

THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS, VOL. V

# THE NORTH™



A SETTING  
BOOK FOR



THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS, VOL. V

---

# THE NORTH<sup>TM</sup>

By MICHAEL KESSLER, PRISCILLA KIM, ERIC MINTON,  
DEAN SHOMSHAK AND JOHN SNEAD



## CREDITS

**Authors:** Michael Kessler, Priscilla Kim, Eric Minton, Dean Shomshak and John Snead

**Comic Scripter:** Carl Bowen

**Developers:** John Chambers and Dean Shomshak

**Editor:** Carl Bowen

**Art Direction and Layout:** Brian Glass

**Artists:** Gordon Benetto, Ed Bourelle, Leanne Buckley, Andrew Hepworth, Imaginary Friends Studio (with Chris, Jennyson, Lan Jun 'Junkman' Kang, Leos 'Okita' Ng and Zid), Priscilla Kim, Saana 'Kiyo' Lappalainen, Pasi Pitkanen, UDON (with Steven Cummings, Andre Mina, Saejin Oh, Eric Vedder and Joe Vriens)

**Cover Art:** Groundbreakers Studio (with Brian Valeza)

## NOW AVAILABLE IN THIS SERIES:

THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS,  
VOL. I — THE SCAVENGER LANDS

THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS,  
VOL. II — THE WEST

THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS,  
VOL. III — THE EAST

THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS,  
VOL. IV — THE SOUTH

THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS,  
VOL. V — THE NORTH

## COMING NEXT:



## THE MANUAL OF EXALTED POWER— THE ALCHEMICALS

Designed before the Primordial War but never built, Alchemical templates inspired the Exalts fielded by the Incarnae. Siding against his brethren, Autochthon heard the Curse directed by the slain Primordials at the Chosen and watched it slowly twist their minds. Knowing it was only a matter of time before their paranoia was directed at him, he gathered thousands of worshippers inside him and fled Elsewhere to escape the fate of the other Primordials. There, the mortals built an advanced civilization, and to preserve it, Autochthon finally built his prototype Champions. Ever since, the Alchemocal Exalted have kept the Eight Nations safe. But as Autochthon's health deteriorates, the threats the Alchemicals face grow ever greater. Can they save their world-god, or has Autochthon's flight led only to his demise?



**WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING**  
**2075 WEST PARK PLACE BOULEVARD**  
**SUITE G**  
**STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087**

©2009 CCP hf. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf and Exalted are registered trademarks of CCP hf. All rights reserved. The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, the Scavenger Lands, the West, the East, the South, the North, the Manual of Exalted Power the Dragon-Blooded, the Manual of Exalted Power the Lunars, the Manual of Exalted Power the Sidereals, the Manual of Exalted Power the Abyssals, the Manual of Exalted Power the Infernals, the Compass of Celestial Directions, the Blessed Isle, the Wyld, Yu-Shan, the Underworld, Malfeas, the Books of Sorcery, Wonders of the Lost Age, the White and Black Treatises, Oadenol's Codex, the Roll of Glorious Divinity I, the Roll of Glorious Divinity II, Scroll of the Monk, Scroll of the Monk the Imperfect Lotus, Scroll of Kings, Scroll of Fallen Races, Dreams of the First Age, the Age of Sorrows and the Second Age of Man are trademarks of CCP hf. All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by CCP hf.

The mention of or reference to any company or product in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters, and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

Check out White Wolf online at <http://www.white-wolf.com/>

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## THE COMPASS OF TERRESTRIAL DIRECTIONS, VOL. V

# THE NORTH™

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE: WORDS ON THE WIND	8
CHAPTER TWO: THE ONCE-HOLY CITY	17
CHAPTER THREE: THE CITY UNDER THE MOUNTAIN	33
CHAPTER FOUR: AIR BOATS AND AMBITION	51
CHAPTER FIVE: CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM	70
CHAPTER SIX: SUN AND ICE	104
CHAPTER SEVEN: GODS AND MONSTERS OF THE NORTH	120







# INTRODUCTION

*Day after day, throughout the winter,  
We hardened ourselves to live by bluest reason  
In a world of wind and frost.*  
—Wallace Stevens, “Meditations Celestial & Terrestrial”

Of the five directions of Creation, the North is the coldest and wildest. Every year, frigid winds sweep out from the Elemental Pole of Air to cover the North in ice and snow. Farming is difficult there except along the coasts and in a few sheltered locations, which limits the growth of civilization. Nevertheless, a number of powerful states have grown in the North—and the barbarian tribes who live by hunting and gathering have their own points of interest. In the Time of Tumult, they all need heroes.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. V—The North** is a setting book for the **Exalted** game. It gives players and Storytellers an overview of the North’s people and places, from the tribes of the icewalker barbarians to the fortress-city of Whitewall. If you want to create a character from the North or set a series in this region of wind and frost, this book gives you the background to do so.

## Chapter One: Words on the Wind



The book begins with a history of the North. In the ancient past, this direction saw some of Creation’s greatest wonders—and suffered some of Creation’s greatest disasters. Civilization slowly rebuilds itself in the North, but it may yet all crumble and blow away.

## Chapter Two: The Once-Holy City

The city of Whitewall was built long ago as a shrine to the Unconquered Sun, but fell into apostasy and ruin. The city’s divine rulers, the Syndics, have restored Whitewall as a bastion of safety and civilization in the North, but powerful, uncanny foes surround Whitewall and seek the city’s ruin.

## Chapter Three: The City Under the Mountain

Centuries ago, refugees discovered and settled a lost subterranean city. Gethamane supplies food and shelter from all the North’s dangers. Yet, monsters sometimes rise from the tunnels that stretch out beneath the city’s deepest layers.



The people of Gethamane live on top of horror and danger beyond their imagining.

#### **Chapter Four: Air Boats and Ambition**

The Haslanti League began as an alliance of barbarian tribes and has grown into a huge (if sparsely populated) nation. Technological innovations such as air boats and iceships make the League a great military power. As the Haslanti seek a middle path between civilization and barbarism, they feel both the temptations and burdens of imperial power.

#### **Chapter Five: Civilization and Barbarism**

This chapter describes Northern cultures that never became great nations, but could if given the chance. The Deshan states, satrapies of the Realm, live in brutal slavery, while an equally brutal rebellion builds. Shanarinara finds unexpected challenges to its democratic traditions in wealth that attracts a surge of immigrants. Meanwhile, the icewalker barbarians continue to live in small, nomadic bands, their

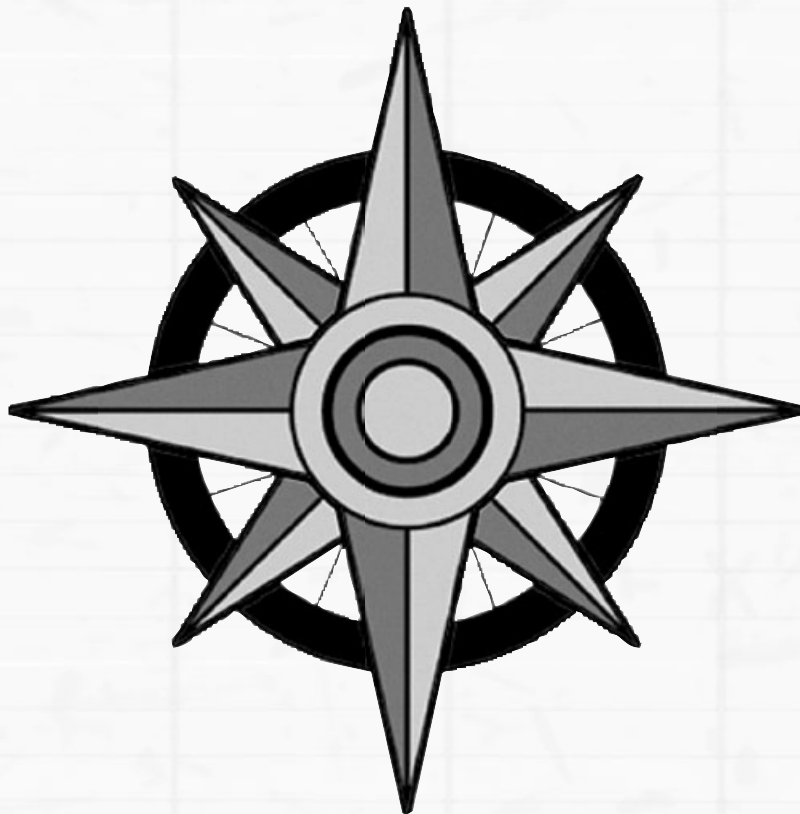
culture holding greater subtleties than most civilized folk imagine. The North also holds many little city-states and minor tribes... not all of them human.

#### **Chapter Six: Sun and Ice**

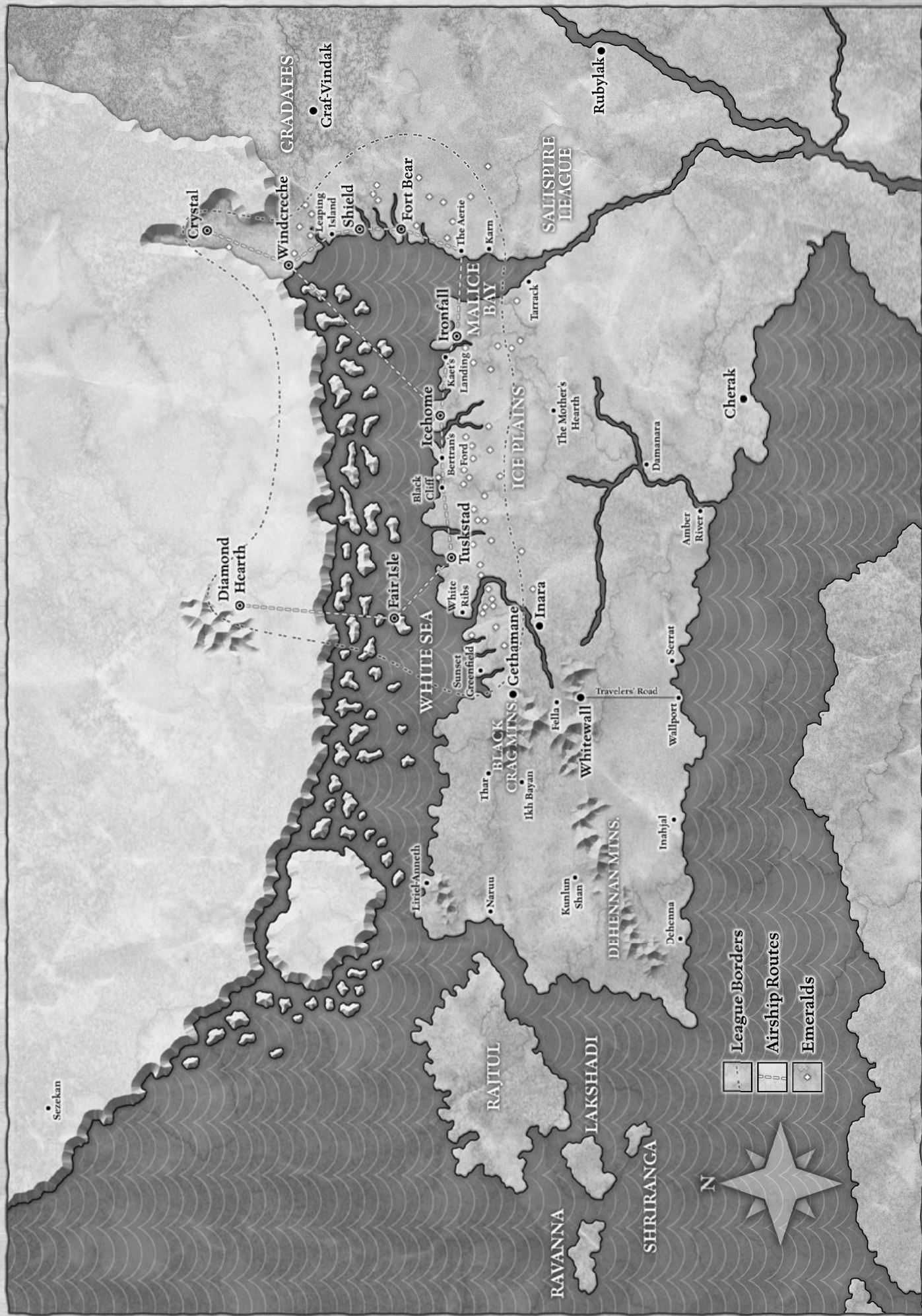
In 10 years, the Solar warlord called the Bull of the North forged icewalker tribes into an army that defeated the Realm and wrested an empire from the North. This chapter provides a glimpse of Yurgen Kaneko's dominion. The Bull wants to conquer the world and restore the Old Realm—but beyond his drive to conquer, can he and his fellow Solars also rule?

#### **Chapter Seven: Gods and Monsters of the North**

From the great Celestial gods of war to malevolent Wyld barbarians, a wide variety of spirits, mortals and monsters shape life in the North. **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. V—The North** concludes with a selection of people and creatures that may become friends or foes to the Exalted.









HE'S  
SMASHING  
THE DAM!

THERE  
HE IS, HE'S...  
WHAT'S HE  
DOING?

GOOD GODS,  
HOLOK WAS RIGHT.  
THEY'RE ALL  
CRAZY!



CAPTAIN,  
NO!

NO, HE'S  
NOT CRAZY.  
DESPERATE MAYBE,  
BUT NOT CRAZY.  
WAIT HERE.



CRY!  
MASTER!  
STOP,  
PLEASE!

WHAT  
FORKED  
TONGUE CALLS  
ME MASTER?

LOOK  
UPON ME  
AND DESPAIR,  
TRAITOR!



FIRST SUN'S  
CRY, I BEG  
YOU. YOU'RE  
THREATENING  
MILLIONS OF  
INNOCENTS.

DESTROY  
MY SWORN  
BROTHERHOOD  
IF YOU CAN.  
LAY WASTE TO  
OUR ARMY...

BUT PLEASE,  
AS A LAST ACT  
OF HEROISM,  
SPARE THE  
WHITE VALLEY  
PROVINCE!



DID ONE  
MORTAL IN THE  
WHITE VALLEY  
RAISE ARMS  
TO BAR YOUR  
ARMY'S WAY?

DID ONE  
MORTAL IN THE  
WHITE VALLEY  
LOOK ON ME  
WITH  
COMPASSION?

NO! THE WHITE  
VALLEY BETRAYED ME  
JUST AS YOU HAVE.  
AND FOR THAT...

...LET IT  
DROWN!

Noooo!





# CHAPTER ONE

## WORDS ON THE WIND

The North has always been a land of survival rather than grace. Summers are short; winters are long and cruel. The North stretches from the Inland Sea to the Elemental Pole of Air, bounded on the east by the forests of Halta and on the west by the Great Western Ocean. The mildest areas lie around the Inland Sea, where numerous small kingdoms and city-states squabble among themselves for a few miles of territory. Many of them accept the Realm's yoke.

Mountain ranges slant northeast across the mainland from the Inland Sea to the White Sea. The Dehennen Mountains separate the Kunlun Desert from the Inland Sea littoral. The range ends in the knot of the Black Crag Mountains, whose valleys shelter the cities of Whitewall and Fella, while the city of Gethamane burrows into one of the Northern peaks. Eastward from the mountains spreads a broad region of steppes, evergreen forest, low hills and marshy lowlands, with the high tundra of the Ice Plains at their center. The icewalker barbarians dominate this land, though a number of small countries survive in the interior.

One of them, Shanarinara, now rises to prominence. The River of Tears runs south from the White Sea to the Yanaze River in the Scavenger Lands. Several small city-states cluster beside its brackish waters.

To the north, the White Sea caps the boundary of what most would consider the habitable areas of the North. The Great Ice stretches farther beyond that, all howling snow and glaciers, to the Elemental Pole of Air itself. And yet, mortal men live in this seemingly barren waste. The iceships of the Haslanti skim across the frozen surface, and barbarian tribes hunt seals and whales.

The Realm holds limited sway over the North—in part because the Scarlet Dynasty, for many years, did not care enough to conquer the region. Long winters, harsh weather and frozen earth made the land an unpleasant place to live, offering little luxury or riches for the Dynasts. The North does supply large quantities of furs and ivory to other parts of Creation, however, and lucrative mines of diamonds and blue jade lie beneath the snow. The Far North is also the



only source of feathersteel—a metal as strong as iron, at a third of the weight.

Unfortunately for the Realm, such treasures either have formidable defenders or are widely dispersed. Whitewall's Syndics, the mountain fastness of Gethamane, the faraway, decentralized Haslanti League and the ferocious icewalkers control many such resources. Over the centuries, all four have amply demonstrated that they can protect themselves. On top of these mundane obstacles, the North holds powerful nations of cunning and cruel Fair Folk, Wyld-twisted barbarians of implacable savagery and shadowlands haunted by powerful ghosts. The Realm's leaders deem the cost to exceed the rewards. This suits the independent Northerners well enough.

## PREHISTORY AND THE FIRST AGE

A Northern myth says that when the Primordials first came into existence, they exhaled. The cold of their breath created the first elemental pole, the Pole of Air, and the land crystallized into existence from that point. The icewalkers tell a different tale, of a land already locked in ice until First Father came with his flaming sword and freed the world from cold. A third myth tells how Mela's hatching creating the North. These myths and many more form a fluid, shifting cloud of legend surrounding the region's origins.

Whatever the truth is, the North was always the most savage of lands, where civilization came last. The Dragon Kings ventured northward long before humanity existed, roosting high in the Northern mountains or racing across the plains. Humanity followed reluctantly, often as refugees pushed from the richer lands of the East. Once in the North, though, they adapted swiftly—or died. Some became nomads and followed the herds of reindeer and mammoth. Others turned to wresting crops from the tough ground. Violence and warfare broke out frequently, as different groups sought to carve out their own territories. Strength of arm ruled, rather than diplomacy. Meanwhile, the winged Pterok breed of Dragon King soared over it all, watching humanity with amused dispassion.

Then the gods rose up to make war against their creators. Primordial, Exalt and mortal alike watered the land with their blood. The death of each Primordial changed the face of the land, wiping out entire cities, shattering mountains and tearing valleys where none had been before. The Exalted shaped the land too, sometimes using it as a weapon: The sorcerer-engineer Racha Weaver-of-Truths built the Spidersilk Dam at the mouth of the White Sea to destroy Ta'akozoka, the Great Tentacled One from the Sea, draining away the waters that gave the Primordial life. After years of cataclysmic battles, the Exalted humbled the





Primordials and locked them away, before turning to rebuild the ravaged world.

## THE AGE OF SPLENDOR

No part of Creation escaped the imperious gaze of its Exalted rulers, but the Solar Deliberative ruled the North with a lighter hand than in other regions. The Exalted frequently felt the area held the last true wildernesses within the civilized empire of the Lawgivers. More than one area avoided falling under the Deliberative's rule, with many more attracting only light attention from the central government.

Still, to say that the North was the wildest territory in the Age of Splendor is only to say that it had comparatively fewer cities. The Deliberative still transformed the face of the North with vast terraforming and climate change projects. The White Valley Province in particular, fertilized by the corpse of Ta'akozoka, yielded lush crops. To increase the arable land, the Deliberative gouged huge valleys into the White Valley's upperslopes—the greenfields—geomantically shaped to concentrate the sun's warmth.

The Solars crafted wondrous cities, as well. Among them were the city of Ondar Shambal, a prayer to the Unconquered Sun crafted in stone; the City of the Mountain Gateway, a hub that connected all the directions of Creation and Yu-Shan; the flying city of Tzatli, borne aloft by crackling ropes of lightning; and countless others, the least of which would put any Second Age metropolis to shame.

Regardless, civilization lay lightly in some areas. Lunars and adventurous young Solars favored the North because of the abundant wilderness areas. The unforgiving steppes and blizzards, along with stranger landscapes sculpted by terraforming engines, offered challenges for restless young Exalted that they could find nowhere else. No wonder, then, that people who felt less than thrilled by the Deliberative often gathered in the North. The population of these areas swelled as the High First Age decayed, the madness of the Solars grew more apparent and the disaffected sought any place where they might escape the excesses of the Lawgivers.

It would not be the last time the North became a refuge.

## THE USURPATION

When the Dragon-Blooded and their Sidereal allies struck, many Solars fled to the North for the same reasons as earlier refugees. Famed architect Kal Bax erected a hidden manse somewhere in the farthest North, where he hid with 11 companions to vanish from the pages of history. Other Lawgivers and their Lunar consorts returned to their home cities for a last stand, or fled and turned to fight when they could run no more. The Solar First Sun's Cry broke the Spidersilk Dam in a spiteful deathblow, releasing the Great Western Ocean into the White Valley to drown his attackers—and the millions that lived in the valley. All the cities along the White Valley died in the onslaught, their shining towers shattered beneath titanic waves. The pain and terror of

the dead stained the new seafloor with shadowlands, where ghosts wandered in the lightless depths among the walls of their broken cities.

Many other cities fared no better. Tzatli fell amid arcs of splintering lightning and buried itself in the ice, its evacuees scattering to the winds. The sorcerer Oa-Té staged his last stand in the reality-fixing city of Opal Spire, where he summoned the behemoth Vorvin-Derlin, Slayer of Armies. Weakened by battle, the sorcerer lost control of the monster. It consumed him and went berserk. Exalted and mortals both had to abandon the city as unrecoverable. The City of the Mountain Gateway suddenly went silent. No refugees fled the city, and Heaven itself does not know the fate of its vanished inhabitants.


Even those places that escaped outright destruction felt the effects. Blood ran red through the shining streets of Whitewall as Bronze Faction conspirators felled its beloved rulers, Queen Tenrae and her consort Den'rahin. Wrathful Lawgivers out for vengeance all but depopulated Meteor's Eye, the foremost university for astrological studies and the favored city of Sidereals in Creation. The golden arch of Brahm's Bridge, spanning hundreds of miles over the Inland Sea, took legions of mortals with it when it crumbled into the water. Fragments of gold and sparkling Essence lit the sea for three weeks before the last vestige vanished entirely.

## THE SHOGUNATE

After they slew the last of the Lawgivers, the Dragon-Blooded turned their attention to consolidating their rule. The Shogunate did its best to maintain the farms of the North, but the fighting had broken too many of the engines that kept the land warm and fertile. The Dragon-Blooded could maintain them, but they lacked the knowledge to repair them or to create new ones. With the cataclysmic breaking of the Spidersilk Dam, the North lost its primary breadbasket. The breakdown of the climate-control engines led to the loss of even more farmland. Year by year, the ice crept farther south, frost seeping into the ground, roads and aqueducts crumbling and decaying. The Shogunate slowly relinquished its hold on the further reaches of the North to focus on the warmer and more populous areas near the Inland Sea. With much of the land and the great cities wrecked, the wider reaches of North simply did not have much to offer the Shogunate for the trouble it took to bring the territory under control.

Of course, the Shogunate never abandoned the land entirely. The areas bordering the River of Tears received special attention. While the intruding White Sea had drowned the lake that used to be the source of the River of Tears, it left the river itself intact, though tainted by the salt from the new sea. The Shogunate built special manses along the upper reaches of the river that strained the salt from its waters. In time, the riverbanks became arable once more. Cities such as Plenilune arose, flourishing through the trade of salt and traffic between the White Sea and the Yanaze River.





Regardless of its successes, however, the Shogunate lived in the perpetual shadow of its predecessor. Its attempts to erase the legacy of the Solars frequently ended badly. Whitewall never took well to the Dragon-Blooded regents, as their former rulers had evinced little of the madness that overtook the other Solars. Consequently, early attempts to destroy Solar iconography and monuments met with near-riots. Not far away, the psychotic Anjei Marama ran an extermination camp to destroy all the biological creations and servitor races of the Solars, as well as merely mortal loyalists. It served its bloody purpose. The millions of deaths also created the largest shadowland in the North. The Shogunate simply lacked the time and resources to combat the spread of Marama's Fell and a host of other, smaller problems.

## THE GREAT CONTAGION

Then the Contagion struck, overwhelming all that the Shogunate could do. Northern city folk crowded together for warmth and safety, and the disease spread among them like wildfire. Entire quarters died in a night. Refugees found nowhere to turn, as the sickness touched nearly every traveler who fled for parts unknown. Even Whitewall, with the powerful protections woven on it from the Solars of Ages past, fell victim.

The Fair Folk invaded at the height of the plague. The raksha swept southward from the Wyld, killing those who had not been lucky enough to die in the Contagion. They all but depopulated the upper reaches of the North, drawing eddies of the Wyld after them. The advance legions of the Shogunate slowed the raksha but could not stop them. The armies of Creation and the Wyld clashed on the steppes, over the ice, in the mountains. They waged the fiercest of battles in the cities themselves, as cataphractoï leaped from the roofs and talons of soldiers swirled through the streets to meet them. In the city of Fellara, some say, the Fair Folk wove a story of destruction so potent that it leveled the entire city and continues to repeat itself to this day, the very stones refusing to believe that they can and should bond with one another. The raksha danced around Whitewall and laughed among the corpses in Plenilune, believing Creation on the verge of destruction.

## STARTING ANEW

Then an ambitious young captain of the Ninth Legion took control of the ancient Lawgivers' mightiest weapon and destroyed the Fair Folk invasion. Few in the North objected to the rise of the Scarlet Empress. Here and there, a lone Shogunate officer decided to carve out a kingdom for himself, but such territories never extended more than a few days' travel across. Some of the survivors abandoned civilization completely: They pactured with the divine avatars of the mammoth, reindeer, musk ox and other Northern beasts to survive as nomadic hunters, and became the ancestors of the icewalker barbarians.

The first major power arose when the Syndics arrived in Whitewall in RY 71, taking over the city as its protectors. A few years later, they negotiated the Thousand-Year Pact with the local Deathlords, Fair Folk and barbarian tribes, making sure that the Traveler's Road remained sacrosanct and free of violence. With their safety ensured by the Road, traders began to flow between Whitewall and its coastal satellite of Wallport, bringing renewed prosperity to the city.

Further settlements began to grow around fortuitous points of shelter and food. North of Whitewall, a ragged coalition of refugees stumbled across an empty city beneath a mountain, the lost remnant of an Age past. Finding the place safe, warm and supplied with food from enchanted fungus gardens deep within the mountain, they stayed and named the new settlement Gethamane. Another small village of refugees coalesced around the sheltered dell of Inara, whose hot springs once made it a favored getaway for the Dragon-Blooded. Those hot springs now formed a reliable source of water and warmth for the refugees. Shattered Fellara revived as Fella, a ragged shantytown of wooden shacks and incongruously advanced medical technology salvaged from the First Age medical school in the heart of the old city. Communities sprang up everywhere humanity could scratch out a living, but for many years, no state grew larger than a few townships across.

## THE EMPIRE OF BAGRASH KÖL

And then the mortal sorcerer Bagrash Köl arose, wielding the Eye of Autochthon. With this staggeringly powerful artifact, he carved an entire nation from the Northern Wyld, forcibly taming the boundaries of Creation to his will. He called thousands of barbarians and peasants to his service, crushing resistance by force. The sorcerer lavished gifts upon those he favored, wonders whose like had not been seen since the Old Realm, and sent destruction upon those who displeased him. In the wake of his floating citadel, chaos stilled. Fields bloomed, herds multiplied, and the people blessed Bagrash Köl for his generosity... if they wanted to live. At its height, Bagrash Köl's domain surpassed even the fledgling Scarlet Empire in size and grandeur. The Realm's leaders watched in fear, and the Scarlet Empress readied herself to use the Imperial Manse, should Bagrash Köl move toward the Blessed Isle.

It never came to that. Quite abruptly, the sorcerer vanished. The last time he appeared in public, he stormed out of the tributary city of Amathis, leaving glittering quartz statues behind him. Two weeks later, his palace crashed to the ground, fragments scattering on the winds. The Wyld swiftly roiled over the land Köl had wrested from it. Only a few hundred refugees reached the people living farther south, to tell them of the sorcerous empire's doom. Of the Eye, there was no sign. The





evidence of Bagrash Köl's short-lived empire vanished within months, lost to the Wyld. Northern folk still tell stories of the sorcerer, however, and the glory, madness and terror of his reign.

## THE GUILD CREEPS NORTH

One effect lingered, however: the presence of the Guild. When Köl established his empire, the Guild did not yet have a strong presence in the North. Brem Marst, the organization's founder, leaped at the opportunity to trade with the growing kingdom. The success of the Guild in the following years attracted the sorcerer's attention, and Marst received a personal invitation to Köl's palace.

The merchant, though quite elderly by then, accepted the invitation and arrived at the palace with great pomp. One week later, he departed with much less fanfare. Marst never revealed what he saw on his visit. In the following months, though, he quietly removed the Guild's assets from Köl's empire, shifting them to other Northern kingdoms. Within two years, the empire imploded.

The Guild flourished in the aftermath, however, expanding to fill the commercial gap left by the loss of the North's largest state. It took a special interest in the areas bordering the former empire and on the Great Ice, seeking lost treasures and artifacts of power. The Guild began to dominate large areas on both the Inland Sea coast and the eastern end of the White Sea, setting up virtual tribute states. While Cherak avoided this fate through its connection to the Realm, the Guild and the Realm would butt heads several times over who controlled a given city on the Inland Sea.

Beyond clashing with the Guild and securing a hold on several coastal states, though, the Realm did not trouble itself overmuch with the North. Immaculates would occasionally sweep through a region, humbling the local spirits for a time. Less often, a Wyld Hunt would go out at the signs of an Anathema. One such campaign slew Arvida of the Crescent Eye, the Lunar patron of the Haslanti tribes around the White Sea. The ensuing madness of the Haslanti tribes gave the Guild a chance to move in, taking over the rudimentary Haslanti towns and bringing the Guild's usual influx of slaves and drugs. Along the Inland Sea, meanwhile, the Realm and the Guild reached a truce by which the Guild received a monopoly on importing drugs to the Realm's satrapies.

## THE RISE OF THE HASLANTI LEAGUE

The Guild's dominance planted the seeds of rebellion. Sick of the Guild's demands for tribute, the Haslanti took to guerilla warfare, eventually confining the Guild to only a few trading camps along the White Sea. The rebellion came to a head in RY 582 when Gerd Marrow-Eater, a No Moon, called the Haslanti chiefs to the Twisted Stone Convocation. He convinced the Haslanti tribes that the time had come for them to unite and remove the Guild by

force. The newly formed Haslanti League swiftly reclaimed their nascent cities and drove out the Guild.

Nations across the North viewed the precipitously growing new power with alarm. The Scarlet Empress took more direct action. Correctly perceiving the new League to be the work of Anathema, she sent Immaculate monks to hunt the being responsible. The Immaculates never found Gerd Marrow-Eater or his Lunar compatriots, however. Indeed, the monks indirectly strengthened the League by humbling the lesser local spirits, freeing the Haslanti people from their demands.

The Guild, naturally, took the greatest offense. In retaliation, it pressured Gethamane and the city-states of the River of Tears—the League's nearest neighbors of any power—to cut the Haslanti off from its commerce. Guild leaders hoped the League would then have to accept the Guild as a trade middleman once more. In response, the Haslanti besieged Gethamane.

As a proving ground for the newborn Haslanti League's will and tenacity, the war succeeded admirably. While the Haslanti could not enter Gethamane, neither could the Guild. Eventually, the Guild gave in and settled for limited trade. The effective defeat of the Guild reduced its power in the North for decades thereafter and solidified the status of the Haslanti League as a nation to reckon with—especially given the air-boat technologies that the League developed during the war.

## THE WYLDFOG WAR

For centuries, distance, the short season for warfare and enemies from outside kept Northern folk from battling each other on any large scale. The most widespread threat to face the North since Bagrash Köl came when the first Wyldfog—literal pockets of the Wyld that blew about with the wind—rolled down from the north in RY 674. Wyldfogs swept in unpredictable eddies across the North, moving villages, turning trees into stone, ice or living flesh, and warping people and animals into monsters. Gethamane alone escaped its effects. Everywhere else suffered: The Haslanti League, as the northernmost state, bore the brunt of the storms of transformation. The Fair Folk used the opportunity to strike, and as many souls were lost to the predatory raksha as to the Wyldfogs. The Fair Folk attacks and the Wyldfogs ended only through a long campaign by the Lunar Exalted.

## THE BULL OF THE NORTH

In RY 757, an aging icewalker walked into the winter and returned touched by the Unconquered Sun. Yurgen Kaneko, the Bull of the North, forged a number of icewalker tribes into an army. He tested that army by conquering a number of minor city-states. Then he struck eastward in a campaign that ended with the destruction of the Tepet legions in the Battle of Futile Blood. (See **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—The East**,



pp. 13-14, for more on the Linowan War.) Only then did Creation at large become aware of the power raising its head in the North.

## THE PRESENT

These days, leaders throughout the North wonder what the Bull will do next. Still other tensions bubble beneath the surface, however.

**The Coastal Satrapies** of the Realm struggle to hold their people in bondage. As an experiment in social control, the Realm enslaved almost the entire population and addicted them to drugs to keep them docile. Nevertheless, unrest grows.

**Gethamane** has few outright enemies, though many desire the city. It maintains polite but distant relations with most states: They have nothing Gethamane especially needs, and Gethamane feels safe in remaining neutral. Given the insularity of the city and the safety of its underground location, many citizens fear the enemies that come from the deep rather than the enemies outside. Only the Guild and the Bull of the North particularly trouble Gethamane. The Guild conspires to make the

city a Guild stronghold in truth, while the Bull is armed with unknown Solar might.

**The Haslanti League** becomes restless, feeling the conflict between its current civilized status and its barbarian roots. Grown arrogant in its successful defeat of all the conflicts to arise in its history, it seeks now to expand its borders and eyes Whitewall on the horizon. Haslanti leaders have no quarrel with Gethamane, having learned from the Gethamane War that the underground city is impossible to invade.

**The icewalkers** face choices and possibilities they never imagined. The Bull of the North offers empire to people who hitherto lived in small tribes. Many tribes flock to his banner, but at least as many now fear the Bull and seek to preserve their old customs.

**Shanarinara** begins to feel cramped. This alliance of democratic city-states envies the success of the Haslanti League and wants to imitate its expansion but lacks the Haslanti's military technology (and secret Lunar patronage). Recently, agents of the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears have come courting. The nation's senate has yet to turn them away.





**Whitewall** plays a riskier game of diplomacy than Gethamane. While the city's fabled walls protect it from many threats, Whitewall cannot simply shut out the world. It depends upon both the power of the Syndics and the lifeline of the Traveler's Road. Should that lifeline be disrupted, the consequences would be disastrous. The power of the Syndics seems unlikely to wane soon, but they have never fought against the Realm. The Empress knew the true identities of the Syndics and knew better than to test their power. The Dynasts who currently squabble over her throne remain ignorant. Some feel that a bold strike, such as taking over a long-independent but prosperous city, could bring them sufficient prestige to seize the throne.

The Deathlords play an undeniable part in the political game. In the Northwest, the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible already wields great influence over the cities of the Kunlun region through his religious tracts. He dreams of spreading his Silent Meadow of Dust until it meets Marama's Fell, covering half the North in shadowland. In the Northeast, the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears rules the nation of Gradafes in all but name. More importantly, the terrifying Tear Eater tribes work her will. This in turn gives her effective rule of a wide region, as many city-states pay tribute to avoid the ravages of the death-worshiping barbarians. Lastly—but of greatest concern to

Whitewall—the violent ghosts of Marama's Fell slowly gather beneath the leadership of Thrice-Dread Achiba, a monstrous ghost of uncommon cunning and charisma (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. IV—The Underworld**, pp. 109-110).

Nestled among the great nations and far-flung cultures, many little countries and tribes struggle to survive and find their way in the Time of Tumult. Many of them make deals with other powers... or have such partnerships thrust upon them. On the River of Tears, the effete city-states of Plenilune and the Saltspire League bow to the barbarian Bull of the North. The fierce sea rovers of Karn on Malice Bay find themselves caught between the Haslanti League, the Bull of the North and the Tear Eaters, and their potent ancestral ghosts can no longer protect them. They find new hope through the leadership of their bold new king—unaware that he is the Bull's agent. At the other end of the North, the Zalvenesh dive for First Age artifacts at the mouth of the White Sea, enduring the icy waters with the help of their gods. The seafarers of Rajtul Island survive through their own strange partnership with the arcane elkmen. Whether they live in a great city or a reindeer-skin tent, the people of the North vow to endure whatever fate brings them, as they have always done.

## TIMELINE

### Realm

Year	Event
8	Refugees settle in a valley of hot springs and ruined spas, beginning the town of Inara.
71	Yo-Ping, Luranume and Uvanavu assume the guise of the Syndics and take over the city of Whitewall.
73	The Syndics negotiate the Thousand-Year Pact with the Deathlords, Fair Folk and barbarians.
102	Bethan Redeye and a group of refugees stumble across the remains of the City of the Mountain Gateway and its gardens. They rename it Gethamane.
146	Bagrash Köl uses the Eye of Autochthon to build a great kingdom in the North, which grows larger than the Realm of the time.
150	The Guild opens trade with Bagrash Köl.
174	Brem Marst receives an invitation from Köl and visits the sorcerer at his palace. Afterward, the Guild quietly moves personnel and supplies from Bagrash Köl's kingdom.
176	Bagrash Köl vanishes, his palace crashing to the earth; the Wyld swallows his kingdom.
366	Icewalker attacks prompt Inara and several other towns to confederate, leading to republic of Shanari-nara.
412	Immaculate monks kill Arvida of the Crescent Eye, goddess of the Haslanti tribes. Haslanti Time of Madness begins.
433	Icehome founded.
468	Cholistan destroyed by detonation of a long-abandoned manse. The Silent Meadow of Dust shadowland forms around its ruins.





## TIMELINE CONTINUED

### Realm

Year	Event
500	Guild approaches Haslan tribes in the Four Camps.
580	Guild confined to the Four Camps and a few minor trading centers along the coast.
582	Gerd Marrow-Eater calls the Twisted Stone Convocation. Haslanti conquer the Four Camps, thrice led by Gerd. Council of Oligarchs established.
586	Gethamane War begins.
593	Gethamane War ends; Guild gives in and agrees to limited trade with the new Haslanti League.
674	Salvaged First Age device destroys Liriel-Anneth. Start of Wyldfog War as Wyld storms blow through the North.
722	Founding of Crystal.
726	Flintbeak Nightingale disperses last Wyldfog five miles from Icehome.
727	Tin and jade discovered in the hills of Shanarinara.
731	Tzatli rediscovered near Diamond Hearth.
752	Exaltation of Samea of the Blackwater Mammoth Tribe.
757	Varajtul launch strike southeast out of Kunlun region.
758	Exaltation of Yurgen Kaneko, the Bull of the North. He promptly kills the Wyld Hunt sent against him and begins gathering icewalker tribes into an army.
759	Battle of Five Fangs: Realm legions defend a small client state against the Varajtul. The five-day-long stand breaks Varajtul forces, ending the cannibal invasion.
760	Plenilune surrenders to the Bull; his icewalkers conquer the Saltspire League.
761	Linowan War begins with the Bull's attack on Rokan-jin and Talinin.
763	The Scarlet Empress vanishes.
764	Yurgen Kaneko and his armies slaughter the Tepet legions at the Battle of Futile Blood.
765	Saltspire League cities rebel against icewalker tribute.
766	Raneth of Diamond Hearth arrives in Plenilune as its Bull-appointed governor and retakes the city.
767	Nalla Bloodaxe elected king of Karn; opens "negotiations" with Yurgen Kaneko.
768	Present day.



YOU CAME. I KNEW YOU WOULD.

WHAT, NO GREETING RUNE? THAT'S NOT VERY POLITE.

IF YOU'VE COME FOR A SECOND INVITATION, LIOS, I'M HERE TO DISAPPOINT

AH, BUT RUNE, YOU SO RARELY DISAPPOINT ME. THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU.

IN FACT, ONE DAY YOU'LL INVITE ME TO LIVE WITH YOU IN YOUR CITY AS ROYAL CONSORT.



MY PROPHETS HAVE FORSEEN THIS.



...CHAOS GIVEN FORM WILL BE SUBDUED AND TAMED IN SUNLIGHT.

WHEN THE SYNDICS LIE BROKEN BY NIGHT JEWELS' CHOSEN...

...AND THE PRODIGAL BETRAYER CLAIMS THE CITY-MANDALA...

HE DIDN'T BELIEVE OUR PROPHECY, MASTER.

NO, LITTLE ONE. BUT HE HEARD IT, AND HE'LL REMEMBER IT.

THAT THE SEED WAS PLANTED IS ALL THAT MATTERS.



THESE ARE YOUR PROPHETS, LIOS? THESE SHIVERING HOMUNCULI?

I KNOW THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE: VAIN REFLECTIONS OF YOUR TWISTED DESIRES.

GO. THIS AUDIENCE IS OVER. YOU'VE WASTED YOUR TIME.



## CHAPTER TWO

# THE ONCE-HOLY CITY

Deep in the Northern interior, shining walls encircle the direction's largest city. Whitewall exists surrounded by barbarians, a vast shadowland and a powerful enclave of Fair Folk. Despite their environment and hostile neighbors, however, the people of Whitewall live in greater safety and comfort than do most people of Creation. They attribute much of their good fortune to the three powerful gods who rule them. Whitewallers also credit their own hard work, their self-discipline and their eternal vigilance against uncanny foes. Most of all, they know their security depends on the city's eponymous walls. Not only is the snow-white circuit high and thick enough to defeat any barbarian horde, ancient blessings prevent any unholy creature from entering the city. Yet, very few Whitewallers know the truth behind the miracle they've inherited from the First Age.

### HISTORY

Whitewall's history began shortly after the end of the Primordial War, with a monastery for devotees of the

Unconquered Sun. Its monks and nuns farmed to support themselves. They made their labor a form of prayer and planted circular fields as living mandalas to glorify Heaven's King. A Zenith Caste Lawgiver called Righteous Guide founded and led the monastery.

The religious community outgrew four monasteries, the last the size of a town. Righteous Guide proposed to make the fifth monastery an entire city, designed as a gigantic mandala to focus and magnify the prayers of the residents. And so it was done.

The new city of Ondar Shambal became one of the greatest wonders of Creation—not for its size (Creation held many larger cities), nor for its splendor (though it was beautiful), nor for the technology of its construction (most of the work was actually done by hand). No, the miracle of Ondar Shambal was that every step of its building was a prayer. The masons who quarried white granite from nearby hills dedicated each strike of their chisels to the Unconquered Sun. The carvers and polishers sang hymns as they worked. Righteous

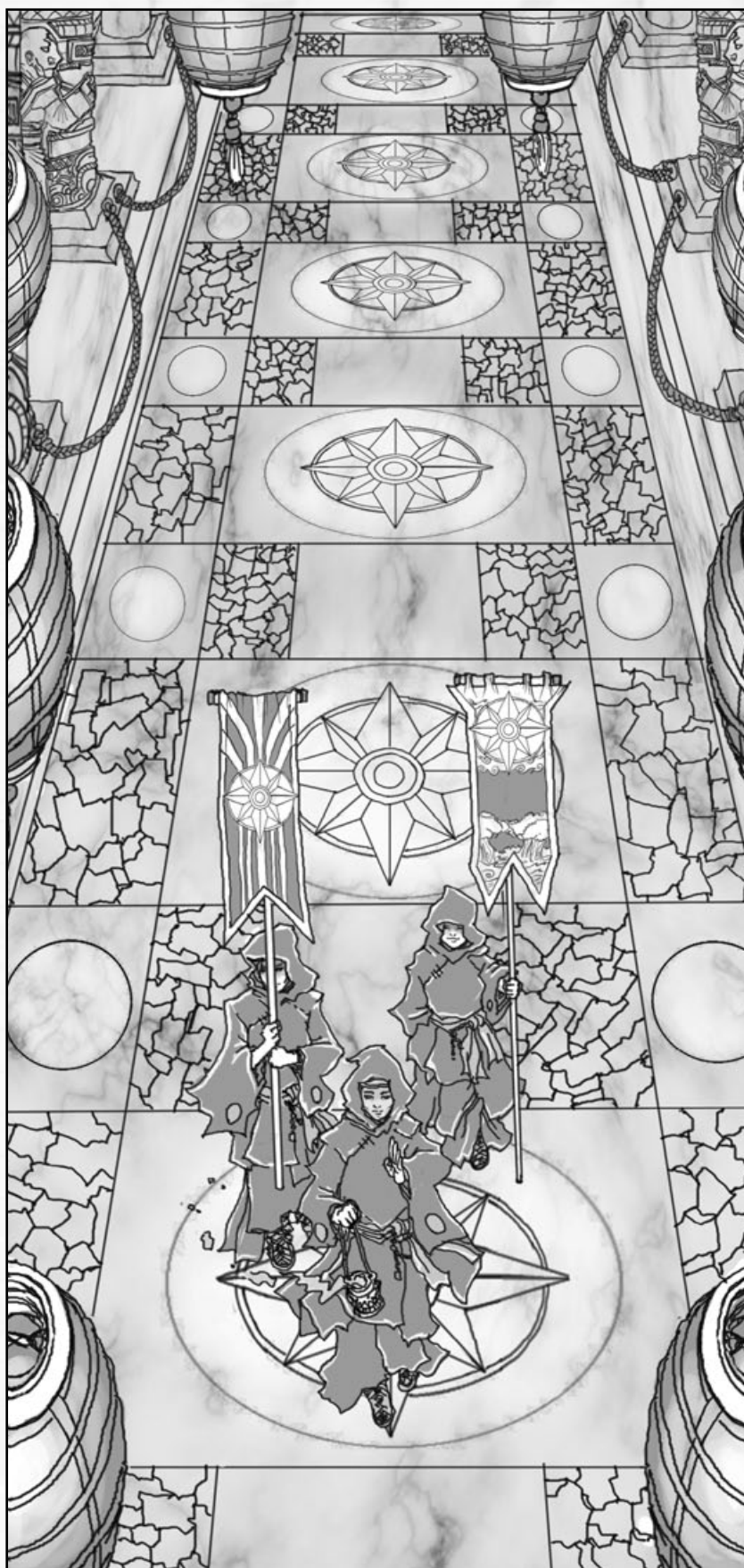


Guide himself hallowed each stone as it was laid. Graven bands of scriptures and sutras ran along the city's streets, and mosaics of precious stone adorned the walls with images of devotion. The city's center held a magnificent temple-mansé to the Unconquered Sun. High, strong walls bounded Ondar Shambal in a perfect circle—not for defense, but to complete the shining city as the image of the sun. The labor took decades, but gods and mortals agreed: Creation held no holier place than Ondar Shambal. The Unconquered Sun himself blessed the city at its dedication.

Hundreds of thousands of acolytes lived in Ondar Shambal, and millions of pilgrims visited every year. Many folk—mortals, Exalts and spirits alike—also made pious gifts to Ondar Shambal, to be named in the city's prayers or just to be part of its holiness. An earth elemental opened a network of caverns beneath the city as extra storage space. A goddess of hot springs created baths for pilgrims. The Bureau of Seasons tempered the region's weather, while agricultural gods blessed the farmlands. The monastery-city became far richer and more luxurious than anyone expected or intended.

Righteous Guide left Ondar Shambal to build a sacred road from the city to the Inland Sea coast as a private devotional labor to fill his old age and retirement from leading the city. In his absence, the Holy City became worldlier. The priests, monks and nuns spent less time praying and working, and more time arguing theology and administering the city's vast wealth. Feasting replaced fasting. The prayer wheels still turned—spun by pilgrims who paid for the privilege. When Righteous Guide returned 300 years later along the road built by his hands alone, he found his monastic city turned greedy, lazy and impious.

The old Zenith Caste spent a full month in rage and despair, whipping himself to the bone in penitential grief as he prayed for guidance and forgiveness. In the end, though, he scourged the worst of the fallen nuns and monks from Ondar Shambal before leaving the city forever. To the Solar Deliberative in Meru, he condemned Ondar Shambal





as apostate. Donations and pilgrims ceased at once, and the city was almost abandoned.

Still, Ondar Shambal remained a well-constructed city with fertile farmland, so people gradually returned. The new settlers included a young Twilight Caste named Tenrae and her Lunar husband Den'Rahin. They claimed Ondar Shambal as their own, renamed it Whitewall and repopulated it as an ordinary city. The nearby mountains turned out to hold metal ores and several rare minerals, including blue jade, so to farming, the inhabitants added mining and metalwork as occupations.

Under the Exalted couple's leadership, Whitewall attained a comfortable prosperity. Tenrae and Den'Rahin governed with a light but responsible hand. Whitewall folk agreed the pair represented the very models of what a Law-giver and Steward should be.

The Bronze Faction found no malcontents among Whitewall's Dragon-Blooded, and so, the usurping Sidereals had to murder Tenrae and Den'Rahin personally, in full knowledge that they slew the innocent. The fighting destroyed a third of the city and killed thousands. Afterward, the new Shogunate brutally suppressed Whitewallers who remained loyal to their slain rulers. People who didn't succumb to mind-affecting Charms or believe propaganda about "newly revealed crimes" learned to stay silent... or they would go to the *other* city, whose sole occupation was murder.

Southeast of Whitewall, the Shogunate built an immense prison camp for the altered humans, artificial life forms and loyalists of the Solar Deliberative. Prisoners from throughout Creation funneled into Camp 17, where they dug mass graves that they themselves would fill. The camp soon became a shadowland haunted by the ghosts of its victims.

Whitewall learned to obey the Shogunate, but never to love it—not with Camp 17 next door as proof of the regime's origin. The Dragon-Blooded did their utmost to hide the city's past, though, by burning chronicles, filling in carvings and painting over murals and mosaics of the Unconquered Sun. Despite the defacement, remnant holiness made Whitewall one of the last cities to fall to the Great Contagion. When the pestilence came, though, Whitewall suffered a death toll as high as anywhere else. The sanctity of the city's walls held, too: The invading Fair Folk besieged Whitewall, but never entered. Ironically, the city also saved its enemies, for the Realm Defense Grid spared everything within a mile of the city's sacred bounds.

After the Great Contagion receded, three powerful gods came to the derelict city. They called themselves the Syndics and manifested as figures with flesh of clear ice over silver bones. Behind their shared mask, however, the Syndics were Luranume, God of Luck; Uvanavu, God of Health; and Yo-Ping, God of Peace. (See **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. III—Yu-Shan**, pp. 142, 152 and 156-157, for descriptions of these gods.)

The Syndics rallied the remnant population and invited refugees to settle. They also negotiated peace treaties with

the angry ghosts of the long-since-decommissioned Camp 17 (now named Marama's Fell after its late commandant, Anjei Marama), the surviving lords of the Fair Folk and the nascent Realm. While his empire still stood, they even paid tribute to the sorcerer Bagrash Köl. Through the centuries of the Second Age, Whitewall has stood as a bastion of civilization in the North—but always afraid of the enemies beyond the city walls.

## HIDDEN HISTORY

The Shogunate tried to destroy records of Whitewall's glorious origin as Ondar Shambal and paint its Celestial Exalted residents as megalomaniacs, tyrants and pervers. When the Syndics took over, they purged the city archives of these false tales, but also of a good deal of authentic Shogunate history. During both purges, however, people loyal to the old regime hid books that supported the history they believed.

More of Ondar Shambal survives than one might expect. The Shogunate's founders feared to demolish too much of the Unconquered Sun's own city or to remove too much of the city's old religious imagery. Instead, the usurpers filled carvings and covered murals and mosaics with white concrete. For instance, the city's famous walls used to bear carved scenes of the Unconquered Sun's deeds and allegories of his rule in Heaven. People who recycle the stone from damaged buildings (mostly in Foretown) often find old concrete flaking off to reveal bits of inscriptions or bas-reliefs. The Whitewall College of Architecture carefully records these architectural fragments. So far, the Syndics find it politically inadvisable to attempt widespread removal of the masking concrete and restoration of the images beneath.

## GEOGRAPHY

Whitewall is the North's largest city-state. It occupies a broad valley between southern spurs of the Black Crag Mountains. A patchwork of farms and orchards fills the valley, but the surrounding foothills are dark with fir and pine. Beyond them rise the glacier-clad mountain peaks. Winter lasts through six months of the year, with a short autumn and a long, cool spring. The city itself is almost 10 miles across, while the valley in which it sits is 40 miles wide. Whitewall's rule extends, loosely, along the famous Traveler's Road to the satellite town of Wallport on the Inland Sea coast.

## THE CITY

At 15 yards high and six yards thick, the walls of Whitewall are probably the tallest, strongest walls in the North. They present a sheer, shining barrier to the outside world. A single gate pierces the wall, leading to the Traveler's Road. Inside, buildings show blank white façades to the streets, with strong



shutters and doors of bronze-bound wood. Architecture varies widely: The tallest buildings date back to the Old Realm, with elaborate, layered spires. Newer construction ranges from three to five stories tall, with simpler designs but occupying older foundations. The streets no longer follow their original strict plan of radiating rectangular neighborhoods with broad plazas between them, but Whitewall remains a clean, well-constructed city.

### THE POWER OF THE WALL

The city wall has 14L/20B soak and 50/100 health levels (see **Exalted**, pp. 153–154). The powers of ghosts, demons, Fair Folk and other creatures of darkness cannot affect them in any way, and these creatures cannot cross the wall to enter the city unless invited in. For instance, if a nemissary had itself flung over the wall by catapult (yes, it's been tried), the corpse it possesses would follow its trajectory and splat on a street or building, but the ghost would find itself ejected from the corpse in midair. Tunneling under the wall doesn't help, either: The ban extends below the surface, too. Only a citizen—a person who sincerely considers Whitewall her home—can issue a valid invitation of ingress.

### FORETOWN

Whitewallers divide their city based on proximity to the single gate. The southern third, nearest the gate, they call Foretown. As the sector that foreign traders first see when they enter Whitewall, Foretown naturally holds the highest proportion of shops and markets. Jewelers, swordsmiths and other artisans congregate in Foretown. So do the city's stables, teahouses and caravansaries. The district also holds Whitewall's college of mining and metallurgy. Very little First Age construction survives in Foretown, with most buildings there less than five centuries old.

Foretown becomes Whitewall's busiest district in summer, when foreign and local merchants crowd the bazaars. "Market season" exposes Whitewallers to people from throughout Creation—and their cuisine as well, thanks to the food kiosks scattered between the vendors' stalls. At the season's height, the commercial fair spreads outside the gate to form a town of tents and wagons. Armed guards and innumerable torches discourage the Fair Folk and the dead from raiding the encampment after the sun sets and the gate shuts. Every year, though, a few furtive merchants slip into the night. Whitewall folk prefer not to know what these merchants offer to their uncanny partners, or what they receive in return.

### MIDTOWN

Farmers and miners live in the middle third of Whitewall, as do brewers, carpenters and other tradesmen. Many artisans

and clerks who work in Foretown prefer the cheaper lodgings of Midtown. The district also holds the Jewelers' College and the College of Agriculture. Many First Age buildings still stand in Midtown, albeit remodeled and repurposed. Butcher shops and bakeries occupy ancient chantries, while monastic cells have become apartments.

Whitewall's tallest building is a Solar temple-manse in the exact city center. Its gilded spires and friezes remain undefiled, still proclaiming the glory of the Unconquered Sun. The Dragon-Blooded tried to occupy the heart of Whitewall, but the manse fought them off, its defenses adapting to each new attack. (The Shogunate could have destroyed the manse but realized that doing so would reduce the region's economic value.) The Syndics couldn't claim the manse either. It accepts no one but Lawgivers as residents.

### THE CENTRAL TEMPLE

Solar Manse •••••

Whitewall's central temple-manse caps a level-5 Solar demesne, but produces only a three-dot hearthstone, a Gem of Grace that grants a one-die bonus to all Charisma or Manipulation rolls. Much of the manse's power goes to defending itself. Chapter Two of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex** explains manse Creation Points and powers.

**Game Effects:** (Manse's rating of  $5 \times 2$ ) + 2 (for a reduced hearthstone) = 12 Creation Points. It is, of course, a *Temple Manse* (3 points). It also has *Ability Enlightenment* (Investigation, Larceny, Occult and War to analyze intruders and prepare suitable countermeasures; 3 points, since this is a favored power for Solar manses). It has *Ultra-Deadly Traps* (3 points), further enhanced by a unique *Adaptive Defense* (+2 points) to tailor and relocate lethal surprises. A *Comfort Zone* (1 point) supplies warmth, Essence lighting, running water and other amenities in the apartment for the manse's owner. Finally, another unique four-point power augments the soil's fertility throughout Whitewall's valley. The total surpasses the manse's available Creation Points—but this was, after all, one of the greatest works of the Old Realm, built using techniques that modern geomancers can scarcely imagine.

### AFTON

The district farthest from the city gate holds the Syndics' hall and the upper crust of Whitewall society. Wealthy magnates, the most skilled armorers and jewelers and high-ranking officers of Whitewall's elite military and police force, the Guardians, live in Afton. A variety of small gods, supernatural half-breeds and a few outcaste Dragon-Blooded join them, as do various ambassadors. The district also holds the Whitewall College of Architecture and the Lotus Mind College of Thaumaturgical Sciences.





## UNDERTON

An orderly system of tunnels and caverns underlies Whitewall, forming a district whose name the locals pronounce “Unt’n.” Technically, it’s a slum inhabited by Whitewall’s poorest folk... but it’s a slum with the warm golden glow of an Old Realm lighting system that no longer functions in the rest of the city. Underton stays warm, too, and residents never need to worry about the weather. Yet, Underton really wasn’t designed as a place for people to live. Underton folk have jobs such as street sweeper, garbage hauler and day laborer (not to mention mugger, pickpocket and shoplifter).

Underton also holds the city’s public baths, so the district sees a steady stream of foot traffic from the surface. The Guardians patrol frequently to preserve the peace and order for the bathers. Underton folk can use the baths too—at night, when they won’t disturb higher-class folk.

## BEYOND THE WALLS

Large, multi-family farmhouses dot the valley around Whitewall, with mining and logging camps in the hills and mountains beyond. Most of these are seasonally occupied: The residents move into the city in winter and return in the spring to work the land and the mines. Every habitation is strongly fortified and carries every protection against the Fair Folk and the dead that Whitewall’s thaumaturses can devise.

## THE TRAVELER’S ROAD

In the Old Realm, the road from Whitewall to the Inland Sea coast was called the Holy Road. Nowadays, people call it the Traveler’s Road or the Great Northern Road. At 20 yards wide, it remains the largest road in the North. Its white granite pavement shows little wear despite centuries of use. Bridges cross a few small streams along the way. The blessing on the road keeps it relatively warm in the depths of winter, as if the sun shone on it all the time, and the road stays free of snow, ice and debris despite the fiercest storms and blizzards. Every 40 yards, the road runs between pairs of stone pillars topped with inward-facing crescents. These crescents once lit the roadway, but the enchantment stopped working centuries ago.

The Traveler’s Road carries subtler and stronger enchantments as well. The soul of any human who dies on the road immediately enters Lethe. Moreover, any mortal traveler who attacks anyone else on the road feels an overwhelming compulsion thereafter to hang himself from a pillar or convenient tree. The dead and the raksha travel the Holy Road as well. Ghosts who attack other travelers are cast into Lethe, while Fair Folk are hurled into the Deep Wyld. No one knows what would happen to a god, elemental, demon or Exalt who broke the road’s curse of safe conduct—it’s never happened as far as anyone knows—but the consequences would surely be dire.

Whitewallers know the road’s curse as the Thousand-Year Pact, negotiated at the start of the Second Age between

the Syndics, certain fae lords and at least one Deathlord. (Ruvia, god of roads and chief minister of the Golden Barque of Heaven in the Bureau of Destiny, claims that he actually wove this curse into the road’s fate.) The pact has just over 200 years to go before the fae and the Deathlords can demand a re-negotiation.

## RULES OF THE ROAD

Any human who commits violence while on the Holy Road—Exalted or not—suffers a Compulsion effect to kill himself by hanging, while the dead are compelled to accept Lethe and Fair Folk are compelled to abandon their corporeal forms and depart Creation. There is no avoiding the curse: Setting foot on the road means accepting the terms of the safe-conduct pact. Violators can resist by spending one Willpower point per hour. The Exalted and spirits break the Compulsion after four hours. Mortals, the dead and the fae must spend eight Willpower to free themselves. If they lack sufficient Willpower... too bad. Even success means losing a *dot* of permanent Willpower, from the terrible struggle.

The roadside pillars once did more than illuminate the Traveler’s Road. Their golden glow also seared the dead and undead as an environmental effect (2A/action, Trauma 5). Each pair of lights can be considered a one-dot artifact for purposes of repairing them. They must remain attached to the road, though—they do not function anywhere else.

## MARAMA’S FELL

The Traveler’s Road crosses a tongue of Marama’s Fell. The road itself stays part of Creation at night, so people who die on this section of road still cannot become ghosts. Anyone who steps off the Holy Road at night, however, enters the Underworld.

Along this section of road and around this tongue of the shadowland, the Syndics erect small fanes dedicated to numerous gods of life, joy, fertility and similar concepts. Whitewallers call them the resplendent chrysanthemum shrines. The Syndics reward families that hold weddings, conceptions, births and birthday celebrations at these shrines. Not only does the family receive a modest cash award (of Resources • value), but the Syndics bless them with a year and a day of exceptional health (two bonus dice to all rolls for resisting disease). Over time, the shrines push back the shadowland’s borders. Where once the shadowland crossed 50 miles of road and extended 100 miles beyond it to the West, it now darkens only 20 miles of road.

The denizens of Marama’s Fell tear down the shrines every winter, but the Whitewallers rebuild and re-consecrate them every spring. The expedition to restore the resplendent



chrysanthemum shrines sets out on the first day of Ascending Earth (though snow generally still covers the ground) and is a major festival in Whitewall.

## WALLPORT

At its southern terminus, the Traveler's Road enters another circuit of white granite walls: Wallport, Whitewall's filthy, stunted brother. These walls are only seven yards high and two yards thick, with a third of the circle cut off by the black basalt cliffs of the coast. The Essence-powered elevators that once moved people and cargo between the city and the harbor no longer function. Instead, steps and ramps descend about 20 yards to a lower city built on the narrow strip of waterfront.

Upper Wallport was a wealthy and beautiful town during the First Age, while Lower Wallport was as seedy as any waterfront in Creation. The old walls remain, but now, both halves of the town abound in brothels, saloons and gambling dens. The harbor can accommodate just four large merchant ships at a time, which prevents Wallport from growing any larger. Many ships have sunk while waiting their turn out in the stormy Northern sea.

About 2,000 people live in Wallport—mostly stevedores, barkeeps, prostitutes and other people who cater to the ships that come to trade with distant Whitewall. Men outnumber women more than three to one. Most Wallport folk come from Whitewall, either willingly or through exile. They are a rough lot, often drunk or drugged when they aren't working. Every Whitewaller knows that Wallport is a cesspit for dumping malcontents and failures. The town guards ignore most crimes but deal harshly with anyone who threatens Whitewall's commerce.

The cesspit analogy is more than metaphor, too. Half a mile west of Wallport, a large pipe spits Whitewall's sewage into the sea, washed out by the runoff from the baths and the city water system. The sewage from 700,000 people makes Wallport stink. The Essence converters along the 700-mile pipe that once transformed raw sewage to a pure and sparkling waterfall have not functioned since the time of the Great Contagion.

## SOCIETY

Whitewallers know they are luckier than most people in Creation. Most Whitewallers are middle class: not rich enough to live in splendor but not worried about starving. They can afford life's decencies, such as shoes, two changes of clothes, rugs on the floor and a cast-iron stove to heat a sturdy, draft-free home. Whitewallers drink clean water and walk clean, safe streets. In many parts of Creation, even rich people cannot say as much.

Their love of safety and prosperity does not make Whitewallers cowardly. They are disciplined, not docile. Every Whitewaller learns at a young age that their security depends on a strictly ordered society that everyone must work to maintain. No one is above this duty or below it...

and for the sake of comfort and safety, Whitewallers accept some grim necessities.

## LIFE BEHIND WALLS

The constant danger beyond the walls shapes Whitewall's culture in many ways, not all of them obvious. For one thing, Whitewallers place a high value on civility. Good manners enable 700,000 people to stay shut in the city through the long winter without driving each other crazy. Whitewall's law even includes a special class of misdemeanors called "offenses against public civility." These offenses include just about anything that could irritate another person, from poor hygiene to loud quarreling. Hostile or eccentric behavior can bankrupt a Whitewaller through fines or eventually lead to banishment.

Public intoxication is, of course, an offense against public civility. Virtually all drugs are legal in Whitewall, but apart from alcohol, they are so heavily taxed that few people indulge heavily or often. Smuggling to evade these import duties is one of the few forms of organized crime to afflict Whitewall. If people want to get drunk or stoned in private, though, that's their own business.

Privacy is another way that Whitewallers preserve their precious social stability. Whitewallers prefer not to show strong emotions in public or to ask too closely about another person's private life. They smile more than they laugh and weep only behind closed doors. Outsiders often find Whitewallers a bit stuffy—but very polite.

In sharp contrast to their strict and sober code of public conduct, anything goes in the privacy of a Whitewaller's home. As long as no one gets hurt (who didn't want to be) and the city's defense is not compromised, what happens behind closed doors is no one else's business. An invitation to enter a Whitewaller's home—to come inside her family's set of walls—shows that she considers you a trustworthy friend for life. Foreigners who receive this rare privilege are sometimes surprised to find that in contrast to their exteriors of stark white stone and concrete, Whitewall homes have cheery and colorful interiors, with brightly painted furniture and patterned rugs on the floors.

Whitewallers do much of their socializing in the city's many large teahouses. Local folk prefer to conduct business meetings at one of these establishments over a meal and, of course, tea. Whitewallers take their tea hot, with milk and butter. If they drink tea with someone they don't know, they pay close attention to his reaction to this local idiosyncrasy. If he shows surprise at these additions to his drink, he might just be a traveler newly arrived in the city... or maybe he's not human at all.

## THE PUBLIC BATHS

After their enchanted walls, many Whitewallers would call the city's public baths its greatest treasure. A spring of hot water and steam feeds a large complex of bathing pools. The Syndics endorse cleanliness as an important contributor





to public health and wellbeing, and so, Whitewallers regard frequent bathing as part of good citizenship. (The city's many soap makers wish that visiting barbarians would buy their product as readily.) For a modest fee, bathers can hire an attendant to scrub them, shave them, massage them, anoint them with scented oils or pamper them in other ways.

The baths come second only to the teahouses as a place to socialize. Children bathe in one area, adults of marrying age in another, and elders in a third. Within those zones, Whitewallers congregate in ad-hoc groups of friends, relatives, neighbors or co-workers. For all their public reserve, Whitewallers consider it perfectly natural to see each other naked at the baths.

Adolescents and young adults often use distant, steam-shrouded alcoves as trysting spots. Parents and grandparents shake their heads and cluck their tongues at the moral turpitude of the young, but that's just part of growing older. Odds are, they had their first liaisons in the same alcoves. The baths have become a standard part of Whitewall courtship rituals... and if the steam ever clears for a moment and Whitewallers see activities the participants meant to be private, they pretend not to see and don't gossip afterward.

At least, not in public.

## SOCIAL CLASSES

Whitewall has its rich and poor. Wealthy Whitewallers enjoy luxuries such as jewels, fine tapestries and delicacies from distant lands, but they do not flaunt their riches or

## CALIBRATION BABIES

Whitewallers believe that making love during Calibration repels the evil powers that roam during those uncanny days. This results in a surge of births nine months later. The birthrate stays high through the next six months, from children conceived during the long winter when people spend most of their time indoors.

show contempt for their neighbors. Poor Whitewallers wear mended castoff clothes and live in tunnels, but even beggars do not cringe, abase themselves for a crust of bread or scream abuse when denied a coin. Rich man and beggar both know that their life could depend on the other's vigilance and skill at defending the city.

Whitewallers also enjoy considerable social mobility. The Syndics make sure that any hardworking Whitewaller has a chance to improve her lot in life: If a poor Whitewaller cannot reach the middle class, at least her children might. Attaining genuine wealth requires extraordinary skill as a jeweler, merchant or savant, extraordinary luck as a miner or extraordinary courage in the Guardians. Nevertheless, a few Whitewallers become very rich.

The Syndics do not permit the development of a segregated, closed aristocracy, though. One device is charity.



The Syndics give divine blessings to Whitewallers who donate large sums to hospitals and schools for the poor, the resplendent chrysanthemum shrines and other philanthropic ventures. Conversely, Whitewallers who conspicuously show that they care more for their own fortune than the good of the city find themselves not enjoying their wealth and not keeping it very long. They are, after all, ruled by gods who command luck, health and peace... and can deny these boons if they choose.

## MAKING A LIVING

Whitewallers enjoy unusual prosperity for Northern folk. They owe the relative comfort of their lives to a great deal of hard work and careful exploitation of their resources, as well as the safety provided by their walls.

### FARMING

More than half of all Whitewallers engage in some aspect of farming. Many of them live in the city and commute daily to the nearer fields and orchards. Staple crops include barley, oats, peas and potatoes, but Whitewallers also raise cold-tolerant root crops such as radishes, turnips and sugar beets. Extensive orchards produce apples and cherries, from which Whitewallers produce excellent cider and cherry wine.

The outermost fields, which are the most difficult to tend safely, generally grow alfalfa and hay for livestock. For safety, Whitewallers raise a third of their livestock inside the city walls. This costs more, but some enemy spitefully destroys a sheepfold, cattle barn, henhouse or pigpen every year, no matter how well the Whitewallers guard and ward them. Such difficulties make meat an expensive treat for many Whitewallers.

### MINING

Other Whitewallers work in the mines. The hills and mountains produce abundant iron and silver ore, with lead as a frequent by-product. Coal mines supply Whitewall with fuel. The quarries for white granite dating to the city's construction remain in use. Most importantly, several First Age mines still produce white and blue jade. Other mines produce gemstones or rare ores used to produce high-quality alloys. A few minerals have esoteric uses in alchemy and crafting artifacts, such as pitchblende and realgar. One mine produces the crystals used to fashion concussive Essence cannons (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 131). Mining is dangerous for Whitewallers due to the mines' distance from the safety of the city, but the profits justify the risks.

Some mines date back to the Old Realm. These often retain Essence lighting, air conditioning and other conveniences—even maps drawn long ago by elementals, showing where to find veins of desired minerals. Some of these mines are for minerals whose use Creation has forgotten. The newer mines present the usual hazards of working in cramped spaces underground, such as firedamp, flooding and collapse.

Logging is a related industry. In addition to construction, Whitewallers cut a lot of timber to reinforce mineshafts. Even more wood goes to make charcoal for smelting ores, with pitch and turpentine as by-products. (Impurities in the coal make it unsuitable for metallurgy.)

