



ZOBECK GAZETTEER

BY WOLFGANG BAUR AND
CHRISTINA STILES

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ZOBECK GAZETTEER

WOLFGANG BAUR WITH CHRISTINA STILES

BEING A TRUE AND USEFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE FREE CITY OF ZOBECK IN THE YEARS AFTER THE GREAT REVOLT, WITH PARTICULAR ENUMERATION OF ITS ARCANE COLLEGIUM, ITS TEMPLES AND ITS KNIGHTLY VIRTUES, ITS WORTHY MERCHANTS AND THE MOST PECULIAR KOBOLD QUARTER, AND ALL OTHER ASPECTS, EXALTED AND UNWORTHY, FROM CROWN SQUARE TO ITS VILE AND DEBAUCHED GUTTERS AND INTO THE SECRETS OF THE ZOBECK CARTWAYS, LONG HIDDEN FROM PUBLICK VIEW.



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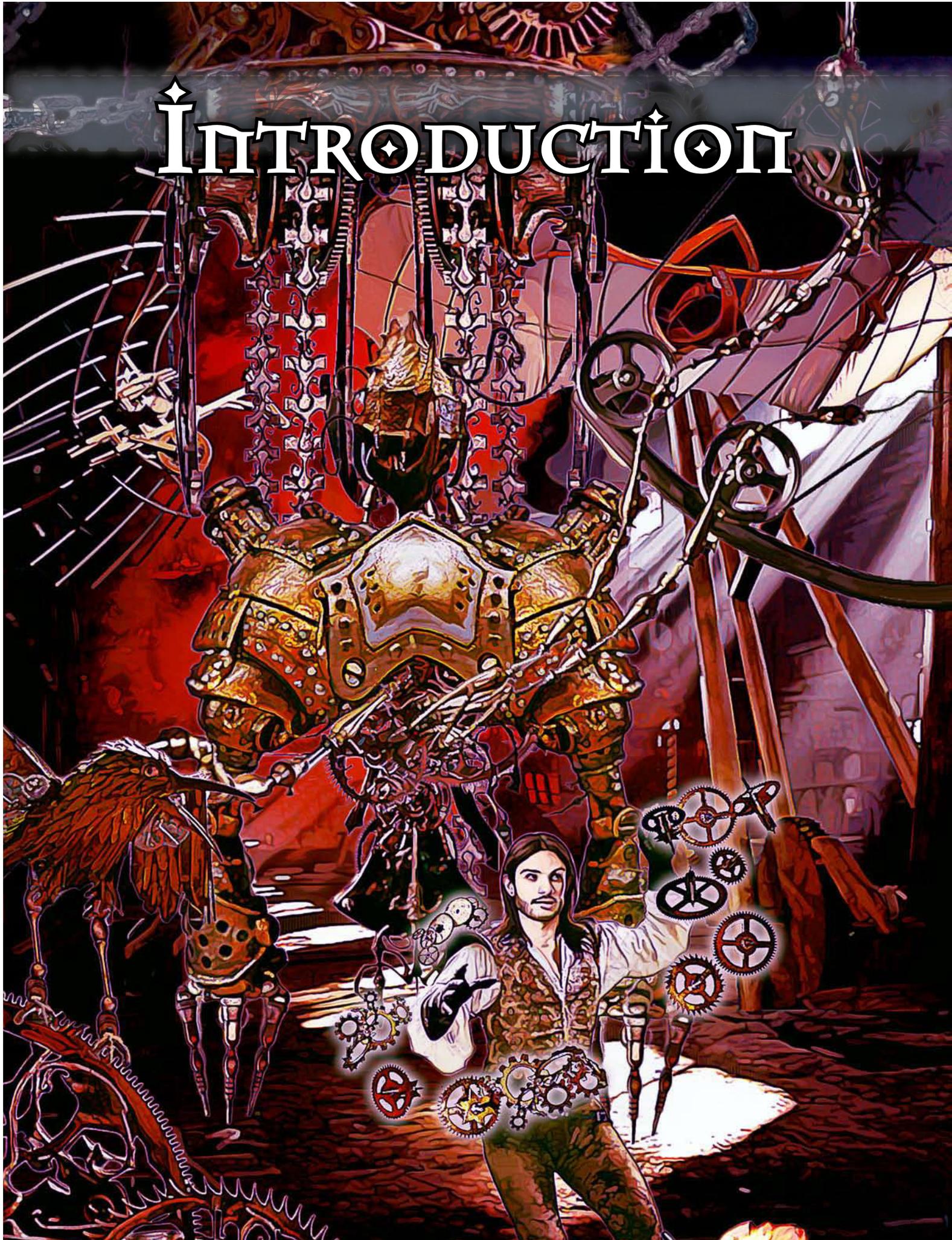
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INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS ZOBECK?

Welcome to the bustling, ever-ticking Free City of Zobeck! Some 80 years ago, the Revolt led to the death or exile of the former ruling House Stross and the imprisonment and impoverishment of many of its followers and sycophants, making the Free City one of the few places in Midgard not answering to a feudal lord. The aristocracy raged against the Revolt, but surrounding nations decided an independent Zobeck might prove very useful and supported the small city-state. An unspoken agreement made it plain that so long as Zobeck remained neutral in the affairs of its “betters,” its neighbors would allow it to live on sufferance.

This was their great mistake. While its neighbors kept to their own affairs and paid the city little mind, Zobeck’s industrious citizens forged themselves and their community from the chaos of civil revolt. In a few years, the merchants, arcanists, and followers of Rava the Gear Goddess built their sleepy, backwater river town into a nation with clout far beyond its borders. Zobeck has blossomed in a mere eight decades into a mercantile powerhouse known across Midgard for its gearforged and mastery of clockwork technology.

The expanded *Zobeck Gazetteer* provides all the information you need to run a campaign in the Free City at the crossroads of Midgard. Home to merchants, priests, conniving cultists, and backstabbing thieves, Zobeck is a thriving fantasy city you can easily insert into your existing campaign world with only slight modifications. However, the city works best as the trade center of Open Design’s Midgard campaign setting, already well detailed in numerous stand-alone products. In Midgard or in your own world, Zobeck provides the perfect home base for spinning your game’s stories.

Game Support

While this particular book uses the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* rules system, Open Design happily supports other fantasy systems. To date, Open Design has released products using the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons rules and the fan-favorite AGE system. As long as fans request it, Open Design and its in-house magazine *Kobold Quarterly* will continue to support the most popular fantasy gaming systems of the day. Visit the Open Design web site daily at www.koboldquarterly.com to see what system-specific books are being released. Then join existing or

Designer’s Note

Zobeck was my precious baby darling four years ago, when it was new. Since then, it has met a lot of new friends, and some unsavory types showed up in its Streets a little while ago. Clearly my little baby has grown up a bit. That’s all to the good.

Originally, Zobeck sprang from my memories of Prague and Dresden and a sense that Middle Europe was not at all well served by existing fantasy. The lands of Baron Munchausen and Franz Kafka and the Brothers Grimm are a wild breeding ground for the genre, but every time I looked at a fantasy RPG, I saw Celts and Britons and maybe the Norse. All great, but not all the time.

So I wrote Zobeck to have a ghetto, to focus on trade on a river, and to have nearby the deepest, darkest woods possible. And it has grown into its own mature self, meaning not just sex and violence but also its own personality, a Zobeck gestalt, if you’ll forgive me the expression. It’s dark. It has a humorous side. It enjoys the patronage of an interesting

ADAPTING ZOBECK TO YOUR CAMPAIGN

While the Free City of Zobeck resides at the crossroads in a world called Midgard and includes many details about Midgard’s deities, clockwork technology, and neighboring territories, Game Masters can easily remove Zobeck from this realm and slip it into their own. This requires a few adjustments, certainly, but Zobeck makes a fine trade hub in any campaign world.

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The Midgard Game Line

Portions of this book first appeared in the *Zobeck Gazetteer: An Introduction to the Free City* in 2008. Before and after then, dozens of articles in *Kobold Quarterly* and entries in several Midgard-related sourcebooks and adventures have expanded the city, which gamers first glimpsed in patron-supported products like *Steam & Brass* and *Castle Shadowcrag*. Over the years, Open Design trekked beyond Zobeck’s walls to explore the Free City’s surroundings, such as the eldritch Margreve Forest, the dwarves of the Ironcrag Mountains, and the undead realms of Morgau & Doresh. The *Midgard Campaign Setting* reveals still more of this intriguing world, of which Zobeck remains the beating heart.

Onward!

Zobeck has continued to expand only because of Open Design’s patrons and fans. Thank you for all your support. Thank you also to all the writers, artists, and editors who have been a part of the line. This city has grown—and the world of Midgard continues to grow—because of your additions to the creative pool. Although this world was born from one mind, it has blossomed under the guidance of many visions, and that is truly the beauty of the collaborative open design process.

To those of you new to Zobeck, again, welcome to the Free City! Be careful to watch your purse strings as you travel these thief-laden roads in search of your own riches. Your adventures and rewards, though, will be well worth the danger, my friend.

goddess and endures all the dangers of being a Free City ruled by its own people. In short, it’s a small town that punches above its weight.

I think, after all this time and all the glorious additions to Zobeck by so many great designers, it’s really not mine alone. It has done what I didn’t even know I wanted at the start: it has inspired others. They’ve added to it. Tweaked it a bit. Add a roisterous tavern here or a corrupt official there. They have made it their own. Bits of it are disgusting or strange, but all of it is delightful.

So...My deep and abiding thanks to everyone who contributed to helping Zobeck grow up. A strong, independent, and charming child is every parent’s dream, and a vibrant, lively, entertaining setting is every designer’s hope. I’ve got both.

Thank you,
Wolfgang Baur
Kirkland, WA
October 2011

CHAPTER 1 A HISTORY



THE WISE AND ENLIGHTENED guidance of House Stross over their various domains—including the provinces of Grisal, Zobeck, and the Smolder Hills—is demonstrated by the fact that they have made trade with the Winter Court and a tight alliance with the Order of the Undying Sun the twin, somewhat contradictory, pillars of their rule.

Balancing the tensions between the Order, where the eldest son of the Stross generally earns his spurs, and the wilder shadow magic of Sarastra and her followers, beautifully illustrates the Stross' ability to play competing interests against each other while still securing their city against outside aggression, especially from the Ironcrag and Morgau. Everywhere is evidence of the people's deep love for House Stross, and they support its rule faithfully. Indeed, I think no crown in the Crossroads is more secure than that of His Grace Kranos Stross.

—From *Travels down the River Argent*
(published one year before the Great Revolt)

The Free City's austere feudal history has greatly defined the city's current freedom-loving citizenry. After suffering under the long, harsh reign of the aristocratic Stross family, the people of Zobeck have little love for nobles or the institution of feudalism. They have vowed to never again accept a lord's yoke. Instead, commerce and the ability of every man and woman to grab life's wealth and gusto rule the Zobeckan spirit. Free to make their way in the world, they work to secure a living in whatever manner they see fit—though some occupations clash with the city's laws—and answer to no one but themselves.

Still, certain citizens are not as free as others. The kobolds fought alongside the rebels to emancipate Zobeck and thus gained a seat on the Free City Council, but as a whole, the kobolds remain very much second-class citizens. They do not experience the same uplifting spirit of freedom as their dwarf or human neighbors, or even the gearforged. Those formerly flesh-and-blood beings now living in metal bodies hold more privileges than any kobold in the greater city. For all their assistance in the Great Revolt, the others have relegated the kobolds to their own little ghetto and the most menial professions. Life remains harsh for the little dragon men who once steered their own destiny and mined freely in service to a proud kobold king of these lands.

Here's how the present Zobeck came to be...

Early Days: The Fey, the Curse, and the Kobolds

For thousands of years, the fey ruled the Margreve and the surrounding area, including the lands upon which now sit the city of Zobeck and Castle Shadowcrag. Over fourteen hundred years ago, on the advice of an evil advisor named Chorvodni, the Holly King and his fey followers sacrificed a young fey woman with a sword of light and planted a black oak on Rosehaven Hill.

Chorvodni—a shadow lammasu who served Sarastra, the goddess of night, magic, and shadow—led the Holly King to believe this magical sacrifice would trick the goddess and allow him to steal much of her power. Instead, the Heartwood Pact, as the ritual became known, forever cursed the fey to the Plane of Shadow, where Sarastra forced them all into servitude. Their pact also linked the hilltop, and the castle that would later rise upon it, to the Shadow Plane.

The Pact ultimately granted the fey great power, and they became the goddess's willing servants. However, their time on the Plane of Shadow transformed them into a twisted version of their former selves called scáthesidhe, the shadow fey. Over time, their hearts grew bitter, and they longed to regain all that they had left behind. But they could not act directly against the curse, which they had sworn to honor in the Heartwood Pact.

About 600 years after Sarastra stole the fey from the land (and 200 years before the Stross family came to rule Zobeck), a tribe of kobolds began mining the abandoned lands. Under King Brandorek's orders, the kobolds built Brandor's Keep, a simple square fortification, on the fey's beloved Rosehaven Hill. The structure remains intact as a part of Castle Shadowcrag (see pg. 52).

Eventually, Sarastra allowed the fey to occasionally return to the place where they had struck their bad bargain. When, the fey discovered that the kobolds had usurped "their" lands, the Moonlight King and his followers drove the kobolds off the hill in a rage. The kobolds resisted from the shelter of their mines, under the leadership of a kobold wielding the fey's sword of light. But the fey worked carefully to destroy the kobolds that had trespassed on "their" black oak.

The Fey and the Stross Family

The fey formed a hidden alliance with an ambitious human merchant family named Stross, and through Adrastus Stross, the fey saw the kobolds enslaved and the sword of light broken. Lord Stross brought in 20 shadow mastiffs, more than 20 grim dwarves, and a column of 200 human soldiers. He called out for Brandorek, the kobold king, and the king surrendered, offering his oath of fealty. The dwarves sundered the magical sword.

The Goddess of Night, realizing that the black oak now bound the land as well as the fey, commanded the fey to defend the site. No one should have a chance to destroy the black oak. Indeed, Sarastra commanded the fey to bring the site over the planar boundary. When they failed to do so with sorcery, the fey decided to manipulate one of the Stross children. They sought to tempt a Stross scion to swear allegiance to them, to swear fealty to their King upon reaching adulthood, and eventually to grant the castle to the fey upon death. They never quite succeeded, but they did come close.

In the Black Oak Bailey, site of their great black oak, the fey struck this bargain with the Stross. In exchange for their eldest daughter and eldest son fostering in the courts of the shadow fey, the Stross gained access to shadow magic and the right to rule the Rosehaven lands, as the fey called the small walled city of Zobeck and the kobold mines all around it. The eldest of the Stross patriarchs entered the realm of shadow near his death, and some believe he lives there still, his soul forfeit for the power the fey gave his descendants.

The Shadow Plane still seeps through the dark oak and tempts those near it into darkness. Merely living near the baily does not trigger the curse. The victims must also ask for help from the Goddess of Night and Magic—and for many long decades, the Stross remained loyal to the Sun God Khors. Over time, the fey turned them more and more toward Sarastra, convincing each generation to go a little further into shadow, but the Stross were canny bastards.

While the Stross did offer some worship to the goddess, they never fully embraced her. Instead, they used the scáthesidhe's wish to corrupt them to manipulate the fey. The family taught its sons and daughters the secrets of power over the shadow fey. And, indeed, their teachings kept the fey at their command until the Great Revolt (see below) brought down the family.

The Stross Family's Rule

The Stross ruled in the city and province of Zobeck for nearly 600 years, marrying well, fighting off invasion from the Magocracies to the west, and holding its own against the advances of Morgau & Doresh to the northeast. They did it the old-fashioned way, with fistfuls of silver and a ruthless cruelty that scattered their enemies.

The Stross family's wealth flowed from river trade and deep silver mines. Their peasants worked hard, their enslaved kobold miners pulled ore from the earth day and night, and their soldiers kept the eastern Morgau undead at bay. But over time, the costs of defense and the nobility's luxurious upkeep grew very steep. The knights and landowners took more and more, and one day, the merchants, artisans, and peasants decided to stop paying. It took only a small spark.

The Stross guards dragged Halsen Hrovitz, a boy of ten, from the city's streets for denouncing the Stross as "leeches" and screaming that he did not want to die in their mines. Ordinary Zobeckers blocked the guards' path. News of the incident raced through the city, and citizens flocked to the boy. A mob grew. The people initially threw insults at the guards holding Halsen. As their numbers and courage grew, however, their pent-up anger manifested in thrown cobblestones. They pelted the guards relentlessly and freed the boy, who lived but suffered a terrible injury to his leg that never healed.

The hard-pressed guards fought to return to the prison. Hussar reinforcements arrived and rode into the mob, trampling a half-dozen people. A silversmith named Abelard and a journeyman wizard named Marcenzo reformed the crowd and gave it direction and goals. Within hours, they lead the citizens to seize the city barracks, but soldiers from Castle Stross continued to march in, as did the troops from the gatehouses on the river, the Great Southern Road, and the Griffon Gate. The battle was far from over when the sun set on the first day.

The mob looted the Stross barracks and armory throughout the night and passed out weapons to a thousand willing hands.

The Great Revolt

By mid-morning the next day, Abelard and the wizard Marcenzo lead the rebels to accomplish the impossible: they chased all the hostile guards and soldiers out of the city. Clever maneuvering during the night allowed them to surprise the Stross men at a half-dozen different places just before dawn, and the guards never recovered from the shock. The soldiers regrouped near the Oros Bridge, however. The citizens and a few adventurers gathered in Crown Square to plan and prepare for the counterattack. The city folk swore that the revolt must not falter nor end until they had cast off House Stross completely.

All day the rebellious citizens gathered their forces. A huge mob threatened the commandery of the Order of Undying Sun, staunch supporters of the Stross family, who supposedly held a king's ransom in gold. The threats were a ruse, however, to keep the knights from supporting the city guards who yet remained loyal. In the meantime, Abelard and Marcenzo proclaimed Zobeck the Free City and struck a bargain with the majority of the remaining guards: In exchange for supporting the rebellion, their captain would have a lifetime seat on the

new Free City Council that would govern Zobeck. With the bargain struck, word went out to sack Stross warehouses, counting houses, their city palace on Crown Square, and even their ships and barges.

The rebels released prisoners and arrested nobles and tax collectors. The mob ruled the city while the Watch stood aside, powerless to resist. Meanwhile, the aristocracy's forces fled to plot their revenge. They had lost the battle for the city, but the war was far from over. The knights of the Order of the Undying Sun gave their word not to return to Zobeck, and so were set free. They marched out to the sound of hisses and cries of, "Traitors to the people!"

One month later, the aristocratic army returned. Nobles and knights of the Undying Sun sent from other commanderies rode warhorses, while footmen and other allies—including mercenary crossbowman—followed on foot or on lighter horses. With the group also came powerful shadow fey called the Four Deaths. The Stross allies seized the Oros Bridge, dividing the castle from the city and cutting off a main trade route. They stopped barge traffic on the River Argent and slowly pushed back the Free City's patrols.

The Battle of Oros Bridge

On a rainy, late spring day, almost 7,000 rebels met Lord Kranos Stross and his 1,400 retainers and 2,200 allies at the Battle of Oros Bridge. The revolutionaries' numbers and bravery overcame their shortage of training and proper arms and armor. Peasant archers, kobold miners, stout mercenary pikemen hired by merchant interests, and the wizardry of Marcenzo formed the backbone of the Free City's Army. A few dwarves had worked tirelessly to make spears, shields, and armor for hundreds of the most experienced warriors, but more than half of Zobeck's army carried little more than knives and hate. The Watch, now firmly committed to the revolt, formed the remainder of the force, with the priests of Yarila the Harvest Goddess and the Volund the Forge God providing support. The Free City Army's anger gave them courage against their better-trained foes.

The first morning, the Free City Army attempted to use that rage and courage to retake the bridge. The nobles held against repeated attempts to drive them off by magic and numbers, however. Confident in their superior skill and equipment, the Stross alliance counterattacked around noon. Cavalry poured over the bridge, shattered the front ranks, and overran the Free City Army's supply area. Almost as soon as they reached the reserves line, though, they fell into a clever trap. A field of holes and mud prepared by miners ensnared the advancing horses. Kobolds, artisans, and peasants dragged almost 50 knights down into mud and death.

Both sides retreated in good order.

The second day was clear and sunny enough to see the muddy mess of the previous day's struggle. The battle continued into late afternoon with only skirmishes, feints, and small probing attacks while the Stross forces waited for the ground to dry sufficiently for another cavalry charge. That delay undid them, however. The wizard Marcenzo had taken his best men across the river during the night to join a large contingent of kobold reinforcements freed from the Stross silver mines and moving fast over the drying river bank.

Suddenly flanked, the Stross line at the bridge collapsed, and the mercenaries took flight, leaving the cavalry to struggle alone. In two days of bloody ruin, the peasants and kobolds took hundreds of noble prisoners and finally ended the reign of the Stross family. Kobold archers, owl-flying raiders, and other deadly night fighters prevented the remaining army from retreating to Strossheim, the Stross family's castle. The stragglers instead retreated east, seeking shelter at the village of Briarwood.



The Castle Falls

That night, the mob stormed Strossheim, forced the gate, and sacked the castle. They freed prisoners from the dungeons, tore down tapestries, and carted off food and gold. By dawn, more than 40 bodies hung from the battlements, arranged from youngest to eldest.

The Stross supporters fled to neighboring states, sought refuge downriver, or simply changed sides. After the looting ceased, the castle briefly served as the Free City Army's headquarters. One Stross child, Evander Stross, survived the massacre, though no one realized it. The quiet child was playing amidst the castle's shadows, as he usually did, when the mob struck. In the midst of the clash, he pledged his soul to the forces of shadow, and the shadows enfolded him into their protection.

The looting of the upper halls and the death of the inhabitants turned the castle into a place haunted by new ghosts. Fortunately, the fires started in the Great Hall failed to catch (or were suppressed by summoned water elementals). Many looters sought to find the "hoard of silver" the Stross family vaults contained, though they never did. Some claimed demons had guarded it, others vanished in the search, and some were driven mad by the terrors they saw below the hill. The army sealed up the entrances to the kobold's silver mines for a few months, until the kobolds offered to work the mines in exchange for a fair share of the silver and a permanent position on the City Council. The city gratefully accepted over the objections of those who still saw kobolds as nothing more than slaves.

After the Revolt

Five years later, the Free City Army abandoned the castle as the number of missing or simply dead sentries became unacceptable. The rumors of the castle's haunting date to that time. The dwarves of Clan Grimbold stayed, however, and remain there still. Certain wizards and cultists visit them on occasion to purchase things best not discussed. Likewise, fighters seeking weapons of starmetal or pure shadow, or weapons aligned with the heavens, often make their way here and pay high prices for goods not available anywhere else.

The kobold silver miners worked the castle's mines for more than 30 years. When the deep mines suffered a series of devastating collapses

and explosions, even the kobolds abandoned them as haunted, or at least unlucky. The mines recently reopened with the help of clockwork pumps and new techniques for bracing the old tunnels.

The Present Day

The Zobeck Revolt is 80 years past; only a few dwarves and gearforged remember it first hand. The brash, rich city found its footing as an independent, mercantile state. The citizens honor Rava the Gear Goddess as well as older deities, but they do not revere Sarastra, Goddess of Night and Magic.

Likewise, fewer people follow the Sun God than did at the height of the Stross dynasty. The revolutionaries became the city's Consuls and Lord Mayor, elected by the human, dwarven, and kobold citizens of Zobeck. Life, and the world it seems, has moved on, but the things that still abide in Strossheim (now called Castle Shadowcrag) have not forgotten.

