

EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION

NATIONS OF BARSAIVE I THROAL



AN EARTHDAWN SOURCEBOOK BY ROBIN D. LAWS





• THIRD EDITION •

NATIONS OF BARSAIVE VOLUME ONE: THROAL

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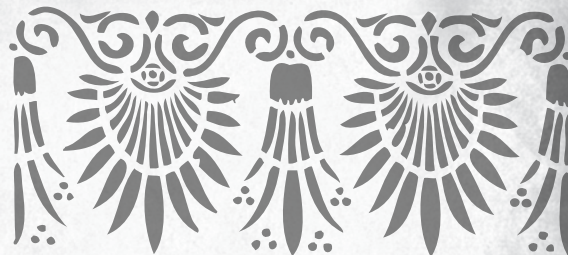
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• EARTHDAWN THIRD EDITION •

NATIONS OF BARSAIVE VOLUME ONE: THROAL



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*This has to be done right, so I am going to do this myself, lad.
People intend using this section to find stuff, not to giggle about
your inability to arrange letters properly.*

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INTRODUCTION

As Throal goes, Barsaive follows. When Throal was under the yoke of Thera, the rest of Barsaive shared her chains. When Throal threw off the chains of Thera's oppression and slavery, Barsaive rallied around her and did the same. Truly, Throal is the heart of Barsaive.

• KRATHIS GRON •

1

The age of **Earthdawn** was 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 Scourge is over, and people have emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes step forward to champion their land, arming themselves with powerful spells and magical treasures. Through magic, skill, and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge, and fight the oppression of the Thera Empire. By doing so, they become Barsaive's living legends.

Nations of Barsaive Volume One offers gamemasters and players an in-depth look at the Kingdom of Throal. This book provides detailed descriptions of Barsaive's mightiest Kingdom, featuring revised and updated content, and new material for adventures in the world of **Earthdawn**.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Nations of Barsaive Volume One is a sourcebook for the **Earthdawn** game. This book describes the vast underground realm of the dwarfs and its immediate surroundings, including the sprawling city of Bartertown and the Throal Mountains from which the dwarf kingdom takes its Name. Players can use this information to enhance their characters' backgrounds and increase their knowledge of the world of **Earthdawn**. Gamemasters can use the wealth of opportunities in this book to create new adventures, flesh out the game world, and expand the scope of evolving campaigns.

Aside from the **Player's** and **Gamemaster's Guides**, the gamemaster and players need no other material to use this product, though gamemasters may find other published **Earthdawn** products useful; for example, more information on dwarf culture can be found in the **Namegivers of Barsaive** book.

This sourcebook begins with an overview of life in **The Dwarf Kingdom**, followed by a detailed history of Throal from its earli-

est days to the recent and infamous Death Rebellion. Additional chapters include an in-depth discussion of trade in the kingdom, complete with profiles of prominent trading houses and guilds, and a richly detailed description of the kingdom's cultural life.

The Halls of Power details the Throalic government and law, diplomatic relations with other influential powers in Barsaive, and gives overviews of important organizations in Throal, from its diplomatic corps to its army. **A Tour of the Kingdom** highlights places of interest to player characters who may live in or visit the dwarf kingdom. This book also offers a detailed look **Outside the Kingdom**; at Bartertown, for example, the scruffy but lively place where many adventurers may prefer to spend their off-hours, and describes areas of interest in the Throal Mountains from the treacherous underground chambers of Braza's Kingdom to the home of the cliff-dwelling, flying t'skrang. The final chapter offers guidelines for running **Adventures in Throal**, including several sample adventure outlines. In addition to these, brief adventure hooks are scattered throughout the book.

The second part of this book offers game mechanics and rules for situations that might arise when adventuring in and around Throal. The **Goods and Services** and **Magical Treasures** chapters include descriptions and statistics for various magical and common items that adventurers may encounter on their travels in Throal. Finally, the **Character Index** summarizes the many gamemaster and other characters described in the book, and a comprehensive **Index** completes this volume.

Like other **Earthdawn** sourcebooks, **Nations of Barsaive Volume One** provides the gamemaster with detailed background information to read at his leisure. It also offers plenty of solutions for problems that gamemasters are likely to run into in the course of an adventure. In a city environment like Throal, you may find it difficult to predict exactly where your player characters will go and what kinds of trouble they will stick their noses into. The purpose of this sourcebook is not to fill in all the gaps, but to open the doors of the gamemaster's and players' imaginations.

To give gamemasters and players a taste of the flavor of **Earthdawn**, first-person fictional accounts from **Earthdawn** characters are interspersed throughout the book. You can use them as a guide to the game's atmosphere, or as jumping-off points for story lines in which the player characters get involved.

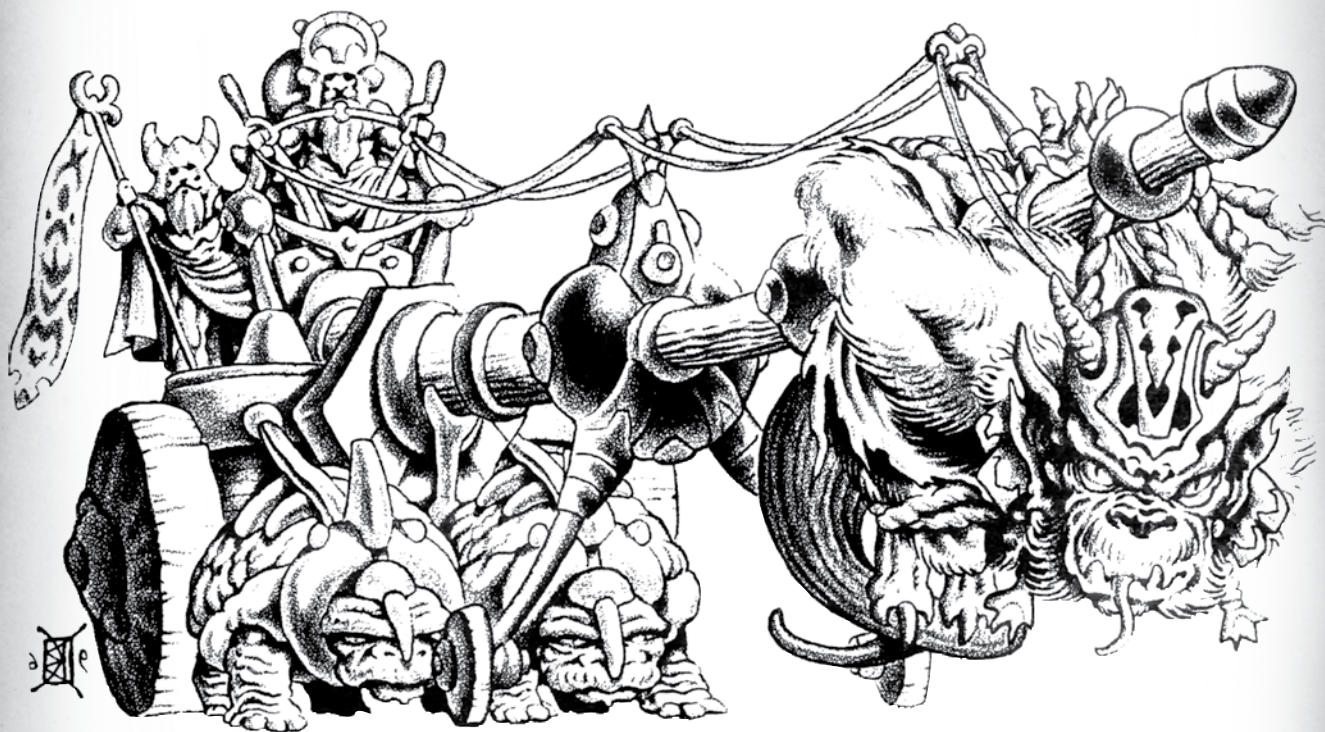
Though the material offered in this book is presented as fact and should be treated as accurate in terms of **Earthdawn** continuity, remember that you are the ultimate author of your campaign. If

a fact in this sourcebook contradicts something you have already established in your game, or if you find it inconvenient, go ahead and change it. Any player who claims that the gamemaster is wrong about some detail of Barsaive deserves to have as many changes thrown at him as you can dream up. In some instances, this book presents contradictory accounts of a setting or character as **options** from which the gamemaster can choose. These options allow you to decide which version of the truth is real in your campaign.

AT THE BRINK OF WAR

In addition to providing gamemasters with basic information on the recovering civilizations in Barsaive, this book details several conflicts developing in the province. Whether groups

of adventurers explore or settle down in Throal to explore its mysteries, terrible dangers are brewing in the background. Barsaive has staged a remarkable recovery from the devastating effects of the Scourge, largely because of Throal's efforts. Thanks to the dwarf kingdom and a few legendary heroes, Barsaivians can live in relative safety in the province's larger cities and towns. However, this surface stability is currently facing a crisis. When the threat of the Horrors receded, the major powers of Barsaive felt secure enough to focus on their political and military rivalries. When the Therans established the fortress of Triumph near Lake Ban, a new, blood-stained chapter in Barsaive's history began.



THE DWARF KINGDOM

Throal stands as a beacon of civilization to all of Barsaive. We cannot bow to the pressure of hostile forces. To do so betrays the trust of those who look to us for guidance, and dishonors everything our late king worked for.

• UMO YILWAZ, IN AN ADDRESS TO THE J'HAVIM OF HOUSE YILWAZ •

▲ ▲ ▲

I expected Throal to be a dank and musty place, like the countless derelict kaers in which I've risked my skin these past few years. I know we dwarfs are supposed to be earth-lovers, never happier than when we're traipsing around a big hole in the ground. Me, I like dirt and stone well enough, but I've always preferred it under my feet instead of over my head. Understand: I grew up in a wee speck of a farming village out in the hinterland, out on the plains, with nothing but miles of bright blue sky overhead. Just the idea of mountains makes me dizzy. And being underground—well, if it means treasure, I'll grumble and get on with it, but until I came to Throal, I thought anyone who wanted to live in a hole had to be cracked in the head.

When I stepped through those magnificent gates into the Bazaar, I realized that all my imaginings of the place were nothing like the reality. Throal was no more like a kaer than an ocean is like a puddle. The ceilings of the vast rock chamber were enormously high—thirty feet at their lowest point. The air smelled fresh and clean and cool, with no stink of dust or mildew like I'd expected. Instead, I could smell spices and perfumes. Nothing overpowering, mind you, just a few tantalizing, intoxicating hints. I'd expected grim pillars of crudely worked stone. Instead, I beheld polished marble, sparkling crystal, intricate mosaics of colored glass and semi-precious stone. All around me, walls and floor and ceiling caught and reflected the rays of dozens upon dozens of light quartz fixtures, each one more ingeniously placed than the last. There was nothing gaudy or garish about it, either; on the contrary, I found it deeply soothing. The architects who designed this place, and the craftsmen who built it, had created a light more beautiful than that of the sun itself! The light drew me through the Bazaar, pulled me deeper into the heart of Throal, as if it were welcoming a long-lost daughter. Tears spilled from my eyes and ran down my grimy cheeks.

I found myself in the middle of a throng, surrounded by all sorts of Namegivers doing business in the Bazaar. But by far the most common were dwarfs, clad in colorful silks. In other surroundings they might have looked foppish to some, plumed like foolish and preening birds. But together, under the harmonious light and dancing colors of the Bazaar, the assembled dwarfs became something else. They were a walking celebration of honest pleasure, of their community with one another, of life itself.

One of the patrons of the Bazaar, a dwarf woman some five years younger than myself, saw my tears. She approached me, and without a word wrapped me in her arms. Within moments, other dwarfs joined her. They enveloped me in a rough huddle of love and welcome.

After a long moment of silent communion, the young woman said to me, "Welcome, my sister. You are home."

—From the Journals of the Weaponsmith
Javira of Awett, 1505 TH

▲ ▲ ▲

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THROAL

The Kingdom of Throal lies in the midst of the vast mountain range of the same Name. Founded a thousand years before the Scourge, it has become the dominant political and economic power in most of Barsaive, especially in the eastern region of the province. Roughly one-third of Barsaive's people live in Throal's underground passageways and cities, and new cities are under construction to accommodate increasing population. Dwarfs are the largest group of Namegivers in Barsaive at large, and are an even greater majority of the population in Throal. Though the kingdom encourages members of other races to settle within its stone borders, dwarfs remain in charge.

In addition to its sheer size and economic clout, Throal is best known for its cultural influence. During the years of Barsaive's domination by the Theran Empire, the dwarfs of Throal acted as intermediaries between Barsaive's people and its imperial rulers. In so doing, they shielded the people from the worst of the Theran brutalities, built a lasting network of trading and political contacts, and made the Throalic language the unifying tongue that bridges Barsaive's many disparate cultures. T'skrang traders from the Serpent River can communicate with troll raider chieftains of the Twilight Peaks, thanks to the common language given to them by the dwarfs of Throal.

Even more important than a common language, however, is the dwarf kingdom's contribution to Barsaive's common culture. The few common cultural threads that Barsaive has to draw upon exist thanks to the efforts of King Varulus I, who commissioned the *Book of Tomorrow*—a vast compendium of stories, facts, and essays on almost every conceivable subject. Barsaivians took copies of this book with them into almost every kaer and citadel during the Scourge, where it served as a reminder of everyday life during the awful days when the Horrors ravaged the earth. The *Book of Tomorrow* gave Barsaivians hope in the depths of despair, offering concrete proof that darkness and dank earth were not their only birthright. Because of this book's enormous influence over their lives in the kaers, Namegivers throughout Barsaive tend to think of Throal as the most important repository of learning in the land since the Scourge ended.

Throal's recent monarchs, the late King Varulus III and his predecessor, Varulus II, furthered the influence of Throal by promoting a sweeping political agenda. The most important expression of their reformist beliefs is the *Council Compact*, the legal code developed by Varulus II. Its principles mark a dramatic departure from the authoritarian practices of previous Barsaivian rulers, from the mighty Theran invaders to petty local dictators. The *Council Compact* affirms the fundamental equality of all Namegivers, setting forth the radical premise that no Namegiver is innately superior to another. More than anything else, the leaders of Throal want to spread this idea, along with their vision of benevolent rule, throughout Barsaive. Slavery is anathema to them, and they are fighting to abolish it by any means necessary. The Therans, who depend on slavery and intend to re-conquer the entire province, consider the *Council Compact* an open declaration of hostility. They would like nothing better than to see Throal destroyed and the idealistic beliefs of its rulers repudiated. The Therans are not alone; certain malcontents and would-be local tyrants claim the *Council Compact* is mere propaganda designed to camouflage Throal's own plans of conquest.

Though some people call Throal's motives into question, the kingdom so far has kept the loyalty of most of Barsaive's adepts, both legendary and obscure. The majority of them accepted Varulus III as a genuine reformer, a good monarch deserving of the aid of heroes, and continue to do so with King Neden. Others have less lofty reasons for using Throal as a home base. First, it is an extremely safe place to store treasure (magical and otherwise); second, it is a splendid place to rest and recuperate after a dangerous mission; and third, it is the center of knowledge and scholarship in Barsaive. The renowned Great Library of Throal contains a great deal of information useful to explorers, mercenaries and other adventurers.



ON EVERYDAY LIFE

Though adventurers may think of Throal primarily as a rest stop, it is in fact a vast metropolis where thousands of Namegivers sleep, work, and enjoy themselves. Exotic though it should seem to players and their characters (unless they are natives of Throal), the dwarf kingdom's residents feel perfectly at home there.

If you use Throal as the setting of a scene in your campaign, the kingdom will seem much more alive if you take the time to describe some of the most striking features of daily life there. A few good examples are given below.

ON ACTIVITY

Something is always happening during the day in Throal. Business takes place in large market areas, and also in any lane or public walkway. Vendors of snacks, sweets, toys, perfumes and other small items can be found everywhere, loudly extolling the virtues of their goods. Performers and musicians are just as common, from buskers hoping to earn enough for a meal to dedicated amateurs who simply enjoy entertaining people with their art.

Public spaces are also full of people engaged in debate: Throalites of all social classes are devoted to the art of the argument. Knots of onlookers often surround debaters. If the debaters are particularly eloquent, the crowd listens attentively. If they are merely average,

passers-by feel free to join in the controversy. The issues being argued may be obscure or trivial, or may be something everyone in Throal feels passionately about. Though manuals of Throalic etiquette claim that it is extremely poor form to display anger while debating, this custom is no longer much in evidence (if it was ever followed in the first place).

Most Throalites believe a little anger adds spice to a good argument, but to threaten violence in a debate is a grave offense. A good citizen of Throal is expected to be able to argue articulately, even passionately, but without completely losing control. Sometimes this leads to trouble between newcomers and longtime residents. Orks and trolls, for example, have a hard time keeping their emotions (and weapons) out of arguments. If a debate degenerates into a scuffle, Throal's omnipresent Royal Guards are quick to appear and wrestle the troublemakers into submission. This happens seldom, however, and usually because the participants have been overindulging at a nearby tavern. The people of Throal feel great respect for their guards; even the most notorious drunkards can be counted on to behave themselves when Royal Guardsmen show up.

Unlike the citizens of most other places in Barsaive, the people of Throal clearly feel safe and secure. Throal's reputation for secure streets and passageways is well known throughout Barsaive. Because Throalic law requires that the government reimburse those whose property is stolen within the kingdom's borders, law enforcement is extremely well funded. Throalic citizens love to grouse about high taxes, but they treasure their unequalled personal safety. Most Barsaivian adventurers are accustomed to cities whose people instinctively look over their shoulders for trouble no matter what the time of day. In Throal, people stroll around casually, afraid of nothing.

Throal's citizens love public life. It is considered strange, even sinister, to keep to oneself in Throal. Those who spend time milling about in public squares are not presumed to be lazy or shifty, but assumed to be waiting for something entertaining to start happening. In any well-traveled part of Throal, of course, something

entertaining is bound to begin at any moment. In the unlikely event that nothing interesting is happening, many a Throalite will happily create his own diversion, usually by striking up a conversation. Talk is the favorite recreational activity in the kingdom.

HOW THE PERSONAL IS PUBLIC

Dwarfs throughout Barsaive are known for their inquisitive natures; they consider it rude not to ask their conversational partners a string of personal, probing questions. Those of other cultures who have lived a long time in Throal tend to pick up this habit. Total strangers may approach player characters when they enter the kingdom, wanting to know everything about them. Adventurers will most likely find this off-putting, as most of them have learned through bitter experience to keep a low profile in a new place. Player characters who intend to live in Throal, however, must learn to give up the idea of keeping secrets, at least within the kingdom's borders. Dwarf culture has turned the kingdom of Throal into a gigantic small town, where everyone is expected to know everyone else's business. The concept of gossip does not exist in dwarf culture; dwarfs see nothing shameful about wanting to know all the intimate details of another's life. They do, however, recognize a character flaw that they call *wech'nes*, an overwhelming or exclusive interest in the negative aspects of somebody's life.

The eagerness of the average Throalite to discuss personal business (his own and everyone else's) has several implications for adventures set in Throal. Player characters will often find it easier to get information out of witnesses when conducting an investigation, as no one will consider their curiosity suspicious or even unusual. Because Throalic informants tend to be forthcoming, the presence of a tight-lipped Throalic citizen is a clue in itself that something strange is going on. On the downside, enemies of the player characters also find it easier to gather information about them. When the adventurers do something impressive, word will spread quickly; unfortunately, reports of foolish or shameful acts will just as swiftly tarnish their reputations.

When player characters discover that Throalites easily give out information they would have to struggle to learn elsewhere, they may forget that even well-intentioned people can have the facts wrong. News in Throal passes by word of mouth, and people inevitably exaggerate some details and forget others as they recount stories. As an old Throalic proverb says, "Legends change as they dance across many tongues." This adage applies as much to rumors and minor details as to legends. From the gamemaster's viewpoint, an investigation need not be simple just because Throalites happily answer questions. A quick answer to a question is not necessarily the truth, and the Throalic gift of gab makes its people accomplished liars when they wish to be. In Throal, the trick is not to get someone to talk, but to discern the truth behind the person's words.

ON MARKING TIME

In an underground kingdom, time is not measured by the rising and setting of the sun and moon. In Throal, as in kaers all across Barsaive, a variety of ingenious timekeeping devices substitute for the cues normally visible in the heavens. The people of Throal divide their days into twenty-four hours, but not into two twelve-hour halves. Instead of saying "Three p.m.," a Throalite would say "the fifteenth hour."

The most common clocks in Throal are candles made from a special wax that burns at a measurable, steady rate. The candles are marked with twenty-four stripes, spaced so that the time it takes to burn from one stripe to another is exactly an hour. These "hour candles" are placed in special holders equipped with a dial marker. The user then lights the candle and sets the dial marker to show the hour at which the candle was lit. To read an hour candle, look at

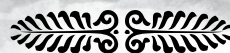
the dial marker and then count the number of stripes on the candle. Subtract this number from twenty-four; the result is the number of hours that have passed since the candle was lit. That number of hours, added to the hour shown on the marker, tells the reader precisely which hour it is: tenth, twelfth, fifteenth, and so on. Of course, hour candles must be lit on the hour in order to give the correct time; however, the low cost of hour candles compensates for the inconvenience.

More expensive timepieces include mechanical clocks, which measure time by keeping track of water that pours through them at a steady rate. The richest Throalites own costly magical clocks made from modified light crystals.

Though visitors to Throal can easily find out what time it is, they often find it difficult to adjust physically to a sunless world. All Namegivers, except for dwarfs and obsidimen, rely on exposure to sunlight to tell their bodies when to get tired and go to sleep. Though Throal abounds with light-quartz crystals that grow bright during the day and fade to dimness at night in the same manner as the sun, the lack of natural sunlight means that new arrivals in Throal often find it hard to sleep well. They may be prone to insomnia, have difficulty waking up in the morning, or feel drowsy or irritable during the day. After living for a month or so under the mountains, most Namegivers adapt and harmonize their internal clocks with those of long-time residents of Throal.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOR

The dwarfs of Throal love bright, vivid colors, and the cheerful sight of the gaily clad residents helps compensate other Namegivers for the absence of the sunlight they love and miss. This tradition of wearing bright, colorful clothing began during the Scourge,



ADVENTURE HOOK

After King Neden rebuffs a typically haughty Theran diplomatic overture, the Therans decide to teach Throal just how vulnerable it is. The Empire hires a company of mercenaries to infiltrate the dwarf kingdom, posing as traveling merchants, entertainers, and scholars. The group enters Throal over a number of days so as not to arouse suspicion; its members are of various races and backgrounds, making them difficult to identify as a unit. At a prearranged time, the infiltrators smash as many of the air sponges as they can find in one of the kingdom's Inner Cities. Within a day, the air in the target city will turn poisonous, so its residents must evacuate. The sabotage kills no one, but causes serious inconvenience for thousands and severely embarrasses the king's administration.

The adventurers are hired to track down the head of the mercenary company and bring him back to face Throalic justice—alive. Unfortunately for the adventurers, one of their quarry's underlings decides to assassinate him and take over his position. The player characters must not only find and capture a dangerous enemy, but must safeguard their prize on the long journey back to Throal.

when garment makers deliberately created clothing with intricate patterns and eye-popping hues as an act of defiance against the despair brought by the Horrors. People associated bright colors with pleasure and the joys of life, the brighter and richer the better. The architects of Throal soon joined the weavers and tailors, decorating structures new and old with complex and brilliant-colored mosaics. Some mosaic tiles are made of polished semi-precious stone, though most are fired clay covered in bright glazes.

Throalites have lost none of their love of color since the Scourge's end, and visitors to the kingdom may find its vividly dressed people and colorful buildings gaudy or jarring. Citizens less fond of the underground life than the typical dwarf, however, find the wild swirl of colors a welcome tonic for the eyes and soul.

OF SOUNDS EVER PRESENT

The acoustics of Throal's underground passageways and buildings intensify sounds, making the dwarf kingdom a loud place. Throalites love to talk and make music, and the everyday business and bustle generates a cacophony of noises. The constant background noise makes Throal seem vibrant and full of life, but can be distracting to new visitors. Non-stop ambient sound also makes it difficult to perform tasks that rely on careful listening, such as eavesdropping, picking certain types of locks, or guarding against intruders. If a player character attempts any of these actions in Throal, add +2 or more to the Difficulty Numbers for all appropriate tests.

The noise level also confers one advantage: it masks sounds that characters may want to conceal. Characters can easily avoid attracting attention when doing noisy things such as putting on armor or unsheathing a sword, or when trying to sneak quietly into an area. If a player character attempts any of these actions in Throal, they gain a +2 bonus to all appropriate tests.

In contrast to its daytime bustle, Throal is so quiet during the night hours, when most residents are asleep, that the difference can seem eerie. The modifiers listed above do not apply at night.

OF SMELLS AND OTHER FRAGRANCES

Throal's ventilation system leaves much to be desired. That residents can breathe at all is a tribute to the ingenuity of dwarf (and Theran) engineering. In addition to the fresh air supplied by the abundant plant life in Throal, air circulates through a magical system devised by the Therans. Special crystals called air sponges, usually grown by Elementalists, are situated throughout Throal. They magically transmute stale air into fresh air, converting carbon dioxide into oxygen much as plants do outdoors. An air sponge large enough to freshen the air breathed by a hundred people costs 100 silver pieces and weighs about ten pounds. Air sponges do not wear out, and only need to be replaced if damaged.

Though the air sponges make it possible to breathe in Throal, they do not make the experience pleasant. Odors, dust, and humidity escape slowly from Throal's underground chambers. Few of the ventilation shafts sunk before the Scourge have been reopened, as sealing them was much easier than unsealing them. Residents become used to the discomfort, which increases as one travels further back and lower down. The Bazaar, which lies near the surface, smells fresh and pleasant; the author of the opening account was no doubt unpleasantly surprised when she ventured deeper into Throal. Every so often, teams of engineers propose various expensive ways of better ventilating the kingdom, sparking perennial political debate between those who feel that the Throalic citizen's tax burden is already heavy enough and those who consider any tax increase a small price to pay for air as clean and sweet as that in the Bazaar.

Throalites bathe about once every seven days, covering any offensive odors with perfumes on non-bath days.

Even the poorest Throalite spends money on fragrances, though wealthier citizens can afford finer ones. Though a modern reader walking into Throal's Bazaar on a busy day might well find his nose under assault, by the standards of the world of *Earthdawn* the people of Throal keep themselves remarkably clean. The most common perfumes in Throal are fairly subtle and mask personal odors well. Stronger and more noticeable fragrances tend to be made from exotic ingredients; because they are more expensive, wealthy citizens tend to be the ones wearing them. This practice often leads working-class Throalites to remark that they "smell honest" in contrast with rich folk.

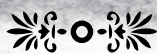
On the Muckers' Bells

Waste disposal is a major industry in Throal. The kingdom has no sewer system, and so people rely on chamber pots. As the contents of these pots cannot simply be dumped in the hallways, waste collectors—known as "muckers"—pick up and empty the chamber pots daily. The muckers have predetermined routes, and householders make sure that they are home to dispose of their waste when the muckers come around. Muckers travel in groups of four, pulling large metal tanks mounted on hand carts to hold the waste. The muckers' carts are covered with bells so that people can hear them coming. Those with waste to dispose of get their chamber pots; everyone else runs for cover to avoid the stench. In Throal, endless variations on the phrase, "the ring of the mucker's bell" are used to refer to approaching trouble, as in, "We saw the ork scorchers massing on the hill, and we knew the mucker's bell was ringing."

The muckers dump the waste into disused mine shafts, which are full of worms, flies and luminous bacteria that feed on nutrients in the sewage. These tiny creatures, many of them first bred by Theran Nethermancers, also attack and eat disease-bearing bacteria, making them an invaluable contribution to safe living in the kaers. The muckers keep a close eye on the waste-eaters, breeding more whenever necessary. Several magicians in Throal recently came up with a variety of spells designed to mask the odor in the mine shafts, and so dumping wastes has become a little less distasteful.

The Royal Guild of Muckers has considerable clout in Throal. The first muckers were badly paid, and were treated as outcasts despite the importance of their unpleasant job. Since the formation of the Royal Guild, muckers have been extremely well paid, but remain social pariahs. The guild leaders learned during the Scourge that Throalites feared nothing more than the thought of a mucker work stoppage, and through careful blackmail they managed to raise their wages again and again. Modern-day muckers are paid better than healers, and leading guild members are second only to members of the great trading houses in personal wealth. With the Scourge over, the Throalic government could theoretically fire all the high-paid muckers and replace them with immigrants willing to do this unpleasant work for less money; however, the king and his advisors would pay a high political price. Other guilds would view such an act as a threat to their own power, and would fight it tooth and nail. In addition, the mucker guildmasters are skillful politicians and have vocally supported King Neden and his agenda. For these reasons, the king accepts the drain on the treasury that they represent.

The current mucker guildmaster is Pabumius, an immensely fat, rich old miser of a dwarf. A hard-bitten leader, he maintains the muckers' loyalty by acting as a stern father figure. Muckers are a society unto themselves, and Pabumius rules the guild through an intimidating presence. He hates the rich traders, especially the old guard who often trouble the king, and loves to think up new ways to vex them. In contrast to his usual tightfistedness, Pabumius gives generously to organizations which pay homage to various Passions, and is also a member of several *olzim* (see **On the Passions and Their Followers**, p. 41).



ADVENTURE HOOK

The adventurers are hired to investigate the murder of a perfume manufacturer, who was found in a passageway with a short sword in his back. The sword is the standard weapon carried by Throal's city guards. If the adventurers ask the right questions in the perfumer's neighborhood, they discover that many people in the area recently took sick, and that the illness was traced to the local well. As the guards reported no disturbances or incidents of poisoning, the well was closed under the assumption that some Horror or other fell creature contaminated it. As it turns out, the well was indeed poisoned.

Further investigation reveals that the poisoner and the guard captain knew each other and did business of some kind. The guard captain is the murderer; the perfumer, a parsimonious soul, paid the captain off to allow him to dump wastes into the well instead of hiring a worker to cart it to the proper place. The perfumer always dumped small amounts of harmless waste water, until one day he got sloppy and put something toxic in the well. The guard captain, not wanting to reveal his corruption to his superiors, took matters into his own hands. Solving the murder allows the reopening of the well, winning the adventurers the entire neighborhood's gratitude.

Fighting a constant battle with the unpleasant odors of Throal are the glorious smells that waft daily from the kingdom's ovens. The scents of simmering spices and baking bread are so omnipresent in Throal that a minor (and completely false) tale has sprung up to explain it. According to the story, the King pays legions of bakers to continually bake much more fresh bread than the people of Throal can eat, at least partly to make the kingdom smell better. Every day, tons of bread are allegedly thrown out to rot. Now and then, anti-Throal agitators talk up this story to highlight Throal's supposed wealth, selfishness and waste.

OF DAILY ROUTINE

The industrious people of Throal are early risers. Most people wake up around the sixth hour, and business typically begins at the eighth hour.

At the thirteenth hour, most businesses (except for food halls, taverns and the like) close for the *mado'yeh*, a two-hour lunch break. Eating is only a small part of the *mado'yeh*; Throalites consider it a fine time for socializing, indulging in hobbies and sealing business deals. Though it is improper by custom to drink heavily during the *mado'yeh*, Throal's more dissolute citizens do it anyway. Some people even use the *mado'yeh* for romantic assignments.

Business resumes at the fifteenth hour and concludes at the nineteenth hour. Evening in Throal lasts from the nineteenth to the twenty-second hours, and may be spent in a variety of ways: in taverns with groups of friends, at home with the family, attending political or philosophical meetings and so on. Even the most austere-minded dwarfs consider the evening a socially acceptable time to knock back an ale or three.

By the twenty-second or twenty-third hour, most Throalic citizens retire to bed. The period between the twenty-third hour of one day and the sixth hour of the next is the only guaranteed quiet time in the usually noisy kingdom, and so restless sleepers are well advised to adopt the habits of the locals.

Throalic custom does not include a set day of rest when businesses are closed, but holidays fall every five to ten days on average. Most businesses close on these holidays, but one can never be sure whether a particular business will be open or not on a given festival day. Those men and women who do not run a business of some kind frequently spend their days in housework, unless they can afford to pay servants. Unlike some human cultures, the dwarfs of Throal do not regard any type of work as being better suited to men or women; people of either gender are just as likely to run a shop or maintain the house and look after the children.

Keeping a home up to Throalic standards of cleanliness is hard work, requiring plenty of physical labor. The average Throalic householder's day starts with a trip to the nearest well, as Throalic homes do not have running water.

Throal is full of extraordinarily deep wells fed from various springs and underground water sources. Because water is heavy, fetching it is taxing, and so to use more water than one needs is considered extremely rude. Civic authorities know very well how vital a supply of clean water is to the dwarf kingdom, and wells are heavily guarded to discourage poisoners and saboteurs.

After fetching enough water to last the day, the householder heads to market to buy the day's food. Throalites have no means of keeping meats or vegetables from spoiling, and must get them fresh each day. The largest and cheapest market is the Bazaar (see **The Grand Bazaar** on p. 75 of the **A Tour of the Kingdom** chapter), but there are many smaller markets in the Inner Cities and in the Halls of Throal. Buying quality food at a reasonable price is time-consuming, and the householder needs a keen eye and a tongue sharp enough for clever haggling.

By the time the marketing is done, the householder must begin preparing the midday *mado'yeh* meal. Family members and servants who stay home during the day customarily eat together, often joined by those returning from their places of business. Among the wealthy, family members customarily eat apart from the help.

After the *mado'yeh*, the typical householder spends the afternoon cleaning and laundering, or baking the week's supply of bread. Around the eighteenth or nineteenth hour, the householder prepares a small evening meal. The evening is the householder's (or servant's) to spend as he wishes, in rest or recreation.

OF THE KINGDOM'S POPULATION

The population of Throal is approximately 190,000 and growing. Thirty thousand people live in the Halls of Throal, and another 20,000 live in outlying communities that dot the mountains of Throal (see **The Mountain Settlements** on p. 108). The remainder live in the Inner Cities, all of which were built in the past 75 years. During the Scourge, about 50,000 Namegivers lived in Throal proper; with the construction of the Inner Cities, the overcrowding in the Halls of Throal has eased considerably.

Common wisdom has it that the population of Throal is one-third of the total population of Barsaive. However, as no practical way exists of counting the population of the entire province (much of which remains unexplored), this figure is popular conjecture rather than hard fact.

The racial composition of Throal appears in the Throal Racial Composition Table. The proportions listed are not equally valid

throughout the kingdom; dwarfs almost exclusively inhabit some areas of the Halls of Throal, and orks, trolls, and humans predominantly inhabit neighborhoods in various Inner Cities. The barons and baronesses who rule the various Inner Cities are trying to encourage new immigrants to settle in cosmopolitan neighborhoods, as troubling riots have occurred between areas segregated along racial lines. Unfortunately, many Namegivers prefer to settle among people who look, think and behave as they do. Integrating the remarkable number of immigrants with the rest of the kingdom and with each other is one of the primary challenges facing Throal in the present day.

THROAL RACIAL COMPOSITION TABLE

Race	Population
Dwarf	44%
Elf	7%
Human	15%
Obsidiman	handful
Ork	25%
T'skrang	1%
Troll	8%
Windling	handful

ADVENTURE HOOK

The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made five great swords and five great shields during the war with the Huari. One pair he used himself; the others he gave to Tav Korelsed, Thandos, Ambica and Garaham.

Each item is said to give the wielder legendary powers. Byrnicus' sword could cut through all armor worn by the enemy; his shield countered all metal weapons used against him. Tav's sword won the loyalty of all whose blood was spilt upon it; his shield bore the growling face of a bear that struck fear into all who beheld it. Thandos' sword allowed him to relive the memories of all whose blood was spilt upon it, and his shield bore the grinning face of a dragon; it hypnotized his enemies and made them forget their purpose. Ambica's sword could bite enemies from a distance even though it remained in her hand, and her shield could disarm any foe at the moment he considered fighting her. Garaham's sword danced through the air, striking enemies whenever he loosed a spell at them. His shield absorbed spells cast at him by the enemy, allowing him to cast spells of greater power himself.

One of the minor mysteries of the Founding is what happened to these great weapons. Instead of keeping them and passing them along to Throal's kings and heroes to defend the realm forever, after Thandos' death Ambica gathered them up and hid them away in a cave known as the Last Place. She may have done this as a symbolic act to show that Throal would prosper through peace, not war. Or she might have been trying to counter Tav's dying curse. Scholars and treasure seekers have been searching for the Last Place for centuries, with no luck. Can the player characters discover this long-hidden cache of legendary weapons?

See the **Magical Treasures** chapter on p. 131 for more information on the Armaments of Byrnicus.

ON THROAL'S HISTORY

▲ ▲ ▲

Korelsed: *I am betrayed! Red blood stains the tunic of the king! Stabbed! Stabbed!*

Ambica: *The king is not betrayed, Tav Korelsed, for you are not the king. You have not been a king, nor shall you be.*

Korelsed: *Did my cruel wounds not impede me I would fall upon you as a mountain lion falls upon its prey! I would tear your jawbone from your head! These arms that have held you would rend you!*

Ambica: *Your own words condemn you. They have broken your dream, not I. You are a fine warrior, my love. A killer born. And that is why you shall not take the throne. Other dwarfs exist only to prove your conquests. This Throal you would make is a pen for sheep. By day, you would be the shepherd of the flock; by night, the lion that preys upon it. You have won dwarfs to your side with mighty words of freedom and honor. Those words are greater than you. You must die so that they may live.*

Korelsed: *Will none of you avenge me? As the river of my blood flows from me, find another source in her dark heart. Take her, dwarfs of Throal! Take her!*

Ambica: *They shall not take me. One of them shall be king.*

Korelsed: *Not you, Ambica? You do not slay me to be queen?*

Ambica: *We are too much of a part. I too am a lion of the mountains. I will not stain this kingdom a-borning with my bloodied hands.*

Korelsed: *Garaham! Take her!*

Garaham: *No, milord, I will not.*

Korelsed: *Byrnicus! Take her!*

Byrnicus: *No, milord, I will not.*

Korelsed: *Weak and trembling cubs! Thandos, my brother, vengeance falls to you. Blood for blood!*

Thandos: *Enough blood has been spilt to found a thousand kingdoms, elder brother. I am sick at heart, but what must be done has been done.*

Korelsed: *Traitor! You are a boil on my flesh! Now I see. Now that my life falls from me, now that it is too late, I see!*

Thandos: *Do you see?*

Korelsed: *While I fought for our ancient dream, you slipped into a bed that belonged to me. You caressed flesh that was mine to caress!*

Ambica: *If you thought me property, I was never yours.*

Korelsed: *I was a fool to trust you.*

Ambica: *If you could see, it would not be too late.*

Korelsed: *Garlen, protect me. I fall from this treacherous bosom into yours. Light my final path, my final way. Thystonius, find strong arms and sharp swords to punish this day's treason! I call the curse of the slaughtering pen upon the House of Korelsed. As I die, so shall...*

Ambica: *The king is slain.*

Thandos: *You would prop a corpse upon the throne?!*

Ambica: *Now that he is slain, it is safe to pay him homage. Follow me, my warriors. We shall bring the news to the hosts of Throal. We shall exalt his Name—the Name of Tav Korelsed, first king of Throal.*

—From the Final Act of Donalicus' Classic Play, *The Founders*

▲ ▲ ▲

ON THE TIME BEFORE THE FOUNDING

The founding of Throal took place in legendary times. Though scholars are forever digging into old documents and poets are constantly reinterpreting ancient legends, it is virtually impossible to know exactly how the kingdom was born.

The earliest legends told in the Throal Mountains portray the dwarfs as a unified force. These stories tell very little about their style of life, their political institutions, or their beliefs. Scholars assume that the earliest dwarfs in the Throal Mountains lived a nomadic existence as hunters and raiders. These early stories have one common thread: great battles fought between the dwarfs and a race of beings characterized as “giants.” As the tales have it, these giants were the original inhabitants of the mountains and the dwarfs were invaders. Because these stories are told from the dwarfs’ point of view, the invasion is portrayed as entirely just. Rashomon, the Passion of fatherhood and rulership (now the Mad Passion Raggok), is said to have promised the dwarf king Bujmon dominion over the mountains if the dwarfs first destroyed Rashomon’s “rebellious children,” the giants. Some storytellers from the hinterlands who tell the tales of Bujmon replace Rashomon with a benevolent dragon called the Scaled Father, but other than that the stories do not vary much.

Most modern-day scholars believe that the so-called giants were trolls. Trolls are known to inhabit mountain ranges, and are much larger than dwarfs. Artists and poets frequently insist on portraying the giants as an unknown race of Namegivers so large that they make trolls look puny, but scholars have found scant evidence to support this fancy. Scholars also generally agree that Bujmon is probably a composite of several dwarf kings or chieftains, to whom all legends of giant fighting have become attached over the centuries. Artists almost universally portray Bujmon as a flawless, noble questor of a once-pure and benevolent Passion.

This group of ancient legends, known as the Bujmon Cycle, is followed by another set of stories that is more difficult to understand. In these tales, known as the Warring Tribes Cycle, the dwarfs have split into dozens of kingdoms. Most likely these “kingdoms” were individual tribes whose “kings” and “queens” served as the village headmen. Tales from the Warring Tribes Cycle lack the moral clarity of the Bujmon legends. Instead of a righteous, divinely inspired king fighting a great war against stronger enemies, the Warring Tribes tales depict bitter, often pointless squabbles between larger-than-life characters. The many monarchs who appear briefly in the Warring Tribes Cycle battle one another for petty reasons, frequently losing much more than they win. These stories are packed with betrayal and soaked in blood. Because the characters are flawed and passionate, the Warring Tribes stories are much richer material for poets and playwrights than the Bujmon Cycle.

ON THE BIRTH OF THROAL

Only in the third cycle of Throalic legends can anything approximating a date be attached to the stories. This cycle, called The Founding, deals directly with the creation of the dwarf kingdom. According to the legends, three or four generations before the beginning of the Throalic calendar the countless small dwarf tribes began merging into two great tribes. This occurs at roughly the same time

ADVENTURE HOOK

Feodering, a mining community in the eastern Throal Mountains, is destroyed in a raid. Terrified survivors report being attacked by strange, giant humanoids who stand 12 to 14 feet tall. The adventurers are sent to determine the truth; does this raid herald the return of a forgotten race of Namegivers, the ancient foes of the dwarfs? Or is a tribe of ork scorchers or troll raiders, aided by Illusionists, using the old legends of the giants to strike fear into their victims?

as the banishment of the martyr scholar Elinar Messias from the Elven Court, which touched off the chain of events that eventually led to the birth of Thera. The tribes of the eastern Throal Mountains called themselves the Huari, and those of the western mountains called themselves the Mishwal. To this day, the dwarfs of Throal still keep track of which tribal group they belong to (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book for more information on dwarfs and tribal loyalty).

Not long after their formation, these two huge tribes went to war with one another. In the legends, King Stehwon Leis of the Huari and Queen Bodal Korelsed of the Mishwal both claim the right to rule all the dwarfs of the Throal Mountains. Why the dwarfs suddenly wished to be united under a single ruler remains unclear; the legends simply assume that the unification of the dwarfs is necessary and inevitable. The only dispute—protracted, fierce and bloody—is

who should reign over them. A few of the Founding legends contain oblique references to dragons; evidently both sides received boons or advice from them. In some legends, one group of dragons appears to aid both sides. In others, two dragons (or groups of dragons) compete for some unknown prize, using the Mishwal and Huari as their instruments.

As the tales unfold, Stehwon and Bodal both die in battle. Their children, Stehwon II and Tav Korelsed, succeed them as tribal leaders.

Tav Korelsed is assisted by a number of legendary figures. Foremost among them is his lover, the great warrior Ambica. Other notable heroes of Throal’s founding include Byrnicus, a Weaponsmith who forged a great sword and shield for each of his allies, and the Elementalist Garaham, who won the support of the mountains themselves against the Huari. Together these mighty heroes lead many battles against the forces of Stehwon II.

After many years of fighting, a terrible plague falls upon the Mishwal, reducing their numbers to the point where a Huari victory seems inevitable. Then Tav Korelsed’s younger brother, Thandos, appears on the scene. Queen Bodal had given him as an infant to a dragon in exchange for some great favor; some scholars claim that this dragon was Icewing, but the legends remain murky whenever dragons appear in them. Thandos learned many mysterious talents from the dragon, which he uses to aid his brother. His wily strategies complement the courage and ferocity of Tav Korelsed and Ambica, culminating in a decisive battle in a valley known as Upandal’s Forge. During the Battle of Upandal’s Forge, Tav Korelsed and Ambica personally engage Stehwon II and his queen, Lekhara, in combat. Ambica kills Lekhara before Stehwon’s eyes; overcome by grief, he surrenders to Tav Korelsed.

Though this battle ends the war, the bloodletting goes on. Soldiers of Tav’s personal guard are ordered to provide an escort for Stehwon, but instead assassinate him. The defeated Huari troops threaten rebellion, blaming the assassination on Tav Korelsed. As battle erupts anew, Thandos Korelsed and Ambica appear before Huari and Mishwal troops. They announce that Tav Korelsed has been slain, and venerate him as the first king of Throal. Tav’s childhood friend Byrnicus steps forward to confess that he has murdered the king. He reveals that he loves Stehwon’s daughter Marakh, and claims to have killed the king to avenge the assassination of her father. Byrnicus willingly goes to the gallows; Stehwon’s daughter,

grief-stricken, commits suicide. Thandos Korelsed takes the throne of the new dwarf nation and marries Stehwon's younger daughter, but maintains a tempestuous love affair with Ambica.

Later artists and historians reinterpreted the bloody events that followed the Battle of Upandal's Forge, and most dwarfs have come to believe that either Thandos or Ambica slew Tav Korelsed because he planned to expand his conquests, attacking the dwarf city-states to the north and southwest. Thandos and Ambica wanted the new nation of Throal to develop in peace, and decided that only Thandos could make the transition from warrior to king. According to this interpretation, Byrnicus volunteered to die in order to expiate the new king's guilt in his brother's death. Legend also has it that Tav's dying words were a blood curse upon his own house; the gruesome fates of the later Korelsed kings give this story credence. Some see the curse as just punishment for the assassination of Stehwon II, assumed to have been ordered by either Tav or Thandos.

Despite the blood on their hands, Tav and Thandos Korelsed are still revered as great leaders in Throal. Tav is regarded as a fearsome warrior, and those who risk their lives for Throal still invoke his Name as they prepare for battle. Most dwarfs see the story of Tav's death as a cautionary tale against dreams of conquest. Had Tav lived to continue his military campaign, Throal would likely have collapsed within a generation. As for Thandos, he is seen as a martyr who made great sacrifices in order to build Throal on the right foundation.

ON THE AGE OF CITY-STATES

The early years of the kingdom of Throal passed in the shadow of the great dwarf nations of northeastern Barsaive. The greatest was the kingdom of Scytha, located to the north of the Throal Mountains. A mighty economic and military power back when the dwarfs of Throal were mere hunters and raiders, Scytha was held in check by several neighboring dwarf city-states, Killea and K'rzon foremost among them. Tribal and national rivalries drove the kings of these states to fight irrational wars against one another. Scytha in particular was founded upon a myth of constant conquest; the Scythans believed that the Passion Thystonius anointed them kings over all other dwarfs. During Throal's first two centuries, Scytha launched alternating attacks on Killea and K'rzon with the regularity of a swinging pendulum. The Scythans conquered Killea first, then turned their armies against K'rzon. After K'rzon fell, the people of Killea revolted against Scytha, starting another round of costly fighting. By the time Scytha managed to retake Killea, the people of K'rzon had taken advantage of their conquerors' depleted resources to stage a revolt of their own.

While the great city-states were caught up in this mad pattern, Throal grew unmolested. The curse of Tav Korelsed, however, began to show itself within a generation of his death. On the twelfth anniversary of Thandos' coronation, he vanished. Though no body was ever found, Thandos' personal guards were accused of killing him and disposing of his corpse. Despite the spectacle of their execution, the public blamed the murder on Tav's ghost. Thandos II succeeded his father to the throne and ruled for two dozen years, gradually going mad. As his last act, Thandos II ordered the execution of all the heads of Throal's noble families. The king's son, Thandos III, commander of the Throalic army, refused to carry out the order; instead, he deposed his father and took the throne. Thandos III ruled for many decades, and for a time people believed that the curse on the house of Korelsed had abated. On the fortieth anniversary of his coronation, however, Thandos III melted like a candle in the midst of a speech to Throal's noble families. His son Thandos IV ascended to the throne—to the consternation of nobles and commoners alike, almost all of whom considered him a fool. Fortunately for Throal, Thandos IV turned out to be the cleverest of Throal's kings to date.

The people of Throal became prosperous mining the rich minerals of the mountains, especially iron. At first, they sold raw ore to their neighbors. As their profits grew, Thandos IV brought ironworkers to Throal to teach his people how to make finished products from the ore. Soon afterward, Throal became an exporter of worked iron—including weapons—to Scytha and other city-states in the region. Throal grew richer still, peacefully prospering from the violence of others. Scytha and its rivals periodically considered attacking and looting Throal, but each city-state feared that overextending itself in a difficult mountain war would make it a ripe target for assault. In the end, Throal remained at peace for all of Thandos IV's eighty-year reign.

His successor, Thandos V, ruled cautiously but well, never straying from the lessons of kingship passed to him by his father. Upon his death without an heir in 220 TH, however, a crisis erupted. As the dead king's councilors frantically searched the royal genealogies for some clue as to who had the strongest claim to the throne, they discovered that Thandos IV was not the son of Thandos III—worse, he was not even related to the royal house of Korelsed. Thandos III and a few trusted advisors had concocted the hoax to counter the curse of Tav Korelsed, but the discovery threw the legitimacy of the throne into question. Simmering Huari resentment boiled to the surface, and nobles of that tribe demanded their long-forgotten right to rule. In the resulting war of succession, thousands of Throal's people died fighting one another.

Eventually, a family of ironworkers recently arrived in Throal managed to broker a peace. The family claimed neither Huari nor Mishwal ancestry, and so both sides found the peace proposal acceptable. The peace ushered in the second dynasty of Throal, founded by another legendary king, Braza I. The son of a mixed Huari-Mishwal marriage, he furthered Throal's commercial interests as the first trader-king.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A wave of mysterious killings strikes Throal. Though the victims have little in common, the crimes are all remarkably similar. In each case the victim seemed to be alone, and could not have been killed by mundane means. Panic grips the people: has Throal been invaded by invisible Horrors? The adventurers are hired to investigate and to somehow deal with this terrible threat.

In fact, the murderer is the ancient spirit of Tav Korelsed, summoned from its restless grave by a misguided Nethermancer and scholar Named Cibonicus. Cibonicus wanted answers to the ancient mysteries of the Founding, but Tav is more interested in finding and punishing the unknowing descendants of the house of Korelsed. The true Korelsed bloodline has been obscured since the coronation of the false Thandos IV in 76 TH, but the vengeful spirit of the first king of Throal can smell the blood of his treacherous family. The adventurers must find Cibonicus, discover what is going on and figure out how to exorcise this mad ghost from Throal's bloody past.

Braza believed that the future of Throal lay in trade, and did what he could to advance it. At that point in time, Throal consisted of a dozen or so settlements—most of them mining towns—perched on the sides of the mountains. Each of the settlements looked for leadership to a baron or baroness, a hereditary ruler descended from commanders of Tav Korelsed's army. Braza I announced that each baron and baroness must create a trading company to find new markets for Throalic iron and other goods, and that each company's profits must be spent in its home communities. Further, he decreed that barons who failed to make enough money to keep their towns prosperous would be replaced. Finally, Braza I granted trading charters to several Huari families to counter lingering tensions from the war of succession.

The leaders of the trading houses, both new and old, became a new aristocracy. Braza himself supervised a major trading house, and with its profits built a fantastic marble city inside the Throal Mountains. This city, now sealed, lies beneath the Halls of Throal.

Throal's dazzling new wealth overcame the caution of the greedy Scythans, who trumped up an ancient tribal grudge and attacked several Throalic settlements in the western mountains. The local barons, used to dealing with the Scythans, fortified their towns heavily and dealt the Scythan armies a humiliating defeat. Almost immediately afterward, forces from Killea and K'rzon attacked Scythia in concert for the first time. The Scythans beat back these assaults at a terrible cost, and swiftly abandoned their notions of conquering Throal.

Meanwhile, the trading houses had begun to explore areas beyond northeastern Barsaive in search of new avenues of profit. Their successes in this area laid the groundwork for an uneasy alliance with a power new to them: the Theran Empire.

OF THROAL AND THERA

The Therans arrived in Barsaive during the waning years of Thandos V's reign, in 216 TH. Caught up in the subsequent war of succession, the dwarfs of Throal paid little heed at first to reports of the foreign invaders and their incalculably powerful navy. The progress of Throalic traders across the province in the wake of Braza I's reforms mirrored that of the Theran diplomats and traders. Thera was a young and hopeful nation in those days, and had yet to show its dark side. To the Throalites, Thera represented a rich new market. Therans in Barsaive needed Throal's trade goods, and also sought a new commodity: orichalcum. Rich veins of orichalcum ran throughout the Throal Mountains, but its people had never bothered mining it in quantity before. Tantalized by the immense profits to be made, Throal became the first nation of Barsaive to supply orichalcum to Thera. For nearly a century, Throal possessed a virtual monopoly on this trade; Theran records show no extensive imports of orichalcum from other areas until the early 330s TH. Countless new towns and settlements sprung up around orichalcum mines, many of which soon eclipsed the old nobles and their trading houses. When Braza I died in 275 TH, the orichalcum trade was firmly established and Throal was well set on the path to peace and prosperity.

The long peace ended abruptly and brutally around 400 TH, with the devastating Orichalcum Wars. Inspired by greed for Theran silver, Barsaive's petty rulers warred fiercely with one another for trade supremacy. All too soon, the war for trade became an excuse to fight about everything from ancient grudges to revenge for recent defeats. Waves of ork raiders swept down the mountain slopes and over the plains of Barsaive to attack Throal, laying waste to many of its settlements. Several wrecked towns, judged too insecure to defend, have never been rebuilt.

The beginning of the end came when troll raiders made the fatal error of attacking Theran mining vessels. This act brought the full might of Thera's navy down on them, and the defeated raiders were taken away in chains. Thera then declared Barsaive an imperial possession. Barsaive's new rulers lost no time in building the vast military base of Sky Point in southern Barsaive and the provincial capital of Parlainth, to the northeast of Throal.

The first overlord of Barsaive, Kern Fallo, was an enlightened despot by comparison with many of his successors. Seeking local allies to administer the province, he naturally thought of the dwarfs of Throal, with



whom his family had long-standing trade connections. Throal's vast trading network had given it widespread contacts throughout the province, and its policy of neutrality had made it no major enemies aside from scattered ork raider tribes. Fallo therefore considered Throal an ideal intermediary between Thera and the dozens of petty kings and leaders in Barsaive.

Despite grave misgivings about the Therans, Queen Jonatha of Throal saw little choice but to accept Fallo's offer. The Thera-Throal alliance, sealed in 443 TH, allowed the dwarf kingdom considerable freedom in administering the province. The agreement permitted them to continue their trading operations, spread their language, and embark upon scholarly and cultural projects, provided they kept Barsaive's people quiet and its orichalcum flowing toward Thera. Kern Fallo cared little about other details of Throalic policy, and Queen Jonatha wished above all to avoid conflict with the Therans. She appointed administrators for all of Barsaive's populated areas from the ranks of the trading houses, some of which became involved in the Thera slave trade. Others came to abhor slavery, though they did not voice their objections to their Thera masters.

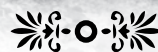
Over the next three centuries Throal's coffers filled to overflowing with Thera silver, and its settlements grew into towns and cities populated by all manner of Namegivers. Many of the greatest works of Throalic art were created during this period. Throalic administrators occasionally bloodied their hands putting down local revolts, but they remained much more benevolent than Thera overlords would have been.

Another succession crisis briefly threatened this Throalic "golden age" when Queen Bevelona, last of the heirs of Braza I, died without issue in 634 TH. House Ueraven, a Huari-connected family, lobbied aggressively—some historians say criminally—to become the royal family, stirring up long-dormant tribal rivalries in their bid for the throne. House Avalus led the largely Mishwal opposition, and the Mishwal nobles even went so far as to proclaim Jothan Avalus the rightful king of Throal. In response, Ueraven troops massed in that house's stronghold of Jalasa. Before they could act, however, forces loyal to Jothan attacked and defeated them. House Ueraven's leaders accepted the inevitable in public, but in private their determination to possess the throne remained undimmed (and does to this day). The reign of Jothan I ushered in the third dynasty of Throalic monarchs, from which Varulus I, Varulus II, Varulus III, and Neden are descended.

Meanwhile, the Scourge drew ever closer. Powerful Horrors began to appear in Barsaive around 700 TH, and heroes arose in Throal to oppose them. Throal became a training ground for adepts, and its craftsmen and magicians created great magical treasures to fight these abominations from beyond the physical world. Throal's rich treasury stood the kingdom in good stead; Throal's kings and queens spent the nation's long-acquired wealth to prepare it for the coming disaster. Meanwhile, Thera rule became more decadent and chaotic with the accession of every new overlord. The slave trade accelerated, and the dwarfs of Throal began secretly working against the interests of their Thera masters. More and more adepts from Throal set out to hunt down and fight Horrors all across Barsaive, and they slowly began to win the hearts of Barsaive's ordinary people.

ON THE BUILDING OF THROAL

As the Scourge drew nearer, Throal turned its orichalcum and other raw materials over to the Therans in exchange for the knowledge of how to safeguard the kingdom from the coming Horrors. Recognizing the impossibility of protecting the many communities scattered across the Throal Mountains, Queen Ulutur decided to expand Braza I's underground capital city. United within its sheltering walls, deep in the mountains that had nurtured them



ADVENTURE HOOK

One of the legendary Throalic adepts of this period was Bozwicus, a Warrior who became one of the first Horror Stalkers (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* sourcebook). According to legend, the Passion Garlen gave Bozwicus a magical treasure: the clay figurine of a cow. Bozwicus' self-appointed mission was to seek out as many different types of Horrors as she could, and defeat each in turn. Whenever she defeated a Horror, its powers would flow into the cow figurine. Bozwicus could then use these powers herself, but Garlen warned her to do so only in the direst emergency. Bozwicus, however, soon came to rely upon the terrible powers held in the cow. Eventually she came face to face with the Horror Ubyr, who slew her easily.

At'skrang Nethermancer Named T'shan V'ruda recently found Bozwicus' Cow submerged in the silt of the Serpent River. V'ruda was exiled from Throal in 1507 TH, accused of summoning a Horror during a speech at the Royal Auditorium. (Whether he is guilty of this charge or not is up to the gamemaster.) V'ruda has attached several threads to the cow, and wishes to attach another. To do so, he must perform a deed: he must pay homage to Garlen at a shrine just south of the Great Library. The Royal Guard has advance word of V'ruda's illegal return to Throal and plans to fight him off.

How the adventure proceeds depends on V'ruda's motivation. If the gamemaster decides that V'ruda ultimately serves the cause of good, the adventurers' task is to get him to Garlen's shrine without the authorities finding out. There Garlen charges him with a great mission, on which the player characters can accompany him.

If V'ruda is simply a menacing and ruthless character, the adventurers must stop him from entering Throal. This means that they must face the Horror powers of Bozwicus' Cow. If they defeat V'ruda, they must then figure out how to destroy this dangerous item.

for so many centuries, the people of Throal could preserve the achievements of Barsaivian civilization for later generations. Some Throalites considered this massive project folly, and broke away from the kingdom to build their own smaller kaers with Thera aid. Most, however, preferred to live in a massive kaer where they could find what they considered the amenities of civilized life: plays, sports, and plenty of people to debate with. Determined not to allow the Horrors to rob them of the things they valued most, the dwarfs of Throal began building their vast underground refuge.

Construction of the new Halls of Throal began in 910 TH, after it became clear that Braza I's old city could not serve as a foundation for the giant kaer; it had too many holes and ventilation shafts through which Horrors might gain entry. The workers sealed Braza's city shut and began new excavation. Meanwhile, Throalic magicians grappled with the particular problems of a vast kaer; among other things, they devised a system of magical crystal greenhouses to ensure a supply of fresh food to a population of more than 50,000 Namegivers.



Construction continued slowly over the next century, with several setbacks. At one point, when Theran experts warned the Throalic architects that the layout of a certain hall formed a mystical pattern that might attract Horrors, Queen Ulutur suspected that the Therans were deliberately forcing her workers to drag out the construction process in order to extort more orichalcum. She had little choice but to trust their word, however, and tolerated the delays as best she could.

In 950 TH, the aging queen died peacefully in her sleep. Her son, King Varulus I, presided over an increasingly unstable kingdom. Intelligent Horrors made several attempts to infiltrate the king's inner circle, directly and through corrupted Namegivers. Domsday cults began springing up, fueled by the increasing fear and despair of Barsaive's people; several fomented revolutions against the king, hoping to curry favor with the Horrors by destroying their Throalic enemies. A quiet, bookish dwarf when crowned, Varulus gradually became the tough and uncompromising ruler that the times demanded. He swiftly put down any signs of revolt, ensuring

temporary stability but also making enemies in a number of trading houses close to the Theran Empire. The most serious incident occurred in 997 TH, when Varulus exiled fourteen young nobles from the houses of Heovrat, Erud, Pay'ar and Turlough for plotting against him. The nobles proclaimed their innocence, and their families cried foul; in the light of the coming Scourge, exile from Throal was a virtual death sentence. Though the evidence against the alleged plotters could be read in several ways, Varulus stood firm, knowing that he must seem unwavering in order to keep a fearful populace in line. The Fourteen, as they became known, took refuge with their Theran business partners in Parlainth.

In 960 TH, Varulus officially commissioned the archivists of Throal to begin work on the *Book of Tomorrow* and to assemble a great library to preserve the world's knowledge during the Scourge. Informal work on both of these grand projects had been going on for years, but the pace increased tenfold with the king's open backing.

Thera sealed itself off from the world in 1000 TH, somewhat ahead of schedule and well before the construction of Throal was

complete. The abrupt departure of their Theran advisors sent a wave of panic through Barsaive and through Throal. Many people, believing the end of the world had come upon them, rioted and debauched themselves or committed suicide. Over the protests of his courtiers, King Varulus invoked various draconian measures to quell these disturbances. After several months, as the people slowly realized that the full fury of the Scourge was not about to suddenly sweep over Throal, the panic died down. For his firmness during the crisis, Varulus won great praise from his subjects.

The final stages of Throal's construction were completed over the next 40 years, during which Horror manifestations became increasingly common. Even though these terrible creatures were still rare enough that most Throalites had never seen one, King Varulus decided to take no chances. He decreed that Throal's citizens must regularly prove themselves free of Horror taint. Under a less judicious ruler, these measures could easily have become an excuse to punish political enemies and troublemakers, and many of those whose relatives were banished on the grounds of Horror taint accused Varulus of doing precisely that. Certainly the decree was harsh, but most historians agree that the king applied them fairly. Anyone exhibiting signs of derangement was exiled, lest their weak minds be dominated by Horrors. Those unable to demonstrate artisan skills were also sent away, on the chance that they might be Horrors in disguise.

Complaints about the decree ceased abruptly in 1032 TH. During a public ceremony celebrating the Passion of rulership, the members of one particular *olzim* (see **On the Pssions and Their Followers**, p. 41) devoted to Rashomon suddenly swarmed the royal dais and attempted to slay the king. King Varulus miraculously escaped unhurt, but dozens of minor royals were killed, along with many guardsmen and hundreds of Rashomon's devotees. After the incident, the surviving attackers claimed to have been overtaken by temporary madness. For a day and a night, the royal executioners beheaded captured followers of Rashomon. Many Throalites compared the outburst to orkish *gahad*, and used the orkish Name for the Passion, Raggok, in reference to the event. The "Raggok Incident" is the first recorded indication in Throal of the corruption of the Mad Passions and its disastrous effect on their devotees. The effect on Throal was so profound that "Raggok" replaced "Rashomon" in day-to-day use, and the Name change has since spread across most of Barsaive. The royal family never recovered from the slaughter of its members during the Raggok Incident, and it remains dangerously small to this day.

In 1040 TH, controversy erupted anew when the Theran Overlord of Barsaive, the ork Ersh Wearg, arrived on the doorstep of Throal demanding refuge. The cowardly Wearg, having lost faith in Parlainth's plan to seal itself away from the world for the duration of the Scourge, tried to bluster his way in by claiming his right to rule Throal as imperial representative. His appearance touched off a fierce dispute among Throal's people. Many demanded that the king turn Wearg and his entourage away, while traders with strong ties to Thera argued that Wearg should be admitted but stripped of any authority. Armed clashes began to break out between squabbling trading houses while Wearg and his companions spent a fearful month in the hamlet of Gatemouth, where Bartertown now stands. Unwilling to let Wearg's presence start a civil war, King Varulus allowed him in. When Wearg demanded a large and luxurious area for the officers of the Empire, as Varulus had known he would, Varulus installed him in the unfinished hall that had been abandoned during his mother's reign because of Theran warnings that it might attract Horrors.

In 1045 TH, the city of Parlainth vanished from the world and from the memory of Barsaive. The magic that hid the city created false memories for all who had once known of it or lived there, including Ersh Wearg. Suddenly convinced that he had ruled in Throal for

years, Wearg and his delegation became confused when the dwarfs refused to follow his orders. Varulus disarmed the Theran entourage upon their entry into Throal, but their arrogance nonetheless greatly offended loyal Throalites. The Throalites, of course, had forgotten Parlainth, too—they remembered only that Ersh Wearg gave them the strong feeling of something gone magically wrong.

In 1049 TH, Varulus I flew aboard an airship of the Throalic Navy to a rendezvous requested by the dragon Icewing. To this day, no one outside the royal family knows precisely what happened in that meeting. According to legends that sprang up during the long centuries of the Scourge, Icewing gave Varulus three potions to extend his life and the lives of his heirs. Though grateful for the boon, Varulus wanted to know why he was receiving it. Icewing remained evasive, as dragons are wont to do; he threatened to turn Throal to smoking rubble if Varulus shared his potion with anyone other than his direct heirs, or failed to keep the details of the meeting a secret.

Early in 1050 TH a rain of flesh-eating worms fell for twenty days and twenty nights in the mountains of Throal, obliterating the hamlet of Gatemouth and its inhabitants. Deciding that Throal could remain open no longer, King Varulus sent messengers out to the various adepts and traders still at large in Throal. The messages gave them two months to return to the giant kaer; after that, the gates would be closed.

During those final two months people streamed to Throal from all over Barsaive, begging to be allowed into the kingdom. But Throal had no room in its kaer for these last-minute refugees; only known citizens of Throal were permitted to pass through its gates. The throngs of hopeless applicants camped outside Throal attracted droves of Horrors that attacked and devoured them by night. King Varulus, seeing the refugees as a danger to Throal, sent his army to drive them away; many fought back, preferring to die on the swords of Throal's army than in the jaws of the Horrors. A number of ballads have preserved this terrible time, known as the Weeping, in memory; however, few Throalites like to think about it even now. The Weeping tarnished Throal's reputation as a shining refuge.

At the end of the two months, despite the fact that many great heroes and famous traders had not yet returned, Throal closed its gates. None would pass in or out of the vast dwarf kaer for the next four hundred years.

ON THROAL DURING THE SCOURGE

Having done their best to prepare themselves, the people of Throal settled in for their long-anticipated retreat from the world. At first, kaer life seemed a miraculous deliverance from the evil that stalked the land above. In the midst of Barsaive's darkest days, Throal enjoyed a new golden age; its artists created works of joy and light, its philosophers found meaning in the catastrophe of the Scourge, and its rulers sought to create a new era of perfect government.

In the way of this last goal stood the irritating Ersh Wearg, a baleful reminder of the hateful compromises Throal had made in order to preserve its great civilization. In 1055 TH, Ersh Wearg conveniently ceased to be a problem when his unsound quarters collapsed on him and his servants. King Varulus attributed Wearg's death to Upandal, Passion of builders, calling it the Passion's vengeance against the Therans for turning the building of the kaers toward their own political ends. Houses sympathetic to the Therans privately (and perhaps incorrectly) assumed that Varulus caused Wearg's death, but this assumption caused the king no trouble. On the contrary, scions of these houses admired the king's ruthlessness and quietly postponed their designs on the throne.

Two years later, Horror manifestations began occurring in the Halls of Throal. Despite Varulus' tough measures, Horrors had managed to infiltrate the kingdom. King Varulus and a team of adepts

ADVENTURE HOOK

The month of Riag is known as “the Weepers’ Month” in Bartertown, because it was in Riag of 1050 TH that the Throalic army drove off the last-minute hordes seeking refuge in the kingdom. The Weepers’ Month is feared as a time of haunting. Unfortunate individuals may endure terrifying visions of the Weeping, encounter phantasmal Horrors, or simply vanish. Soldiers and others bearing the insignia of Throal seem to be singled out for these experiences.

When Riag rolls around one year, the manifestations are especially severe. Bleeding ghosts walk the streets of Bartertown in broad daylight. Babies are smothered in their cradles. Responsible citizens seized by sudden madness perform bizarre and savage acts against others or themselves. The adventurers, recuperating quietly in Throal from their latest adventures, must find out who or what is behind these terrors and stop them (if they can).

The Rememberers, a living legend cult, turn out to be the culprits. Led by Nethermancers, the group seeks to punish the descendants of those who refused shelter to the desperate as the Scourge approached. The group is using magic to allow spirits trapped on the astral plane by the terrible events of the Weeping to easily return to the physical world. The cult’s members are quite mad; they are the descendants of those rare people who managed to find shelter outside Throal during the Scourge. The adventurers must find the cultists and stop their dread activities before the ghosts of the Weeping become Bartertown’s only inhabitants.

tracked the manifestations to the manor of House Endour, and in a heroic struggle slew a major Horror Named Whisper. Eleven members and *j’havim* of House Endour were beheaded as collaborators with the Horror, though some of them were innocent. In retaliation for the innocent blood shed, House Endour swore blood vengeance on the House of Avalus.

In 1160 TH, at the age of 270, Varulus I died. He had lived nearly twice as long as a normal dwarf; three successive wives preceded him to the grave along with a dozen children, most of whom died soon after birth. Only one son of the king lived to sit vigil at his bedside: Varulus II.

Varulus II ascended the throne without incident. Wishing to redeem history’s judgment of his father and his harsh deeds, the new king studied his father’s writings and announced his intention to make Throal an ideal society. Varulus II’s quest for Utopia culminated in the proclamation of the *Council Compact* in 1270 TH. Allies and enemies of the royal house alike hailed it as a work of political genius, and Varulus II’s trusted councilors immediately began planning the rebuilding of all Barsaive along the *Compact’s* lines. As for Varulus II’s enemies, they chose to bide their time. With trade routes closed by the Scourge, they no longer had an excuse to maintain the private armies necessary for a coup attempt.

In 1373 TH, at the age of 258, Varulus II passed away in his sleep. His use of Icewing’s gift prolonged his life, but at a steep

cost; he and the son who ultimately succeeded him had extreme difficulty fathering children. Throal mourned the king’s death, celebrated his life, and welcomed Varulus III to the throne. Varulus III proved an able monarch, shepherding his people through the last years of the Scourge and leading their return to the surface world in 1420 TH.

ON THROAL SINCE THE RETURN

By the beginning of the 1400s TH, based on calculations by Throal’s finest magicians and scholars, King Varulus III began to believe that the Scourge might have ended. Beginning in 1409 TH, the king sent annual scouting parties into Barsaive; the first successful expedition returned from the wilderness in 1412 TH. Four years later, the legendary airship *Earthdawn* made its famous voyage of rediscovery. The gallant ship disappeared on its second voyage in 1418 TH, but by that time the evidence was overwhelming that the Scourge had indeed ended. Throal opened its gates, cautiously at first, in 1420 TH. (For complete details of events following the reopening of Throal, see the **How It Came to Pass** chapter on p. 15 of the *Gamemaster’s Guide*.)

One event of this period is of particular importance to modern-day Throalic politics: in order to encourage the rapid resettlement of the Throal Mountains, Varulus III granted free ownership of land to anyone who claimed and agreed to make productive use of it. In so doing, he declared previous rights of ownership null and void. Most of the lands in question had belonged to various Throalic noble houses, whose members had acted as absentee landlords before the Scourge. Most nobles accepted these losses, partly out of loyalty to their sovereign and partly because they expected to enrich themselves as traders rather than landlords. As traders make no money without someone to sell goods to, the would-be merchants wanted the people of Barsaive to prosper quickly. Varulus III won their support by convincing them that giving up rights to land they had never seen would allow others to become rich enough to buy their trade goods, thereby benefiting the nobles in the long run. To nobles already threatened by the reforms of the Compact, or holding old grudges against House Avalus, the land policy was simply one more provocation. The king’s enemies vowed to bring him down once and for all, and have continued to make trouble where they can.

Varulus found himself confronting greater enemies than his rivals in Throal when the Therans returned in 1449 TH. Enraged by the anti-Imperial implications of the *Council Compact*, the Therans declared Barsaive and all its people possessions of the Empire, and launched a war against Throal. Their rash act succeeded where Varulus III had failed; far from intimidating Barsaivians, this display of Theran might created the first genuine sense of Barsaivian unity. The peoples of the province rose up against their would-be masters, fighting a fierce guerrilla war and ultimately routing the Theran armies and navy. The Theran forces withdrew to Sky Point to lick their wounds and plot revenge.

OF THE DEATH REBELLION

As Barsaive slowly returned to normal, the anti-Varulus noble houses continued to dwell on their grievances. Some saw the Therans as instruments of their vengeance. Houses Heovrat, Erud, Pay’ar and Turlough bitterly recalled the events of 997 TH and the long-ago Exile of the Fourteen; House Endour remembered the executions of its members in 1057 TH; and House Ueraven nursed the most ancient of grudges, its defeat by House Avalus at Jalasa in 634 TH. In the early 1480s TH, these seven rebel Houses proposed a diabolical scheme to the Therans for destroying Varulus’ regime from within. They plotted to kill Varulus III and magically dominate young Prince Neden, turning him into a puppet of Thera.

THE LEGEND OF THE EARTHDAWN

In the first days after the end of the dark times known as the Scourge, King Varulus of Throal decreed that the bravest and boldest among his people should go forth and explore the land of Barsaive. After centuries of living in underground kaers and sealed citadels, the people hungered for the sight of the sun and the scent of the wind and many answered his call. Of the hundreds who ventured out into the Horror-ravaged countryside, however, not a single soul returned, until the day the troll sky raider Vaare Longfang came back to tell His Majesty that the Horrors were retreating to the hellish place that had spawned them. Longfang's courage and strength so impressed Varulus that he immediately ordered an airship made ready for her and commanded the raider to explore the length and breadth of Barsaive, documenting the world the Horrors had left and spreading the joyful news of the Scourge's passing to those still in hiding. Throal's finest mages gave the ship strong magic for defense against the Horrors that remained, and Varulus provided a crew of heroes fit for a grand adventure. To represent his hopes for the expedition, the king christened the ship the *Earthdawn*.

For a year and a day the *Earthdawn* sailed across Barsaive's skies, surveying the ravaged land and battling many perils. Though some Horrors lingered in places still thick with magic, Longfang and her crew found most of Barsaive free of the abominations. But these glad tidings fell on deaf ears, for though the *Earthdawn* landed at every kaer and citadel it encountered, all but two rejected their words. Fearful and unbelieving, the people refused to come out of their shelters.

When Longfang returned to Throal and told Varulus of the people's fears, he commanded her to set off once more, this time for the larger kingdoms of Barsaive. Varulus hoped that if Longfang could persuade the great kingdoms to open their doors, the example of the mighty would banish fear among all of Barsaive's people. And so the *Earthdawn* set sail once more, this time toward the human kingdom of Landis. The airship was never seen again. Though many believe Longfang and her valiant crew fell prey to the Horrors, the true fate of the *Earthdawn* remains a mystery to this day.

Occasionally, travelers in remote areas report seeing the airship slowly sailing through the Barsaivian sky. According to another tale, the "ghost ship" still carries invaluable maps of Barsaive drawn by Longfang's own hand.

Adventure Hook

The abandoned *Earthdawn* may indeed still drift through the skies of Barsaive, appearing every so often near the Throal Mountains or the area once known as the kingdom of Landis. Her original crew, however, is likely long dead or perhaps trapped in another plane of existence.

Some unknown force—Horrors, questors of a Mad Passion, or even Theran spies—may be guiding the *Earthdawn* now. And if Longfang's maps truly exist, such artifacts would be invaluable. Of course, any attempt to recover such artifacts would undoubtedly attract the attentions of any number of gamemaster characters—Therans, Horrors, elves, and the like.

Allying themselves with the worst criminals and mercenaries in Barsaive—including Vistrosh, leader of one of the most vicious gangs in the Thieves' City of Kratas—the conspirators nearly succeeded. In 1484 TH, Varulus III and Neden were forced into hiding. Shortly afterward, Neden was kidnapped and mercenaries loyal to the rebel houses briefly took over the Halls of Throal. Many loyalists lost their lives in the fighting and the subsequent round of executions.

King Varulus rallied after Vistrosh's chief rival, the ork gang chieftain known as Garlthik One-Eye, helped foil an assassination attempt against the king. Soon afterward Varulus was able to rescue his son Neden, whom the dragon Mountainshadow cleansed of sorcerous taint. Varulus III then retook Throal, beheaded the leaders of the rebellion, and permanently dissolved Houses Heovrat, Erud, Pay'ar, Endour, and Turlough. The leaders of House Ueraven had hedged their bets by acting behind the scenes, and so escaped punishment. Varulus III christened the entire incident the Death Rebellion, saying that Death was the only true winner.

ON THE DEATH OF A KING

The years since the Death Rebellion unfolded in comparative tranquility. Throal and Thera maintained an uneasy standoff, and Varulus' opponents, even the diehards in House Ueraven, kept to peaceful (if sometimes underhanded) opposition.

All that changed with the arrival of the Theran behemoth and the assassination of Varulus III in 1509 TH (see the **How It Came to Pass** chapter on p. 16 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Varulus' death transferred the power from the old king to the young and untested Prince Neden. While Varulus III spent decades at his father's side before assuming the throne, Neden was thrust into the position with relatively little time to prepare for his responsibilities. Enamored with adventure and the military life, the hot-tempered king remains contemptuous of the subtle maneuverings required of a successful politician.

Their defeat at the Battle of Prajor's Field was a serious blow to the dwarfs of Throal—almost everyone knows someone who was killed or injured in that conflict. The defeat left Throal demoralized, weakened in the eyes of the Theran Empire and of other Barsaivians. The defeat also began to erode public confidence in King Neden. Neden's resolve in dealing with Varulus' alleged assassins, his efforts to avenge his father's death, and his aggressive posture toward Throal's enemies initially earned him respect among Throal's nobility and commoners, but his failure at the Battle of Prajor's Field cost him much of this support. Members of the court who doubted Neden's capabilities before are now emboldened to say so openly. Even ordinary citizens have begun to argue that Neden should only be allowed to act with the consent of the nobles who attend him at court.

Perhaps most important, public discontent with Neden has empowered the king's rivals among the Throalic nobility, most notably Selenda (see p. 54), whose influence grows as Neden's wanes. Houses whose support for Varulus' reforms was tentative or opportunistic have shifted toward the old-guard, conservative line. King Neden must now govern cautiously, as the young king cannot afford to offend Selenda or the other old-guard courtiers. Selenda has begun a campaign to whittle away at the edges of the *Council Compact*; as a first step, Selenda and her allies have pressured the new king to decrease the share of taxes paid by the Throalic nobility.

ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL WAR

While the shaken Arm of Throal campaigns for greater spending on mercenaries and airships, the citizenry is divided on the question. A slim majority wants to strike back at Thera and erase Throal's shame. Others advocate some type of accommodation with Thera that will enable them to resume business in a peaceful province.

The old guard recently allied itself with the accommodationist forces. In reaction, the pro-*Council Compact* nobles support a military build-up. In a compromise that pleased neither side, King Neden shifted the tax burden to ordinary Throalic citizens and devoted more of the treasury to strengthening the Arm of Throal.

To further restore Throal's prestige and assuage his own wounded pride, Neden also authorized a program to covertly destabilize Thera forces and allies in Barsaive by instructing his diplomats to make contact with the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane. His officials quietly circulate the word among adventurer and mercenary circles that rewards are available to groups that significantly damage Thera interests.

Unfortunately, King Neden's preoccupation with the Therans clouds his judgment, resulting in other priorities going by the wayside. Displeased at the number of foreign agents turned up by the investigations into his father's death, he recently authorized a ruthless assassination campaign against suspected Thera and Iopan spies in Bartertown. The campaign contributed to the growing lawlessness in Bartertown and violated the town's independent status, enraging its citizens and spawning virulent anti-Throal sentiments. Known agents of Throal are still facing open hostility in Bartertown's markets and inns.

