, and assigned the group the name Purifier's Council, as knowledge they have gathered about several of the obsidimen has revealed that some of the group are, indeed, Purifiers. Expecting the obsidimen to be fighters against the Horrors' corruption, the Therans have left them alone for now.

> *How convenient. It is an open secret in Theran intelligence circles that the order to leave the Purifier's Council alone came directly from Kanidris. That's right, the obsidimen First Governor of Thera. And while obsidimen are always secretive when it comes to their Dreaming, Kanidris' actions go a bit too far to throw the Empire's spies off track here. What is worth that risk these obsidimen take by entering the Dreaming—or what are they hiding?*
>
> **– Eye of the Sphinx**

The Courtiers of Valvidius

Valvidius was a legendary Thief who lived prior to the Scourge. He eliminated his rivals and had himself crowned King of Thieves, having a crown made for himself, but he was cursed by Vestrial and destroyed (see the **Legend of**

Valvidius on p. 180). His crown, now the legendary Crown of Thieves, survives and is said to possess great powers of influence over thieves. The Courtiers of Valvidius is a living legend cult dedicated to recovering the crown. While this group keeps its membership and activities secret, the fact of its existence has leaked out. Rumors persist of the Courtiers skulking around Kratas and Florque, looking for the crown or any clues to its whereabouts.

Why the Courtiers want the Crown of Thieves, and what they plan to do with it, is unclear and a matter of speculation. The obvious answer is that a master thief who plans on taking over Kratas leads them. Others suggest that they work for Brocher's Brood, the Eye of Throal, or Thera, and wish to use the crown to weaken Garlthik's stature among the thieves of Kratas, in anticipation of an attack on his rule. Garlthik seems to believe that they may wish him ill, in that he has quietly ordered the Force of the Eye to be alert for the Courtiers and to thwart their efforts if they are discovered. Garlthik claims the crown is tainted by its association with Vestrial and wants nothing to do with it, but also does not want it to fall into the hands of his potential enemies. Others suggest that this is merely a ruse and that Garlthik is actually the secret power behind the Courtiers, as he wants the crown for himself. What is clear is that the Crown of Thieves has not yet been found either in Florque or Kratas.

The Courtiers only number a dozen or so Namegivers, but they are almost all Thieves or Illusionists. U'kitalank, a t'skrang Eighth Circle Illusionist and Fifth Circle Thief, leads them. He is also a Rank 8 questor of Vestrial, though he keeps that last fact a secret from the rest of the Courtiers. He also keeps secret from them his real reason for searching for the crown: he received a vision from Vestrial in which the Passion told him the rest of the legend of Valvidius. According to the established tale, when Vestrial exacted his wrath upon Valvidius for betraying his fellow Thieves, the King of Thieves and all his loot simply disappeared. No one knew if he was slain by Vestrial or if some other punishment was meted out to him.

Vestrial told U'kitalank that he wished to administer the worst punishment he could think of for a freedom-loving Thief: eternal imprisonment. However, Vestrial himself could not bear to administer such a punishment, and so turned Valvidius over to his fellow Passions, Erendis and Mynbruje. Mynbruje pronounced judgment over Valvidius, that he was to be imprisoned for a thousand years, and Erendis constructed a prison in astral space in which to hold him. The thousand years of imprisonment are nearing completion (as Passions measure things), but Dis has made it clear to Vestrial that he no longer has any intention of freeing Valvidius. Vestrial now wishes to employ Valvidius as his agent in Barsaive, and he believes that he can use the Crown of Thieves to free Valvidius from Dis' dungeon. Once free, Vestrial will give Valvidius the Crown of Thieves and place him in charge of Kratas, with his Courtiers in positions of power, U'kitalank first among them. At least, this is the story that Vestrial has told U'kitalank. Considering the source, this tale is just as likely to be a lie as it is to be true. If it is a lie, then Vestrial must have some other purpose, though it may be as simple as merely sending one of his devoted followers on a wild-goose chase.

THE MAGISTERIUM RESURGENT

This is a living legend cult that is dedicated to restoring the city-state of the Magisterium of Kratas. Its members revere Orgon the Despot (see **Outside Kratas**, p. 176) and believe that the tales of his authoritarian excesses are exaggerated.

The cult draws most of its followers from the villages around Kratas. In some of these villages, members tell stories of the glories of the Magisterium. Not only would a restored city-state bestow some of this glory upon the inhabitants of these villages, but it is also hoped that a renewed Magisterium would be able to impose some law and order in the area and put an end to the incessant attacks on the villages from scorchers, bandits, and thieves.

Far from glossing over Orgon the Despot's heavy-handed tactics, members of the cult believe that a new despot is necessary to clear the scum out of Kratas. They have discovered a series of old scrolls from a mysterious pre-Scourge prophet know only as the Blind Seer. According to these prophecies, a new leader will arise to purge Kratas of its criminals and lead the city-state to greater glory. However, these prophecies are maddeningly abstruse. For example: "The hawk will soar when the river is red and the stars burn cold; then shall the mice be hunted." These pronouncements, while providing hope and encouragement to the villagers, do not provide a clear course of action.

Some of the cultists spend hours pouring over and debating these prophecies, and then attempt to speed along their fulfillment by performing obscure rituals. Others think that the prophecies are merely inspirational and should not be taken literally. This latter group seeks to establish the Magisterium through conventional political and military means. They are not idiots, however, and know that they have nowhere near enough support to mount a serious attack on the thieves of Kratas, at least not yet. These differences of opinion on the meaning of the prophecies do not lead to actual separate organizations, and followers of both kinds work together.

To increase their power and influence, both schools of thought within the Magisterium Resurgent are pursuing two main avenues of action. The first is on the propaganda front and is mostly conducted at the firesides of the village taverns. There, the members of the Magisterium Resurgent retell the stories of Orgon the Despot, playing up his success in maintaining order and safety, and omitting his horrible crimes against his own subjects. They hope to eventually win over the majority of those living in the area of the former Magisterium to its cause, though they think this will realistically take many years.

Their second course of action is to gather resources for an eventual assault. This includes mundane weaponry and treasure, but its most coveted subjects are artifacts left over from the days of the Magisterium, especially objects belonging to Orgon, such as his scepter. Those who follow



the prophecies believe that the recovery of these artifacts is necessary for the rebirth of the city-state, while the more practically minded think that they may have useful magical properties, possibly as pattern items, or at least as useful standards around which to rally the populace.

The Magisterium Resurgent only numbers a hundred Namegivers at this point, but the cult is slowly growing. Most of the members are not adepts, but are only simple farmers or local merchants. The group has little structure or hierarchy, though members can be found in most villages of the area. The symbol that they use to identify themselves is a stylized scepter, and one member can identity himself to others by idly scratching the symbol in the dirt with a stick while talking of other things. Such symbols are quickly erased, and members of the group do not tattoo the symbol on themselves, wear it as an amulet, or otherwise keep a permanent form of it on their persons. They rightly fear that, should their organization and objective be discovered, the scorchers, Dinganni, Garlthik, and possibly Thera and Throal would try to crush them.

Not every villager victimized by the scorchers or thieves of Kratas is sympathetic to the Magisterium Resurgent, however. Some still remember old stories of the terrible injustices committed by Orgon, and think that those who wish to restore his kind of rule must be followers of the Mad Passions.

The Magisterium Resurgent does not have any formal leadership, but the most influential Namegiver among its members is a human Named Klar Tregon. Klar is a sometime merchant and farmer from the village of Redtree, who often travels to the Greenmarkets in Kratas to sell his and his neighbors' produce. While there, he also looks for any relics of Orgon, or information about the Magisterium. He has scoured Florque as well as Kratas, but with no positive results. Tregon secretly believes that he is descended from Orgon, and hopes to eventually place himself on the Magistrate's throne. In anticipation of leading his forces to retake Kratas, he began studying the ways of war, and has become a Fourth Circle Warrior, though he claims that this has just been to defend his village against raiders, and still affects the manners of a humble farmer. He may in fact be descended from Orgon, as the Despot had dozens of wives and concubines, and hundreds of offspring. Statistically, there is a good chance that any human in the area is descended from Orgon.

It's no surprise that many rumors about Klar Tregon exist—especially about his trainer or mentor (if he had one). Not only does Garlthik pay well for any information about the man, other parties are willing to do the same. Most hope to use Klar and his followers for their own plans.

— Hat'schi, Windling Wizard

The Undercity Delvers

With some irregularity, a small group of elves enters the Undercity. Only by their typical Kratan cloaks is it obvious some of them hail from the city, while the majority seem to travel to Kratas for these meetings, but never as a group. All of them navigate Kratas and even the Undercity with great ease, as if they have been living here their whole lives and a bit longer (taking a typical Kratan lifespan as a base). It is unknown how often they meet in the Undercity, as they are quite well versed in the ways of stealth, and have only been sighted above ground half a dozen times, and even less often below. Garlthik is not aware of this group's existence, but some of the more shadowy Kratan magicians are – rumors have made their round in the Darks – and so is Vistrosh. He has pulled out his men from parts of the Undercity these elves might traverse, though whether out of fear of annoying them or because he is cooperating with them is not even known to his closest allies.

One night, with only a few patrons remaining, a somewhat drunken human spurred an open discussion on these elves in the Locale. He suggested that they were researching an ancient city below the Undercity, had already made some progress, and that at one point, they might even destabilize Kratas' pattern by enacting some kind of old, mysterious ritual that will restore the pattern of this ruined city. The next day, said human was found dead, his body heavily mutilated, but his face absolutely intact. Do you wonder what is going on there? Let me tell you: There are two groups of highly skilled magicians at work in the Undercity. It seems they are aware of each other, but have never met. However, they are each trying to undermine the other's foothold in the city; both have several unidentified agents in Kratas itself.

—Costrak



The Kratan Branches

The following secret societies operate on a larger scale than Kratas alone, but have interests in the City of Thieves. Above all, Kratas provides an anonymous safety to these groups; with all the dangers the city poses, it is still a place where these groups can hide from their enemies while retaining the advantages of being in a city. Garlthik does not like to see the activities of most of these organizations in his city, and in fact tries to get rid of them at any occasion, but without much success.

The Hand of Corruption

Members of the Hand of Corruption believe that the world's cycles of magic, and consequently the Scourge, are a natural process, which should be allowed to run its course. In their view, the *Rites of Protection and Passage* interfered with the proper way of the world. As evidence of this, members of this society argue that any misery suffered by Namegivers is due to the artificial prolonging of their existence. Thus, the Hand of Corruption seeks to complete the work of the Scourge and destroy all Namegivers and their civilizations. These cultists see the attempts of Thera, Throal, and all other nations to rebuild the world as ultimately futile. They believe the world is irredeemably corrupt and doomed to destroy itself, and the only rational response to this is to accelerate it along its course.

To bring down all civilization, the Hand follows different strategies. Undermining societies is the task of the Brokers, non-adepts or adepts without major fighting capabilities, who sabotage a society's infrastructure with the intent of leading it to collapse, by poisoning water supplies or subtly bringing Namegivers up against each other, for example. They also coordinate larger operations, gather information, and prepare for the work of the feared Assassins. Many of them travel the province, but a number of them are settled in important places.

At least one Broker lives in Kratas: Sargan the Blue. He is a seemingly small-time merchant that runs a shop off of Merchants' Row, Sargan's Supplies and Sundries. His goods are known to be of good quality and reasonably priced, by Kratan standards. He deals in a little bit of everything, but specializes in adventuring gear. This latter interest gives him opportunities to meet new possible recruits, as well as giving an excuse for his contacts to visit his store. He often commissions caravans to carry small cargoes, which contain hidden messages and instructions. He seems helpful and often provides advice to adventurers who frequent his shop, in fact sending them to their own or someone else's doom. He is also a rumormonger and sows dissension among the various gangs and factions in Kratas, to help maintain the current level of violence and distrust on the streets of the city, which is close to the Hand's ideals of a society in the final stages of dissolution.

The prominent Assassins of the Hand are highly trained killers, trained and headquartered in the Castle of Assassins, hidden deep within the Mist Swamps. The Assassins carry out some killings in order to advance their devious schemes to strip the world of Namegivers, and others simply to gain money to support this scheme. After a killing, the Assassins often perform elaborate rituals with the blood and body parts of their victims. They arrange the blood and organs of their victims in complex patterns that correspond to the positions of stars, using a form of blood magic powered by the victims' blood. The ritual allows them to remain undetected and strengthens the magic of dissolution.

It is presumed that there is at least one Hand of Corruption Assassin working out of Kratas, because when a number of open contracts for assassinations have been announced in those spots in the city where such things are advertised, some of the marks of these contracts have been discovered mutilated in ways that suggest they were the victims of the Hand's rituals.

> *No member of the Hand of Corruption would leave such obvious evidence on his victims. It's a decoy, used by a smart assassin who is not connected to the group at all.*
>
> **— Gillian, Human Thief**

KEYS OF DEATH

The Keys of Death is one of the deadliest secret societies in Barsaive, and perhaps the most active such group in Kratas. The Keys worship Death as the thirteenth Passion, and believe that the other Passions tricked and imprisoned him under Death's Sea. The Keys believe that Death will be freed from his prison when enough blood is spilled. They believe it is necessary when they kill someone for that person's blood to seep into the earth so that it will contribute to the freeing of Death. Therefore, they prefer methods of killing that cause as much loss of blood as possible, and prefer to kill their victims outdoors or over dirt floors. Each member of the Keys of Death also has his own personalized set of Death Robes that he wears when committing these murders. The Death Robes are black and covered with symbols that represent Death to that individual. When not wearing their Death Robes, members of the Keys can follow all walks of life, from humble farmers to experienced adventurers.

The Keys have a strong interest and presence in Kratas, which is not at all pleasing to Garlthik. For their part, the Keys despise Garlthik as well. The legend that Garlthik's long life is attributable to his stealing a day of life from Death every night, if true, is heretical and blasphemous in the eyes of the Keys, and they want to take revenge upon Garlthik for his defiling of Death. They have not yet mounted any serious attacks against Garlthik, however, at least not any that the Force admits to having repulsed.

Their interests in Kratas are not limited only to the city's leader. Kratas also provides the Keys with many opportunities to soak the city's soil with blood. Many people disappear in Kratas every day; some end up as fodder for the Keys of Death. The Keys often spirit their victims down into the Undercity, both to avoid detection and to get the victims' blood closer to Death's prison. More than one corpse has been found down there, suspended upside down from the ceiling, with its throat slit in such a way that nearly all of the blood is drained out of the body and into the soil. While most of the Keys in the city live average lives during the day, it is believed that some of them have hideouts in the Undercity as well.

Some members of the Keys of Death hire themselves out as professional killers, not only to serve their patron by killing, but also as a way to raise money to further the interests of the society. The Keys are sought after as assassins because of their ruthlessness and rabid devo-



compulsion to spill blood, they rarely perform a quiet killing, and it is usually apparent that the killing was no accident. Rarely, a spectacularly bloody "accident" could be arranged, such as a fall from a very great height.

The Keys' hatred for Garlthik, the easy availability of victims, and the opportunities for murder may not be the only reasons the Keys of Death haunt the streets and sewers of Kratas, and Garlthik suspects as much. He has heard stories from the old timers that the Keys of Death flocked to Kratas after the Scourge, before any of the three reasons listed above were in evidence. Indeed, he has peripheral intelligence that the Keys are up to some other mysterious activity in the Undercity, but does not know what that might be.

Unlike the Hand of Corruption and most of the other secret societies, the Keys of Death are not very well organized and have no known leaders or hierarchy. Many of them work in small groups, or completely alone. However, almost all of them are adepts of stealthy or combat-oriented Disciplines, which makes it very difficult for the Force of the Eye to hunt down or infiltrate the group. While Garlthik's men have caught and executed individual members of the cult, confirmed through discovering their Death Robes, this has given little headway against the cult as a whole.

The lack of clear leadership makes the Keys of Death a good cover-up for an assassin who wants to leave false hints.

— Belphegor, Elven Scout

Deniers of Death

Among his other "virtues," Raggok is the Passion of the undead, and the Deniers of Death are dedicated to this facet, serving him as questors. The Deniers consider the imprisonment of Death, under the leadership of Raggok, to have been a great gift to Namegivers, allowing forms of healing such as death cheat charms, and even eternal life of a sort: undeath. (Indeed, some of the members of this cult are themselves undead.)

The Deniers are sworn enemies of the Keys of Death, because they believe that, should the Keys succeed in freeing Death, undeath and other forms of resurrection will no longer be possible. Destroying members of the Keys of Death is also an Act of Devotion for the Deniers. Raggok has in fact created the Deniers to counter the Keys. Because the Keys are quite active in Kratas, the Deniers have their major operations in Kratas as well. A number of members of the Keys of Death have been slain by the Deniers, and, as a perverse torment, reanimated as undead servants and forced to stand guard at the Deniers' hidden rituals, where the cultists denounce Death and praise Raggok. The Keys, in turn, staked out the old temple to Rashomon in Temple Square, figuring the questors would be drawn to it, and slew one of them when he visited. Both of these groups are extremely secretive, and so have kept their feud mostly unnoticed by the citizenry.

The leaders of the Deniers in Kratas are Orliana Silversmile, a charming and beautiful elf Nethermancer, and Wrylinder the Morbid, a human Nethermancer who has been turned into an undead. The two of them are lovers, despite Wrylinder's apparent state of death. He is well preserved for a dead man, and, until recently, when his state of decay became too pronounced to hide, the two of them could often be found canoodling in the Darks. Orliana still makes appearances there, but not as frequently as she did when Wrylinder could still attend with her. They both carry themselves in an aristocratic manner, delighting in luxuries and wearing elaborate jewelry, cloaks, and tunics. Orliana wears a beautiful set of hide armor, made from the pelt of a storm wolf.

The rest of the cult is made up of a number of foul folk, as well as a dozen or so low- to mid-Circle adepts, including some Nethermancers studying under the leaders of the cult. The cult also maintains undead servants.

The cultists have erected a temple to Raggok deep in the Undercity, which serves as their headquarters. Orliana and Wrylinder live in an elaborate suite of rooms next to the ritual chamber, where sacrifices to Raggok, in which Namegivers are tortured and slain, are performed and the victims are animated as undead. The cultists also collect the blood of their victims in large basins, but rather than spill it on the ground as the Keys of Death do, they drink it or use it in magical rituals.

Nemesis' Minions

While not organized into a society in its own right, the minions of Nemesis (see p. 161 of the ***Gamemaster's Companion***) operate according to their master's vile plan throughout the province, hoping for adepts to accept advice or objects from them so Nemesis can use its Horror Mark power on those with good intentions.

Some of the Minions are plagued with Nemesis' taint to such an extent that they can live nowhere else but in this city, which seems to accept even the corrupted (for example, see the **Fringe**, p. 148). What adept wouldn't believe the elf, who has obviously been driven mad, when he says that he really encountered the Horror the adept is looking for, and that he knows its weak point is fire–because the mad elf has heard the Horror say so in his head?

Further reasons for the Minions' presence in Kratas include the slave trade, and the city being close to several of the Horror's strongholds scattered throughout Barsaive. It could be that Nemesis has a stronghold in Kratas; with his many guises and mysterious ways to come and go it's certainly possible.

Followers of the Twelve

Prior to the Scourge there existed in Barsaive, and other parts of the Theran Empire, a very obscure and esoteric philosophical group known as the Followers of the Twelve. These scholars were concerned with the history and nature of the Passions, and sought to achieve a state of Namegiver perfection by cultivating a balance in their lives between all

twelve of the Passions. This was not a popular pursuit, as their study and rituals took great time and effort, for little practical benefit. The Followers were never able to manifest any questor abilities, despite spending many years studying with questors of all the Passions. Spiritual enlightenment, not magical abilities, was their goal. While the Followers did not actively keep their existence secret before the Scourge, they did not proselytize, and so very few knew of their beliefs and activities. Their writings and ritual sites have all but disappeared from the world.

There has been a very small, and very secret, revival of the Followers of the Twelve since the Scourge. This new iteration of the cult seeks to revive the practice of following the twelve Passions. To accomplish this, they have two objectives. First, they wish to rediscover the writings and shrines of their pre-Scourge predecessors. Chief among these are the currently lost tome, *the Twelve-sided Circle*, written by their legendary founder, Quilena Stargazer; and the Library of the Passions. The latter is believed to have been built somewhere in Barsaive, and contained invaluable writings about, and histories of, each of the Passions and the philosophical writings of the Followers of the Twelve. It may also have contained powerful artifacts useful to questors. The Followers believed that the Passions would be needed by Namegivers to rebuild after the Scourge, and so they built this library to withstand the Scourge, including hiding its underground location.

The Followers of the Twelve believe that discovering these artifacts will help them with their second goal, which is to cure the Mad Passions of their insanity. This group does not follow the Mad Passions, and its members carefully watch each other to look for signs of anyone falling under the Mad Passions' sway. They make a point of referring to Raggok and Dis by their pre-madness Names: Rashomon and Erendis.

The Followers are very small in number, perhaps only a few dozen in all of Barsaive. Nevertheless, a handful of them are active in Kratas. They have reason to believe that the Library of the Passions may lie within the area around Kratas, possibly in the Tylon peaks. Placing the Library here would have been convenient for gathering information on the Passions from the questors making pilgrimages to the Tylon peaks, and the Passions are said to be gathered here in the form of the famous spires. The Followers of the Twelve also scour the markets of Kratas for any copies of *the Twelve-sided Circle*, or any other writings of interest, as well as soliciting the city's information brokers for any knowledge of the Library. While their objective is noble, they maintain a prudent secrecy to their efforts, as many Namegivers are understandably wary of anyone showing an interest in the Mad Passions.

One member of the Followers in Kratas is a dwarf Sixth Circle Traveled Scholar Named Eliana Throm. She is originally from Throal, and has worked in the Great Library. She spends some time in the Darks and other taverns of the Safehearths, cagily teasing out information. She also travels around the province running down leads, especially in the Tylon Peaks and in the Great Library of Throal. She



might hire adventurers to chase down any leads she may have heard about, or even to accompany her on her quests. She is discrete about her true interests, and will only hire those who don't ask too many questions. This might lead players to surmise that she is up to no good, but her intentions are pure.

The Liferock Rebellion

In the year 1509, the Theran behemoth *Triumph* landed at the Ayodhya Liferock, and overnight a new secret society was born (see p. 15 of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***). The Liferock Rebellion is dedicated to driving the Therans out of Barsaive and freeing the Liferock from beneath the behemoth. The rebellion is lead by Omasu (see p. 15 of ***Gamemaster's Guide***), head of the Overland Trading Company, and one of the obsidimen of the Ayodhya Liferock. The few obsidimen of the Ayodhya Brotherhood who were away from the Liferock when the behemoth landed form the core of the Rebellion, including Omasu and his co-elder, an adventurer and Elementalist Named Granal. Other Namegivers have flocked to the Rebellion, notably obsidimen from other Liferocks, horrified at the desecration of Ayodhya, and many t'skrang, who also revere Ayodhya as an important stop on the Serpent River Pilgrimage Route.

While the Liferock Rebellion is the youngest secret society in Barsaive, it is rapidly growing, and it has the enormous wealth of Omasu and his trading company at its disposal. It is also more powerful than its size and age might suggest, as its important activities include coordinating and sponsoring the actions of other anti-Theran groups in the province, including most notably the Eye of Throal, the Vivane resistance, the Force of the Eye, the t'skrang *aropagoi* of V'strimon and Syrtis, and the new ork nation of Cara Fahd. The Liferock Rebellion also hires groups of adepts to perform specific tasks in the areas of sabotage, gathering of intelligence, and relay of information between the different groups involved in the fight against the Therans.

The Liferock Rebellion uses Kratas for a number of its activities, such as recruiting new members, hiring mercenaries and adventurers, and gathering intelligence on the Therans. The head of the Rebellion in Kratas is a member of the Ayodhya Brotherhood, an obsidiman Warrior Named Rotasan, formerly a leader of a small band of highwaymen. Rotasan and Omasu had some mysterious animosity between them, understood only by other obsidimen. Indeed, prior to 1509, Rotasan went out of his way to rob the caravans and warehouses of the Overland Trading Company. However, after the landing of the behemoth, Rotasan revealed that he was of the Ayodhya brotherhood, and joined the Rebellion. He prefers to deal with Granal, but will work with Omasu when necessary. Now he is the public face of the Liferock Rebellion in Kratas, recruiting adventurers and hiring mercenaries to attack Theran caravans traveling between Vivane and *Triumph*. This position puts him at some risk, and it is rumored that the Theran *akarenti* have put a price on Rotasan's head. However, Rotasan is a dangerous foe and a well-respected, experienced resident of Kratas, so few Kratans would try to collect this bounty.

Unbeknown to the general public, there is another important member of the Liferock Rebellion in Kratas. Xent'ka is a t'skrang Boatman of the K'tenshin *aropagoi*. Despite her house's pro-Theran leanings, Xent'ka was appalled at the sacrilege of the Therans, having been deeply moved by her own pilgrimage many years ago. She has kept her disgust secret, however, and to all appearances she is a loyal, pro-Theran *aropagoinya* who trades for her house in Kratas and Daiche. She uses her position to gain intelligence about the Therans, and passes information on to Rotasan and the rest of the Brotherhood. She is using Omasu's funding to develop her own network of spies and informants throughout the province. While her network is still relatively small, she is also able to buy many secrets from the freelance spies and information brokers in Kratas. In addition, she uses her network to deliver coded messages between the various factions with which the Rebellion allies itself. She is also on the lookout for magical and elemental lore, especially any that might help with the restoration of the Liferock.

Player characters could get involved with the Liferock Rebellion in Kratas in a number of ways. They might wish to join of their own volition, or they could be hired by Rotasan to attack Theran interests in the province. Xent'ka could hire them to gather intelligence or carry messages, but she would do so using cutouts and dead drops, so that the characters could not trace their employer back to her and the Rebellion. Alternately, the characters could decide they want to collect the Theran bounty on Rotasan, though the obsidiman has powerful friends he can call upon for protection, including Garlthik. Akarenti Gendel of Triumph could also hire the characters to infiltrate the Liferock Rebellion. The Therans are desperate to get a double agent into Omasu's network.