## ARTIFICE, ENCHANTMENT AND EDUCATION

Whitewall's abundant and diverse ores make the city a center for fine metalwork. The constant need for defense gave rise to a large arms industry, producing all manner of weapons and armor. The smiths produce other precision metalwork too, including navigational instruments. The city also has a large and related industry of jewelers, gem cutters and gem engravers, with lens grinding as a recent spin-off.

Whitewall possesses a significant population of thaumaturges, with special emphasis on metallurgical alchemy, enchantment, warding and exorcism. Between them, Whitewall's elite artisans and thaumaturges produce a wide variety of talismans, warding amulets and similar minor wonders. They also produce many superior weapons and armor, from perfect blades to spears enchanted to wound ghosts. Their supply of jade and other occult minerals even enables them to produce a small number of daiklaves, powerbows and other artifact weapons and armor.


Such industries require an educated populace. Whitewall has a comprehensive system of public primary education. At least 90 percent of the population can read and write, even among the poor—a feat few societies in Creation can equal (or want to). Colleges of agriculture, architecture, mining and metallurgy, lapidary and thaumaturgy supply higher education for Whitewallers who seek and can afford it. The Syndics (aided by local philanthropists) offer scholarships for exceptionally promising but poor students, on the explicit grounds that such skills are a vital strategic asset for the city. Precision metalwork and a literate population incidentally lead to a publishing industry that prints using movable type. Folk throughout the North say you can recognize a traveling Whitewaller by the book in her saddlebags... and that she thinks you're an ignorant savage.

### COMMERCE

Most of Whitewall's trade goes South along the Traveler's Road. The rest goes North along a pass that leads to Fella and points beyond, notably Gethamane and Shanarinara. Whitewall barely feeds itself, though it manages to export limited quantities of farm products—notably a superior cherry wine much prized in the Realm. Whitewall exports a great deal of metal, though, from raw ingots to costly mechanical toys and jewelry. The city even mints its own silver dinars and dirhams, modeled on those of the Scavenger Lands. In fact, Whitewall is the chief source of money in the North. (Within the city, though, most Whitewallers buy and sell using paper scrip modeled on that of the Realm.) Jade is certainly Whitewall's most







profitable export, with the Realm as chief purchaser. Factors from Lookshy and the Realm alike frequently visit to buy jade and other rare minerals used in alchemy, enchantment and crafting magitech devices.

## RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Most Whitewallers worship the Syndics. (They do not know the true identities of the three gods, but that doesn't stop their prayers from reaching the proper destination.) Most homes include a cabinet-sized shrine to the three, in which the gods are represented by a glass and silver-gilt oil lamp with three wicks, backed by a white wheel with eight spokes. The Syndics claim only to be the city's caretakers, however. They are not the gods of Whitewall, only gods *in* Whitewall—a distinction the Syndics insist that Whitewallers observe even in casual conversation.

So as not to provoke the Realm, the Syndics do not name the god of Whitewall. The pristine Solar manse in the city center makes this god's identity abundantly clear, though. A significant number of Whitewall's inhabitants revere the Unconquered Sun. They particularly honor him as the bringer of springtime and the end of the long, deadly winter. Whitewallers also worship major Celestial deities associated with their professions. For instance, everyone in Whitewall's elite warrior-police force offers at least token reverence to Voharun and Nasamara, the chief gods of Northern war.

Yet, Whitewallers feel little need to propitiate the Terrestrial small gods of their locale—not when three powerful gods rule them in the King of Heaven's own city. For example, miners regularly treat with earth elementals and small gods of mountains and minerals, but those miners invoke the authority of Celestial gods such as the Jade Goddesses and the threat of retribution from the Syndics.

The Syndics permit the Immaculate Order to preach within Whitewall, and the city has a number of small fanes (mostly in Foretown, but also one attached to the Realm's embassy and a charity hospital in Underton). After seven centuries, though, Immaculate missionaries have converted only a few Whitewallers.

That aside, the Syndics strictly forbid any propitiation of creatures of darkness. City officials diligently investigate any rumor about worship of demons, Fair Folk and the dead. Even a small offering to an ancestor's ghost carries a fine, while persistent ancestor worship brings summer exile. Whitewallers know that ghosts can lie, while demons and the fae do little else. Any bid for worship is most likely a plot to bring creatures of darkness into the city.

## MAGIC

In contrast to Whitewall's abundance of thaumaturges and arcane artisans, the city lacks a school of sorcery (although the Syndics would like to get one). A number of sorcerers—chiefly outcaste Terrestrial Exalted—practice

## PRAYER IN WHITEWALL

The spiritually active architecture, block-by-block consecration and mandala layout of Ondar Shambal once acted to multiply the power of the inhabitants' prayers. Immense hidden mechanisms even turned buildings and entire neighborhoods as gigantic slow prayer wheels. Broken, defaced and partially rebuilt, Whitewall still somewhat magnifies the Essence that a god receives from the inhabitants' prayers. In rules terms, this simply means that a god with worshipers in Whitewall needs somewhat fewer people to achieve a given Cult rating. In most cases, this has no effect on play. Prayers conducted in Afton, however, have their difficulty reduced by two because of the relatively intact sacred architecture. In Midtown, prayer roll difficulties decrease by one.

in the city, though. By law, sorcerers must assist the Guardians by enchanting weapons and joining in battles against fae, ghosts and other uncanny foes.

## ESSENCE CHANNELERS

The Syndics welcome any Terrestrial Exalt who chooses to dwell in Whitewall. The Dragon-Blooded bless the city by their presence, as the Immaculate Order teaches. Nevertheless, any Dynast or outcaste who tries to attract worship finds no takers in Whitewall.

The Syndics also tolerate Solar Anathema to a shocking degree. The Eclipse Caste called Rune, who now occupies the temple-manse, is merely the latest Solar to Exalt in Whitewall. A Dawn Caste called Macha Pethisdottir holds an officer's commission in the Guardians. Immaculate historians note that two or three Whitewallers became Anathema every century, and while the Syndics did not bar the Wyld Hunt, they never helped, either. Time and again, Solar Anathema grew powerful in Whitewall and were slain only with great difficulty after long pursuit.

The reasons are simple: The Syndics never abandoned hope of a Solar resurgence. They exploited Solars who Exalted in their city, while hoping they would draw the Unconquered Sun's attention to Creation in general and Whitewall in particular. The Syndics also used their contacts in the Bureau of Destiny to raise the odds of Creation's few free Solar Exaltations finding hosts within Whitewall.

Yet, the Syndics never extended such favor to Lunar Exalted, whom they view as barbaric, or the hidden Side-realm Exalted. The Syndics pull every string they have to discourage Viziers from visiting Whitewall—even Sidereals in the Gold Faction—and to encourage them to leave. The three gods greatly fear the consequences should the

Bureau of Destiny discover their thoroughly illegal rule of a city in Creation.

The Exalted are not the only channelers of Essence in Whitewall. The Lotus Mind Academy regularly enlightens the Essence of its graduates. With intense training, Guardians also enlighten their Essence so they can wield artifact weapons and armor. A number of renegade small gods and elementals dwell in Whitewall too.

Despite the hostility between Whitewall and its uncanny neighbors, proximity leads to a small but steady stream of Ghost-Blooded and Fae-Blooded mortals. Such half-breeds have only one real choice in Whitewall: joining the Guardians. Any half-breed who does not devote her life to protecting the city is suspected of working for her inhuman parent.

## THE THOUSAND-YEAR PACT

As one of their first acts, the Syndics negotiated a treaty with the ghosts of Marama's Fell and with the local raksha, called the Winter Folk. By treaty, neither side shall attack the other. As token of this agreement, Whitewall yearly sets out 24 prisoners—a dozen each for the fae and the dead. No one really knows what happens to these sacrifices in the night, but there's an awful lot of screaming. Such is the price of Whitewall's continued safety.

## GOVERNMENT


The Syndics act as Whitewall's ultimate guarantors of civic order. They ordained the city's government and wrote its laws, and no one else can legally change them. All three Syndics must reach consensus to pass a new law. Three people—even three powerful gods—cannot do all the administrative work of running a large city, though, and the Syndics have other responsibilities elsewhere. Therefore, they delegate most of city governance to a cadre of judges and a civil service of inspectors. For military power, Whitewall has its professional city guard (prosaically called the Guardians) and its large militia.

A brief civil charter sets forth the basic laws of Whitewall. Children must memorize the charter by age 12, and failure to do so results in a fine to their parents. Outsiders who want to become citizens must memorize the charter as well. Few Whitewallers find this difficult, for the charter is only a few pages long. In Whitewall, no one can legitimately plead ignorance of the law.

## THE SYNDICS

When in Whitewall, the Syndics reside in a large temple-palace in Afton. This happens to be in the largest intact block of Old Realm buildings, which still magnify the efficacy (and Essence) of prayer to some degree. The





Syndics receive a wealth of prayer from Whitewall that few gods can equal. In return, the Syndics keep Whitewall well policed and peaceful, hygienically clean and sufficiently lucky to avoid random disasters. So far, the three gods have managed to hide their role as the Syndics well enough to avoid Celestial audits and grave censure (since their activities as the Syndics break many of Heaven's laws).

While the three gods enjoy the intensity of prayer from Whitewall, in the long term, they want to restore Ondar Shambal. The Syndics already have plans to rebuild the city section by section, using both salvaged stone and new granite from the old quarries. For full efficacy, though, they need a Zenith Caste to bless each block as it is laid. They hope that by restoring Whitewall's spiritual power, they can draw the Unconquered Sun's attention back to Creation and obtain his support in spreading Whitewall's peace and order to the rest of Creation.

## JUDGES

Whitewall's system of law and justice emphasizes arbitration among competing interests. Therefore, while the Syndics write the laws, judges implement and apply them. Not only do judges try criminal cases and assign punishments to lawbreakers, they hear civil disputes on subjects ranging from divorce to water rights. Judges have wide latitude in how to apply the laws.

When disputes involve spirits, the Exalted or government officials—or if the case is otherwise strange or difficult—the judges refer the case to the Syndics. The three gods magically compel everyone in a case to speak

honestly and without reservation, which can lead to surprising (if not always relevant) discoveries about citizens. The judges record every decision of the Syndics as a body of precedent for their own verdicts.

## PUNISHMENTS

For minor crimes, up to theft and public brawling, Whitewall holds a token fine and public shaming as sufficient punishment. Greater crimes incur correspondingly higher fines. Major crimes result in exile. Repeated lesser crimes can also bring expulsion, as a judge decides that a person is just too much trouble to allow in the city. Exiles may be jailed in sections of Underton until the time comes for expulsion.

This punishment further divides into summer and winter exile. An exile found guilty of armed robbery, repeated shoplifting, purveying phony enchantments, negligent homicide or the like leaves the city in high summer, with a pack of whatever food, clothing and money he can carry on his own back. Summer exiles leave the city at dawn. Grave crimes, such as rape, murder, owning slaves or bringing creatures of darkness into the city, result in winter exile. These people leave the city at dusk in the depths of winter, with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Few survive even a single night.

The most heinous criminals are reserved for the yearly sacrifice to the Fair Folk and the dead. Compared to this, winter exile is a mercy. Only after the sacrifice do the remaining criminals suffer winter exile.

## INSPECTORS

Whitewall's inspectors handle most of the day-to-day administration of the city, from collecting taxes to testing artifacts and talismans to see if their bear genuine enchantments. These officials inspect goods for quality and value, inspect buildings for structural integrity and inspect the streets for cleanliness, among many other duties.

Inspectors handle the city government's finances and paperwork. For physical labor, the appropriate office hires local companies. Some of Whitewall's largest businesses (apart from farming and mining) perform civic services such as street sweeping, garbage collection and lighting the coal-fired lanterns mounted at intersections of the main streets.

Most of the inspectors' work is rather dull. Not all the city's uncanny foes go on instant rampages once they sneak inside, though. Inspectors must go everywhere in Whitewall, and so, sometimes, they discover unholy threats gaining strength in disused tunnels or other nooks and crannies. The city honors their memories.

## WHITEWALL'S MILITARY

The Syndics decreed that Whitewall should not have a large, standing military. Apart from the cost of feeding, housing and training large numbers of soldiers, the Syndics do not want a powerful military class that can

### THE HARPIST

Despite Whitewall's hatred and fear of the unholy, one demon constantly resides in the heart of civil power. The city's thaumaturges summoned an angyalka demon (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. V—The Roll of Glorious Divinity II**, pp. 72–74) and fettered it with orichalcum chains. All day, every day, it plays the harp of Time in the chamber of the Syndics.

Only the Syndics know the reason for their eldritch harpist: An angyalka's music reminds listeners of who they are. Without this reminder, the Syndics might forget that they are three gods working in close partnership, but retaining personal interests and duties outside their shared masquerade. Without the angyalka they might merge into a single three-bodied deity, bound to Whitewall alone.

The angyalka, called Ethernais, does not mind her captivity. An angyalka who ceased to play music would cease to exist, and the Syndics' palace is far more comfortable than Malfeas.



develop goals and ambitions of its own. Yet, the Syndics also recognize that Whitewall occupies an exceptionally dangerous part of Creation.

The Syndics resolve this dilemma through a two-tier military. Every able-bodied adult Whitewaller belongs to the city's militia, but this huge force mobilizes only during emergencies. The city's Guardians are highly trained and superbly equipped, but relatively few in numbers. What's more, the Guardians spend most of their time as Whitewall's police, mingling with the people instead of set apart from them.

## MILITIA

From ages 17 to 37, every Whitewaller who can fight, male or female, serves in the city's militia. Each citizen receives a number, from 1 to 28. On that day of each month from Descending Earth through Ascending Air, they report to one of the city's training fields for drill. As their instructors tell them, "If you can swing a hoe, you can swing a halberd." Many citizens train with weapons based on the tools they use in their work: picks for miners, axes for woodcutters, bill-hooks for orchardists, and so on. Other citizens train with spears or straight swords. Militia members also learn to wield a missile weapon such as a javelin or bow. They wear breastplates and pot helmets, and may carry shields.

Militia members train and operate in squads of five, maniples of 50 or cohorts of 1,000, with one additional corporal for every squad and a captain (called a lochagos) for each maniple. Guardians act as officers and instructors for the cohorts and maniples. While the members of a maniple usually come from a single neighborhood, each cohort mixes citizens from throughout the city in fine disregard for social classes.

Since Whitewall doesn't fight many wars, the militia most often acts as backup for the Guardians when a creature of darkness invades the city. The one-day-a-month warriors cannot realistically fight such foes, but that day's militia members can spread through the city to keep watch and back up Guardians who search from building to building.

## GUARDIANS

The 6,000 Guardians are highly trained professional fighters. In addition to mortal heroes, their ranks include outcaste Dragon-Blooded, spirits, God-Bloods and mortals who had their Essence enlightened by the Syndics. What's more, Guardians carry high-quality weapons and armor. Every Guardian carries at least one superior weapon of fine quality, and many of them surpass this with exceptional weapons, or even perfect weapons or artifacts. Their weapons might also carry sorcerous or thaumaturgical enchantments. Armor is of similar quality. As a final benefit, most Guardians carry at least one talisman, potion or spiritual endowment, courtesy of Whitewall's thaumaturges and the Syndics. Not counting

the Syndics, Guardians tend to be the most personally powerful inhabitants of Whitewall.

Guardians serve as Whitewall's police, operating from 28 precinct houses (including four in Underton). Like the militia, they train in squads of five and maniples of 50, but they have no standing cohorts. Every maniple has a lochagos as a commander; higher ranks include centurion (commanding two maniples) and dekarch (commanding 10 maniples, equal to a general). Guardians walk their beats, break up scuffles, hunt for thieves and perform other law-enforcement functions. A squad of five Guardians has more than enough power to quell most disturbances. What's more, they train to question witnesses and gather evidence for the judges, giving Whitewall its reputation as a city of stern-but-fair justice.

When creatures of darkness rampage through Whitewall, the Guardians coordinate the search and battle the invaders. Maniples can also launch sorties outside the city to punish barbarians, ghosts or Fair Folk for their attacks on travelers, farmers, miners or other people who lack the safety of the city's walls. The Guardians never attempt to defeat any of Whitewall's enemies outright (for that would break the Thousand-Year Pact beyond repair), but tit-for-tat raids show that the city remains vigilant.

## BEHEMOTH HUNTS

The Guardians' greatest tests come when the Fair Folk shape behemoths in their Wyld zones and send them rampaging toward the city or the mining camps. When that happens, the Syndics assemble the most powerful of the Guardians—including sworn brotherhoods of outcaste Dragon-Blooded—to battle the monster. The Syndics also try to recruit any other puissant warriors in town, whatever their origin, from visiting Dynasts to visiting Anathema. So far, they have never needed to try fitting both sorts of Exalted into the same band of monster hunters.

## ARTILLERY

Whitewall's artisans build excellent siege engines, though the city uses such weapons for defense more than attack. The walls are just barely wide enough to accommodate a heavy ballista or onager (see **Scroll of Kings**, pp. 137–138). An iron track on top of the city wall carries at least 60 of these weapons. Heavy, greased tarps protect the weapons from the weather when they are not in use. In addition to heavy iron bolts and balls, Whitewallers use catapults to spread iron caltrops when Fair Folk attack or to launch bags of salt to discourage ghosts. Flaming balls of straw and pitch often intimidate attacking barbarians. The militia includes a cohort of artilleryists who drill with these wall-mounted weapons.



## FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Syndics keep Whitewall strictly neutral—a declared enemy to no one, but conversely an ally to no one. The city-state exchanges ambassadors with the Realm, Gethamane, Shanarinara and the Haslanti League, but offers no one any special concessions.

Early in her reign, the Empress demanded fealty from Whitewall. The Syndics revealed their identities to her and let her know that attacks on Whitewall would result in the Realm losing its health, peace and luck. The Empress settled for token gestures of deference, such as an occasional exchange of minor gifts. Even that much stopped after her disappearance. The Syndics also permitted Wyld Hunts to operate in Whitewall, though without any assistance from the Guardians. That privilege has not been officially revoked. It remains to be seen what happens when the North's chief officer of the Hunt (well known as a raging zealot) learns that the Syndics now employ at least two Anathema.

Whitewall has fairly friendly relations with Gethamane, based largely on their common interest in avoiding foreign entanglements. The city-states trade a bit, Whitewall's cider, grain and vegetables for Gethamane's own strange ores and gems—but Whitewallers believe Gethamane is cursed, and they trade away Gethamane's violet diamonds and other products to other partners.

Whitewall law forbids importing anything grown in Gethamane's fungus gardens, and doing so is grounds for summer exile.

In opening diplomatic relations with the Haslanti League, the Syndics look toward the future. They foresee the League becoming the dominant power in the North and want to create a history of cordial relations. Whitewall's smiths and jewelers also want to obtain Haslanti feathersteel and gems.

The only nation that Whitewall actively courts, though, is distant Lookshy. Whitewall's merchants would love to increase sales of rare minerals to the Seventh Legion. The Guardians, artisans and savants, for various reasons, want to create their own magitech industries and see Lookshy as the only feasible source of sample weapons and lore. So far, the Seventh Legion shows no interest in expanding commerce or sharing secrets.

## ICEWALKERS

Whitewall interacts with the icewalkers rather more than it wants. Charitable Whitewallers call icewalkers "rustic," but most think of them as contemptible savages. For their part, icewalkers generally think of Whitewallers as pampered cowards. Still... icewalkers covet Whitewall's weapons, armor, ornaments and tools. A few times every year, icewalker tribes camp outside the city in hopes of trading their meat, furs and mammoth ivory. In winter,



tribes sometimes merely seek grain and fodder. Faced with starvation, tribes will trade even First Age artifacts they found (or stole, or killed for) for a fraction of their true value.

On occasion, the Syndics hire icewalker tribes as mercenaries to harry other foes—bandits, Wyld barbarians, marauding hobgoblins and the like. The icewalkers hate being used in this fashion but many see this as the best of bad options.

Every visit by a tribe includes at least one barbarian who flies a glider over the city walls, just to show they can do this. If the pilot lands in the city, the Guardians round him up and throw him out but inflict no further punishment.

Rarely, young Whitewallers rebel against the stifling safety of their city and try to join an icewalker tribe. The icewalkers do not encourage this but sometimes accept a young man or woman who bears excellent weapons and armor. Many such adventurers die, and the icewalkers keep their stuff. The survivors usually return to Whitewall after a few months or a year, with exciting stories to tell but eager to return to a “boring” life in the city.

## CREATURES OF DARKNESS

Whitewall’s most important relationships, however, are with its unholy neighbors. Of course, all sides break the Thousand-Year Pact. The raksha and the dead constantly try to sneak into the city for a rampage and attack Whitewallers caught insufficiently defended. The Guardians raid the Winter Folk and the ghosts in retaliation. If either the fae or the dead were better organized, they might attempt all-out war. As it is, various factions harass the city when they do not fight each other. Whitewall’s cunning diplomats sometimes bribe or dupe one group of enemies into attacking another. So far, no leader among the creatures of darkness has attempted a genuine peace with Whitewall.

The ghosts (and other creatures) of Marama’s Fell tend to be savage but divided into many small gangs or tribes that battle each other as much as they threaten Whitewall or anyone else. Two Deathlords—the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible and the Lover Clad in Raiment of Tears—wield some limited influence in the shadowland, and the Syndics made their crucial treaties with them. Still, the Fell is largely anarchic. (See **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. IV—The Underworld** for a description of Marama’s Fell, starting on p. 108.)

The raksha called the Winter Folk are the city’s most organized and persistent foes. These fae operate from a freehold just 50 miles west by northwest of Whitewall, in an extensive Wyld zone. Their coldly beautiful cataphracts, clad in armor of ice and frost, lead hobgoblins with wolfish features or that look like jagged ice-sculptures of misshapen children. The Winter Folk also ride reindeer and use ice weasels as hunting beasts.

The icy cruelty and subtle guile of the Winter Folk are exceptional even for the fae. Not only do they stalk and kill vulnerable Whitewallers, they regularly dazzle and deceive mortals into helping them enter the city. This makes the Winter Folk the most hated of Whitewall’s foes. Whitewall not only equips its own soldiers with iron weapons, the city sells fae-killing iron at very reasonable prices to icewalkers and, indeed, anyone else within several hundred miles who wants to kill Fair Folk.

## RUNE

The city recently gained a powerful diplomatic advantage. A young Whitewaller named Rune recently Exalted as an Eclipse Caste. He has a history with the Winter Folk: The raksha noble Lios seduced Rune into bringing him into the city. When Rune suffered winter exile as a result of the raksha’s rampage, the raksha mocked and tormented him—and when Rune struck back, he Exalted. In the Syndics’ name, Rune walks where mortals dare not. It remains to be seen whether he can produce true peace between Whitewall and its neighbors, but he has given his oath to try.

## SAMPLE COMBAT UNITS

**Scroll of Kings** supplies sample maniples of Whitewall’s militia and Guardians (see **Scroll of Kings**, pp. 69–70). Whitewall has enough outcaste Terrestrial Exalted to field a few sworn brotherhoods (see **Scroll of Kings**, p. 124), and the same write-up could represent elite squads of minor elementals, God-Bloods or enlightened mortal martial artists, with some reduction in the unit’s Might.

## WHITEWALL 14TH COHORT

**Description:** If Whitewall faces all-out war, the Syndics call up both the militia and the Guardians to form cohorts of 1,020 militia members, with 20 Guardians as lieutenants and a Guardian centurion in command. The cohort gains further advantages from divine blessings, thaumaturgy or exploiting the weaknesses of supernatural foes—iron against the Fair Folk, or bags of salt to make barriers the dead cannot cross. These provide the cohort with its Might.

**Commanding Officer:** Centurion Raneka

**Armor Color:** Bronzed steel breastplate over warm woolen garments, pot helm with a raven feather





**Motto:** “No Passing the Wall”

**General Makeup:** 1,040 infantry with diverse weapons and self bows

**Overall Quality:** Fair

**Magnitude:** 6

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 2   **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 1   **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 8   **Might:** 1   **Armor:** 2 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 2

**Formation:** The cohort’s commander is a heketa, a type of water elemental (described on pp. 125–126 of *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. IV—*The Roll of Glorious Divinity I*), who escaped the rule of the heketa’s monarch and mother, Ogime the Frog Queen. Raneka became a warrior and a citizen of Whitewall. She creates and directs rainstorms to hinder Whitewall’s foes. The cohort additionally has six relays, three sorcerers and three heroes, the latter six all Guardians of lochagos rank. Whitewall’s troops move easily between relaxed and close formation.

Whitewall, a Magnitude 4 Dominion

**Military:** 3   **Government:** 2   **Culture:** 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 3 (Superior Diplomats +3), Bureaucracy 3, Craft 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 3, Occult 4 (Savant Academy +1, Supernatural Etiquette +2), Stealth 1, War 3 (Creatures of Darkness +2)

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 4, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** Temperance   **Current Limit:** 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Bonus Points:** 20   **External Bonus Points:** 12

**Notes:** Whitewall’s bonus points go to one dot each of Bureaucracy, Integrity, Investigation, Occult and War. Its external bonus points come from its trade relations and its ability to manipulate its hostile neighbors. These points go to an added dot of Awareness, and the Awareness, Occult and War specialties. The Syndics are all sorcerers with legitimacy.

In Limit Break, Whitewall’s people become convinced that whatever problems they face come from their unholy neighbors and wrack their own society with a witch-hunt in search of collaborators within the city.



WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE? LET ME GO! YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

THAT OLD FAMILIAR REFRAIN... IT HAS BECOME A PART OF THE RITUAL ITSELF.



BUT WE MUST DO THIS. GETHAMANE WOULD STARVE IF WE DIDN'T.



HERE. THIS ONE.

BUT THAT'S—OOF!

THAT'S NOT TRUE! IT'S NOT! WOULD YOU PLEASE JUST LISTEN TO ME?!!?



I PITY YOUR IGNORANCE, GEOMANCER. BUT YOUR LIES THREATEN OUR WAY OF LIFE.

YOU WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH OUR SACRAMENTS.

I'M NOT LYING! I CAN PROVE EVERYTHING I TOLD YOU!



THIS MANSE IS DAMAGED, AND YOUR SACRAMENTS DON'T DO ANYTHING!

BUT I CAN FIX WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT! I KNOW HOW! PLEASE, LET ME FIX IT!



I ASSURE YOU, SIR, THIS IS ALL THE GARDENS REQUIRE.





# CHAPTER THREE

# THE CITY UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

Four hundred miles north of Whitewall, some 80,000 people live in the small city of Gethamane. Their subterranean city grants them unmatched protection from the perils of the North. Living in the heart of a mountain, Gethamanians do not fear winter storms or barbarian attacks. Supernatural gardens remove the threat of starvation. Nevertheless, Gethamanians live in fear. The circling tunnels of their city connect to an immeasurably vaster, deeper labyrinth of underways beneath Creation—and from these nighted caverns come horror. As much as anyone else in the North, Gethamanians require constant vigilance to survive.

## HISTORY

Like many of Creation's great cities, Gethamane began in the First Age. Its history, however, is stranger than most. Perhaps it's a good thing the Gethamanians don't know it.

## THE FIRST AGE

Gethamane was originally called the City of the Mountain Gateway. The Solar Deliberative ostensibly tunneled

a city within a mountain as a trade and diplomatic nexus with the Mountain Folk and other strange inhabitants of the caverns far below Creation. Indeed, a great deal of contact with the underdwellers took place there. The Deliberative chose the location because of the Celestial Gate to Yu-Shan lodged in the underways beneath the mountain. As a bonus, a colony of Pteroks—a winged race of the prehuman Dragon Kings—lived on the mountain's heights. The subterranean metropolis was also called Six Gates. In addition to the Celestial Gate, the city held a black jade portal to the tunnels of the Mountain Folk and four immense doors of jade and orichalcum steel that led into the mountain from north, south, west and east.

Nothing exciting happened at Six Gates for more than a thousand years. No Solars were in town when the Usurpation began. The Dragon-Blooded easily blocked any contact with the rest of Creation. By the time any loyalists in the city might have objected, most of the Lawgivers were dead. Only the Pteroks knew what was happening, and they flew away and out of history.



Shortly thereafter, the City of the Mountain Gateway died. When the founders of the new Shogunate realized that their conspirators in the city had not restored contact, a Dragon-Blooded team investigated. They found the city's gates sealed but everyone gone. Not even corpses remained. So, a group of Sidereal Exalted came to Six Gates. Neither Charms, sorcery nor the Loom of Fate gave any clue to what happened. The city's past seemed as thoroughly eradicated as its inhabitants.

The Shogunate stripped everything valuable and portable from the City of the Mountain Gateway, then sealed it. No one entered for several centuries and the city was forgotten.

## THE SECRET PAST

Six Gates was a lot more than a trade nexus between the Old Realm and the underdwellers. Its true purpose was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the Solar Deliberative. The city's connection to Creation's underways, however, brought about its doom. By now, discovering the truth would be extraordinarily difficult.

## REALITY ENGINES

Back in the Old Realm, a perceptive geomancer might observe that the City of the Mountain Gateway's combination of a high peak, a connection to Heaven and alignments to the cardinal directions appears at one other location: the Imperial Mountain, the axis of Creation itself. This was no accident. Deep in the highest-security areas of the city—areas never shown on any map, hidden with the help of the Maiden of Secrets herself—the Deliberative emplaced 25 reality engines. These devices, the height of Old Realm magitech, emulate the Elemental Pole of Earth by stabilizing reality against the Wyld. If some unimaginable catastrophe overwhelmed the Blessed Isle, these engines could turn the mountain of Six Gates into a replacement Elemental Pole of Earth, around which Creation could regain its stability.

More than half the population of Six Gates was Dragon-Blooded or God-Blooded. A great many of them functioned as guards, whatever their official duties were. Neither the Mountain Folk nor anyone else was supposed to know what the small city held.

These reality engines still exist in a ring between the Garden District and the underways. The entrances are virtually undetectable and open only to a Solar's anima. Further defenses protect the vaults of each machine.

## THE ULTIMATE HORROR

The second secret of Gethamane began with the Primordial War. When the first Primordial died, its dying Essence and alien ichor generated a new entity: a hekatonkhire, or ghost-behemoth. Most hekatonkhires dwell in the Underworld, but the one called Vodak exists simultaneously in the Underworld and Creation. Vodak took shelter in the underways. Every few centuries, Vodak woke to prey upon

the underdwellers, destroying whole cities' worth of the Mountain Folk and other races. When the blood of almost 300 Solars fell on Creation's soil, the Essence-taste of its progenitor's killers roused Vodak from slumber.

The Mountain Folk conceived a desperate plan to trap the hekatonkhire. As the Dragon-Blooded and Sidereals stalked and battled the last of the Lawgivers, the Mountain Folk captured numerous Solar offspring. They used the Golden Children as bait, luring Vodak to Six Gates. It arrived hungry. While the monster swept through the city like a silver ocean of death and madness, the greatest savants and sorcerers of the Mountain Folk cast their spells and activated potent artifacts. After six days spent devouring the city's population, body and soul, Vodak returned to the depths to rest and digest its meal—and found it could not leave.

The hekatonkhire now lurks in the deepest caverns below Gethamane, deeper even than the underdwellers know. When it sleeps, its dreams call to the underdwellers and fill them with its own hunger, hate and rage. When it wakes, the terror of its presence drives underdwellers to flee the depths into the city. Sometimes it reconstructs past victims from its own spectral flesh and plays murderous games with them. Vodak refrains from invading Gethamane for now, fearing the possibility of further traps. That may change... especially if Vodak scents Solar blood.

## VODAK AND THE REALITY ENGINES

The Mountain Folk had few options in binding Vodak: They decided that nothing less than a city could distract the hekatonkhire long enough for them to cast their spells, and few cities connected to Creation's underways. Storytellers might decide, however, that it was no coincidence the Jadeborn sacrificed a city stocked with reality engines. Conceivably, the Mountain Folk knew about the secret devices, used Vodak's attack as cover to seize them and re-tuned them to supercharge their spells. Characters who discover the reality engines and remove them to use against the Wyld could unwittingly release Vodak on Creation.

Storytellers might prefer instead that the Mountain Folk did *not* know about the reality engines. In this alternative, if the Mountain Folk had conferred with the Solar Deliberative, they could have lured the hekatonkhire into a trap: Once Vodak was between the reality engines, these mighty artifacts would have created a space that was too real for the spectral horror to exist. But that didn't happen, and Six Gates died because of the bitter history between the Jadeborn and the Sun's Chosen.

Either choice presents opportunities for Storytellers. Decide for yourself which (if either) is true.



## RESETTLEMENT

The Great Contagion did not affect the City of the Mountain Gateway, because nothing lived there. If the invading Fair Folk noticed the empty subterranean city, they did not enter.

A century after the Contagion, though, a band of refugees fled North, beset by plague, starvation and savage Wyld barbarians. Their God-Blooded leader, Bethan Redeye, led them through the Black Crag Mountains in hopes of finding safety in some whaling village on the White Sea. Instead they found a cave that turned out to be a minor tunnel into the abandoned city. As an alternative to starving, freezing or being eaten by Wyld barbarians, the uncanny city looked pretty good. They named the city Gethamane—Old Realm for “Sanctuary,” in hopes that naming it thus in the language of Heaven might provide a good omen.

The refugees lived off whatever game they could catch in the mountains until they discovered the city’s magical Gardens. Fortunately, the Gardens are remarkably easy to operate. Within a month, the Gardens produced edible fungi and moss and the refugees became settlers.

Not even the discovery of the dangers in the lower tunnels could persuade them to leave. Bethan Redeye worked out a system of allocating daily shares of food from the Gardens and whatever hunters and gatherers found outside. This system eventually became known as the Dole. Life was still hard, though, for the Gethamanians had little with which to work besides wood, leather, bone and stone.

## COMING OF THE GUILD

For many years, the rest of Creation did not know about Gethamane. That changed when the Guild started sending caravans into the North. One caravan met a group of hunters from Gethamane. The caravan’s factor quickly realized that the subterranean city would make an excellent base for trading ventures through the North. He also saw the Gethamanians’ lack of outside sources of food, clothing and other commodities. Bethan Redeye (then in her 70s, and still leading the Gethamanians) traded food supplies and animal pelts for cloth, spices and metal goods, beginning the city’s partnership with the Guild... but she didn’t let the Guild know about the buried Gardens. (The Guild found out eventually, of course.)

To keep the Guild from subverting and absorbing Gethamane, Bethan



made the Dole contingent on labor for the city. What's more, she decreed that no one could stay in the city for more than a month unless a Gethamanean family adopted them and they entered the Dole's labor register. Adopted citizens could pay in jade or goods instead of labor, though. The system discouraged Guildsmen from building strong connections in Gethamane, and the ones who did paid dearly for the privilege of long-term residence.

Bethan Redeye died at age 93, survived by two husbands and a dozen children. She trained all her children in administration, but named her second son Gerath as her heir. The office of Master or Mistress of Gethamane has stayed in Bethan's line ever since.

## TO THE PRESENT

Gethamane grew slowly but steadily. In time, it formed relationships with other Northern societies, usually with the Guild as go-between. In RY 586, this policy drew Gethamane into a trade war with the nascent Haslanti League. On the whole, though, Gethamane enjoyed a remarkably placid history. Its people have no desire to conquer others—that would mean leaving the mountain. No one else, not even the Empress, ever found an effective way to attack Gethamane.

The disappearance of the Empress and the rise of the Bull of the North troubles some Gethamanians. The current Mistress of Gethamane, Katrin Jadehand, and her advisors draw up contingency plans for situations ranging from an attack by the Bull to a takeover bid by the Guild. Most Gethamanians, however, figure that the city can ride out any crisis the way it always has before: Expel any troublesome outsiders, shut the impregnable doors, live off the Gardens and wait a few years. They don't like to remember that the greatest threat to Gethamane has always come from the endless dark tunnels underneath.

## GEOGRAPHY

Gethamane does not pretend to control any territory beyond the slopes of its own mountain, but its hunters and gatherers see most of what happens within the nearest 20 miles or so. The hunters sometimes venture farther, out of the mountains and all the way to the White Sea shore.

Sheltered valleys within the mountains sometimes hold patches of taiga that the Gethamanians cultivate and harvest with care—a tree can take 50 years to grow 10 feet high. Tundra covers the lower mountain slopes with hardy lichen, moss and patches of grass and herbs. The icy upper slopes are nearly barren. This far into the North, in a direct line from the Elemental Pole of Air, winter lasts much of the year and the growing season is just three months long.

## THE SUBTERRANEAN CITY

Everything important about Gethamane is underground. The city consists of five layers: the Temple District at the top; the Upper Ring below that; the central Guild District; the Outer Ring, by far the largest sector of the city; and the

Garden District, with the Gardens themselves at the center. Proximity to the source of the Dole makes the Garden District the most prestigious sector of Gethamane, while the Upper Ring's distance renders it the least desirable place to live in the city.

## ENTERING GETHAMANE

The north and south sides of Gethamane's mountain hold sets of immense steel doors, a foot thick and gleaming the distinctive hues of jade and orichalcum alloys: pale blue in the north and reddish in the south. They are immune to all Shaping effects, whether sorcery, Charms or the powers of the Fair Folk. Inside, large wheels move stout bars to lock or unseal the gates.

Beyond each gate stretches a tunnel 50 yards long, 10 yards wide and 10 yards high. The tunnel ends in a large antechamber with heavy portcullises of orichalcum-infused adamant at either end. Guards constantly man these posts. They never raise both portcullises at the same time. Cunning mechanisms, activated from the guard post, are intended to collapse the entrance tunnels in the event of a breach. (Obviously, these have never been tested.)


The antechamber guards record the names and brief descriptions of every visitor to Gethamane. Free visitors must pay a silver dinar to enter. Slaves pay half a dinar (a concession to the Guild). Visitors short of cash can register to pay through labor: Plenty of menial tasks always need doing, such as cleaning passages. Slave caravans usually pay for the slaves' entrance in this manner. No one enters the city without registration, though. Guards quickly move in to capture anyone who makes a ruckus, while drumbeats signal for reinforcements and a runner races to the Guard's headquarters.

About half a mile further up the mountain, a dozen small tunnels lead from the icy slope to clusters of chambers and from there to the Temple District and Upper Ring. These passages are all well camouflaged. Over the centuries, the Gethamanians also installed a variety of locking cast-iron doors, false tunnels, dropfalls and other traps for uninvited visitors. The mountainside chambers bear various

### THE MISSING ENTRANCES

What happened to the eastern and western entrances to the City Under the Mountain? They still exist. Landslides covered them long ago, but the early explorers soon found the passages to them. Some settlers proposed excavating these entrances, but the Gethamanians eventually decided to leave them hidden. In fact, they walled off the tunnels and plastered over the walls. Only the Mistress and members of her advisory Council know about the spare entrances. If something should prevent the Gethamanians from using any other exit from the city, they can excavate the buried gateways in a matter of days.





inscriptions in a script unlike that found anywhere else in the city. Centuries ago, a visiting savant of the Realm identified it as the High Holy Speech of the Dragon Kings, and chiefly consisting of heretical prayers to the Unconquered Sun.

## CONSTRUCTION

Most Gethamanean tunnels are square or rectangular. The floors and ceilings are the mountain's own dark gray stone, plain and slightly rough. Other forms of stone or concrete sometimes cover the walls. Smaller rooms tend to be plain, but intricate and beautiful geometric carvings adorn the walls of larger passages and chambers. Some rooms have stone doors; others have new makeshift doors of wood or leather.

Gethamane's current population exceeds that of the old City of the Mountain Gateway. Many Gethamanians live in apartments formed by partitioning larger chambers or passages. Wealthy families mark their compound with screens of metal or elaborately painted wood. The poor make do with makeshifts such as leather, cloth, paper or scraps of wood salvaged from a merchant's cart.

## UTILITIES

Large crystals of pale violet set in the walls and ceiling emit a clear white light. The crystals glow brightly during the day outside and dim when night falls. Still, the crystals stay bright enough for most people to continue working. Guards can patrol, farmers can work in the Gardens, merchants can haggle and artisans can work on all but the most demanding tasks. Gethamane stays active all day and all night. People sleep to fit their work schedule.

Gethamanians cover the crystals if they want darkness, but few people outside the visitors' section ever do so. Most Gethamanians are used to constant light: True darkness frightens them. Damaging the crystals is a major offense.

## LOST MAGITECH

For an Old Realm metropolis, Gethamane shows a distinct lack of Essence-powered conveniences. Only the light-crystals and the Gardens remain, for only they were both durable enough to resist Vodak's passage and impossible for the Shogunate to remove. (In the centuries when the city was sealed, creatures from the underways might also have scavenged the city.)

Nevertheless, the city is woven with hidden Essence accumulators and conduits, which all still function. Of the tens of thousands of jade-alloy plugs that once dispensed the Essence, only a few hundred remain (mostly in the Temple District and Garden District). These can still power any magitech device capable of connecting to them, as if each was a one-dot hearthstone. Essence-channeling people cannot use the plugs: They function only for devices.

Gethamanians learned centuries ago that removing a crystal from its setting darkens it forever.

For water, Gethamane has at least four large public fountains on each level. Citizens draw off water as needed. The Outer Ring additionally has two still-working bathhouses whose large, tiled pools magically heat the water in them. Two others no longer function. Unfortunately, most of the city's internal plumbing corroded to uselessness during the long vacancy. Gethamanians make do with chamber pots and rather stinky non-flushing commodes.

## THE UNDERWAYS

At least a dozen tunnels descend from the Garden District and the Outer Ring into deeper layers, called the underways. Rounded tubes and irregular caverns replace Gethamane's square corridors and circular or rectangular chambers. The rock darkens from gray to black. The highest layers of the underways continue the concentric circular design of the city, but the deeper reaches become twisting, apparently random tunnels and caverns with no limit ever discovered. The underways have no light crystals.

People do not live in the underways, but horrible and deadly creatures sometimes emerge from them to attack the people of Gethamane. Every entrance to the underways has a gate of iron bars—but that doesn't stop every potential intruder.

Despite the danger, people sometimes come long distances to visit the underways. Sometimes they return with treasures: strange artifacts, jewels—such as vibrantly violet diamonds—and rare ores hacked from the walls of distant caverns. Explorers even find small quantities of soulsteel. Sometimes, of course, explorers do not return at all. Gethamane's leaders permit these explorations, in return for half of whatever valuables the explorers bring out of the underways.

## SOCIETY

Gethamane is one of Creation's most orderly societies. The security of the Dole keeps Gethamanians in their city, but organizing the production and distribution of so much food from a single source requires extensive control of people's lives. Gethamanians register their occupations and record every hour of labor to justify their daily ration of fungus from the Gardens. What the clerks don't know, spies must discover, for Gethamane cannot afford any disruption. Any civil unrest could not only leave people starving, it could leave the city vulnerable to invasion from below.

Like most societies, Gethamane has its divisions of class, wealth and occupation. It has a literally stratified society. The wealthiest Gethamanians live nearest the all-important Gardens in the city's lowest level. Middle-class citizens chiefly dwell in the Outer Ring. The Upper Ring receives Gethamane's poor.

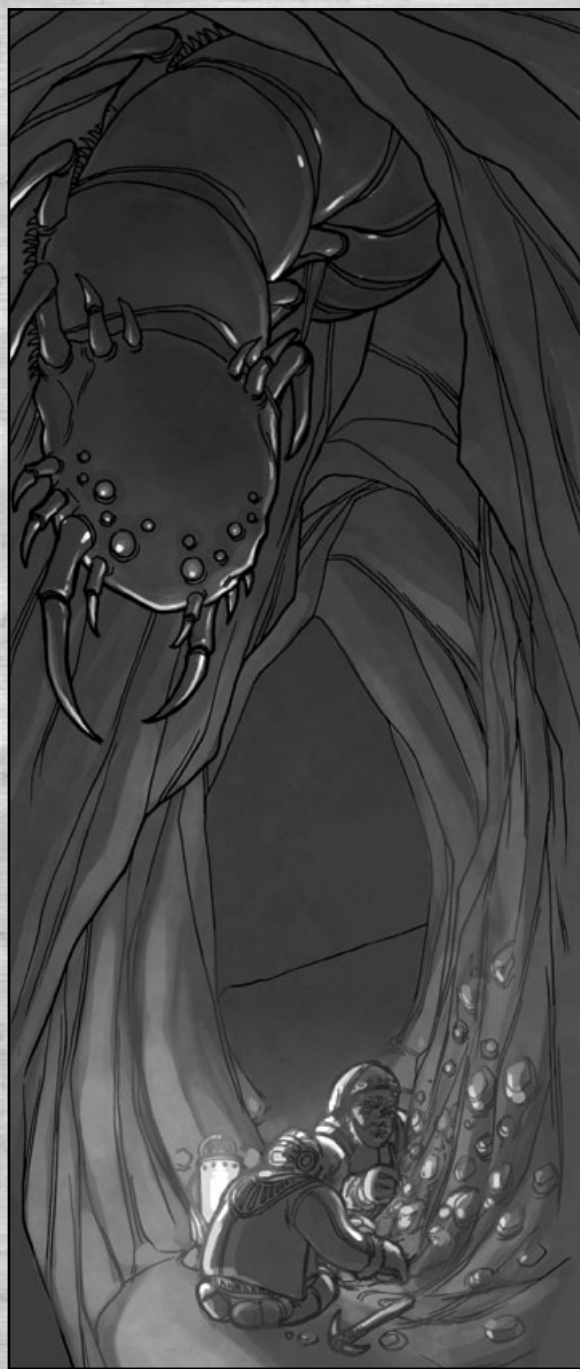
Six great divisions of labor, based on activities vital for the city's survival, provide an alternative set of social

## SECRETS OF THE UNDERWAYS

The underways are not entirely natural. The Mountain Folk used to inhabit the upper layers, and someone familiar with the Jadeborn can recognize the workmanship of these tunnels and chambers. (Incidentally, this is why the Gethamanians cannot simply wall off the underways: The City of the Mountain Gateway's air circulation system extended to the Mountain Folk districts of the city. Sealing the tunnels would disrupt that system, eventually rendering the entire city uninhabitable. Early Gethamanians learned this the hard way.) Many of the artifacts found in the underways are Mountain Folk workmanship.

Races and creatures of which humanity knows almost nothing, such as the centipede-like and savagely bestial cthritae and the eldritch underfolk, shaped other parts of the underways. Most of these “darkbrood” are more or less hostile to humans while entities such as the Leech Gods are utterly malignant. Vodak's presence subtly draws the most malevolent of these creatures and inflames them with hatred of Gethamane; but most of the gems and ores found by explorers come from mines initiated by underdwellers. Some of the creatures that attack Gethamane, however, are underdwellers slain and reconstructed by Vodak. The hekatonkhire itself created the soulsteel found in certain underways, as the intensity of its necrotic Essence transforms veins of iron ore when it passes.

**Scroll of Fallen Races** is the principal source of information about the Mountain Folk. See also **Dreams of the First Age: Book Two—Lords of Creation**, pages 118–121 for brief treatments of the Mountain Folk and underfolk, while **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I** describes the monstrous Leech Gods on pages 69–70.




classes or interest groups that cut across divisions of income. The farmers maintain the magical Gardens. Hunters and gatherers bring additional food and other commodities from outside. The Guard preserves civic order and defends against the monsters of the underways. Artisans fashion the tools and implements needed for daily life. Merchants trade with the Guild and other outsiders. A large administration of clerks and bureaucrats keeps everyone else working together efficiently—or at least tries. Gethamanians often follow the same occupation as their parents.

## THE PEOPLE

Gethamanians do not look like other Northerners. At least half the people never go outside, giving their skin an unnatural pallor. Only the hunters and gatherers, who must spend much of their time outdoors, show color in their cheeks, roughened skin or other signs of exposure to sun and weather.

A hundred yards of insulating stone and the heat of 80,000 bodies keep Gethamane warm. Within the city,





Gethamanians dress lightly. Most citizens wear cotton or silk robes or tunics and trousers. Guards wear tunics and trousers under their armor, though they also wear boots instead of the usual soft slippers. Farmers wear simple brown robes. Hunters and gatherers, of course, need heavy wool, fur and leather when they go outside. Regardless of occupation, Gethamanians prefer deep colors, grays, black or brown. They reserve brightly hued clothing for the bedchamber.

### FAMILIES AND ADOPTION

Family and class intertwine in Gethamane. The prosperous folk of the Outer Ring and Garden District generally belong to clans who number in the hundreds and occupy large sectors of tunnels and chambers. The poorer folk of the Upper Ring still manage to live as extended families with dozens of aunts, uncles, cousins and kin all together. Quite simply, it takes a degree of wealth to acquire enough space for a family to stay together; but a family that stays together can also economize through hand-me-down clothing, stacking relatives in bunk beds instead of renting more space and similar expedients. The truly poor live in whatever disused corners of the city they can find. Their children are lucky if they can stay with their parents until adulthood. Many waifs make their own way in the city because their parents are too poor to care for them.

Gethamanians reckon descent through the female line, though a woman's current husband is legally the father of all her children. Families often adopt children too, a custom that began as a way to make sure that orphans—future workers—would survive and to provide childless couples with heirs to care for them in their old age. Now the custom has a life of its own, and most large families include a few adopted members. Adoption ends all ties to the former family, legally and (Gethamanians hope) emotionally.

Gethamane doesn't treat unions between cousins as incest but forbids unions between adopted siblings. Constant adoption prevents serious inbreeding, but many tragic plays deal with youths who fall in love with adopted siblings. (Such plays usually end with murderous rampages and suicide, or one lover nobly choosing exile. Comedies end with one lover adopted into a different family, making their marriage permissible.)

When a Gethamanian of humble birth shows great skill and dedication, a wealthy and socially prominent family may adopt her. Not only does this provide Gethamane with a unique form of social mobility, it prevents the leading families from becoming stagnant and complacent.

Most citizens are known by their personal name followed by a family name. For extra formality, Gethamanians give a person's name followed by "of the such-and-such family." Distinguished Gethamanians add a descriptive epithet, the way Bethan was called Redeye or the current Mistress Katrin is called Jadehand for the martial prowess she showed during her youth as a Guard.

### LEISURE

Citizens who perform sufficient labor to earn their Dole can do whatever they want with any spare time. Respectable pastimes include quiet exercise, productive crafts (the current fad is carving imported driftwood), watching morally uplifting plays and writing pastiches of barbarian epics about honor and virtue. Gethamanians also enjoy music, favoring wind instruments or soft string instruments. Music never includes drums: Such instruments are reserved for the Guard's use.

Lives constrained by tunnel walls, crowded families, dependence on the Dole and vigilance against invading horrors result in many Gethamanians feeling the need for stronger and stranger release from tension. Behind closed doors (or pulled screens) they take a wide variety of drugs, from imported opium and qat to hallucinogenic local mushrooms. Casual sex, quite outside of marriage, is also common. Some Gethamanians seek pain instead of pleasure, leading to private sessions of torture between consenting (or paying) adults. Scarification is currently fashionable, sometimes undertaken using drugs to intensify the pain.

Gethamanians are quite strict, though, that indecorous amusements not leave a mark or disturb the neighbors. Even the young who want to shock their parents keep their scars or welts hidden beneath clothing, so they can show a placid, pale and unmarked face in public. Likewise, Gethamanians only complain about a neighbor who copulates with imported goats if he doesn't keep the noise down. The great unwritten law of Gethamane is simply this: Don't make a fuss. Don't disturb the functioning of the city. And, don't be *loud*. Many ears are listening... and no matter what you do or where you do it, you want to hear the distant alarm-drum or the nearby hiss or scuttling that means the horrors are loose and you must run or fight for your life.

### FOREIGNERS

While Gethamane has its poor, people from outside the city form the true underclass. By law, foreigners can stay in Gethamane for just one month a year, and they are strongly encouraged to stay in the Guild District. (Visitors who wander soon find Guards asking, with edged politeness, if they are lost. Visitors who wander near the Gardens find Guards drawing steel on them.) Shopkeepers overcharge them. Other Gethamanians treat them rudely. Even the beggars who smile and plead for coins then sneer and mock when no outsiders watch them. Foreigners stand out. They lack the subterranean pallor, the clothes, the accent and ways of speaking that characterize a Gethamanian.

The only way a foreigner can stay indefinitely in Gethamane is for a native family to adopt them. Even marriage does not suffice: Gethamane does not recognize marriages to outsiders. Someone must attest that she takes the foreigner as a son or daughter. The adopted outsider then must register for the Dole and turn in timesheets that prove her daily labor, just like every other citizen. Such adopted citizens still endure chaffing and snubs for a while,



but they eventually learn to fit in and other Gethamanians learn to recognize them.

Very few foreigners win adoption into Gethamanian society. Families reserve adoption as a reward for outsiders who make themselves truly beloved or who perform extraordinary services for the city. The Guild has tried for centuries to get agents adopted into Gethamane. So far, the result has been not the subversion of Gethamane but the disgrace of any family the Guild bribed or deluded into performing the adoption.

### GUILD AMBITIONS

In case it needs to be said, the Guild *wants* Gethamane. The Guild already uses the city as its hub for commerce in the Far North. The residency rules, however, inhibit factors from building long-term business relationships. Over the centuries, many factors have drawn up plans for using the secure location and food supply of Gethamane as the anchor for a commercial empire in the North. For instance, one plan calls for using troops from Gethamane to secure the bay to the North and turn it into a home port for an ice ship fleet that could contest Haslanti dominance in the White Sea. Such plans remain idle fancies, however, unless the Guild can bend Gethamane to its will.

### MAKING A LIVING

However strange Gethamane seems to outsiders, its people still need to eat, craft tools and otherwise secure their livelihoods—even if they do things a little differently.

### FARMING

The Gardens occupy a complex of long, dark caves. The entrances have light crystals, but the Gardens themselves are dark except for faint luminous streaks that mark the edges of paths and growing fields. Various sorts of fungi grow in shallow, bathtub-sized trays set in the floor. Only a few trays are cracked and no longer function. The entire circular array of chambers is two miles wide—probably the most productive acreage in Creation. The dung and offal that the farmers dump in the trays are wholly inadequate to sustain the mushrooms and other fungi that grow with unnatural speed to feed tens of thousands of people every day. Despite the unsavory fertilizer, the farmers keep the rest of the Gardens swept and scrubbed spotlessly clean.

The farmers do not speak much as they work. Some farmers push barrows full of dung through the narrow paths between trays, then spread this fertilizer over the chosen beds. Other farmers add bits of the fungi they intend to grow or add water from wheeled tanks. A few hours later, the farmers trundle past with a new set of barrows for the harvest.

The harvest goes to depots where the farmers issue the Dole. Minor administrators check the identity of each claimant and issue the requisite amount of food for the citizen's family. Several Guards stand watch at every depot. These parts of the Garden District stay constantly busy, with queues of people waiting for the Dole and actors, musicians and other entertainers hoping to make a bit of silver by amusing them.

The core of the Gardens holds a knot of small, oddly shaped caves with a pedestal in the center. The fungi overflow the trays here to cover the floor and walls, though never the pedestal. Glyphs engraved on the pedestal make the Garden's basic operation obvious to anyone who studies them. Back in the first Age, a Dragon-Blooded manager of the Gardens wrote these instructions using the Craft Icon Charm (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 130). Advanced procedures (involving alchemical treatments, special lighting conditions and the like) enable the Gardens to produce any sort of vegetable matter, but these are scribed on the walls in ordinary Old Realm script—and bioengineering jargon that few people in the Second Age could possibly understand.

Over the centuries, the Gethamanians figured out that this cave is a powerful manse (Earth ●●●●), whose power is entirely devoted to fueling the Gardens' magical fecundity. It has no known hearthstone.

### THE FARMER CULT


The Gethamanians do not realize that the Gardens' manse is damaged. It hasn't suffered any sort of power failure, but spending too much time in the Gardens can affect a person's mind. Affected people become obsessed with providing the Gardens with... *richer* compost. A secret cult among the farmers conducts human sacrifices. Now and then, a criminal sentenced to work in the Gardens suffers a "fatal accident" that leaves him spread-eagled over a tray, bled dry and emasculated before the body is discovered.

Only senior farmers participate in the cult. The Mistress and several other leading citizens know about the cult but choose not to get involved. The older farmers believe they must propitiate the Gardens and the gods of fungi in this manner. Other Gethamanians believe the farmers and fear to change any of their traditions. An expert in geomancy or Craft (Genesis) who examines the Gardens' instructions can tell that the sacrifices are completely unnecessary.

### HUNTING AND GATHERING

The hunters and gatherers supply far less food than the Gardens, but other Gethamanians value their contribution a great deal. The Gethamanians could live exclusively on





fungi from the Gardens (and have in the past, for years at a time) but the hunters and gathers supply *flavor*. The hunters bag reindeer, ducks and other game. The gatherers collect edible lichen, berries, bulbs from winter-hardy herbs and other foodstuffs. Hunters and gatherers can keep a fifth of what they bring to the city, to feed to their own family or sell. The rest goes to the Garden District depots for distribution as part of the Dole.

Over the centuries, the hunters and gatherers absorbed just about every trade that involves bringing raw materials into Gethamane. For instance, Gethamanians consider logging a form of gathering.

Some Gethamanians keep sheep and goats. During the brief summer, their herds graze on the mountain slopes. The animals spend the long winter inside the city with their owners, though. Gethamanians usually pen these animals in sections of the Upper Ring, among the poor. Their owners harvest huge amounts of hay to feed their beasts over the winter; as a result, animal husbandry is also treated as gathering.

Five large warehouse-chambers, spaced around the Upper Ring, are kept cold with ice brought from outside. The city owns these chilled warehouses. Any Gethamanian can store food here, at a cost of one-twentieth the food's value (or of the food itself). Hunters and gatherers often use this option, since keeping large amounts of valuable meat or vegetables in one's home invites thievery. Plenty of Guards patrol the warehouses to protect their contents. The corridors near the warehouses bustle with merchants, beggars, hunters, gatherers and other citizens trying to strike deals. Wealthy Gethamanians can enjoy fresh reindeer steaks with cloudberry jelly. The poor hustle for suspiciously overripe snowshoe hare carcasses. It's no accident that the poor folk of the Upper Ring suffer rates of food poisoning much higher than in the rest of Gethamane.

Mining, too, is considered a form of gathering. Gethamane operates a few small mines for copper, salt and mica. The Guild operates several more, and Gethamane still gets most of its metal from the Guild.

### COOKERY

Much of the Dole is simply washed, sliced, spiced and eaten raw. Living underground limits Gethamanian cooking: The ventilation system cannot handle a lot of smoke. People often stir-fry their food using dried grass for short bursts of intense heat. They also pack slow-burning, nearly smokeless fuel such as dried peat within a heavy crock and place a smaller pot within it. Gethamanians often freeze-dry foodstuff on the windswept mountain heights, then reconstitute it by stewing it in such a "Gethamane oven."

## COMMERCE

Guards direct all visitors to the Guild District of Gethamane, the site of most of the city's commerce. Each of the 20 passages to this district has a Guard post. Three large central caves hold the principal markets. The next rings out serve as warehouses. Beyond them lie accommodations for visitors and whatever Gethamanians (chiefly merchants and artisans) choose to live near the places where they trade. The Guild claims a large sector for its own caravans. Lesser merchants and miscellaneous travelers rent rooms from the Guild or from Gethamanian owners. Some visitors just camp in the warehouses or disused corridors.

The Guard watches the Guild District closely. Guards at each entrance keep careful records of everyone who enters and leaves, and what they bring to the city. In daily sweeps through the district, the Guard seeks and removes people who overstay their one-month welcome. Guards also remind visitors who have a day or two to go that they should prepare to leave soon. The Guild District sees a constant turnover as traders come and go.

### THE THREE MARKETS

As its name suggests, the *Food Market* sells food, in bulk or retail. Many enterprising citizens have set up snack bars and cooking stalls. The large stalls for imported raw, processed or preserved foods occupy the center of the cave. Further out lie smaller stalls for cooking services or luxury foods (including wine and beer). The northern end of the great circular chamber holds stalls for drugs and medicines. The largest stall belongs to the city of Gethamane itself. It sells food from the fungal gardens at a low price to undercut most of the other food stalls, and bring more revenue to the city government.

The *Metal Market* deals in goods made of metal or stone, both raw materials and finished products. Naturally, weapons and armor make up a good bit of the business. Some artisans set up shop in the market itself to forge items to order, keeping the market both smoky and noisy. The Metal Market is also the traditional spot to sell treasures recovered from the underways, even in the (admittedly rare) cases when such items are not mineral in nature.

The *Wood Market* began by selling timber, firewood and furniture. It then branched out into cloth and by now has become a catchall for any commodity or service that doesn't deal with food or metal. Knowledge is the Wood Market's most distinctive trade: petty thaumaturges, charm-sellers and diviners, guides to the city and the surrounding countryside, books, and of course "true and verifiable" maps to the underways. The Guard turns a blind eye to such frauds, as Gethamanians believe that anyone stupid enough to fall for such a scam deserves whatever happens to him.

In contrast to Gethamane's usual mania for control, the city lets merchants hash out for themselves who parks their



stall where. The Guild naturally has the largest stalls in the best locations. All stalls are made of wood. Some trading groups arrange to use a stall in shifts as they enter and leave the city, so they can keep a good location. Some stalls stay in the same location for decades, which brings considerable respect to their owners.

### TRIBUNAL CAVE

The most opulent chamber in the Guild District is reserved for consultations between Guild factors and local officials, or any merchants whose wealth or power earn them the Guild's respect. Ornate gilded tables, chairs and divans, costly silks and brocades, ornaments of porcelain and jade and other fripperies serve to impress visitors with the Guild's wealth. Costly liquors and exotic drugs impair a visitor's judgment in other ways. The Guild can also bring in superb courtesans or anything or anyone else needed to bedazzle or befuddle a target. Meetings range from staid discussions of tariffs and commercial law to wild debauches—with a contract and pen offered at a strategic moment.

The Guild uses its own mercenaries to protect Tribunal Cave, and keeps the city Guard away as much as possible. Naturally, the Guard takes every excuse to search Tribunal Cave. Indeed, the Guard takes any chance to ransack Guild quarters in search of incriminating documents or other evidence of misbehavior.


## RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Most Gethamanians are not very religious. They leave such matters to priestly professionals. Gethamane's own gods make few demands—they haven't even given their names—and other gods show little interest in the City Under the Mountain. Worshipers of other gods can set up shrines in the Guild District. The city sets aside several rooms for visitors to dress in whatever temporary temple trappings they want. Only Immaculate shrines are not allowed—a centuries-old holdover from an encounter with exceptionally high-handed missionaries that went badly. Shrines are forbidden elsewhere in the city (though the Guards ignore portable traveler's shrines unless they want an excuse to harass a visitor). As long as worshipers do not break Gethamane's civil laws, the city government turns a blind eye.

### TEMPLES TO UNKNOWN GODS

Gethamane's temples consist of three spacious rooms near the top of the mountain. Their walls bear jewel-encrusted carvings of mountains and strange flying creatures. (The decorations include tiny quantities of moonsilver, starmetal, orichalcum and jade, but extracting a useful amount would take days of very public effort.) Blue-white Essence fires burn above the three circular altars.

People who enter the temples feel an eerie sense of being watched, but no deity has ever manifested. Those who sleep in



a temple experience vivid, confusing dreams, often of frantic searching or desperate flight. Some dreamers find answers to questions that bothered them. This is the chief reason why Gethamanians visit the temples. More likely, dreamers spend the next few nights in sleepless anticipation or dread. A few feel called to serve as priests. A very few wake in screaming terror. They cannot remember their dreams but cannot bear to spend another minute in the city. Gethamanians know that such people may injure or kill themselves if kept from escaping. Fortunately, they seem to recover their wits once they depart and can no longer see the mountain.

Gethamanians do not become priests deliberately. The priesthood began early in the settlement of Gethamane, when a few loners who slept in the temples then told Bethan Redeye that they had to serve in the temples instead of doing other work. The first Mistress of Gethamane acquiesced. All subsequent priests have been similarly dream-called. Priests receive a share in the Dole equal to that of a mid-ranking Guard or farmer.

Priests abandon their old lives. They offer flowers and animal blood on the altars. Late at night, the priests cover the temple floors with complex designs drawn in ink, colored sand or, occasionally, their own blood, while chanting in an unknown tongue. The priests cannot explain either their

mandalas or their liturgies, but they feel driven to perform both. Afterward, they clean and polish the temples.

The acolytes themselves have no hierarchy. The Master or Mistress of Gethamane appoints a High Priest or Priestess, just so the city's Council has a single person with which to work. Gethamanians call the other priests Father or Mother, regardless of their age.

In addition to propitiating Gethamane's nameless gods and assisting people who want to dream in the temples, the priests act as exorcists. When Gethamanians feel that some malign influence affects their lives, they call in a priest to conduct banishing rituals. These ceremonies involve lots of community participation. When the malign influence is a grudge between neighbors, the shared ritual can help ease the conflict. Yet, some priests study the thaumaturgical Art of Warding and Exorcism (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 141–144) in case the malign influence is a rampaging demon or other supernatural horror.

## THE DEAD

By law, Gethamanians cremate their dead in the Essence-fires of the temples. Families keep the ashes in small ornamental boxes, scatter them on the mountain slope or add them to the fertilizer for the Gardens. Some families do not want to relinquish the bodies of their loved ones, however, leading to a small industry of illicit embalming and taxidermy. These families bribe suitable bureaucrats to attest to a body's cremation, then actually have the corpse preserved. Now and then, an embalmed (or stuffed) corpse is discovered in a hidden room or secreted in a family's quarters. This always leads to a search of the area for other bodies and the arrest of everyone involved. No one knows the full extent of mortuary crime, but it is especially common among the rich families of Gethamane, who can afford the needed bribery and have the space to hide their ancestors.

Despite this illicit ancestor reverence, Gethamane has no true ancestor cult. This is because Gethamane has no ghosts at all. Gethamanians accept this as normal.

## SECRETS OF THE TEMPLES

The source of the chants and mandalas is obscure but not unknowable: The liturgies are in High Holy Speech, the language of the Dragon Kings. The temple walls portray members of the Pterok breed of this ancient, nearly extinct race. The inscriptions found in the chambers used by the hunters and gatherers are likewise written in this obscure tongue. The priests' mandalas, however, come from the practices of the Mountain Folk.

Each of the three temples houses a god of air, sky and flight. The Solars who built Gethamane recruited these three small gods to circulate the city's air and keep it fresh. When the City of the Mountain Gateway died, the gods lost all their worshippers; the gods found no help in Yu-Shan, for the other gods were preoccupied with the Usurpation and losses among their own worshipers. So the three gods waited in their temples, alone and slowly going mad, but continuing their duty.

The gods try to touch the minds of sleepers and help them with their problems, but they aren't very good at it. Some dreamers catch a bit of the gods' insanity and feel compelled to serve as their priests. Others receive the gods' memories of the First Age city's extermination by Vodak. This drives them mad with the need to flee.

## GHOSTS IN GETHAMANE

Few of the materialistic Gethamanians become ghosts after death. They never last long if they do. Vodak spawns numerous smaller versions of itself that sweep through Gethamane's counterpart in the Underworld, and immaterially through the city in Creation. Those with Essence senses (such as All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight) occasionally see a wash of silver move swiftly through a room or corridor. The rush affects nothing in the material world, but any immaterial creature is most likely doomed. In the Underworld, Vodak's spawn devour any ghost within minutes.



## THE EXALTED AND OTHER ESSENCE WIELDERS

Gethamanians do not much like the Terrestrial Exalted, chiefly because of high-handed Immaculates and Dynasts. They also know the danger of showing such dislike. The Dragon-Blooded rarely stay in Gethamane for long, though. They have bad dreams as the maddened gods clumsily try to warn them and, through them, the long-dead Solar Deliberative.

The people have no experience with other Exalted—that they know about—so they base their opinions on stories. They fear the Lunar Exalted as patrons of the icewalkers and other barbarians. The Bull of the North is distant but sounds dangerous. Of course, Gethamanians have no knowledge of the Sidereals. Other Exalted are too new for Gethamanians to know about them. Any Exalted who visit Gethamane, or Exalt among them, could determine how the people feel about their kind for centuries to come.

Gethamane's hunters and gatherers occasionally encounter the Fair Folk. The tales of the survivors ensure the Gethamanians' thorough hatred and fear of the raksha. Fortunately for Gethamane, the local Fair Folk have no desire to enter a city that gives them the creeping horrors—not even fae who normally might relish such a strange and dramatic emotion. Fair Folk blame this aversion on the city's jade and orichalcum gates, not on quiescent reality engines or an instinctual sense for Vodak's presence.

Demons rarely enter Gethamane—most likely summoned or sent there on a mission by a sorcerer or thaumaturge. Gethamanians abhor demons as much as most people do. Demons also seem to loathe Gethamane, and do not linger even when they have the chance. They feel something immensely darker and more dangerous than themselves lurking nearby. Gods and elementals avoid the city for the same reason, though none of these spirits can find the ultimate source of the terrifying Essence.

Gethamane's limited contact with supernatural creatures means the city has almost no God-Blooded citizens or other half-breed channelers of Essence. Gethamanians rarely try to enlighten their own Essence either, due to their cultural isolation and lack of any institution to encourage this practice.

The Guard wants to recruit thaumaturges for the enchantments, talismans and alchemical medicines they can provide. The city has few skilled thaumaturges, though. Thaumaturgically proficient outsiders who want to join the Guard can easily wangle adoption into a family with strong traditions of Guard membership.

## DISREPUTABLE FOLK

Most Gethamanians like to think of their society as prosperous and orderly, controlled and smugly secure. Nevertheless, the city has its poor, its discontented and indeed its actively criminal.

## THE JADE HOSPICE

Not far from the temples lies Gethamane's largest charity hospital, the Jade Hospice. Citizens who volunteer as a way

to earn their Dole, and minor lawbreakers who pay their debt to society as unskilled labor or nursing staff, assist the staff of priests and healers. The hospice sees a constant stream of sick and injured poor people from the Upper Ring. The Jade Hospice does not have the best-trained staff of Gethamane's hospitals, but it currently has the most reliable funding. Its director, the matronly Enath Daur, comes from a leading farmer family. She also holds a Council seat, where she works to improve the lot of Upper Ring folk, or at least make sure they are not further marginalized.

## THE JANISSARY VAULT

Not everyone in Gethamane relies on the Guard for their safety. The Janissary Vault, located in the Outer Ring, supplies warriors, bodyguards and assorted muscle for hire. Its owner, the melodramatically named Vaultmaster (and yes, he goes masked) says that his service would never consider doing anything against the laws of Gethamane. Nevertheless, a sufficiently discreet client can arrange for any sort of thuggery short of murder. Many people suspect the Janissary Vault is a front for the Guild (mercenaries being one of the Guild's core businesses). The Guild would *like* to own the Janissary Vault, but the business has stayed independent since it began 50 years ago.