ON THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

Though King Neden has many concerns at home, he has realized that he cannot ignore the rest of Barsaive. The arrival of the Thera behemoth and death of King Varulus III have caused concern across much of the province about Throal's ability to lead effective resistance to Thera encroachments. To help stave off this growing anxiety, Neden has begun to stretch the Arm and Eye of Throal across more of Barsaive than ever before. Increasingly, Neden relies on the Eye of Throal for information on Iopos, offering rewards to adventurers who provide intelligence on the doings of the Denairastas. To reassure Barsaive's inhabitants that Throal remains strong, King Neden frequently sends troops around Barsaive to "show the flag."

The uneasy truce that existed between Thera and Throal is gone, most likely forever. Though neither side has made a formal declaration of war, the Battle of Prajor's Field has greatly increased the tension between these two powers. To this day, Throalic and Thera forces in Barsaive face off in numerous encounters. Some of these end peacefully and others in vicious skirmishes, though none has yet matched the scope of the Battle of Prajor's Field.

Thera still wants to see Throal humbled and the "seditious" *Council Compact* repudiated, and Imperial agents are constantly working

toward that end. And while Throal had long considered the Denairastas a minor power, the exposure of the real culprits behind King Varulus' assassination transformed the Denairastas and Iopos into the dwarf kingdom's most immediate and dangerous enemy virtually overnight. In fact, Uhl Denairastas and his Holders of Trust have increased their strength in Barsaive by slaying the great king of Throal and set Throal and Thera at one another's throats. Namegivers throughout Barsaive view the Holders of Trust and the Denairastas clan with increasing terror. Despite the exposure of the plot, Uhl's Throalic and Thera enemies remain locked in a deadly dance that will inevitably lead to widespread war and chaos, which Uhl and his clan will undoubtedly exploit.

With so many enemies looking for a chance to strike a blow, Throal will need heroes for some years to come.

ON TRADE



Certainly the Council Compact contains many inspiring words. In it are brilliant ideas, beautiful stories, much of the learning of our people. Yet all of us in this chamber can point to the threads that truly bind the peoples of Barsaive to our nation of Throal. These threads are not made of words or thoughts. They are molded of clay, forged of metal, carved in wood, grown from the soil. The common goods in which we trade, the everyday transactions of business, are the things that reshape our shattered province. Our recovery rests on a foundation of simple things: pots, saddles, blankets, spices, ointments, charms, tools, weapons, boots ...

"We, the traders and merchants of Throal, are the true vanguard of civilization. As we forge new trade routes, as we reopen markets for our goods, we shine light on a land still almost entirely concealed in darkness. In making profits for ourselves, we bring profit to all. Every traveler knows that to step more than one hundred yards from a trade route is to risk one's life. But who forged those trade routes? Our fathers did. Who guards them still? We do. Without the great trading houses of Throal, the cities of Barsaive would be isolated, disconnected. It would not be safe to travel to Jerris, or Travar, or anywhere. The Serpent River and its t'skrang children would be no more than legend. Urupa would be a faraway rumor. We would know these places only from books.

"There is an old saying that silver breeds all ills. But we know that nothing could be further from the truth. Without the silver brought into the treasury by trade, Throal would be a breeding ground for misery. Throal would be but a shadow of itself. We would be huddled in our grim hovels with none of the luxuries our people now take for granted. The treasury could not pay for the city guards who guarantee our safety. We would be dirty, diseased wretches, living by the whim of bullies and thugs.

"The role we merchants of Throal play in Barsaive is not a new one. Our genius for trade made our nation mighty in the days before the Scourge. We were able to unify Barsaive with the Book of Tomorrow because the other inhabitants of this vast province wanted our goods. They learned our language because they wanted to make fair deals with us. The Name of Throal became synonymous with the good faith bargain, and our nation and province prospered for it.

"In those days, we sometimes worked with the unscrupulous Therans. Many otherwise well-meaning folk, looking upon those times in hindsight, tar this occasional partnership as a moral error, a stain on the conscience of Throal. We all know such a view is utter foolery. As the great Toberoc Garsun, renowned founder of my House, once said: 'There is no dishonor in dealing with a Horror, so long as you outsmart it.' What the Therans wished to accomplish with swords and soldiers, we achieved with innumerable routine business deals. The business arrangement, unlike the military engagement, is built

on trust. And trust is the strongest foundation of all when one wishes to build a nation.

"Barsaive has yet to fully recover from the Scourge. We have shone our light on the cities, but the thousands of villages and isolated settlements between them remain trapped in fear, ignorance and poverty. Our civilizing mission continues. At year's end, as you tabulate your profits and losses, do not forget to count the enlightenment you have brought to the distant corners of Barsaive. Remember that as you build our realm's future, you invest in your House's future.

"With our success, new challenges will arise. As we make Barsaive ever more prosperous, it becomes an increasingly attractive target for thugs and bandits. We are more than experienced in dealing with minor thieves. But the great bandits, the Therans, remain strong, their dedication to conquest unwavering. Perhaps we can again weave them into helplessness, tying them in a constraining web of contracts. Or we may have to stand and fight once more for the deserved fruits of our labors, just as we would against the scruffiest of scorcher tribes. We must avoid rash action and work for peace as long as we are able.

"When new catastrophes threaten our nation, the philosophers will philosophize and the lawmakers will make new laws. But the merchants and traders, as ever, will act.

—From the Address of Lomron of Garsun to the Annual Banquet of His Majesty's Trading Commission, 1508 TH

▲ ▲ ▲

ROADS OF SILVER

Though Lomron of Garsun spoke the above words to flatter an audience of his fellow traders, they are not far from the mark. Trade is the linchpin of Throal's power and influence in Barsaive, and also of its prosperity. Throal's trading houses have poured money into the royal treasury, and this money has largely paid for the construction of the new Inner Cities. The Inner Cities in turn benefit the trading houses, providing homes for the many immigrant arti-

sans and craftsmen who produce goods for the trading houses to sell throughout Barsaive. These makers of goods are attracted to the Inner Cities because Throal is safer than any other settlement in Barsaive, thanks to the rich tax base provided by the trading houses. The immigrants also come to Throal to live nearer to the traders who distribute their goods. A craftsman or artisan based in Throal has more bidders competing for his merchandise, and can thus command a higher price.

People who live near trade routes, or in major cities connected by those trade routes, refer to themselves as living in "civilized Barsaive." They have the traders of Throal to thank for this status. Most Barsaivians think of merchants when they think of Throal. To the ordinary folk of Barsaive, the face of Throal is the local representative of some great trading house or other. Only an elite few meet Throal's diplomats. The first representative of "civilization" encountered by people living in Barsaive's dangerous, unexplored wild lands is usually a Throalic trader.

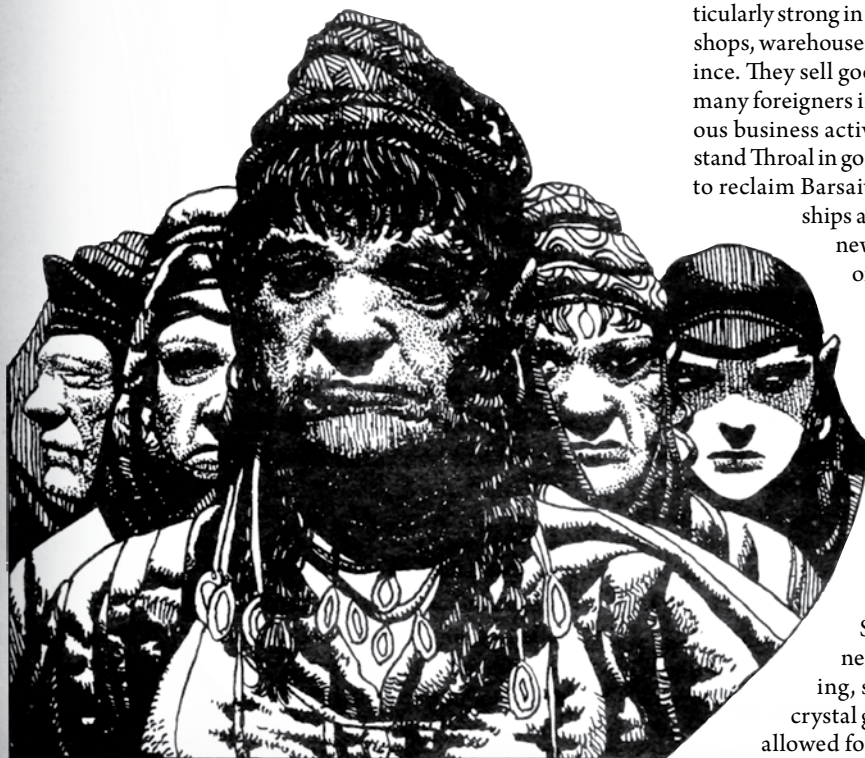
In civilized Barsaive, Throal's traders are known for a peculiar sort of honesty. Though they stand staunchly behind their words, they also have a reputation for wrapping negotiations in confusing contract language. As a popular Urupan saying goes, "A Throalite's as good as his word—but his word doesn't mean what you think it does." In a similar vein, an old t'skrang joke explains that the people of Barsaive had to learn the Throalic language in order to keep Throalic merchants from swindling them in contracts. In some quarters, envy of dwarf business acumen fuels racial hatred against them, and many Barsaivians who fear Throal's political ambitions subscribe to a stereotype of its people as greedy and exploitative.

Despite the occasional misunderstanding (or even outright swindle), the trading relationship between Barsaive and Throal is of great mutual benefit to each. Throal has taken the initiative in rebuilding trading routes that merchants from other cities have come to rely on. In taking the steps necessary to rebuild Barsaive's economy, Throalic traders have filled their own vaults with silver and gold.

Most Throalic trading houses invest their earnings beyond Throal's borders. They have bought interests in existing trading outfits in cities such as Jerris and Urupa, and their holdings are particularly strong in eastern Barsaive. Their monies have helped build shops, warehouses, inns and other businesses throughout the province. They sell goods produced by other Barsaivians, and employ many foreigners in their caravans and local operations. Their various business activities are creating an interdependence that will stand Throal in good stead if the Theran Empire takes further action to reclaim Barsaive as part of its empire. These business partnerships are also alliances that will help Throal against any new political threat that may appear. The prosperity of many influential people outside Throal is linked to the dwarf kingdom's, and so they will have every motivation to come to Throal's aid should the need arise. These links are still new enough, however, that even a minor disruption to trade routes could collapse the province's still-fragile economy and create terrible hardship.

ON THROAL'S ECONOMY

Like every kaer in Barsaive, the kingdom of Throal had to be self-sufficient during the Scourge. Throal's people took care of all their own needs, from food to shelter to basic goods like clothing, shoes, simple tools, and so on. Throal's famous crystal greenhouses (see *A Tour of the Kingdom*, p. 96) allowed for underground farming on a far more extensive scale than was possible in most other kaers, and Throal's popu-



ADVENTURE HOOK

To demonstrate that not everyone sees the people of Throal as heroes, send the adventurers to rescue a group of traders being held hostage in the town of Oasis. Oasis is a settlement that has sprung up on the trade route to Jerris, north of the Liaj Jungle. Rami, the mayor of the town, is a would-be petty despot with ties to local scorcher tribes. She is holding the traders for ransom in the wake of a soured business deal; the traders took advantage of Rami's lack of negotiating experience and convinced her to sign a one-sided contract. As compensation for what she regards as fraud, Rami is demanding payment from the traders' families. If the families delay too long, Rami is going to start lopping off heads.

Members of the captured traders' families hire the player characters to free them. The adventurers are given ransom money, but much less than Rami is demanding. Their employers have agreed to let the adventurers keep whatever remains of the ransom after freeing the traders by whatever means. Do the adventurers try to dicker with the angry mayor, risking a confrontation with her ork scorcher allies? Or do they decide to earn the entire ransom by staging a daring rescue attempt?

lation was large enough to support the production of luxury goods during this period. Though the influence and wealth of the great trading houses was temporarily reduced by the total absence of trade, the average Throalite enjoyed a much higher standard of living during the Scourge than most other Barsaivians.

In the generation since the Scourge's end, significant changes have taken place in the dwarf kingdom. The expansion of Throal's economic role over the past century has brought a new vulnerability in its wake. Throal is no longer capable of self-sufficiency; the waves of immigration to the Inner Cities have increased the population to the point where the existing crystal greenhouses cannot produce enough food for everyone. Constructing additional greenhouses would be an enormously expensive and labor-intensive enterprise, and some people would likely starve in the meantime.

The expansion of trade has brought other potential problems with it as well. Currently, the most successful trading houses are those that have been boldest in expanding their empires beyond Throal. Most of these are also staunch allies of the king. If major trade routes were cut off by some catastrophe, these trading houses would suffer enormous losses of wealth and prestige that might well destabilize Throal politically and give the houses opposed to Neden a chance to expand their power.

ON THROAL'S TRADING HOUSES

Though prominent traders like to pretend to be above mere political concerns, business and politics in Throal are different sides of the same silver piece. King Neden's foreign and domestic policies are built around Throal's needs as the foremost trading power in Barsaive. For example, the royal treasury taxes the traders and

spends the revenue on things to the traders' benefit, such as the building of the Inner Cities. Military spending primarily benefits the trading houses too, because the army's chief function is to protect trade routes from bandits and troublesome local rulers. The treasury functions as a sort of central clearing house that invests the traders' money in projects beneficial to them in the long run.

Despite his commitment to trade, the king and his courtiers do not always see eye to eye with the large trading houses. Personal rivalries and narrow self-interest often cloud the picture and complicate the relationship between traders and the government. Though the trading houses have interests in common, they also compete with one another. Those who can secure special privileges from the king do so, while those left out in the cold tend to make trouble at court. Noble families run most major trading houses. Some of them, such as House Ueraven, bear historic grudges against the royal family. On certain issues, the king is at odds with the trading houses as a group. The traders tend to take existing benefits as their due, concentrating their energies on getting rid of policies they dislike. The main point of contention between government and business revolves around the passages of the *Council Compact* that punish the rich and powerful more severely for their transgressions than the average or poor citizen. Traders are also notorious for the determination with which they seek tax loopholes. If all the loopholes sought by various traders were instituted, the average resident of Throal would end up paying for services that benefit only the wealthiest members of society.

Many of the trading houses founded by the old noble families of Throal, commonly referred to as the "noble houses," can trace their lineage back to the dwarf civil wars that preceded the foundation of Throal fifteen hundred years ago. Not all of these families were on the same side in these wars, and ancient grudges still shape political and business rivalries. A young dwarf brought up in one of these so-called noble houses is reared on epic stories of ancestral triumphs and the treachery of ancient rivals. The traders as a whole revere history, and place great importance on their tribal heritage. In contrast, dwarfs outside the trading houses are likely to consider tribal rivalries a quaint relic of the past.

Not all of the noble houses became powerful trading concerns. Some faded before the Scourge, and their descendants maintain meager lives in once-impressive living quarters in the Estates of the Halls of Throal. Their family Names still give these people a ceremonial role in Throalic life, and they still send courtiers to attend the king. However, they have no real clout in Throalic society.

The noble trading houses break down into two factions. The first is variously referred to as anti-reformers, conservatives, the old guard, or the Huari faction. (The latter Name refers to their supposed tribal heritage; however, not all traders who oppose the king's reformist measures are of Huari descent, and some Huari families are staunch royalists.) Members of the old guard want to repeal portions of the *Council Compact* they see as interfering with their rightful privileges. Though not exactly friendly to Thera, the anti-reformers want the king to soften his public opposition to slavery in order to avoid a costly conflict with the Empire. Though their enemies sometimes paint them as cowards, the old guard has a certain logic on its side: an all-out war would be extremely bad for business. Old-guard traders tend to be cautious in their business dealings, wary of overextending themselves. They have a reputation for taking over markets that others have already developed.

The second faction is known as reformers, loyalists, radicals, or the Mishwal faction, though not all descendants of the Mishwal tribe agree with the king's policies. The ancestors of many loyalists helped draft the *Council Compact*, and their modern-day descendants support it out of family pride and ideological conviction. Others recognize the business advantages of being on the king's good side. Reform traders tend to be innovative risk-takers who

build new markets for their goods. This makes them natural allies of the king, who wants to expand Throal's cultural and political influence over as much of Barsaive as he can. They cultivate a reputation as gamblers and swashbucklers, but they are no less canny than their more cautious rivals. Many of King Neden's friends belong to this circle of well-connected merchants.

Whether old guard or reformist, the noble houses are all run by extended families. Dwarfs related by blood or marriage to the central family of the house are considered part of it, even if they do not work for the trading house. As family members, they get a say in the general direction of the firm and in the selection of courtiers. The importance of the family in decision-making varies from house to house. Strong-willed matriarchs or patriarchs run some, paying only token heed to the advice of their younger relatives. Others defer to a number of influential family members. A few operate by consensus or make decisions by secret ballot.

Serving the families are many *j'havim*, or associates. *J'havim* are mere employees, with little influence over the policies of the house. However, *j'havim* who show initiative and business acumen often become connected to the house through marriage. Members of noble houses rarely marry for love; suitors for the hand of a dwarf noble must demonstrate exactly how they can increase the house's fortunes if they hope to have any success.

Before the Scourge, noble houses had a monopoly on trading operations. In the past century, however, dwarfs of humble origin have created new and prosperous trading houses to take advantage of Barsaive's growing economy. Groups of other Namegivers have done the same, often forming under the direction of boards composed of members of several races. These houses are collectively known as the free traders, the new generation, or the Inner City traders (the latter because the headquarters of most of these new operations are in the Inner Cities rather than the Halls of Throal). Politically, the new generation tends to ally with the reformers. In addition, the free traders want their economic clout reflected in the ceremonial life of the court. They want to send courtiers to attend the king, and want better access to royal officials. As the spearhead of the movement to make Throal a truly multiracial kingdom, the free traders enjoy the support of many average citizens in the Inner Cities. The free traders' most radical notion is making non-dwarfs eligible to ascend the throne when a royal line ends. The reformist houses, though generally tolerant of other Namegiver races, part company with the free traders on this issue.

The average company of free traders consists of a small administrative board that oversees a hierarchy of *j'havim*. The structure of the board varies from company to company, and *j'havim* can be promoted to it.

THE MAJOR HOUSES

Throal has a total of 28 noble trading houses, each privileged to select a courtier to attend the king (for descriptions of prominent courtiers, see **Advisers and Courtiers** on p. 51 of **The Halls of Power**). Three of these houses may send two courtiers each. Though most trading houses belong to a given faction, not all houses are equally dedicated to their factions' political goals.

Countless minor free trading houses also exist in the dwarf kingdom, but only six of them have real economic clout. Unlike noble houses, free traders do not customarily use "House" as part of their business Names. They call their businesses "companies" as in the "Dream Spire Company," the "Circle Path Company," and so on.

This section describes some of the more prominent houses; gamemasters may create their own houses if they wish.

House Chaozun

The old-guard House Chaozun (CHOW-zun) is run by a group of spinsters known as the Five Sisters. So attuned to one another are they that each can speak for the others without question, and few people bother to learn their individual Names. Chaozun specializes in the sale of weapons and armor, and Throal's military is one of its chief customers. Like the stern-minded sisters who run it, House Chaozun espouses conservative views; despite differences of opinion, however, the Five Sisters bear no personal grudge against the royal family. House Chaozun will sell armaments to anyone in Barsaive who is not a direct threat to Throal. Local folk in some far-flung areas of the province despise House Chaozun for equipping ork scorcher tribes. Adventurers wishing to sell or purchase fabulous magical weapons should consider approaching the *j'havim* of House Chaozun.

House Garsun

House Garsun (GAHR-sun) is the largest and richest of the trading houses, long protected from adversity by its sheer size. Members of House Garsun have been among Throal's wealthiest citizens for generations and do not expect (or desire) to see that position jeopardized. Many communities in Barsaive still associate the Name Garsun with stability and honesty; they remembered the Name of the trading house through all the years of the Scourge. In a popular ballad supposedly written during the Scourge,

called "Waiting For the Garsun Trader," a young child dreams of the day his kaer will be unsealed, and the House Garsun caravan will arrive overloaded with toys and exotic foods. House Garsun's reputation is its most valuable asset, and the house is becoming increasingly complacent about its place in Barsaive's markets. House leader Lomron is a popular figurehead for the old guard; with a manner reminiscent of a long-winded favorite uncle, he puts a smiling face on caution and traditionalism.

House Ludi

House Ludi (LOO-dee) chalks up its remarkable business success to the favor of the Passion Chorrolis. Only family members who are questors of Chorrolis are permitted to vote at board meetings, where they make decisions by consensus. The public face of this old-guard house is the courtier Vamban, who appears at court only when matters affecting House Ludi's balance sheet are in question. Vamban is known for his awful table manners, his unseemly interest in the misfortunes of others, and his cleverness in striking deals. He and his fellow board members see no distinction between conducting business and engaging in worship. They are notorious for tricky contracts and other practices that fall just short of fraud, and can justify

ADVENTURE HOOK

Snorutia's maiden aunt, Volumnia, hires the adventurers to protect her niece from Osbaldo, who has hired a notorious band of assassins from Iopos to make him an instant widower. Though Snorutia refuses to believe that her darling Osbaldo could possibly want to dispose of her, she accepts her aunt's offer of a bodyguard troop because she knows that personal guards are a status symbol. She treats the adventurers like menial servants as the assassins draw nearer, and the player characters may have to overcome increasing feelings of loathing for their charge in addition to fighting off the killers. If the adventurers expose Osbaldo's plans, they win the patronage of several of the other old guard houses, who consider Osbaldo a loathsome upstart.



any ethical lapse as an act of devotion to Chorrolis. According to family legend, House Ludi has the blood of the Passions in its veins; the ancient founder of the house was allegedly born of a brief liaison between Chorrolis and a Huari noblewoman.

House Mikul

House Mikul (Mik-OOL) is a very prosperous house that lives by the motto, “Trust is the foundation.” Members of House Mikul have always believed in the long view, and pride themselves on their honest and above board approach to business. In addition to their trading operations, representatives of House Mikul serve as a sort of shadow diplomatic corps, building good relationships with governments throughout eastern Barsaive. The leader of House Mikul is the charismatic Curticia, a middle-aged woman who exudes warmth and common sense.

Curticia was a personal friend of King Varulus III, but always opposed the king’s hard-line anti-slavery campaign. She believes that Barsaive will inevitably be partitioned between Thera in the west and Throal in the east, and that peaceful and productive business can be done under this arrangement. The arrival of the behemoth at Ayodhya has reinforced that belief, and House Mikul’s relationship with the crown has become strained. Any sign of war or discord is bad for the network of partners she has built, which includes some strange bedfellows: she trades with everyone from Garlthik One-Eye of Kratas to minor Theran merchants.

House Pa’vas

House Pa’vas (PAH-vass) is a prime example of a trading house that withered during the Scourge. The family lost its interest in business when Throal was sealed, spending its fortune rather than increasing it. Unprepared for the competition to re-establish trade routes after the opening of Throal, they have sold their noble heritage to vulgar but vigorous traders such as the greedy Osbaldo, a jumped-up nobody who has recently become the de facto head of House Pa’vas. In exchange for a generous allowance to the remaining blood kin of House Pa’vas, Osbaldo recently installed his idiot son Drumilica as a courtier. Osbaldo wants to marry into House Pa’vas and become its official leader, but his quarrelsome wife Snorutia is inconveniently in the way. Over the past year, Snorutia has survived a series of mysterious and potentially fatal accidents through indomitable dumb luck.

House Ueraven

House Ueraven (OO-ee-raven) sees itself as the nemesis of the royal family, House Avalus. Ueraven built its business empire on the trade monopoly with Iopos granted to the House by Uhl Denairastas, ruler of that city. Though known for their unsavory connections and often accused of underhanded maneuvers in politics and business, the Ueraven family excels at covering its tracks. The current leader of House Ueraven, a strong-minded, aging woman Named Selenda, is among the most vociferous opponents of royal policies on virtually every front. As for Selenda’s personal connection with King Neden, the gamemaster may use either of the following options.

Option One: House Ueraven was a party to the abortive coup of 1484 TH, but their involvement was never proved. Varulus III suspected the truth, and he and Selenda circled each other like wary predators until his death—a dance that continues with King Neden.

Option Two: The rebel houses approached House Ueraven just before the coup of 1484 TH and invited Selenda to join them. Selenda was more than willing to work against Varulus III legitimately, but considered a coup far too destabilizing to Throal, and ultimately warned Varulus of the attempt on his life (which failed). King Varulus III and now King Neden owe House Ueraven a major debt, one Selenda does not intend to let them forget.

House Byril’ah

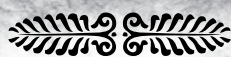
The reformist House Byril’ah (Buh-RIL-ah) has always maintained close ties to the king’s family. One of the smaller noble houses, Byril’ah specializes in the sale of luxury items such as sculptures, paintings, books and antique and modern jewelry. It also acts as a broker for architects, painters and mosaic artists. Many Byril’ah family members are artists themselves, with skills far surpassing those of the average Namegiver. House Byril’ah has also produced more than its share of philosophers, diplomats and politicians. Many of the major contributors to the *Council Compact* were scions of House Byril’ah, which considers its trading empire a mere vehicle for its true mission: to bring education and beauty to all Barsaive. House Byril’ah sees the egalitarian message of the Compact as central to this project.

The House leader, Beracia, is a renowned designer of jewelry. Like other members of her house, she projects an image of sophistication and enlightenment that helps buyers feel good about paying

the premium prices Byril'ah charges. In politics, as in business, members of this trading house feel that the subtle approach reaps the greatest rewards. House Byril'ah owes the bulk of its political influence to the dazzling parties it frequently hosts; any Throalite who wants to pick up on court and business gossip considers attendance at these affairs a must. Even hardened traders like Selenda Ueraven and House Chaozun's Five Sisters are reluctant to cross House Byril'ah lest they be cut off from the rich opportunities for contacts on the social circuit.

House Elcomi

Highly active before the Scourge, House Elcomi (ELL-ko-hm-ee) now does little business outside Throal. This reformist house remains a major force in Throal, however, as a prominent financier of ventures by many other reformist and old-guard trading houses. House Elcomi owns pieces of many of the other noble houses, and can easily shake up the current balance of economic power by calling in a few strategic loans. The venerable head of



ADVENTURE HOOK

The adventurers, having achieved considerable status in Throal (by a method of the gamemaster's choice), receive invitations to one of House Byril'ah's glittering affairs. Not long after their arrival, a stunning and mysterious guest appears: a dwarf maiden of staggering beauty and charm. So lovely is she that the room seems to light up when she enters. She dances with all the male dwarfs, including a young nobleman Named Zudian Ludi, and chats briefly with all the women. Everyone seems to love her on sight. As the party draws to a close she slips away, without having left her Name.

In the days that follow, Zudian cannot get her out of his mind. Obsessed with possessing the mystery woman, he approaches the player characters, whom he recognizes from the night of the party. He offers them a fortune to help him find the woman.

The mysterious beauty left Throal all alone and headed into the mountains, far from safe trade routes. If the player characters escort Zudian in pursuit of her, they face many dangers. Somehow the woman made it safely through a series of hazards that nearly kill Zudian and the adventurers.

When they finally find her, Zudian tries to buy her favors with boasts of his vast wealth. She laughingly rebuffs him. Enraged, Zudian attacks her. The adventurers must choose to help Zudian or stop him. The woman turns out to be the Passion Astendar, and she destroys Zudian whether the player characters help him or not. If the adventurers do the right thing, they earn Astendar's favor. If not... well, attacking a Passion is not a good idea.

In an ironic twist, upon their return to Throal the characters hear the legend of Astendar's triumphs over Chorrolis, a tale that has many parallels with their recent adventure. This adventure also gives the gamemaster a chance to set up long-term plot lines via gossip, rumors and contacts that the adventurers pick up as they mingle with the party guests.

House Elcomi, Tholon by Name, also serves as its courtier (see **Advisers and Courtiers**, p. 51 in **The Halls of Power**). Elcomi is reformist less out of ideological conviction than because Tholon supports the throne without question. If an old-guard monarch were to legitimately take the throne, Tholon would almost certainly ally himself with the new ruler.

House Neumani

House Neumani (NEW-man-ee), a minor house before the Scourge, has spent the past few decades rapidly expanding. The house leaders put their time underground to good use, planning ways to open new trade routes after the Horrors departed. Knowing that their intended ventures would be dangerous propositions, they relied heavily on adepts and adventurers in their plans. Many family members trained as adepts, and to this day a surprising percentage of Neumani scions follow various magical Disciplines. Such conduct is highly unusual for a noble house of Throal; most nobles are content to let employees risk their necks. The Neumani think like adventurers, relying on bold action and strategic gambles to increase their holdings. Now that the major trade routes have been opened, at the cost of much Neumani blood, other houses are taking advantage of their accomplishments. Meanwhile, the Neumani are searching for the next frontier, still pushing the boundaries of "civilized" Barsaive and bringing their goods to the province's small and isolated villages. The leader of House Neumani is the Swordmaster Grindo, who brings all the bravado and flair of his Discipline to his business dealings. He respected Varulus III as a risk-taker and is even closer to King Neden, with whom he has adventured on a number of occasions. Should King Neden ever be threatened with a coup, the flashing swords of House Neumani would swiftly defend him.

House Sarafica

House Sarafica (Sah-RAF-i-ka) is noted for its secrecy, personified by its enigmatic leader. Thirty-year old Zendes, a reclusive dwarf woman, is the youngest head of a trading house in Throal's history. Zendes never attends social functions, and almost invariably sends delegates to attend meetings on her behalf. The mystery surrounding Zendes and her house merely makes her more interesting to other Throalites. Some believe that she and House Sarafica have sinister plans; others say she is merely shy. Whatever her motivation, it is clear that the house's confidence in her is fully justified. Since Zendes took over, House Sarafica has grabbed vulnerable markets previously controlled by a number of old guard and reformist smaller houses. Zendes has shown a remarkable talent for spotting and exploiting weaknesses in the competition; indeed, many other traders attribute Sarafica's recent growth to an unparalleled intelligence network. Though this network is often talked about, solid evidence of its existence is scarce. Most of the rival houses believe that some of their *j'havim* feed information to Sarafica agents, and rumors persist that Zendes is favored by several of Barsaive's dragons, including Icewing. As the rumor goes, Zendes is involved in dragon affairs, and so it is little wonder that she is as secretive as a dragon herself. Politically, House Sarafica is a quiet but staunch supporter of the king. No one, not even King Neden, knows whether this support represents House Sarafica's true goals or is merely a useful position in some greater game.

House Yilwaz

House Yilwaz (YILL-wazz) is a minor reformist house known for making major waves. Twenty years ago, ork scorcher captured three members of the Yilwaz family on a trade mission near Iopos. They were sold as slaves to the Therans, necessitating a rescue attempt financed from the house's operating expenses. A family member was killed in the rescue, and the survivors—twin broth-

ers Umo and Pepara—have since become joint heads of the house. Upon the brothers' return to Throal, the Yilwaz family decided to use its trading operations against the Therans. They have made it their mission to out-compete Thera trading companies in regions of Barsaive served by merchants of Thera and Throal, especially the regions around Urupa and Vivane. Since the arrival of the behemoth, they have begun to focus on the region around Lake Ban and Travar as well. Though this strategy is not consistently profitable, the house makes enough money to support a large number of *j'havim*. Those stationed outside Throal double as anti-slavery agitators. Yilwaz caravans are always heavily guarded, and their armed employees are encouraged to pursue slavers and rescue slaves whenever possible. House Yilwaz is even more strident in its opposition to the Therans than King Neden is, and they would like to see Throal wage a military harassment campaign or even all-out war against their hated foes. As part of this agenda, they have developed a close relationship with the obsidian merchant Omasu, helping supply the efforts of the Liferock Rebellion.

ON THE FREE TRADING COMPANIES

The two most prominent free trading companies in Throal are the Dream Spire Company and the Circle Path Company.

Dream Spire Company

The Dream Spire Company is a multiracial trading house currently headed by a cantankerous human Named Oberh. Founded by a group of ambitious immigrants anxious to prove that business success is not the sole preserve of dwarfs, the company has carved out a niche for itself in areas of Barsaive where anti-Throal feelings run rampant. Some hinterland settlements look on the kingdom of Throal with fear, regarding its trade moves as a mere prelude to conquest. In some areas, Throal's former allegiance to the oppressive Therans is too well remembered, while in other places Thera and Iopan agents plant dark rumors about the king's true intentions. Though the Dream Spire Company does not conceal its Throalic

ADVENTURE HOOK

For two months in a row, strange hauntings disrupt the proceedings of His Majesty's Trading Commission. The ghosts claim to be the founding members of the various trading houses, who are now enduring gruesome torments in Death's kingdom. The spirits groan that they are as heavily taxed there as are their living descendants in Throal. They have run out of money, and Death has sent them to demand taxes from their living kin. Unless they are paid, they will forever haunt the current heads of the houses they created.

The steward of the building where the commission meets hires the adventurers to exorcise the restless spirits. He tells them that some of the traders left gems behind them after the last manifestation, and those gems vanished in the middle of the night. The "spirits" are in fact a pair of swindlers, an Illusionist and a Thief, paid by Grindo of House Neumani to play a prank on his fellow traders. When the adventurers uncover the truth, Grindo happily returns the gems (plus interest), mocking the members of the old guard for their gullibility.

origins, many traders wary of the dwarf kingdom prefer to do business with this company on the assumption that its relatively low number of dwarf employees means that Dream Spire is less than sympathetic to the Throalic government's aims.

The small number of dwarfs working for Dream Spire has led some old-guard trading houses to publicly question the company's loyalty, accusations to which Oberh responds by saying that his people present a friendly, multiracial image of Throal to the ignorant. Oberh sincerely believes this, but also knows that if fear of Throal were to evaporate tomorrow, many of his markets would go with it. In domestic politics, Dream Spire is a vocal proponent of opening up the monarchy to other races when a royal line dies out. This makes Oberh unpopular among conservatives and reformers alike, but he thrives on controversy. Whenever Throal hardens its stance against Thera, Oberh's voice is among the loudest to object; any aggressive moves by Throal threaten Dream Spire's precarious hold on its nervous hinterland markets.

Circle Path Company

The Circle Path Company was founded by a family of elves who settled in Throal before the Scourge. Though all Namegivers are welcome to purchase shares in the company, its leadership and staff are mostly elves. Circle Path's *j'havim* cycle through various jobs in the company, mimicking the mystical paths trodden by elven nobles. The head of the company, a soft-spoken woman Named Alfaliel, claims that this system makes Circle Path more efficient because everyone understands everyone else's job. Most other traders think this is foolish, and





a fearful few see some kind of mystical elven threat in it. The fact that Circle Path does a small amount of business with the royal court of the Blood Wood, which is widely feared in Throal, only adds to some people's apprehension. Most of Circle Path's business, however, lies in importing food to Throal. Circle Path's success is founded on good relationships between individual farmers and its traders in the field. Alfaliel keeps her company out of political debates as much as possible, and gets nervous whenever conflict with Thera looms. She knows as well as anyone just how much Throal can be hurt by disruptions in its supply lines.

ON THE BANNED HOUSES

After the so-called Death Rebellion in 1484 TH, King Varulus stripped five old-guard noble houses—Heovrat (HAY-ov-rat), Erud (AY-rude), Pay'ar (PIE-ar), Endour (En-DOW-er) and Tur-lough (TUR-low)—of their rights and privileges, and condemned their leaders to death (see **On Throal's History**, p. 12). These houses, officially declared non-existent, are remembered as the Banned Houses, and their one-time family members remain in Throal as commoners. Some have accepted the ban and attempted to blend into the rank and file of Throalic society. Other families covertly maintain their ancient rites and customs, dreaming of a day when House Avalus will be expunged and they will regain their former glory. The Eye of Throal (see **Threads of Unity**, p. 69) keeps careful watch on the more outspoken members of the Banned Houses. Some of the more underhanded old-guard houses, such as House Ueraven, maintain covert ties to the Banned Houses, and supporters of the king are constantly on guard against their machinations.

Of the five, Houses Heovrat and Erud are the most tenacious. Members of House Heovrat pretend to be humble tradesmen while secretly hiring out as assassins, poisoners, and practitioners of dread magics. House Ueraven has allegedly employed them in various acts of skullduggery, though concrete proof is hard to come by. Like the members of most other Banned Houses, House Heovrat is no longer allied with Thera; the pragmatic Empire was quick to discard them when the coup attempt failed. The remnants of House Erud retain fragmentary Theran connections and live in self-imposed exile in Vivane. From there they act as none-too-reliable experts on Throalic affairs for the benefit of the Overgovernor, attempting to establish themselves as puppet rulers-in-waiting should Thera ever conquer Throal.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S TRADING COMMISSION

Once a month, the members of Throal's major trading houses meet under the auspices of His Majesty's Trading Commission. Though established by Varulus III and still bearing his seal, the organization is not an arm of the government. The late king created it as an independent body ten years ago, when he found himself swamped with petitions to intervene in various intricate business disputes between houses. The commission has not eliminated feuding between traders, but it has allowed them to resolve many issues before they become serious enough to attract the king's impatient attention.

At meetings of the commission, members debate politics and ethics, discuss business trends, and coordinate the expansion of trade routes. More often than not, they gossip and try to wheedle information from one another. Real business gets done in the commission's lounge after the formal meeting has closed. The servants on call in the lounge are the best paid in Barsaive, and members tip them heavily to eavesdrop on their rivals. Rumor has it that several of these servants are actually agents of the Eye of Throal, who keep King Neden advised of the goings-on in the commission.

GUILD MEMBERSHIP TABLE

Guild	Fee
Armors and Weaponsmiths	50
Archivists (Sages)	50
Beast Handlers	5
Beggars	100
Blacksmiths	25
Builders	2
Guardsmen	10
Healers	100
Muckers	150
Musicians	5
Scribes	50
Stage Performers	2
Tailors	8

OF PRIVATE ARMIES

All the trading houses maintain forces of armed Namegivers to guard their assets in Throal, and to protect their caravans out on the trade routes. Many of these forces are private armies in all but Name, a matter of grave concern to the king. In the event of a war of succession or another coup attempt, many of Neden's enemies can mobilize highly trained, well-equipped fighters at a moment's notice. Varulus III had attempted to regulate these forces on more than one occasion, but gained no support for these efforts even from his usual allies among the houses. The private armies have legitimate functions, and no house leader wants to give them up.

Even minor houses have sufficiently large budgets to offer experienced adepts attractive fees, and some of them number adepts among their permanent staff. Others place existing bands of adventurers on retainer, summoning them when their services are needed. If you want your player characters to put down roots in Throal, you might have a representative of a big trading house offer them a deal of this sort. Adventurers on retainer with trading houses are known as *b'jados* (buh-JHZAH-ohs), which roughly translates as "trading house heroes."

Becoming a *b'jados* can be a springboard to all kinds of adventures. In Throal, the adventurers might get involved in domestic political intrigue or covert scheming between the trading houses. Their employers may dispatch them to all corners of Barsaive to defend various house interests. If characters are especially interested in the details of commerce, they can become traders themselves and try to open up new markets, pocketing a healthy commission for every successful venture. Some players might even enjoy having their characters rise through the ranks of a trading firm until they are offered an arranged marriage that allows them to join Throal's nobility.

Average pay for a *b'jados* is 200 silver pieces per month per Circle. Multi-Disciplined characters are paid according to their highest Circle. *B'jados* get a discount from traders of their house, and can purchase most items listed in the **Goods and Services** chapter, p. 126, and the **Goods and Services** chapter of the *Player's Guide*, at 10 percent off. This discount also applies to magical equipment such as healing aids and blood charms, as well as common magic items.

ON THE ROYAL GUILDS

Though the trading houses are the most influential economic organizations in Throal, they represent only a small percentage of the kingdom's workers. Most artisans, laborers and providers of services belong to various professional guilds. Guild leaders speak for the interests of their members, either in petitions to the king or through the process known as *chav'ao'ros* (see **The Halls of Power**, p. 49). They enforce traditional standards and rules of conduct on their members, and negotiate deals when one profession needs to make regular arrangements with another. For example, the Royal Guild of Laborers enters into annual negotiations with the Royal Guild of Architects to arrange standard compensation scales and work rules for construction projects.

Hundreds of different guilds exist in Throal, both large and small. In keeping with the typical dwarf mania for organization, King Jothan IV created the guild system in 870 TH. During this time, business was booming in Throal, and Jothan was bombarded with petitions requesting his intercession in minor contract disputes. Hoping to free himself from these responsibilities, he created professional organizations for every different occupation he and his advisers could think of. He then enacted statutes requiring members of all the Named occupations to join the appropriate guilds. Reflecting this royal origin, each guild is called the "Royal Guild of [Name of Occupation]" —the Royal Guild of Map Makers, Royal Guild of Merchants, Royal Guild of Moneychangers, Royal Guild

of Musicians, and so on. Workers can belong to more than one guild at once; for example, a dwarf who sells carpets and changes money in the Grand Bazaar must join the Royal Guild of Merchants and the Royal Guild of Moneychangers.

The guilds once enjoyed great power over their professions. They could bar individuals from legally doing business in their chosen vocations, and could charge unlimited dues. Some charged exorbitant rates; others became corrupt, taking bribes from other guilds in exchange for contract concessions.

Reforms contained in the *Council Compact* brought the guild system back into line with its original intent. Modern Throalic law includes serious penalties for corruption among guild leaders and members, as well as regulations limiting the fees the guilds can charge. Individuals wishing to join a guild are allowed to openly compete for available positions, which in most cases means submitting to an examination by guild officials. The examination may be written or oral, and might also involve a demonstration of the applicant's skills. The examinations are held in public, and officials of the Chancellery (see **The Halls of Power**, p. 56) can scrutinize the results whenever they wish. Some examinations, like those of the Royal Guild of Archivists, are of little interest to outsiders. Others, like those for the Royal Guild of Musicians or Royal Guild of Beggars, are treated as entertainment; they are held in the Royal Auditorium, and Throalites of all stripes can attend these examinations.

Lacking automatic access to the king, the guilds do not have nearly the influence on political life that the trading houses do. However, guilds representing professions vital to everyday life in Throal have a mighty bargaining chip: they can stop working. No one much cares if the beggars' guild calls for a work stoppage, but the administration would quickly take notice if builders' guild members put down their picks and hammers and stopped building the Inner Cities. Though the builders negotiate with the architects, the government has intervened in several work stoppages over the past decade, pressuring the architects to give in to the laborers' demands. The fear of a muckers' guild work stoppage, of course, is every Throalic citizen's nightmare.

Player characters with professional skills must join the appropriate guilds in order to legally make money using those skills inside Throal's borders. The annual fee for guild membership equals the average proceeds from a day's labor at the profession in question. To do business without a guild charter is an infraction punishable by a heavy fine, typically ten times the annual membership fee.

The Guild Membership Table lists a number of guilds to which player characters might conceivably belong, along with the annual membership fee in silver pieces. Use these fees as a benchmark for guilds not listed.

Player characters may wish to join guilds for a number of reasons. First and foremost, guild membership provides an adventurer with useful friends and contacts. Characters may also join to pose as ordinary workmen rather than adepts. Investigative adventures might require a player character to infiltrate a guild under a false identity. Finally, adventurers with lucrative skills might join up to make extra silver between assignments.

The gamemaster decides how hard it is to join a given guild. Most guilds governing menial occupations accept all applicants. A few, like the Royal Guild of Beggars, must keep their numbers small by royal decree; membership among them is rare and coveted, hence the surprisingly high membership fee for the beggars' guild. Guilds governing occupations requiring a great deal of training have tough examinations; for example, an applicant to the Royal Guild of Healers might be asked to cure a patient with a terrible illness.

In an effort to increase their political clout, the various guilds created a master organization in 1497 TH. Called the Guild of

ADVENTURE HOOK

Every three years the Royal Guild of Armorers and Weaponsmiths elects a new guildmaster. As election time approaches, many influential traders from the reformist and old-guard factions decide to take action to defeat Gokvune. Unable to stomach allying with each other (even if the notion occurred to them), each group covertly sponsors a candidate for Gokvune's position. The guild members are roughly equally divided between passionate supporters of Gokvune and opponents worried that her attacks on the trading houses are losing them business. The guild's elections are notoriously rough affairs; taverns frequented by their members have been demolished in the past.

The player characters can enter this situation in a number of ways. If they have trading house connections, supporters of one of the challengers will approach them. If they have royal guard connections, they are deputized to keep the election violence to a minimum. If a player character is already a member of the armorers' guild, he might owe Gokvune a favor. The adventurers may even be hired by local tavern owners to make sure that the inevitable fights occur off their premises.

Depending on the gamemaster's needs, the Armorers and Weaponsmiths' election could be a comical interlude, a test of the players' interactive skills, or a grim and deadly conflict.

Guildmasters, it was designed to allow the many workers of Throal to speak with one voice. It is not yet clear how successful this venture will be. Many individual guilds see each other as rivals, and efforts to create solidarity among all workers will have to overcome vast differences in basic interests. The Guild of Guildmasters is currently split into three factions: the Mogs, the Coalitionists, and the Defiants.

The Mogs, Named after a notorious former leader of the Royal Guild of Millers, want to see the guild reforms of the Compact repealed. They represent guilds whose leaders are nostalgic for the old days, when a guild leader had almost unlimited power to enrich himself. The Mogs hide their sell-serving positions behind the principle that guild members should be able to make their own rules, independent of the king's wishes. The Mogs' unofficial leader is Brolonicus, head of the Royal Guild of Carters, an aged and wily male dwarf who has amassed a fortune in shady dealings with various other guilds. If he ever chose to give it, his testimony could convict more than a dozen different guild heads on corruption charges; Brolonicus is thought to have ordered several murders to protect his position, and the heads of the other factions within the Guild of Guildmasters are afraid of him. As an opponent of the *Compact*, Brolonicus has interests in common with the old guard trading houses. Members of Houses Ueraven and Chaozun are believed to call upon Brolonicus when dirty deeds need doing.

The Coalitionists see the guilds as a part of a three-way partnership with the trading houses and the government, and their aim is the overall good of all Throalic citizens. They periodically agitate for a greater say in policy-making, but are generally loyal supporters of King Neden and the Compact. Their leader, also the current Master of the Guild of Guildmasters, is Solira the Green, an energetic and cheerful dwarf woman who heads the Royal Guild of Archivists. She is also a member of the reformist House Elcomi. Coalitionist guild leaders prosper by making profitable connections to the administration and business community, inspired by Solira's personal motto: "If you build a bridge, you can carry gold over it."

The Defiants are the guilds known for their tense relationships with the trading houses. Many craftsmen and artisans privately



sympathize with the Defiants, though they use the connections of the Coalitionists in public. The Defiants believe that the trading houses are taking advantage of them, and want the king to enact regulations to compensate for the traders' superior bargaining power. This faction's more passionate members would love to see a number of trading houses collapse outright. Some Defiants get along well with the free traders; others see them simply as tomorrow's oppressors. The leader of the Defiants is an ork woman Named Gokvune, the head of the Royal Guild of Armorers and Weaponsmiths. Known for rhetoric as hot as her forge, Gokvune is sincere in her crusade against the trading houses, but has attracted many malcontents and troublemakers. Player characters joining the armorers' guild can count on getting a lecture on the evils of the trading houses from Gokvune or one of her sycophants.

ON COINS AND CURRENCY

Throal produces many of the coins used in Barsaive. Minting coins is expensive, because many circulate out of Throal and most never return. Throalic coins stay in the city-states or the hinterland, where they and Theran coins are considered the only reliable currency. The costs of operating the royal mint, however, are more than justified by the trade advantages of maintaining a reliable currency in Barsaive. There is also a certain propaganda value in having images of Throal in every Barsaivian's pocket.

All Throalic coins are hexagonal, which makes them difficult to shave. As one might expect from a culture that places so much stock in craftsmanship, the coins are extremely well minted by ancient standards. The level of detail is greater than that of Theran coins, though only an expert would consider the difference obvious.

The Throalic copper piece weighs one-third of an ounce and bears a pick and hammer design on both sides. The tools are wreathed in a scroll containing the slogan "Together we rebuild Barsaive." This coin is the source of the folk saying, "The peasant's luck is always the same," because the identical sides make it useless for gambling, and peasants and workers commonly use it. In Throalic slang, copperers are also called "hammers," "tool kits," or "builders."

A silver piece weighs one-quarter of an ounce, and on its face is a heroic portrait of Throalic founder, Tav Korelsed. On the reverse side is an image of the *Council Compact*, open to its famous anti-slavery passage. Slang terms for these coins are "Tavs," "founders," and "books."

Throal's rarely used gold pieces weigh one-fifth of an ounce. Their faces display an image of the legendary merchant king Braza surveying the Throal Mountains. The reverse side shows a dwarf slave throwing off his shackles, surrounded by a halo of light. Because of the disparity between the images—a rich king on one side and a slave on the other—the gold coin is considered a symbol of fate in Barsaive. One superstition has it that a gold coin can be used for divination, but only within an hour of first acquiring it. The diviner asks a yes or no question and flips the coin: Braza means yes and the slave means no. Slang terms for gold pieces include "Brazas," "fates," and "two-siders."

ON CULTURE

▲ ▲ ▲
Dearest Mother,

You can tell Father that the money you invested in my education has not gone to waste! I have learned so much here, in so short a time! I know how much you and Father like life in the village, but Throal is so exciting! There is so much to tell, I hardly know where to begin! I have spent much time in the Royal Auditorium since my arrival. Our tutors at the Hall of Learning tell us that too many lectures

in the Auditorium will confuse us, but they only say this because they do not want us learning too much, too quickly. They want us to remain unwise, all the better to fill our heads with their own pet theories. Tell Father that I've taken his words to heart—I've not lost that old farmer's common sense among my copious notes and scrolls! Our tutors do teach us many valuable things, but one must (as Father said) sort the pearls of wisdom from the cow's leavings in their words. Many a pearl have I found at the Auditorium—and all beyond price!

Debates are held in the Auditorium, and from the words of the speakers one can learn all kinds of things. (The Auditorium is also host to ceremonies, festivals, processions and various revelries; but rest assured, dearest Mother, that unlike many of my rich classmates I am not using this valuable time as a mere excuse for ale-tasting and song-singing!) In the Debates, the finest and sharpest minds of Throal duel for the approbation of the audience, much as orks fight for supremacy in their scorcher bands. Speakers are judged on the richness of their ideas and on their style. I have seen my destiny, Mother; I must become as cutting and clever a philosopher as these debaters! (Tell Father not to worry; I know that this is a vocation, not a profession. I am certain that a thinker as ambitious and motivated as I can easily acquire a well-paid position in the king's administration, or in one of the countless trading houses. All the most popular debaters are highly sought after as advisers or tutors or... all manner of things!)

The Debates are sponsored by several different debating societies, the most prestigious of which is His Majesty's Royal Society of Philosophers. Just last night I witnessed an epic confrontation between the esteemed Lagustan and the ferocious Holomica.

The master of ceremonies was the famous scholar Jerriv Forrim, who is only now recovering from a terrible illness. As is customary, the scheduled debaters did not know the topic on which they would be required to expound—it is considered much more of a challenge that way! But Forrim, knowing his debaters well, selected his resolution with cunning. There he stood, leaning on a walking stick in the center of the vast, empty stage, flanked on either side by Lagustan and Holomica. The entire auditorium sat silent, breathless, awaiting Forrim's pronouncement. Forrim looked out upon the quiet crowd, straightened his stooped shoulders and said in a ringing voice, "Resolved: that the moral worth of a Namegiver is irrelevant to his fate in this world, or in the next." A gasp of anticipation rang out—for the past few weeks all of Throal has been a-chatter about Holomica's new epic poem, "The Good Are Punished and the Bad Are Rewarded". Lagustan has been particularly forceful in his attacks against it. The poem's subtleties would doubtless be beyond you, but in essence it is an allegory of the history of Thera—and it claims that they gained greater power and influence as they grew more brutal. Even in the land of Death, the epic's villains get no comeuppance—instead, the dead honor them for their victories. Some consider Holomica's poem a call to arms to Throal, urging it to forget its qualms of conscience and conquer Barsaive. Others read it as a justification for immorality. Still others say it is a cry for justice in an unjust world. Holomica himself had refused to further explain the meaning of his work—but now, in the debating hall, facing the stern Lagustan, he would be forced to reveal his intended meaning. And he did.

I am late for my class in the Scythian language, so I cannot repeat the pithy statements, cutting insults and delightful moments of levity that punctuated this great confrontation. Lagustan, of course, easily slapped down Holomica's passionate but thoughtless arguments. Others cheered for Holomica's iconoclasm, or his martial fervor, or his mysterious artfulness, depending on how they interpreted his enigmatic words. I found it so suspenseful that I spent the hours perched on the edge of my bench; I could not lounge about, eating roasted squash seeds, as I saw a few empty-headed young nobles doing. (In my opinion, people who cannot pay attention to the

argument ought not to take up seating room; they might as well go and be seen somewhere else, rather than deprive interested people of a place.) In the end, no winner was declared; there were too many partisans of each thinker in the audience to decide the victor by cheers alone. I cannot wait for the scheduled rematch. I have heard that some people offered to pay Scholar Forrim hundreds of silvers to know the subject of the next debate in advance!

I have spent too much parchment describing this event, and so the rest must wait for another letter—the dueling schools of music, the great controversy concerning the architecture of the Inner Cities, the pageants of the great Passions... Even the list is too long to finish writing, and the trader is here to claim all messages bound for the northern reaches. I shall close by wishing you and Father and Ellistan the best of my love. I do not know when I shall next see you... but you are always in my thoughts.

Post Script: Wish Ellistan a happy birthday for me, and tell her I have found her a book of Kalassa's early poetry. I will send it by the next post.

—A Letter from Pagon Pallaz of Umril
to Her Mother, 1507 TH

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Dwarf culture values learning and thinking. Throal was founded as the ultimate expression of dwarf values, and its most revered kings have all been philosophers as well as politicians. In fact, many Throalites are philosophers in their spare time. To them, the discussion of weighty issues is second nature.

An adventurer staying in Throal to research a recently acquired magical treasure will experience this phenomenon first-hand in all sorts of unexpected ways. When he goes to the bakery to buy the day's bread, he may be held up in his purchase because the baker is busy arguing with a street-sweeper over the artistic merits of a new song. On his way to the Great Library, he finds his way blocked by a knot of shopkeepers, servants, traders, nobles and common workmen who have stopped to conduct an impromptu argument on the ethics of money-lending. The approach of a Royal Guard patrol at first fills him with relief; surely they will break up the assemblage and allow the adventurer to pass. But the guardsmen join the huddle and offer their own opinions, as loudly enthusiastic as everyone else. When the adventurer finally reaches the library (after several detours), he sees a group of children assembled on the steps, arguing about the moral of a famous legend. The children ask him to help them decide the true answer, but whatever he says, one child or another makes some challenging response. The hapless adventurer finally steps through the door almost an hour later, heaving a sigh of relief—debating is forbidden in the Great Library. If not for that edict, the place would be too noisy for anyone to concentrate on anything else.

The life of the mind is the life of Throal.

ON THE GREAT LIBRARY

The Great Library is a vast stone complex located near the center of the Halls of Throal. Because of its location and the vast and varied information it contains, the Great Library is often called the heart of the kingdom. Its motto, emblazoned over the elaborately carved archway that opens on its main reading room, is: "To Preserve Knowledge Is To Preserve Our Souls"

Though Throalites believe that gathering and preserving knowledge is an inherently virtuous act, they do not feel that all information should be made available to the public indiscriminately. As an example, the royal commission to produce a book on the Horrors prompted a major controversy among the library staff, many of whom felt that information on the Horrors was so

innately dangerous that it ought not to be made available. Because most Throalites see the Great Library as the center of their civic life, any question concerning it inevitably spills into public debate. Only the direct intervention of the king forced the Horrors book ahead, and even then only under stringent precautions. Even Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, had misgivings about the project from the beginning.

Anyone can use the books and scrolls on display in the Main Reading Room at no charge. Access to the Great Library's general collection of research material, which includes anything of use to adventurers, costs 20 silvers per day. Because researchers must place their requests with the staff tending the retrieval desk and then wait for someone to find the book or scroll in question and return with it to the reading room, certain unscrupulous apprentices make a fair living accepting bribes for all sorts of services, from filling requests more quickly to helping patrons determine exactly what volume or scroll they should request to performing unauthorized research themselves. Though they generally wait for the patrons to suggest appropriate compensation for these favors, they will do this work for as little as 10 silver pieces. A description and map of the Great Library appear in **A Tour of the Kingdom**, p. 87.

LIBRARY STAFF

Leading members of the library staff are accorded the kind of respect usually reserved for members of the royal family, heads of popular and prosperous noble trading houses, and the kingdom's greatest artists. A permanent posting to the library staff is among the highest honors to which a Throalic scholar can aspire.

The head of the library is the Master of the Hall of Records, a position currently held by the dwarf Merrox. Reporting to him are six functionaries, each bearing the title Scribe and Archivist of the Hall of Records. Each Scribe and Archivist maintains a staff of six to twelve apprentice archivists. Archivists fulfill various administrative duties and perform research on the king's behalf; they often assign the latter duty to their apprentices. Apprentices also work in the portions of the library that are open to the public. They collect fees for library access, assist patrons, return books and scrolls to their proper places and perform general maintenance. When player characters go to the Great Library, they will most likely interact with apprentices, as higher-placed officials are far too busy to be bothered with adventurers.

The library staff also includes many scholars who do not work directly for Merrox, but have been honored with the title of Associate Archivist. Associates receive access to staff-only areas of the Great Library, in return for which they must share the fruits of their research with the Library.

Merrox

*"But, Your Highness ... do you truly think
this is wise, under the circumstances?"*

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The Master of the Hall of Records is one of Barsaive's most learned scholars and close confidant of King Neden. Prompted by personal loyalty to the monarch's father he first came to know and love as a fellow scholar, he supports the king's reformist policies without reservation despite his own deeply conservative disposition. Merrox believes that all worthwhile truths have long been discovered, and that many of the ideas popular among current philosophers are nonsensical or even dangerous. He tends to promote the careers of librarians and archivists who share his outlook. Scholars too prone to questions often find that permanent staff positions elude them. Consequently, though Merrox's connections to the king make him untouchable, many of his colleagues are



anxiously awaiting the day when he retires or a new king appoints someone to take his place.

Merrox is unlikely to interact directly with adventurers who come to the Great Library looking for information; his assistants deal with members of the public. Since Varulus III has died, Merrox spends even less time performing his official duties. When he pays attention, he is an excellent administrator. His recent neglect, however, has allowed rivalries between his underlings to fester. Some of his archivists have resorted to hiding books from their rivals, a practice that would outrage Merrox if he knew about it.

Adventurers who wish to speak to Merrox can attract his attention with newly discovered artifacts or documents concerning his specialty, the early history of Throal. If they please him with valuable information, he can ensure that they get privileged access to any research materials they seek. He can also reward them by conveying a message to the king on their behalf.

Merrox is a Thirteenth Circle dwarf Traveled Scholar (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book for more information on this Discipline).

Jerriv Forrim

"Hmmp. I see standards of scholarship have continued to decline during my absence."



The most senior Scribe and Archivist is Jerriv Forrim, a picky and demanding dwarf who strikes fear into the heart of apprentices throughout the Library. Though Forrim's scholarly credentials are impeccable, he finds it difficult to get along with others. Younger staff members pray nightly to the Passion Mynbruje that Forrim will not succeed Merrox as Master of the Hall of Records.

Forrim long suffered from a mysterious, debilitating illness. In fact Thom Edrull poisoned Forrim to improve his own position. Forrim does not suspect Edrull's villainy, as he has a strong sense of fairness and would find it inconceivable that anyone would deliberately incapacitate a fellow scholar in order to land a plum research project.

Jerriv Forrim goes out of his way to avoid meeting adventurers and other library patrons. If he happens to bump into a group of

player characters while they are misbehaving or abusing library privileges, however, he will loudly, publicly and eloquently bawl them out.

Jerriv Forrim is a Seventh Circle dwarf Traveled Scholar (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book for more information on this Discipline).

Thom Edrull

"Your request is highly irregular ... but perhaps something could be arranged, in exchange for certain ... considerations."



While other Scribes and Archivists spend their spare moments dreaming of new scholarly discoveries, the grasping and greedy Thom Edrull dreams of gold and status. This silky voiced, clever dwarf was pushed into a career as a scholar by his domineering grandfather, who was Merrox's mentor at the Great Library. Edrull would have preferred a career as a swashbuckling trader, or so he tells himself. More likely he would have ended up a bandit, as he is irresistibly drawn to underhanded ways of doing things. Even when it yields him no tangible benefit, Edrull delights in bad behavior.

His greatest exploit, the poisoning of the renowned scholar Jerriv Forrim, had far-reaching consequences for Edrull. The two scholars had been assigned to complete several volumes of the work *Denizens of Barsaive*, with Forrim in charge. Edrull, exasperated with his senior colleague's exacting standards and wanting the prestige of sole authorship, contacted one of his many friends among thieves and traveling peddlers of dubious reputation. They procured him a rare poison, which he slipped into Forrim's cider. Forrim fell ill, as Edrull had planned, and Edrull took over the project. His work on the *Denizens of Barsaive* volumes so impressed Merrox and the court that Edrull received a promotion.

Thom Edrull has managed to accumulate power at the library by taking on the administrative tasks other Archivists find bothersome or distasteful. He assigns apprentices to various library staff jobs, and has handpicked his own personal staff from among them. Not surprisingly, most of Edrull's personal apprentices are as venal as, or even more so than, Edrull himself. Edrull makes sure that his own people are on duty during peak hours, offering to assist patrons with research in exchange for an additional fee above the standard 20 silvers. These fees break library regulations; the apprentices are supposed to be working on research for the king, not for paying customers. Needless to say, a large portion of the proceeds ends up in Edrull's purse.

Thom Edrull has an instinctive sense for dirty dealings. If player characters are involved with anything remotely dishonorable at the Great Library, Edrull will nose them out and use whatever information he has to his best advantage. He may help the adventurers or turn them in to his superiors, depending on which course he finds more personally profitable. The only things to which Edrull won't stoop in his pursuit of wealth are bloodshed and betrayal of Throal to the Therans.

Thom Edrull is a Sixth Circle dwarf Thief.

Ela Pono

"That will be twenty silvers, sir. I see you are researching the Skull of Maarberg. I vaguely remember something about that item's key knowledges ... but the memory is cloudy. I wonder what could possibly jog it?"



Ela Pono is one of Thom Edrull's corrupt apprentices, a young ork scholar thoroughly accustomed to skimming silver from library patrons. She specializes in research concerning magical treasures, lost kaers, and other information for which adventurers are likely to pay, and is often on duty when adventurers first come to the Great Library.

Without ever asking for money in so many words, she makes it clear that she can help them if they give her the proper motivation. The quality of her information is up to the gamemaster; if clues are needed to move the plot along, Ela's research can be correct (if overpriced). If you want your player characters to work harder for their information, Ela Pono's information should be vague and possibly misleading.

Ela Pono is a Third Circle ork Thief.

Zamirica One-Knee

"That will be t-t-tt-tt-tt-tt twenty silvers. You—you are researching the Sk-sk-skull of Ma-muh-muh-muh-Maarberg? I—I—cascading, flowing, the blood, the blood! Sorry, that will be twenty silvers, please."

Zamirica One-Knee, an apprentice archivist, highlights another of the Great Library's recent staffing problems. Like many library apprentices, this quiet, unassuming dwarf was assigned to prepare documents for a tome on Horrors. Some of them are experiencing terrible mental side effects from this work, and poor Zamirica has fared the worst. Though able to present himself as sane and normal when he really concentrates—for example, when in the presence of his superiors—he tends to drool and babble when his attention wanders. He sees intense visions of the last days of Parlainth, the subject of a document he was assigned to translate.

If Zamirica is on duty when adventurers ask for any document that might be Horror-related, the poor wretch begins to tremble and shake. He poses no danger to himself or anyone else, and is still capable of carrying out his duties. However, the player characters might think him a dangerous lunatic or a mystic weathervane. (He can be either of these things, if it suits the gamemaster's purposes.) Zamirica does not work for Thom Edrull and wouldn't dream of asking for a bribe.

Zamirica One-Knee has two fully functioning legs. His nickname comes from his youthful days as a player of the ball game *hach'var*, when he habitually dropped to one knee after scoring goals.

Zamirica One-Knee is a non-adept dwarf scribe.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Holomica writes his poems under the inspiration of a Horror that marked him during a trip to the countryside nearly 15 years ago. The Horror wants to slowly drive all of Throal mad by exploiting one of the kingdom's virtues, its devotion to literature and the arts. Each poem that Holomica writes is more disquieting than the last. The epic Holomica is currently composing, *Death Cries of the Virtuous*, will be powerful enough to drive already troubled souls over the brink into madness; they will commit murders resembling those described in Holomica's poems. The player characters must figure out what is going on and permanently end Holomica's catastrophic career one way or another.

ON THE FINE ARTS

Throalites see the arts not as a luxury, but as a necessity. Reverence for the arts goes hand-in-hand with Throal's devotion to intellectual pursuits. The ancient Throalic philosopher Teso Cratia first expressed the viewpoint that art should strive to create beauty and to sharpen the minds of its audience. According to her doctrine, experiences of beauty are soothing and restorative, like sleep; to see and hear beautiful things regularly is just as necessary as sleep to a Namegiver's well-being. However, just as too much sleep can make a Namegiver listless and dull, so can too much loveliness. Art should therefore also test its audience, forcing the viewer or listener or reader to reconsider cherished beliefs and ponder

great moral questions. In Cratia's view, the great civilizations of legend all began to decline when they stopped taking art seriously and began to regard it as a mere diversion.

Most debates about art in Throal center around which of Cratia's two principles is more important: beauty or challenge. Some, especially those influenced by elven culture, argue that beauty is far more valuable than confrontational art, which can turn harsh or even ugly. Others, especially those who use their poems or statues to influence political affairs, look down their noses at artists

whose work they consider "merely decorative."

Depending on your tastes and those of your players, the arts in Throal may be a mere background detail in your campaign. For example, if your player characters are trying to eavesdrop on conversations in a tavern, the nineteen out of twenty Throalites who aren't saying anything relevant to the plot might be arguing fervently about the latest mosaic, play, or style of clothing. If player characters are involved in political intrigue in Throal, however,



involvement with the art scene becomes unavoidable. Because so many Throalites care so passionately about new works of art, prominent artists become extremely influential in public debate. The arts play the same role in Throalic society that the news media does in the modern world; art is the means by which people learn about issues and form opinions. If the player characters want to make or prevent some change in Throal, they will need to have prominent artists on their side.

PROMINENT ARTISTS

The following gamemaster characters are prominent artists in Throal with whom politically minded adventurers might interact. Most politically involved artists belong to the “challenge the audience” school; artists who produce works of pure beauty tend to remain aloof from matters that would interest the typical band of adepts. Like Throalic philosophers, many artists, especially those with a political bent, have other professions by which they earn a living. Some artists consider amateur status a mark of true dedication; others happily grow rich selling their wares to an eager public.

Javen

“You think me contemptuous of you because you are a potbellied, kelp-chewing, decomposing pile of insect-attracting offal. To the contrary: these defects you cannot help, and it would be churlish to hold them against you. It is your stupidity, your self-puffery, your use of words you do not understand, your ignorance, your baseness and your utter lack of acquaintance with morals and ethics that make you a fair target for ridicule.”

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Javen is the pseudonym of a middle-aged male elf who is the acknowledged master of a uniquely Throalic art form: satirical pottery. Like his competitors, Javen creates pots featuring scurrilous caricatures of noted public figures. The quality of his drawings is matched only by the ruthlessness of his wit. His sympathies are reformist, and the heads of the old-guard trading houses are his favorite targets. However, he does not spare the royal family when he feels they are moving too slowly.

Javen runs a large studio and employs more than a hundred apprentices to reproduce his drawings on pot after pot. A new and particularly savage drawing might sell hundreds or even thousands of pots, plates and vases. Javen is one of the wealthiest artists in Throal, but his work is of little interest to the rest of Barsaive. Grouchy and intolerant, Javen responds consistently to people who offer him money to promote their political views: he has a quartet of burly troll apprentices throw them out.

Javen is a non-adept elf artist.

Holomica

“Y-yes, it is true. My work stinks—of blood, of fear, of passion, of the capriciousness of fate, and of our own helplessness in the face of it. My poems stink of life, and th-th-thus I accept your damning of them as the highest praise.”

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The half-mad poet Holomica makes everyone nervous; Throalites of all stripes find his vast narrative poems profoundly disturbing. In these bloody epics, dozens of characters outdo one another in depravity and corruption. Good characters appear, only to be slaughtered or humiliated. Legendary heroes or Passions are portrayed as twisted or foolish. Holomica’s work shocks most Throalites as much because of its undeniable power as for its unsettling ideas. Holomica’s supporters argue that his poems are simply an extreme example of challenging the audience; the poet himself resolutely refuses to explain the meaning of his work.

Tall for a dwarf, Holomica would be taller still if he ever straightened his hunched back. His hair is an unruly mane, and he is known to drool when excited. In conversation, he uses large words and throws around arcane ideas, but often sounds barely coherent. He is notorious for his frequent drunken sprees in Throal and Bartertown.

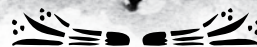
Holomica is a non-adept dwarf poet.

D’Abrunia Koriaj

“Once we had kings. Now we have bureaucrats.”

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The archconservative D’Abrunia Koriaj is known for her grand mosaics depicting great moments in the history of Throal. Great deeds by King Varulus III and his ancestors are notably absent from her work. The kings she chooses as subjects are depicted as strong, aggressive leaders who smite enemies and evoke awe in their subjects. The implicit message behind her images is that today’s leaders are inadequate compared to those of old. For the past year, D’Abrunia has been working on a series of vast mosaics covering the walls of a new complex of warehouses owned by House Garsun in the city of Bethabal. They depict the founders of Garsun in the same heroic style as her portrayals of the ancient kings, clearly implying that House Garsun should be the royal family. The Builders’ Guild, which strongly supports King Neden, has refused to work on the warehouses, claiming that Koriaj’s mosaics are seditious. House Garsun recently hired builders from outside Throal to complete the project, resulting in skirmishes between the outsiders and Builders’ Guild members. Reformers and conservatives each blame the other for the labor unrest. The controversy has spread throughout Throal, and has become a topic of debate so intense that Koriaj was pelted with eggs during a recent speech at the Royal Auditorium.



ADVENTURE HOOK

In the middle of a preview performance of Donaligus’ famous play, “The Founders,” (see **On Throal’s History**, p. 13), during Tav Koresled’s death scene, Trevas and Gesan break into a fierce marital spat. This piece of public foolishness is the last straw for members of several old-guard houses attending the show; soon afterward, they lobby the king to replace the couple with artists “more suited to the dignity of their high position in the theatrical profession.” Chancellor Wishten, preoccupied with matters he sees as more important, gives in to their complaints. When passionate fans of Trevas and Gesan find out about the replacement, they stage a riot. Frantic to placate them, Wishten decides to reverse his decision, but Trevas and Gesan have left the kingdom in search of new audiences.

The adventurers must find the pair and bring them back. Unfortunately, the quarrelsome duo picked the wrong village to entertain, and have been taken prisoner by cadaver men, who want a permanent source of diversion in their haunted kaer.

Koriaj is not a subtle political thinker. She wants her kings to be heroic figures unmoved by the petty concerns of average Namegivers. Had King Varulus III executed more of his foes after the Death Rebellion, Koriaj would have admired his “heroic” ruthlessness instead of despising him for the “weakness” of mercy. King Neden, however, seems to possess the mighty indifference of legendary kings, although he has yet to prove his worth as far as Koriaj is concerned.

Koriaj is a non-adept dwarf artist.

Trevas and Gesan

Trevas: Now Ilwan picks up the knife and moves towards Ozzet—

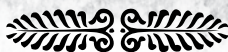
Gesan: Ilwan most certainly does not! What an absurd, unmotivated—

Trevas: Just who is directing this play?! Hmmmmm?

Gesan: Certainly not you, you muck-headed fool!

▲ ▲ ▲

This husband and wife team heads the King’s Players, the largest and most popular theatrical company in Throal and well-known for its brilliant interpretations of works by the classic Throalic playwrights Donalicus, Bazrata, and Oloron. Though vastly different in style, all three writers specialized in plays depicting the triumphs, sacrifices and other great acts of the old Throalic kings. Performances of these works, which are held in the Royal Auditorium twice a month, remind Throalites of the glory of the throne. The treasury underwrites much of the budget for the King’s Players. Trevas is an aging idol, constantly surrounded by adoring female fans. Despite his love for his much younger wife, Gesan, Trevas often succumbs to temptation. Gesan’s public confrontations with Trevas are as famous as their on-stage performances together. Their public adores them for their wild lifestyle and charismatic stage presences, though some scholars complain that their productions fail to bring out the true depth of the great texts.



ADVENTURE HOOK

A gang of young ork ne’er-do-wells are caught red-handed with stolen copies of this year’s examination for sixteen-year-old students. Throalic society considers cheating on tests a terrible crime usually punished by permanent exile from the kingdom. The youngsters claim they were framed, but no one believes them except for their families, who scrape together enough coin to hire the adventurers to prove their children’s innocence.

The real culprits are a group of rich dwarf layabouts, heirs to various noble trading houses. They bribed a library official for a copy of the test, and when it became apparent that their tutor was about to catch them in possession of the evidence of their cheating, they slipped the scroll into a passing ork student’s bag. They then informed the nearest guard patrol, hoping that their unnaturally high test scores would go unnoticed in the controversy.

One of their longtime apprentices is a frustrated playwright Named Thorapin. He wants to take over the company and mount productions of his own plays, most of which are cruel satires of King Neden. Thorapin hates the old guard as much as he does any authority figure, but is willing to curry their favor for the opportunity to replace Trevas and Gesan.

Trevas and Gesan are non-adept dwarf actors.

ON EDUCATION

Throalites take education seriously. Indeed, ever since the last days before the Scourge, Throal has viewed the education of Barsaive as its mission. The dwarfs take immense pride in having taught their fellow Barsaivians the Throalic language and the practices of trade. The *Book of Tomorrow* was a vast educational project, designed to allow each kaer to teach its children the rudiments of civilized life as well as to remind Barsaive’s people of their ancestors’ world. This pride often leads other Barsaivians to accuse Throalites of arrogance, a charge that has some merit; many Throalites cannot help flaunting their pride in their achievements. An entire series of old jokes, wildly popular in the dwarf kingdom, involves encounters between a sage of Urupa and an idiot of Throal. In each of these jokes, the idiot proves wiser than the sage. Needless to say, these jokes are not popular in Urupa.

According to one of the conclusions reached in the preamble of the *Council Compact*, Throal’s grand ambitions would only succeed if the people of Throal understood the principles of reasoning, learned the lessons of history, and knew how to trade shrewdly. The Compact therefore made it an offense to raise ignorant or poorly educated children. Despite the weight given to education, however, the Compact did not set up a public education system. Educational institutions in Throal are privately owned, with generous tax breaks given to families with school-age children so that they can afford to hire tutors.

Dozens of small schools are scattered throughout Throal. Students may enter a school at any age, though few enter before age four. Each student must write an examination set by the Great Library staff at three points in his school career: at age seven, at eleven, and finally at age sixteen. The following subjects are critical to a Throalic education: mathematics, the principles of trade, Throalic history, the Throalic language and the principles of reasoning. Students are also required to master an additional language, either that of another Namegiver race or one of the ancient root languages of Throalic. They are also expected to become proficient in an Artisan skill and a specialized subject of their choice, such as geography, legends, or magical theory. If a student fails any of the three library-sponsored tests, his family and tutors are fined. Failing a test also brings great shame upon the student’s family. The penalty for failure applies only to residents of Throal, who must abide by the laws of the *Council Compact*.

Only rarely do dwarf, human, or elf students fail these tests, though no one knows precisely why. The tests are less congenial to troll and ork students, whose cultures place less value on formal study. Education has always been a major source of contention between the dwarf rulers of Throal and its ork residents, the second most numerous racial group in the kingdom. Orks balk not only at the emphasis on dwarf languages and history, but at the length of time they are expected to remain students. At age sixteen, an ork has already lived more than a third of his likely lifespan. In addition, ork culture is hostile to book learning; most orks believe that the only truly valuable lessons are those gained through experience. However, the orks of the Inner Cities are divided on how to resolve this clash of cultures. Some argue that orks should be tested according to different standards and should be excused from study at an earlier age. Others claim that such preferential treatment will shame the orks in the eyes of other Throalites, viewing changed

standards as an intolerable admission of failure. As it stands, unrest sometimes breaks out in ork- and troll-dominated neighborhoods when test scores are announced. Most orks attend their final years of schooling while working full time, another factor contributing to their consistently lower test scores. The gap between ork students and dwarfs, humans and elves provides a reliable source of ammunition for dwarf traditionalists who resist attempts to cede more power to the orks and other racial minorities.

The experience of students in Throal varies widely. The court makes no rules on how schools should be organized, and as long as students can pass the library's exams, anything goes. Many young dwarfs skip formal schooling altogether in favor of tutoring by members of their extended families. Grandparents in particular take an active role in the typical dwarf's education. Every member of a family is expected to be able to tutor youngsters in his area of expertise, and some families supplement their pool of knowledge by hiring outside tutors to school their children in specialized subjects. Dwarfs educated this way tend to score high in exams. Throalites of other cultures rarely use tutors; those who have not been taught this way themselves tend to have a hard time tutoring others. Dwarfs who lack extended families also cannot take advantage of family tutoring, and so formal education has become a lucrative business in Throal.

Schools in the dwarf kingdom cater to dwarfs without extended families, non-dwarf citizens and youngsters who come to Throal to study from other parts of Barsaive. The more expensive schools place their students in small study groups, assigning a tutor to personally supervise each pupil's progress. Most Throalites cannot afford such attention, and their children are placed in large institutions where they learn the answers to likely exam questions by rote. The worst of these schools suffer from serious discipline problems, as bored and poorly motivated students rebel against the stifling environment. Unfortunately, young orks and other students who already face an uphill battle to get a good education are the most likely to attend these schools. Truly wretched schools go out of business quickly because the fines for failed exams are higher than a student's annual tuition; however, mediocre schools can thrive by preparing their students to squeak by at examination time.

OF THROAL'S MANY PHILOSOPHERS

Throal displays a contradictory attitude toward its philosophers. The great thinkers of the past are credited with many advances in Throalic civilization, including enormous influence on the *Council Compact*. Living philosophers, on the other hand, are often labeled troublemakers. They are always dreaming up new systems of thinking and living, thereby disrupting comfortable old traditions. They specialize in criticizing the government and the status quo. They tend to think in extreme terms, and are often unwilling to compromise. The more extreme a philosopher's views, the more likely he is to attract a following among impressionable, headstrong youth. Philosophers' speeches in the Halls of Throal and the Royal Auditorium breed controversy and unrest; in short, they constantly test the limits of Throal's freedom of thought and expression.

The Scourge dramatically changed the dwarf kingdom's philosophical traditions. Old schools were forgotten and new ones sprang up. During those days, people desperately sought an explanation for the horrific events that were overtaking the world. Old theories of what the world was all about and how Namegivers ought to behave seemed suddenly inadequate. Throal's thinkers tried to come to terms with the Scourge in various ways. They came up with many bizarre theories, some of which proved seductive enough to attract followers. Some followers of this or that philosophy even fought with those who accepted other theories. Nowadays, the followers of certain philosophers may pose an occasional threat to public order, but no longer to the survival of the nation.

A few philosophers make a living as speakers and teachers. Many more are thinkers in their spare time. Throal has no philosophers' guild; anyone who wants to call himself a philosopher can do so. However, the public only takes seriously those who accumulate large numbers of followers. A thinker with a hundred hard-core followers and a thousand or so occasionally interested audience members is worth talking about.

Many Throalites spend their evenings listening to various philosophers, hopping from speech to speech as others might travel from tavern to tavern. On any given night speakers can be found in the Grand Bazaar, giving impromptu speeches in the passageways of the Halls of Throal, or expounding their theories in drinking establishments. Once a week, the Royal Auditorium hosts a program of speeches by philosophers of competing schools.

Only truly spellbinding orators can hold an audience in silence. Throalites who follow the philosophy wars are quick to heckle, shout questions and throw spoiled food when they disagree with a speaker. Those who agree with the speaker then angrily confront the hecklers. More brawls are fought over philosophy in Throal than any other matter. The Royal Guards appear in force at the Auditorium's weekly Philosophy Night in anticipation of trouble.

A few of Throal's most prominent and troublesome philosophers are described below.

Belyawain

"The world is unclean. Exposure to the world stains us. For years, we have avoided unclean influences. Perhaps it is now time to destroy the sources of unclean energies."

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Belyawain is the current leader of the Ja'kotton Movement, a male separatist group founded during the last century of the Scourge by a philosopher Named Ja'kotto. Ja'kotto argued that Namegivers had only themselves to blame for the Scourge. The Horrors, he reasoned, were attracted to this world by the intense emotions people carelessly allow themselves to feel. To feel intense love, hatred, desire or any other emotion is to wallow in the unclean energies of an imperfect world. Ja'kotto believed that nothing happens without a purpose, and so some higher force must have prompted the Scourge. This force or being wanted people to stop feeling things intensely, and sent the Horrors to teach Namegivers a lesson. Recognizing that desire between men and women is a primary source of intense feelings, Ja'kotto ordered his followers to separate themselves from women and live apart from the various other unclean influences of daily life in Throal.