CHAPTER TWENTY

A Discourse on Traps

**By Thilmon Nine-fingers, Imperial Traps Master—
for the Edification of Imperial Engineers and Architects
Employed in Constructing Garrisons, Fortifications,
Cities, and Kaers for the safety of the Theran Empire.**



t should not need saying, but this document must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the barbarians of the provinces.

Many of you have felt the need to install traps of one sort or another, to protect your wealth and lives from thieves and bandits. Many of you have petitioned Thera for advice. Others have proceeded unaided, with frankly haphazard designs and mixed results. This document is a humble attempt at a more methodical approach to the design of traps, and it is the author's hope that this will be of use. Even though they are not anticipated to reach our world for several hundred years yet, it is not too early to begin thinking about the traps we will build to protect our kaers to defend against the Horrors.

There are several factors one must consider before designing a trap. First is the issue of effect: what do you want to happen when the trap is sprung? The possible effects can be grouped into four main categories: the *denial of access* to a place or thing, the *sounding of an alarm*, the *capturing* of the thief, and last but not least, the *injuring* or *killing* of him. Let us examine these more closely.

A denial of access trap is the most benevolent, and is best used in places where an innocent might accidentally walk into the trapped area. These usually involve a barrier, such as a gate or door falling down to block off a hallway or doorway, or a cage falling down around a valuable object.

One clever design involved a tunnel dug beneath a river. When the trap was sprung, a door opened in the roof of the tunnel, flooding it. The tunnel looped back upon itself many times, making it longer than necessary so that a Namegiver could not swim through it with one breath (excepting t'skrang, of course). In the design I saw, the trap was sprung at the entrance to the tunnel, giving the trespasser ample time to retreat as the water began to fill the passage. The trespasser would end up wet at the ankles, but none the worse for wear. Had the trigger been placed in the middle of the tunnel, however, this would most likely have drowned the interloper, rather than merely denying him access.

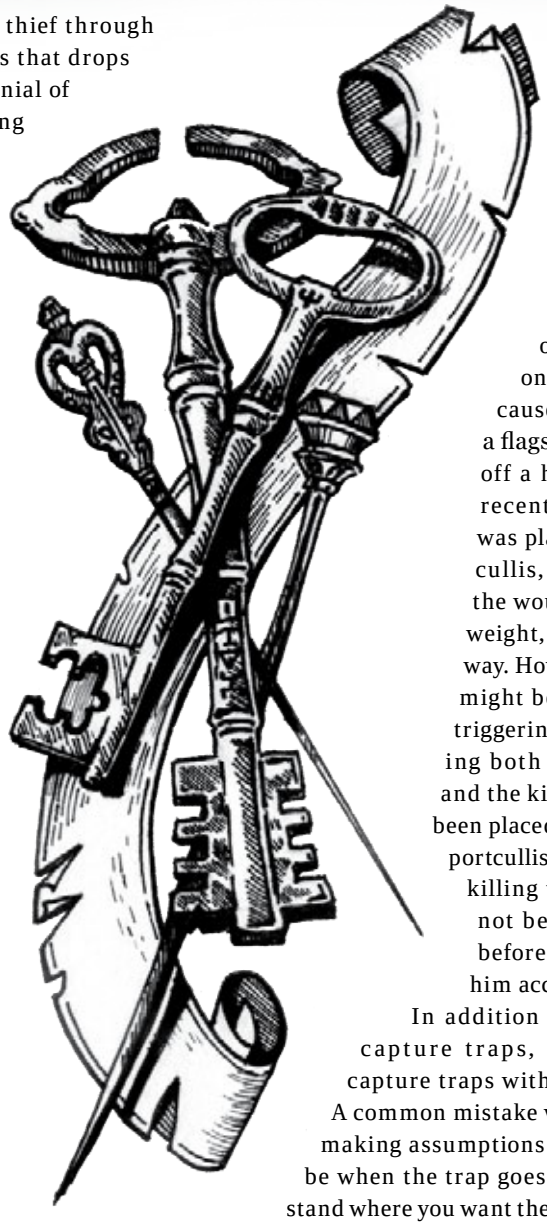
Other ingenious types of barriers that I have seen involve moats, filled with water, or, in one installation near a volcano, molten magma. These moats may also contain fierce creatures, whether in water or simply in a dry pit. To make the moat a trap, one merely rigs the platform or bridge that crosses it to fall away when a trigger is activated. Placing the trigger before the bridge makes this a denial of access trap; putting the trigger on the bridge makes it a death trap.

Do not get stuck in the mindset that a denial of access trap can only place a barrier between a thief and his target; it could also move the target. For example, a Theran treasury held a large chest full of gold coins in the bursar's office, for paying soldiers, contractors, vendors, and such. If anyone touched the chest without holding the bursar's seal of office (which was magically keyed to the trap), the chest would drop through a trapdoor and down a deep and narrow shaft. The chest could be retrieved by a tedious hand crank mechanism that took several minutes of sweaty labor to raise it. The junior clerks who accidentally brushed against the chest, and then had to crank up the chest under the disapproving eye of the bursar and those waiting to be paid, rarely made that mistake more than once.

Alarms are one of the simplest traps, and can easily be attached to other effects—a set of bells hung on a falling portcullis, a gong or drum struck by a falling trapdoor, and so on. These are only effective, however, when a guard is present to check on the trap. If one is putting capture traps in areas where innocents may wander, it is important to attach alarms so that guards can come and free them. A variant of the alarm trap is a marker that covers the thief with ink or other identifying material, sometimes magical, so that the thief responsible can be picked out of a crowd. Again, this is only useful if someone investigates.

Another form of alarm trap is a guard animal. A well-trained guard dog might kill or capture a thief, but can also sound an alarm by barking.

A capture trap seeks to restrain the thief through snaring or imprisoning him. A portcullis that drops across a hallway, blocking it, makes a denial of access trap, keeping the thief from going forward. A second portcullis, falling behind the thief captures him. Another classic capture trap is the pit trap that drops the thief into a pit below, presumably too deep to easily climb out of. Be careful though, in that such traps can kill from the drop, even without the addition of spikes at the bottom. Other capture traps involve snares where ropes or chains snag a limb of the intruder, sometimes pulling him off his feet. Nets are also sometimes used this way, enveloping the victim's entire body. Another type of snare involves powerful magical glues, some derived from creatures such as giant spiders. Much success has been had with coating floors, doorknobs, and even decoy treasure chests with these substances. One other type of capture trap involves the use of paralytic or sleep gases, poisons, or spells to incapacitate the victim.



However, whenever installing a capture trap, it is important to include an alarm and/or schedule regular checks by guards. On the one hand, a competent thief can eventually escape from most capture traps if left to his own devices. Conversely, a capture trap can become an inadvertent death trap if an innocent wanders into it, and is left to die of thirst or hunger.

A death trap, of course, attempts to kill its victims. Common forms involve dropping the victim from a height, often on to spikes, or having heavy objects dropped onto the victim. Other death traps involve shooting projectiles such as arrows, bolts, or spears at the victim. Other weapons, usually blades of some sort, can swing up, down, or out of walls. These weapons are often coated with poison, and small needles or darts can be made lethal through this means. Some other death traps try to drown, suffocate, or burn victims; or release poison gases or powerful spell effects. Another type of death trap involves releasing a vicious creature to attack the victim.

Be wary of any trap that involves animals, in that these creatures are not always predictable. Some creatures will not attack if they have recently eaten, and you are committing those who come after you to the expense and bother of caring for the creatures. Animals also die, and if your trap depends on them, your trap will be ineffective in the time it takes to replace a dead guard animal. Remember in the case of kaer defenses, we want to design traps that will last for centuries with minimal maintenance.

A trap may contain more than one effect, but this is sometimes foolish or unnecessary. For example, one classic denial of access trap causes a portcullis to drop when a flagstone is stepped on, blocking off a hallway. I saw one of these recently where the trigger stone was placed directly under the portcullis, with the hope of crushing the would-be thief under its falling weight, as well as blocking the hallway. However, a suitably nimble thief might be able to leap forward after triggering the trap (as I was), bypassing both the denial of access effect and the killing attempt. Had the stone been placed several yards in front of the portcullis, there would be no chance of killing the thief, but he would also not be able to get under the gate before it fell, successfully denying him access to the hallway.

In addition to combining alarms with capture traps, I also recommend using capture traps with death traps when possible. A common mistake when building death traps is making assumptions about where the victim will be when the trap goes off. Namegivers will rarely stand where you want them to, and also vary greatly in size. You will not be present to aim your crossbow bolts or swinging, bladed pendulum when the trap is triggered. By using a capture trap first, you can control where the victim will be when the weapons are activated. For example, you might drop portcullises on both sides of a hallway, preventing the thief from jumping out of the way, and then drop boulders from the ceiling between the two. A simple snare involves a small pit, just the size of a foot, covered with a trapdoor. When stepped on, the foot drops through the trapdoor, where a spring loaded metal collar grabs hold of the limb. Combining this snare with a pendulum blade trap should yield good results, as the snare will all but guarantee that the blade will hit its target.

However, you should not rely exclusively on these combination traps, as the more complicated a trap is, the more chance it can go wrong.

Now that we know our desired effect, let us consider power—that is, what force will make the effect happen? The simplest is self-powered, when the victim provides the

force himself. This may seem implausible at first blush; what thief is going to slit his own throat on a blade? Yet many very good traps are self-powered. Consider the following examples. Namegivers, or their mounts, impale themselves on caltrops—the four-pointed bits of metal that land with a point up—dropped by those they pursue. Invading armies run into wooden stakes, placed in a circle around an encampment. A thin but strong wire suspended between trees can yank riders from their saddles when they ride into it, a technique used by bandits along the highways of some of the provinces.

Successful as these may be, they usually rely upon the cover of darkness and, more importantly, the victim running or riding too quickly to notice them, or to stop in time if he does notice them. Most professional thieves will be moving too cautiously to fall for these. One exception is the hidden poisoned needle, placed near a lock or doorknob, or within the drawers of a desk or other piece of furniture, that a thief is likely to search. Others rely on invisibility or an innocuous appearance, such as a contact poison on a doorknob, or a mud puddle that actually contains a powerful acid capable of eating through boots (and the feet within them).

The most reliable power source for traps is the natural tendency inherent to the Earth to pull things down toward itself. Such traps either drop the victim from a height, such as into a pit (which may be filled with poisoned spikes, or other hazards), or drop objects from above. The latter may be intended to block access, such as gates or cages; or kill the victim with heavy weights, such as blocks or stones, or sharp weapons like spears or spikes. Trappers use a simple version of these traps in the forests and jungles when they prop a dead log on a stick, rigged to fall when an animal disturbs the bait attached to the stick.

Some very clever traps, rather than dropping the weights on the heads of their victims, use the falling weight to power another effect. For example, a heavy weight might be attached to a cable that runs through a series of pulleys, which change the direction of the force, and then fastened to the end of a lever. The other end of the lever might have an axe or mace head attached to it. Thus when the weight falls, the weapon can swing up from the floor, out from a wall, or anywhere the designer wishes.

Some ambitious trap designers have designed a version of this trap that redirects the force of the falling weights to push or pull a pair of walls together, crushing those standing between them. While impressive, this type of trap takes an incredible amount of effort to construct, and requires a great deal of space around the room for housing the weights. It is also difficult to reset and hard to disguise, as the walls must either fit so closely to the floor as to leave tell-tale scratch marks on the floor, or leave a discernible gap.

I also suspect that this trap may not be very reliable, as it is complex and easily jammed. When it does work, though, the effect of it on a Namegiver's body is quite dramatic and demoralizing.

Right on both counts.

—Garlthik One-Eye

Another technique for redirecting the force of falling weights is to direct them down ramps. This means using weights on sledges and rails, or logs or balls of stone and metal that can roll down the ramp. Note however, that the shorter or less steep the ramp, the slower the object will slide or roll. The longer the ramp and the steeper the ramp, the more force the weight will build up before it hits its target. An advantage of a rolling ball or rock is that with enough momentum built up, it will continue down a hallway until it hits a target. If the ball is large enough to fill the entire hallway, it is very difficult to avoid. The disadvantage is that to build up such force requires building the ramp, and devoting that much space in the building to otherwise unusable space. A compromise is to slant the hallway that is the target, making it the ramp. However, to develop enough force to make the trap effective involves making this hallway so steep as to be inconvenient to climb.

This leads us to a discussion of stairways. Stairs make excellent sites for traps for a number of reasons. One, they can control access from one floor to another. Two, a dead weight dropped at the top of a staircase may continue to bounce down the stairs, knocking further victims down the stairs. Three, a blow suffered at the top of a staircase might knock a victim down the stairs causing further damage. Four, steps make good triggers; unlike a given floor tile, most Namegivers will step on every tread of a set of stairs, yet individual stones or steps are easily avoided by those you wish to tell. An Imperial soldier can more easily remember to avoid the third step, for example, than he can play a complicated game of hopscotch across the floor.

A simple staircase trap might dump oil and small metal balls on the steps, with the intent of causing the victims to slip and fall down the stairs. The most complicated staircase trap I have ever seen caused the individual steps to collapse into a ramp, down which the victims slid, into a pit that opened at the base of the ramp, complete with poisoned spikes. Finally, a trapdoor above the top of the ramp released stone balls that rolled down the ramp and landed on top of the victims in the pit. While I will concede it had style, the engineering involved in making the stairs collapse into a ramp was quite complex, and I am unconvinced that this added enough to the efficacy of the trap to be worth the effort. For example, one could much more simply just rig the top steps to collapse into a pit beneath the stairway, and drop the rocks straight down into that useless space under stairs that usually becomes a closet.

Another common source of power for traps is that of springs of various types. By springs I don't just mean a coil of metal, though such are certainly used. Any material that,



when pushed or pulled will want to snap back to its original position, can be used as a spring. The classic trapper's snare that uses a bent-over tree to tighten a noose of rope around an ankle and lift the prey off the ground is an example of a spring-powered trap. The merchant who places a loaded crossbow on a table in his inn room and connects the trigger to the door handle with a piece of string has improvised a spring-powered trap. Bows are springs after all.

I recall a further example of a different type of spring trap that used a version of a siege engine. Imagine a small catapult, but rather than having a basket for flinging boulders mounted on its arm, it had a large flat paddle. When released, the paddle simultaneously struck the ends of spears that were set in tubes embedded in a wall at various heights, propelling them into the hallway beyond.

On the other hand, not all projectile traps rely on springs. A large bellows or bladder being compressed often propels blowgun darts. This can just as easily be done with dropping weights as it can with a released spring.

I am of two minds about spring-powered traps. They can be easily set and reloaded, and can generally fit into smaller spaces than can the weights required for those powered by the attraction of the Earth. Most of the traps hidden in treasure chests; or desks, cabinets, and the like, are spring powered. However, springs can break, wear down, or rust over long periods of time and must be replaced or repaired. Such springs when held under tension for too long will eventually take to their new shape and lose their ability to snap back forcefully. When we consider defenses for the kaers that must last hundreds of years, we must take this weakness into consideration and provide for the easy refurbishment of these traps by those who shall come after us.

There also exist more exotic means of powering traps. Some alchemists have discovered certain liquids and powders that when combined together can give off toxic gases or even cause explosions. Similar effects can be achieved by the combination of kernels of True fire and air to create explosions such as in fire cannons, while others may use True air to raise parts of traps. In this latter case, effects like those powered by the Earth's attraction can be employed, but in reverse. Spears may shoot up from the

floor, or a platform might fling an intruder upward into a ceiling full of spikes. True air can also be used for its cooling effect. I saw one trap in a noble's palace, in which a secret door was concealed in a wall behind a decorative fountain in the courtyard. To open the door, one had to stand in the pool of the fountain. When the trap was activated, a kernel of True air was released into the pool, instantly freezing the thief's feet in a solid block of ice. By the time the guards chopped him free, he had lost several toes to frost bite. (Of course, he lost his head shortly thereafter, so the loss of his toes was a moot issue.)

As flashy and spectacular as such applications may be, I am somewhat of a traditionalist and therefore caution about the added expense of using such True elements if they do not add much effectiveness to a trap's design. In the case of the reverse pit trap above, in which the elemental air flings the thief upward into spikes, this is not practically different than a pit trap. However, the fountain trap is more elegant than trying to construct and conceal a mechanical ankle-grabbing device within the fountain. I am experimenting with adding True wood to the arms of a crossbow and other wood-based springs in the hope that this will increase not only their power, but their longevity when left in a cocked position. It will be left to those who come after me to determine the long-term efficacy of this technique.

True air and fire are usually too valuable to be left around in traps, and are better employed in flying the airships and arming the fire cannons that are the backbone of the Imperial military. Remember, a good trap should be able to easily and cheaply reset itself. I do have plans for extensive traps that rely on True air and fire to be deployed in kaers when our airships are grounded for several centuries, and will have no use for their ammunition.

However, in guarding extremely valuable objects or information, such expense might be justified. For example, I recently developed a scroll case for use by Imperial couriers in carrying sensitive military orders, political intelligence, and the like throughout the Empire. Should such documents fall into the wrong hands, they could jeopardize our troops, embarrass our diplomats, and weaken our stature in the world. These scroll cases have a series of four or five latches on the outside, which must be unlocked to open the case. If they are not unlocked in a certain order, a kernel of True fire is released from an orichalcum container into the case, instantly immolating the contents. The precise order in which the latches must be released can be changed once the case is opened, so that it can be reused even if the original order is compromised. Even I cannot tell from the outside which order is the correct sequence if it has been changed from my original setting.

The final power source I will discuss is magic. This is a very broad category, including spells of nearly any sort, as well as trapped elementals and spirits. Obviously magicians need to be consulted and employed in these sorts of traps. Magical traps, or wards, have many advantages. They can combine power source, effect, trigger, and concealment, all in one spell. They are also very difficult to detect and disarm.

Their primary disadvantage is that they require high-Circle magicians to install them. I know of only four means of creating magical traps, all of which have their disadvantages. (There may be other means, of which I know not, as I am not a magician.) The quickest and simplest means is to anchor a spell. Spell anchoring is a refinement of spellcasting, taught at the higher Circles of the magicians' Disciplines, that allows the magician to anchor his spell to a place or object. However, such a ward only lasts until it has been triggered, or until a year and a day has passed, after which time the spell must be recast and re-anchored. This is fine for facilities with resident magicians, such as court magicians or those assigned to military garrisons. This will not do for those traps that we wish to last unattended for years at a time, such as in kaers.

A magician can Name such a ward, making it permanent. These create excellent wards, but require the magician to imbue some of his magical life force into the spell. This energy could be spent to increase his magical abilities instead, and so many magicians are loath to Name their wards, unless it is of great personal advantage, such as with wards on their grimoires, or their living quarters. Even the most generous of magicians is limited to a small, finite number of such spells. It is my hope that as the Scourge approaches, more magicians can be persuaded to protect their kaers with Named spells, as a way of leaving some protection to their descendants after their death.

Another way to make a magical trap of long duration is to summon a spirit, and then imprison it in the object or place to be trapped. An early, primitive version of this method trapped the spirit in a delicate orichalcum sphere, which was then crushed by a falling weight, thus releasing the (presumably angry) spirit to wreck havoc on bystanders. Spirits are unpredictable, however, and are just as likely to flee the area as to slay those who set off the trap.

Imperial magicians developed a variant of the summoning technique to allow a spirit to be trapped in an item. Normally the summoner touching the item commands such spirits. Instead, the magician establishes a trigger condition and power that the spirit must use. For example, a fire spirit trapped in a door might use its Spear power on whoever touches the door without saying a password.

Commands should be kept simple, as such spirits, being contrary, will often try to interpret their instructions in such a way as to pervert the desired result. Another disadvantage is that the object must be made in part with orichalcum, which can serve to alert the wary. More importantly, other magicians can banish or even turn such a spirit. Further, I shudder to think what would happen should a Horror corrupt such a spirit.

The last means of making a permanent ward is through ritual magic. Such powerful castings require magicians to work in concert over many days or weeks to create very powerful, long-lasting wards. All such rituals, and the wards they create, are unique, so little can be said about them in general.

Nine-Fingers overlooked another means of creating a permanent ward: the dying legacy. Many such were created and directed against Horrors during the Scourge, often when a Kaer was breached. I informed him of this oversight last night.

— Orlianna Silversmile

The next factor for consideration is the trigger method for the trap. Except for self-powered traps, most traps have a trigger condition. These are almost always dependent on the movement of the victim, such as stepping on a pressure plate, walking into a tripwire, or stepping on a trapdoor. Of course, all of this depends upon the Namegiver. While at least one of these examples is a fair bet for most, obviously windlings can fly past many of these triggers, which is one reason why they make good thieves. Other Namegivers can fly with magical assistance as well, so one should never rely solely upon the victim stepping on a trigger. I do know of one dwarf fortress that runs tripwires overhead, so that taller Namegivers will set off their traps. A citadel plagued by troll raiders set their pressure plates to only be set off by the weight of a troll. One must take especial care in designing traps based on the expected victim; no single trap is likely to be effective against all Namegivers. Magical wards can be set with any number of conditions, such as only activating when someone without an identity badge, or not wearing a particular uniform, enters the room.



Other triggers rely on opening a door or window, pulling a doorknob or chest handle, opening a cabinet drawer or door, and so on. Even flying Namegivers need to open a door that bars their way. However, thieves are often expecting traps at such barriers, and will be extra cautious when inspecting them.

The placement of triggers can be the most important part of a trap's design. They are often placed in hallways or stairways, or in front of doors that are natural bottlenecks or choke points where Namegivers can be assumed to travel. Even in a large room, where there may be a nearly infinite number of paths across the room, it can be fairly easy to direct Namegivers to step where one wants them to, by examining what objects they will be moving toward, augmented by the placement of furniture. For example, in an Imperial Overseer's apartments, I knew that an assassin who made it to the dining room would most likely head for the door of the Overseer's sleeping chambers. There were over two hundred floor tiles I could have chosen to use as triggers in this room, but knowing the most likely path and controlling where the heavy dining table would be placed, I could choose the one tile in the middle of the room that the assassin was most likely to step on. So far, it has killed four assassins...

The other key factor in designing the trigger is the means of disabling, disarming, or bypassing it. When we design the traps for kaers, they will not need to be disarmed for hundreds of years. Other traps need to be disabled on a daily basis, so that those who require access to an item or area can get it. The best means of disabling a trap is to have a simple lever that a Namegiver can use. For example, a guard station inside a castle tower might have a trapped staircase leading up to it. A guard within the station can look through an arrow slit and see who is waiting to come up the stairs before throwing the lever, disabling the trap and allowing his replacement into the tower. Once the previous guard has left, the replacement rearms the trap. The advantage is that someone outside the castle cannot disable the trap. The disadvantage is that someone has to be in the castle day and night. This is not a problem for military garrisons that have soldiers on duty at all times, but it is difficult for the lone merchant who wants to lock his shop up at night and then go home. Further, as few people live inside their treasure chests, such traps need a disarmament device on the outside, such as a knob to turn or a button to press; obviously, these need to be especially cleverly concealed. Many are disguised as mundane objects. Others have keys that, rather than opening a lock when turned, disable the trap.

Some traps can simply be avoided, if one knows the secrets to their triggers, such as only stepping on the black floor tiles in a checkerboard pattern, or jumping over the third step, or with many magical traps, by saying a password. The problem with these methods is that once the secret gets out, it can be spread to a large number of people, duplicated more quickly and easily than a physical key. If such a secret does get distributed, it will necessitate rebuilding the trap's trigger, or in the case of a magical ward, recasting the entire spell.

There is the final factor to consider when designing a trap: concealment. Both the trigger and the effect need to be concealed. Remember, that a thief only needs to disable *either* the trigger or the effect. If he can block the hole from which a bolt will shoot, or cut the tripwire that triggers the trap, either will accomplish his goal. Thus, both

must be concealed. A simple example of this is the so-called Barsaivian crojen trap, used by the primitives who live in the jungles of that backward province. The trappers dig a pit in the jungle floor and put sharpened stakes in the bottom, then cover the pit with sticks, branches, and leaves, which hides the pit and serves as a trigger (for the cover will not support the weight of the target beast).

However, a pile of branches on the floor of a house or palace would certainly look out of place. Floorboards, stone tiles, and rugs often conceal the triggers, as do door handles, chest hinges, and the like. Of equal importance is concealing where the trap's effect will issue, such as arrow holes, overhead trapdoors, and so on. Controlling the amount of light that illuminates these areas is key, as well as using architectural features like roof beams to cast shadows over them. This is one reason that many trap builders like to use small darts and needles, but these must be poisoned to be effective. The tiny hole that a dart can come from is much smaller than the one that a spear or hawk hatchet would fly out of.

Some of these holes or slits can be concealed with light wall hangings, or even parchment carefully painted to trick the eye. The swinging blade or a similar trap effect will slice through this camouflage with ease, but then the cover will need to be replaced. As mentioned earlier, magical traps are usually inherently concealed, but this is true only for those who cannot see magic. This is yet another reason that windlings make such natural thieves.

Some trap builders have complained to me that the quality of the stonework of Imperial masons is too good for our purposes, and the small amount of space between stones needed for a stone trigger to be depressed, or the tiny tube from which a poisoned dart is ejected, are noticeable among the close fitting stones and smooth mortar of Imperial buildings. While many trap makers have lobbied the builders to do shoddier work, an aesthetically preferable solution is simply to decorate the surfaces in which triggers are concealed. Thus many heavily trapped rooms will have beautiful bas-relief sculptures on the walls, and intricately inlaid parquet floors, all concealing triggers and trap effects.

There are some cases where one might purposely leave a trap effect unconcealed for purposes of deterrence. There is one jeweler's shop I know of whose vault door is an iris of razor sharp blades. One must step through this maw of death to enter the vault, and when the door is closed behind it, someone trying to pick the lock would risk losing his hand when the trap shuts. This surely deters the hordes of lesser thieves that would be a nuisance, but such an obvious trap would be a challenge to an elite burglar. I would rather not give such master thieves advance warning of what traps they must overcome. Of course, such an obvious trap might be an excellent distraction from a second, more subtle and deadly, trap. One might even make the actions necessary to disable one trap be the trigger for another.