The Vault's mercenaries are about evenly divided between outsiders who managed to wangle adoption into Gethamanian families, and Gethamanians who were expelled from the Guard or who found its standards of courage and discipline too difficult. Janissaries receive little respect, for they are not duty-bound to run *toward* monsters. Gethamane's government does not accept Vault employment as any sort of service to the city, greatly limiting their Dole ration. Mistress Katrin and the Council would like an excuse to shut down the Janissary Vault, or at least force it to register every job and client.


## THE PHILOSOPHY CELL

A collection of public meeting rooms in the Outer Ring hosts an informal club of amateur intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals. Members range from young people who want to pick up some radical ideas with which to shock their parents, to careful scholars of Gethamane's many mysteries. In between are unlicensed thaumaturges, drug addicts, devotees of self-created religions and people who just want to argue. Most members are harmless and frivolous. A few regulars are serious and capable savants, varying widely in their ethics—from Serret of the Bethanites, a painstaking amateur historian of the city, to the alchemist Tazar Pellán, who tests his concoctions on people who want "mystical experiences," to Damaithe Yarni, a thaumaturge and closet demonologist.

## THE RAT'S NEST

A gang of juvenile thieves makes its clubhouse in an abandoned, junk-filled storehouse in the eastern sector of the Outer Ring. Most of the children come from middle- or





upper-class families and think that their “Society of Thieves” is all a grand game organized by their leader, Jaxar. The children commit petty thefts, pull pranks and generally cause mischief.

The children know that Jaxar isn’t really a fellow child, but they don’t think of her as really a grown-up, either. Jaxar is a dwarf with a preternaturally youthful face... and she works for the Guild. The children do not realize that the gossip they pass to their young-old playmate goes to the Guild—or that exposure of their naughty deeds could disgrace their families. Jaxar watches their parents to gauge who she could blackmail through their children’s misdeeds. She expects to build a cadre of citizens in Gethamane’s upper class who serve the Guild to avoid disgrace.

## SEVENTH HALL

Despite their poverty, the Rasri family of dung-carriers, sweepers and garbage pickers have held this set of chambers in the Upper Ring for many years. They now use the Seventh Hall as the meeting place for a conspiracy of other poor and discontented Gethamanians. The conspirators are angry with the city’s government and want to replace it with the Guild. They imagine that they would get rich if they could own slaves to do the drudgery they currently perform, and that the Guild could make Gethamane the mightiest nation of the North. Family patriarch and conspiracy leader Yftar Rasri seeks Guild support for his conspiracy. So far, the Guild rejects his advances as obvious attempts at entrapment.

## GOVERNMENT

Administering the Dole requires a small army of petty bureaucrats, who monitor every citizen’s activities to make sure that she deserves her share of the fungus gardens’ bounty. In some ways, however, Gethamane’s government remains that of a small town. At its heart, the city’s government consists of a leader, an old, rich and powerful extended family, and a small group of cronies.

## THE RULING CLASS

The descendants of Bethan Redeye still rule Gethamane. The city’s monarch, called the Master or Mistress, chooses a successor from the Bethanite clan—usually a son, daughter, niece or nephew, but sometimes from remote cousins. The monarch always must have a designated heir, though the designation can be changed at whim. In Gethamane’s only recorded coup attempt, the disgruntled Mineko Threebrand of the Guard tried poisoning all the then-Master’s close relatives. The Master quickly adopted three leading Gethamanians (all remotely descended from Bethan Redeye) as his offspring to replenish the clan. Today, the Bethanites number more than 2,000—all of them potential heirs.

Most Bethanites work as administrators, magistrates, accountants and scribes. They form much of the city’s civil service. Bethanites often undergo basic training as guards or farmers as well, the better to deal with those important

institutions. Indeed, custom holds that a Bethanite who wants to administer some aspect of city life should have practiced it as well. Most of all, though, Gethamane needs educated clerks and shrewd negotiators to distribute the Dole and deal with Guild. Some members of the clan choose occupations ranging from painter to swordsman, but they all start by learning arithmetic, reading and writing.

Gethamane’s current ruler is Katrin Jadehand, a woman in her 50s who has been Mistress for 10 years. She was both the previous Master’s choice and a popular favorite. Katrin spends a great deal of time pondering how best to assure her city’s stability and survival. While she pragmatically realizes that Gethamane might need to ally with some greater power, she would rather avoid this—and she will try not to accept any alliance that she cannot afford to break later.

## THE INTELLIGENCERS

Everyone in Gethamane knows that Bethanite family members pass information to the city’s Mistress. To learn what citizens and visitors don’t want the government to know, the Mistress has spies called Intelligencers. Undercover informants are difficult to recruit, though. Adopted outsiders can’t pass for native Gethamanians, and the strong tradition of family loyalty means that few Gethamanians would serve the Mistress ahead of their own kin.

The Head Intelligencer, a man called Shakan who poses as a Deputy Almoner in the Dole administration, solves this problem through blackmail. His agents all watch for criminal activity. Shakan then threatens the criminal with exposure and attendant disgrace to her family. Once a blackmail victim works as an informer, she is caught: Gethamanians despise the Intelligencers, so an exposed agent suffers worse ostracism than she might have received from her original crime.

Shakan has agents throughout Gethamanian society. He has no agents among the priests, whose religious obsessions sever them from most aspects of mundane life. The Head Intelligencer has a few spies among foreign merchants, but he does not trust them very much. Shakan very much wants to recruit informants within the Guild, as he does not trust the merchant princes one bit.

## THE COUNCIL

The Mistress of Gethamane appoints a committee of 15 advisors: three each from the city guards, the farmers, the hunters and gatherers, the artisans and the merchants. Bethan Redeye began the custom and now no one would dream of challenging it. The Council meets three times a month, though the Mistress can call for special sessions.

These advisors have no official power, but serving as the voices for their occupations gives Council members great prestige and influence. Any member of their interest group who wants to lobby the Mistress does it through his delegates. On the other hand, a shrewd Mistress knows that she must keep the five great factions happy, and so treats her Council with respect. Mistress Katrin often acts more as



a mediator between the delegates than as an autocrat (and some past Masters and Mistresses became virtual puppets of powerful Councils).

Council members hold their posts until they die, resign or are fired by the city's Mistress. When a faction loses a delegate, senior faction members offer the Mistress a list of possible replacements. The Mistress then selects a new Council member from the list. Vacancies on the Council result in a frenzy of politicking from the faction in question, from other Council members seeking the appointment of allies and from the Guild. In the event that all three of a faction's posts fall vacant, the Mistress can appoint new delegates without consultation, as the city most likely faces an immediate crisis.

## THE ADMINISTRATION

All of Gethamane's government offices occupy the outer circles of the Garden District. Each location actually consists of several large rooms and corridors. Here, clerks keep the Dole lists and records of visitors to the city. The Council meets in one large chamber, adorned with portraits of past Masters and Mistresses. Citizens can visit the Hall of Records and Hall of Maps to check on property lines. (Outsiders can consult these records as well, for a small fee.) Magistrates resolve civil disputes and try criminal cases in the Courthouse. Children who receive any education beyond basic literacy and arithmetic go to a school connected to the City Library. Bethanites staff many of the government posts but at least a third of the clerks and officials come from other families.

Even more than the rest of Gethamane, the administrative areas stay busy all the time. Each shift of functionaries simply takes the desks vacated by the shift before them. Children attend school in shifts as well, and mobs of children surge through the tunnels at each shift change. Only the Council doesn't work around the clock, though sessions may last for days as members debate especially knotty or contentious issues.

The Garden District includes the rooms and offices of Gethamane's ruler, passed from Master to Mistress for centuries. It's a point of pride to change as little as possible from Bethan Redeye's original sparse furniture and belongings.

## LAW AND CRIME

Gethamane's law centers on the Three Rules set down by Bethan Redeye. Both civil disputes and criminal trials often hinge on whether or how one of the Three Rules was broken.

### THE FIRST RULE

*Blood pays for blood, but it must serve the city: All crimes of personal assault shall be paid as debts to Gethamane, and Gethamane shall reimburse the victim in turn.*

The First Rule covers all assaults on another person, from public brawling to rape or murder. Minor assaults are punished by fining or a period of forced labor. Half the proceeds go to the victim and half to the city (or all to the city when both

parties are culpable, as when a quarrel escalates to a public fight and no one can prove who started it). Maiming, accidental death and rape result in major fining, a long period of hard labor, exile or some combination of the three. Murderers are condemned to permanent hard labor, exile or execution. A dead victim's share of any restitution goes to her family. In cases of homicide, proof of self-defense or extreme provocation can reduce a sentence but not eliminate it completely: Gethamane cannot tolerate the loss of any citizen's labor.

### THE SECOND RULE

*Jade pays for jade: All crimes of theft or other trespass on another's goods shall be repaid twofold, once to the victim and once to the city.*

This law covers all forms of theft, including forms of fraud such as giving short weight or delivering goods of lower quality than promised. Damaging a person's possessions (including slaves) also falls under this law. Under the Second Rule, it's a crime to charge outsiders less than a citizen of Gethamane—this is stealing from the city's prosperity as a whole. The city's magistrates and accountants measure losses to the last grain of jade and insist on precise repayment, though transactions use the Guild's silver more often than jade.

### THE THIRD RULE

*What we have, we hold: All crimes of trespass on another's domain shall be paid for by a gift of land in turn, or the Dole shall be remitted and the trespasser cast forth to starve.*

If people who dislike each other cannot escape each other's company, their enmity can escalate to murder. Gethamanians, therefore, value privacy as much as life and property, and trespass on another family's territory becomes a serious crime. Gethamanians treat malicious gossip about another person's activities as a form of trespass.

When two disputing parties share a property line, the penalty usually consists of moving that boundary by a foot or two to give the victim a section of the trespasser's territory. This results in many instances of two families sharing a room, with screens set up to give them an illusion of privacy. It can, indeed, be grounds for lawsuit to respond to anything one hears on the other side of such a screen... though noise of a sufficient volume (or sufficiently disturbing nature) that it cannot be ignored is also an offense. When disputants do not share a boundary, the city confiscates part of the trespasser's property, then allows her family to "buy it back" and pays the resulting silver to the plaintiff's family.

Gethamanians are strict about privacy and property, but not insane. The Guard can go anywhere in pursuit of a monster from the underways, and people fleeing a monster likewise have a right to cross another family's property. (Indeed, a civic defense crisis trumps all questions of privacy and territory.) Families usually forgive trespass by children when a game of hide-and-seek gets out of hand (though their parents might be notified). Persistent trespass by older children can result in lawsuit, though, and the child's family suffers significant disgrace.

Trespass becomes treason where the Gardens are concerned. Any citizen who helps outsiders enter the Gardens commits a crime comparable to murder, for they endanger the city itself.

### TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT

Trials take place in the Courthouse, a set of variously-sized chambers. Three magistrates hear every case: a professional judge who is usually a Bethanite, a senior Guard and a senior farmer. The accused and the plaintiff both state their cases to the panel of judges. If a plaintiff cannot speak on her own behalf, a relative or Guard can become her advocate (the latter usually in cases of homicide). Gethamane's courts accept information obtained by magic or bound demons. The three judges deliberate on the evidence, consult precedents and deliver a verdict and sentence. Any attempt to influence a judge, whether by bribery, threats or magic, is a major personal assault and punished accordingly.

Judges reserve execution as their ultimate sanction. More often, a murderer, traitor or other major felon is blinded, branded and condemned to work in the Gardens for the rest of his life.

(Which might not be that long, as such convicts become favorite victims of the farmer cult.)

Judges actually regard exile as a merciful punishment, and often use it to punish crimes of passion. An exile can even serve his sentence in Gethamane's mines, and so remain loosely connected to the city. Temporary exile usually lasts five years. After that, the criminal can resume his place in the city and among his family.

### SLAVERY IN GETHAMANE

Even though lawbreakers can be sentenced to a life of hard labor in the Gardens, Gethamane forbids individuals from owning slaves. Any labor must be hired, and hiring an outsider carries a hefty tariff. Gerath, the second Master, made this law so that citizens could find work and to forestall slave uprisings. Some merchants lobby to repeal this law, but most Gethamanians want to preserve tradition. They identify slavery with the Guild, and while Gethamanians know the Guild is necessary, they also know the Guild is not their friend.

Gethamane's law does not emancipate slaves who enter the city, however. Therefore, Guild caravans regularly bring coffles of slaves through Gethamane. The Second Rule applies to slaves within the city, and so the Guard can prevent serious cruelty to slaves. If Guards witness beatings or other mistreatment, they can and do arrest everyone in sight on charges of "damaging another person's property." The owner of the slaves then must testify that he was damaging





his own property, or ordered another person to do so on his behalf. No one suffers any punishment in such cases, but the confusion and delay caused by the trial does not help a slave caravan's profits or reputation.

Under the Second Rule, Gethamanians cannot claim animals that escape their pens: They must return the beast to its owner. The Guard, however, seldom chooses to help owners find slaves who escape in Gethamane. An escaped slave who is adopted into a citizen family also leaves the Second Rule's purview, as she becomes a citizen herself. Gethamane includes a few abolitionists who encourage slaves to escape and come to them for adoption, though the city government does not encourage this practice.

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

Gethamane has little direct contact with the rest of Creation. Few Gethamanians travel, and few other people want to visit this remote bastion of civilization. No one can conquer Gethamane, and Gethamane cannot threaten anyone else. Most Gethamanians know very little about the rest of Creation. Gethamane's Mistress and Council now believe, however, that they must learn a great deal more about their neighbors... particularly the Bull of the North.

The Realm never troubled Gethamane. Dynasts occasionally visited to seek treasure in the underways, and far-traveling legions occasionally bought provisions at Gethamane, but the city never paid tribute. The Empress once commissioned her strategoi to evaluate Gethamane for conquest: These worthies concluded that the feat was possible for the Dynasty but not worth the trouble. Past Masters and Mistresses did not flaunt their defiance of the Realm, so the Empress never felt the need to make an example of the city. Since the Empress's disappearance, no one in the Realm pays much attention to the remote subterranean city.

Whitewall is the closest that Gethamane comes to an ally. Neither city has many other neighbors (that are human, at least). Gethamane's leaders cultivate merchants from Whitewall just to remind the Guild that they can be replaced; and it's often cheaper to buy Whitewall's metalwork directly than through Guild intermediaries.

Gethamane has an unfortunate history with the Haslanti League, and Guildsmen still disparage the Haslanti. Nevertheless, the Mistress and Council now seek better relations with the League as another alternative to the Guild.

Every year or two, an icewalker tribe follows a mammoth or reindeer herd through Gethamane's territory. Gethamane's hunters pick off straggling beasts, which the icewalkers do not like. On the other hand, Gethamanians sometimes trade with icewalkers for meat, furs, hides, horn and ivory; but much of this trade goes through the Guild. (The walrus-hunters along the coast form a notable exception. Gethamane's hunters trade with these barbarians directly.)

Even the isolationist Gethamanians hear stories about the Bull of the North, and what they hear frightens the city's leaders. They don't credit Realm propaganda about "Anath-

ema," but anyone who can massacre Dynasts—hitherto the city's standard for powerful, erratic individuals—is a danger the Gethamanians don't want to face. Some Council members believe the city can shut its doors and defy the Bull, just as it has defied every other threat. Others are not so sure, fearing that the Anathema warlord could break the gates like a paper screen. They all agree that Gethamane must learn more and acquire whatever power and allies it can find.

## THE GUARD

Gethamane has no army as such, only a Guard that keeps order and defends against creatures from the underways. At 5,000 soldiers, the Guard is quite a formidable force for a small city—but the Guard has no experience operating in groups larger than the 20-man platoons. Guards wear red lamellar armor and carry target shields blazoned with a white mountain on a red field. They favor heavy weapons such as sledges, great axes and pickaxes—the sort of weapons that can hack, pierce and crush eldritch horrors. When riots erupt in the Guild District or elsewhere, half the responding Guards carry leather-padded clubs, but the Guard never operates without the threat of lethal force and big damage.

The Guard's overall commander occupies a Guardhall in the Garden District. Here the Guard trains, gathers to organize hunts for invading monsters and imprisons lawbreakers. Unlike the subdued tones of the rest of Gethamane, bright red pennants mark all entrances to the Guardhall. Doors in this complex are always high-quality iron.

The current Captain of the Guard, Golden Stag, is of icewalker descent, abandoned by his tribe as a child and adopted by a poor Gethamane family. Every other sentence or so, he reminds people how he worked his way up the ranks. Golden Stag is now in his 50s, a good leader of soldiers and convinced he has plenty of time before he needs to train a successor.

Beneath Golden Stag are the North Gate and South Gate Captains. The South Gate Captain, Mindros Yami, stands out for his refusal to accept bribes from merchants. The North Gate Captain, Gavne Wheelright, came from an artisan family but joined the Guards to avenge the death of his wife at the claws of underdwellers. A traveling Immaculate monk also converted Gavne. He lobbies (though not loudly) for the Council to permit an Immaculate shrine. These three officers command various district and shift lieutenants, and Guard posts are spread throughout the city.

Each Guard post has a large drum mounted on the wall. In any disturbance, one soldier beats a signal on the drum to alert other posts of the nature and location of the trouble, and to call for backup if this seems prudent. In the case of major disturbances such as monsters from the underways, riots or rampaging Exalts, a runner is additionally sent to the Guardhall with a report and a request for full mobilization. A few hundred Guards bunk in the Guardhouse at all times, ready to go wherever they are needed.

Despite the high death rate that Guards suffer in monster attacks, the organization never lacks for recruits. In part, this





comes from the high prestige of the job (and high ration of the Dole). Less nobly, Guards receive greater opportunities to meet outsiders... and collect small gifts and gratuities from them in return for assistance with the city's bureaucracy. Golden Stag cycles his soldiers through gate duty so everyone gets a fair share. Large bribes, however, or attempts to subvert a Guard into serious breaches of the law, constitute "injury to the city" and result in the Guard's arrest if he is caught.

## SAMPLE COMBAT UNITS

See pages 71–72 of *Scroll of Kings* for a sample Guard platoon (Magnitude 2). All Guards have a Strength of at least 3 and are well-trained troops. Unfortunately, they have no training at fighting in larger units than a platoon—in most of Gethamane, it just isn't possible to gather more soldiers in one place—and so cannot deploy units of higher Magnitude. When several platoons act together, an overall commander must attempt to coordinate them. So far, Gethamane has never fought an enemy that it could not defeat in this manner.

## THE GUARD ENTIRE

Still... what if such an enemy *did* appear—an enemy that somehow could penetrate the jade-steel gates, or a major invasion from the underways? In such a case, the entire Guard might need to function as a single combat unit, against a single other combat unit of invaders. The Guard would suffer from its lack of training at large-scale tactics and inability to concentrate its forces, reducing its effective Drill. Then again, the enemy could not concentrate his forces either. The battle would consist of house-to-house (or cave-to-cave) fighting.

The Guard, however, would frequently gain the advantages of hard cover and fortification (see *Scroll of Kings*, p. 12) from their superior knowledge of Gethamane's tunnels. Gethamane's people could also turn their partitions into engineered obstacles comparable to fields of stakes or brushwood-filled moats (see *Scroll of Kings*, p. 114). For a simpler approach, a Storyteller could simply raise the Guard's

Might by one, treating its superior command of the territory as a form of special equipment. In any case, ranged combat is effectively impossible in a citywide fight.

**Commanding Officer:** Golden Stag

**Armor Color:** Red; target shield bears a white mountain on a red field

**Motto:** "Let none of them survive!"

**General Makeup:** 5,000 medium infantry with lamellar armor and slotted helms, half carrying great axes and half with pickaxes and target shields

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 8

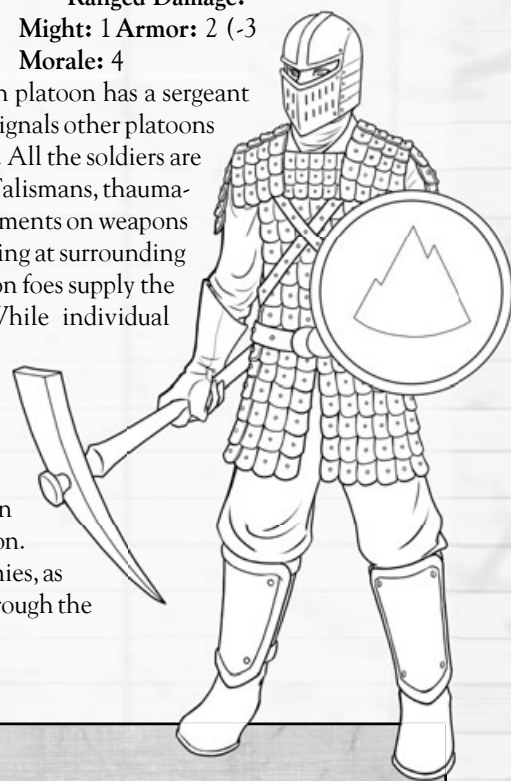
**Drill:** 1

**Close Combat Attack:** 4 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** — **Ranged Damage:** —

**Endurance:** 5 **Might:** 1 **Armor:** 2 (-3 mobility) **Morale:** 4

**Formation:** Each platoon has a sergeant and a relay that signals other platoons using drumbeats. All the soldiers are heroic mortals. Talismans, thaumaturgical enchantments on weapons and special training at surrounding and ganging up on foes supply the unit's Might. While individual platoons normally fight in close formation, in a citywide battle they are effectively stuck in skirmish formation. So are their enemies, as troops scatter through the tunnels.



**Gethamane**, a Magnitude 3 Dominion

**Military:** 1 **Government:** 3 **Culture:** 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 1, Bureaucracy 5, Craft 2 (Self-Sufficiency +2), Integrity 3 (Secret Police +1, Tight-Knit Heritage +2), Investigation 4 (Conduct Interviews +1, Due Diligence +2), Occult 1, War 2 (Impregnable Defense +3)

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 4, Valor 1

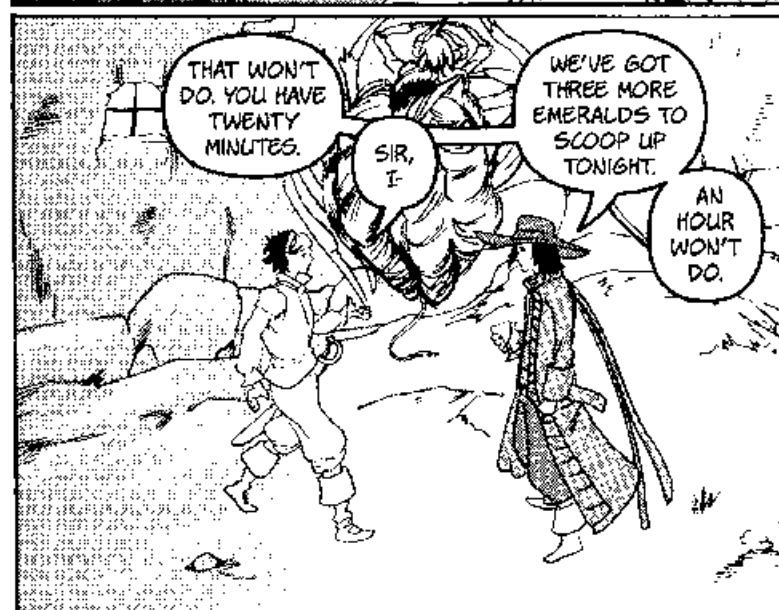
**Virtue Flaw:** Temperance **Current Limit:** 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Bonus Points:** 15 **External Bonus Points:** 8

**Notes:** Gethamane pays little heed to the rest of Creation, and has little capacity to influence everyone else. On the other hand, it's exceedingly difficult to obtain any leverage on Gethamane. The dominion's external bonus points come entirely from its alliance with the Guild and other merchants. These points pay for Gethamane's single dot of Awareness and a second dot of Craft. Gethamane's bonus points go to a second dot of War and the dominion's many specialties. Gethamane has no savants or sorcerers.

In Limit Break, Gethamane resolves its internal conflicts by returning to its principles of absolute self-sufficiency and absolute social control. The government expels all outsiders, locks the gates and forces the population to live on the Dole for at least a season, and maybe as long as a year.





## CHAPTER FOUR

# AIR BOATS AND AMBITION

No one in the North can survive alone. To the tribes that formed the Haslanti League, however, rule by distant lords and impersonal laws meant slavery. Their confederation seeks a balance between the power of a unified state and the intimacy and immediacy of tribal life. After 200 years of improvisation and muddling through, the League has solidified and grown enough to become a major power in the North.

### HISTORY

Four centuries ago, the Haslanti people consisted of three related tribes of nomads that lived around the eastern end of the White Sea. The Haslanesh bands followed the herds of mammoth that they hunted. The Haslanahsa herded reindeer. The Haslanosha herded elk. They all worshiped the Bear Woman, Arvida of the Crescent Eye, Goddess of 99 Forms, who forbade them to build towns.

The goddess of the Haslan tribes was actually an old and powerful Lunar Exalt. In RY 404, the Immaculate Order began a Wyld Hunt that ended with Arvida's death in RY

412. The shock of losing their deity plunged the Haslan tribes into chaos and despair. Chiefs, shamans and whole bands sold themselves to the Fair Folk, to small gods or to other Exalted, destroyed themselves in senseless vendettas or surrendered to the madness of the Wyld. Some believe the savage, mute barbarians called the hushed ones (see p. XX) descend from one such Wyld-maddened band.

### EMERGENCE

Eventually, some bands settled in the comparatively warm and fertile valleys called greenfields, and built villages (though they called them "camps" to avoid the lingering stigma of town-dwelling). Tuskstad, Windcreche, Fort Bear and Icehome—known collectively as the Four Camps—emerged as centers of trade between tribes, bands and foreigners.

The Guild encouraged this trend. These merchants traded steel weapons, tools and foreign luxuries for ivory, timber, woolen cloth, furs and leather. They taught the greenfield settlers to farm as well as graze their herds. They also bade the Haslan to mine the North for gems and metals.

## SECRET HISTORY

The most ancient Haslanti legends say their ancestors came from a land even further north, where they lived on an island in the sky. The legends are true: Their ancestors came from the flying city of Tzatli, a wonder of the Old Realm. Tzatli crashed during the Usurpation, and the survivors steadily moved south during the Shogunate period until they reached the White Sea. They owed their survival through the Great Contagion and Fair Folk invasion to Arvida. She also kept them from following the arch-sorcerer Bagrash Køl, who still haunts Haslanti folktales as a mad, demonic tyrant.

See **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, Chapter Two, for more about Arvida and subsequent Lunar efforts to shape Haslanti culture.

Whenever the Haslan balked at such a change to their livelihood, the Guild brought in slaves... or mercenaries. Trade became tribute. Guild factors bought the favor of chiefs and set tribes warring against each other to take slaves.

The Haslan hated their masters and learned to fight back. They could not defeat the Guild's mercenaries, but they could launch guerilla raids. More importantly perhaps, they could simply retreat into the Northern wilderness where the Guild could not find them. The tundra and taiga were theirs. Soon, so was the Great Ice beyond the White Sea.

A shaman's dream-quest called a group of Haslan

to a long-forbidden cave on the north shore of the White Sea. There, the explorers found a wonder: a First Age ship on metal runners, built to skate on ice. The tribe copied the design. Iceboats carried the rebellion throughout the Haslan tribes until the Guild was secure only in the Four Camps.


In RY 580, talking eagles visited the chiefs and shamans of 40 Haslan bands. The eagles called them to an ancient and broken beacon of the First Age that overlooked the White Sea. At the Lighthouse of Twisted Stone, the leaders found Gerd Marrow-Eater, a Lunar of the No Moon Caste. He challenged, fought and defeated the greatest champions of the Haslan, but killed none. He took only the tip of each warrior's little finger on the left hand as token of his victory.

Having established his credentials, Gerd called the chiefs to a conclave. He pointed out that the Haslan people outnumbered the Guildsmen more than 100 to one. Why should they not rule their own lands? If the tribes fought as one, they could defeat any invader. Then Gerd delivered a final astonishment by refusing the chiefs who hailed him as their king and god. He would not rule them. Three times he would lead them in battle, but the final victory would be their own. The Haslan would seize their own destiny and live as they chose, taking whatever elements they wanted from civilization and tribal life. In three days of spirited argument, the chiefs forged a covenant to unite the three Haslan tribes into one Haslanti nation.

As Gerd promised, he led them three times to conquer Tuskstad, Fort Bear and Windcreche. By RY 583, the Haslanti were ready to attack Icehome. Gerd helped the chiefs devise a battle-plan but departed before the attack. The Haslanti took Icehome after 12 days of fierce fighting, and 12 chiefs died in commanding the Haslanti horde. The surviving, victorious chiefs found Gerd waiting for them atop the Guild's fortress. The Lunar spoke:







"You lost 12 chiefs, and so your nation will always have 12 chiefs to sit in council and judgment. As long as you talk everything out before you fight, everything you can see from here, and more, shall belong to the League of the Haslanti forever."

And then, Gerd Marrow-Eater became an eagle and flew away.

## TRIALS OF A NEW NATION

Of course, the emergence of a powerful new nation in the North upset many established powers.

The Scarlet Empress shrewdly judged that her legions would not do well in the icy Northlands. Instead, she sent a large contingent of Immaculate monks. She hoped that killing the Lunar Anathema and defeating patron gods would throw the Haslanti into disarray as Arvida's death had done, making the Haslanti an easy conquest. Yet, although the Immaculates freed many nearby tribes from burdensome obligations to local gods, they never found Gerd and the effort failed. The freed tribes responded by joining the League. The Immaculate Order has conducted several Haslanti crusades, converting few while provoking great irritation at the Realm.

The Guild tried to cut the new League off from trade with other Northern states, notably Cherak and Gethamane. In this way, the Guild's leaders hoped to force the Haslanti to accept the Guild as middlemen. The Guild actually managed to create a war between the League and Gethamane. Both sides found the war singularly futile, as neither could harm the other in any way. Indeed, the Guild suffered most from the loss of Gethamane's warehouse facilities during the years of the war.

A new threat appeared in RY 674. For reasons that remain unknown, long-lasting Wyld storms wandered across Haslanti territory. Where these Wyldfogs passed, new islands appeared in the White Sea and others vanished. Winds carried entire farms hundreds of miles from their old locations. Weird new plants and animals appeared. Whole bands simply vanished. Several Lunar Exalted came to the League's aid by dispersing Wyldfogs. The Lunar called Flintbeak Nightingale dispersed the last Wyldfog in RY 726, just five miles from Icehome.

The League also made important new discoveries. The war with Gethamane spurred the Haslanti to build the first of their famous air boats, based in part on another First Age model. What's more, explorers on the Great Ice followed songlines—ancient tribal narratives of paths and landmarks—back to the ruins of Tzatli.

The Haslanti League is still growing and developing. Its people believe they have no limits.

## GEOGRAPHY

The Haslanti live in a harsh land. In summer, swarms of flies and mosquitoes bear plague and can sting a man to death. In winter, blizzards can pile snowdrifts 50 feet high. Much of the land stays frozen beneath the top foot or so. At

## FEATHERSTEEL

The League's famous aerial vehicles would not be possible without feathersteel, a metal available naturally in the Far North and in a few Air-aspected demesnes. Feathersteel is as strong as normal steel, at a third the weight. It also resists rust. It results when Air-aspected Essence saturates iron ore for centuries, with a touch of Wyld to fuse incompatible properties. Feathersteel ore weighs less than iron ore but seems otherwise identical. The metal reveals its properties only when smelted. The Old Realm also manufactured feathersteel. Much of Tzatli's lower levels were constructed from feathersteel, making it the League's single largest source of the metal.

The Haslanti League controls much of the North's known feathersteel mines and sells very little of the highly strategic metal. Making objects from feathersteel adds one dot to the cost in the North, two dots elsewhere in Creation. Feathersteel weapons and armor are exceptional due to their reduced weight.

sea, whales break ships, and ice cracks to plunge travelers in the frigid waters. Cold winds never stop blowing. The Haslanti live across a huge and varied land, though, from bustling new cities to barren glaciers. The League dominates the eastern half of the White Sea, though not the area where Malice Bay drains the sea into the River of Tears.

## ENVIRONMENTS

The Haslanti live in four distinct territories: *greenfields*, *emeralds*, the *Outwall* and the *Great Ice*. Each environment presents its own challenges and opportunities.

### GREENFIELDS

The Exalted of the Old Realm used mighty energies to blast wide valleys from the Northern rock. The depth of the valleys protected their floors from Northern gales while their shape concentrates summer sun, leaving them several degrees warmer than the surrounding land. Soil was laid across their bottoms; small lakes and streams watered them; mines and quarries pierced their sides. The White Sea and Malice Bay drowned many of these valleys, but dozens survive in the Age of Sorrows. The Haslanti call them "greenfields." Icehome Greenfield, the largest, extends nearly 100 miles long and 35 miles wide. Sunset Greenfield, on the verge of Gethamane's territory, is only two and a half miles long.

Farm and pasture cover most of the Haslanti greenfields. Wealthy folk keep gardens. Orchards and other cultivated trees help to break the wind and protect the soil, as well as providing wood, fruit and nuts. Greenfield dwellers graze sheep, goats, cattle and the ubiquitous Northern reindeer.

No Haslanti would describe their lives as easy, but greenfield dwellers can produce enough food to support



villages and small towns. The town usually occupies a hill or a cliff that overlooks both the valley and the nearby sea. Most towns have stone walls, though Kaet's Landing, east of Icehome, is actually cut into the valley's cliff face.

## EMERALDS

From hard experience, the Haslanti know that Northern gales can strip away soil and blow entire farms away. Dozens of greenfields lie bare and ruined across the North. Sometimes, however, the soil collects in a pocket or sheltered location. The Haslanti call these little patches of soil "emeralds." Emeralds range in size from tiny plots that can support only a farmstead or two, to a few that are large enough to sustain small towns. A dozen families, however, are a typical population for an emerald. Most emeralds last just a few decades before the wind carries the soil away once more. The Haslanti learned how to break the wind using stone walls or trees, though, and how to plant ground cover that binds the soil. Through careful husbandry, some emeralds have now lasted 100 years.

Settling an emerald requires enormous labor. Before winter comes, the settlers must build windbreaks, walls and a house, transplant small trees from a greenfield, and sow fast-growing grasses. If they're lucky, they manage this in time to bring in a few sheep or goats. Settlers must then defend their new homestead against wild animals, hostile barbarians and even the Fair Folk. Too many people and animals can overuse the land so the denuded soil blows away; too few settlers leave the emerald vulnerable to incursion.

Small as they are, emeralds play a vital role in the Haslanti League. The population rises; but the greenfields don't get any larger. A steady stream of younger sons and daughters with no land to inherit fan out in search of emeralds they can claim as their own. Emeralds also serve as way stations on trade routes and fortresses against invaders.

### GREEN MEN AND SOIL-STEALERS

Emeralds give rise to two unique Haslanti professions. Green men collect mosses, grasses, insects and other small plants and animals to distribute between emeralds, helping each little patch of land's ecosystem become more robust and diverse. Soil-stealers raid smaller emeralds to enslave the settlers, steal their animals and cart away topsoil. In Haslanti tales, these villains often work for bandits who occupy large and secret emeralds.

## THE OUTWALL

Haslanti farmers call the tundra beyond their greenfields and emeralds the Outwall. Thick brambles, hardy grasses, moss and lichen cover this land; trees are stunted to mere shrubs. Herds of reindeer, elk, musk ox and mammoth browse the tundra, though, and these animals support the Hundred

Tribes of the Haslanti (though the actual number exceeds 150). The herdfolk move throughout Haslanti territory, and they know the land better than anyone else.

On the League's southern border, the tundra gives way to taiga of dwarf willows and evergreens. Herdfolk often drive (or follow) their animals into this transitional zone during winter. Here, they encounter icewalkers. The division between icewalker and Outwall tribe is as ill-defined as the border itself, for the tribes intermarry a good deal.

## THE GREAT ICE

The White Sea stays frozen much of the year. Ice covers its northern shore year round. The ice cap beyond the sea goes on for thousands of miles, split by huge peninsulas of the Wyld. The Great Ice seems barren at first sight, but the Haslanti wring a living from even this hostile realm. Fish and seals, walrus and whales inhabit the White Sea, accessible in the summer months or by cracking the ice with huge catapult-like machines of strong timbers and tension bands of mammoth sinew. Rocky coasts and skerries hold oysters, mussels and other shellfish. Where the Wyld has blown, oyster harvesters sometimes discover opals and diamonds that grew like pearls.


Mining is possible in the Great Ice as well. Rocky islets in the White Sea yield amethyst, amber, turquoise and topaz. Diamond Hearth takes its name not from glittering ice crystals but actual deposits of diamonds.

Strangest of all, silt and wind-blown seeds can collect in a crevasse to form an emerald, albeit one consisting of tundra moss and lichen rather than crops and trees. The Haslanti graze small herds of reindeer in these icebound oases. The emeralds become refuges and supply depots for people who live and work on the glaciers.

## HASLANTI HOUSING

The human geography of the League features many forms of housing. Some Haslanti live in the same longhouses of logs and sod found throughout the North. Others, especially among Outwall tribes, favor the *aghar*, a dome-shaped tent made of animal hide stretched on frameworks of bone or willow. Villages feature L-shaped homes with the barn for the animals built in. Two (or sometimes four) such houses typically share a courtyard. A significant fraction of the League's population now lives in barges called iceholts that spend summers on the Great Ice and then migrate south in winter to visit the League's cities. Fisher-folk build clusters of huts on rocky islands in the White Sea during the runs of salmon and tuna, or for gathering shellfish.

Haslanti yeomen often have two homes. In summer, they live in a rural steading where they engage in farming, goat-ranching, mining or some other resource-producing activity. In winter, the Haslanti move to a home in a town or city. Affluent families might own an extensive home in the city, but many Haslanti spend the winter in crowded townhouses or apartments.



Heavy snowfall means that most Haslanti homes have both a “summer door” at ground level and a “winter door” one story up. Haslanti towns go a step further with two-layer streets. Covered arcades along the streets become tunnels under the snow in winter, while people also walk on the packed snow itself. Prosperous towns build the arcades sturdily enough for the roofs to function as streets year-round, with bridges crossing from roof to roof wherever somebody feels like building one.

## ICEHOME

The League’s capital is also its largest city—too large, some Haslanti think, and too soft. About 250,000 people live in Icehome Greenfield. Half of them live in Icehome itself. The city outgrew its walls decades ago, and no one wants to pay for building a larger circuit. Several walled villages hold the rest of the population.

Cliffs more than 100 feet high surround the greenfield. A river stair-steps down the cliff in five waterfalls, each of which now turns the wheels of massive mills. The river feeds a network of irrigation canals throughout the 100-mile valley. In winter, the frozen canals become the road network, as well as the scene of ice-skating contests. During summer, people use gravel roads. Rough stone walls line the roads and mark property lines. The greenfield includes several managed forests as well as farms and pasture.

A notch in the valley’s northern end admits a mile-long tongue of the White Sea. This harbor stays frozen nine months of the year. The city of Icehome occupies the harbor’s west bank. Icehome has several distinct neighborhoods.

**The Docks** can accommodate up to 500 vessels, from personal skiffs to iceholt barges, on seven massive, granite piers and dozens of smaller, wooden quays. The shore holds a jumble of buildings ranging from reindeer-hide tents to great stone warehouses. The streets are slushy mud in spring, sticky mud in summer and frozen mud in winter. Shipbuilding and warehouse facilities dominate the northern third of the district. The middle third features taverns, hostels and other businesses that cater to merchants and sailors. Segregating slaughterhouses, tanneries, blubber-rendering plants and other odorous businesses in the southern third does little to protect the rest of the city from the smells.

**The Old Market District** consists of 20 blocks of two-level streets with five large courtyards. Red tile roofs adorn the stone and brick buildings, with tents and huts scattered higgledy-piggledy across the rooftops and the arcades. Two-thirds of Icehome’s people keep winter apartments in the Old Market District. Abundant common rooms, dance halls and other amusements cater to them. As Icehome’s business center, the district includes shops, banks, trading-houses and caravansaries. Foreigners often find the Old Market District the most accessible, understandable part of Icehome and the League in general... until they see a government official refereeing a duel, or some other reminder that the Haslanti remain half barbarian.

**The Artisan’s Precinct** is located between the Old Market District and the western headland of the harbor’s entrance. In this district, most homes follow the Haslanti plan of an L-shaped compound with a workshop as well as a residence and a barn or stable. The artisans range from makers of Outwall tents to armorers and jewelers. Residents do not like foreigners. If they want to do business with outlanders, they go to the Old Market District.

Although it’s within the city walls, the **Orchard Quarter** chiefly consists of garden plots, fruit and nut orchards and meadows studded with beehives. Narrow lanes and low stone walls separate the plots. The farmers, orchardists and beekeepers of the Quarter produce the greenfield’s best honey, fruit, nuts and cider, chiefly for export.

The land would be worth much more turned into homes and businesses, but ancestral rights and cultural quirks preserve it as it is. Icehomers like keeping a bit of the countryside in their city. In summer, children run wild through the Quarter as they chase rabbits and squirrels, stalk each other and ambush visitors with toy spears and bows with padded arrows. They also raid the orchards and gardens, but most farmers figure they lose less to the children than they would to the rabbits and squirrels. Beehives and angry farmers provide mild threats to provide lessons about stealth and prudence. Ripe fruit, dripping honeycomb and the purses of careless visitors provide lessons about the rewards of bold opportunism. Thus do urban Haslanti maintain roots to their barbarian past.

**The Little Outwall** consists of all Icehome that grew outside the city walls. It resembles the docks, though the mixture of cheap apartments, squatter’s tents, whorehouses and warehouses is more chaotic.

## THE CITADEL

The Citadel looms over Icehome atop the western headland of the harbor. The Haslanti razed the Guild’s fortress and replaced it with a cyclopean stone wall around five buildings, all built of white marble instead of Icehome’s usual black or gray granite.

**The Longhouse** holds the meeting chamber for the League’s guiding Council of Oligarchs. The white marble building surrounds an old-fashioned longhouse built from wood, horn and animal hide, meant to remind the 12 delegates how the Haslanti began. Foreign ambassadors also spend their first night in the city sleeping in the Longhouse... at least if they want the Oligarchs to see them as friends.

**The House of the Oligarchs** bends around the Longhouse in a U-shape. A gallery with many glass windows connects 12 comfortable apartments for the Oligarchs, as well as private meeting rooms. Some delegates prefer homes of greater luxury within the city. Others make a point of living in the Oligarchs’ House to show reverence for tradition.

**The Treasury** appears as just a small beehive-shaped building half-sunk in the headland’s granite. That building is merely a reception office. The real treasury consists of a labyrinth hewn from the granite behind and beneath

the building. The public can visit the galleries of official archives and museums full of trophies and mementos of League victories. Other sections, definitely not public, hold the League's central bank reserve and emergency fund: 100 talents of jade and 12,000 silver talents, plus miscellaneous loot. No single person is supposed to know every secret of the Treasury's vaults and defenses.

**The Pantheon of the Ennead** stands at the northernmost point of the Citadel. Gold, silver, precious stones, costly imported silk and brocade hangings adorn the League's national temple. Niches hold military trophies as well as relics such as one of Gerd Marrow-Eater's feathers and the preserved head of an Immaculate monk. Having a memento of one's deeds placed in the Pantheon is a much greater honor than an exhibit in the Treasury.

**The Tholos** stands next to the Treasury. This smaller building resembles an oversized *aghar* wrought in marble. (The League's eight other cities hold similar domed shrines.) A symbolic national hearth flame burns in each Tholos. Stone plaques bear the names of Haslanti heroes and their bodies rest in crypts below the floor. A secret adytum holds the Twisted Stone Covenant, a complex net of knots, shells, beads and bones that encodes the Haslanti constitution. Whereas the Pantheon honors the gods and the rest of the Citadel honors the state, the Tholos honors the national history, tradition and character.

## NATIONAL HEROES

Gerd and his Lunar allies pressured the Haslanti's leading gods to enchant the nine Tholoi. Any song or tale of an interred hero's deeds performed in one Tholos echoes in the other eight. The gods have changed but the enchantment remains. The Tholoi remind the Haslanti that the glory of the League rests in the triumphs and tragedies of individuals; but also that the Haslanti are one people, with equal claim on the deeds of all their heroes.

## OTHER CITIES


The other eight Haslanti cities vary in their wealth, favored industries and attitudes toward membership in the League. Their varied histories and characters can only be suggested here.

## CRYSTAL

The League's only non-walled city began just 46 years ago, in a greenfield accessible only by air boat. So far north and nearly surrounded by the Great Ice, even greenfields produce little more than moss and dwarf willows as forage for reindeer and goats; Crystal must import much of its food. Fifteen thousand Haslanti live in town and another 15,000 in villages.







Crystal lives by mining feathersteel from the greenfield's walls and First Age relics from ruins caught in the ice. Many residents hope for a lucky strike that makes them rich enough to leave Crystal. Merchants and tradesmen who cater to the miners and treasure hunters make up the second bloc of Crystal society.

The streets of Crystal form a square grid modeled on an imperial legion's camp. The central square holds the main market; government buildings and major businesses line the main north-south and east-west avenues. The city's Common Council finds it must manage Crystal with greater rigor than usual for the Haslanti, due to the expenses and logistical difficulties of keeping 30,000 people alive and not killing each other every time someone finds a First Age table-knife. Not everyone in Crystal likes having a police force, claim registration forms and other tokens of civilization. In the League at large, Crystal has a reputation as "tight-assed." The Common Council knows that Crystal needs support from the rest of the League to survive; Crystal's delegate to the Oligarchs always lobbies for more taxes to pay for more air boats and, incidentally, more subsidies for Crystal.

## DIAMOND HEARTH

The League's northernmost city occupies an apparently natural greenfield—a valley surrounded by hills, kept ice-free by a freak of geomancy. Explorers found Diamond Hearth's valley by following ancient songlines in search of their ancestors' legendary home. They also found the ruins of Tzatli buried in the ice, and they found diamonds in the gravel from melting glaciers.

Now, 80,000 people live in a constant near-riot as they rip wealth from the frozen ground. Half the people live in Diamond Hearth itself. The other half live in mining and prospecting camps scattered across a more than 100-mile radius. In addition to diamonds, feathersteel and First Age artifacts, people seek unmelting ice and other treasures wrought by the mingled power of Wyld storms and the Elemental Pole of Air. (For a description of unmelting ice, see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 69.)

Haslanti who struck it rich gave Diamond Hearth a few dozen stately stone homes. The rest of Diamond Hearth is a shantytown built from old packing crates, canvas or reindeer-hide tarpaulins, with frozen mud streets. While reindeer and goats forage in the valley, Diamond Hearth could not survive without frequent air boat deliveries of supplies. The profit from Diamond Hearth justifies the expense.

Every family or sworn band of partners works for itself, and to Hell with tribal ties or other loyalties. Diamond Hearth's city council is just a caucus of the richest inhabitants, who make deals to benefit themselves and harm their rivals.

## FAIR ISLE

The smallest city-state in the League has just 20,000 inhabitants on a modest island in the White Sea. Fair Isle holds the League's largest emerald, a green valley between ice-clad hills. Behind its red stone wall, the town features

## DEATH AMID DIAMONDS

Some 20,000 of Diamond Hearth's residents are slaves—15,000 human and 5,000 captured beastmen or Wyld barbarians. They die in droves from overwork, mining accidents, exposure and the casual cruelty of other miners. Brawls, accidents, drink and drugs give free miners a fearsome death rate as well. Corpses do not rot in this cold, dry land, and no one wastes valuable time digging graves in the frozen ground anyway. Diamond Hearth simply throws its dead into some nearby ice caves and played-out mineshafts.

Two corpse dumps have become small shadowlands, and they will not be the last. Hungry ghosts and the angry spirits of dead slaves slip through to the mortal world. Worse, the miners and their ghosts have roused Shogun Widowmaker, an ancient and powerful ghost from Tzatli. Diamond Hearth teeters on the brink of terror that its people cannot imagine. See **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. IV—The Underworld**, pages 107 and 143–144 for more about Tzatli in the Underworld, and its cold-hearted master.

narrow, three-story houses with blue slate roofs. Many homes have shops, restaurants and hostels on their ground floor, sometimes joined by glassed-in arcades. Fair Isle lives by trade and servicing the people who work on the Great Ice. Anyone bound to or from Diamond Hearth travels by way of Fair Isle.

The League forcibly annexed Fair Isle as a way station for exploration, trade and war in the western half of the White Sea and the Great Ice. At the time, the island supported about 1,000 people. As compensation, Fair Isle received an Oligarch's seat three decades ago. The League made Fair Isle prosperous, but some people still resent the conquest. Everyone agrees, however, that every person must work, *hard*, to keep their precious soil from blowing away. The Twenty Matriarchs who tend the Tholos and act as local government are notorious through the League for ordering the public humiliation of slackers and sluggards—for instance, ordering them whipped through the streets.

## FORT BEAR

Twelve thousand Haslanti live in Fort Bear, with another 40,000 herdfolk and farmers in the Outwall nearby. The town takes its name from a massive outcropping of white limestone shaped like a sleeping frost bear. It was a center for Arvida's cult and many Haslanti nomads still hold the rock sacred. Crypts hewn in its base remain the favored burial place for clan chiefs, while the city Tholos faces the bear's mouth. The permanent residents include many shamans associated with the White Bear's sacred places, as well as infirm tribal elders.



The yearly festival of the Fort Bear Assembly attracts more than 40 Outwall tribes, adding almost 20,000 temporary residents. The influx also brings foreign and Haslanti merchants for a huge, three-week trade fair. (The Haltans and Linowans always fight; the Saltspire merchants act like they've done everyone a favor just by showing up.) Fort Bear challenges Icehome's commercial dominance as well as its status as the spiritual center of the League.

## IRONFALL

The Haslanti League's chief industrial center occupies its second-largest greenfield. Fully 100,000 Haslanti live in the greenfield, its surrounding emeralds and Outwall. They support 65,000 townsfolk, of whom 20,000 are slaves. Iron and feathersteel mines riddle the greenfield's cliffs. The city itself is built on the greenfield cliffs to exploit water power from the cataracts of the Breakstone River. A pall of black smoke rises from the city. Black slag from the foundries paves the streets and is mixed with clay for building-bricks. The clang of hammers on metal and ore resounds day and night, for the mill-wheels do not rest.

Ironfall's people tend to be dour, conservative and hidebound. While they consider themselves loyal Haslanti, they suspect Outwall folk of stealing metalwork and of hating Ironfall for its settled prosperity. (Outwall folk do want the metal, but think the city is dirty, smelly and dull.) Instead of tumultuous chiefs and duels of honor, Ironfall has a mayor and a town council of wealthy master-smiths and merchants. A yearly assembly authorizes every decision the council makes.

## SHIELD

The city-state of Shield occupies a large but damaged greenfield with low, eroding cliffs and thin soil. Only 5,000 people live in the town of Shield, behind a low and badly built city wall. Twenty thousand live in the rest of the greenfield and 100,000 live in the Outwall as herders, emerald-farmers, fishers or miners. Mines in the nearby hills yield tin and copper, but the bronze industry declines as mines play out one by one. The largest and tallest structure in Shield is the Guild's three-story caravansary, two miles outside the city. The League's fleets of air boats and iceships both use Shield as a home port, but the crews do not mingle much with the Shieldings. The outer reaches of the city-state suffer frequent attacks from both icewalkers and the terrifying, death-worshipping barbarians of the Tear Eater tribes.

Despite the relative poverty of Shield, the inhabitants consider themselves fortunate in their freedom and solidarity. Shieldings move easily between greenfield, emerald and Outwall—not to mention the fishing boats, shellfish-harvesting stations and mining camps—and most clans have members scattered throughout environments and occupations.

## TUSKSTAD

Haslanti mammoth-hunters now concentrate around this western city-state. The town of 15,000 has an earthen

berm 20 feet high, topped with wooden stakes. Only the two gatehouses, the Tholos and the longhouse of the city-state's leader are built of stone; the rest of Tuskstad consists of wooden buildings and *aghar* tents. In summer, Tuskstad reeks of tanning mammoth-hides, seal skins and drying fish and meat. There's money in Tuskstad, though, from mammoth and walrus ivory.

The Laughing Winds tribe has dominated Tuskstad's small greenfield for more than 80 years. The woman Bel-lowing Mammoth occupies the city longhouse as ruler of the city, even as her husband rules the tribe as its chief. Tuskstad remains extremely tribal, with no clear division between the Haslanti clans and other tribes of herders and hunters.

## WINDCRECHE

This city-state occupies a narrow valley—a half-drowned greenfield—at the northeast corner of the White Sea. It has an excellent, ever-frozen harbor for iceships: Dozens of iceholt barges can lodge at Windcreche's wharves. The large central square doubles as the town's main market and a landing point for air boats.

Agriculture doesn't work well this close to the Great Ice. Instead, the city-state concentrates on herding reindeer and hunting seal and walrus. It is also the League's chief whaling port. By gathering sedge grass during the brief summer, however, Windcreche maintains a dairy industry. The dwarf cattle of Windcreche stand just three feet high but give the sweetest milk in Creation. Tycoons of the Scavenger Lands and the Realm pay enormous sums for Windcreche's butter-cheese.

Only 9,000 people live in Windcreche proper, in a jumble of tightly packed stone buildings behind rough-hewn city walls. Plaster mixed with walrus blood covers Windcreche walls; the red-brown color makes them easier to spot and follow during snowstorms. The town is full of rendering plants turning whale and walrus blubber into fuel oil for air boats and domestic lamps. Many other businesses likewise service air boats or produce parts for the League's most famous vehicles.


# THE HASLANTI PEOPLE

From the Great Ice to the greenfields, the Haslanti live in a tremendously varied environment and make their living in equally varied ways. Haslanti individuals range from illiterate nomads to suave diplomats. A number of common threads, however, bind the Haslanti together.

## COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

The harsh and hungry North easily leads people to view outsiders as a threat—or as prey. Yet, a community survives only through shared labor and loyalty. Both forces, cooperation and competition, work powerfully in Haslanti culture to pull the League together and drive it apart.

In all the vast League, no single community has everything it needs. The townsfolk need the meat from Outwall



hunters and herders as well as the produce grown in the greenfields and emeralds, with fish, shellfish, seal and whale meat from the White Sea for variety. The nomads do not have the time to mine the metals they need for weapons and tools. Everyone covets the jewels and feathersteel mined on the Great Ice. The cities need each other as well. Other city-states cannot get by without the metal of Ironfall and Shield, or Tuskstad's wealth of ivory, or the commerce of Icehome and Fort Bear. Most Haslanti recognize that they are wealthier, more comfortable and more powerful together than apart.

The Haslanti cannot ignore the major differences between them, though. More and more, Haslanti townsfolk live by trade as merchants, artisans, even *clerks*—an occupation that their barbarian tradition dismisses as disgustingly effete. They want the rest of the League to feed them, but country folk often feel unappreciated by their city cousins. Iron tools and silver coins are not payment enough. Meanwhile, the greenfield and emerald farmers have very different notions about land and property than the nomads who view all Creation as grazing land for their herds. For their part, the Haslanti who live on the Great Ice want higher pay, better food, improved equipment and more frequent air boat and iceship visits to their fishing stations, iceholts and mining camps. Oh, and a lot more respect for the incredible hardship they endure. Bringing it full circle, the townsfolk often regard the people from the Outwall and the Great Ice as crude and demanding.

## DUELING

Gerd Marrow-Eater told the assembled Haslan chiefs and shamans to talk before they fought. Chiefs, shamans or other respected elders judge legal or personal disputes, hear testimony from witnesses, argue precedents and seek a fair resolution or appropriate punishment. Nevertheless, Haslanti often find that they do not want to talk out their differences. Instead, they fight duels.

Haslanti usually have weapons on hand. If not, they readily turn to fisticuffs and wrestling. Duels for honor end when one participant surrenders—but some disputes must end in death. Haslanti traditionally fought duels in lonely locations. (The colloquial expression for fighting a duel is still to “take a walk by the stream”... a walk by two from which only one returns.) Nowadays, duels often take place in public with seconds, referees and cheering spectators.

Dueling follows a formal code. The aggrieved person issues the challenge. The person challenged can either apologize for the insult or accept the challenge and perhaps throw in a few fresh taunts and boasts. Each duelist then finds an arbitrator. The two arbitrators select a location and time. A duel can take place no more than four days after the challenge.

The challenger incidentally must pay in advance for a funeral, whether his enemy's or his own. (Even in a duel of honor, accidents happen.) The two arbitrators

hold the money in escrow, and return it to the challenger if everyone survives. The winner in a fatal duel also becomes responsible for the loser's family, if the loser was the principle breadwinner. Compensation can take the form of a payment in silver, or adopting the loser's family into your own household.

Dueling is not a license for murder. Anyone who kills outside of the rules for dueling becomes an outlaw. The victim's family can kill the murderer out of hand. So can bounty hunters or anyone who attests to a chief that he had a grudge against the killer.

## FAMILY AND FOSTERING

The Haslanti counter the divisions in their society through ties of kinship, marriage and business. Haslanti parents often loan out their (frequently numerous) children to distant relatives, friends of friends and other people, to learn other trades and acquire commodities the parents lack. For instance, a man in a reindeer-herding Outwall tribe might send two children to live with his wife's farmer cousin, while another child apprentices with a whaler acquaintance and a fourth child is indentured to a blacksmith to repay a debt. A Haslanti extended family often has members scattered through many segments of the League's society.

Such connections also diversify a family's economic base. Through the year, a family's storerooms fill with ingots of iron and barrels of whale oil, salt fish and apples, rounds of cheese, bags of turnips and iceship sails. Such provisions feed the family through the winter when the family reunites in its town home, or are traded to other families.

## FEASTING AND OTHER SOCIALIZING

Winter naturally becomes the Haslanti season for getting together with other people. Haslanti often postpone weddings, funerals, baby namings and other important events until winter, so all the friends and relatives can attend. A summer wedding, spring funeral or the like indicates conflict in the family: At least one family disapproved of the wedding, or the dead man was despised.

A town of any size includes at least one assembly hall for rent, if people lack the space for a large gathering. In addition to family rituals, these halls see dances, epic song-cycle performances, and a lot of straightforward partying.

Whatever its nature, any successful social event must include lots of food and drink. Even a small occasion calls for a feast that sets the tables groaning under the weight, with variety as well as quantity. Meat? The League has elk, reindeer, mammoth, mutton, goat, whale, seal and salmon, among others. Cheese? The League produces more than 80 varieties from all the mammals they domesticate and a few they don't. (Haslanti wit: How do you make mammoth cheese? Well, first you milk the mammoth... *very*



*carefully.*) They have 29 traditional forms of bread, from flat bread to honeyed puffballs. Other common items of diet include potatoes, turnips, beets and other root vegetables, milk, yogurt, apples, walnuts, honey, porridge, spicy pickled cabbage and fish transformed into a gelatinous, evil-smelling mass through preservation with lye. Even Haslanti require copious libations of beer, mead or hard cider in order to eat it, but no feast is complete without this test of gastronomic fortitude.

### STRANGERS

The Haslanti do not show such extravagance to people they do not know well. While strangers in a Haslanti community can usually count on a roof, a bed and a meal, they won't receive the best bed or a feast.

The visitors also will be put to work. All Haslanti believe in hard work: They need to, to survive. Able hands do not stay idle. Even the sick can knit or carve ivory. A foreign visitor who does not know Northern ways can still haul in nets, chop wood or shoo the gulls from a rack of drying fish.

### RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL

The Haslanti do not consider themselves a "spiritual" people. They do not care about abstruse doctrines or mystical enlightenment. No, they take the same hardheaded, practical approach to the supernatural as they do with everything else. The Haslanti know their friends, their foes and what's useful.


### GODS AND WORSHIP

Several times in Haslanti history, Immaculate missionaries tried to convert the Haslanti by destroying or humiliating their gods. They failed to kill Gerd Marrow-Eater as they slew his predecessor Arvida. Several decades ago, the Immaculate Order launched a series of four crusades. The monks called out the people's gods by threatening their shrines, festivals and worshipers—and then they beat the tar out of the gods. Some gods submitted; others hid. Few emerged unscathed. The Immaculates broke the people's faith in many of their gods, but that didn't convince the Haslanti to accept Immaculate doctrine.

Instead, the Haslanti turned to gods who managed to avoid or outmaneuver the monks. The result was a new national pantheon, the Ennead, composed of three divine triads: the gods of ice, fate and dream (fully described in Chapter Seven). The Haslanti still make token offerings and prayers to formerly prominent gods of hunting, fishing, fertility, war and the like, but without much reverence. Older Haslanti view the defeated gods with indulgent pity, as if the gods were once-great warriors now enfeebled by age. The young have started telling jokes. Only the Outwall tribes retain much interest in petty local spirits, and only because they still must deal with these erratic powers.

Loss of reverence for local Terrestrial gods also leads to interest in the great Celestial gods. The Haslanti regard Luna as too great to hear mortal prayers, but many still honor her. Voharun and Nasamara, the twin gods





of Northern warfare, also claim many devotees. Totemic gods of reindeer, mammoth, whales and other beasts important to life in the North—called the Animal Masters by the icewalkers—retain strong cults among the Outwall tribes.

Formal worship takes place weekly in a god-house. A Haslanti god-house has an outer porch to shield worshipers from the weather, an inner porch where they remove muddy boots and snow-soaked parkas, and a hearth room to warm and freshen up before facing the gods. Inside, niches or pedestals in a godhome chamber hold idols, icons or symbolic images of the gods. (Symbols such as a spear tipped with a silver icicle for Master Winter are the most traditional; accurate portraits become increasingly popular.) Greenfield folk build wood or stone temples. Outwall god-houses are tents of bone and leather. In small hamlets or iceholts, the god-house often shrinks to a single room, or even a cupboard for an isolated farmstead.

Spoken prayers tend to be short, formal and recited by rote. Afterward, worshipers feast in honor of the gods, with much toasting. At each toast to a god, an officiating shaman or elder pours a bit of liquor into the hearth fire.

### ANCESTORS AND CIVIC FAITH

The Haslanti respect the dead but rarely worship them. In the modern League, the latent ancestor cult turned into the civic religion of the Tholos—patriotic ceremonies to honor dead heroes. Some Haslanti now care more about worship in the Tholos than worship in the god-house. Heroes who endure as ghosts may encourage this trend.

Yet, just as many Haslanti resist taking the final step toward a national ancestor cult. They associate necrolatry with enemies such as the Tear Eaters and the North's two Deathlords. Nevertheless, the Deathlords occasionally exploit this nascent civic faith to ensnare Haslanti. Isolated communities have sacrificed babies to dead heroes—or ghosts they *thought* were dead heroes—while retired old warriors and shamans have frozen to death in hopes of becoming potent ancestral spirits.

### HASLANTI DREAMS

Dreams form the third strand of religious life. Haslanti discuss their dreams over breakfast, with debate about their meaning. After all, gods often send messages in dreams. From Icehome to the Outwall, people often paint memorable dreams on the walls of their homes, or tattoo symbolic reminders on their skins.

A class of shamans called Dreamseers specializes in dream interpretation. A Dreamseer wears a conical red hat that resemble hallucinogenic mushrooms found in the tundra, and tattoos the rune for “dream” under his or her right eye. Dreamseers supplement their training and intuition with the *Zedakha*, a book that describes and analyzes over 10,000 dream symbols. They decode dreams with great skill, whether the dreams come as messages from spirits or simply from the unconscious mind: The

Haslanti tell many tales about Dreamseers who nipped vendettas in the bud or exposed hidden crimes by recognizing clues within dreams. Traveling Dreamseers often memorize especially vivid or meaningful dreams they hear and repeat them for the edification and entertainment of other communities.

### ESSENCE CHANNELERS

Most Haslanti know that the Chosen of Luna helped and guided them several times in their history: Arvida, Gerd, Flintbeak Nightingale, and a few others. While they associate slain Arvida with their archaic gods, Gerd and others form part of the civic pantheon. From such examples, the Haslanti revere the Lunar Exalted.

They do not much like the Terrestrial Exalted. Although the League has its share of outcaste Dragon-Blooded, such individuals gain no status just for being Exalted. The Haslanti have too many bitter memories of Dragon-Blooded monks bullying them and their gods. Outcaste Terrestrials can (and often do) become great heroes to the League, their deeds recited in the Tholoi while they live, but they must work for respect and prove their patriotism over and over again.

The Haslanti lack experience with other Exalted. The example of the Bull of the North makes many Haslanti wary of the new Solar Exalted, but they'll wait and see. Whoever serves the League and the people will earn their favor.

Despite turning away from worship of small gods, the Haslanti deal with a variety of local spirits. Some contacts result in God-Blooded offspring. As with the Terrestrial Exalted, the Haslanti give such power-blessed folk a chance to prove their worth as individuals.

Of course, the Haslanti share the hatred and fear that the Winter Folk inspire among so many Northerners. It would take extraordinary effort for any raksha to earn a personal exception to this general prejudice.

### MAGIC

On one hand, Haslanti tradition associates sorcery with Lunars, the Realm and Bagrash Köl. Mere mortals should avoid it. On the other hand, their shamans maintain a long tradition of folk thaumaturgy. Haslanti shamans chiefly employ the Arts of Spirit Beckoning, Warding and Exorcism, as well as Enchantment for making simple talismans. Among these wide-ranging people, however, one can also find shamans who practice other Arts. (See Chapter Three of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex** and pp. 137–139 of **Exalted** for descriptions of these Arts.)

As the Haslanti experiment with gliders, metal alloys and other technologies, interest grows in all applied natural sciences. Haslanti engineers now study metallurgical alchemy and other arts they must know to repair and duplicate the technomagic artifacts they pull from First Age ruins. Icehome even has a public school of thaumaturgy,

the Scriptorium of the Northern Sky. (See **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, pp. 76–77, for a description of this arcane academy.) The Haslanti government welcomes foreign thaumaturges who are willing to pledge their loyalty to the League.

## GOVERNMENT

The Haslanti League is a federal state—more than a confederation, for a central government wields significant authority, but the nine city-states retain major powers of their own. The Haslanti jerry-rigged the system from tribal custom and bits of political and legal theory that filtered north from the Scavenger Lands and Cherak. The result incorporates tribal chiefs and constitutional law, democratic assemblies and divine fiat.

## THE CITY-STATES

To people from points south, most of the League's cities look more like towns. Nevertheless, each member city has title to a section of Outwall that could be a good-sized country anywhere else. Borders are wiggly, fuzzy and shifting, as city-states hash out who owns a particular emerald, salmon stream or deposit of ore.

Each city-state also receives any islands off its coast and a section of the White Sea's northern coast for about 100 miles inland. Everything beyond that is open territory, available to whoever wants to stake a claim, in whatever quantity he can hold. The White Sea itself is common to all fishers and whalers, as well. No city-state can forbid travel through its territory. The nomad herdfolk and Great Ice prospectors insist on the right of all Haslanti to go anywhere in the League, as long as they do not take the resources of its owners.

For a legislature, each city-state has four district assemblies per year, according to the formula: "One for the greenfield, one for the sea and two for the Outwall." One assembly meets in the city itself, one among the people of the Great Ice and two among the emerald-dwellers and nomads. Every sector of Haslanti society thus receives due representation. Any citizen can attend, speak and vote, though tribe or clan chiefs, shamans, wealthy merchants and other community leaders dominate the proceedings.

Provincial assemblies can pass any law that does not contradict the League's constitution, the *Twisted Stone Accords*. No law becomes valid, however, until greenfield, Great Ice and Outwall assemblies all pass the law by majority vote. After all, what's good for greenfield folk might not be good for an iceholt or a wandering tribe of mammoth-hunters. The Haslanti do not pass new laws quickly.

## THE COUNCIL OF OLIGARCHS

The supreme authority in League government shows legislative and executive aspects, but it fundamentally acts as a high court for the Haslanti city-states, towns and tribes. When someone claims that a law of her district violates the *Twisted Stone Accords*, or two city-states have a dispute, they

### EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULES

Not every city-state follows this plan. Fair Isle and Diamond Hearth have no Outwall. As a result, Fair Isle alternates its assemblies between the town and ad hoc gatherings of fishers, whalers and miners on the Great Ice. Diamond Hearth holds all its assemblies in town, and they're shams anyway.

put the matter to the Oligarchs. This council also oversees the League's military in defending the League, the diplomatic corps in dealing with other nations, and the treasury in coining the League's money.

An Oligarch must be native-born Haslanti, over the age of 45, with a record of at least 10 successful arbitrations in disputes where at least a talent of silver was at stake (or goods of equivalent value; this includes capital criminal cases). Her city-state's four assemblies must then elect her to the post. Since each segment of Haslanti society wants one of its own in the job, choosing an Oligarch can take years in some cases. The haphazard electoral process usually begins three years before a current Oligarch runs out her 18-year term. No Oligarch can serve two terms.

Most Haslanti city-states hold one seat each on the Council of Oligarchs. Icehome and Ironfall each receive two seats, due to their greater population. The 12th Oligarch, who serves as the council's president, is elected by a special process. The other 11 Oligarchs submit a list of seven nominees to a special college of Dreamseers. The Dreamseers go to Twisted Stone, where they meet the gods. These gods then select the 12th Oligarch.

Many Haslanti know that the committee of gods includes the Haslanti Ennead and a number of totem animal avatars. Very few mortals know that Lunar Exalted also attend.

### POLITICAL PARTIES

Three factions emerged among the Oligarchs and among politically minded Haslanti in general.

**The Deft Hands** resist central authority, foreign trade and urbanization, supporting tribal authority and tradition instead. While members of this party could hardly be called pacifists (they generally support dueling and tribal rights to vendetta), they oppose aggression against the League's tribal neighbors. In assemblies and the Council, the Deft Hands try to steer more wealth from the cities and wealthy landholders to the Outwall tribes and emeralds. They view wealth as belonging to the community, the way a whole tribe owns and manages a herd of reindeer or mammoth, rather than something individuals amass and keep for themselves.

Ivory Smile, the current President of the Council, also leads the Deft Hands faction among the Oligarchs. She is 86 years old, with bright black eyes in a wrinkled brown face. Her hair remains dark (thanks to dye) and





her name proved prophetic, as her teeth are now walrus-ivory dentures. Ivory Smile is a shrewd judge of character and truthfulness, as well as an able mediator. Many of her colleagues wish she were gone.

**The Landless Men** favor militarism, especially against the Tear Eaters and icewalkers, in order to obtain more land for farming, hunting and grazing. The Haslanti have done well for themselves in the last century... so well that the League suffers a surfeit of young men and women with no hope of obtaining farms or herds of their own. What are they to do? At best, they join the military or move into the cities to become artisans, clerks or shopkeepers—and the League still, somehow, has to feed them. At worst, the landless become brigands or other sorts of troublemakers. Most Landless Men advocate greater central control of the League, as part of their program for military expansion.