The Ja'kottons set up a hermitage, where they engaged in various exercises designed to escape passion and desire. Many of these were intensely physical, designed to induce a state of exhaustion that would allow its practitioners to see clearly without emotion. Out of these exercises eventually grew the acrobatic sport called *un'hayedah*, described later in this section. This sport supposedly exemplifies Ja'kotto's ideals of total calm and purity, though those who do not subscribe to his views often find it emotionally involving to watch. Displays of *un'hayedah* are one of two ways in which a Ja'kotton may interact with the outside world. The other is speech-making. The Ja'kotton Movement continually seeks male converts, wanting all of the world—or all the world's men, at least—to adopt its ways. By this sect's reasoning, the end of intense emotions among Namegivers—especially the end of love and desire between the sexes—will please the force that sent the Scourge and keep it from sending another one. The Ja'kottons reject the notion that Scourges come in cycles and believe a new one may begin at any time. They believe that their own actions brought about the premature end of the Scourge, and that if they falter the Horrors will return.

Belyawain, like many disciples, is even more extreme than the thinker he follows. Ja'kotto died before the Scourge ended, pass-



ing the torch to his earliest student, who has since passed the torch on to Belyawain. Belyawain runs a tightly disciplined organization, allowing no one to question the words of the late master—or rather, Belyawain’s interpretation of those words. During the past decade, the Ja’kottons have come to feel increasingly besieged. Members are drifting away from the organization now that fears of the Scourge are receding. Groups who do not share Ja’kotton beliefs have adopted the holy sport of *un’hayedah* for mere entertainment. These developments have made Belyawain increasingly angry and frustrated. His master often said that violence in pursuit of a laudable goal was justifiable, and Belyawain is beginning to think it necessary. If the Horrors are no longer supplying the fear necessary to turn people toward the true way, perhaps the followers of Ja’kotto should do so. Belyawain has recently begun to plan a secret campaign of terror which would target prominent Throalites for assassination. Those who inspire great shows of emotion in the people, such as sports heroes, artists, questors, adventurers, and other philosophers, are his intended targets. If the adventurers win fame and popularity in Throal, they could come to Belyawain’s sinister attention.

Belyawain is a non-adept dwarf philosopher.

Hyondak

“Most of what you see and hear and feel every day is an illusion. We must seek out the tiny kernels of truth hidden in that illusion.”

The windling Hyondak is the most popular current advocate of a philosophical tradition called the Mirage, a school of thought that explained away the Scourge by saying it wasn’t really happening. The Scourge, as well as most other experiences of life, was a mere illusion. Namegivers do not really exist, except for their souls.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Vazilia, Grand Commander of the Royal Guards (see **The Halls of Power**, p. 61), approaches the adventurers. Vazilia believes that the Self-Reliants are in cahoots with a gang of anti-Throal bandits who have been raiding trade caravans. Agents of the Eye of Throal recently broke up a bandit cell and captured some of its members. In exchange for lenient treatment, one of the bandits—a human Named Avanil—has become a double agent.

Vazilia wants the characters to pose as members of Avanil’s gang when she meets with Smilyada, who Vazilia assumes will incriminate herself during the meeting. If Smilyada is too sneaky to do so, the characters are to plant evidence incriminating the philosopher in acts of treason. As the adventurers get to know Smilyada, they discover that she has no interest in rebellion. Avanil does, however, and begins recruiting a gang of rebels from among Smilyada’s more naive followers.

Their homes, the tools they use, their bodies, and the food they eat are all unreal. Souls float about in an immaterial realm, dreaming that the world exists. At one point, souls knew that they were real and that their dreams were not. But over time, they came to live in their dreams and began to think the dreams real. Eventually, souls described this dream world to one another and became trapped in the illusion that they had created together. This brought Namegiver souls into a world of pain. Until they made the dream world “real” by their own belief in it, they had never suffered hunger or exhaustion, never known conflict or danger. Trapped in their collective illusion, sealed into the absurd bodies of Namegivers, the souls suffered all these unpleasant things. Faced with the struggle to survive, they soon forgot that they were once pure souls and thought of themselves only as bodies. The more time the souls spent in this false world, the more painful it became. The ultimate expression of this pain was the Scourge, a terrible nightmare brought about by the falseness of the dream world.

The Mirage spawned several offshoots during the Scourge. One school tried to return to the world of souls through rituals and meditation. Another became fatalistic, deciding that nothing could be done to break the illusion. Yet another divided experiences according to their degree of reality: some things were more real than others; and followers of this philosophy strove to avoid unreal experiences and seek out real ones. Once the Scourge ended and Throal reopened, these groups gradually fell apart. The Mirage became a matter for scholarly argument rather than a way of life.

Hyondak is a recent immigrant to Throal, and has revived the cosmology behind the old philosophies of the Mirage with a new, self-indulgent twist. Hyondak argues that because the world is just an illusion, no act against anyone or anything in the world can be truly evil. The souls of Namegivers are already trapped in the unimaginable torment of a false physical body; therefore, the pursuit of selfish pleasure is perfectly understandable and accept-

able as compensation. No one can truly injure another Namegiver; whatever happens in the dream world is just a nightmare, and no one can be blamed for doing bad things in someone else's nightmare.

Hyondak's followers do whatever pleases them, the more outrageous the better. Mirage celebrations are occasions for excess of all sorts. Followers of the Mirage discount all notions of duty and social responsibility as part and parcel of the illusory world. Many youthful ne'er-do-wells flirt with the Mirage in order to annoy their parents and justify selfish actions. The Mirage has attracted many casual followers who do not believe Hyondak's words deep down, but nevertheless use them as license to misbehave.

Many observers suspect that Hyondak's Mirage is simply a front for a crime network. Several Mirage followers have been convicted of crimes in Throal, ranging from burglary to murder. So far, the Royal Guards have failed to connect Hyondak to the criminal actions of any of her followers. Prominent citizens have repeatedly called for her expulsion from Throal, but the *Council Compact* explicitly forbids the punishment of philosophers for their words alone. Hyondak's speeches and meetings are excellent places to meet thieves and other professional criminals. As for the philosopher herself, the gamemaster may choose either of the following options.



Option One: Hyondak is a non-adept windling philosopher, sincere in her beliefs and not caring on how her followers behave. It makes no difference to her whether they are committed to the Mirage, young twits being rude to their parents, or professional killers. She truly believes that morality is an illusion and that others should know this regrettable truth. She accepts donations from her followers to maintain a modest lifestyle while she works on a manifesto describing her philosophy. In private, Hyondak is a silly, easily distracted creature. She enjoys flattery, fine foods, and the attentions of attractive male windlings. She is truly amoral; she has absolutely no conscience, but also bears no malice toward others.

Option Two: Hyondak is a Fifth Circle windling Illusionist and runs the Mirage as cover for a crime ring specializing in burglary and smuggling. She does not believe in the Mirage and sees Throal's reverence for philosophy as a loophole in the *Council Compact* that she aims to exploit to the fullest. In private, Hyondak is wily and insatiably greedy. She loves money and power, and revels in her ability to trick people. If crossed, she is an implacable enemy. She will seek the death of anyone who threatens her criminal empire, no matter how remotely.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The player characters owe a favor to a trading house; perhaps they have a debt to repay, or a misdeed for which they need to atone. On the night before a decisive *hach'var* game against a hated rival, members of the house's team suffer food poisoning. The adventurers become last-minute stand-ins, hoping that their talents as adepts can make up for their lack of experience at the game.

Members of the opposing team all have high *Hach'var* skill step number. This skill allows team members to execute such maneuvers as capturing and hitting the ball. For each of these maneuvers, the player character's step number in the *Hach'var* skill is based on his Dexterity step. The average *Hach'var* step of the opposing team is Step 12. Characters use Melee Weapons to knock down opponents with their sticks, or Unarmed Combat to trip or check them. Characters also use Avoid Blow to evade Knock-down attempts. Scoring a goal has a base Difficulty Number of 10, which increases when opponents are standing in the way or the scorer is off-balance.

If you and your players enjoy tactical play, you can devise more elaborate rules and run the game with miniatures as the main entertainment for a gaming session. Alternatively, you can resolve crucial moments of the game with appropriate Skill Tests and quickly describe the rest.

Smilyada

"This vast empire we are building makes us weak. It tempts us to corruption. We must turn our backs on it, or it will devour us."

Smilyada is another thorn in the side of Throalic authorities. A practical philosopher with clear political interests, she has no use for the mystical questions that drive many of her rivals. Her school of thought, which she calls Self-Reliance, does not seek to find deep meaning in the Scourge. Smilyada believes that the Scourge, though terrible, had a good effect because it forced Throal to rely on its own resources and people. It also cut Throal off from the rest of Barsaive, which Smilyada believes was a good thing. According to Self-Reliance, communities should exist apart from one another and support themselves. When a nation expands, whether through immigration, trade, or military conquest, its people inevitably fall prey to moral weakness and start making their livelihoods off the backs of others. As an example of a community that started out trying to protect the world and ended up thoroughly corrupt, Smilyada points to the Theran Empire.

In some areas Smilyada supports King Neden's regime; for example, she is an outspoken opponent of slavery. However, she simultaneously denounced Varulus III for his attempts to bring

ADVENTURE HOOK

The followers of Ja'kotto become violently offended if they discover that spectators are betting on one of their events, and brawls have broken out more than once between staunch Ja'kottons and members of the Royal Guild of Bookmakers. Of course, this just makes betting on Ja'kotton *un'hayedah* more popular; in Throal as in other places, forbidden fruit is the sweetest.

The elf Yonlediel, a prosperous member of the bookmakers' guild, approaches the adventurers for a delicate mission. She has been engaged in a betting conspiracy with a disaffected pupil of Belyawain Named Hedwenicus. Hedwenicus is one of the judges at *un'hayedah* events; he has been fixing the results in exchange for payoffs from Yonlediel. Because the Ja'kottons are cloistered, Yonlediel has to sneak someone into their hermitage to give Hedwenicus his money. She has been sending her nephew, Ragaliel. Unfortunately, Ragaliel did not return from his last foray into the hermitage. Yonlediel assumes (rightly) that the Ja'kottons are holding and torturing Ragaliel, and she wants the adventurers to rescue the boy.

the *Council Compact* to the rest of Barsaive and for allowing vast numbers of immigrants into the kingdom. She does not say that the immigrants are bad people, merely that Throal will not be able to support them in times of crisis. In addition, she also rails against the trading houses; trade is bad because it makes people rely on outside goods instead of making things for themselves. Smilyada opposes war with Thera as a pointless exercise that will only destroy the dwarf kingdom.

Like many popular philosophers, Smilyada is charismatic, stubborn and contemptuous of those who disagree with her. She has about two thousand followers, all of whom she teaches to craft their own goods. When necessary, the Self-Reliants trade with one another on a limited scale. Now and then Smilyada makes noises about leaving Throal and setting up an ideal community in Barsaive's wild lands; more than a few Throalites would be happy to show her the door.

Smilyada is a non-adept dwarf philosopher.

ON ATHLETICS

Throalites may revel in the life of the mind, but they also celebrate the body, and sporting events are as popular in Throal as debates, plays and other public performances. During the Scourge, Throalites developed indoor sports to keep themselves active and healthy, as they could not go outdoors. Many of these sports remain popular in Throal but largely unknown outside the dwarf kingdom. Immigrants have brought their own sports with them, giving rise to new athletic events in the past few decades.

Professional athletes do not exist in Throal, but dedicated, gifted amateurs are widely admired for their prowess at a variety of sports. Some trading houses employ popular athletes as *j'havim* and give them flexible schedules and generous personal time to train. Teams sponsored by the trading houses dominate some sports, such as *hach'var*.

Gambling is legal in Throal, and many sports are the subject of heavy betting. Some of the trading houses whose fortunes withered during the Scourge trace their downfall to gambling. It is illegal to cheat at gambling, rig a sporting event, or use force or threats to collect a gambling debt. Like any other liability, gambling debts can be collected through legal petitions.

Some of Throal's most popular sports are described below.

Hach'var

Hach'var is a team sport played on a rectangular indoor court. The court is seven feet wide by sixty feet long, and the long side walls are lined with several rows of stone bleachers. The short walls at either end are called the goal walls; they contain seven holes, each eight inches in diameter, arranged in a circular pattern. The object of the game is to score goals by getting a five-inch diameter ball through one of the holes in the goal wall controlled by the opposing team. *Hach'var* balls are tightly rolled spheres of animal hide. Players hit the ball with long sticks tipped with six-inch diameter paddles. They may hit the ball with the paddle or with their head or feet, but not with their hands.

Teams have seven members each, and team members may not be substituted after play begins. The game is divided into three intervals. The first interval is thirty minutes long; during this time, one ball is in play. During the second interval, which lasts fifteen minutes, two balls are on the court. The final interval is six minutes long and is played with six balls.

Hach'var is a very physical game; players may slam into and trip opponents, or whack them with the sides of their sticks and paddles. Players wear padding designed to protect vital organs with as little impediment to movement as possible. Players may not poke opposing players with the end of a stick.

People unfamiliar with *hach'var* expect to see orks and trolls dominate the game, but the average troll's or ork's strength and size are as much liabilities as assets. They make good defensive players, but they cannot navigate the narrow court as skillfully as experienced dwarf players. Humans and elves make good all-around players, big enough to knock over dwarfs and agile enough to avoid being knocked over by orks and trolls. Windlings and obsidimen are banned from play. The sole t'skrang player in Throal, T'venyoh of the House Elcomi team, has caused quite a controversy among fans; she uses her tail to trip other players, which some believe gives her an unfair advantage.

A good *hach'var* player must be physically strong and resilient. Even so, many teams celebrate the end of a match by downing booster and healing potions.

Personal Combat

Two evenings a week, the Royal Auditorium hosts competitions of martial skill run by the Royal Guild of Trainers, an organization of professional combat instructors. Fights are popular spectator events, and the trainers' guild makes more money from admission fees than it does from membership dues. Combatants fight in the auditorium for many reasons. The trainers, as well as adventurers for hire, compete with one another to show off their abilities and attract clients. Some people also use personal combat in the Royal Auditorium to settle grudges and arguments. The *Council Compact* labels dueling as an offense unless it occurs in public under the supervision of the trainers' guild. Sometimes famed adepts fight one another in the auditorium in order to enhance their legendary status. If a player character faces a gamemaster character of great repute and wins, he is awarded half the Legend Points the character would have received for defeating the same opponent in a genuine fight. The gamemaster determines the Legend Point award for each gamemaster character opponent.



The trainers' guild forbids matches to the death. Most armed matches are fought to first blood. Fights between particularly durable adepts last until one party surrenders, or until the trainer acting as referee calls the match. The trainers have keen instincts for the amount of punishment a combatant can take, and so accidental deaths in the ring remain rare. The last such death occurred six years ago, in a case where the victim claimed to be of a higher Circle than she had actually reached. The trainers keep a supply of healing potions and last-chance salves on hand to reduce the chances of permanent injury. A healing potion is supplied at no charge to each combatant at the end of a fight. Unarmed combat is also popular. Like armed fights, these bouts are conducted with a referee in attendance.

Whether armed or unarmed, combatants may use magical talents, treasures or spells during a match. The audience is there to witness wonders and the fighters are expected to cope with their opponents' unexpected abilities, just as they would in a real battle. Though much less common than physical fights, duels between spellcasters are extremely popular. If such an event is publicized ahead of time, the stalls of the Auditorium fill up hours before the event.

Player characters wishing to quickly make a Name for themselves can do so on a fight night. They can challenge gamemaster characters, or show off their abilities by challenging one another. Fight nights also provide a non-lethal way for player characters to resolve lingering disputes with gamemaster characters.

Un'hayedah

Un'hayedah (OON-ha-yee-dah) is a combination of dance and athletics that most Barsaivians outside Throal consider bizarre.

The philosopher Ja'kotto, a male separatist who encouraged his followers to live a cloistered existence apart from women, developed the sport during the Scourge as a way of achieving a "pure" state free from emotion. Ja'kotto's leading disciple and current leader of the Ja'kotto Movement, Belyawain, has popularized the sport as a way to keep men in good physical condition. Until organizations other than the Ja'kotto Movement sponsored un'hayedah matches, women were banned from participating.

Un'hayedah consists of choreographed movements to fiercely rhythmic drumming. The participants each run an obstacle course, during which they must execute a predetermined series of fiendishly difficult acrobatic maneuvers. A trio of adjudicators judges each participant, evaluating the performance on technical and aesthetic grounds.

Un'hayedah attracts a smaller audience than personal combat or *hach'var*, but its fans are devoted to it. When not attending events, they discuss the intricacies of the sport at taverns frequented by other devotees. The audience is mostly dwarfs; there are very few non-dwarf competitors. Intense rivalry exists between adherents of Ja'kotton, who view un'hayedah as central to their philosophy, and those who view it merely as a sport.

ON THE PASSIONS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS



"My gut was roiling with gahad. I had swallowed one insult too many. Throal is no place for a free ork like me. It belongs to bowing, scraping, stupid orks who are one breath away from being turgma. Or so I thought as I stomped down the passageway from the Bazaar toward the Royal Auditorium. The merchants there looked down on me like I was dirt! I could feel them smirking at me behind their masks of false friendship. And these were orks, mind you—treating me, Elvak Questormasher, as some stinking slave. I am a hero to orks everywhere—but not in Throal. Here it meant nothing that I had single-handedly slain an entire coven of Vestrial's reeking lackeys! Here it meant nothing that I had personally spit in the face of Ilbix Byzox, hated questor of Raggok! No, here all that mattered was wearing the shimmering silks of a parrot-colored dwarf, or speaking with a perfumed voice.

"As these dark thoughts clouded my head, I heard a commotion ahead of me. Banging drums. Shouts. Swords beating against shields. For a moment, I thought war had broken out in the corridors of Throal. But as I turned the corner, I saw that it was a procession. Three to four score dwarfs, orks and humans were marching in battle gear, brandishing their weapons and making a great clamor that lifted my heart and softened my gahad. They were dressed in robes of white, spattered with red pigment made to look like fresh-shed blood. Children, similarly attired, accompanied them. They bore wooden standards, topped with whittled figures of a terrible warrior. The warrior was Thystonius, shown as a dwarf, an elf, a human... he even appeared in his aspect as Tranko, the battling ork.

"Among these stout men and women, a cry went up: 'Death to Thera! Death to Thera!' Though I have met many who honor Tranko, I had never seen such fervor before. These people truly had the blood of a Passion flowing through their veins. Before I knew it, I was swept up in their procession. I drew my blade, and began to bang it against my shield.

"I have never had a quarrel with Thera, though I have often struggled against Thera's questors of Dis. Suddenly, I found myself thinking that crushing the Thera's in Barsaive would be a good way to destroy many of Dis' spawn. I joined the chant: 'Death to Thera! Death to Thera!'

"We turned another corner and found ourselves facing a unit of the Royal Guards. As I was at the head of the procession, I braced for battle with them. But to my surprise, they joined us too! As we continued, many others fell in behind us, and our shouts were doubled and redoubled.

"Then I saw a vision of the future. In my mind's eye I saw Barsaive as a vast battlefield, littered with corpses and soaked red in the blood of the enemy. I saw Tranko, Thystonius himself, looking down upon us, his children, and smiling with pride."

—Sworn Testimony of Elvak Questormasher, 1508 TH,
Taken by Apprentice Archivist Tonicurst the Younger, for a
Work in Progress Entitled *The Questor's Way*



Devotion to the Passions is as structured and organized as every other activity among the dwarfs of Throal. Followers of the Passions join groups, known as *olzim* (OLE-zeem), that express their spiritual allegiances. *Olzim* resemble social clubs much more than churches or congregations; each meets infrequently, perhaps once a month, to discuss means of bringing their chosen Passion to the attention of other Throalites. *Olzim* members debate the truth behind legends concerning their favored Passion, often paying a Troubadour to perform the legend in question. They also supervise any ceremonies devoted to their Passion, and meet more often when the time for a ceremony or pageant approaches. If a prominent questor of an *olzim's* Passion visits Throal, the *olzim* will convene to hear the questor speak.

Olzim are one of the primary means by which Throalites from different walks of life get to know one another. An *olzim* is a place to make new friends, and also to forge business and social connections. Roughly two-thirds of Throal's citizens are members of an *olzim*, and about one in every four Throalites is heavily involved in more than one *olzim*. The typical *olzim* has five hundred to a thousand members, and two to three hundred people turn out for an average meeting. Unlike some other Throalic organizations, *olzim* are easy to join; new members are always welcome. Officers of one *olzim*, however, rarely belong to another.

Though all members of an *olzim* are dedicated to a particular Passion, an *olzim* cannot dictate doctrine to its participants or order them to think and behave in a certain way. Officers of an *olzim* are elected each year; they tend to perform purely ceremonial duties, and it is not unusual for an *olzim* to have several dozen officers. The chief officer of an *olzim* is the Elder.

Several *olzim* throughout Throal and its Inner Cities serve each of the sane Passions. There are currently 146 active *olzim* in the kingdom, a number that will no doubt increase along with Throal's population. Some Passions have many more *olzim* than others, and ensuring cooperation between a given Passion's various *olzim* in Throal falls to an organization known as a *j'ha-olzim* (juh-ya-OLE-zeem). The functions of a *j'ha-olzim* are mostly honorary; in practice, its duties are limited to arranging processions and pageants. A *j'ha-olzim* cannot issue commands to the members of the *olzim* under it. *J'ha-olzim* are structured and run in the same way as *olzim*, under a chief officer known as the Grand Elder.

Officers make decisions only with the consent of the *olzim's* members; issues of procedure are resolved with a show of hands at a general meeting. Large disputes tend to arise over petty personal matters, such as which potter receives the honor of making this year's ceremonial urn or some other triviality. Dissatisfied members can easily start up *olzim* of their own if enough interested people are willing to join them. Conflict between *olzim* of different Passions is limited to friendly rivalry or mild mutual disapproval.

The relationship between *olzim* and questors can be uneasy. Questors unused to the ways of Throal may view the devotion of

the typical *olzim* member as weak or even frivolous. Other questors recognize the value of the *olzim*, and appreciate the financial support and favors they can gain from *olzim* members.

The Mad Passions have a few adherents in Throal, who must pay homage to them in secret. Instead of *olzim*, the followers of the Mad Passions form secret societies (described on p. 44). The *olzim* of the sane Passions are briefly described below.

ASTENDAR

Astendar's nineteen *olzim* serve as vehicles for the promotion of the arts, and count many artists as well as patrons among their members. More ceremonies, pageants and processions are devoted to Astendar than to any other Passion, and the general public in Throal considers these events the most enjoyable of all such celebrations inspired by the Passions. Events sponsored by Astendar's *olzim* range from poetry competitions to wild celebrations, well lubricated with food and drink. More strait-laced residents of Throal de-emphasize Astendar's romantic and erotic aspects, but many a young citizen has been initiated into the ways of love during one of Astendar's ceremonies. Performances are a staple of *olzim* gatherings, as are discussions of various new works by prominent artists.

Player characters who join an *olzim* of Astendar will meet many artists and people who love luxurious things, including rich traders and merchants who may hire adventurers to find lost art treasures.

CHORROLIS

Traders, merchants, moneylenders and other Namegivers who seek success in business join *olzim* dedicated to Chorrolis, the Passion of trade. Judging by the thirty-five *olzim* that honor his Name, Chorrolis is the second most popular Passion in Throal. Members of these *olzim* meet more often than most, some as often as once a week. The building of professional connections is a feature of all *olzim* in business-minded Throal, but those who follow Chorrolis make this the focus of their devotion. A standard topic at meetings is the trade climate in Barsaive, and attentive listeners may hear about lucrative opportunities. Members and *j'havim* of reformist, old guard, and free trading houses all serve as officials of the various *olzim* of Chorrolis; the *olzim* provide neutral ground for hammering out differences and forging uncomfortable but sometimes necessary allegiances between the factions.

Player characters may wish to join an *olzim* of Chorrolis in order to develop valuable contacts and gain information about business opportunities and trading house politics. Characters who want work as *b'jados* or on one-shot assignments along Barsaive's trade routes will find membership in one of these groups invaluable.

FLORANUUS

Floranuus is a somewhat neglected Passion in Throal; his flighty nature and lack of concrete goals make him less than popular among practical-minded Throalites. A mere four *olzim* are dedicated to the fiery Passion of revelry, victory and motion, and many Throalic citizens see their members as misfits, oddballs and eccentrics. However, they are happy misfits and oddballs. Members of *olzim* dedicated to Floranuus are mostly orks and elves, an odd social mix that leads to many amusing anecdotes. Meetings of the *olzim* are meandering but interesting affairs, never stopping long on a single topic but reaching many surprising destinations along the way.

Player characters joining Floranuus' *olzim* can make connections with Throal's elven and ork communities and can meet a wide range of eccentric characters. Some of these people harbor wild schemes that might just come to fruition with the help of a group of adepts willing to take a crazy risk or two.

GARLEN

Like others throughout Barsaive, the common folk of Throal show particular reverence for Garlen, the Passion of hearth and home. Throal has more *olzim* dedicated to her than to any other Passion, thirty-seven and counting as the Inner Cities fill up with immigrants. Though most questors of Garlen are women, both men and women join this Passion's *olzim*. Meetings are simple affairs, in which members share their prayers for the health and prosperity of their homes. Garlen's *olzim* also function as self-help organizations for Throalites of humble means. Officers arrange for families to share hand-me-down clothing and economize on supplies by purchasing in quantity, and provide volunteer healers to aid those most in need of medical care.

Player characters wishing to earn the loyalty of Throal's poor can do so by becoming active in an *olzim* of Garlen. This loyalty could prove helpful in a political crisis.

JASPREE

Few Throalites follow Barsaive's agricultural Passion, who has only three *olzim* dedicated to him. These *olzim* are almost indistinguishable from the Royal Guild of Farmers, the workers who run the Crystal Greenhouses (see p. 96 in **A Tour of the Kingdom**). Jaspree's adherents have recently become seriously concerned about Throal's reliance on imported food, fearing that the kingdom might starve if it should suddenly become cut off from the rest of Barsaive. *Olzim* members have begun to use the ill-attended festivals of Jaspree to argue for expansion of the crystal greenhouses. Though the greenhouses might not be strictly economical during peacetime, the farmers are correct in saying that the greenhouses would become vital in a crisis. Player characters who see trouble ahead for Throal might join an *olzim* of Jaspree in order to advance the worthy cause of Throalic self-sufficiency.

LOCHOST

Not surprisingly, the *olzim* of the Passion of rebellion, change and freedom are much more politically active than the devotees of other Passions. Determined agitators, they want to see dramatic changes in Throal and in Barsaive at large. Members of *olzim* dedicated to Lochost come from many walks of life, but they all share a burning desire for equality and freedom. Their meetings are strategy sessions devoted to converting more Throalites to their way of thinking. The *olzim* of Lochost are more coordinated than others; Lochost's *j'ha-olzim* even issues policy directives that are closely followed by the Passion's servants. Questors of Lochost also play a larger role in the *olzim* than their counterparts who follow other Passions, by running the *j'ha-olzim* and directing the entire group's agenda. The leadership of the *j'ha-olzim* wants to use the *olzim* system to bring about change in Throal. Their main focus at the moment is Thera; specifically, they want Throal to take a harder line against the Theran practice of slavery. As part of that effort, the

j'ha-olzim are building ties to the questors of Thystonius. Though few of them are foolish enough to say so openly, they want Throal to launch a military campaign against the Theran forces stationed at Ayodhya, Sky Point and Vivane. Their belief in their cause blinds them to the devastating consequences such a battle might hold for Throal. Knowing that Lochost is on their side, they are confident of a decisive, if difficult, victory.

The current Grand Elder of Lochost is Jorkan Foe-of-Chains, an ork Warrior, Liberator, and questor. She is widely admired by Lochost's followers and among Throalic orks in general, who see her as a bold hero of ork culture in a sea of cautious dwarfs. Jorkan embraces Namegivers of all races who oppose slavery and hate Thera. Her outspoken nature and fanatical views make the trading houses uneasy. If King Neden's leadership falls into question, Jorkan can mobilize thousands of angry, armed citizens on either side of any fray. Player characters who can ensure Jorkan's support of their political patrons in such a crisis will have done them a major favor, for which the characters can potentially exact a steep price. Unfortunately, the cost of Jorkan's aid will be equally high; she will expect nothing less than a full-scale war against Thera.

Player characters with a grudge against Thera are likely to seek allies in the *olzim* of Lochost. Orks and liberators will find these groups especially congenial.

Adventurers loyal to the crown may want to infiltrate Jorkan's organization in order to keep a close watch on her. Her charisma and unpredictable behavior make her a potential threat to the stability of the kingdom.

Throal houses fifteen *olzim* dedicated to Lochost, and representatives of all Namegiver races appear in their ranks. There are more orks in Lochost's *olzim* than any other race.

MYNBRUJE

The Passion of justice and truth has only five *olzim*, most of whose members are thinkers, scholars and administrators. Because these *olzim* include many prominent Throalites—among them Master Merrox of the Hall of Records, Chancellor Wishten, and the courtier Tholon—their influence is far greater than their numbers might suggest. Meetings often turn into rigorous debates on the nature of justice as expressed in the *Council Compact*.

Player characters anxious to make connections with powerful figures behind the throne might wish to join the *olzim* of Mynbruje. In order to impress these people, they must show eloquence in debate and a solid grasp of serious philosophical issues. Followers of Mynbruje are traditionalists when it comes to the involvement of *olzim* in politics; they view it as a dangerous trend, even in support of a just cause. If they were paying closer attention, they might well be concerned about the growing sway that the *j'ha-olzim* of Lochost and Thystonius hold over Throal's common people.



ADVENTURE HOOK

During a procession in honor of Thystonius that degenerates into the usual brawl, a young visiting merchant is stabbed. She survives the attack, but cannot identify her assailant. A public outcry against the irresponsibility of Thystonius' *olzim* members forces the king to outlaw future processions. The merchant hires the adventurers to find her attacker, whom she suspects is a paid agent of her estranged husband. Her husband has sworn to track her to the ends of Barsaive and kill her. In fact, the attacker is a member of the Royal Guards, ordered by the local magistrate to bring disrepute on the *olzim* of Thystonius. The magistrate, a follower of Mynbruje, is trying to discredit Thystonius' *olzim* in order to quench Throal's growing thirst for war with Thera.

If the adventurers reveal the magistrate's misdeeds, they bring a corrupt official to justice. However, they will also make the cause of Thystonius' *olzim* more popular and bring the kingdom closer to the brink of war. Do they choose justice, or the greater good of the people?

THYSTONIUS

Guards, soldiers, mercenaries and amateur fighters make up the eight *olzim* of Thystonius, the Passion of valor and physical conflict. These *olzim* sponsor fighting competitions, train youngsters in the arts of war and speak up for the interests of the military. Lately, in concert with the followers of Lochost, they have begun to lobby for a rousing good fight against the contemptible Thera Empire. Many in the military are members of these *olzim*, and would dearly love to see such a battle take place. Soldiers less interested in dying for the glory of Thystonius take a dim view of such saber-rattling.

Celebrations and festivals sponsored by the *olzim* of Thystonius tend to degenerate into brawls, and sensible citizens who want to avoid getting bruised stay home during these events. If any other group in Throal caused as much public disorder as the followers of Thystonius, their activities would be banned. The king turns a blind eye to their antics, however, because so many of them are Royal Guards. So far, no one has been seriously hurt in these spiritually inspired altercations, and the guardsmen try their best to keep it that way. Should catastrophe happen, the authorities' grudging tolerance would surely evaporate.

Questors of Thystonius do not take a direct hand in running *olzim* affairs, but call upon *olzim* Elders for aid whenever they need it. The Grand Elder of Thystonius is a dwarf Warrior, Air Sailor, and Swordmaster Named Derrisk. An immigrant to Throal, Derrisk has become one of the dwarf kingdom's most prominent and controversial citizens. A skilled debater, she is one of Throal's foremost advocates of all-out war with the Thera Empire. Her legendary deeds, many of which involve fights against the Therans, have won her the admiration of Throalites from all walks of life. Those in power, however, see her as all too willing to spill Throalic blood to pay tribute to Thystonius. Derrisk is also a storyteller of some repute; her stirring account of a mission to the heart of Thera is particularly popular, and has already been immortalized in several ballads. According to Derrisk's story, she confronted and defied the First Governor himself. None of her companions survived the

return journey to Throal, so no one can confirm the truth of her tale. However, her exploits inspire martial fervor in the most cautious Throalic citizen.

Though not a questor, Derrisk should outclass the highest-Circle player character in any player group by several Circles. With regard to her motivation, the gamemaster may choose between the following options.

Option One

Derrisk is utterly sincere in her hatred of Thera and her love for Thystonius. Like any good debater, she chooses the facts that suit her argument and so makes a convincing case that Throal could win a battle against Thera. However, Throal's actual chances of victory mean little to her. She is dangerous because she believes that there is nothing wrong with incurring massive casualties in pursuit of a worthy cause.

Option Two

Derrisk is a fraud, an agent of a foreign power that stands to benefit from a mutually destructive conflict between Thera and Throal. Depending on the gamemaster's choice, this power may be Iopos, the Blood Wood, or even the Mad Passion Vestrial, who personifies manipulation and deceit.

UPANDAL

The former king was a questor of Upandal, and his royal rank brought prestige to the twenty *olzim* that serve the Passion of building and planning. These *olzim* attract architects, builders and laborers. Through the *olzim*, wealthy construction bosses can drink and chat with their workers and learn about their concerns. Many officers of the Chancellery and the administrations of the Inner Cities are members of these *olzim* because they see the continuing construction of Throal as an act of homage to Upandal. Others, somewhat more cynical, see Upandal's *olzim* as a means of making connections with powerful government officials. Some Throalites grumble that an insular network of officials who grew up together in Upandal's *olzim* runs the kingdom. Rivalry exists between the adherents of Upandal, who generally support the king's initiatives, and many followers of Chorrolis who support the old-guard traders. However, many traders and officials of the Chancellery also belong to *olzim* of both Passions.

Members of Upandal's *olzim* are enthusiastic about architecture and construction. Their meetings are often given over to examination of new plans, speeches by prominent architects, and visits to construction sites. Many members are fervent builders of models. Each *olzim* sponsors an annual model contest, and the *j'ha-olzim* of Upandal also awards an annual prize of 10,000 silver pieces to the architect who designs Throal's most impressive new building. This award is highly coveted; no architect is considered first-rank until he has won it.

Player characters who join an *olzim* of Upandal can benefit by making connections to government officials. Many *olzim* members spend time in the Great Library researching construction techniques of the past, and can provide valuable information about the layout of lost kaers and the forgotten passageways of Throal.

THE MAD PASSIONS

The servants of the Mad Passions dream of crushing Throal by any means necessary. The dwarf kingdom represents hope, achievement and bravery—everything the Mad Passions despise. Thus far, none of the Mad Passions have gained a major foothold in the dwarf kingdom. Their followers work through secret groups, each small enough for a band of player characters to tackle on their own.



Dis

The servants of Dis are the most pathetic of the Mad Passions' minions in Throal. Most of them were minor figures in the Death Rebellion of 1484 TH, too insignificant (and in some cases, too devious) to be prosecuted in its wake. Without the patronage of the trading houses who led the rebellion, these skulkers, killers and spies sought another master. One of them, a Thief and questor of Dis Named Deorah, introduced them to the service of her chosen Passion. Promised the wealth and privilege they had hoped to squeeze from the Death Rebellion, most of them joined Deorah in a secret society. Calling themselves the Heirs of the Rope, they have long since slipped into the despair and boredom characteristic of followers of Dis. They meet infrequently and rarely recruit new members. Deorah died of a stomach ailment three years ago; since then, a retired schoolmaster Named Xodath has led the group. Xodath is a fastidious, frightened old dwarf so worried about maintaining the respect of his fellow conspirators that he is afraid to initiate any of Deorah's many plots against Throal. The Heirs of the Rope no longer includes any genuine questors.

Servants of the Mad Passions Raggok and Vestrial know of the Heirs of the Rope and plan to use them to cover their own tracks if an investigation ever gets too close to their own nefarious activities. Though the Heirs have no dastardly plans in progress, some of them are skilled and subtle enough to pose a threat to player characters if they believe their group's existence may be exposed.

Raggok

The Passion of vengeance and jealousy takes a personal interest in the destruction of the dwarf kingdom. He sometimes visits Throal in the guise of Crarites, a traveling peddler who sells amulets and charms. As Crarites, he manifests as a large male troll with pockmarked, flaky skin and oversized, ram-like horns. Crarites appears once every year or so in the Grand Bazaar and meets with Uilmaz, a dwarf curio merchant. Uilmaz is the leader of the Hive of Ashes, a secret society dedicated to destroying Throal from within. Crarites first met Uilmaz in 1430 TH, when the dwarf was dying of a wasting disease. In exchange for a pledge of eternal loyalty, Crarites offered Uilmaz a cure for her otherwise fatal condition. The "cure" was in fact an elixir derived from the astral essence of a dormant Horror. Uilmaz seems to be nothing more than an impossibly old dwarf woman who walks with a stoop, but in fact she has become a minor Horror.

Following the instructions of her new master, Uilmaz kept an eye out for others in a position similar to hers. In the eighty years since her initiation into the Hive of Ashes, she has extended Raggok's dark bargain to more than four dozen dying Throalites. Those so horrified by the offer that they threatened to expose her did not live to make good on their threats. Uilmaz arranged for their deaths, which were attributed to their illnesses.

The members of the Hive of Ashes include professionals, workers and *j'havim* of various trading houses. Most of them are other merchants in the Grand Bazaar, and so player characters will find it nearly impossible to conduct business in the Bazaar without being noticed by a Hive member. Crarites/Raggok has given his fol-

lowers one primary mission: to corrupt or destroy any heroes who pass through the gates of Throal, from young adepts who can be turned toward vengeance and destruction to heroes of legendary status. Any player characters who attract attention in the Bazaar may become targets of the Hive. Hive members have slain more than a dozen adepts over the past ten years, and have also recruited a number of still-respected adepts to Raggok's cause.

The infusion of Horror essence received by each Hive member upon initiation allows them to physically transform into deadly creatures similar to bloatforms (see p. 286 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). In this form, the Hive members' game statistics are the same as those of bloatforms, except that they have the Damage Shift power (see p. 271 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) instead of the Horror Mark power. They retain a vaguely humanoid shape, covered with shifting tentacles and pieces of rotting flesh, and they sport insect-like claws and wings. Members of the Hive can no longer use Artisan skills they may have learned in the past. Though slow corruption has driven them completely insane, they are clever enough to pass in Throalic society as eccentric but otherwise normal Namegivers.

Raggok realizes that his campaign to destroy heroes is just a way of marking time. He is building the Hive and sharpening the abilities of his minions as he waits for the moment when the dwarf kingdom is most vulnerable to a devastating blow. The thought of a war with Thera pleases him, and he has instructed the Hive to support the growing pro-war forces in Throal.

Crarites has no interest in personally battling Namegivers, as such one-sided victories do not quench his thirst for vengeance. Raggok's avatar can dematerialize at will, and will do so if attacked. However, he may take a couple of deadly swipes at the adventurers just to teach them a lesson before he goes. If by some bizarre chance a group of player characters manages to slay Raggok's manifestation, they do not kill the Passion; they merely prevent him from returning to Barsaive as Crarites.

CRARITES

Attributes

DEX: 30 STR: 30 TOU: 30
PER: 28 WIL: 40 CHA: 25

Characteristics

Initiative: 30 Physical Defense: 39
Actions: 6 Spell Defense: 40
Attack (10): 40 Social Defense: 32
Damage: Physical Armor: 40
Horns (10): 40 Mystic Armor: 40
Death: 269 Recovery Tests: 15
Unconsciousness: 247 Knockdown: 36
Wound Threshold: 13 Movement: 6
Karma Points: 50/50 Karma Step: 20

Powers

Raggok's Powers (*Player's Companion*, p. 169), Cause Pain (15): 40, Durability (15), Inspire Rage (15): 40, Raise Undead (15): 40, Spellcasting (15): 43, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) ^T (15): 43

^T Power as talent

Spells

Nethermancy (Fifteenth Circle). Crarites can cast any and all Nethermancer spells known to exist in Barsaive. He does not use spell matrices, but suffers none of the effects of using raw magic.

Loot

None. All of Crarites' accoutrements are illusory.

Legend Award

Fifteenth Circle × 7 (Group). All of Raggok's servants will forever seek vengeance against any Namegiver known to have defeated one of the Mad Passion's manifestations, and Raggok will personally direct this campaign. (Did we mention that it's generally a bad idea to attack an avatar of a Passion?)

Vestrial

The Passion Vestrial has ten times more followers in Throal than any other Mad Passion. Through these secret devotees, the Passion of deceit and manipulation weaves elaborate plans for the destiny of Barsaive, and Throal lies at the center of this web. Appearing to his minions in dreams, Vestrial has created a number of secret societies in Throal, all of which operate ignorant of each other and of the true cause they serve. As a Passion, Vestrial has a different sense of time than the ordinary Namegiver; his plans may be brilliant and destined to bear terrible fruit after centuries of scheming. Or Vestrial may be deceiving himself, just as he used to back in the days when he was a lovable trickster. The Passion's plots may even cancel one another out, forming a pattern of utter nonsense. Whichever of these is true, Vestrial has several hundred Throalites unknowingly dancing to his strange tune.

A few of Vestrial's followers in Throal are described below. The gamemaster should feel free to invent additional ones to suit the needs of his campaign. Unintentional servants of Vestrial make good adversaries for beginning characters; these mysterious groups create problems for Throal, but are not powerful enough to easily destroy even novice adepts.

Ghinez and Apprentices

The architect Ghinez is one of the elder statesmen of the construction industry in Throal. His designs have long been praised for their simplicity and beauty. He is a fixture in the *olzim* of Upandal, and popular among his workers and customers. He is also a questor of Vestrial.

For the past three decades, Ghinez has been placing magical incantations of deception in the masonry of the homes and businesses he has built. At this time, only he and his three apprentices, who also happen to be his sons-in-law, are aware of this plot.

Anyone who spends more than forty hours in a building marked with one of these incantations risks falling under a curse. The gamemaster should make a Step 15/D20+D6 Curse Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim suffers a penalty to his Perception Tests when attempting to distinguish truth from falsehood. He also suffers a penalty to his Social Defense against illusory magic, including Interaction Tests, resisting skills such as Acting and Disguise, and resisting Illusionism spells. The severity of the penalty is based on the Curse Test result. An Average result causes a -1 penalty; for each result level above Average, the penalty increases by -1. For example, an Excellent result causes a -3 penalty. Gamemaster characters exposed to this effect are generally gullible and unable to think critically. They may, for example, be easily convinced that war against Thera is a good idea.

When viewed astrally with the Divine Aura spell or other similar abilities, a victim of this incantation appears to have a clouded aura. A Dispel Magic spell severs the link between the victim and the incantation. It does not automatically cause the victim to reject false beliefs acquired while under the incantation's influence, though victims can easily be persuaded of the folly of such notions once the effect is dispelled. Dispelling the incantation's effect does not prevent victims from falling prey to it again if they spend another forty-plus hours in one of Ghinez's buildings.

The incantations woven into the buildings have an astral presence only during the moment when the Curse Test is made. Several Wizards of Throal are aware of the effect, having lifted the curse from numerous victims; however, none of them have yet discovered what generates it or how widespread it is.

Sons of the Air

About thirty Air Sailors in the Throalic navy belong to a living legend cult called the Sons of the Air. They believe that a Great Form elemental air spirit (see p. 211 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) Named Kwai-Ru is their patron. The Sons of the Air have been active since the ill-fated flight of the *Earthdawn*, when Kwai-Ru came to their founder claiming to owe a debt to the lost sailors of that legendary vessel. Since that day, a select few Air Sailors have been inducted into the cult, which operates in secret.

None of them have yet realized that the Name Kwai-Ru is an anagram for *wurika*, the ancient Scythian word for trickery. Belief in Kwai-Ru inspires the members of this cult to foolhardy acts of bravery; they think their patron elemental air spirit will magically aid them in attempting impossible stunts. Not surprisingly, the cult's adherents frequently don't live long.

As with much that Vestrial does, the Passion's plans for this group are unclear. He may one day call on the Sons of the Air to betray the Throalic navy, or he may simply enjoy seeing Air Sailors die in idiotic accidents.

The Watchers

The magistrates and Chancellery officers in this secret society believe they serve the interests of the dragon Mountainshadow. Some of the group's several dozen members are more involved than others—especially its leader, an Officer of the Court Named Lorinel. This elderly elven woman has been a fixture in government since the days of King Varulus II. Over the course of his reign, Varulus III had slowly eased her out of her official duties; nowadays, she is mainly responsible for relations with the Chancelleries of the Inner Cities. This leaves Lorinel quite a lot of spare time, in which she follows cryptic instructions she receives by messenger once or twice a month.

She thinks these messages come from Mountainshadow or one of his servants. In fact, they come from a mad ork in Bartertown Named Harchong. Though most of Harchong's hallucinations are random expressions of his madness, some of them are inspired by Vestrial, who visits him in dreams as a dragon and claims to be Mountainshadow.

Harchong writes bad verse inspired by his visions, which he passes along to a troll Messenger Named Randova Brokensong. Bro-

ADVENTURE HOOK

While aboard a Throalic airship, one of the characters walks through the wrong door and barges in on the strange and bloody initiation ceremony of the Sons of the Air. The members of the group know that they must either recruit the player character or destroy him. Vestrial, sensing that his unwitting followers are in trouble, aids them by deceiving the ship's navigational equipment and sending it into a terrible storm above the Wastes. The adventurers must survive the storm, as well as the deadly attentions of the Sons of the Air.

kensong, a onetime Troubadour rendered mute in a battle, is the only Namegiver involved with the Watchers who knowingly follows Vestrial. The Passion has tricked her into believing that he will restore her voice if she serves him loyally for a decade and a day. Brokensong delivers Harchong's messages to a minor official of the Chancellery, who passes them along to Lorinel without looking at them.

A typical message might read as follows:

*The two hach'var players fall in love.
The titan punches his mother
on the mountain.
The soldier reveals the time candle.
The wax has melted
down the mine shaft.*

Lorinel puzzles out her instructions from the verses, interpreting the strange words to match her assumptions concerning Mountainshadow's wishes. She thinks Mountainshadow is sympathetic to Throal but opposed to sudden changes, and so she orders the other Watchers to keep a close eye on those activities of the king and others that she thinks might culminate in surprising results.

Lorinel has placed Watchers in the *olzim* of Lochost, Mynbruje, and Thystonius, and also in the free trading houses. All members issue weekly reports to Lorinel, which she condenses into an account of her own and passes via Brokensong to Harchong. Without perusing the reports, Harchong buries them in the basement of his hovel along with the mummified skeletons of the rats and birds that he regularly captures.

On three occasions, Lorinel decided that Mountainshadow wanted particular troublemakers killed. She ordered them murdered, and other Watchers carried out the killings. If player characters become too involved in Throalic politics and appear to be bringing about rapid change of some kind, Lorinel might interpret Harchong's verses as their death warrant.

Adventurers may also come into conflict with the Watchers if they somehow arouse the personal wrath of Vestrial. In this case, the Passion will appear to Harchong and dictate a verse ordering Lorinel to kill them.

THE HALLS OF POWER

A weak king rules hoping his subjects will remain powerless. A great king becomes so only through the strength of his people.

• KING VARULUS III •

These days are sorrowful indeed. I am torn by doubts that I cannot share with any living soul. The only gesture I can make toward my troubled conscience is to record events here, in this journal, so that the scholars of future generations shall have a true account of them. I am a party to a grim and necessary hoax. The victims of the fraud are the good people of Throal. My rational mind tells me that this sham is necessary and serves the ultimate good of the people. My emotions gnaw at me, demand that my allegiance be to the truth and the truth alone. As Master of the Hall of Records, my duty is to sort rumor from falsehood, to make truth available to all. Yet I have become a deceiver, and the good of my cause does nothing to change that fact.

It is widely known that the king spends many hours in conference with me each day. That we are friends, confidants, enthusiastic fellow scholars. We while away hours on minutiae, our ramblings touching matters ranging from the trite nature of astral space to the distribution of poisonous mushrooms in the Servos jungle. It is a habit we have had for many years. Anyone who follows the ways of the court knows that King Varulus is a most excellent amateur scholar; he is preparing a weighty tome concerning legends of the Passion he quests for, Upandal. If His Majesty is less often seen in public, shortens his sessions at court, delegates more authority to his chancellor, it is because he is nearing completion of this great text. Courtiers and nobles who demand access to the king are told that he is busy, with me, carefully editing and annotating this mammoth tome. Not to worry, we tell them; soon the book will be finished, and the king will once more devote his full attention to matters of state. It is true that His Highness is occupied with a great work, but it is not paper he writes upon. The parchment of this text is the mind of his son, Prince Neden. Varulus is dying. The wasting disease that he once so easily concealed now makes grim progress against his ravaged body. The kingdom's finest healers, questors and magicians have marshaled all their abilities to attempt a cure; the best they can do is increase his strength for short periods. When we must present him to public view, we fill him full of medicines and prop him up in his throne. His absences have aroused the suspicions of hostile courtiers, most particularly Selenda of House Ueraven, but without proof our foes cannot act. Thus far, only the lack of proof has saved us; and I cannot help but wonder every day how long our luck can possibly hold out.

Selenda and her ilk have ever been His Majesty's enemies. They hunger to devour the young prince's authority before he is even crowned. We must therefore prepare Prince Neden to ascend the

throne with the full authority of Throal's greatest kings. Day after day we review the Precedents with him; we speak of strategy, of diplomacy, of the petty flatteries and subtle rebukes that are the indispensable tools of a leader. Prince Neden is a willing and attentive student, but I worry that the urgency of our lessons may be undermining his confidence. Fear has etched itself into Neden's features, and the shadows in his face deepen as his father slips further and further from life.

I have done my best to conceal this bitter truth from friend and enemy alike. The people of Throal feel safe, comfortable, cushioned from disaster by the wisdom and strength of their beloved sovereign. Little do they know that Throal's stability hangs by an ever-weakening thread ...

—From the Private Journals of Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records; Undated, Assumed to be ca. 1508 TH

No one is more painfully aware of the contradiction underlying Throal's government than King Neden. Throal is an absolute, hereditary monarchy ruled by a monarch who believes in neither hereditary rule nor in absolutism. In the long run, Neden wishes to see the government of Throal recast into some new form that will allow all citizens to have a say in decisions that affect them. He has yet to define how such a system might work, or even put a Name to it. Neden knows that his father and his grandfather had already pushed the people of Throal a great distance from the traditional beliefs of the past, and that the implications of the Council Compact have already created tensions within Throalic society.

Before his death, Varulus III was biding his time, allowing the various powerful forces in the kingdom to adjust to the rapid pace of change. He knew that his son Neden would have to implement his final reforms, just as the task of actually putting the Compact into practice came down to Varulus from his father. He had begun sharing his broad aims with Neden, hoping to instill in him the same zeal for just government that Varulus II passed on to him. At the same time, Varulus III warned Neden to expect much more immediate worries than political theory—when he ascended the throne, Varulus warned, Neden had to immediately establish himself as a benevolent ruler, sympathetic to the desires of the governed. Neden found this task difficult, as attacks on his assumption of power from sincere traditionalists and the merely power-hungry were as certain as the fall of night after a long day.

ON THE RULE OF THE CROWN

Technically, the word of the King of Throal is law. Though he annually swears to uphold the principles of the Council Compact, Neden could amend that document on a whim if he chose to. Its interpretation lies entirely in his hands. He has the right to countermand the orders of any royal functionary or administrator, and also has absolute command over the various royal families who rule the new underground cities built in the aftermath of the Scourge. The heads of all branches of Throalic government—the military, the diplomatic corps, the intelligence network, even the scholars and librarians—ultimately answer to the king. All officers of the Throalic government serve at Neden's whim. All these rights of kingship have come down to Neden from the dwarf kingdom's most ancient traditions.

These traditions also state that the closest blood relative of the monarch shall take the throne upon the monarch's death. Children are considered the closest relatives, followed by siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, and first cousins, in that order. Any relative more distant than these has no claim to the throne. Though Throal happens to have been ruled by males for generations, the system of succession gives equal preference to candidates of either gender. If King Varulus III's closest blood relative had been a daughter rather than a son, a queen instead of a king would now rule Throal. Relatives by marriage, such as Varulus' wife Dollas, cannot claim the throne.

As a sire of potential kings, Varulus III had been less than prolific; there was only his son Neden to replace him. As of 1510 TH, King Neden is 36 years old—young by dwarf standards—and unmarried, with no children of his own. Should King Neden die or become incapacitated before producing an heir, Throal will be thrown into a crisis of succession.

Such crises are not unprecedented in the long history of the dwarf kingdom. When they occur, the officially recognized courtiers of the late king convene and select a new king from the leaders of Throal's most venerable families. As described further on in this section, the king does not select his own courtiers; they occupy hereditary positions. The various representatives of Throal's great families have different interests and fight for various agendas. Of the crises of succession recorded in Throalic history, some were resolved peacefully; others led to bloody civil war, with the forces of would-be monarchs battling one another for political legitimacy.

Even with legitimacy unchallenged, a weak monarch will have difficulty enforcing his decrees. The leaders of the noble trading houses control large private armies that they can use as leverage against a king they wish to undermine. Powerful guilds can bring the nation to a standstill with work stoppages, and the common folk can riot if an unpopular king tries to enforce his will or fails to enact policies they want. In an attempt to circumvent this potential threat, Varulus III had created a system to take into account the wishes of the common citizens. He had always carefully balanced these concerns with the interests of Throal's richest and most influential families, even though it has sometimes galled him to do so. He taught Neden the importance of building strong ties to the wealthy nobles, but urged him at the same time to remain open to the desires of the common people.

ON THE CHAV'AO'ROS

King Varulus III, always in his element when dealing with ordinary citizens, had expended a great deal of effort in finding ways to learn what his people expected from him. The culmination of these efforts was the *chav'ao'ros* (CHAV-yow-ross), a term drawn from an archaic root language of Throalic that means "forums within forums." Instituted shortly before the

reopening of Throal, the *chav'ao'ros* is a series of community meetings, each chaired by a speaker and attended by a recorder. The speaker elicits concerns about government from the local people, often asking them to address issues currently before the king in order to help His Majesty judge the public mood. Attendees may also bring up their own matters of concern. The recorder takes notes and carefully represents the consensus, if any, expressed by those who speak at the meeting. Throalic law forbids a recorder to speak or direct the discussion at such a meeting; he must remain neutral in order to accurately recount what is said.

The first set of meetings takes place in the neighborhoods of Throal. The royal administrators maintain careful records of each neighborhood's population, and use these to assign people to *chav'ao'ros* of fifty or so extended families. All adult citizens of Throal are assigned a *chav'ao'ros* every year, though they have no legal obligation to attend any of the meetings. Each neighborhood

ADVENTURE HOOK

A band of adventurers that includes an ork, or a group known to have experience with orks, is approached by Oyalica, a unit commander in the Royal Guards, the police force of Throal (see p. 83). In a regrettable incident at a neighborhood *chav'ao'ros* in the new city of Valvria, the speaker was stabbed and seriously wounded. The neighborhood in question is almost entirely ork, and everyone attending the meeting was an ork. Oyalica has tried to learn the assailant's identity, but no one will talk—not even the victim. Oyalica admits to the adventurers that her experience with orks is limited, but she knew her questions were only making the orks angry. Oyalica asks the adventurers to quietly find out what happened without making the problem worse.

If the adventurers know how to act around plain-spoken, passionate orks, they can piece the incident together and learn that the recorder of the meeting stabbed the speaker. The recorder, Jarkna, was elected to her post as cruel joke; local orks know that Jarkna's gahad prevents her from holding her tongue during an argument. Unable to remain silent, she lost control and stabbed the speaker, who also happens to be Jarkna's rival for the love of the local brewer.

The orks are extremely embarrassed by the incident and the unkind jest behind it. They fear that if the details become public, they will lose the right to participate in future *chav'ao'ros*. Orks are highly sensitive to slights and hate to be thought of as second-class citizens in dwarf-dominated Throal.

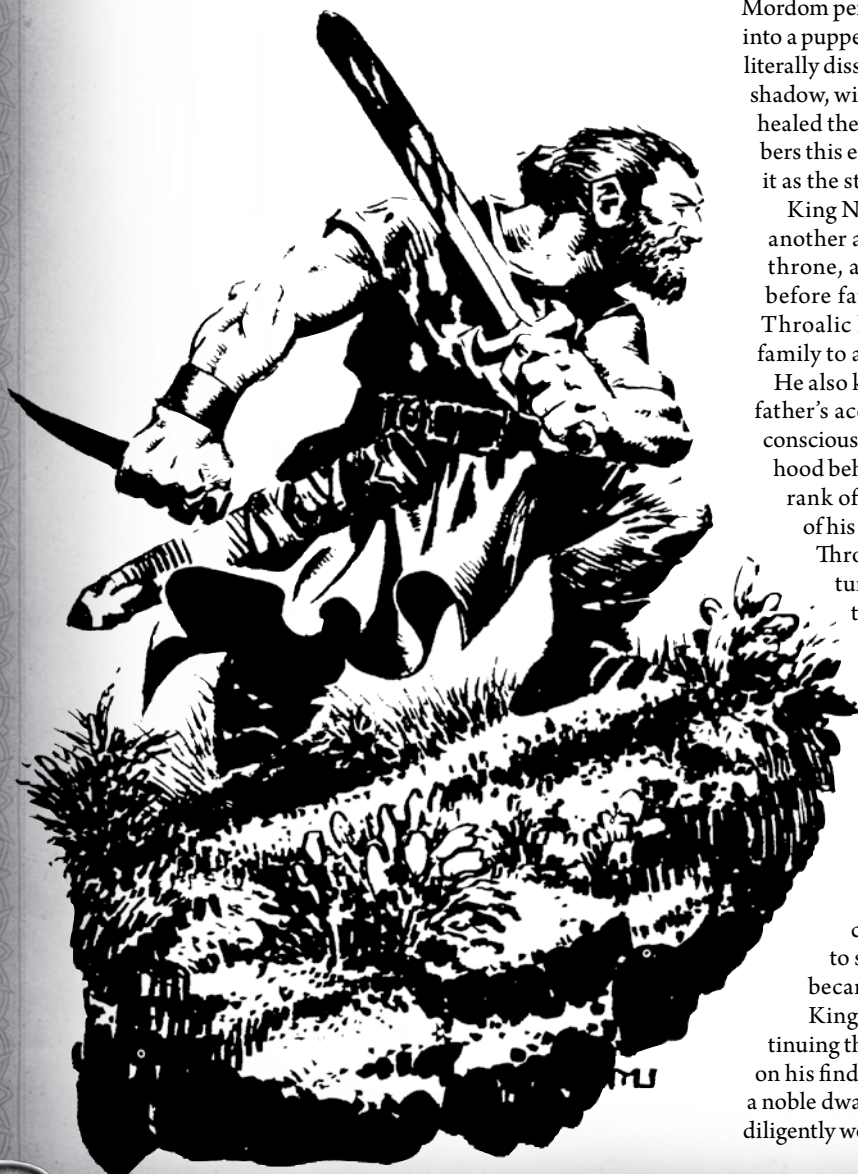
If the adventurers aren't careful, they may be attacked by orks anxious to maintain the cover-up. Once they find out what happened, they face another problem: prominent dwarf nobles who want dwarfs to have higher status in Throal than other Namegiver races. The stabbing incident plays right into their hands, giving them an excuse to whip up conservative dwarf opinion against the orks and other newcomers. If the adventurers succeed in settling the orks down and stopping the hatemongers, they will earn Oyalica's gratitude. In addition, King Neden and his supporters will mark them as useful allies who have earned a royal favor.

chav'ao'ros elects its own speaker and recorder by secret ballot, and may move to replace either or both at any of their meetings, which occur once every two months.

A week after these meetings comes a second round of so-called "city meetings" attended by the recorders of all the neighborhood meetings. At these gatherings, the recorders express the opinions of the people they represent to another speaker and recorder. City meetings take place for the Halls of Throal and each of the inhabited Inner Cities (see **A Tour of the Kingdom**, p. 93). At the end of these meetings, the eight recorders separately distill the opinions expressed by the people's delegates.

These representatives then convey the opinions of the people to the king. This final meeting occurs in the presence of the king's advisers and courtiers, who may interrogate the recorders, argue for or against opinions expressed, and generally insert their personal agendas into the mixture of ideas. The king then contemplates the results of the *chav'ao'ros* and makes his decisions accordingly. He is not bound to obey the peoples' wishes, but tends to do so out of preference. When he must make an unpopular decision, he generally tries to persuade the people of its wisdom.

The *chav'ao'ros* is not democracy, but it may be the root of democratic government if Varulus' plans ever bear fruit. His death prevented him from taking full advantage of the system. King Neden is still attempting to understand the obligations of a ruler to the desires of the common people.



ON THE ROYAL FAMILY

Several families have ruled Throal during its 1,500-year history. The current ruler, King Neden, is the last scion of House Avalus. House Avalus has been dwindling since the early days of the Scourge; after King Neden, there are no other heirs. The kingdom is two heartbeats away from dynastic change, and in Throal such changes are rarely peaceful.

KING NEDEN

"I am ready for the burden put upon me. I am ready for the burden put upon me. I am ready for the burden put upon me."

▲ ▲ ▲

Varulus' son, King Neden, is 36 years old and so a callow youth by dwarf standards. His Name, the Throalic word for "crossroads" represents a startling break from tradition; everyone had expected King Varulus III to Name his son Varulus IV. The symbolism of Neden's Name and his new role as King of Throal are proving difficult burdens for him, especially since his father's death.

Though he tries not to think about it, much of Neden's character was shaped by a traumatic series of events that befell him at the age of ten. In 1484 TH, during the Death Rebellion, Neden was kidnapped by a megalomaniacal Theran Wizard Named Mordom, whose compatriots attempted to assassinate King Varulus III. Mordom performed several rituals designed to turn young Neden into a puppet of Thera; in the most horrifying of these, Neden was literally dissected and kept magically alive. The dragon Mountain-shadow, with the aid of a human Thief Named J'Role, eventually healed the terrible injuries done to Neden's soul. Neden remembers this experience only dimly, but cannot help thinking about it as the stresses on him increase.

King Neden knows that Throal's enemies would profit from another attempt on his life. He is the last of his family on the throne, and there is no successor to take his place if he dies before fathering a child. Neden is intimately familiar with Throalic history, and knows that transitions from one royal family to another have almost always led to bloodshed.

He also knows that his skill as a statesman falls far short of his father's accomplishments in that area. In an attempt, whether consciously or unconsciously, to put the awful events of his childhood behind him, Neden became a Warrior adept, rising to the rank of commander in the Throalic navy. Over the protests of his family, he has regularly risked his life in the service of Throal, undertaking missions typical of legendary adventurers. Whether he realizes it or not, he has spent almost two decades defying death to prove to himself that his torture left no lasting scars. To an outside observer, King Neden has proven himself a dozen times over. However, his heroic exploits have left him little time to study weighty affairs of state. Neden does not know the influential players of Throalic politics very well, and has given little thought to the practical workings of the ideals for which he has risked his life. His instincts are those of a military man, not a politician. Neden wants easy solutions, and does not know how to deal with enemies that he cannot smite with his sword. His father had many years to study the art of governing under Varulus II before he became king. Neden did not have that luxury.

King Neden must also deal with the delicate matter of continuing the royal line. Though he realizes that the state depends on his finding a wife and bringing up a family, he has yet to find a noble dwarf maiden who appeals to him. His mother, Dollas, is diligently working to find him a suitable wife from among Throal's

nobles. Neden understands the necessity of siring an heir, but resents his own lack of choice in the matter, and so cannot stop himself from systematically snubbing every qualified maiden in the kingdom. Luckily for the royal line, a few pretty young dwarfs have mistaken his rudeness for signs of a great romantic soul, so Neden has not quite succeeded in making himself Throal's most ineligible bachelor. Given a choice, King Neden would much rather spend his time with his childhood friend and fellow navy commander, Rokzo the Unruly. Rokzo, a male dwarf raised by ork Scorchers, is just the kind of devil-may-care, charismatic free spirit that Neden secretly wishes to be.

King Neden is a Ninth Circle dwarf Warrior.

DOLLAS

"Yes, it is in Thalastica's interests to support the scheme. But you must remember that he is Mishwal, and so the memory of the defeat at Jalasa in 634 TH gnaws at him just as it did his father before him, and his father's father before that. Yes, even after all this time."

▲ ▲ ▲

Varulus' marriage to Dollas of House Moberl began as a political arrangement but soon became a mutual love match. House Moberl, a powerful noble family in Throal, has always been known for its conservatism. At the time of Dollas' betrothal to then-Prince Varulus, Moberl was openly opposed to the reforms of King Varulus II. In an effort to turn an adversary into an ally, Varulus II proposed that his son marry the daughter of House Moberl's leader. The Moberl agreed, hoping that Dollas would gradually turn the prince against what they saw as his father's excesses. Dollas, however, was smitten with the dashing prince and had no intention of trying to change his political opinions.

The two had been deeply in love since their long-ago betrothal, and Dollas became one of her late husband's most valuable advisers. She is more interested in people than policies, which her advice reflects. Varulus lived in his mind, and tended to think that others do as well. If a plan seemed logical and moral to him, he had a hard time understanding why others disagreed with it. Dollas realizes that many Namegivers employ logic only to convince themselves that what they want to do is right, and her insights made up for Varulus' one blind spot. To this day, she continues to advise her son.

Dollas is the social center of the royal court, organizing the countless functions that the ruling class of Throal is expected to attend. Neden would sooner spend an evening on the training grounds than attending a ball or feast, and is visibly bored at these events. Dollas, on the other hand, sees them as a way to keep in touch with the kingdom's nobles and powerful merchants. A charming hostess, she shows the friendly face that Neden is often too aloof to project. Dollas knows that a moment of flattery, a child's Name remembered, or the gift of a trinket can sway more political opinions than a dozen lofty speeches. She has a prodigious memory when it comes to relationships between noble families; she recalls all the secret affairs, soured business deals and ancient feuds that determine where allegiances really lie. For example, many intellectual dwarfs, including the late Varulus III, deny the importance of tribal rivalries in modern Throalic life. Dollas understands that many Throalic dwarfs still take such matters very seriously. Many of Neden's most vocal opponents happen to be Huari, a tribe with an age-old grudge against the Mishwal from whom Neden is descended. Neden refuses to comprehend that some of these people fight his sensible policies simply because his ancestors belonged to a different tribe than their ancestors. Without Dollas' advice and behind-the-scenes smoothing of ruffled feathers, he would face twice as much opposition.

Throalic tradition did not allow Dollas to succeed her husband. She is a member of House Avalus by marriage, and was therefore not an heir to the throne.

Dollas wants nothing more at the moment than to find a suitable mate for Neden, hoping that the comforts of married life will focus his mind on his responsibilities. She has found several worthy candidates, but Neden has rebuffed them all, and Dollas is growing increasingly impatient with her son.

Dollas is a dwarf non-adept noblewoman.

VEROXA

"You come to me for the favors of the king, or the king-to-be? What foolery! I am but a humble old woman, my senses dulled by age. You overestimate my influence, you do, yes. But perhaps I will ask a favor from you all the same ..."

▲ ▲ ▲

A dwarf's greatest joy is his extended family. Most Throalic citizens consider it a great sorrow that the royal family is so small; aside from Dollas and Neden, the sole surviving member of the royal family is Dollas' mother, Veroxa.

Observers familiar with dwarf traditions consider Veroxa extremely influential, especially with King Neden. The relationship between grandchild and grandparent is considered the most important bond within a dwarf family, and so those seeking favors from or influence with Neden approach his grandmother first. Depending on the favor and who is doing the asking, Veroxa may laugh in the petitioner's face or promise to put in a good word in exchange for a favor in return. Her requests are usually obscure or mysterious. Opinion is divided as to whether Veroxa is a powerful figure secretly pulling strings, or simply a batty old woman.

Veroxa has no confidants and keeps her own counsel. No one knows what sort of advice she has been feeding Neden since his childhood. Neden is fiercely loyal to his eccentric grandmother; though he is occasionally openly disrespectful to his mother, he is quick to chastise anyone who mentions Veroxa's supposed flaws in his presence.

Veroxa is tiny even for a dwarf, and her nut-brown face is creased with wrinkles. She has lost all her teeth except for the top two in the front. Her deep-set eyes gleam with a wily intelligence. She displays none of the vanity typical of the Throalic ruling class; the easily scandalized whisper that more than a year has passed since she last combed her hair. Her clothing, twenty years behind the fashion, is often worn and tattered. Veroxa walks with the help of a gnarled wooden cane encrusted with emeralds and rubies.

Veroxa is a non-adept dwarf noblewoman.

OF ADVISERS AND COURTIER

The court of Throal includes the king's large circle of advisers and courtiers. Advisers, paid by the royal treasury to give the king their counsel, serve at the king's pleasure and may be dismissed at will. They may have particular areas of expertise, or the king may seek their general wisdom. King Neden's advisers include members of several races, and certain advisors also help to administer various arms of the Throalic government. Not all advisers attend every meeting; many of them are specialists whose opinion the king consults only when he needs it.

In contrast, all courtiers are dwarfs. By tradition, these members of Throal's noble families are accorded the privilege of attending the king at all public appearances, including court sessions during which the king makes decrees or entertains petitions from the public. Courtiers are selected by their houses rather than by the king. Most houses may send only one courtier to attend the king at any given time, though a few have the right to send a second attendant.

Each house selects its courtier as it wishes, and members of a noble family may replace the chosen courtier at any time. Disputes occasionally arise over the selection, but resolving them is a matter for each individual house to settle. Thirty-one courtiers attend upon the king, but few of them attend each and every official audience. Unfortunately for Neden, the most useless of the lot are the ones who have the most time to devote to their court “duties.”

All of the current court positions existed long before Neden assumed the throne; in fact, no new family has been granted the right to attend the king since the reign of Varulus I. If Varulus III had his way, he would have abolished the courtier system entirely. He valued the advice of some of them, but considered the rest idiots, pests, or worse. The courtier system gives privileges to the rich and well-born that other Throalites cannot have, which Varulus deemed unfair. The late king had always felt forced to waste entirely too much time concealing his impatience at various courtiers’ inane mutterings. King Neden puts up with the system only because he has to, and grudgingly agrees with his mother’s assessment that the nobles would see the end of their court privileges as an unforgivable slap in the face.

The king need not allow courtiers to attend him unless he intends to announce some decision or policy, and he often circumvents “court toadies” by holding small conferences with his inner circle of advisers. King Neden almost always makes his decisions in private before announcing them publicly, rendering the objections of courtiers moot. This has led some courtiers to complain that Neden holds too many private conferences, thereby flouting the spirit of the system.

A few noteworthy advisers and courtiers are described below. Others, such as the noted scholar Merrox, the Ambassador General, and the Supreme General of the Throal military, are described in the appropriate sections.

AJMAR THE ADMIRABLE

“You have shown sagacity in approaching me with this matter, my friends. I am fully cognizant of all the mystic correspondences related to your dilemma, and therefore I am best positioned to give you the guidance you seek.”

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Ajmar, an ork Wizard of considerable ability, is the Court Spellcaster of Throal, and advises the king in matters pertaining to magic. As an experienced adventurer, Ajmar also frequently offers counsel related to court-sponsored exploration of kaers and ruins. He speaks in a florid manner, refusing to use a simple word when he can find a four-syllable alternative. Though pompous and more than a little pleased with himself, Ajmar is not a fool. Unlike other so-called experts, he is more than willing to admit it when he does not know something. He conducts careful research before giving an opinion, and constantly flips through a collection of scrolls and digests he carries with him in a large pack. These texts contain the basic correspondences of symbols and ideas that many Wizards see as the basis for their craft. When presented with a question, Ajmar consults these texts to see what symbols are involved. Though his methods and manner of speaking may seem comical, his advice is generally sound.

Much to the chagrin of several courtiers, Ajmar was selected for the post of Court Spellcaster soon after his arrival in Throal. Neden values Ajmar’s advice because the Wizard is completely apolitical; his only agenda is to support himself while he completes a text on magical theory. Ajmar has no vested interest in Throalic politics. Consequently, the king has increasingly come to draw on Ajmar’s knowledge of mystical correspondences for insight into mundane domestic problems. King Neden has grown fond of the eccentric ork Wizard, and loves to listen to gripping stories of his adventuring career.



Preoccupied with his work, Ajmar has not noticed the hostility cast his way by several of the wealthier courtiers. To them, he symbolizes everything wrong with Neden’s rule. They find it intolerable that the king listens to a non-dwarf—and a disreputable adventurer at that—more than he does to them.

Ajmar has olive skin, bushy white eyebrows, and a long, snowy beard combed into two points. He often wears a colorful hide cap with a curled peak.

Ajmar the Admirable is a Tenth Circle ork Wizard.

DRUMILICA

“If I might but have a moment of your precious time, my liege. Please, please, sire, I really and truly must be heard. Only a moment, I understand how important—ah, yes. Well. The matter at hand. Ah. Er ... heh-heh-heh ... dear oh dear, how terribly silly! How foolish of me! I have forgotten the matter of which I wished to speak. How very comical. Let me just compose my—your Majesty? Your Majesty!”

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Drumilica is the archetypal fawning fool, currently serving at court for House Pa’vas. This once-proud noble family fell on hard times when the Scourge disrupted trade; the dwarfs of Pa’vas, unrivaled at opening new trade routes, were unable to manage the money and assets they already had. By the time the gates of Throal re-opened, House Pa’vas had become a small and impoverished family living in a vast, crumbling underground hall. Any source of income was precious to them, and when a newly wealthy merchant offered to pay them for their court post, the family listened

ADVENTURE HOOK

Ajmar returns from a personal meeting with the king to find that his apartment has been burgled. The robbers smashed all the furnishings and scrawled orkish obscenities across the walls in hog's blood. Though irritating, these actions are of little consequence to Ajmar next to the real catastrophe—the thieves have taken his only set of notes for the text he has been laboring over for months. Ajmar cannot track down the villains himself because he must attend a small symposium of Wizards in Bartertown, and so he hires the player characters to help him.

If they follow Ajmar to Bartertown, the adventurers may begin to suspect one of the ork's rival Wizards. In fact, the robbery was financed by the courtier Selenda (see p.75), who wishes to drive Ajmar away from Throal by making it impossible for him to complete his work. The ork ruffians who actually perpetrated the theft are spending their money in the pubs of Bartertown. They saved Ajmar's notes, because even they know that Wizards' texts are worth good money to the right buyer. After some detective work and a brawl or two in Bartertown's seediest drinking establishments, the adventurers can recover Ajmar's manuscript. Unfortunately, they will find it nearly impossible to make allegations stick to Selenda; in any contest between the word of a dwarf noble and a gang of ork criminals, Selenda wins. If the player characters try to expose her, they gain a powerful enemy.

attentively. The merchant was Osbaldo, Drumilica's father, who wanted to buy himself prestige and find a post for his idiot son that would keep him well away from important business dealings. In exchange for an annual allowance, House Pa'vas formally adopted Osbaldo's family, thereby qualifying Drumilica to serve as courtier to the king.

Drumilica is enormously proud of his role as courtier. He attends every session without fail, no matter how inconsequential it might be. Indeed, he has a gift for making any meeting much less consequential simply by opening his mouth. His opinions are never less than completely asinine. His manner of speech does not help matters; he loves to use large words that he does not really understand, rarely finishes sentences, and often contradicts himself within the same speech.

No self-enamored courtier is complete without a mindless devotion to fashion, and Drumilica fits this stereotype to the letter. Dressing in an extreme manner among the color-loving dwarfs is difficult, but Drumilica repeatedly and dramatically rises to the challenge. The clashing patterns and colors of his clothing seem custom-designed to induce headaches, and he has a distracting fondness for bells. Bells hang from every available garment, from his shoes and from his hat. On festival days, he even ties a handful of bells on ribbons into his beard.

Drumilica personifies everything Neden despises about the courtier system. Now and then, the king

awakens with a smile on his face from dreams in which he has throttled this irritating fop. The subject of Drumilica's odiousness is one of the few on which King Neden and Dollas are completely in agreement.

Drumilica is a non-adept dwarf courtier.

ISAM DERR

"The Therans have stepped up their activities south of the Blood Wood? What of it? You'd be far better off devoting those resources to cleansing Parlainth or the Badlands of Horror taint!"

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One of the few obsidimen living in Throal, Isam Derr resides in the city of Wishon. How he manages to live in the underground kingdom without going into hibernation is a secret he does not share (there are rumors he belongs to a secret society; to date no-one has been able to prove this to be true). Isam Derr has sworn to do whatever he can to rid the world of Horrors. He no longer actively adventures, but still acts in an advisory capacity to King Neden. As the threat of Horrors has waned, so has Isam Derr's influence with the king. He is no longer a member of the king's inner circle, though the king still calls on him whenever something concerning Horrors comes up.

Derr is currently attempting to curry favor with Neden, but the king sees him as somewhat pushy. Isam Derr fears that House Avalus is headed for disaster, and wants to do whatever he can to ward it off. No one knows better than he how many major Horrors still walk in Barsaive, and how many loathe Throal as a beacon of peace and enlightenment. Through his network of contacts



ADVENTURE HOOK

While pursuing a pickpocket through the Grand Bazaar, one or more of the adventurers collides with Drumilica as he exits a tailor's shop, knocking him and his expensive new outfit into the mud. Drumilica throws a tantrum, threatening to charge the player characters with assault. When the city guards come, the tailor and a passing noble corroborate Drumilica's wildly exaggerated version of the incident, and Drumilica presses charges against the adventurers. His advocate, however, offers a settlement: he will spare them the bother and embarrassment of a trial in exchange for twice the usual fine.

If the adventurers bother to investigate, they will discover that the greedy advocate is another member of the threadbare House of Pa'vas, and that he hired the pickpocket to instigate the whole affair. Once confronted with these facts, Drumilica denies all knowledge of the plot. He even threatens to charge the adventurers with slander if they spread the story around.

This incident allows the gamemaster to demonstrate the workings of the Throalic legal system (see p. 79). It also sets the adventurers up for a rude surprise should they ever become involved in matters at the royal court: the comical but irritating Drumilica is waiting for a chance to thwart whatever petitions they bring before the king.

throughout the province, Isam Derr keeps his ears open for Horror activity directed against the dwarf kingdom. Diminished influence or not, Isam Derr can still be certain of an audience with the king if he bears concrete evidence of such a threat.

How he manages to live in the underground kingdom without going into hibernation is a secret he does not share. Isam Derr has sworn to do whatever he can to rid the world of Horrors. He no longer actively adventures, but still acts in an advisory capacity to King Neden.

Isam Derr is a Tenth Circle obsidian Warrior.

KELASSA

"Let Selenda stew in her rancid juices. The people are behind you, my king, and that is all that matters."



Kelassa is Neden's closest ally among the courtiers. Unlike the rest of them, she is frequently invited to meetings of the king's inner circle. Kelassa represents House Bvri'ah, a noble house noted for the large number of significant artists and scholars it has turned out over the years. Members of House Byril'ah were instrumental in drafting the Council Compact, and as the courtier for her house Kelassa is an eloquent champion of the Compact's aims.

Kelassa was chosen as Byril'ah's courtier for her artistic accomplishments. She is widely considered Throal's foremost living poet, and slightly inebriated gatherings of sentimental dwarfs frequently recite her epic verses. Most other races find dwarfish poetry sadly lacking in elegance, and consider Kelassa's quatrains leaden and maudlin. Many dwarfs, especially those dedicated to the spirit of the Council Compact, would violently disagree.

Whatever the quality of Kelassa's poetry, she has acute political insight, she regularly moves among the common folk of Throal, and is an excellent judge of their mood. More often than any other courtier or adviser, Kelassa urges the king to take the results of a *chav'ao'ros* into account even when other advisers are busily watering down the people's demands.

Few people know that Kelassa is an adept; during her younger years, she embarked on a series of wild adventures in order to have a life interesting enough to write about. Though she ended up writing about the ancient heroes of early Throal, the realistic details of combat and danger in her poems and stories are drawn from her own experiences. Kelassa has not actively used her magical talents for a long time, but remains a Fourth Circle Troubadour and Third Circle Swordmaster.

Though Kelassa is approaching middle age as dwarfs reckon it, she still appears youthful and vibrant. She often wears robes of a particularly brilliant orange, her favorite color. She is a passionate individual politically and personally; a list of her former lovers would make even more compelling reading than her epic poems, as that list includes the Names of famed dwarfs of humble and noble birth. Some whisper that she was once Varulus III's lover, before or after his marriage to Dollas. Gamemasters interested in exploring this relationship may choose between the options given below.