One last admonition I will make for those to come after me: all of the assumptions that you make about the victims of your traps must be reconsidered when it comes time to build traps for the Horrors. We still know so little about them. Will our poisons kill them? Do they need to breathe, or can they be drowned? Can they fly over our pits and tripwires? How large or small will they be? Does fire hurt them? Will they be able to see magic like windlings? What questions are we not thinking to ask? From what the *Books of Harrow* suggest there will be a great and horrible variety of these entities. The best advice I can give is to build your kaer traps many times stronger than you would need to slay a Namegiver. Further, vary the types of triggers and effects. Perhaps a Horror immune to fire will be vulnerable to ice? Finally, put traps upon traps, and then trap those. We can only hope that at least one will work...

Game Information

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

People speak of Kratas as they speak of evil places.
As they speak of the Badlands, the Poison Forest, or fallen Scytha. But hear me: it is not the place that is different, weird, or dangerous.
It is the people who live there.

• Asdarion the Old, Historian and Poet •

21

This chapter presents players and gamemasters with new rules to enrich their **Earthdawn** games. These include new talents, talent knacks, and skills; specialist rules for the various Disciplines; and guidelines for creating Kratan gamemaster characters or player characters hailing from the City of Thieves.

KRATAN CHARACTERS

Many cities throughout Barsaive are known for certain trades or crafts and Kratas is no exception. Jerris is known for its airship industry and is home to many types of craftsmen associated with it. Urupa is known for trade and is home to all kinds of merchants, specializing in different goods. Kratas is known for its criminals, and criminals work in different fields too.

This section describes occupations within the field of crime, some of which can find applications in the legal domain. It also describes types of criminals beyond the standard gang member or cutpurse, and so offers help and guidelines to gamemasters and players alike, for creating authentic characters. The different types of Kratan characters are presented in the following format:

Skills describes the skills often employed by the character, whether he is an adept or not, and the primary reason for learning them. Players and gamemasters can use the list of skills as a guideline for human adepts looking for promising talents to learn via Versatility.

Disciplines lists the Disciplines that work best in the special field of employment, either because the field fits into the Disciplines' mindsets, works well with their other abilities, or both. The Disciplines presented serve as hints on likely Disciplines to pick for multi-Disciplined characters alongside Specialists (see below) or to replace them.

Races specifies the races most or least likely to be represented within a group of the type of character being described. Any races not mentioned for a character type can be assumed to be equally represented.

Specialist (Discipline) describes rules for Discipline variants created by adepts adapting their paths to the profession presented, to be included at the gamemaster's discretion (***Gamemaster's Companion***, p.181). If a Specialist has talent changes, the gamemaster is advised to look for talent knacks to complement these talents and allow the adept to learn them where appropriate, while restricting other knacks for the Discipline. Note that if a talent replaces a Discipline talent, the new talent becomes a Discipline talent, unless stated otherwise.

The Confidence Trickster

Some thieves, rather than stealing wealth through the picking of locks or pockets, specialize in persuading individuals to give up their wealth willingly, albeit under false pretenses. These are **confidence tricksters**, also known as hucksters, scam artists, or con men. Such characters employ a trick, or con, of any sort, playing upon their marks' character flaws by presenting bait, or their virtues by putting them in situations where they can show integrity or compassion. As each trick is unique, there is no detailed description of the trickster's method of work. For an example con, see **Confidence Tricksters**, p. 79.

As cons seldom work in Kratas, confidence tricksters mainly work outside of the city and use it as a safe retreat or a place to re-supply with equipment, especially forgeries. However, some cons work on new arrivals to Kratas. A trickster has to be desperate or careful with them, though, for new arrivals may have little money, or may be powerful enough to seek retribution, unhindered by laws and authorities. There are known cons-by-mail operating out of Kratas, but the numbers of Namegivers falling for them are dwindling, as lawful citizens throughout the province become increasingly informed of such activities, and letters from Kratas are left unopened. This is simply another nuisance for legitimate Kratan businesses.

Skills

Confidence tricksters often learn the skills of Acting to enhance their displays, Conversation and First Impression to gain the trust of their marks, Etiquette to make their roles more believable or gain admission to specific circles within society, Fast Hand for gambling cons, Forgery to produce fake equipment, and Haggle to hold their own in cons where managing money is essential.

Disciplines

While Illusionists can enhance their cons with spells, many consider a good con without assistance of spells to be the ultimate test of one's ability to trick people, using only one's wits to succeed. Thieves take the con as another form of stealing, sometimes referring to 'stealing someone's trust' for this activity, or to 'the true gift' when they use someone's greed as the base for a con. Troubadours already possess many abilities required by the confidence trickster, and the more philosophically inclined scholars state that adepts of these Disciplines are tricking other Namegivers constantly anyway, even if just to encourage belief in the newest tales they have made up.

Races

Humans make the best overall confidence tricksters, as they can easily pick up new cons and work with a wide repertoire, even learning additional talents required for the profession with ease. Dwarfs are often considered trustworthy, and this makes them ideal con men, many using the fact to their advantage. Obsidimen tend to be too calm and slow for most cons to work, and generally make bad tricksters. While trolls consider thievery dishonest and there are few confidence tricksters among them, there are those that interpret the con as a form of combat, with a mark not being seen as worthy to possess money if he lets someone trick him out of it.

Specialist (Thief)

The confidence trickster Thief is taught to use his tongue rather than his combat abilities. He still finds the ability to pick locks and pockets useful, and sometimes his cons are just a means to camouflage such a job.

The confidence trickster Thief replaces Perception with Charisma as an Important Attribute, and receives the benefits of his Sixth Circle Karma ability to Charisma appropriately. At Second Circle, he swaps Detect Trap with First Impression. At Third Circle, he swaps Disarm Trap with Haggle. In the Novice Talent Options, the new Bribery Talent (p. 224) replaces Great Leap. At Fifth Circle, he swaps Sense Poison with Graceful Exit.

The Romancer

The **romancer** is a hard character to categorize, being one of a group of Namegivers with common abilities but no common goals. The romancer is able to create romantic feelings and eventually seduce his mark, but his motives are not always obvious. Some romancers are after the amorous adventure alone, while some are after their marks' money in the end. There are also rumors of romancers who can be hired to achieve predetermined goals, for example to distract a mark on the broadest possible level, to talk a mark out of an important object or information, or to prove or disprove fidelity.

Kratas does not seem to be the best place for amorous adventures or for finding love, but from time-to-time even a romancer has to hide, from an angry father, husband, or the broken-hearted themselves. Then again, while not the place for "prime prey," Kratas has a good enough number of citizens desperately seeking affection. A number of the courtesans and



harlots in Kratas may actually be followers of this path. In fact, romancers not only learn to create relationships, but also how to keep them running—although not all are interested in such; for some, any extended romance soon becomes boring. For the courtesans, especially the expensive sorts, it is desirable to keep their best clients returning. Outside Kratas, there are many romancers living at the expense of rich marks, trying to keep their relationships up, most often preying on rich widows.



Skills

The romancer often knows the skills of Etiquette to gain admission to his marks' social circles, Flirting to gain the marks' attentions, and Seduction to take his relationships beyond pure romance. Additionally, romancers often know skills that help them to get close to their favorite types of mark. These include Artisan or Artist skills used to impress a mark, or the Disguise and Mimic Voice skills to enhance their own appearance. Some rare romancers even employ the Alchemy skill to brew love potions.

Disciplines

Many a Swordmaster follows the path of the romancer, stylizing himself as the prime target for romantic affection or as a desirable lover, but romancing remains only a secondary ambition to most. Troubadours have considerable repertoires of abilities with which to enchant their marks; due to their traveling nature, however, they often leave trails of broken hearts behind. A Thief might consider himself a "thief of love," as described for the romancer Thief in the ***Player's Companion***, p. 76.

Races

As each race has its own need for romance, romancers are found in equal shares throughout most of them. Notable exceptions include obsidimen, who have next to no romancers due to their non-reproductive nature, and windlings, who have lots of male romancers due to the low ratio of females among them. Elves and t'skrang romancers are numbered slightly above the average, as they appear more beautiful or charming, respectively, to other races.

Specialist (Thief)

The romancer Thief is a thief of love or affection, as described in the ***Player's Companion***, p.76. A number of Thieves use romance as a cover for crime.

The romancer Thief replaces Dexterity with Charisma as an Important Attribute, and receives the benefits of his Fourth Circle Karma ability to Charisma appropriately. He learns the new Flirting talent (p.225) instead of Trap Initiative at First Circle), learns Winning Smile instead of Detect Trap at Second Circle, and the new Seduction Talent instead of Disarm Trap at Third Circle. Trap Initiative, Disarm Trap, and Detect Trap are available from the Novice Talent Options, while he loses the Talent Options of Haggle, Sprint, and Surprise Strike.

Specialist (Troubadour)

The romancer Troubadour sees romance, love, passion, and even lust as the stuff from which tales and legends are made.. As with a Troubadour accompanying an adventuring party to gain first-hand experience while delving kaers or hunting Horrors, the romancer Troubadour gets involved in amorous adventures. Unlike other romancers, he often works his way into someone else's heart slowly, building up the tension required of any good tale.

The romancer Troubadour replaces Item History with the new Flirting Talent at First Circle, Item History replacing Haggle in the Initiate Talent Options. At Second Circle, he swaps Disguise Self for Winning Smile. The new Seduction Talent replaces Throwing Weapons as a Novice Talent Option.

THE SPY

Kratas has a market for all sorts of information, and it comes as no surprise that the City of Thieves has its share of Namegivers specializing in obtaining it. While most **spies** take contracted work, some steal information when the circumstances allow, trying to find a buyer afterwards. In Barsaive, spies are categorized as the stealthy type, excelling at entering places unobserved. This is very different

from the methods employed by infiltrators such as the infiltrator Scout (***Player's Companion***, p.64), who walks openly in, or even joins the group he is targeting, collecting information firsthand. Many a layman confuses spies and infiltrators, much to the concern of these professionals, who could blow their cover or unnecessarily reveal their identities to someone who will end up not hiring them. Members of both groups often work through middlemen for this reason. Some individuals try to work in both fields of work, but only multi-Disciplined adepts are very successful at combining fields.

Skills

While spies need all the breaking-and-entering skills of regular thieves, they complement these with a number of abilities targeting information. Many have high ranks in Read/Write Language to understand all sorts of written information, and employ Research to shuffle through documents and interpret rumors related to their targets. Nearly all spies know the Search skill to detect secret compartments where papers might be hidden. Spies also often have a wide array of Knowledge skills at low ranks, although some do specialize in certain subjects. Rookie spies often resort to Bribery to gain admission to places normally closed to them.

Disciplines

With the wide array of abilities needed to become a spy, very few Disciplines on their own provide the talents required to keep the game running, although most have an ability or two to contribute. While the Scout learns stealth- and trap-related talents allowing him unobserved entry, he usually prefers to work as an infiltrator, falling back to the spy's field of expertise only when infiltration fails. The magician Disciplines can fall back to spells for some of the spy's tasks, but regularly miss out on other important abilities, and either have to specialize or work in a team with other adepts. The spy Thief (***Player's Companion***, p.76) naturally excels at this path, bringing most of the abilities required.

Races

Except for trolls and obsidimen, all races have their share of spies. While windlings are physically well-suited, they can draw unwanted attention before a job, sometimes negating their advantages of size and Flight. Humans tend to make good spies because the number of abilities required favors them and their Versatility talent.

Specialist (Thief)

The spy Thief (***Player's Companion***, p.76) is a master at stealing knowledge. While some spy Thieves act out of philosophical conviction only, equating secret knowledge with any other form of possession that prevents their marks from true thought and action, most sell their services.

The spy Thief swaps Search for Picking Pockets at First Circle. In the Novice Talent Options, he replaces Haggle and Sprint with Read/Write Language and Bribery (p. 224). In the Journeyman Talent Options, Book Memory and Research replace Call Missile and Sprint.

ADVENTURE HOOK

While staying at one of their usual hangouts (like an inn they regularly stay at when in Bartertown), the player characters receive a letter from an old acquaintance. Their friend normally makes his home in one of Barsaive's lawful larger cities, but now writes from Kratas: He has uncovered a business opportunity, a long-term deal he can strike with one of the Throalic Trading Houses operating in Kratas, but does not have enough money because he was robbed on his way to the City of Thieves. He needs only a small sum, 600 silver pieces initial investment, but cannot leave because his contact will strike the deal with someone else. He's keeping negotiations open for as long as possible, but needs the money within the next month or so to seal the deal. An annual gain of 800 silver pieces is guaranteed, which he is willing to share with the player characters, in addition to paying back the 600 silver pieces.

The letter is in the acquaintance's own handwriting, but is a forgery. If the characters send the money, they will never see it again. If they do not investigate, they receive another letter from the acquaintance, telling them of a second opportunity very similar to the first one. If they deliver the money themselves or investigate after not hearing from their acquaintance, they do not find him in Kratas. The letters came from a confidence trickster working out of the City of Thieves. He has bought the traveling journal of the characters' friend from a group of bandits and used it to identify the characters and forge the letters. Their friend has indeed been robbed on his way to Kratas, but of all his possessions and probably his life. With any luck, he is only held captive or enslaved, and the characters can still save him.

If the player characters cannot be contacted as described above, or do not have that kind of money, the gamemaster can modify this Adventure Hook: the characters are hired by a local merchant to investigate the situation of his relative or friend after receiving a letter telling of an interesting business opportunity in Kratas...

THE CUTTHROAT

Some thieves lack the skill to slip valuables out of an unaware victim's pocket, or do not have the patience to spend hours silently working on picking a lock, or simply

have a violent temperament. These are the **cutthroats**, thugs, and muggers. Some are extortionists, using the threat of violence to get their loot, while others take out contracts from third parties, becoming enforcers. Many cutthroats roam the countryside as member or leaders of bands of bandits, preying on merchants' caravans and other travelers. The cutthroat is despised, or at least looked down upon, by most of the thieves in Kratas, as lacking in skill and subtlety. Even the Silent Shepherds view cutthroats as unsophisticated brutes, and count none among their number. Still, cutthroats have their uses, and both Vistrosh and Garlthik employ them in their gangs. Cutthroats are common in the rough-and-tumble gangs of the Scrabbles (see p. 146), and also among the *buunda-vim* of Bartertown and Throal.

Skills

Cutthroats working in towns and cities learn skills enabling them to rough up their marks, and are versed in combat techniques, mostly unarmed. In contrast to common robbers and bandits, however, cutthroats often employ threats and intimidation rather than merely brute force, often using the Disarm skill to crush attempts at resistance, the Impressive Strike skill to boost later Interaction Tests, the new Intimidation skill (p. 225) to force their marks to action, and the Taunt skill to verbally subdue them. Those cutthroats active in the wilderness regularly learn the skills of Animal Handling to handle their own or stolen mounts, Navigation to find their way, Tracking to find and follow suitable prey, and Wilderness Survival. Orks who are part of scorcher bands regularly learn skills related to mounted combat. Most cutthroats also learn the Search skill (***Player's Guide***, p. 101) to allow them to quickly rummage through their marks' possessions.

Disciplines

Cutthroats count many of the combat-oriented Disciplines among their number, with each filling its own niche. While Swordmasters often work in cities, posing as dangerous sell-swords, Cavalrymen often work in the wilderness, within larger groups. Warriors fill both roles, while Sky Raiders are rarely seen. Archers and Scouts each provide some unique aspects to the wilderness cutthroat. Thieves fill city and wilderness roles equally well, and lend their unique way of thinking to both.

Races

While orks and trolls produce more than their share of cutthroats, especially enforcers and extortionists, dwarfs are also common, profiting from their reputation as a hardy race, and may more successfully fall back to using threats and intimidation; their marks do not think they can trick them, as with an ork or troll, however unjustified the thought may be.

Specialist (Thief)

While most adepts could make a living as a cutthroat, the cutthroat Thief makes it a lifestyle. In the end, it is more about the taking than how one takes. As with other Thieves, there are cutthroats out for money and those acting out of conviction.

At First Circle, the cutthroat Thief learns Unarmed Combat instead of Silent Walk, Silent Walk replaces Climbing in the Initiate Talent Options. Also at First Circle, he swaps Trap Initiative for Search. At Sixth Circle, Slough Blame is replaced by Steely Stare.

THE BURGLAR

The **burglar** is a criminal focused on stealing from places, rather than directly from people. Burglars concentrate more on bypassing locks and traps than on tricking people. Being a burglar is a very common occupation among thieves for two reasons: people generally stash more money away at home than they carry on their persons; and the burglar needs to master many more skills than the average cutpurse, so many consider this occupation more refined. That the Thief Discipline follows the same paths, learning to pick someone's pockets first, gives this hierarchy among common thieves the finishing touch.

Among burglars there are those who further specialize in liberating the valuables left behind in kaers. These thieves, known as "kaer delvers," "kaer breakers," or more euphemistically, "kaer restorers," are especially sought after by adventuring groups. Whether adepts or not, these delvers try to distinguish themselves from regular thieves and their selfish mindset, instead viewing themselves and building up reputations as contributors to discovering Barsaive's past and rebuilding its civilization.

Skills

The burglar needs access to the wide array of abilities found as talents in the Thief Discipline, such as Climbing, Detect Trap, Disarm Trap, Lock Picking, and Trap Initiative. Burglars often fashion their own tools using the Craftsman skill, and learn to choose the best picks using the Evaluate skill. Depending on their occupations as burglars or delvers, they learn differing Knowledge and General skills, as appropriate. The burglar often learns Streetwise and knowledge of laws, prominent merchants, and their primary locales. The delver also learns Mapmaking, Navigation, and Knowledge skills related to kaers and the dangers found within.

Disciplines

Next to Thieves, Scouts are the most prominent burglars, targeting kaers and old ruins more often than inhabited places. Other Disciplines are virtually unheard of in the world of the burglar.

Races

The way of the burglar favors dexterous and nimble Namegiver races, most commonly dwarfs, elves, humans, and windlings. Obsidimen and trolls rarely become burglars, as the path often conflicts with their views of the world, making it hard for them to follow their preferred Disciplines.

Specialist (Thief)

The burglar Thief challenges all kinds of security measures made up by Namegivers. It is not surprising that his view of theft is expanded beyond that of other thieves: he not only conveys the message that possessions are distractions, he also states that all the obstacles created against him are an illusion of safety, the targeted possession itself being what is really dangerous.

The burglar Thief swaps Climbing with Picking Pockets at First Circle. At Seventh Circle, Fast Hand is swapped with Evaluate.

Specialist (Scout)

While there are some criminals among them, Scouts who follow the path of the burglar typically call themselves delvers or delver Scouts, rather than burglar Scouts. They target lost kaers and old ruins, seeing themselves as explorers or liberators of the places they visit, rather than intruders; they have every right to be there. When burgling a kaer, some Scouts go alone or in small adventuring groups, while others take part in large expeditions.

The delver Scout learns Research instead of Speak Language at Second Circle, Speak Language replaces Detect Weapon in the Novice Talent Options. Disarm Trap and Trap Initiative move from the Journeyman to the Novice Talent Options, Disguise Self and Anticipate Blow move from the Novice to the Journeyman Talent Options.

THE ASSASSIN

Where other criminals might recklessly accept the deaths of their marks as a possibility, the **assassin** makes it his primary concern. Where others may be out for a mark's possessions, the assassin is out for the victim's life, often paid by a third party. As a result, the assassin is widely despised, especially among adepts. There are no tales or legends depicting the assassin as a hero (except among assassins themselves); he is instead considered a wrongdoer, a coward, and a bad guy. This applies to assassins as Namegivers throughout Barsaive see them: the silent, stealthy, deceitful, and hidden murderers and contract killers; or worse, the members of a sinister cult.

These types form the majority, while a few Namegivers have all the abilities of an assassin or work in a similar field, but under different circumstances. Examples include some types of bounty hunters and trophy hunters, resistance fighters and rebels, as well as vigilantes.



Skills

While some assassins openly confront their targets, sure of their abilities in combat, most prefer the way of stealth. Most assassins pride themselves on their flexibility, using an assortment of skills such as Silent Walk and Surprise Strike, to sneak into position or up to a target and quickly disable him. Most important is a combat ability of the assassin's choice, be it Unarmed Combat or Melee, Missile, or Throwing Weapons. Circumventing obstacles by use of the Climbing, Detect Traps, Disarm Traps, Great Leap, and Lock Picking skills is often important. Using trickery instead of stealth is also common, and the assassin might employ the Bribery, Disguise, and even Mimic Voice skills, coupled with social interaction, to gain access to his victim. A small number of assassins are specialized, adding General and Knowledge skills for a certain type of entry or a certain way of killing to their repertoire. Among poisoners, the Alchemy and Craft Weapon skills are common.

Disciplines

Almost all adepts can act as assassins. Commonly, however, stealth or ranged combat abilities are the norm. Thieves and Scouts both excel at stealth, although they differ enough that each job favors one or

the other; the Thief is better at intrusion, while the Scout can blend in with a crowd or garrison more easily. Ranged combatants include magicians, but while Illusionists are ideal deceivers, they lack deadly spells. Nethermancers, on the other hand, can offer both once they have mastered the art of shadows. Archers are deadly assassins, but risk succumbing to the way of the Sniper (***Player's Companion***, p. 23). Other Disciplines lead niche existences as specialized killers, such as the Beastmaster who trains poisonous animals to attack his target, or the Warrior skilled at fighting his way through masses of guards.

Races

In most cases, trolls and obsidimen have difficulties with stealthy activities, and highlander trolls, especially, find that a sneaky killing stains their honor. Additionally, obsidimen value life too much to be assassins as a means to earn money. The same is true of many windlings, although they are prominent poisoners.

Specialist (Sky Raider)

An oddity among the variations in the Disciplines, the assassin Sky Raider has lost all of the Discipline's aeronautical abilities, while managing to retain the Sky Raider worldview. For the assassin Sky Raider, it is a mark's personal responsibility to prevent his own death. However, the assassin Sky Raider never strikes from the shadows, but instead confronts his mark face to face, telling him he intends to kill, for whom, and why. If the mark can defend himself, he has earned his life. Assassin Sky Raiders tend to be non-troll adepts, who often are unable to secure berths on airships. Only rarely does a highlander troll take this path.

The assassin Sky Raider loses all of his Half-magic abilities, replacing them with the ability to make Interaction (Insight) Tests (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.93). At First Circle, Steel Thought replaces Air Sailing. In the Novice Talent Options, Resist Taunt replaces Wind Catcher and the new Bribery Talent (p. XX) replaces Wound Balance. Wound Balance replaces Navigation in the Initiate Talent Options. At Thirteenth Circle, instead of the Lightning Song ability, the assassin Sky Raider gains the Resurrect Self ability (***Player's Companion***, p. 89).



Specialist (Thief)

The assassin Thief is admired and feared. He is admired because no other individual can deliver the killing blow to a mark as silently as he can, bypassing any security measures one can think of. He is feared because the killing can become a necessity for him, part of practicing his Discipline. He is the thief of life, and might see death as a gift bestowed through him, showing others what life is worth, taking it from Namegivers who, in his eyes, do not deserve it. Most Thieves, however, do not confirm this point of view as a valid one, because by the theft of life, the victim cannot learn from it anymore.

For the assassin Thief, Melee Weapons is swapped with Picking Pockets at First Circle. In the Novice Talent Options, Haggle is replaced with Missile Weapons. At Seventh Circle, the adept's special Karma ability is replaced with the ability to spend 1 Karma Point on melee or ranged Damage Tests.

THE SLASHER

The **slasher** is a fighter employing knives or daggers. While there are weapons that cause more outright damage, the slasher manages to use his smaller weapons most effectively, counting on the versatility of knives and daggers—they are easily concealed, do not necessarily present a martial appearance, and can be thrown without difficulty. While most people think back-alley knifing is the event the slasher excels at, in fact he is trained at fighting opponents that are better armed.

As the slasher is more a practitioner of martial arts than anything else, he can work in a variety of fields where his skills are of use, including some of those fulfilled by other roles described in this chapter, such as the assassin or the cutthroat. In Kratas, a typical gang member might have abilities similar to the slasher if he started out with relatively cost-efficient knives or daggers and did not buy better armament when enough money was at hand.

Skills

The slasher picks up typical skills for the use of Melee Weapons, and often learns the new Close In skill (p. 225). Due to his weapons' versatility, Throwing Weapons comes in handy, as does Conceal Object, with which a large number of Size 1 weapons can be concealed. To profit from this element of surprise, slashers often also learn Surprise Strike. Some slashers prefer to sneak up on their victims, learning the Alchemy skill to use poisons.

Disciplines

Slashing is often the style of choice for adepts of Disciplines that favor melee weapons, but do not usually carry larger weaponry about. Prominent among them is the Thief, who would be hindered by larger weapons when burgling.. A number of Swordmasters are slashers and choose the dagger as their primary weapon, although sometimes Swordmasters using compact short swords or dwarf swords also count as slashers. Cavalrymen, Sky Raiders, and Warriors almost never become slashers, as the path is either too specialized, or small weapons not practical for them.

Races

Only the t'skrang truly revel in the slashing style, and like to show up opponents with larger weapons. They see confronting such opponents as a sign of fearlessness. That daggers go well with most wardrobes is a minor, but sufficient, reason to also lead some elves on this path. Rare among slashers are trolls and obsidimen, as well as windlings. Their usage of larger- and smaller-than-standard weaponry would perhaps be balanced if they were only among their own kind, but as a troll's small weapon is already quite large, a dagger- or short sword-wielding troll cannot be considered a true slasher except if fighting another troll or an obsidiman. Similarly, a windling with his tiny broadsword is no slasher among his own kind, but may in some cases be considered so by larger folks (see below).

Specialist (Swordmaster)

The slasher Swordmaster is one among the many different types of Swordmasters favoring a weapon other than the sword. Most Swordmasters specializing in another weapon do not pick a small one, rather choosing the axe, mace, or a two-handed weapon, and so the slasher Swordmaster differs enough to develop a variant of his Discipline.