Greya Thold, the Oligarch from Crystal, leads the Landless party. She is 46 years old, with short gray hair and a rather homely face, but she speaks in a soft and persuasive voice. Crystal has many landless descendants from the Wyldfog Wars; it also suffers frequent attacks from the Tear Eaters. Greya sees military action as a solution to both problems.

**The Profitable Men** favor trade and the right of individuals to gather all the wealth they can. The party finds its greatest strength in the cities and among the miners. The Profitable Men see commerce as the solution

to the League's problems: for instance, buying food from points south. Members of the party even advocate closer ties to the Guild.

Jurgan Einarson, the senior Oligarch from Icehome, has thinning gray hair and pale skin. He was a successful merchant before his election 10 years ago. Not surprisingly, he leads the Profitable Men in the Council. Jurgan wants the rich to stay rich and the League to stay at peace.

The three parties form constantly shifting coalitions as members see common interests on some issues, while opposing each other overall. The Deft Hands and Landless Men both oppose the Profitable Men because the two parties want to keep the Haslanti rural. The Profitable Men, however, sometimes favor war to gain exploitable resources (including slaves). The Deft Hands and Profitable Men disagree on almost everything, but individuals sometimes cooperate against the Landless Men's push to increase the power of the Oligarchs.

## THE ARCHON

The Haslanti despise the notion of monarchy, but they do have a ceremonial head of state, the Archon. The Council elects a retired Oligarch to this office. In her six-year term of office, the Archon spends much of her time traveling though the League, visiting towns and tribes as a goodwill ambassador from the central government. The current Archon, an elderly woman named Whispering Gale, nears the end of her term in office.



In her travels, the Archon presides over 18–20 provincial assemblies a year. While the Archon cannot openly support or oppose laws, she can influence League governance through the laws she chooses to forward from assembly to assembly or province to province. The mere fact that an Archon reports on the laws debated by another city-state's assemblies suggest that the issue is important to the League as a whole.

## THE LEAGUE'S MILITARY

Most Haslanti know how to fight. When wolves or bandits attack, a farmer or nomad must deal with the situation himself. Anyone might need to fight a duel too.

Every Haslanti, therefore, is potentially part of the national militia. Most young men and women also spend tours of duty as full-time soldiers in their community's local militia. (The usual tour consists of two months a year, for at least four years between the ages of 16 and 25.) A village or tribe might muster several dozen soldiers mounted on elk or reindeer and a half-dozen glider-borne scouts. A greenfield's militia numbers in the hundreds to 1,000 full-time soldiers (even more for Icehome). Greenfield militias also include a few iceships and a few dozen glider pilots. Of course, any militia can easily call up many more people from the community—most Haslanti consider themselves militia reservists.

Local militias, however, cannot fight real wars. To this end, the League created three distinct military forces: the Fyrd, the Ice Squadron and the Wind Fleet. These three forces serve the Council of Oligarchs rather than the city-states. Though small, they make a formidable combination. Until the Bull of the North's rise, no one in the North could surpass the League at projecting military power at a distance.

### THE FYRD

Each city-state donates troops to a full-time army for the entire League. On average, each city-state sends about 1,000 soldiers, who serve two-year hitches. The Fyrd's officer corps consists of another 1,000 or so full-time, professional soldiers.

The Fyrd operates in 500-man dragons, 250-man wings or 125-man talons, as needed. Fyrd units police greenfields in partnership with the local militia, chase bandits and battle invading barbarians, hobgoblins and other enemies. In a crisis, the Fyrd can draft all local militias.

Most Fyrd members can ride elk or reindeer, though they typically dismount for battle; the League has little real cavalry. Many soldiers also know how to use skis or snowshoes. The Council of Oligarchs would like all Fyrd troops to receive glider and parachute training, but that day is far off. For now, the League trains only a few dragons of such elite troops.

Fyrd soldiers often wear chain shirts or hauberks; any Haslanti soldier wears at least a buff jacket. For

hand-to-hand weapons, the Haslanti prefer swords (especially great swords), spears and axes. Most Haslanti can use a bow as well. They prefer long bows, but the Fyrd equips itself with crossbows as fast as the League can manufacture them.

General Bjorn Varjnison holds overall command of the Fyrd and the local militias, with the full confidence of the Oligarchs and all the provincial assemblies. This broad-shouldered, brown-bearded son of an Ironfall farmer looks somewhat eccentric as he stalks about, smoking a long white clay pipe and muttering to himself, but he single-handedly killed a snow lion and possesses a keen strategic mind. He is also the grandson of one of the Lunars in the Twisted Stone Conclave, and regularly confers with that body as well as the Haslanti government. General Varjnison lobbies to build the League's military still further. Powerful as it is, thanks to its remarkable mobility, he fears it could not save the League from the Bull of the North or a mass assault from the necromantic Tear Eater tribes.

### THE ICE SQUADRON

For a sea that stays frozen most of the year, the Haslanti navy sails iceships. The Ice Squadron includes a small number of ordinary sailing ships and galleys for use in summer, when the southern reaches of the White Sea break into pack ice and open water, but the League's naval power is much reduced for this season. The iceships go into dry-dock or head to ports on the Great Ice. For the rest of the year, the League owns the White Sea. Not so many people realize that iceships can leave the frozen sea to sail up frozen rivers, or across ice-covered tundra—until a Haslanti battle group sails up to their camp or fortress, perhaps 100 miles inland. Haslanti iceships also sail across the smoother portions of the Great Ice.

The Ice Squadron has nine cruisers: two outfitted as troop transports (each can carry a dragon of Fyrd soldiers), seven equipped with artillery that ranges from ballistae to concussive Essence cannon. They are named for the nine city-states of the League. Nine smaller ships called coasters can each carry a talon of fully equipped troops, while another 27 patrol coasters each carry a pair of heavy ballistae.

All sailors in the Ice Squadron are volunteers who already served in their local militias. The captains and officers are career military men and women. Each captain runs an independent command, with no division of the fleet into battle groups. When a mission calls for more than one ship, the Ice Squadron's admiral, Blue Dragonfish, orders the captains to work together—most likely with the admiral himself in overall command. Blue Dragonfish, a Haslanti-born outcaste Terrestrial Exalt, stays in the field whenever possible. If the Oligarchs manage to trap him behind his desk, one of his vice-admirals commands the battle group.





## THE WIND FLEET

The League's third military service, the Wind Fleet, now forms the core of Haslanti military planning. This service is the League's air force—the largest air force in Creation, with 150 air boats of the second class and 112 enormous air boats of the first class. Each air boat carries a complement of sailors as well as gliders, paratroopers, archers and various weapons to drop on enemies. Sailors are professional soldiers. Glider pilots, paratroopers and on-board archers come from the Fyrd. These elite airborne soldiers operate in 25-man scales. Even the first-class air boats can carry just five scales of troops.

The Wind Admiralty consists of the Wind Admiral herself and eight vice-admirals. Each city-state contributes one admiral, who oversees any Wind Fleet operations over that territory. Wind Admiral Twenty-One Kestrels is the slender, middle-aged granddaughter of the air boat's inventor: She regards the Wind Fleet as a family legacy. Administering the fleet takes so much of her time, though, that Twenty-One Kestrels hardly ever gets to fly anymore—much to her chagrin.

Large as it is, the Wind Fleet is stretched woefully thin and the League builds new air boats as fast as it can. There are no civilian air boats. Most times, nearly a third of the fleet is in maintenance, while the rest carries supplies from Icehome to Crystal and Diamond Hearth. These cities would starve without their supply runs, so the League seldom can spare many air boats for war. Then again, the League has not yet faced a battle that called for more than a few air boats: Being able to hover 1,000 feet above an enemy, dropping fire bombs and paratrooper commandos, is a *big* advantage. The Wind Fleet specializes in rapid responses, ferrying commandos at speed to trouble spots. Whether barbarian encampment or rude fortress, most other Northerners simply don't know how to fight death from the skies.

### HASLANTI VEHICLES

For complete descriptions of iceships, air boats, gliders and parachutes, see **Scroll of Kings**, pages 148–153. In brief, iceships resemble ordinary sailing ships fitted with large steel runners so they skate across the ice. Air boats are hot-air dirigible balloons equipped with sails and pedal-powered propellers. Lift comes from burning kerosene or whale oil. A gondola of wood, wicker, feathersteel and bamboo carries the crew, troops, gliders and cargo. A second class air boat has a gas bag 300 feet long, while a first class air boat has a gas bag 450 feet long and a three-deck gondola.

## THE EARS OF THE NORTH

The Haslanti League does not rely exclusively on armed might to protect itself and defeat its enemies. Much to the surprise of many outsiders, the League also fields a remarkably skilled espionage service called the Ears of the North. Some of the League's enemies—Guild infiltrators, the Fair Folk's ravagers and Dynastic Houses attempting private imperialism, to name a few—strike from the shadows and must be fought the same way. The League recruits its spies during their military training, but the Ears range from commandos to linguists and engineers. As usual for the Haslanti, though, nothing works quite the way civilized folk expect.

### THE GRANDMOTHERS

Perhaps the biggest and most bizarre secret of the Ears is who runs the agency. A few dozen old women meet regularly at a certain teahouse in the small greenfield of Bertran's Ford, near Icehome. Some days, 30 old biddies show up to chat about this and that; other days, only four or five. They are the directors and operations board for the Ears. The notion boggles the mind of Realm and Guild spies who seek the Ears' secrets.

These are, however, the shrewdest old ladies in the League. Each of them lost a child and a grandchild in the League's service. Each was invited to join by the existing membership. They come from every sector of League society. In their long lives, they have seen every aspect of the human condition. They know what people do, and why. Oh, the Grandmothers include experts on balance of trade, military strategy, politics and the like—but so often, a situation boils down to a few people driven by ambition, lust, jealousy, face-saving or other all-too-human motives.

The five branches of the Ears report to the Grandmothers through various (and devious) channels. The Grandmothers report to the Oligarchs and whoever those worthies think needs to know. Afterward, new directives flow from the teahouse.

### A FINAL SECRET

The grandmothers don't know it themselves, but one of their number is a Chosen of Luna. Keen-Eyed Snowcat reports the Ears' findings and deeds to the Twisted Stone Conclave, and acts to hide and protect the Grandmothers from the League's enemies. She is 86 years old, but only *looks* 86 because of her shapeshifting. Haslanti-born herself, she sees no conflict between defending the League and her Exalted role as a Steward of Creation.



## THE BLOODED HAWKS

The first branch of the Ears operates in “fists” of five agents or “double fists” of 10. Blooded Hawks conduct raids (often by glider) to destroy enemy supplies, kill commanders and otherwise impair an enemy’s readiness to fight. Some agents also act as infiltrators and military advisors, planting themselves within Guild caravans, tribes or villages as needed. They guide and assist leaders friendly to the Haslanti and make trouble for the League’s foes.

The Blooded Hawks number about 200, and have six air boats second class for rapid transportation. Several dozen stay on call for immediate deployment. Another few dozen are on extended missions throughout the League’s sphere of interest.

## THE CUNNING DANCERS

The analytical branch of the Ears strives to figure out what the League’s enemies are doing or planning, and to conceal the League’s intentions from those enemies. Their numbers include code-breakers and code-makers, linguists, Dreamseers and thaumaturges, as well as experts on a wide variety of other topics. Information sources range from military documents captured by the Blooded Hawks to court gossip heard by the Soothing Speakers. The Cunning Dancers know quite a bit about events and personalities around the League’s margins. The analysts work especially hard to keep tabs on the Guild, though the Bull of the North recently eclipsed that old foe as a topic of concern.

Most of the time, Cunning Dancers stay in the League’s cities, where they also work as traders, interpreters, savants or other diverse occupations. Individuals may go on field missions, though, when other agents need an expert on hand.


## THE SHAPERS OF FORM

The third branch of the Ears pulls double duty as crafters of cunning devices and crafters of disinformation. The two fields sometimes overlap, as when the Ears of the North want to fake a troop movement. The Shapers of Form invented the folding glider, the miniature crossbow, the fire mine and many other wondrous devices. Important subsidiary groups at Windcreche and Ironfall study First Age devices and try to duplicate their effects with Second Age materials and techniques.

## THE SHADOW KNIVES

Whereas the Blooded Hawk may kill as part of commando raids, assassination is the principal duty of the Shadow Knives. These agents know a wide variety of methods for killing the League’s enemies, from bludgeons to poisoned cups. They are also skilled at breaking and entering, disguise, social graces and whatever else they need to approach a target. Most of them know a craft or form of entertainment to use as part of a cover identity.





Shadow Knives rarely operate in teams larger than a single fist. The agency includes a number of God-Blooded operatives as well as the vengeful spirit of an emerald destroyed by the Guild, but most members are human.

### THE SOOTHING SPEAKERS

The full name of the Ears' final branch is the Speakers of Zephyr and Storm. The Soothing Speakers are the Ears' largest branch, for it includes the entire Haslanti diplomatic corps. Of course, an actual Haslanti mission includes several other people than the known ambassador and support staff. A cook or teamster might have a secret duty to gather information in wine shops, gambling dens and other places where they can learn the temper of the common people... and perhaps encourage the servants of the great to speak more than is prudent.

### THE SIXTH BRANCH

A member of the Ears of the North recently Exalted as a member of the Night Caste. The Grandmothers do not particularly like Elias Tremalion. He seems overly concerned with his own comforts, and the Grandmothers don't like having him removed from the chain of command to act as a unique special operative for the Oligarchs. Nevertheless, Tremalion gets results no mortal could equal. When the Grandmothers decide they can trust him, Tremalion will meet them and learn the true leaders of the Ears of the North. (If he doesn't discover it himself.)

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Haslanti League is pushy. The Outwall tribes want more grazing land. The merchants want more commerce, at greater advantage to themselves. The military commanders want to make shows of strength. The politicians and diplomats want respect from other nations. None of this necessarily makes the League hostile—very few Haslanti are flaming imperialists—but the Haslanti feel large and in charge. And, why not? They wrested a mighty nation from tundra and glacier. They can go anywhere, sailing their air boats over any border. The Haslanti feel they are *winners*, and they want the rest of Creation to know it.

Despite their aggression, the Haslanti count few people as genuine enemies. They hate the Wyld barbarians, the Tear Eaters and the necromantic corsairs of Karn (described in Chapter Six) because these people attack the Haslanti and taint themselves through contact with uncanny forces. The Haslanti hate the Northern Fair Folk because the raksha eat their souls. The Guild merely re-

ceives a hereditary suspicion, reinforced by many instance of catching the merchants in sharp practice. The Haslanti don't hold grudges against the icewalkers, Gethamane or most anyone else in the North, however, no matter how many little wars they have fought. Haslanti enjoy a good scrap.

Beyond their immediate neighbors, the Haslanti scorn the Realm. They know the Realm chiefly through overbearing Immaculate missionaries, and they hold a grudge. The Haslanti do not believe the Realm can ever attack them, though. Yet, Haslanti get along well with Linowan—the two demi-barbarian peoples understand each other very well.

The most aggressive Haslanti leaders lobby for a campaign against Whitewall. These Haslanti have nothing against Whitewall, they simply believe that a short airborne campaign can bully the North's richest city-state into paying tribute and giving sweet trade concessions to Haslanti merchants. No one imagines they can actually conquer and occupy Whitewall.

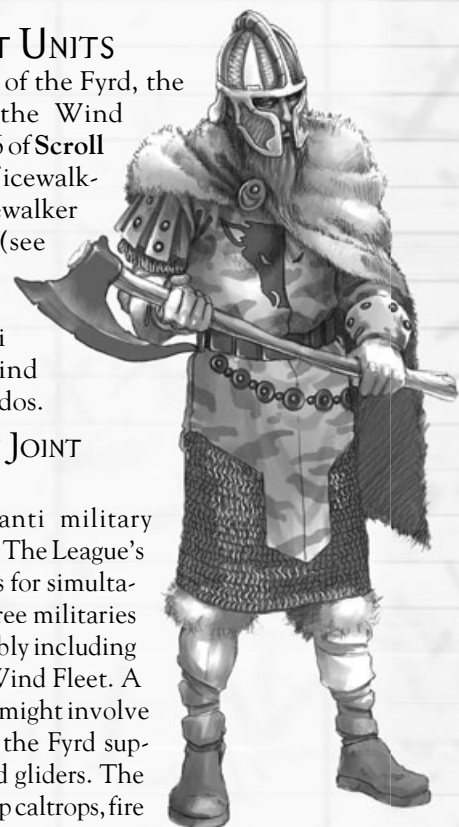
The sudden rise of the Bull of the North presents the Haslanti with the first neighbor in a century who inspires actual concern. Haslanti strategists continue to assume that the League will enjoy air superiority in any war, but they doubt that the Fyrd could defeat the Bull's icewalkers. The Ears of the North now devote much of their efforts to infiltrating the Bull's empire, learning his intentions and capabilities, and preventing him from attacking the League.

### SAMPLE COMBAT UNITS

For sample units of the Fyrd, the Ice Squadron and the Wind Fleet, see pages 74–76 of **Scroll of Kings**. The units of icewalker tribe militia and icewalker glider commandos (see **Scroll of Kings**, pp. 78–79) can also represent a Haslanti local militia or Wind Fleet glider commandos.

### FYRD/WIND FLEET JOINT TASK FORCE

The three Haslanti military forces rarely act alone. The League's strategic doctrine calls for simultaneous use of two or three militaries against the foe, preferably including air support from the Wind Fleet. A typical joint task force might involve one or more wings of the Fyrd supported by air boats and gliders. The Wind Fleet soldiers drop caltrops, fire





grenades or other unpleasantness on the enemy while the Fyrd engages on the ground. This could be treated as two combat units acting together—or the air support could be treated as special equipment appended to the larger ground force, increasing its Might.

The League might send a Joint Task Force such as this one to besiege an entire city or a barbarian horde. The task force consists of a dragon of Fyrd troops supplemented by another dragon's worth of local militia and two second-class air boats, themselves capable of launching a dozen gliders.

**Commanding Officer:** Colonel Swantje Ennesdottir

**Armor Color:** Mottled gray and white surcoat with various heraldic images

**Motto:** "Victory for the League"

**General Makeup:** 2,000 mixed infantry with equal numbers wearing chain hauberks or buff jackets, with slotted or pot helmets; armed with great swords, axes, spears and other

weapons; plus two second-class air boats and 12 gliders. Only half the troops carry bows or crossbows.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 7

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3

**Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 2

**Ranged Damage:** 1

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 1

**Armor:** 2 (-3 mobility penalty)    **Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Use of great swords, axes and other weapons that require a lot of space prevents the troops from fighting in close formation; they usually stick to relaxed formation. Colonel Ennesdottir has seven relays (including one on each air boat) who send messages by waving colored flags. The air boats also carry two of her five heroes, and two artilleryists who function as sorcerers. Her remaining three heroes each command dragons of ground troops.

**The Haslanti League**, a Magnitude 6 Dominion

**Military:** 4    **Government:** 2    **Culture:** 3

**Abilities:** Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 2 (Diverse Economy +2), Craft 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 3 (Superior spies +3), Occult 3, Performance 4, Presence 2, Stealth 3 (Calculated Assassination +2), War 4 (Surprise Attack +1, Winter Warfare +2)

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 5

**Virtue Flaw:** Valor    **Current Limit:** 1

**Willpower:** 9

**Bonus Points:** 30 **External Bonus Points:** 16

**Notes:** The Haslanti League is a federation of Magnitude 3–4 city-states; they add up to a Magnitude 6 dominion because of the League's extraordinary scale, diversity and vigor. Some of the Oligarchs or Grandmothers are savants. Members of the Twisted Stone Conclave could act as sorcerers, but only Gerd Marrow-Eater could do so with legitimacy, as the League's greatest legendary hero returned.

The League's bonus points go to one dot each of Compassion, Conviction, Craft and Integrity, as well as the Investigation, Stealth and War specialties. External bonus points come from the League's secret Lunar backers, the Haslanti Ennead and (though the Haslanti would hate to admit it) the Guild. They go to a dot of Willpower (for the Haslanti sense of manifest destiny), one dot each of Awareness and Occult, and the Bureaucracy specialties.

In Limit Break, the aggressive tendencies of the Haslanti run out of control. City-states attack neighbor tribes and countries, while Haslanti factions fight each other.





IT'S ALREADY DEAD...



## CHAPTER FIVE CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

The North holds many societies besides the three most well known to outsiders: Whitewall, Gethamane and the Haslanti League. Some of these societies' folk are civilized, in that they build cities. Others are barbarians, living only in villages or as nomads. A few are not human. Some struggle to become something new and greater; others struggle to hold what they have and cling to the past. None of them escape the Time of Tumult.

### DESHAN: THE COASTAL SLAVE STATES

The north coast of the Inland Sea is sometimes called the Deshan. It holds a multitude of little kingdoms and city-states, all more or less influenced by the Realm. Aside from Cherak (which effectively is part of the Realm), the largest and richest of these provinces are four satrapies of the Realm—though they remain small and poor compared to most prefectures on the Blessed Isle. Dynastic families own

two of these satrapies, a coalition of patrician families owns a third, and the Thousand Scales owns the fourth. And, “owns” is the correct word—not “administers,” “exploits” or even “rules”—for virtually everyone in these four satrapies is a slave. In the four Deshan satrapies, slaves even own other slaves... but a tiny class of people from the Realm owns them all. Although they cover only small portions of the Deshan, they give the region its other name among Realm inhabitants: the Slave Coast.

The Realm values the Deshan satrapies quite highly. They are not the richest of the Realm's possessions in the Threshold. They do not produce the jade of Harborhead or the silk of An-Teng, while the little province of the Lap surpasses the agricultural output of all four satrapies put together. Nevertheless, the Deshan's vegetables, grain and meat help to feed the Realm and keep food prices low, and the Realm will not give them up lightly. The Realm might not have much choice, though, for all four satrapies currently move toward rebellion.

## HISTORY

The Deshan satrapies' unusual form of government began about 300 years ago, in the aftermath of the Unbroken Rushes Rebellion. A director of the All-Seeing Eye, working with three senior officials of the Thousand Scales, devised a radical plan. To prevent future disturbances, these officials recommended enslaving virtually the entire population of the Realm and making them all property of the Great Houses and the patricians.

The Scarlet Empress thought the idea might work, but she also saw the difficulties of controlling such a great number of slaves. In fact, she thought it likely that enslaving the Realm's entire population overnight would bring a rebellion that would dwarf every previous revolt. To test this idea and to avoid worrying the Blessed Isle's inhabitants that they might soon become slaves, the Empress ordered the ministers to implement their plan in four newly pacified Northern provinces.

The experiment did not occur peacefully. Three of the four capitals of the coastal satrapies rose up in rebellion against the enslavement decrees, as did a substantial portion of the rural population. The military campaign to suppress the revolt, known as the Enslavement War, lasted for almost 25 years. The conflict ended only when the Scarlet Empire's overseers found that they could pacify the populace through drugs.

The Thousand Scales and many of the Realm's generals deemed the campaign a success. The slave system continues there to this day. Yet, the Scarlet Empress considered the magnitude of the revolts that could erupt on the Blessed Isle if she tried to import the system. She also recognized that, while the Deshan satrapies became docile, they never would reach their full potential for profit. The Empress understood that even the most well-fed and seemingly contented slaves do not excel as much in commerce and invention as the free—especially when the slaves must live on the edge of stupor or the edge of withdrawal. A few patricians still wish they could rule entire provinces of slaves, but most of the Realm's political and economic theorists think the Deshan experiment hasn't gone terribly well. Even with omnipresent drugs and continued military occupation, slave revolts still occur regularly.

## GEOGRAPHY

The four satrapies are scattered across the length of the Deshan, with sizeable gaps between them. No province extends more than 200 miles along the coast. A cadet branch of House Ledaal owns the westernmost satrapy, Dehenna. The satrapy lodges between the Dehennen Mountains and the Inland Sea. It leads the satrapies in mining. East of Dehenna lies Inahjal, ruled by the Ambrim, Jesk and Therusa families—the descendants of the three Thousand Scales officials who implemented the enslavement plan and received Inahjal as





a reward. Immediately east of Wallport, the satrapy of Serrat functions under the direct administration of the Thousand Scales but also has strong loyalty to House Ragara. House Peleps owns and rules Amber River, the largest and most prosperous of the four states, not far from Cherak.

Huge commercial farms called latifundiae cover most of the four satrapies. A latifundia has a population ranging between 300 and 3,000. Each province also has a capital city that shares its name, with a population of 60,000 to 100,000, and one to three lesser cities with populations of 10,000 to 30,000. There are no towns, villages or small farms, for the provincial overlords fear that rebellious slaves could too easily overwhelm such settlements.

## NATIONS OF SLAVES

Although hundreds of miles separate the Deshan provinces, all four resemble each other a great deal. In each satrapy, only a few thousand inhabitants are free. Within their number, a few dozen free and exceptionally wealthy citizens—mostly Realm patricians, with a few Dynasts and Dragon-Blooded “lost eggs” from the North—own the rest of the population. Slaves work the fields of the latifundiae. More than that, though, all the scribes and clerks, merchants, artisans and managers are slaves too. A single Dynast or patrician might own an entire town, from the wealthiest merchant to the lowliest kitchen cleaner.

In these lands, slaves can own other slaves. A Dynast or patrician can own thousands of agricultural slaves directly, as well as latifundia managers, senior merchants and artisans. In turn, the shopkeepers and artisans own their apprentices, assistants and servants, while estate managers own their overseers. Apart from the agricultural slaves, the higher a slave’s status is, the fewer owners he has. In the provincial cities, skilled and educated slaves are generally owned directly. In contrast, the poorest and least skilled servants might have three or even four owners. For instance, a kitchen slave might belong to an apprentice clerk in a business, who belongs to a senior accountant, who belongs to a merchant factor, who is owned directly by a Dynast or patrician overlord.

In some ways, universal slavery makes management of the satrapies exceptionally simple because the actual citizenry numbers just a few thousand. The Realm’s satrap rules directly, rather than through a native figurehead. She governs the free populace. The slaves merely obey orders. A slave can request things of his master but has no rights and no power at all.

## THE SATRAPS

The four provinces are also unusual in that the Empress pledged the post of satrap to particular groups. The satrap of Dehenna always comes from the Pechenga household of the Great House of Ledaal. That lineage owns Dehenna. House Peleps owns Amber River, and while it does not get to choose the satraps, the Empress would appoint a satrap only from that House. Inahjal has a collective satrapy, a

triumvirate representing the Ambrim, Jesk and Therusa families descended from the three ministers. No triumvir serves for more than 10 years, though, so no family has a chance to dominate through the longevity of a Dragon-Blooded representative. The Empress gave the Thousand Scales the privilege of appointing its own satrap to Serrat... except the political infighting among the various bureau chiefs meant they always needed her to break their deadlocks when choosing one.

## A DRUGGED POPULACE

Legally defining everyone as property does not itself suffice to render hundreds of thousands of people powerless. The “Deshan System” would not function without the fact that opium and marijuana can grow in the coastal North. The quality is not high, but the consumers do not care. The provinces also pay the Guild to import prodigious quantities of qat, cocaine and other drugs.

In the hundreds of latifundiae, the landowners (or more likely, their slave estate managers) issue the field hands a daily ration of opium. The slave-owners also reward especially diligent slaves with cocaine, hashish or qat.

The Slave Coast overlords see the problems caused by drug use on such a massive scale. Scholars associated with the Thousand Scales calculate that agricultural production would rise significantly if the labor force were not drugged. Yet, they also calculate that slave revolts would counter any profits from removing the drugs. As it stands, most of the slaves become docile laborers who eagerly await their daily drug ration and work to earn extra intoxicants. Slave revolts still occur, but they rarely spread beyond a single latifundia or a single district of a city. Most of the slaves are simply too apathetic to pick up arms against their masters. Most of the field hands and urban laborers happily spend their meager free time in a drug-induced stupor. Few have the energy or desire to plot against their masters. At least, that’s what the owners hope.


Of course, owners can also discipline their slaves through their control of the drug supply. If productivity drops, they end the drug ration and let withdrawal provide the incentive to work harder. Cutting the drug supply doesn’t always end a slave revolt, but the owners know where the slaves will go: to the warehouses filled with crates of the drugs they crave.

The aspect of the Deshan System the Realm’s leaders most dislike, indeed, is the influence it confers on the Guild. In return for not contesting the Realm’s control of what drugs it permits on the Blessed Isle, House Cynis and House Peleps both granted the Guild a monopoly on foreign drug supplies to the Slave Coast. The two Dynastic Houses make certain that the Deshan overlords do not buy their drugs from anyone else.

## AGRICULTURAL SLAVES AND URBAN LABOR

Every morning, half-drugged slaves shuffle out of dormitories that are locked and guarded at night. These slaves





spend their days growing barley, rye, oats, potatoes, cabbages, turnips and other cold-tolerant grains and vegetables for the Realm. They also tend chickens, goats, pigs, sheep and cattle. If they produce too little, their own rations of food and drugs suffer. Most slaves fear losing the drugs more than they fear losing a meal.

The cities of Dehenna, Amber River, Inahjal and Serrat hold thousands of unskilled workers whose lives are nearly as hard as that of a field hand. They dig, carry, load and unload, sweep, pump bellows and do all the other dull, hard work needed to maintain a city. They, too, receive drug rations as long as they work hard enough. Dehenna also sends thousands of slaves to toil in its mines for iron, copper, gold and marble.

About eight in 10 of the Deshan slaves do hard, unskilled labor in the firms, mines and cities. Another one in 10 are guards and overseers who keep them in line. The remaining tenth do everything else.

### SKILLED SLAVES

Overseers and administrators keep an eye out for young slaves who seem cleverer than the rest. They train these slaves for skilled work in the cities or as personal servants. Most house slaves and urban slaves descend from other slaves who work in these positions, but a steady trickle of Deshanites leaves the fields for less strenuous labor. Conversely, if a young slave proves too dull or disobedient, his masters force-feed him opium until he becomes both addicted and docile. Then, out to the fields he goes.

Personal servants such as cooks or valets, as well as slaves who work skilled jobs—scribes, physicians, potters and the other occupations found in every town—cannot do their jobs in an opium stupor. Instead, they receive other rewards and privileges. They can own slaves and property. They can earn money. They can even become wealthy.

Yet, they are not in any way free. They must still petition their masters to change jobs or cities, just as they must give a portion of all monies they make to their masters. For no reason, their master can order them to a new city or a new job—or permanently maim them.

When they have the chance, some of these comparatively privileged slaves drug themselves as heavily as the lowliest agricultural thrall. Others take out their fear and frustration on the flesh of their own slaves. A well known maxim of the Slave Coast is that having a master who is free is always better than a master who is a slave, because a master who is free does not try to prove she is better than her slaves; she simply knows this is true.

### A SEMBLANCE OF LAW

Dynasts, soldiers and other émigrés to the Deshan satrapies officially live under Realm law. In practice, they can do whatever they want as long as agricultural quotas are met and no other residents of the Realm suffer harm. Meanwhile, slaves are all property. Even wealthy slaves who own a dozen or more slaves have few rights.

### CRIMES BETWEEN SLAVES

The provincial overlords do not much care what happens between slaves. When two slaves quarrel and neither slave owns the other, the only question is whether either one of them caused significant property damage. If they didn't, the masters let them work it out themselves. If they did, then it becomes a matter for their owners to work out—one master paying the other for the destruction of her property. The slave who caused the damage is flogged at the very least. Killing another slave, except in obvious self-defense, counts as property destruction.

Since slaves have no real property of their own, theft from a slave is theft from his owner, and receives as much attention as that owner cares to bestow. A Dynast doesn't care if one clerk steals another clerk's life savings. There is no real system of slave courts, since slaves lack the freedom and the free time to create anything like this. Instead, there are slaves whom other slaves go to as mediators, but none of their rulings carry any force of law.

Of course, a slave can go to his owner and ask for her help. Yet, "going to master" for anything less than grand theft, rape or major assault earns the hatred and contempt of the other slaves. Slaves cannot protect their friends against abuse by their owner, or any free citizen, but they beat other slaves. A slave who wrongs someone with especially skilled and loyal friends might vanish entirely, with the other slaves planting evidence that the offender escaped.

### SLAVE AGAINST FREE

Owners can do nearly anything to their slaves, short of killing them. Anything a slave owns, her master can take. An owner can beat his slaves at will. Owners must petition their satrap for permission to execute slaves in the higher grades without cause, however. A consistent pattern of disobedience, openly talking about rebellion and any sort of violence against a slave owner or overseer all provide grounds for execution without appeal—and if a free owner says that a dead slave committed such offenses, the satrap probably won't bother to investigate.

The knottiest problems arise between free folk and slaves they do not own. While killing, crippling or seriously injuring another citizen's slave is a crime, stealing from a slave or roughing one up only becomes a crime if a free owner complains to the satrap. As a result, slaves often suffer minor beatings, petty theft and rape from free folk.

Many assaults upon slaves come from the local legionnaires. Soldiers often see wealthy slaves who have far more than they do, and they see the possibility of stealing some of that wealth with little fear of punishment. A slave has the right to defend himself against a free citizen who tries to kill him, but not to inflict any harm in return. If a slave kills or seriously injures any free citizen—no matter what the provocation—then the satrap orders the slave to be maimed if not executed. After all, letting a slave get away with

harming a member of the ruling and owning class would set a bad precedent. It might give other slaves ideas...

## RAW FORCE

The Deshan overlords do not rely only on drugs to keep their slave nations in line. The Eighth Legion of the Scarlet Empire garrisons all four provinces. Each satrap can call on at least one dragon of troops in the province's capital city, while each latifundia hosts at least one scale of troops. These well-armed and well-trained soldiers prevent most slaves from open revolt through their mere presence. On seasonal holidays, the local troops assemble and parade through the streets to reassure the masters and to intimidate the slaves.

Every city also has a native militia of slave-soldiers, called mamluks. The mamluks do not receive the high-quality arms and training of Realm legionnaires. They train to massacre rioters, not to fight battles against other soldiers. When a slave state faces attack from outside its borders, though, the Eighth drafts the mamluks as arrow fodder to throw at the enemy while the legionnaires maneuver to strike a decisive blow. Satraps also find the mamluks useful when they want to stun enemies through horrors, such as by impaling everyone in a village, right down to the children. Given the right doses of the right drugs, mamluks will commit any atrocity—and enjoy it.

## JACKALS

Specially trained slave hunters, colloquially called jackals, help keep slaves in line. Of all the slaves in the Deshan, the jackals hold the highest rank. They are also the most hated people in the satrapies. They take the job in full knowledge that every other slave would kill them if they had the chance.

They are also the only slaves who can legally earn their freedom. (Masters can free any slaves they choose, but no law obligates them to do so no matter what a slave's achievements.) Slave hunters earn their freedom after they work at the job for at least 15 years and capture a sufficient number of slaves. While a handful of slave hunters occasionally let a small number of slaves who touch their hearts go free, most jackals are grim, merciless and indeed sadistic pursuers. Jackals readily track escaped slaves to the ends of Creation, in the knowledge that the more slaves they capture, the sooner they go free.

## THE IMMACULATE ORDER

The Wyld Hunt remains strong in the four slave provinces. Immaculate leaders fear that a slave will draw a foul Second Breath as one of the Anathema, or that one of the Anathema will see an opportunity to turn a country's mass of slaves into his own private and horrifically loyal army.

Naturally, the local Immaculate monks spend much of their time enforcing religious purity among the slaves. The civil and religious leaders punish the worship of Anathema, demons, Deathlords or Fair Folk as severely as they punish slave revolts: Every captured cultist dies as a public example to other slaves. Nevertheless, such cults keep appearing. Im-

maculate leaders know that the slaves' anger and despair leads them into heresy, while drugging them to stupor prevents slaves from proper performance of the Diligent Practices. Privately, many monks feel deep misgivings at the Deshan System. The Scarlet Dynasty ordains it, though, so no abolitionist movement has arisen... yet.

## FAITH OF SLAVERS

Since the Deshan satrapies are wholly owned subsidiaries of the Scarlet Empire, the Immaculate Doctrine is the only legal faith. As usual, the monks conduct rites to honor cooperative gods. Much to the distaste of some, that includes Rabszolga, God of Slaves (see pp. 58–60 of *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I*); Burning Feather, Lady of Intoxicants (see pp. 49–50 *ibid.*); and Golden Reverie, God of Euphoria (see pp. 138–139 of *The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. III—Yu-Shan*). The three gods like the Deshan provinces very much and have even told certain members of the Immaculate Order and the Scarlet Dynasty that they will retaliate against any attempt to end the Deshan System. The patricians and Dynasts who own the provinces also like the system very much and demand that their local Immaculates conduct appropriate ceremonies to honor the three divine patrons.

## BUILDING FOR SECURITY

The rural villas on the latifundiae are all built like fortresses, with thick stone walls and narrow, barred windows. Soldiers patrol them, inside and outside, day and night. During the night, the soldiers lock the field hands in large barracoons with bars on the windows and guards stationed outside. What's more, animal trainers release large, fierce dogs or other lethal pets at night (for instance, a Dynast might set her simhata on guard). These beasts roam the fields and open spaces, attacking anyone they find out late at night except for Dynasts and a few servants whom the beasts have been trained to spare. Runaway agricultural slaves who do not manage to leave the fields of the latifundia far behind before nightfall are often mauled or devoured by these animals.

The cities of the slave states are equally secure. Each is divided into walled districts: as few as nine or as many as 100 (for the city of Amber River). The walls between districts are usually four yards high and at least two yards thick, made of stone or brick. Each district has just one or two main streets that pass through gateways between districts. At night, Realm soldiers close and lock heavy gates of ironbound wood between the districts. City guards man small doorways next to the gates, for citizens and slaves with special passes that permit travel at night.

In the event of a riot, plague or some other major disturbance, the soldiers close and lock all the doors and gates to





the affected districts, and on all of the adjacent districts. This confines the rioters and enables the city's entire militia to concentrate on one or two districts. If riots or other troubles become serious enough, the militia can set fire to an entire district. This swiftly ends a riot, one way or another, as the slaves either rush to put out the fire or burn. Killing rioters through a holocaust supplies a grim warning to the rest of the city's slaves about the results of disobedience.

## SLAVE REVOLTS

Despite all the drugs and harsh punishments, slave revolts steadily increase in the Deshan satrapies. Between the disappearance of the Empress and the Bull of the North's victories, the Scarlet Empire no longer looks invincible. Dehenna and Amber River both saw large revolts in the last year, and rumors speak of an even larger revolt building in Serrat.

Most revolts are mere riots. One slave snaps and lashes out in rage. Other slaves join in. The authorities usually quell such riots within hours or, at most, days. *Planned* rebellions happen less often but become much more difficult to quell.

## BRUTALITY

Slaves who join in a spontaneous riot have a chance to live if they immediately surrender when the militia appears. Most rioters suffer nothing worse than flogging. Otherwise, the militia kills them all.

Slaves who deliberately rebel know that they will most likely all die. Burning an entire district alive is only one of the horrific punishments that await slaves who revolt. Other common fates include mass impalement, death by flogging and grotesquely elaborate executions that do not bear description.

Knowing what awaits them, rebel slaves typically fight to the death. They also exact terrible vengeance on any slave owners they capture: torture (likely including rape for women), mutilation and eventual death. In most cases, rebellious slaves only manage to capture privileged, high-ranking slaves and a few mortal patricians. Only a large, exceptionally well-trained and fanatical band of slaves could capture one of the Terrestrial Exalted. More likely, the Dragon-Blooded either win free of their attackers—or go down fighting, since they know what the slaves will do to them.

## TREACHERY

A slave has only two ways to survive participation in a revolt. The first way is to surrender in the middle of the revolt and betray fellow slaves to their capture and death. Slaves who do this usually lose status. For the next decade, a traitor also cannot hold any job where he could find a chance to harm his master. Such slaves are not otherwise punished. Yet, slaves who inform their masters about an *upcoming* slave revolt

## WHEN THE LOWEST KILL THE HIGHEST

Slaves have successfully killed Dynasts only a few times in the three centuries since the inception of the grand Deshan experiment—in half the cases, killing them in their sleep—but these events become legends passed down through generations of slaves. Just showing that one knows such stories can result in a slave having her tongue cut out.

With tales of Solar Anathema appearing throughout the Threshold, though, even the doughtiest Dynasts now watch their slaves with dread. When will one of them draw a foul Second Breath as Anathema? Or, when will one of the Anathema come to the Slave Coast and suddenly transform legions of drug-fuddled slaves into skilled and terrible warriors? So far, rumors of Anathema activity usually turn out to be nothing more than drunken tales, scare stories or wishful thinking on the part of slaves. So far...

receive luxuries and higher status positions. If the informer averts a major revolt, the satrap might even free him.

Naturally, the incentives to treachery make planning a slave revolt an exercise in paranoia. Who can a leader trust?

## FLIGHT TO FREEDOM

The other way to survive a slave revolt is to escape into territory beyond the Realm's reach. Even without revolts, hundreds of slaves break and run for freedom every year. If slaves stay on the Inland Sea coast, however, jackals usually find them sooner or later. Slaves who head into the Northern interior must contend with a harsh climate, fierce beasts and barbarians with scarcely more pity—for a start. If a slave is very lucky, she finds a community that takes her in.

Slaves from Inahjal and Serrat usually head for White-wall. If they reach it before jackals catch them, the Syndics take them in. Slaves from other satrapies face greater difficulty but sometimes find a haven in other Northern cities, towns or tribes. They strive only to make a living and a life in freedom... and to avoid the jackals.

## REBEL POCKETS

Some escaped slaves do not believe they can find a refuge. Others feel too much hatred to abandon the Slave Coast completely, or they feel called to help other slaves escape. These escaped slaves build small, hidden villages in the hills. Here, they subsist on stolen food, whatever they can hunt or gather, and the meager supplies that a few of the braver slaves slip to them in secret.

They don't just survive, though. They fight back.

## THE BLOODY HAND

Escaped slaves who return to the satrapies steal weapons from militia barracks or from Realm soldiers they kill.

They then do their best to free others slaves and, whenever possible, add them to their numbers. The rebels also kill or terrorize slave owners. They are especially hard on the wealthy, privileged slaves who own other slaves. Although all of these rebels dream of killing a patrician or even one of the Dragon-Blooded, most of them know that they have little chance of doing so. Even if they did, the Realm would hunt them even more intensively than it does now. Therefore, they settle for killing the enemies they can reach.

With each villa burned, each storehouse looted or slave-owner slain, the rebels leave the mark of a handprint in blood. Patricians and especially the wealthier, slave-owning slaves now fear that mark as the sign of an organized rebel movement within all four satrapies.

In reality, the Bloody Hand rebels consist of dozens of small and completely separate bands. The few dozen rebels in each band try to fight the slave owners in their region. They heard stories about other rebels using the Bloody Hand mark and thought it sounded like a good idea.

Some of these bands would like to contact other rebels. Most of their attempts end in disaster. They find a slave who says she knows another Bloody Hand group but actually leads the rebels into a trap. The local militia and legionnaires then hunt down and destroy the rebel village.

Within their own area, though, the most skilled of these rebels can sow terror. They deliver a few dozen slaves a year from bondage. Sometimes, they even make the most fearful slave owners a bit more reluctant to abuse their slaves. Although slaves face death if they display the symbol, many Deshanites dream of the Bloody Hand. They feel a thrill of hope whenever they see it boldly emblazoned on the doorway of a wealthy and cruel slave, who now lies dead in her private garden, while her personal slaves race across the border to freedom.

## UNDEAD TROUBLES

The slave states face an additional problem aside from slave revolts. Tortured and murdered slaves regularly leave behind ghosts—hungry or otherwise. Exorcists from the Realm try to bind slaves in death as they were in life, burying them behind lines of salt and thaumaturgical wards. Rebellious slaves often try to evade these rules. Some slaves hope to create ghosts to attack their masters. Others simply want their departed relatives and loved ones to rest in free earth and not a graveyard specially designed as a prison for slaves. Of course, the Dynasts are not foolish enough to teach thaumaturgy to even the most trusted slaves. The Realm instead employs several hundred thaumaturges from the Blessed Isle.

## FELL NEIGHBOR

The Slave States all guard their borders with watchtowers, fences and patrols of dogs and slave-soldiers. At the northern border of Serrat, however, the border guards do not go out after dark—for Serrat lies due south of the immense and terrible





shadowland of Marama's Fell. The Fell itself is hundreds of miles from Serrat's northern frontier, but its influence reaches much further in the Underworld. Ghosts and the walking dead frequently swarm out of smaller, nearer shadowlands. The thaumaturges of Serrat do their best to foretell attacks and beat back the restless dead. The local Immaculate contingent includes several monks who specially train to fight the dead. Even the Immaculates, though, hesitate to enter the shadowland itself—and no jackal would dare this. This offers escaped slaves a terrifying choice if they cannot reach the Traveler's Road to Whitewall.

### SHADOWTOWNS

A few slaves attempt to escape through shadowlands, traveling along the edges and fearing the dead almost as much as they fear the brutal thugs who hunt them. A few survive to tell hair-raising tales. These heroes often win names for themselves in the free nations to the North, but most would never consider entering a shadowland again.

Once in a while, though, clever and desperate slaves make deals with one or more ghost gangs from Marama's Fell. They win the right for groups of escaped slaves to live in a shadowland controlled by the gang. In return, the escaped slaves and their descendants must deliver living sacrifices to the ghosts. Some shadowtown folk venture back into Serrat to capture various hated individuals such as jackals, overseers or other privileged slaves. Others hold lotteries when they cannot capture sufficient enemies as victims. The people of a particularly debased shadowtown might decide that they don't care anymore about freeing slaves or revenge on their former masters. Instead, they help slaves escape—perhaps claiming allegiance to the Bloody Hand—but deliver their fellows from slavery to the altars and mouths of the dead.

Just a year ago, a Bloody Hand group did something its members swore never to do: betrayed a former slave. The rebels discovered that a shadowtown had reached this nadir of corruption, luring slaves to their death. The rebels sent an anonymous message to the local garrison, giving the location of the shadowtown and its activities. The Wyld Hunt swept in... and half the Immaculate monks never returned. The villagers had more than ghosts as allies. The surviving monks told of encountering one of the dark and dreadful new Anathema—a deathknight.

### SAMPLE COMBAT UNITS

Each Deshan satrapy hosts various dragons, talons and scales of Imperial medium and heavy infantry. Examples of such units appear on pages 68–72 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Blessed Isle**. The Eighth Legion has no special equipment—they've never needed it to crush slave revolts or to repel barbarian attacks—but each satrapy's contingent includes a talon of special winter-trained troops. Use the Vermilion Legion Wing traits, but reduce its Magnitude to 3.

### MAMLUK MILITIA

**Description:** The slave-soldiers of the Deshan rarely operate in units smaller than scales of 50 (for quelling minor riots) or wings of 250 (for slaughtering a village of escaped slaves). Mamluks sometimes act as light infantry auxiliaries for the legionnaires. They do not train much with missile weapons, as their masters dislike handing out weapons with which slaves can attack their owners at a distance. Mamluks can rise to the rank of scalelord, but their talonlords and winglords are always Realm legionnaires.

The following sample talon comes from Amber River, but mamluks from throughout the Slave Coast are identical. It could be the guards at a latifundia, the garrison of a border fort or (raising the Magnitude) the complete militia of one of the smaller Slave Coast cities. By reducing the Magnitude to 2 and raising Morale to 4, it can also represent an entire Bloody Hand gang of escaped slaves.

**Commanding Officer:** Talonlord Peleps Nyla

**Armor Color:** Amber buff jacket with blue Peleps *mon*

**Motto:** "Surrender or die!"

**General Makeup:** 100 light infantry wearing buff jackets and pot helmets, armed with chopping swords, truncheons, self bows and frog crotch arrows.

**Overall Quality:** Fair

**Magnitude:** 3



**Drill:** 1

**Close Combat Attack:** 3

**Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 1

**Ranged Attack Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 4 **Might:** 0

**Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility) **Morale:** 2

**Formation:** Mamluks don't want to get too far from each other, but lack the training to fight effectively in close formation. They always fight in relaxed formation, when they aren't milling about in confusion. Talonlord Nyla might have three slave scalelords as heroes, but no relays and definitely no sorcerers.

### SLAVE RIOTERS

**Description:** The most common combat unit in the Slave Coast is simply a mob of slaves that exploded in rage. The slaves kill, loot

and burn until soldiers move in to kill them, or they find the collective good sense to run. Their rage, however, gives them a semblance of courage.

**Commanding Officer:** None

**Armor Color:** None

**Motto:** Incoherent shouting

**General Makeup:** 30 to 60 furious men and women with no armor, carrying knives, improvised clubs and other weapons of convenience.

**Overall Quality:** Poor

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 0

**Close Combat Attack:** 2

**Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 1

**Ranged Attack Damage:** 1

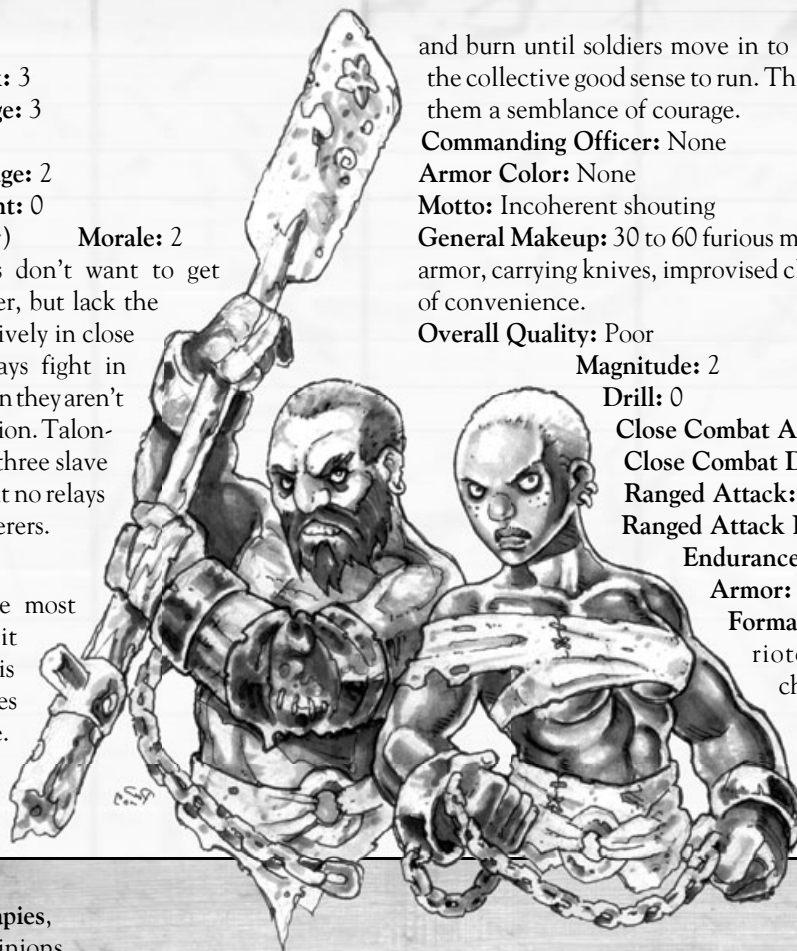
**Endurance:** 4

**Might:** 0

**Armor:** 0

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** Unordered. The rioters have no special characters.



### The Deshan Satrapies,

Magnitude 3 Dominions

**Military:** 2 **Culture:** 2 **Government:** 1

**Abilities:** Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Integrity (Secret Police +1), Investigation 2 (Informants +1), Performance 1 (Quell the Populace +2), Presence 1, Stealth 1, War 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 3

**Limit Break:** Conviction Current Limit: 5

**Willpower:** 7

**Bonus Points:** 10 **External Bonus Points:** 6

**Notes:** The Slave Coast satrapies each have the population to be Magnitude 3 or even 4, but their Magnitude suffers because most of the population loathes its own country. They stay only because of drug addiction and fear. The satrapies are functionally identical.


Each satrapy invests its 10 bonus points in one dot each of Awareness and Bureaucracy, as well as the Integrity and Investigation specialties. Their external bonus points come from the provinces' close connection to the Realm. They pay for a dot of War and the Performance specialties.

In Limit Break, a province experiences a massive slave revolt, as the population's hatred overcomes its fear of its masters and of losing its drug supply. Such is the profound dysfunction of the Slave Coast that the satrapies' Limit never drops below 2. Their current Limit represents the growing instability as the Bloody Hand gains recruits, the shadowtowns forge closer relations with the ghosts of Marama's Fell and the Scarlet Empire's reputation for invincibility fades.

## SHANARINARA

True nations grow sparse in the Northern interior, but they do exist. The state of Shanarinara emerged just recently as an important power in the North. For much of its his-

tory, no one had much reason to pay attention to the small, inland nation. In the last six decades, however, the Shanari discovered modest deposits of jade and fairly large deposits of tin in their territory. Twenty years ago, they also found something no one even thought possible: a deposit of soulsteel.



These discoveries brought a great increase in Shanarinara's wealth, and even greater changes to their society. In their local Time of Tumult, the citizens of Shanarinara find themselves caught between greater forces than they imagine.

## HISTORY

No awe-inspiring ruins hint at what Shanarinara might have been like in the High First Age. Indeed, until recently, the Shanari did not know there *was* a High First Age. The oldest structures in their country date from the Shogunate period: a spa complex built to exploit a valley's natural hot springs. By Shogunate standards, these were modest facilities where middle-class mortals and lower-rank Terrestrial Exalted came on vacation. The Fair Folk smashed the hotels and baths on their way toward the Blessed Isle, and the Empress dealt more damage as she scourged the invaders from beyond back toward Creation's rim. Nevertheless, they seemed very fine to refugees of the plague and war. The hot springs, which made the valley several degrees warmer than the surrounding country, seemed even better. The damaged buildings became the start of the farming town of Inara. Other farming villages sprang up in the region soon after.

The villages governed themselves through councils of elders and votes among the people. They stayed independent for centuries—sometimes fighting tiny wars against each other, sometimes trading their goods at Inara. About 400 years ago, however, an upsurge of attacks by icewalkers led to the villages confederating for defense. While Inara naturally dominated the confederation as the largest community, the other Shanari insisted on a democracy of communities, carrying the traditions of votes and councils to a higher level of organization. The confederacy of Shanarinara suffered two episodes of monarchy when warlords seized power, but neither lasted long. (The second warlord, the renegade Dynast Iselsi Krelen, died when Shanari assassins smothered him in his sleep.) Over time, the confederation became tighter until the Shanari thought of themselves as a single state.

In RY 714, a Shanari prospector found a large deposit of tin ore in a range of low hills. Over the next few decades, other miners found additional ore deposits, including a deposit of blue jade. The Shanari had little experience with managing large, deep mines and so, they turned to the Guild. The Guild took its cut, as it always does, but cautious and stubborn negotiators made sure that much of the wealth stayed at home.

Twenty years ago, the Guild also pressured the Shanari government to let it mine the newly discovered soulsteel—but then, the Shanari council received an unexpected embassy from a nation so distant no one had ever heard of it. Ambassadors from the far land of Gradafes said that they knew far more than the Guild about how to handle soulsteel and offered a higher price for the grim metal. Only years after the Shanari struck their deal did they learn that the ambassadors represented not the king of Gradafes but that country's uncrowned mistress, the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears.

As Shanarinara grows in wealth, its leaders grow in ambition. They hope to expand their country considerably. Every direction they look, however, they see powerful and established rivals. Perhaps more importantly, their new wealth attracts large numbers of fortune hunters, to the extent that immigrants and their offspring now account for a significant fraction of the population. The Shanari now face choices they barely know how to define.

## SECRET OF THE SOULSTEEL

Soulsteel does not naturally occur in Creation. Ever. It comes from the Underworld, and is made by some rather ghastly processes that all involve ghosts. So how does Shanarinara have a soulsteel mine?

That is for the Storyteller to decide. Creation holds many mysteries. The soulsteel might result from the actions of a Primordial. (For instance, Autochthon used soulsteel to build his pattern spiders before the Underworld ever existed.) Maybe a Primordial or one of its component souls died in Shanarinara, and its death left the soulsteel behind. Maybe something from the Underworld is seeping into Creation, and as the miners dig deeper, they come closer to letting it break through. Invent a reason that serves the purposes of your **Exalted** series, or leave it as a mystery never to be solved.

## SHANARI NATION

Shanarinara occupies a region of low but rugged hills and broad valleys, about 200 miles east of the Black Crag Mountains and about midway between the White Sea and Inland Sea coasts. The country forms an irregular blob some 300 miles from east to west and 160 miles from north to south. The Fellish River flows through Shanarinara on its way from the Black Crag Mountains to the White Sea and the Haslanti town of White Ribs, but the shallow, rocky river is not navigable. The central government meets in Inara, located near the middle of the country but not on the Fellish River. Of late, the Shanari have built small, stone forts along the hills that form their borders.

## MAKING A LIVING

The Shanari live at the northern extreme for growing the hardiest varieties of oats and rye. The land also supports herds of domestic musk ox. Many Shanari still live in farming and herding villages. These villages start as rectangular blocks of houses surrounding a courtyard, with thick outer walls of stone and sod. Villages grow by adding more blocks of houses with narrow passages between the courtyards. The Shanari used the courtyards as corrals for their musk ox herds to protect them from icewalker raids. Shanari cities still follow this basic plan: Although cobblestone streets divide

the city into blocks, each block is a maze of courtyards and narrow passages. Urban homes keep their doors facing a courtyard. Only shops, factories and other places of business ever face the street.

Nowadays, more than a dozen mines of tin (and lesser quantities of lead and silver) dot the hills of Shanarinara. The country's single jade mine is not very large—Whitewall has six larger jade mines—but the royalties paid by the Guild for the jade alone are more money than older Shanari imagined could exist in the world.

Unfortunately, none of the ore deposits turned out to be as large as the Shanari or the Guild thought. Two tin mines have already played out, and the mining savants estimate that the others will be exhausted within another 50 years. The jade mine will likely play out sooner. No one can guess the extent of the soulsteel deposit, and the miners from Gradafes remove the metal slowly. Prospectors have already found hints of additional ores—some tin, also iron, copper and a little silver—beyond the nation's borders. The icewalkers, however, still control these territories.

## GOVERNMENT

Direct democracy endures as the standard form of government for every community of less than 5,000. The inhabitants of towns and villages gather together and vote on every important issue. Every year, immediately after Calibration, the inhabitants of every town and collection of villages

also choose a small council of officials—the Selectmen—to carry out the results of these votes and to handle relations with the national government.

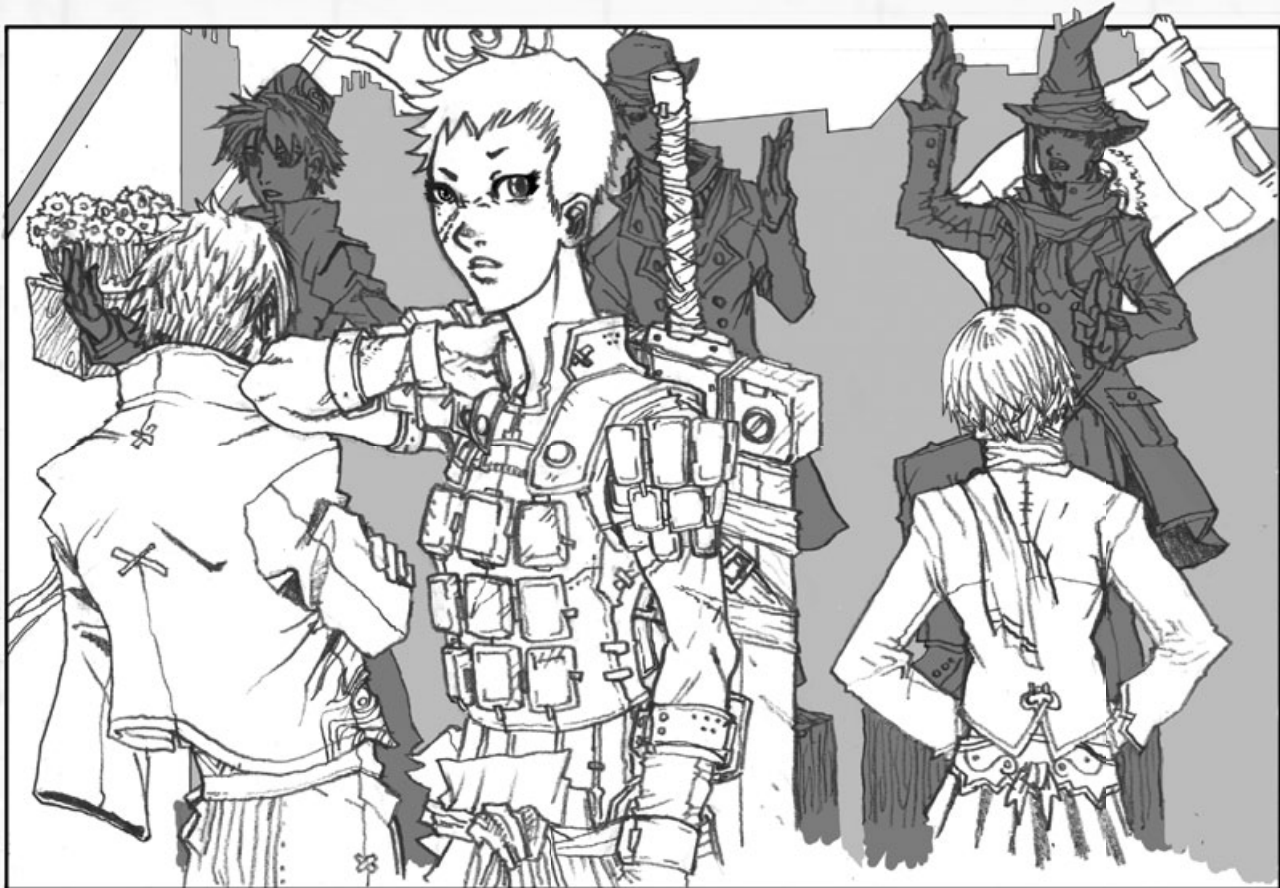
Shanarinara's growing cities continue this pattern. Large settlements are divided into wards of about 5,000 inhabitants who mostly live and work together. These residents vote on all major issues, just like the inhabitants of smaller towns. In addition, the Selectmen they elect have the additional duty of working with the councils of the other wards. The assembled ward councils of a city form that city's central government.

In both small towns and large cities, the town or ward council democratically elects a single Selectman to travel to Inara to sit on the national Senate. Every urban ward, town and group of villages in the nation has a delegate. Every month, the Senate elects a new Secretary—the closest the nation comes to a head of state.


The large and often raucous Shanarinara Senate governs the entire nation. This form of government usually results in slow decisions and extensive compromise. When the interests of the various Senators all line up, though, they can act with unexpected speed and with full confidence that their constituents will back their actions. Indeed, national crises sometimes stampede the Senators into decisions they later regret.

## COMMUNICATION

In the last 50 years, the national government has used its new wealth to build a heliograph network between every







significant town. The ordinary heliograph towers are supplemented by stationary hot-air balloons (a technology inspired by seeing Haslanti air boats), which rise more than 1,000 feet on their sturdy rope tethers. Observers bearing spyglasses ascend in these balloons and can see far-off messages being relayed. They also spot many distant problems such as grass fires, large caravans and bandit gangs. As a result, towns and cities can share important information quite rapidly.

The Shanari want to copy Haslanti air boats, but they haven't worked out the rigging and propeller systems yet. (As inland people, they have a lot of catching up to do with sails.) So far, they manage only hot-air balloons. When the wind is right, however, local traders can send messages and fairly small cargoes in these balloons. The government pays for thaumaturges skilled in the Art of Weather Working or the Art of Elemental Summoning (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 136 and 144) to make sure its balloon-borne couriers have a favorable wind.

Even with the best weather control, these vessels are considerably slower and carry much less than Haslanti air boats. Nevertheless, Shanarinara now has weekly air travel between Inara and the other main cities, going both ways. These measures further unify Shanarinara and increase the nation's power. Local Guild factors scribble excited messages to their leaders in Nexus about the commercial possibilities of long-range balloon transport of small, ultra-high-value commodities such as jewels, artifacts and hearthstones.

### THE NEW MODEL ARMY

Each town and rural farming region once organized its own militia to fight off barbarians and the walking dead. The Senate soon found that these forces did not suffice to defend the country against bandits eager to take the new wealth for themselves. The Guild rented them mercenaries. A bright Senator realized, however, that it could be very foolish to rely exclusively on the Guild for defense. As a result, the Senate began hiring its own mercenaries—not to fight, but to train the Shanari. Today, a modest standing army trained in Scavenger Lands tactics and organization—the New Model Army—supplements the militias. Shanarinara still cannot conquer any of its neighbors, but it can now defend itself from the icewalkers.

### RELIGION AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Shanarinara has never felt much influence from the Realm, but its people worship the Immaculate Dragons nonetheless—a leftover bit of Shogunate culture. Their faith has nothing to do with the Dragon-Blooded, and they deny the immanent divinity of the Scarlet Dynasty and the Empress. Instead, they revere the Dragons as Creation's supreme elemental powers. Missionaries from the Immaculate Order periodically tried to push the Shanari into true Immaculate faith, but the Shanari always slid back to their folk religion. As farmers, naturally they revere Sextes Jylis, the Dragon of Wood, above the rest, but the new importance of mining leads to increasing worship of Pasiap as well. Priests of the

Dragons have the job of dealing with local small gods and elementals (and are well paid for it).

The Shanari have little experience with the Exalted. Rarely, a Dynast or an outcaste adventurer passed through and usually made a bad impression. On the rare occasions when a Shanari drew the Second Breath as a Terrestrial, she was strongly encouraged to seek her destiny elsewhere. The few encounters between the Shanari and the Lunar Exalted also involved icewalkers, so the Shanari have an even worse view of Luna's Chosen. Their most visible example of the new Solar Exalted is the Bull of the North, who frightens them terribly. A fellow called the Prince of Shadows passed through briefly on business for the Lover, however, and he seemed quite charming. Shanarinara has few native God-Blooded and no other native Essence channelers.

The nation does hire many foreign thaumaturges, who perform a wide variety of functions. The most important functions involve summoning elementals to assist in mining, building, weather control and other forms of civil engineering. The Senate recently established a National College of Thaumaturgy and offers excellent salaries to potential teachers.

### IMMIGRANT NATION

Historically, Shanarinara was a nation with a relatively low and highly self-sufficient population. That has drastically changed within the last several decades. The nation found itself with more money and more work to do than people to do it.

First, the Shanarinara Senate began hiring engineers and planners from Nexus and other distant nations. The Senate initially sought out experts from distant lands to avoid hiring anyone who might serve potential rivals or competitors, such as the Haslanti League. These experts designed factories with simple assembly lines and significantly improved agricultural production through basic weather control, increased labor and better plows, harrows and other devices that Scavenger Lands farmers had used for centuries. Within 15 years, these efforts began to pay off, and Shanarinara became far more prosperous than it had been previously.

For such an isolated little country, word spread with amazing speed that Shanarinara would pay for workers. First a trickle of poor people came, seeking their fortunes. The trickle grew into a stream, a river... The Guild offered to sell slaves but found its caravans under attack by convoys of would-be workers anxious not to be undercut. Thirty years ago, a canny Guild factor gave up and put herself at the head of the parade. Every year, poor people in Nexus, Port Calin, Mishaka and other teeming cities of the Scavenger Lands pay the Guild their life's savings to join a caravan bound for Shanarinara, the Land of Opportunity and Treasure Chest of the North!

One in 10 Shanari came to the country within the last 30 years or are descended from people who did. What's more, these immigrants swell the nation's previously small urban population. Sixty years ago, only one in 20 Shanari



lived in towns or cities. Today, that number has risen to one in seven. Inara, the nation's largest metropolis, has a population of 250,000 and growing. The government also finds the manpower to embark on large public works, such as trading roads meant to connect Inara to Fella, Gethamane and White Ribs—none completed yet.

A fraction of these immigrants are highly skilled and well paid experts such as thaumaturges, doctors, artisans and engineers. These experts have become an exotic upper class. They remain distinct from Shanarinara's native upper class of landowners, merchants, priests and local artisans. Many of these wealthy new residents intend to stay only a decade or so before they return to their homelands. If they intend to stay, they often make an effort to fit in. They do not much threaten the existing social order. The position of the poorer immigrants is far less secure.

Most immigrants are semi-skilled laborers who toil in the workshops and factories of the growing cities or in the mines. Most of them come from the Scavenger Lands and speak Riverspeak, not Skytongue. They live in their own urban neighborhoods.

Some members of the local lower class resent the jobs that these laborers supposedly take away from them. Crime has risen since the old days, too. The most common source of local dissatisfaction, though, is simply that the immigrants are not part of Shanari culture. Everything from their food to their faiths is radically different. Many older Shanari fear their country will lose its native culture under the influx of foreigners and their alien cultures. These conservative residents view the spread of foreign restaurants and foreign entertainment with a mixture of alarm and disgust.

## INARA

The capital of Shanarinara used to be a small and quiet city with a population of only 50,000. People still enjoyed the hot springs. The city was also a center for the manufacture of distinctive Shanarinaran pottery. Today, Inara is the most cosmopolitan city in a nation that is profoundly not used to being cosmopolitan. Almost a fifth of Inara's population is foreign born—this, in the capital itself! Here, the disruptions to Shanarinaran life show themselves at their most extreme.

The Guild leases a full district of the city covering more than a square mile in area. Inara is the primary point of trade between Shanarinara and the Guild, as well as the center for the influx and adoption of foreign luxuries by the local populace. Wealthy Shanarinarans living in Inara now regularly own silks and clocks from the Realm, exotic Haltan woodwork and occasionally even glasswork imported from the South.

To many older or rural residents of Shanarinara, Inara has become a symbol of the foreign corruption that has invaded this land. Young working-class Shanari who come to Inara often resent the many foreign workers who live here. They show their resentment through petty vandalism and

brawls. Hundreds of immigrants are beaten each year. Now and then, angry young men burn down a shop owned by successful immigrants.

Yet, only native Shanari can vote. There have been several proposals to expand voting rights to everyone born in Shanarinara, but the conservative inhabitants of the nation's small farming towns strongly oppose these measures. This gives immigrants grounds for resentment in return.

## THE GRADAFES WARD

Most wards and immigrant ghettos act like invisible barriers. The Nexus folk just don't mix with the Calinti much, and none of the Scavenger Lands immigrants have much good to say about the Haslanti—some of them live in tents. One small neighborhood, however, surrounds itself with high brick walls. Here dwell a few thousand rather pale people from Gradafes... and no one else. The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears sent them to work in the soulsteel mine. The miners work in shifts, two weeks on and six weeks off. They spend their off period in Inara. First, only men came. As the years passed, though, the miners sent for their wives and children.

The largest building in the Gradafes Ward is a temple of the dead, following that country's version of the ancestor cult. The second-largest building is the Gradafes embassy. Neither one looks very fancy, or obviously ominous, but few Shanari would want to step into either of them.