Option One

Kelassa was Varulus' first love. Varulus wanted to marry her, but his father and grandmother considered her too wild and unpredictable for a royal consort. Though the royal family pressured Varulus to break his ties to Kelassa, the two of them secretly conceived a child together. Kelassa left Throal to have the baby, sending word to Varulus that she had suffered a miscarriage during a kaer adventure. Though she loved Varulus, she did not want to be a member of the royal family, and chose to hide her child's existence because she knew a royal bastard would only cause problems for Varulus later on. In a letter, Varulus broke off the relationship, blaming Kelassa's reckless ways for the loss of his child. Kelassa arranged for the child, a healthy baby boy Named Yacus (YAY-cuss), to be raised by distant relatives in an outlying settlement. She also saved the letter from Varulus, just in case.

The intervening years before Varulus' death had healed the once-bitter rift between them. They did not discuss personal matters, and made good political allies. Kelassa has become a close friend of Dollas, but has not told her the full story of her relationship to Varulus. If Neden's rule ever threatens to wound Throal, or he turns into a monarch hostile to the Council Compact, Kelassa is ready to pluck the first-born son of Varulus from obscurity and fight to crown him king.

Option Two

Varulus and Kelassa grew up together as playmates; they shared no relationship deeper than adolescent puppy-love. Rivals of the king who wish to portray him in a bad light sometimes spread rumors of a more serious illicit relationship, with or without the addition of an illegitimate heir to the throne. Some misguided devotees of Kelassa's works also tell this tale, finding supposed "clues" to her royal affair in her poems.

SELEND A

"Point of privilege, Your Highness! Point of privilege!"



Anyone wondering why the king dislikes the courtier tradition need only look to Selenda for an answer. Selenda is the matriarch of House Ueraven, a wealthy family of Huari tribal ancestry. Just as her forebears opposed Varulus' grandfather and father, Selenda

of Ueraven voiced loud objections to Varulus and his policies, and continues to do so with King Neden.

The dispute between House Ueraven and the royal family goes back centuries, to the time when the last king of House Korelsed died without an heir. In accordance with tradition, the noble families met to choose a new king. House Ueraven claims that they were given the throne, and that other nobles reneged. Official history maintains that support for House Ueraven's claim was based largely on coercion. Members of House Avalus exposed these machinations, and that house was then selected to lead Throal. Despite bitter censure from the other noble families, Ueraven vowed to fight on for the throne. The new king nipped the Ueraven rebellion in the bud with a successful military assault on House Ueraven's troops, who were headquartered in the mountain city of Jalasa. After a brief skirmish, the defeated Ueraven family was forced to swear fealty to the new monarch. Most of Throal's citizens regard this incident as a dusty footnote in history, if they think of it at all. The children of House Ueraven, by contrast, have grown up on tales of the perfidy of House Avalus in every generation since. Now that House Avalus has been reduced to a mere handful of dwarfs, Selenda is laying the foundation for House Ueraven's succession to the throne. Selenda has secured support among old-guard nobles, who feel that Varulus' Council Compact deprives them of the natural benefits of high birth. With this support, Selenda might well succeed in a bid for the throne if something happens to Neden.

Because their sworn enemies proposed it, the Ueraven bitterly fought the Council Compact. Since its inception, they have become the focus of conservative elements in the dwarf nobility who see the Compact as a threat to their power. In order to strengthen the loyalty of these allies, Selenda must be seen as a strong opponent of the Compact, and so she regularly rails against it at court. She is especially tenacious when Neden attempts to introduce measures that threaten the status of the rich and well-bred in Throal. Selenda takes a special interest in civil and criminal court cases where nobles are pitted against common citizens, and excels at exerting pressure on the king. When she has no major issues with which to involve herself, she ties the court up in procedural matters. Though her post as courtier is purely ceremonial by law, her influential allies make her an adversary to be reckoned with. On more than one occasion, Selenda's efforts alone have frustrated the king and his advisers in their efforts to pursue a specific goal.

Though she does not make a regular practice of it, Selenda is even willing to engage in petty crimes to harass the regime. However, she is smart enough to avoid supporting major conspiracies that could backfire and permanently disqualify House Ueraven from the next struggle for succession. If the Denairastas had presented Selenda with their plan to assassinate King Varulus III, she would have turned the conspirators over to the authorities immediately; the appearance of ultimate loyalty would bring her the maximum political advantage. Selenda considers herself a loyal servant of Throal, if not of King Neden, and refuses to conspire with the kingdom's external enemies. She opposed House Ueraven's still-unproved involvement in the coup attempt of 1484 TH, arguing that the risks of open rebellion were too high. In the aftermath of the Death Rebellion, Ueraven's leaders lost their positions in the house and Selenda took over. House Ueraven made quite a bit of silver before the Scourge through business partnerships with Thera, but Selenda has no particular love for the Empire. She opposed Varulus' anti-slavery campaign partly out of habit and partly because she sees no value in it—she sees only the great cost of a war with Thera over the issue. To keep the chances of such a war at a minimum, Selenda fights any efforts to step up pressure on the Therans in Barsaive.

Forceful to a fault, Selenda dominates other members of her family, and expects other people to agree with her if she makes a



point strongly enough. In the eyes of the weak-willed and insecure, she has a certain charisma. More strong-minded people consider her abrupt and arrogant. Like many who are sure of themselves, Selenda tends to ignore information that does not fit her preconceived notions. For example, she does not realize that many other conservative nobles dislike her and would be unlikely to support her, or a Ueraven member under her thumb, for the throne. The old guard considers Selenda a useful handful of sand to throw in the king's eyes, but do not see her as their future queen. Like his father before, King Neden despises Selenda; she intimidates him, though he would never admit it.

Selenda has a flat, broad face and large, frog-like lips. She wears too much make-up, applying absurd amounts of rouge to her sunken cheeks. In a manner now out of fashion, she powders her face and hair, which gives her a ghoulish appearance. She wears a strong perfume, also hopelessly out of date, that arrives in a room several paces ahead of her and refuses to depart when she leaves.

Selenda is a non-adept dwarf courtier.

THOLON

"A true follower of the traditional ways supports his king unconditionally."



Tholon is the eldest courtier currently attending the king. His dignified manner, his familiarity with the precedents of Throalic history, and his personal experience in politics are all highly valued by his fellow courtiers. He speaks sparingly at court, but when he does, people listen. A conciliator by nature, Tholon often defuses confrontations instigated by Selenda or other troublesome courtiers. A genuine traditionalist, he believes that the word of the king

is beyond question. To Tholon, King Neden deserves the loyalty of all Throalites simply because he sits upon the throne; the specific policies he chooses to adopt are beside the point. If Neden were to announce Throal's submission to the Therans tomorrow, Tholon would continue to support him unwaveringly. Privately, Neden is troubled by this unquestioning loyalty, though he does not stop Tholon from eloquently defending him in public.

Tholon is the head of House Elcomi, a family that became rich during the Therans' rule over Barsaive. House Elcomi has not aggressively pursued the available business opportunities in the new Barsaive, seemingly content to draw revenues from its properties in Throal and from investments in the business initiatives of more active houses. Tholon could shake up more than a few houses by calling in these loans, which makes several house leaders reluctant to support Selenda or other opposition forces; Tholon's wrath would be very bad for their business. If the royal line dies out, Tholon would become a wild card; without a legitimate sovereign on the throne, his loyalties would be anybody's guess. Tholon wants to avoid a struggle for succession at all costs, and on several occasions has privately harrumphed to Dollas that Neden should get himself married and start producing offspring without further delay. King Neden regards Tholon as a surrogate grandfather, and is closer to him than he was to his father.

Tall for a dwarf, Tholon stands four feet, six inches high. He is also unusually thin and frail, and walks with the aid of a cane. His large, bony nose resembles a parrot's beak.

Tholon is an nOn-adept dwarf courtier.

WISHTEN

"Cheer up, Dalubian! Certainly the muckers are a difficult bunch. But you can charm them if you put your mind to it! I know you can!"

▲ ▲ ▲

The current Chancellor and foremost advisor to the king is Wishten, a likable male dwarf widely hailed as one of the greatest players of *hach'var* who ever lived (*Hach'var* is a team sport popular in Throal; for details, see **Hach'var**, p. 40). Wishten no longer plays the game; knee injuries make it difficult for him to walk, much less engage in sports. A member of the royalist House Elcomi, he was appointed chancellor as a stopgap measure more than ten years ago. Varulus III hoped to convince Kelassa to take the post, but she was busy writing an epic poem and turned down the job. Wishten has performed surprisingly well

as chancellor, and Neden would not dream of replacing him now. A natural leader, Wishten has a casual, cheerful manner much different from the usual dour, deliberative dwarf official. He has a good memory for details, an optimistic attitude and plenty of common sense. Like the coach of a *hach'var* team, he gets good results from his subordinates by making them feel confident of their abilities.

The number one target of his confidence-instilling skills is King Neden. Wishten is aware that Neden depends heavily on him, especially in these first few years of the young king's rule. Wishten is doing his best to ensure that the king learns to trust himself, so that he can survive the storm that has broken upon him. Though good at carrying out orders, Wishten is not a great political thinker. He sees both sides of any thorny issue, including the question of stepping up hostilities against Thera.

Wishten is a non-adept dwarf advisor.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION

The Chancellery, a small civil service commanded by the king's chancellor, carries out the king's decrees. As the one responsible for the practical running of affairs in the dwarf kingdom, the chancellor holds a vital position. As the scholar Merrox once observed, "No great kings were ever served by incompetent chancellors, but brilliant chancellors made several mediocre kings seem great." Each king appoints his own chancellor; courtiers and *chav'ao'ros* delegates might voice their opinions on a candidate, but the monarch alone decides who fills the position.

Officers of the Court, of which there are currently five, serve the chancellor. They in turn delegate royal orders to be carried out by the rank-and-file Officers of the King. Many officers have young assistants, who begin as apprentice officers and are promoted to the position of deputy officer before attaining their full authority. Each Officer of the Court is assigned certain responsibilities on a more-or-less permanent basis. For example, Officer of the Court Dalubian takes care of waste disposal issues, while Officer of the Court Azakis keeps an eye on relations between the races in Throal.

The Chancellery oversees the smallest details of life in the Halls of Throal, from repairing buildings and roads to licensing businesses. People who need things fixed or who seek redress in disputes with neighbors must first approach an Officer of the King. If unsatisfied, they may petition an Officer of the Court, then the Chancellor, and finally the king himself. The Chancellery devotes most of its resources first to the assessment and collection of taxes, second to public works.

In the Inner Cities, administrative arrangements are made by the various noble families chartered to run each city. The Chancellery communicates the king's wishes to these families, each of whom maintains its own Chancellery; there is a Chancellery of Yistane, a Chancellery of Bethabal, and so on. When Throalites speak simply of "the Chancellery," they mean the Chancellery of Throal, which is also sometimes referred to as the Royal Chancellery.

OF CITIZENSHIP

No one in Barsaive has an automatic right to live in Throal, or even necessarily to enter it. Permanent citizenship and legal residence in the dwarf kingdom are under the jurisdiction of the Royal Chancellery.

Throalic citizenship belongs to anyone born in Throal, and any child born to a Throalic citizen is automatically eligible for citizenship upon registration with the Chancellery. Because the Throalic government wants people to move to Throal, any Namegiver who wishes to may apply for citizenship, and the process for obtaining

legal rights of residence is simple and friendly. The applicant (and his family, if any) attends an interview with a Deputy Officer of the Royal Court, during which the applicant will be asked about his family background, place of birth, and occupation. In addition, the officer asks the applicant why he wants to move to Throal. Finally, all applicants must prove that they have reasonable prospects for supporting themselves. The interviewing officer has the right to summarily reject an application, but does so only in extreme cases. Those few applicants rejected tend to be suspected or known criminals.

Certain types of applicants are favored over others, especially Theran exiles and adepts. Throal welcomes Theran exiles for propaganda reasons, especially if they are willing to provide useful information or speak out against their former homeland. King Neden knows that this policy risks letting double agents into the dwarf kingdom, but he considers the risk worth the benefit. Varulus III wanted Throal to be a home to mighty heroes who would fight for it in time of need, and so adepts and adventurers are welcomed and encouraged to swear fealty to the king.

A Namegiver need not become a citizen in order to live in Throal. However, citizenship brings several benefits with it. Anyone living in Throal for more than two months is subject to taxation, and citizens are taxed at a lower rate than non-citizens. Citizens may participate in the *chav'ao'ros* and so influence the king's decisions. Finally, the Throalic government may intervene on behalf of its citizens when they get into trouble outside the kingdom, though this latter benefit is not guaranteed. Such aid depends on how well known or well connected the citizen in question is, and whether or not he can get word of his plight back to Throal.

Anyone who commits an illegal act may be stripped of citizenship rights, temporarily or permanently. Royal Guards stationed at the entrance to the kingdom, as well as the entrances to the Halls of Throal in the Grand Bazaar, keep a list of exiles on hand and briefly interview the people passing through the gates to make certain no one under a sentence of banishment gets inside the kingdom. The system is less than foolproof; the Scroll of Exile, as it is called, contains Names and descriptions, but no portraits. Smooth-talking exiles can usually get past the guards, but they tend to run into trouble inside the gates, when people who know them spot and report them. Exiles caught by the gate guards are subject to severe flogging. Those apprehended in Throal are usually executed.

If your player characters are prone to trouble with authority figures but want to spend time in Throal, present a scene in which they witness the capture or execution of an illegally returned exile. This scene should reinforce the idea that the characters cannot easily return to Throal if they get themselves expelled.

ON LAW AND JUSTICE

The rule of law is central to the lives of dwarfs in general and Throalites in particular. As the noted scholar Derron Killat has pointed out, the dwarfs' own Name for themselves can be translated as "People of the Law."

It is a common belief among the people of Throal that the way to create an ideal society is to first create an ideal set of laws. Therefore it is not surprising that King Varulus II, when seeking to reform both Throal and all of Barsaive, decided to accomplish his reforms through that extraordinary legal document, the Council Compact.

ON THE COUNCIL COMPACT

Though most Throalites claim some degree of familiarity with the Council Compact, very few have read it in its entirety. Weighing in at over 200,000 words, it is a massive text, especially by the standards of the world of Earthdawn, where books are laboriously

copied by hand. Few complete versions of the Council Compact exist, as only advocates (Throal's equivalent of lawyers) bother to have unabridged versions made. A much-consulted complete version is available for the perusal of citizens visiting the Great Library; the book is the centerpiece of the library's main reading room.

The drafting of the Compact took nearly twenty years. Much of this time was given over to spirited debate between the king, his courtiers and advisers, other nobles, philosophers, military officials, questors, merchants, businessmen and scholars. This symposium of the great minds of Throal was restricted to the elite, but the result could hardly have been better for the average citizen; the document ended up affirming the essential equality of all Namegivers. In its new definitions of personal rights, it logically developed the idea that no individual, regardless of wealth or status, should have greater rights than another.

The Council Compact was completed in 1270 TH, during the Scourge, though minor amendments have been made to it regularly since then. The king may exercise his right to alter the Compact at any time, but Varulus III had always been extremely reluctant to do this. In fact, he had spent a great deal of his reign fending off petitions from conservative-minded noble houses to soften the Compact's reforms. The more the economic power of the noble trading houses grows, the more they resent the limits the Compact imposes on them.

One of Varulus' unfulfilled objectives was to limit the ability of future kings—or anyone else—to easily amend the Compact. He wanted to elevate it from the status of law book to a genuine constitution, but he was unable to do much more than dream about accomplishing this. Before his death, Varulus devoted a great deal of time to this issue in his briefing sessions with his son. He believed Neden would be deluged with demands to nullify major portions of the Compact before his corpse had cooled, and did his best to fortify his son against the onslaught.

The Council Compact consists of the following sections:

Preamble

Supposedly a mere introduction to the volume of laws to follow, this rigorous philosophical argument is in fact the longest portion of the book. Here the reader finds the stirring language that inspires Throal's allies and arouses unease in the hearts of Therans. The Preamble begins by describing various systems of law known to the drafters of the Compact. Each is in turn described, its flaws and strengths examined. The final system of laws described is one adopted during the early years of the now-vanished dwarf kingdom of Scythia. The Preamble judges it superior to the existing systems, and a worthy starting point for Throalic law. In a long tangent, the downfall of Scythia is traced to its abandonment of this first legal code. The drafters then examine the fundamental precepts underlying that code. From there they postulate a series of possible precepts for the ideal set of laws. What should be the basis of all law? Adherence to tradition? The words of the Passions, as interpreted by questors? Or should laws be based on a concept of "common sense," apart from high-flown principles and complicated philosophical questions? This section summarizes the various arguments of the participants in the Council of 1270 TH. Finally, a particularly stirring passage states that the basis of any set of laws must be the rights accorded to the citizens who will live by them. The Preamble then seeks to establish what, if anything, should divide classes of citizens with regard to the rights they are granted by law. In this section appears the famous passage stating that all Namegivers must be granted the same rights, and condemning slavery as an affront to logic and decency. The Preamble concludes by discussing the practicality of laws, and how seemingly small decisions in a law book can profoundly shape the society for which the laws are made.

The Tales

The Compact next makes what seems like a strange detour. It recounts a number of legends: the Cabinet of Dragons, the Parliament of Mermaids, the One-Armed Dwarf, and the One-Legged Ork, among others. Slowly, a theme develops; all the stories deal with the responsibilities of rulers and the rights of those they govern. The first few stories concern tyranny and oppression; later stories are optimistic tales of heroes who build things, increase knowledge, and create social harmony.

The Precedents

This section is similar to the one that precedes it, except that its stories concern the actions of past kings of Throal. These legends have been carefully selected to prove that the reforms of the Compact are not a departure from Throalic history, but a logical culmination of it. It tells of kings faced with difficult decisions who reach just conclusions that favor the common person. Its stirring stories of war and conquest show kings who create harmony through rule based on a respect for peace rather than mere military or personal might. The stories are arranged in chronological order. The early ones are written in ringing, mythic language; the later, more down-to-earth stories read more like history.

The Transcripts

The Transcripts is a dialogue between participants at the drafting of the Council Compact, in which they analyze the practical effects of certain laws. This entire section revolves around a single, vital question; now that the principles of the new society have been established, how can they be put into effect with the least disruption to established ways? The apparent opinions of Varulus II are put into the mouth of his Chancellor, a woman Named Takilla. The primary dissenter is the merchant Philibus of House Ueraven; as the Transcripts continue, Philibus forces Takilla to strengthen her arguments and think more carefully about the consequences of the king's plans. The section ends with Philibus claiming to have played a dissenter's role simply to improve the end result. Given House Ueraven's traditional opposition to reform, however, it is likely that this bit of harmony was added in the editing process.

The Code

The largest section of the Compact, aside from the Preamble, contains the laws by which Throalites now live. Each entry begins with an Edict, a bare statement of a law. The Edict is followed by a Justification, a sometimes brief, sometimes wordy explanation of the intent behind the law. The final section of each entry is the Penalty, a recommended range of punishments to be meted out to those who disobey the Edict in question.

The Code organizes the hodgepodge of pre-existing Throalic laws, along with those developed during and after the drafting of the Compact, into three sections according to the seriousness



of the penalties for disobedience. Violations of Throalic laws fall into three classes: infractions, offenses and crimes. Infractions are violations of the civil laws and regulations that set out the everyday rules of life in Throal: qualifications for citizenship, how much noise one may make at night, how much refuse each household may produce without paying additional costs, and so on. Offenses cover minor misbehaviors such as cheating a customer or engaging in a brawl (provided the brawl does no permanent harm). Crimes are major transgressions against Throal and its citizens, including murder, housebreaking, and engaging in slavery.

Within these three classes, the laws are organized according to the Throalic alphabet by the first letter of the first sentence of each law's Edict. This unhelpful arrangement keeps the kingdom's advocates busy. The Great Library periodically announces—and then delays—plans to issue an annotated version of the Compact with an index, but for the time being the format of the volume makes Throalic law inaccessible except to legal professionals.

The Council Compact limits the types of punishments that the king and his magistrates—referred to as “delegates” in the legal text—may mete out to offenders. If a punishment is not mentioned in a given entry, neither king nor magistrate can impose it on an offender who breaks the law unless the king first officially amends that law.

The most common punishment is a fine; depending on the transgression, the silver pieces go either to the treasury or to the wronged individual(s). Infractions can only be punished by fines, each with a specific limit. Offenses and crimes may also involve fines, in addition to more serious punishments.

A passage in the Preamble specifically outlaws the permanent maiming of offenders, a common practice that continued until the day on which the Compact was proclaimed. The Code allows public flogging, but provides that a healer must be on hand to repair any otherwise permanent injuries caused by the beating. Many traditionalists who oppose the Compact want to see maiming brought back, a position that garners them some support among the common folk who are most likely to be victimized by criminals. Rarely imposed on anyone since the end of the Scourge, the death penalty may be assessed as punishment for the most heinous crimes. Execution is most often done by spell, though more traditional methods such as hanging and beheading may also be used.

Though the Compact says nothing about the matter, Throalic law has no tradition of imprisoning offenders for long periods of time. The Royal Guards may take individuals into custody until their cases are adjudicated. They may also be subjected to humiliating public display in the Cage, a large metal crate suspended near one of the entrances to the Grand Bazaar. Passersby frequently jeer at inhabitants of the Cage and pelt them with stones and rotting food. Most people sentenced to the Cage are transients and other non-

citizens, and those sentenced to this punishment sometimes must share the Cage's limited space with an offender even less savory than themselves. The maximum sentence in the Cage allowed under the Compact is one month; transgressions that require the criminal to be separated from society are punished by temporary or permanent exile rather than imprisonment.

The least of the punishments for lawbreaking is censure, in which public criers announce the details of the transgressor's act throughout the halls and cities of Throal. Throalic citizens take meticulous records of their legal proceedings, and people who have been censured in the past are likely to receive stiffer penalties if they are judged guilty of further offenses or crimes.

Forced labor is another popular punishment. The Preamble states that work undertaken for the greater good has a cleansing effect on the soul, and allows a lawbreaker to compensate for his actions through public service. Transgressors sentenced to forced labor must usually work for a set number of hours on specific public works projects. Able-bodied lawbreakers are put on excavation detail; infirm ones join cleaning units. If the transgressor has a useful profession or skill, he may be forced to use it for the benefit of the kingdom. Adepts who break Throalic law may be assigned to carry out missions that serve the king's purposes.

Another principle of the Compact that traditionalists despise is its insistence that rich and influential citizens be punished more harshly than ordinary folk when they break the law. Accordingly, most convictions permit the king to strip public offices from those who hold them. The only way that a king can remove a courtier from his position is to convict that courtier of a serious crime. Theoretically, a king convicted of such a crime may be deposed.

Refusing to cooperate with authorities carrying out a sentence is also an offense under Throalic law, one that permits escalating penalties. For example, a convicted offender who refuses to pay a fine may be sentenced to a higher fine or to forced labor. Theoretically, a recalcitrant offender could end up with a death sentence if he is stupid enough to refuse to submit to a minor penalty.

The most famous law in the Council Compact appears below as an example of the Code.

Edict: All Namegivers are masters of their own souls, and none may be enslaved to the will of another.

Justification: As proven in the Preamble, no Namegiver is fundamentally more worthy than another. Therefore it is an affront to basic principles for one Namegiver to claim ownership over another. No Namegiver can become property. The equality of all Namegiver souls is a fundamental right that cannot be forfeited, either willingly or through coercion. Namegivers may enter into contractual relationships with one another and perform services for one another in exchange for payment or for other services. But they may not own one another. It is an offense against the people and throne of Throal to claim ownership over another Namegiver, to sell another Namegiver as property, or to knowingly aid and abet the practice of slavery in any manner.

Penalty: These crimes are among the gravest possible, and therefore carry the gravest possible punishments. Those judged guilty of claiming ownership over other Namegivers shall be stripped of all proceeds from their illegal claims of ownership, and shall forever forfeit all claims to public office within Throal. They may also, at the discretion of the king and his delegates, face some or all of the following penalties: the forfeiture of all property and of Throalic citizenship, a sentence in the Cage not to exceed one month, or public flogging.

Those judged guilty of selling Namegivers into slavery shall forever forfeit all property, all claims to public office within

Throal, and Throalic citizenship. They may, at the discretion of the king, be put to death.

Those judged guilty of knowingly aiding and abetting the practice of slavery face penalties at the discretion of the king and his delegates. These penalties may include censure, forced labor, fines, or forfeiture of rights within Throal. Such penalties may be combined.

On Taxes and Taxation

One of the most important parts of the Code, Throal's tax laws, is tucked away in the section dealing with infractions. Wealthy citizens must pay a much higher percentage of their income than citizens of modest means, and are much more heavily penalized should they be judged guilty of evading taxes. Tax law is the portion of the Compact that Neden's political rivals in Throal hate the most. Throal has high taxes, mostly because of the amount it spends on guards and other security measures. The nobles like being safe, but dislike having to pay for that privilege. Like most bitter political fights, the struggle between the reformers and traditionalists comes down to silver and gold.

Like any resident of Throal, player characters who live there must pay taxes. Tax collectors from the Chancellery visit each Throalic residence once a year in the month of Rua and make a tax assessment for each adult individual. Throal's tax code is no less convoluted and loaded with qualifiers than any other dwarf-written legal document, and so tax assessments can vary widely from person to person. Throalic citizens have the right to appeal their assessments to the king, but Neden is widely known to reject most such petitions without a second look.

TAX TABLE

Status	Citizen	Resident Non-Citizen
Poor	5%	7%
Average	20%	25%
Rich	45%	55%

On Paying Taxes

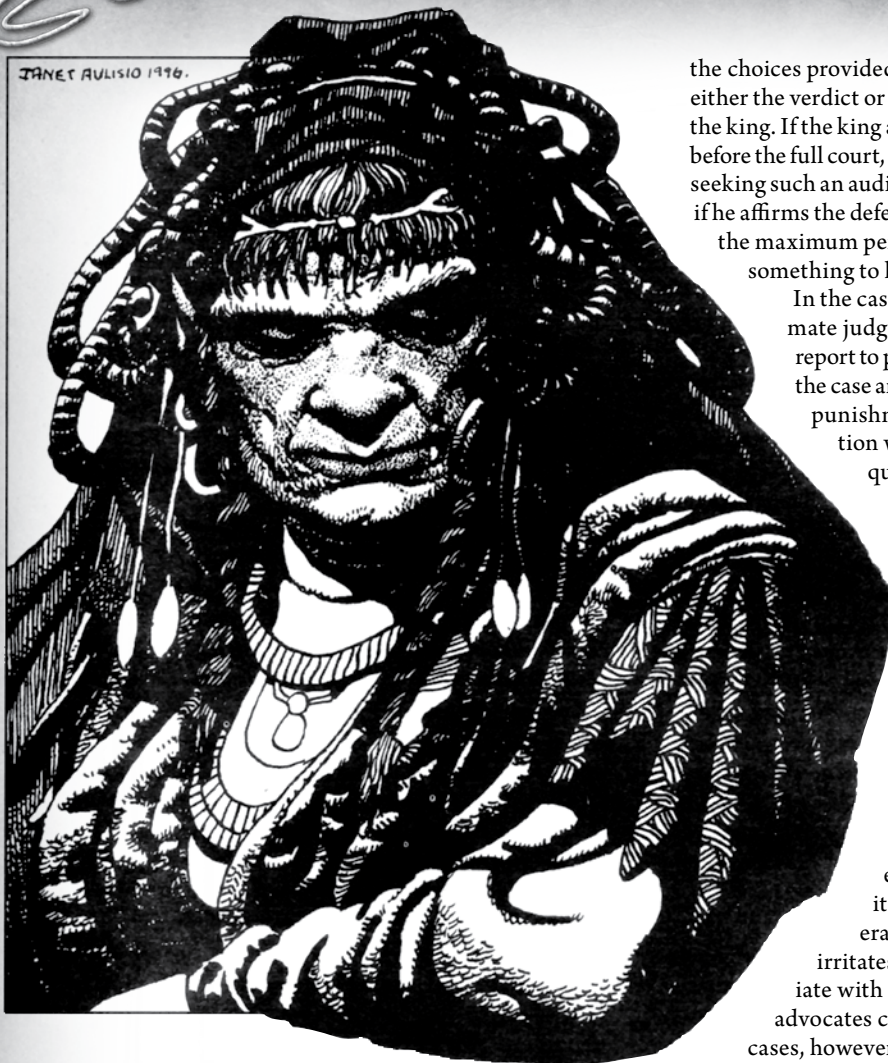
Few gamemasters or player characters consider filling out elaborate tax forms an important part of an action-adventure story. The Tax Table, below, lets the gamemaster easily determine the percentage of a character's declared income which he must pay to the government each month.

First, decide whether the character's income qualifies the person in question as poor, average, or rich. Adventurers are usually counted as rich unless they work for the Throalic government. The number given in the table is the base tax rate for each category, representing the minimum percentage of income claimed as tax revenue by the Chancellery. Once you determine the base tax rate, make a Step 4 Tax Test and add the result to the base rate to determine the actual percentage at which the character will be taxed.

OF JUSTICE IN ACTION

Throal's Royal Guards investigate infractions, offenses and crimes. They patrol regularly throughout Throal, and pursue and detain anyone they see breaking the law. Citizens may also report infractions, offenses, or crimes by going to their local guard station.

In the case of infractions, every unit commander of the Royal Guards may assess guilt or innocence on the spot and levy appropriate fines up to the limits specified in the Compact. The guards do



not collect the fines; instead, each commander notes each fine on a scroll, which is later handed over to the Chancellery for collection. Tax collectors demand the actual coin. Once a demand is made, anyone who believes he has been unfairly convicted may lodge an appeal with a magistrate. These officials act as overseers of all Royal Guard patrols in a given neighborhood. If a magistrate strikes down a conviction, the guard commander who levied the fine must pay the amount of the fine to the treasury. This provision discourages guard commanders from making snap decisions, and creates a certain amount of tension between patrollers and their superiors. If the magistrate upholds a conviction, the guilty party must pay the fine or face further penalties. Magistrates are accountable to the Chancellery, which regularly audits each guard station. The Compact imposes stiff penalties for official corruption, which has so far held the system's potential for abuse in check.

Guard commanders investigate and charge parties suspected of offenses and crimes, but do not assess guilt. For these types of transgressions, the Royal Guards refer the cases to the local magistrate. A defendant accused of an offense is told when to appear before the magistrate. If charged with a crime, the defendant is taken into custody and held in the central jail in the Hall of Justice. In either case, the magistrate holds a hearing at which the evidence against the defendant is presented, and the defendant is permitted to give his side of the story. The magistrate may interrogate both the guard commander presenting the evidence and the defendant. No other witnesses speak at the hearing; the guard sums up any eyewitness testimony.

In the case of an offense, the magistrate judges the defendant's guilt or innocence and then assesses a penalty or penalties from

the choices provided in the Compact. The defendant may appeal either the verdict or the punishment by seeking an audience with the king. If the king agrees to hear the appeal, the audience is held before the full court, with courtiers and advisers present. The risk of seeking such an audience is that the king may increase the penalty if he affirms the defendant's guilt. Magistrates often levy less than the maximum penalty for offenses in order to give defendants something to lose should they launch a frivolous appeal.

In the case of a crime, the magistrate does not pass ultimate judgment on the accused. Instead, he prepares a report to present to the king at court. The report outlines the case and concludes with a recommended verdict and punishment. The king may accept the recommendation without comment, or may ask the magistrate questions about the case. The king then renders a verdict and assesses a penalty if the verdict is guilty. The defendant may appeal either the verdict or the sentence by requesting an audience with the king. By tradition the king may not turn down such a request, though the Council Compact says nothing on the matter. (In fact, the Compact contains nothing at all about the actual administration of justice; it merely sets out the laws and the reasoning behind them.)

Defendants in any of the three categories may choose to be represented by advocates, professional pleaders with an intimate knowledge of the law and the people who administer it. Hiring an advocate for an infraction is generally a bad idea; it slows down the process and irritates guards and magistrates, who may then retaliate with guilty verdicts and harsher sentences. Good advocates can have a major impact on offense and crime cases, however. They can put a friendly face on a defendant who may be defiant, frightened, or confused. They can employ their specialized knowledge of the Preamble and Precedents of the Compact to argue for lighter sentences. Most of them can talk rings around the typical gruff, no-nonsense guard commander. Advocates may also appear before the king in appeals or in crime cases on behalf of their clients.

Throalic law does not permit citizens to press civil charges against one another. However, the tradition of intervention allows citizens who accuse others of violating the law to petition for receipt of any fines levied once the cases have been judged. They can also petition for the benefits of any forced labor sentence—forcing an enemy to re-tile the front of one's home, for example, has a certain entertainment value for the injured party. If the accuser's case is considered just, the defendant frequently must pay a stiffer fine than the usual. Accusers whose cases are grossly unjust may be fined themselves for the infraction of false prosecution, with the proceeds going to the defendant. Varulus' distaste for sticky cases was legendary; he had been known to sentence everyone involved in a vexing case to street-sweeping duties. Most Throalites still consider it risky to launch an intervention without a good advocate.

Good advocates cost money, an aspect of the Throalic justice system that still favors the wealthy. King Neden dislikes advocates on principle, but likes many of them personally. A small but clever group, the advocates know that King Neden is inclined to restrict their influence where possible, and they therefore take pains to publicly support his other policies. By making themselves the king's invaluable allies, they protect their own position.

Advocates charge by the day, their rates ranging from 30 to 100 silver pieces. Trials are short in Throal, rarely lasting more than a few days to a week.

On the Royal Guards

The Grand Commander of His Majesty's Royal Guards is a humorless, determined dwarf woman Named Vazilia. Born into the influential Garsun noble house, Vazilia rebelled against her conservative family by becoming an adventurer. Her parents disowned her out of spite. Though they later came to regret their actions and tried to reconcile with their daughter, Vazilia refused to speak with them. She has yet to formally rejoin house Garsun, and seems unlikely to do so. During the Death Rebellion of 1484 TH, she fought for King Varulus, and was afterward offered a post in the Royal Guards. She has served the king's interests unwaveringly since that day and was rewarded seven years ago with the top post in the Guards. Vazilia oversees a staff of seventeen magistrates, each of whom is in charge of an area in Throal or the Inner Cities with a population of about 10,000 people. Though the number of guards varies for each area depending on the need, each magistrate oversees a staff of about 40 Namegivers. Neighborhoods in the Inner Cities that are prone to racial fights have 60 to 70 guards per magistrate. Wealthy neighborhoods have even more guards, up to 120 per magistrate. The guards are divided into patrols of four Namegivers apiece, one of whom acts as commander.

Most members of the Royal Guards are dwarfs, which often worsens the racial squabbles that plague some of the Inner Cities. Dwarfs who grow up wanting to be guards tend to be traditionally minded. The whole notion of racial disharmony is new to them, and they are often at a loss to understand it. Longtime residents of Throal tend to see the Royal Guards as their friends and protectors, a role the guards cherish. When dealing with citizens disposed to like and trust them, they uphold public order in a firm but cheerful manner. Most longtime residents consider questioning by a Royal Guard a reassuring experience rather than a threatening one. In the new cities, the guards frequently take a harder approach, sometimes even coming to regard the people they are protecting as their enemies. So far the conflicts have been minor irritations, but unless someone does something soon about the attitude of many rank-and-file guards toward immigrant Namegivers (dwarfs included), Throal may find itself with a problem it will take generations to resolve.

Few guards are adepts, a distinction generally limited to commanders and magistrates. Of the adepts in the Royal Guards, adept magistrates tend to be retired adventurers who do not get personally involved in fights. All Royal Guards have a much higher level of combat training than the average Namegiver, and are well prepared for struggles with opponents of all abilities.

TYPICAL ROYAL GUARD

Attributes		
DEX (16): 7	STR (16): 7	TOU (18): 7
PER (11): 5	WIL (13): 6	CHA (11): 5
Characteristics		
Initiative: 4	Physical Defense: 9	
Physical Armor: 9	Spell Defense: 7	
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 7	
Death: 42	Recovery Tests: 3	
Unconsciousness: 34	Knockdown: 7	
Wound Threshold: 12	Movement: 5	
Skills		
Acrobatic Strike (6): 13		
Avoid Blow (6): 13		
Conversation (6): 11		
Detect Weapon (6): 11		
Disarm (6): 13		
Maneuver (6): 13		
Melee Weapons (6): 13		
Missile Weapons (6): 13		

Parry (6): 13
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Resist Taunt (6): 12
 Riposte (6): 13
 Search (6): 11
 Second Attack (3): 10
 Speak Language (4): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Or'zet, Troll)
 Streetwise (6): 11
 Tactics (6): 11
 Taunt (6): 11
 Throalic Law^K (6): 11
 Throal Military Organization^K (6): 11
 Throwing Weapons (6): 13
 Unarmed Combat (6): 13
 Weapon Rune Carving^A (6): 11
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Ringmail (Phys 6; Init 2), Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 19)

Weapons

Broadsword w/etched Throal seal (Forged +3; Damage 15), Club (Damage 10), Sap (Damage 8), 2 × Bolas (Damage 10; Range 12–24 yards/6–12 hexes; Entangle 9), Light Crossbow (Damage 11; Range 32–64 yards/16–32 hexes), Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)

Equipment

Belt Pouch, Carving Tools, Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

D6 silver pieces, D12 copper pieces

Legend Award

Third Circle (1 per 2 PC)

Notes

Has the Heat Sight racial ability.

On Justice and Adventurers

Some players may have no trouble with their characters abiding by the law in Throal. They will want their characters to use Throal as a home base because it is so safe compared to the rest of Barsaive; they can study, rest and gather information without worrying about being attacked by bandits or ferocious creatures. The threat of having their loot stolen, which should be omnipresent everywhere else, is virtually nonexistent in Throal because the Compact mandates that the government reimburse anyone whose property is stolen inside Throal's borders. The prominent role that the Royal Guards play in Throalic life makes this adventurer-friendly level of safety possible.

On the other hand, many players enjoy portraying characters who do not have to play by the rules. What's the fun of being a powerful adept if you still have to mind your manners and knuckle under to authority? Though player characters in Earthdawn are assumed to be at least somewhat heroic, they also tend to be outlaw heroes who make mistakes, cause trouble and generally wreak havoc with the social order.

A campaign set in order-loving Throal can quickly stop being fun for the players if the gamemaster emphasizes the authoritarian side of Throal's justice system. Getting arrested for petty offenses is not the stuff of legend. Luckily, the gamemaster can easily get around this potential problem. King Neden wants Throal to be a gathering place for adventurers, and so his official policy instructs guards to give visiting adepts the benefit of the doubt. Adventurers provide the king with vital information about Barsaive through the Great Library's journal purchases; also, if large numbers of adepts come to depend upon the amenities Throal offers them, they will come to its defense in times of need. Individual guardsmen also have personal reasons to treat known adepts with caution; if a fight breaks out, the guards are likely to get the worst of it.

This policy should not let player characters get away with serious crimes, however. A gamemaster who takes it that far risks damaging the credibility of the adventure's background. Experienced adept characters can defeat a typical Royal Guard unit with little difficulty; however, many other adepts live in Throal who will come to the guards' aid in short order. If a fight breaks out between guards and player characters, assume that adept reinforcements will arrive within a minute or two.

It should be difficult for the player characters to evade capture under these circumstances, so choose the races and Disciplines of the reinforcements accordingly. You may want to use gamemaster characters who have already appeared in the story line. If you know your players well enough to assume that they will eventually end up in a brawl with the Royal Guards, you can prepare game statistics for the reinforcements in advance.

As a pointless fight with the law can easily derail your plans for an extensive Throal campaign, you may want to warn off the players if their characters are on the verge of such a brawl. Alternatively, you may want the characters to become defendants in the Throalic justice system as part of the adventure. Perhaps they have been framed and need to clear their Names, a classic plot line in adventure fiction. The experience may also be useful for shocking them into behaving more like heroes.

On Advocates

If player characters end up facing prosecution in Throal, they would be well advised to seek out skilled advocates. Following are some gamemaster characters who might fit the bill; their Names appear in boldface type. As dwarfs dominate the legal profession in Throal, these advocates are dwarfs unless otherwise noted.

Zomof the Unlucky is not a prosperous advocate. He earned his unfortunate nickname through spectacular failures in a string of high-profile cases, and most people do not know that his record in minor cases is fairly good. A few years ago, Zomof acted on behalf of the accuser in an intervention fraud case and won a large purse of silver for his client. Unfortunately, and unbeknownst to all parties involved, the defendant was a powerful questor of Raggok, who proceeded to lay a curse upon the unfortunate advocate. The curse lowers Zomof's Charisma step by -1 when pleading a case before a magistrate, and by -2 when before the king. Zomof's price has gone down as his reputation has faded; at 30 silver pieces per day, he is the cheapest advocate in Throal.

Felerius is the favorite advocate of Throal's anti-reform faction. Gray-haired and venerable, he speaks with the cadence of authority. His manner before the court is calm and cool. He lays out the cases for his clients with clarity and humor. Members of the Royal Guard hate speaking in cases involving the great Felerius; he is notorious for his barbed wit and is quick to make verbal sport of a poorly educated guard. Though Felerius professes great respect for the Council Compact, he would lead the charge to dismantle it if the throne ever fell into conservative hands. Before his death, Varulus warned Neden to be extremely wary of Felerius.

Felerius usually takes tax cases for merchants and nobles, but excels at criminal cases involving the sons and daughters of the nobility. He will not defend player characters who reek of outlawry or rebellion, but would be pleased to work for those with a spotlessly heroic reputation. His fee ranges from 70 to 80 silver pieces per day, depending on a case's complexity.

Buna Wordmaker, an ork, is famed in Throal for her flamboyant manner and her dedication to justice for Throal's orks. When racial tensions flare up in the Inner Cities, the orks usually get the blame—or so Buna argues. Her overwhelming volume, apparent disrespect for authority and outrageous rhetoric ought to be a big impediment for an advocate in conservative Throal; however, Buna has a peculiar underdog charisma that even King Neden seems to find charming. Buna's personal magnetism allows her to get away with stunts that no other advocate would dream of. When she does go too far, her clients suffer for it, but her skill with words and her willingness to do anything for her clients keeps her purse full nonetheless. She charges 80 silver pieces per day for ork clients, 90 silver pieces for others.

Allinia is one of King Neden's most articulate defenders in public debate. Her political allegiance and reputation for honesty make her

a powerful voice before king and magistrate alike. Though born into a family of wealthy traders, she is a devoted fighter for the down-trodden. She often accepts cases for defendants of modest means, balancing those smaller profits by charging her more well-to-do clients hefty fees. Allinia will only work for clients she believes to be innocent, and she will not quit in the middle of a trial, even if she suddenly becomes convinced of her client's guilt. Allinia will not offer her special low fees to adepts, even if they happen to be temporarily down on their luck. She knows that silver flows like water through the fingers of adventurers, and at best may be persuaded to take a percentage of future earnings from an adventurer who is in desperate financial straits. Her usual fee is 100 silver pieces per day.

THE THREADS OF UNITY



Personal Notes on the Official Diplomatic Ceremonies Attending the Anniversary of the Birth of His Highness, Crown Prince Neden. Not for Dissemination.

The ceremonies were held in the king's audience chamber. Present at the reception were Queen Dollas, the prince's grandmother Veroxa, Chancellor Wishten, and yours truly, Ambassador General Tramon. The prince arrived late. His Majesty the King was unable to attend.

Among those paying their respects to the prince were Geverian Half-Smile, emissary of Alachia, Queen of the Blood Wood; Bazana Gems-Dripping, delegate of the Magistrates' Council of Travar; Diona the Swift, Senior Slasher (such a title!) to Garlthik of Kratas; Dequaria Alandos, Representative of Urupa; and Ilio Shipwright, Designated Tradesmaster of Jerris.

Geverian Half-Smile arrived with His Highness the prince, both late. Both also appeared extremely cheerful, given the time of day. They had no doubt been celebrating His Highness' birthday in a private manner. Prince Neden took his seat and asked that Geverian be ceded the floor in order to begin the official birthday greetings. Geverian proceeded to recite a piece of doggerel regarding the prince and an unfortunate romantic entanglement. I am not a literary critic, but it must be said that Geverian's so-called poem was in deliberately poor taste.

Diona the Swift, also known for unseemly familiarity between an ambassador and the heir to the throne, interjected with a similarly ribald commentary. Fearing that this simple formal event was about to bring disrespect upon the Crown Prince's position, I stepped forward and did my best to steer matters back toward official protocol. Thankfully, the queen was also aware of the potential for embarrassment and exercised her usual sensitivity. She nodded to her particular friend among the ambassadors, Dequaria Alandos of Urupa. Dequaria took the floor and spoke at some length in praise of Throal, the unique friendship between Urupa and Throal, and the qualities of statesmanship and propriety required in a leader of Namegivers.

It soon became clear that Dequaria was extemporizing, adding considerable length to her address. As her tribute expanded, Prince Neden managed to regain his composure and adopt the appropriate attitude of regal distance. I must remember to send Dequaria that bottle of pre-Scourge sparklewine as a token of thanks for her timely and effective intervention.

After Dequaria had finished, Ilio Shipwright of Jerris began to speak. Ilio's address, putatively a ceremonial paying of respects, included a subtext directed at me. Ilio wants Throal to discreetly make its voice heard in an internal dispute in Jerris. The traders wish to restrict the airship makers' production in order to maintain their monopoly on trade transport. Ilio, whose family Name speaks of his allegiance,



wishes to see Throal weigh in against the traders. I now face the challenge of devising a response so thoroughly ambiguous that both factions consider it a sign of support. An Ambassador General's work is never done...

Bazana Gems-Dripping similarly larded her otherwise empty words with troublesome content. The council of Travar is presently straddling a river that is growing increasingly swift and treacherous. They wish to continue their lucrative association with Throal and also to maintain their dominance over their own often wretchedly poor people. It is a matter of no small discomfort to Travar's council that the downtrodden of Travar are increasingly drawn to the philosophy of equality underlying the Council Compact. The common folk wish to push the rulers of Travar closer to the governing laws of Throal than Travar's rulers wish to be pushed. This leaves Throal on the horns of a truly difficult dilemma.

It is indisputably in Throal's interest to keep Travar stable and prosperous, and it is just as indisputably in Throal's interest to extend the enlightened laws of the Compact throughout Barsaive. The king wishes neither to repudiate the ideals of the Compact nor to encourage the agitators. How shall we manage this interesting balancing act? Prince Neden, though not quite expert in such delicate matters, noted the meaning in Bazana's words. From the fire in his eyes, it is clear that his sympathies lie with the agitators—a typically rash position, one from which I must work to move him.

Open revolt in Travar would greatly disrupt trade for more than a few noble houses already disposed to think ill of the royal family, and the last thing we need is to add fuel to our own conflicts.

Fortunately, the rest of the proceedings went smoothly. Diona the Swift did not touch upon the punitive counter strikes recently launched by the Eye of Throal against the caravan raiders of Kratas—an interesting omission. Were the raiders sanctioned by Garlthik, or not? Hopefully, the truth of this matter will remain... indeterminate.

At length, thankfully, the audience meandered to a conclusion. Prince Neden left in the company of Geverian and Diona. With her eyes, the queen urged Neden to remain behind in order to receive instruction on the artful discharge of his responsibilities. Sadly, the prince chose to ignore her silent entreaties. It is as if he intentionally feeds the worries of those who imagine him upon King Varulus' throne. If only Neden's confidence were not so salted with willfulness... the transition from father to son will be a difficult one, I fear.

—From the Personal Diary of Tramon, Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, 1508 TH



Economically, culturally, and politically, the influence of Throal extends far beyond its borders. Among the important political institutions that shape Throal's relationship with the rest of Barsaive are its diplomats, intelligence officers and army.

OF THROAL'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Before addressing the specific organizations that help Throal shape its relations with other powers in Barsaive, it is important to look at the current state of diplomatic relations between the kingdom and some of the more prominent powers in Barsaive. This section discusses the official relationships between Throal and other power centers of Barsaive, including the representatives these powers have sent to Throal, and the ambassadors who represent Throal to them.

The Blood Wood

Relations between Throal and the Blood Wood are tense. Though elves and dwarfs live side by side throughout Barsaive in relative

harmony, relations between elf and dwarf governments have been uneasy since the time of legends. Like many Barsaivians, the dwarfs were appalled by the corruption that the blood elves brought upon themselves in order to survive the Scourge. Throalic students of history learn that the elves were too haughty to accept Theran aid, and the fate of the Blood Wood is taught as an example of disaster brought about by foolish pride. Though the dwarfs of Throal had to swallow some of their scruples in order to ally with the Therans, their practicality proved superior to the elves' intransigence—at least in the dwarfs' view.

As dwarfs are not shy about volunteering their advice, the blood elves are well aware of Throal's uncharitable judgment, and consider the dwarfs to be arrogant and naive. Queen Alachia had her own reasons for refusing to deal with the Therans, none of them as trivial as mere pride. Alachia believes that the Throalites will bend if the Therans make a serious push into Barsaive. Young blood elves are taught that the cynical dwarfs will eventually abandon their high ideals and once again become Theran lackeys, just as they did before the Scourge. Blood elves also learn early on that the Therans are dangerous beyond measure.

These mutually harsh perceptions are responsible for the strained relations between the two governments. Despite their distrust, however, each wants to exert influence on the other. Neden wants Alachia to proclaim her opposition to slavery, or to make some other declaration indicating her support for the broad ideals of the Council Compact. Queen Alachia is hoping to ensure that Neden continues or even intensifies the conflict with Thera now that he has taken the throne.

Alachia's emissary in Throal is Geverian Half-Smile, an uncorrupted elf adventurer who has sworn allegiance to Alachia. Intelligent and sardonic, he has a fatalistic air that King Neden finds appealing. The two of them met on one of Neden's clandestine adventures into the hinterland, and saved each other's lives. Upon learning of Geverian's friendship with Neden, Alachia appointed him emissary to Throal. Relations between Throal and the Blood Wood are so strained that it is unusual for an emissary to maintain permanent quarters in the kingdom, but an exception has been made for Geverian because he is a comrade of the king. Geverian's orders are to cultivate his friendship with Neden and encourage him to harden his stance against Thera.

Alachia does not allow ambassadors to take up permanent residence within her domain. This is fine with the members of Throal's Diplomatic Corps, who have no wish to live within the Blood Wood's grim embrace. When a mission must be sent to the Elven Queen, Throal's Ambassador General usually saddles his son or daughter, both highly skilled and grudgingly respected diplomats in the corps, with the distasteful but important responsibility.

Iopos

The city-state of Iopos, ruled by the sorcerous Denairastas clan, is the sworn enemy of Throal and Thera. The Holders of Trust—the Iopan network of spies, bullies and enforcers—has proven quite skillful in its efforts to undermine Throal's attempts to unite Barsaive. Iopan agents repeatedly attempt to assassinate Throalic diplomats and other Barsaivians in negotiation with them, and often succeed. The Holders of Trust are known for cleverness, and they often disguise strikes at their enemies to look like the work of others. Rumor has it that many Holders reside in Throal; some people also suspect that many of Barsaive's living legend cults are fronts for the Holders of Trust. King Varulus III considered the Iopans a minor threat because they are far away from Throal and far less powerful militarily than the Theran Empire—a mistake he paid for with his life. Needless to say, Iopos turned into an enemy when their involvement in Varulus' assassination was revealed. Throal frequently sends spies to Iopos, but with limited success;

anyone caught gathering intelligence in Iopos is subject to summary execution by the Holders of Trust.

Throal does not bar Iopan citizens from the dwarf kingdom, but keeps them under close surveillance. A small community of Iopan refugees living in Thoal oppose the Denairastas clan and wish to reclaim their city from its corrupt overlords. These refugees claim what others have long suspected, that the Denairastas rule through sorcerous mind control. The refugees say that they escaped the city only because they have a higher than normal immunity to the effects of magic. Styling themselves the Iopan government in exile, the refugees are led by Chuhk Alabamarian, an aged human male. Alabamarian claims to be the rightful ruler of Iopos, tracing his lineage back to a pre-Scourge ruler. He treats his small knot of supporters as if he is a real ruler, ordering them around with an exacting devotion to discipline.

The refugees exist on the fringe of Throalic political life. Varulus III had persuaded them to adopt the laws of the Council Compact if they ever became the rulers of Iopos. However, Neden has not given them significant support because he believes that any aid short of an all-out effort to topple the Denairastas would be wasted. The Eye of Thoal keeps a close eye on Alabamarian, for it would be entirely in character for the Denairastas to plant a colony of fake rebels in their enemy's midst.

Jerris

The grim city of Jerris considers itself one of Thoal's important trade partners. Its downtrodden people subject themselves to the depressing, soul-eroding atmosphere of the nearby Wastes in order to get rich. Though Jerris looks geographically isolated, it is crucial to the movement of goods across Barsaive because it is located just beneath a swift air current that allows speedy transport of goods via airship. As in Thoal, politics in Jerris are dominated by influential trading houses. According to contracts between the various trading houses of Jerris and Thoal, Thoal supplies the goods and Jerris the transport. These contracts have made fortunes for parties on both sides, and so Thoal and Jerris seek to preserve good mutual relations.

The trading houses that run the city government from behind the scenes appoint the ambassador representing Jerris to Thoal, drawn from among the several Tradesmasters General. The current Tradesmaster General to Thoal is Ilio Shipwright, a corpulent human who wears expensive Throalic-style clothing. Once a shrewd and successful businessman, Ilio has dulled his senses for years on wine and other sensual pleasures. His appointment as Tradesmaster General to Thoal was a maneuver to ease him out of an important position in a major airship manufacturing firm, allowing younger and hungrier relatives to take over. Ilio is quite pleased with his retirement post; he likes nothing better than spending



city money on lavish parties in honor of Thoal's trading magnates. He is quite popular with the nobility of Thoal, particularly the old guard. King Varulus III considered him a blowhard and an idiot, an opinion shared by King Neden. Dollas, on the other hand, realizes that the old man has a little cleverness left in him, and has warned her son not to underestimate Ilio.

The Throalic ambassador to Jerris is Obakavim, a troll and, until recently, a prominent officer in the Dream Spire Trading Company. Obakavim's primary mission is to coordinate efforts between the

Throalic trading houses so that they do not overbid one

another when making transport contracts with Jerris' airship firms. The

airship firms consider this an unfair trading practice. The trading houses of Jerris, who increasingly see the airship firms as rivals, are happy to see Thoal driving a hard bargain.

Kratas

Surprisingly, Thoal is on apparent good terms with Garlthik One-Eye, ruler of Barsaive's notorious city of thieves. Despite the fact that Thoal represents law and order while the residents of Kratas symbolize banditry and chaos, recent history has made strange bedfellows of the cantankerous king of thieves and the noble king of dwarfs. Garlthik, an avowed foe of the Therans, rose to power by assembling an army of thieves and driving the imperialists from the ruined citadels of Kratas. His chief enemy, the gang leader Vistrosh, has from time to time allied himself with the Therans, who have not forgiven Garlthik for the humiliating defeat he dealt them. During the Death Rebellion, Garlthik played a pivotal role in thwarting an attempt by Throalic rebels to assassinate King Varulus III; the rebels had aid from the Therans and Vistrosh's gang.

Though they have a shared history, neither king is quite sincere toward the other. Garlthik helps Thoal when it suits him, but also allows his bandits to attack Throalic caravans. He disavows knowledge of such assaults, of course, but neither Neden nor Ambassador General Tramon is naive enough to accept these protestations at face value. If the Therans are finally driven from Barsaive, Thoal might well turn on Kratas, but that moment seems far distant. Until that day arrives (if ever), the pretense of friendship is mutually beneficial. Garlthik wins balm for his ego; the greatest king of the region treats him as an equal. Neden and his advisers keep a troublesome ally in plain view; it is better to have Kratas at your side than behind your back.

Kratas' ambassador to Thoal 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 pen-

chant for brawling. When not attending official court functions, she spends her time breaking furniture in taverns throughout the kingdom. A Thief and Warrior, Diona has befriended King Neden and promised to take him on an incognito tour of Kratas' most colorful sights. Tramon considers Diona a bad influence on the king, and is hoping she will soon commit a crime serious enough to justify her expulsion from Throal.

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 for the punishment of those who stole them. Needless to say, 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.

Thera and Vivane

Sworn enemies devoted to each other's downfall, Throal and the Theran Empire are not yet at war simply because neither side is ready to pay the cost of an all-out conflict. Throal maintains that the Theran presence in Barsaive is illegal and the Imperials are invaders. The Therans regard themselves as the rightful rulers of Barsaive, and maintain that Throal's defiance of their

sovereignty is a violation of Imperial law. Neither recognizes the other as a legitimate government.

Since the Theran navy's failed attack on Throal in 1449 TH, Throal and Thera had been locked in a military stalemate that cool heads saw as beneficial to both sides. Throal continued its economic and cultural expansion without paying the enormous costs of open battle with the mighty Theran war machine, which satisfied King Varulus III. He believed that trade ties and cultural loyalty would ultimately win the day for Throal. If the dwarf kingdom could avoid all-out war with the Therans, it would win. King Neden, by contrast, sees the contest with Thera through the eyes of a hot-blooded young warrior. Intellectually, he understands his father's strategy. Emotionally, he longs to vanquish the corrupt imperialists on the field of battle—despite the humiliation he faced with the Battle of Prajor's Field.

Ironically, the Therans at Triumph also feel humiliated by the battle's outcome. They reason that if Barsaive is truly a Theran province, Throal should face massive retaliation for attacking a Theran target. The battle prompted General Nikar to send word to Thera requesting a force capable of such retaliation. In reply, Nikar received a sharp rebuke. First Governor Kanidris reminded Nikar that waging war is not part of his assignment. The bulk of the Theran navy is busy turning cities to slag in the province of Marac and can spare no forces on a backwater like Barsaive. Kanidris made clear that Nikar will have to fulfill his assignment with the troops he has on hand. Kanidris ordered Nikar to put economic pressure on Throal by attacking its trade caravans and suggested the creation of a network of informers and agitators within Throal; a network he can use to nudge the dwarf kingdom toward capitulation. Finally, Kanidris ordered Nikar to

gather intelligence on Iopos and the Denairastas clan, about whom Thera knows next to nothing. Nikar is none too happy with the First Governor's instructions, especially since he does not dare disregard them. Like all Theran generals, he is accustomed to destroying his foes with overwhelming military might, and does not take kindly to being deprived of his due.

Until either Throal or Thera challenges the other to a decisive showdown, any required communications with one another must take place through unofficial channels. Throal does not permit a Theran representative to live within its borders. Thera's representative in Throal, Apulian Coriatus, is forced to pose as a mere merchant and reside in Bartertown. A 35-year-old male human, Coriatus was once a protégé of Kypros, but has since fallen from favor. Kypros appointed him to the humiliating post of an unacknowledged ambassador as punishment for the collapse of a slaving network he was supposed to build in the area around the Blood Wood. Bitter and vengeful as well as vain, Coriatus hates Kypros and everything about his assignment. He despises Bartertown, Throal, and King Neden, and doesn't care who knows it. A snarling, hissing bundle of resentment, the portly

Coriatus is the world's worst ambassador. His status is also Bartertown's worst-kept secret; as he stalks down the town's chalky streets, children and adults alike openly make fun of him. Neden hopes that Coriatus' resentment might eventually turn him to Throal's cause, but Coriatus holds too high an opinion of himself to turn traitor to his homeland.

When Throal must make back-channel contact with Tharan officials, the kingdom sends a diplomatic expedition. Chardthom Mole-Spattered leads most of these ventures, an aged male troll recognized as the Diplomatic Corps' greatest expert on matters Tharan. Unusually mild-tempered for a troll, Chardthom is as kind-hearted as he is ugly. His nickname comes from the hundreds of moles that cover his skin; in his old age, many of these have sprouted white whiskers. Chardthom believes wholeheartedly in the Council Compact, and would cheerfully die to uphold it or to further his king's interests. He has studied Tharan ways for decades, and is expert at interpreting intelligence reports provided by the Eye of Throal. Chardthom is a strong supporter of Varulus' standoff strategy, and King Neden, whom he considers impulsive and thoughtless, does not impress him. Neden, for his part, sees Chardthom as a doddering old fool overly sympathetic toward the Tharans after studying them for so long.

Travar

The bustling merchant city of Travar maintains close ties with Throal. Its leaders are wealthy businessmen whose prosperity depends largely on the trade routes that Throal built and continues to defend. If Throal succeeds, Travar succeeds. Though the rulers of Travar want to see the province dominated by Throalic trade interests, they also wish to maintain their independence from the dwarf kingdom. Travar's ruling magistrates see the Council Compact as an effective piece of propaganda, but do not especially want to live under its rules. They like their lives of luxury, and feel no responsibility toward their less-prosperous fellow citizens. The common folk of Travar once agitated for the dwarf kingdom to make Travar a Throalic protectorate, and in response, the magistrate did its best to undermine the reformists without offending Throal. The recent events, however, have left Travar struggling to remain neutral in the brewing conflict between Throal and Thera.

Bazana Gems-Dripping is Travar's representative to King Neden's court, officially known as Delegate of the Magistrates' Council of Travar. A well-heeled ork woman with a sharp eye for business, Bazana enriched herself considerably at her last post as Delegate to Jerris. As she did in Jerris, she spends most of her time in Throal forging trade connections, especially with the old-guard and free trading houses. Bazana sees little distinction between diplomatic and commercial negotiations, or between official duties and personal business. Ultimately, she wants to become a member

ADVENTURE HOOK

The player characters are sent to Travar to investigate the disappearance of Ambassador Nurnborg. As part of their initial briefing, they learn that extremists in the government may have wanted to silence Nurnborg for his contacts with the protectorate movement. However, this lead proves to be false. Nurnborg has actually been kidnapped by protectorate extremists, who were on the verge of staging a coup and declaring Travar a vassal state of Throal. Nurnborg refused to help them; he loves the Compact too much to see violence done in its Name. The extremists have not harmed him, they are merely keeping him prisoner so that he cannot warn the council. The adventurers must find Nurnborg and then stop the coup.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Player groups who enjoy a darkly comical tone in their fantasy campaigns can play personal guards to Liltom and representatives of Throal in the city of thieves. Such characters must make their own justice in a place where the law is topsy-turvy. They would quickly accumulate enemies in Kratas, but would also have a degree of immunity that would let them deal with the city's many different gangs and factions. After all, no one wants to arouse the full fury of Throal by killing members of a diplomatic delegation. An adventure or campaign of this kind allows for plenty of down-and-dirty intrigue in a place where politics is practiced at sword point.

of Travar's council of magistrates; in order to do so, she must get rich enough to pay for adept champions to win the city's annual Founding tournament. Always on the lookout for a lucrative business deal, Bazana could become a patron of an adventuring party with an eye for treasure and a need for investors, especially if they appear competent enough to return her favors one day as her hired champions.

Throal's ambassador in Travar is Nurnborg, a loud, boisterous male ork with an infectious enthusiasm for the Council Compact. In addition to smoothing trade contacts between Throalic trading houses and their counterparts in Travar, he holds regular study sessions in which residents of the city can learn about the Compact. Many of the stalwarts in the protectorate movement learned about Throalic law from Nurnborg. Officially, of course, Throal does not seek direct control over any independent political entity; however, it actively encourages all governments in Barsaive to use the Compact as the basis of their laws. Occasionally King Varulus III made an official display of discouraging Nurnborg's popularity with the protectorate agitators, but few Travarians on either side of the conflict believed that Throal truly disapproves of its ambassador's actions. Travar's ruling magistrates turn a blind eye to Nurnborg's activities, hoping that the agitators will remain little more than annoyances. If the protectorate movement ever gains momentum again, however, relations between Travar and Throal could cool considerably.

Urupa

Throal and Urupa enjoy a warm relationship based on compatible philosophies. Both realms govern according to the wishes of their people, have an interest in open trade, and stand for hope and cooperation in a world still bound by fear and mistrust. Urupa has its own code of laws, but has adapted many of the principles of the Council Compact since the Scourge. Though no formal defense pact exists between the dwarf kingdom and the city-state, it is understood between them

that if one is attacked, the other will come to its aid.

Dequaria Alandos, Representative of Urupa, is the city's ambassador to Throal. A beautiful human woman with a regal presence, Dequaria is a popular fixture of Throal's social scene. She hosts regular banquets in her luxurious quarters; invitations to these events are coveted among Throal's nobles, artists, and philosophers. Dequaria has become a close friend and confidante of Dollas, and King Neden regards her as a sort of honorary aunt. With Dequaria as Representative, continuing close relations between Urupa and Throal are assured.

Throal's ambassador to Urupa is Reesha, the middle-aged daughter of Selenda of House Ueraven. Varulus appointed Reesha to this unchallenging position in order to appease Selenda, who wanted

to get her daughter out of Throal because the girl was pregnant by an ork b'jados. Selenda believed, wrongly, that Varulus III did not know her true reasons for demanding her daughter's diplomatic posting.

Reesha, the child, and the child's father live discreetly in Urupa, where Reesha does her job quietly and efficiently. She is uninterested in the constant scheming of House Ueraven; she just wants to live comfortably with her lover and child.

The T'skrang Aropagoi

Though Throal has maintained relations with three of the Serpent River *aropagoi*, its strongest ties are with House V'strimon, whose central foundation is the Floating City in Lake Ban.

The representative from the Floating City to Throal is K'senkt Abe-rius V'strimon, an elderly t'skrang sailor who lost his left arm in the Theran War. Most Throalites wonder how an old boatman born and bred on the river managed to adjust so readily to underground life in Throal. For those who voice their amazement, K'senkt has a favorite response: "Underground or underwater, what's the difference? It's not where you are that matters, it's the people you're with!"

Though officially he has the same stature in Throal's court as the leaders of the various free trade houses, he is treated with the respect normally given to foreign ambassadors. K'senkt commands respect partly because of his bearing and manner, but also because he makes annual recommendations to the Trade Council of V'strimon concerning the placement of Throalic trading companies on the Protocol List. A company on the Protocol List can demand service from any riverboat of the V'strimon *aropagoi* and expect priority treatment.

One might expect that someone in K'senkt's position would parlay his influence into a healthy extra income, but K'senkt has proven incorruptible for more than two decades. Those who have sought to bribe him, companies tied to Houses Garsun and Ueraven in particular, have found themselves excluded from the Protocol List for a dozen years or more. Those who have tried to eliminate him in the hopes of finding a more biddable replacement soon discovered what the Therans recognized thirty years ago: K'senkt is difficult to kill and almost impossible to outfox.

Barsaive at Large

Beyond its relations with other significant powers in Barsaive, Throal also has diplomatic ties with thousands of small settlements throughout the province. It maintains these relations mainly through coordinating its activities and messages with the trading houses as they forge new trade routes. His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps makes sure that the trading houses act in a way that will bring honor and profit to Throal.

The Diplomatic Corps has the power to launch investigations when it hears reports of activities likely to bring Throal into disrepute, and the corps has already threatened some of the smaller houses with de-commissioning for pursuing shady trade practices.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S DIPLOMATIC CORPS

Formal relationships between Throal and other governments are managed by His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, an organization created by King Varulus III. All members of this small association serve at the king's pleasure. Because the rules governing the corps are not enshrined in the Council Compact, they are a matter of custom rather than law. This arrangement allows the king to change the corps' structure or its members without challenge.

In addition to its diplomatic role, the corps also recommends foreign policy to the king and interprets reports provided to it by the Eye of Throal, the King's intelligence-gathering organization (see p. 69).

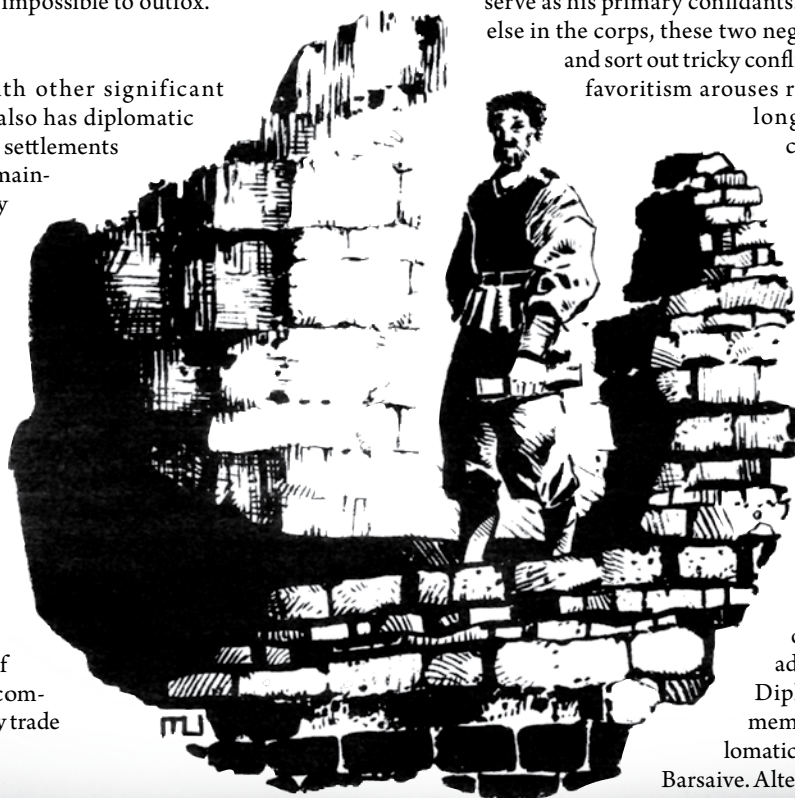
The head of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador General, is one of the king's advisers. The Ambassador General counsels the king on matters concerning relations with other governments, conveys the king's wishes to the diplomats under his command, and sees that informal arrangements and treaties are negotiated to the king's satisfaction. The Ambassador General also supervises the operations of the Eye of Throal. He may dismiss any member of the corps who fails to perform adequately. Dismissed diplomats may petition the king for reinstatement, but the king need not give them a hearing.

The current Ambassador General is a middle-aged dwarf scholar Named Tramon, a brilliant thinker who has devoted his life to the study of post-Scourge Barsaive and its governments. Few people in Barsaive know more about these matters than he does. Cool and rational by nature, Tramon inspires respect but rarely affection. He is a realist in a court full of idealists, driven by the desire to win rather than by dedication to the Council Compact. He believes that sometimes it is necessary to do ruthless things for the good of Throal. Tramon does not want an empire; he recognizes that such immense power would corrupt Throal, just as it has Thera. He does, however, want Throal to have the upper hand in all treaties and especially in trade matters.

Tramon heads a large family, all of whose members regard him with almost fanatical adoration. His two eldest children, his daughter Mirial and his son Eyorgicus, work closely with him and serve as his primary confidants. More often than anyone else in the corps, these two negotiate important treaties and sort out tricky conflicts with other states. This favoritism arouses resentment among other

long-time members of the corps, especially because Mirial and Eyorgicus are every bit as brilliant as their father. They are also every bit as hard-headed when it comes to gaining the advantage for Throal. Though many speak of them as cold-blooded and calculating, few argue with the results they achieve.

If your group of players particularly enjoys travel and political intrigue, consider a campaign in which the adepts are employed by the Diplomatic Corps, either as members or as escorts for diplomatic envoys to certain areas of Barsaive. Alternatively, if the characters



impress King Neden or Tramon with their political savvy, the king or the Ambassador General may commission them as a special delegation of troubleshooters within the corps. Such a position would allow them to meet officially with representatives of other governments throughout Barsaive, and they would be given delicate tasks that might require the use of magical talents as well as negotiation skills. The adventure hook in the sidebar is an example of the kind of situation that might befall player characters hired as diplomatic troubleshooters.

ON THE EYE OF THROAL

The Eye of Throal is King Neden's intelligence organization. Officially, it exists to inform him about the activities of foreign governments and other potential external threats to the safety of Throal. Unofficially, it also monitors internal threats to the king and his government. The extent of the Eye's activities is an open secret, which keeps the king's enemies wary of infiltration.

The Eye of Throal is a relatively new institution, created in response to the Death Rebellion in 1484 TH. Looking at that near-disaster in hindsight, Varulus III realized that his position was much more vulnerable than he had thought; had he known which foreign and domestic enemies were ranged against him, he could have snuffed out the rebellion before it had a chance to flare up. In order to dramatically reduce the risk of his foes surprising him again, he established the Eye of Throal.

Leadership

The Eye of Throal serves two masters; its leader reports to the Supreme General of the Arm of Throal and to the Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps. All three are expected to work together to keep the king well informed of the activities of Throal's enemies and allies. Though both the Supreme General and the Ambassador General must approve any actions by the Eye of Throal, the Supreme General is expected to pay special attention to active intervention by the Eye in Barsaive: attacks on enemies, break-ins, and other dangerous measures (the sorts of missions that make good adventures). The Ambassador General chooses the targets of investigations and interprets all reports filed in the wake of intelligence-gathering or active missions.

Fortunately for Throal, the Ambassador General and the Supreme General get along well personally; otherwise, this dual structure would be a recipe for conflict. King Varulus III made it clear that he would not tolerate selfish jockeying for power in this crucial area, and made both officials equally responsible if a mission fails. In part, Varulus divided responsibility within the Eye of Throal in order to prevent the organization from turning on him. He was well aware that the Theran Empire's intelligence-gathering forces wield vast political power, and he wanted to keep that pattern from recurring in Throal. As the Preamble to the Council Compact states, "Nothing is more corrupting than secret power." The Senior Gatherer manages the Eye of Throal's day-to-day operations. This official's identity is secret, so that no one will attempt to bribe or threaten him. The Senior Gatherer reports directly to the Ambassador General and Supreme General, but is most often left to manage the Eye as he sees fit. The Senior Gatherer uses an elaborate network of operatives to deliver orders to agents, hire adepts for freelance work, and take care of necessary administrative tasks. Among these operatives, only those known ominously as the Five have direct contact with the Senior Gatherer. Aside from the king, the Ambassador General, and the Supreme General, the Five are the only people in Throal who know the Gatherer's true identity.

The present Senior Gatherer is a human Named J'Role, known (among other things) as the Honorable Thief. Once a feared and profoundly troubled man, J'Role found inner peace in his later years and is now supposedly retired. Years ago he befriended King

ADVENTURE HOOK

While traveling through the hinterlands, the adventurers are approached by a representative of the Diplomatic Corps. Local villagers are attacking traders visiting the region for the first time, apparently in revenge for having been bilked in the past by the Fair Dealers' Association, a small free-trading company. The adventurers are hired to investigate these claims and present evidence to the corps. If the evidence is against the Fair Dealers, the corps will ask for the revocation of their license to trade.

The Fair Dealers are worse than fraud artists—they have been marked by Horrors. The contracts they offer to village headmen mask a ritual that carries the Horror mark to those who sign the documents. Once the adventurers find out what is really going on, they must eradicate the Fair Dealers and the Horrors working through them.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Traders from several houses report that villagers in the area to the north of Urupa have suddenly turned hostile to Throal and its citizens. Communities that previously welcomed Throalic merchants with open arms have refused them entry, and some village leaders have confiscated goods from them as "reparations" for unspecified crimes. Tramon orders the player characters to investigate, recover the confiscated property, and mollify the villagers. If possible, the characters must repair the damage to Throal's image and get the merchants' property back by peaceful means. If peaceful resolution is impossible, then the characters are to demonstrate that no one trifles with Throal's traders. As Tramon sees it, those who cannot be made to love the dwarf kingdom will be made to fear it.

When the characters arrive on the scene, they discover that the villages have been repeatedly raided by members of Terath's Chargers, the ork mercenaries who serve as auxiliary troops for the Kingdom of Throal. If the characters accuse any of the ork band's leaders of executing the raids, they can get into serious trouble, because the raids are actually the work of impostors: a small gang of orks wearing faked and misappropriated Chargers insignia.

The culprits are actually members of a living legend cult called New Cara Fahd; they want to disrupt all relations between prominent orks and other governments so that the orks will rise up and form a great nation of their own. (Conveniently, they ignore the fact that the ork nation of Cara Fahd does now exist—they fervently believe that their nation is the real Cara Fahd.) In their efforts to unmask and punish these agitators, the player characters must be careful not to turn the impostors into martyrs and thereby arouse the sympathies of other orks in the area.

Neden and his late father, earning a place in their hearts partly through his talent as a jester and entertainer. J'Role's past as a legendary adventurer caught up with him again when the last Senior Gatherer passed away of natural causes. Because J'Role had met and often struggled against many of Barsaive's most powerful figures, from Queen Alachia to Garlthik of Kratas to the dragon Mountainshadow, King Varulus III considered him the most suitable candidate for the post.

Though too old to take an active part in adventures, J'Role is not too long in the tooth to effectively direct the missions of others. At first he resented being pressed into service, but J'Role soon came to enjoy his job, especially because it gives him a chance to make up for many of the terrible wrongs he committed in his past. He finds it amusing that most Throalites think of him as a pleasant, humorous old man, not suspecting the vital role he still plays in the affairs of Barsaive.

Structure

The Eye of Throal uses loyal agents to gather information and to mount secret operations against the kingdom's enemies. Some Eyes, as the agents are known, go on long-term missions; these agents are nicknamed "kaer dwellers" or "dwellers." They adopt false identities and live as residents of the places they are studying, usually working individually rather than in teams. Kaer dwellers file regular reports, secretly passing them along to messengers who carry their observations back to Throal. Several trading houses with connections to the king allow their j'havim to act as go-betweens for this purpose. The transmission of information to Throal is a dweller's top priority. A dweller may also engage in limited-scale acts of subversion or sabotage, but only if the action carries no risk of capture. Kaer dwellers often pay informants to supply them with facts they cannot gather themselves. Though kaer dwellers are exceptionally skilled at what they do, few of them are adepts; they are supposed to maintain a low profile, and so do not need amazing magical abilities.

The Eye of Throal has scattered roughly two dozen kaer dwellers throughout the Vivane region, with at least two stationed in the city of Vivane. No Throalic agents live in Sky Point, but a few of their informants do. At least one dweller is said to live in Vrontok, the slaver town that lies in the shadow of Sky Point. A handful of kaer dwellers live in Kratas, and a pair of blood elves who have sworn secret allegiance to Throal send regular dispatches from the Blood Wood. A merchant Named Cleotha Splayfoot, living in Haven, is a kaer dweller who keeps the Throalic government informed about goings-on in Parlainth. Most of Barsaive's best-known mercenary and scorcher bands contain kaer dwellers, and a few kaer dwellers live in Jerris, Urupa, and Travar. J'Role would dearly love to get dwellers into Iopos, but all the agents who have attempted to infiltrate the city so far have been discovered and slain.

In addition to kaer dwellers, the Eye of Throal also uses teams of adepts for short-term missions. Many of them specialize in certain types of activities: sneaking into places and stealing things, sowing rumors to stir up rebellions, conducting lightning raids on enemy forces, and so on. The Eye of Throal even includes a team of assassins under J'Role's command, though King Neden is not proud of this fact. These specialist teams are called *cirivados*, a Name derived from the top tile in a popular Barsaivian board game.

Other adept teams are generalists, with a mix of Disciplines much like the average adventuring party. They receive open-ended assignments, in which the Senior Gatherer needs someone to find out exactly what is going on and deal with whatever comes



up. Generalists are expected to solve mysteries, get along with the locals, and (if necessary) apply force to villains and Horrors. On occasion, the Arm of Throal (see p. 71) employs adept teams as elite units or advance scouts.

If the player characters impress Throalic authorities with their service to the nation, they may be invited to become Eyes. Adept members of the Eyes are paid a generous daily wage while on active duty, and are often allowed to keep loot and magical treasure captured from Throal's enemies as long as they accomplish their primary missions. Eyes are expected to pose as simple adventurers, and must not reveal their affiliation with the Eye of Throal. In order to build believable cover identities, team members may undertake personal missions, but the Eye does not pay them for

serving on these missions unless they happen to turn up information of use to Throal or defeat major foes of the dwarf kingdom. The Eye encourages missions that allow adepts to improve their abilities, such as quests to learn the key knowledges of magical treasures.

Player Characters and the Eye of Throal

For purposes of game play, player characters can join the Eye of Throal without feeling that they have lost their freedom of action. A campaign in which the adventurers are Eyes makes it easy for gamemasters to get player characters involved in story lines with major impact simply by giving them assignments from the Senior Gatherer.

Some especially anti-authoritarian player groups may run screaming from the prospect of working permanently for the government. However, the gamemaster can still send them on missions for the Eye of Throal from time to time. J'Role frequently hires freelance adventurers if his other adepts are injured or already out on missions. Likewise, he may hire a group of player characters if one member has a particularly useful ability or some prior connection to the mission at hand. Player characters hired in this manner will be approached by one of J'Role's operatives, and are highly unlikely to meet with the Senior Gatherer himself.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S EXPLORATORY FORCE

His Majesty's Exploratory Force is well known in Throal, its exploits celebrated in song and story. Some of its members even appear in the bright murals that decorate the Halls of Throal. Most Throalites do not know, however, that this very public institution is in fact a branch of the secretive Eye of Throal. Though His Majesty's Exploratory Force was commissioned long before Varulus III created the Eye of Throal, the leaders of this once-independent organization have reported to the Senior Gatherer since the crushing of the Death Rebellion. The Eye of Throal received command of the Exploratory Force because its kaer explorations often yield valuable intelligence, and also to simplify the king's administrative duties.