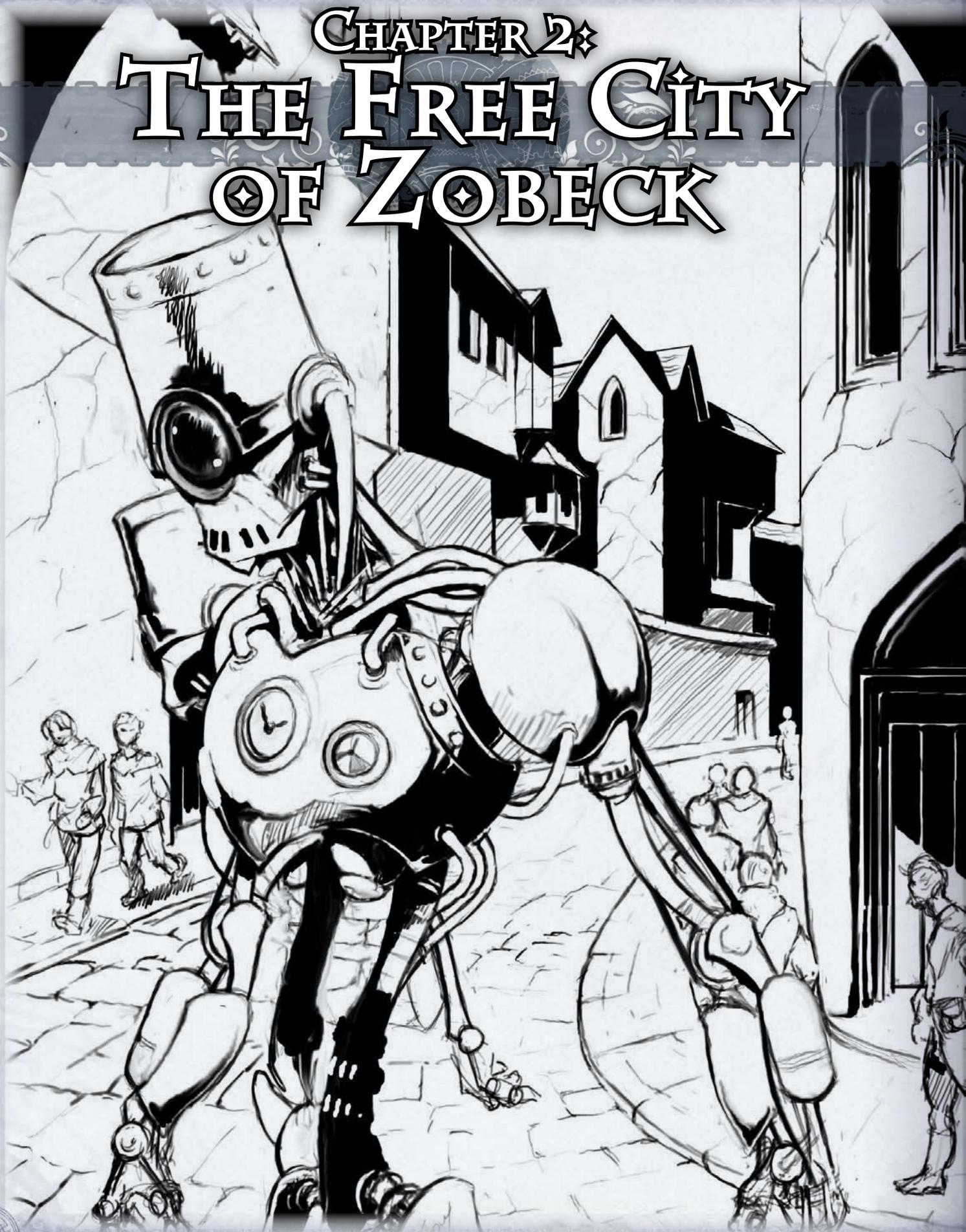
Dangerous Neighbors

Zobeck shares borders with five states: the dwarven Ironcrag Cantons to the west, the undead princes of Morgau and Doresh to the north and east, the human kingdom of the Magdar to the south, and the difficult legions of the Duchy of Perun's Daughter far to the east, at the mouth of the River Argent. Raiding bands of militant ghouls from the subterranean Ghoulish Imperium sometimes harry the city's trade, though the ghouls send no ambassador to the city.

Almost as dangerous as those nations are the less organized groups. Bands of centaurs occasionally make their way through the Margreve Forest to raid the city's fields and outlying villages. Groups of shadow fey sometimes harass travelers on the Great Northern Road, though this is rare.

Close but not quite bordering Zobeck are seven to 12 more states, depending on who does the counting: the nomadic elves of the Rothenian plains, the human lands of the Grand Duchy of Dornig, the Free City of Salzbach, the small mountain state of Verrayne, the powerful but sharply-pressed Electoral Kingdom of Krakova, and two of the Seven Cities, Melano and Triolo. All have trade relationships and not infrequently alliances with Zobeck.

CHAPTER 2 THE FREE CITY OF ZOBECK



MAMMON SCRATCHED HIS golden beard, sending a shower of silver ducats to the floor. Lesser devils scrambled to gather them up, but the erinyes Issiloth waited and watched her master's darkening expression. "Why, oh worthless servants of mine," the arch-devil asked, "is this merchants' city not entirely within my claws?"

The servants outdid each other in avoiding their master's gaze, and the silence grew weightier. Finally, Issiloth judged the moment right, licked her lips, and stepped forward. "My lord, most of the merchants already bow to your fiendish mastery." The words almost made her gag, but she pressed on. "We have plans to secure more—"

"Most is not all!" Mammon thundered. "All of Zobeck must bend its knee. Or have you forgotten your sums, you lintpicking dungeater?" His gaze began with her, swept over the rest, and returned to the erinyes. The other devils edged toward the chamber's platinum doors. Issiloth bowed her head to hide her expression and choose her next words carefully.

"Perhaps the ones who resist you serve other gods or masters?"

"Of course they do." Mammon sounded more annoyed than angry, and Issiloth held her breath. "You give tedious council because you do not know better. Perhaps, oh clever servant, you should learn first hand. Go, and bring their greatest heroes to my service."

Issiloth tried to look stricken. "But my lord the heroes of Zobeck are noted for their patron goddess and stout—"

"Go, little fool," Mammon said in his most quiet tone, and Issiloth shivered with real fear. "And if you fail, do not return."

Issiloth felt the pull of the link to the city forming quickly. "I am already gone, your Golden Magnificence, with a thousand pardons for my rudeness and sloth," she said and meant every word. With a twinkle of coinage, she found herself in a summoning circle, just one more newcomer looking to make her own way in Zobeck. Whether that meant seeking glory and souls for Mammon, or just finding a berth out of his reach, at least she finally had her chance.

A city's people are its foundation and its soul. The city of Zobeck houses a more industrious group of citizens than most, all of them free to trade, bargain, gather, and even scheme to make themselves rich, powerful, or wise. As one of the very few Free Cities in Midgard, it answers to no king or noble lord. Instead, its Free City Council rules from secret chambers, its Watch is both human and gearforged, and its people know what makes a life worthwhile: freedom, trade, and the blessings of the Gear Goddess. The city ticks and tocks, and its people keep a steady rhythm of mercantile life. Trade flows up and down the River Argent, out the Dwarven Gate to the Ironcrags, north through the Margreve, and south to Harkesh and Siwal and the distant cities of spice and silk.

Underneath all that hard work and pragmatism lies a darker city, a place built on kobolds enslaved in silver mines; a place still scarred by a harsh family's diabolical practices and autocratic rule; a place corrupted by pacts of blood, by temptations of the flesh, and by the raw power of untrammelled greed that blackens men's hearts. The people of Zobeck lust for power, wealth, success, and pleasure, and they bargain with anyone they believe can provide them: Kariv gypsy fortunetellers, strange cults, harsh gods, and other unscrupulous schemers. The people's hungers draw devils like crows to a corpse.

Yet the city prospers. Its heroes avert disaster again and again. Somehow, Zobeck's heart keeps ticking, overseen by Rava, the goddess that gave it life.

DISTRICTS

The Free City encompasses ten main districts, each briefly described below. More detailed information about each district can be found in Chapters 3 and 4.

The Cartways

Originally kobold mining and drainage tunnels, Zobeck's vintners and greengrocers later expanded and used these underground passageways for storing wine and perishables. Noble revelers used

them to travel back and forth to the Stross-sponsored Winter Festival in the underground cavern called Winter Hall. Eventually, the city's nobles claimed the Cartways as their private highways, using them for everything from business to sexual rendezvous. After the Great Revolt, the victors saw the tunnels as symbols of the rich and sealed them for good.

Entrances to the Cartways still exist, however, and Zobeck's smugglers, gangs, and undesirable residents frequently conduct business or lair therein. Travelers in the Cartways have encountered barghests, ghouls, devils, demons, otyughs, and various cults, including a cult of Marena. The Free City's Watch officially prohibits exploration in the Cartways. Anyone entering them does so at their own risk.

Citadel District

Located in the northern part of the city, this section contains the walled Citadel and its highly skilled Griffon Riders that protect Zobeck's uppermost river entrances. The King's Head tavern and the White Rose tavern both reside in this district. The former caters to average soldiers, while paladins and priests of Khors and Perun patronize the latter.

Collegium District

As its name suggests, this district's greatest feature is Zobeck's famous Arcane Collegium. Lada's Temple of the Celestial Dawn is its other great landmark. Scholars, scribes, mages, students, and alchemists frequent this district and often gather at the Hedgehog tavern or peruse the shelves at the Book Fetish.

Dock District

Also called the Gullet—and one of the busiest areas of the Free City—the Docks along the Argent River are the center of the city's trade, just slightly eclipsing the Great Northern Road. Its wharves, alleys, and thoroughfares see traffic from merchants, bargemen, and stevedores at all hours. Its taverns, gambling dens, and bordellos stand beside warehouses, dry docks, and other industries of the water trade. Brawls are common, and the Watch tends to heavily patrol the area to ensure the smooth continuation of commerce.

THE FREE CITY OF ZOBECK

N Large city

Corruption +0, Crime +2, Economy +5, Law +0, Lore +3, Society +7

Qualities academic, holy site, prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction

Danger +10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Free City Council (led by a Lord Mayor)

Population 14,000 (11,040 humans; 420 dwarves; 2,200 kobolds; 200 gearforged; 140 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Arcane Collegium Guildmaster Orlando (CN male human wizard 14/expert 2)

Field Marshall of the Free Army Sir Jorun Haclav, (LN male human fighter 2/cleric 6 (Perun)/expert 2)

Lord Commander of the Free Army of Zobeck Lady Fenyll Marack (LE female human rogue 6/assassin 6)

Lord Mayor Karillian Gluck (LN male human aristocrat 5/expert 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 9th +1

Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

Gear District

The city's dwarves dominate this district, which houses many trade guilds, like the Geargrinder's Guild, Foundreyman's Guild, and Steamworker's Union. The area is awash in tin, iron, and brass creations, and the sound of dwarves striking anvils carries throughout the streets. Many gearforged frequent this district.

Kobold Ghetto

Zobeck's hard-working kobolds reside in this section of the city. Their many kings hold sway in this small realm, and any Bigs or Too Talls entering the Ghetto have to submit to the kobold border authority, paying taxes on declared goods and often bribes just to gain admittance.

The Ghetto's streets are narrow, crowded, and often trapped. Non-kobolds are walking targets for pickpockets and gangs.

Lower Zobeck (Ashmill)

Ashmill is home to the Free City's poor and unskilled working classes, though a few merchants like the Kappa family have purchased large chunks of space here near the Moon Temple and the shrine to St. Charon. Lower Zobeck also houses the Wheatsheaf tavern, a favored drinking hole for smugglers and rogues. Merchants selling foodstuffs, livestock, and spices do brisk business in this district.

Temple District

Temples to the Free City's five main deities Lada (her largest temple in Zobeck), Perun, Rava, Volund, and Porevit and Yarila (the Green Gods) comprise the extent of this district. The structures surrounding the temples house their staff or store goods and livestock to support the clerics.

Market District (Vineyard District)

Merchants selling carpets, cloth, leather, wine, weapons, alchemical powders, poisons, goods from other lands, and even otherworldly

goods from the Realm of Shadow hawk their wares from tiny stalls in this district. Most anything can be found for sale here.

Merchant District

Weavers, cobblers, coopers, carpenters, jewelers, armorers, and other skilled workers have shops lining this district. Some of their wares are sold in the Market District, supplementing their income, but these craftsmen generally work to order and keep quite busy. Many merchants reside in the upper levels of their shops, though the wealthier ones have residences in Upper Zobeck.

Upper Zobeck

The Free City's government centers, including the Council Hall, City Archives, the Redrock Bailey (jail), and the Civic Courthouse, cluster in this district. The opulent, painted-brick houses of the city's richest and oldest families stand in the Crown Square portion of the district, where the great Old Stross Clock tolls the hours.

LIFE IN ZOBECK

Despite commerce's importance, not everyone in Zobeck is a merchant or business owner. The average citizen makes his wage through common labor, as a farmer, apprentice, launderer, miner, sailor, servant, stevedore, watchman, wait staff, or any of a myriad of other professions. Some individuals, of course, prefer illegal endeavors, such as smuggling, thieving, and narcotics dealing. For the most part, however, Zobeck is a city of hardworking people who highly value their freedom.

People of Zobeck

As a thriving trade center, Zobeck draws people from across Midgard. The Free City calls to enterprising individuals desiring to make their own way in the world. It offers even the lowliest peasants the chance to forge new beginnings. Opportunities in nearly every arena abound for those who know how to grab them, and many come to the Crossroads in hopes of bettering their lot. In Rava's ticking city, people can join the hum of the seamless trade machinery and forge their own destiny. In fact, Zobeck's population has swelled in recent years from 9,600 people to its current population of 14,000.

Zobeck welcomes all human visitors and many of the other races. In a city of commerce, newcomers are all viewed as walking money, and the citizens of the Free City are eager to relieve them of their coin—whether legally or not.

Humans

Humans comprise the city's largest population. Most hail from the Magdar Kingdom to the south, though some have immigrated from the Duchy of Perun's Daughter or from Salzbach and Grisol (the latter of which was human before the dwarves took it). A few have arrived after fleeing from the harsh masters of Morgau and Doresh. Others have trickled in from all over Midgard in search of opportunity. Even a few Kariv have made the city their permanent home.

Overall, the humans here are a varied lot, and many different hair colors and skin tones make up the city's crowds. At least a dozen languages echo through the city's streets and docks.

Dwarves

Zobeck's dwarves are, in some senses, the weakest and least martial dwarves in Midgard. For a time, their cousins in the Ironcrag Cantons



considered them a strange sort of “lowland canton”, but their unusual behavior has put the lie to even this. They rarely gather for war, they rarely cloister their women, and they show little interest in the Old Gods Wotan and Perun. Instead, they devote themselves to the strange cult of Rava the Gear Maiden and to the construction of ever more sophisticated mechanisms and tools. They are master jewelers and craftsmen, excellent diviners, and even respectable bards, but they seem to lack the reaver’s temperament entirely.

The dwarves of Zobeck almost exclusively live in the Gear District, to be close to their work, and some say, to keep one ear open for what the kobolds might do to their forges at night. They labor long and hard, and many gain great wealth; a few maintain summer villas in the alpine reaches. Some work as factors for the great dwarven trade houses, but this is rare because of their uncharacteristic behavior. They show much less passion for the ancient ways than most dwarves. Indeed, when pressed for their clan, canton, and lineage, some merely reply that they are “children of the city and the Goddess Rava.” This formulation troubles the more devout visitors from Stannasgard or Winterheim. The most famous among them is Ondli Firedrake, a pantheist priest who represents Rava and Volund and is First Consul of the city. (See the *Dwarves of the Ironcrags* book, for more information on the dwarves, including their dwarf-specific magic).

Kobolds

The Free City is home to at least 2,200 kobolds, though only a few hundred are ever present in the city at one time. They work the Vilgau silver mines to the north of the city, and the Tromburg iron mines to the north and east. When they do come to the city, they have money to spend and a desire to drink their wages away.

Drunken kobold miners pick fights, and they especially hate

gnomes, none of whom live within the city walls for fear of assault. Why does the city tolerate such disruptive creatures? Partly they suffer the kobolds because few other creatures are willing to work in the dangerous, wet, tiny mines, and certainly not for the pittance that the kobolds earn. The iron, silver, and lead they pull from the earth fuel Zobeck’s smithies and foundries. But that is only half an answer.

Small but strong, the kobolds of Zobeck walk the city streets in large groups every night, visiting the various establishments to spend their coin. Most are miners, but almost as many live and work in the Kobold Ghetto on the southeast side of the city. Their Ghetto houses hundreds of the best metallurgists, assayers, alchemists, and clockworkers in Zobeck. The kobolds’ talent for sorcery means that they even have an apprentice in the Collegium. Their small, nimble fingers make them valuable in all the fine work required to build clockworks of all kinds, from scullions, to toys, to deadly traps and weaponry, such as the Zobeck self-winding crossbow.

Gearforged

The gearforged were human once. Created during the Great Revolt when the Collegium sided with the rebels, the first gearforged were little more than a desperate ploy to hold off the knights of the Order of the Undying Sun and the heavy cavalry of House Stross. Dedicated dwarves and humans worked closely with wizards from the Collegium for long hours in the guildhalls using borrowed blood and souls to put life into lifeless metal.

Constructed of steel and brass, their intricate mechanical bodies needed more life than simple animating magic could provide, and the Collegium turned to dark and shunned techniques to transfer the life force of sentient creatures to artificial forms. Disturbed but desperate, the rebels went ahead with the work. The Steamworkers and

A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO ZOBECK, AN EXCERPT

It's said that a merchant of the Free City would sell his own mother to slavers for two coppers. That's false, of course; he'd need at least two gold. Two coppers would only get a kobold a dance with mum.

Though Rava the Gear Goddess remains the ticking heart of the Temple District, industry and trade are the city's soul. Caravans and mule trains clatter and tromp through the city gates day and night. Barges and river-runners keep the dockhands constantly running. Free City fortunes arise from commerce, whether built on cantonal steel and iron, the spices from distant Khandiria, or stallions of questionable pedigree.

But while steel, spices, and stallions have their charm, nothing draws the eye so much as the monthly arrival of the glass merchants. Though many caravans brave the Shadow Road, none of the imitators have a patch on this Zobeck original.

—Darian Darkfyre

Geargrinders built the gearforged as fast as the foundries allowed, and the clockwork mages animated more than 100 powerful soldiers to counter the heavy cavalry of House Stross.

The animating spirits came from the people of the city: elderly volunteers, angry and idealistic young men, criminals seeking a reprieve, and a few seeking a new life in a whole body. Their bodies died, but their souls lived on, fought bravely, and won.

These are the gearforged—once human, now mechanical and undying. They guard against the creeping return of aristocracy and against the decay and corruption of diabolic cults. Many remember how things were, and they do not forgive easily the slaughter in the streets, still so vivid in their memories. A few individuals join these first gearforged every year. Many are wealthy merchants at the end of life, others soldiers seeking a new edge, and a few are criminals compelled to serve the city as the price of their crimes.

Each gearforged's iron, brass, and steel body has a distinct appearance, making them as varied as any other of Zobeck's peoples, though they always have a humanoid shape. Deep in their ticking hearts, the gearforged are much more than war machines. They are thinking creatures with souls who serve the city as watchmen, in the Spyglass Guild, and as soldiers. Their minds grow with time. And they remember. They remember *everything*. Their curse is that they never forget until they strip their gears and die. This is what separates them from mere devices, the simple servants only responsive to orders and capable of little more than a limited amount of memorization.

Others

Drawn to the bustling city's rich opportunities, numerous other races call Zobeck home. Many of these may not reside in the city proper, especially those with more monstrous natures or shapes. Instead, they live in the Cartways or other dark corners and do not openly walk the city's streets in daylight hours. They remain residents, of a sort, all the same.

Some beings known to exist (or to have existed) within the city's boundaries include: barghests, blood hags, dark nagas, devils, darakhul, derro, elves, ghouls, goblins, halflings, lizard folk, shadow fey, and tengu. This list is not inclusive; other creatures may certainly reside or pass through Zobeck at any given time.

CULTURE

Zobeckers value commerce above most things, except freedom. They fiercely celebrate their hard-won freedom during the Stross's Fall celebration, and none of them forget that freedom can be tenuous—especially with neighbors like Morgau and Doresh. Still, common Zobeckers give thanks daily for the ability to run their own lives and make their own way in the world, and they teach their children the importance of this gift.

Zobeckers also have a tremendous love for their patron deity Rava and her inspired gearforged creations. They also hold the Free City's other four main gods in high regard. Most of them stand ever vigilant against cultists, especially those of Marena, who seek to undermine the accepted faiths in Zobeck.

Languages

In a trade city like Zobeck, the Trade tongue suffices as the principal language of the streets along side the natives' many dialects of the Northern Tongue. Dwarven and Draconic are other popular languages, as well. The ever-turning wheels of commerce continually bring diverse people to Zobeck, however, and most any language or dialect can be heard in the city on any given day.

Currency

The silver piece is the basic exchange standard in Zobeck, as it is in many municipalities and countries throughout Midgard. Copper, gold, and even a little platinum also circulate, along with somewhat more exotic currencies. Bartering is less common in Zobeck's markets, where coin is king, but certain groups, like the Kariv and the kobolds, often exchange goods for services and vice versa. Bartering with Zobeck's various gangs is also feasible, if dangerous.

TRADE BY ROAD AND RIVER

The commerce of a trade city sounds glamorous and exotic: silks and spices, mithral and magic, relics and lore all change hands between locals, visitors, and sharp-eyed wanderers. Everything seems sweeter when minstrels sing about it—largely because they go easy on the sweat and donkey shit. But the Crown square merchants have a saying, "There's no such thing as easy money."

Traders and Cargos

The traders and stevedores make their coin because someone has to actually move all the iron, wheat, silver, ale, wool, and timber sold in Zobeck. The traders take a (sometimes literal) whip to kobolds or humans who load and unload the city's barges, oxcarts, mule trains, and hay wagons. Once the trip begins, the costs rise: time, toil, fodder, and travel itself all drain money. All too often, blood too is a price of doing business—someone has to defend the cargo against bold robbers, ravaging ogres, or grasping petty lordlings who close their bridges and demand a toll.

Still they come, more and more, and Zobeck welcomes each shipment. The Free City spurns no opportunity to gain every copper. Many merchants prize the most uneventful and short routes, often to Cronstadt or Hammerfell. Specialists—rare and spectacular—can command far greater fees and profits. The Templeforge airships down



from the Ironcrag; the Flying Cities of Sikkim, charging the air with their alluring spice; even the Shadow Road of the scáthesidhe, connecting the Free City to the courts of the Shadow, can return many times an investment's cost to a bold and careful merchant. Everyone wants something and everything wants someone—meaning that there is always money to be made if you can bring the right goods to the right market.

River Traffic

Certainly, pulling an oar is easier than marching up a mountain, but the “easy money” of floating on a barge downriver to Srevresta or the Duchy of Perun's Daughter is not so easy that guards are tripping over one another volunteering for it. The river gods are fickle, especially in spring, and a pack of river trolls can capsize a barge no matter how heavily laden. Worse, the songs of the lorelei can distract a pilot, and hill giant bandits can sink a cargo with a few well-placed boulders and loot the wreck. And, of course, if the cargo doesn't go through, the guards don't get paid.

A successful run south creates still more work when going back upriver. Guards are expected to pull at the oars. Forests crowd the riverbank for long miles, hiding bandits and worse. And the river itself is often filled with snags, shifting sandbars, and other bargemen whose cargo may have been stolen. Some bargemen turn to banditry, pretending friendship and then turn pirate. Say what you want about the stink of a mule train, at least you won't drown in your armor.

The Road South

The Magdar Kingdom is a fine and reasonably stable kingdom of insanely ambitious and scheming barons, dukes, and bastard princes.

They all spend their time vying for the kingdom's Eagle Crown, and the Magdar have at times had as many as 12 Immortal Kings within 18 months. Their politicking and scheming partially relies on the trade flowing through their kingdom, for they spend their tariffs and tolls to import the rarest poisons and the priciest assassins.

Goods reach the Magdar Kingdom in oxcarts, meaning they might travel twelve miles on a good day. Though glacially slow, this method has at least two good points to recommend it: Oxen are cheap and pull well, and ox carts can be circled for protection each night. The latter's importance cannot be overstated—the White Mountain Marches are nothing but a nest of robbers, and the raiders from the Mharoti Empire are patient and vicious. The third, unspoken, benefit of this system is its reduced personnel cost and plentiful opportunities for advancement: half the guard company will likely die before reaching Harkesh.