At First Circle, the slasher Swordmaster learns the new Close In talent (p. 225) in place of Maneuver. Maneuver replaces Winning Smile in the Novice Talent Options. Instead of receiving the benefits of Karma on all melee weapons Damage Tests at Seventh Circle, he receives them to Damage Tests made with melee and thrown weapons smaller than his one-handed Weapon Size capability (see p. 248 of the ***Player's Guide***).

Specialist (Thief)

The slasher Thief is the rare example of a Thief following a martial path and specializing with a certain type of weapon at the same time. While many a Thief favors the dagger or short sword, the slasher Thief is still uncommon, and a teacher may be hard to find outside of Kratas.

The slasher Thief learns the new Close In talent (p. 225) instead of Trap Initiative at First Circle, Trap Initiative replaces Search in the Initiate Talent Options. At Sixth Circle, Slough Blame and Conceal Objects are swapped.



New Talents

The following talents are available to the Discipline Specialists presented in this book and appear in the same format as those described in the **Talents** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, p.57.

Bribery

Step: Rank+CHA **Action**: Standard
Karma: No **Strain**: 0

Bribery is the talent of discreetly buying favors, allowing the adept use of any number of successful methods to disguise the exchange. It is used as described for the Bribery skill in the ***Player's Guide***, p. 93.

Close In

Step: Rank+DEX **Action**: Simple
Karma: No **Strain**: 1

The adept, who must be wielding weapons of a smaller Size than his opponent (unarmed attacks count as Size 1 weapons), tries to gain an advantageous position by making a Close In Test against the target's Physical Defense. If successful, he maneuvers into a position close to his opponent and creates a situation where the opponent's larger weapon is disadvantageous to the opponent. This situation is handled similar to the Weapon Reach optional rule (***Player's Guide***, p. 230), but provides more benefits to the adept. While engaged in close combat with the adept, the target opponent is considered Harried (instead of receiving a –1 Reach penalty). While Close In lasts, neither the adept nor the target may move, they are locked in an intense close quarter battle. The adept may break off at any time by moving away, instantly terminating the talent's effects. The target can try to break off by using the Going Into a Weapon (Shield) combat option in the following rounds, but failure means the –2 Attack Test penalty stacks with the Harried modifier. There is no Initiative Test penalty from weapon Size for using the combat options. The effects of Close In last as long as the adept is engaged in close combat with the target, if the adept's movement becomes limited, for example by being Knocked Down, the target may automatically break off.

Krarg successfully uses his Close In Talent against his opponent. This causes his opponent to be Harried for as long as both remain in close combat, and while it prohibits Krarg from moving away if he wants to keep his opponent Harried, the opponent may not move away either without first having broken the talent's effects. Krarg attacks his opponent, benefiting from the opponent's lowered Physical Defense. Afterwards, Krarg is attacked, benefiting from the opponent's penalty to Action Tests. His opponent Wounds him, though, and Krarg cannot allow himself

to be Knocked Down—this would end the Close In effect. Krarg succeeds at his Knockdown Test, but at the beginning of the next round, Krarg's opponent announces use of the Going Inside a Weapon combat options. Krarg's opponent wins Initiative, and has now successfully broken off, Close In is no longer effective. Had the opponent failed, he would have suffered a total –4 Attack Test penalty that round.

Flirting

Step: Rank+CHA **Action**: Sustained
Karma: No **Strain**: 0

A form of interaction with members of the adept's preferred gender, the Flirting talent combines elements of flattery, intense attention, and clever wordplay to affect another person. It is used as described for the Flirting skill in the ***Player's Guide***, p. 97.

Seduction

Step: Rank+CHA **Action**: Sustained
Karma: No **Strain**: 0

The adept convinces a member of his preferred gender to become romantically involved with him. He may attempt the Suggestion stage against the same character a number of times equal to his Seduction Rank, instead of just once. It is otherwise used as described for the Seduction skill in the ***Player's Guide***, p. 101.

New Skills

Except as noted, the following skills are available to all characters and appear in the same format as those described in the **Skills** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, p.87.

Close In

Step Number: Rank+DEX **Default Use**: No
Action: Simple **Strain**: 1

The Close In skill is similar to the Maneuver skill in that the character uses it to gain an advantageous position. It is used as described for the Close In talent, above.

Intimidation

Step Number: Rank+CHA **Default Use**: Yes
Action: Standard **Strain**: 0

The Intimidation skill allows a character to influence an interaction with another character. Intimidation works best against characters who have a reason to fear, and who hold Unfriendly or worse attitudes toward, the character using this skill. The Intimidation skill can be used in place of Interaction (Intimidate) Tests (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 93). Intimidation often creates resentment in the target character. A successful use of the Intimidation skill against a target character makes all subsequent Favor attempts (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 94) aimed at that same character at least one degree more difficult. To use this skill, make an Intimidation Test against the target character's Social Defense. The Result Level determines how successful the attempt is.

Stopping Actions

A character can use Intimidation to order another character to refrain from performing an action, or do nothing. Examples of the first include orders such as "don't touch that," "stop dead in your tracks," or "leave her alone." An Average Result on the Intimidation Test makes the target character stop his action for one round. An Extraordinary Result convinces the target character to refrain from a forbidden action for as long as the intimidator is within sight. A character cannot use Intimidation to make a target stop an action he performs simply by existing. It is impossible, for example, to order someone to stop breathing.

Forcing Actions

The Intimidation skill can also be used to force a character into taking an action, but the target character will not take an action he believes is more dangerous than resisting the Intimidation attempt. A Good Result on the Intimidation Test convinces the target character to spill secrets, walk ahead in a corridor, or cast a spell. An intimidated character stops performing the requested action as soon as he is out of the intimidator's sight.

New Talent Knacks

Being the most prominent place to meet criminals and Namegivers with an otherwise questionable morale, Kratas sees a number of talent knacks in widespread use that are rare elsewhere. The City of Thieves is the best place to learn these knacks, although adepts in other parts of Barsaive and beyond may know them as well.

The talent knacks in this chapter are mainly of two types: those that provide additional possibilities to cheat, trick, rob, and harm one's victims; and those that enable an adept to protect himself from such attempts. There are some knacks that most adepts would find distasteful or morally wrong to use, and they might think less of another adept who displays knowledge of them. For Kratans, of course, such a display might just be a show of magical prowess, and may even be beneficial simply to demonstrate to others that the adept is no one to fool around with.

The following talent knacks appear in the same format as those described in the **Talent Knacks** chapter of the ***Player's Companion***, p.118.

Act on Instinct

Talent: Trap Initiative
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 2

The Act on Instinct talent knack allows the adept to expand his ability to evade traps to include other situations of Surprise (***Player's Guide***, p. 228). If the adept fails the Perception Test made to determine if he is Surprised, he may make a Trap Initiative Test against the same Difficulty Number, requiring a Good Result. If successful, the adept can move out of the line of danger, up to half his Movement Rate. He still cannot act freely—he cannot use Standard Actions in the Surprise round—but can use abilities that do not require a Standard Action. He is neither Blindsided nor Surprised by the situation, but is considered Harried (***Player's Guide***, p.227). For example, the adept is allowed to use the Avoid Blow talent or skill, albeit with a Harried penalty, and the Surprise Strike talent or skill cannot be used against him for failing the initial Perception Test, except if the attacker can gain Surprise in another manner, such as with the Conceal Object talent or skill.

Arrow Catch

Talent: Avoid Blow
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 2

The Arrow Catch talent knack enables the adept to pluck a missile or thrown weapon directed at him out of the air before it can do damage instead of just avoiding it. The adept needs a free hand to use this knack and must be able to hold the caught weapon or missile in hand, but is allowed to drop any item he is currently holding before using the knack. The adept makes an Avoid Blow Test against the weapon's Attack Test result. A Good Result is needed to catch a thrown weapon, an Excellent Result to catch a missile weapon's projectile. A failed result means the adept may be struck and hurt, as normal.

Astral Hideout

Talent: Astral Pocket
Rank: 10 **Strain**: 1 Wound (see text)

The Astral Hideout talent knack allows the adept to create an extra-large astral pocket, into which he can climb and close behind him. This is a very risky knack to use, as the adept exposes himself to being stuck in astral space. The adept takes Strain damage equal to his Wound Threshold (causing a Wound, but not requiring a Knockdown Test), then makes an Astral Pocket Test against the higher of his own natural Spell Defense, or the highest Spell Defense of the items he brings into the pocket. If successful, he slips into the pocket by the end of the same round, but cannot bring other large objects such as bags of loot with him, only what he wears as clothing and equipment. If he already has an Astral Pocket storing items active at that time, he has the choice to either empty it into astral space or the physical plane. While inside the pocket, the adept cannot slip from it into astral space, nor can he see out of the pocket unless he possesses some means of viewing astral space. In either case, he cannot see what is happening on the physical plane from within the pocket. Anyone viewing astral space has the normal chance of seeing the astral pocket, and, on an Extraordinary Result, the adept within it. If the adept is still inside the pocket when its duration expires, or if someone attacks and destroys the pocket on the astral plane while the adept is inside, he will be trapped in astral space.

Commanding Gaze

Talent: Steely Stare
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 2

The Commanding Gaze talent knack can be used to shy a target away or inspire some similar behavior. It is used as described for the Steely Stare talent (***Player's Guide***, p. 82), but requires a Good Result. If the Steely Stare Test is successful, instead of the target doing nothing, he will follow the adept's suggestions if they are non-harmful. Examples include leaving a tavern, stopping littering the streets, or swapping seats with the adept. This knack has given Sky Raiders a good reputation as bouncers.

Corner of the Eye

Talent: Lip Reading
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 2

The Corner of the Eye talent knack allows the adept to read lips without continuously staring at the target. The adept must use the Lip Reading talent normally for three consecutive rounds before he can use the Corner of the Eye knack. The adept makes another Lip Reading Test, using this Talent Knack, requiring a Good Result. If successful, he can turn his head away from the target, thus avoiding suspicion, and continue to use Lip Reading to follow what is being said. The Strain cost for this knack is taken once for each use; the adept takes Strain for using the Lip Reading talent, as normal. Once active, the knack can be used for as long as the adept can see the target by turning his head again; it ends when any event occurs that blocks a hypothetical line of sight for more than one round.

Empathic Connection

Talent: Empathic Command
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 2

The Empathic Connection talent knack allows an adept to connect to his mount in a way that assures him of its well being over a distance. The adept spends one minute with his mount, talking to or touching it, then makes an Empathic Command Test against his mount's Spell Defense. If successful, he is able to sense the mount's feelings and state of health over a maximum distance equal to Empathic Command Rank miles, for as many hours. The adept can spend a Standard Action to get detailed information about



his mount. If the mount's state changes drastically, the adept is informed right away.

FALSE EVIDENCE

Talent: Evidence Analysis
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 2 (see text)

The False Evidence talent knack allows an adept to falsify evidence at a crime scene or similar place that might later be investigated. The adept takes one minute to survey the scene and rearrange the details, then makes an Evidence Analysis Test against the highest Spell Defense among the items present or the Spell Defense of the place, whichever is higher. If successful, the number of details that he can change is determined by the Result Level achieved (1 detail for an Average Result, 2 details for a Good Result, and so on). The adept may use this knack on the same scene multiple times, up to a number equal to his Evidence Analysis Rank, but each attempt takes twice as long as the previous and multiplies the Strain cost by the number of attempts (the second attempt takes 2 minutes and causes 4 Strain, the third attempt takes 4 minutes and 6 Strain, and so on). The False Evidence Test Result for falsifying a detail becomes the new Difficulty Number for Evidence Analysis Tests or other types of tests deemed appropriate by the gamemaster to detect what really happened at the scene.

FEIGN HIT

Talent: Avoid Blow
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 2

The Feign Hit talent knack allows an adept to avoid a blow, while appearing to have been hit. The player declares the adept is attempting to use the Feign Hit knack before making his Avoid Blow Test. On a Good Result (Excellent if avoiding a ranged attack), the adept can react convincingly to the blow, as if hit. This may require him to fall down. Using this knack may allow the adept to later gain surprise (***Player's Guide***, p. 228) or any other benefits of 'recovering' from the hit, subject to the gamemaster's approval, and judged according to the circumstances.

T'kranl the Guilty is relaxing in the Riverboat tavern when an enraged troll bursts in looking for the t'skrang who stole his grandmother's heirloom brooch. The troll swings a massive club at T'kranl, with an Attack Test result of 12. T'kranl decides to use his Feign Hit talent knack, and with a bit of luck (and a Karma Point) rolls a 19 on his Avoid Blow Test—a Good Result. T'kranl catches enough of the club to convincingly absorb some of its momentum, spins out of his chair, bounces off the wall, and collapses motionless on the floor. The troll moves on, wading into combat with another t'skrang. Hearing the troll's roars moving away from him, T'kranl cautiously opens an eye and silently gets to his feet. Considering sneaking up on the troll to Surprise Strike him, the t'skrang opts instead to sneak out the nearest window, the brooch safely in his pocket.

FOOL THIEF

Talent: Evaluate
Rank: 7 **Strain**: 1

The Fool Thief talent knack allows an adept to magically detect if an item offered to him is stolen. This knack is used alongside normal evaluation, but its use must be announced before making any tests. The adept makes an Evaluate Test against the item, as normal. However, the result is also compared against the seller's Social Defense. If the Evaluate Test result is equal to or higher than the seller's Social Defense, and the item is stolen, the adept becomes aware of this fact, but does not receive any other information about the item, e.g. that the item is illegal or that it is not stolen, other than the normal result of the Evaluate Test, if any (***Player's Guide***, p. 68). Subsequently, if the adept knows an item is stolen, Haggle Tests made against him require a Result Level one higher than normal to succeed (usually a Good Result).

FRAUD MASTERY

Talent: Performance
Rank: 3 **Strain**: 3

The Fraud Mastery talent knack allows an adept to more convincingly use his own forgeries. When presenting a forgery of his own making, the adept may make a Performance Test to convince the target that the forgery is genuine. Each Result Level achieved adds +1 to the Difficulty Number to detect the forgery (see the **Forgery** skill on p. 97 of the ***Player's Guide***).

Fragile Blade

Talent: Infuse Weapon
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 2

The Fragile Blade talent knack allows an adept to weaken a non-magical weapon so that it breaks when a certain amount of stress is put upon it. The adept makes an Infuse Weapon Test, as normal, requiring a Good Result. If the adept crafted the weapon himself, the required Result Level is lowered by one. If the work is not done at a properly equipped forge, the Result Level required is increased by one. If the test succeeds, the result becomes the Difficulty Number to detect the weakening of the weapon, although this normally requires specialized knowledge. The adept also picks a number no greater than the Infuse Weapon Test result. If the result of a Damage Test made with the weapon equals or exceeds this value, it breaks, rendering it useless. When a character buys a weapon, he usually tests it, but not so hard that it leaves visible marks (these come through regular use and such marks would stigmatize the new weapon as used). Testing does not result in more damage than the weapon's unmodified Damage step in the hands of the wielder. A weapon secretly replaced will likely not be tested, but the adept will often need appropriate abilities to copy a weapon, such as the Forgery skill or an appropriate Artisan skill.

At the gamemaster's discretion, a weapon weakened with this talent knack may worsen the adept's reputation if produced without a justification, lowering the amount of money customers are willing to pay for his services.



H'krenst and his adventuring group are hired to ensure that a certain Swordmaster loses face in a tournament. The group's Thief sneaks into the Swordmaster's room to steal his broadsword, taking it to H'krenst for some modifications. H'krenst has rented a local forge for the night to perform the short ritual. The base Difficulty Number for using Improve Blade on a broadsword is 14 (5+9=14), and H'krenst's player knows he will need a Good Result (21). Knowing he has several tries, he does not want to waste Karma, and rolls an 8. However, unbeknownst to both H'krenst and his player, the weapon was improved with the Forge Blade talent and the base Difficulty Number is in fact 17, meaning the Weaponsmith needs a 25 for success. Suddenly, the Swordmaster's sword breaks into pieces, because H'krenst has rolled a Pathetic Result... H'krenst has to come up with a new plan. He 'borrows' a fresh broadsword from the forge, but needs to add ornaments to it so that it resembles the original weapon. With great effort, he succeeds, and as this weapon has not been forged with the Forge Blade talent, this time the base Difficulty Number is indeed 14, and he needs a Good Result—21 or better. Not wanting to take further risks, H'krenst spends a Karma Point and rolls a 25 on his Improve Blade Test, successfully sabotaging the weapon. Since he doesn't want to make it obvious that someone has been tampering with the blade, he sets the breaking point of the broadsword at 18. The Swordmaster will be in for a nasty surprise in the tournament.

Gory Shot

Talent: Mystic Aim
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 6

The Gory Shot talent knack allows an adept to place a well-aimed, devastating shot that is not intended to kill the target, but instead make sure it does not get away. While some bounty hunters use this knack, they rarely teach it to anyone, because it is very popular with Archers following the way of the Sniper. The adept makes a Mystic Aim Test against his target's Spell Defense. If successful, instead of the normal effects of Mystic Aim, the weapon is targeted against an artery or similarly vulnerable anatomical feature. If the ensuing Attack Test hits and causes damage, the target is subject to bleeding as for the Wounds that Bleed optional rule (***Player's Guide***, p. 222), but for 3 (or Step 3) Damage points per round. This does not automatically cause a Wound, nor does it require one. The target must have blood in order for this knack to work, and the adept must use a pointed weapon to cause the damage (which

makes it impossible to combine this knack with the Flame Arrow talent). The bleeding also makes it easier to track the target. Tracking Tests made against the target receive a +3 bonus until the bleeding has been staunched and the tracker reaches the location where it stopped.

GUARD POCKETS

Talent: Picking Pockets
Rank: 6 **Strain**: 2

The Guard Pockets talent knack allows the adept to use his knowledge of pick pocketing to guard his own belongings against such thefts. The adept performs a short 10 minute long ritual, inspecting his clothing and baggage for openings and content, and rearranging things so they are harder to reach. He then makes a Picking Pockets Test, the result of which becomes the Difficulty Number to pick the adept's pockets or use the Offguard talent knack against him. Even if a Picking Pockets or similar Test against him beats this new Difficulty Number, the adept and any onlookers still have a chance to spot it with Perception Tests, as normal. Each use of this knack lasts Picking Pockets Rank hours.

IMPROVISED SHIELD

Talent: Shield Charge
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 2

Stemming from the Outcast Warrior's ability to thrive even in disadvantageous situations, the Improvised Shield talent knack allows an adept to use any large, flat object that has a grip or similar component allowing him to pick it up and hold it, as a shield for the purpose of performing a Shield Charge. Examples include stools, small tables, or even doors. As these items are often not built to withstand such punishment, the object may be damaged or even break, at the gamemaster's discretion.

LISTEN

Talent: Search
Rank: 7 **Strain**: 2 (4; see text)

Using the Listen talent knack puts the Search talent to an acoustic use. Instead of seeing hidden things, the adept can hear them, substituting his Search step for his Perception step when listening for something. This includes characters using Silent Walk or similar talents or skills. An adept can combine both the Search talent and the Listen knack into one Standard Action, but doubles the Strain cost to a total of 4.

LOCK GUARD

Talent: Thief Weaving
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 3

The Lock Guard talent knack allows the adept to weave his innate knowledge of locks to one lock of his choice. He performs a short, 1 minute long ritual, studying the lock, then smears a drop of his blood on it and makes a Thief Weaving Test. As long as he stays within a number of yards equal to the Test Result, he remains connected to the lock and has a chance to sense someone meddling with it. Any attempt to open or otherwise influence the lock must beat the Test Result as well as any other Difficulty Numbers (the one to pick the lock, for example), or the adept will be informed of the happening (but cannot prevent it without further action on his part). If the adept is asleep or has to concentrate on another action, only a Pathetic Result by the character interacting with the lock will alert the adept. Lock Guard lasts Thief Weaving Rank hours.

MAIM

Talent: Down Strike
Rank: 10 **Strain**: 6 (see text)

While most Sky Raiders engaging in raiding believe that if their marks cannot defend their property they are not worthy of having it, there are those that think the same about a mark's life. To ease the slaughter, they try to incapacitate their victims first. At the beginning of the round, the adept announces he will Maim his opponent, using the Aggressive Attack combat option (***Player's Guide***, p. 222). The Strain for the knack includes the Aggressive Attack, and the adept is limited to one attack that round. If the adept's Attack Test is successful, and his use of the Down Strike talent causes damage, the target is subject to damage to a limb, as per the Damage to a Limb optional rule (***Player's Guide***, p. 223). If the damage results in a Wound, the target's penalties are doubled to –2. The adept may use the Called Shot combat option (***Player's Guide***, p. 222) to choose the specific limb struck, otherwise the limb affected is at the gamemaster's discretion.

MASTERMIND'S PLAN

Talent: Safe Path
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 5

The Mastermind's Plan talent knack allows the adept to survey an area to create a plan for an ambush. While scouting the area, the adept uses normal means to learn information about places suitable for an ambush, but also summons a number of elemental spirits who help him in his task. At the end of his considerations, the adept makes a Safe Path Test, noting the result. The adept will know all those sites in an area within a radius of Safe Path Rank miles that will provide an advantage for an ambush, and



how to prepare them optimally. Use of this knack does not guarantee that someone will run into the ambush, but if, for example, a caravan is expected on a certain road, the adept will now know if there are any prime sites for an ambush there and how best to utilize them. When an ambush site discovered by this knack and prepared accordingly is used, the adept and his allies, up to a maximum number equal to his Safe Path rank × 10, receive several benefits. The adept's Safe Path Test result becomes the Detection Difficulty for attempts to notice the ambush. Additionally, if the ambushers successfully Surprise their targets, they receive a +2 bonus to their Action Tests during the surprise round.

Not So Fast

Talent: Fast Hand
Rank: 7 **Strain**: 2

The Not So Fast talent knack is used to discover sleight-of-hand activity. The adept observes and concentrates on an area in his sight, memorizing the details, then makes a Fast Hand Test. The Fast Hand Test result is substituted for Perception Tests made by the adept to spot the use of the Fast Hand talent or skill. The adept may use Not So Fast again to achieve a higher result. The adept must actively observe the target area or the knack's effect ends. As observation requires a portion of the adept's concentration, he is considered Harried (***Player's Guide***, p. 227) for purposes other than observing the area as long as he uses the knack. It otherwise lasts for a number of minutes equal to the adept's Fast Hand rank.

Not So Fast is often used to observe gambling tables, either by croupiers or the cheater himself, to discover colleagues and choose another table with some real victims.

Plant Prison

Talent: Plant Shelter
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 4 (see text)

The Plant Prison talent knack allows the adept to entrap another in a vegetative prison. Plant Prison works much more quickly than Plant Shelter, requiring only four rounds of concentration to form a prison of normal size. Such a prison can hold a human-sized Namegiver. To create a Plant Prison for a troll-sized Namegiver takes eight rounds and causes 8 Strain. To create a prison for a dwarf takes three rounds and causes 3 Strain, while a windling-sized Plant Prison takes two rounds and causes 2 Strain. To imprison a target, the adept makes a Plant Shelter Test against the target's Spell Defense, the Plant Prison's characteristics are determined as for the Plant Shelter talent (***Player's Companion***, p. 111). A Plant Prison can only hold one Namegiver, and the target must be immobile while the adept is creating it. The gamemaster determines the time required and Strain cost for targets other than Namegivers. Trapped targets can attack the Plant Prison to break it open, but cannot use most weapons due to confined space, and are Harried while inside the prison. The Plant Prison lasts for Plant Shelter Rank hours.



Request Donation

Talent: Bardic Voice
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 2

The Request Donation talent knack lets an adept use the charming magic of his Bardic Voice talent to ask another person for money. The adept can claim it as a gift, a loan, or a donation for some good cause, but in any case, will not be required to return it. The difficulty of coercing someone to hand over some of his money depends on the target's Attitude towards the adept (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 93). The adept makes a Bardic Voice Test against the target's Social Defense, as normal, but requires the same Result Level as if asking for a small favor (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 93). If successful, the target gives the adept an amount of money equal to the adept's Bardic Voice rank × 10 silver pieces, if he has it on his person or in nearby storage. If the target does not have enough money, he gives the adept what money he has. The adept can choose to decline part or all of the 'offer'.

Stalk

Talent: Tracking
Rank: 8 **Strain**: 3

The Stalk talent knack allows an adept to shadow a large traveling group over the course of several days, learning about its composition, habits, equipment, and the like. This is possible for a trained tracker by conventional means, but the use of this knack allows the adept to magically compose a myriad of details into a bigger picture. The adept tracks the target group as normal. Each day, he makes an additional Tracking Test using this knack, commonly when investigating the target group's campsite. If this test succeeds, the adept learns one piece of information relevant to his cause that he would not have learned by regular tracking. The detail level of the information depends on the Result Level achieved and is determined by the gamemaster. The adept may use the Stalk knack against individuals, but requires a Good Result to succeed (for gaining knowledge, the Result Level needed is treated as if one level lower).



TALE OF TERROR

Talent: Creature Analysis
Rank: 7 **Strain**: 2

By telling a Tale of Terror, an adept draws on his knowledge of dangerous entities to intimidate a target. Beastmasters most often tell of dangerous animals and magical creatures, while Nethermancers give accounts of Horror constructs. The adept uses his Creature Analysis talent as an Intimidation Test (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 93) against the target. Success not only terrifies the target about the entity described, but also invokes a feeling in him that the adept could bring that entity's wrath onto the target, or that the adept is an extremely tough person because he has encountered such an entity. The effects of the test are similar to those of normal Intimidation, and up to the gamemaster to define, but it is suggested they produce more severe results, depending on the adept's performance. Members of the Grim Legion use this knack regularly to extort 'donations' for their cause.

TRACK MOUNT

Talent: Call Mount
Rank: 9 **Strain**: 4

An adept can use the Track Mount talent knack to learn the whereabouts of his mount. The adept announces he is using this knack, takes the Strain Damage, and makes a Call Mount Test, as normal. If successful, the adept is provided with a vague sense of the mount's location, within a ninety-degree arc, if it is within Call Mount Rank miles. The adept gains this information for Call Mount Rank hours. An adept can only use this knack on a mount he has a connection with, for example, if the adept has used his Animal Bond or Blood Share talent on the mount or declared it his familiar.