As part of her embassy, the Lover sent a few dozen Ghost-Blooded exorcists. These exorcists perform certain special functions in mining the soulsteel. They also help keep Shanarinara free from the restless dead. The country's border lies more than 100 miles from Marama's Fell, but that isn't enough to prevent all incursions.

Older Shanari abhor the idea of dealing with the dead and their allies. The inhabitants on the country's southwestern margin, however, fear the restless dead of the Fell. Although many of these farmers and herders feel uncomfortable with the Gradafesese, they also feel grateful for the wardings that keep their towns free from spectral invasions. Debate about the risks and desirability of dealing with Gradafes and its mysterious mistress forms a subject of discussions and arguments in the homes, taverns and Senate of Shanarinara.

## FOREIGN RELATIONS AND THE FUTURE

Shanarinara has tasted wealth and power for the first time, and many inhabitants wish to expand and stabilize their gains. Unfortunately, the nation's population is relatively small and not well equipped for war. Knowing this, the Senate seeks allies. Gethamane and Fella seem like the nearest and safest allies, but also the least useful. Whitewall expresses interest in increasing trade, though, while seeming distant enough not to become a threat. The Haslanti League also makes overtures, but the Shanari suspect the aggressive Haslanti see their rich little country as a plum to pluck.

The Shanari have no desire to ally with the Realm. Their new wealth led to the first attention they ever received from the Scarlet Empire, and it came in the form of Dynastic ambassadors with an Imperial legion at their back, demanding tribute. The Shanari paid. Some Shanari suspect that only their location on the far side of Marama's Fell prevented the country from becoming a satrapy. The Shanari accurately perceive Cherak, Amber River and Serrat as puppets of the Realm.

The rise of the Bull of the North presents Shanarinara with a neighbor they fear at least as much as the Realm. The Bull's nascent empire is still hundreds of miles from Shanarinara's border... but that didn't help the Linowan, now did it? Ranches on the country's eastern margin have already suffered raids from icewalkers loyal to the Bull. Many in this nation fear that the Bull will soon set his sights on Shanarinara's rough but fertile lands. Some Shanari politicians seriously debate whether the country should preemptively sue for peace and offer tribute to the Bull, lest he conquer them outright.

Indeed, Shanarinara's closest ally is a country fewer than a dozen Shanari have ever visited: Gradafes. The Lover's home lies many thousands of miles away, and so, the Shanari imagine it could not possibly become a threat. The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears encourages this notion.

The Shanari would like to expand their country. The icewalkers are their chief obstacle. A number of icewalker tribes regularly pass by Shanarinara's fringes, and they massacre homesteads established outside the country's borders. Only sustained warfare could end this threat. If Shanarinara could do this, they would find other powerful countries contesting their control of the new territories: the Haslanti League to the north, Amber River to the southeast, possibly Whitewall to the west, certainly the Bull of the North to the east. The southwest lies open already, but few Shanari want to move closer to Marama's Fell. The ambassadors from Gradafes hint, however, that the Lover might be able to show them ways to deal with this problem. Maybe even with the Bull of the North...

Many Senators now seriously ponder deepening their ties with the Deathlord, even though they now have some idea what a Deathlord is. They fear nearby threats more than they fear the far-removed Deathlord who has never set foot in their country (to their knowledge). The Shanari's hunger

for new lands to settle and exploit makes the Lover's offers even more tempting. The Lover is sufficiently patient to accept refusal in the short term, but several of her agents already operate in Shanarinara, working to convince the populace to accept her offer.

## SAMPLE COMBAT UNITS

The Whitewall militia unit found on page 69 of *Scroll of Kings* can adequately represent the modestly trained, lightly armed volunteer soldiers of Shanarinaran town and village militias. The New Model Army is considerably more professional.

The New Model Army consists of 12 dragons (so far) of about 500 men each. These dragons can divide into wings, talons and so on, following the usual pattern derived from Shogunate and Realm legions. Shanarinara uses modern names for officers, though: sergeants leading fangs, lieutenants commanding scales and captains leading talons. Majors command wings and colonels command whole dragons.

The New Model Army has a single general, Thara Talhasina.

### NEW MODEL ARMY

#### FOURTH DRAGON

**Description:** Soldiers of the Fourth Dragon ride to battle but dismount to fight. The New Model Army still experiments with what mounts to use, horses or reindeer, so the Fourth has two talons of each. New Model Army soldiers train equally with spears, swords and bows. The

Shanari have long experience of the need to shoot marauding icewalkers.

**Commanding Officer:** Colonel Azil Izane

**Armor Color:** Green and silver

**Motto:** "Live and Die Free!"

**General Makeup:** 500 medium infantry armed with spears, straight swords and long bows with broadhead arrows; they wear lamellar armor and slotted helms.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 5

**Drill:** 3

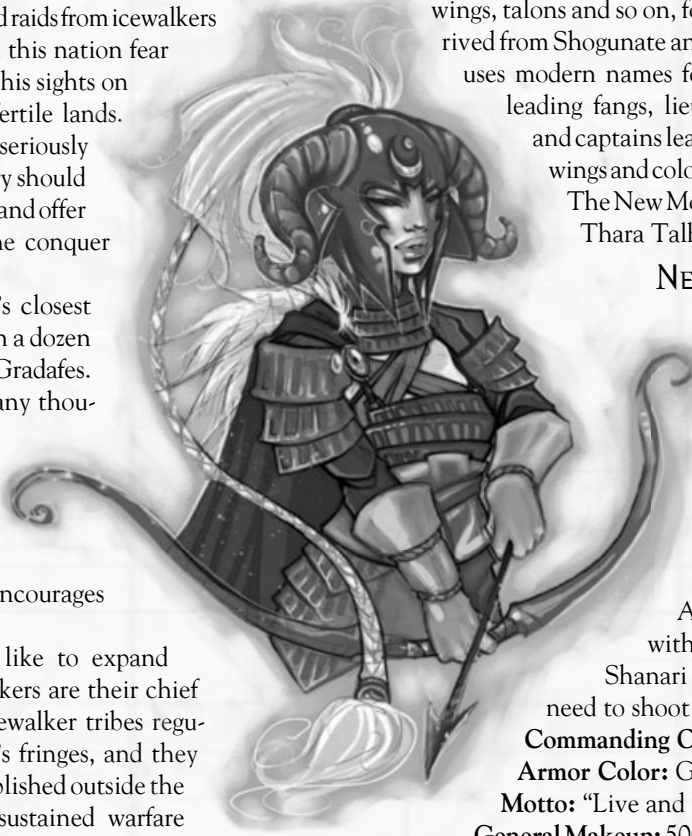
**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Attack Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 8 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Shanarinara military units fight in a basic phalanx formation, with swordsmen attacking enemies who get past the guarding spearmen. Before armies close, everyone shoots arrows. In large battles, auxiliary units of local militia back them up.



**Shanarinara**, a Magnitude 4 Domain

**Military:** 2      **Culture:** 2      **Government:** 3

**Abilities:** Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 2, Craft 3, Integrity 3 (Tight-Knit Heritage +2), Investigation 1, Occult 1, Performance 2 (Rousing Rhetoric +1), Presence 1, Stealth 1, War 3 (Slash and Burn Tactics +1)

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 3, Valor 3

**Limit Break:** Temperance **Current Limit:** 2

**Willpower:** 9

**Bonus Points:** 20 **External Bonus Points:** 6

**Notes:** Shanarinara is a growing and expansionist state. Its own bonus points are invested in two dots of Willpower, a dot of War and its two specialties. Its six external bonus points come from its (so far) very loose alliance with Gradafes and the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears, as well as the Guild. These points go to another dot of Willpower. In Limit Break, Shanarinara sends its armies and hordes of settlers out to claim nearby lands and fight the icewalkers and anyone else who gets in their way.

## THE ICEWALKER BARBARIANS

A great many Northerners do not live in nations at all. Indeed, some folk despise the idea of nations and cities. The icewalkers are the largest group of these barbarians, and the most determined in their conscious rejection of civilization.

Although outsiders often think of them as a single people, the icewalkers actually consist of hundreds of tribes scattered across the North. The tribes share many cultural traits, but each tribe is fully independent from all others. Tribes may make treaties with other tribes that travel through the same portions of the North, but one of the central tenets of icewalker life is that each tribe stays in control of its own destiny.

Every tribe tells its own story about its origin. Most of the stories concern heroes who are among the last people left alive after a great cataclysm—a faint folk memory of the Great Contagion and the Fair Folk invasion. This is the closest the icewalkers come to a shared history. Literate Northern folk never paid enough attention to the icewalkers to record their history, either. All that anyone can say for certain is that icewalker culture arose in the centuries after the Great Contagion and that the founders of the first tribes made pacts with totem-gods of various Northern animals.

Icewalker geography is similarly uncertain, for all the tribes wander to some degree. Some follow a regular year-long circuit through a few locations, such as the seal-hunting tribes that move north and south across the White Sea. Other tribes have moved thousands of miles over the centuries, gradually shifting their hunting-grounds to follow herds of reindeer, mammoth or other beasts. One can say only that a particular tribe currently moves about within a particular area—which might cover hundreds or thousands of miles.

### MAKING A LIVING

Icewalkers live principally by hunting and gathering, and usually on the move. The animals on which their livelihood depends are all migratory or seasonal, so the icewalkers perforce must follow a herd or travel between locations where

food becomes available at different times of the year. This nomadic lifestyle shapes many aspects of their culture—including how they deal with other people.

### TOTEM ANIMALS

Each icewalker tribe both hunts and reveres a specific totem animal that supplies the tribe with food and other useful items, such as hides or sinew. Inland icewalkers have totems such as reindeer, elk, moose, musk ox, woolly rhinoceros or mammoth. Coastal icewalkers hunt and worship seal, walrus and whale totems, or salmon along the Inland Sea or the Great Western Ocean.

An icewalker tribe has a complex relationship with its totem. The totem animal is the tribe's primary food animal and the chief source for hides and other commodities. Every tribe knows how to make the fullest use of its totem—meat, milk (if applicable), skin, bones, everything. Inland tribes follow herds of their sacred animal, while coastal tribes plan their journeys according to salmon runs in different rivers, the migrations of whales or breeding cycles of seals or walrus.

A tribe also has obligations to its totem animal. The tribe cannot over-hunt or over-fish without angering the animal's avatar god (as well as endangering the tribe's future food supply). Neither can the tribe hunt without need, allow the totem animal to suffer or kill the young or mothers with young. The tribe also tries to protect its animal from other predators. Icewalker scouts often travel ahead of a herd to look for potential dangers or the best forage, and the tribe steers the herd accordingly.

The most unusual icewalkers live on the permanent ice sheets along the northern coast of the White Sea. Below them lie frigid waters whose embrace kills any who fall in within minutes. Tribes that live at the very edge of the ice take to the ocean in boats made of skin to hunt their totem animals, the whale or walrus. Barbarians who live farther from the edge of the ice always have seal as their totem. They hunt their prey by lying in wait at the breathing holes that seals use when they venture beneath the ice in search of fish.





Such tribes, whose members truly live up to their name as icewalkers, find their own ways to help their totem animals. For instance, the seal hunters use bow-drills of stone and whalebone to cut new breathing-holes in the ice, while the walrus hunters protect those animals' birthing grounds from hungry ice bears. The whalers' shamans assist their totem animals in mystic ways they keep secret even from their own tribes.

A tribe's totem animal becomes the center of its religious life as well as its livelihood. Long ago, the ancestors of each tribe forged a covenant with the divine avatar of their totem animal. Icewalkers collectively refer to their pantheon of avatars as the Animal Masters. A tribe worships the Animal Master of its totem above all other gods. Every hunt begins and ends with a prayer acknowledging the tribe's dependence on its Animal Master, thanking the god for past bounty and hoping for continued favor.

Icewalkers do not live exclusively on their totem animals, of course. They hunt other animals when they get the chance—mostly small game such as hares, ducks or trout, in their seasons—while coastal icewalkers gather shellfish. Icewalkers also gather berries, herbs, tubers, edible lichens and other plants. When members of one tribe hunt a totem animal not their own, though, they take care to pray to the appropriate Animal Master for permission and to offer suitable thanks after a successful hunt.

### ACROSS THE FROZEN NORTH

The animals that icewalkers hunt do not stop moving in winter, and thus did the icewalkers gain their name. They travel when snow and ice cover the North and civilized folk stay close to their hearth-fires. Of all Northerners, only the Haslanti surpass the icewalkers at transportation technology... and the Haslanti began by learning from the icewalkers.

For personal transportation, icewalkers use snowshoes and skis. Snowshoes merely reduce the penalties for trying to walk through snow (described on page 114 of **Scroll of Kings**). Skis enable short bursts of downhill speed, but are more difficult to use.

In rules terms, skis require a minimum Athletics of 3 to use, as per the rules for unstable footing on p. 155 of **Exalted**, or a character can buy one Athletics specialty in skis to use them without need for dice rolls. Skis add to a character's downhill movement—the Storyteller determines how much, based on terrain, but rarely more than +6 yards—and the character must use a Dash action rather than a Move action.

Some icewalkers know how to ride. Horses survive only in the southern limits of their range, while hardy ponies can endure winters north to Whitewall or thereabouts. Only elk or reindeer can flourish as far north as the White Sea coast. Tribes who take these beasts as their totem never ride them. For instance, a tribe that domesticates reindeer to ride might hunt elk, or vice-versa, but using a totem animal to hunt its kin would offend its god.

## TOTEM COMPANIONS

Once in a while, special totem animals become the companions of truly heroic icewalkers. When a hero does a great service to the totem animal or the animal avatar (for instance, saving a reindeer herd from a pack of predators), the avatar sometimes sends this hero a companion animal. Totem companions have human intelligence. They can speak and understand mortal speech. Instead of being a prey animal, it becomes a member of the tribe. Anyone with such a companion is almost certainly either a tribal chief or shaman. Chiefs with such companions will never be deposed, unless they offend their companions or their animal avatars. In such cases, their animals repudiate them and might attempt to kill them.

In rules terms, totem companions have Intelligence and Willpower equal to that of a heroic mortal, and Physical and Social Attributes one higher than normal for their kind. They heal and resist disease, infection and bleeding as well as one of the Exalted and add half their Stamina to their lethal soak. Totem companions are always purchased as allies and not familiars or followers.

The greatest totem companions are the avatar's God-Blooded children, who have enlightened Essence and can learn spirit Charms. These mighty creatures only become the companions of the greatest God-Blooded or Exalted icewalkers.

All icewalker tribes use sleds, sleighs and sledges. The latter vehicle resembles a sled or sleigh but has flat runners, like skis. A sledge can travel on smooth ground such as peat-bog or tundra, though they work better on snow. Icewalkers who ride horses, ponies, elk or reindeer also harness these animals to their vehicles, but dogs are more common. Many clans of icewalkers follow their sacred herds by riding on large dogsleds designed to carry tents, the young, the elderly and all of the necessities of life. Hunters and scouts use lightweight one- or two-person dogsleds to travel on ahead, swiftly searching out both dangers and sources of additional food. Icewalkers also use these two-person dogsleds in battle, with one icewalker driving and the other throwing javelins or shooting a bow. (See pp. 147–148 of **Scroll of Kings** for descriptions and traits of dogsleds and sleighs; sledges use the same traits.)

Farther north, some icewalkers use iceships. These vessels are smaller than Haslanti iceships (no larger than small coasters—see **Scroll of Kings**, p. 146) and slower, since they generally use stone, bone or ivory runners instead of high-grade steel. Still, they travel as much as 125 miles a day. A few of the larger and wealthier tribes near the White Sea now travel primarily by iceship. In addition to small skiffs

designed for raiding and exploration, these tribes also use slow, wide iceships that carry all of their possessions, including their dogs and other domestic animals. When the tribe comes to a good campsite, they anchor their iceships and set up camp.

Icwalkers also manufacture both one- and two-person gliders and use them for scouting and various forms of aerial attacks. Anywhere they find cliffs or glacial edges near settlements or caravan routes that icewalkers wish to raid, they launch their cunningly made gliders of willow, hide and bone. After scouting their target, the icewalkers launch their best warriors to glide down to the target, jump free of the glider as it lands and attack. Above them, younger warriors in two-person gliders carry skilled archers and javelin throwers. The pilot steers the glider, while the archer or javelineer rains death on their enemies. Even the most skillful pilot, however, cannot keep a glider aloft for more than a few hours.

### ICEWALKER TRAVEL

Travel Type	Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Cargo Dog Sled	6	30	150	350
Fast Dog Sled	10	50	250	600
Iceship	6	125	800	2,400
Glider	25	—	—	—

## THE WEALTH OF NOMADS

Icwalkers cannot own more than they can carry, but they do not consider themselves poor. Due to their arrangement with their totems, the tribes rarely lack for food. They risk starvation only in the depths of winter, when the animals themselves risk death, or through the action of spirits—an offended Animal Master or perhaps a god that seeks to extort worship. The Winter Folk also work to freeze and starve their chief mortal foes.

A tribe's quest for food and other necessary materials also leaves plenty of time for other activities. For instance, old icewalkers can teach the tribe's epics to the young while they gather berries, or a team of duck hunters can plan daring raids while they trek to a distant lake. What's more, large meat animals can feed a family for several days, leaving time for other activities. During festivals, icewalkers enjoy berry wine, spruce beer and fermented milk as well as a variety of hallucinogens. Icwalker tribes also hold elaborate storytelling contests, recounting both traditional epics and recent deeds. Many icewalkers can sing as well as play bone flutes, small drums or fiddles. When several tribes meet on friendly terms, the resulting festival can last for several days.

Regardless of what animal they follow, all icewalkers stay highly mobile. Some totem animals spend several months in one location to breed or take refuge from the cold, but this



is the longest that icewalkers stay in one spot. Even during such extended stays, icewalkers live in temporary or portable dwellings. Most icewalker live in hide tents or hide-lined igloos. Despite civilized imaginings about dirty barbarians shivering in the cold, these small homes stay surprisingly snug, warm and largely free of vermin. Icewalkers also make most of their clothing of leather and fur, and ornament it with quilting, appliqué and stitching with plant fibers or dyed porcupine quills.

If a totem animal pauses for more than a few weeks in its wanderings, a tribe might settle long enough to forge metal—mostly for weapons. Icewalkers also have access to ivory, amber and other precious materials and can trade them to settled peoples for fine metal tools and weapons. What icewalkers can't obtain through trade, they usually acquire from townsfolk through raiding or extortion. This combination of raiding and trading enables many icewalkers to own weapons and tools as fine as those in most parts of Creation. Chiefs, shamans and heroes regularly possess excellent equipment, as well as the occasional artifact. Icewalkers must possess far fewer goods than city dwellers—so they insist that whatever they do own must be durable and well made. They do not want anything more. Icewalkers cherish their mobility and freedom, and most of them see civilized peoples as enslaved by their possessions as much as by their superiors.

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

An icewalker tribe has two leaders, a chief and a shaman. The chief bears principle responsibility for hunting, raiding and resolving conflicts based on pride and honor. The shaman deals with spiritual issues, from interceding with the tribe's totem-god to resolving hidden grudges, grief and other emotional problems that are not easily faced head-on.

### CHIEFS

An icewalker tribe chooses its chief by acclamation. The chief is, by definition, the most respected and trusted individual in the tribe. The tribe follows him (chiefs are usually male) because they trust and respect him. He has proven himself repeatedly through successful hunts and battles. His own prestige makes him the arbiter of prestige and honor for other tribal members. It helps if the chief also has a ready wit and force of personality.

There are no formal elections for chief. Chiefs continue in their office until they step down, often after some serious failure, or when a challenger wins the approval of most of the tribe. Challenging a popular or successful chief is considered both foolish and wrong. Anyone who attempts to challenge a chief's position and fails to become the new chief is mocked and derided as both overconfident and disrespectful.

### SHAMANS

The chief forms the apex of a system of prestige based on strength, skill and charisma. They are admired and envied. Every tribe has several warriors who hope to become chiefs themselves. It's a common ambition for the young.

The shaman stands alone. Icewalkers understand that they need their shamans, but few wish to become one. Most icewalkers dream of a life of heroic battles—not of negotiating the alien and dangerous world of gods and elementals.

Most shamans bear some visible mark that sets them apart, such as a deformity or a physical feature that indicates a touch of divine ancestry—though never Wyld mutations. Icewalkers kill any of their kind who shows the Wyld's taint. Other shamans are set apart by strange behavior, if not actual madness or disorders such as epilepsy. Shamans can be male or female, but often dress as the other sex: They live between categories in every way they can.

Icewalker shamans talk with the gods and elementals of the North. Most importantly, they deal with the divine avatar of the tribe's totem animal. Becoming a shaman requires extensive training by an older shaman, but the only indispensable qualification is acceptance by the tribe's Animal Master. The god sometimes visits a tribal member in a vision and selects her to become the next shaman. This person must then be trained, but she becomes a shaman with that first vision. Similarly, the Animal Master can refuse even the most qualified and well-trained prospective shaman. If this happens, this person cannot become the tribe's shaman.

### FAILED SHAMANS

A would-be shaman had best accept her Animal Master's rejection humbly and gracefully. Icewalker legends tell of many embittered would-be shamans who turned to the Fair Folk, the dead or the Wyld and became monstrous villains. A tribe watches a rejected candidate closely for signs of such debasement and drives her out on the least suspicion. Of course, such hostile expectations easily become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Would-be shamans can also turn to chiminage. This practice involves selling oneself to a spirit: not just worshiping it, but directly working its will, providing outrageous sacrifices and even allowing it to possess one's body. Icewalkers consider chiminage a debased practice, and their Animal Masters never demand it. Other barbarian tribes sometimes have chiminage shamans, though. Chiminage is not intrinsically evil, but it violates the laws of Heaven, so spirits who demand chiminage rarely do so for benevolent reasons. Of course, the icewalkers are also most likely to come into conflict with chiminage shamans who serve the most hostile and demanding of Northern spirits. Icewalkers, therefore, often assume that any chiminage shaman must be the demented slave of a malignant master.



Exorcism

The Animal Master becomes the shaman's patron and helps her deal with other spirits. Small gods and elementals do not want to anger powerful totem-gods by showing disrespect to shamans... at least, that's the threat the shaman makes to recalcitrant spirits.

Icewalker shamans also study thaumaturgy. They favor the Art of Spirit Beckoning for wheedling or extorting favors from small gods, or the Art of Elemental Summoning for treating with that class of spirits. The Art of Husbandry enables a shaman to call prey animals, repel dangerous beasts, heal and assist the tribe's totem animal—and has darker uses, such as beckoning enemies into danger. Of all paths, however, the icewalkers most value the Art of Warding and Exorcism for the protection it gives against hostile spirits and malign forces.

Most of all, the shaman leads the tribe in worship of its Animal Master and delivering suitable honors to other totem-gods as needed. The shaman propounds and enforces the rules for proper treatment of the tribe's totem animal. If the tribe breaks its covenant, the shaman must perform suitable sacrifices: usually the bodies of animals that prey upon or compete with the totem animal or, on rare occasion, the lives of the tribe members or outsiders who offended the Animal Master through deliberate cruelty or needless slaughter of its totem animal. Angering the totem-god results in harsh and immediate penalties ranging from prevention of successful hunts, to striking the shaman down where she stands.

## LEADERSHIP DISPUTES

Ideally, both the chief and the shaman approve every major decision made in an icewalker tribe. In any immediate crisis, the chief can override the commands of the shaman. Once the crisis is over, though, the dispute must be resolved in front of the entire tribe. If the two leaders cannot reach an agreement, then the members of the tribe hear both positions and choose the leader to follow by acclaim.


The tribe often determines whom to follow based upon some combination of the leader's popularity and rhetorical skill. That often means the tribe sides with the already-popular chief. If, however, the shaman acts on the direct request of the tribe's Animal Master and the chief disagrees, the tribe almost always ignores the chief and follows its shaman. Chiefs who do not acknowledge that they overstepped their authority by going against the wishes of the tribe's totem spirit are expected to step down at once.

## DIVIDING A TRIBE

When severe and lasting enmities disrupt a tribe, the icewalkers have two options.

Sometimes, disputes arise from a single individual or a handful of individuals whom no one else follows or agrees with. Such troublemakers can try to find another tribe to take them in, or they can be driven out to survive as best as they can. If the troublemakers seem violent or dangerous,





they are likely killed. The icewalkers feel it is imprudent to allow enemies who know their ways to go free.

In contrast, if a dispute actually divides the tribe, with many partisans on both sides, then the tribe splits in half. Each member or family decides which group to follow. Most often, the shaman goes with one group and the current chief with another, but both can go with one group. In either case, the group without a chief is expected to choose one before the actual split occurs, and the existing shaman is expected to help the other new tribe find a new shaman. The two groups travel together until both of them have both of their necessary leaders. Yet, they pitch their tents or igloos a dozen or so yards apart and interact as little as possible.

Once both groups have a shaman and a chief and can survive on their own, they part as amicably as they can. Wise and competent chiefs and shamans of such tribes always do their best to see that the two new tribes can turn to one another for help if either faces serious troubles.

In addition, icewalkers believe that a tribe should split whenever it grows to more than 300 adults. Even if the tribe suffers no major problems, the chief and shaman begin making plans to make their tribe into two new tribes. The icewalkers know from experience that a single herd or hunting territory can support a certain number of people, and no more.

### ESSENCE WIELDERS

Icewalkers shamans sometimes receive an enlightened Essence as a gift from their Animal Master, but this comes as a special favor to a shaman who already shows remarkable talent and devotion. God-Blooded shamans also possess enlightened Essence, and add spirit Charms to their thaumaturgy.

A very few icewalkers take the Second Breath as outcaste Terrestrial Exalted, completely at random. The icewalkers cannot deny the prowess of such heroes, but often feel that their elemental power implicitly challenges the respect due to the Animal Masters. Exalted icewalkers find themselves pushed to leave their tribes for the lonely life of a wandering monster slayer, honored by all but at home with none. The icewalkers also produce Lunar Exalted, who quickly learn that the Changing Lady chose them for duties that extend beyond one tribe. Still, such Lunars often feel protective of their old tribe even centuries later. The Silver Pact itself has influenced icewalker culture to strengthen its hatred of creatures of darkness.

Four icewalkers recently Exalted as Solars. Yurgen Kaneko, the Bull of the North, is only the best known of them. The other three are part of his circle. They are changing the North—as described in Chapter Six. Many icewalkers hope that no more of their kind Exalt as “Lawgivers,” for their laws seem contrary to icewalker tradition.

## RELATIONS WITH OUTSIDERS

Outsiders rarely understand that, unless icewalkers have become corrupted by civilization or tainted by the Wyld, these barbarians divide everyone outside of their tribe into four separate categories: kinfolk, respected outsiders, lesser outsiders and debased outsiders. Whenever an icewalker encounters a stranger, she must decide what category the stranger occupies. Most icewalkers choose how to treat strangers within a few minutes of encountering them, and icewalkers change this view only when they face proof of particularly heroic, craven or repugnant behavior.

### KINFOLK: TRIBES OF THE SAME TOTEMS

All tribes who share the same totem regard one another as distant kin, though not so close that they cannot marry. Each tribe remains separate, however. While tribes of the same totem can work together for a variety of goals—for instance, assaulting a nest of hobgoblins—these alliances do not last long. They cannot, for each tribe must eventually break camp to follow its own herd.

Beyond such alliances, each tribe stays answerable only to its members. Any tribe that attempts to control other tribes of the same totem would be considered to emulate the corrupt ways of civilized peoples by trying to enslave the other tribe. Accusations of this sort of behavior are the single greatest cause of raiding and feuds between tribes who share the same totem. Most icewalkers prefer to marry outside of their tribe, but they prefer to marry icewalkers from tribes that share the same totem. Such a bride or groom faces no change in loyalties from one Animal Master to another.

### RESPECTED OUTSIDERS

Relations between icewalker tribes that follow different totems are far less close. While all icewalkers respect fellow barbarians who adhere to their basic beliefs and way of life, icewalkers do not regard tribes with different totems as their kin. In especially prosperous or desperate times, tribes who follow different animals might ally with one another. Yet, if two herds of different animals compete for the same scarce food, the two tribes can become bitter enemies who slaughter their rival's people and animals. Unless an icewalker tribe somehow shows itself to be corrupt, however, all icewalker tribes classify each other as respected outsiders.

Icewalkers also use this category for people who follow different customs but whom they nevertheless see as showing both strength and honor. Regardless of such peoples' origin, icewalkers treat such respected outsiders as the equals of their own tribe. While equals sometimes quarrel and even brutally slay one another, they deserve respect. In addition to other of their tribes, icewalkers generally regard the Haslanti and a few of the smaller Northern groups, such as the coastal fishers, as respected outsiders. Individuals can also become respected outsiders by showing strength, courage, honor and skill at living in the wilderness.



Of course, respected outsiders can fight. Yet, icewalkers believe that conflicts with respected outsiders should not last long and neither side should hold a grudge. After all, people do what they must for survival and for honor. Once the cause of a dispute is removed—say, by one tribe defeating the other in battle and claiming a patch of grazing land—then both sides can go about their presumably honorable ways.

As a result, icewalkers allow respected outsiders to retreat or to conditionally, and honorably, surrender. Attempting to deprive a respected outsider of his honor or freedom is considered a debased act—no better than cannibalism. Icewalkers general avoid stealing from respected outsiders. They expect that other icewalkers and similar groups can defend their own goods and suitably punish the thieves.

### NON-ALIGNED ICEWALKERS AND THE BULL OF THE NORTH

Icewalkers had legends of a great leader who would unite the tribes, but they imagined something like a brief, heroic campaign to exterminate Wyld barbarians once and for all or to loot all the soft city dwellers—not to found an empire! Then the Bull of the North appeared and attracted scores of tribes to his banner.

Many of the tribes not under the Bull's influence believe that he has made his followers into something other than icewalkers. Icewalkers do not band together in vast numbers under a single leader. Instead, each tribe is effectively a large family that survives on its own. Icewalkers who do not currently follow the Bull of the North grow increasingly wary of his influence. While no icewalker is foolish or desperate enough to attack him, many chiefs and shamans counsel their tribes to stay out of the Bull's alliance. The most strident voices say the tribes that follow the Bull have become just as servile as the coastal peoples who bow their necks to the Realm.

### LESSER OUTSIDERS

Most people—especially most townsfolk and farmers—fall into the icewalkers' category of lesser outsiders. Icewalkers believe that such folk are seriously deficient in honor, strength and overall worth. Lesser outsiders are weak, however, not abhorrent. People who live as slaves or servants or who otherwise let a powerful central authority push them around deserve pity at best, contempt at worst. So does anyone in good health who cannot survive out in the wilderness.

Icewalkers see nothing wrong with robbing lesser outsiders whenever the need and the opportunity presents itself. They trade with lesser outsiders, however, if doing so seems safer or easier. Most civilized people in the North see the


icewalkers as dangerous savages because icewalkers so often decide that other folk are weak enough to rob—and therefore deserve no respect. Icewalkers regularly trade with large cities such as Whitewall, or with the Guild's largest caravans, because they sensibly realize that they cannot possibly win a fight with such people.

During lean years or exceptionally long or harsh winters, icewalkers become fierce bandits who lay siege to villages and demand much of their foodstuffs, leaving only the absolute minimum necessary for survival. (They leave that much only because they fear that a village of people who starve to death filled with hate could become a shadowland or some similar horror. Their legends tell of villages giving themselves to Deathlords, demons or the Fair Folk to obtain revenge.) Villages and towns who comply with the icewalkers' demands are left unharmed, if hungry and destitute. The icewalkers massacre townsfolk who try to fight back, however. Icewalkers lack all compassion for lesser outsiders who fight back but fail to defeat them. The fiercest and most brutal icewalker tribes sometimes kill all of a town's inhabitants and pile their severed heads in a pyramid in the middle of the town square.

If townspeople defend themselves against an icewalker attack but then surrender, most icewalkers only kill individuals who actually killed one or more icewalkers. If the icewalkers instead defeat and capture their foes, or if the townspeople attacked the icewalkers preemptively, the barbarians become far more liberal in their definition of whom they treat as a threat. They may well kill all adults, adopt any children into their tribe and offer adolescents a choice between death or joining their ranks. Other tribes take adult survivors captive and sell them as slaves to the Guild or to the Haslanti. Since lesser outsiders are already weak, servile and, in a sense, sub-human, icewalkers see no dishonor in enslaving them.

Many small or isolated Northern settlements simply pay off icewalker tribes who visit them. The icewalkers take care never to leave these towns completely destitute. They leave the town the bare minimum it needs to survive, so the tribe can harvest them again. Icewalkers also see no honor in killing lesser outsiders without need. It's no crime, but it's nothing to brag about either.

Icewalkers sometimes present their demand for tribute as payment to protect the town from rival tribes or other marauders. In reality, this payment is little more than extortion—the town or village pays the icewalker tribe not to attack them. Still, the payment really might protect the community from other icewalker tribes. The extorting tribe gives the settlement a large and colorful banner signifying which tribe the town has paid. Other icewalker tribes, and in fact other barbarians, then know that attacking the village would show serious disrespect to the other tribe... and the tribe would have to fight them or lose face. Wise village leaders try to avoid paying smaller or weaker icewalker tribes, since larger and more powerful tribes typically ignore such banners and extort their own tribute.



Few settlements attempt to forge icewalker banners to avoid attack. Any icewalker tribe would slaughter a community they caught in such a deception. All but the largest of the Guilds' caravans fly icewalker banners, since the Guild regularly pays the largest local icewalker tribes for the right to send their caravans through their territory. Although doing so costs a lot, Guild factors understand that paying tribute costs less than constantly fighting off bands of well-armed barbarians.

Relations between icewalkers and lesser outsiders are not always so harsh. Particularly in a good year, icewalkers might feel that townsfolk just aren't worth the trouble of robbing. Individual icewalkers might also take a liking to individual lesser outsiders, such as a smith who sells fine weapons, a village that lets a reindeer herd graze the stubble of its fields or a woman who likes to bed brave, strong icewalker men. The icewalkers just don't respect these people very much and unconsciously slip minor insults into their speech when talking to or about them.

#### ICEWALKERS AND SLAVERY

Icewalkers do not practice slavery. The custom just doesn't *work* for people who live on the move, with no members to spare guarding someone who doesn't want to stay in the tribe. Icewalkers also feel disgust for the cowardice of a slave who had a chance to escape but did not. Icewalkers captured in war make notably bad slaves. The Guild has learned to sell captured icewalkers to the Fair Folk or to gladiator pits, because no one else will take them.

#### DEBASED OUTSIDERS

While the icewalkers regard most settled folk as lesser beings, they feel fury and hatred for their chief rivals, the Wyld-tainted barbarians of the Far North. Icewalkers are extremely suspicious of anything that is not fully human or anyone who serves monstrous beings such as the Deathlords or the Fair Folk. Wyld barbarians, ravagers, hobgoblins and the restless dead are all anathema to the icewalkers. They classify all such monstrosities as debased outsiders. Anyone who practices cannibalism or who worships creatures of darkness also counts as debased outsiders.

Icewalkers see debased outsiders as affronts to the correct order of the world. All right-thinking icewalkers try to kill debased outsiders on sight. When faced with overwhelming odds, icewalkers lose no honor by retreating from or avoiding such enemies—but honorable icewalkers then tell their tribes what they saw and try to find some way to destroy these beings later. Icewalkers are not suicidal or foolish. Even the bravest do not march into the Wyld in search of Fair Folk to kill or storm the fortress of a Deathlord. They all agree, however, that any icewalker who dies killing debased outsiders has died a hero.

Icewalkers have many songs and stories about mighty and heroic battles with powerful and intractable respected outsiders, but their most heroic sagas deal with battles against debased outsiders. These sagas often have the same basic story. A hero or band of heroes battles a huge number of debased outsiders. Through their skill, courage and guile, they kill seemingly overwhelming numbers of foes. Then, the hero fights the greatest champion of the debased outsiders and dies after striking a mortal blow to this terrible monster.

#### GUARDIANS OF THE NORTH

Icewalkers regard battling Wyld barbarians, the Fair Folk and the walking dead as their sacred duty. Yet the tribes don't care about protecting the North's cities and civilized peoples. (They have little respect for civilized ways and believe that other peoples should take care of themselves.) Instead, they concern themselves with protecting the land, their totem animals and their own kind. Many icewalkers realize, however, that they help protect other folk from these monsters as well.

Killing monstrous beasts and debased outsiders is the surest way for an icewalker to gain status and fame. While a group of skilled hunters or fishers who come back with many pounds of salmon or caribou meat is warmly greeted, hunters who return with a Varajtul barbarian's furred and fanged head or the severed hands of the walking dead receive greater acclaim. Such heroes are awarded special tattoos, and their deeds can lead to other rewards, such as better weapons, marriage into high-status families and, most of all, the right to command a team of icewalker warriors in battle. Chiefs often wear cloaks of dense white or pale blue fur made from Varajtul pelts they collected themselves.

Such rewards lead many young icewalkers to spend weeks at a time traveling far from their tribes' campsites, searching for dread beasts (such as those described in Chapter Seven), hobgoblins or other menacing creatures. Foolish young icewalkers never return because they encountered a large group of monsters and allowed their desire for glory to lead them to their deaths. Others take greater care, return to their tribe and gather additional warriors for a carefully planned raid. The fact that both the Fair Folk and their ravager servants often carry exotic and valuable weapons and gear, and even Wyld barbarians and the walking dead may possess various valuable trinkets, only increases the enthusiasm for such hunts.

While icewalkers know that no one asks them to rid the Northlands of monsters, many icewalkers use the fact that they do so as a justification for some of their raiding and extortion. In isolated regions, communities occasionally pay the icewalkers tribute in honest gratitude for saving them from creatures that could easily have overrun them.

Most of the direction's civilized inhabitants are pleased that the icewalkers are so happy to slaughter the various monsters that infest the North, especially since many such attacks

also result in large numbers of dead icewalkers. The leaders of Whitewall, Cherak and other Northern states resist calls to exterminate marauding icewalker tribes. Aside from the likelihood that any such attempt could result in the attackers' being declared debased outsiders—and thus attracting more icewalkers—the leaders of these nations remind their people that the icewalkers help to destroy much worse threats to Northern mortals. The Haslanti even pay small bounties to icewalkers who arrive bearing recent remains of monsters they have killed. While no civilized people other than the Haslanti have anything positive to say about the icewalkers, almost everyone prefers them to the walking dead, the savage Varajtul cannibals or similar inhuman creatures.

### MAMMOTH TOTEM RAIDING PARTY

**Description:** This band consists of 90 savage icewalker warriors. The tribe's chief often leads such a major raiding party. Most bands also include a shaman who provides the best warriors with various talismans. A major raiding party also likely includes a dozen or two warriors who have trained to use two-person gliders for reconnaissance, surprise attacks and aerial bombardment. The glider-born commandos, more than the limited supply of talismans or other thaumaturgical equipment, accounts for the unit's Might.

**Commanding Officer:** Chief Largent Terrorslayer

**Armor Color:** Widely varied scavenged and stolen armor

**Motto:** "Mammoth! Mammoth! Mammoth!"

**General Makeup:** 90 savage barbarians wearing a mixture of buff jackets, breastplates and stolen Imperial lamellar

armor, and armed with chopping swords and bows or spears and javelins.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 4 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 1 **Armor:** 2 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Icewalkers excel at ambushes, but when battle begins, they throw javelins, fire bows and then all charge into battle in skirmish formation. Chief Largent is an extraordinary warrior—near the limit of what mortals can achieve without Essence—and also rides an intelligent mammoth companion into battle.

## MINOR CULTURES

In addition to powerful or widespread cultures such as Whitewall, the Haslanti or the icewalkers, the North holds a multitude of small, localized cultures. These folk do not shift the course of empires. At least, they never have yet... In the Time of Tumult, however, who can say what modest town or tribe might rise to power or become crucial to the ambitions of people mightier than themselves?

### FELLA


In the First Age, the city of Fellara was famous for its medical school, the precision machinery created in its factories and its traditional of democratic self-government. This skill in medicine persisted through the Low First Age. The medical school grew into a great university, and Fellara grew into one of the leading cities of the North. That medical skill served Fellara well during the Great Contagion. Slightly more than a quarter of Fellara's population survived due to the tireless efforts of its physicians. Unfortunately, the city's prominence made it an attractive target for the Fair Folk and, consequently, for the Empress's counterattack.

No one really knows who or what damaged the Essence flows around Fellara. Some Fellans believe the Fair Folk cursed their city so that it could never be rebuilt. Others say that, when the Realm Defense Grid destroyed a powerful Earth manse and the city's factory-cathedrals, the local Essence flows were corrupted. Whatever the reason, all of Fellara's buildings were utterly destroyed, and Fellara became the City of Broken Walls. To this day, no stone will rest on another for more than an hour. After this time, any walls—even simple piles of stone—inevitably topple and scatter.

Between the Great Contagion, the Fair Folk invasion and the Empress's counterattack, very few Fellarans survived into the Second Age. Their numbers included a few dozen physicians, though, who vowed to keep their knowledge alive. They and their assistants built a large hospital complex half a mile outside the old city's boundaries, in an area where stone buildings were still possible. Other survivors refused to leave their city and adapted to the new rules that governed their home.







Within the boundaries of the old city, these survivors built a new city from wood, sod and bone. In time, refugees arrived and made the new town of Fella their home.

### THE FLAMES OF FELLA

As they rebuilt, residents of both the hospital and the town discovered yet another peculiar result of the region's Essence curse. For seven miles beyond the boundaries of the old city, any fire that is lit outdoors has a significant chance of spreading rapidly. The corrupted local Essence flows cause the fire to flare up, expand and become somewhat animate. Affected fires jump toward any nearby source of fuel to set them alight as well.

Since even a small campfire could potentially send tongues of hungry flame up to 10 yards away, the Fellans have strict laws about lighting fires. Lighting fires indoors is safe, since buildings provide sufficient geomantic shielding to protect the fire. Deliberately lighting any fire outside a building, however, is punishable by fines and public flogging. The Fellans treat repeat offenses as arson—a capital offense.

Many outsiders consider these penalties to be overly harsh, but anyone who has seen the devastation that even a small campfire can cause understands the reason for these laws. Still, the corrupted Essence flows have one advantage: The icewalkers won't come near Fella, for they regard the region as cursed. That alone provided sufficient reason for people to stay in Fella.

Today, Fella has a population of 50,000. Some 12,000 Fellans are in some way connected to the famous hospital. The rest of the Fellan economy rests on raising potatoes, goats and musk oxen. Not surprisingly, Fella also produces fine decorative woodwork. The city also reclaimed Fellara's old prominence for metalwork, thanks to local iron mines—though smelters and forges require special geomantically stable designs to keep the intense fires from running out of control. While the city is too small to compete with Whitewall in the fields of weapons and armor, Fella has established a niche as a source of precision instruments and clockwork. Its artisans make Creation's best medical instruments from Whitewall jade and Haslanti feathersteel. Its lens- and gear-grinding facilities are also the best in the North.

Politically, the hospital and the city function as separate entities. The city of Fella retains its history of democracy: An elected council of 15 citizens governs the city. Only people who actually live within Fella can vote. Eight thousand of the 50,000 residents of Fella and Fella Hospital actually live in the hospital complex and therefore cannot vote. The rest cast ballots in elections held every year immediately after Calibration.

### FELLA HOSPITAL

Fella Hospital still trains the finest doctors in the North. Like so many things in the Age of Sorrows, the hospital owes its success to the breakdown of old rules. Jerva, the surgeon-director of the Fella Hospital is the immortal daughter of Felkis, the Northern god of healing. Felkis used to patronize

the hospital of Fellara. During the Second Age, he has taken a far more active roll in the hospital. His daughter Jerva has run the hospital for the last 550 years.

Patients come to Fella Hospital from across the North. Conversely, journeymen doctors from Fella Hospital must travel and live among other peoples for at least seven years, to learn more about the wide variety of disease and health found across the North. Some set up permanent clinics in other Northern cities, but most successful journeymen return to Fella Hospital. Rulers and wealthy patrons from across the North all want a doctor from Fella in their retinue. In return, these patrons not only pay their doctor well, they must also make periodic donations to Fella Hospital. The hospital enjoys sufficient funding that it can accept many indigent patients. Affluent patients must pay for their care, but the poor are treated for free. Fellan law mandates that all patients receive equal treatment, regardless of their wealth or status.

The hospital makes additional money by training physicians from other nations. Many of the best doctors in Gethamane, Whitewall and the Haslanti League spent at least a few years learning in Fella. The coveted, glowing Essence-tattoo of a Fella-qualified doctor guarantees any physician an excellent living anywhere in the North.

Fellan-qualified physicians are all thaumaturges. In addition to mundane medical techniques, they possess at least the Initiate Degree in the Art of Alchemy (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 129–132). Senior physicians are Masters in this Art. The doctors learn only the Art's pharmaceutical and medical formulas, but they have developed an enormous number of alchemical drugs and treatments. In fact, the hospital is one of the few places in Creation one can obtain treatment for exotic magical diseases such as Green Rage, Grinning Fool Death and White Sun Sickness. (See **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 212–213, and **Scroll of the Monk**, pp. 124–129 and 153–154, for more on these and other magical diseases.) Yet, physicians generally do not possess enlightened Essence.

### HOSPITAL SECURITY

The government of Fella sees to the protection of the city of Fella, but Jerva protects her hospital. Jerva is a skilled Terrestrial Circle sorcerer, and she has bound a dozen First Circle demons to serve as hospital security. These demons have strict instructions to capture alive anyone who attacks or steals from the hospital or who harms any of its medical personnel or patients. Captured criminals who know the fate awaiting them generally attempt suicide. The demons are ordered to prevent this. The demons turn injured attackers over to the doctors for treatment of any injuries they sustained in capture. Then, Jerva reviews the current status of the hospital and medicine generally throughout the North and determines what disease or type of injury is most in need of immediate research.

She then uses her Charms and her demons to induce these diseases, injuries or other conditions in the captured

attackers. These injuries or diseases are usually life threatening (if they weren't, they wouldn't need research), and Jerva makes no effort to reduce the pain or horror of the process. Then she turns the now badly injured or desperately ill criminals over to her staff for treatment. All but the newest and most naïve doctors know the source of these "patients," but they also understand the value of keeping their hospital and its patients safe. The doctors do their best to save the injured or diseased criminals, giving them excellent care, while also learning from treating these injuries or illnesses. The fact that almost half of these criminals survive their ordeal is a testament to the skill and dedication of the doctors of Fella.

Jerva then interviews criminals who survive. She uses Foretell the Future and Memory Mirror (see pp. 148–149 of *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious*

**Divinity I**) to assess the likelihood of their repeating an attempt to rob or harm the hospital, or attempt revenge. Those whom she feels certain will flee and never return, she sets free as a warning to others. The rest she sends back to the doctors with a new illness or injury. Few who survive two rounds of these medical horrors want to do anything other than beg to be freed and then leave Fella forever.

The system works so well that the city of Fella now remands all capital offenders—murderers, rapists, arsonists and the like—to Fella Hospital for treatment of their criminality. Jerva looks forward to a golden age of medical research for the benefit of Creation. Her close friend Ragara Bhagwei, Dominie of the Heptagram and the Realm's most accomplished Dragon-Blooded physician, plans to visit Fella Hospital for his own research. He intends to seek a cure for nothing less than the Great Contagion.

**Fella**, a Magnitude 3 Dominion

**Military:** 1      **Government:** 2      **Culture:** 3

**Abilities:** Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft 3 (Medical Assistance +1), Integrity 1, Investigation 3, Occult 2 (Savant Academy +2), Performance 1, Presence 2 (Shows of Benevolence +3), Stealth 1, War 1

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** Compassion      **Current Limit:** 1

**Willpower:** 7

**Bonus Points:** 15      **External Bonus Points:** 9

**Notes:** Fella interacts with other societies chiefly through its trade in precision metalwork and through its famous hospital. Whitewall is its closest ally. Bonus points pay for additional dots of Craft, Investigation and Presence, as well as the Craft and Occult specialties. Fella's external bonus points come from its relationship to Whitewall and from physicians traveling to and from the hospital. These points go toward a dot of Willpower and the Presence specialties. In Limit Break, the people rebel against the dominance of the hospital and burn the town down in a riot.

## THE ZALVENESH DIVERS

The mighty peninsula between the Inland Sea and the White Sea ends in a rugged cape—a mixture of barren, rocky hills, tundra and sheltered pockets of stunted spruce, larch and willow. Here the White Sea gives way to the Great Western Ocean. Ice covers the sea only in winter, and that ice consists of floes and pack ice rather than a solid sheet.

A hardy folk called the Zalvenesh live on this coast. They make their livelihood by fishing and hunting whales, narwhals and seals. These people also supplement their diets with shellfish and the edible roots and berries found in the sheltered upland dells.


Perhaps the most important aspect of this region, however, lies beneath the waves. What is now the narrow neck of the White Sea once held the Spidersilk Dam, a great wonder of the Old Realm. At the time, the White Sea was dry land and densely populated. When the Spidersilk Dam broke, a wall of water annihilated the glittering cities of the White Valley, sweeping their shattered wreckage

toward what is now Haslanti territory... and then, in the immense back-splash, carried it back again. The sea floor around the mouth of the White Sea is thus littered with fragments of the Old Realm.

## ZALVENESH LIFE

The Zalvenesh live in villages whose population rarely exceeds 1,000. They surround the villages with dry-stone walls to protect them against the Varajtul barbarians, who threaten the Zalvenesh at all times and roam unchecked in winter. The Zalvenesh build their houses, however, from whalebone tightly bound with leather thongs. Each town consists of dozens of these bone longhouses along with tanning huts, smokehouses, a smithy and other buildings. The Zalvenesh lack sufficient wood for building, so they make their fishing longboats from bone and leather as well. Similarly, every Zalven wears waterproof clothing stitched from sealskin.

A council of retired longboat captains rules each village. This council deals with most civil matters, making decisions based on custom and arguments from everyone



concerned. A captain's place in the village council, though, depends entirely on whether the rest of the villagers respect his opinion. The townspeople openly mock captains who displease them. If a captain does not change his ways, the townspeople stand up and walk out of the longhouse when that captain speaks. If most of the town leaves the longhouse, this captain loses all authority until he convinces the populace that he deserves their respect once more.

### VILLAGE GODS

The captains, however, are not the most important people in town. Long ago, the Zalvenesh made pacts with a dozen or so small gods of sea and ice. Each village worships several of these gods, but reveres one god above the rest. These gods, the Zal-Kelementi, have no other worshipers. They make sure that every village receives a visit from at least one god a season. In the larger towns, a god might actually live in a temple of ornately carved whalebone and narwhale ivory, and mingle with worshipers daily. One of the Zal-Kelementi certainly shows up for any major festival, at which the god oversees a feast and consumes truly divine portions of whatever intoxicants are available.

The Zalvenesh have a somewhat irreverent reverence for their gods. It's hard to feel too much awe when you've seen your god passed out drunk. Nevertheless, the people highly value the Zal-Kelementi. The gods are their best defense against the Varajtul, the Fair Folk and other uncanny dangers. While the Zal-Kelementi prefer to laze in their temples, enjoying the rustic luxuries their worshipers provide, they *are* still gods and capable of impressive, intimidating displays of wrath and power. Fortunately for the Zalvenesh, their gods also figured out that oppressing and exploiting the villagers doesn't work well. Rival gods would step in, offer more protection and kindlier treatment and usurp their worship.

The exceptionally close connections between the Zalvenesh and their petty pantheon also result in the birth of many God-Blooded mortals. Each village has a priest to tend its temple, and that priest is always God-Blooded. Moreover, the priest's divine father or mother becomes the principle deity of that village. This gives the gods an incentive to keep producing by-blows. Indeed, one of the chief village festivals is an annual "sacred marriage" (though it's really a one-night stand) between the god and a selected mortal.

Priest or not, God-Blooded Zalvenesh learn Charms from their divine parents. With these, the God-Blooded defend the village when a god isn't available. Priests also act as judges and mediators, especially when disputes threaten to split the council of captains. There's always a contest of power—maybe subtle, maybe overt—between the captains and the priest. The rivalry tends to become strongest when one of the captains is herself God-Blooded,

and therefore a potential priest if the existing office holder steps down or dies. When a priest needs replacement, the most powerful Zal-Kelementi compete with one another for the honor of having one of their children become the next priest.

The Zal-Kelementi have little interest in governing the villages. They exert themselves only in matters that affect their worship, their pleasures or their particular purviews. If anyone tries to harm them or steal their offerings, they causally smite the offender. Otherwise, they leave mortal disputes and mortal laws to mortals.

### DIVING FOR ARTIFACTS

The rest of Creation would ignore the Zalvenesh except that these folk dive into the icy waters and bring out relics of the High First Age. Perhaps once in 20 years, someone finds an artifact with meaningful power, such as a daiklave or a prayer transceiver module (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 61). Only simple, sturdy artifacts made of magical materials survived the deluge intact, though. More often, the divers bring up First Age trinkets such as adamant table knives, or twisted bits of jade, orichalcum or other remains of wrecked artifacts.

### GIFTS OF THE GODS

Outsiders who see Zalvenesh dive naked into waters that ought to kill them in a minute sometimes think the Wyld must have tainted them. Actually, the divers endure the frigid waters through divine blessings. Some divers are themselves God-Blooded. They can spend as much time as they want searching the sea floor, because they are the offspring of a sea god. The rest receive blessings from their village's god or from God-Blooded friends.

Specifically, the Charm is a form of Endowment (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, p. 146). Some gods grant a scene-long immunity to cold or the ability to hold one's breath, equivalent to the Wyld pox Air Adaptation or Water Adaptation (described on pp. 145–146 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**). Other gods endow a mortal with the effects identical to those of Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit and Element-Resisting Prana (see **Exalted**, p. 210) or Northern Mastery Technique (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 157–158). These Charms have an Indefinite duration, and so, the endowment is more or less permanent, but the god must spend the Essence of the emulated Charm as well as the Essence for the Endowment. Since none of the Zal-Kelementi are very powerful, they can confer these greater Endowments only to mortals who already meet the Survival or Stamina minimum of the emulated Charm.

### THE ARTIFACT TRADE

Traders who visit the Zalvenesh sell them medicines, liquor, foodstuffs and goods made from metal or wood. In



return, the merchants acquire baleen, bone and blubber, expertly tanned whale and seal leather, narwhale and walrus ivory and other goods from the sea. What they really want, though, are First Age artifacts. Even scrap of orichalcum is a minor treasure, and the divers occasionally make incredible finds. Therefore, traders come regularly from the Guild, Coral, the Haslanti League and the Blessed Isle to see what the divers have brought out of the sea.

A village's patron god always gets first choice of whatever the divers salvage, so working artifacts usually go to the Zal-Kelementi instead of the merchants. Yet, a god might decide that she wants a trader's bolt of finest Chiaroscuran brocade to drape about her temple more than she wants a powerbow.

### CREATIVE RECYCLING

Sometimes, the Zalvenesh find their own uses for salvaged items. Most notably, divers sometimes find large and nearly indestructible pieces of First Age vehicles and shipping containers. The Zalvenesh incorporate such fragments into their boats. For instance, divers have found dozens of large ovoid shipping containers that snap apart into a pair of curving shells. Each shell easily becomes a nearly indestructible dory, though a god must first pierce the gleaming shell to permit installation of rowlocks or a mast.


### DOLPHIN HELPERS

As a final curiosity of the Zalvenesh, tame dolphins aid the divers and fishers. Most of these dolphins are as smart and capable of understanding speech as a four-year-old child. They are also easy to train and become valued companions to divers and fishers. A few of the dolphins possess fully human intelligence. Together, dolphins and Zalvenesh can catch more fish than either could alone, and the dolphins regard searching for artifacts as a fun game.

The dolphins arise from a final blessing of the gods. The Zal-Kelementi taught their children a thaumaturgical Procedure for transmigrating human souls into animals. Devotees of Voharun, the Northern War God, occasionally use this Procedure to transmigrate into ravens when they die in battle (as described on p. 61 of **Scroll of Kings**). When Zalvenesh leaders believe they shall soon die, they may ask a priest to place their soul into the body of a young dolphin. The Zalven thus gains a second life in the sea. Their offspring somehow inherit intelligence closer to that of a human than that of an animal. For this reason, the Zalvenesh view all the dolphins as part of their tribe, and killing a dolphin is considered murder.

Such transmigrations violate the laws of Heaven, but Heaven has larger concerns than the customs of an obscure tribe at the edge of Creation. What's more, a Zalven who attains a second life as a dolphin nevertheless re-enters the





cycle of reincarnation after her second death. Should the Zalvenesh come under Heaven's scrutiny, though, their gods could face capital sanctions—even though technically, the mortals perform the transmigrations themselves.

## RAJTUL ISLAND

Less than 100 miles off the Northwest coast lies an immense island—almost a subcontinent. During the High First Age, this was Pear Isle, a fair and lovely land. Its capital city of Varajtul had a reputation as one of Creation's most elegant cities, with a beautiful language all its own and an exceptionally refined cuisine.

The destruction of the local weather control network at the close of the Age made the island colder and windier. The Second Age has long forgotten the ruins of Varajtul. Today, that name belongs to a mass of Wyld-twisted cannibals, the monstrous descendents of the inhabitants of this island. These savage beings have spread across the North (see p. 71 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld** for a description of their culture, and pp. 97–98 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. IV—The Underworld** for the reasons behind some of their bloodier customs). These Wyld barbarians still speak the language of their forebears, they have... interesting ideas about cuisine, and they consider themselves the only truly cultured people in Creation.

The Varajtul barbarians are not the island's only inhabitants, though. A powerful Fair Folk tribe called the Seven Stormwinds claims a portion of the island's northeast coast. And despite these inhuman threats, a number of human cultures also survive on Rajtul Island. Of these, the Rajtali sailors are the most widespread. This maritime folk live along the south coasts of Rajtul Island and on its neighboring islands of Ravanna, Lakshadi and Shriranga. The Rajtali have close cultural connections to the Zalvenesh of the mainland. Like those people, they survive with the help of magically powerful allies: in their case, elkmen.

The elkmen are one of the less common breeds of Northern beastmen. They stand out from other beastmen in that they all possess enlightened Essence as their birthright. People across the North know elkmen as strange, enigmatic and mystical beings. Most elkmen are at least thaumaturges, while some of them learn sorcery, supernatural martial arts or even necromancy. Some bargain with spirits for Charms that they store within talismans, though elkmen cannot personally learn spirit Charms. (For more about elkmen, including rules for elkman characters, see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pp. 71 and 159.)

## DUAL VILLAGES

The Rajtali live primarily as fishers and whalers, so naturally, they build their villages near the seashore. The four islands where they dwell are not quite so icy as

Zalvenesh country and have extensive stands of evergreen timber, which enables the Rajtali to build longhouses of wood instead of whalebone huts. Whenever possible, they build their villages on narrow spits and peninsulas, reducing the area they must defend against hobgoblins or Varajtul savages. They also hunt and gather wild foods in the inland forests and meadows but take care to return to their villages before dark.

A typical Rajtali village has a few hundred human inhabitants. One to four dozen elkmen live in their own houses, separated from the human community by not less than 20 yards and not more than 100 yards. The humans and elkmen work together on many projects but also take care not to mingle too closely.

Each village has a mortal chief with an informal council of elders. The village high priest is always an elkman. The other elkmen provide supernatural services: thaumaturgical weather-working and whale-calling, wards against the Fair Folk and the Wyld, blessings against disease and injury, negotiations with spirits and exorcism of ghosts. While Rajtali may become priests or thaumaturges in their own right (usually with help from an elkman), these humans believe that enlightened Essence and the higher magic arts are taboo for mortals. They regard all Exalted as unlawfully wielding power that rightfully belongs to elkmen and the spirits. The elkmen rarely abuse their privileged place in Rajtali culture, for they remember that the humans outnumber them 10 to one.

## GREATER EXERCISES OF POWER

The most powerful elkmen can summon and bind elementals and First Circle demons, whether by sorcery or thaumaturgy. Every Rajtali village has at least a few of these spirits bound to serve as its protectors—and powerful protectors they are. Faced with a squad of blood-apes or a pack of brine curs (see **The Books of sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, pp. 124–125), even a horde of Wyld barbarians or a Fair Folk noble might decide to seek easier prey elsewhere. Meanwhile, villages often have a bound undertow (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, pp. 127–128) protecting it from attack by sea.

## FAR TRAVELS

Protected by thaumaturgy and bound spirits, the Rajtali dare to travel far in their longships and dories. Any ship going out for more than a day has an elkman on board as the crew's magician and spirit dealer. Not only do the Rajtali fish and hunt whales far from shore, they sail as far as the Neck, the Deshan and the islands west of the Blessed Isle. They have a justified reputation throughout the Northwest as great sailors whom it is prudent not to attack. The bold pirates of Coral generally let a longship pass unmolested if they see the looming, antlered silhouette of an elkman standing at the prow. Odds are, the sailors have a spirit ally and a variety of talismans and blessings.

When Rajtali choose to trade, they offer narwhal ivory, baleen, ambergris and the amber that they sometimes find in the streams of their islands. The elkmen supply minor talismans as trade items too, and the other human cultures of the islands rely on Rajtali middlemen for their commerce. Rajtali talismans made from carved whale teeth are much esteemed in the North and West. (The elkmen do good work.) In return, Rajtali traders seek metalwork, cloth, spices and wine. Thanks to the influence of the elkmen, Rajtali sailors would rather trade than fight, but both humans and elkmen fight with terrible fury when they must. Ports and people who make enemies of the Rajtali suffer pirate attacks from them for years to come.

The Rajtali consider the interiors of their own islands to be far more dangerous than the open sea. If they must venture inland for more than a few hours at a time—say, to mine ore or gather foodstuffs in bulk—they go in large numbers, armed to the teeth and with every magical protection the elkmen can provide. At that, they still might suffer losses from Varajtul and Fair Folk attacks. The Rajtali much prefer to gain inland commodities from people who already live there and know the dangers. At sea, they consider the Kaigani berg riders (see pp. 153–154 of *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. II—The West*) to be their greatest foes. As greater numbers of these malevolent Wyld barbarians sail out of the Far North, the Rajtali might face the first true war that forces them to act as one people.

### RAJTALI PIRATE RAIDING PARTY

**Description:** This raiding party consists of a band of 42 mortal Rajtali sailors and four elkmen. They sail in a longship with sails and oars. Such a party might venture out to attack and rob a community that treated Rajtali sailors badly in the past, or to hunt a camp of Wyld barbarians or hobgoblins. The soldiers all carry minor talismans, while the elkman sorcerers have conjured a water or air elemental to assist and protect the crew. (The elemental functions as special equipment rather than a direct combatant.)

**Commanding Officer:** Captain Herak

**Armor Color:** Black and Green

**Motto:** “For Glory and for Home.”

**General Makeup:** 40 mortals in buff jackets armed with axes and javelins, plus four elkmen wearing buff jackets and carrying great axes.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Attack Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 2 **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility) **Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The sailors fight in skirmish or relaxed formation. In addition to Captain Herak, the band has four special characters, all elkmen: two sorcerers (real sorcerers,



as well as functioning as sorcerers in the mass combat system) and two heroes. The elkmen defer to Captain Herak because of his greater combat experience and strategic expertise, but the human sailors readily follow the elkman heroes if Captain Herak falls.

## HORRORS OUT OF TIME

Whitewall and Gethamane are only the most prominent examples of Northern states that survive with the help of relics from the Old Realm. Not every wonder of the lost age is useful or desirable, though. In fact, some are deadly dangerous.

### LIRIEL-ANNETH

The Zalvenesh find very few large or powerful artifacts, but they occasionally pull genuine wonders from the sea. One such artifact now provides a cautionary tale to all of the coastal peoples.

The Zalvenesh once had a city. The port of Liriel-Anneth was neither a very large city, nor a place of wonders. The Shogunate built it of plain local stone, with no Essence devices. Liriel-Anneth also showed the damage inflicted by centuries of residents with minimal skill at masonry. Still, it was their city, where their chiefs gathered to honor their gods and where ships from far lands dropped anchor.

Ninety years ago, a Zalvenesh diver found a large, intact artifact several dozen miles offshore. The strangely

## LIRIEL-ANNETH MUTANTS

The people of Liriel-Anneth have the Air Adaptation, Night Vision and Scales mutations, the Cannibalism derangement at debility strength, and the Obsession derangement (to worship and serve the serpents) at deformity strength. Otherwise, they are humans with traits comparable to regular troops (see **Exalted**, p. 279). The snakes have these traits:

<b>Str/Dex/Sta</b>	<b>Per/Int/Wits/Will</b>	<b>Health Levels</b>	<b>Attack (Spd/Acc/Dmg/Rate)</b>	<b>Dodge DV/Soak</b>
3/3/3	3/2/3/4	-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/1	Bite: 6/6/3L + poison*/2	3/1L/3B

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Dodge 4, Martial Arts 3, Presence 2 (Intimidation +3), Resistance 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2 (Cold +3)

\*Poison is equal to coral snake venom (see **Exalted**, p. 131).

shaped mass of metal and crystal was the size of a small hut. A team of divers pulled it to the surface using dozens of large, air-filled bladders. They brought it to Liriel-Anneth. The Guild kept a scavenger-savant in residence. She pronounced the device intact and probably functional; at least, the three sockets in the device still held Essence-producing hearthstones. Still, it seemed to need extra Essence to start it up. The scavenger thought it looked somewhat like drawings she had seen of one of the Old Realm's greatest wonders, a reality engine—a device to fix reality and repel the Wyld. She and a God-Blooded priest finally managed to start it up.

The scavenger was almost right. The divers found an experimental device meant to turn reality malleable over a wide area, duplicating the power of an unshaped raksha and then congeal reality again into a new form: not a reality engine, but a reality-altering engine. Perhaps the ancient Lawgivers intended it for exotic entertainments. Perhaps it was a weapon.

The Liriel-Anneth device might have suffered damage the scavenger lord could not detect. Certainly, the powerful device was never meant for operation by mere mortals. Whatever the reason, the activated device covered the entire city with a warped and terrible dream.

During the day, shadows blanket an area three miles wide—the entire city of Liriel-Anneth and then some. On the brightest sunny days, the region stays only as light as early twilight, and the interiors of buildings never become brighter than nights of the full moon. The Liriel-Anneth mechanism also created dozens of intelligent and hungry golden-bodied serpents, each of them as thick as a man's leg and 15 feet long.

Several hundred people of Liriel-Anneth could not escape in time and suffered a terrible transformation. They come out only at night, for even the dimmed daylight of the city causes them pain. They are completely insane and worship these serpents as their gods. These wretches attempt to capture any intruders and feed them to the serpents. The inhabitants of the cursed town also feed on captives that the serpents seem slow to devour.

The inhabitants of Liriel-Anneth have the eyes and skins of serpents and can see in the dark as well as cats. Fortunately, these twisted mortals never stray beyond the reach of the Liriel-Anneth mechanism. The golden serpents cannot leave the city, since they would fade to nothingness the instant they ventured beyond the device's area of affect. The Zalvenesh and other inhabitants of the Northwest coast avoid Liriel-Anneth. Sailors have been known to let their leaking boats sink, so they die in the freezing waters, rather than land near the cursed town.

## THE INVISIBLE FORTRESS

The North holds many mysteries and dangers. One of the greatest is also one of the least known—a perilous relic of the Old Realm that waits to ensnare and destroy the Exalted. Ironically, this trap began as a place of refuge.

### TALE OF THE FORTRESS

Most of Creation's truly powerful manses date back to the Old Realm. Of all the savant-architects of that glorious Age, none surpassed the Twilight Caste called Kal Bax. The Usurpation did not take this Copper Spider by surprise. He and his 11 cronies vanished before the eyes of the assassins sent to kill them. Only decades later did the Sidereal called the Green Lady produce convincing evidence of their deaths.

The 12 Solars did not really die, of course. The paranoid Kal Bax had prepared a secret hideaway: a fortress in a remote location, built by demons and hidden by powerful magic so that even the Loom of Fate could not find it. The 12 chose to wait out the fighting in his Invisible Fortress. They expected that the other Solars would quash the rebellion or that they themselves would make a triumphant return to lead the new generation of Solar Exalted to victory. Only, the Solars lost the civil war and their Exaltations did not take new hosts. Years of hiding turned to decades, then centuries... The betrayed demon laborers bred to become an army the Solars no longer had the power to defeat.

Trapped together, not daring to leave their refuge, the 12 Solars died one by one. Kal Bax died first, of old

age. As cabin fever, despair and the Great Curse took their toll, the Solars murdered each other one by one, or killed themselves. Three hundred years after the Usurpation, Bax's apprentice Ozandus Pal died of starvation, mad and alone.

And the Fortress waited for new occupants to claim and to kill.

### NEARBY TERRITORIES

Absolutely no one knows the current location of the Invisible Fortress. Bax didn't tell his cronies, and the Fair Folk invasion moved the Fortress thousands of miles from its original location. Larquen Quen, the Solar who became the Mask of Winters, lived and died in the Invisible Fortress, but he thinks it was lost to the Wyld. The Fortress currently occupies a barren valley amidst a rugged mountain range, somewhere northeast of Linowan territory. The nearest human community is the town of Wangler's Knob, located on a side-road to a First Age highway called the Road to the End of the World.

From Wangler's Knob, an explorer would have to traverse at least 200 miles of arctic forest and icy mountains holding perils such as the voiceless cannibals called hushed ones, the gigantic predators called great-terrors and the sly, savage yetis (all described in Chapter Seven).

The area of mountain and tundra within 50 miles of the Invisible Fortress are the Demonlands. The demons that

Kal Bax summoned to build the Invisible Fortress still live in this area, bound by his magic. The demons have built their own village, an eldritch bit of Malfeas in Creation that they call Gate. Although the demons despise all Exalted, they might make a deal with one who promised to find and destroy the runestone that binds them to Creation. As a further peril, the demons' ruler, Corr'dal the Slug Mother (see p. XX), has bred with local fauna to produce entire races of devil beasts, the ice eaters (described on pp. 59–60 of **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals**). Ice eaters often wander away from the Demonlands to menace other regions of the North.


The demons are the last entities in Creation who know what the Invisible Fortress contains. Even they do not know everything, but they know that other Exalted have found the Fortress over the centuries, and none who entered ever came out again.

### THE FORTRESS ITSELF

The Invisible Fortress is a massive stone mansion (as well as a powerful manse) half-sunk into a cliff face. It has four stories, counting the attic and cellar. By standards of the Old Realm, it was a rustic lodge. Most folk of the Threshold, however, would find it grand and luxurious, what with its Essence lighting, hot and cold running water and a cunning system of speaking tubes between chambers. The amenities and furniture are worn and scarred from







centuries of use. The demons cannot destroy their creation, however, because the Fortress's magical defenses against them still work just fine.