The Road North

Zobek's Order of the Griffon Riders protects travel and trade along the Great Northern Road, which stretches over 200 miles from Zobek to Castle Valach on its way to the city of Bratislor in the north. Though only a wagon width wide in most places, the forest seems unable to totally reclaim it; the road remains a scar cut down the Margreve's face. High overhead, the branches of flanking trees reach for each other, turning the road into a long tunnel with a tall, green gothic arch. Some sun breaks through, but night falls early here even in high summer.

Due to boggy, rocky, and overgrown stretches, travelers frequently take a fortnight to traverse the road on foot. Riders typically take eight to ten days if they pull no wagons. Coaching inns, spaced one to three days apart, offer travelers a respite from beasts and weather.

ZOBECKERS AND ZOBECKIANS

Zobeck's local inhabitants refer to themselves as Zobeckers. For ages, however, tourists have called the citizens Zobeckians, and this name has promulgated throughout Midgard. Zobeckers generally dislike being called Zobeckians, but they enjoy taking foreigners' money, so most politely ignore the inaccuracy. The names are interchangeable among the lower classes, but in polite company or after the locals have had a few drinks, visitors should remember the distinction if they want to score social points or avoid fights.

Though snow and cold challenge winter travelers, the road's condition suffers most from melt waters, rains, and mud in the early spring. Coaching inns are either closed or not prepared for travelers during this time. Merchants willing to risk the Great Northern Road before the annual Road Opening festival in Zobeck can expect tough going from both the terrain and the hungry creatures emerging from the deeper hollows.

The Great Northern Road is the only passable route to the rich cities of the Red Queen and the undead princes of Morgau and Doresh. As the second source of wealth for the city of Zobeck—the first being the River Argent—the Great Northern Road sees heavy, steady use.

Trade with the Shadow Fey

Antonidas Jabber was a young highwayman, brash enough to get rich and smart enough to never get caught. He loved knives, cheap beer, and cheaper women; all traits that endeared young Jabber to the even younger—and vastly richer—Tuck Marick, the youngest son of the Marick merchant house with an allowance that beggared description.

Jabber and Tuck were fond of songs and stories, and while on a bender of heroic proportions, they decided that the minstrels' tales of callous fey were all terribly one-sided; nobody who spun straw into gold and turned frogs into princes could be all bad.

At the very least, they thought there was money to be made trading with the Winter Court. Though Zobeck boasted many wonders, the city's market for myth was underexploited, and Jabber and Tuck were notoriously bullish.

Caravans of the Shadow Road

With Tuck's fortune and Jabber's brass balls, the pair commissioned a mule train and wagons to drive the Shadow Road (also called the Niflheim Road). The wagons would travel the impossible route by way of blood and poetry gathered from the poorest and most desperate minstrels of Zobeck.

It shouldn't have worked, but it did.

Though the first emissaries to the Winter Court returned to the Free City in pieces over a period of six months, the youths-turned-merchants persevered. The pair took on a promising young linguist of the Arcane Collegium named Matthias Yronwood, known for his controversial publications on the intricacies of shadow fey speech. Soon enough, Yronwood's research on the shadow fey tongue and insights into fey customs gave Jabber's brashness and Tuck's money the chance to actually see returns.

With Yronwood's guidance, the young factors established trade routes and even spoke to the Winter Court—still ruled by the Goddess of Night and Magic—without offending the nobility in

attendance. Yronwood established protocols to ensure negotiations and conversation between human and fey in moderate safety.

Before the year was out, the first glass caravans returned to Zobeck from the far-off Shadow Realm. The profit margin was enormous, given the fey's belief that haggling for gold—as opposed to the sublime intangibles of mortal memory and human degradation—was beneath them, and the simple fact that the Winter Court has little use for money.

Gold changed hands, of course, just not nearly as much as Jabber and Tuck feared. The alabaster fey happily took gold for the children's toys and journeymen's work the caravans seemed so interested in (such as ghostly silver lutes, goblets of spun ice, or essence of blizzard), but the rarest items were sold only for happy memories, years of the human haggler's life, or sex. Given the beauty of the Winter Court, the last was the most freely traded; when asked why such a premium is placed on congress with mortals, the fey invariably replied, "It warms us."

For the first decade, Jabber and Tuck controlled the market for Winter Court moonlight steel; to this day, their original caravan—The Chartered Merchants of Scáthesidhe—conveys the most intricate wares direct from the Winter Court's capital. Other caravans now brave the Shadow Road each year, returning with riches and wonders never before seen, but for moonlight steel and mirrors, Zobeck has the market cornered.

The Flying Traders of Sikkim: From Desert to Mountains and Back Again

Zobeckers are practical people, but even the dourest moneychanger on the Street of Silver Fish opens his purse once or twice in a lifetime. That day is usually when the Flying Traders of Sikkim come to town.

The flying cities of Sikkim were once the marvel of the ages, built with the aid of the djinn and allied with servants of the Mharoti Sultan. When that alliance broke, the city folk became merchants, dealers, and mercenaries, selling the magic of their flying home as just another commodity. There's a sense that Sikkim's best days are gone. They are outlaws now, for they refuse to bow to the Sultanate.

The flying cities travel the world, enormous round islands up to a half-mile across with names that resonate in every port from the desert gardens of Siwal to the icy fastness of Trollheim. Only three cities remain active from a fleet once dozens strong: fast Farokhan, stately golden Ushu, and mysterious Attimahl of the veiled women. One in particular is missed, the lost sorcerer-city of Ulduvai. Certain magical compasses are said to point always toward this city of wonders (see *J3 Crucible of Chaos*).

The Flying Cities

The cities wander the world, but when they dock at Zobeck, they are almost home. Zobeck's mastery of sorcery, divination, and steam makes it a kindred spirit for the far-flying Sikkimese traders, and their shared respect for profitable dealing gives the two cultures a great deal in common.

Superficially, the societies are opposites. The dress of the flying cities is loud, shimmering, and colorful. Zobeckers wear drab woolens or rich lace, but never in scarlet, orange, and lime all at once. Likewise, the Sikkimese worship elemental forces, which are at odds with Zobeck's more traditional religious life.

Both groups feel a bit isolated in an unfriendly, if not openly hostile, world, and they each have things the other wants. Zobeck's

griffons fetch a high price in any flying city, while their spices, salt, and information sell at a premium in the Free City. Zobeck's mastery of clockworks commands great respect from the Sikkimese.

Stories of swindling or even robbing the Sikkim traders circulate freely in Zobeck, but nobody knows anyone who has actually tried it. Given the flying cities excellent defenses—invisible and ever-vigilant aerial spirits, wards of lightning magic and storm glyphs, and rumors of darker guardians—sneaking or breaking into the cities themselves seems less foolish than suicidal.

All three cities use huge sails and vast quantities of amber, brass, and silver to power their magic, but they can readily pay for these materials with the profits from the spice trade, their elemental engines, and with the knowledge they bring from far corners of the world.

A few masters of the Collegium have traveled with the Sikkim, seeing distant lands for themselves, learning to fly carpets and bargain with djinn, efreeti, and elementals. Few make a second trip, though, as life aboard the Flying Cities seems to sap arcane vitality in some fashion.

The Clockwork Caliph

The flying cities have a regular seasonal route: Zobeck, the Magocracy of Allain, the snows of distant Trollheim in the summer months, back south along the Rothenian plains, and to the garden city of Siwal by late autumn, when the heat fades and the harvest comes in. In winter, they retreat to hidden Sikkim, a high desert plateau, for refuge.

The flying traders refer to the rulers of the lands they visit by fanciful titles, the Lord Mayor and City Praetors of Zobeck are always called the Clockwork Caliphs, for example, while the trolls are the Odorous Effendi.

Adventurers and pilgrims seeking to visit the oracles of Siwal (or the city's dancers, said to be the most seductive in the world) pay a fare of little more than 300 gp for a pleasant four-week journey. Likewise, Mharoti gnomes seeking alchemical instruction often use the cities to reach Zobeck's Collegium to perfect their alchemical fire techniques.

EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND MAGIC

The Free City houses the Arcane Collegium, an institute of learning specializing in the study of magic, though its staff includes experts in languages, alchemy, geargrinding, and clockwork craftsmanship. Currently, about 40 students matriculate in the various schools of magic, including clockwork, necromancy, illusions, divination, and the unusual study of star and shadow magic called the illumination school—a field closely related to illusion, with a touch of creation, conjuration, and necromancy mixed in. The practice of star and shadow magic, like clockwork magic, is native to Zobeck. Outside of the Free City, only a few elves may actually know its associated spells.

Zobeck is known far and wide for its clockwork technology. Common clockwork devices include the auto scribe, bolt-thrower, climber, firebox, market scale, scullion, trip-hammer, walking tower, watchman, and weaving spider. More details on these items can be found in the *Crossroads Player's Guide*.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

The citizens of Zobeck enjoy several celebrations throughout the year, many related to seasonal changes and the particular gods associated with the solstices and equinoxes. With trade so central to the city's life, events like the River Fair and the Road Opening Festival, held to honor the city's successful commercial endeavors, enjoy great popularity.

Clockwork Festival

Each year in the month of Goldflower, when other nations celebrate the Crown Festival, all Zobeck honors Rava and her great gifts by celebrating the Clockwork Festival. Zobeckers know the Clockwork City would simply not live or prosper as it does without Rava's blessings and continued interest.

On this summer day, the citizens wreath Rava's creations—the gearforged and the various clockwork constructs—in flowers and parade them through the streets to cheers and joyful applause. Many families carry (or hire others to carry) their revered gearforged ancestors on palanquins. Clockwork items abound throughout the bustling markets, from tools to toys and even gear- and wheel-shaped cakes, and this attracts many travelers to the city during this time.

Festival of Light (Midsummer Festival)

This festival celebrates the harvest of early crops and the long days of light. Lada's priestesses bless the harvests, heal the sick, and offer up prayers to provide for those who toil so that others may eat. The celebrants also honor Khors and his priests for the light that brings them bounty. The farmers make food offerings to the clerics of both gods. Lanterns, bonfires, and magical lights keep the fields bright from dusk until dawn.

Miner's Holiday

During Redleaf and following Volund's Festival, the kobolds receive a celebratory release from all mining to exalt in their own Miner's Holiday. Kobolds actually begin celebrating the night before, which has become known as "All Kobolds Eve." On the Eve, groups of drunken kobolds—some 20 or more strong—assail public houses to drink a week's wages and yip out traditional songs. Drinking, fighting, and property damage ensue. With the exception of the doubled Watch patrols, most of Zobeckers stay indoors or give the revelers a wide berth.

Spring Festival

"Attending the Spring Rite" has become a polite way of saying half the citizens of Zobeck spend a night in the month of Thunders rutting like rabbits, while the other half pretend not to notice.

Torches and bonfires rule the fairgrounds and lanterns glimmer on every street. Young and old alike celebrate the rites together, making the festival as much about community building as religious observance.

The rites of Porevit and Yarila forbid payment for affection, so the courtesans and lovers for sale see the Spring Festival as a day off, a chance to celebrate love instead of simply selling it. Anyone seeking partners offers them the finest flower or bouquet they can afford, or sometimes a simple garland. Even those who live alone or celibate often receive flowers from admirers or friends, and some describe the city as buried in petals.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Someone has poisoned the beer shipped from a specific brewery, sickening dozens. Many suspect the cult of Marena the Red, but it might be simply a rival brewery.
- A new fighter took the brawling at the Wheatsheaf to a fine art and openly calls for bouts against all comers. The Watch doesn't interfere, as the man is one of their officers. The Cloven Nine and other gangsters are furious at this intrusion on their territory and threaten retaliation.
- Some say a furnace gargoyle haunts the rafters above the Grey Friar, each night bringing in one piece of machinery from the Geargrinders. What is it building?

Among many young people in the city, the Spring Festival commonly results in weddings at Midwinter and/or births the following spring. Even when lacking the vows, the births carry no shame; children born in the springtime to the brides and grooms of Porevit and Yarila are considered lucky. Those born precisely on the winter solstice are always invited to join the Green Gods' priesthood and enter into the druidic mysteries at the age of 10 or 11. Though dedicated to the Green Gods, Lada also gains from this festival, as many a new love often blooms here.

River Fair

A part of Lada's Midsummer Festival, the River Fair is a trade fair that takes place along the Docks. Wanderers, bargemen, stevedores, and all the apprentices of the city join together for midsummer madness—with the Sisterhood and dwarven brewers providing the potables. Makeshift stalls line the Docks, and merchants hawk their wares in a bustle of noisy commerce. Barges anchor up and down the river, Kariv music flows into the city proper, and dancing abounds.

Road Opening Festival

Shortly after the Spring Festival, marked when no snows can be seen from the Citadel, Zobeck celebrates the opening of the Great Northern Road running through the Margreve. As with many festivals in the Free City, this entails a great deal of drinking and reveling. The merchants supply copious amounts of spirits for their workers and caravan leaders as both a reward for past service and a bracing for jobs yet to do.

Stross's Fall

For the past 80 years, Zobeckers have commemorated the day that Halsen Hrovitz's courage inspired the Great Revolt. This celebration has several names, depending on the nature of the celebrant: the Free City Council and government officials call it Free City Day; the kobolds call it Miners' Day, in honor of the freeing of the miners that the Stross had enslaved for centuries; the Ravans and gearforged call it Forge Day, to honor the gearforged and their contribution to the Great Revolt; the Ladans call it the Golden Day Festival; most citizens call it Stross's Fall or Hrovitz's Rise.

Food and drink flow freely on this day. The Watch has its hands full but never deals harsh punishments to revelers arrested on this day. For the most part, it tries to keep people from endangering themselves and others or damaging too much property too badly, but otherwise, this is a free for all of rejoicing.

Spring Trade Fair

In the month of Thunders, or sometimes as late as Goldflower, Zobeck's fields host the annual Spring Trade Fair, when all the far-flung partners of Zobeck's merchant houses bring their best wares to begin the trading season. The Spring Trade Fair begins after the Road Opening and lasts throughout the spring season. Merchants set up their colorful tents around the perimeter of the city's pastures, and many visitors flock to the city to purchase the exotic items offered.

Volund's Festival

During the autumnal equinox in Redleaf, the priests of Volund offer their Fire Blessing to all weapons, armor, and metal tools (and some say to the gearforged as well) brought to their priests, whether at Volund's temple or at portable anvil stations set up throughout the city. This tremendously noisy event ends in a great and fiery nighttime service culminating in the Anvil Prayer. Throughout the festival, nearly every priest, smith, geargrinder, and steamworker in the city brings an anvil or a metal pan to hammer on during the chorus, creating a cacophonously beautiful salute to the forge god.

Winter Festival of Khors

Roughly 200 years ago, House Stross and their aristocratic allies held the Winter Festival in the Cartways, in a cavern called the Winter Hall. The revelers travelled to the site in donkey-drawn carts filled with candles and were greeted with casks of wine large enough to dance on. Debauchery ensued.

After the Great Revolt, the festival celebration changed. Much wine remains an important part of it, but the chilly festival now consists of a parade and feasts throughout the city.

We No Work Day!

Every once in a while, the kobolds (all of them) decide to shrug their duties for drink and revelry throughout the day and evening. They claim this celebration takes place on the anniversary of their enslavement by the Stross family, and they celebrate it as a way of snubbing the upper classes. This celebration never seems to take place on the same day of the year, however, and in some years, the kobolds have celebrated it more than once.

As with All Kobold's Eve, chaos spreads throughout the Free City when the kobolds refuse to work. We No Work Day never coincides with any other holidays when workers have the day off, and it always seems to take place at the most inconvenient time. Humans have tried their best to discover dates of upcoming festivals but unsuccessfully. No official word passes through the streets or Kobold Ghetto; the kobolds just instinctively seem to know when every We No Work Day rolls around. Some scholars believe this knowledge might be transmitted by scent.

RELIGION: GODS OF THE CROSSROADS

The Crossroads region—from the Cantons to the Free City to the Duchy of Perun's Daughter, and from the Magdar Kingdom to the blood-soaked principalities of Morgau and Doresh—is a place of contrasts and confusion. Peoples from all points of the compass live or

wander through here, and they bring their gods with them. The five greatest deities are the patrons of the five great nations. The sixth god, Khors, slowly fades in most places as Rava usurps his position. He remains strong in the Magdar Kingdom, however, and still has pious adherents elsewhere who value his power against darkness.

ENTERTAINMENT

Zobeck never sleeps, both because its kobold citizenry are nocturnal, and because its tavern keepers are always searching for one more coin. Most districts have establishments that cater to the common vices—drinking, gambling, whoring, and fighting—though such places abound in Lower Zobeck. Street fights on the bridge or on the docks are popular, with the loser dunked into the water.

The wealthier citizens also pay for less common entertainment, including dancing bears and musicians accomplished with the lute, recorder, drum, and trumpet. Sometimes bards sing to accompany Kariv dancers, and in summer those with the taste and the coin for it go hunting or hawking in the forest north of the Argent.

Inns, Taverns, and Alehouses

Zobeck's inns, taverns, gambling halls, and alehouses serve as the living rooms and parlors of the community, where public and private life plays out in front of free-flowing taps. The city has 14,000 hard-working souls who depend on 24 breweries and seven vintners, and everyone has a favorite drink. Dwarven brewmasters vie with the import of Rothenian and Morgaunic wines. Even the kobolds brew up something called Dog's Breath Ale, which they prize but no one else can stomach.

The city's taverns are as unusual as its guilds and its gods. The Broken Seal, the Dancing Bear, the Grey Friar, the Hedgehog, the King's Head, the Moon and Owl, the Seven Bells, the Silk Scabbard, the Wheatsheaf, and the White Rose are the Free City's most famous establishments, and each caters to a slightly different clientele. Information on each tavern is detailed in the district in which it resides.

Gambling

Opportunities to gamble include traditional dice, card, or drinking games, but Zobeckers also bet on fights, between both animals (usually dog, rats, and dire weasel) and humanoids in the city's various organized pits. Favored gambling dens include the Broken Seal, the Dancing Bear, Seven Bells, the Silk Scabbard, and the Dire Weasel Kennels in the Kobold Ghetto. In the Gullet, there is also the Red Queen, the Cup and Pentacle, and the Rooster. Dice, card, and other games of chance can appear in most any tavern.

Narcotics

Certain narcotics can be purchased in Zobeck's back alleys, dark tavern corners, or the Cartways Black Market. Specifically, buyers can locate requiem from Kammae, poppy's draught from the south, various hallucinogenic mushrooms from the Margreve, dragon's root, and a local opiate called akori blossom. (See the *Crossroads Player's Guide* for more information on narcotics.)

Pit Fighting

For skilled and clever fighters, the city's pit fighting rings can provide a decent income, though not nearly as good as the organizers and hosting establishments make from the wagers. Moreover, successful fighters often find work as muscle in one of the gangs, as bodyguards for wealthy and worried individuals, or with people who need specific "jobs" done. The Silk Scabbard hosts the most popular fights in the city. Most fighting rings are temporary; once the Watch finds them, the dens usually decline as the bribes outweigh the profits.



INFLUENTIAL FAMILIES

Many of Zobeck's influential families are merchant houses. Members of these families often hold positions on the Free City Council, and they help ensure the city stays remains a commerce-friendly place. Currently, only the Greymark and Hrovitz Houses have sitting Consuls.

Armanac

Norek Armanac (N male human aristocrat 6/rogue 2) and his daughter Ardora (CN female human aristocrat 1/rogue 5) lead the Armanac House, best known as the king of shipping in Zobeck. They own a fleet of river barges and their own shipwright company. Their sailors travel the river nonstop to collect the most exotic goods from far and wide. Of course, some of they transport isn't, strictly speaking, legal but so far, the Watch can prove nothing. The Armanac have strong ties with the Stevodore's Brotherhood and the Bargeman's Fellowship, and they supposedly have some type of control over the Barge King, Sundran Karesh.

Greymark

The gruff, elderly Lord Volstaff Greymark leads House Greymark and serves as a Free City Consul. He is currently on his fifth wife, all of whom have been young and raven-haired women of great beauty. Rumors say he has sired several illegitimate children, but he has no official heirs for his empire. Volstaff deals in exotic spices, luxuries, rare books, and drugs. Very few people know much about the old gentleman, and he works hard to keep it that way. When not working, he often relaxes at performances by the city's most famous bard, Jayzel.

Hrovitz

This once down-and-out family rose to prominence after Halsen Hrovitz sparked the Great Revolt. He and his five siblings had been forced into labor to pay off the family's debts. After the Great Revolt, the new Free City Council gave the Hrovitz family the remains of the Stross estate in Crown Square. Skilled workers volunteered their time to repair it, and revolutionaries showered the family with goods and gold, some of it looted from the very house they now owned.

Five years ago, the priests of Rava completed a platinum gearforged body for the elderly Halsen, unlike any built before or since, which held many magical powers. The gearforged Halsen appeared at the Gear Festival that year, but he has not been seen since. The priests of Rava do not speak of his disappearance and merely smile when his name is mentioned.

ADVENTURE HOOK

- Consuls are always getting in trouble: people try to extort them, bribe them, seduce them, or otherwise gain influence over them. Thus the Praetors closely watch the Council. When a Consul falls prey to a devilish seductress, the Praetors—indirectly, of course—call in the PCs to exorcise her. The plot goes deeper than that, however, as the Consul in question has given the seductress information about the city's plans for a new army.

In Zobeck, to say one has “the heart of a Hrovitz” is to say that one is courageous beyond measure. Halsen's descendants remain merchants and stalwart supporters of the Free City, but few have sought the prominence of their forbearer.

Kappa

Successful silk merchants, Orem Kappa (LN male human aristocrat 3) and his family live in the Ashmill district. They harvest raw silk from a silk wasp queen and her hive imported from the Mharoti Sultanate; these silk-spinning creatures form the crux of their lucrative operation. Orem has a young daughter named Nashya, who some say has unusual powers of the mind (see *TôZ*, pgs. 6-7).

Slygass

Lord Grimaldi Slygass (LN male human fighter 6/expert 4) leads House Slygass, who trade in rare metals including mithral and adamantine. They have strong connections to the Grimbold dwarves at Castle Shadowcrag and can acquire starmetal weapons with uncharacteristic ease.

Vandereik

Wine merchants with several shops in Zobeck's Vineyard District, the Vandereik own lands outside the city and cultivate grapes brought to Zobeck from many different lands. Golzca Vandereik (LN female human aristocrat 6) and her seven daughters work the vineyards and see to the wine trade.

Zeerghast

One of Zobeck's oldest families, the wealthy Zeerghasts helped fund the creation of the Arcane Collegium, and several of their members once served as faculty there. Former allies of the Stross, the Zeerghasts survived the Great Revolt by temporarily fleeing the city, some say to Morgau and Doresh. The Zeerghasts never assisted the Stross when the chaos broke out, and as soon as House Stross fell and the Free City settled quietly into its new government, the Zeerghast quietly reappeared. Through all the violence, their home remained intact and untouched while the mob burned and looted others around it.

The Zeerghasts claim to hail originally from Magdar, and they are the sitting king's distant cousins. Rumors hold that they also have familial ties to Morgau, but no one says so very loudly. For the most part, this reclusive family eschews the political dance and social machinations the higher classes seem to enjoy.

Zilas

The Zilas family makes its money cultivating rare plants and herbs from the Margreve, mostly for spell components or alchemical ingredients. The Arcane Collegium and the Chartered Brotherhood

of Alchemists are their main customers in Zobeck, but they trade widely beyond the city. The family has land outside the walls and has produced some interesting plant hybrids. One such, akori blossom, has made a big splash in some circles as a hallucinogenic opiate. Very, very few know that the Zilas grow this plant, however (see *TôZ*, pgs. 6-7).

GOVERNMENT

Zobeck's government is a many-layered nightmare to visitors seeking to bend it to their own purposes, but familiar enough to locals who know just how to get things done. For the most part, it serves the master merchants with security and safety for trade, the common people with justice and fair dealings in the markets, and the poor with work as conscripts or ditchdiggers.