Goods and Services

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Namegivers seem to think of goods made in Kratas as low quality, and services available in Kratas as poorly performed. They could not be more wrong. When your clientele are thieves and cutthroats, you produce the highest quality goods and deliver the timeliest and most professional service you possibly can. Those that produce low quality goods and deliver untimely and unprofessional service soon find themselves out of business... permanently.

• Glindella of the Daggerwrights' Forge •

22

This chapter describes goods and services unique to Kratas, including prices, restrictions on their use, and directions for purchasing them.

SHOPPING IN KRATAS

This and previous **Earthdawn** publications made mention of Kratas' higher prices, giving only brief guidelines on how they were different. Once Kratas becomes frequented more often by the player characters, possibly even as the setting of an extended campaign, gamemasters may want more reliable pricing information. While the final decision about the Cost and the Availability Rating of an item should stay with the gamemaster, general information on Kratas' economy and trade opportunities are important for the players' plans for their characters' futures, as well as their characters' knowledge of their own world—especially for those possessing a Knowledge skill related to trade or the type of product being traded. The following background information can be taken as a rule, a guideline, or a source for gamemasters to develop their own set of pricing and Availability modifiers.

AN ECONOMY OF THIEVES

Kratas does not have an economy like Barsaive's other cities. The City of Thieves does not really produce any trade goods, it is little more than a big meeting place for fences, their suppliers, and their customers—and a hideout from Barsaivian authorities. Stolen goods being what they are (dangerous to acquire and possess), Kratas puts out relatively large quantities of goods for relatively low prices—no merchant buys stolen merchandise at regular prices. The reverse is true for the goods the city takes in, like food. Only here it is dangerous and burdensome to come to Kratas to deliver the goods, so they are sold at a higher price. As the supply of these goods is low, it dictates the price. Indeed, some merchants take pleasure in bringing a load of simple foods to Kratas to "make the thieving maggots pay a fortune just to eat simple fare for robbing merchants' caravans." And while local farmers bring in the usual foodstuffs and make a good living off it, the merchant who dares bring a caravan of exotic and valuable foods and luxury items into the City of Thieves can strike the deal of his life—if he makes it away with his life, that is.

Gamemasters are encouraged to introduce the effects of Kratas' special economic situation into their game as an aspect of Kratas as a special

BARGAINS TABLE

Item Category	Type of Items	Cost Modifier
Rare Import	Exotic and quality foods and beverages, normal clothing, live animals	400%
Regular Import	Food and beverages, artisan and craftsmans' tools	200%
Self-supporting	Weapons, items listed in this chapter	100%
Typical Export	Poisons, second-hand equipment	80%
Kratan Specialty	Thieves' Tools, worn-out equipment	75%

location in the game setting. Pointing out differences between normal Barsaivian shops and bazaars and those of Kratas when describing the city and while characters are shopping will help the gamemaster flesh out Kratas as a unique place and give both himself and the players new perspectives for roleplaying. It can also serve as the incentive or rational background for new adventures, especially when players take things into their own hands and set new goals for their characters, such as letting them seize opportunities.

PURCHASING ITEMS IN KRATAS

In **Earthdawn**, when a character tries to purchase an item, the gamemaster decides whether or not the item is available and for what Cost by taking the item, its Availability Rating, and base Cost into account (***Player's Guide***, p. 247).

As Kratas is different from other major cities, the relation between Cost, Availability, and the size of the community is different from other Barsaivian settlements. While Kratas is the size of a city in terms of population (allowing purchase of Unusual and Rare Availability items frequently), it does not have the same share of craftsmen, scribes, or sages as other Barsaivian cities. In these areas, Kratas has to satisfy most of its demand through imports, which makes these goods less available and often more expensive. Other goods, like weapons and alchemical products, are produced in Kratas, and Availability and prices may be unaffected. Then there are those goods that Kratas produces in excess, like tools and equipment designed for thieves and cutthroats. These items may be illegal elsewhere, or their producers may be wanted criminals. In any case, goods such as lock picks, climbing gear, and assassins' tools are easier to come by in Kratas, and probably cheaper, as the price and Availability in the **Goods and Services** chapter of the ***Player's Guide*** represents how available they are in a world that, in contrast to Kratas, is not dominated and populated by thieves.

Considering the guidelines above, Kratas is treated as a town, or even a village, for items the gamemaster considers fall under the category of "rare imports." For goods and services native to Kratas, and represented in the city by a typical number of craftsmen and other professions, it remains a city when determining Availability. For merchandise that Kratas is the best place to look for, it should be treated as a metropolis, allowing purchase of even Very Rare items.

KRATAN BARGAINS

The Kratan Bargains rule is a quick and easy way to simulate Kratas' high prices and special situation by applying a Cost Modifier based on the type of item purchased. It changes the Cost of an item by allowing the gamemaster to quickly judge the item's Availability.

Refer to the **Kratan Bargains Table**, below. For every item about to be purchased, the gamemaster determines the category it falls into for Kratas, considering the guidelines given above, and applies the Cost Modifier, which is given in percent of the regular price (thus, self-supporting items—those that Kratan craftsmen can produce in sufficient quantities to satisfy the city's demand, but not much more—cost 100 percent of the regular price, thus remaining unchanged). The **Kratan Bargains Table** lists examples of items which fall into each of these categories.

The Kratan Bargains rule is recommended for simple purchases of items not typical for Kratas and for groups that do not want to get involved into the "economy of thieves" in too much detail, or that do not haggle frequently.

KRATAN MERCHANDISE

While an expensive place to live most of the time, there is one category of merchandise Kratas is famous for and that is available in excess: stolen property. Stolen goods are Kratas' lifeblood, and are what pays for most of its inhabitants' needs. And stolen goods do not sell for the same price as those acquired through legal means—most of the time, that is.

While stolen property comes cheaper than regular merchandise, the exact price depends on the danger it brings with it in recognizable features. While you can carry a nondescript sword throughout Barsaive without anyone bothering you, bringing one that bears the markings of the Arm of Throal to the Dwarf Kingdom will get you questioned at best, arrested at the gates at worst. Adorning yourself with the bracelet that is clearly identifiable as a prized heirloom of House Chaozun, lost in a scorcher raid, might earn you a mortal enemy very quickly.



Under normal circumstances, stolen goods are purchased at 10 percent of their nominal value (see the **Haggle** talent in the ***Player's Guide***, p. 72). Since this represents a general rule, true for all of Barsaive, gamemasters are encouraged to employ the following new guidelines into their game for use in Kratas.

Because Kratan merchants do not face the same danger merchants of other cities face for dealing in stolen goods, and are able to get items far away from their legitimate owners or remove marks of ownership, they can buy and sell them at slightly higher prices. A Kratan fence's offer will usually start at 30 percent of the listed cost, and he will sell such an item at 60 percent of the listed cost. These prices assume a generic, used item, often bearing signs of the removal of the former owner's markings. Valuable or unique items can often still be recognized by former owners, and may even lead back to a crime (by use of the Evidence Analysis or Research talent or skill, for example).

The gamemaster modifies the initial offer accordingly, referring to the **Merchandise Table** as a guideline. Kratan merchandise is roughly divided into five categories, as shown in the **Item Category** column of that table. The **Fence's Offer** column shows what a Kratan "merchant" will buy the item for, while the **Kratan Cost** column shows for what price it can usually be bought in Kratas. The **Haggle** column is an additional option for groups that want to incorporate the idea of dangerous goods being harder to sell for a high price into their games. The listed value replaces the normal 5% increase/decrease in price when haggling successfully.

Typical items are tagged as **Daily Theft**, any item that might be recognized under limited circumstances or having its owner's markings removed (affecting its function to a limited degree only, but not looking too pretty either). Daily Theft makes up over two thirds of Kratas' economy. Cheaper than Daily Theft is the **Bad Deal**, an item the thief probably wouldn't have stolen in the first place because it has recognizable, irremovable markings, or is severely damaged, but was taken because the thief had the opportunity. Even worse is **Dangerous Loot**, something a thief would not want to show around, things one can be actively hunted down for by any major government, or that seems so bad to possess everyone would want to get rid of it at the first opportunity. On the other hand, there is **Good Booty**, something that does not bear marks that are recognizable by anyone other than the prior owner himself, such as a small notch on the hilt of that "hardly used sword." Good Booty also passes as second-hand equipment; see the **Bargains Table**. Lastly, there is **Perfect Plunder**, every thief's big dream. It is practically new, and no one will recognize it no matter where it ends up. The only way to confirm it is stolen is to track it from the scene of the crime or by magical means.



Common Magic Items

In addition to the common magic items found in the ***Player's Guide***, p.257, the following magic items can be found in Kratas.

Amulets of the Eye

Each member of the Force of the Eye wears a triangular bronze amulet, point down, with an open eye carved in the center. Called Amulets of the Eye, these amulets identify members of the gang to the people of Kratas, and also serve a more important function. All of the amulets are blood charms magically linked to the eye patch worn by Garlthik One-Eye. This magical link allows the magistrate to see and hear through any of the amulets as though he were physically present in its vicinity. The blood magic used to power the amulets also forms a blood oath between Garlthik and each member of the Force of the Eye.

The amulets' magic lets Garlthik One-Eye keep abreast of everything his agents discover in their daily activities in Kratas and elsewhere in Barsaive. It also serves to keep members of the gang loyal, as they never know when their

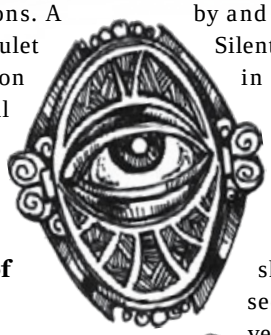


MERCHANDISE TABLE

Item Category	Fence's Offer	Kratan Cost	Fence/Haggle
Dangerous Loot	10%	20%	1%
Bad Deal	20%	40%	3%
Daily Theft	30%	60%	5%
Good Booty	40%	80%	7%
Perfect Plunder	50%	100%	10%

master might be listening in on their conversations. A member of the Force of the Eye who removes his amulet for any length of time better have a good explanation to avoid arousing Garlthik's suspicions. This "magical spy network" is one of the things that have defeated many attempts by other factions (including those of Brocher's Brood) to infiltrate and undermine the Force of the Eye.

For more information, see **Joining the Force of the Eye**, p. 76.



Smoke Bombs

These small bombs incorporate True Air in their construction. When thrown against a hard surface, the smoke bomb explodes, creating a billow of smoke that fills an area roughly 6 yards (3 hexes) in diameter. Sight-based Action Tests within the cloud of smoke suffer a Full Darkness penalty (***Player's Guide***, p. 226). Thieves or assassins discovered during a crime often use these to make good their escape. The smoke is hot, thus foiling Heat Sight, though Astral Sight will penetrate it. The bomb is a one-use item, which is destroyed once thrown.







Spider Gloves and Slippers

These magical gloves and slippers are made from the footpads of giant spiders (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 174). The slippers stretch and can fit over boots and other footwear. The gloves stretch to fit most Namegivers as well. Windlings, obsidimen, and trolls need tailored sets, however. When worn, the gloves and slippers give the wearer a +2 bonus to his Climbing Tests.

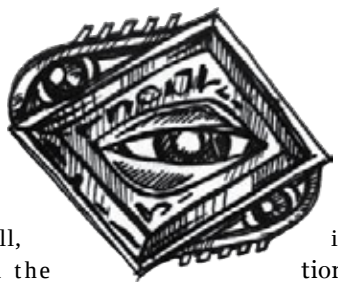
It is alleged that some gloves and slippers are made from jehuthra hide (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 280). Such sets work just as well, but are rumored to expose the wearer to being Horror Marked, if the Horror that created the jehuthra is still alive.





Arrow of the Assassin

Arrows of the Assassin are very thin arrows made out of True air, with small, very sharp arrowheads crafted from the clearest crystal. The only Arrows of the Assassin currently in existence are made for elven warbows, crafted by and according to the design of Xelliana of the Silent Shepherds. The advantages of the True air in these arrows are twofold: first, it greatly increases the range of the arrow, much like a flight dagger, increasing the weapon's Ranges by +50 percent each. Second, the arrow is almost invisible. Except for the head, it appears only as an arrow-shaped shimmering in the air, almost impossible to see unless one knows what to look for and is very close to it. This allows the archer to drop a target from a very long distance, and with the head stuck in the target, the target's companions will be unaware that an archer was responsible until a closer inspection of the body reveals the arrow shaft sticking out.



Night-Black Blades

Glindella of the Daggerwrights (p. 166) has discovered an ingredient that when added to molten steel causes the entire piece of metal, even the sharpened edge of a blade made from the steel, to turn black as night. The Daggerwrights forge a number of knives, daggers, and darts from this night-black steel, and can custom make any weapon a customer requests. A weapon made from night-black steel costs five times the normal cost. In addition to looking intimidating, the blades never apply any modifiers disadvantageous to their wielder to the Perception Tests of others trying to spot him, as they do not reflect light. At the gamemaster's discretion, they offer a +1 bonus to Conceal Object Tests if black or very dark-colored clothing is worn. However, a night-black throwing weapon that misses its target when thrown into a dark alley may also be quite difficult to find again.

Smoke Cloak

Developed by Reepnick (p. 169), this black cloak has tiny amounts of True Fire and True Wood woven into the fabric. When activated (by hooking the two halves of the clasp together), dark smoke emanates from the folds of the cloak, surrounding the wearer in an opaque cloud. While this can be an intimidating sight in the light of day, its primary purpose is to assist with stealth under dimly lit conditions, adding +1 to the Difficulty Number to spot the wearer. Some degree of darkness is required for this to work.



TRAPS

The following section details some of the traps that can be encountered in Kratas, installed in several buildings and places deemed off-limits. For more information on traps, refer to the ***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.110.

DART DROP TRAP

The dart drop trap protects a vault or entrance by dropping objects—usually sharp metal darts—onto the head of the intruder from a concealed container above. This sort of trap is triggered by manipulating the lock without proper care, and is a bane to wannabe thieves.

Detection: 14 **Disarm**: 12
Initiative: 10/2D8
Trigger: Failure to achieve a Good Result when picking the lock.
Effect: From above the thief's head a small trap door opens, dumping a load of sharp metal darts down on him. The gamemaster makes a Step 4/D6 Test to determine how many darts hit the thief. Each dart has a Damage Step equal to 2 plus the appropriate Damage Step for Falling damage corresponding to the height the darts fall from (from floor to ceiling; ***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.108). Most dart drop traps are used in rooms with ceilings four to six yards in height, resulting in a Damage Step of 12 for each dart (Physical Armor provides protection).

DOG HOUSE TRAP

The trap is built to look like a large container, most often a chest, locked with a large padlock. The Lock Picking Difficulty depends on the lock and is often low, but the "trap" is triggered when the lock is removed. This chest is actually a dog house, featuring a panel in the back through which the resident can enter and exit. When the padlock is removed and the hasp lifted, the whole structure collapses and falls outward, revealing the creature residing in it (usually a guard dog, although there have been accounts of hell hounds or norikots).

Detection: 16 **Disarm**: NA
Initiative: NA
Trigger: Removal of lock.
Effect: Opening the box releases the creature inside.

THERAN SCROLL CASE

This trapped scroll case is described in the **Discourse on Traps** (see p. 209). If the trap is not disarmed before opening, a kernel of True Fire burns the contents of the scroll case.

Detection: 20 **Disarm**: 18
Trap: 14/2D12
Trigger: Opening the case.
Effect: When activated, the case's contents are burned.

POISON NEEDLE TRAP

When any sort of pick is inserted into the lock, a spring-loaded needle juts out of a tiny hole next to it, pricking the hand and delivering a dose of Damaging poison (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.123). Other more or less potent poisons may be administered at the gamemaster's discretion.

Detection: 16 **Disarm**: 14
Initiative: 12/2D10
Trigger: Inserting tool in lock.
Effect: Damage Step 12/2D10 poison (for three rounds; see text).

THIEF'S BANE CHEST

These large iron chests have their keyholes mounted inside and at the back of inset circular tubes, just large enough to fit the hand of a Namegiver holding a key. Most of these are too small to accommodate a troll's or obsidiman's hand, unless custom made to fit. Halfway through each tube is a slit in which are mounted two razor-sharp blades, often coated with poison. These blades are spring-loaded, triggered by a tiny pin mounted inside the lock itself. The location of the pin within the mechanism is unique to each individual chest, so even if a thief recognizes the chest, he will not know which part of the lock to avoid. The rightful key will bypass this pin but any attempt to pick the lock,

COMMON MAGIC ITEMS TABLE

Item	Cost	Weight	EDN	Availability
Amulets of the Eye	NA (see text)	1	NA	Very Rare (see text)
Smoke Bombs	60	1	11	Rare
Spider Gloves and Slippers	350	4	16	Very Rare
Arrow of the Assassin	500	4 oz.	15	NA
Night-black Blades	× 5	as weapon	as weapon	1 level higher than weapon
Smike Cloak	500	1	14	Very Rare

even a successful one, will trigger the blades. The Difficulty Number of the locks varies, but can range from 10 to 15, or even (albeit rarely) as high as 20 (a chest with a lock of this difficulty would be extraordinarily expensive, however). A thief must achieve an Extraordinary Result on his Lock Picking Test to open the lock without setting off the blades.

Wedging something in the way of the blades may disarm the trap within a thief's bane chest. However, it requires an Extraordinary Result to do this without blocking access to the lock itself. To add further insult to injury, the lock of the chest is spring-loaded such that it must be held open with the key turned. If pressure is released, such as by having the fingers holding the key or pick severed, or a quick thief beating the trap's Initiative and removing his hand just in time, the latch will spring back closed. A clever thief who is aware of this property may fling the lid open with the opposite hand, while picking the lock with the other, or have a partner do it.

Ryger Squinteye (p.166) has recently built at least one of these traps whose lid is made to slide to the side, rather than open upwards, even though it has an obvious pair of hinges on the back. Flinging the lid open triggers a series of darts to fire out from the underside of the lid. These are only Damage Step 4/D6 weapons, but are also coated with a poison.

Detection: NA **Disarm**: 12
Initiative: 16/D12+D8+D6
Trigger: Picking the lock (see text).
Effect: When the blades are sprung, they do Step 15/D12+2D6 damage.



Poisons

Poisons and Kratas go hand-in-hand. The nature of being a thief means that, sooner or later, one will either administer, or have administered to one, a poison of some form. Apart from the poisons described in the ***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.123, several new poisons available in Kratas are described below.

Lethe's Tears

This poison can be administered either orally or by causing a Wound. If the initial Resistance Test fails, the poison takes about five minutes to make its way through the body, at which point the subject falls asleep. The subject will remain asleep for a number of minutes equal to the Effect Test result, after which he will awaken, with no memory of the fifteen minutes before falling asleep. If there is no drastic change in the victim's position or environment, he will not even be aware of the missing time or loss of consciousness. Should the target suddenly find himself face down on the floor, or with a recent injury, he will know something is amiss, however. Careful timing is the key to using this poison in such a way as to avoid detection.

Lethe's Tears are made from the diluted venom of the death moth (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.165). Ergan the Alchemist keeps a number of caged death moths down in his basement, stripped of their legs and wings, which he milks for their venom. Ergan has acquired a strong resistance to the fear-inducing power of the moths.

Type: Paralyzation **Spell Defense**: 9
Onset Time: 5 minutes **Step Number**: 7
Duration: Effect Test minutes

Blood Algae

This is a poison distilled from the blood algae of the Serpent River. Traditionally, only questors of Raggok make this. The fact that it is now sold on the streets of Kratas suggests that there are questors of Raggok operating in the city, or that some thief stole the secret from Raggok's questors elsewhere, then brought it to Kratas.

Type: Damage **Spell Defense**: 10
Onset Time: Instant **Step Number**: 8
Duration: Any target Wounded by a weapon coated with this poison suffers 2 Damage Points each round until he can staunch the bleeding with a healing aid or bandages (no armor provides protection).



eapons

The following weapons appear in the same format as those described in the **Goods and Services** chapter of the ***Player's Guide***, p.248.

Mini Crossbow

Some of the best assassins are windlings. If based in Kratas, windling assassins are often equipped with tiny crossbows, a novelty for them, and so picked up with great interest. These crossbows have collapsible arms that allow the windlings to carry them on their back when not in use, making them able to be carried easily while in flight. However, windlings still need to use both hands to load and fire them.

As Kratans are quite inventive when it comes to employing stealth, these mini crossbows have been modified to be used by other Namegivers as well. There are three major modifications to the basic design. One fits a vertical grip to the crossbow, instead of a butt, allowing it to be fired one-handed. Another mounts the crossbow on a vambrace strapped to the wielder's forearm, reaching over the hand and without a grip. This modification also features a dagger-like point that can be used as a close combat weapon, allowing Unarmed Combat Tests to be made with the crossbow, using the same Damage Step. The third modification changes the shape and size of the crossbow so that it does not reach over the hands, and thus is concealable under the sleeve, but this requires both



hands to fire, and is harder to aim. It imposes a –2 penalty to Attack Tests when using the crossbow, but adds +2 to the Difficulty Number to spot the weapon.

For all of these weapons, the tiny bolts they fire do little damage, unless they are coated with poison (which they usually are).

Mini Crossbow

Cost: 75
Damage Step: 2
Strength Minimum: 5
Weight: 1
Size: 2
Range: 2–12 (1–6)/13–24 (7–12)
Availability: Rare

Mini Crossbow Bolts

Cost: 10
Weight: 8 oz

The Silent Shepherd's Crook

The Silent Shepherd's Crook looks like a normal shepherd's crook, except the curved top is a sharp metal blade, not a wooden hook. Some are built with a wooden cover that conceals the blade, much like a sword cane. At the gamemaster's discretion, the crook can give the wielder a +2 bonus to his Climbing Tests in situations where it can be used to hook a ledge or similar structure, though it is advised that the wielder sheath the blade before doing so, or it can get damaged. It can also give a similar benefit to Dexterity Tests to vault over an obstacle, or similar clever use, again at the gamemaster's discretion.

The Shepherds have their crooks made for them by the Tinkerers' Forge. A character might be able to persuade the Weaponsmiths of that forge to make him one, but only if he can trick the Tinkerers into believing that he is a Shepherd. The Shepherds are proprietary about their crooks, and if such a character were to be found out, they would be quick to retrieve the crook. They do not appreciate amateurs sullying their reputation.

Unless noted otherwise, the rules for quarterstaffs are applied (***Player's Guide***, p. 250).

Cost: 40 (120 with metal blade)
Damage Step: 4 (6 with metal blade)
Strength Minimum: 7 (13 with metal blade)*
Weight: 4 (6 with metal blade)
Size: 5
Availability: Uncommon (NA with metal blade)

* Minimum Dexterity 7

Blood Charms

Blood charms are magical items that draw on the magical power within the wearer's blood. Several new blood charms are available in Kratas, as well as several variations of existing blood charms. For more information on the existing charms mentioned in the descriptions below, as well as details on how blood charms work, see the ***Player's Guide***, p. 257.



Blood Fingers

The blood fingers blood charm is a variation of the blood knuckles charm (***Player's Guide***, p. 257), although it doesn't give a bonus to unarmed Damage Tests. Instead, tiny chips of precious gems (such as diamond or ruby) are embedded—one each—in the tips of the fingers. Each absorbs a slight amount of blood causing the wearer 2 Blood Magic Damage. For 1 Strain per round of use, the wearer adds a +2 bonus to any Dexterity-based Tests that rely primarily or exclusively on fingers and hands (including Picking Pockets, Lock Picking, and Disarm Trap Tests, for example). The bonus does not apply to combat talents or skills, as they usually involve using the entire body, not just the hands.

Unfortunately, their creator Ergan (p. 169) has not perfected these charms. On a Pathetic Result on an Action Test made using the blood fingers, the wearer's blood drains from the charm, and it must be recharged to continue to function. This can only happen after the wearer has healed the original Blood Magic Damage caused by the charm.

Blood Toes

Like blood fingers, the blood toes blood charm is a variation of the blood knuckles charm (***Player's Guide***, p. 257). Tiny chips of ruby, diamond, or similar precious gems, are implanted in the toes of the wearer. The blood absorbed by the charm causes the wearer 2 Blood Magic Damage. For 1 Strain per round of use, the wearer adds a +2 bonus to any Dexterity-based Tests that rely primarily or exclusively on feet or legs (including Silent Walk Tests, for example). The bonus does not apply to combat talents or skills, as they usually involve using the entire body, not just the feet. Like the blood fingers charm, a Pathetic Result on an Action Test while using the blood toes causes the wearer's blood to drain from the charm, and it must be recharged to continue to function. This recharging can only happen after the wearer has healed the original Blood Magic Damage caused by the charm.

Dexterity Booster

Similar to the strength booster charm (***Player's Guide***, p. 261), the dexterity booster is made of clear crystal that turns dark red when activated by the wearer's blood. This causes the wearer 2 Blood Magic Damage. For every 2 Strain taken, the wearer receives a +1 bonus to a Dexterity-only Test.

Dulcet Throat

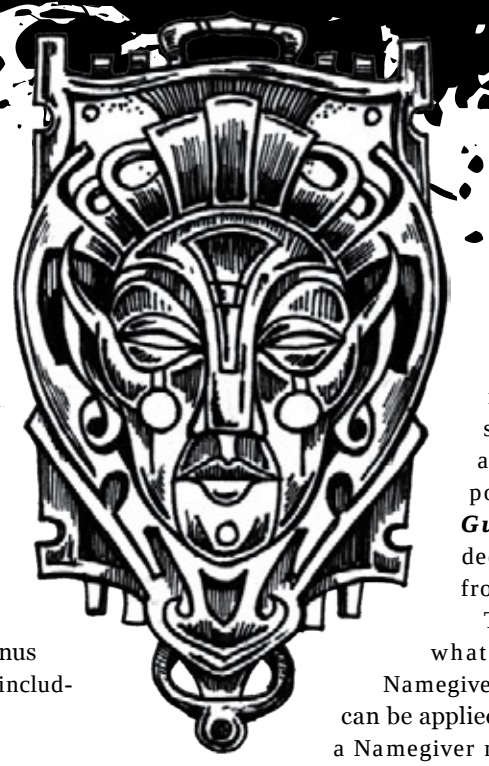
The dulcet throat blood charm contains a tiny gold snake suspended in a pastille of a jelly-like substance. When swallowed the gel dissolves in the throat, at which point the snake wraps itself around the vocal chords and bites into the inside of the throat, causing 2 Permanent damage to the wearer. For 1 Strain, the snake awakens and vibrates with the wearer's vocal chords, adding magically sweet tones to the speaker's voice. This gives the speaker a +2 bonus to one Interaction Test that attempts to verbally create a positive reaction in the target.