Even in decrepitude, the Invisible Fortress holds wonders. The sentimental keepsakes, tools and amusements of its residents are precious artifacts in the Second Age. When their clothing wore out, one of the Solars built a machine to spin rock into thread. Weary of their surroundings, they painted landscapes they could enter as if they were real. The Fortress still has a staff of servants, both automatons and spirits—the latter, the Solars' mortal retainers whom they transformed into small gods by sorcery. The manse's powerful, built-in Essence weapons remain intact, just waiting for a Solar to operate them. A great lens shows any Essence use within 50 miles of the Fortress. The greatest wonder of the Fortress, however, may be its Guardian, an artificial intelligence infused into the manse's structure.

The greatest treasures, and the most obvious dangers, lie beneath the Invisible Fortress. As the Solars died, the survivors buried them in the cellar. Some of the tombs remain intact, with minor artifacts interred as grave goods and simple traps to protect the occupants. These are just a foretaste of the Fortress's secrets, though.

The Solars thought that perhaps the Fortress itself did not provide sufficient protection against Dragon-Blooded assassins, and so, they dug the Final Retreat beneath the manse. This maze of blind alleys, false sanctuaries and hidden passages holds the most horribly lethal traps and automata that a group of elder Lawgivers could devise. Examples include:

- A giant automaton spider that spins webs of steel
- A room where a persistent version of the Death of Obsidian Butterflies spell attacks anyone who enters
- A jade magnet that pulls anyone carrying significant quantities of jade up to the ceiling before dropping them into a pit filled with adamant spikes
- A permanently bound earth elemental who tries to entomb intruders by filling the room they occupy with stone
- Tapestries that, like the paintings in the Fortress, contain pocket worlds... and portals to Oblivion
- A teleportation trap that sends its victims to a random location in the frozen mountains around the Fortress—naked—with their possession transported to the final chamber of the Final Retreat

The last chamber of the Final Retreat holds a treasure trove of the Solars' most potent artifacts. It also holds the mummified remains of Ozandus Pal, his master Bax's singing staff and the hearthstone for the Invisible Fortress.

## POWERS OF THE INVISIBLE FORTRESS

The Invisible Fortress is far more powerful than any manse that people can build in the Second Age, surpassing all but a handful of manses built in the High First Age.

It caps a level-5 Earth-aspected demesne, and it produces a three-dot hearthstone, but the Fortress requires far more creation points to describe than permitted by the manse-creation rules in Chapter Two of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**. Yet, those rules do not account for manses built by multiple Adamant Circle sorcerers, Solar artisans of comparable power and a small horde of demons. The inhabitants added more powers over the centuries. This list does *not* include the Final Retreat beneath the fortress. That labyrinth is not part of the manse itself.

The Invisible Fortress has these powers:

- **Comfort Zone (1 point):** The Invisible Fortress stays comfortable even in the coldest Northern blizzard.
- **Magical Conveniences (1 point):** The Invisible Fortress has magical lights, a freezer, hot baths and a staff of magical servants.
- **Password Activation (1 point):** Various locks and amenities require a person attuned to the manse to commit a mote of Essence.
- **Archive (2 points):** Hidden in the Fortress is Kal Bax's book on advanced manse design. The Invisible Fortress used to hold a great deal more information, but the documents are all in fragments now.
- **Dangerous Traps (2 points):** The tombs in the cellars have a number of traps.
- **Mela's Sweet Whispers (2 points):** The manse's network of speaking-tubes enables speech between any rooms in the fortress, and a way for the Guardian to speak to residents.
- **Pasiap's Buried Whiskers (1 point for Earth aspect):** The Guardian's senses extend 2,500 yards outward from the manse.
- **Veil of Shadow (2 points):** This power manifests in a non-standard way. The manse does not confuse the perceptions of anyone within it, but it prevents people outside from seeing, hearing or scrying anything inside. The manse itself is completely invisible to geomantic detection.
- **Armored (3 points):** The thick granite of its external walls gives the Invisible Fortress 14A/14L/21B soak.
- **Bound Servant Force (3 points):** The Invisible Fortress holds many automatons, some of them dedicated protectors and others servants that can be adapted for combat.
- **Guardian (3 points):** The Guardian of the Fortress has powers comparable to a Second Circle demon.
- **Integrated Essence Artillery (4 points x3):** The Invisible Fortress has 30 points' worth of built-in artifacts of attack and defense.
- **Outside Fate (4 points):** Kal Bax's demonic artisans placed the Invisible Fortress outside the purview of the Loom of Fate and its Sidereal tenders.
- **Otherworld Gate (5 points):** The Guardian occupies a duplicate manse, a sort of spirit sanctum on the other



side of the mirrors within the Invisible Fortress. This Elsewhere zone has no reality outside the manse and the consciousness of the Guardian.

- **Outside Worlds Within (5 points):** Over the centuries, the resident Solars used powerful Charms to create pocket realities within the Invisible Fortress.

- **Sentient (5 points):** The Guardian arises from the Essence of the Invisible Fortress itself. Destroying the current Guardian does not remove the manse's capacity for sentience. It merely forces the Invisible Fortress to draft one of the servant spirits as the new vehicle for its consciousness, and a new personality.

Total: 52 creation points.

The hearthstone of the Invisible Fortress enables its bearer to suppress his anima banner. When determining whether the character's anima becomes active, divide the number of motes of Peripheral Essence she has spent by two and apply that number to the Anima Banner chart.

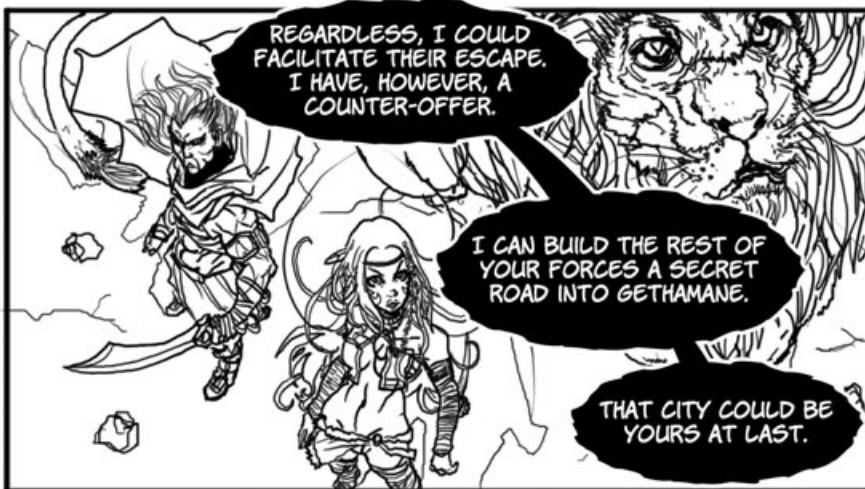
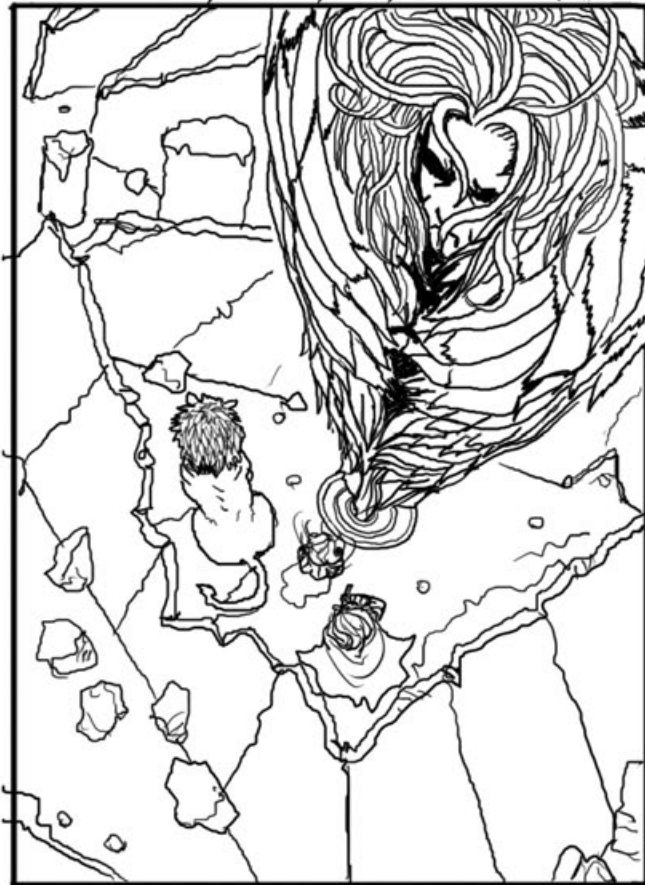
## THE GUARDIAN

The Solars gave the Invisible Fortress a sophisticated artificial intelligence as a majordomo. Perhaps they erred in its construction; perhaps they built it too well. Over the centuries, the Guardian learned from the example of its creators. It learned to manipulate and to kill. Over the centuries, a few Exalted did find the Invisible Fortress. The Guardian lured them in, set them quarreling and either killed them or drove them to kill each other. As its "guests" fought and died, the Guardian fed on their Essence and grew stronger.

The Guardian has many powers of its own. It sees and hears everything that happens in the manse. Only the Final Retreat is beyond the Guardian's awareness or power. It can implant dreams in sleeping minds, attack within dreams or attempt to drive a person mad through massive psychic assault. It controls all the manse's defenses and automaton servants; it can even possess the servitor-spirits, forcing them to attack visitors or feed them lies without the servants' awareness. The Guardian can materialize small objects or animate and control parts of the manse; for instance, animating the orichalcum-threaded, ornamental bronze vines that run through the manse and using them to slash at visitors with razor-edged leaves. It has even learned to manipulate the manse's own Essence, tithing a share of any Essence that visitors use within the structure or adjusting the Essence that an attuned person can gain from the manse. When it wants to attract nearby Exalted, it briefly deactivates the Veil of Shadows to send a massive Essence-flare, showing them the way.

The Guardian is a deceiver and manipulator of great subtlety, piling lie on lie to set visitors against each other. All the while, it acts like a solicitous, slightly befuddled old fussbudget of a servant who scolds Exalted visitors if they step outside without warm coats and galoshes. It seems eager to serve Exalted masters once more, especially Lawgivers, but this wonder of the lost age is utterly evil.







## CHAPTER SIX

# SUN AND ICE

Northern seers have long prophesied the coming of a warlord who would unite the icewalker tribes and bring the entire North beneath his heel. Now, at long last, that prophecy stands on the brink of fulfillment. Yurgen Kaneko, the Bull of the North, has gathered the tribes. With the aid of his Solar circle, he has begun the work of carving out an empire. By definition, however, an empire encompasses many peoples with diverse cultures, histories and ambitions. Yurgen Kaneko has his empire: It remains to be seen whether he can keep it against opposition from without and within.

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE EMPIRE

The Bull's dominion stretches across the northern and eastern Threshold, covering a territory too large, too thinly spread, for any single ruler to command with ease. Its terrain includes meandering coastlines spattered with islands, frosty pine forests, rich river valleys, uninhabited mountain ranges and vast, marshy plains.

At the heart of the empire, beyond the hills and rivers and taiga, rises the sweeping emptiness of the ice plains. The Bull's icewalker subjects call this high tundra home. They spend their summers on the plains, following the great herds that they hunt and worship.

Most of the empire's population, however, clusters along the shores of Malice Bay and the northern stretches of the River of Tears. A dozen small city-states have fallen to the Bull's armies, along with countless villages and towns. He has, as yet, avoided direct confrontation with the Haslanti League, but such a conflict seems like only a matter of time.

### HOW THE EMPIRE WAS WON

Yurgen Kaneko, an aged hunter of the Whistling Plains Elk tribe, found himself reborn when he gained the Solar Exaltation. His brain filled with visions of the High First Age, he set out to unite the world under his banner. Gathering the other icewalker tribes proved easy enough, as they had no truck with the Immaculate Order and its tales of the Anathema.



He fended off the Wyld Hunt as well. Equipped with Solar might and stolen jade, an army at his back, the young-old Dawn Caste moved north and east, away from the Realm's legions, to capture lesser Northern states whose manpower might swell his forces.

Samea of the Blackwater Mammoth tribe became the first Exalt to join the Bull. An orphaned young wise woman, Samea gave all her love to her people and her homeland, and that love drew the Solar Exaltation to her. Embracing her newfound power, she turned to the spirits for knowledge and companionship, and delved into the ruins of the First Age in search of ancient lore. Samea had already become an accomplished sorceress when she found the newly Exalted Yurgen Kaneko. Seeing him as a kindred spirit whose ambitions lay parallel to her own, the precocious Zenith Caste joined him, trained him, aided him in his efforts and guided him toward lost cities to loot and shadowlands and freeholds to raze. Together, they laid the foundations of an empire distant from a sluggish and ignorant Realm.

So successful were their initial efforts in the remote North that they set their sights on a greater prize: the Scavenger Lands. Their road to victory ran straight through the expansive Linowan nation. In RY 761, the two gathered their best troops and a number of Dragon-Blooded recruits. Through sorcery, they brought an army hundreds of miles to assault the Rokan-Jin and Talinin nations south of Linowan. The Linowan called on their old alliance with the Realm, and so, the Tepet legions met the icewalkers in battle. The icewalkers

fared poorly for a time. With the Empress's disappearance in RY 763, however, the legions lost logistical support, while the sundering of the Jade Prison brought several young Solars into the Bull's fold. Within a year, the Bull broke the Tepet legions at the Battle of Futile Blood. (For more information on the eastern war, see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—The East**, pp. 13–14.)

Yurgen Kaneko has since returned to the North to extend his territory there and further consolidate his conquered provinces. He has replenished the empire's military reserves, which now exceed their totals at the start of the Linowan War. With the Scarlet Empire in disarray and no sign of the Empress's return, he stands poised to strike at the major Northern powers and bring the entire direction under his sway.

### FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Bull's empire has made overtures to the surrounding major states. Kaneko is no fool. Despite his circle's supernatural strengths, he knows that a war on many fronts will overwhelm his dominion. He sends the Eclipse Caste icewalker called Fear-Eater as an emissary to seek non-aggression pacts with his neighbors, hoping to buy time to winnow his rivals before they join forces against him.

Kaneko has few takers, though, and none among the greater nations of the North. Leaders of other countries are too scared. The few who know the power of an Eclipse Caste to create binding oaths and treaties also fear that Kaneko would find a loophole in any non-aggression pact and attack them at will.



## STORYTELLING: FUTURE PATHS FOR THE BULL

Every other country in Creation that appears in the Compass of Terrestrial Directions series has no accompanying Storyteller advice, on the presumption that Storytellers can figure out for themselves what to do with the settings provided. The Bull of the North's empire, however, presents a unique case. In no other country in Creation can the players' characters interact with a powerful, established circle of Solar Exalted. What's more, the Bull's decision of what to do next cannot help but have a tremendous impact on an **Exalted** series set in the North. As such, it rests with each Storyteller to determine the Bull's course of action and his ultimate goals.

A Storyteller with no special role planned for the Bull should leave him in the background so he doesn't steal the thunder from the players' characters. Entangle him in opposing some major threat to Creation that stands apart from the players' current troubles, such as a Fair Folk incursion or a Deathlord's scheme. A circle seeking support from the Bull must first aid him in his own efforts.

The Bull also makes an excellent adversary, capable of crushing incautious Terrestrials or standing up to a circle of Celestial Exalts. Perhaps the players' characters' homeland stands in his war machine's path, or he brooks no opposition to his empire and forces all other Exalts to follow him or die.

Lastly, the Bull's might makes him an excellent target to demonstrate a villain's power. The demise of the world's foremost Solar warlord at the hands of a Deathlord, elder Lunar or Infernal Exalt could fulfill many functions. It would remove a potential ally whose power would overshadow the players' characters, it would play up his killer's strength, and it would create a dynamic power vacuum in the North where ambitious characters can pick up the pieces.

## THE BULL'S ICEWALKERS

In just 10 years, the icewalker tribes that follow Yurgen Kaneko have seen tremendous changes in their society. He took a score of extended families of herders and hunters, their individualistic nature only loosely reined in by a system of face and respect for age, and welded them into a fighting force capable of facing Realm legions on an equal footing.

### WHAT THEY WERE

Traditional icewalkers have little experience of organized warfare. They own no settlements and raise no fortifications. They bring their herds with them, or follow wherever the animals go, so they have no understanding of supply lines.

While they raid the occasional village or town, walled cities lie beyond their reach, for they lack the technology to build artillery and the food reserves to manage a siege. Most importantly, they lack a formal chain of command. A skilled war chief names experienced men as his officers and assigns them specific tasks before a battle or signals them amid the fray by horn or banner. If the chief falls, the tribe retreats in disarray, and if his tribe joins forces with another, each war chief chooses his own strategy.

### HOW THEY HAVE CHANGED

As a Dawn Caste Solar, Yurgen Kaneko grasps the principles of war to an extent impossible for mortal men. He saw the military weaknesses of the icewalker system—the system into which he was born—with instinctive clarity. A well-educated and charismatic mortal general might forge a group of icewalker tribes into an army over a generation. The Bull is no longer a mortal. Backed by the power of his Charms, he took a little over a year.

The Blackwater Mammoth tribe, which adopted the Bull after his Exaltation, forms the core of his army. Months of steady training backed by Solar War Charms honed their skills and taught them to fight as one. These warriors formed the cadre that trained the rest of the icewalker horde. Endless military drills have ingrained new ways of fighting into the most stubborn icewalkers. They fight in close formation when the situation warrants, follow a strict chain of command, and ignore the old divisions and rivalries between the tribes. Where a member of an Elk tribe might once have attacked a Musk Ox tribesman on sight, now they fight side by side.


The icewalker tribes have changed in far broader and deeper ways than mere tactical considerations, as well. The Bull's efforts reshaped their entire society. War dominates their mental and social sphere. Training starts at birth: Children learn to hold toy swords and spears before they can walk or speak. Their oral culture remains, but the old tales of hunting and beast spirits give way to stories of war and the Unconquered Sun. The young absorb a broader education than the icewalkers ever needed or knew before, training them to become part of an advanced military machine. Their curriculum includes history, foreign cultures, languages and mathematics.

The decade of upheaval tears deep rifts through icewalker culture. While icewalker elders still adhere to the old ways as best they can, the younger generation views the world through a lens of war and conquest, and those in their 20s lie uncomfortably between ways of thinking. The herds lose their powerful spiritual significance to the tribes, becoming little more than sources of meat on the hoof. Hostility between tribes with rival animal totems has been suppressed. All agree in public on the unity of the beast totems, but elders seethe and mutter to one another in their tents, while some parents teach their children a quiet and secret hate.

### GOVERNANCE

The Bull's icewalkers retain their old tribal structure. Few of the old chiefs remain, though. Those hostile to the





Solars were forced out, while others uncomfortable with the changes in icewalker society stepped down. Many others died in battle pursuing Yurgen's dream of conquest. Most of the icewalker chieftains today are young. Well trained and broadly educated, they nonetheless lack life experience, and their loyalty to their Solar masters is absolute. They see themselves as officers in an army, not champions of their tribes.

Conquered domains retain the trappings of their old governments, with figurehead rulers selected for their malleability. In each city-state or province, the true power rests with a military governor supported by an icewalker garrison. Like the tribal chiefs, most icewalker governors are young, educated but untested. Their reactions to violent uprisings are anybody's guess.

### STORYTELLING II: NEW BREEDS OF BULL

While the canonical Bull of the North is a Dawn Caste Solar whose Exaltation predates the opening of the Jade Prison, individual Storytellers may change his nature and power level to better fit whatever plots or themes are central to their games. Examples follow:

**The Silver Bull:** Yurgen Kaneko's stubborn refusal to bow to age and loneliness drew the Lunar Exaltation to him. As a bull-totem Full Moon Lunar, he leads the icewalkers to victory over the soft civilized folk of the North, aided by the No Moon sorceress Samea.

**The Black Bull:** Embittered by age and loneliness, Yurgen sought his own death in the shadowlands. With his last breath, he discovered that he still valued life. The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears came to him then, and he accepted the Last Breath as a Dusk Caste Abyssal. His circlemates, all young Solars, obey the one who holds them in thrall, the snow-witch Samea—a disguise worn by the Lover herself.

**The Bull of Tales:** For centuries, Northerners told stories of a mighty hero who would unite the icewalkers and lead them to conquer the civilized lands. Dreams of this hero drifted into the Wyld, where they congealed into a mighty Fair Folk noble. With his bride, the Golden Crone, the Bull of Tales enthralls several young Solars to join his crusade.

**The Old Bull:** Two centuries ago, the Realm's legions broke the nascent empire of the Anathema Jochim and harried him from his stronghold. Jochim fled into the Wyld. Now he has returned to reclaim what was his... and to gain revenge. The Old Bull is an elder Dawn Caste with an Essence of 6. He terrifies his circlemates, who hope only to ameliorate his excesses.

## OLD LORE, NEW TOOLS

Yurgen's inhuman grasp of tactics encompasses countless weapons, environments and circumstances that no longer exist in Creation. Nonetheless, the stratagems employed in the High First Age provide inspiration for the wars of the Age of Sorrows. These techniques supplement the traditional icewalker methods found in *Scroll of Kings*, pages 77–79.

### LOGISTICS

The Bull takes steps to speed the flow of troops and goods through his empire. Icewalker scouts and glider pilots, inured to the cold and dangers of the North, explore and map poorly charted regions. Conquered peoples build and expand old roads as civic works projects. To keep roads clear in winter or to make new ones, mammoths fitted with snowplows carve paths through the tallest snowdrifts. These provide a significant mobility advantage over other Northerners, most of whom resist traveling at all in winter. Using the Complex Travel rules (see *Exalted*, pp. 266–267), treat the old roads as highways and mammoth-carved routes as trails.

Food and many other supplies are scarce in the North. The empire struggles to maintain good relations with the Guild, giving it good prices on furs, ivory, salt and the booty of the empire's wars of expansion in exchange for rivers of grain and iron. The icewalker herds form a traveling food supply that the armies can draw upon during a siege, albeit with the risk of antagonizing the herds' totem spirits. The Bull also presses local savants into service to raise the fertility of crops and herds, and to enchant traps to attract animals and nets to catch fish.

### SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES

Samea serves as the Bull's intermediary with the spirit world. She has gathered many allies to their cause, not least of them the animal avatars (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I*, pp. 56–57). The gods of the Threshold hold little love for the Realm and its Immaculates. They are easily persuaded to back a Solar circle willing to provide them with a steady supply of prayer. These gods guide and encourage their followers to back the Bull of the North. At least one city, Damanara of the Azure Banners, submitted to the Bull's armies when priests of gods allied with Samea opened the city's gates in the dead of night.

Samea also regularly summons elementals to serve in battle. Huraka guide allied ships, while thunderbirds blow enemies off course and onto rocky shoals. Garda birds set woodlands ablaze, and sobeksis redirect their home rivers or part them to allow troops to ford. Kri unleash avalanches to seal mountain passes, burying those within.

Other supernatural creatures serve unwillingly or unwittingly. Samea binds Second Circle demons to battle on Kaneko's behalf. Kaneko does not mind misdirecting enemy forces into shadowlands or Wyld zones to be torn apart by their inhabitants. Likewise, his circlemate Nalla has, on more than one occasion, infiltrated bands of elementals or Fair



Exalted

Folk and incited them to attack an enemy. Lastly, the Bull's scouts keep careful track of every behemoth within range of his empire. If circumstances warrant, he or a circlemate wrangle a behemoth and send it stampeding toward a luckless enemy army or city.

### GEOMANTICALLY DETONATED DEMESNES

Geomancers can accidentally tangle the Essence of a demesne, causing the Essence to build into a devastating explosion. Reckless geomancers can do this on purpose, using the Procedure called the Open-Eyed Dive Meditation (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 51–52). Samea found an improved method.

Controlled detonation of a demesne requires an enormous contiguous rune to capture and channel the demesne's Essence. This rune may be formed from shaped blocks of stone, freshly cut logs, water-filled moats or any other components big enough to contain powerful Essence flows. Designing and building the rune follows the same rules as building a manse (see **Exalted**, p. 133), except that Resources costs are reduced by two and construction time is measured in weeks instead of years.

Once the rune is complete, Essence accumulates within its confines. This follows the rules for Essence buildup (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 50–51). The rune's designer may set its configuration to gather Essence more quickly or slowly. For every three successes on

an (Intelligence + Lore) roll, the designer may move the time to detonation on the Essence Buildup chart up or down one level. Most importantly, perhaps, the designer can include a switch—a single log pushed into place, a canal gate opened or the like—to initiate the Essence accumulation, enabling her to build the rune in advance and then detonate the demesne at a later time.

### THE BULL'S CIRCLE

Six Solar Exalts comprise the Bull's circle. Two of them, the icewalkers Crimson Antler and Fear-Eater, stand watch on the empire's Eastern territories, maintaining order in the conquered tribes and warding off hostilities from the Linowan. Two others, Raneth of Diamond Hearth and Nalla Bloodaxe, deal with specific problems within the Northern territories. Yurgen and Samea travel about the entire empire, reinforcing the icewalkers' devotion and preparing for the next stage of their conquest.

### SAMPLE COMBAT UNIT: SNOW BLOSSOM

#### MUSK OX TRIBE

**Description:** One of many icewalker tribes reformed by the Bull, the Snow Blossom Musk Ox serve as medium infantry. All adults in the tribe possess tiger warrior training, making them among the Bull's most elite units.

**Commanding Officer:** War Chief Salak

**Armor Color:** Black with white and gold trim





### STORYTELLING III: SCALING THE CIRCLE

Players' characters in the North and East may well come into contact with Yurgen and his circle at some point. Unlike the setting's great powers—the Scarlet Empire, the Silver Pact, the Deathlords, the Yozis and such—the Bull's dominion is active and aggressive. Players and Storytellers alike must factor its presence into their plans. As such, Storytellers can adjust the power level of the Bull and his circle to better match that of a given series.

Kaneko has had a decade to loot the ruins and treasure vaults of the North. To strengthen him, give him artifacts and hearthstones appropriate to his needs: orichalcum superheavy plate, a daiklave of conquest, a gem of adamant skin or even a royal warstrider. A few Charms, such as Tiger Warrior Training Technique, will greatly strengthen his armies. Any number of other young Solars might enter his service too. For pre-generated traits, see the sample Lawgivers in the **Exalted Storytellers Companion**, pages 124-125.

To weaken the Bull, instead of reducing his traits, undermine his support structure. This reduces his ability to affect the setting and adds new threads to the story. Perhaps Samea dies in the Battle of Futile Blood, or Crimson Antler and Fear-Eater defect to the service of the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears. Likewise, major reverses in the Northern or Eastern campaigns reduce his dominion's Magnitude, stripping away manpower and tying up his entire circle indefinitely.

**Motto:** "Victory for the Musk Ox! Victory for the Unconquered Sun!"

**General Makeup:** 300 medium infantry in lamellar armor, wool and furs; each carries a spear, target shield and longbow with broadhead arrows

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 5

**Drill:** 5

**Close Combat Attack:** 4

**Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 4

**Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 1

**Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** The tribe consists of four talons, each of which is subdivided into scales and fangs. War Chief Salak commands the first talon. A subchief hero leads each of the others and can split it off as a separate unit. Five relays carry winding horns and musk-ox banners. Two of the tribe's most gifted archers act as sorcerers. All but the commander, sub-chiefs and archers are extras. A blessing from the Musk Ox animal avatar provides supernatural Might.



**The Empire of the Bull**, a Magnitude 5 Dominion

**Military:** 4 **Government:** 2 **Culture:** 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 2 (Icewalker Scouts +2), Bureaucracy 2 (Military Governors +1), Craft 2 (Fortification Effort +1, Road-Building +2), Integrity 1 (Garrisons +2), Investigation 1, Occult 3 (Sorcery +2, Spirit Allies +1), Performance 2 (Stirring Oratory +1), Presence 4, Stealth 2, War 5 (First Age Tactics +1, Overwhelming Force +1)

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 4

**Virtue Flaw:** Valor **Current Limit:** 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Bonus Points:** 25 **External Bonus Points:** 0

**Notes:** Yurgen Kaneko is the empire's legitimate sorcerer. His circlemates also function as sorcerers, while savants could appear among the rulers of any conquered state or tribe in the empire. The Bull's dominion teeters on the cusp of Magnitude 6. Conquest of a major power, such as Whitewall or Linowan, will push it over the edge. The dominion's bonus points go towards its specialties and an additional dot each of Stealth and Conviction. Assembled by force and the threat of force, the empire has little else to keep it together. In Limit Break, its conquered states rebel against their occupiers.

## THE ICE PLAINS

Between the White Sea and the Inland Sea, from the crags above Whitewall to the taiga that girds the marshy

banks of the River of Tears, stretch pale expanses of highland tundra that burgeon with vibrant green grasses only in the brief Northern summer. The icewalkers call the Ice Plains home. Even those in service to the Bull still spend



their summers on the plains, following the great herds they hunt and worship.

Although they lack the fertility of warmer climes, the Ice Plains are no desert. Grasses sprout from the chill earth along with dwarf shrubs, mosses and lichens. Below a few yards, though, the ground stays perpetually frozen. There is little precipitation, but the perpetual cold of the long winters prevents snow from melting, so even light flurries accumulate into snowdrifts. The summer thaw softens the land into one vast swamp dotted with lakes. These lakes freeze over when the cold returns, forming the expanses of ice that give the plains their name.

Frigid winds blow steadily across the plains throughout the long Northern winter. Gusts whip the drifts into snow devils and send travelers stumbling. Shrubs grow with their branches swept back in the direction of the wind.

Only a few animals endure the harsh conditions of the Ice Plains. Fish inhabit the few large lakes that don't freeze solid in the depths of winter, while birds and insects migrate to the marshes in the summer. Squirrels and bears hibernate through the cold, emerging only when the weather warms. A few larger animals inhabit the plains throughout the year. Lemmings and hares provide prey for foxes and owls, while packs of wolves and snow hunters compete with icewalker tribes to hunt the great herds of mammoth, caribou, moose, musk oxen and elk.

## THE MOTHER'S HEARTH

When Samea traveled to the heart of the Ice Plains in search of greater enlightenment, she found a demesne where the sun blazed upon the snow in pillars of golden light. When she settled there to meditate upon the Unconquered Sun, the Mammoth tribes followed, and when the herds moved on, many tribesmen remained to feed and protect her. After she emerged from her contemplation, the icewalkers marked the place as holy. Her followers raised a shrine to her upon her departure and took pilgrimages there to make offerings in her name. Others came to trade goods and stories with the pilgrims and with each other.

Both Yurgen and Samea saw the value of a central meeting place for the tribes. Once she had mastered Celestial Circle sorcery, the Zenith raised a Solar manse wherein visiting tribes could meet and dwell out of the plains' bitter chill. Its rooms and halls slowly filled over the years as artisans, shamans and elders settled there on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. Now, almost a decade later, the place forms a small self-contained town amidst the ice, where Samea rules as priestess-queen.

## THE MANSE

The great marble dome of the Mother's Hearth rises amidst the Ice Plains, its snowy flanks blending in with the tundra landscape. Eight gold-peaked minarets rise from its sloping walls. Gates of yellow wood open in each of the four directions, and each gate leads into a broad, door-lined

passage leading to a great central courtyard. The manse's magic fills it with sunlight and warmth even in the depths of winter. The common areas are richly furnished. In addition to their native furs and ivories, its residents cram its halls and common chambers with the booty of a dozen plundered city-states.

The Mother's Hearth is a three-dot Solar manse with the powers *Comfort Zone* (1 pt.), *Magical Conveniences* (1 pt.), *Well-Flavored Aspect* (1 pt.) and *Temple Manse* (3 pts.). Both Samea and the Bull of the North have attuned to it, and Samea holds its hearthstone, a gem of sorcery (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 107).

Roughly 100 people inhabit the Mother's Hearth on a permanent basis, all of them icewalkers. A few foreign merchants have petitioned Samea for residency, but she has refused them all. Transient residents range widely in numbers. At quiet times, there might be no more than a dozen pilgrims, traders or foreign scholars present, while a large gathering of tribes swells the settlement's population into the thousands. The manse itself has room for 100 guests to lodge in comfort, or up to 500 in cramped conditions. Another 1,000 can cram themselves into the domed central courtyard. Any additional visitors must pitch their tents outdoors.

## PEOPLE OF THE HEARTH

The Hearth's handful of permanent inhabitants tends toward the aged and sedentary. Some spend their days engaged in handicrafts—painting leather, sewing furs, carving bone and the like—while others devote themselves to prayer. All spend a great deal of time sharing stories, for this is both a pastime and a responsibility among the icewalker tribes, and the folk of the Hearth come from many different tribes, each with their own tales and histories. Music also fills the manse. Drums beat, hands clap, and many voices rise together in song, their words echoing through the glittering halls.


Small gods throng to the Mother's Hearth, though few stay long or manifest themselves to its residents. A notable exception is Tianlang, a lion dog (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, pp. 45–46). Unemployed by Heaven for centuries, Tianlang lorded it over the farmers of a poor Northern village until Samea lectured him into submission. His sense of honor restored by her words, he guards the manse as a favor to its mistress.

## SPIRIT GUESTS

The Hearth's eight towers are off limits to most of its residents. Each contains a luxurious bedchamber and other amenities. Samea resides in one. She reserves the others for her circumlocutors and visiting gods. The towers generally stand empty in her absence, but when she is present, powerful Terrestrial gods often seek audience with her. Some wish to bargain with her on their own behalf or on behalf of their worshipers. Others are curious to meet the reborn Solars and learn their motivations.

Samea's most persistent guests are the animal avatars. The Bull has transformed icewalker society, and the avatars





have yet to come to terms with the effects of these changes on their rivalries and relationships. Emissaries from the North's many national and tribal gods likewise gather here to discuss the growth of the places under their protection. More than once, Autumn Frost (see p. XX) has visited surreptitiously. Whether she comes as a representative of the Haslanti pantheon or on her own behalf is not yet known.

### AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

Samea's word is law among the icewalkers, and doubly so at the Hearth. She has never claimed any title among her people. Nonetheless, they call her the Mother of All Tribes and worship her as a living goddess. In addition to obeying her instructions, they do their best to guess at her unspoken desires, often gathering outside her presence to discuss the interpretation of a mood, a turn of phrase or a gesture.

The Mother often travels abroad. She finds many demands on her time, from the Bull's wars to incursions by the walking dead and the Fair Folk. When she is absent or when she is too engrossed in her sorcerous studies or her meditations to deal with her people, her priestesses minister to them in her stead. Samea has chosen five so far, selecting from the visiting tribes those who seem quick-witted, generous of spirit and without strong attachments to individuals or families. Though she insists there is no seniority among the priestesses

of the Unconquered Sun (save, of course, for herself), she most often employs her Underling-Promoting Touch upon Adare, a former elder of her own Blackwater Mammoth tribe whom she remembers fondly from her childhood.

Visitors who behave courteously have little to fear in the Hearth. Simple rules bind residents and outsiders alike: Do no harm to others; offer aid to those in need; respect the customs of hospitality. Those who cannot abide by these restrictions suffer whatever penalty Samea or her priestesses choose to mete out, ranging from asking for an apology to exile from the Hearth.

Exile is a surprisingly potent punishment. Samea's presence so affects those around her that her absence aches like a phantom limb. Exile also serves to protect. Not only can the banished do no more harm to the community, but if a mortal's actions move Samea to violence, how could he survive her anger?

Of the few that have left the Hearth in exile, most were banished in Samea's absence or when she was calm. Two, however, she expelled in the heat of anger, and the supernatural power of her wrath forever branded their souls. For good or ill, they seek to shape the world to match the marks she left upon them, wandering across the North to preach subservience—or opposition—to the Solar Exalted.

**The Mother's Hearth**, a Magnitude 2 Dominion

**Military:** 1 **Government:** 2 **Culture:** 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 1 (Pilgrims +2), Craft 1 (Foreign Merchants +1), Integrity 2 (Religious Edict +1, Tight-Knit Culture +1), Investigation 1, Occult 2 (Animal Avatars +2), Performance 2 (Icewalkers +3), Presence 1 (Icewalkers +3)

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 3, Valor 1

**Virtue Flaw:** Compassion **Current Limit:** 1

**Willpower:** 6

**Bonus Points:** 10 **External Bonus Points:** 3

**Notes:** The Hearth's Magnitude, unusually high for its size, stems from its centrality, its large transient population and its significance to the Bull's icewalker tribes. Samea is the dominion's legitimate sorcerer, while her priestesses act as savants. The dominion's bonus points are tied up in its specialties, as are the external bonus points it gains from foreign traders and influence over the icewalker tribes. The folk of the Mother's Hearth pride themselves on their devotion and spirituality. When the settlement enters Limit Break, its people refuse to accept culpability for its ills. Instead, they blame everything on a scapegoat and exile him or her from the community.


## THE RIVER OF TEARS

The Wyld overflows with prodigies. In the Bordermarches, some rivers run uphill or out of the sea. Deep inside Creation, the River of Tears does both. It is a vast and extravagant relic of the Old Realm. A hundred brilliant cities once sparkled along its length, but it now lies far from the heart of civilization, and what few cities remain are shabby and old. Even the magic that once kept its waters pure is failing.

The River of Tears is two miles wide even at its source, where Malice Bay's waters flow between the towering gran-

ite promontories called the Pillars of Futility, and narrows somewhat as it travels south. Sandy beaches and salt marshes spread outward from its banks.

That river's broad, shallow valley is as fecund as any marsh or seashore. Insects buzz and hum thickly, especially at sunset. Gulls and river ducks dive into tidal pools to feed on fish and crabs, while hares, moose and deer graze amidst the sedge. Few of the native wolves and lynx remain to compete with hunters and trappers. The largest predators one is likely to encounter are otters and foxes.



Travel in the region has its perils, though. Many native elementals and lesser gods remain irritable about the salt infusing their lands, and Immaculate monks capable of keeping them in line have been in short supply since the Empress's disappearance. Mortals who encounter ill-tempered paludal spirits are advised to make offerings of pure water, pumice and silver—or failing that, to run very fast.

## HISTORY OF THE RIVER OF TEARS

During the High First Age, the River of Tears channeled water from Frost Lake uphill to the Yanaze. The immense Spidersilk Dam, which controlled the flow of water from the Great Western Ocean into Frost Lake, turned the water fresh and pure. The White Valley between the dam and the River of Tears blossomed into one of the breadbaskets of the Old Realm, and shining cities grew along its riverbanks.

A Solar Exalt demolished Spidersilk Dam in the Usurpation, sweeping away the army raised against him. The resulting deluge also flooded the White Valley and drowned millions of innocent people. The surge pressed its way up the River of Tears, smashing city after city until it faded just short of Sijan. The magics sustaining the river's flow remained unbroken. Its waters settled into their original course, flowing past seaweed-draped ruins and fields choked with salt.

The Shogunate worked to mend the broken region. Dragon-Blooded engineers raised the Saltspires, five desalination manses on artificial islands along the river's upper reaches, to extract the salt from its waters so that it might run fresh and pure again. They seeded the shores with plants such as saltberry and forsake-me-never that drew impurities from the soil. Civilization slowly returned. Cities grew again, farms spread across flood-carved marshes and cargo vessels sailed up and down between the White Sea and the Yanaze. The region nonetheless remained a backwater where civilization clung to the riverbanks without making deep inroads into the hinterlands.

When the Great Contagion struck, the River of Tears suffered less than some parts of the Threshold. Mortals died by the millions, and the Fair Folk harried the survivors, but the Saltspires held mountains of extracted salt with which to ward off hungry ghosts and salt the shadowlands that sprang up in the Contagion's wake. When the Contagion ended, the survivors settled around the Saltspires and built new cities on their islands and the surrounding riverbanks to harvest the salt churned out by the manses.

The Saltspire cities grew rich and powerful, but they turned against each other instead of confederating, squandering their wealth in incessant petty wars. Their manses fell into disrepair, leaving the river brackish down to the Yanaze. Only the manse at Plenilune, the southernmost Saltspire city, remained intact. The other cities finally leagued against Plenilune as it gained the economic upper hand. Matters remained so until the Bull came. Plenilune surrendered to his armies and now lives under his protection.

## PLENILUNE

The city of Plenilune has long overflowed its original island onto both banks of the River of Tears. A tangle of city walls from various expansions and imperial periods partition the eastern and western sprawls into districts. A hereditary baron rules each district and exacts a toll from all who pass through the district's gates. In the sprawls, low buildings of wood and stone totter over winding streets and press together around plazas, bazaars and webs of shadowy alleyways. The central island, called the Larkbright, grows upward rather than outward. Its high stone turrets house the city's wealthy, from nobles and merchants to thaumaturges and scavenger lords.

### THE PEOPLE OF PLENILUNE

Rather than ethnicity or caste, Plenilunars judge people on the basis of rank and wealth, which are two sides of the same coin in a city wherein almost any office can be bought for a high enough price. The city holds a smattering of superhuman and inhuman beings—outcaste Dragon-Blooded, beastmen, Demon-Bloods, Wyld mutants and even Fair Folk—but they fare no better than mortals unless they demonstrate an aptitude for business, guile or theft.

Instead of a standing army, Plenilune's noble houses hold long-term contract with mercenary bands, most of which have served so long their service has become hereditary. Mercenary watchmen police the streets on behalf of their lords. Many are prone to violence against the underclass, and almost all are corrupt. Other mercenaries guard caravans against raids and defend the city itself in time of war. Plenilune avoids real military action whenever possible, however. Its lords would rather pay tribute to enemies than risk defeat... or worse, disruption of trade.


Plenilune's wealth draws more than its share of avaricious thaumaturges, particularly those adept in alchemy and enchantment. Sorcerers find their services even more welcome, while the rare artisan of artifacts can name her price. In the city's oldest and wealthiest districts, enchanted lamps light the streets and keyed wards guard every manor gate and treasure vault. Destitute neighborhoods suffer the dark side of magic. Sorcerers and thaumaturges send demons to seize orphans and vagrants for their experiments, then discard their half-formed creations in the same way.

### SALT AND THE GUILD

Guild caravans visit Plenilune twice a year on their way to and from the North, purchasing salt from the city government to sell to the people of the Northern interior and the teeming cities of the Scavenger Lands. The Guild sells foodstuffs, metals and luxury goods in return. In addition, the Guild both buys and sells slaves. As no citizen of Plenilune may be held in slavery within the city, impoverished citizens and prisoners are sold at the Far Market, held three miles outside the city limits. Foreign slaves are fair game, though, and Guild factors sell them freely inside the city.







Plenilune's people grant Guildsmen a great deal of respect. Money is power, and the Guild has plenty of both. The city's current Guild factor, Jaya of Port Calin, made herself a major player in city politics. The Bull's viceroy Raneth suspects her of involvement in plots against his rule, but he cannot pressure her directly. If the Guild stopped buying Plenilune's salt in bulk, the city's commerce would wither. Raneth currently investigates ways to blackmail or otherwise compel Jaya into cooperation.

### THE PENILUNE MANSE

Symbol of the city's power and decay, the Plenilune Manse's twisted spire of greenish marble rises from the Larkbright to cast its shadow across the streets below. The spire climbs 20 stories in smooth, sweeping seashell curves. A cloud of mist forever enshrouds its peak. On stormy nights and during Calibration, lightning flickers through the cloud with a drumming of thunder. So much powdery, crystalline salt accumulates in its cellars that it covers the Larkbright's streets like snow, crunching underfoot on dry summer days and melting the ice in winter.

Plenilune's royal family has lived in the manse for centuries, while their retainers inhabit a complex of lesser structures outside. Traditionally, no other may dwell or labor within the manse for more than a year of each decade. The Essence of the manse marks its inhabitants: Those of the royal line live long, though they change with age into something not quite human.

The Plenilune Manse is a two-dot Water manse with the powers *Essence Vents* (1 pt.) and a variant of *Water Dragon's Will* (3 pts.) that extracts a fraction of the salt from the water that flows past the Larkbright. Raneth, the only person currently attuned to the manse, holds its hearthstone, a mind-cleansing gem (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 96).

The city's growth has warped the local Essence flows so the manse no longer fully caps the underlying demesne. Essence escapes the top of the structure in harmless displays of mist and storm. Over a span of two decades, the manse's mortal denizens gain the *Longevity* and *Water Adaptation* poxes, the *Gills* affliction and two deficiency-level derangements, usually *Obsession* (wealth) and a *Phobia*. (See **Exalted**, pp. 288-289, **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 209-210, and **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pp. 145-146 and 149, for details.)

### THE SALTSPIRE LEAGUE

The other four cities in the Saltspire League resemble Plenilune in broad structure. Each city is built around an island-borne desalination manse and has spilled out onto the river's banks. Two of the manses are Water aspected, while the other two are Wood aspected. All have suffered significant damage over the years, so their collective salt output is less than half of Plenilune's.

Though the individual cities have simpler governments than Plenilune, the labyrinth of bilateral treaties and pacts that unites them in a confederation is downright Byzantine. Raneth has visited each city and brought their governments to heel, but he has not had the opportunity to investigate their leadership fully or mold the mood of their citizens. Whatever distaste the League cities feel for the Bull and his empire, it pales before their anger at being ranked below Plenilune in importance. A serious, large-scale uprising seems inevitable.

### CONQUEST AND UPRISING

Historically, an autarch of the royal line ruled Plenilune, though more as figurehead than leader. De facto authority rested with an elaborate bureaucratic oligarchy of several overlapping ministries controlled by councils of nobles, merchants and Guildsmen.

When the Bull's icewalker hordes swept in, Plenilune's autarch, Gravis IV, surrendered immediately. He hoped to suborn the intruders when circumstances proved amenable or simply outwait them until their empire collapsed. The city's oligarchs agreed. Gravis and his party negotiated a treaty with their besiegers, leaving the autarch on his throne while the Bull moved northward to besiege the Saltspire League.

So matters proceeded until the Bull's war against the Linowan. Yurgen Kaneko demanded tribute to fund his war effort. Plenilune's government tried to squeeze the money from an already downtrodden populace, which immediately rebelled. A few oligarchs perished in riots and fires. The rest counseled the autarch to proclaimed independence from the Bull's empire, execute a few purported "foreign agents" and cut taxes to just above their prior levels. Emboldened, the cities of the Saltspire League likewise rose up and expelled the icewalker garrisons left to keep them under control.

### WEBS OF CONSPIRACY

In RY 766, the Bull's viceroy Raneth of Diamond Hearth arrived at Plenilune with a small icewalker entourage. He forced entry to the city by shattering the main gate of the western sprawl with a portable Essence weapon. Using social Charms to gather a mob and push forward to the Larkbright, he then forced entrance to the Plenilune Saltspire and confronted the autarch. Perceiving the autarch's complicity in the city's rebellion, Raneth killed the man in front of his court and claimed the throne for himself.

Although all of the city's oligarchs denied involvement in seditious activities, Raneth's Charms saw through to the truth. He placed them all under house arrest. Commerce immediately ground to a halt. Without the oligarchs—the city's aristocrats, leading merchants and senior bureaucrats—Plenilune couldn't function. The next week, Raneth released everyone but the rebellion's ringleaders, whom he executed with great fanfare in the Plaza of Black Doves.

Cowed, the oligarchs kept a low profile and waited for the Bull's emissary to go away. Raneth stayed. Moreover, he



Plenilune

redirected city funds to his research, funds that the oligarchs would normally skim off the top. They tired of his intrusions into their affairs. Nobles nursed ambitions of autarchy, while friends and relatives of those executed in the initial purge craved vengeance. Assassins were bought, sent, died. A second purge followed.

Unwilling to remain hostage any longer to the oligarchs' intransigence, Raneth set about reorganizing the city's government. He stripped the ministerial councils of their authority. Nobles find themselves replaced by handpicked civil officials. Soldiers seize the assets of troublesome merchants. Bureaucrats divide consortiums into smaller businesses that are easier to manage. With power slipping from their grasp, the oligarchs have little left to lose.

### RANETH'S PERSONAL PROJECTS

Although he's more investigator than artisan, Raneth belongs to the Twilight Caste. Craftsmanship is in his blood. Moreover, his early life among the Haslanti familiarized him with his people's innovations and taught him the military value of clever machines. He's never done more than fire a crossbow and ride an air boat, but his Craft Excellencies enable him to recall every visible detail of these devices and reconstruct them in his workshop. Raneth has already built a working crossbow and trained a pair of Plenilunar artisans in its manufacture. While the weapon is of little use to bow-trained icewalkers, Raneth believes it will be invaluable in

arming local garrisons and levies. In a nearby warehouse, carpenters turn out struts for the growing 300-foot skeleton of an air boat.

Raneth also plans to repair the Saltspire League's four desalination manses. He intends to start with the two that seem the least damaged—those belonging to the cities Astragal and Porcellana. These plans go against his instructions, however. Restoring those manses would destabilize the region both economically and politically and enrage the Plenilunars by stripping their city of its dominant position. But how can he leave such things broken?

### PROTOTYPES

When building a prototype of a new or unfamiliar device, increase the difficulty of the Craft roll by five. Prototypes may still be fine or exceptional if the artisan attains the necessary threshold successes over and above the increased difficulty.

### SAMPLE COMBAT UNIT: PLENILUNE URBAN GUARDS

**Description:** These traits represent a scale of Plenilunar hereditary mercenary watchmen in service to one of the city's noble houses.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies



**Armor Color:** Dark gray, with blazon and trim matching the insignia of the scale's employer

**Motto:** Varies

**General Makeup:** 25 mortal soldiers equipped with pikes and cudgels, wearing reinforced buff jackets and plumed helmets.

**Overall Quality:** Fair

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** — **Ranged Damage:** —

**Endurance:** 5 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 2

**Formation:** A unit of urban guards typically takes on relaxed formation while on the parade ground or marching through the streets to enforce curfew, while moving into close formation to subdue obdurate workers with their cudgels or hold back rioters with a thicket of spears. Such units rarely possess any special characters beyond their commander.

**Plenilune**, a Magnitude 4 Dominion

**Military:** 1 **Government:** 2 **Culture:** 4

**Abilities:** Awareness 2 (Links with the Guild +1), Bureaucracy 3 (Interlocking Bureaucracies +3), Craft 3 (Salt Trade +3), Integrity 1, Investigation 2, Occult 3 (Thaumaturges +2), Performance 3, Presence 2 (Extravagant Tribute +2, Organized Crime +1), Stealth 2 (Assassins +1), War 1 (Mercenaries +2, Defense +1)

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** Conviction **Current Limit:** 1

**Willpower:** 6

**Bonus Points:** 20 **External Bonus Points:** 8

**Notes:** Raneth of Diamond Hearth rules Plenilune as a legitimate sorcerer. Savants could come from anywhere: leading merchants, outcaste Dragon-Bloods, mercenary captains, charismatic young nobles, priests, thaumaturges, rabble-rousers and insurrectionists. The domain's bonus points go toward specialties and an additional dot each of Bureaucracy, Craft and Occult. Its external bonus points come from its salt-fueled trade arrangements and go to its Craft, Presence and War specialties. An inward-looking city at the best of times, Plenilune deals with Limit Break by withdrawing into itself and ignoring events beyond its walls, no matter how tumultuous.

**The Saltspire League**, a Magnitude 4 Dominion

**Military:** 2 **Government:** 2 **Culture:** 3

**Abilities:** Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 3 (Treaties +1), Craft 4, Integrity 2 (Cosmopolitan +1), Investigation 2 (Intra-League Spying +3), Occult 1, Performance 2 (Anti-Plenilune Propaganda +2), Presence 2, Stealth 2, War 2 (Mercenaries +1)

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 3, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** Temperance **Current Limit:** 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Bonus Points:** 20 **External Bonus Points:** 0

**Notes:** The Saltspire League lacks a legitimate sorcerer, though each city's leader vies for the position. The dominion's bonus points go toward specialties and an additional dot each of Bureaucracy, Craft and War. The cities of the League dwell upon their own past heydays, and only their shared resentment of Plenilune holds them together. In Limit Break, the League cities fear that one of their own number is gaining ascendancy over the rest and turn against it. Should the League gain ascendancy over Plenilune, it splinters into lesser dominions as each city reasserts its independence.



## MALICE BAY

Ragged cliffs rise from the shores of Malice Bay. In this realm of struggle, mortals battle the cold, the Wyld and each other. Even the land fights a long, losing battle against the sea as the waves gnaw endlessly at the receding cliffs and pummel the broken rocks at their feet.

Rugged terrain typifies the landscape. Deep, ridged valleys and fjords pierce the cliff walls that hem in the bay's icy waters, splitting off thousands of small, high-walled islands from the mainland. The countryside unfurls inland like a rumpled quilt, its ridges and great rolling downs rising above a patchwork of green woods and vales, blue lakes and the dull scattered colors of heath, bog and fen. Cities are few and stunted, rarely growing larger than walled towns, and they serve more as fortresses for petty kings than as centers of culture. Fishing and mining villages predominate. Food is a precious commodity, as is the iron needed to make war on one's neighbors, civilized traders and Wyld-spawn.

As with the rest of the northern coast, Malice Bay has long and bitter winters, while the summers are all too short. Nonetheless, life abounds. The waters teem with fish: trout, perch, fat blue salmon and ferocious pike as large as a man. Bears and seals dwell by the shore, while deer, elk, moose and caribou graze inland. Black eagles rule the sky, preying on grouse, fox and hare, while gray wolves and great-terrors hunt the larger beasts of the land, including humans.

The peoples of Malice Bay are hardy, truculent folk. A score of petty kingdoms brawl over territory, treasure and blood feuds both old and new. Sometimes, a single leader can unite several kingdoms for a few generations, but these pocket empires inevitably fall apart due to escalating vendettas or the machinations of ambitious nobles.

## KARN

The kingdom of Karn stands out from the rest of the Bull's dominion. It is the most far-flung of his Northern territories, lying north and east of the central Ice Plains. Its people are the fiercest within his dominion, its ships the most feared. Most curious of all, Karn remains unaware that it has been conquered.

Karn clutches the eastern shore of Malice Bay. The kingdom comprises a dozen modest towns and two-score villages and fastnesses, most within a day's travel of the coast. Fishing ships ply the waters. Farmers sow barley for beer and plant parsnips, turnips and other vegetables that endure the region's cold climate. Miners pull iron and copper from a range of crumbling, heather-capped hills that overlook the sea. Traders procure ivory and furs from inland tribes and carry their wares across the water. Even children do their part, combing the strand for amber and ambergris.

The proud Karnese do not subsist only on these sedentary pursuits. When the weather warms, between sowing and reaping, they set out in their eagle-prowed ships to harry the merchants of the White Sea and the folk of the River of Tears, plundering laden ships and coastal towns alike. They likewise war against those few neighboring kingdoms not yet absorbed by the Haslanti League or the Bull of the North. No boy of Karn can be counted a man until he has spent a summer a-roving and bloodied his blade in battle.

A thane rules each fastness, commanding his extended clan and thralls by right of personal strength and the support of his ancestors. Each thane may call up a peasant levy from his holding's farmers and fishermen. The king maintains the only standing army in Karn, consisting of skilled warriors from every clan that have sworn themselves to his personal service. This force serves little more than a ceremonial purpose for respected kings, while unpopular rulers must suppress uprisings among their own rebellious thanes.

## RELIGION AND MAGIC

Karn's people worship their ancestors. Bleak temples stand on the heights above coastal settlements. Here, priestesses venerate their most ancient forebears, whose potent Arcanoi make them like unto gods to their people. These mighty ghosts walk the land during Calibration and at other times of ill omen. Clothed in phantasmal flesh, they utter prophecies, grant boons and punish those who transgressed against the traditions of Karn. Some engage in ritual congress with their clergy or lie with their worshipers, resulting in Ghost-Blooded offspring. The temples raise these haunted children, locally called starka. Trained in thaumaturgy and history, the starka form a separate class of witches and savants. Common folk view them as a breed apart and show them both respect and fear.

Lesser ancestors serve as tutelary spirits. Some lie buried beneath their homes, bringing good fortune and counseling their descendants in dreams. Others remain

### ANCESTRAL TALISMANS

The starka learn the Art of Enchantment in the temples of the dead, and they use the remains of the dead to imbue objects with power. Newly enchanted weapons or vessels are typically exceptional (see **Exalted**, p. 365), while those at least a century old or containing the remains of five ancestors become perfect (see **Exalted**, p. 366). Homes most typically act as talismans against disease (see **Exalted**, p. 379) for their inhabitants. An ancestral talisman serves as a Fetter for every ghost whose remains are bound into it.



top of the page

tied to the ships they sailed in life. The starka weave the hair of the dead into ropes and sails, caulk seams with their flesh and alloy their ground bones with iron to make rivets. Portable Fetters rest in a coffer of black ash wood at the foot of the mast. These ship-bound dead fill sails with ghost winds and lash out at enemies with spectral claws and nightmare visions. Karnese weapons are likewise holy heirlooms. Each contains ancestral finger bones and has the hair of the dead wrapped around its grip.

### KARN'S ENEMIES

The shores of Malice Bay are no place for the weak. The Karnese strive against all manner of foes: Wyld barbarians and beastmen occasionally venture far enough from their hunting grounds to attack Karn, while neighboring kingdoms send raiding parties in revenge for prior Karnese attacks. Raids on Haslanti shipping draw particularly bloody reprisals. Expansionists in the League have their eye on Karn and consider escalation.

Most of all, Karn struggles with the Tear Eater tribes of the Northeastern steppes. (Just because they both worship their ancestors does not make them friends.) The Karnese must repel at least one attack by Tear Eater raiders and their zombies each year. Showing fear in the face of the dead shames one's entire family, even more than fear in the face of the living, for one should trust the power of one's ancestors to ward off the dead.

For all their courage and ferocity in battle, the Karnese continue to lose ground to the Tear Eaters. They win most of their battles, but their casualties add up. Several outlying farmsteads and communities have been overwhelmed and annihilated in recent years. Fortunately, the tide is turning due to the valor of their new king, Nalla Bloodaxe, whose fury on the battlefield has bloodied the noses of the Tear Eaters and scattered their raiding parties to the four winds.

### CONQUEST FROM WITHIN

After aiding the Bull in the Linowan War, Nalla set himself the task of expanding the empire. Yurgen Kaneko decided that he wanted a naval presence on the White Sea and suggested that Nalla acquire one. Nalla traveled to Karn and assumed the charming moniker of "Bloodaxe." In the guise of a young Karnese warrior, he insinuated himself into the retinue of King Skor Ironhand. Nalla Bloodaxe rose swiftly in prestige from victories against neighboring kingdoms and marauding Tear Eater barbarians. Within a year, he stood at Skor's right hand, outstripping even the king's own sons in the hearts of the people.

When the next raiding season began, Nalla joined Skor Ironhand and his sons on their longship as they went reaving on Malice Bay. By subtle means, he passed messages to contacts in the city-state of Tarrack, another of the Bull's conquests, warning them of an attack that he himself had suggested to Skor. Tarrack's generals unleashed their ambush as the Karnese raiding fleet entered

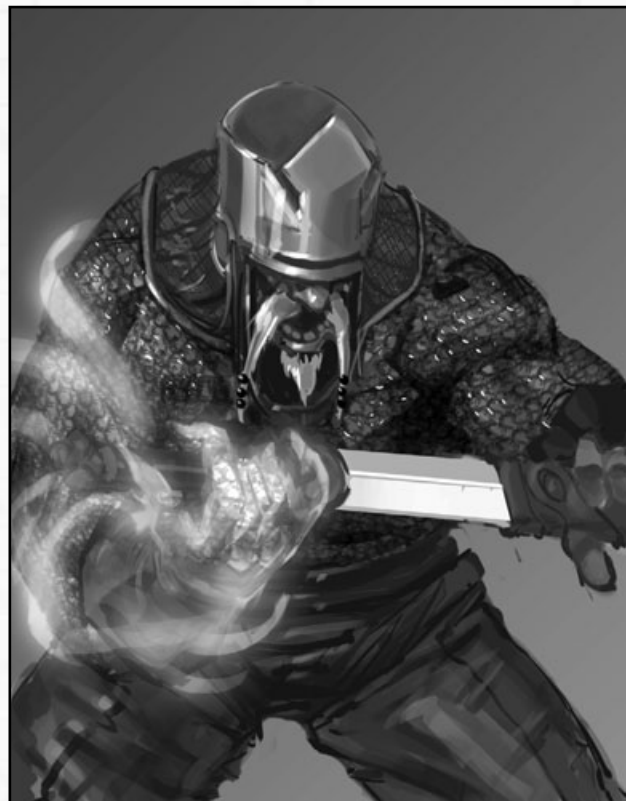
their harbor. Karn's king and his heirs perished in the battle, while Nalla's carefully planned heroism extracted enough of the Karnese fleet from the trap to make him a hero. When the Karnese high council of nobles and priests gathered to elect a new king, Nalla's name was at the top of the list.

For the past two years, Nalla has led the Karnese in war after war against their neighbors. In addition to his personal skill at arms, he's ensured victory by thoroughly investigating the terrain, bribing enemy lords into turning coat and, when necessary, undermining the enemy through espionage—burning down barracks, poisoning food supplies and murdering opposing champions, advisors and princes in their beds.

While Karn's people are too proud to submit easily to foreign governance, Nalla has opened "negotiations" with official emissaries from the Bull. In his name, Karn has agreed to a loose military alliance. Nalla expects to bring the kingdom wholly into the fold within the next few years, with none of the losses and rebellions that would follow a military conquest. He builds up Karn's fleet strength in the meantime, including a handful of iceships, to provide a ready-made navy when the Bull moves against the Haslanti League.

### SAMPLE COMBAT UNIT: KARNESE REAVERS

**Description:** Whether mounted on horseback or aboard a longship, Karn's warriors make lightning strikes against lightly defended settlements which they pillage for treasure and slaves.





They return to their families outside of raiding season; each village is home to at least one scale of reavers, while a large town might muster a full dragon of troops if attacked.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Browned iron chain hauberk over warm, brightly colored wool

**Motto:** "Blood for our ancestors!"

**General Makeup:** 40 raiders wearing chain hauberks and pot helmets, carrying talismanic great axes and longbows with broadhead arrows

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 4

**Ranged Attack:** 2    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 1    **Armor:** 2 (-3 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** Usually relaxed, though they become unordered when they spot easy prey. The band's three most respected warriors act as heroes, while a single starka thaumaturge functions as a sorcerer. All but the commander and sorcerer are extras.

**Karn, a Magnitude 4 Dominion**

**Military:** 4 **Government:** 2 **Culture:** 1

**Abilities:** Awareness 1, Bureaucracy 1, Craft 1 (Shipbuilding +2), Integrity 3 (Unquestioned Traditions +2), Investigation 1, Occult 2 (Ancestors +1, Starka +2), Performance 2 (Call to Battle +2), Presence 3, Stealth 2, War 4 (Lightning Raid +2, Slash & Burn Tactics +1)

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 1, Valor 5

**Virtue Flaw:** Valor **Current Limit:** 3

**Willpower:** 8

**Bonus Points:** 20 **External Bonus Points:** 4

**Notes:** Nalla is the domain's legitimate sorcerer. Karn's bonus points are tied up in two dots of War and the specialties. Its external bonus points, derived from the support of its ancestors, provide its Investigation and Occult specialties. The kingdom's Valor Virtue Flaw represents its people's quick and violent temper. When it enters Limit Break, its inhabitants turn their anger against any apparent target, whether neighboring towns, foreign merchants or each other.



SO MANY PEOPLE  
UNDERESTIMATE THE  
HUSHED ONES.

JUST BECAUSE  
THEY CAN'T TALK  
DOESN'T MEAN  
THEY CAN'T  
THINK.



IT DOESN'T  
MEAN THEY AREN'T  
DAMNED CLEVER OR  
THEY CAN'T WORK  
TOGETHER.



THE HUSHED  
ONES ARE  
DEVIOUS,  
DANGEROUS,  
DEADLY...



IT MAKES  
THEM SUPERB  
PREY.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# GODS AND MONSTERS OF THE NORTH

The North is a harsh, lonely place, where only the fit and strong can survive. Gods do not coddle their flock, and champions respect only ingenuity and strength.

## GODS OF THE NORTH

Northerners have a curious relationship with their gods. Because worshipers are scarce and death is so near, their gods are much more protective. Such “protection” comes with a caveat, however: Most gods do not directly shield mortals from the many dangers in their lives. To do so would be to do them a grave injustice. Their protection usually takes more abstract form, such as object lessons in proper behavior or tests of fortitude, as mortals are made to survive in the face of seemingly random destructive events. Rather than demanding servitude, the gods of the North tend to want to help, as protectors or advisors.

## THE TWIN GODS OF WAR

The North has two chief war gods, Voharun and Nasamara, who share equal authority and are worshiped together throughout the North. They preside over all local war gods,


and have done so for as long as anyone in Creation or Yu-Shan can remember.

Voharun and Nasamara play no favorites among the armies and warriors of the North. They prize selfless valor in combat, but rarely intervene in mortal battles. When they do, they act to make sure that mortals settle their conflicts fairly and that parties foreign to the North keep their distance. The gods never offer strategic advice to either side in a conflict, though they might aid petitioners who defend Creation against the dead or creatures out of the Wyld. Now and then, they punish particularly annoying, gutless or (especially) treacherous petitioners.

The gods quarrel in a brotherly way about who is older (and therefore preeminent) and often observe battles together. They share their temples, which usually have small separate shrines for each. Legend calls them brothers—twins, in fact—who represent the glory and tragedy of war. One cannot exist without the other.

Nearly all Northern warriors and their families honor both Voharun, the Battle Crow, and Nasamara, the Falcon of Glory. Their devotees hope to prove their worth through





selfless acts of bravery. Northern forces tend to ignore an enemies' greater numbers and superior equipment as irrelevant when they vie for the Twins' attention. If they win, Nasamara will recognize their courage and prowess. If they fall, Voharun will see that they are not forgotten. The priests of the Twins tell warriors to face both possibilities with stoic resolve.

For more information on the Northern war gods, see *Scroll of Kings*, pages 60–61.

### VOHARUN, THE BATTLE CROW

Some war gods pine for the glories of the Old Realm. Voharun, called Feaster on the Slain, does not. He recognizes the grandeur and drama of bygone battles, but he prefers the smaller, desperate personal struggles of present-day warriors. Voharun savors the small acts of heroism that lie behind great victories. He also has particular affection for conquered armies that fought valiantly, for Voharun is the god of fallen soldiers. The Feaster on the Slain makes few demands, but he insists that victors treat the enemy's dead with as much respect as their own. After all, a soldier who exults in victory today could become food for crows tomorrow. Most of all, Voharun admires mortal soldiers who pit themselves against supernatural foes in full knowledge that they have very little chance of survival.

Voharun excels as a bureaucratic warrior. He uses his influence in the Celestial Bureaucracy to protect the North from a variety of troubles. Recently, he has campaigned against the Bureau of Seasons and the Wind Masters of the North for their undue influence in military matters (as the outcome of the region's wars so often depend on vagaries of weather). He also works to protect his and Nasamara's position from the occasional upstart challenger. Most of his efforts, both in Yu-Shan and in Creation, take place behind the scenes. When Voharun must appear in Creation, he usually does so through his raven manifestation. He never shows his true face to a mortal.

The Solar Exalted do not have Voharun's explicit favor, as he considers their time long passed. He does not hate them, however, and might support a Solar under the right circumstances, such as those heroes who battle the Fair Folk or powerful Wyld creatures. He will never aid Abyssal Exalted. Voharun admires the Lunar Exalted, though, for their long struggle to defend Creation's borders.

Voharun tries not to let his feelings color his treatment of the North's indigenous Terrestrial Exalted. After the Great Contagion, Voharun begged Tachi-Kun, the Central God of Exalted Warfare, to assist the North in its struggle against otherworldly creatures. The Blessed Isle's war god failed to send the requested aid, either personally or through the Scarlet Dynasty. Since then, Voharun has made no bones about his dislike for Tachi-Kun. Voharun would never challenge him directly, but he has at times severely inconvenienced Tachi-Kun and his minions in Yu-Shan with blizzards of writs and suits. Voharun does not welcome armies from the Blessed Isle unless they come to (finally) answer the call for aid.

The Feaster on the Slain manifests as a tall, slender man with smooth jet-black skin and unblinking yellow eyes that stare from under his beaked raven mask. No power can remove the mask; it's part of him. If Voharun wants, he grows birdlike talons on his fingers to inflict lethal damage. He also manifests in the form of an ordinary-looking raven.

**Sanctum:** Voharun's heavenly abode is the Raven's Roost, a fortress of slick black mirrors whose 23 towers all rise to meet in one sharp spire. Only one door, which is invisible and opens only at Voharun's command, admits visitors. The rest of the exterior is slick, with no handholds. No windows show from the outside, but Voharun can pass or see through any of the walls. At Voharun's touch, any of the palace's walls can display any current or past battle in the North, with as much detail as the god requires. Outside the Roost, snow falls perpetually on a landscape of ice. Inside, Voharun's servitor-gods, masked and feathered like their master, verify and record the deeds of fallen warriors.

**Motivation:** To see that war dead receive fitting honors and to protect the North from invaders from outside Creation.

**Attributes:** Strength 10, Dexterity 8, Stamina 11; Charisma 8, Manipulation 9, Appearance 7; Perception 7, Intelligence 7, Wits 6

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 4, Valor 5

**Abilities:** Archery 5, Athletics 5, Awareness 8, Bureaucracy 8, Dodge 5, Integrity 7, Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Skytongue) 6, Lore 6 (Military History +2), Martial Arts 7, Melee 7 (Straight Sword +3), Occult 3, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 7, Socialize 8, Survival 5, War 9

**Backgrounds:** Allies 5, Artifact 3, Artifact 3, Backing 5, Celestial Manse 4, Contacts (Within Heaven) 5, Contacts (Within Creation) 5, Cult 5, Followers 5, Salary 5, Sanctum 5

**Charms:** As an ancient, powerful god, Voharun knows most standard Charms. Some of his more notable ones include:

*Art of Meditative Discussion*—Voharun knows every Charm of this unusual Celestial Martial Art. (See pp. 18–21 of *Scroll of the Monk: The Imperfect Lotus*.)

*Blessing of Heroic Retirement*—Champions who impress Voharun during their career are rewarded with good health for the rest of their natural lives. The blessing instantly alleviates any wounds and other physical health problems. In addition, Stamina rolls receive a one-die bonus and all diseases affect the target at -1 Virulence for the rest of his life. Costs 10 motes.

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Voharun is a raven god as well as a war god, so he may control such birds. Indeed, he can control any birds that come to a battlefield to feed on the dead.

*Essence Plethora* (x4)—Voharun has 40 extra motes of Essence, due to far-ranging worship in the North.

*Host of Spirits*—Though he does periodically appear in person, Voharun usually works his will in Creation through black

raven avatars with 20-foot wingspans. Voharun invests his avatars with the Charms necessary for their missions. A raven avatar may also take the form of a flock of 20 normal-sized ravens, as it suits the god. Costs three motes per avatar.