The Free City Council

The Free City Council replaced the Stross-era Praetorian Council after the Revolt. Once composed of hand-picked noble allies of House Stross, the Praetorian Council generally deferred to their lord's wishes in running the city and spent most of their time scheming and plotting against one another. They pilfered money from the city to fund their own projects and interests, ruinously taxed the city's bourgeoisie, restricted trade with tariffs on goods entering the city and exit fees on goods leaving the city, and used the Watch as their personal enforcers to settle vendettas, illegally detain or imprison citizens, and to seize private property. This flagrant corruption laid the groundwork for the violence that destroyed the old aristocracy.

After the Great Revolt, the rebels imprisoned or executed any Praetorian Council members they caught. The Revolt's leaders created the Free City Council to administer the city as the Praetorian Council should have done. Its standing Consul members were citizens who helped lead the Revolt and who held strong interests in the city, mostly guildmasters, priests, and even kobolds. The Council is charged with ensuring the welfare of the city and its citizens, protecting Zobeck from all threats to its freedom, and maintaining the flow and profitability of commerce within the Free City.

Lord Mayor

The sitting Consuls choose the Lord Mayor from among their peers to serve a 10-year term, though most have held the position for life. The Lord Mayor oversees the administration of justice by appointing all of Zobeck's judges, establishes and provisions the army, appoints all knight-commanders of the Citadel, and commands the Free City's militant orders—except the paladins of the Order of the Undying Sun. The Order predates the city's independence, and this chapter only serves on the condition that their commander answer to no one “not of noble blood.” In practice, the Order of the Undying Sun acts as an independent military force.

Consuls

Generally descendants of the Great Revolt's leaders, the 12 Consuls serve for life or until they receive a “silent office” (a retirement sinecure). Sitting Consuls fill any vacancies from among the city's most prominent civic leaders, typically guildmasters, merchants, or powerful members of the priesthood—but once in a while, the Consuls choose an adventurous individual seeking a quieter life.

By tradition, the Free City Council always includes the Guildmaster of the Arcane Collegium and the Kobold King of Kings. During the

Revolt, the leaders gave the city's Watch commander a lifetime council seat but secretly decided that, unlike the deal they struck with the kobolds and the Arcane Collegium, this "seat for life" would only extend to that individual. Upon his death, the Council did not give the position to his successor but added a second seat for a cleric of Rava. To this day, this "betrayal" remains a point of contention between the Council and the Watch. The Watch's current captain, Horvart Edelstein, is bent on regaining his "rightful seat" on the Council.

Onkli Firedrake, a dwarven priest of Rava (and Volund), has served as First Consul, or Council House Chairman, for 20 years. His Consul peers selected him to guide the meetings as the most patient and fair-minded among them.

Current Consuls

- **Karillian Gluck**, Lord Mayor (LN male human aristocrat 5/expert 4)
- **Onkli Firedrake**, First Consul and High Priest of Rava-Among-the-Dwarves and Volund (LG male dwarven fighter 4/cleric 9 (Rava & Volund))
- **Kuromak**, Kobold King of Kings (CN male kobold rogue 9/shadowdancer 5)—this seat's Consul fluctuates with the rise and fall of the Kobold King of Kings in the Kobold Ghetto; Kuromak is the seat's sixth holder in the last two years.
- **Radovar Streck**, City Consul (NE male human expert 3/alchemist 5)
- **Melancha Vendemic**, City Consul (LN female human expert 10)
- **Kekolina of the Derry Mine**, City Consul (NG female kobold rogue 6/cleric 2 (St. Piran))
- **Myzi I**, Mouse King (N male outsider (native) fighter 10)
- **Orlando**, Guildmaster of the Arcane Collegium (CN male human wizard 14/expert 2)
- **Lord Volstaff Greymark**, master merchant and Consul (LE male human expert 12)
- **Lady Wintesla Marack**, master merchant of House Marack and Consul (LG female human cleric (Lada) 5/aristocrat 8)
- **Halsen Hrovitz IV**, master merchant of House Hrovitz and Consul (NG male human bard 6/expert 7)
- **Azeleanara Perunisis**, retired adventurer originally from the Duchy of Perun's Daughter (NG female human fighter 14)

The Praetors

A secret council known as the Praetors serves as the Lord Mayor's inner cabinet and his eyes, ears, and hands throughout the city. The Praetors are the core of Zobeck's secret police network, indirectly controlling the city's internal and external spies, jailers, and tax collectors. The number of Praetors never exceeds five, and Consuls sometimes also serve as Praetors.

The identity of the Praetorians typically remains secret. Many have suspected, but none have ever proven, strong ties between the Order of Griffon Knights and the Praetors. Any citizen may denounce another citizen by a charge given to the Blue House (the seat of the secret police, just outside the Citadel). Lady Fenyll Marack is the only acknowledged member of the Praetors (see Military Leaders).

Military

Zobeck's military might consists of the Free Army, the Griffon Knights, and the Zobeck Hussars. The Free City can also count on assistance from the Order of the Undying Sun.

The Free Army

The bright red banner with a golden gear of the Free City's army flies high from the Citadel walls, and rarely does it march against a foe in anger. But Zobeck is surrounded by neighbors who might demand tribute, bluster with outrageous threats, or even seek to compel the city's submission and fealty. Thus the Free City retains a standing army, though a small one, and cultivates good relationships with some neighbors and some prominent mercenary companies.

Elite Forces

The city rarely commands more than 1,000 troops in the city itself, and half of those come from a levy of the citizens to man the walls when its professional soldiers go raiding. For all its wealth—and the bounteous patronage of the Gear Goddess—the Free City is smaller than the great metropolis of the Seven Cities or the Mharoti Empire. The gearforged company is still its preferred heavy infantry, and its mages from the Arcane Collegium are second to none—but both groups are relatively small and scattered, no matter their individual strength.

The city's true elites are the Order of Griffon Knights (primarily scouts, despite their name) and the Zobeck Hussars, a set of ridiculously brave (some say foolhardy) cavalry. The Griffon Knights ride their mounts to scout the forests and open plains; the hussars patrol roads, hills, and woods in their green jackets and gold braid. The hussar's colorful plumage hides hard steel, and they burn border villages when needed. The hussars are also inordinately fond of dueling.

Military Leaders

- **Lady Fenyll Marack**, Praetor of the Blue House, Lord Commander of the Free Army of Zobeck (LE female human rogue 6/assassin 6)
- **Sir Jorun Haclav**, Field Marshall of the Free Army, Captain of the Zobeck Hussars, and Master of the Citadel (LN male human fighter 2/cleric 6 (Perun)/expert 2)
- **Sir Janush Hermass**, Commander of the Order of the Undying Sun (LG male human paladin 12)
- **Sir Malkus Lineguard**, Command of the Order of Griffon Knights (LG male dwarf fighter 4/wizard 5)

Zobeck Order of Battle

- Griffon Knights, 20 flying cavalry
- Zobeck Wands, 25 human wizards of the Collegium
- Zobeck Hussars, 50 human light cavalry
- Rava's Legion, 75 gearforged heavy infantry
- 1st to 5th Companies, 250 human medium infantry
- Volund's Hammer, 50 dwarven crossbowmen
- Raven Feeders, 100 kobold archers/light infantry
- The Exiles (cantonal mercenaries) 75 dwarven heavy infantry/pikes
- City levy, up to 500 human, dwarven, and kobold citizen-soldiers

Footmen and Mercenaries

Infantry is the queen of the battlefield, and Zobeck has been blessed in this regard. Its citizens willingly volunteer when needed, and its kobold and dwarven folk make excellent skirmishers and crossbow troops, respectively. The city is also notorious for its skill in conducting night raids.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Free Army needs scouts to investigate shadow fey activity in the Margreve and offers a large bounty to anyone signing up for this venture.
- River bandits have repeatedly drowned patrols along the shore and on river barges. Giants, ogres, and the lorelei are all rumored to be involved, and the army is tasked with ending the problem.
- The priests of Perun the Thunderer need someone to fly a griffon into a thunderstorm to bottle a lightning elemental. Strangely, the Citadel's griffon riders have not volunteered.



However, Zobeck depends on companies of mercenaries to fill out its ranks. Most of these are Ironcrag dwarves or the pikemen of Dornig, though Rothenian centaurs occasionally serve as light cavalry, scouts, and skirmishers.

The city of Zobeck's main strength has always come from the willingness of her people to fight. Their wealth and skill make them formidable, and her neighbors approach battles with the city warily. Most find it easier by far to strike a deal with Zobeck than to overcome her army.

Order of the Undying Sun

The commandery of the Order of the Undying Sun in Zobeck is a faded place. Its knights no longer enjoy the privileges they once had, when they served as the officers and generals of House Stross's private army, and have grown somewhat bitter at their "exile" to this backwater. Most of their duties involve guarding trade caravans on the Great Northern Road, riding down ghoulish infestations along the foothills of the Ironcrag, or chasing bandits. Honorable work, surely, though not exactly suffused with glory. Still, their primary service is to Khors, and so long as he is worshipped in Zobeck, the knights will maintain a presence, whatever their private feelings on the matter.

Recently, however, the Order sent Janus Hermass, a renowned Magdar knight with a strong following, to replace the retiring Sir Fryderyk Sieboski (who now serves as an advisor). Instructed to encourage the Order's growth within Zobeck's territory, and accompanied by several charismatic priests of Khors, Janus's arrival has caused a stir and surge in moral among the knights in the Free City, and many within and outside of the Order wonder what might ultimately come of it.

The Order of Undying Sun in the Crossroads

The Order of the Undying Sun is much stronger in the Magdar Kingdom and south in Illyria than in Zobeck; hundreds of knights serve in dozens of major commanderies and minor forts from the White Mountain Marches to the Ruby Sea and the borders of the Mharoti Empire. The Order is widely respected, and the King of the Magdar Kingdom would never think of excluding its Grand Marshall from his deliberations when the season of war approaches. Its scarred and devoted warriors each fight harder than half-a-dozen mercenaries, and their unwavering devotion to high ideals makes them the elite backbone of Magdar's army.

Though known for its outstanding heavy cavalry, the Order also raises most other sorts of troops, though rarely archers. These include companies of warrior-priests of Khors in war wagons, swift White Riders who primarily act as scouts and skirmishers, and even companies of devout pikemen who serve a season for pay and honor (the "Sunset Regiments", so-called because their service sees an end).

These troops obey the Grand Marshall Ödon Vencelsohn, called the Protector, and though they are not knights, they vastly increase the Order's martial power. With weapons and basic armor provided by the Order's armorers, these soldiers are uniformly of a higher quality than most levied troops. Some claim that the Order's infantry and horse are even of higher quality than some vassals in the Magdar Kingdom.

Entering Knighthood

Joining the knights is a simple matter: swear allegiance to the local commander, swear to obey the priests of Khors and uphold the creed

of the Sun God, show your proficiency in mounted combat with lance and sword, and you're pretty much in. New recruits receive armor and weapons of simple quality (but not trained warhorses).

The first rank is as a squire to a senior or veteran knight, fetching, carrying, and polishing armor. This may last a month or a year, depending on the age and skill of the applicant. Once the senior knight considers him fit, the candidate receives spurs, a sword, and the title of knight-novice. While he now answers to the Order's captains and commanders rather than the senior knight, he remains quite a junior figure.

Paladins of Khors

The elite of the Order (and most of its officers) are paladins of Khors. Their white- and yellow-plumed helmets are striking and distinctive, as are their blue cloaks and the white or dappled grey horses they favor. Most speak the Magdar dialect or the Trade tongue (with a Magdar accent), and they are both generous to their friends and implacable against their foes. Their light truly does shine brighter than most, and their bright swords cut through the darkness.

Zobeck's council gives them little respect because of the Order's support for the wrong side during the Revolt, but everywhere else, the white plumes of Khors are a sign of righteous might and outstanding skill.

The Watch

The City Watch is composed of human warriors, clockwork watchman, and several gearforged. Most members of the Watch are, indeed, looking out for the city's best interest, but there are a few who seek to use the position for their own gain. Horvart Edelstein (NE male human fighter 8) is the current Captain of the Watch.

About 260 individuals serve as watchmen in the ten main districts, with most patrolling the Merchant and Market Districts in teams of three or more. Each team reports to a sergeant, who in turn reports to a lieutenant. The watchmen carry tipstaves to more easily arrest individuals without seriously harming them (see Chapter 8). The Watch's headquarters, the Redrock Bailey, is located in the Upper Zobeck.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The Watch fines citizens for committing minor crimes and usually holds drunks and disorderly individuals overnight in addition to fining them. Serious crimes may result in flogging, long-term imprisonment, or hard labor. Exile or death punishes the worst crimes.

All fines are equal to the property damage caused or 50 gp for personal assaults. Flogging consists of six lashes. For additional offenses, criminals receive the offense's number times the listed punishment, meaning a second offense doubles the listed punishment, while a third offense triples it, and so on.

Sentences for hard labor can be fatal or merely exhausting, as it usually means 12- to 16-hour workdays in the silver mines, unloading barges, digging graves or sewage ditches, road construction, or (in the best case) harvesting crops. Those sentenced to imprisonment have a better chance of coping well and emerging unscarred, but usually only if they have money or wealthy friends. Most prisoners are held in the Citadel, and those with the funds may purchase some comforts, such as furniture or better food. Without this, however, inmates have a rough time, and most prisoners emerge gaunt and sickly.

IMPORTANT FACTIONS: GANGS, GUILDMASTERS, PRIESTS, AND PROFESSORS

Gangs, clerics, guildmasters, and masters at the Arcane Collegium hold sway and power in different parts of the city. Several priests and guildmasters (including Guildmaster Orlando of the Arcane Collegium) also serve as Consuls on the Free City Council.

The tables below include the names of the most notable of these individuals. Chapter 5: Gangs, Guilds, and Guardians provides more details about the gangs, while information on the Arcane Collegium and each guild or temple appears in its associated district in Chapter 4.

Gangsters and Smugglers

- **Izachar**, or "Eyebite," Leader of the Cloven Nine (CE male human fighter 4/wizard 9)
- **The Red Mask**, Master of the Redcloaks (LE male unknown race/class/levels)
- **Mama Rye**, Matriarch and crab diviner of the Kariv (N female human sorcerer 6/oracle 3)
- **Kandrepoor**, Kobold smuggling king (N male kobold rogue 8)
- **Silver-Fingered Jorick**, Prince of the Barge Bandits (CN male human rogue 4/fighter 5)



DOING TIME IN THE CLOCKWORK CITY

The physical effects of Zobeck's justice merit some mention.

Hard Labor: Characters sentenced to hard labor must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude upon their release or contract filth fever or another sickness of the GM's choosing.

Imprisonment: Prisoners held in the Citadel must spend 100 gp/week to buy the amenities needed to keep themselves healthy. For each month when they do not pay this fee, the character must pass a DC 15 Fortitude save or lose 1 Charisma or Constitution. Once released, this ability damage heals normally.

Crime	Punishment
Arson	Fine + 1d4 weeks imprisonment
Assault	Fine
Blackmail	Flogging and 1 week hard labor (mines)
Blasphemy against Rava	Fine
Breach of Contract	Flogging and 1 week imprisonment
Bribery	Flogging
Burglary	1d4 weeks imprisonment and 2 weeks hard labor
Counterfeiting	Fine and 3 months imprisonment
Cult Membership	1 year imprisonment; death for a second offense
Demon/Devil Summoning	Exile/Death
Dueling	Fine
Embezzling	6 months imprisonment
Espionage	Imprisonment or Death/Exile (depends on the spy)
Murder	2d4 years imprisonment
Murder, Mass	Death
Necromancy	Exile (Fine for members of the Collegium)
Perjury	6 days of flogging and 6 months hard labor
Pickpocketing	Flogging and fine equal to twice value of stolen goods
Rape	Flogging and 2d4 months imprisonment
Rioting	Fine and flogging
Sedition	Exile
Slander	Fine; flogging for a second offense
Slavery	Flogging and 6 months imprisonment
Strong-arm Robbery	Floggings and fine equal to twice the value of stolen goods
Tax Evasion	Fine and 2 months hard labor
Treason	Death
Vandalism	Fine

Guildmasters and Merchants

- **Lord Volstaff Greymark**, master merchant and Consul (LE male human expert 12)
- **Lord Grimaldi Slygass**, master merchant of House Slygass (LN male human fighter 6/expert 4)
- **Lady Wintesla Marack**, master merchant of House Marack and Consul (LG female human cleric (Lada) 5/aristocrat 8)

- **Ursl Schramm**, Guildmaster of the Steamworker's Guild (LN male dwarf fighter 6/expert 4)
- **Philomena Flaxe**, Guildmistress of the Honorable Order of Weavers (LN female human expert 9)
- **Ersebet Cemilla**, Leader of the Spyglass and Cartographer's Guild (N female human rogue 12)

Priests and Mages

- **Lucca Angeli**, High Priestess of Lada, the Golden Goddess (NG female human cleric 11)
- **Medlin Gorzax**, High Priest of Perun (N male human cleric 11)
- **Ogolai Kiyat**, High Priest of Porevit and Yarila, the Green Gods (CG male centaur cleric 9)
- **Ondli Firedrake**, First Consul and High Priest of Rava Among the Dwarves and Volund (LG male dwarven fighter 4/cleric 9)
- **Lena Ravovik**, High Priestess of Rava Among the Humans (LN female human cleric 9)
- **Orlando**, Guildmaster of the Arcane Collegium (CN male human wizard 14/expert2)
- **Konrad von Eberfeld**, Master Necromancer of the Arcane Collegium (NE male human wizard 6/fighter 1/elritch knight 6)
- **Ariella Scarpetti**, Master Illusionist (N female human illusionist 9)
- **Rudwin Whitstone**, Master Diviner (N male dwarf sorcerer 8).

ZOBECK'S NEIGHBORS

The River Argent flows stern and chill beneath the bridges and along the docks of the Free City. It traces the northern border of the Magdar Kingdom before snaking further east to the Ruby Sea. Barges and ships ply this deep and slow waterway, connecting east to west. Its towpath provides a roadway for both farmers and oxen. Most of the time, the patrols of Zobeck's Order of the Griffon keep robbers, fey maidens, and ogres away from the riverbanks.

Zobeck survives on the trade that flows into and out of it, and thus takes a great interest in those lands reached by the Argent or the great roads. Many of the lands surrounding the Free City have threatened or aided it at one time or another, and every Zobecker knows that maintaining their freedom and wealth means keeping a careful eye on their neighbors.

Ironcrag Cantons

Located in the Ironcrag Mountains and their foothills, the Ironcrag Cantons are centers of dwarven trade, industry, and culture. Each canton is defined by a settlement that has existed at least 100 years, contains both free and cloistered dwarves, and encompasses a set of halls. More than mines and simple shelter, proper halls must include forges or smelters, a brewery, clan homes, and at least one temple or shrine. The total population of the cantons is difficult to determine (dwarves are reticent to count their numbers, or at least to share those numbers with anyone). The best guesses say the cantons hold as many as 150,000 dwarves and perhaps 25,000 slaves, mostly human.

The 14 settled cantons are Bareicks, Bundhausen (Liadmura), Grisal, Gunnacks, Hammerfell (Mazzot), Juralt, Kubourg (Friungorla), Nordmansch, St. Mishau, Templeforge (Favgia Baselgia), Tijino, Vursalis, and Wintersheim (Inviernusa). Some of the cantons have two or three names, one in Trade, one in Dwarven, and one in the southern speech.



Other cantons besides the 14 constantly rise and fall and are not accorded equal status. Most notably, the small settlements of Roglett and Mynnsgard have been inhabited for about 50 and 80 years, respectively. While not yet established enough to merit mention among the cantons, they are certainly on their way. The former canton of Citadel (Friundor) lies mostly abandoned, although recent finds of gold have drawn prospectors, priests, and the curious back to its halls. Also abandoned are the Fallen Halls of Sargau, Villershall, and Volund's Beard.

The dwarven cantons all lie in the Ironcrag, although varying altitudes and passes make some much more accessible than others, and a few are separated from the main cantons by lowlands and rivers inhabited by humans. The two outliers are Wintersheim to the north, and the dark canton of Grisal, which stands across the River Argent, near the Morgau and Doresh border.

Magdar Kingdom

The rolling hills and grasslands south of Zobeck are the provinces of the Magdar Kingdom, a place rich in traditions of chivalry and warfare, where the good king Stefanos holds tourneys every summer and hires a great many mercenaries from the Ironcrag when war threatens. Indeed, the Magdar must fight often to defend its borders both to the east against the wild tribes of the Rothenian Plain and to the south against the akinji skirmish troops and the dragon-blooded sorcerers of the Mharoti Empire. Thanks to this constant conflict, one of the greatest weapons of the Magdar is the war wagon.

Most armies travel with a baggage train. The dwarves prefer mules, the Rothenian centaurs manage on their own, the armies of Morgau

and Doresh rely on zombies, but all carry their weapons, food, tents, and other supplies somehow. The Black Army of the Magdar, however, turned this logistical requirement into a portable fortification on the open plains where it so often fights. These war wagons are easy to circle into a tall wall of iron-reinforced wood, a laager against attack almost as good as a palisade.

War wagons provide protection and cover for crossbowmen, and even ballistae can be mounted and fired through their firing slits. But this is only half the Magdar Kingdom's strength. The rest lies in the Black Army itself. No part-time peasant force or hodge-podge of lords' guardsmen, this highly disciplined and professional corps serves the kingdom year in and out as a standing army.

The Margreve

The Margreve Forest is an ancient place, already old when most of the gods were young. In time immemorial, it cradled the great spirits of nature, and its loam felt the footfalls of the old ones. As millennia passed, its roots swallowed rivers, its canopy stole the sun from vast tracts of land, and its groves crested mountains that have since weathered to hills.

In all that time, the Margreve has changed little. History seems to transpire around it, lapping at its edges like the sea does the shore, but never truly invading. Though kingdoms rise and fall beyond its borders, the Margreve remains a world apart—a place where memories and old magic linger in the rings of trees and where new ideas and ways never quite take root.



A strange realm that lives by its own rules, the Margreve harbors wonders and horrors in equal measure. Those few regions men know fairly well have an evil reputation as not worth risking to gain their potential rewards. Every year, however, a few brave souls decide to ignore the old stories and cautionary tales. Most never return.

Morgau and Doresh

The Princes of Morgau and Doresh are exclusively ghouls, vampires, and other intelligent undead. Their cold hands control a nightmare realm where peasants suffer without hope or sanctuary. The Imperial Principality fights against all its neighbors from time to time, Krakova in the north, Rothenia and even Rubyat to the east, the Ironcrag Cantons to the southwest, and Zobeck to the south.



The rulers of Morgau and Doresh rightly believe themselves surrounded by a sea of enemies. Any one of these foes they could dispatch in short order, but their alliance against the undead nobles of the Imperial Houses means the undead hold the passes when they must and raid the lowlands with fire and sword whenever they can. Morgau and Doresh draw special hatred for their tendency to wage winter wars and to fight by night, as neither condition bothers their undead soldiers very much and play to the Principality's strengths.

For the most part, the wars remain small: holding a village for a season, despoiling a graveyard for new troops, laying waste to crops, or turning a tenacious enemy's daughter into a ghoul or vampiric spawn. The Principality does not wish to make friends, only to terrify its neighbors and dissuade them from denying undead sovereignty.

Just as important, raids and warfare keep its neighbors from spreading the seeds of rebellion among the living who suffer beneath the undying gentry. The peasants of Morgau, often restless and always fearful, long to shake off their masters. Despite their undeniable strength of arms, the one war the undead princes can never win is that waged for the hearts of their people.

Most right-thinking men acknowledge that extracting taxes and enforcing laws are the price of civilization, which makes any ruling class bloodsuckers in a sense. But everyone outside the Principality believes that the undead aristocracy's demands for their subjects' warm blood and cold corpses are beyond the pale. Some citizens think their undead masters' command of death and darkness is a glorious beginning, but most of the living folk realize that Morgau is a place of suffering. They obey their masters and fight in their armies out of fear rather than patriotism, as doing anything else invites reprisals against their families or forced enlistment in the "bone company".

As a result, the army is very much led by its officers, and its success comes from undead troops and ghoulish darakhul mercenaries. The darakhul are the true ghouls who dwell in their own lands below the earth. They are both entirely evil and among the best troops the Principality can field, when available. Great victories in the field, however, are actually secondary to the vampire princes' desires. They are smart, and join together to field the best troops whenever a real threat appears. Everything else—the raids, the constant drumbeat of war, or slave taking—serves merely to keep the border in flux and their neighbors off balance.