Heat Sight Eye

Similar to the darksight eye (***Player's Guide***, p. 258), the heat sight eye is a light-blue-tinted piece of hollowed-out living crystal, containing a small gel worm attached to a strap. When attached, the worm burrows into the wearer's eye, causing 2 Permanent damage and giving the wearer the equivalent of the racial Heat Sight ability (***Player's Guide***,

BLOOD CHARMS TABLE

Item	Cost	Weight	EDN	DR	Availability
Blood Fingers	500	1	15	1	Very Rare
Blood Toes	500	1	15	1	Very Rare
Dexterity Booster	500	1	16	1	Very Rare
Dulcet Throat	450	neg.	16	0	Rare
Heat Sight Eye	300	1	14	0	Rare
Trap Initiative Booster	450	1	17	1	Very Rare
Blood Crystal Nail	300	neg.	14	0 (see text)	Very Rare



p. 20). The eye can never be removed and the Permanent Damage can never be healed.

TRAP INITIATIVE BOOSTER

This blood charm looks similar to the initiative booster charm (***Player's Guide***, p. 260), though a bit smaller. When attached, the red-colored piece of crystal turns black as obsidian with the wearer's blood. This causes 2 Blood Magic Damage. For every 1 Strain the wearer takes, the charm gives him a +1 bonus to his Initiative Test made against a trap (including Trap Initiative Tests).

BLOOD CRYSTAL NAIL

One of the wearer's fingernails or toenails is removed and replaced with a thin sliver of living crystal that fills with blood. This causes 1 Permanent damage. The wearer can flip the nail open at will, exposing a very small compartment or extending a miniature weapon or tool from beneath. Some use these charms for smuggling small valuables, such as gems, or tiny scraps of paper with information on them. Assassins may have miniature blood weapons, such as needles, installed, with a poison sac (***Player's Guide***, p.261) attached or with manually applied poison. A spore gland (***Player's Guide***, p.261) could also be embedded in the hand to spray spores out from under the nail.

The nail is obvious if one knows what to look for, but not if all the Namegiver's nails are painted. This charm can be applied to fingernails and toenails, and a Namegiver may have multiple blood crystal fingernails or toenails installed. A poisoned needle combined with a Swift Kick can make for an excellent (and deadly) surprise attack...

The Depatterning Rating of the blood crystal nail does not include that of any blood weapon, poison sac, or spore gland embedded beneath the nail. The Ratings of these must be applied separately.

Magical Treasures



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Hey, you! Wanna buy a dagger? This one's been blessed by the Passions, cursed by a Horror, and forged with elemental fire. It's the most powerful dagger in all o' Barsaive. How'd I get it? In Kratas, my friend, you can get anything...

• Alleyway "Merchant" •

This section provides gamemasters with new thread items to introduce into their games. These items are popular in Kratas, are only available there, or are the property of important gamemaster characters residing in the City of Thieves. Where appropriate, descriptions contain hints and explanations of where these items can be found or purchased, and specify the items' Key Knowledges.

General Treasures and Thread Items

General Treasure and Thread Items are among the more common threaded items characters weave threads to so that they can gain access to the powers of their Thread Ranks. Rules for General Treasures and Thread Items are found in the **Magical Treasures** chapter of the ***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 130.

Swords of Command

Swords of Command come in sets of two to twelve matched broadswords of the finest quality. Their origin is a matter of speculation, but they were clearly made by a society very advanced in the ways of magic, for they combine the elements of a powerful Thread Item with those of a Group True Pattern (***Player's Guide***, p. 120). In Kratas, the leading officers of Deteranis' Swords have a set of five of these swords.

Maximum Threads: 2–12
Spell Defense: 16
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the set of Swords of Command.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 Rank bonus to his Empathic Sense talent. This bonus can only be used on characters with threads woven to the same set of swords as the wielder's. The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The Rank bonus to the wielder's Empathic Sense talent is now +3. The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the group for whom the set of Swords of Command was created.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Tactics Tests. If the wielder does not know the Tactics talent or skill, he may use it as a Default Skill (***Players Guide***, p. 87). The maximum number of troops he can command is doubled. The sword is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The Rank bonus to the wielder's Empathic Sense talent is now +5. The sword is now Damage Step 9.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wielder must take part in a military campaign as a junior officer, leading at least 60 troops, and achieve victory by working cooperatively with similar units.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Chain of Command** ability. When accepted as the leader of all troops under the command of any number of characters with threads woven to the set of swords, the wielder may replace the Tactics Tests of any of the other wielders with his own Tactics Test. For this ability to work, the other wielders must have attuned their Empathic Sense talents to him. The maximum number of troops the wielder can command is tripled.

Shadow Bombs

Small metal spheres covered with arcane symbols, shadow bombs are smaller than spike bombs—only an inch in diameter—but are said to be similar in design. When thrown by a wielder with a thread attached, a shadow bomb explodes, filling an area with ice-cold darkness, similar to the Ethereal Darkness spell (***Player's Guide***, p. 167). This does no damage, but the darkness created is impenetrable to sight, even for characters with Low-Light Vision or Heat Sight. Any actions requiring sight suffer a Complete Darkness penalty. The wielder and anyone else with a thread woven to the bomb can see through the darkness as clearly as day, as can any characters with knowledge of Nethermancy. With no threads attached to it, the shadow bomb does not explode.

Shadow bombs are destroyed after they are thrown, but can be recreated using the same rules and methods as for spike bombs (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 141), and their effects can be dispelled as per the Ethereal Darkness spell. The thrown Range of a shadow bomb is equal to that of a dagger.

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the alchemist who created the shadow bomb. For many of those available in Kratas, this will be Ergan or B'rakorl.

Effect: The bomb creates darkness 6 yards (3 hexes) in diameter that lasts for two rounds.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The bomb now creates darkness 8 yards (4 hexes) in diameter that lasts for three rounds.

Thread Rank Three

Effect: The bomb now creates darkness 10 yards (5 hexes) in diameter that lasts for four rounds.

Thread Rank Four

Key Knowledge: The creation of a shadow bomb requires the assistance of a Nethermancer with knowledge of the Ethereal Darkness spell. The wielder must learn the Name of the Nethermancer who assisted in the bomb's creation.

Effect: The bomb now creates darkness 12 yards (6 hexes) in diameter that lasts for five rounds. The Difficulty Number to dispel the darkness is now 16.

Thread Spider Gloves and Slippers

Thread spider gloves and slippers are much rarer than their non-threaded counterparts. Only a few pairs have been made in Kratas, but reports of their success are increasing demand.

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Namegiver who created the Gloves. In Kratas, Reepnick, the Daggerwrights, and the Tinkerers' Forge, have each made at least one set.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 Rank bonus to his Climbing talent. The wearer is allowed to climb with one limb free, enabling him to carry something in his hand, kick someone with a foot, or perform other appropriate actions while climbing. If these actions require the use of a Standard Action, he cannot move that round.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wearer now gains a +3 Rank bonus to his Climbing talent.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the type of spider that the gloves and boots were made from.

Effect: For 2 Strain, the wearer can cling to smooth surfaces, including hanging upside-down from a ceiling, for a number of minutes equal to his Climbing Rank. This effect requires the wearer's Standard Action each round to maintain.



Thread Flight Dagger of the Cutthroat

Glindella considers this to be the current height of the Daggerwrights' art. First she begins with a night-black flight dagger (for game statistics, see **Night-Black Blades**, p. 236) of the best quality, then creates this threaded item from it, applying a unique rune design to each dagger created. In addition to the magical bonuses below, the standard rules for night-black blades apply (see p. 236).

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the dagger.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage Step 3. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Throwing Weapons Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The dagger is now Damage Step 4. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Conceal Weapon Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the secret method of the construction of the Night-Black Blades.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage Step 5. The wielder now gains a +2 bonus to his Throwing Weapons Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The dagger is now Damage Step 6. The wielder now gains a +1 Rank bonus to his Surprise Strike talent.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The wielder must undergo a ritual, as described for the Weapon Back spell (***Player's Guide***, p. 208), in which an Elementalist who knows the spell or a member of the Daggerwrights copies the rune from the blade onto the wielder's body, creating a scar. This causes the wielder 1 Blood Magic Damage that can only be healed if the weapon is destroyed or his thread to it is severed.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the weapon works as if the Weapon Back spell had been cast upon it. The Duration of the ability is eight rounds and the Effect Step is equal to the wielder's WIL+6. The wielder counts as a magician for purposes of lowering his Spell Defense (***Player's Guide***, p. 134) when using this ability.

Thread Hook Hatchet

This is one variant of a thread version of the hawk hatchet, devised by the Daggerwrights, and made of night-black steel. It has a metal ring inset in the center of the handle that spins in place. There is a post in the middle of this ring around which one can tie a rope. In addition to the magical bonuses below, the standard rules for night-black blades apply (see p. 236).

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14
Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the hatchet.

Effect: The hatchet is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Throwing Weapons Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Effect: The weapon's Ranges are now: Short 2–30 (1–15), Long 31–60 (16–30).

Thread Rank Four

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the weapon's creator.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder can make the hatchet spin around a target with a successful Attack Test; no damage is rolled. If there is a rope attached, this will securely tie the

rope to the target. A target so tied is considered Entangled (***Player's Guide***, p. 229), with an Entangling Difficulty to break free of 10. Additionally, this can be used as a grappling hook to attach the rope to a point, like a tree branch or parapet, to which the wielder would like to climb.

Whip of Dis

This is a whip used by slavers and questors of Dis to keep their subjects in line. The whip is made of dark leather, and constantly oozes drops of blood, which never seem to dry. Several members of Brocher's Brood are believed to possess these weapons. Some say these whips are created by the Therans, though others point to their dripping blood and claim they originate from the Blood Wood. Amongst both groups are Namegivers that believe these whips can only be created by questors, or at least followers, of Dis.



Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 16
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the whip.

Effect: The whip is now Damage Step 6. As an entangling weapon, the whip can be damaged and rendered useless (***Player's Guide***, p. 229). If this happens, the wielder can have it grow back, as a Standard Action, for 2 Strain.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: If the wielder causes damage to a target with the whip, he may take 2 Strain to let the target be affected by the Pain spell (***Player's Guide***, p. 188). He uses his Willpower Step for the Effect Test; the rules for the spell apply as normal.

Thread Rank Three

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Melee Weapons Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Deed: The wielder must perform an Act of Devotion to Dis of a type of the gamemaster's discretion. He does not earn any Devotion Points for this Act.

Effect: When successfully entangling a target with the whip, the wielder may take 4 Strain to let the target be affected as if by a Sleep spell (***Player's Guide***, p. 188).

Thread Mini Crossbow

Some mini crossbows are Named General Treasures. These are almost always of Theran manufacture and used by Theran assassins. In Kratas, B'rakorl has one of these items in her inventory.

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the crossbow.

Effect: The crossbow is now Damage Step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The crossbow's Ranges are now: Short 2–16 (1–8), Long 17–30 (9–15).

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the crossbow's creator.

Effect: The crossbow is now Damage Step 5. The retractable arms open and close at mental command as a Free Action.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The crossbow is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn where the weapon was made.

Effect: The wielder may gain a higher bonus from the Aiming combat option. He gains cumulative bonuses for up to four consecutive rounds of aiming. If aiming for three rounds, he receives a +4 bonus; if aiming for four rounds, he receives a +5 bonus to his next Attack Test.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The crossbow magically generates bolts, removing the need for the wielder to ever need to reload the bow. These bolts are made of solidified, dark magical energy. Unstable, they disappear two rounds after being removed or fired from the weapon, and cannot deliver poison or be transformed with an ability such as Flame Arrow. Normal bolts can still be loaded into the crossbow.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn who created the first weapon of this type.

Effect: The crossbow is now Damage Step 7. The crossbow's Ranges are now: Short 2–20 (1–10), Long 21–40 (11–20).

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must cut himself and drip blood onto the bow while swearing a Blood Oath of some kind to the Theran Empire, which may be represented by one of its officials or an organization like a Noble house. The Oath is handled as normal, but if broken, the wielder forfeits all threads woven to the crossbow, in addition to any other effects of breaking the Oath.

Effect: The crossbow is now Damage step 8. It has three reservoirs–small hollows–carved into its stock. The wielder may drip poison into any of the reservoirs, along with a drop of his blood, causing 1 Blood Magic Damage per reservoir filled. The wielder can then cause any bolt fired from the bow to be coated with poison from one of the reservoirs, for 2 Strain per bolt. Once a reservoir has been used, the Blood Magic Damage may be healed, but it cannot be refilled until the Damage Point is healed.



EGENDARY TREASURES

The following items are Legendary Treasures, unique magical items spoken of in legends by the citizens of Kratas. Rules for Legendary Treasures can be found in the ***Gamemaster's Companion***, p. 27, although they are used as the more common threaded items presented above.

GEARS OF ARTIFICER

This is a necklace made from a handful of gleaming metal gears, strung on a simple cord. According to legend, these gears were struck from the body of the Horror, Artificer (***Gamemaster's Companion***, p. XX), during combat with a group of adepts. Since Artificer only manifests on the physical plane when the magic level is at its highest, if these are truly part of the Horror, the adepts must have fought it during the very height of the Scourge. A popular rumor among the explorers of Kratas is that this battle happened deep in the Undercity, with a group of powerful adepts holed out in the ruins in its lowest levels.

There have been numerous accounts of this item, and many attempts to find it, as it is said that it protects its wearer from Artificer's traps. His Majesty's Exploratory Force of Throal has a standing reward of 5,000 silver pieces for anyone who brings it to them. Their focus is on Kratas, as the last confirmed wearer of the gears was a Thief who called Kratas his home during the gang wars, a dwarf Named Takarson Nine-toed. Unfortunately, no one knows what came of Takarson due to the chaos of those times in the city. Since then, tales have put the gears in nearly every city in the province, but few are credible.

While this necklace is highly sought after by Thieves, it is rumored that weaving a thread to the necklace can expose the weaver to a Horror Mark from Artificer. Some suspect that the necklace was created by the Horror for this very purpose. It is certain that most Namegivers who wore the necklace came to a bad end, but this does not prove anything, as those with an interest in wearing the necklace tend to be employed in dangerous professions anyway.

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the necklace.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to all Action Tests made against traps.

Thread Rank Two

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the adept who struck the gears from Artificer.

Effect: The wearer now gains a +2 bonus to all Action Tests made against traps.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the location of the battle during which the gears were struck from Artificer.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wearer may make a Perception Test with a bonus equal to the Thread Rank woven to determine if there are any traps made by Artificer nearby. The Difficulty Number is Artificer's Forge Trap Step. If successful, the wearer learns the number of traps placed by Artificer within 100 yards, but not their location or type.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wearer now gains a +3 bonus to all Action Tests made against traps.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn when the battle occurred during which the gears were struck from Artificer.

Effect: The wearer now gains a +4 bonus to all Action Tests made against traps. He now adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense, and to his Physical and Mystic Armor Ratings, against any earth-based elemental attacks (such as spells or powers of Earth spirits), and against attacks by opponents associated with earth or stone (such as Stone Lions or obsidiman).

Thread Rank Six

Deed: The wearer must find a trap constructed by Artificer and successfully disarm it.

Effect: The wearer doubles all bonuses the Gears of Artificer confer if they are used against Artificer or its creations (this includes the Thread Rank Three bonus to the ability to sense Artificer's traps, which is now +12).

HURMON'S CROOK

This looks like any ordinary wooden shepherd's crook, and does not have a metal blade attached. This item is tied to the legend of Hurmon and his group of assassins, the Silent Shepherds. Without a thread attached it has the same characteristics as a normal shepherd's crook (p. 239).

Maximum Threads 3
Spell Defense 18
Legend Point Cost: Master

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the weapon.

Effect: The staff is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 Rank bonus to his Silent Walk and Surprise Strike talents.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the first person slain by Hurmon.

Effect: The crook's Climbing bonus is now +4. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Melee Weapons Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wielder now gains a +2 Rank bonus to his Silent Walk and Surprise Strike talents.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the first person Hurmon was paid to kill.

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 9. The wielder now gains a +2 bonus to his Melee Weapons Tests.

Thread Rank Six

Deed: The wielder must assassinate a tyrant, warlord, or other despotic villain.

Effect: The wielder now gains a +3 Rank bonus to his Silent Walk and Surprise Strike talents.

Thread Rank Seven

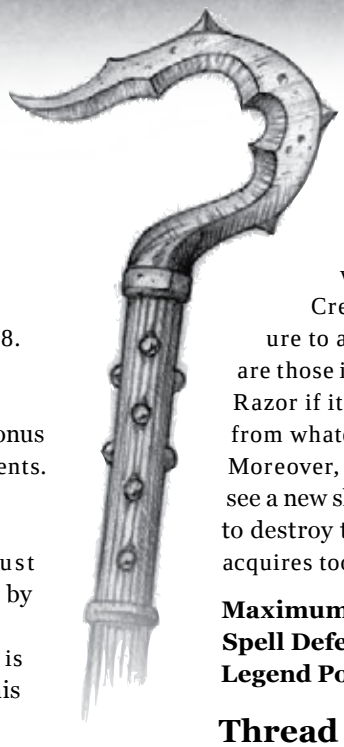
Effect: The staff is now Damage step 10. The wielder now gains a +3 bonus to his Melee Weapons Tests and the crook's Climbing bonus increases to +6.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must form a new branch of the Silent Shepherds.

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 11. The wielder now gains a +4 Rank bonus to his Silent Walk and Surprise Strike talents and a +4 bonus to his Melee Weapons Tests.

Mynbruje's Razor



Mynbruje's Razor is a six-foot tall piece of living crystal crafted into a giant blade. About halfway down the blade is carved a figure of Mynbruje as a human woman, with a crown of stars. Her right arm cradles an hourglass with the sand almost run out, while her left arm trails a set of scales behind her. At the base of the blade is a square shaft with two holes bored through it. These are used to attach the Razor to a ship's hull as a figurehead. More about the history of the Razor is contained in the story about B'rakorl's Emporium.

This is a very powerful magical treasure, so it should be introduced into a campaign with care. For game balance, one should hold the Crew (see below) strictly to the penalties for failure to act as a questor of Mynbruje. In addition, there are those in Thera (and elsewhere) who will recognize the Razor if it appears again, and will be eager to acquire it from whatever vessel upon which it is currently mounted. Moreover, several powerful Horrors will be unhappy to see a new ship outfitted with the Razor, and will wisely try to destroy the ship when it first appears, before its Crew acquires too much power.

Maximum Threads: 12
Spell Defense: 22
Legend Point Cost: Master

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the blade.

Deed: The owner must affix the blade to the prow of a ship, which may be an air or water vessel.

Effect: The ship adds +1 to its Ramming Step.

Thread Rank Two

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the captain of the first ship to mount the Razor. This was Captain Mellinara Tallboots, a human Air Sailor of the adventuring group "The Truthful Friends."

Effect: The ship now adds +2 to its Ramming Step and +1 to its Speed Step.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Names of the creators of the Razor. They were Horgnok, a troll Crystalsmith from Ustrect; and Wellista Follanis, an elven Elementalist from Wyrm Wood.

Effect: The ship now adds +3 to its Ramming Step and +1 to its Maneuverability Step.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The ship now adds +4 to its Ramming Step, +2 to its Speed Step, and +3 to its Armor.

Thread Rank Five

Deed: The owner must be part of an adventuring group with a Group True Pattern. The group members must perform their group Naming ritual and include the statement that they are now the crew of the vessel to which Mynbruje's Razor is attached. Each member of the group must weave a thread of any Rank to the Razor, though the Razor's abilities are based on the highest-Rank single thread woven to it. From this point on, the Crew collectively acts as a questor of Mynbruje. This does not preclude individual members from remaining questors of other Passions, but the actions taken by the Crew as a whole count as Acts

of Devotion, or failures to act, with a commensurate gain or loss of Devotion Points. Whether an action counts as a Crew action or an individual action is at the discretion of the gamemaster. To increase the Questor Rank of the Crew, each member may contribute Legend Points toward purchasing the Rank, and cost is determined as if for a Warden talent. Additionally, members of the Crew may also contribute Legend Points to any one member of the Crew for the weaving of a higher-Rank thread to the Razor. No other Legend Point sharing is allowed.

As long as a Crew member has a thread woven to the Group True Pattern and to the Razor, he can use the appropriate Questor powers (the limit on how often a power can be used is shared by all characters, though). Also the mere appearance of the ship in troubled areas may Ease Suffering in those that see it, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Note that the Crew (where capitalized) refers only to those who share the Group True Pattern for the purpose of the Razor's effects and requirements; a ship may well have other crew who are not part of the adventuring group, and whose actions are irrelevant to the accumulation of Devotion Points or the magical use of the Razor. Additionally, members of the Crew do not have to actually perform sailing duties while aboard the ship (although it is generally expected that they help out in maintaining the ship's welfare by whatever means they can).

Effect: The ship now adds +5 to its Ramming Step and +2 to its Maneuverability Step. The Crew may improve its Questor Rank and use Mynbruje Questor powers while aboard the ship.

Thread Rank Six

Deed: The Crew must attain a Questor Rank of 2.

Effect: The Razor begins to accumulate Karma. In a special Karma ritual, all members of the Crew spend at least thirty minutes preparing the ship—checking the rigging, polishing the fire cannons, stowing the gear, and so on—and solemnly contemplating the purpose of their journeys. At the end of the ritual each Crew member may transfer 1 Karma Point from his own Karma pool to the Razor. The Crew can then use these Karma Points to augment any of the ship's Action Tests. The Razor can hold a maximum of 10 Karma Points. The ship now adds +6 to its Ramming Step, +3 to its Speed Step, and +4 to its Armor.



Thread Rank Seven

Deed: The Crew must attain a Questor Rank of 3.

Effect: The ship now adds +7 to its Ramming Step, +3 to its Maneuverability Step, and +5 to its Armor.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The Crew must attain a Questor Rank of 4 and perform a Major Act of Devotion to Mynbruje.

Effect: For 1 Strain per Crew member, the ship, and everything and every person on it, can enter or exit from astral space. While in astral space, a sphere of Mystic Armor surrounds the vessel, reducing damage from contact with unsafe astral space and from any attacks directed at the crew or ship from outside of the sphere. The sphere neither hinders spells directed out of it, nor does it offer any protection against attacks from within the sphere. It does not prevent hostile astral forms from moving into the sphere. The sphere reaches in all directions from the farthest physical structure on the ship, for example, the tallest mast, longest oar, or widest spar. The ship now adds +8 to its Ramming Step. If the Razor spears a Horror by ramming it, the Horror receives 2 Wounds in addition to any damage caused by the maneuver. The sphere adds +4 to the Mystic Armor of everyone aboard the ship against attacks directed through the sphere. The Razor now holds a maximum of 15 Karma Points.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The Crew must attain a Questor Rank of 5 and perform a Zealous Act of devotion to Mynbruje.

Effect: The ship now adds +9 to its Ramming Step and +8 to its Armor. If the Razor spears a Horror by ramming it, the Horror now receives 4 Wounds in addition to any damage caused by the maneuver. The sphere now adds +8 to the Mystic Armor of everyone aboard the ship against attacks directed through the sphere. The Razor now uses a Step 5/D8 Karma Die.

Thread Rank Ten

Deed: The Crew must attain a Questor Rank of 6 and complete a Quest for Mynbruje.

Effect: The ship now adds +10 to its Ramming Step. If the Razor spears a Horror by ramming it, the Horror now receives 6 Wounds in addition to any damage caused by the maneuver. The sphere now adds +12 to the Mystic Armor of everyone aboard the ship against attacks directed through the sphere. The Razor now holds a maximum of 20 Karma Points and uses a Step 6/D10 Karma Die.


Creatures

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

What? Did you think the danger only started once you got to the city gates?

• Dorelius Hobble •

The city proper and the underground of Kratas, as well as the surrounding area, are home to a variety of unique animal and plant species.

This chapter describes a number of creatures and plants commonly encountered in Kratas and the larger area, and includes game statistics and other information. Like several plant species, some of these creatures are treated as poisons or traps for game purposes. For explanations of the statistics used, see the ***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.145.

ANKLEBITER

The anklebiter is a large burrowing rodent, the size of a cat or small dog. An armed Namegiver could easily dispatch a single anklebiter, but these creatures hide and attack in numbers from cover, making them more troublesome than their size would suggest. The colors of their striped fur match the grasses in which they live, making them very difficult to see. A pack of anklebiters lives in a large warren, with a number of connected tunnels. The entrance holes are hard to see in the grass, but are big enough for a running gazelle, horse, or Namegiver to step in and sprain or break an ankle, so even empty burrows are a hazard. Treat the burrow as a trap, described below. Worse, should an anklebiter be home, it will attack the ankle, crippling its prey. Once the victim falls to the ground, the anklebiter summons its fellows with a high-pitched squeaking noise. Soon, more of these creatures pour out of nearby holes to devour the downed victim. The Dinganni usually know where anklebiter warrens are located, and are able to avoid them.