The primary purpose of the Exploratory Force is to investigate unopened kaers, welcoming the inhabitants (if any) into the new era and recovering what they can from the kaers' depths. Its duties include mapping the kaers, eradicating Horrors or other dangerous creatures that dwell within, and recovering documents, valuable antiquities, and magical treasures. The organization's secondary function is to explore and map all of Barsaive. To this end, large and small Exploratory Force expeditions regularly leave Throal for the wild, uncharted regions of Barsaive where no one has set foot since before the Scourge. As part of this job, the Exploratory Force maintains the distance markers located all across Barsaive (see p. 53 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) and installs new markers as needed.

The current head of His Majesty's Exploratory Force is a charming, restless dwarf archer Named Oergesol. Oergesol's career as an active adventurer came to an end when an infection acquired in a dank kaer cost him the use of his left eye. No longer able to aim properly, he kicked around Bartertown in search of a replacement career until J'Role selected him to replace a retiring Exploratory Force chief. Once depressed by his disability, Oergesol has thrown himself wholeheartedly into his new work, hatching new plans for the Exploratory Force almost every day.

Oergesol is particularly interested in the Forgotten City of Parlainth, where many of his greatest exploits occurred. He is attempting to convince J'Role and his superiors to fund a systematic exploration of the entire city. J'Role, whose own memories of Parlainth are less enthusiastic, sees such a project as a waste of resources; he is more concerned with Barsaive's increasingly tense politics than with buried treasures and slaving monsters.

Player Characters and His Majesty's Exploratory Force

If a player group shows a fondness for classic treasure-hunting and creature-slaying adventures, encourage their characters to join His Majesty's Exploratory Force. Explorers receive the same pay and benefits as agents of the Eye of Throal. In times of political crisis, Exploratory Force adventurers may be given sensitive missions otherwise reserved for the Eye of Throal.

ON THE ARM OF THROAL

The Arm of Throal is the dwarf kingdom's military, commanded by Supreme General Foellerian. The Supreme General reports directly to the king and is a member of his inner circle. In addition to her duties as overseer of the Eye of Throal, the Supreme General commands Throal's infantry and navy.

Supreme General Foellerian, a zealous and demanding dwarf woman, insists on strict discipline and obedience to protocol. Those who serve under her fear her legendary wrath, evidenced by tell-tale pockmarks in the mosaics on her office walls that chronicle the many times she has thrown things at them in a rage. Much of her fiery rhetoric and quick anger come from sheer frustration that her colleagues among the king's advisers do not take the Theran threat as seriously as she does.

Foellerian is convinced that Throal's final battle with Thera will occur very soon. She does not hunger for this war, but fears it, knowing that the full might of the Empire could easily level Throal. Foellerian argues constantly that the kingdom must spend more public money on increasing its military strength and views such projects as the construction of the Inner Cities as sheer folly.

Foellerian also believes that the rich traders should be heavily taxed in order to increase her budget, which makes her deeply unpopular with all of them. Her uneasy relationship with the traders is problematic because the infantry is expected to defend trading caravans against bandits, ork scorchers, and dangerous creatures. Foellerian proposes that the traders use their precious private armies for these small skirmishes and leave Throal's infantry to fulfill its primary duty of practicing and refining large-scale fighting tactics that they can use against the Therans. Infantry units often sustain casualties in battles along trade routes, and the traders show little gratitude for the pain the soldiers suffer.

Many of King Neden's courtiers lobbied continually for Foellerian's removal from her post before the Therans returned. His father rebuffed all of those requests; and King Neden respects Foellerian's fire and determination. Privately, however, Foellerian fears the king's impetuous nature.

Foellerian is an Archer of at least Ninth Circle.

Infantry

General Quaavami Rockbreaker, a stern and self-controlled troll woman, commands the infantry. Quaavami is Foellerian's protégé and shares the Supreme General's concerns about Throal's military vulnerability. She resents the traders' demands for her aid even more fiercely than Foellerian, but holds her anger inside. Even at her most furious, Quaavami keeps her voice quiet and her words measured; only a twitch in her left cheek gives away her rage. Though her officers and enlisted ranks fear her anger, they also show Quaavami intense loyalty because they know that she fights for their safety when few others will.

Quaavami finds it difficult to conceal her contempt for Ilmorian, her counterpart in the Throalic navy. The glamour that surrounds the navy disgusts her, because she knows the infantry have shed the most blood in the service of Throal. The king and his advisers seem more willing to sink money into airships than into the far less romantic ranks of the foot soldiers, and Quaavami wonders

if her forces would get the resources they need if she could match Ilmorian's personal popularity. Every time she sees him cheered in the Royal Auditorium or celebrated by a Troubadour, she feels like punching someone. Quaavami is a Warrior and Scout adept.

The infantry consists of approximately 3,000 soldiers. Six generals, each of whom commands five troops, report to Quaavami Rockbreaker. Each troop, a hundred soldiers strong, is commanded by a war consul. Troops are divided into units of 20 men, each commanded by a sergeant who reports to the war consul. All the war consuls are adepts, as are roughly 30 percent of the sergeants. Most sergeant adepts are of Fourth Circle or lower; few enlisted soldiers are adepts. Five of the troops are cavalry, known collectively as the King's Lancers.

Quaavami's strategies rely on swift strikes and equally swift withdrawals. Speed is paramount, so Throalic soldiers are lightly armored. Stockpiles of heavier armor are available if necessary for use against Theran heavy cavalry. Quaavami also wants her troops to be able to respond quickly and effectively to a variety of situations. Often called upon to fight raiders and bandits, Throal's infantry must react spontaneously to surprise conditions, and so foot soldiers are expected to be proficient with both melee and missile weapons. Quaavami recently hired another ten troops as reserve units and trains them in the tactics required to successfully fight Theran forces.

Throal's army is well armed, its weapons provided by a staff of Weaponsmith adepts supported by the Royal Treasury. Because the Weaponsmiths use their talents to improve these weapons magically, the blades inflict more than the usual damage. The infantry's use of magically enhanced weapons gives them a psychological advantage against bandits and scorchers, who fear their blades based on reputation alone.

TYPICAL SOLDIER

Attributes		
DEX (16): 7	STR (16): 7	TOU (18): 7
PER (8): 4	WIL (13): 6	CHA (8): 4
Characteristics		
Initiative: 5	Physical Defense: 9	
Physical Armor: 8	Spell Defense: 5	
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 5	
Death: 42	Recovery Tests: 3	
Unconsciousness: 34	Knockdown: 7	
Wound Threshold: 12	Movement: 5	
Skills		
Armor Rune Carving ^A (S): 9		
Avoid Blow (S): 12		
Hunting (S): 12		
Melee Weapons (S): 12		
Missile Weapons (S): 12		
Parry (S): 12		
Read/Write Language (1): 5—(Dwarf/Throalic)		
Resist Taunt (S): 11		
Riposte (3): 10		
Speak Language (4): 8—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, <i>Or'zet</i> , Troll)		
Tactics (S): 9		
Throal Military Organization ^K (S): 9		
Throal Military Procedures ^K (S): 9		
Tracking (S): 9		
Unarmed Combat (S): 12		
Wilderness Survival (S): 9		

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor
Hardened Leather Armor w/etched Arm of Throal seal (Phys 5; Init 1), Footman's Shield w/etched Arm of Throal seal (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 19)

Weapons
Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 15), Medium Crossbow (Damage 12; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/15 medium crossbow bolts), Sling (Damage 9; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Equipment
Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tool, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb, Waterskin
Loot
D12 silver pieces, 3D12 copper pieces
Legend Award
Third Circle
Notes
Has the Heat Sight racial ability

On Magicians in the Infantry

Currently, the infantry does not regularly field magicians. Of the 30 infantry troops, only three have small detachments of magicians at their disposal; five magicians per troop, most either Elementalists or Wizards. When special circumstances warrant it, adept teams from the Eye of Throal may perform certain operations with the infantry (and the navy, if necessary). The army almost always relies on the Eye of Throal for the services of Illusionists or Nethermancers.

The Arm of Throal can immediately draft up to 40 or 50 magicians that it keeps on retainer. These reserves make up a truly awesome force, for few armies could withstand the onslaught of so many magicians constantly hurling fireball and lightning cloud spells across the battlefield.

Navy

Much to the chagrin of the infantry, the navy gets the glory in Throal. The romance and wonder of airships have captured the kingdom's imagination, as has the General of the Navy, the flamboyant Air Sailor Ilmorian. As personally popular with the average citizen of Throal as with the sailors under his command, Ilmorian is as effective a politician as he is a general. In fact, his detractors say he is better at politics than war. Largely because of Ilmorian's skill at winning friends and influencing people, most of the new money devoted to Throal's defenses is going to its airship fleet.

A graceful elf with luxuriant blond hair, Ilmorian is brave, good-looking, and more than a little conceited. He has also been extraordinarily lucky; in numerous clashes with crystal raiders and other sky pirates, he has triumphed over extraordinary odds again and again. Ilmorian has come to believe the songs and stories that celebrate these great deeds, and has no doubt that he will defeat even the vaunted Theran navy when the time comes.

Ilmorian encourages his officers to think independently and find unexpected solutions to problems. His stock response to an officer with a problem has become legendary: "Improvise, man, improvise!" His men adore him. Even Neden, who served under him as a navy commander before he ascended to the throne, is not immune to this spell.

The navy fields 18 galleys, four of which are lightly outfitted scout ships. Four more are under construction, two in Travar and the other two in Jerris.

The 14 fully equipped galleys each require a crew of 140: a hundred oarsmen, with the remaining 40 composed of commanders, navigators, and fighters. This latter group defends against boarding attempts by enemy ships. A war galley's crew usually includes 15 or so adepts, averaging Fifth Circle. Unlike the infantry, the navy crews commonly include magicians, particularly Wizards and Elementalists, whose long-range spells are extremely effective in ship-to-ship combat. Non-adept auxiliary fighters have the same game statistics as the average infantry soldier given above.

In addition to its galleys, the Throalic navy also has a small fleet of eight drakkars, most often used for short scouting excursions in the immediate vicinity of the dwarf kingdom. The Eye of Throal and members of His Majesty's Exploratory Force frequently use these ships for missions as well. Though the navy currently does not count any galleons in its fleet, Ilmorian has petitioned the king on several occasions to commission a small fleet of these



massive vessels. Thus far the king has refused Ilmorian's requests, preferring instead to commission more galleys. Fortunately for the Royal Treasury, two galleons of the pre-Scourge Throalic fleet were recently recovered and put back into service. These ships were stranded in the peaks of the Throal Mountains when the Scourge descended on Barsaive. Counting four ships in total, two of the galleons were destroyed when they crashed in the mountains, but the other two survived.

Mercenary Units

In addition to its infantry and navy, the Arm of Throal employs several ork cavalry units as mercenary troops. "Send an ork to fight an ork" is Neden's unstated policy, and so the ork cavalries battle scorcher bands and other bandits who threaten trade routes and Throal's outlying communities. Their principal antagonists are the dreaded Skull Wharg tribes.

The most famous of the mercenary units is Terath's Chargers. This nomadic tribe of 1,600 orks supports 400 cavalry fighters, roughly 40 of whom are Cavalryman adepts. At any given time, only half the Chargers' fighting force is stationed near the Throal Mountains. The other half fulfills short-term contracts with other employers. The band's overall leader, Terath the Contemplative, has

split command of the Chargers between his two children. Terath's son, Earyl Bloodstroke, commands the half that remains in Throal. Terath's daughter, Zarass Icethought, commands the other half of the force—and has recently left to join forces with the newly founded nation of Cara Fahd.

The pensive Terath admires King Neden immensely and has read the Council Compact carefully in order to better understand his employer. Though he thinks that the king has little chance of accomplishing his aims, he admires those aims nonetheless. Terath is getting on in years, and spends more and more of his time managing various business enterprises in the city of Bethabal. He has left the prosecution of war to his son and daughter, and now acts as little more than a figurehead to his followers. Though he knows that rivalry existed between Earyl and Zarass before she left, his increasing detachment from the day-to-day affairs of the Chargers has prevented Terath from noticing the true seriousness of the rift. Zarass always criticized Earyl for being too close to Throal, arguing that Earyl's intermittent love affair with Dajag Treaty-Keeper, the Baroness of Bethabal, is clear evidence of his divided loyalties. Terath finds it hard to quarrel with his son because he, too, identifies with Throal. He dismissed Zarass' complaints, not understanding how low her opinion of Earyl had fallen.

Earal has become a popular figure in the outlying communities of Throal. He sees himself as more than a mercenary; he regards Throal's citizens as his people to protect. Unlike his father, he is not an intellectual and does not care a fig for the Council Compact. Earal believes in personal loyalty, to his Chargers first and to the people of Throal's outlying settlements second. Bold, decisive and lusty, Earal likes to think of himself as a hero rather than a mere sell-sword.

Over two years ago Earal survived two attempts on his life by infiltrators in his camp. In public, he proclaimed them servants of the Hand of Corruption. The results of his interrogation, however, revealed an enemy closer to home; his sister Zarass sent the assassins. Though Earal acts publicly as if she had not tipped her hand, he has doubled his personal guard. He knows that he will one day have to face his flesh and blood on the field of battle, but hopes that day will be slow in coming.

As her Name suggests, Zarass Icethought is cold-blooded and heartless. Her jealousy of Earal has grown so intense that it borders on insanity, and observers believe that if she could not obsess over his loyalty to Throal, she would have found some other pretext to hate him. After her failed assassination attempts, Zarass received word of another famed mercenary captain, Titanstroke Greybeard of the Thunderers, sounding her out about a grand alliance of scorcher and raider tribes. Intrigued by this prospect, Zarass temporarily put her vendetta against Earal on hold and left to join Titanstroke for Cara Fahd.

The loss of Titanstroke's services forced Throal to hire six less-accomplished ork cavalries to augment its forces: Death's Lingering Kiss, the Elf Eaters, the Golden Flashes, the Grinning Wounds, the Mud Beasts and the Stinking Renders. Their captains report to Earal, who takes his orders from Terath, who in turn deals with General Quaavami Rockbreaker. Each of the six cavalries supports roughly 100 mounted warriors, of which one in ten are Cavalryman adepts. Many of these mercenaries are personally unsavory and professionally unreliable, and Earal is hoping to attract a better class of mercenary to Throal's service in the future. Statistics for a typical member of these lesser cavalry units appear below.

The sadistically poetic Jeslar, who creates disturbing sculptures from the bones of her slain foes, commands Death's Lingering Kiss. A young ork Warrior Named Sandahg commands the Elf Eaters. Sandahg is unusually beautiful even by the standards of non-orks, with delicate features (for an ork) and flowing blond hair. As the Name of her band suggests, Sandahg harbors a despicable prejudice against elves. After the unsolved murders of an elven family in the outlying community of Coalspout, her unit was suspended from guard detail. The Golden Flashes are under the command of Walsha, a greedy fellow with a strange, high-pitched voice. He is probably the cleverest of the six mercenary leaders, but devotes most of his mental energy to gaining the highest possible pay for the lowest possible risk. Beverun, a dark-skinned ork known for his radically shifting moods, heads the Grinning Wounds. He can go from infectious cheer to violent rage in seconds, often with no apparent cause. Captain Schraerak, a manipulative drunkard and glutton devoted to testing the limits of his liver, commands the cavalry known as the Mud Beasts. Finally, the Stinking Renders are captained by the imperious Agak Plankhead, an elderly female Cavalryman with the air of an outraged grandmother.

TYPICAL ORK MERCENARY

Attributes

DEX (15): 6 **STR (18): 7** **TOU (19): 8**
PER (11): 5 **WIL (7): 4** **CHA (8): 4**

Characteristics

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense:** 8
Physical Armor: 8 **Spell Defense:** 7
Mystic Armor: 1 **Social Defense:** 5
Death: 43 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Unconsciousness: 35 **Knockdown:** 7*
Wound Threshold: 12 **Movement:** 6/8^R

^R Riding Movement Rate

* Has the Sure Mount skill

Skills

Animal Bond (4): 8
 Animal Handling (4): 8
 Animal Training (4): 8
 Caravan Trade Routes ^K (5): 10
 Charge (5): 12
 Hunting (5): 11
 Melee Weapons (5): 11
 Missile Weapons (5): 11
 Ork Scorcher Tactics ^K (5): 10
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Speak Language (4): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human, Or'zet, Troll)
 Sure Mount (5): 12
 Tactics (5): 10
 Tattooing A (5): 9
 Tracking (5): 10
 Trick Riding (5): 11
 Unarmed Combat (5): 11
 Wheeling Attack (5): 11
 Wheeling Defense (5): 11

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1), Rider's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0, Shatter 19)

Weapons

Flail (Forged +1; Damage 13), Lance (Damage 13), Longbow (Damage 11; Range 40–80 yards/20–40 hexes), Quiver (w/40 longbow arrows)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Tattooing Tools, Trail Rations (3 weeks), Traveler's Garb, 2 × Waterskins, Thundra Beast (Bit, Blanket, Bridle, Harness, Saddle, 2 × Large Saddlebags, Stirrups)

Loot

Coins, jewelry, and semi-precious stones (worth 5D10 silver pieces)

Legend Award

Third Circle

Notes

Has the Gahad and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.

A TOUR OF THE KINGDOM

How big is the Kingdom of Throal? That's a good question. Certainly big enough for me.

• KANDOR LITHCAL, DWARF CITIZEN •

▲ ▲ ▲
The curious incident began at Uvimir's sausage stall, which stands in the Hall of Tav, seven doors down from Elproni's bakery; the bakery is several hours in and decorated with a mosaic depicting Garaham's pact with the mountains. I had stopped for a brief chat to inquire after Uvimir's daughter's health. A month earlier, the young lady had been poisoned, and I was able to identify the miscreant, a jilted suitor. As Uvimir happily described his daughter's recovery, I felt a sharp pain in my temple. I turned with cat-like speed, a throwing dagger already in my hand. I saw a young child, possibly ork, running away from me, heading north. Peals of laughter bounced from wall to wall. Dazed, I reached down to the tiled floor, where I found a hand-sized chunk of granite. Its edges were sharp, and I touched the side of my head to see if I was bleeding. To my good fortune, the rock had bruised the skin without piercing it. However, it could easily have done me permanent harm. I had no wish to harm a child, but this young ruffian required some immediate discipline.

I pursued the boy down the hallway. He ran quickly, more quickly than his little legs should have allowed. Though he easily outdistanced me, his odd, keening laughter kept me on his trail. The child knew well the twists and turns of the Halls of Throal. He easily wove through the crowds, who paid him little heed. I was not so lucky: I had to slow my pace to avoid careening headlong into passers-by. They reproached me with looks, as if they found my behavior completely unacceptable. I had no time to explain why I was chasing the boy; if I stopped to do so, he would elude me.

I pursued him past the Great Library and into a weaver's establishment. He darted through the looms, and I followed as best I could. One of the weavers sought to block my way, but I shouted at him and he stepped aside, confused. The boy popped through a back doorway in the weaver's large work room. The door slammed shut behind him. I had to fumble to open it. Once through the door, I found myself in the Thandos Hall, south of the entrance to the Elcomi estate. A demonstration of the moneylender's guild was in progress in front of the estate, and the hall was choked with dwarfs. Elcomi guards shoved the moneylenders about; the moneylenders shoved them in return. Royal Guards were in the middle of the fray, trying to separate the two sides. In the chaos, I feared that I had lost the child.

Then another rock landed at my feet. The boy—yes, definitely an ork, and a weedy little fellow at that—stood unnoticed in the midst of the scuffle. He grinned and gave me the buunda, that rude ork gesture of contempt. Then he turned and scooted through the guards and moneylenders, laughing as he went.

The chase went on for hours, from Thandos Hall to the streets of Oshane. From Oshane, to Wishon. Through Wishon, to the northern reaches of Bazrata Hall. From Bazrata to the crystal greenhouses.

Through the greenhouses to the Mines. Whenever I got too close to the boy, some obstacle placed itself in my way. Whenever I grew too distant, he stopped long enough to mock me, keeping my anger at a boil. A less stubborn dwarf than I would have abandoned the chase long before I did. All through the night I followed the boy. Despite my exhaustion I continued on, too tired to question the boy's peculiar stamina.

Then I saw the boy's hand. The rocks had fallen on him. Forgetting my fatigue, I clawed at the stones, ripping them from his body. To no avail; breath had long since been crushed from him. He had been dead for many hours, perhaps days. It was only then that I realized the truth.

I had been chasing the boy's spirit. By some ghostly means, he knew of my abilities as a solver of mysteries. From his temporary grave, he had hired me to find his killer—hired me with a stone.

—From the Journals of Neyo Neyonicus,
Solver of Mysteries, 1507 TH

▲ ▲ ▲

This chapter presents a detailed overview of Throal, including the Grand Bazaar, the Halls of Throal, the chambers of the Inner Kingdom (the Great Library, Royal Auditorium, and the Royal Chambers), the Inner Cities, the crystal greenhouses, and the mines. Each area of the kingdom described includes a sample map.

Several areas are presented in a format containing the following subsections: **Standard Activities**, **Security Measures**, and **Encounters**.

Standard Activities describes the types of activities player characters might witness in the area. **Security Measures** provides an overview of the area's security, including the Royal Guards and private security forces such as those of the noble houses and trading companies. **Encounters** depicts several possible encounters the gamemaster may use to make the area in question come alive for the players.

THE GRAND BAZAAR

The Grand Bazaar is the bustling, welcoming face of the Kingdom of Throal. Many who come to Throal go no further into the kingdom than the Bazaar, paying for lodging in Bartertown rather than venturing into the Halls. During business hours, the Bazaar is a riot of colors, smells, and sounds. At night it is ghostly and quiet, inhabited only by patrolling guards and travelers heading into the Halls of Throal.

ENTERING THE BAZAAR

A traveler will encounter three landmarks upon entering the Bazaar and the Kingdom of Throal: the Royal Road, the Gates of Throal, and the gates to the Halls of Throal.

Royal Road

The Royal Road to Throal is a man-made embankment of crushed stone that gradually slopes up from Bartertown to the mountain kingdom's entrance. The famed arches of Throal, three vast structures of carved granite, straddle this sloping embankment midway between Bartertown and the gates to the Halls of Throal. The Royal Road runs all the way through Bartertown, and is the central thoroughfare from which all the crossroads of the trading town run. For more about the Royal Road and Bartertown, see **Bartertown**, p. 99.

Gates of Throal

During the long centuries of the Scourge, the Gates of Throal kept the Horrors out of the dwarf kingdom. In each of the three massive archways that mark the entrance to the kingdom stands a set of double doors, each door 50 yards wide and 100 yards high. Vast blocks of granite, each 50 yards wide and 30 yards deep, stand between the archways. The gates are a marvel of construction that required Throal's finest magicians, engineers, and smiths a generation of effort to create. They are made of magically reinforced stone and wooden planks laced with kernels of elemental earth and wood, set in a framework of iron and orichalcum. Though no longer active as they were during the Scourge, orichalcum-lined wards cover the surface of the doors. The doors are 3 yards thick, and the threshold that separates the Bazaar from the outside world is 30 yards deep.

The gates have not been closed since the reopening of Throal in 1420 TH. The gates even remained open during the Theran siege in 1458 TH, a point of pride for King Neden and his people.

The gates can only be opened or closed in two ways, neither of which can be accomplished at a moment's notice. The creators of the gates designed a special spell to open and close them that is known only by the court magician, currently Ajmar the Admirable (see **Advisers and Courtiers**, p. 52 in **The Halls of Power**), and a few other completely trustworthy magicians. The gates can also be opened or closed by chaining dozens of thundra beasts and other beasts of burden to pegs on the doors and making them pull the massive slabs.

Thirty-six guards are always on duty at the gates of Throal, twelve at each archway. The gates of Throal represent easy duty for Royal Guardsmen, as they are not responsible for challenging entrants to the kingdom or patrolling the Bazaar, which lies just inside the gates. The gate guards need only look strong and vigorous as symbols of Throal's determination to defend itself against any enemies.

Hall Gates

At the gateway to each of the nine great Halls of Throal, two units of the Royal Guard challenge the people entering the kingdom. Politely but firmly, the guards ask every passer-by if he is a resident or a visitor, the nature of his business, and the proposed length of his stay.

The guards can refuse entry at will, but they only bar entrance to those who pose an obvious danger to Throal's citizens. Prospective visitors to Throal are turned back at the gates if they are drooling mad, clearly infected with a contagious disease, or bear some obvious mark of a magical curse or Horror influence. The guards will also apprehend known exiles attempting to return to the kingdom (for more information, see **Of Citizenship**, p. 56 in **The Halls of Power**).

GOODS FOR SALE

Throal being Throal, even the seeming chaos of the Grand Bazaar is regulated and organized. Chancellery officials license the merchants who sell their wares in the Bazaar, and licensed merchants must set up their stalls in areas set aside for the types of goods they sell. Carpet sellers are grouped together in one area, armorers in another, and so on. This arrangement makes it possible for shoppers to find things in the Bazaar, and also encourages competition between purveyors of the same sort of merchandise. The major areas of the Grand Bazaar are described below.

Beasts

Various animals and creatures are sold in this area—some as pets, some as beasts of burden, most destined to end up on a dinner plate. Chickens, pigs, goats, and cattle are the most common eating animals, and can be butchered on the spot at the customer's request. The floor in this area is caked with dried blood and sometimes slick with fresh blood. The smell is less than appetizing.



Outside business hours, burden beasts are rarely stabled here. The beast dealers own or lease stables outside the gates of Throal, and bring to market only as many animals as they think they can sell in a day.

Carpets

Throalic craftsmen are famed for pictorial rugs and carpets. Popular subject matter includes animals (fabulous and otherwise), maps of Barsaive, swords and shields, flowers, and the mountains of Throal. The more intricate the scene, the more expensive the rug; some depict epic historical or legendary events based on famous paintings or murals, and these go for a hefty price. A small rug with a simple design can cost as little as 40 silver pieces, while the most remarkable pieces command thousands of silvers.

Carts and Wagons

In this area, customers can buy ground vehicles of various designs, from assembled carts and wagons to kits containing all the necessary pieces. Other traveling gear, such as reins, saddles, and stirrups, can also be purchased here.

Clothing

In the clothing area, interested customers can find fashionable Throalic garments, bolts of cloth, bedding, footwear, hats, belts, sacks, and so on.

Curiosities and Antiques

Adventurers wishing to sell souvenirs of their kaer expeditions can do so in this area. This is also the place to buy magical charms and potions. Most of the "exotic wonders" hawked here are pieces of junk passed off on the unsuspecting, but the discerning buyer can sometimes find a rare treasure among the dross. New works of art are also for sale, from small figurines to massive statues and paintings.

Furnishings and Household Goods

The mostly wooden furniture sold here includes beds, chairs, tables, dresser drawers, trunks, scroll racks, and so on. Customers can also purchase dishes and cookware of all sorts, made of clay, wood, or metal.

Groceries

This area of the market sells food intended for preparation elsewhere, including grain-based breads, fruits, vegetables, ale, and wine. Foods such as corn, potatoes, coffee, and chocolate are unknown in Throal.

Jewelry

Jewelry merchants sell everything from cheap baubles to rare gems in this area. As it is a favorite target for thieves, Royal Guards patrol this area more frequently than any other.

Miscellany

Any item not sold in its own area can be found in the section devoted to miscellany, including such vital pieces of adventuring gear as lamps, candles, rope, oil, and imported tools.

Prepared Foods

Stall upon stall offers cooked and preserved foods to shoppers, to eat on the spot or take away. Customers can find something tasty to suit any palate, from the sugared flower petals beloved by windlings to a steaming, stinking bowl of quaalz beans for a hungry ork. This area is the source of most of the good smells that drift through the Bazaar. Here, adventurers can also purchase trail rations and dwarf mine rations.

Perfumes

Perfume manufacturing is one of Throal's major industries, and a large contingent of dealers is on hand to sell their wares. Many of the transactions conducted in this area are substantial, as traders from other parts of Barsaive make deals for large quantities to sell in their home regions.

Services

The service area is given over to stalls that provide services of various sorts. Fortunetellers of all Namegiver races predict their customers' futures using cards, thrown bones, and palm reading. Tattooists decorate their patrons with intricate and colorful designs. Moneychangers convert antique or foreign currency into Throalic coins and assess the value of precious metals and gems.

Low-rent sages offer dubious opinions on treasure maps, ancient legends, and ancestral curses. Threadbare philosophers provide personal counseling for a handful of coppers. For a few silver pieces, a customer can wrestle with a muscle-bound ork or troll; if the customer wins, he gets double his money back. Jacks-of-all-trades repair broken items. Jugglers, musicians, and jesters caper around in hopes of being thrown a coin or two. Scribes compose or read messages for illiterate clients. Storytellers compose extemporaneous epics on a theme and subject matter of the customer's choosing. Gamblers offer passers-by the opportunity to lose the contents of their purses on games of chance.



ADVENTURE HOOK

The business rivalry between perfume merchants Budicett Ermine-Robes and Jihni Avacus has turned personal. Each of them runs a large display of stalls right across from the other's. They both cater to the same working class folk who want subtle, inexpensive fragrances. A few months ago, Jihni initiated a price war against Budicett. The two have now dropped their prices to the point where they are selling their wares below cost. Recently, each merchant has suffered from vandalism, losing hundreds of silvers' worth of goods in a night-time attack.

Stawyri approaches the adventurers for help; she is sure that some of her men are looking the other way while Budicett and Jihni destroy each other's businesses. Both merchants are unpopular with rank-and-file guards because they are forever demanding special favors. Stawyri wants both merchants caught red-handed so that she can punish them with a stiff enough fine to drive them out of business. She also wants the insubordinate guards weeded out, and she wants the adventurers to accomplish both tasks.

Stawyri does not know that the attacks on both merchants are being orchestrated by the corrupt head of the Royal Guild of Merchants, Morri of Bazrata. Morri fears that Jihni will run against her in the next election for guildmaster; Jihni's trade war with Budicett makes good cover for Morri's plot to run her out of business. Morri is not bribing guards to look the other way; she has simply hired a clever band of Thieves to do her dirty work. If Morri discovers that the adventurers are on her trail, she will dig into her deep pockets and hire adepts to assassinate them.

Professional gossips peddle secrets and rumors about the business dealings, political affairs, and personal peccadilloes of Throal's prominent citizens. A few prominent messenger services, both dwarf and non-dwarf alike, have their headquarters in the Grand Bazaar itself, as well as a number of conglomerates of free-lancers. Lastly, one can book their trip out from the very gates of Throal via caravan or airship from this area.

Weapons and Armor

Another of Throal's most lucrative industries is the manufacture of armaments. Fighters throughout Barsaive depend on the solid Throalic workmanship of their swords and armor to help them triumph over adversaries. Magical weapons, both forged and threaded, are also sold here by a few expensive specialists. In addition to purchasing weapons and armor, adventurers can also hire the services of the Weaponsmiths in this area to research magical weapons or to forge weapons and armor. The Weaponsmiths who work in the Grand Bazaar belong to a number of different Forges (see p. 93 of the *Player's Companion*) located in the Halls of Throal.

SECURITY MEASURES

In addition to the 36 guards at the Gates of Throal and the 72 guards at the nine entrances to the Halls of Throal, another dozen guard units patrol the Bazaar day and night. Dealers whose merchandise is particularly attractive to thieves also hire private guards, some of whom may be adepts. Adepts loyal to Throal frequently intervene in robbery attempts, whether paid to do so or not. If a group of player characters decides to steal magical weapons, equipment, or similar treasures from the Bazaar, make their attempt to do so as dangerous and difficult as such a task would be during any other adventure. Throal is a safe place for honest folk, not for bandits.

The Bazaar has its own magistrate, a dwarf woman Named Stawryi, known for her tough, uncompromising manner. She deals with fewer cases than Throal's other magistrates, but a case in the Bazaar is more likely to be complicated than cases elsewhere. Many of her cases involve interventions by merchants attempting to win the fines levied on convicted criminals. Stawryi inspires tight discipline in the guards under her command. They don't like her very much, but they respect her and fear her occasional bursts of temper. According to rumor, she has had a series of affairs with men under her command who were subsequently transferred out of her area when the affairs went sour. Stawryi rubs many merchants the wrong way; they want her to act as if she works for them, but she defers to no one. It is entirely possible that the rumors about her love life are simply part of a campaign to discredit her.

THE HALLS OF THROAL

The term "the Halls of Throal" refers to the part of the kingdom built from 910 to 1050 TH, before Throal was sealed. Its construction differs considerably from those parts of Throal built since the kingdom's reopening. The Halls of Throal were constructed according to the architectural tastes of dwarfs, while the Inner Cities are designed to appeal to other Namegivers as well.

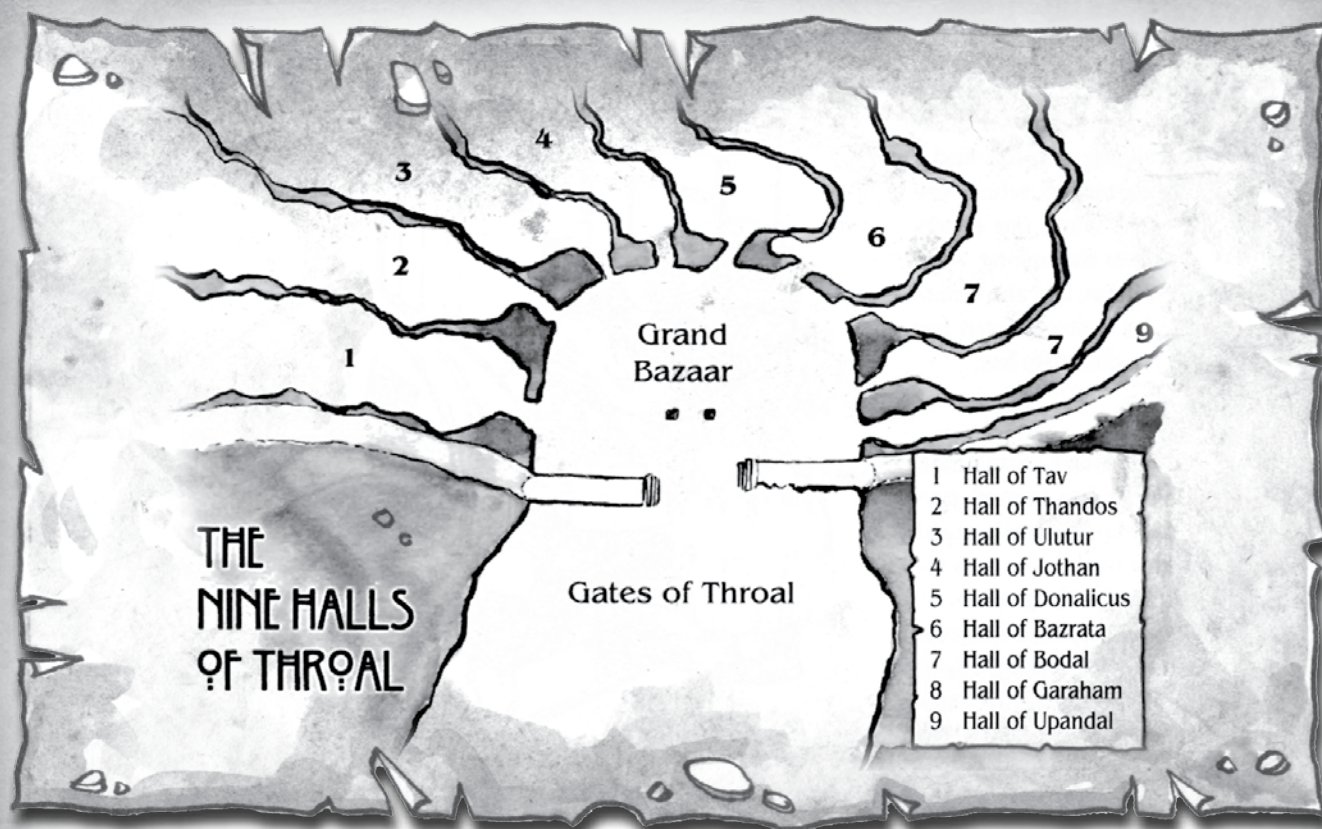
The nine Halls of Throal radiate out like wheel spokes from the Grand Bazaar, the mammoth foyer at the entrance to the kingdom. Three of the Halls are Named after past monarchs of Throal, three after heroic founders of the kingdom, two after great playwrights, and one for Upandal, the Passion of building and construction. In order from left to right as they branch off the Grand Bazaar, the nine Halls are Tav, Thandos, Ulutur, Jothan, Donalicus, Bazrata, Bodal, Garaham, and Upandal.



The Halls of Throal are not literally halls, but specific networks of tunnels and chambers in the kingdom. Between each of these vast areas are several cross tunnels that connect the passageways of each Hall to another. Consisting of little more than glorified tunnels, the Halls alternately narrow and widen as they twist their way through the mountain. The average width of a passageway is 10 yards, the average height 5 yards. The walls, which are also the outer walls of dwellings and businesses, are often decorated with colorful mosaics, or painted murals in the poorer sections. The murals are less long-lived than the mosaics and must be restored every decade or so. Throalites who allow chipped or peeling paint on their outer walls are either poverty-stricken or miserly.

Light crystals illuminate the entire length of the Halls of Throal, glowing in sconces every 6 yards or so. The light is brighter than that of the average kaer, but a person used to living above ground will find the Halls shadowy by comparison. The floors are tiled with granite slabs. In front of wealthy homes, the granite gives way to marble tiles purchased by the inhabitants of the wealthy estates. Some ostentatious-minded people have paid for floor mosaics as well.

Each of Throal's winding Halls is dozens of miles long, and it would take several days to travel the entire length of any one of them. They twist and turn and are periodically intersected by unnamed cross-tunnels. These cross-tunnels, which connect the Halls with one another, enable Throalites to travel from Hall to Hall without having to go all the way to the Grand Bazaar. Not all of the Halls are on the same elevation; extensive portions of Halls Jothan, Bazrata and Upandal lie 30 yards below the "ground level" of the rest of the kingdom. Travelers navigate each change of elevation via a huge, elaborate marble staircase, complete with a miniature grass-filled park where travelers can rest or quench their thirst in numerous fountains. The waters can even help travelers resist the effects of fatigue, to a point. These staircases are a popular linger-



ing place for street salesmen and buskers. Royal Guards assigned to patrol the staircases of Throal wage a constant, losing campaign to keep them clear of loiterers.

Strangers to Throal often have difficulty finding their way to specific locations, as homes and businesses are not numbered. Instead, they are described by the approximate time it takes to get to the spot from the Grand Bazaar, and also by landmarks. For an example, see the description of the location of Uvimir's sausage stall in this section's opening journal entry. People who know Throal well easily adjust to this less-than-precise system, but outsiders find it exasperating. For example, many visitors mistake the tunnels that connect the Halls for the Halls themselves. Connecting tunnels and the Halls are both lined with shops and homes, and so a perplexed wayfarer can easily spend hours tramping down one Hall while believing he is in another. The Halls are also remarkably similar in appearance; the subject matter of various mosaics and murals is the only real distinguishing feature between most locations, and even these may be repeated. The Halls of Throal are filled with depictions of the Battle of Jalasa, the Betrayal of Tav Korelsed, Braza's Finding of the Routes, and the Defeat of the Therans at the Gates of Throal. Visitors to the kingdom often complain that the dwarfs must have deliberately made Throal difficult to navigate, and it is true that the confusing layout makes it easy for Royal Guards to spot strangers. Strangers, after all, are most often the ones wandering around with puzzled expressions on their faces. The maze of the Halls also separates the citizens of the Inner Cities, which are more rationally laid out and easier to travel through, from residents of the Halls proper (who are most likely to come from families that have lived in Throal for generations). Many denizens of the Cities venture into the Halls of Throal only reluctantly.

The Halls of Throal are a crowded place to live. Dwarf society is based on the extended family, and living in close quarters with one's relatives is considered right and proper. Only dwarfs of the richest families have private sleeping quarters, and dwarfs of humble origins maintain that this is why "rich kids" are soft in the head.

As in many large settlements across Barsaive, people in Throal arrange themselves by economic status. When Throal was being

built before the Scourge, King Varulus I allowed citizens to bid for their choice of housing in the giant kaer. The highest bids netted not only the largest estates, but also free choice of location. Because people thought that the Horrors would enter through the Grand Bazaar and work their way back (should Throal actually be breached), the favored locations were those furthest from the gates. By this reckoning, the people at the far ends of the Halls had at least a chance of mobilizing to fight the monsters off if catastrophe struck. Since Throal reopened, the distance between the estates of the rich and the outside world has become inconvenient, but tradition is a powerful thing where symbols of status are concerned. Therefore, the furthest reaches (in distance and depth) are still the most desirable properties in the kingdom. In Throalic parlance, to be "in" is to be wealthy and well-connected, as in, "After I get the trade franchise from Queen Alachia, I'll be well and truly in." "Out" means the opposite: "Of course, if Alachia refuses, my investments will fail, and I'll be out—completely out."

In general, the Halls of Throal contain three types of areas: the *dahnat*, which translates roughly to "the slums," home to Throal's least well-off; the Estates, home to the nobles; and the other neighborhoods, known as *wedshel*, home to Throal's equivalent of the middle class.

THE DAHNAT

The poorest, most run-down areas of the Halls are the first things a visitor sees after leaving the Grand Bazaar. These southerly areas of the kingdom, known as the *dahnat*, are a haven for beggars and others who have fallen on hard times. Though the poorest citizen of Throal is better off than many in Barsaive's other large cities, everyone in Throal agrees that the *dahnat* are a shameful blight. As usual, however, reformers and the old guard disagree about the solution. Reformers want to spend public money to spruce up the *dahnat*. Old-guard conservatives want to make it a fining offense to have a shabby home or business—a tax of sorts on the poor that would encourage them to move somewhere less immediately visible, such as the Inner Cities. The reformers oppose this

measure because it punishes the poor, contrary to the spirit of the *Council Compact*.

Throal has a smaller proportion of destitute people than other cities in Barsaive; fewer than 5,000 Namegivers live in the *dahnat*. The average dwelling in this area is a 5-yard-by-13-yard rectangle adjoined to one of the Halls at a narrow end. These one-room dwellings may house 20 or more members of an extended family. Furniture is rudimentary: a wooden table, a few rickety chairs, a stove, and a few storage chests for dishes and clothing. At night, *dahnat* dwellers move the furniture to one side so they can sleep on mats.

Businesses also operate in the *dahnat*, many of them threadbare shops where local people spend their hard-earned coppers. Others are larger enterprises dependent on cheap labor, such as weavers' workshops, tanneries, and the like. Most employees of such establishments are women; men from the *dahnat* leave the neighborhood each morning to work elsewhere in Throal as builders or miners.

Few Throalic dwarfs remain poor for more than a few generations. Children who work hard even at mediocre schools can almost always get better jobs than their parents, lifting the family out of poverty. Most residents of the *dahnat* are relative newcomers to the kingdom, as those who lived in the *dahnat* during the Scourge have long since moved on to better circumstances. Legions of poor dwarfs have given way to humble souls from the rest of Barsaive who have come to Throal in search of a better life. The *dahnat* are more racially mixed than other areas of the Halls of Throal, and orks have become more numerous than dwarfs. The *dahnat* are also home to a few humans and trolls.

Though long-time Throalites look down on them, residents of the *dahnat*—known as "southenders" or "southers" in Throalic slang—are proud and self-reliant. They have hope for their children's future, if not their own. They work hard, and expect that hard work to pay off. They bear no love for the rich, but hope that their descendants might one day join their ranks. Children of the *dahnat* tend to be high-spirited and have a healthy disrespect for their so-called social betters, but few of them are criminals. The *dahnat* of Throal are safer and quieter than many areas of Bartertown.

Men, women, and even some children leave their homes to work during the day, leaving the *dahnat* quiet and empty. During the evening, residents flock to the taverns to forget their troubles. Most of these drinking establishments look bad and smell worse. Brawls break out frequently, though few people get badly hurt. Taverns offer cheap drinks, the companionship of hardworking southers, and little else. Popular taverns in the area include the Broken Nose, the Granite Hands, the Golden Tankard, Olen's Place, the Smirking Imp, the Tattooed Human, and the Winged Dwarf. As many southers are illiterate, the taverns are marked not by printed signs, but by the crude, colorful murals that adorn their outer walls.

Player characters will have to overcome a bad first impression if they enter a southender bar. The poor folk of the area are suspicious of outsiders, and have learned to act invisible in the presence of richer people. Also, like humble people in Barsaive's hinterlands, many southers display a superstitious dread of adepts. As far as they are concerned, even honest and well-meaning adventurers usually bring trouble. Legends, after all, tell of mighty adepts who have great adventures in which common folk more often than not get slaughtered.

In addition to tavern crawling, southers make their entertainment in other ways. Lacking much money for concerts, plays, and such, they tell stories and sing. Though less interested in debate or in the arts than the average Throalite, they are aficionados of personal combat and hach'var.

Most of the homes in the *dahnat* are owned by the kingdom. Originally purchased by their occupants, most of whom have since

moved into better areas (see **The Wedshel**, p. 81) or to one of the Inner Cities (see **The Inner Cities**, p. 93), the houses fell into the government's possession by default. After assuming ownership, the kingdom offered them for rent and sale. A few of the wealthier noble trading houses also own *dahnat* houses, from which they make a tidy profit in rent.

The Chancellery oversees the homes owned by the kingdom, and is also responsible for ensuring that private landlords follow the laws governing ownership of rental property. The most significant rent law concerns pricing; the Chancellery has placed restrictions on the prices owners can charge for rent in the *dahnat*. Rents average around 25-30 silver pieces per month, and vary according to location. Homes in some of the Halls of Throal cost more, especially those farthest from the Bazaar; rent for these runs about 35-40 silver pieces a month.

To rent or purchase a home in the *dahnat*, one must be a resident of Throal—and, of course, find a landlord willing to rent. Unfortunately, the Chancellery has imposed no restrictions on landlords regarding whom they must rent to or whom they can deny. Orks and trolls have been the target of discrimination in the past when trying to rent or buy homes owned by members of the noble houses. Thus far, no one of any race has run into trouble renting or buying a kingdom-owned home.

Security Measures

The magistrate in charge of the *dahnat* is a friendly, kind-hearted dwarf Named Skerrin, who was born in the *dahnat* and worked his way through the ranks of the Royal Guards to his current position. He relates well to poor dwarfs, and has a reputation for fairness and compassion.

Skerrin believes that hard work can solve all problems. Though he does not understand orks and trolls as well as he does dwarfs, he nonetheless manages to keep a lid on tensions in the *dahnat*. As part of his efforts to keep criminals and exiles from moving into the cheap housing in the area, Skerrin launches periodic sweeps to check up on new residents. The honest workers of the *dahnat* cooperate with these raids, because the last thing they want is crooked or dangerous people living in their midst.



The Royal Guard units under Skerrin's command take their cue from him, and make an effort to fit in with the community. Few of them were brought up in the *dahnat*, but they spend time in local taverns and generally get to know people. Therefore, most south-ers see the Royal Guards as allies instead of adversaries.

During the work day, guard patrols are light; a guard unit takes anywhere from 1 to 10 minutes to respond to a disturbance. In the evening, patrols are more frequent in case fights break out in the taverns; a guard patrol will appear within 10 rounds of any trouble starting. Late at night, patrols are so infrequent that it takes anywhere from 3 to 15 minutes for a unit to respond.

Accommodations

Numerous establishments offering cheap lodging exist in the *dahnat*, but few advertise with signs, thus forcing prospective customers to ask the locals for directions or recommendations. If newcomers to the *dahnat* strike local residents as dangerous or troublesome, the locals may deliberately mislead them in the hope that they will move on.

Sleeping space in these cheap lodgings costs 1 copper piece a night. This fee entitles the customer to a mat in a communal sleeping area, but does not include meals or drinks; patrons must buy these from nearby taverns. Typical lodging houses are referred to by their owners' Names; four of the better-known appear below.

Hardstick's

This lodging house is run by Iaiah Hardstick, a middle-aged dwarf with a sour disposition. Easily insulted, he regularly gets into fights in the local taverns. His customers often have to ban- dage him up after a night out.

Johuricus'

This lodging house belongs to Johurrus Johuricus, a thin, wiz- ened old dwarf with a weakness for alcohol. He is cranky in the mornings but garrulous when drunk.

Siggo's

The owner of Siggo's is a grim, tough human woman who takes guff from no one. Her blanket refusal to talk about her past has given rise to all kinds of wild rumors about her. Siggo is completely bald, and some say she lost her hair after a terrible encounter with a ghost or a Horror.

Stathina's

This place belongs to Stathina Goldheart, a humble dwarf woman who has dedicated her life to Garlen. She often helps down-and-out patrons find jobs and make a fresh start. She has a low tolerance for adventurers, whom she regards as little better than criminals.

Encounters

Typical brief encounters in the *dahnat* can include:

- A mangy dwarf child escaping punishment from his parents.
- A party of exhausted miners heading into a tavern after a long day's work.
- A madwoman babbling about a disaster that will soon befall Throal.
- A guard unit asking a shady-looking character a few questions.
- A mural artist touching up a tavern sign, with a paintbrush in one hand and a jug of ale in the other.
- A legless beggar complaining to an armless beggar that visitors to the Bazaar are getting more miserly every day.
- Members of the Miners' Guild intimidating a new arrival who has been working in the mines without joining the guild.

- A construction boss looking for Builders' Guild members will- ing to do some hard work on short notice.
- A young woman sweeping dirt from her home into the hallway.
- A stray puppy that tags along after the adventurers, begging for food.

THE WEDSHEL

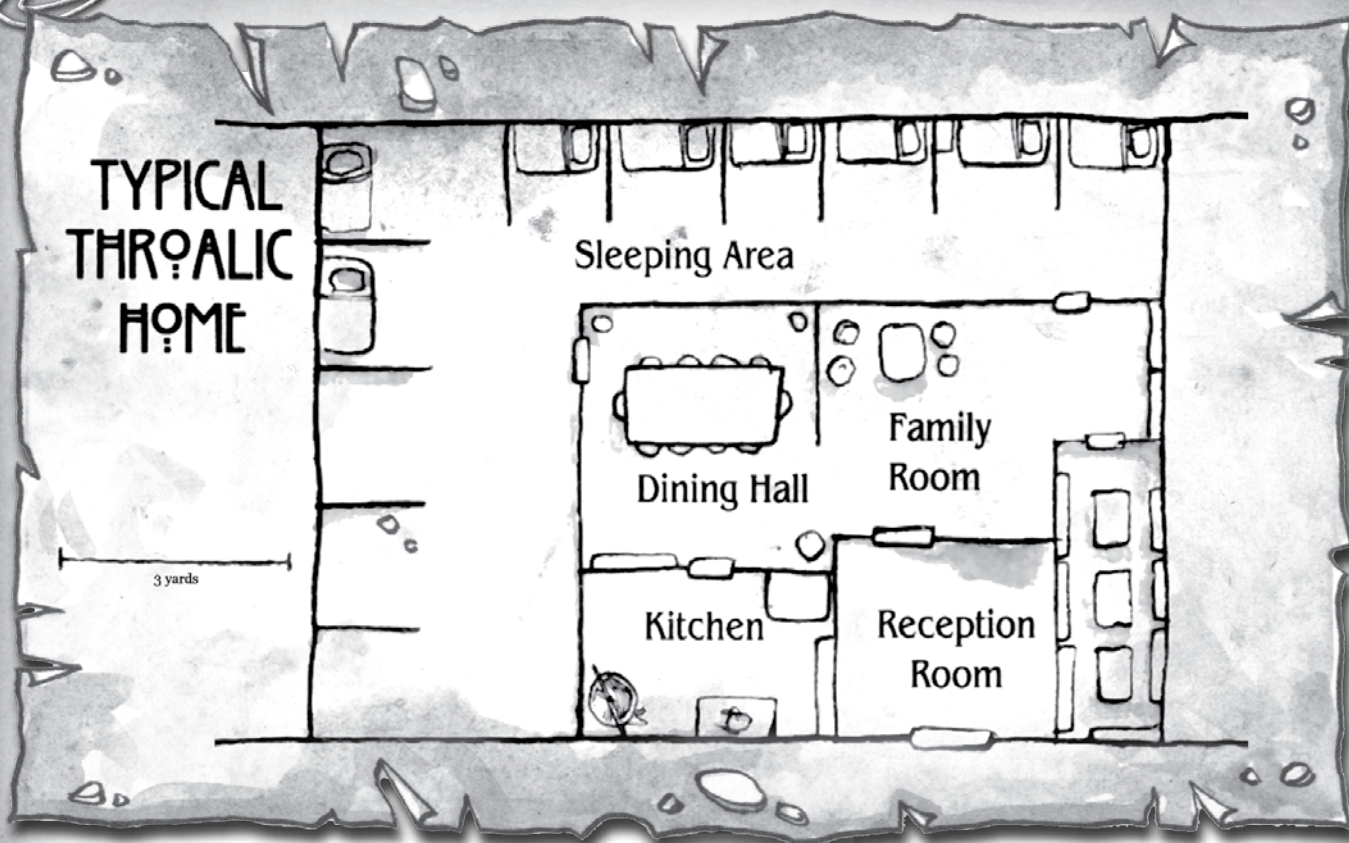
Though Throalites do not use the term "middle class," the bulk of Throal's population would fit that modern definition. In Throal, people too prosperous for the *dahnat* but of too low an income level to be rich are considered ordinary, average citizens. The poor and the rich are different, and tend to live in their own enclaves; the areas inhabited by average Throalites are neither *dahnat* nor wealthy estates, but simply the "other neighborhoods," the *wedshel*, full of ordinary people, their homes, and their places of business.

A Typical Home

The average Throalic home is hewn from the mountain. Built fairly quickly at around the same time, all these homes are roughly similar in construction. Each home has a single entrance, with large doors of heavy oak that open onto one of the Halls of Throal. Luckily for the people of Throal, fire is not a major hazard; since so much is made of stone, there are few structures that will burn. Most average homes are occupied by their owners. A select few homes in each of the Halls belong to members of the wealthier trading houses, who rent them at prices ranging from 100 to 150 silver pieces per month. As in the *dahnat*, only citizens of Throal may rent or purchase a home in these moderately prosperous neigh- borhoods. The typical home contains a reception room, dining hall, family room, sleeping area, and storage space.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A group of young rowdies decides to have a night of fun slumming, dressing in rags and heading to the Broken Nose tavern. They pro- voke the local miners until someone throws a punch and a fight breaks out. One of the young provocateurs is thrown off-balance, hits his head on a table and dies. The guard unit investigat- ing the incident declines to charge any of the miners; even the accounts of the dead man's friends make it clear that his demise was acci- dental. However, this explanation does not satisfy the dead man's parents. Wealthy trad- ers from Travar used to purchasing justice, they assume that the guards are favoring poor Throalites because they killed a foreigner. The traders hire a group of adepts to kidnap the miner who knocked the hapless victim down and take him to Travar for trial. This act outrages even those Throalites who normally would side against a poor miner. The Throalic government hires the player characters to intercept the kidnappers and return the miner to Throal unharmed. This adventure works especially well if the charac- ters have previously worked for His Majesty's Exploratory Force, the Eye of Throal, or the Arm of Throal (see **The Threads of Unity**, p. 71).



Reception Room: An enlarged foyer, the reception room is the place to entertain acquaintances for business or pleasure. Furniture and trappings are meant to subtly impress guests, and so most Throalites decorate the reception room with items crafted by family members. This practice fits in with the Throalic proverb, “Know my family through the fruit of our hands.” Placing an expensive work of art or precious antique in the reception room is ostentatious, a social misstep committed only by the ignorant. The first time player characters are invited to a Throalic home, they will only see the reception room.

Dining Hall: Dwarfs love food almost as much as the company of their kin, and so the dining hall is the heart of a Throalic home. Gigantic wooden tables, usually rectangular and ringed with chairs, are almost always the most impressive and expensive pieces of furniture in Throalic homes. Their owners regard them as family heirlooms and take excellent care of them. Each table is custom-made by the best woodworkers a family can afford to hire (or the most talented woodworkers in the family); important events in a family’s history are often carved into the tabletop, the table legs, and the legs and backs of the chairs. For example, a family of actors might have masks and scrolls carved into its table. The dining table is so treasured a symbol of Throalic life that the *Council Compact* prescribes a specific penalty for stealing or destroying one; the penalty is much higher than that for stealing or damaging other sorts of property. Items that illustrate family status, such as portraits, tapestries, and trophies, are displayed in the dining hall, and some of these items may be quite valuable. The eating room reminds a family of its identity, and guests entertained here are entering the family’s heart. An invitation to dine with a Throalite’s family is a great honor, and to betray it through bad behavior is a slight not only to one’s host, but to all his kindred. Many legendary blood feuds began with slights or arguments in a family dining hall.

Family Room: The family retires to this casual, comfortably furnished room to spend time together after a meal. (In Throal, “comfortable” means that the stout wooden seats and backs of chairs are adorned with thin cushions.) Musical instruments, scrolls and

books, craft materials, and other things a Throalite might use to while away an hour or two are stored here, propped in corners or scattered across tabletops. Only a Throalite’s most intimate friends will be invited into a family room. Though not revered in the same way as a dining hall, the typical family room is too informal a space to entertain mere acquaintances or business contacts.

Sleeping Area: A treasured verse of Throalic poetry says, “To hear the snores of one’s grandparents is the most perfect bliss.” (Dwarfs snore more loudly than any other Namegiver race, even drowning out trolls.) Throalic families sleep in communal areas, with the limited privacy of wooden partitions. The partitions can be moved around as the number of people in a family changes. Partitions are intricately decorated, either carved or covered in needle work. Family members keep personal property in chests and drawers in their own portion of the sleeping area. Strangers are never invited into a family’s sleeping area; most Throalites would consider it bizarre to put up a house guest.

Storage: Storage rooms contain the family’s silver and gold, as well as possessions that no one is currently using. These chambers often have reinforced doors, and some families have even installed mechanical traps in their storage areas to deter thieves. Still others keep large dogs trained to attack intruders.

Security Measures

Most areas in the bustling Halls of Throal are well patrolled, and adventurers traveling through the *wedshel* areas will spot numerous guard units. Often, guards are on the scene when a disturbance begins; if not, they will arrive within 3 to 4 minutes (18 to 24 rounds). Average Throalic citizens do not stand idly by when trouble starts; able-bodied folk who see crimes being committed are likely to intervene unless the people causing the disturbance are adepts. In that case the average Throalite will give them a wide berth and wait for the professionals to arrive.

Three magistrates oversee affairs in the Halls of Throal. The magistrate of Tav, Thandos, and Ulutur Halls is Jomikale, a War-

TAVERN TABLE

Tavern Name	Clientele
Ancient Memories	<i>J'havim</i> of House Ueraven
The Blue Sun	Chancellery officials
The Crystal Shield	Weaponsmiths and makers of armaments
The Frozen Windling	Trolls
The Hidden Gem	Muckers
The Inscrutable Sentinel	Royal Guards
The Living Canvas	Tattooists and tattoo wearers
The Lost Thread	Magicians and scholars of magic
The Nectar Petal	Windlings
The Painted Mask	Actors and theatergoers
The Platinum Cockroach	Insect collectors
The Ready Stamen	Workers at crystal greenhouses
River of Tongues	Philosophers
Sea of Fire	Morticians
The Seven Sutures	Healers
The Spent Scarab	Mercenaries and warriors
The Spider's Web	Widows

rrior adept and reformed roughneck who began his career as a lowly guardsman. Once a bribe-taking drunkard who luckily managed not to get caught by his superiors, he turned over a new leaf after accidentally killing a young elf boy during an interrogation. His newfound moral righteousness made him one of the most famous guards in the kingdom, with an impressive record of arrests that ultimately propelled him into the magistrate's chair. Jomikale has a reputation as the toughest magistrate in the kingdom; in the face of every defendant he sees the image of the former self he has come to loathe. Only a few of his closest associates know his dark secret, and none of them dares speak a word about it.

The magistrate of Halls Jothan, Donalicus, and Bazrata is a stolid, unemotional dwarf woman Named Philippa. A former advocate, Philippa is a wise judge but not a great leader. The guards under her command are lazy and uninspired; they keep the peace well enough, but have a terrible record when it comes to solving crimes.

The magistrate Pijian commands the guards of Halls Bodal, Garaham, and Upandal. The youngest magistrate in Throal, she is a member of House Ueraven appointed to her post by King Varulus III in order to appease the influential courtier Selenda. Her promotion aroused resentment among the Royal Guards and assistant magistrates, many of whom felt they deserved the job more. However, Pijian has surprised her critics by running a smooth operation, winning the respect of her men, and making solid judgments on the bench. She has even ruled against her own house on several occasions. Though Selenda has pressured her to criticize the *Council Compact*, Pijian consistently defends it. Her family has recently begun pressuring Pijian to resign and take her place in the family business, but she has so far ignored their wishes. Where she would stand if House Ueraven makes another bid for the throne is anyone's guess.

Accommodations

Since the reopening of Throal, various inns have sprung up to cater to visitors. Most of these inns are converted shops or houses with less than luxurious accommodations. They offer private sleeping quarters

and serve meals at prices ranging from 1 to 3 silvers a night, depending on the quality of the food and the size of the rooms.

The Halls of Throal also contain hundreds of taverns, mostly neighborhood establishments frequented by Throalites of all sorts who happen to live nearby. Many of these establishments have such odd and whimsical Names as Astendar's Cup, the Ax and Saddle, the Burning Tree, the Chirping Bat, the Delinquent Serving Boy, the Eye in the Swirl, the Feathered Mage, the Horse of Garaham, the Howling Pup, the Iron Ball, the Kneeling Warrior, Ninety Caverns, the Robe of Purple, the Trap Door, the Unending Poem, the Unforgiving Bee, the Vane of Rubies, and the White Owl. Gamemasters can use any of these Names, or make up some of their own.

A few of the better-known inns in the Halls of Throal are described below.

The Sand Behemoth

The mural on this inn's outside wall depicts a Theran warship made of sand, falling apart under the withering attack of Throalic airships. The inn's proprietor is Holli Ilfara, an expatriate human and former political prisoner from Thera. She believes that Thera's present rulers have corrupted the noble vision of the Empire's great founders, and her sympathies have made the Sand Behemoth a favored meeting place for Throalic agitators who want war with Thera. Radical members of the *olzim* of Thystonius and Lochost can be found in the inn's common room most evenings, cursing Thera and plotting their next moves. The inn is clean, though not elegant, and Holli personally serves up the exotic Theran dishes she learned to cook as a child. A room and meals at the Sand Behemoth costs 2 silvers a night.

The Fur-Covered Elephant

Bilmo the Braggart, a middle-aged male dwarf, runs a rough establishment that attracts adventurers, mercenaries, peddlers and other fringe characters. Bilmo claims to have once been a mighty adept and happily regales anyone who will listen with wild tales of his exploits. He says he eventually grew bored with adventuring and underwent a re-Naming ritual to escape his many foes. Individual gamemasters may decide if Bilmo's tales are true and/or useful, or simply absurd fabrications. The Elephant is none too clean and the food is mediocre at best, but the price is just 1 silver a night.

The Tasty Thundra

Run by the talkative ork, Dwalis, this establishment is known for its delicious meats and foul vegetable dishes. Dwalis loves to talk about other people's business as much as any dwarf. He is a bad person with whom to share a confidence, but an excellent vehicle for spreading rumors. A room and dinner at the Tasty Thundra costs 2 silvers per night.

The Vine of Grapes

Many a man in Throal dreams secretly about Kathieri, the beautiful elf maiden who runs this inn. Shy but kind, Kathieri recently took over the inn from her elderly parents. She dotes on her parents, and has turned down suitor after suitor in order to continue caring for them. The inn is clean and well run, and offers the finest in elven cuisine. A favorite stop for visiting elves, the Vine of Grapes costs 4 silvers a night. Despite the high price, the inn is often full.

Specialty Taverns

Some taverns appeal to a specialized clientele, reflected in their Names. Most guilds have one or more taverns at which their members regularly gather, and at least one tavern caters to *j'havim* of each of the major trading houses. Others are centered around their patrons' interests and hobbies. The **Tavern Table** lists some of the specialized taverns in Throal.

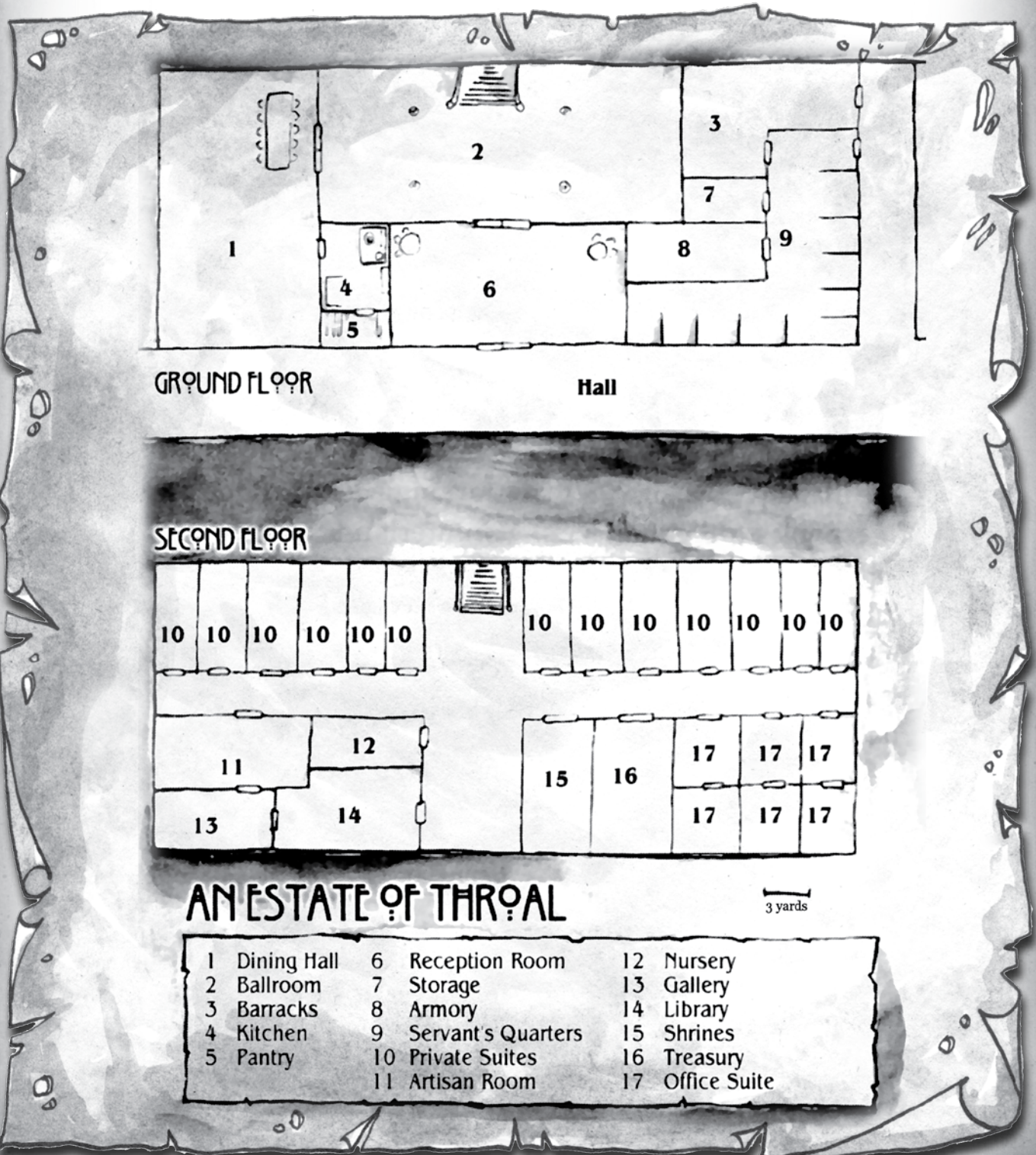
Encounters

The details of everyday life described in **On Everyday Life** (p. 8) are typical occurrences throughout most of the Halls of Throal. The Halls are active during the work day, full of customers and workers at the shops and businesses standing alongside family homes. Sellers of goods stand in the passageways hawking their wares. Householders buy from them and chat with one another on the way to market. Impromptu debates flare up at the least opportunity. Children play games. Old folks sit in chairs in the passageways, waving to friends and striking up conversations with strangers. Adventurers are likely to meet Throalic citizens from all walks of life in these moderately prosperous neighbor-

hoods, and may have any type of encounter that the gamemaster can dream up.

THE ESTATES

When Throalites talk about the wealthiest among them, they speak of those who live "in the Estates." The Estates are less a geographical neighborhood than a state of mind. Throal's rich inhabit manors located at the farthest-in ends of all the Halls of Throal. Geographically, a manor at the end of one Hall actually stands closer to *wedshel* abodes in the same Hall than to manors in other Halls.



A Typical Estate

The great estates of Throal are designed to house families, but also to impress other Throalites with those families' wealth and power. The most fashionable estates are the oldest ones, built in the tenth century; their owners have been rich for a long time and it shows. Most newer manors are painstaking duplications of older ones.

Manors in the Estates are not available for rent at any price, and are rarely sold. The cost of a manor put up for sale would likely be at least 100,000 silver pieces, putting it far beyond the reach of most people (and certainly beyond the reach of adventurers).

The following description of a typical estate assumes that the resident family is still wealthy. Estates owned by noble families that have fallen on hard times generally show signs of encroaching poverty. Expensive furnishings and pieces of art have been sold off; the family no longer throws parties or invites guests in; they have few, if any, servants or guards; large areas go unused, accumulating dust.

Armory: The armory houses weapons, armor, uniforms, and other gear belonging to the family's armed guards. Some armories contain enough equipment to outfit more than a hundred guards and supporters. Should civil war break out in Throal, the nobles are prepared to fight it.

Artisan Room: Family members polish their artisan skills in this communal chamber. Throal's rich citizens prefer to buy their works of art from famous artists because such purchases give them status. After all, anyone can make a work of art; it takes serious money to buy one. However, active traders know they must keep their artisan skills sharp in case they need to prove to customers out in the hinterlands that they are not Horror-tainted. Depending on the skills practiced in these areas, artisan rooms can contain entire smith's workshops, pottery kilns, and so on.

Ballroom: Every noble estate worthy of the title has a vast ballroom in which to entertain and impress other rich Throalites. The typical ballroom is covered in marble and decked out with ornamental support columns. Huge mosaic or canvas portraits of ancestors bedeck the walls. The "ballroom painting" has become a distinct sub-genre of Throalic art; these enormous paintings are full of figures and usually depict great feats performed by heroic traders. Every ballroom also contains a gigantic, elaborate chandelier made of precious metals and countless tiny shards of light crystal. Connecting the ballroom to upper regions of the manor house is a mammoth staircase, with guards stationed at its bottom to prevent outsiders from ascending into the family's private rooms.

Barracks: The guards sleep in these austere chambers; each guard's space contains a sleeping mat, a chamber pot, and a small chest in which to store his personal items. Barracks are rarely inhabited for any length of time, as most guards prefer to live with their families elsewhere in the kingdom. Only in the event of a prolonged civil disturbance would the barracks see full use.

Dining Hall: Rich Throalites entertain in massive dining halls dominated by absurdly long dining tables. Some of these tables can seat more than a hundred guests. As with the typical ballroom, the walls are covered with huge canvas paintings of heroic ancestors. In a "dining-hall painting," family ancestors appear in portrait groupings, gazing grimly down on guests. Figures in these paintings are typically three times life size.

Gallery: Nobles are expected to be art connoisseurs, and have galleries full of paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and other art objects. It is considered bad taste to display commissioned works in the gallery; the point is to impress visitors with the age, rarity, and fame of artworks one has "just happened" to collect. A successful trading house invariably owns extremely valuable items, and the typical manor gallery is an extension of its treasury. Pieces on

ADVENTURE HOOK

Merchants and residents near the Nectar Petal tavern are in an uproar over a band of windling Cavalrymen who have made the tavern the site of nightly zoak races. Zoaks are the half-bat, half-bird flying mounts favored by some windling Cavalrymen (game information for these creatures appears on p. 209 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). The zoak races take place in the passage outside the tavern, impeding traffic and scaring the old folk. During the evening, the hallway is choked with gawkers and gamblers betting on the races. The local Royal Guard unit has asked the racers to move along, but so far they have refused. As the zoak racers are adepts of great prowess, local authorities ask the player characters to persuade them to cease their activities.

The zoak racers are actually members of a windling living legend cult, the Furious Laughers, devoted to curing the Passion Vestrial of his madness by performing bizarre acts throughout Barsaive. They believe that bringing bizarre behavior to sane and stable Throal will make their metaphorical magic all the stronger. Like many cultists, the windlings are dedicated to the point of fanaticism and will gladly turn to violence if necessary to advance their cause.

display can be sold off whenever the house needs large amounts of silver. The contents of a rich family's gallery are a much more compact source of wealth than a reserve of precious metal. Two to four armed guards are on constant duty in each gallery to prevent theft.

Kitchen and Pantry: An estate kitchen must be large and equipped well enough to serve an entire feast, even though most of the time it serves food for no more than 20 dwarfs. Most kitchens have vents designed to spread delectable cooking odors throughout the rest of the manor. Food is stored in an adjoining pantry.

Library: A dwarf noble is expected to be well educated and capable of discussing matters ranging from natural history to philosophy, and so every noble manor has a sizable library. Some are rarely touched; other nobles are genuine amateur scholars with impressive collections of works on their chosen subjects. Trading house libraries are particularly strong in geography, as so much of their success depends on the establishment of new trade routes. The walls of the typical manor library are often adorned with painted maps of Barsaive, which are updated as new routes are created and old ones abandoned. The library is also the usual site of meetings to discuss family business. An old traders' superstition keeps ancestral portraits out of the library; a trader doesn't mind his predecessors staring at him when he's eating, but he prefers not to have them staring over his shoulder when he makes important business decisions.

Office Suite: In these small rooms, day-to-day business is conducted. These offices are set aside for the use of high-ranking family members or inhabited by several *j'havim*.

Private Suites: Bedrooms for family members, these suites contain personal luxuries from jewelry to expensive clothing. Unlike average dwarf families, rich dwarfs sleep apart from one another. Most Throalites consider this practice decadent and

believe that it represents one reason why the rich often seem heartless and selfish.

Servants' Quarters: The 20 to 30 servants who serve the typical noble house live in these smallish chambers, located near the nobles' private rooms so that they can be at the family's beck and call at all hours. Servants of different noble houses are often related to one another, and the same families of retainers have served many of the ancient noble houses for centuries. Though not overly large, the typical servant's quarters are as clean and decently furnished as the living quarters of most average Throalites.

Shrines: Most nobles propitiate the Passions, or at least make a show of doing so. Noble families erect household shrines to all the sane Passions, though Chorrolis usually has the largest and most impressive one.

Treasury: A noble house keeps its cash in this large chamber, usually in gold and silver bars. Manor house treasuries are heavily guarded, and the chests full of precious metal are rigged with mechanical and magical traps. The most prosperous noble houses may have as much as 100,000 silver pieces on hand at any given time. On paper the noble families are worth more than that, but most of their money is usually tied up in investments or circulating around Barsaive in the purses of caravan masters.

Standard Activities

Because Throal's aristocracy gets most of its money from trade rather than from rent on inherited property, Throal has few truly idle rich. Men and women of Throal's noble families work during

the day, balancing accounts, arranging expeditions, and buying commodities to sell in the hinterlands. Often, more than half of the family is away from Throal making business deals. Even socializing is work for the wealthy; everyone wants to seem richer, smarter and more successful than everyone else. Those who create this impression get more business and earn more money.

The rich throw parties and attend parties thrown by other rich people. They patronize arts and sporting events, appearing in special boxes at the Royal Auditorium. They attend these events primarily to be seen; observing whatever is going on is secondary. Business deals are made as often at parties and public events as in offices.

Security Measures

The Estates are heavily protected by Royal Guard units and by hirelings of the noble families who live in them. Guards are always on the scene, even before trouble starts. If adventurers cause trouble near a noble estate, they can expect twice as many reinforcements to arrive twice as quickly as they would anywhere else in Throal. Adept reinforcements will arrive 6 to 12 rounds after an altercation starts because they frequently visit rich neighborhoods in order to seal agreements to guard caravans or undertake special missions, and to improve their social standing.

The Estates are so widely spread out that no single magistrate oversees their affairs. Instead, the Estates fall under the jurisdiction of the magistrates of the Halls in which they are located. For example, noble estates in Hall Bazrata are under the jurisdiction of Magistrate Philippa.

❖ ADVENTURE HOOK ❖

The estates of two very different noble houses stand across from one another at the end of the Hall of Bazrata; on one side is the conservative, dour House Chaozun, and on the other is the swaggering, swashbuckling House Neumani. Aside from making money, the Neumani like nothing more than scandalizing the Chaozun. This time, however, they may have gone too far.

Grindo, the leader of House Neumani, has hired a trio of ogres as members of his private guard and stationed these hulking louts at his main gate during business hours. Though he will not admit it, he has clearly done this extraordinary thing to upset House Chaozun; sure enough, Chaozun's courtier is soon demanding an audience with the king; those ogres are bound to cause trouble, and Chaozun wants them gone!

The situation presents the Chancellery with a two-fold problem. First, House Neumani is a staunch ally of the king, and even though ogres in Throal makes them nervous, Chancellery officials do not want to alienate one of Neden's most dependable backers. Second, the issue of nobles' freedom to hire whatever private guards they will is a touchy one. Even those nobles who hate Grindo would be enraged at the king's interference with such decisions. They know the king would like to see their private armies disbanded, and will rebel at the slightest hint of such a move. The player characters must find a way to make the ogres want to leave without attracting the attention of Grindo or his rivals.

❖ ADVENTURE HOOK ❖

Every year the king sponsors a spell research competition, open to all magicians in Barsaive. A panel of judges assembled by the court spellcaster examines the spells on paper for originality, technical merit and utility. Finally, the competing spellcasters demonstrate their spells at a public performance in the Royal Auditorium. One of the competitors this year is a mysterious Nethermancer and Horror Stalker known only as the Crimson Face; she appears to be an elf, but her features are hidden by a mask of red agate that she never removes.

During the private examinations, the Crimson Face presents a spell that makes an area unattractive to ghosts. During the public performance, however, she surprises the judges by casting a spell that summons a multi-tentacled creature that smells of rotting organic matter. Skittering through the stands, the monster leaps on and devours a visitor from Urupa who has come to town to see the performance. The Crimson Face runs away and the summoned creature melts through the walls of the auditorium. Horrified that a contestant would summon what looks like a Horror during this event, Ajmar the Admirable enlists the player characters to find and slay the Horror and bring the Crimson Face to justice. In fact, the seeming Horror is a magical Horror hunter created by the Crimson Face to destroy other Horrors. The devoured Urupan had been marked by the Horror Ristul; the victim's family, also pawns of Ristul, come to Throal for vengeance and are slain by the Face. Can the adventurers figure out what is really going on?

Encounters

Likely encounters near an Estate include the following:

- Suspicious private guards urging the player characters to move along.
- Spoiled rich dwarf children running amok.
- Servants chatting with one another during their time off.
- Royal Guards shooing away beggars.
- Construction crews adding an expensive new facade to the front of a house.
- Well-dressed adolescents dangerously showing off the results of their fencing lessons.
- *Olzim* members importuning a wealthy patron to sponsor a procession.
- A grubby character collecting a large gambling debt from an embarrassed trader.

THE INNER KINGDOM

Just beyond the northern edges of the Halls of Jothan and Donalicus lies the Inner Kingdom of Throal. This portion of the kingdom contains the Royal Auditorium, the Great Library, the offices of various government departments such as the Chancellery and His Majesty's Exploratory Force, and the private chambers of the royal family. Each of these is described in detail below. Several areas of the Inner Kingdom, in particular the Royal Chambers, the Central Chambers, and the Great Library, are connected by a network of secret passageways known only to the king and his most trusted advisors.

THE ROYAL AUDITORIUM

The Royal Auditorium is the heart of public life in Throal. The Auditorium seats approximately 4,000 Namegivers, mostly in bleachers that climb along the walls on all sides of its 300-foot round stage. The bleachers are accessible via long aisles that rake steeply downward in this vast, bowl-shaped room. Boxes for the wealthy also ring the stage. Performers enter the stage area via entrances under the aisles connected to a series of dressing and rehearsal rooms underneath the auditorium.

Standard Activities

The Royal Auditorium hosts displays of personal combat, professional and amateur dramatic performances, poetry readings, lectures and educational presentations, guild elections, *un'hayedah* competitions, pageants in honor of the Passions, debates, displays of exotic beasts, demonstrations of magic, and festival celebrations. Some of these events are free to the public; others cost admission, the amount of which is determined by the gamemaster.