Perun's Daughter, Maidens of the East

This nation of beautiful women lies at the Argent River's mouth, several days downriver from the Free City. The Duchy of Perun's Daughter interests Zobeck for two reasons. First, it controls the River Argent's connection to so much land and so many trade venues on the shores of the Ruby Sea. Second, its matriarchy is ruled by the demi-goddess Vasilka Soulay, more often called Perun's Daughter.

The god of war and thunder, Perun goes by the names Donar or Thor in the north or Mavros in the south. As a deity of destruction, chaos, and blood, he makes a fitting mate to Marena, the Red Goddess (see "Cults and Heresies of Zobeck" on pg. 70). This child, however, seems to take more after her human mother, a woman named Mother Illyena. Vasilka is a woman of wisdom and learning, and a goddess of courage, teaching, and stern mercy.

Ruled by a Divine Hand

Though small, the duchy is rich in the trade of the fish and oysters from the river mouth and in the crafts of timber, fine jewel-work, and divine magic. None of these will ever raise the land to glory, but they keep its people happy, healthy, and give them time for reflection, recreation, and the pursuit of art. The duchy is, by far, the land most given to education, literacy, scholarship, and the keeping of ancient lore. Their learning focuses on mathematics, botany, agronomy, and architecture rather than the arcane. The vast library in the capital city, a wing of the royal palace, is open to the public one day each week.

Oddly, people here largely neglect worship and theology. Her Divine Transcendence, the Duchess Vasilka grants boons and answers prayers to a small priesthood, though most of her people also revere the Green Gods and Lada. Most importantly, Vasilka's power provides a bulwark against the Rothenian centaurs and against the bandits of the Ruby Despotate, the dragonborn legions of the Mharoti Empire, and the cunning cavalry of the Magdar Kingdom. Her most powerful defenders are the amazons of Perunalia.

Amazons and Guardians

With raiding centaurs, dragon legions, and the Ruby Despotate all too willing to carry away the "shameless women" of Perun, the people of the duchy feel somewhat besieged merely because of their ruler. Perun's Daughter is entirely capable of defending her people. The Perunalian warrior tradition is old, well respected, and primarily female. Many visitors remark on the strangeness of the nearly all-female city guard and fall into shocked silence when they see the duchess's horse guards pass—every one of them a woman of skill and daring. Though capable, this force is not always sufficient to put off attacks by larger neighbors, especially when lead by men dismissive of the "girls on their ponies". In times of trouble, though, the people of Perun have a friend in the Free City of Zobeck; their mutual alliance dates back 80 years and remains firm.

Women who flee the Despotate or the Magdar Kingdom are welcomed into the duchy and soon find work, usually as guards, soldiers, weavers, or farmers if they know no other trades. The Perunalian generals and marshals of the Order of the White Lions—a society of female paladins—willingly raise levies of both men and women in times of war.

Lest it be misunderstood, the duchy is not entirely gloriously enlightened, selfless, and wise; the merchants of Zobeck consider



Perunalians especially sharp traders who sometimes take goods by force to feed their troops or negotiate contracts at sword point. Certainly the duchy is an unusual realm, and its people would have it no other way.

The Shadow Realm

The Shadow Realm is a place of long winter and wan summers—a home to elves as unforgiving as a blizzard. They are the twisted servants and worshipers of their goddess and queen Sarastra, the Goddess Night and Magic. Her Moonlit King is rarely seen but is feared even among the shadow fey.

She sits on a mirrored throne within her palace of glass and dreams attended by 1,000 lords and ladies with alabaster skin and hearts of ice. Human tales describe the Queen as a demi-goddess and implacably cruel, though many details are likely exaggerations. The queen dreams of conquest, blood, and loss; she remembers too many worlds that once were hers.

The Winter Court waits trapped within a world stitched together from memories of a past that never was. Shadow ships sail seas of fog. Fey hounds lurk near crossroads and echoes of forests in hope that

something warm will find its way between the worlds. Each summer is weaker than the last.

But where before they despaired, now the shadow fey hope. The world of men remembers them and comes to trade, and for these isolated and dangerous fey, this presents the greatest opportunity in many bleak years.

Mankind comes to bargain, and the Winter Court loves nothing so much as a bargain. The humans entreat the fey to return with them to their wondrous, vibrant, city to stimulate commerce, and they offer the Winter Court their desires in exchange.

The Winter Court knows much about desire. These humans talk of caravans, nursery rhymes, blood sacrifice, and ambassadors. They speak of mutual profit, normalized trade relations, and the chance to heal the breach between their world and the dark creatures such of the Shadow Realm. They speak so much that they never notice the desperation of the alabaster fey or the way their living breath thaws the ceaseless snow.

They welcome the return of the Winter Court, and the Winter Court welcomes them. If it is ambassadors the humans want, then ambassadors they shall receive. The Shadow Realm is stirring for the first time in living memory. The shadow fey ambassador to Zobeck has been seen on the streets, and changes are certainly afoot.



CHAPTER 3 THE KOBOLD GHETTO



☉ **KING, KNOW** *that your people have dug deep into the earth for another week, and again we have brought forth silver, lead, and other valuables to the enrichment of all the people of the city. And we have given a portion of that wealth to the humans and the council of the city, and we have kept a small portion for our own treasuries. The people await your words, O King, to build traps, to confuse the foolish Big People, and to someday seize all that was ours, in the days before the shadow fey came.*

—Foreman Bardozeck, a kobold miner in his weekly report

For many, living in a ghetto—dingy, crowded, and walled off from the rest of the city—might seem a miserable fate, a hard life of poverty and an early grave. For Zobeck's kobolds, this is actually an improvement.

SLAVES AND WORSE THAN SLAVES

The Kobold Ghetto, a warren of streets no more than six feet wide (at best), lies between the Argent and Derry rivers. Throughout most of the Ghetto, roofs meet overhead to keep out the worst of the sun for those nocturnal inhabitants who must venture out during daylight.

The Ghetto has only two entrances, the Ghetto Gate and the Water Gate, each carefully watched from both sides. A set of multiple kobold “kings” or tribal chieftains rule the district, each of which has power so long as he keeps his relatives and minions in line. One king, the King of Kings, generally holds the others in check until their united strength undercuts him; King Kuromak just recently ousted Brandorek, the 12th of that name, to claim the leading position. Few kings last more than a decade. Some barely last a year.

More than 80 years ago, the kobolds were slaves to House Stross, and the Ghetto was their pen. They were chattel used by the thousands to do the most dirty and dangerous jobs so that humans and dwarves could work at fine crafts and live comfortably. Kobold slaves mined silver, built clever clockworks, and worked deadly steam boilers for the constructs and automatons that fueled Zobeck's industry. History largely ignored them, but some believe the kobolds helped invent the everwound spring, the aeolipile generator (a steam engine used in places where water or muscle power won't suit), and the reciprocating balance wheel, thus laying the foundations for Zobeck's fame. These centuries of enslavement form an indelible part of the kobold's culture, and despite their (relatively) short lives, no kobold in Zobeck has *ever* forgotten.

Now, the Ghetto is a place of free kobolds, the legal equal of any man or woman of the Clockwork City. They remain a people apart, however, physically, culturally, and habitually. The single biggest obstacle is their nocturnal nature. Kobolds labor all night and return home before dawn to spend the day in sleep and rest before venturing back out shortly before sunset.

GREATER AND LESSER KINGS

The kobolds are fiercely loyal to their lesser kings, who function variously as attendants on the great King Kuromak, as his rivals, as clan leaders, and as guild masters. Only kobolds seem to really understand the current incarnation of their political structure, and it continues to evolve almost as quickly as their religious practices.

Various wild stories circulate about the current King of Kings: he is

half-devil, he is a werebasilisk, he seeks to rule the whole city. Certainly the last is true, but like his predecessors, he spends so much energy fending off the schemes of the lesser kings that has little time to do more.

Kuromak has a distinct advantage, however, in his ally Prince Karremark, self-styled Kobold Prince of the Night Ghetto. He acts as the chief of the kobold secret police, has infiltrated the gang called the Redcloaks, and keeps the king's stable of giant owls. Most agree that Karremark is well placed to succeed Kuromak, and many wonder why he hasn't already given Kuromak a swift push out a high window. Some believe the two might share blood ties, though exactly how is murky. Others believe that some arcane pact binds them, or that Karremark is simply patient.

Others are not so reticent, and assassins frequently attempt to kill the King of Kings. Most fail, and the heads of would-be usurpers invariably top pikes above the entrance to the Silver Palace. The next chieftain with a foolproof plan for regicide usually ignores these warnings, however. The 15 current lesser kings include sly long-term leaders who navigate the currents smoothly and brash newcomers who might disappear by the next new moon.

- **Queen Allepina the Quick** (CN female kobold bard 6) is a sibilant-voiced female bard. Rumors claim she was part of a travelling show, but now she teaches other kobolds acrobatics, escape artistry, and thievery as leader of the Ghetto's rogues.
- **King Hrodik** (LE male kobold fighter 7) is the leader of the kobold mining gangs and commands by far the largest army in the Ghetto. He is ambitious, gluttonous, strong, and universally hated. Stories claim that he is entirely a creature of darkness and mines and never comes up to the surface. Most of the lesser mine bosses claim to be his cousins, children, or grandchildren.
- **King Illanak the Puppet** (NG male kobold rogue 1) defers to his many wives and advisors in all things. These advisors are much cannier than Illanak—they don't want to be targets, as kings are prone to be, and are content to rule behind the throne. Illanak has been lucky so far.
- **King Khundarak the Curious** (N male kobold rogue 8) is an 8-fingered engineer and trap springer with a reputation for curiosity. His machines and designs, and those of his followers, are valued by kobold, dwarf, and human alike.
- **King Kiksha the Wanderer** (CG male kobold bard 5) is a kobold with a sweet tooth, sharp wits, and comic timing. Kiksha is the subject of many popular songs and legends, and yet he might be nothing more than a rumor. Of all the kings, he has the least power and is the most elusive but is also the best loved.
- **King Kleptrenglit the Rich** (LN male kobold rogue 5) deals in sundries and vices for his brethren and makes himself indispensable to human gangs through his network of smugglers and dealers throughout the Ghetto.
- **King Kondak of Lillefor** (NE male kobold fighter 4/rogue 4) recently arrived from Lillefor, quickly gained a reputation for



getting “the goods” on the various kings, and has now risen to king himself. Kondak’s Guttersnipes, a group of young kobold sneaks and beggars, somehow hear information that others want hidden. Kondak is actually a spy for King Kekarrac of Lillefor, who is interested in extending his realm above ground.

- **King Lemenerak the Wicked** (CN male kobold wizard 6) harbors vast ambitions to become a godling. Unlike most, Lemenerak is not a creature of malice, but he knows that malice gets you noticed. He works in secret, but his schemes invariably go horribly awry.
- **Queen Nemevene the Keeper** (LG female kobold paladin 4), whose clan holds some of the poorest territory in the Ghetto. She commands everyone’s respect because she does not hesitate to target human smugglers and even city guards who double-cross her.
- **King Nerborg the Stitched** (NE male kobold dread wight sorcerer 6), oldest and perhaps deadliest of all the council of kings. He leads Brandorek’s Chosen, the bodyguards and elite troops of the King of Kings. His lair brims with magical traps and endless unraveling scrolls. Some say he communicates only by writing, his voice withered away to silence.
- **Squinting King Ossa** (NE male kobold rogue 4 barbarian 2) is hobbling and hoary but retains a gambler’s love of life and still throws dice occasionally at his namesake abode, Squinter’s Palace. He turned this riotous den into a nexus for the Ghetto’s drinking, gambling, and prostitution.
- **King Slaudic the Maimed** (LN male kobold cleric 4 (Volund)), a dignified schemer, engineered the bloody coup of his brother by encouraging the acts of depravity clan elders used to justify the

change. He has expanded the tunnel system and forged ties to Lillefor through marriage, treachery, and trade.

- **The Keeper in White** (NE male kobold clockwork lich wizard 12) is an albino kobold whose real name has been lost to time. His followers are misfits who obey him with a cult-like fanaticism. The Keeper’s torso is made of grafted mithral, and a clockwork heart locked away in his chest has kept him alive for over a century. He demands utter silence in his presence, and the ominous clicking of his heart is unsettling.

The Keeper lives in the Throne of Keys, a house littered with thousands of keys stolen from all over the city. Persistent rumors say that the Keeper holds a terrible secret locked inside him, one even he does not know. Whatever the truth, the Keeper obsesses over finding the one key that unlocks his chest, and he seems to be growing more urgent and desperate in his search.

THE INHABITANTS

No respectable human or dwarf visits the Ghetto often, but its kobolds reflect the character of Zobeck as a whole. Mine gangs, street gangs, silver syndicates, followers of the Red Mask, and cultists, all rub shoulders with perfectly respectable servants and clockworker kobolds.

Clockworker kobolds, mechanically adept craftsmen trained by the Geargrinder’s Guild, serve as the protectors and stewards of the city’s many gear-work doors, bridges, gates, lifts, devices, and scullions. Kobolds also repair locks, wind-up keys, and gravity-fed devices. Unnoticed, they feed fule to boilers in the guildhalls and wind the springs and oil the joints of the Watch’s automatons, though not

officers or gearforged. This maintenance takes them to every corner of the city, but their dusty grey-green uniforms make them invisible.

The dock crews in Zobeck's small but bustling harbor also make good use of kobolds, which allows the city to maintain a working night shift. The river crews wear blue hats and work in sets of three, six, or nine to carry crates that a single human could easily lift. Most longshoremen from the day shift assume that kobold dock crews are corrupted by smugglers, but this seems far more common among humans than kobolds.

Big Trouble in Tiny Streets

Kobolds hold themselves apart and are instantly suspicious of anyone who comes to visit them. While kobolds can pass unnoticed in the rest of town, no human or dwarf can visit the Ghetto so discretely. The kobold kings take an interest in nearly every visitor, even if only a commercial interest. The streets are cramped, dark, and filled with traps. The residents quickly hush up any violence involving Bigs. People disappear there all the time, and when kobolds die at the hands of outsiders, well, no one wants to talk about that either. Because respectable society willfully ignores the Ghetto, it is a perfect place for assassinations, gang fights, and plain old murder.

A Reptilian Heart

Somewhere under the streets of the Ghetto are the kings' halls and queens' boudoirs, where kobolds fight, scheme, and gossip among themselves. The wilder stories claim these underground halls are just as large as the surface buildings, or larger.

Truthfully, humans and dwarves largely don't care what the kobolds do so long as the drudge work of mining and maintenance gets done cheaply and well. In return, the kobolds get one small patch of ground to call their own, and for now, that seems to be enough.

The narrow streets of Zobeck are filled with people walking, working, and brawling. In the even narrower streets of the Ghetto—where humans must turn sideways to pass through and even a dwarf might brush his head against the top of a doorframe—all of that energy is magnified. The buildings lean toward each other, creating deep shadows, and some streets are completely roofed over so that kobolds can stroll down them untroubled by rain or sunshine.

Like the kobolds themselves, the Ghetto is both an integral part of Zobeck and still distinctly separate from it. In some ways, it's as alien as the Margreve and, in other ways, almost more unsettling, since it so resembles the city visitors know yet it plays by a different set of rules that no one will explain. It is a place made for kobold comfort with no thought given to others: no lanterns at night, no room to stretch, and few open spaces.

It has many sites of interest, however, and it has plenty of reasons, personal and professional, for Big Folk to visit. And traps, of course. It has lots and lots of traps.

Ghetto Authority

Sometimes getting out of the Ghetto is even harder than getting in. Just after dusk and just before dawn, the Ghetto Gate clogs with official "border kobolds," who hold up exiting non-kobolds by requiring they declare their activities in the Ghetto and produce any purchased clockwork items for taxation.

The ghetto authority slows exiting the Ghetto by at least 20 minutes and up to an hour on the worst days. Declared items are taxed at a

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Getting into, out of, and around in the Ghetto is almost an adventure in itself. Once the crowds close in, PCs who do not speak Draconic suffer a -10 penalty to Perception checks while in the Ghetto from being overwhelmed by the alien nature of the kobolds and their activities. Indeed, non-kobold visitors are dazed for 3d6 rounds when they first enter the Ghetto. GMs may wave or reduce these penalties for frequent visitors, but these PCs should fall under far closer scrutiny from authorities on both sides of the wall.

Kobold Shackles: When the guards want to "check" individuals before entry to or exit from the Ghetto, two large or obese kobolds flank the target holding small, geared manacles. Each makes a melee touch attack against the largest or most dangerous-looking visitor. If they both succeed, the devices springs work as expected and the shackles latch onto the target's legs, limiting movement to 5 feet and making the target count as flat-footed. Two more kobolds then make two more touch attacks to bind the target's arms. Success imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls and skill checks, -8 if both attacks succeed. Attempts to cast spells with somatic components require DC 20 concentration checks.

A successful DC 20 Escape Artist check (remember to apply the -8 penalty) lets the target escape. If neither arm nor leg on one side is caught, the character gains a +2 circumstance bonus on the attempt. The kobold guards can quickly release the shackle locks. While the target is held, more agile kobolds frisk him for odds and ends to tax or steal.

rate of 1 cp per 1 gp of value. Undeclared items that are discovered are confiscated but can be redeemed for a fine of 1 sp per 1 gp of value.

While the Ghetto guards conduct their checks, the area swarms with kobold peddlers, charlatans, and children. It is almost impossible to keep everything organized. This is an ideal time for pickpocketing, card scams, begging, and general troublemaking.

Kobold Professions

Zobeck's kobolds are remarkably hard-working creatures. They are members of the city's guilds and participate in many industries, although the majority of them are miners. Most kobolds don't match the stereotype of a dirty face with a miner's pick and a pocket full of silver. Some are innkeepers, stinkrunners (movers of the dead, especially during plagues), blacksmiths, leatherworkers, and quite a few are artisans or smallholders of various kinds. These include scribes in the Vigilant Brotherhood, masters in the Geargrinders, and clockworkers. And some, like the Kobold Wreckers, are professional demolitionists, destroying any Zobeckian structure without questions if the money is right (see "Redcloak Ruckus" in *TōZ*).

The clockworkers are mechanically adept in every way (equal to the dwarves, they claim). The Collegium, alchemists, and the wealthy employ them to maintain nearly all of Zobeck's myriad gear-driven wonders.

Of the major kobold professions, the miners are the most clan-ridden and gang-like. Each mine gang serves a "boss" or "mine chief," and numbers from around ten up to more than 40. These gangs sometimes brawl with others over rights to a particular ore seam, alehouse, or simply right of way in the street. The scars that some miners bear with pride were most likely inflicted with a kobold mining pick.

STREET LIFE

More challenges than just traps await unwary ghetto visitors.

Beggars: The PCs are harassed by begging kobold adults. They make loud requests for coins or other items of interest (such as shiny armor or weapons). The kobolds follow the PCs for some time if they are ignored, persisting in their requests for aid. If the PCs do not gratify them with some coins or goods within a minute or two, the beggars bombard them with rotten kobold foodstuffs.

The Cutting Swarm: A dense swarm of kobold children passes the PCs. They crowd in tight, stomping toes and scratching shins. As they pass, they claw dozens of little slits in the pants, robes, and other leg clothing of the PCs. PCs with exposed skin or light clothing suffer minor scratches but take no damage. They do, however, need to save against contracting filth fever (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*).

Drunken Kobold Band: The crowded streets part as a procession of kobolds musicians makes its way down the street. As the band passes, the kobolds break out into a high-pitched, crooning caw; a not entirely unmelodious sound that is kobold music. Containers of drink appear almost immediately, and the crowd quickly takes on a festive mood, cackling and hooting. The kobolds eventually reach a fevered pitch of song and dance after about 30 minutes. If the PCs stay and watch, the kobolds eventually become rowdy and fights break out, possibly catching up the group in a street brawl.

Mining Gang: A group of kobolds (two per PC) plus their mine boss (male kobold fighter 2) is out in the street after payday and looking for trouble. Armed with kobold picks (see *Crossroads Player's Guide*), they try to swarm the weakest-looking PC. A simple DC 15 Intimidate check makes them scatter, as does the first kobold incapacitation or death. The Ghetto guards come to investigate within 1d4+2 rounds, flying to the rooftops on giant owls. Unless bribed (10 gp per party member or half that with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check) the guards escort the troublemaking Too Talls out of the Ghetto.

Street Games: The PCs meet a few street kobolds running a scam with a shell game or dice. A PC interested in the game makes a Perception check opposed by the lead kobold's Bluff check (equal to the party's average level +10). The street kobolds always bet more than they have. If a PC beats the kobold's Bluff check, the kobolds claim they don't have the coins on them to cover the bet (which is true) and try to leave to "get the coins they owe" (which is a lie). PCs who try to stop the kobolds or protest too much soon find themselves surrounded by a gang of three kobolds per PC.

Together with the miners (whom most kobold craftsmen consider uncouth), the scribes and clockworkers are the mainstays of legitimate life in the Ghetto. All obey their guilds and their lesser kings in large matters, and prey on one another and gullible humans whenever they can. It's said that a kobold will always give good work with a sour face, and it is true: their love of hard work is innate, but so is their love of complaint.

GHETTO LOCATIONS

The city of Zobeck is a river town of stone, wattle, and daub, and wealthy enough for slate and tile roofs rather than just thatch. What lies under those roofs, though, varies quite a bit from quarter to quarter, and nowhere is stranger than the small doors and low ceilings

of the Kobold Ghetto. For larger characters, the place always feels too small and too crowded. Here are the highlights.

Ghetto Gate and Water Gate

The Ghetto has a rough reputation, and the kobold guards and traps surrounding the one surface gate are part of the reason why. The poison spikes on the portcullis and several pit traps are widely known. Pre-aimed fiery ballista bolts and other deadly weapons also defend this portal.

Widely rumored but unconfirmed among the big people of Zobeck are the numerous other traps in the surrounding streets, ranging from the degrading to the deadly. Among the more lethal creatures defending the site are two furnace gargoyles. The underground gate to Lillefor is said to be similar, although there the guards are tame bulettes large and old enough to retire from mining duties. The traps surrounding the Water Gate are better disguised, as are the defenses.

Entering the Ghetto is tedious and slow, making it much easier to bribe your way in, at least during nighttime (the gates are firmly shut from dawn to sunset, when kobolds sleep). The typical bribe is 5 gp for humans, 10 for dwarves. Elves, gnomes, and halflings are usually told (repeatedly) to go elsewhere, but they might enter for a 20 gp bribe, minimum. As the guards quickly point out, they don't have to allow anyone into "the Quarter" at all.

Permission to enter doesn't mean things go easily. People trying to bluff or intimidate their way in draw the guards' suspicions, and they insist on searching the troublemakers for contraband. They use kobold shackles and go through backpacks, purses, sacks, and even scroll cases with reckless disregard for property, dumping everything to the ground (fragile items, such as potions or vials, sometimes break).