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 4
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8 (10)
Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (3): 6

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 28
Unconsciousness: 19
Wound Threshold: 7

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 3
Movement: 7/3[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Legend Award: Second Circle

Powers: Camouflage (3): 8, Climbing [S] (3): 11, Locate Target (3): 7, Low-Light Vision, Surprise Attack (2)

Anklebiter Hole

Detection: 8
Disarm: NA
Initiative: 8/2D6
Trigger: Stepping into the hole.
Effect: Step 6/D10 damage (the gamemaster may increase the Damage Step if the victim is moving at speed, running for instance). Physical Armor on the feet provides protection. If this is enough to cause a Wound, the victim's ankle is severely sprained or broken—treat this as a Sprained Ankle (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.123) but with a –2 penalty; the victim is Knocked Down. At the gamemaster's discretion, an anklebiter is near enough to attack the victim—who will probably be Surprised (***Player's Guide***, p.228)—in the following round.

Dinganni Falcon

While the Dinganni revere all birds of prey, the predator they call *Matkt'sho darr*, or "Spirit-friend of the People," is held in the highest regard. While the Dinganni often decorate themselves or their possessions with stylized birds, the pictograph of the Dinganni falcon is reserved for the holiest and most important items, the Dinganni talon among them. Finding one of these bird's feathers is considered an omen, promising luck for a year and a day, though killing a falcon for its feathers brings with it a death sentence. The Dinganni see this bird as a guardian of their people and their lands. One reason for this is that the falcon hunts the more dangerous smaller creatures living among the plains, such as rodents that might prey on the Dinganni's food stores, as well as the feared anklebiter. With its exceptionally keen eyesight the falcon spots the anklebiter from high above and swoops down to make off with its prey, long before the anklebiter's cries summon the rest of the pack.

Scholars have long debated the connection between the Dinganni falcon and the Dinganni people. Some note that a respectful distance is kept towards these birds, while others say this is because the Dinganni simply avoid the falcon's hunting grounds, where anklebiter holes might be located. The majority believe that the Dinganni simply see the falcon as the most efficient hunter in their lands, and strive to follow its example. A few even suggest there is a magical connection between Namegiver and bird.

DEX: 12 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 7
PER: 10 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 9

Initiative: 12
Actions: 2
Attack (4): 16
Damage:
Beak (5): 14
2 × Claws (3): 12

Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death: 70
Unconsciousness: 57
Wound Threshold: 11

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9
Movement: 2/9✦

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

Legend Award: Fourth Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Powers: Battle Shout (Shrill) S (4): 13, Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (4): 14, Hunting S (4): 16, Tracking S (4): 14, Trap Initiative S (4): 16, Wilderness Survival S (4): 14

Jaspree Spider

The Jaspree spider is a giant trapdoor spider, although not as big as the giant spiders of the Servos Jungle. It traps prey by digging a pit and covering the hole with a dirt-concealed lid spun from webbing. The spider spins a series of webs among the nearby grasses, forming a corral that funnels prey to where it lurks under its trapdoor. Galloping animals may run into the grass webs and get stuck, but cautious creatures that try to walk around them are directed toward the pit. A trapdoor of this size would normally stick out as a barren spot in the middle of the plain, but the spider has a magical gland under its carapace that allows it to use Grass Growth, a power similar to the Plant Growth power accessible to questors of Jaspree (***Player's Companion***, p.181). Using Grass Growth allows the Jaspree spider to grow grass on top of its trapdoor in a matter of minutes, disguising the spider and its lair. Strands of webbing connected to the webs in the nearby grasses reach into the lair, so that the spider can sense when a creature gets stuck. The spider can also feel vibrations through the earth from the footsteps of creatures approaching its lair. The magical gland is sought after by farmers and gardeners. Once removed from the creature's body, however, it rapidly loses power. The gland will affect all vegetation within a few-yards-radius as if the spider knew the Questor talent at Rank 12 and was using the Plant Growth power. However, each day after removal, the effective Rank of this power decreases by one; by the thirteenth day, the gland is useless. A recently removed gland can fetch as much as 300 silver pieces from a gardener or farmer, but the value decreases proportionally with the age of the gland, by 10 percent per day.

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

Initiative: 5 (10)
Actions: 1
Attack (5): 10
Damage:
Bite (3): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3

Death: 66
Unconsciousness: 53
Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8
Movement: 8/3✦

✦ The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Legend Award: Fourth Circle

Powers: Climbing S (5): 10, Durability (5), Grass Growth (12): 19, Locate Target (5): 10, Poison (SD: 10; Paralysis), Surprise Attack (5)

Equipment: Lair may contain equipment from previous victims.

Loot: Lair may contain small valuables from previous victims. Fresh Grass Growth gland worth 300 silver pieces, reducing in value by 10 percent per day.

Rules

To detect the trapdoor hidden under the grasses requires a successful Perception (12) Test. The spider does not wait for people to fall into its lair, however. Instead, its trapdoor opens upward, and the spider leaps out from beneath.

Grass Web Trap: To detect the webs of the Jaspree spider requires a successful Perception (6) Test. If a character runs into the web, he becomes stuck with a Step 8/2D6 Strength. In order to escape, the character must make a successful Strength Test against the web's Strength.

Poison and Cocoon: If any bite attack causes at least 1 Damage Point, the Jaspree spider releases a powerful Paralyzing poison (***Gamemaster's Guide***, p.123). If this poison takes effect, the victim is paralyzed for Effect Test minutes, and the spider spins a cocoon around the victim. Once the paralytic poison has worn off, a cocooned character may free himself by making a successful Strength (9) Test. However, the victim must still deal with the Jaspree spider to escape the confines of the burrow.

Adventure Hook

A questor of Jaspree has heard tales of the Jaspree spider and journeys to the Dinganni Plains to capture one. He hopes to breed the spiders in captivity, harvesting their glands or training them to use their powers to increase crop yields. The questor is willing to pay the player characters handsomely for their assistance in capturing a spider. Once the characters have captured one, the questor insists that the players escort him and the spider (caged on a wagon) to Vivane to get paid. While traveling to Vivane, the player characters discover that the questor is a Theran of House Gascilium—the Empire's agricultural specialists. Once they discover their employer's identity, the characters need to make a moral choice: do they want to give such an advantage to the Empire? More crops means more wealth, which means more Imperial troops that can be directed militarily against Barsaive. Should they choose to turn against their employer, they will not be paid; the questor will release the Jaspree spider and use his Command Animal power to direct it to attack the characters. If the player characters remain loyal to their employer, the gamemaster should harass the group for working with the Therans—possibly by orks from Cara Fahd when the group passes near or through the region, as it seems this questor has a bad reputation for trying to capture their wildlife.

Leech Burr

Many of the grasses and shrubs of the plains have thorns and burrs. These are mostly a nuisance, but one species of plant, the leech burr, can be dangerous to travelers. Leech burrs require a drop of blood before they fall to the ground and take root. Each burr injects a tiny needle-like spine into the flesh of a passing animal or Namegiver, extracting a small amount of blood. Unfortunately, walking or riding through a patch of these plants can result in dozens of these burrs latching on to a creature. The spines are so thin that they easily slip through the weave of clothing, but will not readily penetrate armor. Noticing the leech burrs requires a successful Perception (10) Test.

Detection: 9
Disarm: NA
Initiative: NA
Trigger: Moving through area.
Effect: For every yard moved through a leech burr patch, a number of burrs latch on to the victim, causing 1 Damage Point each. For the first yard, Step 4/D6 burrs latch on; each yard thereafter adds +1 Step more burrs (Step 5/D8, Step 6/D10, and so on). Physical Armor provides protection if it covers the affected body part (usually the legs).

Norikot

Norikots resemble dogs in general shape. A little larger than wolves, but not as big as mules, they have elongated snouts with large sharp tusks like those of a boar, and sport pairs of short, sharp horns on the tops of their heads. Wickedly sharp claws complete their armament. The norikot's hide is thick and scaly, somewhat like a rhinoceros, but with short fur. Additionally, norikots have random accretions of horn and bone on their shoulders and backs. This last trait has led to their nickname, "troll dogs", but they have no relation to or special affinity with trolls, and most trolls—as most wise Namegivers—have nothing to do with them.

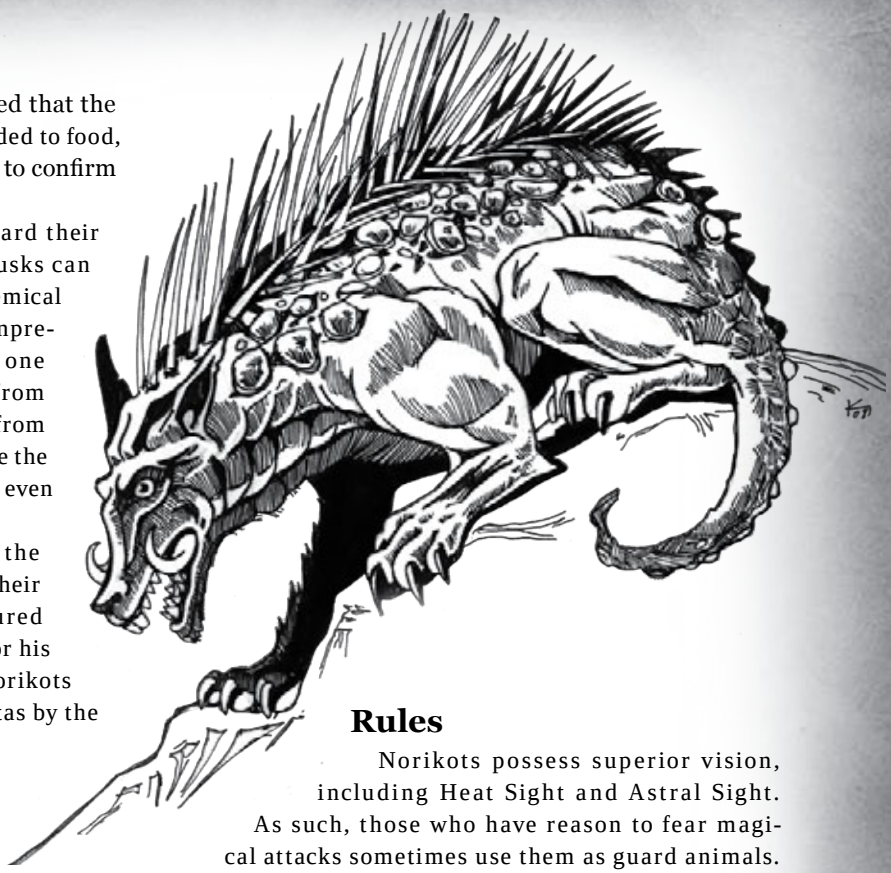
Norikots are reputed to have a taste for Namegiver flesh, and have been known to turn on their masters for no reason. It is rumored that Theran Heavenherds or some other powerful magician created norikots, but the truth is that these creatures are Horror constructs that require



Namegiver flesh in their diet. It is also rumored that the horns or tusks of the norikot, powdered and added to food, can cure various diseases. There is no evidence to confirm the accuracy of this rumor.

Powerful Horrors often use norikots to guard their lairs or to hunt enemies. Norikot horns and tusks can cure nearly any illness if processed in an alchemical solution, but the effect seems to be rare and unpredictable. Most often they have no effect, or one sample will have completely different effects from person to person, or dose to dose. Effects range from complete cures to relief of symptoms (often while the condition worsens) to nausea, hallucinations, or even extreme toxicity.

Norikots have been seen running wild in the depths of the Undercity. Possibly unaware of their true nature, the blood elf Vistrosh has captured several of them and uses them as guard dogs for his most sensitive hideouts. It may be that the norikots of Kratas were constructed by or drawn to Kratas by the Imposter or another Horror.



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

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense**: 7
Actions: 3 (5; see text) **Spell Defense**: 10
Attack (5): 10 **Social Defense**: 6

Damage:
Bite (6): 12
Claws (3): 9

Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death: 58 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Unconsciousness: 47 **Knockdown**: 7
Wound Threshold: 11 **Movement:** 7

Legend Award: Third Circle (Group)

Powers: Astral Sight, Charge (5), Durability (3), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 10, Heat Sight

Equipment, Loot: None

Rules

Norikots possess superior vision, including Heat Sight and Astral Sight. As such, those who have reason to fear magical attacks sometimes use them as guard animals. Norikots will never consent to be used as mounts.

A norikot's preferred method of attack follows three steps. First (if it has sufficient running space to build up speed) it charges its prey and rams it with its horns, digging them deep into the victim's flesh. The momentum of the charge can also knock the victim down (see **Charging Attacks** in the ***Players's Guide***, p. 233). The norikot then bites its prey, attempting to lock its powerful jaws in place around any extremity (see **Bite and Hold** in the ***Gamemaster's Guide***, p. 147). Finally, once it has a hold on its victim, the norikot gouges with all four claws, either from on top if the victim is prone or by hanging from its jaws if the victim is still standing.

Number of Attacks: If the norikot manages to knock its victim to the ground, it may attack five times per round—using all four claws and a bite—while the victim remains prone. Once the target gets up, the norikot may make only three attacks per round—using its two fore claws and a bite.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Character Index

Lemme in-troduce ya to some of my friends! Hic! Jusht as shoon as I sober up. Hey! While ya wait, could ya shpare an old dwarf soldier down on hish luck a coupla silvers for some ale?

• Old Darrik, Drunken Ex-Soldier •

Any story, whether a novel or a movie or even part of a roleplaying session, is about characters. The most important characters in gaming are the player characters, of course, but an interesting supporting cast can make or break an adventure. This book is packed with brief character sketches in the source material and in adventure ideas. Whenever you are at a loss for a plot development or the premise for an adventure, refer to the **Character Index** below. This table lists all of the characters in this book, including a brief description of the character and page references for finding additional material.

The **Character Index** serves as a helpful reminder of the dozens and dozens of gamemaster characters mentioned in this book. This table can also serve as an instant reference tool if you are in the middle of an adventure and need a gamemaster character with whom the player characters can interact. Depending on the situation, you can find someone the player characters already know or bring a new character on stage.

The **Character Index** also comes in handy if you are about to run a session and need a premise to get started. Pick a few characters from the table at random, then figure out what kind of story might involve all of them. This kind of lateral thinking can kick-start your imagination, breaking you out of habitual patterns. Think of it as the storytelling equivalent of connect-the-dots.

You can also use lower-level gamemaster characters to represent the powerful people listed on the table. For example, if you choose Vistrosh to be part of your story but do not want your player characters consorting directly with Kratas' movers and shakers, you can use one of Vistrosh's minor flunkies or servants instead.

The following tables list all the major characters introduced in ***Kratas: City of Thieves***, as well as a few characters from previous **Earthdawn** products who live in and around Kratas. The characters appear in alphabetical order. Each listing includes the character's Name, a page number on which the character first appears, and a brief description of the character, including race, gender, official position (if any), and general personality.

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
All-Breakers	67	Expansionist extortion gang based in the northern section of the Scrabbles
Arvid Maneth	8	Associate archivist of the Great Library of Throal
Asdarion the Old	87	Clifftop has made appearances in the work of this historian and poet
Asram	63	Ork baker in Kratas who can scrape together a fair amount of cash in a pinch
Barkeep of the Darks	157	Seemingly Nameless barkeep of the Darks; a very tall, very pale elf

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE		
Character Name	**Page Number**	**Description**
Belphegor	60	Elf Scout suspicious of N'geliana and her role as just a healer
Berry Blossom	151	Grim Legion band leader; wingless windling Illusionist and Horror Stalker
Blagstern	58	A surly ork Thief, who coordinates the unknown members of the Brood
Bleritis	46	Illusionist in charge of Garlthik's personal security; prowls Kratas in disguise
Blood Steel Forge	165	Kratas' largest forge, known for sheer quantity of goods and blood charms
Blossom's Squad	150	Compotent and dedicated band of the Grim Legion, based in a warehouse
Bordol	126	A surly, betraying human that operates the Drunken Dragon Inn
B'rakorl	168	Eccentric, old t'skrang, runs an Emporium full of magical wares
Branka Warg	102	Killed by Vistrosh for her imitation of Alachia in the Temple of Astendar
Brekul Denairastas	29	Human cat burglar and niece of Uhl; a spy and a master of impersonation
Britaine	130	A Slasher in the Force of the Eye, who secretly belongs to the Keys of Death
Brocher's Brood	58	Second largest gang in Kratas; bitter enemy of the Force; run by Vistrosh
Brotherhood of Kra Tys	197	Mysterious, occasional gathering of obsidimen atop the Kratan Mesa
Caelarion	158	Elven Nethermancer and one-time patron of what is now the Darks
Caleb	58	An old dwarf Thief and Illusionist, he is Vistrosh's most trusted advisor
Ch'krask	115	A particularly vicious slaver and a Thief; occasionally meets with the Brood
Ck'tenal	125	Known as the "Captain," this retired t'skrang Boatman runs the Riverboat
Costrak	200	Dead patron of the Darks who knew of the Undercity Delvers
Cranta Warg	102	Powerful ork Illusionist; questor of Astendar; sworn enemy of Vistrosh
Crentan	113	Founder of the Legion of Despair mercenaries; egotistical human Warrior
Daklaam	137	Human Wizard doing bizarre blood magic experiments in the Catacombs
Death's Thunder	115	A five-person, thrill-seeking mercenary band with an airship for hire
Deniers of Death	202	Secret sect and questors of Raggok, specializing in undeath
Deternis	113	Mysterious and regal Warrior elf; leader of Deteranis' Swords; master tactician
Deternis' Swords	113	An elite mercenary band known for their dedication and brilliant tactics
Diona the Swift	27	Kratan ambassador to Throal; former lover of Garlthik; known for brawling
D'klarr'raan	117	A t'skrang Warrior and astrologer of sorts, he leads the Starlight Infiltrators
Doombringers	116	A vicious mercenary group that will take even the most ammoral jobs
Dorelius Hobble	129	Retired human adventurer, renowned for exploring kaers and disarming traps
Dorma Torlisant	12	She rallied Kratas to build the citadel, claiming inspiration by Upandal

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Dortan	97	Current head of the Old Mill in the Greenmarket, he is a member of the Force
Drannoquinn	104	Helps maintain the Temple of Jaspree; obsidiman Purifer in Blossom's Squad
Dri Murdugast	31	Greedy elf burglar with plans to split the Urupan branch away from the Force
Drogram	27	Dwarf Warrior who knows something of Liltom's activity in Kratas
Duchalia the Herbalist	99	A highly skilled herbalist that deals in potions and poisons
Duntac	187	Wise Dinganni Cavalryman with a disdain for Kratas
Eee'kaal	193	A flighty windling questor of Floranuus, who passes through Kratas briefly
Eemala	–	Traveled Scholar, Horror Lore expert, questor of Mynbruje, in Blossom's Squad
Ekarra	189	Ork woman and Troubadour who is secretly an agent of House T'kambras
Elamian Sitalin	116	Hailing from Jerris' shipyards, this striking Air Sailor is in Death's Thunder
Eliana Throm	203	From Throal, dwarf Traveled Scholar, member of the Followers of the Twelve
Eliandar of the Sharpeye	123	Elven Illusionist who runs the Hard-Earned Coin gambling hall for the Force
Emian Gradon	101	Theran administrator and questor of Erendis; commissioned the Temple Plaza
Ergan the Alchemist	169	Vorst Journeyman, specializes in blood charm creation
Eskatrack of Throal	121	Speculative, questor of Mynbruje with contacts in the dahnut at Kratas
Essali	107	Brother of Gelor, who often unwittingly follows his brother's plans
Eye of the Sphinx	197	In the know about Theran intelligence and politics
Fastrech Kenlijahu	135	Intrepid explorer who learned where to avoid in the Undercity
Fendler of Bakster	8	Got lost in the sewers of Kratas and claims to have seen a grand, ancient city
Fenghat	144	Infiltrator Scout; grew up in the Scrabbles, but got rich leading tours of Kratas
Fiktish'la	97	Kratas' only Brewmaster, this t'skrang woman hails form the Tylon river
Finellianis	71	Twelfth Circle elf Thief who started Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers and holds the Kratan Invitational Thieves' Tournament
Firewind	116	Elementalist and Windmaster, this fiery windling serves on Death's Thunder
F'klanarra Darkwater	33	Leading member of the Syrtisian Silver faction; meets with Therans in Kratas
Flekar the Patience	75	Pseudonym of a semi-retired Confidence Trickster, now living in Kratas
Flekoran the Mole	112	Warrior, Weaponsmith, founder of Flek's Diggers, and a very charismatic ork
Flek's Diggers	112	Famous unit of excellent sappers, known best for their trench digging
Flork	175	Troll Wizard responsible for the corruption of Flork's Woods
Followers of the Twelve	202	Obscure, esoteric group who seek to worship all the Passions
Foranal the Lost	115	A female troll Skyraider with her horns sawn off, she leads Death's Thunder

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE		
Character Name	**Page Number**	**Description**
Force of the Eye	44	Large gang which rules Kratas under the leadership of Garlthik One-Eye
Franicalis	129	Member of the Force; handsome human Troubadour; runs the Blooming Lily
Frent the Chaotic	101	Follower of Lochost in Throal; outspoken against the Temple Plaza of Kratas
Freywak Nosebreaker	–	Troll Warrior, extremely loyal to Berry, she grew up in Blossom's Squad
Fuml Pierco	30	Aging burglar and shipwright, runs the Force of the Eye's operations in Jerris
Garlthik One-Eye	42	Long-lived ork and Master Thief, he founded the Force of the Eye and rules Kratas to this day
Gelor	107	A sleazy human who has received a vision of Raggok recently
General Illfaralek	26	Theran Spymaster of Vivane employing agents in Kratas
Gertan'kl the Eel	29	Slippery Boatman tasked with getting Force goods into Blood Wood markets
Gestren	184	Recruiter working for the Purple Barque
G'graks the Jealous	12	A t'skrang whose chaida explored the ruins of Kratas
Ghagin	71	A scrawny, scraggly dwarf Thief; rich from his "grandchildren's" thieving
Ghagin's Grandchildren	71	A band of thieving children who survive live off of the pickings in the Scrabbles
Gifrad	39	Outspoken ork Liberator
Gillian	30	Very streetwise and traveled human Thief who talks a lot
G'krat	99	A shady t'skrang Scout that is not above using poisons
Glanis Trul	47	Elf Troubadour who is in charge of the Force's teams of thieves in Barsaive
Glindella	166	Human woman: Thief and Weaponsmith, founder of the Daggerwrights
Golan	1	Ork Thief and gambler who prefers card games
Gold Branch	30	Part of the Holders of the Trust that has at least one spy based in Kratas
Goobrosh	145	Member of the Legion of the Despair; ventured into the Fringe by accident
Gortoo Nargan	171	Dwarf questor of Upandal, obsessed with exotic tools, runs the Tool Belt
Gragok	153	Cynical ork Sky Raider
Granal	204	Elementalist; co-elder with Omasu of the Ayodhya brotherhood
Grangor's Butchers	40	A ruthless and predatory gang defeated by Garlthik in his conquest of Kratas
Gravin Bakor	40	Insightful historian of Throal who is knowledgeable of the politics of Kratas
Greasy Imgan	85	Utterly loyal to Garlthik, this old dwarf is Steward of the Magistrate's Palace
Green Tarl	170	Connoisseur and skilled craftsman of fine jewelry, owner of the Winking Eye
Gremor the Black	122	Information broker with a dark disposition that frequents the Cutthroat's Rest
Grizeldo	31	Second-in-command in Urupa for the Force; spies on Dri for Garlthik

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Groorglan	144	A typical Kratan thug, proud of his exploits
Hand of Corruption	200	A death cult believing the Scourge failed and wanting to finish the job
H'atschi	91	Windling Wizard, art afficianado, and explorer of the manors of Clifftop
He'klak of Ca'renn	145	Simple traveller traumatized by what he witnessed in the Fringe
Herinta	65	Leader of the All-Breakers, the ambitions of this striking elf know no bounds
Herok Shatterbone	112	Leader of the Herok's Lancers cavalry, represented by Thumad in the Stables
Hespaan	184	Pseudonym of Gestren often used when he is recruiting
Hestreph of Kiltar	109	*Experienced, down-to-earth trader for his village who frequents Kratas*
Horgnok	248	A troll crystalsmith from Ustrect and co-creator of Mynbruje's Razor
Horrd the Looter	25	Opportunist and looter extraordinaire with a speech impediment
Hunek Neumani	81	Exiled from House Neumani, this dwarf Thief has a map to a treasure hoard
Hurmon the Quiet	154	A peaceful shepherd turned assassin, he founded the Silent Shepherds
Inosh Tem	–	Meticulous Vorst Archer, mason, and carpenter; member of Blossom's Squad
Ionella	130	Head of the Dream Spire Company in Kratas, a no-nonsense human woman
J'stresh Ken'tresh T'kambras	147	T'kambras agent often based in Kratas
Jael	99	An energetic and inquisitive boy, vulnerable to the allure of adventure
Jendarak the Swift	113	Human Warrior who keeps his ear to the ground around Kratas
Jonjon Gondra	5	Itinerant human Thief that returns "home" to Kratas
J'Role	40	The Honorable Thief, protégé of Garlthik's; spymaster of the Eye of Throal
Julericani	133	Dwarf Wizard and regular visitor to the Darks, he works for House Neumani
Kalador the Dark	115	A bounty hunter that is well known for hunting slavers
Karak Bloodeyes	111	Runs the Skull Whard scorcher tribe that frequents Kratas as a trading stop
Keys of Death	201	A cult of assassins who ritually kill victims to free Death from Death's Sea
Kitan Trulo	10	Pre-Scourge Undersecretary of Kratas, infamous for the rule of Erendis
Klanatamrar	116	A powerful elven Wizard and unlikely leader of the Doombringers
Klar Tregon	199	Human Warrior, most influential in the Magisterium Resurgent
K'latmar	164	A t'skrang Thief from Yistane, famaliar with the forges of Kratas
Kobblad	48	An ambitious member of the Force; decided to betray Garlthik to Vistrosh
Korog Irontooth	167	Force of the Eye member, ork Thief who patrols the Hammersing
Kree'klin Silvertail	127	A rather ethical connoisseur of exotic substances; runs the Dream Palace