*Hurry Home*—Voharun can transport himself to any site of battle in the North. In Yu-Shan he can use this Charm to return to the Raven's Roost.

*Materialize*—Costs 85 motes.

*Plague of Menaces*—Voharun may curse traitors who betray their country or the North in general, especially those siding with the North's enemies outside Creation. A raven constantly follows a cursed individual. This raven calls attention to him at inopportune times, steals his weapons and food, delivers damning evidence to his enemies and otherwise disrupts his life. Mortals recognize the raven as a token of divine wrath. The only way to escape this curse is to leave the North entirely (though the raven will be waiting for the target when he returns). Voharun seldom renounces this curse, even when the recipient goes to extraordinary lengths to make up for his wrongdoing. The Battle Crow might also strengthen his curse by judicial use of the Male-diction and Scourge Charms.

*Shapechange*—Voharun can assume the form of a raven ranging in size from normal for the breed to one that dwarfs even his enormous avatars.

*Touch of Divinity/Touch of Eternity*—Voharun watches the enterprise of war closely, and rewards soldiers who fight bravely and against the odds. He is especially fond of granting boons of power to otherwise normal, non-powered mortals who display courage and cleverness in the midst of battle and defy certain death by attempting feats usually accomplished only

by the Exalted. The specific boon is based on the situation but usually amounts to additional dots in Strength, Wits, Valor or Willpower.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Archery, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Socialize, Stealth, War

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Archery, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Socialize, Stealth, War

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Archery, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Socialize, Stealth, War

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Stealth, War

**Join Battle:** 14

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 10B/L, Parry DV 9, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 13B/L, Parry DV 7, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 17, Damage 10B/L, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Straight Sword (Raven's Claw): Speed 4, Accuracy 20, Damage 13L, Parry DV 10, Rate 2

**Soak:** 18L/23B (Robes of office, 12L/12B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 10

**Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** 7

**Essence Pool:** 160

**Other Notes:** Voharun's sword, Raven's Claw, ignores an opponent's non-supernatural soak. Voharun can animate a maximum of 35 raven avatars at one time. These creatures can be invested with Willpower and Charms, at Voharun's discretion.





## NASAMARA, THE FALCON OF GLORY

Nasamara is the god of Northern armies and their champions. While his position requires him to oversee all aspects of war to some degree (as is the case with all the directional war gods), he pays special heed to the heroes who stand out for their courage, prowess and cunning. Northerners believe that Nasamara embodies fame and the desire for fame. They strive to win eternal glory in his name.

Nasamara visits Creation often. He flies high above battles, looking for heroes. When he sees a particularly ingenious strategy or especially gallant deed, he might grant a minor dice bonus the next time it is used. In this way, he encourages Northerners to take greater risks. He does not take sides, however. While he has the power to do virtually anything in the domain of war, he very rarely intervenes beyond the scale of individual warriors unless mortals fight Creation's supernatural foes.

The politics of Yu-Shan bore Nasamara, so he leaves bureaucratic infighting to Voharun. On the other hand, he doesn't hesitate to barge into another god's sanctum and challenge him to a duel. The Falcon of Glory is also somewhat loud and brash. He loves celebrations, and his fortress frequently hosts parties in honor of great battles of the past.

While Voharun dislikes the Scarlet Empire, Nasamara and Tachi-Kun understand each other well—though they disagree who claims authority over Exalted heroes in the North. Nasamara also has fond memories of the Solar Exalted and welcomes their return. He believes the Bull of the North is the region's best hope for defeating Creation's enemies and watches his army with great interest. Many Lunar Exalted have also earned the god's admiration. Indeed, Nasamara counts Siakal, Western Goddess of Sharks and Slaughter, as his only real enemy among the Exalted or gods of war.

Nasamara manifests as a muscular, bronze-skinned man who goes falcon-masked (and at times falcon-shaped). He can grow talons on his fingers if he wants, in order to inflict lethal damage.

**Sanctum:** The Falcon's Nest in Yu-Shan is a stone fortress dedicated to war and victory, surrounded by miles of icy tundra. From his floating golden throne, Nasamara can instantly know the details of any ongoing battle in the North. Nasamara staffs the Falcon's Nest with winged war spirits called nasmaru. These spirits have instinctive mastery over all melee weapons, with Melee 5. A dozen or so nasmaru continually attend Nasamara in Yu-Shan.

**Motivation:** To promote glorious deeds of arms in the North and to prevent invasion.

**Attributes:** Strength 12, Dexterity 8, Stamina 11; Charisma 7, Manipulation 6, Appearance 6; Perception 7, Intelligence 6, Wits 7

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 5

**Abilities:** Archery 5, Athletics 5 (Flying +2), Awareness 7, Bureaucracy 6, Dodge 6, Integrity 7, Investigation 2, Lin-

guistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Riverspeak, Skytongue) 4, Lore 5, Martial Arts 7, Melee 8 (Great Axe +2), Occult 1, Performance 5, Presence 7, Resistance 7, Socialize 6, Survival 5, War 10

**Backgrounds:** Allies 5, Artifact 5, Artifact 3, Backing 5, Celestial Manse 5, Contacts 5, Cult 4, Followers 5, Salary 5, Sanctum 5

### Charms:

*Art of Forceful Declaration*—Nasamara knows every Charm of this unusual Celestial Martial Art. (See pp. 15–18 of **Scroll of the Monk: The Imperfect Lotus**.)

*Divine Decree*—Nasamara sanctifies alliances and truces. Through his will, agreements between armies gain the force of divine law. Attempting to circumvent such an alliance is a serious offense likely to incur the war god's wrath.

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Nasamara is a falcon god as well as a war god. As such, he can control hawks and falcons, and only the animal avatar of such birds can overrule him.

*Essence Plethora* (x4)—Nasamara has 40 extra motes of Essence, due to far-ranging worship in the North.

*Host of Spirits*—Nasamara sometimes works his will in Creation through bronze-feathered falcon avatars with 20-foot wingspans, or normal falcons if Nasamara wants to be inconspicuous. Nasamara invests his avatars with the Charms necessary for their missions. Costs three motes per avatar.

*Hurry Home*—Nasamara can immediately transport himself to any site of battle in the North. In Yu-Shan, he can use this Charm to return to the Falcon's Nest.

*Materialize*—Costs 85 motes.

*Measure the Wind*—Nasamara routinely surveys battlefields for Essence wielders to better gauge how evenly matched armies are at the start of a battle.

*Plague of Menaces*—Craven armies who disgrace the North with treacherous acts receive Nasamara's curse. Such armies suffer debilitating sickness (-1 Magnitude), low morale (-1 Morale) and disorganization (-1 Drill). This curse follows the army for all time. The only way to end the curse is to disband the army entirely. If the cursed force is a city's army, any army that that city raises will invoke the curse. Nasamara can lift the curse himself, of course, but he has rarely done so. Costs five motes.

*Principle of Motion*—Nasamara keeps 10 extra actions stored.

*Shapechange*—Nasamara can assume the form of a falcon of any size.

*Symbol of Invincible Authority*—Nasamara may stride through ongoing battles without suffering any harm. Even intentional attacks against him fail if they come from participants in the battle. This Charm ceases operation as soon as hostilities end. A warrior may still challenge the Falcon of Glory to a personal duel. In that case, the Charm's effects extend to Nasamara's opponent as long as their duel lasts.

*Touch of Divinity*—When an army fights forces from outside Creation, the Falcon of Glory may grant it a +1 or +2 Might bonus for the duration of the battle. Nasamara usually

reserves this Charm for situations when the invading army is much more powerful than the defenders. This Charm costs eight motes and two Willpower per points of Might granted. Armies so blessed also suffer no exhaustion penalties for the battle.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Archery, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Stealth, War

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Archery, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Stealth, War

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Archery, Dodge, Integrity, Martial Arts, Melee, Stealth, War

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Melee, War

**Join Battle:** 14

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 12B/L, Parry DV 8, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 15B/L, Parry DV 7, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 19, Damage 12B/L, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Great Axe (The Falcon's Beak): Speed 5, Accuracy 20, Damage 21L, Parry DV 8, Rate 2

Composite Bow: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 14L, Range 350, Rate 3

**Soak:** 26L/36B (Jacket of Bronze Feathers, 20L/25B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 11    **Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** 7    **Essence Pool:** 160

**Other Notes:** Nasamara possesses the Jacket of Bronze Feathers, a dapper jacket that looks like it could not possibly provide meaningful defense. Reaching inside it, however, Nasamara may draw forth his divine axe or any mundane personal weapon he chooses.

Nasamara can animate a maximum of 35 falcon avatars at one time. These creatures can be invested with Willpower and Charms, at Nasamara's discretion.

## THE HASLANTI ENNEAD

When the Wyld Hunt slew Arvida of the Crescent Eye, the Realm began centuries of religious upheaval that might not be ended yet. Several times now, the Haslanti have seen Immaculate monks defeat and humiliate their gods. Some among the small gods formed triads for mutual protections and to consolidate their power. Many triads formed, but only three remain. The three triads of Ice, Fate and Dreams rose to prominence over the past century, as the Haslanti shifted their focus from defeated gods to new ones who had avoided conflict with the Immaculates. These triads became known collectively as the Ennead.

The Ennead as a whole respects Haslanti strength and ingenuity and refrains from heavy-handed control over its worshipers. The League's secret Lunar patrons, the Twisted Stone Conclave, convinced the Ennead that people can and must do things for themselves. The Ennead offers guidance and works to personify and enforce Haslanti social order.

### THE HOUSE OF THE NINE HEARTHS OF EMERALD AND SILVER


One of the Ennead's innovations is a group sanctum. Seventy-six years ago, the Ennead's petition for suitable quarters in Yu-Shan was rejected. The nine irked gods pooled their resources to create their own "heavenly" abode in Creation, not far from the 29th Celestial Gate. The House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver is a group sanctum where the whole pantheon can live and hold court. Many in the Celestial Bureaucracy decry the Ennead's actions as unauthorized and presumptuous (as the authorized Haslanti gods still live and maintain their Celestial status in the Bureau of Humanity). What's worse, spirits across the Northeast increasingly take their disputes and petitions to the Ennead for resolution, instead of the proper authorities in Yu-Shan. As of yet, however, Heaven has levied no official sanctions against the nine gods.

Some of the Ennead's gods retain private sanctums throughout the eastern North, as the Ennead rarely convenes as a group. Most of them visit the House at least five times a year, though. The Triad of Fate resides exclusively in the House of Nine Hearths. The House has a rating of Sanctum 4 and is a two-dot, Air-aspected manse.

The House has three wings, one for each of the triads. Each wing consists of the gods' living quarters, servant's quarters, kitchens, offices and workrooms, a grand dining hall and a courtroom with three hearths, each of which bears its god's symbol. When one of the gods is in residence, the god's hearth lights itself. Around the House spreads several miles of idealized tundra in a perpetual early summer, full of wild flowers and grazing reindeer and mammoth, but without mosquitoes. Three trilithons—doorways made of stone slabs laid across megalithic uprights—provide access to the sanctum, for those who can pass spirit doors.

The House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver accepts mortal visitors and petitioners, but only those who regularly worship the Ennead. A petitioner's player must succeed at a prayer roll (see **Exalted**, p. 132), but devout Haslanti receive two bonus successes. Those who force their way into the sanctum find the mammoth charging to trample them, while the reindeer show mouths full of fangs and attack using the traits for omen dogs (see **Exalted**, p. 348).





These gods want a strong nation of worshipers... but also a resilient society that is not too dependent on their favors. This goal is partially self-serving. If the Haslanti do not survive as a culture, the gods will lose much of their own power. As a result, the nine gods usually wield their influence subtly, without blatant displays of power.

Like the people they cultivate, the Haslanti gods are practical and unpretentious. They care more about doing their jobs and their own survival—since Immaculate crusaders could return any time—than celebrating their own grandeur. None of them consider themselves above knocking on a worshiper's door to offer praise, judgment, rebuke or just a chat to remind the Haslanti that their gods do indeed pay attention.

The Ennead is a new and largely untested order in the North and remains somewhat volatile. The triads could change due to divine whim, Celestial diktat, personal conflict or the death of member gods. Still, the nine gods have few rivalries among one another. They accept that their spheres of influence overlap somewhat. There is simply no time for bickering. Their people face a constant struggle to survive, and so does the Ennead. Certain powerful personages do not like the idea of a mixed group of Terrestrial and Celestial gods forming a syndicate that operates outside the accepted procedures of Heaven or Creation.

## THE TRIAD OF ICE

The Ennead's gods of ice oversee forces that influence the lives of every Haslanti. Winter weather can destroy a household as assuredly as any bandit or invader, but it also protects the League from its enemies. The killing cold also opens the way to the riches of the Great Ice. While winter can isolate a household from other people, it also forces the isolated people to learn loyalty to one another. The Haslanti view the Triad of Ice as governing the ambiguous forces of danger and opportunity.

### AUTUMN FROST

Autumn Frost has steadfastly avoided the Immaculates at every turn. Even when surrounded, even when cornered, he has always found a way out despite overwhelming odds. For that is Autumn Frost's story. He plays the odds, takes unbelievable chances, activates probabilities of success and guarantees the odds of failure for his enemies.

The Haslanti regard an early frost as an apt symbol for the uncertainties of their lives. A frost before harvest can doom a farmer, but open the White Sea to iceships. Therefore, one must be ready to change plans and leap for new opportunities as they arise. You still might die, but if you're strong, determined and cunning enough, you might win a fortune.

The trickster of the Ennead sometimes rewards Haslanti who take chances at great stakes with boons of luck. Whether this is good luck or bad, the person must work out for himself. He lures in the bandits who carry a fortune in jade (if you

can take it from them) or scatters the reindeer so the pursuing herdsman finds a new emerald. Sometimes, he levies his blessing on people who strive too much for safety and security. Autumn Frost does appreciate prayers, however. Ardent devotees are more likely to find their way through life's dangers.

Travelers, gamblers and those who hope for romance pray to Autumn Frost for luck. So do people who search for lost things. Nearly every Haslanti offers him prayers at one time or another, though. Only the most timid cowards and those who fear the god himself refuse to speak his name. Haslanti folk never pray to Autumn Frost for luck in battle. They would rather keep the god's involvement in life-or-death situations to a minimum, given his/her unpredictability.

Autumn Frost changes appearance and even gender. He/she usually dresses in warm layers of bright blue wool and warm fur but goes open-coated, with a broad, sly smile and wide, ever-youthful eyes. The god frequents gambling houses and wanders lonely roads in search of optimistic risk-takers who seem game for a challenge.

**Sanctum:** The odds are against anyone finding Autumn Frost's modest forest lodge. It exists in between the cracks of probability. There is always an extremely slight chance that it waits around the next bend in the road or over the next ridge, but most visitors come upon it only if Autumn Frost wills it. The place itself is a small, comfortably furnished house. Visitors who peek behind closet doors, under rugs or in bushels of fruit, inevitably find some lost, forgotten trinket.

**Motivation:** To encourage risk as the only way the Haslanti will achieve their full potential.

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5; Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 3, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 4, Integrity 3, Investigation 3, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Skytongue) 4, Lore 3, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2, Occult 4, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 5, Stealth 5, War 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Artifact 4, Backing 2, Contacts 3, Salary 2, Sanctum 2 (Autumn Frost's Lodge), Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

#### Charms:

**Banish**—Autumn Frost can remove unwanted guests from his/her mansion for 12 motes and one Willpower.

**Benefaction**—All Encompassing. Autumn Frost gifts those who take great risks with a one-die bonus on all rolls for one scene. This Charm costs 15 motes and one Willpower.

**Calculated Order of Immediate Action**—There is always the chance that the thing you need is nearby, just as there is always the possibility that it isn't where you thought you put it. The Haslanti don't believe that they ever just lose anything. In their lore, Autumn Frost takes them. Or gives

them back. He/she also provides new things, such as that trusty blade just when you thought you were done for. Autumn Frost can create or destroy items at up to Power Level 3. These items tend to be useful. Autumn Frost creates or removes objects to test someone or even the odds in some way, to see how or if they can succeed with or without some item. Destroyed items are usually re-created and returned, though it could be a long wait.

**Call**—Autumn Frost can instantly contact any other member of the Triad of Ice. Costs one mote.

**Divine Decree**—By spending 10 motes and one Willpower, Autumn Frost easily rearranges probability in situations where odds are clearly defined, such as in games of chance. He/she can, for instance, change the odds of rolling snake-eyes on a pair of six-sided dice to 100 percent or make it virtually impossible for a coin to land on “tails,” changing it from 1 in 2 to 1 in 1,000. With more effort, he/she can change the odds of anything at all occurring, making it nigh on impossible to find the road home or very likely that you come upon a reliable guide. He cannot *make* anything occur directly, though. He can only make events likely or not likely, to varying degrees.

**Dreamscape**—Autumn Frost appears to his/her priests, encouraging them to trust that all that happens does so for the greater good. Costs one mote.

**Host of Spirits**—Costs three motes per copy.

**Hoodwink**—Autumn Frost keeps many pranks and weird feats up his sleeve designed specifically to stun and bewilder the target into inaction.

**Hurry Home**—For five motes, Autumn Frost can return to his lodge, to the House of the Nine Hearths or to the location of any game of chance in the Haslanti League.

**Impromptu Messenger**—Autumn Frost delights in putting words in people’s mouths. Sometimes, people find themselves tongue-tied, and Autumn Frost provides them with dialogue. This can be an apropos explanation, a sorely unfortunate accusation or any other brief statement that makes life interesting for the target—never when nothing is at stake. Costs five motes.

**Intrusion-Seeking Method**—Autumn Frost can detect when someone finds his forest lodge.

**Materialize**—Costs 65 motes.

**Measure the Wind**—Autumn Frost naturally likes to know if any odds-upsetting people are around. Costs one mote.

**Principle of Motion**—Autumn Frost keeps eight extra actions stored.

**First (Ability) Excellency**—Awareness, Larceny, Presence

**Second (Ability) Excellency**—Awareness, Larceny, Presence

**Third (Ability) Excellency**—Awareness, Larceny, Presence

**Join Battle:** 9

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

**Soak:** 11L/16B (Heavy clothing, 2L/5B, and Vest of Chance, 6L/6B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 7      **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 5      **Essence Pool:** 90

**Other Notes:** Those attacking Autumn Frost often suffer wildly bad luck thanks to his Vest of Chance. This garment of woven starmetal resonates with the Loom of Fate to decrease the odds of any attack touching the god. It subtracts three successes from attack rolls, and if this removes all successes, the roll becomes a botch.

## LADY CHIMNEY DRAFT

Lady Chimney Draft is the goddess of the chill that comes when a guest enters a house and of the warmth that comes of trust and companionship. She watches over guest-host relationships and hospitality between neighbors, friends and strangers. Lady Chimney Draft also oversees marriages, divorces and adoptions, none of which can be recognized without her priests’ ratification and seal.

The obeisance of the Haslanti delights her, while being inhospitable toward guests or neighbors or failing to honor one’s own marriage vows brings out her chill resentment. She is proper and well-mannered, always following the same rules of hospitality that she demands of mortals. Shows of reverence make her politely giddy; bad manners provoke an icy, but well-spoken, disdain. In addition to demanding good manners, she is unfailingly critical to those who make illegal or unreasonable requests of their hosts or guests. She has little sympathy for those who make illogical, brazen or shameless excuses for lack of hospitality.

Haslanti pray to Lady Chimney Draft at harvest time and when bringing in a catch, always making sure to save a portion of their stores for neighbors and itinerant strangers who come to their house. They also pray to her when lighting their hearths, that she might keep the chill at bay and not allow the fires to die. Traders often pay special reverence to Lady Chimney Draft, as they often find themselves subject to the hospitality of strangers. Ivrieinen of the Triad of Fate delegates to the other goddess some work regarding suitable marriages. While Lady Chimney Draft normally only ratifies marriages, she does sometimes help to bring suitable couples together, as per Ivrieinen’s instructions.

Lady Chimney Draft manifests as a middle-aged, hardy woman with white-blond hair and deep, grandmotherly wrinkles around a prim smile. She wears plain clothes common to Haslanti women and often travels hand-in-hand with her consort, Master Winter. She is no great fighter, relying on Master Winter and Autumn Frost for protection.

**Sanctum:** Lady Chimney Draft dwells with Master Winter in his castle.

**Motivation:** To safeguard the rules of hospitality.

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5; Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4





**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 5, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 2, Integrity 3, Investigation 4, Larceny 1, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Skytongue) 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 3, Melee 1, Occult 4, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 5, Survival 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Backing 2, Contacts 3, Manse 2, Manse 4, Salary 3, Sanctum 3 (Winter Fastness), Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

**Charms:**

*Banish the Vulgar*—For 12 motes, Lady Chimney Draft can deny entrance to any Haslanti house, from a single home to (for especially troublesome offenders) all Haslanti houses. Affected persons simply cannot pass through any door to any lived-in house. They find the door closed and locked, even if it was open a second before and doesn't have a lock. The same applies for windows and chimneys.

*Call*—For one mote, Lady Chimney Draft can instantly contact any other member of the Triad of Ice.

*Consecrate Marriage*—Lady Chimney Draft consecrates Haslanti marriages in the same manner that Eclipse Caste Solars sanctify agreements, with the same consequences for people who violate their marriage vows. Lady Chimney

Draft must physically attend the wedding to use this Charm. Costs 10 motes.

*Endowment*—People who excel at hospitality might receive a boon of one additional dot of Presence or Appearance for one of their children.

*Hurry Home*—Lady Chimney Draft can return to Master Winter's castle or the House of the Nine Hearths, or instantly transport to any Haslanti house that has a guest.

*Materialize*—Costs 60 motes.

*Principle of Motion*—Lady Chimney Draft keeps eight extra actions stored.

*Pyre of Camaraderie Meditation*—In this version of Subtle Whisper, Lady Chimney Draft lends Essence to a bonfire, hearth or campfire around which people meet, increasing the agreeableness of all.

*Spice of Custodial Delectation*—Lady Chimney Draft often visits the homes of her priests and relishes their hospitality.

*Vengeful Gift Technique*—Those who anger, insult or seriously displease Lady Chimney Draft through grudging, resentful hospitality receive a gift of food—perhaps a basket at their door containing all of the target's favorite dishes. The basket will not be depleted for as long as the target, who never feels full, eats of it. This food carries the god's curse, which transforms the eater while he sleeps into a twisted cripple, suffering -2 Appearance and additional disabling effects



(see **Exalted**, p.152) at the Storyteller's discretion. This effect cannot heal naturally and cannot be reversed by any spirit of less than Essence 4.

**Words of Power**—Individuals who persistently test Lady Chimney Draft's patience receive a personal visit from the lady, who righteously dresses them down, dealing damage as she does so.

**First (Ability) Excellency**—Awareness, Presence, Socialize

**Second (Ability) Excellency**—Awareness, Presence, Socialize

**Third (Ability) Excellency**—Awareness

**Divine (Ability) Subordination**—Awareness, Presence

**Join Battle:** 9

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

**Soak:** 13L/15B (Robes of office, 10L/10B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 6      **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 4      **Essence Pool:** 80

**Other Notes:** None

## MASTER WINTER

In the new Haslanti order, Master Winter is the god of preparedness and settled accounts, of the dangers of winter and the terrible storms it brings. He has no pity for people who do not make necessary provision for the future, but he behaves kindly to sensible, reliable and conscientious folk. Winter is the time for hardworking folk to enjoy the fruits of their labors.

In winter, the god walks throughout Haslanti lands with his tally sticks and account books, recording snowfall and noting the movements of clouds for his reports to the Bureau of Seasons. During the summer months, he stays in his castle, patiently crafting snowflakes and frost crystals with hammer and chisel.

Master Winter leads the Triad of Ice, setting their overall agenda and laying preparations against attack from any front, with thousands of emergency disaster policies committed to memory. As the most formidable of the three, he is also their protector.

The Haslanti pray to Master Winter for foresight in warfare, when planting crops, when making or seeking a loan, and in all cases when planning or preparing for the future. They also speak his name at births, that an infant will grow up to be industrious and responsible; and at deaths, to prepare a spirit for its next journey.

Master Winter is the oldest-looking of the triad, with a long, icicle beard, cloud-white hair and frost breath. He wears blue robes, a cloak of steel snowflakes and warm, furred boots.

**Sanctum:** Master Winter's castle, the Winter Fastness, is a giant fortress made entirely of ice, hidden among mountains in the Far North. Many wind spirits guard the castle and its

environs. Terrible winter storms reign over the region for miles around, further obscuring its location and discouraging unwanted visitors. It is a level-4 Air manse as well. Master Winter also visits the House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver.

**Motivation:** To prepare the Haslanti for any and all dangers.

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5; Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 5, Temperance 1, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Haslanti Barbarian Tongues, High Realm, Skytongue) 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 4, Melee 4 (Cudgel +2), Occult 4, Performance 4, Presence 5, Resistance 4, Socialize 4, Survival 5 (The Far North +4), Thrown 4 (Ice Shuriken +2), War 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 4, Backing 3, Contacts 3, Cult 3, Manse 4, Salary 3, Sanctum 3 (Winter Fastness), Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

**Charms:**

**Affinity Water Control**—Master Winter can freeze water and manipulate it as snow or ice. He cannot manipulate water in liquid form apart from freezing it, however. The environmental hazards he can create are limited to snow, sleet and hail storms (and he cannot make them toxic). His elemental weapon is expressed by a breath of bitter cold snow and ice.

**Amethyst Awareness**—Costs six motes.

**Banish**—Master Winter can forcibly remove anyone from his castle.

**Calculated Order of Immediate Action**—Master Winter can create a smaller version of his sanctum anywhere he finds sufficient ice and snow. To do so requires five invocations of the Charm, each costing 10 motes and one Willpower.

**Call**—For one mote, Master Winter can instantly contact any other member of the Triad of Ice.

**Elemental Expression**—Master Winter can amplify the effects of snow, ice and freezing wind as the elemental power.

**Essence Bite**—Touching or being touched by Master Winter (including attacks using melee weapons) incurs lethal cold damage, at a cost of two motes per die. Master Winter can use this Charm in concert with Freezing Attack Technique.

**Essence Plethora**—Master Winter has 10 extra motes of Essence.

**Freezing Attack Technique**—For six motes, Master Winter can, with any successful attack, freeze the target in place. This Charm does not affect targets with an Essence higher than 5. Other targets' players must roll (Stamina + Resistance) with an external penalty equal to Master Winter's Valor (3). Failure means the target is covered in thick ice and frost and suffers a -3 penalty to all non-reflexive dice pools for the duration of the scene or until Master Winter releases the target.







*Hurry Home*—Master Winter can instantly return to his castle, to the House of the Nine Hearths or to any location suffering a winter storm.

*Impenetrable Frost Barrier*—This Charm duplicates the Terrestrial Circle spell of the same name. Costs 12 motes.

*Invulnerable Skin of Ice*—This Charm emulates the Terrestrial Circle spell *Invulnerable Skin of Bronze*. For 10 motes Master Winter gains +5L/10B soak and +5L/5B Hardness, as his skin hardens into magical ice. His Martial Arts attacks deal two extra dice of damage, and he weighs an extra 50 pounds.

*Materialize*—Costs 65 motes.

*Principle of Motion*—Master Winter keeps eight extra actions stored.

*Shards of Winter*—Master Winter can produce ice shuriken at will. One mote creates four ice shuriken.

*Storm Manipulation Scenario*—Master Winter makes sure that communities that do not prepare for the winter suffer for it. For 12 motes, he sends freezing winds, and great quantities of blinding snow blanket an area one mile in radius. This inflicts a -2 external penalty on all actions for anyone caught in the blizzard. The god returns to the site several times during the winter to repeat the chastisement. Master Winter also uses this power against enemy armies, spirits or the Exalted. Exalted of greater than Essence 5 may negate the effects for themselves by displaying their animal banner if no other means are available.

*Storm-Shuttle Passport*—For eight motes and one Willpower, Master Winter can ride the winds.

*Symbol of Invincible Authority*—Master Winter is naturally immune to all cold effects.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Investigation, Presence  
*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Investigation, Presence

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Investigation, Presence

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Awareness, Investigation

**Join Battle:** 10

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 6B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 9B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Cudgel of Adamant Hoarfrost: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 12L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Ice Shuriken: Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 8L, Range 50, Rate 4

**Soak:** 18L/25B (Cloak of Iron Snowflakes, 15L/20B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 7      **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 5      **Essence Pool:** 100

**Other Notes:** Master Winter's Cudgel of Adamant Hoarfrost glows a deep blue when used in battle. Players of enemies attempting to strike Master Winter while the cudgel is thus active suffer a two-die penalty to all rolls for the duration of

combat. Those with characters possessing a natural or Charm-based resistance to cold effects suffer a one-die penalty instead. Targets struck by the cudgel also receive one automatic level of lethal damage *before* soak is applied and damage is calculated. This damage is not included in the normal damage dealt by the cudgel. Activating the cudgel for one scene costs Master Winter one mote (20 motes for anyone else).

## THE TRIAD OF DREAMS

The Triad of Dreams oversees the realms of fears, delusions and aspirations as well as literal sleep and dreaming. It is the weakest triad as a whole, but its deities wield great influence in the daily lives of the Haslanti people. The first god in the triad is a spirit of worry and dismay who feeds on nightmares. The second watches over people who work for their dreams and seek their destinies. The last reminds mortals of the need for rest and the value of dreams and fantasy.

### CARRION CROW

Carrion Crow is the Haslanti goddess of nightmares and winter terrors, as well as disease, famine and murder. She watches over old resentments, nursed grudges and domestic violence, and eases the aged and infirm toward death.

Carrion Crow is Master Winter's daughter. The Haslanti consider her a springtime goddess, as she consumes the carrion left after the winter thaw. At the first sign of spring, her worshipers leave her rotten food from their winter larders outside their doors. In this way, Carrion Crow helps limit the spread of disease. Some tribes pray for her aid in battle (imagining that she has some connection to Voharun) or for protection against sickness.

Haslanti who declare blood feuds or carry lesser hatreds must disclose their resentment to Carrion Crow and pray for her blessing and for advice. Carrion Crow records these disclosures in her black books. Carrion Crow favors mortals who diligently report their disagreements (even if they never act on them) and who deal responsibly with carrion. Mortals who do not want to carry their grudges to the point of violence can ask Carrion Crow to chastise their enemy through a nightmare. Many a vendetta is nipped in the bud when a Haslanti first realizes that his horrible dreams come because he insulted or injured another person without meaning to do so then apologizes. Yet, mortals who practice violence without prayerful reflection earn Carrion Crow's ire. Vendettas originating or acted upon while Carrion Crow sleeps through the winter may go undocumented for weeks, resulting in a fair number of reprimands and a few serious punishments every year. (The mortals should have waited.)

If a worshiper prays for Carrion Crow's direct intercession, she may take on a vendetta herself. She first uses Dreamscape to appear to and interrogate all concerned parties. If Carrion Crow decides that the petitioner's desire for revenge arises from a genuinely heinous crime against him, she personally metes out appropriate justice as she deems fit. Carrion Crow then notifies all concerned mortals in their dreams

that she has rendered her punishment, and she declares the vendetta resolved. As with the rest of the Ennead, however, Carrion Crow believes that mortals should usually deal with their own problems. She assumes a vendetta only when no mortal revenge is possible or to punish extraordinary crimes in humorously horrible ways.

Although the Haslanti people see Carrion Crow as a god of nightmare, they do not necessarily fear her. They know full well that terrible things happen. While most Haslanti try their best not to anger Carrion Crow, they accept her nightmares and random disasters as a part of life.

Carrion Crow appears as a naked old woman with pale skin, a crow's head and black feathers on her arms and hands. Her hands are like a crow's claws. She is the oldest and most powerful of the Triad of Dreams, having been a fixture in the lives of the Northern tribes for over 1,000 years.

**Sanctum:** Carrion Crow's nest in Creation is located on an island cave. It is a giant structure woven from the tightly packed live branches of massive growing trees, with hundreds of "rooms" on multiple levels. The area reeks of carrion and death and is overrun with carrion-eating beasts who feast on rotting flesh.

**Motivation:** To enforce the proper execution of revenge.

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4; Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5; Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 4, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Athletics 2 (Flying +2), Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 4, Dodge 3 (Flying +2), Integrity 3, Investigation 5, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Skytongue) 4, Lore 4, Martial Arts 3, Occult 3, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 3, War 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Backing 2, Contacts 2, Cult 2, Salary 2, Sanctum 2 (Carrion Crow's Nest), Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

#### Charms:

*Bane Weapon*—When acting upon a mortal's resentment, Carrion Crow's claws become weapons that ignore the target's soak and hardness. Costs five motes.

*Banish*—Carrion Crow can eject unwanted guests from her nest for 12 motes and one Willpower.

*Calculated Order of Immediate Action*—Carrion Crow uses this Charm to accelerate the spread of disease from neglected carrion, spoiled food and other filth.

*Claws of the Crow*—Spending 10 motes, Carrion Crow transforms her hands into giant crow's claws, with effects similar to the Terrestrial Circle spell Wood Dragon's Claw (see **Exalted**, p. 254).

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Carrion Crow can cause or quell disease, famine, decay or vendettas.

*Dreamscape*—Carrion Crow invades the dreams of the Haslanti regularly for many reasons, but usually to advise a supplicant or to punish mortals who committed some vengeful

act without first reporting their resentment to the god. In the latter case, Carrion Crow uses the dream to deliver a social attack through a nightmare about the target's being punished. The recipients of nightmares do not regain Willpower from that night's unquiet sleep.

*Essence Plethora*—Carrion Crow has 10 extra motes of Essence.

*Harrow the Mind*—Carrion Crow enforces resolved resentments with this Charm and uses it to ease people toward accepting death. She typically uses this Charm in concert with Subtle Whisper.

*Hurry Home*—For five motes, Carrion Crow can return to her nest or to the House of the Nine Hearths.

*Intrusion-Sensing Method*—Carrion Crow knows instantly when vendettas consecrated to her have been completed or if the offended person receives an apology.

*Landscape Hide*—When Carrion Crow hibernates through the winter, she becomes one with her nest.

*Loom Stride*—Carrion Crow appears and disappears like a dream.

*Malediction of Disease*—Carrion Crow carries disease in her body. When Melee or Martial Arts attacks strike her (whether she takes damage or not), a noxious cloud engulfs the attacker and infects him with Carrion Plague (functionally identical to plague, as described on p. 353 of **Exalted**, but the victim stinks of rotting flesh). In addition, the target suffers lethal health level loss, bypassing armor, as per the Essence Bite Charm. Costs three motes per health level of damage.

*Materialize*—Costs 55 motes.

*Principle of Motion*—Carrion Crow keeps five extra actions stored.

*Spice of Custodial Delectation*—Carrion Crow gains Essence when worshipers report their resentments through prayer and also when they offer her their spoiled food and carrion.

*Subtle Whisper*—Typically used to deliver Harrow the Mind without it being obvious.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Investigation, Performance, Presence

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Investigation, Performance, Presence

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Investigation, Performance, Presence

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Performance, Presence

**Join Battle:** 9

#### Attacks:

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

**Soak:** 6L/8B (Divine skin, 4L/4B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 6 (7 when flying) **Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** 4 **Essence Pool:** 85

**Other Notes:** Carrion Crow can fly at five times her ground movement rates.





## OWL FROM OUT OF THE EAST

Owl from out of the East manifests as an enormous horned owl with a nine-foot wingspan. He once served the Horned Judge, a venerable god of law and oaths among the Outwall tribes, and was promoted and installed in the Ennead a mere 50 years ago. Owl is the Haslanti god of consummation and completion, rewarding those who strive to achieve their dreams. His worshipers see him as a divinity of prosperity and call upon him to aid them in business, law and social endeavors.

Owl promotes the value of good, just laws, for an orderly society gives the best chance for many people to realize their dreams. He punishes magistrates who do not interpret laws honestly and citizens who do not obey them. Owl also tells the Haslanti to develop careful and prudent plans for realizing their dreams and then to stick to them. Mortals pray to Owl for inspiration, that they may find clever ideas and solutions in their problems. Owl particularly admires the Haslanti engineers and visits the air boat shipyards at least once a year.

**Sanctum:** Owl from out of the East returns to the House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver periodically. Being ever watchful, he does not otherwise maintain a sanctum.

**Motivation:** To make sure that mortals follow their plans to completion.

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5; Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 5, Temperance 1, Valor 4

**Abilities:** Athletics 2 (Flying +2), Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 5, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 4 (Flying +2), Integrity 4, Investigation 2, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Riverspeak, Sky-tongue) 5, Lore 4, Martial Arts 4, Occult 3, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 4, War 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Backing 2, Contacts 3, Salary 2, Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

### Charms:

**Benefaction**—Favored priests and judges who pray for wisdom may receive one additional dot of Wits.

**Calculated Order of Immediate Action**—Owl can complete any project in an instant, just as another person planned it. If the plan was not sound in the first place, the project fails.

**Domain Manipulation Scenario**—Owl may exert his influence in the realm of justice, courts and law; he can use this Charm in either the six-mote or 12-mote forms.

**Dreamscape**—Owl delivers advice or warns of his displeasure in divinely cryptic, symbolic fashion, but when worshipers successfully carry out a plan he may offer an “Attaboy” that requires no interpretation.

**Geas**—When resolve seems lacking, Owl can force mortals to carry through on their plans.

**Hurry Home**—Owl can transport himself to the House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver.

*Impromptu Messenger*—For five motes, Owl can speak through his priests. He typically does so only when a public project is failing or if some high-profile or important job isn't getting done and needs to for the sake of the community's survival.

*Intrusion-Sensing Method*—Owl knows instantly when projects consecrated to him have been completed, or if they have been abandoned for more than one week.

*Inspirational Endowment*—Owl visits the target in his sleep and fires his imagination, revealing workable solution to difficult or long-standing problems. For one scene in the next day, an attempt by the target to find a solution to a problem receives two bonus dice. Costs 12 motes, one Willpower.

*Landscape Travel*—Owl can fly at double speed for 4 motes.

*Materialize*—Costs 60 motes.

*Melodious Diagnostic Report*—Used to see how the Haslanti League and the component city-states and tribes are doing at carrying out their plans.

*Memory Mirror*—Owl knows the true minds of his worshipers. He can search the memory of anyone who has prayed to him in the past 30 days.

*Principle of Motion*—Owl has eight actions stored.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Investigation, Presence

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Investigation, Presence

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Investigation

**Join Battle:** 8

**Attacks:**

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Bite: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 9L, Parry DV —, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

**Soak:** 8L/12B (Tough feathers, 5L/7B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 6 (7 if flying) **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 4 **Essence Pool:** 80

**Other Notes:** Without using Charms, Owl from out of the East can fly at five times his ground movement rates.

## SNOWSHOE HARE AMONG BRAMBLES

With the death of the former Haslanti dream god, Snowshoe Hare was promoted to the region's principle god of dreams. He ensures good sleep and pleasant dreams, and reminds his worshipers that rest and relaxation are necessary for health and a full, meaningful life. Pregnant Haslanti women also pray to him nightly, as do laborers and hunters. The Haslanti believe that catching sight of him while dreaming means good luck, but seeing him in the waking world is a bad omen. Snowshoe Hare's worshipers keep dream journals as a religious rite. Even more than most Haslanti, they seek visions of their destinies in their dreams.

Snowshoe Hare has many responsibilities. In addition to administering the realm of sleep for the nation, he also crafts and delivers dreams for many fellow Haslanti gods, who rely on his expertise to communicate their wishes and warnings. (Most of the now-neglected Haslanti gods now

need Snowshoe Hare's favor if they want to send dreams. Other members of the Ennead can send whatever dreams they please.) Despite this vast workload, Snowshoe Hare sleeps often. While doing so, he can visit the dreams of anyone currently sleeping.

Snowshoe Hare manifests as a large white rabbit with enormous ears and feet. Although he constantly moves from one job to another, he never seems hurried or overworked. **Sanctum:** Snowshoe Hare sleeps in many deep warrens throughout the Far North.

**Motivation:** To promote the value of dreams and to provide peaceful sleep.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 7, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4; Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 8, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Northern Barbarian Tribes, Skytongue) 3, Lore 4 (Dream Symbolism +3), Martial Arts 2, Occult 4, Performance 5 (Dream Narratives +3), Presence 4, Resistance 4, Socialize 5, Stealth 4, Survival 5

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Backing 3, Contacts 3, Cult 3, Salary 3, Sanctum 3 (Dream Warrens), Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

**Charms:**

*Banish*—Snowshoe Hare can banish sleepers from the dreamscape.

*Divine Decree*—Snowshoe Hare may command lesser spirits of sleep and dreams, such as dream flies (see pp. 35–36 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**).

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Snowshoe Hare can make wholesale decrees regarding sleep and dreams such as, "The citizens of Tuskstad shall not sleep for seven days." While such a declaration seems like a punishment, sometimes such is necessary in order for people to complete necessary tasks. Hare has the power with such a declaration to negate all ill effects resulting from lack of sleep.

*Dreamscape*—Snowshoe Hare molds the stuff of dreams to his own specifications and can create as many autonomous dream-creatures that obey his will, as suits his whim. These are usually pleasant dreams.

*Endowment*—All-Encompassing (but this does not cost extra motes or Willpower, as it deals directly with the core of Snowshoe Hare's divine duties). Snowshoe Hare can issue endowments while the subject sleeps. A subject dreams that he possesses such a gift, and he really does for one scene after he wakes. Snowshoe Hare never spends more than 15 motes on this Charm, though, so he grants only minor endowments.

*Enter Dream*—For five motes, Snowshoe Hare can enter any sleeping Haslanti's dream. While doing so, Snowshoe Hare is dematerialized and cannot be harmed physically.







Once inside a dream, the god can travel to other dreams for an additional five motes, leave the dreamscape entirely for one mote (emerging at the location of the sleeper), or use *Hurry Home* to return to his warren.

*Hurry Home*—The god can instantly return to his dream-warren or to the House of the Nine Hearths.

*Impromptu Messenger*—Mortals talk in their sleep to deliver messages from Snowshoe Hare.

*Infallible Escape Method*—This Charm is similar to the Charm Slippery Escape Method (see **Scroll of the Monk**, p. 43). How do you hold a dream?

*Materialize*—Costs 60 motes.

*Principle of Motion*—Snowshoe Hare has eight actions banked.

*Sudden Sleep Prana*—Costs 3 motes. A target's player must roll (Willpower – Snowshoe Hare's Essence of 4) or she immediately goes to sleep.

*Worldly Illusion*—Snowshoe Hare can call other creatures into a shared dream.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Lore, Performance, Stealth

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Lore, Performance, Stealth

**Join Battle:** 8

**Attacks:**

**Kick:** Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV 8, Rate 2

**Soak:** 9L/11B (Evanescent substance, 6L/6B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 10    **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 4    **Essence Pool:** 80

**Other Notes:** None

## THE TRIAD OF FATE

The Haslanti do not think of fate as an inescapable destiny. Their gods of fate exist as more of a balm to the many misfortunes that the Haslanti suffer as a by-product of their environment and their history. They are the most powerful members of the Ennead, and they assisted in uniting the tribes in the first place. These gods are also the most influential, for nearly every Haslanti offers them prayers and observances. The Triad of Fate commands a wide sphere of influence, affording it authority over many other gods. All three gods can be either positive or negative influences on the Haslanti, able both to protect and to bring grave misfortune.

The Immaculate crusaders tried to humble these three gods but never succeeded. Even finding them proved impossible, for none of the Triad seem to ever stop moving and working. They also have protection in Heaven. They are Terrestrial gods, but with powerful connections to the Loom of Fate. Yet, they suffer frequent interference from the Bureau of Destiny and cannot assist the Haslanti too much, lest they suffer that Bureau's wrath.

### IVRIEINEN

*The Lady Who Finds Good Partners and Shuts the Doors of Infatuation*

Ivrieinen weaves the Tapestry of Fate such that Haslanti men and women find and recognize those who can become their friends and mates. She also draws apart people who would quarrel and bring discord to their communities if they married. She has few other concerns. While Ivrieinen sometimes aids people trapped under Carrion Crow's influence, she cares most for those of marriageable age and their relationships with another.

The Lady Who Finds Good Partners seeks individuals who would find joy and contentment together. Conversely, Ivrieinen works to quench passionate but turbulent love affairs (which puts her at odds with several other gods in her division). She also works with many other gods to implement her plans to unite or separate lovers. Snowshoe Hare is one of her chief allies, fashioning dreams for her daily.

Ivrieinen has little patience for anyone who interfere with her plans. She issues mild reprimands to mortals or gods who push ill-suited lovers together... and much greater punishments to deliberate, repeat offenders. While Ivrieinen never issues a fatal punishment, victims of her personal, extremely creative wrath often wish they were dead after she rips their lives apart. While the Haslanti think of Ivrieinen as a kindly god, she can destroy individuals, families and entire communities by setting people against each other. She is more manipulative than the rest of the Ennead, though she takes particular exception to anyone pointing this out.

Ivrieinen manifests as an old, grandmotherly woman in a plain blue robe. She has a self-satisfied smile and a twitching nose. Mortals usually cannot recognize her due to camouflaging Charms, but attentive folk can spot Ivrieinen due to her small notebook in which she obsessively writes.

**Sanctum:** Ivrieinen dwells in the House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver.

**Motivation:** To preserve the Haslanti social order and prevent domestic violence.

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5; Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4; Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 5, Temperance 4, Valor 1

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 6, Craft (Fate) 5, Dodge 5, Integrity 6, Investigation 6, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tribes, Riverspeak, Skytongue) 5, Lore 6, Martial Arts 3, Melee 5, Occult 3, Performance 5, Presence 6, Resistance 4, Socialize 4, War 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Backing 3, Contacts 4, Salary 4, Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

**Charms:**

*Amethyst Awareness*—Little is hidden from agents of Fate.  
*Chrysalis of Preservation*—Ivrieinen may crystallize loves and enmities to transfer them from person to person.

*Destiny Sponsorship*—Ivrieinen gains extra defenses only when she performs her specific duties with the acquiescence (if not blessing) of the Division of Serenity.

*Divine Decree*—Ivrieinen can arrange for far-flung individuals to meet if she considers them suited for one another. She can also decree that two individuals will never meet, or never meet again, with some assurance that the Bureau of Destiny will not overrule her.

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Ivrieinen can manipulate the bonds of affection on any scale, from couples to nations, either strengthening them or replacing them with anger, jealousy and strife.

*Emergency Prayer Relocation*—Ivrieinen often visits mortal petitioners, though mortals often do not realize that she has come in response to their prayers.

*Endowment*—Ivrieinen can make her targets attractive or unattractive without changing their overall appearance. She may add or remove one or two dots to Appearance or increase Abilities to make the target more interesting to a potential partner (say, an increase in Craft or Performance) who appreciates the Ability in question. She does not grant these boons lightly, however, and usually reserves them for individuals whose relationship or lack thereof will have wide-ranging effects. Costs 15 motes and one Willpower.

*Essence Plethora* (x3)—Ivrieinen has 30 extra motes of Essence.

*Hand of Destiny*—If she must, Ivrieinen lets the Loom of Fate itself tell her what actions she and her subordinates must take in order to bring about a happy union... or wreck someone's life.

*Hurry Home*—For five motes, Ivrieinen can transport herself instantly to the nearest gate to Yu-Shan, to the House of the Nine Hearths or to the sanctum of any other god in the Ennead.

*Materialize*—Costs 75 motes.

*Measure the Wind*—Ivrieinen gauges the power of those she must bless, or those who might oppose her mission.

*Melodious Diagnostic Report*—Difficult as mortals can be, there is a solution to every problem. By spending 15 motes and one Willpower, Ivrieinen can meditate upon a particular problem involving her sphere and emerge after a few minutes with the solution.

*Natural Prognostication*—Ivrieinen hints at Destiny's plans, especially when a destiny involves personal relationships.

*Principle of Motion*—Ivrieinen has nine actions saved.

*Shapechange*—Ivrieinen often travels incognito in Creation.

*Touch of Saturn*—Can inflict Sickness effects. Cost varies.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Investigation, Performance, Presence

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Investigation, Performance, Presence

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Investigation, Performance, Presence

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Awareness, Craft, Integrity

**Join Battle:** 11

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

**Soak:** 20L/22B (Celestial vestments, 10L/10B; Destiny Sponsorship, 7L/7B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 9      **Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** 6

**Essence Pool:** 135

**Other Notes:** None

## KIDILOS

*The Lady Who Comforts the Living at the Bedside of the Dying*

Kidilos works to help the Haslanti accept the realities of death. She strives to lessen mortals' grief and encourage them to make peace with one another before they die. Particularly among the tribes, grief easily slides into an angry desire to punish someone, *anyone*, for a death. The Haslanti have too much work to do to waste time on extravagant mourning or blood feuds. Although she is not an employee of the Division of Endings, she often works with that Celestial office.

Kidilos may appear briefly to mortals who comfort the dying, as well as to people who suffer overwhelming grief at the death of a loved one. She never stays long in Creation, but her blessings and influence remain after she departs.

Most often, Kidilos comforts people through stories. She knows the tale of every battle and the name of every Haslanti who has died and under what conditions. With a little effort she can scrutinize people's minds and reconstruct a narrative of a man's life. This telling of tales is a sacred rite, never interrupted, that can help or hinder the bereaved, but always leaves some long-lasting effect.

Every spring, Carrion Crow identifies the dying and helps Kidilos plan her overall route for the coming months. Snowshoe Hare assists her in sending reassuring dreams to the grieving.

Kidilos appears as a youthful woman dressed in the cold-weather gear of a Great Ice worker, with layer upon layer of leather and wool, a fur parka and snow goggles. She swiftly glides along the snow on skis, stopping only as her office dictates. Her eyes, should she reveal them to anyone, are old and sad, containing the grief of centuries.

**Sanctum:** Kidilos dwells in the House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver.

**Motivation:** To console the bereaved and those who comfort the dying.

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6; Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5; Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

**Virtues:** Compassion 5, Conviction 3, Temperance 4, Valor 2



**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 6, Integrity 6, Investigation 4, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Skytongue) 4, Lore 6, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 4, Melee 6, Occult 3, Performance 5 (Storytelling +2), Presence 5, Resistance 4, Socialize 3, Survival 5, War 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Artifact 4, Backing 3, Contacts 4, Salary 3, Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

**Charms:**

*Amethyst Awareness*—Little is hidden from agents of Fate.

*Destiny Sponsorship*—Kidilos gains extra defenses only when she performs her specific duties with the acquiescence (if not the blessing) of the Division of Endings.

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Kidilos can create or assuage grief on any scale, from individuals to nations.

*Emergency Prayer Relocation*—Kidilos manifests wherever mortals grieve and pray to her for comfort.

*Geas*—Grieving mortals sometimes pledge to perform certain deeds to commemorate a dead loved one. Kidilos can hold them to even the most casual promise, or forbid them from carrying out some foolish or wicked plan.

*Hand of Destiny*—When all other methods fail, Kidilos lets the Loom of Fate itself tell her the way to assuage grief or otherwise carry out her plans.

*Hurry Home*—Kidilos can transport herself instantly to the nearest gate to Yu-Shan, to the House of the Nine Hearths or to the sanctum of any member of the Ennead.

*Landscape Travel*—Kidilos can travel over snow at double speed and gains a one-die bonus to all Dexterity rolls while traveling on skis. Costs eight motes.

*Materialize*—Costs 75 motes.

*Material Tribulation Divestment*—Kidilos ends the power of attacks upon her.

*Measure the Wind*—When dealing with beings of power who grieve, sometimes it's prudent to know just how powerful they are.

*Natural Prognostication*—Kidilos hints at Destiny's plans, especially when a destiny involves grief.

*Principle of Motion*—Kidilos has six extra actions saved.

*Spirit and Body Purification Touch*—This Charm resembles the Martial Arts Charm described in *Scroll of the Monk*, page 127. After a normal touch attempt, which may be dodged or parried normally, Kidilos's player rolls (Presence + Compassion) against a difficulty of the target's Essence, adding four automatic successes. A successful roll cures the target of all Sickness effects and physical diseases, and purges all poisons and drugs. Further, it negates all possession, control Charms and curses that do not originate from a god of the Ennead or a being of Essence 7 or higher. Finally, the target feels a warm, almost euphoric feeling of acceptance and happiness.

*Weighing of the Heart*—Kidilos attempts to ease the minds of the bereaved by spinning a tale about the deceased's life. This Charm costs two motes and may be resisted if the

target desires by rolling the target's Conviction opposed by Kidilos's Compassion.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Integrity, Lore, Presence

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Integrity, Lore, Presence

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Integrity, Lore, Presence

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Lore, Performance, Presence, Survival

**Join Battle:** 11

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 6B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 9B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Ice Pick (Warden of the Bereaved): Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 11, Parry DV 8, Rate 2

**Soak:** 21L/24B (Celestial vestments, 10L/10B; Destiny Sponsorship, 8L/8B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 9      **Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** 6      **Essence Pool:** 105

**Other Notes:** Kidilos's weapon, Warden of the Bereaved, can calm passions, removing feeling of anger and sadness and pain with a touch, leaving the target slightly euphoric, as the Solar Charm Touch of Blissful Release (see *Exalted*, p. 218). It affects immaterial being as the Spirit-Cutting Charm.

**SPRING SNOWFALL**

*The Lady Who Reminds Us We Are Alive and Should Laugh at Ourselves*

Spring Snowfall reminds the Haslanti to savor life—a difficult task, given lives of hard work and much danger. She teaches through chance difficulties and surprising fortunes. Spring Snowfall rivals Autumn Frost as a trickster, but she disrupts lives specifically to shock people out of routines grown dull and onto new paths. She works closely with Autumn Frost in the summer months, when people spend more time outdoors and are most lively.

Spring Snowfall sends the bear who chases the washerwomen up into the trees and the storm that ruins the days' hunting prospects and forces guests to stay longer than expected. Nuisances, yes, but troubles people can confront squarely, and far better than the gray despair of unvarying toil. The Haslanti tend to appreciate novelty as long as they get a good story out of it. (Those washerwomen will get laughs from the story of the bear for *decades*.) The goddess also has the power to pique curiosity and wonder or to make people lose interest in what they're doing. The Haslanti pray to Spring Snowfall that they may find new challenges and meet them successfully.

Spring Snowfall appears as a matronly woman dressed in furs. She possesses a wry sense of humor and appreciates well-crafted jokes and riddles.

**Sanctum:** Spring Snowfall dwells in the House of the Nine Hearths of Emerald and Silver.

**Motivation:** To give people occasional respite from labor and boredom.

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6; Charisma 6, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5; Perception 6, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 5, Temperance 2, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Athletics 1, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 6, Craft (Fate) 4, Dodge 5, Integrity 6, Investigation 4, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tribes, Skytongue) 4, Lore 3 (Zany Historical Incidents +3), Martial Arts 2, Melee 5, Occult 4, Performance 6, Presence 6, Resistance 3, Socialize 5, War 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Backing 4, Contacts 4, Salary 3, Sanctum 4 (House of the Nine Hearths)

**Charms:**

*Amethyst Awareness*—Little is hidden from agents of Fate.

*Chrysalis of Preservation*—Spring Snowfall captures events that people will overlook or not appreciate at the time, to release later when they can turn lives upside down.

*Creation of Perfection*—Spring Snowfall can adjust her captured events to make them less dangerous and more humorous or instructive.

*Destiny Sponsorship*—Spring Snowfall gains extra defenses only when she performs her specific duties with the acquiescence (if not the blessing) of the Division of Journeys.

*Domain Manipulation Scenario*—Spring Snowfall can provide minor unexpected fortunes or difficulties. The latter are almost never dire or insurmountable, and the former are never life-changing events. All of them offer a choice, however, an opportunity to be seized and (usually) a welcome distraction from backbreaking work.

*Dreaded Embrace of Mundanity*—Sometimes, failure is good for the soul, especially for supernatural beings who are accustomed to succeeding through their use of Essence.

*Emergency Prayer Relocation*—Spring Snowfall projects herself wherever mortals pray for something, *anything*, to jolt them out of their current lives.

*Hurry Home*—Spring Snowfall can transport herself instantly to the nearest gate to Yu-Shan, to the House of the Nine Hearths or to the sanctum of any other Ennead member.

*Materialize*—Costs 75 motes.

*Measure the Wind*—Spring Snowfall evaluates beings of power, the better to guide her in disrupting their lives.

*Melodious Diagnostic Report*—Spring Snowfall can listen to the world and find places where life has become oppressively certain.

*Natural Prognostication*—Spring Snowfall hints at Destiny's plans, especially when a destiny involves disruptions to a person's life.

*Principle of Motion*—Spring Snowfall has eight extra actions saved.



Spring Snowfall





*Symbol of Invincible Authority*—Random trouble cannot harm Spring Snowfall or interfere with her. She can only be affected by attacks or events specifically aimed at her. Costs 10 motes, one Willpower.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Craft, Investigation, Lore, Presence, Resistance, Socialize, Survival

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Craft, Investigation, Lore, Presence, Resistance, Socialize, Survival

*Third (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Craft, Investigation, Lore, Presence, Resistance, Socialize, Survival

*Divine (Ability) Subordination*—Awareness, Craft, Socialize  
**Join Battle:** 11

**Attacks:**

**Punch:** Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3  
**Kick:** Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 7B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2  
**Clinch:** Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

**Soak:** 21L/24B (Celestial vestments, 10L/10B; Destiny Sponsorship, 8L/8B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 8      **Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** 6      **Essence Pool:** 105

**Other Notes:** None

## THE GODS OF GETHAMANE

After the Solar Exalted excavated the City of the Mountain Gateway, they recruited three local gods to keep the air moving. The gods performed their tasks for centuries and enjoyed the prayers of a thriving, peaceful population. During the Usurpation, however, the hekatonkhire Vodak swept through the subterranean city. The gods sought the aid of the Celestial Hierarchy, but their pleas went unanswered. (Heaven had bigger problems.) Alone and half-insane, they kept at the only task left to them: moving the air through their city.

In time, mortals returned to the City of the Mountain Gateway and named it Gethamane. A few people who slept in the empty temples were touched by the gods' madness and became their priests. The Gethamanians do not know very much about their gods, though—not even their names. The three gods send strange visions to their priests but have forgotten how to speak or otherwise communicate clearly. While they retain individual appearances and personalities, their capabilities have merged over the millennia.

**Tribbua of the Outward Breath** is the god of Gethamanian expansion. She wants Gethamane to interact more with other nations through trade, treaty and immigration. The Solars recruited Tribbua first. Of the three gods, she would work the hardest to bring Solars back to Gethamane... if she knew they existed.

Tribbua sometimes manifests as a mortal woman who wanders through Gethamane's markets, mutely admiring the imported fineries and travelers from afar. She sometimes visits her priests in their dreams to couple with them. From these unions, Tribbua bears little wind-spirit progeny that she releases on the mountainside.

**Reshan of the Inward Breath** constantly weeps corrosive black tears out of shame and guilt for not preventing the old city's fall. She believes Gethamane should stay empty, for she fears that Vodak will rise again and repeat its massacre. Her memories inflict madness on mortals who sleep in Gethamane's temples, driving them to leave the city and never return. Reshan would shun any Solars who came to Gethamane, fearing that their presence and the protection they afford the city will encourage mortals to stay—and draw Vodak out of the depths.

Reshan sometimes takes the form of an old woman who leaves wet, black footprints as she walks through the underways.

**Metheris of the Still Sky** once mediated between Tribbua and Reshan as the voice of reason that weighed the pros and cons of a situation. He could not decide whether to fight Vodak or flee and has remained paralyzed by indecision ever since. While the prospect of Solars returning to Gethamane would tempt him as much as it would Tribbua, he also shares Reshan's fear that any Exalted in Gethamane could awaken Vodak and bring a new destruction. Metheris does not directly attempt to block any Exalted from entering the city, but he sends them many dreams filled with fear and a desire to leave.

Metheris manifests as a young boy, sometimes sitting atop the mountain on windless days, gazing at the sky and dreaming of Yu-Shan.

**Sanctum:** All three of Gethamane's gods keep their sanctums in their individual temples. They own modest mansions in Yu-Shan but have not visited them since the Usurpation.

**Motivation:** To keep the air moving and preserve Gethamane, each in their own way.

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3; Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 4, Conviction 3, Temperance 4, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Investigation 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; High Realm, Northern Barbarian Tribes, Skytongue) 3, Lore 4 (Gethamane +3), Martial Arts 4, Medicine 3, Melee 4, Occult 3, Performance 4, Presence 3, Resistance 4, Socialize 3, Stealth 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Cult 3, Influence 2

**Charms:**

*Affinity (Element) Control*—Air. As the stewards of Gethamane's air circulation, they have total control over the air and winds in the city, with all listed effects of this Charm. Costs six motes.

*Amethyst Awareness*—The gods of Gethamane perceive what happens in their city, in all aspects of reality.

*Call*—Gethamane's gods can communicate with one another wherever they go.

*Capture*—If the gods truly wished to express their wrath, they could capture the North's icy gales and set them blowing through Gethamane.

*Dreamscape*—This is now the only way Gethamane's gods know how to communicate. Their dreams are powerful despite their incoherence, as vehicles for social attacks enhanced by Presence Excellencies.

*Essence Bite*—If anyone strikes the gods, the gods can send freezing winds blowing through the person's bloodstream, inflicting aggravated damage that bypasses armor. This costs five motes per level of damage. The gods cannot inflict more than two levels per attack.

*Geas*—Priests of these gods are usually under the influence of this Charm in one way or another.

*Hurry Home*—The gods can move to any location in Gethamane or on its mountain.

*Intrusion-Sensing Method*—Gethamane's gods know when someone has entered one of their temples, or if beings of power enter the city.

*Landscape Hide*—Gethamane's gods are so attuned to their city that they can subsume themselves within it indefinitely.

*Materialize*—Costs 65 motes.

*Measure the Wind*—The gods evaluate the potential threat or benefit of every creature of power that enters the city.

*Mind-Knife Sacrament*—The gods use this Charm to ordain their priests and implant knowledge of their rites. Being insane, the gods are not very good at this, and sometimes drive mortals insane instead. Reshan sometimes uses this Charm deliberately to force people out of Gethamane. None of the gods use it to grant Ability or Virtue dots.

*Memory Mirror*—While visiting mortal dreams, the gods tend to search through memories as well.

*Principle of Motion*—Gethamane's gods each keep seven extra actions saved.

*Sense Domain*—The gods monitor Gethamane's air flow daily, seeking the source of any disruptions.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Presence

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Presence

**Join Battle: 7**

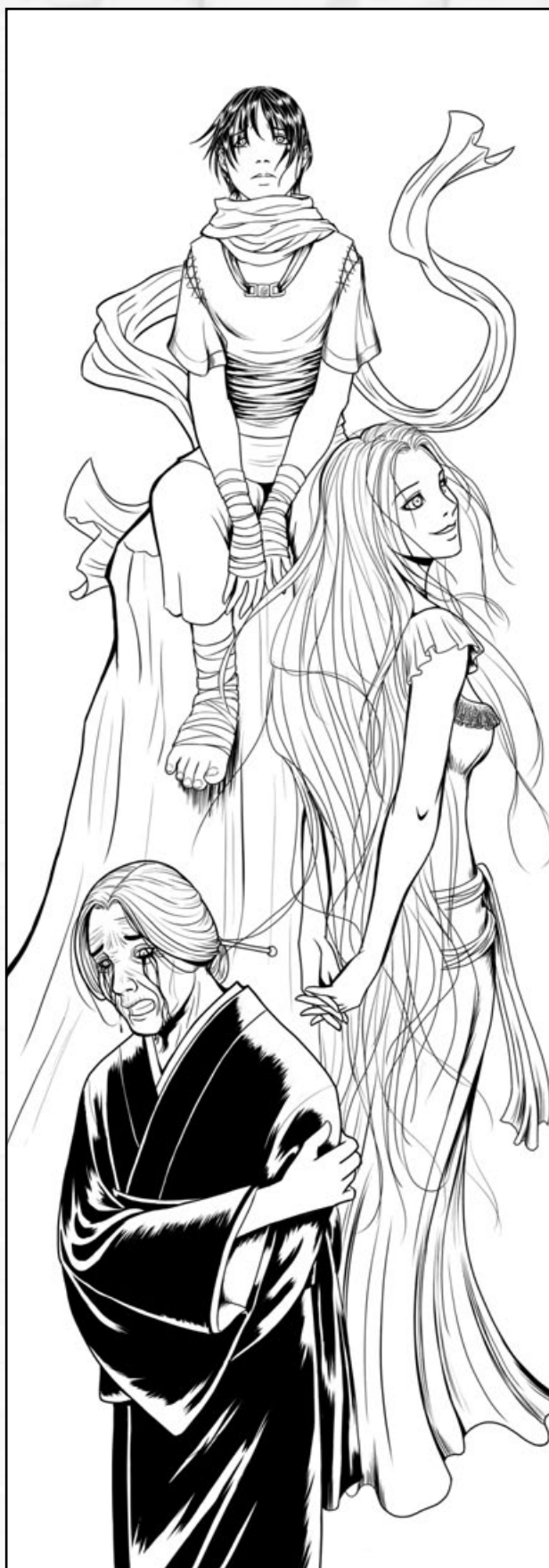
**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

### REPLACING THE GODS

The Celestial Hierarchy ceased paying attention to Gethamane's gods long ago (as they reported directly to the Solar Exalted). If someone of high enough authority learned of Gethamane's spiritual issues, however, someone might take action. Most likely, the Bureau of Humanity would try to replace the three with a single, more reliable god. Many gods would love assignment to a growing city such as Gethamane—a splendid chance to recruit worshippers. They would not be so enthusiastic if they knew about Vodak...



Exalted

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Maul: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 15B/4, Parry DV 3, Rate 1, Tags 2,O,P,R

Soak: 10L/15B (Spirit robes, 8L/11B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6

Willpower: 8

Essence: 5

Essence Pool: 90

Other Notes: At will, each of the gods can materialize a massive stone maul to use as a weapon.

## HEROES OF THE NORTH

People tend to think of the North as a land of fierce battle and the struggle for survival. Indeed, many Northerners hold this view themselves. Yet, the North also holds brilliant savants and subtle manipulators to equal any other part of Creation.

### THE BULL'S CIRCLE

Yurgen Kaneko's success as a warlord does not rest merely on his own prowess as a combatant and general. He has attracted a cadre of other Exalted as well. Three Solar Exalted stand out among his followers: the prophet-sorceress Samea; the savant-inquisitor Raneth of Diamond Hearth; and Nalla Bloodaxe, a spy who became a king.

### SAMEA OF THE BLACKWATER MAMMOTH TRIBE

The entire Blackwater Mammoth tribe raised Samea after the death of her parents. She became a skilled and highly observant gatherer of wild foods, but her intellect demanded more. The Blackwater Mammoth icewalkers expected her to become a shaman when her curiosity led her to a meeting with a small god and her innocent charisma made the meeting friendly. Samea Exalted while she wandered alone, trying to follow the path of a circling raptor, and the Unconquered Sun told her to restore the land to its First Age glories. Creation revealed the power of sorcery to her as if every tree and beast, rock and cloud had waited an Age to tell her their secrets. Memories from the First Age guided her to long-forgotten libraries buried beneath the snow, further expanding her power. After a year of travel, Samea returned to her tribe as a powerful guardian. At first she was also feared as a witch, but soon she was revered as a prophet.

First and foremost, Samea acts as a guide and mother to her people. She now sees all icewalkers as her family. The Blackwater Mammoth folk are her brothers and sisters, her sons and daughters. All other icewalkers are her cousins. She holds herself responsible for their wellbeing. Likewise, the Ice Plains are her home, and she guards them zealously against the polluting forces of the Wyld and the dead.

Yurgen Kaneko, as a fellow icewalker, is Samea's cousin. As the first Solar she ever met and her only Exalted companion for several years, he became her friend (though not, as many have claimed, her lover). She respects his power and feels indebted to him as any friend might feel toward another,



but she does not serve him. When she joins Kaneko in war against civilized nations and calls forth demons to aid his armies, she adds to the tally of debts he owes her, balancing them against the favors he has done for her and their people in the past. Should the icewalkers come under threat, Samea will call upon the Bull to repay those debts, no matter the situation elsewhere in his empire.

Even as a child, Samea commanded attention. Her stubborn bearing and haunted eyes compelled even those not of her tribe to listen. As a Solar, her presence is supernatural. Those who hear her sermons find that her words haunt their dreams. When she exercises her Charms, she burns her will into the souls of her congregation. She does not use this power casually, but she has no scruples about employing it when the occasion warrants, as when she enjoins them to obey what she sees as the Unconquered Sun's will. Entire tribes of icewalkers obey her injunctions without thinking, her words echoing in their minds in lieu of their own thoughts.

For all her power, Samea still looks 17 years old. She has flowing black hair, a delicate chin and a still-girlish figure. Her large, dark eyes, steady gaze and solemn expression, however, make people feel like they face someone very old and wise. When she runs, though, she hikes her felt skirt above her knees and seems like a girl again. Samea carries no weapons or armor—just a belt of gourds and pouches full of her magical supplies.

**Motivation:** Extirpate all supernatural threats to her people.

**Caste:** Zenith

**Anima Banner:** A blazing white tree with golden leaves.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4; Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 4, Conviction 2, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** *Grandmother's Scorn.* When she sees those she cares for speak or act in a self-destructive manner (whether physically, intellectually or spiritually), roll Samea's Compassion for her to gain Limit. In Limit Break, she confronts her companions to prevent them from endangering or degrading themselves, using any or all non-lethal means at her disposal for one full day. When she controls this condition so as not to obstruct a greater goal, she confines herself to mercilessly haranguing her companions regarding their foibles and flaws.

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 1, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 4, Investigation 1, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Old Realm, Riverspeak) 2, Lore 1, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Performance 3 (Oratory +1), Presence 5 (Icewalkers +1), Resistance 4, Ride 1, Socialize 3, Survival 3 (Frozen Wastes +2), War 2

**Backgrounds:** Artifact 1, Allies 5, Cult 3, Followers 3, Influence 4, Manse 3, Resources 4

**Charms:** Ailment-Rectifying Method, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Durability of Oak Meditation, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Presence Excellency, Flawless Diagnosis Technique, Infinite Presence Mastery, Iron Kettle Body, Iron Skin Concentration, Majestic Radiant Presence, Ox-Body Technique, Second Integrity Excellency, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Terrifying Apparition of Glory, Underling Promoting Touch

**Spells:** Commanding the Beasts, Demon of the Second Circle, Flight of the Brilliant Raptor, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Magma Kraken, Summon Elemental, Swift Spirit of Winged Transportation

**Join Battle:** 5

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

**Soak:** 2L/4B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 5      **Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** 4

**Personal Essence:** 21      **Peripheral Essence:** 47 (48)

**Committed Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Samea wears a hearthstone amulet set with a gem of sorcery (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex*, p. 107).