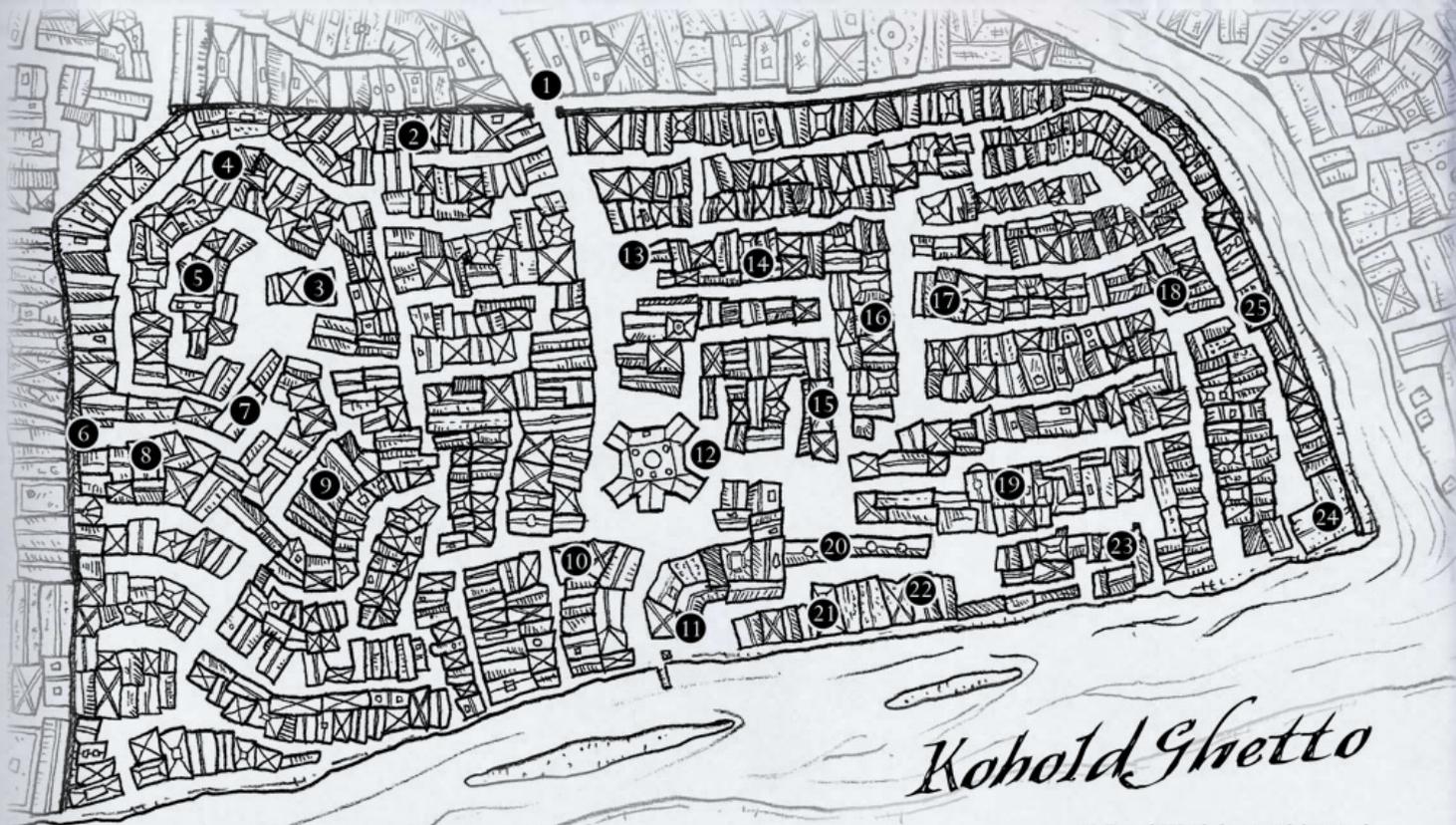
The same "search and shame" procedure might be applied to people who attempt to bribe their way out of the Ghetto, or who fail to pay the proper bribes, or who are not accompanied by a kobold of good reputation, or who simply look like they might have some extra coins weighing them down. The guards have to make a living, and shakedown are their racket. Procedures are similar around the Water Gate, but since this is primarily used for cargo, any individuals coming into the Ghetto this way get a lot of extra, usually unwanted, attention.

The Dock and Ferry (\$48)

The kobolds have a single dock used for fishing boats and small merchant vessels. Most people consider it a smuggling hub, perhaps because vessels load and unload there only by night and without lanterns. The Citadel turns a blind eye to this, if true, because any smuggling brings in goods that kobolds need for mining and clockworking which likely come from hostile nations such as Morgau and Doresh or the dark Niflheim road.

The docks shelter a small fishing fleet and a single ferry, which takes kobolds across the river to mines east of the city roughly every 40 minutes, all day long. The ferry charges 1 cp to cross and allows only Small or Medium creatures, up to 12 at a time. Horses and other large or heavy creatures must walk the long way to the Puffing Bridge in the Dock District.

Kandrepor, the ferry captain, wears smoked goggles during daylight to avoid the glare of the sun on the water. Because clockwork or human Watchmen don't closely watch the ferry, rumors suggest he carries many rogues, smugglers, and rascals out of the city. For a mere



Kobold Ghetto

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Upper Gate (aka Ghetto Gate) | 7 King Kleptrenglit the Rich | 13 Pentrick's Mundane Magics | 19 Royal Workshops: Alchemical, Distillery, Ticking Shop |
| 2 Scaler's Alley | 8 King Kondak of Lillefor | 14 Kobold Market | 20 Royal Workshops: Dire Weasel Dens |
| 3 Piran's Shrine | 9 King Slaudic the Maimed | 15 King Nerborg the Stitched | 21 Night Ship Warehouse |
| 4 Queen Allepina the Quick | 10 King Lemeneřak the Wicked | 16 Queen Nemevene the Keeper | 22 Defender's Workshop |
| 5 King Khundarak the Curious | 11 Kobold Docks | 17 Squinter's Palace (and King Ossa) | 23 King Illanak the Puppet |
| 6 Undercity Entrance | 12 King of Kings House/King's Square | 18 Rok's Roach Den Tavern | 24 Throne of Keys (Keeper in White) |
| | | | 25 Zukpot's House of Happiness (brothel/casino) |

5 gp, some say, Kandrepoor can forget your passage entirely. Some claim he controls several kobold smuggling gangs, or at the very least, he can find them for a small fee.

The Undercity

The undercity beneath the Ghetto is a comfortable run of warrens, cellars, small passageways, and smaller doors that the kobolds find quite congenial, and many of their taverns, bedrooms, shops, and dire weasel kennels are underground. Visitors rarely enjoy these confined quarters, and all of them complain about the vaguely reptilian musk. Kobolds apparently find it homey.

The Ghetto also connects to the Cartways at numerous places and to the River Derry, which flows not far from its walls. Unknown to most humans, though, it connects to another, much larger city: the kobold metropolis of Lillefor. Although fully 140 miles away, a brisk trade flows between Lillefor and the Ghetto, with mostly foodstuffs, wines, and wooden goods descending and metalwork, ore, and enchanted works—such as carrion beetle armor and everlit lanterns—ascending.

This undercity is where the kobolds' other great profession—smuggling—is practiced most openly. Wines, silks, spices, black lotus, and poppywine are all heavily taxed, but not when they arrive on kobold mules, caravan beetles, or courier lizards through

Lillefor. Ghetto merchants are happy to cut the taxman out of these transactions entirely, and the soldiers of the Citadel and gentlemen of the Watch have (so far) declined to pursue the matter.

The King's Square

One of the few truly open spaces in the Ghetto, where the sky is allowed to peak through, is the King's Square. A tall building fronting this square includes the owl roosts, where the various kobold lordlings keep their favored flying mounts. Here kobold crowds celebrate various religious and civic events, typically at the full moon and new moon.

The main building on the square is the King of Kings' Silver Palace (\$46), a marble-faced wonder of tasteless statuary and gilding that displays the king's power and wealth very clearly. Fully 50 kobold guards in heavy armor watch over the entrances to the Silver Palace, and all around it cluster the offices of mine sub-chiefs, assayers, smelting barons, and priests of the various kobold gods. The whole square is a mass of statues, status symbols, and power-hungry ambitions.

The King's Square is also a gathering place for kobold merchants, fishmongers, mine recruiters, couriers, freelance clockworkers, and smugglers for hire. During the night hours, something is always going on, from songs and acrobatics to dueling and ritual scarification.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The PCs must visit the kobold workshops to pick up (but *not* open) a delivery for the Arcane Collegium. The package contains a squirring, mewling thing (a homunculus, pseudodragon, or similar) that escapes and leads the party on a merry chase through the Ghetto.
- Some kobold smugglers want a little help putting together a “honeypot” shipment to draw out a group of bandits ambushing their barges by day. They need some PCs who can stand sunlight to guard the barge. Naturally, the ogres and their human master attack at noon, when the kobolds are all asleep.
- A scroll found by the Vigilant Brotherhood of Scribes seems to imply a link between kobold necromancy and spies from Morgau. The Brotherhood asks the party to question Nerborg the Stitched.
- The PCs need to find an entrance into the Cartways. Their investigation leads them to Scaler’s Alley, but getting through the alley is an adventure in itself. (See “The Fish and the Rose” in *SoZ*.)
- A dragonblooded Northlander named Grizolotoris Cairvos (NG male human fighter 12/cleric 5 (Bahamut)) is intent on becoming the next King of Kings in the Kobold Ghetto. This human wants to better the kobolds’ lot in Zobeck and to quell the infighting by unifying the kobolds under one king and one god: Bahamut, a heretical face of the dragon wind god Azuran. What happens when the kobolds unite under one strong king? Will the Keeper in White allow a human to rule them?

Pentrick’s Mundane Magic Items

A jumble of curios, bric-a-brac, and knickknacks spills from this canvas-covered stall near the Ghetto Gate. Pentrick plies his wares here among the street markets of Zobeck, always looking for a big score. While this shifty kobold already lives extravagantly (by more than just kobold standards), the cunning creature is always looking for more.

A devious and wicked entrepreneur, Pentrick owns a workhouse, filled with indentured servants, in the cramped warrens below the city that cranks out simple arcane trinkets. His own clockwork beetle lies always within arm’s reach, and he offers similar magic to fit any size purse.

In case of bothersome visitors, Pentrick has rigged his stall with a handful of traps (see the Street Traps sidebar, pg. 37), and he has a trapdoor under his low, drapery-covered table leading directly into the nearby warrens, also liberally laced with menacing traps. Visitors whispering the secret phrase—“Little is bigger where the river winds,” rather obvious bait for forced appreciation of Pentrick and his kin—gain access to his more interesting wares.

His magic items, popular with the well-to-do merchants cramming the Free City, provide easy solutions to mundane worries. Both visitors and residents find Pentrick’s utilitarian items essential. These simple magic items bring customers of all stripes to the Ghetto. (See Magic Shops in Chapter 8, pg. 101, for more information on what Pentrick sells.)

Scaler’s Alley

Scaler’s Alley is infamous as a very dangerous part of the Ghetto. Scaler (see Chapter 7, pg. 87), a winged lizardfolk the height of a dwarf and just as wide, has a reputation as a fighter of great skill

and makes his home in the alley to which the locals have given his name. Visitors and residents alike who value their skins avoid Scaler’s Alley.

Shabby, dilapidated buildings line this alley and the area around it. Kobold drunks and gang fighters hang outside the alley’s entrance, which smells of burning lard and long-dead things. An occasional whistling, like steam passing through metal, emanates from the alley. Inside the alley, smoke drifts toward the surrounding buildings and obscures vision beyond 15 feet. The buildings appear to be a murky mishmash of scavenged materials, and their rooftops rise four stories over the dirty street. Unusually, the sky is visible down the length of the alley.

Scaler’s Alley is shaped like an upside-down L and filled with traps. Slinger’s Ambush Gang guards the rooftops. (See Slinger, pg. 88; for more on Scaler’s Alley, see “The Fish and the Rose” in *SoZ*, pgs. 45-47.)

The Royal Workshops (\$47)

The workshops are the only section of the Ghetto absolutely closed to visitors. The various kings keep their weasel kennels at the entrances and flank them with guards, traps, and clockwork guardians to keep their treasures safe. These treasures include jeweler’s workshops, distilleries, geargrinding workshops, trap work armories, alchemical labs, smuggling dens, and traditional armories making mail so fine as to be almost elven.

The Alchemical

This workshop, with the tang of fuming acid always around and ventilation that can only be called “barely adequate,” is where kobold poisoners, metal smiths, tanners, and alchemists acquire their goods. If it is a mined mineral or a pickled body part, this workshop sells it by the dram, pennyweight, or ton.

The Defender’s Workshop

All weapons and armor herein are made to fit kobolds and similarly sized creatures and crafted to the highest kobold standards. This includes highly questionable grooving for poisoning weapons and weapons designed to kill particular species (such as the dwarfbane and elfbane arrows).

Dire Weasel Kennels

The finest fighting weasels anywhere come from these trainers, including dozens of standard breeds from the black, silent nightfeet to the vicious ratting sport weasel to the pure white and showy kingsruff and everything in between. Fights occur weekly, with heavy betting (see Goldscale’s dire weasel mount in Chapter 7, pg. 81).

The Distillery

There’s nothing here that a human or dwarf wants to drink and certainly nothing an elf ever wants to smell. It’s a rank, nasty brewery and distillery that seems to cook up recipes involving fermented rat and moldering potato; best avoided by non-kobolds.

Kobold PCs can find delightful reeks and superb spirits here, starting at 10 sp/cup and extending as far as a purse will open. Wormbottom wine, tannery’s lark, and roachling’s get are three of the more popular spirits here, though all are banned from consumption in the rest of town.

The Night Ship

This workshop is a warehouse and smuggler's paradise, with goods going to and from the river, the Great Northern Road, the mines, and the dark road to Lillefor. If a kobold wants a thing, here is the place to find it. Exotic foods, heatstones, spiced humanoid meats, fine poisons for traps, and even forbidden tools and lore go on sale here, often in shipping crates with somewhat illegible labels. Stock changes nightly.

The Ticking Shop

Herein are produced the components of a clockworker's dream: gears, springs, valves, arbors, escapements, armatures, and even hydraulics and pneumatics for constructs, traps, or just tinkering. The shop only sells to kobolds, of course, with many tools and goods available nowhere else. Masterwork clockwork tools are available for just 400 gp.

THE CARTWAYS

Many blame the kobolds for the Cartways. As the first settlers at the confluence of the Derry and the Argent, the charge seems valid. In those days, kobold stories say, nuggets of silver were everywhere, and mining revealed rich seams of metal. So mine they did. Once below the surface layers of sand and clay, they soon found they could contain the problems of water seepage, and the mines soon ran in all directions.

The seams eventually ran out, but the wide passages carved for wooden-wheeled ore carts made it possible for humans to store foodstuffs and the wines of the Smolten Hill vineyards in cool temperatures. So the vintners and greengrocers expanded the passageways. That might have been enough for most people but not for Zobeck's aristocrats.

Roughly 200 years ago, House Stross invited all the noble houses of the city to a Winter Festival in the deep cavern now called the Winter Hall. Small donkey-drawn carts brought revelers down to what seemed like the gates of the underworld, where they found exquisite food, wonderful music, and wine casks large enough to dance on. Passageways connected the Winter Hall directly with the Stross Manor on Crown Square and the Citadel.

The festival ended, but all the guests wanted their own grottos and their own passageways, and the golden age of the Cartways began, with many brightly-painted wagons and chariots going from house to house underground, carrying visitors, lovers, messages, and gifts. The Cartways stayed busy by night as well, as servants carried goods below ground to not trouble their betters in the streets near Crown Square.

In a few years, the mania for subterranean drinking halls and young lovers meeting secretly in the depths subsided. The carousers and courting scions moved to the theatre and the park in the newly built Gear District, and over time, the passages became more and more the province of human servants, clockworker kobolds, and delivery carts. Members of the Arcane Collegium moved their necromantic studies here. The Sisterhood and the Alchemists and others began to dump wastewaters here. The first sewage pipes ran through Cartways tunnels from the wealthier districts to the river. The place began to smell.

The general use of the Cartways ended with the Revolt. The victorious rebels sealed the passageways as decadent toys of the idle rich, and humans largely abandoned them. This began a great era for kobold rediscovery of their ancient passages. The first connection to the deepest tunnels made it clear that other creatures lived far below Zobeck. Kobolds joyously took the opportunity to found the underground city of Lillefor (or, at least, to loudly claim that they

did) a few days march from Zobeck. Most kobolds stuck closer to the surface and used the tunnels to smuggle goods in and out of town or across the river without paying tolls.

Recently, however, both ghouls and barghests have harassed kobolds in the Cartways, and death haunts the dark tunnels. Stories tell of connections to shadowy realms filled with demons or devils, and many who venture into the depths fail to return. The Watch continues to enforce the prohibition against exploration in the Cartways, for clearly there are creatures resting in the depths that Man was Not Meant to Wake.

The Cartways Today

The underbelly of Zobeck is a strange and wondrous mix of wet and cavernous chambers, smooth passages clearly carved by magic, alchemical runoff, river channels, and the cart tracks that give the tunnels their name. Its kobold market serves as the hub of a great deal of shady dealing in poison, blood, stolen property, magical items, hexes, and arcane lore. The Cartways Black Market caters to still darker customers.

Many visitors refer to these as the "sewers of Zobeck," but that's only true in the sense that filth runs freely through them. They are nothing like a planned system; most people of Zobeck still empty their chamberpots in the street in the traditional manner.

The upper levels of Zobeck's undercity are simple tunnels for alchemical waste and tannery slop. Its depths conceal deadly things, from gangs and other criminals, to devils and undead, to still more twisted powers. Wise explorers tread carefully. The everyday comforts and



LILLEFOR

The kobold city of Lillefor lies near Morgau and Doresh. It has two simple defenses protecting it from the Ghoul Empire's ambitions. First, kobold merchants bring valuable goods to the empire. Second, the city's tunnels are very small, and their stone is too hard to burrow through easily. Lillefor is really a haven for the small races: dark creeper bandits sell their ill-gotten gains, derro sell ore or ingots, and goblins hire themselves out as bat riders or scouts. The kobolds discourage Big Folk (and svirfneblin) from visiting.

From a central square inside all those trap-riddled tunnels rules the kobold King Kekarrac. Appropriately sized and diplomatic creatures can wrangle a short pass to visit the city for eight, 12, or 24 hours (often depending on the size of their bribe). Larger travelers can enter Lillefor but must constantly squeeze through the passages and doorways and can never escape observation or suspicion.

expectations of the Free City vanish when one steps into the Cartways, and help from the Watch is never available below ground level.

Locations

Most townsfolk consider the Cartways a minor set of disused tunnels, when they think of them at all. Their surprising extent and limited accessibility make them very valuable to certain kinds of people, however, and exploration reveals new sections all the time. Whether the work of the Stross in their heyday, the kobolds in their prime, or even sporadic dwarven efforts, the Cartways reach to more places than anyone imagines.

The Black Chamber of Anu-Akma

Persistent rumor claims that in the darkness beneath Zobeck, Anu-Akma—the guardian god of death and the underworld—keeps a shrine set with silver pillars and warded by ancient spirits of the city's defenders. Lies, perhaps, but each year sees a few curious and foolish individuals seeking for the Black Chamber. Here, some say, resurrections may be performed more easily because of the close connection to the Gate of the Dead. Souls called to the Black Chamber return more readily to the realms of the living, suffering less of the difficulty, weakness, and peril that such a journey sometimes entails.

The priests of Anu-Akma certainly do have power in the lands of the dead and over souls of the departed, so these rumors may be true. Just as persistent, however, are more cynical whispers declaring that the Black Chamber is nothing but a maw of the god, and those seeking it become food for ghouls, demons, or worse.

The Cart Tracks

Before the Revolt, nobles used the Cartways as private thoroughfares to avoid the unwashed crowds or for private rendezvous. More commonly, servants used the tunnels to bring firewood, foodstuffs, and other goods to the noble houses quickly and quietly.

After the Revolt, the Cartways fell into disuse except for brave souls who used them for assassinations and smuggling, and the tunnels gradual declined without upkeep. A few enthusiasts continued to map them, but this grew dangerous as goblins, kobolds, and wererats took up residence. Some even say that the devils once bound to service by the old nobles and young merchants slipped their bonds and now roam the tunnels to devour or enslave incautious visitors.

The Cartways Black Market

A long, vaulted gallery punctuated with enormous support columns, the Cartways Black Market is a hidden bazaar of the dark and sinister, the taboo and the forbidden. Several large chandeliers festooned with continual flames cast a garish, flickering light that the vendors and regular patrons no longer notice. The constant murmur of commerce is occasionally punctuated by arguments as flesh, drugs, stolen goods, and precious information changes hands. The threat of violence hangs over each transaction, and when it does erupt, bystanders observe with a detachment bordering on the clinical. A single, unspoken rule governs commerce in the market: Mind your own business.

The Slave Block, the literal and figurative centerpiece of the Black Market, is run by a group of darakhul from the subterranean city of Fretlock, commanded by a darakhul hunter named Dobricar. They bring humans, dwarves, gnomes, svirfneblin, occasionally derro or drow, and—very rarely—groups of adventurous souls, for sale as slaves to those with twisted appetites and deep pockets. Far too many come here to bid for missing loved ones.

Those unfortunate enough to go on the blocks unrecognized or uncontested end up working in illegal mines, fed to the undead of Morgau and Doresh, or pressed into more unsavory forms of slavery. The darakhul have a strict "no dealers" policy, refusing to sell more than five slaves to anyone with whom they have not previously established a relationship. (Slavery is illegal and harshly punished in Zobeck, so slavers take great care in their choice of customers.)

The Cartways Black Market also includes a gambling tent known as the Cut Purse, a derro-run brothel, guard platforms, Radu Underhill's home, food vendors, and a series of merchant tents connected to the loose confederation called the Merchant Consortium (see *SoZ*, pgs. 14-15).

The Smuggler's Market

With access from the docks around the Gullet and from the Kobold Ghetto, the Smuggler's Market is a wet, foul, and violent place to do business, but it is the only place for some business to get done. The Cloven Nine ensure the gates stay well sealed, and they traditionally allow around 50 people to enter each night (the number is almost never the same night to night and seems to vary without pattern, though some claim that it is astrologically or diabolically determined).

The lucky cutthroats and nervous merchants who do get in trade in secrets, lore books, and stolen jewels, or they sell their swords and wands in service to any cult, mule train master, or patron willing to trade hard cash for stout hearts and discretion. The market ends at dawn, and its visitors scatter. Some claim its location is not truly underground at all but a closed mews in the Kobold Ghetto. Others say the location changes weekly, and a sharp ear in low places is required to stay ahead of the Watch.

The city expressly forbids the Smuggler's Market and occasionally raids it with a flying company of hussars, wizards, clockwork guardians, and the Order of Griffon Knights, but few normal citizens of the Free City even know it exists. Those who visit require both stealth and smooth speech in addition to their mercantile acumen to get out of the market with the deals they need at the price they're willing to pay.

STREET TRAPS

The streets and byways near the Ghetto gate conceal a staggering number of traps in marvelous variety. The traps presented here are used exclusively to make life difficult for Bigs. The more deadly traps are usually near the main streets, the dock, and the gates, as those are the areas most often disturbed by the Too Tall.

The following traps are fairly typical of what one finds on the street. All of these traps can be discovered with a DC 17 Perception check. The more valuable bits of property, such as the lesser kings' homes, the houses of mine bosses, or the workshops below, are all defended with rather deadlier devices.

Breaking Boards: On upper floors and bridges between houses, the kobolds place intentionally weakened boards that have at least a foot of clearance beneath them. The boards will break under anyone weighting more than a kobold or halfling, trap the victim's foot, and deal 2d4 damage from the jagged edges of the broken plank. Characters running through such a trap take 2d12 damage instead and must succeed at DC 14 Reflex saves or drop to half movement because of a sprain or tear. This trap requires repairs to reset and cannot be disarmed (although sturdier planks can be laid down over the top of the trap).

Chalybeate Beggar: Most people overlook this decoy of wood, waxed paper, and rags designed to resemble a hunched kobold beggar. It hides a very weakened (and thus, much more inexpensive to cast) *explosive runes* spell and several packs of caltrops that deal 1d6 fire damage and 1d4 piercing damage to any creature within 10 feet. Most Chalybeate beggars explode when touched, but more devious kobolds will set up tripwires nearby. PCs can disarm Chalybeate beggars with DC 23 Disable Device checks. Kobold thieves sometimes set one or more as an ambush-lure or line an escape route with them to slow pursuers.

Chickenhead: Typically used in the narrow claustrophobic streets of the Ghetto to warn off and humiliate rather than kill, a tripwire triggers a heavy wooden beam that swings down (+5 attack) for 2d6 points of nonlethal damage. In addition, a character struck by the chickenhead must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round. As the victim staggers about, the trap dumps a disgusting concoction of runny glue and chicken giblets from a jar above. Finally, the trap empties a box of feathers over the victim, leaving him momentarily sickened (for 1d4 rounds, DC 12 Fortitude negates) and blinded (for 1d6 rounds, DC 10 Reflex negates) much to the amusement of surrounding kobolds. This complicated trap requires several kobolds to manually reset it, while disarming it requires a mere DC 12 Disable Device check.