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Kroktuul	154	Pre-Scourge ork warlord, ravaged and destroyed Hurmon the Quiet's village
Krolok	148	Passionate, but dark ork Nethermancer
Kroptark the Immense	56	An obese troll, he runs the Brood's trade in jaraleh, or pleasure slaves
Krugmaar	165	Massive obsidiman Weaponsmith, elder of the Blood Steel Forge
K'tryklen	47	Senior Fence of the Force; t'skrang Boatman, Thief, and questor of Chorrolis
Kyrethe	45	J'Role's wife and Mordom's sister, daughter to the governor of a Theran city
Larana	137	Youngest daughter of a member of the Force; she has gone missing
Legion of Despair	112	The largest mercenary group in Kratas, but very ragtag and greedy
Liandan	119	Veteran of the First Theran War; aging, plump dwarf and wife of Torad
Liltom	27	Throalic ambassador to Kratas, this woman may be more than she seems
Llodona	–	Motherly dwarf Weaponsmith and questor of Garlen in Blossom's Squad
Logan	124	One of the dwarf triplets who own and bartend at the Screaming Basilik
Lyria	190	Human woman; agent of House T'kambras; hides aboard merchant ships
Ma Fylvie	98	This old human woman spies for Garlthik, running the Sheaf of Wheat Inn
Madame Veniah Indirijan	159	Beautiful, elf magician from Marac; madame of the Purple Barque
Magistrate Teradorg	10	Early, pre-Scourge magistrate of Kratas, skilled at maintaining independence
Maratha niall	32	Destroyed by the Ishkarat, loyalists of this niall have gathered in Kratas to plot against House Syrtis
Meicari the Mad	92	Madmen and naysayer of Vistrosh and his evil deeds
Melarie	127	Runs a squalid brothel Named Melarie's House of Pleasures
Mellinara Tallboots	248	Air Sailor and Captain in charge of the Truthful Friends
Milisantia	8	An elven Troubadour with a mellifluous voice; spent time among the Dinganni
Millantia	102	Cranta's most trusted assistant, this human woman is a member of the Brood
Molis the Nimble	72	A dwarf Thief and member of the Thieves' compact Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers
Moorand	114	One of Deteranis' lieutenants and his protégé; a delibrate obsidiman Warrior
Mordom Churran	39	Powerful, blind Theran Nethermancer as well as nemesis of Garlthik One-Eye
Morg Kneebreaker	46	This muscled troll Warrior is leader of the Force of the Eye's Collectors
Morthon	168	Troubadour and storyteller who specializes in tales that happened in Kratas
M'rantak	114	Persistent assassin from the Silent Shepherds, used by the Daggerwrights
Mustog of the Last Chances	85	Resident of Kratas who is wise to the ongoings in the city
Mykovic	91	Member of the Songbirds; often receives secret messages via chakta bird

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Nandra Finch	173	A courteous, business-like woman who runs the Axe in Hand Inn
Nemesis' Minions	202	Corrupted Namegiver minions of the Horror Nemesis, some are in Kratas
Nevear of Travar	8	Scholar from Travar who believes there is an ancient city underneath Kratas
N'geliana	104	Lead questor of Garlen's temple, secretly a member of Brocher's Brood
Oliaris Tenist	29	A non-adept, unprotected elf who is a decoy for Queen Alachia's true spies
Omasu	204	Head of the Overland Trading Company and Liferock Rebellion
Orgon the Despot	10	Pre-Scourge Magistrate of Kratas who ruled many surrounding areas
Orliana	202	Head of the Deniers of Death in Kratas, an elven Nethermancer
Ournuuu	130	Representative of the Overland Trading Company and the Liferock Rebellion
Philank the Forsaken	69	He harbors a bitter grudge against Garlthik's gang, leading the Forsaken
Pholaan	39	Philosophizing Throalic merchant based in Kratas
Pian Colimantar	11	Last Theran administrator; organized the Theran evacuation before the Scourge
P'laktana	107	Humble t'skrang merchantwoman from Throal about to set up shop in Kratas
Pragolus the Elder	8	Somewhat pompous, but insightful Traveled Scholar with interest in Kratas
Quarom	119	An immense troll Beastmaster who specializes in selling rare mounts
Queaana	156	Current head of the Silent Shepherds; frail-looking, but fit elf Thief and Warrior
Quellandar	128	Dwarf questor of Chorrolis; she is a fixer of sorts and runs Chorrolis' Cups
Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers	70	A Thieves' Compact specializing in stealth and burglury; outlaws in Kratas
Raehlacain	145	The elf spokesman for the Removed who conducts business with the Force
Rangor	63	A charming and manipulative ork who runs the Reavers out of his tavern
Rangor's Reavers	63	A gang that controls the southwestern section of the Scrabbles
Ranose Cutan	31	Outgoing dwarf Thief who leads the members of the Force of the Eye in Travar
Reepnick	169	Charismatic windling tailor; secretly a freelance intelligence agent and broker
Rehellian	131	Dwarf Weaponsmith representing House Chaozun's interests in Kratas
Relga	98	An ork widower and proprietor of the Lamp Oil Inn; father to Jael
Reyga Sliva	77	Pseudonym of a confidence trickster's old apprentice living in Bartertown
Rigart Morbiculum	–	Chipper elf Nethermancer, patron of the Darks, and in Blossom's Squad
Rivealani Neumani	28	Junior Gatherer for the Eye of Throal in Kratas and minor clerk in Neumani
Rogan	124	One of the dwarf triplets who own and bartend at the Screaming Basilik
Roolan	156	Number two in the Silent Shepherds; charming dwarf Thief and Illusionist

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE		
Character Name	**Page Number**	**Description**
Roongarn	138	Crazed troll Beastmaster; may be breeding plague lizards near the Slop Pits
Rotasan	204	Respected obsidiman bandit, Liferock Rebellion contact in Kratas
Rowan Daggertree	93	Retired human adventurer and expert on the rumors about the Undercity
R'plenn	33	Member of House Syrtis who is opposed to the Silver faction
Ryger Squinteye	166	Dwarf Weaponsmith and Elementalist, founder of the Tinkerers' Forge
Sagramon Steeltoe	182	Trusted lieutenant of Garlthik's, in charge of the town of Daiche
Sargan the Blue	200	Dwarf merchant dressed in dark blues, Hand of Corruption agent
Scafali the Desperate	61	Human Thief and Warrior; leads the Desperate Ones; thoroughly amoral
Serian	124	Ork propietor of Serian's Sanctuary, a luxurious hotel owned by the Force
Shining Eversmile	98	An charismatic, elven Swordmaster who now owns a brothel in Kratas
Shuffling Heap	92	A mysterious inhabitant of Clifftop that seems horribly deformed
Silent Shepherds	155	Discreet and reliable assassins; secretly based in the Safehearths
Sillisimin	114	An elven Swordmaster with flaming red hair; one of Deteranis' lieutenants
S'lannthash	156	Seemingly clueless propietor of the Bolthole; a middle-aged t'skrang
Slicant	–	A tame felux, she is Rigart's famaliar and lives in the Squad's warehouse
Soliteris	158	Retired elf Troubadour, born before the Scourge, he runs the Heart's Ease
Solon	130	A Theran Thief adept and assassin sent to Kratas to stir up trouble
Sorella	161	Young, female dwarf Scout, discovered Mynbruje's Razor
Speltan	159	A clever thief with quite a sense for dark humor
Starlight Infiltrators	117	An unusual mercenary company only fighting unarmed; also act as sabotuers
Surehand Calisan	117	Renegade Thief who wishes to steal an airship for the Thieves' Tournament
Surland the Silent	90	mute Troll Beastmaster; agent of Vistrosh; lives in Clifftop with chakta birds
Syt Lianad	25	Force agent in Vivane who is a master of infiltration with many identities
Takarson Nine-toed	246	Dwarf Thief known as the last to be in possession of the Gears of Artificer
Tar Noor	26	Troll Sky Raider with a grudge against Theran slavers; frequents Kratas
Telewerian	83	Dwarf Troubadour; runs gladiator matches in the Arena to revitalize it
Tellianas	178	Deceased windling Wind-dancer, organized festivals in a glade in the forrest
Telow	114	A young, elven apprentice blacksmith who gets in trouble for making weapons
Terhik the Bold	74	Human Warden Thief and member of the Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers compact
Terricia	46	Supreme Slasher of the Force, she is Garlthik's most likely successor

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
The Bloody Fist	66	Skilled at unarmed combat, this gang rules the center of the Scrabbles
The Collectors	45	Part of the Force, these are the enforcers who collect protection money
The Courtiers of Valvidius	197	A living legend cult seeking to recover the Crown of Valvidius
The Daggerwrights	166	Forge open only at night, catering to thieves, very inventive in their wares
The Desperate Ones	62	A small gang of mercenary brigands who has begun kidnapping for ransom
The Enchanters' Crucible	169	A collective, social club, and workshop for varied enchanters
The Fences	45	Part of the Force, this group supports the Force throughout Barsaive
The Forsaken	70	Composed of rejects from the Force; operates in the southeastern Scrabbles
The Liferock Rebellion	204	Organized resistance against the Therans on Triumph
The Magisterium Resurgent	198	This cult wants the Magisterium of Kratas to be restored
The Overseers	46	The senior members of the Force who oversee security and diplomacy
The Removed	144	Unfortunate, rejected Namegivers who have survived encounters with the Horrors and live together in isolation in the Fringe
The Songbirds	52	A secret spy network for Queen Alachia, secretly headed up by Vistrosh
The Thieves	45	The branch of the Force that carries out thefts and robberies at large
The Tinkerers' Forge	166	Kratas' smallest forge, specializes in security: locks, chest, thieves' tools
The Truthful Friends	248	An adventuring group, famous before the Scourge for their righteous exploits
The Undercity Delvers	200	A small group of mysterious, cloaked elves in the Undercity
The Watchers	45	Part of the Force, this group sees to the mundane matters of governing Kratas
Thilmon Nine-fingers	205	Imperial Traps Master of the Theran Empire regarding traps and kaer security
Thront	153	Relentless bounty hunter for hire, he's a troll Archer and Skyraider
Thumad Brokenthumb	112	Kleptomaniac Thief; representative of Herok's Lancers; feigns broken thumbs
Tid Mantel	1	Country-born, unfortunate human Thief turned farmer, lost a hand in Kratas
Tirzenalos the Lore Merchant	171	Elderly elven spy specialist, this Thief lusts for knowledge and old lore
Toomand	131	House Ludi manager and questor of Chorrolis; secretly despises thieves
Torad	119	Veteran of the First Theran War; old, fat dwarf; owner of the Girded Arms
Tralimisent	115	Works to show elves are the best Cavalrymen; one of Deteranis' lieutenants
Traparan Quickhand	137	Prominent member of the Force of the Eye who has a lovely daughter
T'rebak	58	Double agent in the Brood, reporting to the Therans; t'skrang slavemaster
Treegan Yilwaz	133	Husband of Turnarak, he drives caravans between Throal and Kratas
Tr'kalani	116	Negotiator for Death's Thunder; charismatic k'stulaami t'skrang Boatman

KRATAS CHARACTER INDEX TABLE		
Character Name	**Page Number**	**Description**
Trogan	124	One of the dwarf triplets who own and bartend at the Screaming Basilik
Tsanjal Firehead	63	Untrustworthy, greedy elf whose job it is to bring recruits to Rangor's Reavers
Turnarak Ironeater	133	Ork Liberator married into House Yilwaz, who represents them in Kratas
Tuskeater	28	A gargantuan female troll who represents the Force of the Eye in Bartertown
Twurall Ketz	7	Ork Troubadour and enthusiastic resident of Kratas
U'kitalank	198	Leader of the Courtiers of Valvidius and questor of Vestrial
Unctuous Nurm	61	The Desperate Ones' negotiator and fixer, as well as an Illusionist
Urmunn	66	A gigantic obsidiman Purifier that unexpectedly joined the Bloody Fist
Urranum	153	Bounty hunter and Thront's partner, this obsidiman Warrior is a former brigand
Usterius	127	Throalic trading house member; gets lost and infected with a dread iota
Valvidius	176	Legendary "King of Thieves," instituted a large thievery competition
Veskalra	184	Wannabe Thief manipulated into prostitution
Vistrosh	51	A disgraced Blood Warder who leads the Brocher's Brood, he secretly is the Queen's spymaster, leading the Songbirds as well
Vooxona	132	J'havim of House Mikul; dresses her best to meet with Garlthik
Vrenat the Keen	170	Observant and astute head of security at the Winking Eye Jewelers
Vyri	63	Eldest daughter of the Asram who mysterious has gone missing
Waliut	66	A broad dwarf who is a master of unarmed combat, running the Bloody Fist
Wellista Follanis	248	An elven Elementalist from Wyrm Wood and co-creator of Mynbruje's Razor
Woranga	113	Legendary ork Cavalryman; Elf Eater who lost her leg; runs Woranga's Place
Wrylinder the Morbid	202	Somehow undead human Nethermancer, Orliana's lover
Wuurliesaana	170	Old obsidiman, owner of the Crucible, working on a large rock
Xelliana	156	Best assassin in the Shepherds; human Archer, Elementalist, and enchanter
Xent'ka	204	T'skrang agent of the Liferock Rebellion and skilled Boatman
Xok Steadyhand	74	Ork Ninth Circle Thief and member of Quiet Feet, Quick Fingers
Yezethian Narlanth	36	Theran operative in Kratas, having trouble in the Undercity
Y'krilna	115	A green, fernweave-wearing t'skrang Archer; one of Deteranis' lieutenants
Yoolgano the Distiller	126	Poor wretch who is infected by a dread iota; brews swill to sell in Wasteland
Yoorga	148	Sweaty, corpulent human, runs a cheap Mess in the Warehouse District
Zemtarra	17	An Illusionist known as the Honest Charlatan
Zoradan	116	Taciturn dwarf Archer; part of Death's Thunder; nearly on the Sniper's Way

DWARF THIEF

Attributes:		
DEX (14): 6	STR (16): 7	TOU (17): 7
PER (14): 6	WIL (12): 5	CHA (11): 5

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	6					
Physical Defense:	9	9	9	9	10	11
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	8	10
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	46	58	70	82	94	106
Unconsciousness:	37	47	57	67	77	87
Wound Threshold:	11					
Recovery Tests:	3					
Knockdown:	7*					
* The adept knows the Wound Balance skill						
Movement:	5					
Karma Points:	8/8	12/12	20/20	28/28	36/36	44/44

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Picking Pockets [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Silent Walk [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Trap Initiative [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Throwing Weapons	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Detect Trap [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Avoid Blow	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/18

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Acting [A]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Alchemy	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Bribery	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Craftsman (Cooper) [A]	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Forgery	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Read/Write Language	1/7—(Dwarf /Throalic)					
Speak Language	2/8—(Dwarf /Throalic, Ork/Or'zet)					
Sprint	2/2	3/3	4/4	5/5	6/6	7/7
Streetwise	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Wound Balance	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

*Group

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Broadsword/Thread Broadsword						
		F1	F2	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Damage	12	13	14	15	16	17
Dagger		F1				
Damage	9	10				
Number of Daggers	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1, F 2: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Dagger 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Belt Pouch			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Weight of items in pouch			75%	50%	25%	10%
Thread Cloak					Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense					1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Notes: As a dwarf, the adept possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

Elf Thief

Attributes:

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

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	8					
Physical Defense:	11	11	11	11	12	13
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	9	9	11
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	38	50	62	74	86	98
Unconsciousness:	29	39	49	59	69	79
Wound Threshold:	8					
Recovery Tests:	2					
Knockdown:	6					
Movement:	7					
Karma Points:	8/8	12/12	20/20	28/28	36/36	44/44

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/11	4/12	6/14	8/16	10/18	12/20
Picking Pockets [D]	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/18	11/19
Silent Walk [D]	3/11	4/12	6/14	8/16	10/18	12/20
Trap Initiative [D]	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/18	11/19
Throwing Weapons	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/18	11/19
Detect Trap [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/18	11/19
Avoid Blow	—	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/18	11/19
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/13	7/15	9/18	11/19
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/15	9/18	11/19
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/15	9/18	11/19
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/19
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/16

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11t
Alchemy	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Bribery	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Brocher's Brood Lore [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Distract	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Forgery	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	6/14	7/15
Poetry [A]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Read/Write Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, Elf/Sperethiel)					
Speak Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, Elf/Sperethiel)					
Streetwise	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

***Group**

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Broadsword/Thread Broadsword						
		F1	F2	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Damage	11	12	13	14	15	16
Dagger		F1				
Damage	8	9				
Number of Daggers	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1, F 2: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Dagger 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Belt Pouch			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Weight of items in pouch			75%	50%	25%	10%
Thread Cloak					Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense					1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Hooded Lantern, 2 x Oil Flasks, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Notes: As an elf, the adept possesses the Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

HUMAN THIEF

Attributes:

DEX (16): 7 STR (10): 5 TOU (14): 6
PER (16): 7 WIL (11): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	7					
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	10	11	12
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	8	10
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	42	54	66	78	90	102
Unconsciousness:	33	43	53	63	73	83
Wound Threshold:	10					
Recovery Tests:	3					
Knockdown:	5					
Movement:	6					
Karma Points:	10/10	15/15	25/25	35/35	45/45	55/55

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Picking Pockets [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Trap Initiative [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Trap [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Avoid Blow	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Alchemy	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Forgery	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Dwarf/Throalic Law [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Gem Lore [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Human Lore [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Poetry [A]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Read/Write Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, Human)					
Speak Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, Human)					
Streetwise	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

***Group**

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Broadsword/Thread Broadsword						
		F1	F2	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Damage	10	11	12	13	14	15
Dagger		F1				
Damage	7	8				
Number of Daggers	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1, F 2: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Dagger 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Belt Pouch			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Weight of items in pouch			75%	50%	25%	10%

Thread Cloak				Rank 1	Rank 2	
Social Defense/Spell Defense				1/0	1/1	

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Hooded Lantern, 2 x Oil Flasks, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Notes: As a human, the adept possesses the Versatility racial ability.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

Obsidiman Thief

Attributes:

DEX (13): 6 STR (22): 9 TOU (16): 7
PER (14): 6 WIL (11): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	6					
Physical Defense:	8	8	8	8	9	10
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	8	10
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	5					
Mystic Armor:	4					
Death:	45	57	69	81	93	105
Unconsciousness:	36	46	56	66	76	86
Wound Threshold:	14					
Recovery Tests:	3					
Knockdown:	9*					
Movement:	5					
Karma Points:	6/6	9/9	15/15	21/21	27/27	33/33

*The adept knows the Wound Balance skill

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Picking Pockets [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Silent Walk [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Trap Initiative [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Throwing Weapons	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Detect Trap [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Avoid Blow	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/14	7/16	9/18	11/20
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/18

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Acting [A]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Alchemy	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Bribery	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Distract	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Haggle	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Read/Write Language	1/7—(Dwarf /Throalic)					
Speak Language	2/8—(Dwarf /Throalic, Obsidiman)					
Sprint	2/2	3/3	4/4	5/5	6/6	7/7
Streetwise	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Wound Balance	2/11	3/12	4/13	5/14	6/15	7/16

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

*Group

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)						

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Troll Sword/Thread Troll Sword		F1	F2	F3	Rank 1	Rank 2
Damage	15	16	17	18	19	20
Hawk Hatchets			F1	F2		
Damage		13	14	15		
Number of Hawk Hatchets	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1-F3 The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Hawk Hatchet 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Backpack			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Total amount backpack can hold			125%	150%	175%	200%
Thread Cloak					Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense					1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Hooded Lantern, 2 x Oil Flasks, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Waterskin, Writing Kit

Notes: As an obsidiman, the adept possesses the Increased Wound Threshold and Natural Armor racial abilities.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

Ork Thief

Attributes:

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

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	7					
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	10	11	12
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	8	10
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	42	54	66	78	90	102
Unconsciousness:	33	43	53	63	73	83
Wound Threshold:	10					
Recovery Tests:	3					
Knockdown:	7*					
Movement:	6					
Karma Points:	10/10	15/15	25/25	35/35	45/45	55/55

*The adept knows the Wound Balance skill

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Picking Pockets [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Trap Initiative [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Trap [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Avoid Blow	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicised talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Acting [A]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Alchemy	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Bribery	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Force of the Eye Lore [K]	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Forgery	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Read/Write Language	2/8—(Dwarf /Throalic, Ork/Or'zet)					
Speak Language	2/8—(Dwarf /Throalic, Ork/Or'zet)					
Streetwise	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Wound Balance	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

*Group

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Broadsword/Thread Broadsword						
		F1	F2	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Damage	12	13	14	15	16	17
Dagger		F1				
Damage	9	10				
Number of Daggers	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1, F 2: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Dagger 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Belt Pouch			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Weight of items in pouch			75%	50%	25%	10%
Thread Cloak					Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense					1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Hooded Lantern, 2 x Oil Flasks, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Notes: As an ork, the adept possesses the Gahad and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

TROLL THIEF

Attributes:

DEX (16): 7 STR (17): 7 TOU (16): 7
PER (14): 6 WIL (11): 5 CHA (11): 5

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	7					
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	10	11	12
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	8	10
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	45	57	69	81	93	105
Unconsciousness:	36	46	56	66	76	86
Wound Threshold:	11					
Recovery Tests:	3					
Knockdown:	7*					
Movement:	7					
Karma Points:	6/6	9/9	15/15	21/21	27/27	33/33

*The adept knows the Wound Balance skill

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Picking Pockets [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Trap Initiative [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Trap [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Avoid Blow	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/18

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Acting [A]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Alchemy	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13	8/14
Bribery	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Distract	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Gangs of Kratas [K]	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Haggle	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11	7/12
Read/Write Language	1/7—(Dwarf /Throalic)					
Speak Language	2/8—(Dwarf /Throalic, Troll)					
Streetwise	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Wound Balance	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

*Group

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Troll Sword/Thread Troll Sword						
		F1	F2	F3	Rank 1	Rank 2
Damage	13	14	15	16	17	18
Hawk Hatchets		F1	F2			
Damage	11	12	13			
Number of Hawk Hatchets	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1-F3 The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Hawk Hatchet 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Backpack			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Total amount backpack can hold			125%	150%	175%	200%
Thread Cloak					Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense					1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Notes: As a troll, the adept possesses the Heat Sight racial ability.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

T'Skrang Thief

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

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	7					
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	10	11	12
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	9	9	11
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	42	54	66	78	90	102
Unconsciousness:	33	43	53	63	73	83
Wound Threshold:	10					
Recovery Tests:	3					
Knockdown:	6					
Movement:	6					
Karma Points:	8/8	12/12	20/20	28/28	36/36	44/44

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Picking Pockets [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Trap Initiative [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Trap [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Avoid Blow	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Alchemy	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Bribery	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Forgery	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Haggle	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Gangs of Daiche [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Poetry [A]	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Read/Write Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, T'skrang)					
Speak Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, T'skrang)					
Streetwise	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver pieces	30	40	90	230	570	1460
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

***Group**

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Broadsword/Thread Broadsword						
		F1	F2	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Damage	11	12	13	14	15	16
Dagger		F1				
Damage	8	9				
Number of Daggers	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1, F 2: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Dagger 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Belt Pouch			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Weight of items in pouch			75%	50%	25%	10%
Thread Cloak					Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense					1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Climbing Kit, Hooded Lantern, 2 x Oil Flasks, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Notes: As a t'skrang, the adept possesses the Tail Combat racial ability.

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

WINDLING THIEF

Attributes:

DEX (16): 7 STR (7): 4 TOU (11): 5
PER (16): 7 WIL (13): 6 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Initiative:	7					
Physical Defense:	12	12	12	12	13	14
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	9	9	11
Social Defense:	8	8	8	8	9	10
Physical Armor:	3	4	5	5	6	6
Mystic Armor:	1	1	1	2	2	3
Death:	38	50	62	74	86	98
Unconsciousness:	29	39	49	59	69	79
Wound Threshold:	8					
Recovery Tests:	2					
Knockdown:	4					
Movement:	3/8*					
Karma Points:	12/12	18/18	30/30	42/42	54/54	66/66

*Flying Movement Rate

Talents:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual [D]	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Picking [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Picking Pockets [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Trap Initiative [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Astral Sight	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Trap [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability [6/5]	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Disarm Trap [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Avoid Blow	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Surprise Strike	—	—	5/9	7/11	9/13	11/15
Sense Poison [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Evaluate	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Conceal Object	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Missile	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Gold Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Quick Shot	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Shackle Shrug	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	—	11/16

[D] Discipline talent (the adept may spend karma on this talent)
Italicized talents require Karma (Except when also a Discipline talent)

Skills:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Alchemy	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Alchemy and Potions [K]	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14	8/15
Bribery	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Distract	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Gem Lore [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Haggle	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Poetry [A]	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12	7/13
Read/Write Language	1/8—(Dwarf /Throalic)					
Speak Language	2/9—(Dwarf /Throalic, Windling)					
Streetwise	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14
Windling Lore [K]	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7/14

[A] Artisan skill; [K] Knowledge skill

Loot:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Gold pieces	3	4	9	23	57	146
Legend Award:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th*	11th*

*Group

Armor:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Leather Armor / Thread Leather Armor						
		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Phys/Myst	3/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	6/1	6/2

Weapons:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Windling Sword		F1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Damage	7	8	8	9	10	11
Dart		F1				
Damage	5	6				
Number of Darts	2	3	5	7	9	11

F1: The Forge Weapon talent has been used on this item to provide the bonus given
Weapon Ranges: Darts 18–36 yards/9–18 hexes

Thread Items:	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Thread Belt Pouch						
			Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Weight of items in pouch			75%	50%	25%	10%

Thread Cloak	Rank 1	Rank 2
Social Defense/Spell Defense	1/0	1/1

Equipment: Adventurer's Kit, Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Trail Rations (1 weeks worth), Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

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

Discipline 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
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Shadowcloak
Tenth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

The City of Thieves





Located in the center of Barsaive, the city of Kratas serves as a crossroads of information and stolen goods. Despite its location near almost all major trade routes, few honest merchants pass through the city, for Kratas is ruled and run by thieves. Its people are the clever and desperate, the illegally wealthy and the horribly destitute of the province of Barsaive.

The legendary ork Thief, Garlthik One-Eye, controls the city through his gang, the Force of the Eye. Kratas is a veritable hub of information and stolen goods. Adventure and intrigue—both can be found here, in the dirty streets of the City of Thieves!

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