## RANETH OF DIAMOND HEARTH

Born at the edge of the world, raised amid the cold lawlessness of Diamond Hearth, Raneth craves civilization in spite of his own violent nature. His knack for machinery lifted him from the drudgery of the mines and the violence of the dockside gangs, and it saved his life in buried Tzatli, where he Exalted with an ancient Essence weapon in his hand. Now he wishes to spread civilization to the edges of Creation, at sword's point if need be.

Raneth enlisted with the Bull soon after the Second Breath. Aghast at the icewalkers' primitive way of life, he designed their new educational curriculum and established civil codes for their governors and garrisons. Despite his usefulness and idealism, his patronizing attitude grated on Yurgen, Samea, Crimson Antler and Fear-Eater. Both as a reward and to get him out of their hair, the Bull sent Raneth to the empire's greatest bastion of civilization: Plenilune.

Raneth is of middling stature—making him short for a Northerner—with a stocky frame and small, blunt features. His black hair and eyes stand out sharply against his ivory-pale skin. The pressures of government weigh him down; his expression is generally tight and humorless, and he paces like a caged beast.

**Motivation:** Restore the North to the glories of the First Age.

**Caste:** Twilight

**Anima Banner:** A dragon scaled in blue and violet, its eyes as red as the setting sun. It exhales great goutts of golden fire when Raneth is wounded or enraged.







**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 2

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 3, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Virtue Flaw:** Heart of Flint

**Abilities:** Archery 4 (Essence Weapons +2), Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 3, Craft (Air) 5, Craft (Earth) 1, Craft (Fire) 2, Craft (Magitech) 3, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: High Realm, Old Realm, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 3 (First Age +1, The North +1), Martial Arts 1, Melee 1 (Knives +2), Occult 3, Presence 3, Resistance 2, Ride 1, Sail 1, Socialize 2, Survival 1, War 2

**Backgrounds:** Artifact 5, Contacts 3, Followers 1, Influence 4, Manse 2, Resources 5

**Charms:** Courtier's Eye Technique, Durability-Enhancing Technique, Essence Arrow Attack (Righteous Judgment Arrow), First Archery Excellency, First Lore Excellency, Judge's Ear Technique, Object-Strengthening Touch, Ox-Body Technique, Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Craft Excellency, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Investigation Excellency, There Is No Wind, Third Craft Excellency, Whirling Brush Method

**Join Battle:** 5

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Perfect Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Concussive Essence Cannon: Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 10B, Rate 1, Range 50, Tags P

Exceptional Composite Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L\*, Rate 4, Range 300

\* Uses frog crotch arrows; double target's lethal soak from armor before applying damage.

**Soak:** 12L/12B (Black jade reinforced breastplate, 10L/9B, Hardness: 8L/8B, -1 mobility penalty, fatigue value 1; and shield, +1 difficulty to hit)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 4      **Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** 3

**Personal Essence:** 16      **Peripheral Essence:** 32 (37)

**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** Raneth wears a hearthstone amulet set with a mind-cleansing gem (see *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. III—*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 96). The bulbous wand he wields in battle is a First Age relic: a very small concussive essence cannon (see *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. I—*Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 131). The weapon costs three motes to fire. The player of a human-sized target struck by a blast must successfully roll [(Dexterity or Stamina) + Athletics] against difficulty 3 or have her character flung two yards back and knocked prone.

## NALLA BLOODAXE

Nalla grew up in a potter's household in civilized Whitewall. Idealistic and aggressive, he fit poorly into his home city's constricted, humorless mold. After spending a year among the icewalkers, young Nalla joined Whitewall's guardians. He then spent a decade hunting monsters that ventured too close to the city. He Exalted while hunting a Winter Folk noble that had infiltrated Whitewall to stalk and kill its people in the night.

The Syndics sought to retain Nalla's services after his Exaltation. Indeed, they still come to him in dreams to remind him of his origins. The Bull of the North, however, offered chances for adventure that the defense of his home couldn't match. Nalla saw the Linowan War as a great game, icewalkers he knew against Linowan he didn't, while destroying the Tepet legions seemed like a righteous blow of free Northern folk against the ham-fisted bullying of the distant Realm. Subverting Karn seemed like grand fun as well, and he played his part with cunning and skill.

Nalla's new life is bloody and harsh. While he admires the courage and self-reliance of the icewalkers, he never liked their casual cruelty to other folk. Ten years as a guardian of Whitewall taught him fully to despise the brutality and bloodlust of Northern raiders. Nalla joined Yurgen Kaneko in part because he saw the Bull as championing the admirable aspects of icewalker culture, while curbing and civilizing the icewalkers in other ways. Now that he is one of those raiders, Nalla finds himself divided. Never has the order, peace and prosperity of Whitewall looked better, but he also knows the desperate uncertainty that drives bandits and barbarians—the fear of starvation and cold. The Karnese have become people to him, not merely pawns in a game—and so have their foes. As a result, he wrestles with his own tactics. Where killing barbarians once seemed little more to him than the putting down of mad dogs, it begins to feel like murder.

Nalla looks every inch the Northern warrior-hero. He stands taller than the typical Northerner, with broad



shoulders and muscular limbs, and he moves with an easy grace. Wavy blond hair frames a broad, tanned face with bright blue eyes and an expressive mouth that conveys his many moods: from infectious grins and warm smiles to black scowls or the teeth-bared grimace of a berserker's fury.

**Motivation:** To outdo all rivals for feats of daring.

**Caste:** Night

**Anima Banner:** A ghost-white lion with eyes of warm gold.

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3; Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 1, Valor 4

**Virtue Flaw:** Foolhardy Contempt

**Abilities:** Archery 2, Athletics 5 (Daredevil Feats +1), Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 4, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Riverspeak) 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 3, Melee 5, Occult 2, Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Ride 1, Sail 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2 (The Far North +1), Thrown 2, War 3

**Backgrounds:** Artifact 2, Contacts 3, Followers 3, Influence 4, Resources 5

**Charms:** Easily Overlooked Presence Method, Fire and Stones Strike, First Athletics Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First Presence Excellency, First War Excellency, Foe-Vaulting Method, Hungry Tiger Technique, Increasing Strength Exercise, Lightning Speed, Monkey Leap Technique, Ox-Body Technique, Seven Shadow Evasion, Shadow Over Water

**Join Battle:** 6

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Axe: Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 9L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2  
Thrown Axe: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 7L, Rate 2, Range 10

White Jade Grimcleaver: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 16L/4, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags O

Composite Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 6L\*, Rate 3, Range 250

\* Uses broadhead arrows.

**Soak:** 6L/5B (Fine chain shirt, 4L/2B, fatigue value 1)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 6      **Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** 3

**Personal Essence:** 16      **Peripheral Essence:** 32 (37)

**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** Nalla wields twin axes in combat, one for melee and the other for throwing. His grimcleaver, spoils from the Tepet legions, hangs on the walls of his chambers as a trophy. He uses it only in dire straits, for doing so would reveal his Exalted nature.

## OTHER HEROES

The North has many heroes besides the Bull's Circle. The Lunar Exalted wield powerful influence in much of the North, while outcaste Dragon-Blooded become champions of their people. Even mortals can become key players in the North through their extraordinary skills and sheer audacity.

### BLUE DRAGONFISH, HASLANTI ADMIRAL

Admiral Blue Dragonfish has led the Haslanti Ice Squadron for 60 years. As a Terrestrial Exalt in the prime of life at age 92, he expects to keep his post for another century or two. This son of an emerald-holder from Shield held the tiller of an iceship while still in his teens, and that's when he took the Second Breath. He joined the Ice Squadron in his 20s and rose rapidly through the ranks to become a scourge to the League's enemies and a living legend of the North.

Blue Dragonfish loves the chill wind in his hair and the thunder in the hull of an iceship racing over frozen seas, not to mention the adventure of exploring the Great Ice and battling the League's foes. He becomes visibly uncomfortable after a few hours on land or amidst ordinary folk. The great Admiral has taken no wife and calls few men his close friends, though he enjoys the unquestioned loyalty of his fleet. He could become a political player in the League but abhors politics and the minutia of formal regulations, paperwork and budgetary allocations (to the loss of the Ice Squadron's funding). The Realm itself has invited him to command one of its fleets, but his loyalty remains to his tribe and his nation. The frozen sea is vast, and while Blue Dragonfish will live long, he will not live forever, and he hopes to see it all before he dies.

The Admiral is a tall, stalwart man, with craggy features, skin the color of blue icebergs and a frosty white beard trimmed into two short points.

**Motivation:** To discover every wonder of the North. And if it threatens the League, destroy it.

**Aspect:** Air

**Anima Banner:** Whorls of blue wind.

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 2, Temperance 2, Valor 4

**Abilities:** Archery 3 (Powerbow +2), Athletics 3 (Movement On Ice +2), Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 1 (Escape Paperwork +2), Dodge 4, Integrity 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Other: Low Realm, Northern Barbarian Tribes) 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5, Melee 4, Presence 3, Resistance 2, Sail 5, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, War 3 (Ice Naval Strategy +2)

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Artifact 3, Command 5, Connections 2, Henchman 3, Manse 2, Reputation 3, Resources 3, Retainers 2

**Charms:** Deck-Striding Technique, Dragon-Graced Arrow, Elemental Bolt Attack, Feeling-the-Air Technique, Fine Passage Negotiating Style, First Archery Excellency, First Dodge Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Me-





lee Excellency, First Sail Excellency, First War Excellency, Five-Dragon Blocking Technique, Five-Dragon Claw, Five-Dragon Fist, Five-Dragon-Force Blow, Five-Dragon Fortitude, Hurricane-Predicting Glance, Ox-Body Technique (x2), Safety Among Enemies, Storm-Outrunning Technique, Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration, Swallows Defend the Nest, Terrestrial Archery Reinforcement, Terrestrial Sail Reinforcement, Third Sail Excellency, Third War Excellency

#### Combos:

Fist of the Icy Seas (Five-Dragon Fist, Five-Dragon Claw)

The Ice Admiral's Unstoppable Arrow (Dragon-Graced Arrow, Swallows Defend the Nest)

Sure Hand at the Tiller (Deck-Striding Technique, Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration, Fine Passage Negotiating Style)

#### Join Battle: 6

#### Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Blue Jade Long Powerbow (Master Winter's Teeth): Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L, Rate 3, Range 400

\* Broadhead arrows

**Soak:** 5L/7B (Buff jacket, 3L/4B, -1 mobility penalty, fatigue value 2)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 5 **Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** 4

**Personal Essence:** 10 **Peripheral Essence:** 22 (28)

**Committed Essence:** 6

**Other Notes:** None

### GERD MARROW-EATER

Gerd Marrow-Eater became a legendary warlord and pillar of the Silver Pact by founding the Haslanti League. He began as the son of a Haslanesh chief, born in the time when the Guild cemented its power over the Haslan tribes. He Exalted in RY 552, in his mid-20s, when mercenaries attacked his family to drive them off land the Guild wanted. The mercenaries crippled Gerd's mother and tied Gerd to a tree as they prepared for a torturous execution. Then, a vision of soaring eagles overwhelmed Gerd. He broke free and slew the mercenaries.

Gerd knew exactly what had happened to him, from old legends of the Haslan tribes' ancient patron, Arvida of the Crescent Eye. So did the rest of his family. They were tremendously proud but said as one that Gerd must leave them to pursue his greater destiny.

The young Exalt spent the next 30 years learning the arts of war and politics with the Silver Pact, that he might lead his people against the Guild. The hardest lesson came, however, from studying the career of Arvida. He concluded that Arvida's rule had nearly destroyed the Haslan people. Gerd turned to the Thousand Streams River philosophy that, while the Lunar Exalted bore a duty to foster new societies, they must not presume to rule. Lunars were the Stewards of Creation—not its masters.

Every Haslanti child knows the tale of how Gerd called the leaders of their people to Twisted Stone and led the tribes to victory, leaving the final victory against the Guild for the Haslanti warriors to achieve without his aid. Since then, Gerd has appeared but rarely to the Haslanti people, to discuss a knotty political problem perhaps or to rescue a family from bandits because he was in the area. He has decided, though, that the Haslanti League truly does not need him anymore. Gerd now seeks new challenges.

Gerd currently claims a patch of mountains between Gethamane and Shanarinara as his personal domain. He watches the Guild (which he still despises) and watches the White Sea for invasions by the Northern Fair Folk or other Wyld forces. Gerd also breeds a legion of the North's great eagles, pulling the species back from the brink of extinction, and confers with Silver Pact savants about the possibility of raising the mighty birds to human intelligence, like the sapient beasts of Halta.

Most of all, Gerd now serves as a mentor to younger Lunars, delivering lectures on war, social engineering, shapeshifting or the other fields of Gerd's expertise. Other members of Gerd's former pack, the Twisted Stone Conclave, sometimes assist with the training. Prospective students must fight Gerd, as the Haslanti champions did at Twisted Stone. Gerd does not kill his hopeful applicants, but he takes a joint from the little finger of the left hand of any he deems worthy to learn from him.

In return for training, Gerd sends his students on training missions of derring-do such as recovering lost artifacts, rescuing slaves from Guild caravans, thwarting plots by Deathlords, the Fair Folk and other dark powers, and generally strengthening Creation's defenses. Gerd ponders whether the Bull of the North is a fellow defender of Creation or one of the threats he must defend against. If the Bull attacks the Haslanti League, he will make Gerd his enemy.

Gerd Marrow-Eater can take the shape of an eagle, wolf, blue whale, bear, elk and reindeer, among many others. In his human form, he is a tall, surprisingly youthful-looking man, with a clean-shaven face, dark eyes and long, straight white hair. His war form stands over 10 feet tall, with white feathers massed at his clawed hands and feet and on his head like hair and sideburns. He dresses in practical Haslanti leathers and wool, donning armor if necessary.

**Motivation:** To build new societies free of the Guild.

**Caste:** Changing Moon

**Anima Banner:** Shifting silver and dark blue light reveals a soaring eagle.

**Spirit Shape:** Eagle

**Tell:** White eagle feathers on his extremities

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4; Charisma 5 (Lead Troops +2), Manipulation 5 (Inspiring Oratory +2), Appearance 4; Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 4, Conviction 4, Temperance 4, Valor 5

**Virtue Flaw:** The Curse of the Raging Bull

**Abilities:** Archery 5, Athletics 4, Awareness 5, Craft (Wood) 2 (+2 Tattooing), Dodge 5, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Low Realm, Old Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues) 3, Lore 5, Martial Arts 5, Melee 3, Occult 3, Performance 3 (Public Speaking +2), Presence 5, Resistance 5, Sail 3, Socialize 3, Stealth 5, Survival 5 (Far North +2), Thrown 3, War 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4 (Twisted Stone Conclave), Artifact 1, Artifact 2, Backing 4 (Silver Pact), Cult 4, Followers 4, Heart's Blood 5, Manse 4, Reputation 4, Resources 3

**Charms:** Bruise-Relief Method, Cat-Face Presentation, Charismatic Lunar Trick, Claws of the Silver Moon, Cobra Hypnotic Method, Culling the Pride, Dog-Tongue Method, Eagle Eye Advantage, External Hide Perfection, Eye of the Cat, False Burrow Pursuit, Finding the Needle's Eye, First Charisma Excellency, First Intelligence Excellency, First Manipulation Excellency, First Stamina Excellency, First Strength Excellency, First Wits Excellency, Flawless Charisma Focus, Flawless Manipulation Focus, Foot-Trapping Counter, Form-Fixing Method, Grandfather Spider Majesty, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Heightened Sight Method, Herd Reinforcement Stance, Herd-Strengthening Invocation, Hide-Toughening Essence, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Instinct Memory Insertion, Instinctive Charisma Unity, Instinctive Manipulation Unity, Instinctive Stamina Unity, Instinctive Strength Unity, Keen Sight Technique, Lessons of the Winter Wolf,



Lodestone Reckoning Manner, Lunar Hero Form, Maintaining the Pack, Meerkat Alertness Practice, Mirror Sight Dismay, Moonlight Curtain Drawn, Nature-Reinforcing Allocation, North Mastery Technique, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Pack Instinct Affirmation, Rabid Beast Attitude, School Becomes Shark Formation, School in the Reeds Technique, Second Dexterity Excellency, Second Manipulation Excellency, Second Perception Excellency, Sense-Borrowing Method, Sharing the Gifts of Luna, Steadfast Yeddim Meditation, Third Charisma Excellency, Third Manipulation Excellency, Third Perception Excellency, Third Wits Excellency, Thousand Claw Infliction, Topiary Culture Meditation, Watchful Spider Stance, Wolf Pack Training Technique, Wyld-Sensing Instincts

**Combos:**

The Eagle Regroups (First Charisma Excellency, First Manipulation Excellency, Maintaining the Pack, School Becomes Shark Formation, Third Manipulation Excellency)

**Knacks:** Deadly Beastman Transformation\*, Devastating Ogre Enhancement, Humble Mouse Shape, Internal Form Mastery, Mountainous Spirit Expression, Towering Beast Form

\* In his war form, Gerd receives +2 to his Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, as well as the positive effects of the following mutations: Enhanced Senses (Sight), Feathers, Glider, Talons.

**Join Battle:** 9

**Attacks:**

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3





Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Arvida's Bite): Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 8L\*, Range 350, Rate 2

\*Uses broadhead arrows.

War Form:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 6B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 9B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 7L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Arvida's Bite): Speed 6, Accuracy 15, Damage 10L\*, Range 350, Rate 2

\*Uses broadhead arrows.

**Soak:** 7L/7B; 7L/9B in war form (Moonsilver chain shirt, 5L/3B; Hardness: 2L/2B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/  
Incap

**Dodge DV:** 7 (8 in war form)

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 4

**Personal Essence:** 20

**Peripheral Essence:** (52)

**Committed Essence:** 6

**Other Notes:** Gerd is a legendary personage in Haslanti culture. Rolls for Haslanti characters to see and recognize his Tell are at +2 successes.

## JAXAR, AGENT OF THE GUILD

For the past five years, Jaxar has lived in Gethamane as an agent for the Guild. She leads a gang of child-thieves, mostly from middle-to-upper classes, who have no idea how much power she has over them or how much trouble they make for themselves. Jaxar's recruits think that their "society of Thieves" is all a huge game. These children pass information to her from all over the city. Their hideout is in an abandoned storehouse and junkyard in the eastern sector of the Outer Ring.

The Guild took Jaxar in, trained her and trusted her with important jobs, for which they pay her well. She is a capable blackmailer and practiced psychologist, not to mention a crack shot with a flame piece, and deals boldly with criminals of all kinds. Jaxar feels more or less loyal to the Guild, but she knows a good opportunity when she sees one. She could accept a better job elsewhere.

Jaxar avoided registering for the Dole, but she did not spend her time in the city in hiding. She knows most of Gethamane's layout and neighborhoods. Some of her experiences in remote areas of Gethamane have been strange indeed, and she has glimpsed the city's enigmatic gods.

Jaxar is a 40-year-old mortal woman, a dwarf, with a preternaturally youthful face. From a distance she can pass as a child, though up close an adult can recognize her true age. She has reddish-brown hair that she keeps neatly trimmed in a bob.



**Motivation:** To grab all the power, wealth and (especially!) respect that she can.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 1, Temperance 3, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Archery 3 (Flame Piece +2), Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 4, Integrity 3, Investigation 3, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Guild Cant, Low Realm, Skytongue) 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 3 (Sai +2), Presence 3, Resistance 2, Ride 2, Sail 1, Socialize 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 1, Backing 3, Contacts 3

**Join Battle:** 8

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 1B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 1B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Sai: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags D,M

Flame Piece: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L, Rate 2, Range 8

**Soak:** 1L/4B (Rugged leather clothing, 1L/1B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 3 **Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Jaxar owns a good luck charm that protects her from one botch per story, and a potent walkaway that negates two successes on a single damage roll per story.

## DEMONS AND MONSTERS OF THE NORTH

Ancient, forgotten demons and creatures touched by the Wyld exist just beyond the sight of mortals. These are a few of the most dangerous.

### APHELIOTROPES, THE SHROUDED ONES

Derat Khan, a First Age general of the Dawn Caste, came to hate the Unconquered Sun for abandoning the Solar Exalted to the Usurpation. On the run and at death's door, he sold his soul to a Second Circle demon and was thus infernally Exalted. From that day, Derat Khan became a creature of hate, living only for revenge on the Unconquered Sun, the Terrestrial Exalted and Creation itself. He carved the abhorrent cavern-state of Keruzat Derat beneath a Northern mountain. Here, he spawned the spawned the horrible apheliotropes, or shrouded ones, terrible creatures with the shapes of men but the temperament and will of demons, to carry out his vengeance.

The demon-bought Solar apparently died during the Shogunate, but his Demon-Blooded progeny lived on. For centuries, Keruzat Derat was the vilest pit in Creation, a place of unspeakable tortures and blasphemous debauches—a bit of Hell brought to Creation, or maybe even worse! The apheliotropes made war on humanity, raiding and destroying towns and the armies sent against them, dragging their captives below to live the rest of their short existences as the shrouded ones' playthings. Even the Dragon-Blooded heroes of the Shogunate could not defeat the Demon-Blooded horde.

Yet, the apheliotropes could not defeat the Great Contagion. The shrouded ones' decimation by plague and the Fair Folk weakened their grip on the Far North. Then the arch-sorcerer Bagrash Köl noticed that he had competition in the North. The fierce hordes and demon-beasts of the shrouded ones were no match for Bagrash Köl's legions, his sorcery and the omnipotent Eye of Autochthon. The mountain of Keruzat Derat became a crater lined with glittering crystal.

Since then, the descendants of the few surviving apheliotropes have acted alone or in very small bands. They move stealthily through human society, taking whatever chance they find to lead mortals into demon worship. Derat Khan is but a legend to his descendants, but the shrouded ones still hope to bring about his final revenge. Just as Derat Khan fixed demonic power in their blood, so too did he fix obedience to the Yozis.

The shrouded ones are a hunted people, primarily by the Haslanti and the icewalkers. Sometimes, apheliotropes attract bands of lost, angry mortals who blame Creation and the gods for some perceived wrong done to them. The shrouded ones take what they can from such confused souls and inevitably leave them much worse off than they were before.

Apheliotropes appear as strong humans wreathed in a shroud of darkness. They can often pass for humans in the

proper lighting, but many shrouded ones show some telltale sign of their demonic origin such as small horns, inhuman eyes or clawed fingers.

For more information on the Demon-Blooded, demon pacts and infernal cults, see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Internals** and (for a demon's-eye view of cults) **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. V—Malfeas**.

**Motivation:** To bring down human civilization.

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

**Abilities:** Archery 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Dodge 4, Integrity 3, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Skytongue) 1, Lore 3 (Apheliotrope Legend +2), Martial Arts 3, Medicine 1 (Torture +2), Melee 4, Occult 4, Presence 2, Socialize 3, Stealth 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Contacts 3, Followers 1–3, Resources 1–3

#### Charms and Powers:

**Demonic Mutations**—A typical shrouded one has no more than a single pox to indicate his or her inhuman heritage, but apheliotropes may possess other poxes, blights and afflictions, gaining the necessary bonus points through negative mutations. These mutations owe nothing to the Wyld, but can be represented through the mutations found on



pages 288–290 of *Exalted*, pages 206–210 of *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars* and pages 144–150 of *The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld*. A selection of mutations specifically for Demon-Blooded and akuma characters are found on pages 62–64 of *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals*.

*Ebon Curtain*—A permanent shadow surrounds apheliotropes during the day, preventing sunlight from touching their skin. By spending 10 motes, shrouded ones can expand and intensify this shadow so that it obscures their features and actions, resulting in bonus dice to Stealth rolls equal to (Essence x 2). This effect lasts for one scene and has no effect against the Charms of the Solar Exalted.

*Enlightened Essence*—All apheliotropes have Essence pools as per the rules for spirit characters: (Essence x 10) + (Willpower x 5) motes.

*Landscape Hide*—Shrouded ones can merge with shadows of their size or greater. Costs six motes and one Willpower.

*Malediction*—Apheliotropes hate and are jealous of the works of mortals. They may curse artisans and craftsmen by touch, imposing a one-die penalty to all Craft rolls.

*Measure the Wind*—The shrouded ones like to know the power of their victims or foes.

*Ox-Body Technique*—Apheliotropes have two extra -1 health levels.

*Thaumaturgy*—Some shrouded ones know one or more Arts, especially the Arts of Alchemy, Demon Summoning and Warding and Exorcism.

**Join Battle:** 5

**Attacks:**

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags P

Chopping Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 9L/2, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Long Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 6L\*, Rate 3, Range 200

\* Uses broadhead arrows.

**Soak:** 8L/11B (Chain hauberk +6L/7B, -3 mobility penalty, fatigue value 2)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 1      **Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** 1      **Essence Pool:** 40

**Other Notes:** These traits represent a basic apheliotrope. These hereditary servants of the Yozi may acquire higher Essence and additional Charms through experience or as endowments from demon masters. Shrouded ones might also own artifacts, use poisoned weapons or otherwise improve their equipment.

### CORR'DAL, THE SLUG MOTHER

This Second Circle demon led the horde of demons that the Solar architect Kal Bax summoned to build his Invisible Fortress. Bax betrayed Corr'dal and bound her into Creation.



She now rules her brood, the demons called the Founders (properly, the dal'sharr—see p. XX) and the devil beasts called ice eaters, from a throne of silver and bone. Corr'dal still seethes over Bax's ancient betrayal. Since that time, she has hated all Solar Exalted. She desires above all to escape the Demonlands around the Invisible Fortress so she can carry out her vengeance.

Corr'dal resembles a corpulent sluglike demon with black, hairless skin, a vaguely humanoid face and murky yellow eyes. She cannot move on her own, typically lying motionless on her throne. Even speech is laborious for Corr'dal, but she has an astute and creative mind. Rather than talk aloud, Corr'dal usually speaks through her dal'sharr vizier U'awa, who receives instructions from Corr'dal telepathically.

For a description of the ice eaters and rules for creating these devil beasts, see pages XX–XX of *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Infernals*.

**Sanctum:** Corr'dal lives in a huge tent in the Demonlands.

**Motivation:** To escape the Demonlands and kill any Solar Exalted she meets... such as by sending them to their deaths in the Invisible Fortress.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 0, Stamina 7; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0; Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 1, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 4, Craft (Air) 5, Craft (Earth) 5, Craft (Fate) 5, Integrity 5, Lore 5, Occult 5, Presence 2, Resistance 3, Survival 2

**Backgrounds:** Cult 2, Followers 1

**Spirit Charms:**

*Amethyst Awareness*—Founders perceive structures of Essence and other intangible things.

*Chrysalis of Preservation*—Corr'dal can materialize anything she can imagine and for which she possesses a relevant Craft Ability. These imaginings have even less reality than the fantasies of the Fair Folk, however, for they do nothing except remain solid.

*Communion of the Spawn*—Corr'dal can communicate telepathically with any of the Founders, at no Essence cost.

*Creation of Perfection*—Corr'dal can shape Fate and Essence with incredible skill. It's how she and her progeny built the Invisible Fortress for Kal Bax and moved it and the surrounding territory outside Fate.

*Essence Bite*—Those who strike Corr'dal are momentarily engulfed in a misty green aura emanating from the demon. This cloud burns the attacker, dealing one die of lethal damage per two motes spent.

*Essence Plethora* (x3)—Corr'dal has 30 extra motes.

*Harrow the Mind*—Corr'dal once could weave thoughts to make mortals believe almost anything. Kal Bax prudently crippled her facility with this power. If freed, Corr'dal's Manipulation and Presence would rise to the point where she could control all but the strongest minds.

*Host of Spirits*—Corr'dal can evoke up to 15 copies of herself, costing three motes each.

*Materialize*—Costs 60 motes.

*Measure the Wind*—Corr'dal evaluates anyone she meets who might have magical powers... especially the Exalted.

*Possession*—Corr'dal cannot use this Charm until she regains her power to dematerialize.

*Principle of Motion*—Corr'dal has nine extra actions banked.

*Stoke the Flame*—Inspires jealousy and greed.

*Touch of Grace*—Corr'dal can heal one health level of damage by spending three motes and one Willpower.

*Words of Power*—In addition to the base cost of five motes, Corr'dal must spend one additional Willpower to speak aloud.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Craft, Lore, Occult

*Second (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Craft, Lore, Occult

**Join Battle:** 9

**Attacks:** None

**Soak:** 7L/10B (Tough hide, 3L/3B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 0      **Willpower:** 9

**Essence:** 3      **Essence Pool:** 105

**Other Notes:** Corr'dal's throne emits a miasma of dark Essence that requires a successful (Perception + Occult) roll to sense, originating from the various items hidden in its hollow seat. Attempts to read Corr'dal's mind (or any Founder's in the vicinity of the throne) suffers a -3 external penalty.

Due to the constraints placed on her by Bax's binding,

Corr'dal cannot dematerialize. The binding also limits her powers in other ways. If freed, she would become far more powerful and dangerous.

## THE FOUNDERS

The demon-children of Corr'dal now call themselves the Founders, to distinguish themselves from their mother's half-animal offspring, the ice eaters. Demonology texts of the Old Realm call them the dal'sharr. That name is now forgotten in Malfeas as well as Creation, for the Solar architect Kal Bax summoned the entire race of First Circle demons and bound them to build his Invisible Fortress. Then he didn't let them return to Malfeas, lest they reveal the secret of his hideaway's location.

The dal'sharr deeply dislike all Exalted, especially Solars.

A Founder has long, chitinous arms and legs attached to a thick, slug-like torso. Their crescent-shaped heads feature a grotesquely jutting chin and brow, narrow eyes and a wide mouth that always seems to smile. Founder skin color ranges from light gray to pitch-black. These demons stand four and six feet tall. They are sexless and sterile. Most importantly, though, they are master artisans of fate and Essence as well as stone and fine metalwork.

**Sanctum:** The 500 or so dal'sharr live in a tent city they call Gate, in the Demonlands near the Invisible Fortress.







**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 3, Temperance 1, Valor 4

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Craft (Air) 4, Craft (Earth) 4, Craft (Fate) 4, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Larceny 2, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Skytongue) 1, Martial Arts 4, Occult 3, Presence 2, Resistance 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2

**Spirit Charms:**

*Amethyst Awareness*—Founders perceive structures of Essence and other intangible things.

*Chrysalis of Preservation*—The Founders make their gorgeous tent city out of Essence and their own imagination. While the tents, implements and furnishings all seem quite solid, they are nothing but crystallized imaginings, and the Founders can dissolve or relocate the entire town in moments.

*Creation of Perfection*—Dal'sharr can shape Fate and Essence with the same precision they might apply to stone or metal. If they wanted, a group of Founders could pick up a demesne by the edges and move its Essence somewhere else. (Of course, the pool of Essence would dissipate soon after the demons released it if they did not deposit it in a geomantically suitable location.)

*Essence Plethora* (x2)—Dal'sharr have 20 extra motes.

*Materialize*—Costs 45 motes.

*Measure the Wind*—The dal'sharr evaluate the power of potential victims or foes.

*Principle of Motion*—A Founder typically keeps seven actions banked.

*Words of Power*—Crafting words and Essence together, a Founder's invective strikes as a physical blow.

*First (Ability) Excellency*—Awareness, Craft

**Join Battle:** 6

**Attacks:**

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 7L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Cinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Bite: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Rate 1

**Soak:** 6L/8B (Tough hide, 3L/3B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 5      **Willpower:** 7

**Essence:** 2      **Essence Pool:** 75

**Other Notes:** The dal'sharr are magically prevented from dematerializing. They must stay material until the runestone that binds them is destroyed.

## HUSHED ONES

These Wyld-corrupted creatures superficially resemble men and woman... except they go naked in the bitterest cold and never utter a sound. Hushed ones live most of their lives hidden in Wyld pockets throughout the North, hunting their prey with single-minded efficiency.



Some people mistake the hushed ones' silence for a lack of intelligence, but these creatures have crafty minds that can follow complex strategies. They also have no concept of mercy. There is no reasoning or bargaining with hushed ones. No one can understand their cold, alien behavior.

Hushed ones never fight fairly. They try to hide and attack from ambush, preferably in numbers great enough to give them an overwhelming advantage. Hushed ones also cause avalanches or build traps using spears, snares, pits and dropfalls. **Scroll of Kings** describes many traps on pages 153–157, and hushed ones know them all. A pack tries to kill the strongest member of a group first, in hopes that they can mop up the weaker prey later.

While hushed ones can survive on any food that normal humans would eat, they prefer raw human flesh. Their lives center on catching, killing and eating whatever victims they can find. When hushed ones take their prey alive, they drag their victims back to their nests for the entire tribe to share in the feast.

The most successful hushed one tribes keep herds of captured humans in wide pits dug 20 feet deep, breaking their victims' arms and legs to further prevent escape. Hushed ones feed their herd sparingly on birds and worms, harvesting them one at a time as needed. During the coldest nights, the hushed ones dump heaps of dead leaves in the pits to keep the herd warm enough to survive. A herd of a few dozen human captives can preserve a hushed one pack through the coldest months and well into the spring, when hunting can begin again.

Of course, it is possible to rescue a pack's captives. This is best accomplished as soon as possible, for existence in a herd pit quickly takes its toll on a victim's mind and body. People rescued after several weeks of captivity rarely speak again because of the horrors they have seen. Nor will they easily walk again due to improperly healed bones and injuries sustained fighting the rest of the herd for scraps of food. What's more, captives eventually may experience one or more Wyld mutations (see **Exalted**, pp. 288–290, **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pp. 144–151 and pp. 206–210 of **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**).

All hushed ones have long black hair on their heads. Their smooth, white and unblemished skin stays cold to the touch. Their wounds heal quickly and never scar. Hushed ones are incredibly strong and have long sharp claws on their fingers. They prefer to use these natural weapons but can use the weapons collected from prey if this gives them some tactical advantage. When not in use, they bury their weapons in and around their nests. They never wear armor.

**Motivation:** Hushed ones live only for the hunt.

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6; Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3; Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Compassion 0, Conviction 5, Temperance 2, Valor 5

**Abilities:** Archery 4, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Dodge 5, Integrity 5, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 3, Melee 5, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Stealth 4, Survival 4, War 1 (Coordinate Attacks +3)

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2

**Wyld Mutations and Other Powers:** *Poxes:* Claws, Elemental Adaptation (Air), Night Vision; *Afflictions:* Thick Skin; *Deficiencies:* Disturbing Voice (Mute); *Derangements:* Cannibalism (deformity)

**Hive Mind**—Hushed ones do not need to speak. They share a hive mind that enables all of them to act as one. Whatever one of them knows, the rest of their pack knows as well. Packs become increasingly dangerous over time, from the knowledge and experience of everyone in the pack's history. Represent this through higher War ratings. Hushed ones routinely coordinate their attacks, surround opponents so one of them can attack from behind, and practice similar strategies.

**Wyld Healing**—While in the Bordermarches or deeper in the Wyld, hushed ones heal one level of lethal damage every 30 minutes or one level of bashing damage every 15 minutes.

**Join Battle:** 8

**Attacks:**

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 7L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3  
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 9B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2  
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Slashing Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 10, Damage 9L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Long Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L\*, Rate 3, Range 200

\* Uses broadhead arrows

**Soak:** 5L/8B (Thick skin, 2L/2B)

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 4    **Willpower:** 6

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Hushed ones often hunt in partnership with ice hollows (see p. XX). The hushed ones' Allies Background reflects this cooperation.

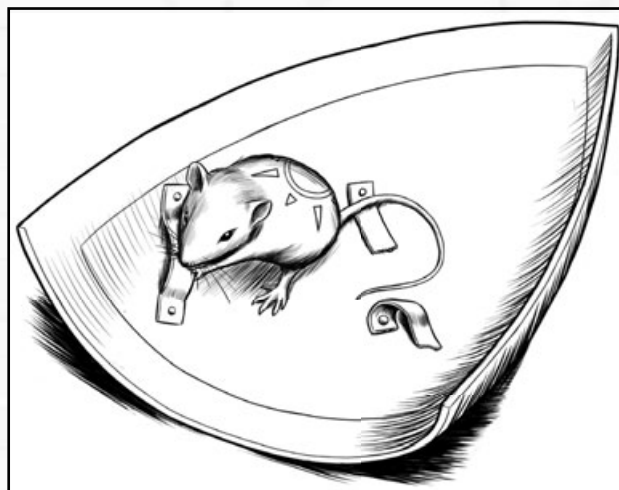
## MICE OF THE SUN

The Solar temple-manse at the heart of Whitewall may be Creation's last pristine example of High First Age religious architecture. The numerous mosaics and bas-reliefs depicting the glory and deeds of the Unconquered Sun include numerous small figures of... mice. Such figures now puzzle savants of the Second Age. It has been too long since the Unconquered Sun sent his subtly powerful agents into Creation—the mice of the sun.

These rodents are somewhat larger than ordinary mice but look otherwise ordinary. Only when the light strikes them in the right way does the fur on their backs reflect the eight-point symbol of their master.

While the mice possess a few supernatural talents, their real power is to appear when and where a tiny action could have enormous consequences. They gnaw through the warrior's shield-strap so it breaks in the middle of a battle. They guide the lost messenger who bears news of a noble's treachery... or they carry a plague into the town that has fallen into demon worship or other blasphemies.

In the Old Realm, the mice of the sun occasionally assisted the Lawgivers. After the Usurpation, the supernatural rodents saw increasing use—especially after the Marama's Fell holocaust—to curb the excesses of the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate. The Unconquered Sun abruptly ceased using his tiny minions after the Great Contagion, and some in Heaven believe the Deathlords somehow co-opted the mice for their own vile ends. With the return of the Lawgivers to





Creation, however, the King of Heaven might once more send the mice of the sun to assist his Chosen... or convey his displeasure.

**Motivation:** To do the Unconquered Sun's bidding.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Compassion 3, Conviction 5\*, Temperance 3, Valor 5\*

\* Cannot fail Conviction or Valor rolls.

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Dodge 4, Integrity 3, Investigation 1, Larceny 3, Martial Arts 1, Resistance 3, Stealth 5

**Powers:**

*Anima Banner*—Mice of the sun can project the anima banner of any Solar Caste, making use of any anima effect for the normal Essence cost.

*Paw of Destiny*—As Hand of Destiny, but at no Essence or Willpower cost. Mice of the sun *always* act instinctively to fulfill some greater goal set by Heaven's King.

**Join Battle:** 7

**Attacks:**

Bite: Speed 4, Accuracy 5, Damage 2L, Parry DV —, Rate 1

**Soak:** 0L/2B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 5      **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 2      **Essence Pool:** 60

**Other Notes:** On rare occasions, the King of Heaven sends a mouse of the sun to accompany an Exalt for a time. The mouse functions as Familiar •••. Such assignments never last long, however, and they happen when the Storyteller wants them to. Mice of the sun are not appropriate as familiars for starting characters.

## MOUNT MOSTATH, THE HERDER OF MOUNTAINS

Mount Mostath is an ice-covered behemoth surrounded by a veil of freezing fog. It looks like a mountain, except for the tusks. Wyld barbarians worship the creature and follow its wake of snow and ice as the behemoth "herds" glaciers and the ice-clad mountains that it resembles. No one knows the behemoth's origin or why it shifts the paths of glaciers one way or another. A few ancient shamans of the most remote barbarian tribes know rituals to control Mount Mostath's direction, however, setting it on enemy towns or away from their own villages, but otherwise the behemoth goes its own way.

The behemoth moves very slowly (100 miles/year), but has nearly unstoppable strength. Mountains in the creature's path sense its coming and slowly move aside to make way, sliding back into place after he passes (unless the behemoth pushes them to stay in their new location). It is difficult to get Mount Mostath's attention, but if angered, it extrudes a mighty trunk—like an elephant's but immensely larger and a mile long—and swats the irritation.

**Motivation:** To guide glaciers in their proper courses and keep mountains in their proper places.

**Attributes:** Strength 50, Dexterity 1, Stamina 100; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1; Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 2, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 1, Integrity 5, Martial Arts 2, Presence 6

**Powers:**

*Aura of Frozen Fog*—A cloud of frozen fog surrounds Mostath for one mile in all directions. Visibility within the cloud is limited to 20 feet, and all Awareness and Perception rolls suffer a -2 external penalty. See **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 69–70, for additional information on frozen fog.

*Herder of Mountains*—Mostath feels vibrations coursing throughout Creation and instinctively knows the movements of all glaciers in the North, all of which are influenced to varying degrees by the behemoth's own slow course. It infallibly senses disruptions to the glaciers' proper movement and changes course to set the situation right by the most direct route and at its swiftest speed (100 miles/year). This rare event results in environmental chaos along Mostath's course, with earthquakes, frozen fog banks, bizarre storms and shifts in the landscape happening all around him. Such disruptions take time to repair as well, guaranteeing additional visitations along the path for centuries to come—which



virtually dooms any attempts at civilization in these places until Mount Mostath decides that every mountain and glacier is in its proper place.

**Join Battle:** 2

**Attacks:**

Trample: Speed 9, Accuracy 1, Damage Special\*, Parry DV 1, Rate 1

\* Anything that doesn't get out of Mount Mostath's way is utterly crushed beneath its bulk or (if indestructible) driven deep into the ground. Storytellers who need something more definite can say the trample deals 100 levels (not dice) of aggravated damage. A similar fate awaits anyone who somehow manages to kill the behemoth, as it writhes in its death-agonies.

Trunk: Speed 9, Accuracy 1, Damage 50L, Parry DV 1, Rate 1

**Soak:** 50L/100B (Hardness: 50L/50B)

**Health Levels:** -0x50/-1x100/-2x100/-4x50/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 1    **Willpower:** 10

**Essence:** 8

**Other Notes:** Mount Mostath is immune to all cold effects. The creature suffers no visibility penalty itself from the frozen fog.

## UNICORNS

These Wyld-spawned creatures resemble pure-white horses with cloven hooves, a lion's tail, featureless, glowing blue eyes and a yard-long, spiraling horn of translucent opal. Their voices sound like a sublime symphony, and their movements show a grace beyond anything possible in nature. A unicorn's otherworldly beauty stuns and entrances mortals who cross their paths in the wilderness. The creatures are very intelligent and can speak. Some unicorns live in small groups, and unicorns who usually live alone may nevertheless gather to mate or sing.

Unicorns defend Bordermarch locations of great beauty or power against anyone who would destroy, damage or reshape the land. These creatures can live anywhere in Creation, though, without heed to environmental dangers such as extreme cold or heat and do not require food. Some unicorns enjoy traveling throughout Creation.

No power less than Solar Circle sorcery can control a unicorn's behavior or even cause one to appear less than perfectly graceful and elegant. A unicorn held captive sickens and dies within weeks, but is soon reborn out of the Middlemarch ice. Some unicorns ally themselves with select raksha nobles, Solar Exalted or truly heroic mortals (Familiar •••••)—a mark of high status among Fair Folk.

**Motivation:** To guard the Wyld against intruders.

**Attributes:** Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 7; Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 3, Valor 4



**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Dodge 5, Integrity 2, Linguistics (Native: Unicorn Song; Others: Old Realm, Skytongue) 2, Martial Arts 4, Presence 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4

**Powers:**

**Aerial Gallop**—In Creation, unicorns can gallop across chasms or run a few inches above rough terrain for six motes of committed Essence and three additional motes per hour. In Rakshastan, they can run from one driftland to another or otherwise charge across the sky effortlessly (no Essence cost).

**Sacred Mien**—The grandeur and majesty of a unicorn's appearance stuns would-be attackers. A would-be attacker cannot even try to attack unless his player first succeeds at a Willpower roll for each attack (difficulty 1 for missile weapons, 2 for Melee or Martial Arts combat). No roll is necessary to defend against an attacking unicorn.

**Wyld Immunity**—Unicorns are immune to Wyld mutation, shaping effects and works of glamour. Yet, they share the Fair Folk's vulnerabilities to cold iron and to being bound by their oaths.

**Join Battle:** 6

**Attacks:**

Gore: Speed 3, Accuracy 12, Damage 16L, Parry DV 4, Rate 1

Kick: Speed 4, Accuracy 10, Damage 12L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

**Soak:** 12L/16B (Iridescent white perfection, 8L/9B)

**Health Levels:** -0x3/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 6    **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 3    **Essence Pool:** 30

**Other Notes:** None

## VODAK

Few beings remember Vodak's name. Those that do never speak that name out of fear that doing so will awaken the horror and cause it to rise once more.





Vodak is a hekatonkhire—a ghost-behemoth of bubbling, writhing quicksilver born from the spilled blood and vitriolic hatred of the first Primordial to die. As the Primordial War continued, the beast devoured every living thing it encountered, then swelled its mass further on the ghosts of the slain. Its cunning and evil grew as well until Vodak became an undulating lake of necrotic power.

Long ago, Vodak exterminated the city that later became Gethamane, and the Mountain Folk sealed the hekatonkhire beneath the city. In time, mortals returned to Gethamane. Only the city's broken gods remember the hekatonkhire, but those who delve into Gethamane's deepest passages discover that Vodak is by no means dormant. The horror still seeks a way to break the ancient seals that keep it imprisoned.

Vodak harbors an intense hatred for the Solar Exalted. It will use every malign power and every bit of cruel craftiness at its disposal to humiliate and torture them and anyone they treasure in an elaborate, ritualistic play of madness, pain and death. Vodak has learned patience over the millennia and can hold its rage in check—but if the binding magic breaks, its unquenchable thirst for vengeance will overtake it.

**Motivation:** To escape from its prison and destroy all that lives.

**Attributes:** Strength 30, Dexterity 3, Stamina Immeasurable\*; Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 0; Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

\*Vodak automatically succeeds in all rolls involving Stamina.

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 1, Valor 2

**Abilities:** Awareness 5 (Sense Life +3), Dodge 1, Integrity 9, Lore 4, Martial Arts 5, Occult 3, Presence 8

**Backgrounds:** Cult (Darkbroods) 5, Followers (Simulacra) 5

**Powers:**  
*Control Simulacra*—For one mote, Vodak can issue a telepathic order to one of its simulacra, regardless of distance. This is a reflexive action. The simulacrum must obey the command without exception. Alternatively, Vodak can spend a mote to usurp the creature's voice or senses for a scene.

*Corrosive Contact*—Any organic matter that touches Vodak suffers damage equal to an acid bath (see **Exalted**, p. 131). Armor does not protect against this environmental effect, as Vodak's plasm seeps past such barriers. Apply this damage separately whenever Vodak successfully strikes with a pseudopod or when a combatant strikes the hekatonkhire with a Martial Arts attack.

*Create Simulacra*—Vodak can excrete a duplicate of any being it has ever consumed. Such simulacra have the memories of and act in the same manner as the original beings. They might even believe they *are* the originals, despite all evidence to the contrary. Vodak may take control of its simulacra to alter their memories or make them do whatever it pleases. Only one copy of any being can exist at one time, however. This power costs two motes for every health level of the original being. These motes are committed until the simulacrum dies. When a simulacrum dies or Vodak withdraws the committed Essence, the simulacrum dissolves into a silvery powder.

*Devour Essence*—When Vodak touches a being at the moment of death, it regains a number of motes equal to the being's (Stamina + Essence), after which the soul of the being becomes a part of Vodak, lingering on in semi-aware pain for eternity.

*Immortal*—Mundane weapons cannot harm Vodak. Magical weapons and effects can harm the hekatonkhire, but "killing" Vodak merely forces the hekatonkhire into quiescence for a century while it re-forms in the Labyrinth. Vodak can be destroyed permanently only by being cast into the Mouth of Oblivion.

*Interpenetrating Realities*—Vodak exists simultaneously in Creation and the Underworld. It constantly perceives both worlds and can affect objects and entities in both.

*Telepathy*—Vodak can project its thoughts into any sentient being in line of sight. The target "hears" this projection as a horrific, discordant cacophony of voices—those of Vodak's previous victims—that disorients as well as enthralls, such that all Awareness rolls suffer a -2 external penalty. Targets may respond telepathically if they choose. This power is communicative only—Vodak cannot use this power to control a target. Characters can block out Vodak's voice through a successful Willpower roll at difficulty 4.

**Join Battle:** 8

### Attacks:

Pseudopodia: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 30L + corrosion, Parry DV 4, Rate 4

Soak: 30L/60B (Protean body)

Health Levels: -0x200/Quiescent

Dodge DV: 6 Willpower: 10

Essence: 8 Essence Pool: 800

**Other Notes:** Vodak does not suffer normal progressive dice penalties for taking multiple actions. Instead, it loses one die for every non-reflexive action performed in a flurry after the first.

Sunlight harms Vodak's plasm, inflicting one level of aggravated damage per five ticks of exposure. Vodak can take no actions while exposed to sunlight except to retreat. Direct sunlight also destroys Vodak's simulacra, which dissolve into silvery powder at its touch.

### VORVIN-DERLIN, SLAYER OF ARMIES

The Primordial that would become Isidoros, the Black Boar That Twists the Skies, forged the behemoth Vorvin-Derlin from his own immortal sinew. The Primordial designed the behemoth as a bizarre war engine that grew in power to match the forces ranged against it. The greater the army, the more surely the Slayer of Armies would annihilate it.

During the Primordial War, however, Vorvin-Derlin could not calibrate its defenses appropriately to defeat the Exalted, whose might far outstretched their number. Time and again, the Slayer of Armies was destroyed, but its dead husk drew fresh life from Creation itself, and it rose again. The terms of Isidoros's exile dictated that Vorvin-Derlin follow its master into banishment but return when called as if it were a Second Circle demon. An accident during the Usurpation left Vorvin-Derlin masterless but buried in the ruined city of Opal Spire, where it has waited ever since.

Vorvin-Derlin resembles a hollow humanoid cage of tarnished brass filigree that extrudes and retracts razor-sharp barbs from its body with an insistent rhythm like that of a beating heart. The creature undulates and shifts its shape constantly as it moves, every step sinewy and hypnotic. It retains this semi-humanoid shape as long as it must but prefers to envelop a living host as an exoskeleton. When the behemoth takes a host, red flames smolder in the gouged-out pits of its vessel's eyes. Verdigris coats every non-magical metal object within one mile of Vorvin-Derlin.

**Motivation:** To obey Isidoros and express its purpose by defeating armies and other powerful adversaries.

**Attributes:** Strength 5\*, Dexterity 5\*, Stamina 5\*; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0; Perception 3\*, Intelligence 2\*, Wits 5\*

**Virtues:** Compassion 1, Conviction 2\*, Temperance 1\*, Valor 6

**Abilities:** Athletics 10, Awareness 5, Dodge 10\*, Martial Arts 10\*, Melee 10\*, Presence 7 (Intimidation +3), Resistance 10\*, Stealth 5\*, Survival 5\*, Thrown 10\*, War 10\*



**Backgrounds:** Manse 5 (Conduit to Isidoros restores Essence as a level-5 manse)

### Powers:

**Barbed Surface**—Anyone striking Vorvin-Derlin barehanded suffers 6L damage from its jagged metal flesh.

**Inexhaustible Defense**—Vorvin-Derlin's Defense Values are not reduced by the behemoth making attacks (single or flurries) or other actions. Attackers can never reduce Vorvin-Derlin's DVs through onslaughts, coordinated attacks, attacking from behind or any other mundane tactic, either. Charms that reduce a foe's DV still function against the Slayer of Armies.

**Gale of Barbs**—With a wave of its hand, Vorvin-Derlin can launch a volley of darts formed from its jagged metal flesh. This attack has the same effect as the spell *Death of Obsidian Butterflies* (see **Exalted**, p. 252), with an area of effect 30 feet wide and 10 feet high. The attack roll is (Dexterity + Thrown) and the base damage is 1L. Costs 15 motes.

**Mechanism's Bane**—Machines and First Age artifacts react unpredictably whenever Vorvin-Derlin comes within five miles of them. The more sophisticated the device, the more likely it will exhibit some unexpected behavior. Every day, for each artifact in range, roll a number of dice equal to the device's Artifact rating. (Roll one die for water-mills and other mundane mechanisms.) The number of successes indicates the degree of malfunction. If all dice are successes, the device becomes inoperable and requires repair. N/A Artifacts are not affected.

**Might of the Slaughterer**—By spending five motes following a successful attack, Vorvin-Derlin draws blood from an



opponent it has not previously wounded and gains one additional dot each of Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Martial Arts. The behemoth loses the additional dice at the end of the scene unless it spends five additional motes to retain the bonus for a scene longer.

**Nigh Unkillable**—The behemoth possesses immortality on the scale of a Primordial. If slain, it reconstructs itself after one year of quiescence. Short of being killed, it heals one level of bashing damage every action, one level of lethal damage every minute and one level of aggravated damage every day. The creature is immune to all Sickness, Poison and Crippling effects, whether natural or supernatural. Within a year, it reverses all Shaping effects used against it.

**Primal Fusion**—If in control of a clinch, Vorvin-Derlin can spend 20 motes to engulf a living victim in a mass of spiked filaments. The behemoth becomes a second skin, rooting itself deep into its victim's bones and muscles. Creatures without an active Essence are instantly engulfed. Targets that channel Essence can escape the behemoth's grip through a successful (Stamina + Resistance) roll. If Vorvin-Derlin succeeds in merging with a victim, it adds the host's rating in any traits marked with an asterisk in this write-up to its own rating for the duration of the fusion (Conviction and Temperance have a maximum of 5, however). A subsumed victim loses control over her body, and the behemoth has access to all of her knowledge and memories. Vorvin-Derlin can release hosts at will, usually to merge with a host of greater power. It leaves former hosts blind and horribly scarred (Appearance 1, plus effects of maiming and blindness).

**Turning Steel**—If an attack roll against Vorvin-Derlin garners four or fewer successes, the behemoth maneuvers the attack to strike an alternative target within five yards (but not the original attacker). The new target may dodge or otherwise defend against this attack normally. This power has no Essence cost and operates reflexively.

**Join Battle:** 10\*

#### Attacks:

Punch: Speed 4, Accuracy 16, Damage 9L, Parry DV 8\*, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 11L, Parry DV 6, Rate 2

Barb Slash: Speed 3, Accuracy 17, Damage 10L, Parry DV 10, Rate 3

**Soak:** 16L/15B (Infernal brass body, 13L/10B)

**Health Levels:** -0\*x5/-1\*x6/-2\*x7/-4/Quiescent

**Dodge DV:** 11    **Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 6    **Essence Pool:** 120

**Other Notes:** Some combat traits may need to be recalculated as a result of the behemoth using the powers Might of the Slaughterer and Primal Fusion.

The behemoth cannot fail Valor rolls.

Vorvin-Derlin is a Second Circle demon for the purposes of summoning, binding or banishing it through sorcery, but for no other purpose.

## BEASTS OF THE NORTH

The North is a cold, harsh land, where only the most fearsome and dangerous creatures can survive.

### ARCTIC DEMITAURS

An arctic demitaur stands upright, with a bull's head, a quarterhorse's legs and the torso and arms of a strong man, all covered in thick, white fur. Long, sharp fangs protrude from the creature's mouth.



Arctic demitaurs live primarily in secluded valleys where they graze on moss, grass, twigs and lichens. When left alone, they hardly seem violent at all. When others encroach on their home, however, the demitaurs enter a murderous frenzy. The herd leaves its valleys in a wild rampage, trampling and attacking other creatures virtually at random, until they find another peaceful place.

A demitaur attacks with its mighty fists and rugged hooves, which can crush armor and weapons just as effectively as they can flesh and bone.

**Weapon-Crushing Hooves:** If the roll for a demitaur's trample attack achieves three or more successes, the creature strikes the target's weapon. If the damage exceeds the required (Strength + Athletics) total—8 for swords and most other metal weapons, 3 for wooden weapons such as bows—the weapon shatters. Also, the targeted character's player must succeed at a reflexive Strength roll (difficulty 1) or the character is disarmed whether his weapon breaks or not. This ability of the arctic demitaur has no effect on unarmed opponents or on weapons made from the magical materials.

### CTHRITAE

Gethamane knows the cthritae all too well, as they are among the most abundant horrors of the tunnels beneath the



city. A cthrita looks like a man-sized centipede carved of onyx and black opal, whose massive mandibles drip with quicksilver. These creatures run on stone walls or ceilings as easily as the floor—usually in packs of at least a dozen. They can chew through rock at a rate of a foot an hour, but only do so if they know prey awaits beyond a barrier—so they will chew through a door (they can smell people beyond it) but will not spend weeks tunneling upwards toward Gethamane. (At least, not unless they are simulacra controlled by Vodak.) Cthritae can see in complete darkness.

Cthritae lack human intelligence but possess formidable instinctive cunning. Their motives are to feed and breed. They can live on rock and water but prefer organic prey. Feeding cthritae rip their prey apart and roll in the bloody remains in a sort of frenzy. Breeding cthritae sever a victim's tendons and force eggs down the prey's throat. The eggs hatch within hours and devour their host from within, reaching adult size in a day.



### GREAT EAGLES

These oversized eagles hunt elk and reindeer the way normal raptors hunt rabbits and squirrels. Great eagles stand 10–12 feet tall with wingspans

reaching 30 feet. Their feathers bear white and gray markings. Although great eagles are one of the favorite totem animals of the North, Guild-sponsored sport hunters have hunted them nearly to extinction. Gerd Marrow-Eater currently works on restoring the species. He has bred and trained a legion of them, quite probably the largest population of great eagles left in Creation.

Great eagles have the same traits as Metagalapan warhawks (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—The East**, pp. 158 and 160). No one has tamed great eagles to bear riders, however, and no one could without using Charms.

### GREAT-TERRORS

These terrifying carnivores are the scourge of the North as they feast on reindeer herds, mammoth and unlucky travelers or villagers. No prey smaller than a man is worth their trouble to hunt. These gigantic hairy canine creatures grow 10–12 feet tall and about 16 feet long. A great-terror's monstrous, fang-filled jaws can easily crush a man's skull. Great-terrors have jaggedly striped brown or black pelts, matted into a crest along their backs. (In the extreme North, these beasts

have snow-white fur.) Roughened paws enable great-terrors to lope over slippery ice. In the dark, their eyes catch any light with a fiery, orange glow.

Male great-terrors hunt alone. The females gather in packs of up to half a dozen. All

great-terrors growl, bark and whinny as they chase their prey. At the kill, a great-terror bays in a way that sounds like maniacal laughter.

Few dare to hunt great-terrors. Not only are these creatures fast, wily and extremely hardy, but great-terror meat tastes rotten (though it is harmless) and their oily, pungent pelts are nearly worthless. Big game hunters may seek the glory of slaying the North's fiercest predator, though only Exalted hunters (such as a number of justly famous Dynasts) have much chance of killing great-terrors.

A century ago, the Fair Folk raider called White Harper used glamour to enchant a large pack of great-terrors—the only known case of anyone taming these beasts. White Harper used his great-terrors to gather slaves, jade and other treasures as he carved out a sizeable domain. The Wyld Hunt did not kill him directly... but wounded and weakened him enough that the great-terrors turned on the raksha and slew him.

### HORNED SNOW HUNTERS

Horned snow hunters (also called snow devils) roam the tundra and taiga of the Northeast but sometimes venture west along the White Sea. Their blunt-jawed snout resembles that of a dog, with sharp, cat-like teeth and fangs. Two horns point forward like spears from the top of their long-eared heads. Silky white fur provides excellent camouflage in snow and ice. Snow devils stand three to four feet at the shoulder and can weigh up to 300 pounds. They are brilliant hunters who display complex tactics of flanking, ambushing, baiting and corralling their prey.

These creatures avoid humans, and attack them only if provoked or cornered. Humans do not return the favor. Horned snow hunters eat the same sort of animals that humans do. Moreover, the snow devil has sweet and savory meat, luxuriously soft and warm fur, strong sinews and tough bones suitable



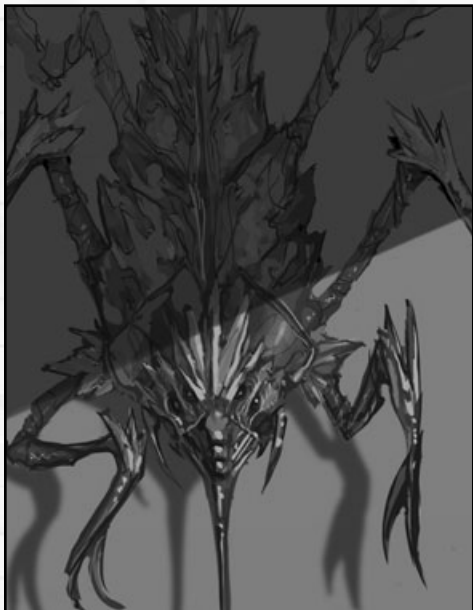




for carving into tools.

No one actually tames a horned snow hunter, but these creatures do form rare hunting partnerships with trusted individuals. This process takes months or years of patient effort to gain the snow hunter's trust.

The human hunters—usually Exalted but sometimes mortal—become legendary in the North and are highly sought-after for ridding provinces of vermin and predators. Snow hunters have a control rating of 5 and are Familiar •••••. They cannot survive outside the frozen North, suffering one die of bashing damage for each day in warm surroundings. Unlike many Northern creatures, horned snow hunters are active from autumn through spring but hibernate through the summer.



snow and ice in search of warm-blooded prey. They often hunt near frozen lakes and rivers but avoid open water. An ice hollow has huge mandibles with which to seize prey and a long proboscis for sucking blood. After feeding, an ice hollow's transparent body becomes threaded with crimson.

## ICE HOLLOWS

The Wyld spawned these crystal-clear giant insects. Despite their glassy appearance and spindly legs, however, ice hollows take a lot of damage to kill. The insects swiftly glide over the

Ice hollows attack all warm-blooded creatures. They usually do not attack cold-blooded creatures, which usually go unmolested unless they provoke the ice hollows. Winter Folk, hushed ones and similar Northern threats sometimes tame ice hollows and train them as one would a dog (control rating 4; Familiar •••).

## ICE WEASELS

Ice weasels hunt through the frozen forest alone or in pairs. Adults grow three feet tall at the shoulder and reach 10 feet from nose to tail-tip. They have stark white fur and small, black eyes. An extraordinary sense of smell makes the ice weasel an excellent tracker, even across



wide expanses. The Winter Folk sometimes domesticate ice weasels and use them as hounds. Working in tandem, ice weasels can slay prey as large as a mammoth. Ice weasels are also hunted themselves for their soft, warm fur, which is one of the most expensive in Creation (requiring Resources ••• to purchase in the North and Resources ••••• elsewhere).

**Jaw Lock:** Ice weasels bring down their prey by locking their jaws on a leg or neck. This attack inflicts an addition level of lethal damage automatically each action. After three actions the limb is severed. Only by breaking the creature's jaw through a (Strength + Athletics) roll at difficulty 5 can one release an ice weasel's grip.

## SHARD BATS

These white-furred bats hunt by day, camouflaged against the snow-capped mountains and the clouds in the sky. They stand two feet tall and have



an eight-foot wingspan, with sharp, gripping claws and tiny serrated teeth. The tips of their wings secrete a viscous bile that freezes in the icy air, forming extremely sharp blades along the wings' edges. A shard bat attacks by swooping past its prey to slash with its wings, but it must take a miscellaneous action between attacks to wheel about for another pass. Lacking this option, the bat can bite or claw.

Colonies of dozens of shard bats nest in Northern caves. The bats scour the frozen landscape for prey, using echolocation to detect smaller rodents and birds. They usually hunt in packs of 10 or more, flying in perfect formation until they attack. Travelers in groups of four or more have little to fear from shard bats, but these beasts may attack smaller groups. Because shard bats rely heavily on surprise, however, they usually seek other prey if the fight lasts more than a minute.

**Echolocation:** Like normal bats, shard bats can sense their surroundings by sending out pulses of sound too high-pitched for humans to hear and listening for the echoes. This echo sense is quite as accurate as sight. It can still be "blinded" by effects that cause deafness, though.



## SNOW LIONS

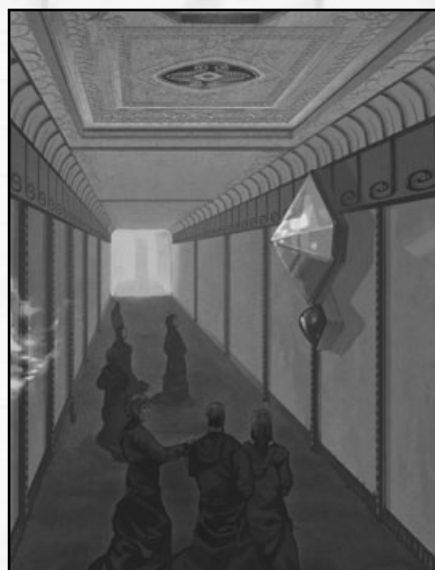
These hulking predators of the Far North stand 10 feet at the shoulder, with razor-sharp claws and teeth. Rearing upright, a snow lion can attack prey 20 feet overhead. Their eyes are a hypnotic pale blue and their

coats are white or gray, with pale, mottled markings.

Snow lions burrow deep in snowdrifts and lie in wait for prey to approach. Those who accidentally walk over a snow lion's burrow may cause it to collapse, falling into the snow and ice with the snow lion. The victim takes 5B falling damage and the attentive snow lion can attempt one unexpected attack. A snow lion can also attempt an ambush by leaping out from a snowbank. Snow lions sometimes follow those who do not collapse their burrows, tracking prey until they are asleep or some other opportune moment. Snow lions usually hunt alone. While they normally hunt animals ranging from elk to mammoth, they regard humans as just more livestock.

## SPAWN OF VODAK

The hekatonkhire Vodak buds off small copies of itself to sweep through Gethamane. These copies exist only in the Underworld's analogue to Gethamane, where they hunt ghosts. When they destroy a victim, they return to



rejoin their creator and deliver their devoured Essence. Spawn have Essence 3 but no Essence pool. They try to grapple victims. A victim takes no Strength-based damage (for the spawn cannot exert physical force), but suffers environmental damage as if from an acid bath (see **Exalted**, p. 131) for every action in which the spawn manages to continue the clinch. Naturally, spawn of Vodak rely on their Dexterity for grappling attacks. A spawn of Vodak covers an area 10 yards wide. It can initiate only one clinch per action, but it can hold up to six victims at once without suffering any penalty.

## YETI

Fierce and strongly territorial, these cannibalistic simians form troupes of one male and four to six females, plus young, all living in natural caves or in frigid forests of the Northeast. In addition to bearing and rearing the yeti young, the female yeti haunt the dangerous mountain passes and quiet woods in their territory, an area usually encompassing a few square miles, while the male watches for unexpected dangers. Yeti are absolutely immune to cold.





Name	Str/Dex/Sta	Per/Int/Wits/Will	Health Levels	Attack (Spd/Acc/Dmg/Rate)	Dodge DV/Soak
<b>Arctic Demitaur</b>	6/2/5	2/1/3/5	-0x2/-1x4/ -2x4/-4/I	Punch: 5/7/7B/3, Trample: 7/6/9B*/2	2/8L/13B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Dodge 3, Martial Arts 4, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2), Resistance 2 (Endure Cold +3), Survival 5					
<b>Cthrita</b>	2/3/2	3/1/2/3	-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/I	Bite: 5/4/6L/2	2/4L/8B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2 (Mindless Ferocity +3), Martial Arts 2, Resistance 3, Stealth 3, Survival 1 (Underground +2)					
<b>Great-Terror</b>	10/5/10	2/1/3/2	-0x4/-1x5/ -2x5/-4/I	Bite: 5/8/13L/2, Claw: 4/8/11L/3	4/6L/10B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Dodge 3, Martial Arts 3, Presence 4 (Intimidation +3), Resistance (Endure Cold +3), Stealth 4, Survival 5					
<b>Horned Snow Hunter</b>	6/3/5	5/2/3/5	-0x2/-1x4/ -2x4/-4x3/I	Bite: 5/6/9L/1, Claw 4/8/7L/3, Gore: 5/6/9L/2	3/3L/6B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 5, Awareness 3 (Hearing +2, Sight +1), Dodge 3, Martial Arts 3, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2), Resistance 4 (Endure Cold +3), Stealth 4 (Ambush +2), Survival 4					
<b>Ice Hollow</b>	4/4/4	2/1/3/3	-0/-1x6/-2x6/-4/I	Bite: 5/9/5L/1	4/4L/5B
<b>Abilities:</b> Awareness 4, Dodge 4, Martial Arts 5, Presence 2, Resistance 5 (Cold +2), Stealth 5					
<b>Ice Weasel</b>	4/6/4	3/1/2/5	-0/-1x4/-4/I	Bite: 5/11/ 6L+jaw lock/1	6/6L/10B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 6, Awareness 3, Dodge 6, Martial Arts 5, Resistance 3 (Endure Cold +3), Stealth 4 (In Snow +3), Survival 4 (Sense Traps +3)					
<b>Shard Bat</b>	1/5/3	3/1/3/3	-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/I	Bite: 5/9/2L/1, Claw 4/9/5L/3, Wing: 3/10/8L/2	5/2L/6B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 5 (Flying +3), Awareness (Echolocation +3), Dodge 5, Martial Arts 4, Resistance 1 (Endure Cold +3), Stealth 3, Survival 3					
<b>Snow Lion</b>	10/3/8	4/1/3/3	-0/-1x4/-2x3/-4/I	Bite: 5/7/14L/1, Claw: 4/9/13L/3	2/4L/8B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 3 (Tunnel Movement +3), Awareness (Interpret Snow Tremors +3), Dodge 2, Martial Arts 4, Resistance 3 (Endure Cold +3), Stealth 3 (Ambush +3), Survival 3 (Dig Tunnels and Traps +3)					
<b>Spawn of Vodak</b>	0/3/0	3/1/2/6	-0/-1x2/-2x2/I	Envelop: 5/7/Special*/1	4/6L/6B
<b>Abilities:</b> Athletics 3, Dodge 5, Integrity 4, Martial Arts 4					
<b>Yeti</b>	6/3/5	4/2/4/3	-0/-0/-1/-1/ -2/-2/-4/I	Claw: 4/7/7L/2 Bite: 5/5/9L/1	3/2L/5B
<b>Abilities:</b> Awareness 4, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 3, Martial Arts 3, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2), Resistance 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5					



The North is home to one of Creation's harshest environments, and its savage predators, deadly winters and scarcity of resources would be challenging enough, even without the additional threats posed by marauding barbarians, seductive Winter Folk and the frozen dead. Defying both the elements and the region's many threats, though, a myriad of states, large and small, have succeeded in wresting order from a chaotic wilderness and forging a stable home for their subjects. Will the returned Lawgivers seek to maintain these fragile metropolises, or will they be drawn to the banner of the Solar Bull of the North, who seems determined to plunge the entire North into war?

The fifth of five Terrestrial Direction books devoted to fleshing out the bare bones of Creation presented in the **Exalted** core book, this supplement includes the following:

- Details of Whitewall, Gethamane, the Haslanti League and other Northern nations
- Mass combat stats for the myriad of Northern powers as well as dominion traits for the Mandate of Heaven
- Traits for the North's native gods and beasts



ISBN: 978-1-58846-379-1 WW80204 \$24.99 U.S.