Dead End: In the twisting labyrinthine alleys of the Ghetto, the passages grow ever smaller the deeper they delve until, finally, around a corner, they dead end. Kobolds posted just up the passageway slide a fourth wall shut to trap in unsuspecting intruders. No reset, no disarm.

Jolly Water: At night, adolescent kobolds on rooftops hurl stoppered porcelain vases at intruders and then scurry away. The thin vases only deal 1d3 damage on a direct hit, but they shatter and douse everything in adjacent squares in water filled with lichen that visibly glows in darkvision. Creatures with darkvision gain a +8 bonus on Perception checks to see creatures covered in the lichen. No reset, no disarm.

Like Bees to Honey: This small clockwork mechanism triggers when someone comes closer than 5 ft.. It runs toward its target and explodes when adjacent, dealing 1d4 piercing damage



and spraying a pheromone that causes nearby rats to attack the marked intruder. This results in a rat swarm appearing in 1d6 rounds and attacking the affected creature for 1d4 rounds or until destroyed. A successful DC 14 Reflex save halves the damage and avoids the pheromone spray. No reset, no disarm.

Loose Coins: A glint of gold at the end of an alley lures the greedy or desperate. When a Medium creature enters the alley, a log on chains falls off the roof, dealing 2d6 damage and knocking the victim into a concealed 40-foot pit for an additional 4d6 damage (a DC 15 Reflex save halves the initial damage and avoids the pit). The coins are copper pieces painted gold. This trap requires a manual reset and can be disarmed with a DC 15 Disable Device check.

Mantrap: This trapped lock allows doors to only open from one side. Whenever anything is inserted into the lock from the wrong side, two metal jaws slam shut on the lock picker's arms, dealing 1d6 slashing damage and immobilizing the target. A DC 13 Reflex save successfully avoids the jaws (and thus the damage and immobilization). A DC 20 Strength check (which can be performed by someone else) or DC 30 Escape Artist check allows the held person to escape. Disarming this trap requires a DC 19 Disable Device check, and it is reset manually.

Neckwire: Spiked wire is strewn at regular intervals across a narrow alley and positioned at human head height. The wire is surprisingly visible (DC 8 Perception check to notice) and not difficult to avoid by simply ducking. Unfortunately for intruders, though, one of the flagstones in the alley is on a strong spring. Creatures of 50 pounds or less do not set off the trap, but heavier beings do. The spring-loaded flagstone hurls its victim into the spiked wires above, dealing 2d6 damage (a DC 14 Reflex save negates). This is a repair reset trap that can be disarmed with a DC 18 Disable Device check.

Peek Poke: A wooden fence or wall conceals the source of an intriguing noise. A cacophony of whirling, buzzing, and clicking sings from the other side, while a hole drilled 5 ft. from the ground provides a peek. Someone foolish enough to look through the hole is poked in the eye by a stick (wielded by a generally bored kobold). The eye poke deals 1d6 damage and renders the person blind unless he makes a DC 15 Reflex save. No reset, no disarm.

Pit and Post: This is a standard CR 2 camouflaged spiked pit trap (see *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, pg. 420) with a steel bar set in the wall and a pressure plate on the bottom. When more than 50 pounds hits the bottom, the steel bar falls out of the wall slot to crush those below. The steel bar deals 2d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 15 Reflex avoids). This trap requires a manual reset and can be disabled with a DC 20 Disable Device check.

Skunk Box: A block ahead of the party, a large kobold approaches a smaller one, who is carrying two large wooden boxes. The large kobold grabs one of the boxes and runs off. The smaller kobold squeals, drops the other box, and runs after the first.

This foolery usually draws observers to investigate the dropped box. Picking up the box results in it exploding, showering adjacent squares in a terrible-smelling rot (DC 15 Reflex avoids). The character must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d2 hours or until after he bathes. The PCs are marked by the attack and take a -6 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks. Creatures with the scent ability can automatically identify the victim's exact location and gain a +6 bonus on Perception and Survival checks made to find him. No reset, but the trap can be disarmed with a DC 18 Disable Device check.

CHAPTER 4 DISTRICTS & LOCATIONS



“DID YOU GET the requiem?” Dobricar asked, forcing himself to sound disinterested. He glanced from the four grimy dwarves to the full cart behind them.

“Yes, Dobricar,” the lead dwarf said tiredly. “The dara— The other darakhul were right where you said they’d be, with the shipment.” He glared up at Dobricar. “This better be worth it. Three of my companions died.”

Dobricar waved away the dwarf’s bitterness. “Cheer up, Garzot. More for the rest of you. The only things worth having are bought with blood.” He led the dwarves into the great cavern ahead. A hundred or more buyers and sellers mingled under the flickering light. He grinned as he saw stolen goods, slaves, drugs, information, and rarer items changing hands for favors, coin, or more exotic currency. “All this, Garzot, was paid for in precious, delicious blood. I’ve seen a lot of it spilled to maintain my little bazaar. And much, much more will flow in time.”

The districts of Zobeck retain their character and charm, from the huts and hovels at the confluence of the rivers where the kobolds first settled to the small hill where House Stross built their great citadel to the tangled docks and warehouses. The city’s houses are stacked two and three and four floors high, but the real action is always in the streets and the squares.

Here are some of the most prominent.

THE GEAR DISTRICT

The Gear District lies on the city’s western side, near the Dwarven Gate, and is primarily a region of tin and brass merchants, gear grinders, and gearforged repair shops. Here one sees the greatest concentration of the city’s gearforged, and the best dwarven clockwork mages and engineers create wondrous new creations in iron and brass.

The entire region revolves around the Steamworker’s Guildhall and the Geargrinder’s Emporium, two structures built at enormous expense with ribs of cast iron. The tin toys and sharp knives sold here are very well made, but the greatest prizes are the new gearforged given life each month through the combined efforts of mages, geargrinders, clockworker kobolds, and dwarven engineers, all at phenomenal expense. Despite the cost, one new clockwork watchman emerges each month (some believe the Free City is slowly building an army of loyal gearforged soldiers), and most months, so does a privately funded gearforged. These private gearforged must pay off the cost of their creation, and most do so through service to a wealthy family, temple, or guild.

From time to time, dwarven mule trains from the Ironcrag bring in shipments of iron and unusual alloys, jewels for precision gearing, and offerings for the temple of Volund. His shrine here clearly shows the dwarven influence. An ever-burning altar and anvil stand before his statue, and his dwarven acolytes often call his name in Dwarven as they tap out the rhythm of his hymns and songs of praise.

The noise of worship is often lost in the district’s other racket. Recently, the city attempted to silence the trip-hammers and bellows at least on holy days, with mixed results.

Gear District Locations

The city of Zobeck is defined by its guilds, its merchants, its trade—and its clockworks. The patronage of Rava made craft and artistry the city’s pride, and makes the city a vibrant hub of trade. Rava chose well when she became patroness of this Crossroads town, for here the hammers ring all day and into the night.

Geargrinder’s Guild (\$2)

Rivals and allies to the Steamworker’s Union, the Geargrinder’s Guild creates the many gears that run the city’s clocks and devices, from the

small intricate wheels and balance arms of automaton birds to the enormous iron cogs that power the city gates and bridges.

Unlike the Arms and Armory masters (who concern themselves most with attack and defense in all its forms) or the Steamworker’s Union (which concerns itself with motion and motive power), the Geargrinder’s Guild concerns itself with the tiny details of memory, reaction, vision, and ethics in mechanical form. They build and repair memory gears, command plates, low-light amplifiers, and similar fragile and complex devices. These elements almost always go to the Steamworkers in sealed brass cylinders, spheres, or cases to better protect their secrets.

Kobolds compose roughly a third of the guild, which values them for their vision and nimble claws. The guild’s leader is the Guildmaster Krick-ok White (CG male kobold expert 6), a pale kobold well into his advanced years with one living eye and one made of fused and enchanted glass lenses, which (so it is said) can see spirits, auras, and even the intentions of those who visit him.

The Grey Friar (\$5)

Located near the Temple District and popular with the followers of the Gear Goddess, this tavern and restaurant attracts a scholarly clientele. It has both a scribe and a gear kobold on staff to handle communications and repairs. The owner, named Abrostar, is one of the few gearforged who seem to have a deep love of learning.

Abrostar claims to remember the entire contents of every conversation she has ever had, every book she has ever read, and every face she has ever seen. The depth of detail she recalls even exceeds that of other gearforged. Many have tested her, but none have ever caught her out. Her eye for nuance means that the Watch often consults her in enquiries about travelers.

The Grey Friar’s wait staff consists of two gearforged and three young students. The food is terrible but cheap; the beer is average and also cheap. The priests of Rava bless the tavern and its patrons each day at noon, and the place is always packed after services at the goddess’s temple.

The Steamworker’s Union (\$1)

The most powerful of the mechanical guilds, the Steamworker’s Union creates the everwound springs, hydraulic joints, and the boilers that give all constructs locomotion. Its members also build the gearforged workers and scullions. They are a strangely pious group, universally devoted to Rava, and they number many dwarves among their ranks.

Old rumors claim that the Steamworkers originated the Hammerfell clan, and the Union’s patriarch is still often a dwarf. The guild also has close ties to the inevitables, who sometimes visit to assist in animating a gearforged or to offer advice on the making of stronger, faster, wiser, and more durable creatures. A few members of

Gear District

1. The Steamworker's Union
2. Geargrinder's Guild
3. Foundryman's Guild
4. Glassblower's Guild
5. The Grey Friar Tavern
6. Solderers' and Braziers Guild

Temple District

7. Church of Perun
8. Temple of Forevit and Yarila
9. Temple of Golden Lada
10. Temple of Rava
11. Temple of Volund

Market District

12. The Brewer's Sisterhood
13. Stonemason's Guild
14. Wainwright's Guild
15. The Vintner's Guild
16. Lanternmakers & Tinker's Guild
17. Limner's Guild

Merchant District

18. Honorable Order of Weavers
19. Ancient Order of Jewelers
20. Carpenter's Brotherhood
21. Cooper's Union
22. Order of Arms and Armory
23. Order of Tanners & Leatherworkers
24. Six Lanterns Playhouse

Upper Zobeck

25. The Great Stross Clock Tower
26. City Archives
27. Civic Courthouse
28. Council Hall
29. Redrock Bailey
30. The Seven Bells Tavern

Lower Zobeck

31. The Wheatshaf Tavern
32. Moon's Grace Temple
33. Red Queen Gambling Hall
34. Shrine of St. Charon
35. Spyglass and Cartographer's Guild
36. Miner's Brotherhood
37. Ragpicker's Guild

Dock District

56. Blackened Fish Tavern
57. Greymark Warehouse
58. The Dancing Bear
59. The Moon and Owl Tavern
60. Altar of the Lorelei
61. The Bargeman's Fellowship
62. Shipwrights' and Chandler's Guild
63. Stevedore's Brotherhood

College District

38. Arcane Collegium
39. The Hedgehog Tavern
40. The Vigilant Scribes
41. Temple of Celestial Dawn
42. Fellowship of the Arcane Collegium
43. Chartered Brotherhood of Alchemists
44. Arcane Square

Kobold Ghetto

45. Ghetto Gate
46. King of King's Palace
47. Royal Workshops
48. Kobold Dock
49. Undercity Entrance

Citadel District

50. The Citadel
51. Griffon Rider Barracks
52. Western Barbican
53. King's Head Tavern
54. The White Rose Tavern

Pastures

55. Shrine of Hubertus





The Free City of
ZOBECK

North and East
to Morgau & Doresh

SCM

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Brewer's Sisterhood in the Market District has cut off the Geargrinders from all brewed potables until they settle some outstanding bills. The Geargrinders cannot pay until they complete the commission of a stunningly beautiful clockwork maiden, destined for service in either Rava's Temple or the house of a very fortunate young merchant. Without beer, though, the dwarves threaten strikes, refuse to take new commissions, and generally make the city miserable. Can the PCs smuggle in or simply purchase a few barrels to calm the situation (hopefully without making enemies of the Sisterhood)?
- The festival of Volund approaches, and weapons, armor, and anvils pour into the temple for blessings and repair. Unfortunately, Sir Jorun Haclav's personal sword has gone missing. The PCs must find out who stole it and why.

the guild claim that the worship of Rava itself came to Zobeck with inevitables from the Gear Plane.

Steamworkers are one of the few guilds that accept both dwarves and kobolds as full members. Their guildhall is a workshop that rings with hammers and burns with hissing steam at all hours. Humans tend the forges during the day, kobolds by night, and dwarves at all hours.

TEMPLE DISTRICT

The Temple District is so named for the many temples it contains. Lada's largest temple stands here, along with important temples to the other four major Crossroads gods: Rava, Volund, Perun, and Porevit and Yarila. Shrines to the various saints also dot these streets.

Temple District Locations

The temples of the district are open at all hours from dawn to dusk. After nightfall, only priests and the most devoted followers travel through its streets.

Church of Perun (\$7)

A large stone building with virtually no outer embellishments, no one might recognize the church of Perun at all but for his thunderstone symbol over its doors. Many still mistake it for a warrior's guild.

Inside rests a small shrine, but the majority of the building houses an armory and rooms dedicated to martial training. Behind the building lies a courtyard also used for weapons practice.

The clerics here train the lowliest of citizens in basic combat and the arts militant, and those willing to offer themselves to Perun receive a spear and dagger or a pike and short sword, with the understanding that they will answer the priests' call to arms if needed. The church of Perun serves as the unofficial recruiter and officer corps for the Zobeck levies.

Temple of Golden Lada (\$9)

This tall, elaborate, edifice of pink stone rests on a small hill, and its tallest tower peeks above the city walls to better see the first glint of dawn. As with Lada's more popular Celestial Dawn Temple in the Collegium District, petitioners line up to receive the priests' healing touch before dawn, when the doors open.

Inside the temple, the statues, pillars, and pews radiate a golden sheen, quite calming to supplicants seeking Lada's blessings. No one is

denied healing during daylight hours, though any receiving powerful curative magic must serve the temple for a period or perform a great task to repay the debt.

Lucca Angeli is the high priestess of Lada, a small woman with dark hair and a powerful personality. She keeps rooms in both temples and rotates weeks between them to give her lesser priests and lay persons equal attention.

TEMPLE OF VOLUND (\$11)

The temple of Volund is a majestic piece of dwarven masonry on the outside; fine statues show forges, hammers, horses, dwarves in battle array, and humans and dwarves in prayer by a forge fire. Inside, the temple is a vast forge that runs 24 hours a day, keeping Volund's fires burning, and the temple interior warm and smelling of fuel and sweat. The temple walls dampen the sounds of hammering, so as not to disturb the priests neighbors, but the rhythm never ceases.

The temple maintains a stable in the town as well, with horses supposedly blessed by Volund. Certainly the priests do a bit of a sideline in horse-trading, shoeing, and animal care. A yellow or russet blaze in some breeds of draft horses, called the "mark of Volund" is highly prized.

Ondli Firedrake serves as the temple's high priest and often works the forge himself, creating a novice's iron holy symbol or fulfilling a commission for a devout warrior or traveler.

Temple of Porevit and Yarila (\$8)

An open series of plant-entwined columns serves as the temple to the Green Gods. Behind this rise vast, beautiful gardens and shrubbery mazes. Many herbs and plants usually only found in the Margreve grow here. Spellcasters often make donations to the temple for the rights to buy cuttings from the plants as spell components—the clerics won't sell them directly. Ogolai Kiyat, an elderly centaur from the eastern plains, is the temple's current high priest. He leads the opening of the Spring Festival Rites.

Temple of Rava (\$10)

A metallic structure with brass-bound iron doors and a green copper roof, the temple of Rava stands out. Two steam golems guard its entrance to protect the valuable work that takes place within, for this is the birthplace of the gearforged.

The main temple level includes three important sections: a shrine of trade, where balances are trued and weights and measures blessed; a shrine of fate and foresight, which includes the sacred and private territory of the Clockwork Oracle; and the open Hall of the Patroness, where the arts and industry of the city are featured along side minor paintings of the city, its founding, and history. This last is where public services are held, such as contract signings, marriages, priestly investments, and funerals.

The temple's crypt is not for burials but for births. The lower halls contain a series of workshops and assembly rooms. In the Sanctuary of Gears, the clerics perform binding rituals to seal humanoid souls into metal bodies and create the children of Rava.

Ondli Firedrake, also the high priest of Volund, serves as the dwarven high priest of Rava. Lena Ravovik serves as the high priestess for the humans. This is the only temple where gearforged number among the priesthood.

MARKET DISTRICT (VINEYARD DISTRICT)

Also called the Vineyard District or the Market Ward, this quarter is filled with small shops and artisans who sell the goods everyone needs. Cloth, leather, weapons, poison, scrolls, and carpets are all for sale here—everything but foodstuffs, livestock, spices (which are sold in Lower Zobeck), and slaves (which are forbidden in the Free City). The merchants work out of tiny stalls and areas no larger than pantries, but the demand for space in the district is huge. Most merchants live above or behind their shops and have done so for generations.

The Four Quarters street in the Market District is devoted to the goods of distant lands. The street's markets offer indecipherable scrolls from Siwal and the Arbonesse, strange alchemical powders, and statues of unknown gods. More mundane goods also appear here, such as amber, Rothenian furs, exotic woods, and garments of silk, shimma, and Harkesh lace. Even some minor magical items from Bemmea turn up somewhere along the street, although nothing too fine.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A bottle shipment to the Four Quarters has released an efreeti, who demands that humans bring him incense, spices, jewels, and virgins. The city leaders are not amused, and even less amused is the lamp's seller, whose shop has become the efreeti's private palace, at least in an illusory way.
- A merchant of Sikkim seeks a guide to the taverns, brothels, gambling halls, and smuggling dens of Zobeck, and someone recommend one of the PCs. Once the guide is drunk, the spy of Sikkim questions him closely.

Market District Locations

The Market district is all about trade. It is busiest from the months of Mustering to Redleaf, or spring to harvest time. In winter, the district caters only to the city's own inhabitants.

The Brewer's Sisterhood (\$12)

The brewmistresses are beloved throughout the city for the beer, ale, and barley wine they make in their vast copper kettles. These

REAL ESTATE, RENTS, AND LIVING EXPENSES

Ownership	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4
Manor	60,000+ gp	40,000+ gp	100,000+ gp	25,000 gp
Villa	40,000 gp	20,000 gp	80,000 gp	18,000 gp
Townhouse	30,000 gp	15,000 gp	60,000 gp	12,000 gp
House	20,000 gp	10,000 gp	45,000 gp	8,000 gp
Apartment Suite	8,000 gp	5,000 gp	15,000 gp	1,000 gp
Apartment	800 gp	500 gp	1,500 gp	100 gp
Building, Small	10,000 gp	5,000 gp	15,000 gp	4,000 gp
Building, Large	20,000 gp	10,000 gp	45,000 gp	8,000 gp
Tavern	12,500 gp	7,500 gp	17,500 gp	5,500 gp
Warehouse	40,000 gp	20,000 gp	80,000 gp	18,000 gp

Rent (per month)

Manor	1,000 gp	700 gp	2,000 gp	500 gp
Villa	500 gp	250 gp	1,000 gp	175 gp
Townhouse	250 gp	150 gp	750 gp	100 gp
House	200 gp	100 gp	500 gp	50 gp
Apartment Suite	100-150 gp	40-60 gp	500 gp	30 gp
Apartment	75 gp	30 gp	200 gp	10 gp
Tenement Flat	10 gp	5 gp	—	2 gp
Building, Small	1,000 gp	500 gp	1,500 gp	400 gp
Building, Large	200 gp	100 gp	500 gp	50 gp
Warehouse	500 gp	250 gp	1,000 gp	175 gp

General Expenses*

Food Costs	100%	100%	150%	100%
Transportation Costs	100%	100%	125%	75%
Goods Costs	125%	100%	150%	100%

District 1: Gear District, Merchant District, and Temple District
 District 2: College District, Lower Zobeck, and the Market District
 District 3: Upper Zobeck and Citadel District
 District 4: Kobold Ghetto and Dock District

*Cost percentage of items listed in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*

hardworking craftswomen often compete with one another in a fierce but friendly way. Some have a contest each year during the River Fair, when the Bargemen, stevedores, and all the apprentices of the city sample and vote on the quality of the copious amounts of potables the Sisterhood provides.

In terms of numbers, the Sisterhood has always been fairly small, rarely more than 40 members at a time, with about 60 or 70 apprentices. Many young girls apprentice, starting at age nine or ten, and it is a popular destination for urchins and runaways. The Guildmistress is Ludmeya Shenk (NG female dwarf expert 8/cleric 4 (Ninkash)), a crookbacked dwarven crone who is canny enough to keep the Bargemen and the Coopers close allies. Zobeck's various beers, from the heavy Chimneysweep Stout to the summery Silverhops Lager, are widely distributed up and down the river and popular among the centaurs.

The Sisterhood owns no magic and its finances, while sound, are not extravagant. It remains among the best-loved guilds in the city, and when Guildmistress Ludmeya speaks, her words carry great weight with the Council. Many leaders count on her guild to quench the thirst in their quarters of the city, and no one wishes to cross her. Ludmeya has ears in every taproom and friends at every table, so they say, and this information is a great asset. She remembers the Revolt, and her loyalty to the city's freedom and prosperity means that what she learns often reaches people who can do something about it.



Hommal's Botanical Rooftop

Hommal Agic owns a five-story tenement that borders the Market District and Lower Zobeck, just on the waterfront. Atop this building lies Hommal's true passion and major source of income—a lush and overgrown botanical garden with multiple interlocking greenhouses and patios overburdened with ferns, saplings, and hanging mosses. Hommal has a small monopoly on certain fibers and extracts within Zobeck and supplies brewers, alchemists, and cooks across the city. An honest businessman for the most part, Hommal has found his garden declared a neutral and safe meeting place for a number of Zobeck's criminal organizations. For serving tea and keeping silent, Hommal avoids paying protection money to any group (see *SoZ*, pgs. 18-19).

Ulmar's Rare Books

A dwarf-run bookstore is an infrequent sight. Ulmar's attitude toward customers makes them infrequent as well. Situated near Lower Zobeck, Ulmar's Rare Books doesn't seem to see enough traffic to stay in business. The assortment of books available is impressive, however, and scholars searching for an obscure reference often come to Ulmar's as a last resort.

Ulmar repairs damaged books, though few know that he forges near-exact duplicates as well. He will duplicate any particularly noteworthy volume he comes across for his special collection. On occasion, wealthy merchants desiring to impress will purchase duplicated rare books at "discounted" prices.

Ulmar works for several masters and provides different services depending on which code word customers use. With the right phrase, Ulmar will recommend a book for purchase from the Spyglass Guild. Another code word, and he brings out a book or package from the Rivermen. The service never improves, though (see *AoZ*, pgs. 14-15).

THE MERCHANT DISTRICT

Like the Market District, this district houses many of the guild orders, such as the Honorable Order of Weavers (§18), the Ancient Order of Jewelers (§19), the Carpenter's Brotherhood (§20), the Cooper's Union (§21), the Order of Arms and Armor (§22), the Order of Tanners and Leatherworkers (§23), and the Six Lantern Playhouse (§24). The Watch patrol more frequently here than the Market district, however.

Merchant District Locations

The Merchant district is more concerned with trade on road and river, and organizes shipments in an out, compared to the Market district. Many master merchants live here as well, and carts and wagons often clog the streets.

Honorable Order of Weavers (§18)

This guild is one of the oldest and yet most modest of Zobeck's guilds. It produces an astonishing variety of patterned and simple woolen, cotton, and silk cloth using looms threaded and tended by its members and its spidery weaving automatons. The guild sells one or two enormous tapestries, true works of art, each year, and they command huge sums. Its clockwork weaving spiders are inhumanly quick and accurate but also feared. Terrible rumors claim that they poison and destroy the Weavers' enemies, and sometimes merchants who buy from the guild carry a spider to distant targets outside Zobeck as part of their payment. This seems entirely baseless and rooted in the spider's

fearsome appearance. The single proven case of a weaving spider attack took place within the city walls.