Security Measures

Guard units are posted to the Royal Auditorium according to the expected turnout for scheduled events. The Auditorium is rarely filled to capacity; an event that attracts 2,000 people is considered extremely popular. For most events, one guard unit is on hand for every 200 people. If the event in question is likely to be rowdy—for example, a hotly contested guild election or a pageant in honor of Thystonius—twice or even three times the usual number of guards may be assigned. If an above-average number of guards are on duty in the Auditorium, the number of patrols elsewhere in Throal may be reduced accordingly. Player characters wishing to do something without being seen by the Royal Guards might want to select the night of a big event for their illicit activities.

Encounters

Typical encounters that player characters might face in the Royal Auditorium depend on the nature of the event in progress. Possibilities include the following:

- Drunken students celebrating the completion of their examinations.
- Vendors selling ale, wine, bread, fruit, or rotten food (the latter item to be thrown at subpar performers).
- Political agitators chanting slogans for their cause.
- Slack-jawed visitors from the hinterland, astonished by the event in progress.
- Mischievous windlings flying above the crowd and spilling beverages on people.
- A crazed philosopher screaming that the end is near.
- Confused trolls who came to see personal combat bouts but found a poetry reading.
- Young urchins carrying signs advertising a business.
- A trader impressing clients from another city with the sights of Throal.
- Hecklers jeering performers.

THE GREAT LIBRARY OF THROAL

The Great Library of Throal is a huge complex situated between the Royal Auditorium and the administrative areas of the Inner Kingdom. This center for knowledge and study is the largest library in Barsaive, the depth and breadth of its collection rivaled only by the Eternal Library of Thera.

Main Entrance (A)

These massive brass doors fill the Library's huge entrance arch, and stand open during the hours that the library is open to the public. A Royal Guard unit is on duty here day and night.

Staff Entrance (B)

This modest wooden door is reserved for the use of the library staff.

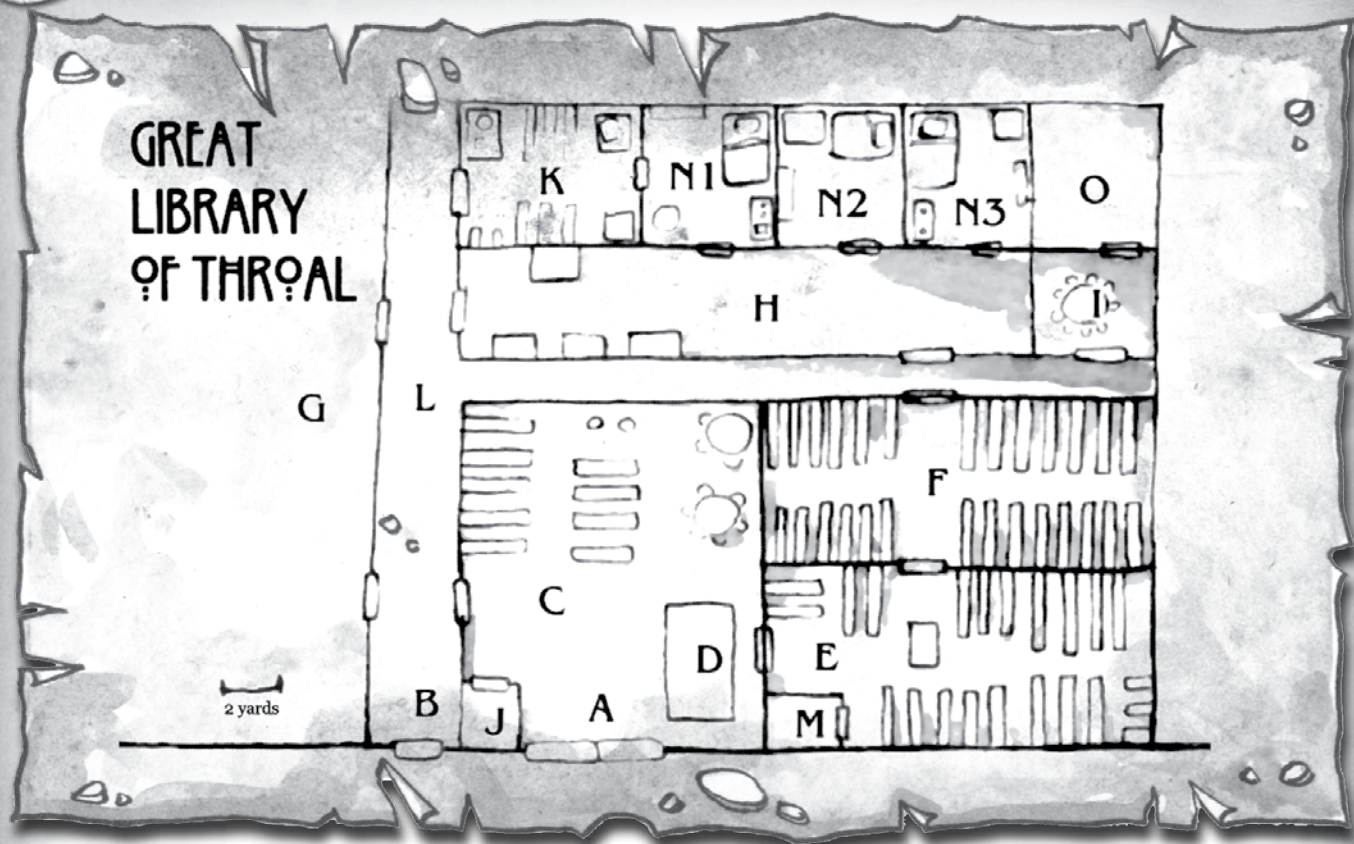
Reading Room (C)

The Library's public area, this spacious room is lined with benches and tables. A large display copy of the *Council Compact* sits on an elaborate, gilt-edged wooden stand in the center of the chamber. Members of the public may not leave this room for other areas of the library unless accompanied by a staff member.

Among the texts available in the Reading Room are *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*, the *Denizens of Barsaive* collection, *The Adept's Way*, and the *Book of Exploration*. Master Merrox has chosen to keep two other volumes of general knowledge, *Horrors* and *Creatures of Barsaive*, out of the Reading Room collection.

Retrieval Desk (D)

At the retrieval desk, library patrons request research material from the apprentice archivists on duty. The general collection is extensively cross-referenced and indexed, though these indices are not available to the general public. No catalogue yet exists for visitors to browse; work has recently begun on such a tool, but it is many months from completion. Player characters using the library must name the subject of their research, which allows the archivists to then search the indices for appropriate books and scrolls. If the subject of a character's research is deemed dangerous or questionable, the archivist asks the researcher to submit a letter of application to the Master of the Hall of Records. Merrox



personally examines the application and approves or rejects the request. In some cases, he may report researchers to the Royal Guards or the Eye of Throal.

General Collections I and II (E, F)

These areas contain racks upon racks of scrolls and books, arranged by topic in a system that makes sense only to those trained in using it. Others, even those with experience as archivists, would have a hard time finding anything. These two collections consist largely of often-requested research materials: descriptions of the many kaers excavated and opened by His Majesty's Exploratory Force, histories of known magical items and legendary heroes, and so on.

General Collection III (G)

When most people think of the Great Library of Throal, the room housing this collection comes immediately to mind. This immense chamber is lined floor to ceiling with shelves, all stuffed with scrolls, books, and records. The stacks in this room extend as high as 10 yards, and small balconies run along the stacks 3 and 6 yards above the ground. Small staircases, situated at the end of each 10-yard row of shelves, allow access to upper areas of the stacks. In between the stacks are tables with benches where archivists and apprentices conduct research.

Study Carrels (H)

This area contains work desks for the archivists, apprentices, and associates of the library.

Meeting Hall (I)

Meetings of library staff are held in this modestly furnished room.

Guard Room (J)

Guards take their breaks in this rest area, which contains a table and a couple of chairs.

Objects Collection (K)

The library collection also includes objects and artifacts, ranging from weapons to jewels to pieces of architecture. All these artifacts are of historical or scholarly interest. Unlike the text collection, the artifacts are badly organized; many are stored away in wooden boxes and have not been touched in decades. Some items might be extremely valuable; there might even be a magical treasure stored away here. The trick is separating the treasures from the junk. A Royal Guard unit is stationed in this room when the library is open.

Corridors (L)

The wide corridors of the library complex are lined with exquisite mosaics created during the Scourge. They show heroic scholars traveling throughout Barsaive to gather information for the *Book of Tomorrow*.

Privy (M)

This small room provides privacy for those caught off-guard by a "call of nature" while undertaking their research.

Master's Quarters (N)

The Master of the Hall of Records lives in this suite. N1 is a lavishly furnished reception area, kept clean and tidy by library staff (unlike the rest of Merrox's living quarters). N2 is Merrox's study, lined with books and objects that he has taken from the general collection for his own scholarly pursuits. Merrox knows that many of these items should be returned to their proper places, and he intends to put them back; however, he is a terrible procrastinator. He knows exactly where everything is, though to anyone else, the place looks like a rat's nest. N3 is Merrox's personal living space, including his bedroom. This room contains a concealed entrance to the secret passageways that connect the Great Library to the Central Chambers and the Royal Chambers.

Storage (O)

Centuries of worthless junk are crammed into this small room. Some apprentices spread rumors about fabulous treasures or trapped Horrors allegedly to be found here, but most of these tales are little more than vivid imaginings.

Standard Activities

The Great Library is almost always bustling with scholars, adventurers, and archivists from all across Barsaive, searching its vast resources for knowledge. Despite the flurry of activity, the library remains quiet; the most prevalent sounds are the soft crackling of parchment and the occasional scratch of a quill pen.

Security Measures

A unit of the Royal Guard is always on duty at the doors of the Library. Because the Library is so close to the Royal Chambers and other areas of the Inner Kingdom, additional guards can be on the scene within two minutes should a disturbance arise.

THE CENTRAL CHAMBERS

The Central chambers are the administrative heart of the kingdom. The offices of all branches of the Throalic government are located here, along with the headquarters of the Royal Guards.

The Central Chambers form a vast maze of offices and meeting rooms in which the bulk of the kingdom's day-to-day business is conducted. Each of the main branches of the Throalic government has offices in this area, including the Chancellery, the Arm of Throal, the Eye of Throal, His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, and His Majesty's Exploratory Force. This area also contains the meeting rooms used by His Majesty's Trading Commission. A unit of the Royal Guard is on duty at the door to each of these offices, day and night. Several offices contain entrances to a network of secret passageways that leads to other areas in the Inner Kingdom, such as the Royal Chambers and the Great Library. Few people know of these passageways, and unauthorized entry is considered treasonous conduct subject to severe penalties.

Security Measures

This area is constantly guarded. Two Royal Guard units stand watch at the main entrance, and visitors must have been summoned or have made prior arrangements in order to gain entry. The guards have a listing of those expected in the Central Chambers each day; a person whose Name does not appear on the list is not allowed entry. In addition to the guards at the entrance, ten Royal Guard units roam the hallways at all times. Player characters should rarely be in this area unless they work for one of the government agencies headquartered here.

ROYAL CHAMBERS

The king and his family live in the Royal Chambers of Throal, where the king also conducts his official business. Heavily guarded, this area is accessible only by invitation and so offers a quick death to interlopers. Player characters should not be able to storm the Royal Chambers. Gamemasters should feel free to beef up the security for adventuring groups consisting of high-Circle adepts.

Royal Hall

This grand entranceway, finished in pale green marble, is the dividing line between the Inner Kingdom of Throal and the Royal Chambers. The door between the Inner Kingdom and the Royal Hall is of pure silver; the door between the Royal Hall and the King's Court is solid gold. Both are embossed with the royal seal of Throal.

Forty veteran Royal Guards and eight high-Circle adepts guard

the Royal Hall at all times. The adepts are members of the Elite Guard, a coterie of former adventurers who have decided that protecting the king is the greatest service they can perform for Throal. No member of the Elite Guard has ever been accused of disloyalty or corruption. Each member has at least one fabulous magical treasure at his disposal. The adepts and the Royal Guard units report to the Supreme General of the Arm of Throal.

No one may enter the Royal Hall without an invitation from the king or the chancellor. The guards will subdue and jail anyone attempting to do so. If the attempted entry posed no genuine security risk, the offender is fined 100 silver pieces and released, though in some cases, the king's advisers can arrange for the fine to be waived. If the suspect is thought to have harbored hostile intent, he is charged with treason. Offenders with influential friends may get off with a sentence of exile from Throal if found guilty, but those without political clout are condemned to death. The guards have the right to slay intruders who resist arrest.

Corridors run alongside the Royal Hall from the adjacent Guard House and Armory. The passages are lined with murder holes from which guards can fire arrows at intruders. The golden door leading to the King's Court includes a powerful magical trap which is activated by a whistle that the captain of the Elite Guard keeps on his person at all times. The trap's statistics are as follows.



Golden Door Trap

Detection: 20

Disarm: 20

Spell Defense: 20

Initiative: NA

Trigger: Once the whistle is blown, the gamemaster makes a Step 20 Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of anyone who touches the door. A successful test triggers the trap's effect.

Effect: The victim and anyone with whom he shares a group pattern takes Step 20 damage each round, until the trap is deactivated by one of the Elite Guard, the chancellor, or a member of the royal family. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Guard House

All but sixteen of the guards on duty spend their working time in the guard house. Of the remaining sixteen, ten guards wait inside the door of the Royal Hall and three guards each are stationed at the murder holes on either side of the Hall.

Armory

Weapons and armor for the guards are stored here.

King's Court

In this huge, vaulted chamber the king entertains petitions, adjudicates criminal cases, and makes proclamations. He sits on a massive, elevated throne of carved gold and orichalcum, under a tapestry depicting the great kings and heroes of Throal's legendary early days. These lofty figures stare balefully down at any who oppose the king. The other walls are covered with mosaics showing the great deeds of House Avalus. The room is illuminated with enormous light crystals, and the king can alter their intensity by touching the arm of his throne. The crystals are arranged so that they back-light the king, making it difficult to look directly at him when they are at their brightest.

The king enters and exits the court through a door behind the throne. This door is made of wood and iron, and was taken from the throne room of King Braza I. Anyone not of the royal family must use another door just to the right of the royal entrance.

Death's Ward

This hallway is Named Death's Ward because it is a giant magical trap, activated by a word of command known only to the royal family. One round after the word is spoken, the floor of the corridor becomes a pit of molten rock. Anyone falling into the lava takes Step 30/D20+D10+D8+2D6 damage per round. No armor protects against this damage. It is not possible to crawl out of the pit without help—for example, a companion tossing a rope to the victim and pulling him from the lava.

Though the nature of this trap remains largely unknown to the people of Throal, a popular rumor (no doubt spread by the help) has it that one of the Inner Chamber's protections was a gift to Varulus I from the great dragon Icewing.

Dining Hall

State dinners take place in this intimidating hall; when dining privately, the royal family eats in the king's quarters. The enormous dinner table is made of magically worked crystal inlaid with gems. The walls are lined with portraits of Throal's past kings and queens, with monarchs of House Avalus given pride of place.

Kitchen

Meals are prepared in this area.

Servants' Quarters

Male servants sleep on floor mats in the northernmost of these two chambers, female servants in the other. A royal servant's entire

life is circumscribed by the demands of his position; servants who accept service with the king agree never to set foot outside the Royal Chambers. In addition, servants are forbidden to speak of the king to courtiers or other visitors to the Royal Chambers.

These practices began in the tenth century, after a scandal in which many servants were found to have passed sensitive information to the Therans. Most of King Neden's servants belong to families who have served Throal's rulers longer than House Avalus has held the throne; many of them, like their parents and grandparents, were born in the Royal Chambers and have never seen the rest of Throal.

The guards assigned to the Royal Hall have standing orders to apprehend any servant attempting to leave the Royal Chambers. Any servant foolish enough to do so faces a charge of treason.

The royal family treats their servants well, because Neden, like his father and grandfather before him, believes that no king can be a good ruler who treats his servants like a tyrant. Royal servants eat the same sumptuous meals as the royal family, live in the splendor of the court, and while away their generous private hours in the study or the workshop. Most of the servants have grown up with Neden, and they are loyal to him beyond question.

Upandal's Shrine

This hallway from the King's Court to the royal family's private living space doubles as a shrine to the patron Passion of the royal family, Upandal the Builder. A mosaic of Upandal on one wall faces a painted map of the Halls of Throal. The Royal Cartographer updates this map whenever new tunnel construction takes place.

Workshop

In this spacious room the king, his family, and his servants hone their artisan skills. Some of the royal servants are accomplished artisans and their works decorate the Royal Chambers.

Study

This library and reading room is casually appointed, full of well-used books and scrolls arranged in a terrible jumble. Merrox keeps trying to put the king's private collection (much of which is on "temporary" loan from the Great Library) in order, but the king and his servants continually defeat the Master's organizational ambitions. Private meetings of the king's closest advisors, where matters in Throal are truly decided, take place in this study.

Gallery

This long hallway houses the royal art collection. Many of the objects and paintings on display are priceless, and thieves throughout Barsaive dream of plundering this room's treasures.

Treasury

Thieves also dream of looting the royal treasury, which contains the crown jewels and trunks of gold and silver ingots and coins. This chamber holds all of Throal's unspent wealth. Chancellery officials frequently enter the Treasury to remove or deposit money.

Virtually every chest and display case is protected by a nasty magical trap, set to go off if anyone not of the royal family or authorized by the Chancellery comes near them. All of the traps do horrific damage, and most have other unpleasant side-effects for those lucky enough to survive their initial onslaught.

Dollas' Quarters

Since the assassination of Varulus III, the king's mother Dollas lives alone in these rooms, which were the former king's quarters. The rooms are simply furnished by comparison to the more public areas of the Royal Chambers. Varulus had kept the walls bare, saying that he spent so much time looking at the dazzling symbols of royal office that his eyes needed a rest at the end of the day.

King's Quarters

King Neden's quarters reek of military austerity, except for a number of trophies commemorating creatures Neden has slain. The trophies include an espagra head and a gargoyle's horn, both mounted on the wall, and a complete stuffed brithan that points towards the door in all its snarling fury.

Veroxa's Quarters

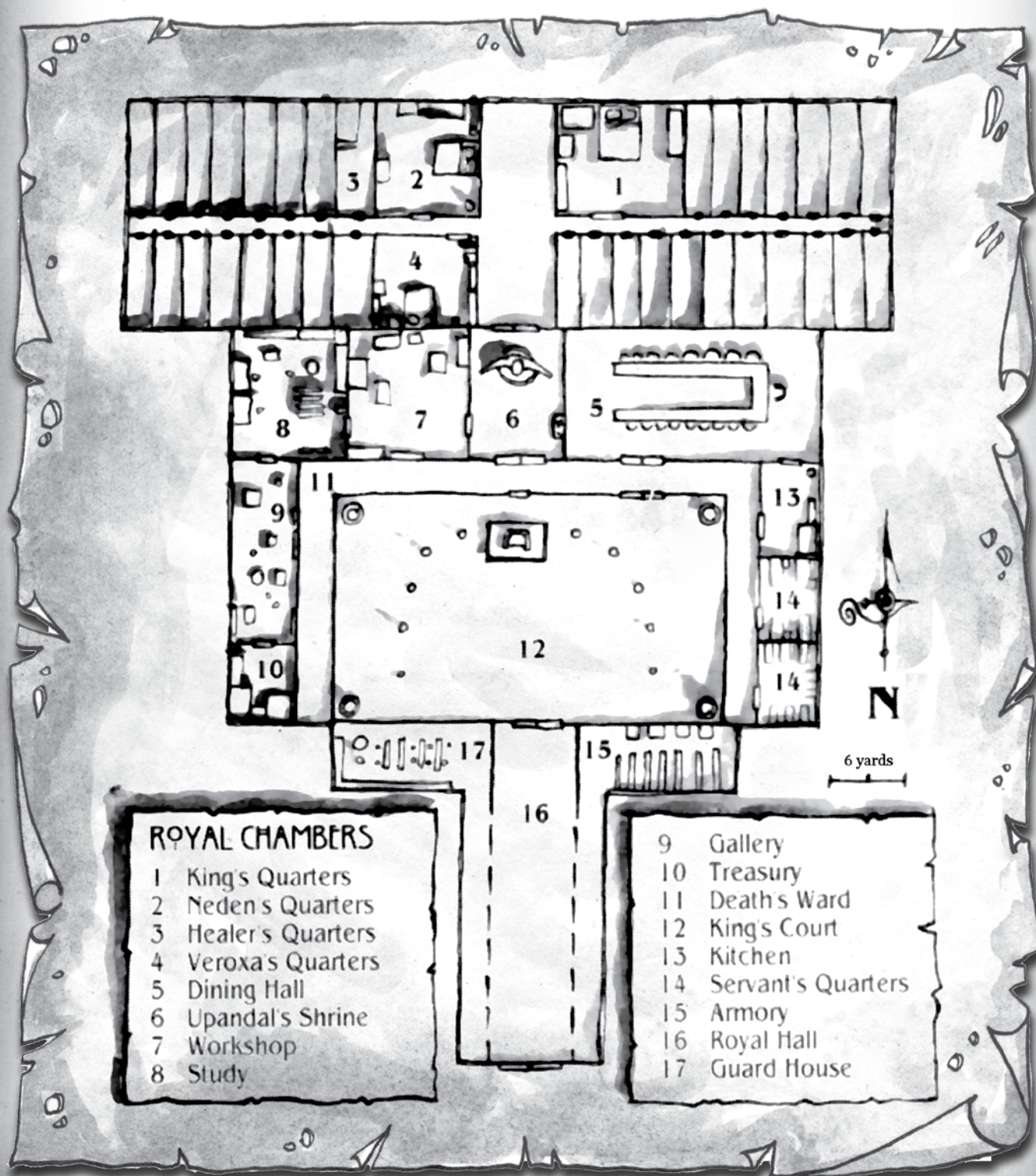
Veroxa's room is full of colorful junk, scattered around in complete disarray. Her furniture is barely visible under all the mess.

Healer's Quarters

The court healer, Rysil, lives in the Royal Chambers on a permanent basis. This grandmotherly traveled scholar and questor of Garlen was a childhood playmate of Veroxa's.

Unused Quarters

The Royal Chambers were built assuming that the king's extended family would be as large as the average dwarf's. The many empty living chambers are a sad testimonial to the dwindling fortunes of House Avalus.





Encounters

Random encounters in the Royal Chambers are extremely unlikely. Adventurers will not be allowed to wander around; if they are summoned to this area at all, they will come on specific business. Once their business is done, they will be expected to leave. Wandering from one area to another within the Royal Chambers without permission is considered treasonous and can easily get the wanderer killed.

THE INNER CITIES

The Inner Cities of Bethabal, Hustane, Oshane, Tirtaga, Valvria, Wishon and Yistane were all built since the reopening of Throal. Varulus III wanted to attract all kinds of Namegivers to the dwarf kingdom, and so he commissioned the construction of the cities in order to make life underground as similar as possible to life in other Barsaivian cities. Not all city folk are immigrants; tens of thousands of Throalites moved from the Halls of Throal to the earliest-built cities to escape overcrowding. Many of these Throalites had been living in the *dahnat*, and considered moving to one of the Inner Cities a step up from squalor.

All the Inner Cities are laid out according to the same circular pattern, as shown on the map of Bethabal.

In the center of each city is a large public area known as the circle, where people can meet, celebrate holidays and listen to speakers. In the center of the circle is the baronial estate, which includes the private residence of each city's baron and his family as well as the offices of the local chancellor.

A bazaar much like the Grand Bazaar of Throal extends around the circle and a park surrounds the bazaar. Certain areas in the parks represent a stunning example of Throalic craftsmanship. The trees, flowers, shrubs and even grasses of these green spaces are all artificial, made of metal and wires and painstakingly hand-painted. They are even perfumed to smell like real plants. Touching a leaf or a tree branch breaks the illusion, however, for the plants feel like the metal objects they are. Living plants grow in other areas of the parks, sustained magically by the light of the vast light-quartz crystals embedded in the cavern ceiling and the walls surrounding the outer walls of each city.

The rest of each city is divided into ten large, wedge-shaped areas called dectants. In each dectant, residential and commercial buildings line gently winding streets. A dectant houses about 2,500 residents. The dectants are divided by wide lanes that radiate out from the city center to the edge of the vast artificial cavern in which the city nestles. Another laneway stretching around the outer perimeter of each city leads to tunnels that connect the Inner Cities with each other and with other regions of Throal.

Neighborhoods within a dectant break down along economic lines. The most coveted real estate lies closest to the city center; the richest city residents have large estates in these areas and the most prosperous businesses ring these estates. The rest of a typical dectant is a mix of residential and commercial spaces. As a general rule, neighborhoods are poorer the farther they lie from the city center.

Neighborhoods are most likely to be racially segregated in the farthest reaches of a dectant. Throalic law neither forces nor encourages Namegivers of the same race to live together; in fact, the barons of the Inner Cities try to discourage this pattern of segregation because it often leads to trouble. Racial riots have erupted repeatedly in Bethabal, Oshane, and Tirtaga over the past 40 years, and less serious incidents have occurred in Yistane and Wishon. Despite the objections of chancellor officials and magistrates, however, many people of the same culture strongly prefer to settle together.

RULERS

A baron and his extended family rule each city. Appointed by the king, these rulers serve for life and, consistent with most other Throalic customs, they can be either male or female. Upon the death of a ruler, the king may allow an heir to continue in the office or he may choose a new baron. When making this decision, King Neden takes into account the current ruling family's popularity among the people they govern. Therefore, city rulers have an incentive to govern well. Rulership of the cities is a matter of custom; it is not enshrined in the *Council Compact*, which was drafted long before anyone in Throal even thought of building the Inner Cities. The king of Throal can therefore change governing practices at will.

In an effort to demonstrate that Throal is not a kingdom for dwarfs alone but for all Barsaivians, King Varulus III had appointed non-dwarf barons to rule more than half of the Inner Cities. This choice is a sore point with elements of the old guard, who prefer Throal to remain predominantly dwarf. They want the non-dwarf rulers replaced, and immigration of other races slowed dramatically. Not surprisingly, the city barons oppose the old guard. However, not all of them support the king to the same degree.

The rulers of each of the Inner Cities are briefly described below.

Bethabal

Famed for the garden that seems to float near the roof of that city's giant cave, Bethabal features six stone walkways leading to the garden's observation platform from various parts of the cavern, each affording a spectacular view of the city.

Dajag Treaty-Keeper, baroness of Bethabal, is a quiet but determined ork who rules the city with steely efficiency. Before King Varulus III appointed her to this post, Dajag served as the liaison between the Throalic government and Terath's Chargers, the famed scorcher cavalry. No one was more surprised than she when Varulus III offered her the baronetcy of Bethabal. This city had suffered Throal's worst racial riots, mostly due to unrest in ork neighborhoods. Dajag inherited the task of bringing peace to Bethabal, and she has largely succeeded; the orks of Bethabal are pleased to see one of their own in a position of leadership. They identify strongly with her and do not want to undermine her authority. Since Dajag took power, Bethabal's ork citizens have addressed their grievances through *chav'ao'ros* meetings instead of street demonstrations.

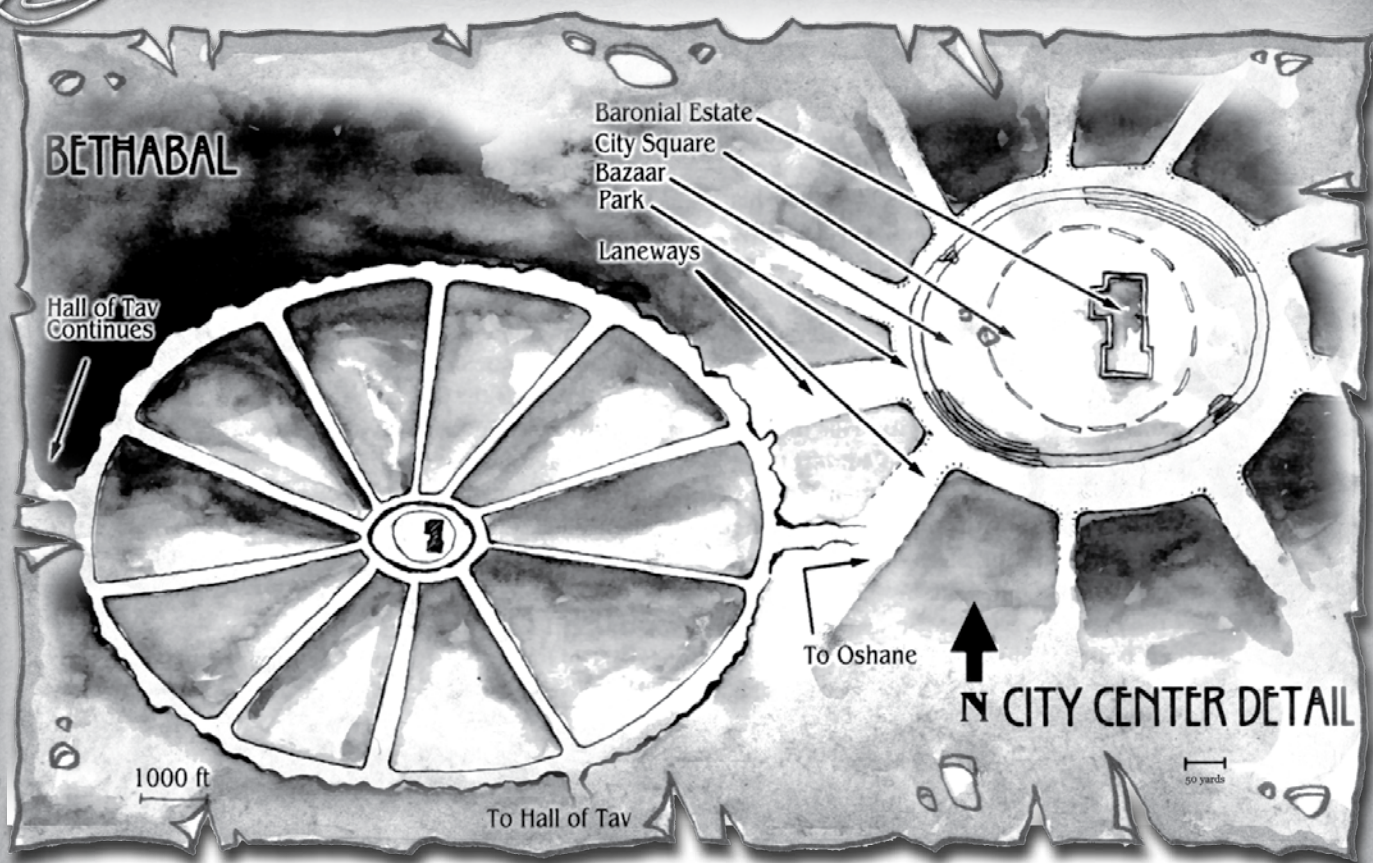
Not everyone is happy with Dajag's success, however. Old-guard dwarfs view her as the symbol of all that is wrong with the king's city policies. They fear that Bethabal will become a kingdom within a kingdom, and that the fast-breeding orks will soon hold a symbolic knife to the kingdom's throat. Unfortunately, many conservative are not at all shy about voicing these concerns. These fears therefore become self-fulfilling; the orks resent being thought of as disloyal, and resentment breeds rebellion.

According to ork custom, Dajag's consorts come and go. She has a recurring, tempestuous relationship with Earyl Bloodstroke, who commands half of Terath's Chargers.

Hustane

Hustane, the newest of the open cities, is ruled by Baroness Divuna Divunicus, a calm, motherly member of the old-guard House Moberl. House Moberl is the family of Dollas, King Neden's mother, but the Moberl baron was removed from power in Bethabal after its recent spate of racial riots. Divuna, niece to the baron, served as magistrate in one of the troubled ork neighborhoods and showed that she was one of the few Moberl's capable of treating orks with respect. A bit of a rebel in her family, Divuna is known for her reformist tendencies, and is close to Dollas.

Varulus III had appointed Divuna as baroness of Hustane partly because he thought her qualified, and partly to mollify leaders of House Moberl who were outraged over their family's demotion.



Because Divuna is a junior member of the family, however, Moberl's leaders have taken her appointment as a slap in the face. (There's just no pleasing some dwarfs.)

Because Hustane only recently opened to settlement, its population is much smaller than that of the other cities. The city is quieter, and entire neighborhoods are still uninhabited. These empty areas see few patrols. This has made the city a popular spot for covert meetings and lovers' trysts; there are fewer eyes to witness comings and goings.

Oshane

Oshane's baron is Stann Olowey, known unflatteringly as "Stann the Quaverer." A middle-aged human, Olowey has a speech impediment that gives his vowels a peculiar, shaky quality. He became Baron of Oshane as heir to his father, a popular and dynamic leader. Stann Olowey, by contrast, is a timid man ruled by self-doubt. He is afraid of his own officials, who easily manipulate him into following their agendas. Oshane's chancellery is terribly corrupt. Its chancellor, Marruth, is a matronly dwarf with an intimidating manner who bullies Olowey shamelessly while enriching her relatives with wasteful government contracts. Marruth is arrogant and venal, but not so much that she fails to cover her tracks. Though Oshane's public spaces are in poor repair and its guards badly paid and poorly motivated, no one outside the baronial estate has yet guessed that Marruth's family is robbing the city treasury blind.

Raithabal and Thurdane

With the events following the death of Varulus III, the crowning of his son as King Neden, and the landing of the Theran behemoth, the planned construction of these two cities has been placed on hold. This has proved to be a contentious decision, and barely a week passes without some form of open debate or public demonstration. Publicly, the reasons for halting construction were attributed to the war against the Therans—funding was diverted to the military. However, after the Throalic defeat at Prajor's Field,

ADVENTURE HOOK

The trolls in one neighborhood have been rioting for three nights in a row, throwing pots at passers-by and paint at shops. The trolls have no history of causing problems, so their rampage is making the authorities uneasy. They appear to be protesting the opening of an inn in the area because they object to its owner, a troll Named Kurtun. Kurtun's horns have been sawed off, which indicates that he is an Outcast—a highland troll who left his tribe after a disagreement over a point of honor. The trolls of the city are lowlanders and understand only a distorted version of the customs among their highland cousins. They think that Kurtun has committed terrible crimes and are demanding his expulsion from their community. They fear Kurtun will hurt them or their children, or will bring dishonor to trolls in Throal.

The local magistrate has pledged to protect Kurtun; he refuses to allow "strange racial customs" to dictate events in Throal. The trolls will continue to riot unless the adventurers help clear up the misunderstanding. Unfortunately, Kurtun will not talk about his severance from his tribe. He left because the clan chief married a woman to whom Kurtun had pledged his love, and Kurtun finds the entire incident too painful to discuss. The adventurers must learn Kurtun's story and convince the rioting trolls that it is true.

some elements within Throal saw this as the result of Neden's focus on revenging the death of his father, rather than continuing his father's good works in the Name of the kingdom. Since the battle of Prajor's Field, petitions to recommence the construction of these cities have fallen on deaf ears; King Neden is yet to make a decision about Raithabal and Thurdane.

Tirtaga

Baron Lochariel of Tirtaga, a portly old elf, is famous for spending lavishly on public festivals and celebrations. A generous patron of the arts and sporting events, he is wildly popular with the common folk of Tirtaga, and has earned the city the nickname, "city of holidays." Lochariel's officials grimly note that his administration is heavily in debt, and that basic services such as street maintenance are falling by the wayside. They have imposed a special tavern tax to take advantage of the fact that many people from other parts of Throal come to Tirtaga to participate in its frequent celebrations. The surtax on beer and wine increased revenues, but Lochariel promptly spent that money on more parties. His chancellor, a humorless human woman Named Aurbach, is scrambling to come up with a way to increase the treasury while keeping Lochariel from getting his hands on the loot.

Valvria

Valvria is ruled by Baron Mardek Silkback, the son of a former officer of the Royal Chancellery. Mardek's late father, Deavak, was the first ork to achieve high office in the king's administration, and Mardek followed in his father's footsteps. King Varulus III had chosen Mardek to be Baron of Valvria because he wanted another ork in power. Orks make up more than half of the population of the Inner Cities, and had justifiably demanded more representation among the barons. Varulus III also needed a less controversial choice than Dajag Treaty-Keeper, the Baroness of Bethabal. While Dajag was a surprise appointment from outside the kingdom, the diplomatic Mardek represented the consummate insider. A smooth builder of political bridges, Mardek has carefully courted prominent members of the old guard, including Selenda and the grim sisters of House Chaozun. Despite being an ork, he is a favorite with the dwarf ruling class.

Dajag is more popular among orks than Mardek, though Throal's orks bear him no particular ill will. Mardek does not cultivate his own people as supporters; he is more interested in being a Throalic politician than a specifically ork leader. Mardek has been a baron for a short time, but in that time his greatest success has been a policy that rewards immigrants for settling in racially mixed neighborhoods. He is an eloquent advocate of a cosmopolitan Throal, which endears him to the king and his advisers.

Throal's rulers do not know, however, that Mardek has a dual nature. On the outside he is all smoothness and smiles. On the inside, he boils with ambition. He wants nothing less than to sit on the throne of Throal himself. He has assembled a vast network of informants, many of whom think they are really serving someone else. Based on their intelligence, Mardek expects King Neden to make blunders that will lead to a civil war. Anticipating this, Mardek has ensured that the guards and magistrates of Valvria are loyal to him personally rather than to Throal. In the event of an insurrection, Mardek hopes to use those forces to play king-maker. Once he has a puppet ruler installed on the throne, he will then take the steps necessary to put himself in the puppet's place.

Mardek knows more about politics in Throal than almost any other Namegiver. He has sources in all factions, no matter how minor. Mardek realizes that it will take him longer than the average ork lifespan to work his way up from city baron to king of Throal, and he is secretly researching old books and legends in order to find a way to prolong his life.



ADVENTURE HOOK

The guildmaster of the Royal Guild of Farmers, Oberliel, is frustrated by his failure to convince Throalites to build more greenhouses. Worried that Throal is headed for disaster, he leads a ritual to contact Jaspree and beg for the Passion's aid. Not being the Passion of politics, Jaspree does not heed the farmers' prayers. However, the mad trickster Vestrial comes to Oberliel in Jaspree's form and gives him a special fertilizer to sprinkle on the stoveplant crop.

This fertilizer causes the stoveplants to give off a hypnotic smoke when burnt. Suddenly, all over Throal, particularly sensitive individuals directly exposed to the smoke begin to sleepwalk in the middle of the night. (A character who fails a Step 6 Effect Test against his Spell Defense succumbs to this effect.) They walk right out of the kingdom unless someone stops them. Many of the afflicted wander straight into the hands of scorcher bandits who unknowingly serve Vestrial. The adventurers must solve the mystery before too many people fall victim to this strange malady.

Wishon

Wishon is ruled by Baron Clifberz IV. This fretful, energetic dwarf has been groomed for the role since childhood; his family has run Wishon, the first of the Inner Cities, since its creation. Clifberz has a long face as flat as a pan, his forehead is furrowed with deep lines, and his ears stick out like enormous flaps. His speeches are notoriously dull. Nonetheless, Clifberz retains the support of the people. Wishon is a peaceful and prosperous community because Clifberz takes a direct hand in its governance, making many decisions that other barons leave to their chancellors. When the rest of the city is sleeping, the lights in the baron's private rooms are often ablaze, as he paces the floors thinking of more efficient ways to run things. When a problem arises in Wishon, Clifberz worries about it obsessively until he finds a solution.

Clifberz hates change. As far as he is concerned, new things just bring new problems. Neden's ascension to the throne worried him because the inevitable changes in policy would complicate his job. Despite this, Clifberz supports the throne; in the event of a coup attempt, Wishon would immediately deploy its city guards to serve the rightful king. A new royal family, after all, would represent even greater change than the inexperienced ruler of the current royal line.

Yistane

Yistane is ruled by Baroness Skaave, a young troll who has only recently taken command of the city. Her mother recently abdicated as baroness in order to undertake a quest supposedly given her by the Passion Garlen. Skaave, a Troubadour and Wizard, is the only adept currently ruling one of the Inner Cities. Her grandmother, Vaare Longfang, was the legendary captain of the lost airship *Earthdawn*. A devout follower of the Passions, Skaave is more concerned with mysticism than politics. This frame of mind makes her a good ruler for Yistane, which has a deserved reputation as the strangest of the Inner Cities.

Peculiar omens accompanied the building of Yistane. When King Varulus III decreed that the city should be built, a strange

black bird flew into the King's Court, snatched the proclamation from his hands and flew into the Halls of Throal, never to be seen again. When the city's cavern was excavated, the diggers found the partial skeleton of a great dragon fused into the rock.

Similar omens manifest regularly in Yistane. Mirrors spontaneously shatter or cloud over. Light crystals suddenly stop working, and then just as mysteriously light up again. A low murmuring sound can be heard on certain streets late at night; the sound has no known source. Magicians report that threads are easier to weave and spells easier to cast here. (To account for these bizarre phenomena, subtract -1 from the Difficulty Number (to a minimum of 2) of all Thread Weaving and Spellcasting Tests made in the city.) Visitors to Yistane report unusually vivid and meaningful dreams. It is not unusual for residents to return home from a day's work and find that the furniture has been moved around, even though the doors are still locked. The spirits of the dead return as ghosts if their funerals are held in Yistane; consequently, city residents consult morticians from other cities when their loved ones die. Because of all these oddities, Yistane attracts more than its share of spellcasters, eccentric philosophers, and madmen. These mysterious occurrences are not necessarily evil or dangerous; in fact, Horrors seem to avoid the place. Yistane is just a little strange.

Skaave believes Yistane has a great destiny ahead of it that will affect all of Throal. She investigates as many peculiar events as she can, in the hopes that one of them will provide a vital clue to what that destiny might be. In addition to the usual guards and magistrates, Skaave has created a parallel organization called the Yistane Investigators' Corps. This group looks into weird happenings and reports their findings, if any, to Skaave. Skaave sometimes hires freelance adventurers as auxiliary members of the Corps. In exchange for aiding these inquiries every now and then, auxiliaries may live in Yistane tax-free. If a group of player characters likes solving supernatural mysteries, a connection to the Investigators' Corps serves as a useful recurring springboard for story lines.

Skaave leaves the practical affairs of Yistane in the capable hands of her aunt Yonaal, who serves as the city's chancellor. Like her grandmother and mother, Skaave is completely loyal to the king.

SECURITY MEASURES

The Inner Cities are well policed, with a different magistrate overseeing each decant in each city. During business and evening hours, disturbances bring at least one guard unit within 4 minutes. At night, guards arrive within 8 minutes. Guard units in the Inner Cities are identical to those in the Halls of Throal.

STANDARD ACTIVITIES

Despite their occasional troubles, the Inner Cities are anything but hotbeds of adventure and intrigue. Player characters will find mysteries to solve in Yistane, and may walk into occasional riots in Oshane and Tirtaga. If a civil war or coup attempt occurs in Throal, the barons will get involved, but not all will be on the same side. In general, the cities are more suitable as safe and comfortable home bases for player characters than as places to stage adventure after adventure.

ENCOUNTERS

Chance encounters in the Inner Cities might include the following:

- Groups of children from rival schools taunting one another.
- A tense confrontation between local orks and a group of foreign traders ensues when the orks decide that the traders have insulted them.

- A paid crier wanders the streets announcing the opening of a new tavern.
- A raucous coming-of-age party for the son of a local merchant spills out into the streets.
- A tax collector attempts to calm an enraged homeowner who refuses to pay up.
- A harried guard unit tries to chase down a rabid dog hiding in a refuse pile.

CRYSTAL GREENHOUSES

One of the biggest challenges of living out the Scourge in kaers and citadels was providing a constant, adequate food supply. The solution offered by the Therans and embraced by most kaers and citadels across Barsaive was to build vast growing rooms in which farmers would raise sufficient fruits, vegetables, and roots to feed the population.

The magicians of Throal, however, arrived at their own solution. They built the crystal greenhouses, the largest and most impressive underground farming operation sustained in Barsaive during the Scourge. The huge crystal greenhouses simulated natural sunlight in a way that other growing rooms could not match. The greenhouses have remained in operation since the end of the Scourge, though their function has changed.

Throal contains 30 crystal greenhouses, all situated in an immense chamber in the northern reaches of the Halls of Throal, beyond the far edges of the Inner Cities. Each greenhouse is a rectangular structure, approximately 30 by 60 yards, with a low-slung, triangular roof. The walls and roofs contain thousands of specially altered light crystals, held in place by an elaborate metal lattice. Using elemental magic, Throal's magicians converted these crystals to give off artificial sunlight. The metal lattices are intricately worked into patterns of vines, leaves, and flowers, and each crystal shines diffuse sunbeams down into the greenhouse.

During the Scourge, each greenhouse produced enough food to feed 2,500 people. Surplus greenhouses not needed to produce food were used to satisfy Throal's energy needs. These greenhouses grew stoveplants—hybrid plants magically bred by the Therans in preparation for the Scourge. Stoveplants grow quickly into tall, wood-like stems as big as a human's fist. Though a stoveplant has a few leaves and a basic root structure, almost all of its energy goes into creating this thick stem. Stoveplant stems make excellent firewood; they burn slowly, giving off plenty of heat and very little smoke.

Since the end of the Scourge, Throal has come to rely almost entirely on imported food. Fruits and vegetables grown in a crystal greenhouse lack crispness and flavor by comparison to food grown under natural conditions, and Throalites are willing to pay more for foodstuffs from outside. Nowadays, Throal uses most of its greenhouses to grow stoveplants, for which demand remains high. Burning coal or imported wood would soon choke the underground kingdom in smoke and soot, and so stoveplants remain the staple firewood. Each greenhouse produces enough stoveplants for 7,500 people. Currently, stoveplant production requires only 23 of the greenhouses; the plants in the remaining greenhouses are exported. As stoveplants are not in high demand outside Throal, returns from these exports are modest.

STANDARD ACTIVITIES

The crystal greenhouses are an impressive sight, sought out by most new visitors to Throal. Adventurers may come to the greenhouses repeatedly if they wish, and are likely to see members of the Royal Guild of Farmers going efficiently and quietly about

their work. Now and then visitors might see a ritual in homage to the Passion Jaspree, as most of the farmers are members of Jaspree's *olzim*.

Throal's farmers have little political influence. They want more greenhouses built so that they can grow enough food to support Throal if the kingdom should be forced to close its doors again. Such construction is an expensive proposition, however, and the Farmers' Guild has had no success in convincing fellow Throalites that the cost would be worthwhile.

SECURITY MEASURES

The greenhouses are not especially valuable, and so guard patrols are infrequent. Now and then, a guard unit stops by to chat with the workers. As this area is little traveled, it takes roughly 7 or 8 minutes for guard units to arrive if trouble starts. Reinforcements are equally slow in coming.

THE MINES

A staggering variety of minerals lie hidden in the depths of the Throal Mountains, of which gold, silver, copper, and orichalcum are the most valuable. The mines, built by generations of dwarfs intent on unearthing these riches, are located in the northernmost reaches of the Halls of Throal. Miners continue to excavate new passageways, taking them further into the mountains in search of virgin veins of silver and gold. These passageways now extend dozens of miles past the inhabited areas of Throal. Certain parts of the mines have been all but abandoned, and rumor has it that some of Throal's secret societies—including those devoted to the Mad Passions—use these disused tunnels as meeting places.

MINERS' GUILD POLITICS

The mines are not the kind of place that would normally attract adventurers. Working men and women break their backs daily in the mines, in hopes of striking it rich. According to Throalic tradition, a mine belongs to the miners who discover and excavate it. Labor is the only essential investment in a Throalic mine, and so miners form cooperatives, pick their sites, and exploit them as

best they can. Once a rich vein is found, its original discoverers become employers themselves, hiring other members of the miners' guild to work while they retire to a life of ease. If a miner works at an established mine, he is guaranteed a modest but steady income. Joining a cooperative to open a new mine offers rich rewards if the miners strike gold or silver, but a miner may go for months or years without income.

The miners' guild is a rich source of strife because its members often have contradictory interests. Partners in successful cooperatives are bosses; they want their employees to work as hard as possible for as little pay as they can get away with offering. Mine workers, of course, want to work as little as possible for higher pay. Control of the Royal Guild of Miners swings back and forth between the workers' faction and the owners' faction. These contests often become violent and sometimes involve widespread vote-buying.

SECURITY MEASURES

The mines are violent places, full of roughnecks who drink to forget how hard they work. The newer mines are far from the protective embrace of the king's justice; the Royal Guards never set foot in them. Cooperative owners hire guards to keep their workers in order, but these sell-swords sometimes cause more trouble than they prevent. Though considered part of Throal, the mines are a lawless frontier where people make their own justice. If a particularly tense situation arises, the Chancellor may assign regular guard patrols; however, Chancellor Wishten would only take this extreme step if dangerous subterranean creatures or Horrors turned up.

ENCOUNTERS

The three types of people usually found in the mines are workers, cooperative owners, and guards. Anyone who does not fit into these categories is greeted with suspicion, and there simply is no such thing as casual visitors. Needless to say, miners do not welcome adventurers investigating strange occurrences. Any encounters between adventurers and others in the mines are likely to be tense, and may quickly turn violent unless the player characters proceed very carefully.



OUTSIDE THE KINGDOM

*There's more to Throal than just the city, my friends.
The mountains, both above and far below,
answer to the King in their own way.*

• GRIFORICAN •

▲ ▲ ▲

The windling merchant darted above me in Bartertown's darkening sky. "It's not safe to be in the street at night any more. Even for you, Mereelva Gadj. Time to head for the inn."

There did seem to be too many loiterers and lurkers hanging about in the alleys and alcoves. Part of me wanted to provoke them. Do the sword dance with them, the dance of blood and sweat. But my joints ached; it was too late in the day for pointless risk. Silently I cursed the ways of Death, who drains the life out of us a drop at a time until we are spent.

I turned my attention back to Hithorn. "Not safe at night? I remember when this town was a safe enough place to pass time between expeditions. Everything grows old and dies, I suppose."

"Bartertown isn't dying. There's more money here than ever before. That's the problem. We're choking on silver and greed. I'll tell you more in the tavern. One never knows whose ears are listening."

We took a corner table. I brought over a thimble of sparklewine for the windling and several pitchers of hurlg for myself. Hithorn was a rumormonger's rumormonger—I knew his tale would be worth hearing. I would have to spend at least a month in Bartertown waiting for payment for the Gem of Thread-Breaking, and I needed to know how things stood.

Hithorn took a long pull at his sparklewine. "The problem is the black market," he said, passing a hand over his damp upper lip. "Three years back, Magistrate Clystone said what was clear to everyone: Bartertown was getting too large for half-hearted policing. The merchants wanted security—too many predators circling. And as the overtaxed citizens of Throal will tell you, you need silver aplenty to hire guards. So Clystone announced a new tax—on all goods and transactions in town. Made the merchants happy as pigs in muck. Seemingly.

"The twist is, no merchant wants to pay taxes himself. He wants someone else to pay. What do you expect from a town of fence sitters? We want to be safe, but we don't want to pay the price. So all of a sudden half the transactions in town are done on the sly. Everyone's a smuggler. Everyday transactions are crimes. This, of course, puts the professional criminal right on top of the mountain—you know, the sort who breaks bones when a deal goes wrong. My fellow merchants were counting their coppers and tossing their gold. As usual.

"We've two sets of taxes to pay here now. The official taxes, to Clystone and his men, and the unofficial taxes, to Shadowswift and his ilk. There's little difference between Clystone's bully-boys and Shadowswift's, as far as I can see." Hithorn sighed and stared moodily down at his wine cup. "I tell you, Gadj, I'm seriously considering relocating to Throal."

"That I find hard to believe," I said. "You'd stifle in that close air. But you speak of Shadowswift as if he poses a real threat. When last I spent time here, he was a weedy boy with a running nose. A petty shifter of merchandise, and not likely to become much else."

Hithorn gave a barking laugh. "Your snot-nosed boy's become king of the shifters, and of the extortionists too. He's got a hundred thugs and better at his command. He has rivals, mind you. These days, all you need to become a power in this town is a willingness to spill blood and a crowd of hirelings with sharper blades than brains."

"Hmmm." The hurlg was excellent, surprisingly enough. "Do I hear opportunity's siren call? I have always toyed with entering politics in my old age."

"Very droll, Mereelva."

"You think I joke."

"More than a dozen have been slain over the black market in this month alone. I'd rather you weren't one of them."

"Fear not, Hithorn. I've no wish to turn gang leader. I learned what that life is like by Garlthik's side, many a year ago. Too much paper to push ... and too little chance to do the things I truly enjoy."

Just then, a ragged-looking human girl lunged at us from the shadows, her crossbow trained on Hithorn. I tossed a throwing knife into the girl's forehead and embedded its sister in her chest as she fell to the floor.

Hithorn gaped at me, impressed by such a display of agility from a broken-down old fighter. I raised my hurlg and grinned at him. "Behind on your taxes, old friend?"

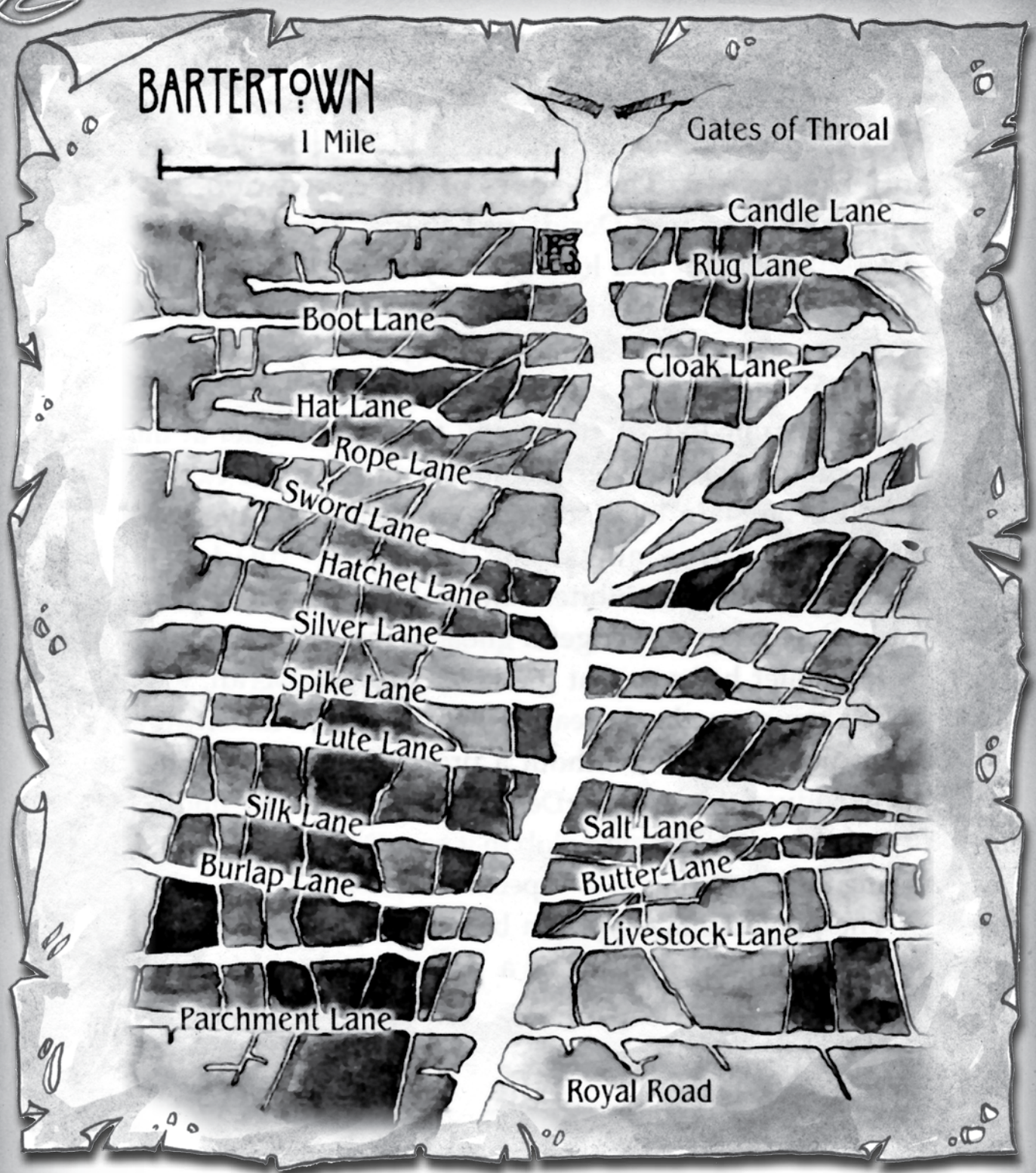
—From the Journal of Mereelva Gadj, as Transcribed by
Apprentice Archivist Deloron, 1508 TH

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This chapter presents an overview of Throal's surrounding communities, including Bartertown, the mountain settlements, the House of the Spirit Wind, Braza's Kingdom, and the underground settlements of the Pale Ones.

BARTERTOWN

Bartertown is perched on the Royal Road that leads to Throal's Grand Bazaar. It sprung up more or less by accident from its beginnings as an open-air market. Gradually, the market's merchants set up permanent establishments to take advantage of the thousands of customers Throal offered. Locating in Bartertown instead of in the Grand Bazaar enabled the merchants to sidestep Throalic law, particularly the high Throalic taxes. As



long as only a few thousand merchants took advantage of its irregular status, Bartertown functioned well. Unfortunately, more and more people moved to the city until its population rivaled that of Throal's Inner Cities—and the level of law enforcement failed to keep pace with the change. Five years ago, Bartertown's population hit 50,000. Such a large community where so much silver flows freely cannot survive without reasonable law enforcement, which is noticeably absent in Bartertown. Always chaotic, Bartertown has become increasingly dangerous and even violent.

Throal would like to extend its sovereignty over Bartertown, but the merchants who run the city remain split over the issue of annexation by Throal. Half of them are fiercely opposed, saying

defiantly that if they had wanted to be Throalites they would have set up shop in Throal when they established their businesses. The other half are beginning to see the loss of a little independence as a small price to pay for safety and renewed prosperity.

Five years ago, City Magistrate Clystone decided to increase taxes to pay for enough guards to effectively combat the rising tide of crime. Many merchants greeted this move with public acclaim and private disdain. The higher Clystone's taxes, the more ingenious the merchants became at evading them. Bartertown was founded by legions of tax avoiders, and the city's merchants have raised the art of tax evasion to new heights. A vigorous black market soon sprang up that made the criminals even more powerful.

In the past five years, Bartertown's problems have turned increasingly deadly. Clystone's attempts to clamp down on smuggling have corrupted him and his government. The magistrate's forces clash regularly with smugglers, especially those who pay tribute to Shadowswift, a young human with a flair for extortion. Battling Shadowswift for dominance over Bartertown are other would-be gang leaders who covet Shadowswift's illegal empire. Ordinary people get caught in the crossfire.

In addition, the assassination campaign of suspected Theran and Iopan spies in Bartertown has enraged its citizens, increasing the city's lawlessness. The growing anti-Throal sentiment has prompted Bartertown residents to emigrate to Throal in record numbers; the city's population has fallen to 40,000 and continues to shrink.

GOVERNMENT

In reaction to the explosion of the black market, Bartertown's government has inched toward tyranny. The city's founders liked loose laws, and more than anything else wanted to avoid restrictions on their businesses. However, the absence of a system of checks and balances has allowed the current magistrate to accumulate unprecedented power. Magistrate Clystone is no longer accountable to anyone; even the Council of Merchants, made up of prominent merchants from Bartertown's early days, is bullied by the man they appointed.

The Office of Magistrate

Technically, the magistrate serves at the pleasure of the Council of Merchants. In practice, he rules by decree. The laws of Bartertown are the accumulated decrees of the city's successive magistrates. Magistrates may repeal their own decrees or those of their predecessors at will.

In the past, the Council of Merchants restrained magistrates from enacting unpopular decrees by threatening to replace any magistrate overstepping his authority. Now, any council member foolish enough to complain about Clystone's behavior can look forward to a late-night visit from a pack of burly tax collectors. It has become hard to distinguish between the laws of Bartertown and the wishes of Magistrate Clystone, who seeks primarily to avoid unwelcome attention from Throal, and to collect taxes in order to fund the collection of more taxes, thereby keeping himself in power.

Magistrate Clystone

"I used to be consumed with doubt, Etheril. During my early days as magistrate, a problem like yours would have tormented me for weeks. After many sleepless nights, I would have affected some useless compromise or other. Since then, I have learned how to lessen my insomnia. Take him out to the pit, boys. You know what to do."

▲ ▲ ▲

The beleaguered magistrate of Bartertown has undergone a terrible transformation in the past few years. Clystone's face and body both show the strain of his thankless job, and his hair has gone prematurely gray from negotiating disputes between the inhabitants of Bartertown and the Kingdom of Throal. Though a clever Illusionist, his talents have proved surprisingly useless in resolving the day-to-day difficulties of his job.

When he first became magistrate, he had little confidence in his abilities. Appointed by the Council of Merchants precisely because they expected him to just muddle along, Clystone found many of Bartertown's problems intractable. He knew that the merchants of the city wanted contradictory things. He also knew, as did every magistrate before him, that the interests of anyone without money meant little in Bartertown. Clystone struggled through his first year or two in office, hoping to find some solution to the town's

troubles. Finally, he decided to face the Council head-on with his citywide tax plan. When it became clear that the merchants intended to evade payment, Clystone began to crack down. At first, he spent the accumulated tax revenues on more tax collectors. As the fight with the merchants grew more bitter, Clystone's tactics became more uncompromising. He gave his tax officials greater discretionary powers, which they abused more often than not. As the tax battle went on, Clystone found himself more and more comfortable playing the bully and tyrant. Now he rules Bartertown entirely by force. The base of his power is approximately 100 heavily armed guards and tax collectors who owe their loyalty to him personally, as opposed to the office of magistrate or to Bartertown's city fathers. Magistrate Clystone has become little more than a gang leader with a seal of office and an education.

Personally, Clystone is happier than he has ever been. He has tossed aside his conscience along with his self-doubt, and his ability to casually order his enemies beaten or even killed makes him feel big and strong. Women now find him attractive. Merchants who once thought him a fool flatter him, afraid of his wrath. Clystone likes being a bully. He feels liberated.

The one thing he fears is action by Throal. He knows that Throal would occupy Bartertown in a minute if the place became so chaotic that it threatened travelers to and from the dwarf kingdom—as illustrated by King Neden's recent assassination campaign. Therefore, Clystone must keep the battle over the black market under a modicum of control. If Bartertown becomes as lawless as Kratas, Magistrate Clystone will swiftly find himself deposed and tossed in a Throalic prison. He must appear to be a legitimate ruler, at least to the casual observer. Bartertown's merchants, tax collectors, and gang leaders can kill one another with impunity—but travelers and people with connections to Throal must be left in peace.

Council of Merchants

The Council of Merchants is an informal group composed of the founders of Bartertown and their heirs. More a clique than a real governing body, the council has no clearly defined membership and no charter governing its activities. Two-dozen merchants or so are members of the council, and new members can be added by unanimous consent.

Once, the Council of Merchants kept Bartertown's magistrate in check. Now the magistrate keeps the council under his thumb by following a divide-and-conquer strategy. A third of the councilors have become Clystone's toadies, lapping up tax revenue for their own personal gain. Another third are Clystone's bitter enemies who hope to unseat him. The remaining councilors are fence sitters, avoiding commitment to either side until it is clear who stands to win. Individual council members move back and forth between the three camps, and Clystone manipulates the council by occasionally dropping a toady or tempting a rival.

Clystone's chief toady is Keinar, a blustering and easily unnerved human. Keinar is the retired patriarch of a large spice import firm and a former magistrate of Bartertown whose tenure in that position was brief and undistinguished. He is fond of claiming that Clystone's iron rule represents a much-needed push for law and order in the city. In fact, he shamelessly admires Clystone's naked abuse of power.

Clystone's primary rival on the council is Taliel, a strong-willed elven woman who heads a consortium of gem merchants. Once Clystone's friend, she has come to despise him and now dreams daily of his downfall. Despite her opposition to the magistrate's tyranny, Taliel is not exactly a fighter for the rights of the downtrodden. She wants to see power in Bartertown shift back to the Council of Merchants, and opposes annexation by Throal almost as fiercely as Clystone. She has recently begun hiring adepts to eliminate the most brutal of Clystone's tax collectors, and so far

their disappearances have not been traced back to her. She considers Shadowswift an enemy as well, despite their common loathing of Clystone; she knows that Shadowswift is just as much a threat as Clystone to the interests of Bartertown's merchant class.

Law Enforcement and Tax Collection

Clystone's armed thugs and tax collectors, known as guardians, are nominally responsible for public order in Bartertown. However, they do little to enforce it unless compensated under the table. Without payment from the parties involved, they make only a token effort to investigate crimes or break up fights. Not surprisingly, the results of their efforts depend on who is paying them most. Even after accepting bribes, the guardians will not undertake freelance work that conflicts with Clystone's orders.

Guardians travel in groups of six. The leader of each unit, called a sergeant, negotiates the terms of freelance arrangements. A typical group of guardians expects 50 silvers to hassle someone weak and helpless, and 100 silvers to beat up someone who might put up a fight. Like all bullies, the guardians are cowards, and no amount of money will entice them to confront an adversary more powerful than themselves, such as an adept. Guardians spend most of their official time collecting taxes from unwilling merchants. Merchants who voluntarily pay taxes keep careful records of all of their transactions and pay a percentage of their receipts at the magistrate's office each month. The percentage ranges from 2 to 9 percent per transaction, determined more or less arbitrarily by Clystone. Merchants who grovel to Clystone's satisfaction often get a lower tax rate.

If the guardians discover an unrecorded transaction, they threaten to vandalize the guilty merchant's property or rough him up. Threats against the merchant's family are business as usual to the guardians. They are under orders not to completely destroy a merchant's operation, as that would prevent them from collecting more taxes from him in the future. This stricture makes them slightly less brutal than the gang extortionists.

If player characters get involved in a disturbance in Bartertown, a guardian unit will arrive too late to do anything, if they show up at all. Under no circumstances will guardians risk their hides to break up a fight between obviously skilled or well-equipped combatants. However, at the gamemaster's discretion, passersby may come to the aid of a Name-giver in trouble. If player characters cause the trouble, the gamemaster may decide that the passersby are righteous adepts out to subdue the rowdy player characters.

None of the guardians are adepts; trifling acts of harassment and graft are not the actions of heroes. When a guardian quits or gets killed, Clystone can easily find another. Game statistics for an average guardian appear below.

TYPICAL GUARDIAN

Attributes		
DEX (11): 5	STR (16): 7	TOU (11): 5
PER (8): 4	WIL (8): 4	CHA (5): 3
Characteristics		
Initiative: 1	Physical Defense: 7	
Physical Armor: 10	Spell Defense: 5	
Mystic Armor: 0	Social Defense: 4	
Death: 32	Recovery Tests: 2	
Unconsciousness: 24	Knockdown: 7	
Wound Threshold: 8	Movement: 6	
Skills		
Armor Rune Carving ^A (2): 5		
Avoid Blow (2): 7		
Melee Weapons (5): 10		
Missile Weapons (5): 10		
Read /Write Language (1): 5—(Dwarf/Throalic)		

Speak Language (2): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human)

Streetwise (3): 7

Tax Collection ^K (2): 6

Throwing Weapons (2): 7

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3), Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 19)

Weapons

Mace (Damage 11), Dagger (Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Sling (Damage 9; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Equipment

Carving Tool, Traveler's Garb

Loot

D6 gold pieces, 3D12 silver pieces

Legend Award

Second Circle

THE BLACK MARKET

Any transaction in Bartertown for which no record is submitted to Clystone's guardians is considered part of the black market. In addition, any item brought into Bartertown without a proper form being filed is considered a smuggled item, as is anything sold to an exporter without the proper documentation. These draconian laws have turned all sorts of common, harmless goods and services into contraband.

Bartertown's economy depends on trade; almost all the items sold in the city are intended for resale somewhere else. In the wake of Clystone's tax program, a huge proportion of Bartertown's business has gone under the table. Merchants may fear Clystone's bully-boys, but they also know that the number of illegal transactions far outstrips the guardians' capacity to enforce the rules. Unfortunately, there are other attentive predators lurking in Bartertown.

These supposed "smugglers," typified by the human gang leader Named Shadowswift, are primarily extortionists. They offer to protect merchants from the guardians and other gangs, but in fact are demanding payment to refrain from attacking the merchants themselves.

Bartertown's gang members are known as *buundavim*, a combination of the Throalic word for "employee" and a vivid ork curse. *Buundavim* are just as cowardly as guardians; neither relishes the prospect of skirmishing with the other. Confrontations between the two factions typically involve threats, colorful insults, and plenty of chest beating. However, because people on both sides tend to be stupid, arrogant, and violent, matters sometimes get out of hand and blood washes the cobblestones of Bartertown. Guardians and *buundavim* are hypersensitive to one another's territorial boundaries, and guardians only raid the premises of a merchant under the protection of a large *buundavim* band after a thorough browbeating from Clystone. *Buundavim*, in turn, do not offer "protection" to merchants who are known allies of Bartertown's magistrate.

Much of the violence in Bartertown takes place between or within the gangs. Most minor gang leaders have pledged grudging allegiance to Shadowswift, currently the most powerful extortionist in town. They must pay him a percentage of their take or face his wrath. In turn, the minor gang leaders are supported by small groups of *buundavim* who pay them off in exchange for a "charter" to "protect" a set number of merchants. Disputes over which *buundavim* owns which charter form the largest wellspring of violence in Bartertown. When *buundavim* fight one another, they rarely resort to open street fighting; they prefer assassinations and ambushes. Now and then a minor gang leader decides to become a major one and launches a wave of assaults on Shadowswift and his men. So far, each of these rebels has ended up as vulture food.

Buundavim most often travel in packs of six or more, and in general are far better at swaggering than fighting. They rarely attack any opponent who appears capable of self-defense. A few *buundavim* are adepts of the most unsavory sort, hoping to use their

Equipment

Traveler's Garb

Loot

D6 silver pieces, D12 copper pieces

Legend Award

Second Circle

NotesHas the *Gahad* and Low-Light Vision racial abilities.**Shadowswift**

"Someone smashed up your shop, Nillo? How unfortunate. Now, didn't I tell you to upgrade your charter with us, to ensure increased protection? I'm sure I did. What's that, Nillo? You say my men smashed your shop? I'll have to have a word with them—as soon as you upgrade our arrangement."

▲ ▲ ▲

A 25-year-old human Troubadour, Shadowswift has quickly seized unofficial power in Bartertown. The high-spirited Shadowswift delights in posing as a legitimate merchant. He toys with recalcitrant clients, coating his threats in honey. Unlike the *buundavim* who work for him or fear him, he boldly walks the streets of Bartertown as if he owns them. His taste for irony is acute; he is a vocal supporter of Clystone's policies because he could never have gotten where he is without heavy taxation. Should Clystone be replaced with an honest official, Shadowswift might become the target of attention from genuine law enforcement officers. Shadowswift's worst nightmare is Throalic annexation, and his *buundavim* have severely beaten several effective campaigners for union with Throal. Other residents of similar political persuasion have learned to keep their opinions to themselves.

Shadowswift's self-image as a cheerful rogue is betrayed by his vulnerability to criticism. He sometimes orders attacks on Bartertowners who condemn him in public. In addition to vanity, his other sore spot is his past as a Theran slave. He has killed underlings with his own hands for merely alluding to that fact.

Shadowswift has invested his ill-gotten gains in various shipping operations, all of which operate solely on the black market. He has

magical talents to take over the black market in Bartertown. The following game statistics apply to the average *buundavim* without magical ability.

TYPICAL BUUNDAVIM**Attributes**

DEX (17): 7 STR (12): 5 TOU (11): 5
PER (8): 4 WIL (10): 5 CHA (14): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 6 Spell Defense: 5
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 8
Death: 32 Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 24 Knockdown: 5
Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

Skills

Acting ^A (1): 7
Avoid Blow (2): 9
Bribery (1): 7
Extortion ^K (2): 6
Melee Weapons (5): 12
Missile Weapons (5): 12
Read/Write Language (1): 5—(Dwarf/Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 9
Speak Language (2): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic, Or'zet)
Streetwise (3): 7
Surprise Strike (2): 7

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1), Buckler (Phys 1; Deflect 1/0; Shatter 17)

Weapons

Broadsword (Damage 10) Club (Damage 8), Dagger (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Sling (Damage 7; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

ADVENTURE HOOK

When the characters are staying at the Juggling Shadowmant, a friend asks for their help to find his son, who has been missing for some days now. One of the Shadowmant's waiters is running a lucrative pit fighting arena in a dark quarter of Bartertown, and the missing son is supposed to become the current champion's—a brutal troll Named Buurtan—next opponent.

The characters soon find out that the boy disappeared after he spent a night out with some friends. A tavern brawl broke out and during the fracas he was snatched away by the waiter with the help of hired thugs (and a debilitating poison). Openly asking questions may bring the characters more attention than they wanted, possibly leading to them being abducted for the pit as well...

Once the characters find out what happened to the boy, they may decide to find out who runs the fighting pit and try to stop him. Possible masterminds could be a Horror-marked Name-giver, a follower (or even a questor) of Raggok, or simply a greedy minion in Shadowswift's employ.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Brainbiter, the friendly, informative barkeep of the Juggling Shadowmant, asks the player characters for help in a certain matter. Long ago, when he was a young troll just beginning his adventures, Brainbiter was part of a kaer exploration that ended in disaster. After the explorers found a magical club, an argument broke out over who should possess it. The leaders of the expedition, two human sisters Named Deridi and Viona, came to blows; Viona killed Deridi and left her body in the kaer, keeping the club for herself. Neither Brainbiter nor anyone else in the group intervened to stop the killing.

A few weeks ago, another member of the ill-fated expedition came to Bartertown and found Brainbiter at the Shadowmant. She bore terrible news: all the other explorers had been slain by a strange, wraithlike entity. Soon after sharing this news, she turned up dead in a Bartertown alley. Brainbiter knows he is next unless he takes action to lay the vengeful ghost to rest.

Brainbiter believes that the killer shade is Deridi, who has become an undead creature because she was left in a Horror-infested place without a proper burial. Brainbiter asks the adventurers to put Deridi's spirit to rest by finding her corpse and the magical club that cost Deridi her life, and burying them together in a respectable ceremony.

the best hiding places of any smuggler in town. Shadowswift likes feeling powerful and likes money, in that order. The status quo in Bartertown has been good to him, and he wants to maintain the current atmosphere of graft and corruption. Though his *buundavim* pose little threat even to novice adepts, Shadowswift has enough gold and silver to hire high-Circle teams of killers if player characters should decide to interfere with his plans.

Other Gang Leaders

Other notable gang leaders of Bartertown are described below.

Hamivar: This handsome young dwarf is Shadowswift's constant companion, a spendthrift and notorious carouser who shows little outward sign of the killer instinct needed to survive as a *buundavim*. The nature of his connection to Shadowswift is a matter of constant speculation in Bartertown; few people can understand what use Hamivar is to Bartertown's paramount gang leader. In private, Hamivar is a cold and ruthless planner who serves as a moderating influence on Shadowswift's temper. He has kept Shadowswift alive and in charge by repeatedly talking him out of foolish moves. Hamivar plans to kill Shadowswift eventually and take his place. Cautious soul that he is, however, he will make no move until he is certain of success.

Pavlak Greatgirth: This enormously obese ork understands nothing save the language of violence. A brutal newcomer to Bartertown's underworld, Greatgirth has recently caused problems for both Magistrate Clystone and Shadowswift by refusing to follow Bartertown's unwritten rules of corruption. Established boundaries mean nothing to this ex-scorcher, or to the *buundavim* who work for him. Local gamblers have begun to place bets on how long Greatgirth will live; the odds-on favorite is "less than two months."

T'shlea V'omponian: A sweet-natured t'skrang woman, T'shlea V'omponian long ago crossed the line from merchant to extortionist. Originally the target of Bartertown's *buundavim*, she gradually charmed the local thugs until they found themselves following her orders. Over the years she has increased her empire; dozens of minor gang leaders report to Shadowswift through her, and she takes a cut from each one's operations. T'shlea uses her knowledge of legitimate business to select the most promising targets in town. Uniquely able to divorce her often-cruel actions from her perception of herself, T'shlea believes that she is kind, honest, and compassionate. Her many victims would disagree.

LOCAL COLOR

Bartertown has always been a sprawling monument to disorder, presenting a startling contrast to the calm and orderly life of Throal. The deterioration of the past few years has only intensified Bartertown's frontier atmosphere, often to the point of outright lawlessness. Residents of Bartertown are proud individualists in their private and public lives. Merchants see one another as competitors rather than members of a group with common interests. Workers gladly undercut one another to get the best jobs; they see guilds as unacceptably infringing on each worker's individual freedom. Devotees of the Passions wouldn't dream of forming *olzim*; to a Bartertowner, one's relationship with the Passions is no one else's business, and public ceremonies honoring the Passions are an unseemly waste of money and time.

Bartertowners respect the silver piece far above the life of the mind. Knowledge and the arts, like everything else, are commodities. Artworks that can be sold, such as statues or paintings or books, are valued; performances are not. Troubadours familiar with Bartertown know it as an unsophisticated place where people only appreciate simple drinking and dance tunes. Local authorities see the observance of holidays as a curious weakness of overconfident governments, and even wealthy merchants make poor patrons for arts and learning. A Bartertown merchant who spends too much time in leisure pursuits is mocked as lazy.



Even the most prosperous rarely put on sophisticated airs; well-to-do merchants like to believe they are as tough and rugged as the rawest newcomer with a small purse and big ideas. As for those who try to form political or philosophical organizations, the average Bartertowner sees them as a touch soft in the head. The most acceptable recreation in Bartertown is passing time in a tavern. Bartertown has more pubs and taverns per citizen than any other settlement in Barsaive. Sophisticated Throalites joke that Bartertown's culture consists of "pubs, pubs, taverns, and pubs," and they're not far wrong.

Pubs and Taverns

In Bartertown, player characters need never worry about running out of taverns. New ones spring up quickly, and established ones must frequently close for renovations after spectacular brawls. Some of the more famous taverns in the city are described below, along with the primary clientele they serve.

The Brave Warrior is a home away from home for traveling adventurers, mercenaries, and adepts. Player characters who hope to find an employer by making inquiries in bars should head directly to this establishment. **The Juggling Shadowmant**, run by a crippled troll and former adventurer Named Brainbiter, is also popular with adepts, but offers a more sedate atmosphere than the Brave Warrior.

Especially seedy and dangerous Bartertown watering holes include **The Canvas Bat**, a tavern frequented by Clystone's guardians; **The Staff of Office**, Clystone's current drinking establishment of choice in which he owns a partial stake; **The Steel Orphan**, where Clystone's enemies in the Council of Merchants often congregate; **The Tub of Rouge**, a notorious house of ill-repute as well as a tavern where patrons can rent companions to suit all tastes; **The Night Unending**, Shadowswift's favorite tavern, which is well guarded by his *buundavim*; **The Red Blot**, a tavern atop a four-story warehouse that derives its Name from the mark left on the street below by unlucky patrons tossed from one of its many windows; and **My Dead Father**, sentimentally Named for the sire of its owner, a half-mad troll Named Tavarlon Tributemaker. This tavern is the filthiest and most disreputable in town.

PROMINENT CITIZENS

Player characters who spend time in Bartertown are likely to encounter the following gamemaster characters.

Arlorn

"We don't like your kind around here."



Arlorn works for J'Role, head of the Eye of Throal. Unofficially assigned to keep an eye on activities in Bartertown and report what he sees and hears to the proper authorities, he and his men are also expected to drive out infiltrators from enemy powers such as Iopos and Thera. Neither Clystone nor the *buundavim* particularly care if enemies of Throal are sitting on the kingdom's threshold, as long as they don't interfere with business, and so it falls to Arlorn to quietly but firmly encourage foreign adversaries, dangerous criminals, and those suspected of Horror taint to leave Bartertown. So far, his record is mixed. He has only a dozen infantrymen, all incognito, to back him up, and, unfortunately, not all troublemakers attract his attention, and some are too powerful for the limited forces at his command.

Unusually burly for an elf, Arlorn is a Fourth Circle Warrior. None of those serving under him are adepts, however. As an interesting campaign option, J'Role might hire a group of player characters to aid Arlorn in his efforts to keep a lid on trouble in Bartertown.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A Bartertown merchant Named Inder hires the adventurers to find his unreliable nephew, Kossol. Kossol and his friends were supposed to build a new addition onto the merchant's shop, but failed to show up for work two days ago. It has since rained, and some of the merchant's wares were damaged. He wants to give Kossol a good dressing down, and is willing to pay the adepts in order to get his hands on the boy.

Kossol has a habit of ducking work and might easily have skipped out on this kind of job. This time, however, he has met with foul play. While working on the extension, he got a good look at a beautiful woman through the third-story window of a building on the other side of the alleyway. He watched her for a while, hoping that he would see something forbidden. Unfortunately for Kossol, the woman and her confederates happen to belong to the sinister Holders of Trust. This particular cell of the Holders came to Bartertown recently to seek out ways to infiltrate Throal. The Holders saw Kossol spying; they think he overheard their plans, and so they kidnapped him. They are holding him in the basement of their hideaway until they can sneak him out of the city for a quick execution. If the adventurers find Kossol, they might also discover other Holders lurking in Bartertown, or possibly even in Throal.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A rash of suicides strikes the city, and the only connection between the victims is the gruesomeness of the methods by which they end their lives. The evidence points to a Horror in town that is marking its victims and driving them to their deaths. Clystone offers a reward to anyone who finds and destroys the Horror.

The Horror, Aessraeth, exists only on the astral plane and feeds on despair and self-destruction. Aessraeth has discovered a unique method of marking its prey; it can project its consciousness into reasonably intelligent animals, from cats and dogs to more intelligent animals. Taking advantage of Bartertown's large population of pet cats, the Horror first possesses the cat belonging to a potential suicide victim. The cat then proceeds to scent mark the victim's home. Once the cat has established the home as its territory, Aessraeth can automatically mark the home's owner.

If the adventurers find out that all of the victims owned cats, they can start a campaign to kill the cats of Bartertown. Unfortunately, this action will bring unwanted attention from a group of Beastmasters who happen to be passing through. If the adventurers overcome the Beastmasters, Aessraeth will command the city's entire cat population to attack the adventurers en masse.

Charboyya

*"Things are bad now, and they are only going to get worse.
It is sad to abandon our dreams of independence,
but better to live in safety than dream in filth."*

▲ ▲ ▲

A prosperous silk merchant, Charboyya is Bartertown's most vocal proponent of annexation by Throal. This humble, honest dwarf came from the faraway village of Hanto and started his now thriving business in Bartertown from nothing. Formerly a confidant of Clystone's, he has watched in dismay as his old friend has transformed himself into a tyrant. Charboyya feels there is little point in merely deposing Clystone; Bartertown has become so corrupt that only an outside force would be able to cut out the rot. Charboyya and his friends among the merchants want to see Bartertown become a barony under the rule of Throal's king, just like the Inner Cities. Charboyya's enemies claim that he wants to become baron himself, but in fact he just wants a safe, stable city in which to do business. He also wants to see Clystone and Shadowswift brought to justice. Charboyya's wisdom and decency make him a natural leader for those Bartertowners who agree with his objectives.

Though Charboyya scrupulously pays his taxes and avoids the black market, both Clystone and Shadowswift have tried to destroy his large establishment. Recently, Charboyya hired a team of seasoned guardsmen to protect his business and workers—a force that includes 16 former members of the Throalic Royal Guard.

Chancellor Wishten of Throal has offered Charboyya financial and logistical aid, which Charboyya has politely refused. He wishes to be seen as independent from Throal, and has repeatedly stated that the decision to join the dwarf kingdom must be made by Bartertown's people alone.

Elberia the Avenger

"Misdeeds must be punished."

▲ ▲ ▲

The delicate balance of power between Clystone's guardians and the *buundavim* may be upset by the recent arrival of Elberia the Avenger, a tall blood elf of indeterminate age who leads a small living legend cult called the Scalpel of Mynbruje. Of the sect's twenty members, five are adepts. Elberia possesses a grim beauty, which is only enhanced by her relative silence. She has shared little of her story with outsiders, but other members of the cult have looser tongues. According to the tales they tell, Elberia is an exile, banished from the Blood Wood for protesting a decision of Queen Alachia's as unjust. Elberia is also said to be a former questor of Mynbruje who was once able to contact the Passion directly. After a mysterious tragedy, she lost this ability. Ever since then, Elberia has attempted to atone to Mynbruje by seeking out evildoers who might otherwise escape punishment and killing them.

Elberia and her followers are reputed to have cut a bloody swath through the city of Kratas, methodically slaying each and every member of a certain minor bandit gang. No one is quite sure why Elberia and her followers have come to Bartertown, but bloodshed is very likely to follow. Both Clystone and Shadowswift assume she has come for them, and have been warily gathering information on her methods and capabilities.

Most Bartertowners believe Elberia is a Scout, Warrior, and Nethermancer, but she has so far displayed none of her talents within the city limits. Elberia is a blood elf Fifth Circle Warrior, Third Circle Nethermancer, and Second Circle Scout, following the *Dae'mistishsa* path of the Journey and the Wheel (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book).

She is currently on the Path of Travelers, advancing as a Scout.



Emor Hawkcruncher

*"You fix this suit of armor now, understand, tinkerer? It is needed
for fight against Horrors. You not no Horror yourself, is you?"*

▲ ▲ ▲

This hulking, dull-witted troll leads the local contingent of the Grim Legion, a Barsaive-wide network of loosely affiliated adventurers dedicated to the eradication of Horrors. The Grim Legion has a bad reputation as a band of fanatics who believe the end always justifies the means. Emor is a particularly shabby specimen of a Grim Legion captain. He spends more time drinking and telling stories about his alleged exploits than he does hunting Horrors. He is well known for bringing inexperienced adepts into his orbit, sometimes with a lot of arm twisting, then sending them off on dangerous missions that usually get them killed.



Despite being a buffoon and a fraud, he is also a Ninth Circle Sky Raider and Sixth Circle Warrior, mostly because he has a knack for surviving missions on which his coerced assistants die in droves around him. Local merchants, especially armorers and weapon makers, see Emor as just another extortionist. Whenever he brings a new Legionnaire into the fold, he browbeats the armorers into equipping the new recruit in the finest non-magical armor that threats of violence can buy. Clystone has tried repeatedly to trick Emor into leaving town, but he always returns, as indomitably stupid and selfish as ever.

Hithorn

*"I had heard rumors of such an item being found.
I suppose a buyer might be found for it, though
I fear legend has exaggerated its value."*

Hithorn, a male windling whose wings gleam like emeralds, is one of the city's canniest merchants. He specializes in the sale of antiquities and magical treasures, prospering through his sheer skill at acquiring information and making contacts. He has connections to wealthy buyers throughout Barsaive and even in distant Thera. If the player characters find an art object they wish to sell for cash, Hithorn is the windling to deal with. Though he will not cheat adventurers outright, Hithorn will drive as hard a bargain as possible. If the player characters are not aware of the full value of an item, he certainly isn't going to help them out. His instinct for a quick profit is balanced by good sense; he realizes that it's bad business to alienate adepts who might bring him other valuable items in the future.

Hithorn tries to stay out of Bartertown's increasingly dangerous politics, but all the factions have taken an interest in him for various reasons. He has a knack for picking up rumors, including those unrelated to his business, and so makes a reliable (if reluctant) source when characters are investigating matters related to Bartertown or ancient artifacts. Hithorn is also a potential patron for an adventuring party: if he finds out that a band of adventurers is on the trail of a valuable item, he often hires adepts of his own to try to get to the treasure first. He pays extra for discreet work, not wanting to incur the wrath of legendary adventurers. Needless to say, adventurers are not advised to share their own plans with Hithorn, lest he hire other people to steal a treasure out from under them.

A questor of Chorrolis, Hithorn travels extensively to search for valuable items and conclude crucial deals in person. Though

he knows a great deal about adventurers and their expeditions, he knows surprisingly little about antiquities or magical treasures in general. Hithorn is no scholar; his gifts lie in sniffing out items that rich people desperately want and getting them before anyone else does.

Pahoga Elcomi

"I can straighten out your difficulty. Many texts on Parlainth give dates that are incorrect by several centuries—a single mistake by a confused or drunken scribe, thoughtlessly reproduced again and again. If you wouldn't mind straightening out my account with the grocer first, I'll be happy to explain everything for you."

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The Third Circle Traveled Scholar Pahoga is her respectable family's dirty secret. Shamed when she was dismissed from the Great Library of Throal for refusing to recant her bizarre historical theories, House Elcomi disowned Pahoga and has since refused to admit to her existence. Pahoga claims that dragons are manipulating the history of Throal; that much of Thera history is a lie, and that the Mad Passions summoned the Horrors to this world. Cut off from the Great Library she loves, she has decamped to Bartertown, where she scrabbles for a living as a cut-rate sage and attempts to find further proof for her theories. She is regarded as one of the town's charming eccentrics. Factions opposed to Throal like to use Pahoga as an example of the dwarf kingdom's authoritarian nature; in Bartertown, by contrast, people are free to say what they like without reprisal.

Pahoga makes a reliable source of information for adventurers on matters that do not touch on her grand conspiracy theories. She knows a little about almost everything, and can send adventurers on their way with solid clues. She might be willing to accompany them on a mission that could bring her closer to information she is seeking.

Pahoga is obsessed first and foremost with proving her theories, next with where she will get her next meal. She is friendly to those who seem genuinely interested in learning from her, but never forgives people who laugh at her. Her family's repudiation hurt her more deeply than anything else.

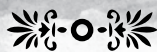
ADVENTURES IN BARTERTOWN

Bartertown's haphazard appearance mirrors its political disorder. Unlike the Inner Cities of Throal, it sprang up unplanned; its jumble of buildings was intended to be temporary, and it looks it. Most buildings in Bartertown are fewer than four stories tall and constructed on flimsy wooden frames. Many of the white stucco-covered houses, hastily and cheaply built, have already fallen into disrepair. Some structures lack proper foundations, and have begun to lean alarmingly.

Bartertown's merchants did not set up their businesses in neatly organized districts, and no clear distinction exists between business and residential areas. Therefore, it is often difficult to find specific places in Bartertown. In general, the more prosperous businesses are located on the Royal Road that runs through the triple Gates of Throal. In a typical show of defiance, Bartertowners never call the Royal Road by its full Name; they refer to it as "the Road."

Intersecting the Road are 21 wide lanes, each Named after a commodity sold by an early settler in Bartertown: Rug Lane, Candle Lane, Ale Lane, and so on. Running roughly parallel to the Road are countless narrow alleys, most of which are Named after early residents: Folok Alley, Zebremius Alley, Bankaj Alley, and so on.

Bartertowners do not number their buildings, which adds to the difficulty of finding given sites. They refer to locations by cross-streets, an improvement over the bewildering system of marking distance by the number of hours the destination lies from a specific point used in the Halls of Throal. Magistrate Clystone's offices are



ADVENTURE HOOK

The Skull Wharg scorchers launch a series of assaults on Garahamite communities in the northwest quadrant, and Earal Bloodstroke sends mercenary cavalry units to combat them. The Skull Whargs, an undisciplined bunch normally prone to fleeing when challenged, show uncharacteristic resolve in fighting back. Even worse, Bloodstroke learns that Karak Bloodeyes is attracting dozens of new fighters every day. Desertion from Bloodstroke's own cavalry units begin to reach epidemic proportions, and many of the deserters seem to be joining the Whargs. Bloodstroke has his hands full fighting them off, and so he hires the adventurers to find out what is happening in Bloodeyes' camp to give his brutal raiders such fire and determination.

The player characters must first infiltrate the scorcher camp, a real challenge (especially for an adventuring party with non-ork members). They discover that the Whargs are inspired to feats of courage by a fearsome woman Named Tyrul Boldwords, a martial poet (Troubadour and Warrior) whose works appeal directly to the rebellious hearts of orks. The Skull Whargs regard her with fanatical devotion. To reverse the tide of support for Karak Bloodeyes, the adventurers must get this heavily guarded agitator out of the Whargs' camp.

They may find an unlikely ally in Bloodeyes himself. He is afraid that Boldwords plans to usurp his role as head of the Skull Whargs, but ordering the assassination of the poet might touch off a rebellion within the ranks. Bloodeyes could use a few outsider adepts to blame for the foul deed ...

- Some guardians kick in the door of a shop and start breaking things.
- A scuffle breaks out when a dwarf starts shouting pro-annexation slogans and onlookers try to silence him.
- A t'skrang trader pulls a cart full of dried fish through the street; behind him, his young children play at being swordsmen.
- A disturbing domestic argument spills out onto the street; a troll woman is beating her human mate with an axe handle.
- Several ork cavalrymen chase a young human girl, shouting that she is a pickpocket; no one helps them.
- A merchant quarrels with a beggar perched outside his shop; the beggar has a terrible skin disease, and the merchant claims that she is driving his customers away.
- A furniture shop catches fire, and its employees frantically try to put out the flames.
- A performer sets up a puppet theater in the middle of the street and begins an obscene, mocking parody of the Founding of Throal; passing Throalic travelers pitch rocks at him.

THE MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENTS



Our stay at Goodweight was a pleasant one, thanks to the hospitality of Baron Sinoricus. Our most gracious host laid out an impressive feast; the local ale was fresh and light, the muttonchops cooked to perfection, and the company of the baron and baroness delightful. Both were keenly interested in events in the Halls of Throal. As you know, it has long been my habit to avoid politics, and so I had but meager intelligence to offer them. They inquired particularly after the health of the king and the doings of the prince; it seemed Baron Sinoricus wanted a sense of the prince's attitudes toward the mountain settlements. I confessed my ignorance of the prince's mind on this subject, and took great care not to suggest the truth: that the prince has likely not given the settlements the slightest thought (though I was sorely tempted to say so!).

At the meal's conclusion, I broached the difficult subject of our party's confrontation with ork mercenaries on our way to Goodweight. Baron Sinoricus sighed when I mentioned the Greeting Wounds cavalry; it seems that problems of discipline are widespread among the new mercenary units. Moreover, the baron feels he has too little authority to bring their excesses to heel. The Cavalrymen answer to Earal Bloodstroke of Terath's Chargers; they do not take direct orders from the barons of the four quadrants. I can see the wisdom in sending an ork to deal with an ork. But Earal is currently hundreds of miles away, in the northwest quadrant. It might be months before he next speaks to Baron Sinoricus, and by then our concerns will then be as stale as an Air Sailor's rations. Even then, it is naive to conclude that Earal's interests coincide completely with our own. But his Majesty doubtless knows best, and I shall waste no more words on this matter.

The following morning, we entered the mine at Goodweight. Brucada's adder immediately began to hiss, a sure sign of Horror infestation. It took us several hours to reach the end of the mine, where we found what we expected: a breach in the mine floor that opened up into a passageway below. The passage led straight down into the heart of the mountain. Its surface was rough, but appeared to have been worked. The sight confirmed our suspicions; the manifestations that haunted Goodweight came not from a natural maze of caverns, but from a distant annex of Braza's Kingdom. The passage was likely an unfinished ventilation shaft, abandoned before it reached air. It was approximately one yard in diameter, easy enough for we dwarfs to navigate, but a tight squeeze for Mailpiercer.

in a building at "Butter and the Road," and Pahoga's squalid hovel stands at "Silver and Allocian."

Encounters

Bartertown lives on trade. During the day, the streets bustle with workers, buyers, and sellers. At night the *buundavim* take over and decent citizens head for cover. Most people entertain one another in their homes or while away the hours in the nearest tavern.

The city tolerates a wide variety of travelers, though the atmosphere is often less than welcoming. Neither the guardians nor the *buundavim* bother to check the credentials of Name-givers entering Bartertown, and only Arlorn's efforts keep enemies of Throal out. Therefore, player characters might run into anything or anyone in Bartertown's streets.

Some typical encounters are briefly described below. The nastier encounters are more likely to occur after dark.

- A group of *buundavim* lounge in the middle of the street, drinking from wineskins and swearing at passers-by.
- A wizened old dwarf woman offers to sell the adventurers her special soup, which she claims has curative qualities.
- A worker repairs the cracked stucco on the outside of a building.
- A stranger with a curious accent stops the adventurers and asks for directions.



THE ENDLESS STAIRWAY



During the time just before the Scourge, when Horrors walked the land but were not yet its masters, a great evil came to pass in the lands between the Serpent River and the Kingdom of Throal.

The dwarf Weaponsmith Ginn Darrow, who lived in a small mountain village, fell under the power of a nameless Horror and went mad. In the grip of his madness he worshipped the abomination and built a temple to it as though it were a Passion. He preached that salvation from the approaching Scourge would only come to those who sacrificed their lives to the Horror by dying a bloody death or dedicating themselves forever to its dreadful service.

Those who believed Darrow's mad words traveled to the blasphemous temple in the Throal Mountains, then spread out to ravage nearby towns and villages. Those who did not flee were killed outright or brought back to be sacrificed on the Horror's unholy altar. In this way, Darrow and his followers helped speed the coming of the Horrors to Barsaive, confident their dread masters would spare their lives in gratitude.

The armies of Throal and Thera struck at these evil-doers scant years before the Scourge began, killing many and driving the rest ever deeper into the Throal Mountains. Angered by their defeat and thirsting for revenge, the Horror-worshippers began to build the Endless Stairway, a set of steps to link the accursed temple in the mountain peaks to another hidden deep underground. From these two temples they intended to wreak vengeance on the Throalic and Thera armies by summoning the physical form of their patron Horror and so speeding the arrival of the Scourge.

Darrow and his disciples vanished during the Scourge. Some say the Horror took them into itself, while others claim the creature simply destroyed them. Still others say the account is no more than a tall story, but even today travelers who pass through the Throal Mountains tell tales of tribes who roam its isolated valleys, tribes that still worship the abomination and practice the forbidden rites. Some visitors even claim to have seen the Endless

Stairway, ascending into the dark mists that surround the mountain peaks and winding its way deep into the black bowels of the earth. So far, no one has dared climb the length of the stairway, and the temples to the unknown Horror remain a mystery.

Adventure Hook

The so-called Endless Stairway extends roughly ten miles from top to bottom, with countless blind twists and turns that make it extremely hazardous to traverse. To reach the stairway, characters first must scale some of the most forbidding peaks in all of Barsaive. Much of the stairway itself lies in dark mountain passes infested with griffins, espagra, jehuthras, and other foul creatures spawned by the unholy unions of Horrors and the local fauna.

Characters who survive these dangers and reach the end of the stairway may find a temple built on a large plateau just below the highest peaks of the Throal Mountains. Populate the temple with any foul folk you wish—descendants of the original cultists, a tribe of savage trolls, a sect devoted to one of the mad Passions. Any of these would be plausible.

The lower reaches of the staircase may contain even greater hazards. Extending far underground, the stairway leads through numerous subterranean dens occupied by various nasty creatures. Some tales even claim a dragon's lair lies beneath the Throal Mountains. The gamemaster may choose to have the stairs lead into this lair, or to someplace worse. According to legend, the bottom end of the stairway leads to the temple of the patron Horror. Though the abomination has no Name in any of the tales, scholars have linked it to an ancient cult known as Those of the Great Hunter. That cult's adherents served the Horror called Verjigorm, the Hunter of Great Dragons. And if Darrow's disciples had any connection to the worshippers of Verjigorm, only the mightiest heroes should consider a trip down the Endless Stairway.

The troll placed a spike in the wall of the mine, to which we attached our mountaineering rope. After affixing small light crystals to the ankles of my boots, I lowered myself into the passage. It was by no means clear how far I would have to lower myself until my feet touched the floor. We had plenty of rope, however, so I was not worried on that account. The probable inhabitants of the chamber into which I was descending inspired greater apprehension. My last encounter with Horrors had left me more shaken than I cared to admit, even to myself. As I slowly went down into darkness, my pulse pounded in my ears like a hundred drums.

Sure enough, I was attacked before I touched bottom. A sudden shriek echoed against the rocks and something hit my right foot. Pain shot up through my leg—something had slashed me. The blow knocked the light crystal from my boot. I saw it fall, hitting something perhaps six or seven yards below. The crystal on my other boot illuminated the writhing, tooth-filled face of the thing attacking me. It was howling in fury; it didn't like the light. I needed to do more than annoy the

beast, I needed to strike at it. But with both hands on the rope, my ability to harm it was drastically limited. As I dangled in the dank air, a thin, spidery arm covered with gleaming blades swung up at my uninjured foot.

I whispered the Name of my patron Passion and let go of the rope. Twisting to avoid the bladed arm, I landed square in the creature's left eye. I sank up to my waist in what felt like grape pulp. The thing groaned and bucked, throwing me high in the air. I recall nothing more before losing consciousness.

—Excerpt from a report by Griforican, member of His Majesty's Exploratory Force, 1508 TH

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he sovereignty of Throal extends beyond the underground kaer and the Inner Cities. King Neden also rules over roughly 20,000 people who live in small settlements scattered throughout the Throal Mountains.

The Throal mountain range is also home to others, who do not recognize Throalic rule: the flying t'skrang of the House of the Spirit Wind and the great dragon Icewing, whose lair remains hidden amid the peaks of Mount Vapor. A community of t'skrang known as the Pale Ones lives deep beneath the mountain slopes on the banks of an underground branch of the Serpent River, and an old subterranean complex built by the legendary King Braza has become a nest of Horrors and other malign creatures. Several mercenary ork cavalry bands also live in and roam across the mountain slopes near Throal.

OUTLYING COMMUNITIES

Throal's outlying communities were founded soon after the dwarf kingdom's reopening. In order to encourage people to reclaim the surface world, King Varulus III offered land grants to anyone who settled in the Throal Mountains and foothills. In the past 80 years or so, Throal's citizens have established 37 communities, the population of which totals about 20,000 Name-givers.

The people who live in these surface villages proudly refer to themselves as Garahamites, to honor the legendary founder of Throal who is said to have tamed the mountain by making a deal with its spirit. The settlers claim to be repeating Garaham's great deed by taming the mountain with their blood and toil.

Economics

Most of the outlying communities are mining towns. Throal kept reliable records of the most lucrative mines prior to the Scourge, and so the early settlers knew just where to go to stake their claims. In those early, lawless days, rival settlers sometimes fought miniature wars over claims to the same mines. Throal's noble houses financed many parties of settlers, but only the people who actually worked the land could hold title to the claims. It took bravery and strength to reach the outlying lands and defend them against attacks by rival settlers, Horrors and other fearsome creatures, and ork raiders. The Horrors have gradually become less of a threat, though raiding remains a serious problem. The prime target for raiders is a settlement's mineral wealth, but for local residents food is also a treasured commodity. What little arable land exists in the Throal Mountains is not rich enough to support large-scale farming; much of it is better suited to grazing. With considerable effort, the Garahamites grow just enough food to support themselves. They import a little food from Throal, but losing even a portion of a crop to disease, bad weather, or raiding can be disastrous. In most of the outlying communities, food stores are guarded even more stringently than gold, silver, or other precious metals.

Government

Most of the outlying communities are divided into quadrants and appointed a baron or baroness from among the Garahamites to rule over each. Like the barons of the Inner Cities, the rulers of the outlying communities govern for life unless recalled by the king. If a baron rules well, an heir is usually appointed to take over the barony upon the ruler's death.

The ruler of the northwest quadrant is Baron Lemak, an ork raised in one of the mountain settlements. Though he adopts the mannerisms of a bumpkin, he is in fact a clever and sensitive ruler. Lemak lards his speeches with colorful country sayings, and neither his clothing nor his bearing show the powerful official and rich mine owner his friends and advisors know. Lemak does things his own way and often ignores royal orders that he dislikes. Officially, he has no more authority over the mercenary cavalries than any other baron, but the orks like him and often obey his wishes. The majority of Garahamites in the northwest quadrant are orks, and they sometimes make noises about declaring their quadrant an independent ork principality ruled by Lemak. The baron does

ADVENTURE HOOK

Several airships vanish while traveling over the southeast quadrant of the Throal Mountains. The adventurers, hired to investigate, find the wreckage scattered across the slopes near the House of the Spirit Wind. If they consult with the *k'stulaami*, they learn that the spirits of the air are angry. Even the strongest flyers of the House have been knocked from the sky lately. As for the cause of the air spirits' fury, the *k'stulaami* believe that someone is mining True air without paying proper respect to the denizens of the elemental plane.

The winged t'skrang are correct. A group of deserters from the Throalic navy have captured a drakkar from a band of crystal raiders and are harvesting True air with no regard for the traditional rituals observed by legitimate miners. The adventurers must rid the area of these unscrupulous bandits and then find a way to contact and appease the air spirits.

little to discourage such talk, but has yet to defy the king's wishes on any major matter.

The northeast quadrant is ruled by Baron Sinoricus, the son of a former mucker who became the first baron of the outlying communities. Though Sinoricus is well liked by the locals, he has had problems lately with the new and unruly ork cavalries, who frequently act more like an occupying force than hired men-at-arms. Sinoricus feared that Varulus was neglecting the Garahamites, though he is careful about where and when he voices such opinions. He worries that King Neden will be even more neglectful of the mountain settlements, but despite his misgivings he would never consider a break with Throal.

Palaja Diamondarm, a leather-skinned, foul-mouthed troll, is baroness of the southwest quadrant. The communities under her control are remarkably calm and peaceful, no doubt because of the swift and merciless justice she dispenses. In the early days, Palaja mounted the skulls of executed prisoners on stakes outside her estate. The king ordered her to discontinue this practice, but local settlers remember it well. Even the worst-disciplined of the ork cavalries are afraid to cross Palaja; in fact, they respect her ruthlessness.

Before his death, King Varulus III confirmed Baroness Uzarg, a young ork, as ruler of the southeast quadrant. The previous baron, Uzarg's husband, was slain by invae—mysterious insect beings that infested portions of southern Barsaive in the earliest days of the Scourge (see p. 221 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*)—during an attack on the now-abandoned settlement of Smelter. Uzarg claims that many more Horrors and Horror constructs are lurking in her quadrant and has sworn to use every means at her disposal to destroy them. Some say the death of her mate has affected her judgment, but others support her claim that the southeast quadrant is particularly rife with otherworldly menaces.

The barons of the four quadrants administer justice and maintain public order. They are expected to uphold the principles of the *Council Compact*, though differing circumstances sometimes force them to adapt its terms to fit the needs of the situation. The barons report to the king's chancellor, requesting funds, troops, or other support as necessary. On a local level, each of the outlying

settlements selects a headman or mayor, usually by the consensus of an informal council of prominent citizens. The headman is responsible for each settlement's security and reports directly to the baron.

In recent years, the Throalic government has paid scant attention to the needs of the outlying communities. Neden tends to take the Garahamites for granted, and chooses to devote his realm's resources to extending trade ties and Throalic influence throughout the province. This benign neglect is a source of increasing resentment, especially to settlers suffering under harassment by ork mercenaries who supposedly serve the king.

Culture

The independent-minded Garahamites feel a powerful emotional bond to Throal, but believe in doing things for themselves. They live without the guarantees of safety that their brethren in the Halls of Throal take as a birthright. They know that raiders or Horrors could wipe out their towns at any moment, and so every able-bodied Garahamite has at least some combat training. Everyone also knows the basics of wilderness survival and has a working knowledge of farming, mining, and construction. Like many who live in Barsaive's hinterland, Garahamites tend to be suspicious of strangers. Newcomers might be swindlers, bandits, foul folk, or worse. The only way to win a community's trust is to shed blood for it, or to live there for many years.

The people of the mountain settlements feel strongly bound to each other. They rely on one another for survival and know all the intimate details of each others' lives. They are as forgiving of their own kind as they are distrustful of outsiders.

Settlement life is rugged, and so books, paintings, and other art objects are rare. Locals value the few pieces of art that they possess, however, and practice the art forms they can. Garahamites love to sing, play musical instruments, dance, and tell stories. Stories of the Founding of Throal are particularly popular, as the settlers live on the land where those great deeds took place.

Typical Defenses

All of the outlying communities are surrounded by walls, mostly built of pine trunks treated with a plant extract that makes them resistant to fire. Some of the older towns have walls of stone and mortar. In addition, each town has a watchtower with a lookout always on guard. When the lookout spots raiders, the children and elderly head for shelter in the mine. Usually in the center of the town, the typical mine is equipped with metal or wooden shutters to protect those inside it. Meanwhile, able-bodied men and women strap on armor and shields and rush to the walls to fire arrows and crossbow bolts at the invaders. Some of the larger communities have ballistae and fire cannon mounted on the walls as well.

These defenses are used primarily against the Skull Wharg scorchers, led by the implacable and possibly insane Karak Bloodeyes. The Skull Whargs believe that orks are the first Name-givers and are destined to rule Barsaive. They hate Throal and anyone even vaguely associated with Throal. Bloodeyes has announced his intention to ride into the Halls of Throal and come out with the king's head on a pike. Until that day, he satisfies his appetite for Throalic blood with raids on the



outlying communities (and anyone else he can reach). The Skull Whargs consist of eight clans, numbering roughly 4,000 orks. Of these, approximately 1,000 are active fighters.

The game statistics for an average able-bodied Garahamite appear below. Several of the settlements also number adepts among their citizens, who help protect their towns against raiders. These adepts are most often First through Fourth Circles, and tend to follow the Archer, Beastmaster, Scout, and Warrior Disciplines.

TYPICAL GARAHAMITE

Attributes		
DEX (13): 6	STR (12): 5	TOU (11): 5
PER (11): 5	WIL (11): 5	CHA (11): 5
Characteristics		
Initiative: 3	Physical Defense: 7	
Physical Armor: 9	Spell Defense: 7	
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 7	
Death: 32	Recovery Tests: 2	
Unconsciousness: 24	Knockdown: 5	
Wound Threshold: 8	Movement: 5	
Skills		
Botany ^K (2): 7		
Craftsman (Mason) ^A (2): 8		
Craftsman (Woodworker) ^A (2): 8		
Creature Lore ^K (2): 7		
Farming ^K (2): 7		
Geology ^K (2): 7		
Hunting (2): 8		
Melee Weapons (5): 11		
Mining ^K (2): 7		
Missile Weapons (5): 11		
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)		
Speak Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)		
Storytelling ^A (2): 7		
Throal History ^K (2): 7		
Wilderness Survival (2): 7		
^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill		
Armor		
Ringmail (Phys 6; Init 2), Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 19)		
Weapons		
Broadsword (Damage 10), Dagger (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Light Crossbow (Damage 9; Range 16–32 yards/8–16 hexes), Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)		
Equipment		
2 × Craftsman Tools, Farming Tools, Traveler's Garb		
Legend Award		
Second Circle		
Notes		
Has the Heat Sight racial ability.		

THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRIT WIND

In the southern spur of the Throal mountain range, on a series of high cliffs, live the *k'stulaami*, winged t'skrang who live apart from the rest of their kind (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book). Roughly one in five hundred t'skrang are born with a membrane stretched between their wrists and hips that serve them as wings. These t'skrang grow up unable to fit into traditional t'skrang society, for at the onset of adolescence, they lose the ability to speak the t'skrang tongue, as well as all interest in any pursuits not connected to flight. The t'skrang of the Serpent River bring their winged youngsters to this mountain community, known as the House of the Spirit Wind. Though greatly reduced in number during the Scourge, the House of the Spirit Wind is slowly rebuilding along with the rest of Barsaive. Currently, just less than 1,000 *k'stulaami* call the cliffs home.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Charboyya (see p. 106) hires the adventurers to venture into Braza's Kingdom in search of the web of the fabled iridescent worm. The silk spun by this giant worm is worth 500 silver pieces a pound, and can be woven into a fabric that shimmers with all the colors of the rainbow when seen in any strength of light. In addition to its beauty, the fabric is extremely durable. Unfortunately for the player characters, the iridescent worm is actually a 50-foot long behemoth with jaws vast enough to swallow a troll in a single gulp... and it is extremely carnivorous.

The *k'stulaami* hunt and forage to survive. They eat mostly birds and edible mosses and leaves that grow on the mountain slopes, and groups of hunters occasionally kill one of the large mountain sheep native to the region. The Spirit Wind t'skrang make most of what they need from material to hand, and so have limited use for trade goods. They make clothing and armor from sheep hides, tools from animal bones and baskets from dried grasses. They do not work metal, and so must trade for blades and other metal goods. They particularly value daggers forged by Weaponsmiths, which they strap to their tails in a manner much like their river t'skrang brethren. Some *k'stulaami* are skilled at finding True air, and trading parties from Throal and the *aropagoi* of the Serpent River occasionally come to the cliffs hoping to trade blades and metal tools for that elusive element. Traders, however, must drive a careful and canny bargain. The Spirit Wind t'skrang prize the work of their own hands above all else, and if they can make something themselves, they will not trade for a version of it manufactured elsewhere, even if the trade goods are stronger or more durable.

ARTS AND LANGUAGE

Though the House of the Spirit Wind is isolated by its location, its people feel mostly curiosity toward outsiders, rather than hostility. They rarely come under attack, as the scorchers of the Throal Mountains can find plenty of easier targets than flying Name-givers who live atop tall, sheer cliffs. In fact, *k'stulaami* have little interest in most outsiders save for windlings, with whom they share a love of flying.

The winged t'skrang speak an odd, bird-like language that they instinctively acquire when they reach *kaissa*, the time when a young t'skrang changes from neuter to male or female. A few members of the House of the Spirit Wind learn Throalic as well as re-learn the traditional t'skrang tongue in order to act as intermediaries with the outside world.

Artistically, the *k'stulaami* decorate useful objects and their own bodies with mystical patterns. Some wealthy art collectors prize *k'stulaami* crafts as rare and beautiful curios. The *k'stulaami* also have a rich tradition of unique legends and stories.

SOCIETY

Like other t'skrang communities, the House of the Spirit Wind is ruled by a *shivalahala*. However, it lacks the usual t'skrang clan structure because few of the *k'stulaami* are blood kin. Instead, members of the House of the Spirit Wind may join one of five associations: the Gales, the Upwinds, the Flyers-in-Storms, the Moss Gatherers, and the Prey Seekers. Each association has its own character, according to the temperament of its members. The Gales are

hunters, reckless and bold. The Upwinds are craftsmen and thinkers. The Flyers-in-Storms are curious by nature, and travel far and wide in search of new sights (as well as new pockets of True air). The Moss Gatherers are patient and quiet, traits that serve them well in foraging. The Prey Seekers are the most aggressive of the *k'stulaami*, and members of their association fight to defend the House when necessary. Each association selects a *lahala*, who advises the *shivalahala*. When a *shivalahala* dies, the House selects a new one from among the *lahala*.

For security, the House of the Spirit Wind relies primarily on its isolation. The high, sheer cliffs they live on are a safer barrier to attack than any fortress, and the Prey Seekers serve as an effective defensive force.

Game statistics for a typical non-adept fighter from the House of the Spirit Wind appear below.

TYPICAL SPIRIT WIND FIGHTER

Attributes		
DEX (19): 8	STR (11): 5	TOU (11): 5
PER (11): 5	WIL (8): 4	CHA (8): 4
Characteristics		
Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 10	
Physical Armor: 5	Spell Defense: 7	
Mystic Armor: 1	Social Defense: 5	
Death: 32	Recovery Tests: 2	
Unconsciousness: 24	Knockdown: 5	
Wound Threshold: 8	Movement: 6	
Skills		
Body Painting ^A (1): 5		
Botany ^K (1): 6		
Climbing (2): 10		
Craftsman (Basketweaving) ^A (1): 9		
Craft Armor ^A (1): 6		
Creature Lore ^K (1): 6		
Gliding (2): 10		

Hunting (2): 10
K'stulaami Culture^K (1): 6
 Melee Weapons (5): 13
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang/*K'stulaami*)
 Spirit Lore (1): 6
 Throwing Weapons (5): 13
 Wilderness Survival (2): 7

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)

Weapons

2 × Daggers (Damage 7; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes),
 2 × Hawk Hatchet (Damage 9; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Climbing Kit, Craftsman Tools, Forge Tools, Painting Tools, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Legend Award

Second Circle

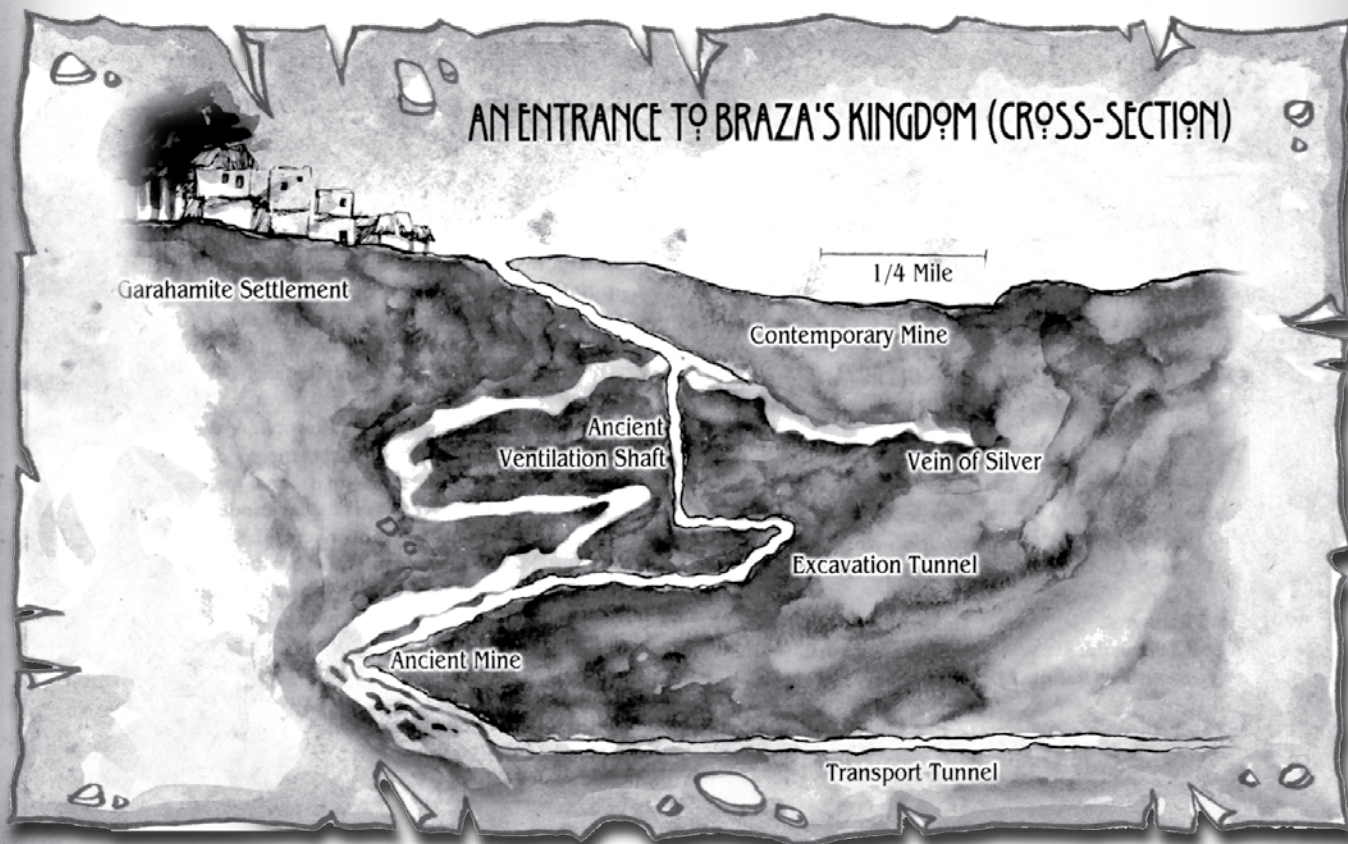
Notes

Has the Tail Combat racial ability.

BRAZA'S KINGDOM

Braza's Kingdom lies deep underground, far beneath the Halls of Throal. First excavated around 200 TH, it was originally an exquisite suite of rooms and ceremonial halls, covering an area roughly the size of the Grand Bazaar. Later, residents of the Halls of Throal used it as the entry point for a vast network of small tunnels connecting mines deep in the heart of the Throal mountains. The tunnels were excavated over a 600-year period. Braza's Kingdom also extends across the mountain range to the natural caverns through which the underground branch of the Serpent River flows.

The entrance to Braza's Kingdom under the Halls of Throal was sealed up in 900 TH, after the people of Throal found several Horrors nesting there. Since the end of the Scourge, miners and adventurers have periodically sought permission to unseal the



entrance, but King Neden, like his father King Varulus III before him, always turns down these requests. Many of the mines dug in the mountain settlements, however, are connected to this vast subterranean tunnel network. On occasion, the Horrors that still lurk in Braza's Kingdom surface in the midst of small mining towns and terrorize the inhabitants.

The vast majority of Braza's Kingdom has gone unexplored since the reopening of Throal. Adventurers who have mapped portions of it report that it remains heavily infested with Horrors and Horror constructs. Some of the Horrors have become dormant, likely from lack of food, and only awaken when Name-givers approach.

Because Braza's Kingdom is unexplored and full of hazards, legends of great treasures have naturally become attached to it. According to some tales, ancient miners hid untold wealth in the Kingdom's underground vaults. Still others say that the fabulous weapons wielded by the Founders of Throal are stowed away in Braza's Kingdom. Skeptical-minded scholars say there is nothing in the tunnel network other than dust and bones.

The map shows a typical entrance to Braza's Kingdom through the active mine of one of the outlying communities. The entrance of the mine lies in the center of town and intersects with a partly completed ventilation shaft from ancient times. The ventilation shaft connects to a far older mine established to work the same vein via a small, rough tunnel, a cramped fit for anyone larger than a dwarf. Leading away from the mine is a transport tunnel large enough to allow a human or elf to stand upright; the floor of this tunnel is smooth and relatively easy to navigate. These transport tunnels go on for miles, connecting to other ancient mines and sometimes to surface entrances.

ENCOUNTERS

If the player characters come across any living beings in Braza's Kingdom, the following encounters are most likely to occur:

- Meeting other adventurers exploring and/or seeking treasure.
- Run-ins with Horrors and predatory creatures.
- Meeting parties of miners seeking a rich, ancient mine; the miners may be Garahamites, Throalites, or foreigners.
- Stumbling across Skull Wharg scorcher seeking routes by which to launch surprise attacks against well-protected villages (these encounters will only take place near the surface).
- Meeting Pale Ones who have forged trade routes through parts of Braza's Kingdom (these encounters only take place deep within the mountains).

THE DOMES OF THE PALE ONES

Many miles of underground rivers flow through the Throal Mountains, some tributaries of the Serpent and others additional sources of that mighty river. All the rivers flow through a series of interconnected underground caverns far beneath the Throal Mountains. In these caverns live the Pale Ones, a tribe of t'skrang who never venture up to the surface world (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book). Though these t'skrang seem to live in a more primitive society than their surface-dwelling cousins, they are canny traders and deadly foes when provoked. Unlike surface-dwelling t'skrang, the Pale Ones' hides are white or pale green; a few even have luminous skin. They also possess the racial ability of Heat Sight, a trait unique to this group of t'skrang.

The Pale Ones survive by fishing and trading. Many tribes offer river transport to dwarf miners, guiding them to sources of True water in exchange for needed goods. The Pale Ones live communally, sharing the fruits of their labors.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Each community of Pale Ones occupies a vast underground cavern, which they call a Great Dome. The typical community consists of five to six foundations, or *niall*, each with 30 to 50 members. Each foundation is led by a *lahala*; a *shivalahala*, selected by the *lahalas* from among their own number, governs the community.

Like the surface t'skrang, the Pale Ones regard their *shivalahala* with reverence as a living embodiment of their history. A *shivalahala* serves for life, and the continuity of her guidance helps ensure the survival of her people in an often-hostile environment. Unlike their surface cousins, Pale Ones do not travel far from their underground homes. Their insular focus on their own communities makes the *shivalahala's* influence all the more powerful; they hold her in awe, and to defy the *shivalahala* is unthinkable.

Ongoing feuds between neighboring communities are common, usually over fishing territory. Because battles between communities of Pale Ones are ritualized, however, a combatant is more likely to be taken prisoner than slain. Quarreling communities often seal a temporary truce by exchanging prisoners, and occasionally prisoners are adopted into the communities that captured them.

When wars between communities get out of hand, either side may petition the king of the Pale Ones, a water-dwelling great dragon Named Earthroot, for assistance (see p. 128 of the *Gamemaster's Companion*). Though many scholars in Throal doubt Earthroot's existence, he is real. He dislikes being disturbed, and has been known to eat petitioners as a way of emphasizing his displeasure. The Pale Ones periodically pay him tribute with large amounts of True water; why he wants so much of it, no one knows. The only clue to Earthroot's plans or motivations may lie in an incident that took place roughly three years ago, when some Pale Ones appeared on the slopes of the Throal Mountains. They claimed to be bearing a message from their king to his fellow dragon, Icewing.

Earthroot's role as king of the Pale Ones seems typically dragon-like. He sometimes manipulates the communities into fighting one another for obscure ends; sometimes he encourages trade with the dwarf miners, but he is just as likely to order an all-out war against the Throalites. In general, Earthroot leaves the *shivalahalas* to run the communities as they see fit. When Earthroot wishes to convey an order to the Pale Ones, he usually sends one of his three aquatic drake servants (see p. 128 of the *Gamemaster's Companion*).

DEFENSES

Every able-bodied Pale One must be prepared to defend his community's Great Dome. The Domes have only a few entrances, which are guarded at all times. The Pale Ones rely on numbers and ferocity, rather than sophisticated strategy, to repel foes.

Only a few Pale Ones become adepts, and of those that follow a Discipline, few ever reach much higher than Fifth or Sixth Circle. Because Pale Ones prefer to stay close to home, they rarely get out into the world to perform the legendary deeds required to attain higher Circles. The notable exception to this tendency are the *shivalahalas* of the various domes, of whom many are adepts of Twelfth Circle or higher. Game statistics for a typical Pale One appear below.

TYPICAL PALE ONE

Attributes

DEX (15): 6 STR (14): 6 TOU (11): 5
PER (11): 5 WIL (13): 6 CHA (12): 5

Characteristics

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 6 Spell Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 7
Death: 32 Recovery Tests: 2
Unconsciousness: 24 Knockdown: 6
Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

Skills

Creature Lore ^K (1): 6
Fishing (3): 8
Melee Weapons (5): 11
Missile Weapons (5): 11
Pale Ones Culture ^K (1): 6
Read/Write Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)
Sailing (3): 9
Speak Language (1): 6—(T'skrang/Pale Ones)
Spirit Lore ^K (1): 6
Swimming (3): 9
Wood Carving ^A (1): 6

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Deflect 2/0; Shatter 19)

Weapons

Dagger (Damage 8; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Spear (Damage 10; Range 10–20 yards/5–10 hexes), Shortbow (Damage 9; Range 30–60 yards/15–30 hexes), Quiver (w/20 shortbow arrows)

Equipment

Adventurer's Kit, Carving Tools, Fishing Kit, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Legend Award

Second Circle

Notes

Has the Heat Sight and Tail Combat racial abilities.

CULTURE

Parochial and suspicious of outsiders, the Pale Ones exhibit a curious mixture of civilization and primitivism. The few cultural practices that outsiders find particularly disturbing bear a distinct mark of cannibalism. For example when a member of a community becomes too lame or sick to contribute to the general good, he is fed to Earthroot—a great honor in Pale One society, but not one that all Pale Ones are happy to receive. Criminals and prisoners from other communities are frequently tortured, most often by boiling or roasting. Victims who show particular bravery in the face of torture are ritually devoured. Those who partake of the victim supposedly gain the qualities of bravery and stoicism. The Pale Ones also practice infanticide, smothering children born as *k'stulaami*.

Contrasting with such apparent barbarism, the Pale Ones are a literate people who read, write, and speak an ancient dialect of the t'skrang tongue. A few Pale Ones in each community also speak limited Throalic. They have a rich tradition of history and myth, and their music—heavy on percussion instruments and odd, stringed flutes—is haunting and complex. Outsiders who escape roasting and gain the trust of the Pale Ones have described them as Name-givers of deep feeling and compassion.



ADVENTURE HOOK

Grindo, the head of House Neumani (see **On Throal's Trading Houses**, p. 23), needs the adventurers' help with a serious problem. One of Grindo's sons, an impetuous youth Named Zeslericus, unearthed the legend of the White Tree, a vast plant that allegedly grows without sunlight in the heart of the Throal Mountains. According to legend, this tree is intimately connected to the destiny of the dragons. Zeslericus has decided that the White Tree is growing somewhere in the underground caverns of the Pale Ones and is determined to take a branch from it and auction off the branch to the highest-bidding Wizard or Weaponsmith. However, Zeslericus failed to discover one vital fact: Earthroot serves as the guardian of the White Tree. Grindo promises the adventurers a substantial reward if they follow Zeslericus and haul him home to daddy before he gets roasted by the Pale Ones or gulped down the dragon's gullet.



ADVENTURES IN THROAL

Throal is a dangerous place. Oh, I know you might think otherwise. Let me tell you straight—rock and stone is good for building, but it's also good for concealing what's really going in the dwarf kingdom.

• GARAND HEDMON, CITIZEN OF THROAL •

▲ ▲ ▲
 “Adventure? I don’t want to talk about adventure. I’ve had enough adventure to last me a lifetime. To last me the lifetime of an obsidiman, even! I never intended to become an adept, you know. At least, not permanently. I just wanted to help my father. He was a great man, my father. The most honest man in Bethabal. Of course, that ran him afoul of the local magistrate. Back in the bad old days, you understand, before Dajag became baron. The old magistrate decided he wanted to expand his estate, and my father’s laundry happened to be right in his way. So he trumped up a false charge against my old dad—treason, of all the stable-swillings! Accused him of associating with Theran agents. I was just a boy at the time, barely become a man. I needed to save my father, but hadn’t the slightest notion how to go about it. Well, an enemy of the magistrate took pity on my tale of woe—which I poured out to him just like I’m babbling now, sitting on a tavern stool much like this one, so many years ago.

“Turned out that this enemy of the magistrate’s was an adept, a Thief. Said he could smell my aptitude for the Thief’s gift, reeking on me like yesterday’s onion pie. So he initiated me. And I used my newfound talents to sneak into the magistrate’s estate, where I found papers proving it was him hobnobbing with Theran spies. So my old dad went free, and folk called me a hero. I even got offered a job as a Royal Guardsman.

“All I wanted to do was go back to my father’s laundry. But destiny cared not a whit for my desires. I suppose when you bring the magic into you, when you become an adept, trouble starts seeking you out. If you don’t look for adventure, adventure looks for you.

“Not much danger in being a launderer, wouldn’t you figure? Well, you’d figure wrong. A little time after I went back to working, the clothes we were washing started getting up of their own volition. Stalking the streets of Bethabal at night. Attacking people. One tunic strangled an old lady who’d been one of our best customers. Strangest thing you’ve ever heard of, I can see by your face, but true. And who better to investigate but me?

“Turned out to be an old Elementalist, Horror-touched, with a grudge against the family of his former wife. They were our customers, see? In a ruined kaer, he’d found a cake of soap imprinted with the spirits of the tormented dead. Slipped the soap into our supply. I had to kill him to stop all the craziness, and believe you me, his earth darts were plentiful and painful. Lucky for me, I got help at the last minute from a few young adepts who had their own score to settle with him.

“So I owed them a favor, and when they got into trouble I felt obligated to pitch in. Nothing much—just a little matter of an assassination attempt on the Grand Elder of the j’ha-olzim of Thystonius. Just a pitched battle with the most ruthless band

of Theran adepts you’d ever care to meet. Lost this finger in that battle—a t’skrang Warrior bit it clean off.

“We took care of those blackguards, but attracted the attentions of a band of Raggok cultists. Lucky us, eh? They weren’t happy that we’d helped followers of Thystonius. Turned out there were dozens of them, like dry rot, all through the Chancellery of Bethabal and some in the Royal Chancellery as well. Took months to clear them out, and in the meantime we’d ended up sentenced to death by the king and then pardoned.

“And that was just the beginning. I haven’t said a word about the talking ring that tried to steal my soul; or the ants of elemental fire that almost devoured the gates of Throal; or the ancient mummies of House Chaozun; or the prophet who convinced all the women of Ontinus Lane to attempt suicide; or the old crones and their game of sticks that nearly collapsed the Hall of Donations.

“I’ve had adventurers from elsewhere tell me how much they like Throal for its peace and quiet. A refuge, they say, a lovely place to take things easy between dangerous missions to the hinterland. I’ve never stepped outside this kingdom’s threshold, but I know they’re putting me on. I swear, one day I’m going to move these tired old bones somewhere safe. Like Parlainth.”

—Anonymous, from Tamar’s
Legends Told in Taverns, 1502 TH

▲ ▲ ▲

This chapter advises gamemasters on how to use the dwarf kingdom in their **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. Using the presented material as a setting or backdrop for adventures and campaigns can be challenging, but can also offer opportunities for different kinds of adventures. This section will help gamemasters solve the potential challenges of setting adventures in Throal and take the fullest advantage of the opportunities the kingdom can provide.

Experienced **Earthdawn** gamemasters know Throal as a fairly peaceful place, a haven of sanity and virtue in a province dominated by lawlessness and terror. Throal is exactly the kind of place where any sensible adept would want to stay between adventures, and player characters in many current campaigns are likely to have put down roots in Throal. As this book shows, however, appearances can be deceiving. Countless possibilities for adventure exist in the dwarf kingdom, enough for an entire campaign in which the characters never venture outside Throal’s gates.

Because Throal tends to be peaceful in contrast to other areas in Barsaive, running interesting adventures in Throal can become a challenge. Quite a lot of subtle danger lurks just beneath Throal’s

placid surface, however, and gamemasters should make full use of it. If your player group starts to treat the dwarf kingdom as just a place for their characters to store their booty between kaer explorations, use the information in this book to give them a real surprise.

CAMPAIGNS IN THROAL

Campaigns in Throal fall into three categories. The first one, in which Throal serves as a base of operations for the player characters, allows the characters to engage in perilous activities throughout Barsaive and periodically return to Throal for rest, equipment, and information.

The second type of campaign is set entirely in Throal, emphasizing political and economic intrigue. These campaigns work well for player characters who have lived in the dwarf kingdom for a substantial period of time or who were born and raised there.

The third type of campaign is likely the most common, in which adventures alternate between action stories set outside Throal and character-driven stories in the dwarf kingdom. Several of the adventure ideas in this book can serve as springboards for character-driven adventures in Throal.

WORKING FOR THROAL

Most of the adventure ideas in this book, as well as the adventures in previous **Earthdawn** products, assume that the player characters do not work for any government or organization. If the gamemaster wishes, however, he may have the dwarf kingdom employ the player characters in some capacity. The dwarf kingdom offers a number of Throalic government agencies and organizations to which the characters might belong, and through which they may get involved in adventures. Described in **The Threads of Unity** (p. 62), these agencies include the Eye of Throal, the Arm of Throal, His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, and His Majesty's Exploratory Force. Several adventure ideas featuring these groups appear throughout this book.

CREATING AND RUNNING ADVENTURES IN THROAL

In addition to the role the Kingdom of Throal can play in campaigns, it was designed to help the gamemaster run short, off-the-cuff adventures. The following guidelines describe some of the challenges of running adventures in Throal and how the gamemaster can use the dwarf kingdom's rich detail and colorful personalities to create his own fully fleshed-out adventures.

Despite the fact that Throal is a maze of underground passageways and chambers, adventures in the dwarf kingdom are far less straightforward than an average kaer expedition. Characters have many choices available to them and it is often hard to predict how the players will choose to solve problems. And in Throal, the problems can be thorny indeed. Many of the adventure ideas in this book involve political intrigue or similarly tricky personal interactions, very different from the simple "bash those cadaver men!" plots likely to happen in the hinterlands.

The more complicated the problem in a given gaming session, the more unpredictable the players' solution is likely to be. Gamemasters who rely on tightly plotted adventures in which

the characters travel obediently from one pre-planned scene to the next may be setting themselves up for frustration. Players like to feel that their bold and heroic characters are free to drive the story, and gamemasters can use this fact to their advantage when setting adventures and campaigns in Throal.

Let the adventurers advance the story line. Make it up as you go along. React to their actions by throwing interesting challenges in their path. Scrutinize the way they overcome these challenges and determine what the consequences of their victory (or failure) might be and how those consequences lead to further trouble. When the characters get out of that trouble, see what new trouble might arise from the new circumstances. Before you know it, you will have a complete and exciting adventure—possibly even the groundwork for an entire campaign.

Though this may sound daunting, especially for gamemasters who have run only prepared adventures, it is not as hard as it sounds. If you feel uncertain about what should come next, just remember that the players are even more in the dark than you are. They discuss their plans in front of you, so you can always stay one step ahead of them. One useful old gamemaster's trick is to listen to the various theories floated by your players to explain what is going on, then pick the most fiendish one and run with it.

The world of **Earthdawn** offers a tremendous amount of detail and a strong underlying logic. When you need to know what happens next, think about what would make sense in Throal. We have put together this book as a resource that you can use for inspiration in the middle of an adventure when you need a quick idea. Relax; have confidence in your imagination and the imaginations of your players. And don't forget to take notes so that you can remember decisions you make on the spur of the moment.



USING CHARACTERS TO CREATE ADVENTURES

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** on p. 141. 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 player characters are working for a friendly trading house, tracking down Vono, an employee who embezzled funds. They have found the neighborhood where the thief lives, and want to ask around for clues. You have already decided what the next clue will be: someone saw Vono in the company of a smuggler from Bartertown. Now you need a gamemaster character to provide the clue. You scan the **Character Index** and choose Javira of Awett, a Weaponsmith from the hinterlands who recently moved to Throal. You decide she saw Vono with the smuggler. Next, you must decide what kind of challenge the player characters will face in getting this information out of her. Because Javira is from the hinterlands, you decide that she doesn't want to make waves in Throal by getting involved in local affairs. Therefore, the adventurers must overcome her natural suspicion of strangers and desire to mind her own business.

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.

In search of an adventure idea, you select Dollas, Jarkna, and Johurrus Johuricus from the **Character Index**. What story line could possibly connect the queen of Throal, an outspoken ork woman, and a drunken innkeeper? Though Jarkna and Johurrus might know each other, Dollas is unlikely to have met either of them. You begin with Jarkna and Johurrus. Learning that Jarkna works in one of the Inner Cities, you decide she might have stayed in Johurrus' inn. Maybe she found temporary work in Bartertown and slept in Johurrus' flophouse upon her return. His place is filthy, and the outspoken Jarkna probably insulted him. You decide that Johurrus bears Jarkna a grudge.

To bring the queen in, you decide that someone stole her necklace while she was attending a performance at the Royal Auditorium. The Royal Guards are scouring the kingdom for this priceless national treasure.

Now that you have all three characters in place, you decide that Johurrus has the necklace. He took it from a mysterious stranger who slept in his place on the night of the theft. In search of a wine-skin, Johurrus rifled through the stranger's bag while she slept, and found more than he bargained for. He is afraid to keep the necklace and is also terrified that the stranger—who surely must be an adept—will avenge herself on him if he identifies her. Johurrus eventually turns the necklace in, but fingers Jarkna—the ork who insulted him—as the thief.

Now you need to answer one last question: where do the adventurers come in? You decide that Jarkna has friends, honest people of humble circumstances. They know that Jarkna is honest too, and so they pool their resources and hire the adventurers to find the real thief before poor Jarkna is executed.

You can also use lower-level gamemaster characters to represent the powerful people listed on the table. For example, if you choose the baron of an Inner City to be part of your story but do not want your player characters consorting directly with the dwarf kingdom's movers and shakers, you can use one of the baron's minor flunkies or servants instead.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventures are presented in an adventure framework format. Adventure frameworks serve as blueprints that outline the basic events of a story line, 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.

ANARO'S SERPENT

A mysterious magical treasure strips a legendary adept of her powers, under circumstances that nearly kill her. Suspicion first falls upon followers of the Mirage, then on the machinations of House Ludi. The real motivation for this strange and terrible theft, however, lies closer to home.

SETUP

The adventurers attend a duel in the Royal Auditorium pitting the great Throalic hero Shalanya Piercecasket against an obsidian Warrior, Ompaca. Ompaca has made it his life's task to test the fighting mettle of all of Barsaive's legendary champions. There is no rancor between the two combatants; they are dueling in order to improve their skills and add to their legends, and admission from the duel will benefit the survivors of a recent scorcher raid on an outlying community. The prowess of both fighters has long been celebrated in song and story, and the people of Throal are looking forward to the match. (If your player characters are of high Circles one of them may take Ompaca's place in the story and fight Shalanya in the ring.)

As the battle begins, Shalanya draws a strange new weapon: a crystalline quarterstaff in the shape of a serpent. The two combatants exchange preliminary blows, which both easily parry. Then Ompaca strikes Shalanya a glancing blow that nearly kills her. The match ends abruptly, and Shalanya's friends rush to her aid. They soon discover that all of her magical talents, including Durability, have been stolen from her.

Shalanya is the primary j'havim of the Dream Spire free trading company and her accident is a dreadful blow to Dream Spire's operations. Oberh, the head of the company (see **On Trade**, p. 27), engages the player characters to find out how this catastrophe could have come about.

EVENT ONE

When interrogated, Ompaca seems genuinely horrified by Shalanya's injury. He wanted—and expected—her to be a worthy opponent. Defeating her by forfeit brings him no honor, no great experience to share with the others of his Liferock.

At some point, Ompaca invites a player character to spar with him. He performs terribly, and collapses in dismay as he realizes he no longer has his talents, either. He remembers touching Shalanya's curious staff as he knelt down to see how badly she was hurt, and the player characters may recall seeing this. Clearly, the staff has a terrible effect on adepts.

EVENT TWO

Shalanya has gone into hiding from the many brigands, petty tyrants, and Theran trash who want to see her dead. Because she is powerless, she feels she cannot afford for anyone to find her, including the player characters. The crystal staff is now in the possession of Shalanya's aunt, her next of kin.

Investigating the staff is difficult. No adept with Weapon or Item History talents is willing to touch it to coax out its secrets, and the player characters are unlikely to want closer contact with it. (In fact, if it looks like they are going to touch the staff, give them a big fat hint warning them against such a foolish move. Most players will

feel unfairly dealt with if their characters' hard-won abilities are taken away, even for the length of a single adventure.)

Shalanya's aunt knows only that Shalanya won the staff in a dice game with a group of other adepts. She knows some of their Names, but not all of them.

EVENT THREE

Having gotten the Names of a few of Shalanya's gambling partners, the adventurers can look them up and pressure them until one of them says something useful. One gambler finally admits that "a stranger" gave him the staff shortly before the game and paid him handsomely to make sure he lost it to Shalanya. The gambler assumed that his mysterious benefactor was a representative of the Mirage (see **On Throal's Many Philosophers**, p. 37), one of Throal's odder philosophical societies. He happens to owe them a large gambling debt, and they have threatened to break his legs (in a philosophical manner, of course) unless he pays up.

EVENT FOUR

The Mirage may or may not be a vast criminal conspiracy, but it is certainly full of individuals who feel they have every right to act as they please. Many Mirage members are rich, powerful, and dangerous. Even more have done things they want kept secret from the authorities in Throal. The adventurers should get into at least one pitched battle while investigating the group. Finally, they reach the group's leader, Hyondak. She turns out to be a friend of Shalanya, who saved the philosopher's life several years ago. She shows the adventurers letters to prove her claims, and offers to double their reward for finding the culprit. Scratch one suspect.

EVENT FIVE

An informant the adepts consider reliable approaches them and reports a rumor that the members of the old guard House Ludi had a grudge against Shalanya. After she performed a heroic demonstration in the village of Sosk, in the hinterlands, the villagers were so impressed that they struck an exclusive trade arrangement with the Dream Spire Company. The Ludi representative, Ouglah, swore vengeance against Shalanya for depriving him of the deal. Ouglah is a notoriously slippery character and a noted questor of the sometimes unscrupulous Passion Chorrolis. After suffering through all sorts of trouble attempting to get at a member of this secretive, wealthy and well-connected trading house, the adventurers are forced to eliminate Ouglah as a suspect; he has been in Urupe for the past several months.

CLIMAX

The adventurers get a message from Shalanya's aunt, saying that a shady character has been following her. When they reach her home, they find it ransacked and Shalanya's aunt badly beaten. She tells them she was attacked by a cloaked figure, who took the staff and tortured her until she told him where Shalanya was hiding—in an empty housing block in Hustane, the unfinished Inner City.

The adventurers arrive on the scene to see a human man assaulting Shalanya. The attacker, Urrif, is an Archer adept formerly employed by the Dream Spire Company. Shalanya once spurned his romantic attentions, and so, maddened with thwarted desire, Urrif decided to possess her any way he could. Scouring Barsaive for a weapon to use against Shalanya, he found the odd item known as Anaro's Serpent, a crystal staff that temporarily drains the magical talents of any adept who touches it. Only one adept may weave a thread to it at a time; that adept receives all of the talents stolen by the staff, at the step levels possessed by the staff's victims. Urrif has all of Shalanya's and Ompaca's talents to use against the adventur-

ers; if they are of high enough Circles to need extra opposition, he may also have confederates at his side.

If the adventurers slay Urrif or somehow dispel the thread he has woven to the staff, Shalanya and Ompaca regain their talents. Now the adventurers face a dilemma: do they keep this foul, corrupting magical treasure, or destroy it?

SEQUELS

Whatever their decision, others are likely to have heard of the staff. Its original owners, cultists, Hand of Corruption assassins, or even scholars desiring to study it from the Great Library may hear of its use in the public duel and seek its current whereabouts. In addition, they now have powerful contacts in Shalanya, the Dream Spire Company, and Ompaca that might get them into more trouble in the future.

THE VOICE OF THE MOUNTAIN

The adventurers become entangled in a bloody feud within the Royal Guild of Miners, a situation complicated by an ancient, vengeful spirit in the Throal mountain range.

SETUP

The Handshake Cooperative Gold Mine lies deep in the heart of the Throal Mountains, a five-day trip from the Halls of Throal. Discovered by a group of miners who made up the original Handshake Cooperative, the mine proved extremely lucrative. All but one of the original miners live comfortably in Throal, while a new generation of miners sweats and toils to take the gold from the ground. The last of the original group, a miser Named Terlesk, acts as overseer at the mine.

When four of the workers fail to return home to their families at the usual time, the families send a messenger to the mine. The messenger discovers that the missing men died in a cave-in. Knowing that tension existed between the miners and their supervisors, the families suspect that something else is going on, and convince the adventurers to find out the truth. Because miners in general tend to be clannish and distrustful of outsiders, the families suggest that the adepts pretend to be replacement workers.

EVENT ONE

Researching the history of the Handshake mine proves troublesome even in Throal. The miners' guild is split between factions supporting cooperatives and those supporting rank-and-file miners. The small but powerful cooperative faction is made up of former workers who founded their own mines and now oversee other workers at their establishments. The rank-and-file members toil in the mines for weekly wages, and often feel put upon by the cooperative owners. Everyone in the guild has heard of the troubles at Handshake, but they differ sharply in their interpretation of events. Cooperative owners blame rebellious workers. The rank-and-file blames indifferent or even murderous overseers. Tempers in the guild are at a fever pitch over the incident.

If the adventurers seem too friendly toward the co-op backers, ordinary workers assume that they are going to the mine to help the owners. In this case, two-dozen angry miners armed with



picks and axes confront the adventurers on their way to the mine. Though individually they present a scant threat to the adepts, the adventurers cannot badly injure or kill a bunch of Throalic citizens simply for standing in their way. The adventurers will have to talk their way out of trouble.

If the player characters act too cozy with the rank-and-file, other members of the Handshake cooperative send a team of adept ruffians out after them. These miscreants will do more than block the adventurers' path; they will attack. In this case, the player characters can freely fight back in self-defense.

EVENT TWO

When they arrive at the mine, the adventurers must prove themselves to Terlesk's overseers and to their fellow mine workers. Adepts who do not look like prime miner material, such as windlings, may find this especially difficult. Both the miners and overseers are suspicious to the point of seeming mentally unbalanced, so more senseless violence is likely to ensue unless the adventurers talk fast and well. The player characters should bend over backwards to avoid hurting the miners; they are working for miners' families, who will take a dim view of mayhem directed at their fellows.

EVENT THREE

After they have won the workers' trust, the adventurers must undergo an initiation ceremony. Bonding rituals are important to people working in close and dangerous quarters, and Throalic miners are no exception. The miners rouse the player characters in the middle of the night, put bags over their heads, and lead them into the mines. The adventurers only cause more problems for themselves by fighting back, especially if they use talents that reveal them as adepts.

Once the adventurers are deep in the mine, one of the workers speaks to them through a metal funnel. Disguising his voice, he pretends to be the spirit of the mountain. He retells the ancient story of the pact between the Throalic hero Garaham and the mountain, from the mountain's point of view. In the story, Garaham promises the mountain spirit his loyalty, love, and a drop of his blood. The "mountain spirit" demands the same of the adventurers; they must repeat Garaham's oath and let the miners prick their thumbs to draw blood. The adventurers might be reluctant to do this, believing it to be part of some terrible blood magic ritual. If they refuse to participate, the miners treat them frostily for the remainder of the adventure.

EVENT FOUR

The next day, the overseer Terlesk spots the adventurers' cut thumbs and flies into a rage, bitterly cursing them for weakness and superstition. To him, making pacts with spirits and elementals is a fool's game. If the adepts did not participate in the ritual, let them look for clues, but make sure they eventually find out that Terlesk despises rituals and trafficking with elementals.

Terlesk's attitude is a clue to the truth—the Handshake Cooperative failed to ask permission to mine from the spirit that inhabits the mountain. Traditionally, every time a new mine is dug, the Throalic miners first re-enact the pact in which Garaham swore allegiance to the mountain spirit. Years ago, however, when the Cooperative first went prospecting at the mine site, they saw a vein of exposed gold gleaming seductively at them from the surface of the cavern where they dug the entry tunnel. They immediately fell to mining the vein, overcome with lust for gold. Too late, they realized that they had failed to seek the mountain's approval for their activities. The mountain spirit, an unforgiving entity, chose to bring woe and strife to anyone who worked the mine from that day forward. Even workers who swear allegiance to the spirit are not spared; the spirit has been sending crags to attack the miners (see Event 5). The mountain has also been affecting the minds of the miners and overseers, driving them to violent acts. A few weeks ago, overseers overcome with the mountain's baleful influence murdered the four workers whose deaths the adventurers are investigating. Terlesk is covering this up, just as he and his cooperative have for years concealed the curse on their lucrative mine.

EVENT FIVE

In the middle of the night the adventurers are attacked by crags, minor elemental beings commanded by the spirit of the mountain (see below). The crags assault the player characters and any miners around them, striking without mercy and fighting to the death. Vary the number of crags depending on the strength of the adventuring party. No miners have yet survived a crag attack. If the adventurers take the remains of a crag to the mine workers (assuming they are still on speaking terms), the miners recognize the crags as servitors of the mountain spirit. They do not understand why the mountain would attack them. As one of them might say, "The mountain would never fight us, unless some fool didn't perform the right ceremonies when the mine was first sunk—and that's just not possible!"

CRAGS

Attributes

DEX: 4 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 12
PER: 2 **WIL:** 2 **CHA:** 2

Characteristics

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense:** 6
Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 2
Attack (8): 12 **Social Defense:** 2 (see text)
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 10
 Fist (5): 15 **Mystic Armor:** 7
Death: 74 **Recovery Tests:** 6
Unconsciousness: 65 **Knockdown:** 13
Wound Threshold: 21 **Movement:** 5

Powers

Durability (2)

Loot

Some crags have gold nuggets embedded in their stony bodies, worth D6 × 20 silver pieces (worth Legend Points)

Legend Award

Third Circle

Commentary

Crags are mysterious elemental beings that serve powerful elemental earth spirits. Spirit-like, but not true spirits themselves, they look like misshapen parodies of dwarfs made out of stone. They cannot speak, have little intelligence, and are easily dominated by major elemental beings. Elementalists, obsidimen, and those with an appropriate Knowledge skill have heard of crags. They know that crags are rare and usually appear as thralls of some powerful elemental spirit or force.

Rules

Unlike obsidimen, crags are solid rock instead of rocklike flesh. If a character achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit against one of these creatures, the crag has been hit in a structurally weak spot and is partly (or entirely) shattered by the blow. The character makes a Damage Test as normal, but the minimum result is equal to the Damage Step of the attack.

Socially Indentured: Crags are immune to effects targeted against Social Defense, unless the Charisma step of the character making the test is at least equal to that of the spirit or being currently dominating the crags.

CLIMAX

With evidence of the crag attack, the adventurers can confront Terlesk with the suspicion that the Handshake Mine was opened without the permission of the mountain spirit. This accusation pushes him over the brink of madness. He loudly curses the mountain and swears that he hasn't an ounce of remorse for his sin of omission. The mountain responds by collapsing the entire mine. The adventurers must race to escape, and then must rescue the miners trapped inside. When they reach Terlesk, they find his body crushed to a pulp; only his face, still frozen in crazed defiance, remains intact.

SEQUELS

Such a dramatic collapse will have serious ramifications for the characters once word spreads throughout the miners' guild. Depending on the miners' Attitudes towards the characters the rank-and-file miners could see them as heroes or as perpetuating the cooperatives' oppression of them. Regardless, the cooperatives are likely to be alarmed, and may even hire other adepts to take direct or indirect action against the characters. If, however, the cooperatives can be convinced of the truth of Terlesk's omission, there may be other troubles the characters are hired to deal with in mines throughout the province.

A MATTER OF TRUST

King Neden learns that the Holders of Trust have stolen a sword that may well be one of his pattern items. The adventurers learn that the sword has been sent to the headquarters of the Iopan-allied t'skrang House Ishkarat, at Lake Vors. They set out for Lake Vors to retrieve the item and end up confronting Jada Denairastas, the magician who killed Neden's father, Varulus III, by using one of the dead king's pattern items. In order to run this adventure, the characters must have established a close working relationship with either the Eye of Throal or King Neden himself.

SETUP

The Eye of Throal has recently learned that the Holders of Trust have stolen King Neden's sword, which is theorized to be a Major pattern item for him since he used it to execute a supposed Theran agent. Even though it turned out that the agent was just a scapegoat for the assassin who killed his father, the execution was the first physical confirmation of Neden's authority as king, and he used the sword to commit the dramatic and bloody act. The Eye of Throal knows that the spell that was used to kill Varulus III requires a pattern item from its victim, and that the caster must have touched the victim before. Neden was present in his father's chambers when Jada Denairastas pretended to treat Varulus, and he does not remember whether she ever touched him. If she did—and if she gets the sword—the Denairastas may be able to kill Neden with the same type of spell they used against Varulus.

EVENT ONE

The Thief suspected to have stolen the sword is Named Lemora, recently uncovered to be a member of the Holders of Trust. Before she left, Lemora operated a food stall near one of the gateways to Throal. If the adventurers ask around for Lemora, they learn that she packed up and left town during the mobilization of Throalic forces for the march on the Theran behemoth. They find one food seller: an old dwarf Named Fezulon who can't stop talking about Lemora's charms. Fezulon developed quite a crush on Lemora, and the adventurers can get him to admit this if they are astute enough to realize it. Fezulon will also admit that he followed Lemora on her way out of town to wave good-bye to her, but never got up the nerve to approach her. He knows that she joined a caravan run by the troll trader Yamin Wheelmaker.

EVENT TWO

Yamin Wheelmaker is mourning the death of two of his sons, both infantrymen in the service of Throal. Before the adventurers can state their business, he shares his grief with them and bitterly blames his sons' deaths on King Neden. If the adepts tell him that they serve the young king, he refuses to help them. If they tell him they serve Neden's rivals, criticize the new king, or tell Yamin they plan to humiliate Neden somehow, the troll shares the following information.

Yamin says that Lemora booked passage for herself and four other Bartertowners on a caravan bound for Jerris. He offered her passage on an airship but she refused, even though an airship would be faster. (It is harder to locate a single caravan in the trackless Barsaivian hinterland than to find one of a few airships in the skies over the province.) Lemora also left a package with a caravan headed for Lake Vors. The package was a long, thin, wooden box. "Yes, it could have been a sword," Yamin says if asked. The package was addressed to one V'sigar F'szaaffinal Ch'othobi (Vuh-SIGH-gar Fuh-SAFF-eye-nall Chuh-0-thoh-bee) of House Ishkarat. Yamin also has detailed maps that show the routes of both caravans. If the

adventurers antagonize Yamin, they must sneak into his establishment and steal his records to get this information.

EVENT THREE

The adventurers should understand that the sword is a more important quarry than Lemora Wuculcian. If they head off in search of her, you can either give them a blatant hint or create a series of tough challenges for them as they attempt to accomplish this less worthwhile goal. Either way, the players should get the message that their characters are on the wrong track.

EVENT FOUR

In Bartertown, or soon after they start their journey to Lake Vors, the adventurers notice that they are being shadowed. Selenda has hired a group of adepts to follow them and obtain the sword for her (use the gamemaster character statistics starting on p. 90 of the *Gamemaster's Companion*). These adepts flee if the adventurers confront them; they have nothing to gain by fighting the adventurers unless combat will let them get the sword somehow. These adepts can stay in the background and trail the player characters or harry them throughout the adventure, as the gamemaster sees fit.

EVENT FIVE

The villages around Lake Vors are controlled by House Ishkarat, a group of bellicose t'skrang intent on expanding their sphere of influence in the region. Ishkarat soldiers, who keep an eye out for strangers and confront any apparent threat to House Ishkarat's security, patrol these villages and the surrounding areas. Local villagers are reluctant to talk to strangers because they fear Ishkarat retaliation for unknowingly aiding enemies of the powerful t'skrang trading house.

The player characters must be subtle to avoid a confrontation with the Ishkaratans as they try to find the Ishkaratan administrator V'sigar F'szaaffinal Ch'othobi. This plain-spoken, bullying t'skrang commands the force that maintains authority over the villages. When the player characters encounter V'sigar, he has already turned the sword over to Jada Denairastas. Only the use of force induces V'sigar to reveal the sword's whereabouts.

When the encounter begins, V'sigar has four bodyguards on hand (if the adventurers are having too easy a time with them, have more bodyguards show up during the fight). V'sigar and his bodyguards are all Sixth Circle t'skrang Warriors or Swordmasters. It is suggested that V'sigar take one of the two Disciplines, with his bodyguards being of the other Discipline. For example, V'sigar as a Swordmaster with his bodyguards as Warriors or vice versa.

SIXTH CIRCLE T'SKRANG SWORDMASTER

Attributes

DEX (19): 8	STR (14): 6	TOU (15): 6
PER (11): 5	WIL (11): 5	CHA (15): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8	Spell Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 4	Social Defense: 9
Death: 80	Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 66	Knockdown: 6*
Wound Threshold: 10	Movement: 6

Karma Points: 24/24

*Has the Wound Balance talent

Swordmaster Talents

Disarm ^D (6): 14
 Durability (7/6) (6): 6
Heartening Laugh ^D (6): 12
 Karma Ritual ^D (6): 6
 Maneuver ^D (6): 14
 Melee Weapons ^D (7): 15
 Parry ^D (7): 15
 Riposte ^D (6): 14
 Second Weapon ^D (6): 14
 Speak Language (5): 10—(Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll)
 Taunt ^D (6): 12
 Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving) ^D (6): 11
 Throwing Weapons (6): 14
 Unarmed Combat (6): 14
 Wound Balance (6): 12

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

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

Skills

Government Administration ^K (4): 9
 Missile Weapons (3): 11
 Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)
 Streetwise (4): 9
 Sworddancing ^A (3): 9
 T'skrang Politics ^K (4): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 3; Init 1)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13), Short Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11), 2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/10–20 hexes), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), Sling (Damage 8; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Equipment

Forge Tools, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Whetstone

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

Notes

Has the Tail Combat racial ability.

Discipline Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Social Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Flourish

Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

Wood Skin ^D (6): 12

Wound Balance ^D (6): 12

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

Skills

Government Administration ^K (4): 9

Read/Write Language (1): 6—(Dwarf/Throalic)

Speak Language (2): 7—(Dwarf/Throalic, T'skrang)

Streetwise (4): 9

Swift Kick (3): 11

T'skrang Politics ^K (4): 9

Weapon Rune Carving ^A (3): 9

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Armor

Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 3; Init 1)

Weapons

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13), Short Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11), 2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 9; Range 10–20 yards/10–20 hexes), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10; Range 24–48 yards/12–24 hexes), Sling (Damage 8; Range 20–40 yards/10–20 hexes), Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Equipment

Carving Tools, Forge Tools, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Whetstone

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Award

Seventh Circle

Notes

Has the Tail Combat racial ability.

Discipline Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Battle Rites

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

CLIMAX

The adventurers learn that V'sigar has given the sword to Jada Denairastas, who is aboard the River Pearl, a luxurious riverboat used by the leaders of House Ishkarat to impress visiting dignitaries—chiefly the Denairastas. The boat is decorated with lavish fixtures of gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl; it is also heavily equipped with mechanical traps devised by House Ishkarat's artificers and magical wards woven by Jada Denairastas herself.

Jada has used her Anchored Spell talent knack (see p. 121 of the *Player's Companion*) to place all of the magical traps. Neden's sword is in Jada's quarters. To retrieve it, the adventurers must first board the River Pearl unnoticed; the ship is anchored in deep waters far from the lakeshore. Then they must penetrate the traps, fight off Jada's Ishkaratan guards stationed aboard the vessel, and survive a final confrontation with Jada.

Jada orders her t'skrang guards to capture the adventurers if at all possible. Jada is a curious young woman, and is content to chat amiably with the adventurers until they make a move on her. Though she seems quite pleasant and is not prone to gloating or making wild threats, she follows the grand villainous tradition of telling her enemies all about her master plan before she kills them. She confirms her family's intention to kill Neden in the same way as his father to send Throal into a deep crisis; Neden has no heir and the struggle for his succession is likely to cause a civil war to erupt upon his death.

When the inevitable fight begins, Jada pulls out all the stops against the characters. This is the magician who killed the King of Throal; so she should be no pushover! The characters succeed in this adventure if they defeat Jada and take the sword. If they kill her, so be it—there are more Denairastas where she came from.

If Jada escapes in the end and leaves the sword behind, she can return to bedevil the adepts in later adventures. Jada has constructed a Bone Circle (see p. 155 of the *Player's Guide*) in her quarters on the River Pearl, and can use it to escape via astral space. If you want her to live, have her flee to her room at the first opportunity and cast the Spirit Portal spell (see p. 200 of the *Player's Guide*).

SIXTH CIRCLE T'SKRANG WARRIOR**Attributes**

DEX (19): 8 STR (14): 6 TOU (15): 6
 PER (11): 5 WIL (11): 5 CHA (15): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 11
 Physical Armor: 8 Spell Defense: 7
 Mystic Armor: 4 Social Defense: 8
 Death: 92 Recovery Tests: 3
 Unconsciousness: 72 Knockdown: 6*
 Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

Karma Points: 24/24

* Has the Wound Balance talent

Warrior Talents

Acrobatic Strike (6): 14
 Anticipate Blow ^D (6): 11
 Avoid Blow ^D (6): 14
 Durability (9/7) (6): 6
 Karma Ritual ^D (6): 6
 Life Check ^D (6): 12
 Melee Weapons ^D (7): 15
 Missile Weapons (6): 14
 Second Weapon (6): 14
 Thread Weaving (War Weaving) ^D (6): 11
 Throwing Weapons (6): 14
 Tiger Spring (6): 6
 Unarmed Combat ^D (7): 15



JADA DENAIRASTAS

Attributes

DEX (15): 6 STR (16): 7 TOU (16): 7
PER (19): 8 WIL (21): 8 CHA (15): 6

Characteristics

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 11 Spell Defense: 13
Mystic Armor: 10 Social Defense: 12
Death: 87* Recovery Tests: 3
Unconsciousness: 67* Knockdown: 7
Wound Threshold: 11* Movement: 6

Karma Points: 55/55

*Jada has 11 Permanent Damage and 1 Blood Wound for every magical ward trap the gamemaster places in this adventure. Once the spells are triggered she can recover this damage.

Illusionist Talents

Dead Fall ^D (6): 14
Disguise Self ^D (6): 14
Engaging Banter ^D (6): 12
First Impression (6): 12
False Sight ^D (6): 6
Haggle (6): 12
Resist Taunt* (7): 15
Silent Walk (6): 12
Slough Blame (6): 12
Speak Language ^D (6): 14—(Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Spell Matrix ^D (6): 6
Thread Weaving [Illusionism] ^D (6): 14
True Sight ^D (6): 6
Winning Smile (6): 12

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

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

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Brooch

Nethermancer Talents (Knacks)

Arcane Mutterings (11): 17
Armored Matrix (11): 11
Armored Matrix (11): 11
Astral Sight ^D (11): 19
Avoid Blow ^{V*} (7): 13
Bargain with Summoned Creature ^D (11): 17
Durability (4/3) (12): 12
Enhanced Matrix (11): 11
Enhanced Matrix (11): 11
Frighten ^D (11): 19
Item History (11): 19
Karma Ritual ^D (11): 11
Lifesight ^D (11): 19
Netherwalk ^D (11): 19
Orbiting Spy ^D (11): 19
Read/Write Language (9): 17—(Human/Iopan, Obsidiman, Or'zat****, Or'zet, Sperethiel, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling)
Read/Write Magic ^D (11): 19
Spellcasting ^{D**} (13): 21 (Anchored Spell, Gaping Wound, Name Spell, Spell Stacking)
Spell Matrix ^D (11): 11
Spell Matrix (11): 11
Spell Matrix (11): 11
Spirit Dodge ^D (11): 19
Spirit Hold ^D (11): 19
Spirit Talk ^D (11): 19
Summon [Ally Spirits] ^D (11): 19
Summoning Circle ^D (11): 19
Taunt ^V (6): 12
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) ^{D***} (13): 21 (Create Thread Item, Unraveling)
Versatility (2): 2
Willforce (11): 19

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

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

^V Learned through the Versatility talent

* Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Protective Bracers

** Modified by +2 Rank Bonus from Spellmaster's Wand

*** Modified by +1 Rank Bonus from Spellmaster's Wand

**** Or'zat is the ancient language of the orks, shorter and more guttural than modern Or'zet

Skills

Alchemy (5): 13
Alchemy and Potions ^K (5): 13
Barsaivian Politics ^K (5): 13
Botany ^K (5): 13

Conversation (S): 11
 Death Rebellion History^K (S): 13
 Holders of Trust Group^K (7): 15
 Magical Theory^K (6): 14
 Melee Weapons (6): 12
 Miniature Sculpture^A (2): 8
 Physician (S): 13
 Research (S): 13
 Robe Embroidery^A (6): 12
 Read/Write Language (1): 9—(Dwarf/Throalic)
 Speak Language (2): 10—(Dwarf/Throalic, Human/Iopos)

^A Artisan Skill; ^K Knowledge Skill

Illusionism Spells

Assuring Touch, Astral Shadow, Best Face, Bleeding Edge, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Flesh Eater, Fun with Doors, Light, Mind Fog^M, Monstrous Mantle^M, Nightmare of Foreboding, Rope Guide, Suffocation, Unseen Voices

^M Denotes spell in spell matrix

Nethermancy Spells

Astral Horror, Astral Spear, Bone Circle, Bone Dance, Bone Pudding, Bone Puppet, Bone Shatter^A, Chilling Circle, Constrict Heart^M, Damage Transfer^E, Dry and Wet, Fatal Food, Friend or Foe, Mordom's Mirror (Named Ritual spell used to kill King Varulus III), Mount Call, Putrefy, Shield Mist, Spirit Dart, Spirit Double, Spirit Grip, Spirit Portal^M, Shift Skin^A, Talent Shredder^A, Wither Away, Wither Limb

^M Denotes spell in spell matrix

^E Denotes spell in enhanced matrix

^A Denotes spell in armored matrix

Armor

Thread Hide Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 5; Init 1), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)

Weapons

Neden's Stolen Sword (Minor Pattern Item of Neden; Broadsword w/Throal seal; Forged +3; Damage 15; on River Pearl), Varulus III's Stolen Sword (Major Pattern Item of Varulus III; Broadsword w/Throal seal; Forged +3; Damage 15; Jada used this sword to fulfill one of the requirements needed to use the Mordom's Mirror ritual spell to kill Varulus III)

Thread Items

Protective Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SocDef +1; Avoid Blow talent +1 Rank Bonus) Protective Brooch (Rank 4; PhysDef +1; SocDef +2; Resist Taunt talent +1 Rank Bonus), Spellmaster's Wand (Spellcasting talent +2 Rank Bonus; Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) talent +1 Rank Bonus; Effect Tests +1 bonus)

Equipment

Alchemy Kit (on River Pearl), Adventurer's Kit, Arcane Tomes, Embroidered Robes, Embroidery Tools, 2 × Grimoires, 3 × Healing Potions, Healing Kit (3 uses), Physician Kit (3 uses), Quiet Pouch, Scrolls, Sculpting Tools, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot

Gems and Jewels (worth 500 silver pieces), 20 silver pieces

Legend Award

Ninth Circle (Group)

Notes

As a human dragonkin, Jada possesses the Astral Sight, Low-Light Vision, and Versatility racial abilities. Jada has used the Versatility talent to learn the Avoid Blow and Taunt talents.

Discipline Abilities

Second Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Decay and Renewal (Nethermancer); Glamour (Illusionist)

Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Otherworldly Control

Tenth Circle: Karma on controlled creature or spirit Action Tests; +1 Spell Defense

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense

Commentary

The young and attractive Jada Denairastas is a polite, amiable, cold-blooded killer. Raised in the sheltered atmosphere of the Grand Palace of Iopos, she has been trained in manipulation and villainy from the cradle. Uhl Denairastas, patriarch of the notorious magician clan, is her uncle. Ever since she was a little girl, she has competed with his other nephews and nieces and even his own children for the old man's favor. By playing the children against one another, Uhl created a circle of operatives who are unquestioningly loyal to him alone.

Jada does not view the things she does for Uhl as evil. Never exposed to such concepts as morality or virtue, she sees nothing wrong in ruthlessly destroying anyone whom Uhl decrees a Denairastas enemy. Truly amoral, Jada would rather charm or trick an opponent than kill him simply because such methods are less risky than overt violence. She finds people interesting, including her adversaries, and she typically engages a victim in friendly, sincerely empathetic conversation before casually slaying him. Jada has risen in her primary Discipline at an astonishing rate, and she is clearly the shining star among the younger generation of Denairastas—though Uhl would never dampen her desire to please him by telling her so. In Iopos, and in the lands of the t'skrang House of Ishkarat, Jada's legend is celebrated in song and story. When her missions take her elsewhere, she adopts one of several false identities. Jada is a human dragonkin Eleventh Circle Nethermancer and Sixth Circle Illusionist.

GOODS AND SERVICES

*It's true. You can purchase anything in
Bartertown ... for a price.*

• TENDIS MARKA, DWARF MERCHANT •

This chapter describes new goods and services that characters might encounter while adventuring—or spending some free time shopping—in the Kingdom of Throal.

All items follow the rules presented on p. 247 of the *Player's Guide* with regard to availability and quality. A selection of different goods and services are presented in this chapter to supplement those described in the *Player's Guide*.

COMMON MAGIC ITEMS

The following common magic items perform specific functions. No special abilities or thread magic are required to use them, although some have restrictions on use or are difficult to obtain (*Player's Guide*, p. 261). Other magical treasures, like thread items, general treasures, and unique treasures are described in the *Magical Treasures* chapter on p. 129.

BATHDAY SCENT

Enchanted with True Water, this special combination of perfume and lotion is spread over the face and hands, from where on it magically sweeps the user's body to leave it as if he had just taken a bath. Any substantial dirt is transported to the hands, where it can be shaken off with the remaining liquid. Added fragrances smell like soaps rather than other perfumes. Known among the very rich and equally busy of Throal for a long time, Bathday Scent has found its way to those adventurers trafficking in the more elusive circles of Barsaive in the past years, but to be of optimum effect on the road, has to be combined with everclean clothing. A flask contains 5 applications.

COINS OF CHORROLIS

Coins of Chorrolis are regular coins of any type, depending on the authority that issued them, although in most cases they keep a gloss betraying their nominal value. They are created when the Passion Chorrolis blesses a coin in the hands of someone deemed worthy of such a gift. Chorrolis does not mind if this person sells the coin afterwards—after all, business is business. For 3 Strain Points of damage, the bearer of a coin of Chorrolis adds a +2 bonus to a single Haggle Test. If the test succeeds with an Excellent result, the price is modified by 10 percent in favor of the user, instead of just 5 percent. The coin can be used on consecutive Haggle Tests, but a perceptive individual might, at the gamemaster's discretion, notice its strenuous effects on the user.

CHORROLIS' INTEREST

Besides the more common coins of Chorrolis, there are a smaller number of even more blessed coins called Chorrolis' Interest, often found in the hands of the Passion's questors. In addition to imparting the normal benefits of a coin of Chorrolis (see above), for 2 Strain Points of damage these special coins grant a +1 bonus to a single Questor Power Test. Obviously, this bonus only applies to Chorrolis' questor powers. Chorrolis' Interest are seldom sold, and when they are, it is usually only from one questor of Chorrolis to another. (If sold to anyone who is not a questor of Chorrolis, these coins might lose their special power, at the gamemaster's discretion.) Only a questor of Chorrolis can tell one of these special coins from a regular one.

ENCHANTED CHAMBER POT

These special chamber pots are common to the houses of Throal's wealthier citizens. Their use has also passed to other cities, such as Urupa and Travar. Not considered prestigious items, enchanted chamber pots are rarely ornamental, and easily pass as normal chamber pots. The enchantment serves two valuable purposes: it prevents foul odors escaping from the pot, and ensures that pots never stain through use.

RING OF DEBATE

Rings of debate are of Throalic origin and made to specific request. They usually mimic an heirloom or feature a family signet, so as to look like normal rings and therefore not give away their true power. The wearer of a ring of debate adds a +2 bonus to any Conversation Test he makes. Using such a ring is generally frowned upon, however, and the wearer's character is considered questionable. After all, if the wearer cannot hold himself in a debate without employ-

COMMON MAGICAL ITEMS TABLE

Charm	EDN	Cost	Weight	Availability
Bathday Scent	14 ^W	200	4	Uncommon
Coins of Chorrolis	Spec.	Spec.	Neg.	Rare
Chorrolis' Interest	Spec.	Spec.	Neg.	Very Rare
Enchanted Chamber Pot	15	300	6	Rare
Ring of Debate	14	200	1	Rare

EDN: The item's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see p. 153 of the *Player's Companion*)

Neg.: Negligible weight for encumbrance purposes. At the gamemaster's discretion, approximately 10 such items weigh 1 pound.

Spec.: Special rules apply to the creation or purchase of these items. See the item's description for details.

ing magic, using a ring of debate does not prove his point or make it any more valid—the ring's magic simply lets it appear to be so. If the wearer is found to be using a ring of debate, the Attitude of his conversational counterparts toward him drops by two degrees. Any Attitude improvement gained through successful Conversation is also lost.

Legend tells that early versions of these rings required the wearer to raise his index finger to access the ring's power. Many Throalic citizens try not to wear obvious rings during conversations; in fact, some rid themselves of all jewelry completely, to avoid even the least suspicion. There may be some truth to this legend, as so far no one has been able to create this unique magical effect on any items other than rings.

PROVENDER

The dwarf kingdom of Throal and the diverse cultures along the Serpent River enjoy many unique foods and beverages. The following types of food and drink expand the types of provender described in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 269 of the *Player's Guide*.

Unless specified, prices for food are for a single serving for one human-sized Namegiver.

J'HAVIM ROLL

Said to be the only thing the *j'havim*—the employees of the big Throalite trading houses—find time to buy and consume during their short lunch breaks, these foods (commonly abbreviated “rolls”) can be had from any of the many stalls lining the Halls of Throal. They usually contain a sausage, cabbage, condiments, and in some varieties other vegetables or sometimes even fruit, all baked in a thin coating of bread. While it is true many *j'havim* prefer a roll for lunch, so do many other Throalites and visitors to the dwarf kingdom.

PROVENDER TABLE

Item	Cost	Weight	Availability
J'havim Roll	3cp	NA	Everyday
Muck			
Tankard	5cp	NA	Average
Keg	50	50	Average
Mado'yeh Beer:			
Tankard	3cp	NA	Everyday
Keg	30	50	Everyday
Royal Sausages	8	1	Average
Tav's Delight:			
Tankard	2	NA	Average
Keg	200	50	Average

MUCK

The recipe for this drink that is loosely Named after the haul of the muckers varies by establishment, but most are based on dark beer and add a variety of spices to that. While a tankard of muck doesn't

smell as bad as the name suggests, it leaves the inhibitor's breath much worse. While Throalites jest that muck's prime function is to hide the smell of other alcoholic beverages, its true purpose is to supply nutrients to avoid the worst hangover the next day. A typical phrase to order this drink, which is served primarily in the more mundane taverns, is “make me a mucker for my last round.”

MADO'YEH BEER

This beverage is typically reserved for the *mado'yeh*, the Throalic midday meal, because it is improper to consume strong alcoholic beverages any earlier. *Mado'yeh* beer

contains only little alcohol, but still retains a strong flavor friendly to the dwarf palate. It is sometimes given as a special treat to Namegivers who cannot drink other strong beers, such as the elderly or adolescent orks and trolls, and sometimes young dwarfs, humans, or elves.

ROYAL SAUSAGES

An assortment of pork and rind sausages, served with various sauces, this meal is favored by the orks of Throal, where specialist cooks create hot sauces to satisfy the palates of orks, but make the sausages inedible for most other Namegivers.

TAV'S DELIGHT

Without a doubt the strongest beer brewed in the Kingdom of Throal, this dark beer can knock out even the hardest ork scorcher or troll crystal raider.



THE JUGGLING SHADOWMANT WELCOMES PATRONS TO BARTERTOWN

OUR LODGINGS ARE REASONABLE!
OUR FOOD IS CHEAP!
OUR ALE IS STRONG!

YOUR OWN ROOM AND BED IN THE SAFETY OF THE
SHADOWMANT FOR JUST TWO SILVER PIECES PER NIGHT!
BRAINBITERS LICEFREE GUARANTEE!
(AMENITIES EXTRA)

CHECK OUT OUR GREAT FOOD AND ALE:

BREAKFAST

EGGS, CURED BACON ON THE BONE, HEARTY BROTH
SERVED ON A TRENCHER OF CRUSTY ROADBREAD
WITH A TANKARD OF WARM ALE OR SPICED WINE
JUST THREE SILVER PIECES!

LUNCHEON

THREE SLABS OF LOCAL CHEESE
CURED MEATS OF VARIOUS GAME ANIMALS
A LOAF OF ROADBREAD
WITH A TANKARD OF WARM ALE OR SPICED WINE
JUST THREE SILVER PIECES!

DINNER

HEARTY STEW WITH CHUNKY VEGETABLES
SERVED WITH SWEET LIVER GRAVY
AND A TANKARD OF STRONG LOCAL ALE OR
IMPORTED WINE
JUST FIVE SILVER PIECES!

REMEMBER THIS. AT THE JUGGLING
SHADOWMANT WE DON'T JUST KNOW
ADVENTURERS, WE ARE ADVENTURERS.
TRY OUR SERVICE.

YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!

MAGICAL TREASURES

No, sir. We have only minor magical items here. For something of greater power, you will need to venture to the other side of the bazaar. But, sir, I would strongly advise you to consider investing in a dozen of these small amulets instead—it is more economical to purchase in quantity, and there is safety in numbers, yes?

• HEERAN, TRINKET VENDOR OF THE GRAND BAZAAR •

GENERAL TREASURES AND THREAD ITEMS

Rules for general treasures and thread items can be found in the **Magical Treasures** chapter, on p. 130 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

NEUMANI BLADES

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 13

Legend Point Cost: Novice

Neumani Blades are mere Thread Items, but are remarkable as a tradition within House Neumani that is known for its adventurous spirit and many adept members. Whenever a member of the house “earns his spurs” in his Discipline, the heads of the house award him his first threaded weapon, a dagger acting as the ceremonial *lech'magat* (see *Namegivers of Barsaive*).

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the weapon.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to tests made to resist fear or intimidation.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to tests made to find his way through an unknown environment.

Thread Rank Three

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to tests made to survive under adverse circumstances in non-combat situations.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The wielder may take 1 Strain to increase the bonus granted by the Rank One through Three Effects to +3 for one test.

SEXTANT

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 15

Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

Sextants are Thread Items equal in design and function to their mundane counterparts, although they are regularly more ornate

and made partially from, or adorned with, precious metals—often, small amounts of orichalcum—or valuable gems.

Without a thread attached they are used as a normal sextant. Sextants are often given to Scouts and other Pathfinders in His Majesty's Exploratory Force.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the sextant.

Effect: The user gains a +1 bonus to his Navigation Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The time required for the user to make Navigation Tests is halved (to 30 minutes).

Thread Rank Three

Effect: The user gains a +2 bonus to his Navigation Tests. If the sextant is used daily to determine the user's position, he also gains a +2 bonus to his Mapmaking Tests.

THE GATHERER'S CIRCLE

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 17

Legend Point Cost: Journeyman

The Gatherer's Circle are a set of Message Stones (*Player's Guide*, p. 264) further enchanted to become General Treasure. While the set itself is not unique and other sets may exist, a Circle of stones has to be enchanted at the same time and attuned to another. This particular set is in the hands of the Senior Gatherer of the Eye of Throal (p. 69) and his most trusted operatives, including the Five. Outside of this small group and the most trusted advisors to Neden, no one knows of the Gatherer's Circle, or how many stones it contains. Each stone has its own Name, which is a number followed by “of the Gatherer's Circle.”

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the item.

Effect: The stone can record a message of up to 200 words and send it to any number of other stones in the set over a distance of up to 1,000 miles. Users of the stone the message was sent to can listen to it when holding their own stone at any time, at which point the message is erased from the sending stone, the sender knowing his message was received. The stone can retain one message.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The stone can now store a total of 3 messages of up to 500 words each and send them over a distance of up to 3,000 miles. The user gains a +3 Rank Bonus to the Conceal Object Talent for the purpose of hiding the stone.

Thread Rank Three

Effect: While the user holds the stone, he can record what he is currently seeing and store (and later send) it as part of a message. Each scene takes up 100 words, and records what the user is actually seeing, not what the receiver would see, and as such includes abilities such as Astral or Heat Sight if they are active while recording.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The stone can now store a total of 10 messages of up to 1,000 words each and send them over any distance. The Conceal Object Rank Bonus is now +5.

UNIQUE TREASURES

The following items are unique magical treasures spoken of in the legends of the people of Throal. Rules for unique treasures can be found in the *Legendary Treasures* chapter on p.46 of the *Gamemaster's Companion*.

KEY TO THE BAZAAR

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 19

Legend Point Cost: Warden

The Key to the Bazaar is a small, ornate key, identifiable as a key for a high-quality lock. It is the key to the treasure chest of the Throalic merchant who proposed the creation of the Grand Bazaar, just inside the gates to the Kingdom of Throal. This merchant is said to have funded the establishment of the Bazaar to no small extent. He was revered as a great visionary by Throalic merchants for many years, and was known to every merchant in the Bazaar and throughout the Halls of Throal; and eventually, beyond Throal. It is said that no one knew the Bazaar like he did, that no one could out-haggle him, and that he could locate any item wanted by any purchaser.

Rumor has it the merchant's treasure chest still exists, filled with riches, and can be opened with this key. Descriptions of the merchant's riches range from piles of gold and gems, to a manual on trade, to shares in various Throalic companies, to an empty chest—the latter to encourage the finder's own trade or to show that a good merchant always invests his money, rather than leaving it to rot in a box.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the Key.

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 Rank Bonus to his Haggle talent when in the Grand Bazaar.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 Rank Bonus to his Evaluate talent when in the Grand Bazaar.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the merchant.

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 bonus to Perception-only Tests when in the Grand Bazaar.



Thread Rank Four

Effect: When looking for an item in the Grand Bazaar, the bearer more easily finds a merchant who has the item in stock. Reduce the Availability Rating (*Player's Guide*, p.247) of goods by one degree (For example, from Very Rare to Rare Availability). The gamemaster may still restrict what items are available on the open market.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the craftsman who created the merchant's treasure chest.

Effect: The bearer receives a +2 Rank Bonus to his Haggle and Evaluate talents.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The maximum number of Haggle Tests the bearer can make per deal is equal to the greater of the highest Thread Rank woven to the Key or his Haggle Rank.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the merchant's full legend, including the biggest deals he made during his career, his style of business, and the history of his company.

Effect: The bearer adds +2 to his Social Defense when resisting other merchants' Haggle Tests. Additionally, all of the key's bonuses and abilities are now available to the bearer in any market or shop friendly to Throal.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The bearer must find and open the merchant's treasure chest.

Effect: The merchant's treasure chest can be used to create any non-threaded, non-unique item that will fit within it. The bearer puts

money or valuables equal in value to the item's normal Cost into the chest and locks it with the key. He then spends one of his available Recovery Tests and makes a Thread Weaving (7) Test. Whether the chest creates the coveted item depends on the Result Level achieved on the test. A Poor Result still yields an item with Everyday Availability. For every step higher on the Availability scale (Average, Unusual, Rare, Very Rare), the test requires an additional Result Level (Average, Good, Excellent, Extraordinary). If the test achieves the required Result Level, when the bearer opens the chest with the key, the desired item is in the chest. Regardless of whether the test succeeds or fails, the money or valuables are gone. Also, the chest doesn't give change.

QUILL OF THE GREAT LIBRARY (THE KING'S QUILL)

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 23

Legend Point Cost: Warden

The Quill of the Great Library is a worn quill pen made, like many others, from a goose feather. It was used by Varulus I to sign the order to create and expand the Great Library and was preserved by the first Master of the Hall of Records. After the scholar's death, it was returned to his family along with the rest of his belongings. After the Scourge, it was lost during the time of Throal's opening to the outside world. The quill is sought by the Throalic government, as it almost certainly is a Core Pattern Item for the Great Library of Throal.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the quill.

Effect: The user gains a +1 bonus to Artisan Tests made with the quill.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The user gains a +1 bonus to any Research Tests made in the Great Library, as long as he writes his notes with the quill.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the specifics of the quill's legend.

Effect: The Attitude (see p.92 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) of any character who considers himself a scholar or learned individual is improved by one degree towards the user.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The user gains a +2 bonus to Artisan and Research Tests made with the quill.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the craftsman who made the quill, prior to the Scourge.

Effect: If the user is a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +2 bonus to his Knowledge Tests. If the user is not a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +1 bonus to his Knowledge Tests. When making tests, the user must write down notes with the quill to benefit from this bonus.



Thread Rank Six

Deed: The user must convince the Royal Archives to show him Varulus I's original order. He must copy the order exactly—save for the signature—using the quill.

Effect: If the user is a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +3 bonus to his Knowledge Skill Tests. If the user is not a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +2 bonus to his Knowledge Skill Tests. When making tests, the user must write down notes with the quill to benefit from this bonus.

THE ARMAMENTS OF BYRNICUS



These armaments are the five legendary swords and shields created by Byrnicus. The Armaments of Byrnicus are rumored to be cursed by Tav Korelsed, the founder of Throal. Whether this is true or not is determined by the gamemaster, choosing one of the following options:

Option One

The Armaments of Byrnicus are affected by the curse of Tav Korelsed. Fearing the curse, Ambica, Korelsed's Warrior lover, had them sealed in the Last Place. To fully achieve the potential of these great Throalic artifacts, the wielders must find all five swords and shields, as well as a way to break the curse. As an example to break the curse, the wielders might use the swords or shields of Tav Korelsed to summon him and convince him to renounce his curse by showing him both the prosperity of the Kingdom of Throal and that the current King of Throal, Neden, is not one of his descendants. Or perhaps the wielders summon Tav Korelsed and make a deal with him to fulfill his curse by helping him eliminate the last vestiges of his bloodline.

If the characters cannot summon Tav Korelsed themselves, perhaps Cibonicus has already summoned him. But Cibonicus, lacking a pattern item for the legendary dwarf hero, lost control of Tav's spirit and now Tav is trying to fulfill his vengeance. Again, in this scenario the wielders can either try to persuade Tav to renounce the curse or help fulfill it. When using this option, there are several suggested curse effects. The gamemaster is free to devise his own curses to complement or replace these.

Option Two

The Armaments of Byrnicus are not affected by the curse of Tav Korelsed. As a symbolic gesture of peace and an end to the war, Ambica sealed them in the Last Place. When using this option ignore the suggested curse effects and any Deeds dealing with the curse being broken in the treasure descriptions below.

GUARDCUTTER

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Guardcutter is a crystal short sword with a blade made from crystal and True earth and a sturdy stone hilt. The sword has sharp crystal barbs along the blade and top of the crossguard. Time has bent some of the barbs on the crossguard back towards the wielder's hands.

Due to the properties of his shield, Byrnicus' sword could not be made of metal, which is why he chose such an unusual material to forge the blade from. A troll Weaponsmith Named Kernalniago taught his apprentice, the Weaponsmith Byrnicus, all of his weapon- and armor-making techniques—including working with crystal material—lessons which he applied in creating this sword. Byrnicus went on several expeditions underneath the Throal Mountains to gather living crystal and True earth to use in his armaments. Byrnicus forged this sword for himself, enchanting it with the power to slice through the armor of its wielder's enemies.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a crystal short sword (see the Namegivers of Barsaive book).

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 5. The sword's crystal barbs help it cut through armor more easily, reducing the Difficulty Number to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wielder's opponent by -1.

Cursed: The sharp crystal barbs turned backwards along the sword's crossguard jut painfully into the back of the wielder's hand. Whenever the wielder makes a successful attack, the barbs cause him 1 Damage Point. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to the next Attack Test he makes with the sword.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the troll Weaponsmith who apprenticed the sword's creator.

Effect: The sword's crystal barbs help it cut through armor even more easily, reducing the Difficulty Number to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wielder's opponent by -2.

Cursed: The sharp crystal barbs turned backwards along the sword's crossguard jut painfully into the back of the wielder's hand. Whenever the wielder makes a successful attack, the barbs now cause him 2 Damage Points. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must find the source of the elemental earth used to create the sword.

Effect: For 1 Strain, the wielder may attempt to cause a Bleeding Wound (see p. 222 of the *Player's Guide*) on his opponent. The wielder must decide to do this before he makes his Attack Test. If the wielder inflicts a Wound, the sword's crystal barbs rip into his opponent, creating a gaping, bleeding injury, and causing him to take 2 Damage Points at the end of each round until he makes a successful Recovery Test, receives medical attention, or dies from blood loss. No armor protects against this damage.

Cursed: On any Damage Test that generates a bonus die, the sword's crystal barbs hook into the enemy or his armor so deep that the wielder must make a successful Strength Test against his opponent's Toughness Step to pull the weapon free. If the test fails, he loses hold of the sword and is disarmed.

He also takes 2 Damage Points from the crystal barbs on the crossguard ripping into his hand as he loses his grip. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelled.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 9.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must use crystal and True earth to repair the blunted and broken crystal barbs along the sword blade and remove or straighten those barbs bent back on the crossguard.

Effect: The sword's reformed crystal barbs help it cut through armor and shields alike. The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Spot Armor Flaw (see p. 81 of the *Player's Guide*) and Shield Beater (see p. 113 of the *Player's Companion*) talents.



LODESHIELD

Maximum Threads: 5 **Spell Defense:** 18
Legend Point Cost: Warden

Lodeshield is a blue-gray footman's shield made from a strange metal alloy known as magnite. Garaham's apprentice, Named Hoffmaier, originally found the ore while gathering True earth in the depths of the Throal Mountains. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus created this shield from this alloy for himself, enchanting it with the power to counter metal weapons.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal footman's shield.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 4. When the shield is used, it attracts metal objects to it. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons suffer a -1 penalty to their Attack Tests.

Cursed: The shield's curse causes metal objects to be attracted toward the wielder, instead of the shield. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in ranged combat gain a +1 bonus to

their Attack Tests. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in close combat still suffer a –1 penalty to their Attack Tests, due to their weapons sticking to the target.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The shield's magnetic attraction increases. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons now suffer a –2 penalty to their Attack Tests.

Cursed: The shield's curse causes metal objects to be more attracted toward the wielder. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in ranged combat gain a +2 bonus to their Attack Tests. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in close combat still suffer a –2 penalty to their Attack Tests, due to their weapons sticking to the target.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the type of metal from which the shield was made.

Effect: The shield's magnetic attraction increases further. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons now suffer a –3 penalty to their Attack Tests.

Cursed: The shield's curse causes metal objects to be even further attracted toward the wielder. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in ranged combat gain a +3 bonus to their Attack Tests. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in close combat still suffer a –3 penalty to their Attack Tests, due to their weapons sticking to the target.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 5 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the miner who first discovered the metal used to make the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Magnashock** ability. The shield can now release electrical energy to shock those who strike it, in a similar way to the *Lightning Shield* spell (see p. 182 of the *Player's Guide*). The Effect step is equal to the wielder's Willpower+2. Using this ability causes the wielder 1 Strain to activate and is effective for one attack. Each time the Magnashock ability is used, reduce the magnetism of the shield by one degree—from Rank 5 to Rank 3, from Rank 3 to Rank 1, from Rank 1 to no effect—until the end of the round. For example, after using this ability once, the shield's magnetic effect would be equivalent to thread Rank 3 until the end of the following round. The shield rebuilds magnetism by one degree

per round when this ability is not used. For example, the wielder uses the Magnashock ability three times over three consecutive rounds, reducing the shield's magnetic effect to nothing. It will take 3 rounds with no further use of the Magnashock ability for the shield to rebuild its full magnetic charge.

Cursed: Whenever a close combat attack strikes the shield, the wielder is shocked by the magnetic discharge and takes Step 4 damage. No armor protects against this damage. A drop in magnetic effect does not reduce the negative effects of the curse.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The wielder can use the shield to detect the presence of metal. The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Gold Sense talent (see p. 107 of the *Player's Companion*); this ability allows the wielder to detect precious metals and magnite, but not orichalcum or True elements. The wielder also gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Detect Weapon talent (see p. 65 of the *Player's Guide*); this ability only allows the wielder to detect metallic weapons.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must find a deposit of magnite ore, then use it to forge an additional band of metal to the protective layer of the shield.

Effect: The strengthened shield can better protect its wielder against metallic weapons. The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to the Metal Ward talent (see p. 109 of the *Player's Companion*).



BONDFORGER

Maximum Threads: 5 **Spell Defense:** 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Bondforger is a broadsword with a blood-red blade and a simple T-shaped brown crossguard and hilt. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made this sword for Tav Korelsed, enchanting it with the power to persuade those whose blood has been spilt by it to join the wielder's cause.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Bloodbond** ability. Whenever the wielder cuts an opponent with the sword for at least 1 Damage Point, he may attempt to bond his opponent to his cause. The wielder spends a standard action cutting himself on the blade, taking 1 Strain, and mingling his blood with that of his opponent. He then makes a Charisma Test against his opponent's Social Defense. On an Average result, the opponent becomes Bloodbonded to the wielder. While the bond is in place, the Bloodbonded character will not willingly harm the wielder or his obvious friends; his attitude becomes Friendly toward the wielder. The effect ends if the wielder or one of his friends acts openly hostile toward the Bloodbonded character. The Bloodbond ability does not work against gamemaster characters who hold an Enemy attitude toward the wielder (see p. 92

of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Regardless of the outcome, the effect of this ability lasts for only a day.

Cursed: This ability only affects one opponent at any one time: the character last blooded by the blade. Whenever the wielder cuts a new opponent, the previously Bloodbonded character returns to his original Attitude. Even if his blood remains on the blade, the Bloodbonded character may make a Willpower Test against the wielder's Social Defense each round to try and break the effect. If the test succeeds, he returns to his original Attitude.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Charisma-only Tests, including Bloodbond Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the sword was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Tactics talent (see p. 83 of the *Player's Guide*) when leading Bloodbonded characters.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Charisma-only Tests, including Bloodbond Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the blade's previous wielder and the Name of the last person that the previous wielder Bloodbonded.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Charisma-only Tests, including Bloodbond Tests.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must discover the Names of all those who have been Bloodbonded to the sword.

Effect: The wielder may increase the duration of the Bloodbond ability using blood magic. For 1 Permanent Damage, the wielder may extend the time that a Bloodbonded character remains Friendly to him to a year and a day. This damage can be healed when the Bloodbond ends. When the Bloodbond ends, even if the Bloodbond ends early through the wielder's actions or those of his friends, the Bloodbonded character's attitude toward the wielder will become Neutral (see p. 92 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*).

GROWLER

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Growler is a body shield covered with a tanned hide bearing the face of a growling brithan. Tav Korelsed defeated a legendary brithan Named Brzexen, famed for its massive size and territoriality, in single combat, as part of his Warrior initiation. Tav had the brithan's head stuffed and mounted on his mantle.

The Weaponsmith Byrnicus later used the stuffed brithan head to make a shield for Tav Korelsed, enchanting it with the power to strike fear into those who looked upon it.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal body shield.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7. The wielder gains the **Brithan's Gaze** ability. As a standard action, the wielder may present the shield's front face towards a close combat opponent. The wielder's opponent must be able to see the front of the shield. The brithan on the shield animates when this ability is used: its eyes glow red, its nostrils flare, and its mouth grins wide, showing wickedly sharp teeth. The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Frighten talent (see p. 71 of the *Player's Guide*). This effect frightens only one opponent per round.

Cursed: Friendly characters who view the shield may also be affected by fear. When scaring a friendly character this way, the gamemaster uses the shield's Curse Step of 14 in place of the wielder's Frighten step.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Frighten talent when using the Brithan's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

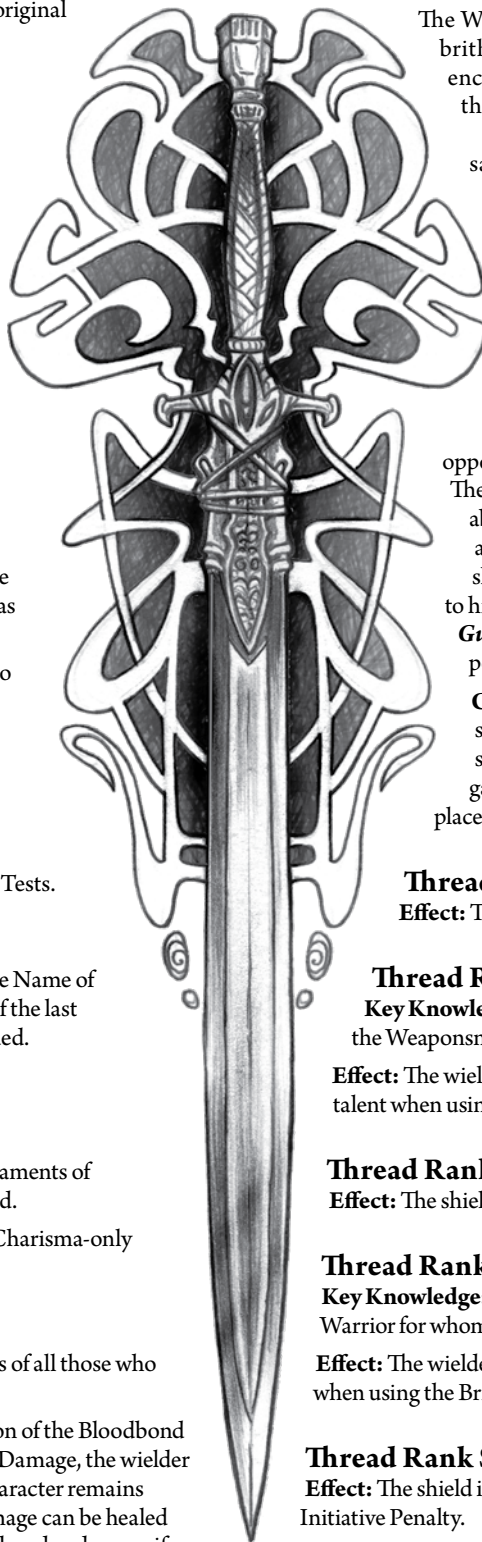
Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Frighten talent when using the Brithan's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 8 and does not have an Initiative Penalty.



Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the legendary brithan who was defeated to make the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Brithan's Roar** ability. As a simple action, the brithan's mouth on the shield widens, growls, and gives out a loud roar. The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Battle Bellow talent (see p. 62 of the *Player's Guide*) when using the shield to Intimidate foes in this way.

Cursed: The wielder and any friendly characters who hear the roar are also gripped by fear. The gamemaster uses the shield's Curse Step of 14 in place of the wielder's Battle Bellow step to determine if the wielder and friendly characters are affected. If Battle Bellow is used to inspire the wielder's companions, use this effect instead.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The wielder becomes more courageous and less likely to succumb to fear or Intimidation. The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Lion Heart talent (p. 74, *Player's Guide*).

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must seek out and defeat a brithan in single combat. The gamemaster is encouraged to make this as difficult for the character as he feels appropriate, throwing other obstacles in the character's way as he seeks out the brithan. Once he has defeated the beast, he must return the body to Throal to be preserved and presented as a gift to the royal family.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Champion Challenge talent (see p. 104, *Player's Companion*).

BLOODSONG

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Bloodsong is a broadsword with a charcoal black blade, and a simple, T-shaped, red crossguard and hilt. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made this sword for Thandos, enchanting it with the power to allow its wielder to relive the memories of those whose blood was spilt by it.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Blood Memory** ability. Whenever the wielder cuts someone with the sword for at least 1 Damage Point, he may attempt to access the target's memories. The wielder spends a standard action cutting himself on the blade, taking 1 Strain, and mingling his blood with that of the target character. He then makes a Perception Test against the target's Spell Defense. On an Average result, the wielder enters a trance and sees the target character's memories as if through the target's eyes. The wielder may ask one

question of the target, which the character attempts to answer to the best of his ability, displaying memories to the wielder in response. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the sword's thread rank. Each round, the drops of blood on the blade sizzle and smoke, leaving a blackened residue on the blade. Using this ability is not without its dangers, as memories of painful events can inflict damage to the wielder in a similar manner to the Experience Death spell (see p. 168 of the *Player's Guide*). This ability is not restricted to use only in combat; it can be used any time.

Cursed: When the Blood Memory ability is used, the wielder may also be exposed to false memories, forged in the dreams, nightmares, and delusions of the target. Nightmares are especially dangerous since these are almost always filled with terrifying and painful memories.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Perception-only Tests, including Blood Memory Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the sword was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Perception-only Tests, including Blood Memory Tests.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the blade's previous wielder and the Name of the last person that the previous wielder used the sword's Blood Memory ability on.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Perception-only Tests, including Blood Memory Tests.

Thread Rank Eight

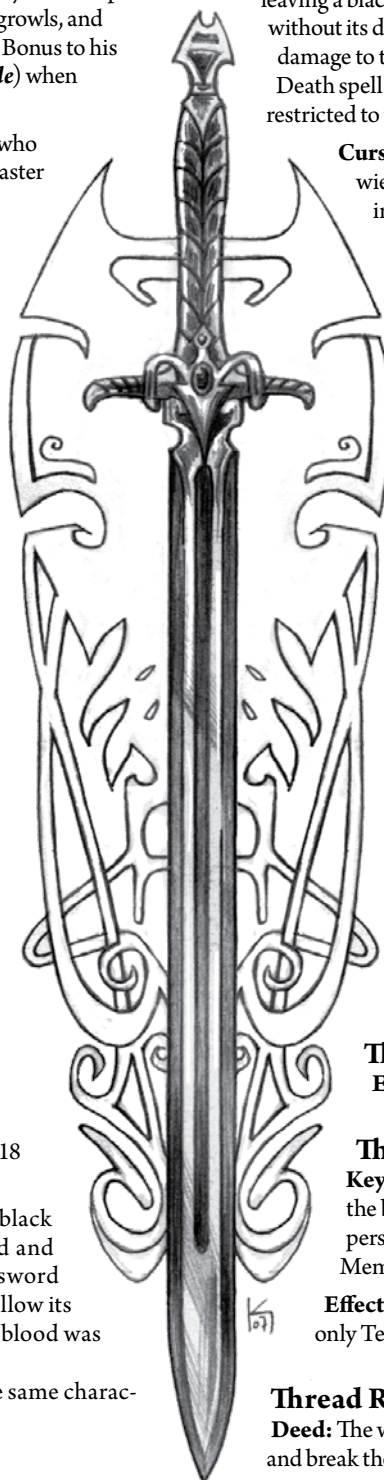
Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 9.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must discover the Names of all those who have had their memories accessed by the sword's Blood Memory ability.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Shared Blood Memory** ability. This works in the same way as the Blood Memory ability, except others may each use a standard action to cut themselves with the sword, taking 1 Strain, then touch the wielder to "share" the target



character's memory. Any damage caused by the target having dangerous memories is inflicted evenly among those participating in the shared experience. This greatly reduces the risk of major harm to the wielder and those present. The maximum number of participants that can share the memory is equal to the wielder's thread rank.

MINDREAYER

Maximum Threads: 5 **Spell Defense:** 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Mindreaver is a body shield covered with green scales and bearing the grinning face of a dragon. Thandos gave a dragon's head to the Weaponsmith Byrnicus to help make him a shield (how he got the head was never explained). Byrnicus used the dragon's head to make a shield for Thandos, enchanting it with the power to mesmerize those who look upon it, making them forget their purpose.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal body shield.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7. The wielder gains the **Dragon's Gaze** ability. As a standard action, the wielder may present the shield's front face towards a close combat opponent. The wielder's opponent must be able to see the front of the shield. The dragon on the shield animates when this ability is used: its irises glow a golden color and the eyes sway from left to right and back. The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Mind Wave talent (see p. 109 of the *Player's Companion*). This effect mesmerizes only one opponent per round.

Cursed: Friendly characters who view the shield may also be entranced. When mesmerizing a friendly character this way, the gamemaster uses the shield's Curse Step of 14 in place of the wielder's Mind Wave Step.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Mind Wave talent when using the Dragon's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

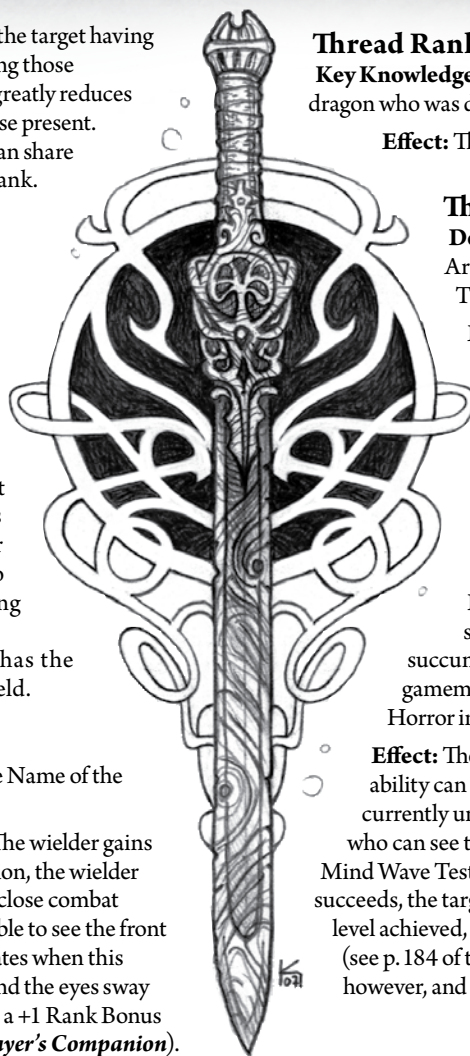
Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Mind Wave talent when using the Dragon's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 8 and does not have an Initiative Penalty.



Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the dragon who was defeated to make the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The wielder becomes less likely to succumb to mind-affecting spells and talents. The wielder adds +3 to his Spell Defense when targeted by mind-affecting spells and talents, and a +3 bonus to his Willpower Tests to regain his memory or mental faculties.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must seek out a dragon and successfully engage it in conversation without succumbing to the creature's mind tricks. (If the gamemaster thinks it more appropriate, this could be a Horror instead.)

Effect: The wielder gains the **Dragon's Stare** ability. This ability can only be used against an opponent who is currently under the effect of the Dragon's Gaze ability, and who can see the front of the shield. The wielder makes a Mind Wave Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target forgets the events of 1 minute for each result level achieved, in a similar manner to the Memory Blank spell (see p. 184 of the *Player's Guide*). The effect is permanent, however, and not an illusion.

THORNWHISTLER

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Thornwhistler is a wooden short sword with many hollows in the blade, a small circular crossguard, and a leather-bound hilt. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus gathered branches and cones from a coniferous tree in the Throal Mountains, Named the Silarch tree, to make the sword. Byrnicus created this sword for Ambica, enchanting it with the power to strike enemies at a distance without being thrown.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a wooden short sword (see the *Namegivers of Barsaive* book).

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 4. The wielder gains the **Air Slash** ability. When swung by the wielder as his standard action, the sword can generate a gust of air that strikes an opponent from a distance. The sword gives out a whistling sound as air passes through the hollows in its blade. Using this ability causes the wielder 1 Strain. The wielder uses his Melee Weapons or Throwing Weapons Step for the Attack Test vs. the opponent's Physical Defense. The Range of this ability is equal to that of a dagger. If the attack hits, the wielder makes a Damage Test for the sword, as normal.

Cursed: When this ability is used, the sword generates a gust of air that strikes the wielder or a friendly character instead. The gamemaster uses the sword's Curse Step of 14 for the Attack Test; the wielder makes a Damage Test for the sword.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 5.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: The Range of the sword's Air Slash ability increases to that of a throwing dagger.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the sword was made.

Effect: The Range of the sword's Air Slash ability increases to that of a flight dagger.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the tree whose wood was used to create the sword.

Effect: The Range of the sword's Air Slash ability increases to that of a hawk hatchet.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must locate and visit the Silarch tree, from which wood the sword was made. He must climb the tree and collect several handfuls of thorns from the branches that grow at the very top. These thorns must be implanted into the sword's blade and crossguard by a Woodsmith—a Weaponsmith who specializes in crafting weapons from wood (see the Namegivers of Barsaive book).

Effect: The wielder gains the **Thorn Flurry** ability. For 2 Strain, he may fire a flurry of thorns towards the target and adjacent targets of the wielder's Air Slash ability. The wielder makes an Air Slash Attack Test against one target as normal. The wielder then makes a second Air Slash Attack Test comparing the result to the highest Physical Defense of the original target and that of his adjacent allies within 2 yards/1 hex. If this test succeeds, the targets take the wielder's Strength Step +4 in damage from the thorns. Each time the Thorn Flurry ability is used, the sword's Damage Step is reduced by -1. Like all thread weapons, this damage is automatically restored at the rate of +1 Damage Step

per week (see p.254 of the *Player's Guide*). If the wielder causes the sword to lower its Damage Step below 1 by using this ability, the weapon is destroyed.

EVERWARY

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Everwary is a buckler with a hole in the middle, revealing a strange amber eye. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus created the shield by constructing a large cloaksense brooch and embedding it inside a buckler, rather than attaching it to a cloak. Byrnicus created this shield for Ambica, enchanting it with the power to watch for danger and disarm any who dare raise arms against its wielder.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal buckler.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The first thread activates the amber eye. The wielder gains the **Detect Intent** ability, and can sense the hostile intentions of others. The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Sense Danger talent (see p. 79 of the *Player's Guide*). The shield also acts like a cloaksense brooch (see p.263 of the *Player's Guide*) when wielded.

Cursed: The shield gives the wielder false information about the intentions of hostile and friendly characters, as well as erroneously reporting the presence of hidden attackers.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The shield can sense the presence of hidden weapons. The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Detect Weapon talent (see p.65 of the *Player's Guide*).

Cursed: The shield gives the wielder false information about the location of hidden weapons on hostile and friendly characters.

Thread Rank Four

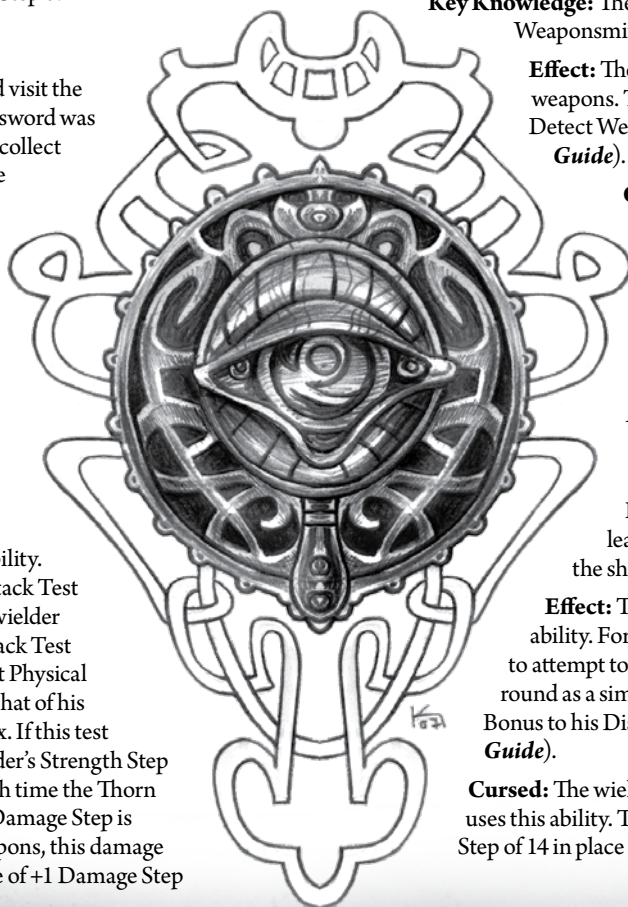
Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Disarming Shield** ability. For 1 Strain, the wielder may use the shield to attempt to disarm one close combat opponent per round as a simple action. The wielder gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Disarm talent (see p.65 of the *Player's Guide*).

Cursed: The wielder risks disarming himself when he uses this ability. The gamemaster uses the shield's Curse Step of 14 in place of the wielder's Disarm step.



Thread Rank Six

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 3.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn how the shield was constructed.

Effect: The shield can sense hidden traps. The wielder gains a +2 Rank Bonus to his Detect Trap talent (p. 65 of the *Player's Guide*).

Cursed: The shield gives the wielder false information about the location of traps.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 2. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: Byrnicus found the amber from which he made the eye in a cave, deep in the Throal Mountains. In this cave was a tree, guarded by three guardians, which he defeated. The wielder must find the location of the cave and defeat any surviving guardians.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Disarming Glare** ability. As a standard action, the wielder may attempt to disarm one character within 10 yards/5 hexes distance. The target character must be known to be hostile to the wielder and either have a weapon in-hand or be known (through an earlier Detect Weapon Test) to have a concealed weapon. He must also be able to see the front of the shield. As the wielder glares at his opponent, the amber eye animates and swirls about the shield in a maddening fashion. The wielder orders the target character to drop or discard his weapon, then makes a Charisma-only Test against the target's Social Defense to Intimidate him into doing so (see p. 94 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). For 1 Strain, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Charisma Test for this ability.

SPELLDANCER

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Spelldancer is a dwarf sword with a wavy, double-edged, silver blade engraved with runes; a crossguard that looks like two fully extended white wings; and a black hilt. The Elementalist Garaham summoned an air elemental Named Celyjina, who loved to dance in the cold winds on the slopes of the Throal Mountains, to help create the sword. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus created the sword for Garaham, enchanting it with the power to dance through the air and slice at foes while the wielder casts spells.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal dwarf sword.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 5. The wielder gains the **Spell Dance** ability. Whenever the wielder casts a spell, he may use this ability. The runes on the blade glow blue, and the sword hums. The sword leaps from the wielder's hand or scabbard, dancing through the air, and strikes any opponent within 2 yards/1 hex of the wielder. The sword has an Attack Step equal to the wielder's Dexterity Step + thread rank. Use the sword's Damage Step to determine how much damage is inflicted. Physical Armor protects against this damage, as normal. The

sword can make one attack per round. The sword dances for 2 rounds before dropping to the ground at the wielder's feet.

Cursed: When the wielder casts a spell, the sword may attack the wielder or a friendly character in range. The gamemaster uses the sword's Curse Step of 14 in place of the normal Attack Step.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: If at least one thread is used to power the spell being cast, the sword can now dance for 3 rounds.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Elementalist for whom the sword was made.

Effect: If at least two threads are used to power the spell being cast, the sword can now dance for 4 rounds.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The sword is now Damage Step 8.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the air elemental who helped create the sword.

Effect: If at least three threads are used to power the spell being cast, the sword can now dance for 5 rounds.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Shocksword** ability. The sword can convert spell energy to create an effect similar to the Flameweapon spell (see p. 171 of the *Player's Guide*). The wielder does not take damage if the die result is greater than 6. Add a Step 4 Electric die to the Damage Step of the sword for 1 round. If the sword is dancing, shorten the dance duration by -1 round when this power is used. The wielder takes 1 Strain to activate this power.

Cursed: Whenever the Electric die result is greater than 6, the wielder is also shocked by the discharge and takes 1 Damage Point from electricity (even when the sword is dancing—electricity arcs to hit the wielder). No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: The wielder must find the air elemental who imbued the sword with some of its power. The wielder swears a blood oath (see p. 124 of the *Player's Guide*) to protect the air elemental from its enemies, and the elemental air deposits of the sky above the Throal Mountains from those who would steal them, such as miners and Therans. If the wielder breaks his oath, the sword immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Steel Dance** ability. The wielder adds +5 to his Physical Defense when the sword is dancing. If an opponent attacks the wielder with a close combat Attack Test result at least equal to the wielder's normal Physical Defense, but less than his

modified Physical Defense when the sword is dancing, he strikes the sword instead, which deflects the attack and then attempts to strike the attacker. The sword makes an Attack Test against the opponent's Physical Defense to determine if the counterattack hits. The sword can only make one counterattack per round. Further attacks that round can be deflected, however, the sword loses -1 round of dancing per successful deflection or counterattack.

SPELLGORGER

Maximum Threads: 5

Spell Defense: 18

Legend Point Cost: Warden

Spellgorger is a silvered buckler made from a unique combination of living crystal, elementally-charged earth, and metal, with a distinctive runic carving of an open maw with endless rows of crystalline teeth surrounding a forming spell pattern. The Elementalist Garaham summoned an earth elemental Named Tefmirgap, who protected the Throal Mountains, to help create the shield. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made the shield for Garaham, enchanting it with the power to capture spells directed at the wielder for later casting, rather than deflect them like other silvered shields.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a crystal buckler shield.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The wielder may use the shield like a crystal spell box (see p. 133 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) to capture one spell. To capture a spell, the wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the result of the Spellcasting Test made to cast the spell. If the wielder's test succeeds, the shield "captures" the spell; the spell has no effect. Unlike a crystal spell box, to release and use a spell stored in the shield, the wielder must use his own Spellcasting and Willpower or Willforce abilities to determine the spell's effect, but need not weave any threads.

Cursed: The shield no longer captures spells but instead eats them, the curse feeding on the magical energy of the spell. The shield may attempt to absorb spells cast by the wielder or spells cast by friendly characters targeting the wielder. To absorb a friendly character's or the wielder's own spells, the gamemaster uses the shield's Curse Step of 14 in place of the wielder's Spellcasting Step. The shield can successfully absorb one spell per round.

Thread Rank Two

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 2 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 Rank Bonus to his Spellcasting and Willforce talents when capturing spells into or casting spells from the shield.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 3 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Elementalist for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The shield now holds two spells.

Thread Rank Six

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 4.

Thread Rank Seven

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the earth elemental who helped create the shield.

Effect: The shield now holds three spells. The wielder can release the magical energy held within the shield to power his own spells, as a simple action. For each spell released in this manner, the wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting, Thread Weaving, and spell Effect Tests.

Cursed: The gluttonous shield now attempts to absorb magical energy from its wielder if it hasn't fed on at least one spell per encounter. To absorb energy from its wielder, the gamemaster makes a Step 14 Curse Test against the wielder's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the magical drain could cause several effects, at the gamemaster's discretion. These effects could include the loss of a Karma Point or Recovery Test, a Step 14 Curse Damage Test, a penalty equal to the shield's thread rank on Talent Tests until a spell is absorbed, eat one of the wielder's spells as soon as it is cast, and so on.

Thread Rank Eight

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed.

Effect: The shield grants elemental fortitude; the wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Knockdown and Recovery Tests.

Thread Rank Nine

Deed: It is said that Garaham had the support of the Throal Mountains themselves. The wielder must find the earth elemental who imbued the shield with some of its power.

The wielder swears a blood oath (see p. 124 of the *Player's Guide*) to protect the earth elemental from its enemies, and the elemental earth deposits of the Throal Mountains from those who would steal them, such as miners and Therans. If the wielder breaks his oath, the shield immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair.

Effect: By standing or sitting on the back of the shield, the wielder can move earth and mountains underneath him at will. The wielder



gains a +4 Rank Bonus to his Moving Earth talent (see p. 109 of the *Player's Guide*).

TOOLS OF THE ARCHITECT

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 21

Legend Point Cost: Warden

The Tools of the Architect are a set of tools like those regularly used by architects. They include utilities for writing, drawing, measuring, and calculating, all stored in a wooden, metal-reinforced box. The box is worn, but intricately decorated. The tools are a craftsman's item, blessed by Upandal, and were the dearest possessions of the architect who designed the Inner Cities of Throal. Upandal blessed the item after the architect had already envisioned the Inner Cities, but had found it impossible to calculate their static and draw schematics to work with.

Few people know of the legend of the Tools of the Architect, although they are items of great power for the Inner Cities. The Tools of the Architect only grant their powers if all of them, including the box, are in the bearer's possession.

Thread Rank One

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the tools.

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 bonus to his Talent and Skill Tests when in the Inner Cities of Throal.

Thread Rank Two

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the architect.

Effect: The bearer adds +1 to his Physical, Social, and Spell Defense when in the Inner Cities of Throal.

Thread Rank Three

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the details of the architect's most important designs.

Effect: When the bearer designs an item using the tools, he halves the design time required. Additionally, when the bearer crafts an item that he has designed using the tools, even with assistance from others, he halves the crafting time required.

Thread Rank Four

Effect: The bearer gains a +1 bonus to his Talent and Skill Tests, and adds +1 to his Physical, Social, and Spell Defense, when in the Halls of Throal. These bonuses are now +2 when the bearer is in the Inner Cities of Throal.

Thread Rank Five

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the story of the tools after they left the architect's possession; in particular, he must learn which important designs were created with them.

Effect: When using the tools, the bearer gains a +3 Rank Bonus to his Fortify Structure questor power (see p. 178 of the *Player's Companion*). If the bearer does not know the Fortify Structure questor power, he may use it three times per day, as if he had the Questor talent at Rank 3.

Thread Rank Six

Deed: The bearer must use the tools to help improve or complete one of the Inner Cities of Throal. The gamemaster determines how much assistance is required to complete the Deed.

Effect: The bearer may spend a Karma Point on his Talent Tests when in the Halls or Inner Cities of Throal.



CHARACTER INDEX

Character? Hic! I'll sh-show ya character! 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 •

The following table lists all the major characters introduced in *Nations of Barsaive Volume One*, as well as a few characters from previous **Earthdawn** products who live in and around Throal and Bartertown. 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. These tables can be used to create stories, see **Using Characters to Create Adventures** on p. 118 for more information.

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Reference	Description
Aessraeth	p. 105	Clever astral Horror that can project its mind into animals, such as cats
Agak Plankhead	p. 74	Imperious old ork woman; captain of Stinking Renders cavalry
Ajmar the Admirable	p. 52	Ork man; pompous but skillful Court Spellcaster of Throal
Alfaliel	p. 27	Quiet, apolitical elf woman; head of Circle Path Company
Allinia	p. 62	Dwarf woman, articulate and dedicated advocate
Apulian Coriatus	p. 66	Vain, resentful human man; unrecognized Theran "legate" to Throal
Arlorn	p. 105	Elf man, agent of the Eye of Throal stationed in Bartertown
Aurbach	p. 95	Humorless, beleaguered human woman; Chancellor of Tirtaga
Avanil	p. 38	Human woman; bandit-turned-double-agent for the Eye of Throal
Azakis	p. 56	Soft-spoken, empathetic dwarf woman; Officer of the Court in charge of race relations
Bazana Gems-Dripping	p. 67	Shrewd, acquisitive ork woman; diplomat of Travar stationed in Throal
Belyawain	p. 37	Angry, fanatical dwarf man; head of Ja'kotton philosophy movement
Beracia	p. 25	Subtle, elegant dwarf woman; head of House Byril'ah
Beverun	p. 74	Ork man given to wild mood swings; captain of Grinning Wounds cavalry
Bilmo the Braggart	p. 83	Swaggering dwarf man, claims to be a re-Named legendary hero; runs the Fur-Covered Elephant inn
Brainbiter	p. 104	Friendly troll man and retired adventurer, runs the Juggling Shadowmant tavern in Bartertown
Brolonicus	p. 30	Wily, murderous dwarf man; head of Mogs, anti-reformist faction in Guild of Guildmasters
Budicett Ermine-Robes	p. 77	Tubby, blustering dwarf man; dealer in inexpensive perfumes
Bujmon	p. 13	Ancient dwarf king, promised dominion over Throal Mountains by the Passion Raggok
Buna Wordmaker	p. 62	Ork woman; flamboyant, shameless advocate
Buurtan	p. 103	A brutal troll champion in a pit fighting arena in Bartertown
Charboyya	p. 106	Wise, kindly dwarf man; prosperous silk merchant and leader of pro-annexation faction in Bartertown
Chardthom Mole-Spattered	p. 67	Kind-hearted, spectacularly ugly troll man; senior diplomat and expert on Theran affairs
Chuhk Alabamarian	p. 65	Pedantic and quarrelsome human man, claims to be rightful ruler of Iopos in exile
Cibonicus	p. 131	Misguided, irresponsible dwarf man; Nethermancer obsessed with the events of the Founding
Cleotha Splayfoot	p. 70	A merchant living in Haven and kaer dweller reporting to the Eye of Throal about Parlainth
Clifberz IV	p. 95	Fretful, change-hating dwarf; Baron of Wishon
Clystone	p. 105	Human man; corrupt, ruthless magistrate of Bartertown
Crarites	p. 44	Apparently a troll trader, actually a manifestation of Raggok
Curticia	p. 25	Warm-hearted, sensible dwarf woman; head of House Mikul; would rather compromise with Thera
D'Abrunia Koriaj	p. 35	Dwarf woman; archconservative, hero-worshipping creator of brilliant mosaic murals

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Reference	Description
Dajag Treaty-Keeper	p. 73	Steely, efficient ork; Baroness of Bethabal
Dalubian	p. 56	Depressed, self-pitying dwarf man; Officer of the Court in charge of waste disposal
Dequaria Alando	p. 67	Thoughtful, regal human woman; Urupa's ambassador to Throal, friend to Dollas
Derrisk	p. 43	Widely celebrated, warmongering dwarf man; Grand Elder of Thystonius
Diona the Swift	p. 65	Feisty, combative ork woman; Kratas' ambassador to Throal and a friend to Neden
Divuna Divunicus	p. 93	Calm, motherly dwarf; presumptive Baroness of Hustane
Dollas	p. 51	Dwarf woman; insightful, socially skilled queen-mother of Throal; wife of the late Varulus III
Drumilica	p. 52	Foppish, inane dwarf man; courtier of House Pa'vas
Dwalis	p. 83	Talkative, rumor-spreading ork man; proprietor of The Tasty Thundra Inn
Earyl Bloodstroke	p. 93	Bold, hearty ork man; commands the half of Terath's Chargers stationed outside Throal
Earthroot	p. 114	Great Dragon; King of the Pale Ones
Ela Pono	p. 33	Ork woman; corrupt apprentice of Thom and archivist at the Great Library
Elberia the Avenger	p. 106	Taciturn, brooding blood-elf woman; leader of vigilante cult newly arrived in Bartertown
Elvak Questorsmasher	p. 41	Hot-blooded ork man; legendary adventurer with a grudge against questors of Mad Passions
Emor Hawkcruncher	p. 106	Troll man, slow-witted leader of the Grim Legion in Bartertown
Eyorgicus	p. 68	Brilliant, dispassionate dwarf man; member of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, son of its head
Felerius	p. 62	Dwarf man; witty, authoritative advocate
Foellerian	p. 71	Fierce, determined dwarf woman; Supreme General of the Arms of Throal
Fezulon	p. 122	Old, male dwarf food seller; very talkative
Garlthik One-Eye	p. 20	Ork Thief and ruler of Kratas; Saved Varulus III during the Death Rebellion and remains an ally
Gesan and Trevas	p. 36	Feuding husband-and-wife actors, both dwarfs
Geverian Half-Smile	p. 64	Sardonic, dissolute elf man; Neden's drinking partner and ambassador from Blood Wood
Ghinez	p. 46	Respected, successful dwarf man; architect and servant of Vestrial
Gokvune	p. 31	Bombastic, fervent ork woman; head of Defiants faction in Guild of Guildmasters
Griforican	p. 99	Male, dwarf explorer and member of His Majesty's Exploratory Force
Grindo	p. 26	Risk-taking dwarf Swordmaster; head of House Neumani; he has adventured with King Neden.
Hamivar	p. 104	Handsome, spendthrift young dwarf man; second-in-command to the smuggler Shadowswift
Harchong	p. 47	Mad, doggerel-writing ork man of Bartertown; unwitting servant of Vestrial
Hedwenicus	p. 40	Disaffected dwarf man; member of Ja'kotton movement
Hithorn	p. 107	Windling man, merchant and information broker in Bartertown
Holli Ilfara	p. 83	Kind-hearted human woman, proprietor of The Sand Behemoth
Holomica	p. 35	Inarticulate, confused ork man; writes disturbing poetry
Hyondak	p. 38	Windling woman and philosopher, head of The Mirage; may be silly sensualist or shrewd criminal
Iaiah Hardstick	p. 81	Sour-faced dwarf man, frequently gets into tavern fights; runs a flop house in the dahnat
Ilio Shipwright	p. 65	Clever but lazy, elderly human man; Jerris' ambassador to Throal
Ilmorian	p. 71	Charismatic, conceited, and extraordinarily lucky elf man; General of Throalic Navy
Inder	p. 105	A Bartertown merchant looking to expand his shop
Isam Derr	p. 53	Pushy, single-minded obsidiman; Barsaive's senior Lightbearer and occasional consultant of Neden
J'Role the Honorable Thief	p. 69	Serene, elderly human man with a legendary past; Senior Gatherer of the Eye of Throal
Jada Denairastas	p. 124	Powerful magician and member of the Denairastas clan; magical assassin of former King Varulus III
Jarkna	p. 49	Working-class ork woman, can't hold her tongue during an argument
Javen	p. 35	Grouchy, intolerant elf man; maker of satirical pottery
Javira of Awett	p. 118	Plain-spoken dwarf woman; weaponsmith and adventurer from the hinterland, newly arrived in Throal
Jerriv Forrim	p. 33	Picky, exacting old dwarf man; Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library
Jeslar	p. 74	Sadistic ork woman with incongruous love of poetry; captain of Death's Lingering Kiss scorcher cavalry
Jihni Avacus	p. 77	Gregarious, likeable dwarf woman; dealer in inexpensive perfumes
Johurru Johuricus	p. 81	Thin, wizened old dwarf man; drunkard, runs a flophouse in the dahnat
Jomikale	p. 82	Stern dwarf man; former corrupt Royal Guard, now the toughest of Throal's magistrates
Jorkan Foe-of-Chains	p. 43	Outspoken, radical ork woman; adventurer, foe of Thera and Grand Elder of Lochost
K'senkt Aberius V'strimon	p. 68	Elderly one-armed t'skrang sailor; Floating City's representative to Throal
Kandor Lithcal	p. 75	Dwarf citizen of Throal

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Reference	Description
Karak Bloodeyes	p. 111	Implacable and possibly insane ork male; leader of the Skull Whargs; hates Throal
Kathieri	p. 83	Shy, beautiful young elf woman, dotes on her elderly parents; runs The Vine of Grapes Inn
Keinar	p. 101	Blustering, nervous, elderly human man; member of Bartertown's council of merchants
Kelassa	p. 54	Vibrant, politically astute dwarf woman; renowned poet, courtier and close ally of King Neden
Kossol	p. 105	Lazy, irresponsible human man; nephew of the Bartertown merchant, Inder
Kurtun	p. 94	Outcast highland troll man; recently opened an inn in one of the Inner Cities
Lagustan	p. 31	Stern, male elf philosopher much respected for his dispassionate analyses of popular epic poetry
Lemak	p. 110	Ambitious ork baron of the northwest quadrant of Throal's outlying communities
Lemora Wuculcian	p. 122	Female Thief and undercover member of the Holders of Trust
Liltom	p. 66	Young dwarf woman; Throalic ambassador to Kratas
Lochariel	p. 95	Generous, portly old elf; Baron of Tirtaga
Lomron	p. 24	Long-winded, smiling, elderly dwarf man; head of House Garsun
Lorinel	p. 47	Self-deluded elf woman; Officer of the Court and unwitting servant of Vestrial; heads the Watchers
Mardek Silkback	p. 95	Well informed, power-hungry ork; Baron of Valvria
Marruth	p. 94	Matronly, intimidating ork woman; corrupt Chancellor of Oshane
Merrox	p. 32	Stuffy, reserved dwarf man; Master of the Hall of Records, confidant of Varulus III and his son King Neden.
Mirial	p. 68	Brilliant, arrogant dwarf woman; member of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, daughter of its head
Morri of Bazrata	p. 77	Ruthless, corrupt dwarf woman; head of merchants' guild
Neden	p. 50	Hot-tempered, young, and very recent King, as well as a Warrior
Neyo Neyonicus	p. 75	Inquisitive, fussy dwarf man; self-appointed solver of mysteries
Nurnborg	p. 67	Boisterous male ork, Throal's ambassador to Travar, eloquently urges to adapt the <i>Council Compact</i>
Obakavim	p. 65	Human man; Throalic ambassador to Jerris
Oberh	p. 27	Obnoxious but honest human man; head of Dream Spire Company
Oberliel	p. 95	Irritable, frustrated elf man; master of the Royal Guild of Farmers
Oergesol	p. 71	Charming, restless dwarf man; head of His Majesty's Exploratory Force
Ompaca	p. 119	Obsidian warrior, known for testing the prowess of Barsaive's legendary champions
Osbaldo	p. 25	Vulgar, rapacious dwarf man; purchased leadership of bankrupt House Pa'vas
Ouglah	p. 119	Ludi representative; questor of the Passion Chorrolis
Oyalica	p. 49	Well intentioned but easily baffled dwarf woman; commander of a Royal Guard unit
Pabumius	p. 10	Stern, obese, elderly dwarf man; head of Royal Guild of Muckers
Pagion Pallaz	p. 32	Enthusiastic, female student under Throalic tutors; hails from the village of Umril.
Pahoga Elcomi	p. 107	Obsessed, eccentric dwarf woman; cut-rate sage of Bartertown with bizarre theories of history
Palaja Diamondarm	p. 110	Competent troll baroness of the southwest quadrant of the outlying communities
Pavlak Greatgirth	p. 104	Obese, unthinkingly violent ork man; heads a new and ambitious gang in Bartertown
Pepara	p. 27	Intense dwarf man, hates slavery; joint head of House Yilwaz; brother of Umo
Philippa	p. 83	Unemotional dwarf woman and magistrate; a good judge, but not so good at commanding guards
Pijian	p. 83	Quietly stubborn dwarf woman of House Ueraven; magistrate of Bodal, Garaham and Upandal Halls
Quaavami Rockbreaker	p. 71	Stern, self-controlled troll woman; General of Throalic Infantry
Ragaliel	p. 40	Thoughtless young elf; nephew of Yonlediel
Rami	p. 23	Mayor of the town of Oasis; allied with ork scorcher and bitter towards Throal's crafty traders
Randova Brokensong	p. 47	Mute troll woman; former Troubadour, now serves Vestrial in hopes of recovering her voice
Reesha	p. 67	Throal's ambassador to Urupa, member of House Ueraven whose child was fathered by her ork lover
Rysil	p. 91	Grandmotherly dwarf woman; questor of Garlen and court healer who lives in the Royal Chambers
Sandahg	p. 74	Unusually beautiful, blond ork woman with a grudge against elves; captain of Elf Eaters scorcher cavalry
Schraerak	p. 74	Manipulative, drunken ork man; captain of Mud Beasts scorcher cavalry
Selenda	p. 54	Forceful dwarf woman; head of House Ueraven, courtier and chief domestic opponent of the king
Shadowswift	p. 103	Young, vain human man; most feared smuggler and extortionist in Bartertown
Shalanya Piercecasket	p. 119	Human woman; legendary Throalic hero
Siggo	p. 81	Grim, tough human woman; runs a flophouse in the dahnat
Sinoricus	p. 110	Easygoing dwarf baron of the northeast quadrant of the outlying communities
Skaave	p. 95	Mystical, devout young troll; Baroness of Yistane; also a Troubadour and Wizard adept

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Reference	Description
Skerrin	p. 80	Compassionate, friendly dwarf man; magistrate of the dahnat
Smilyada	p. 39	Outspoken, stubborn dwarf woman; founder of Self-Reliant school of philosophy
Snorutia	p. 25	Quarrelsome, dimwitted dwarf woman; wife of House Pa'vas leader (who wants her dead)
Solira the Green	p. 30	Energetic, merry dwarf woman; head of Guild of Guildmasters and Guild of Archivists
Sons of the Air	p. 46	A living legend cult of around thirty Air Sailors of the Throalic navy; unknowingly serve Vestrial
Stann Olowey	p. 94	Timid, easily manipulated human; Baron of Oshane
Stathina Goldheart	p. 81	Helpful dwarf woman, distrusts adventurers; devotee of Garlen and flophouse proprietor
Stawyri	p. 78	Blunt, uncompromising dwarf woman; magistrate of the Grand Bazaar
T'shan V'ruda	p. 16	T'skrang man; nethermancer who recently found Bozwicus's Cow in the Serpent River
T'shlea V'omponian	p. 104	Subtle-minded t'skrang woman; former merchant, now runs several gangs in Bartertown
T'venyoh	p. 40	Athletic t'skrang woman; star hach'var player
Taliel	p. 101	Strong-willed elf woman; leader of a consortium of gem merchants
Tavarlon Tributemaker	p. 105	Half-mad troll man; proprietor of My Dead Father, Bartertown's filthiest tavern
Terath the Contemplative	p. 73	Serious, thoughtful, aging ork man; head of Terath's Chargers
Terlesk	p. 120	One of the original members of the Handshake Cooperative, a group of mine prospectors
The Crimson Face	p. 86	Enigmatic elf Nethermancer/Horror Stalker whose face is hidden behind a mask of agate
The Elite Guard	p. 89	A group of high-Circle adepts and former adventurers dedicated to protecting the king
The Five Sisters	p. 24	Stern, cautious, elderly dwarf women; joint leaders of House Chaozun
The Furious Laughters	p. 85	A windling living legend cult, devoted to curing Vestrial of his madness through bizarre acts
The Rememberers	p. 19	A living legend cult led by Nethermancers and composed of those rare survivors from the Weeping.
Tholon	p. 26	Conciliatory, patrician old dwarf man; head of House Elcomi and royal courtier
Thom Edrull	p. 33	Silky-voiced, venal dwarf man; Scribe and Archivist of the Great Library
Thorapin	p. 36	Frustrated, anti-royal dwarf man; well-known playwright
Titanstroke Greybeard	p. 74	Famous, canny leader of the Thunderers ork scorcher tribe, currently pursuing an unknown agenda
Tramon	p. 65	Cool-headed, calculating dwarf man; Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps
Trevas and Gesan	p. 36	Feuding husband-and-wife actors, both dwarfs
Tyrul Boldwords	p. 108	Ork woman; powerful Troubadour and Warrior, recently joined the Skull Whargs
Uilmaz	p. 45	Watchful, sinister old dwarf woman; part Horror and servant of Raggok
Umo	p. 27	Intense dwarf man, hates slavery; joint head of House Yilwaz; brother of Pepara
Urrif	p. 119	Unbalanced human man, archer adept; recently fired from the Dream Spire Company
Uvimir	p. 79	Dwarf merchant; runs a sausage stand in the Hall of Tav
Uzarg	p. 110	Ork baroness of the southeast quadrant of the outlying communities
V'sigar F'szafinal Ch'othobi	p. 122	A plain-spoken and bullying administrator of House Ishkarat; oversees their outlying villages
Vamban	p. 24	Unpleasant, tricky, elderly dwarf man; head of House Ludi
Varulus III	p. 8	Wise, reform-minded, former king of Throal; recently assassinated by the Denairastas of Iopos.
Vazilia	p. 61	Dwarf woman; unwavering royalist, Grand Commander of His Majesty's Royal Guards
Veroxa	p. 51	Eccentric, flamboyant dwarf woman; grandmother of King Neden
Volumnia	p. 24	Perceptive, skeptical dwarf woman; aunt to Snorutia
Walsha	p. 74	Greedy, clever ork man; captain of Golden Flashes scorcher cavalry
Wishten	p. 97	Likeable, easygoing dwarf man; Chancellor of Throal and foremost adviser to the king
Xodath	p. 44	Frightened, fastidious dwarf man; retired schoolteacher and follower of Dis
Yamin Wheelmaker	p. 122	Troll trader who runs caravans out of Throal; bitter due to the death of his sons in the service of Throal
Yonaal	p. 96	Pragmatic, capable troll woman; Chancellor of Yistane
Yonlediel	p. 40	Rule-breaking, prosperous elf woman; bookmaker
Zamirica One-Knee	p. 34	Intermittently sane dwarf man; apprentice archivist of the Great Library
Zarass Icethought	p. 73	Cruel, insanely jealous ork woman; commands half of Terath's Chargers, is suspicious of Throal
Zendes	p. 26	Reclusive dwarf woman; head of House Sarafica
Zeslericus	p. 115	Lazy, light-minded dwarf man; son of Grindo, the head of House Neumani
Zomof the Unlucky	p. 62	Cursed dwarf man with a faded reputation; cheap advocate-for-hire
Zudian Ludi	p. 26	A young, wealthy dwarf nobleman; throws his money around to get what he wants

ON THE BRINK OF WAR

The kingdom of Throal is the heart of Barsaive, the center of culture, commerce and knowledge. But the end of its peaceful days is looming on the horizon, as the dwarfs struggle to survive the great war that seems inevitable.

The return of the Therans and the brutal assassination of Throal's greatest king have thrown the province off-balance. The only heir to the throne, King Neden, turned out to be a hot-headed youth who began his reign with a military assault against the hated Therans. He failed, and soon realized that the Denairastas of Iopos have played a deadly game to put the dwarf kingdom and the Theran Empire at each other's throats and Throal's population on the verge of civil war...

Nations of Barsaive Volume One: Throal offers *Earthdawn* players and gamemasters an in-depth look at the mighty dwarf kingdom. From the bustling, noisy Grand Bazaar to the majestic chambers of the Royal Hall, this sourcebook offers adventure hooks and reams of additional material for *Earthdawn* adventures and campaigns set in Throal and the surrounding area.

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