The Honorable Order does seem to have some touch of the magical about it. Its members are close allies of the Steamworker's Union (who provide some of their more specialized looms and counting tools) and the Vigilant Brotherhood of Scribes (who rely on the Weavers for certain obscure mathematics and accounts). The Honorable Order clearly uses arcane techniques to make such enormous volumes of cloth and to weave such tight sailcloth. Like most guilds, though, they keep their secrets well.

The guildmistress of the weavers, a young woman named Philomena Flaxe (LN female human expert 9), is thin with long limbs and a quiet way about her. Her followers believe she is blessed by Rava, for Philomena has received admittance to the Clockwork Oracle not just once but a dozen times. Each time, the Oracle's words have helped her and her guild. A few believe she should leave the guild and join the priesthood.

Six Lantern Playhouse (\$23)

One of the few public places in Zobeck nodding to the arts, the Six Lantern Playhouse seats up to 3,000 occupants, but it rarely draws a full house these days and is really in a state of decline. The Stross era, when nobles considered the Six Lantern *the* place to congregate and be seen, marked the playhouse's heyday. Since the Great Revolt, the playhouse has suffered because Zobeckers associate it with the largess of nobility. Most merchants consider it a frivolity.

The building is worn with age, inside and out, and owners Joran and Cyndis Zirmac cannot afford to replace the fading fabrics and threadbare seats. They seek a bard or other performer of renown to aid them in attracting patrons and returning the playhouse to its glory days. Unfortunately, said star would need to work for free for several weeks until the playhouse earned the needed funds to make repairs. So far, no one they've approached has been altruistic enough to sacrifice his or her fee. Without an infusion of coin, the playhouse will soon close.

CROWN SQUARE AND UPPER ZOBECK

Crown Square is the newest place to see and be seen. The tall houses all around the edge include the Council Hall (\$28), the City Archives (\$26) (wherein is lodged the tower of the Great Stross Clock), and the homes of the wealthiest and most powerful families in the city, such as the Greymarks, the Vandereik, the Armanac, the Hrovitz, and the Slygass. Their homes are brightly painted blue, yellow, or brick red, with the paint frequently refreshed.

On major holidays and state occasions, thousands gather in the square to hear the benediction of the High Priestess of Rava or a declaration of war against Morgau or the death sentence of a notorious river bandit.

The city typically executes criminals here. The city jail, called the Redrock Bailey (\$29), lies just down the street behind the Civic Courthouse (\$27). The trip from the Redrock to the square is 200 yards along a wide road, and the executioner's cart rolls along it at least once each month. Common murderers, frauds, smugglers, and bandits stay in Redrock. The Citadel holds those convicted of diabolism, sedition, coining, treason, spying, or other high crimes.

The public enjoys the displays in Crown Square. The exercise of authority and the great temple of Rava make the place an axis of power.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The PCs are approached for hire by an elderly widow of the Slygass family who lives a life of paranoia. She fears her own children seek her death, so they can claim their inheritance, and wants the PCs to deal with the situation. As it happens, her paranoia is justified.
- The party hears of a secret oracle of the Gear Goddess that says the city is threatened by a plague of darkness. The PCs are asked to go bring a powerful hermit priest of the Sun God back from his retreat deep in the Ironcrag Mountains. The hermit has little interest in returning unless the party slays a few giants for him first.

After the Revolt, the square was briefly called the Great Folk Square, but this name never stuck, making this one of the few places that actively recalls the old feudal days.

The only things approaching a commercial interest on Crown Square are the small tavern called the Red Pig and the enormously wealthy Merchant's Bank of Yorn and Federhan. The tavern is outrageously expensive and does not admit anyone in armor or carrying weapons or wands—its clientele hires those sorts of people, and they eat in the kitchen.

Upper Zobeck Locations

Though filled with history and grandeur, most of the goings-on in this district remain behind closed doors. The great and good of Zobeck have as much desire, and perhaps more need, as anyone to keep their private business private, and they take some pains to do so. Still, the various landmarks of this district are tied to the city itself, its past, present, and future, and that importance keeps this a busy place.

The Great Stross Clock (\$25)

This masterpiece of horology tracks the hours of the day, the phases of the moon, eclipses, sunsets, and sunrises. Two panels show the seasons of the year. Despite the Revolt, the clock retains the Stross name, even in official language, and is a focal point in the district.

Rumors hold that the clock has much greater powers, however. One hidden chamber within the clock's uppermost reaches supposedly displays omens related to the fate of the city. Some claim another secret chamber contain a gear altar where the souls of the gearforged are bound and returned to serve the city after their deaths—and might even be the seat of the Goddess Rava's visitation. Certainly, many gearforged in the city claim their flywheels and escapements move and ring in time with the Great Clock's chimes.

Some say that the First Gear given to the city by the goddess is the prime gear within the Stross Clock; others claim that gear turns in the Temple of Rava or the Geargrinder's guildhall. What is certain is that the clock is warded by the Collegium and protected by furnace gargoyles, animated armored knights, and traps.

The Old Stross Public Bathhouse

The Old Stross Public Bathhouse lies at the very heart of Zobeck. Located just south of Crown Square and facing the Founders' Statues at the tip of the Crown Spike, the Baths once served only the aristocracy. After the Revolt, the spring waters opened to the general population. This is one of the few places remaining in Zobeck where one can see the lost extravagance of the deposed regime, but the people appreciate

BUT HOW DOES HE DO IT?

The source of the Painted Man's power is purposefully kept vague. How the Painted Man does what he does isn't as important as what he does. Need a *true resurrection* or a *wish*? He makes it happen. Need a bottled alchemical mutagen or someone to summon and bind a pit fiend? He can arrange that. His network of favors allows him access to skills well outside his own purview, making him an ideal source for PCs and tool for GMs.

it as a reminder and a monument. The Old Stross Public Bathhouse is now a shared social space dedicated to the triumph of the Revolt. Generally considered both neutral ground and sanctuary, the baths permit no weapons or armor inside except those carried by the Watch on official business. Given that, it's not unusual to find trade factors soaking alongside gang lords and chatting up guildmasters in a relaxed and casual environment at any hour of the day or night.

The bathhouse has two floors. The street level houses the entrance, while the bulk of the structure lies belowground, sprawling out beneath the wide street before it. The underground space consists of several chambers containing mineral baths, plunge pools, a massage parlor, several lounging areas, and a gymnasium (see *SoZ*, pgs. 20-21).

The Seven Bells (\$30)

By far the most important trade tavern in the district, the Seven Bells is more a market than an alehouse. The tavern stands just off Crown Square and employs, in addition to the wait staff, a scribe, a moneychanger, a notary, and a shipping clerk with connections to the barge trade and the caravan masters. The food and drink are both reasonably good, and relatively inexpensive for the area. Drinking to excess is frowned on, and attempts to duel, brawl, or gamble result in summary ejection from the premises.

The Silk Scabbard

By no means a small operation, the Silk Scabbard brothel and fighting pit occupies an otherwise nondescript two-story brick structure near the junction with Upper and Lower Zobeck and the Kobold Ghetto.

Tyron, Lord Greymark's fixer, owns and runs the Scabbard with the approval and protection of the trade oligarch. This den of excess draws in patrons of all social strata. Fond of risk, Tyron runs many games and fixes only a few. The management sees the occasional brawl as a cost of doing business and keeps the furniture sturdy but comfortable. The Silk Scabbard's girls are well kept; a local bard advertises the brothel as "a dozen lovely ladies and two ugly ones!"

The Silk Scabbard has two floors. The street level contains the brothel, main bar, and pit fighting areas. The upper level hosts the gambling and auxiliary bar with a couple of overflow rooms for the brothel (see *SoZ*, pgs. 22-25).

LOWER ZOBECK (ASHMILL)

Not every district teems with wealth, power, and treachery. Lower Zobeck houses the poor and common citizens just trying to make their way. Many are servants, unskilled workers in the fields or forests, charcoal burners, and dockworkers. The district is lively, with plenty

of rivalries between various streets and families, but few of its troubles reach the eyes and ears of the Citadel or the Consuls.

Ashmill Locations

The most notable element of Lower Zobeck is the emphasis on the Green Goddess and her spheres. The Sisterhood of Brewers and numerous bakers, livery stables, and butchers all surround this district, and many consider it the city's pantry. In a place known for automatons and diabolism, this is a district of human needs and hungers. Perhaps it is no surprise that cults to Marena also spring up in this district from time to time.

The Black Lotus

Found near the border with the Market District and the river, the Black Lotus has a plain storefront marked with a black half-timbered style. It's a two-story building with a simple wooden door next to a street-facing window on which "The Black Lotus" is printed in Trade, Draconic, and the exotic characters of the owner's native language. The window is alchemically reinforced and looks into the curiosity shop. People come here to buy unusual trinkets and curios from afar—but that's not what the shop has a reputation for. Those looking for magical assistance of any kind can find it here with no questions asked, so long as they can meet the price set by the Painted Man.

Tall, fat, and smelling of rare spices—that's the easiest way to physically describe the Painted Man. His true name remains a secret, and the nickname has spread through the city. He wears silk robes embroidered with strange symbols and always paints his face in a foreign style. Friendly and outgoing, if evasive, he speaks without a trace of an accent. Perpetually dissembling, he reveals little while constantly learning as much as possible.

Most claim the Painted Man has lived in Zobeck for decades. One story calls him an exiled member a cabal of eunuch arcanists from a distant land. They once served their emperor's court but fled into exile after a failed coup attempt. Supposedly, the Painted Man is one of only eight surviving conspirators, biding his time as he peddles his powers and continues his dark studies.

It's an open secret that if you need magical assistance of any kind—from arcane, to divine, to the most illegal sorts of dark sorcery—you go to the Painted Man. He always helps for a price. Common magic may require money or goods, but the more potent effects demand more outlandish costs. Perhaps he requires the recovery of a pearl once lost in the Argent. Maybe he demands the delivery of a potion into a certain Watchman's goblet. He could need a lich's phylactery brought back to him or a living basilisk. He may not ask for payment immediately, but he always collects. No one knows of anyone who has denied his requests.

His curio trade has passed powerful artifacts into his possession. Perhaps his secret society stays in contact, or being a eunuch (if he is) grants him access to greater powers, or maybe he's an astonishingly powerful wizard keeping a low profile. Maybe he's not even human. Most who go to him for help don't care, and perhaps that desperation is the greatest expression of his power (see *SoZ*, pgs. 12-13).

Cracked Coin

To outward appearances, the Cracked Coin is a cozy, two-story money-lending establishment, built in the same style as many other businesses in Lower Zobeck. The inside, however, includes several

secret rooms, a hidden vault, and a sub-basement in addition to the business space on the first floor and living space above (see *SoZ*, pgs. 16-17).

The Rampant Roach

On the border of Lower Zobeck, just a few blocks away from Crown Square, stands one of the few kobold-oriented restaurants outside the Ghetto. The owner, a kobold named Skirtal, insisted on opening his restaurant outside of the Ghetto to spread his joy of traditional kobold cuisine to the whole city. Local kobolds working in town frequent the Rampant Roach for lunch and dinner. Unfortunately, non-reptilian clients remain a rarity, and Skirtal barely makes enough to keep up with expenses.

The doors open early in the afternoon and stay open until just before dawn, but business is light until well after dusk. The ambience is cozy and dark. Skirtal warmly welcomes anyone who enters. Food is cheap but filling and comes in generous portions, if the patron can stomach kobold meals (see *Alleys of Zobeck*, pg. 13).

Spyglass and Cartographer's Guild (\$35)

This wide, two-story guild house has many windows on its main level to flood its high-ceilinged, open workrooms with light. The panes' outside surfaces are opaque, however, to prevent curious passersby from peering in. On the main level, 20 permanent drafting stations fill the vast central room, which has space for more if needed. No matter the hour, at least ten diligent cartographers are hard at work copying stolen maps, drafting floor plans of observed vaults, mapping out discovered tunnel systems, some even drawing legitimate maps for clients, and all keeping a careful eye on the entrances.

The upper level contains lodging for those guild members who frequently travel on business for Ersebet Cemilla, the guild's leader (see the Spyglass and Cartographer's Guild in Chapter 5, pg. 56, for more information). This level also houses guardrooms, supply and special equipment rooms, and Ersebet's private chambers, which she shares with her second-in-command Grigory Kaldozh.

The guild house's warded secret basement contains a document-filled vault, a treasure room, a few very strong and magically shielded cells, and a scrying-protected meeting hall.

The Wheatsheaf (\$31)

A favorite smuggler's tavern and second home of anyone who need a thug now and again, the Wheatsheaf nightly serves up strong beer and spicy food with a healthy side of information, especially from the Redcloaks or the Cloven Nine. The collection of rogues, sharpers, cultists, assassins, fences, and cold-eyed hard cases who drink at the Wheatsheaf is ever-changing but always dangerous, alert, and looking for an opening.

Despite its clientele and infernal connections, the Wheatsheaf remains a remarkably non-violent place most of the time. The tavern provides a secure place to conduct public and private business or just have a meal, and that ends if people are watching for a knife in the back or fear that the Watch will show up. When violence starts at the Wheatsheaf, it's never a simple brawl—it's a murder. The killer had best have powerful friends or excellent protection, however, as all the biggest gangsters in Zobeck prefer that the Wheatsheaf operate under a flag of truce, and they look askance on anyone threatening that.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The wines of that the temple of Yarila distributed for the high holy day tasted flat and the festival failed. The farmers fear a poor harvest unless they can appease the goddess. Some call for blood sacrifice, but the centaur high priest says that what's needed is a pilgrimage to a holy place deep within the Arbonesse to make a long overdue offering. The road is dangerous, though, and the pilgrims need protectors.
- Recently, many woodsmen and charcoal burners have gone into the Margreve and never returned. The whole district worries about their fate. Are they held prisoner by dark fey, or have they been eaten by wild griffons? The patrols have found nothing, but the natives refuse to venture into the forest until the disappearances are solved.

THE DOCKS OR THE GULLET

The docks along the river Argent hum with the loading and unloading of barge traffic six days a week, with lulls—but rarely stoppages—primarily in the winter and in times of river banditry. Attempts to alter or control the loading and unloading work have led to bruising run-ins with the Stevedores Brotherhood (\$63), and the expense involved means that the greater merchant houses have stopped trying. The slips each have room for a dozen barges at a time, almost none of which stay longer than a day or two to off-load or take on cargo. Time is money, after all.

The city's wealth depends on the smooth functioning of the docks, so attempts to disrupt this activity are very serious crimes indeed. Lawbreakers attacking barge captains have sometimes been charged with treason and beheaded. Even dockside brawling is frowned on. To provide an alternative, the Docks provide many other vices, mostly fighting pits, whorehouses, and gambling halls. Prime among the last are the Red Queen (\$33), the Cup and Pentacle, and the Rooster.

The Docks take on a very different character after dark, in particular that area called the Gullet, where many gangs have their dens. By night, the Watch rarely ventures down these streets, and everyone guarding the warehouses and counting houses keep their doors, shutters, and windows sealed tight. The gangs will not break into any building that has kept up its protection payments, but people found on the streets are fair game.

The Kariv are the only exception. They trundle along in the dark and even leave their wagons in clumps around the district without fear. They make their home here intermittently, when expecting to meet friends among the barge workers, hoping for a shipment of fine horses, or for their own mysterious interests. More often, though, the Kariv use the Pastures across the river.

Docks Locations

The buildings of the Docks are rough and worn, built quickly and used frequently. The houses are typically wattle-and-daub construction, though the warehouses are brick and better guarded.

The Bargeman's Fellowship (\$61)

The Bargeman's Fellowship is a strange guild in that its members do all

their best work up and down the river, far from Zobeck. They maintain close ties to the Stevedores, and the two often work together when there's a need to load and unload cargo quickly or in bad weather. The Bargemen, though, are more sailors than dockworkers and often stay somewhat aloof. Their guildmaster calls himself the Barge King, and his reputation is extremely suspect: consorting with the Kariv, bribing fey for passage along the waters, and even smuggling are all charges regularly laid at his door. For the most part, though, as long as the shipments go through on time and without heavy losses, the merchants of Zobeck don't care.

The current Barge King is a black-haired man named Sundran Karesh (NE male human rogue 4/fighter 5, alias Silver-Fingered Yorick, the Barge Prince), a former dockworker who seems to have connections among the kobolds, the Kariv horse thieves and crabs diviners, the wealthy merchants, and all along the waterfront. The Barge King typically holds court in the Blackened Fish (\$56) and the Dancing Bear (\$58) taverns, although he also owns a barge used for special cargos that can magically row itself upriver in time of need.

Altar of the Lorelei (\$60)

A small altar to the river spirits resides here. The lorelei are water fey (see *Midgard Bestiary*), not goddesses, and yet the river is thought to be a minor divinity and the lorelei its handmaidens.



Captains leave offerings for luck, and sailors and bargemen at least say a prayer at the shrine. There's no priests of the lorelei, but some say that the priestesses of the Green Gods tend this shrine, claiming that the lorelei is one of the masks of Yarila (see *Midgard Campaign Setting*).

The Broken Seal

Deep in the Gullet, the section of warehouses that are a stronghold of the city's gangs by night, stands the Broken Seal, a tavern where the city's worst scum seems to settle. Headquarters of the Cloven Nine—the infernalist tieflings who until recently were the city's premiere gang for extortion, gambling, and (most of all) diabolism—the Broken Seal nightly hosts Cloven lieutenants and foot soldiers who drink cheap wine and tell whopping lies about their debaucheries and plundering of barge shipments. The recent death of Akad, one of their founders, has shaken them, but the gang continues to frequent the Broken Seal to maintain at least the appearance of strength.

The bar itself is largely below ground. A short flight of stairs leads down to a cellar well stocked with barmaids and thugs. The primary modes of entertainment are gambling and wenching with occasional dogfights for variety. The Broken Seal is also among the more arcane sites in the city, although its reputation for black magic and diabolism makes it unpopular with the masters of the Collegium. So far, nothing resembling an arcane crime can be conclusively linked to the Seal.

The Dancing Bear (\$58)

The dockworkers and Bargemen all drink here, and it's a rough place; they even serve kobold gangs, though not with any good cheer. Brawls, gambling, and whoring are part of the expected entertainment in the common room and the bunks upstairs, but the regulars keep everyone from getting too far out of hand, mostly for their own good. For all its lively distractions, however, the whole place comes alive when Masha the dancing bear performs. She dances, bows, counts, and knows a dozen other tricks. Her favorites get a big bearish kiss.

The dancing bear is also the inn's bouncer. When she growls, all but the most drunken patrons remember to take their business out into the courtyard. For a dockside place, the Dancing Bears loses remarkably few tables and chairs. On the other hand, it runs up huge bills for mead and honey, and Masha is a hopeless scrounger for treats and attention.

The Moon and Owl (\$59)

This kobold tavern, the only one of its kind outside the Ghetto, stands near the Puffing Bridge, close to where mine gangs enter the city when they return from the pits. Humans and dwarves are distinctly unwelcome here, as the language of the tavern is Draconic and the menu caters only to kobold tastes. Indeed, it is open only from sundown to sunup.

Kobolds themselves sit at tables or benches by tribe or work gang affiliation. An enormous, grizzled dire weasel serves as the Moon and Owl's mascot. Rumor claims that she can detect an elf or gnome by smell, and has dragged more than one such visitor screaming into her burrow.

THE COLLEGIUM DISTRICT

This powerful district houses the influential Arcane Collegium (§38), as well as Lada's popular Temple of the Celestial Dawn (§41). Its most famous tavern is the Hedgehog (§39), and it is home to the Chartered Brotherhood of Alchemists (§43).

Collegium Locations

The Collegium's neighborhood is home to student quarters overflowing with impoverished scholars and scribes and those who make money from them. Stationers, sellers of quill and ink, brewers, cheap tailors, and a few tutors all do a brisk business here.

The Arcane Collegium (§38)

Composed of two small courtyards and a dozen two-story buildings (with a mix of grey and yellow stucco and red tile rooftops) housing masters, apprentices, alchemists (near the river), and clockwork servants, the Arcane Collegium opens its doors but rarely.

The most common means of entrance are the Steam Gate that leads into Arcane Square (§44), just across from the Hedgehog tavern, and the Water Gate at the docks, which uses a set of stairs down the embankment to a single pier. The stairs are always slippery and guards and other traps make them impassable to the unwelcome.

Even when the Steam Gate does open, those visitors admitted are most often hired help or agents or someone seeking to offer great treasures in exchange for the Arcane Collegium's wisdom, rather than townfolk with a casual interest. The interior includes the two courtyards and buildings, as well as a black tower, the large gray hall of the summoners, underground labs, and very sturdy alchemical bunkers. All of the buildings have tarnished silver runes inscribed along the eaves, gates, and windows.

The grounds are protected by clockwork traps, gargoyles, and even undead under the control of the masters of the collegiums. Those masters are: Guildmaster Clockwork Mage Orlando (CN male human wizard 14/expert2); Master Necromancer Konrad von Eberfeld (NE male human wizard 6/fighter 1/eldritch knight 6); Master Illusionist Ariella Scarpetti (N female human illusionist 9); and Master Diviner Rudwin Whitstone (N male dwarf sorcerer 8).

The positions of Master Summoner and Master of Stars and Shadows are currently vacant and were last held by Linnea Thorn and Sariel of Morgau, respectively. Mistress Thorn was recently murdered, and Master Sariel retired to the mountains.

The Collegium itself has roughly two dozen apprentices studying under the masters, including kobolds, tieflings, dwarves, and humans. The staff numbers about 40 and includes alchemists, scribes, maids, cooks, a chamberlain, language tutors, arcane tutors, clockworkers, a priest of the Gear Goddess, a few clockwork scullions, and even a falconer from Siwal named Kaashif al-Rashid.

The Book Fetish

Tucked in an alley corner just around the bend of a curving side street, the Book Fetish bookshop caters to a scholarly and refined crowd. The shop is surprisingly roomy, though clearly made by combining several smaller spaces, and lit by large windows. Bookshelves line the walls, and a few stand free on the floor. Tables and chairs fill the center of the room. A horseshoe-shaped counter with glass-fronted cupboards sits just to the right of the door and always has a pretty, young woman

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The PCs hear infernal chanting while passing through the warehouses. If they investigate, they find a branch of the Cloven Nine conducting an augury that involves spilling a certain amount of (very fresh) human blood.
- The silver-tongued king of the barge bandits is said to visit the Red Queen gambling house (§33) each full moon with an elven courtesan on his arm. There's a big price on his head, if only someone were daring enough to try to arrest him in the midst of a pack of gamblers, gangsters, and diabolists.
- Merchant families always seem to be at one another's throats. The PCs are asked to visit a warehouse and inventory the goods, returning with a particularly valuable set of alchemical fire. The only trouble is that when they arrive, the warehouse is open, the guards are dead, and the alchemical fire is missing. Unless the PCs act quickly, a nasty string of arsons occurs the next day—and the PCs are prime suspects, seen at the robbed warehouse by an eyewitness.

behind it. The Fetish keeps slightly irregular hours but usually opens around mid-morning and stays open far into the night. At any given hour in between, visitors can find Arcane Collegium faculty and students browsing the shelves, sampling the books, or arguing over the low tables.

The Fetish sells new and used books, common and rare volumes, and a wide range of ordinary to exotic spell components (usually kept in the backroom or behind the counter, with only samples displayed). Many customers see it simply as a cozy shop that often stocks the right items but perhaps charges too much. A closer examination of the stock and the staff, however, begins to reveal the secret of the Fetish's popularity.

The side of the counter furthest from the door, tucked close to a wall, contains libido-affecting herbs; various objects for heightening sexual pleasure, including through pain; and contraceptives. The attractive and polite female staff occasionally fetch special items from beyond the faded scarlet tapestry behind the counter, almost always books on proscribed sexual or religious practices. Eavesdropping among the customers reveals some careful, perhaps coded, conversations. Questioning of the staff reveals nothing, of course, unless the correct phrases are used.

The Book Fetish actually is a quality bookshop, but it also serves as a front for the Temple of Painful Pleasures. Many of the customers (though by no means most) frequent the shop for its large selection of erotic literature and treatises on sexual practices, as well as to pay their 11 gp to obtain the platinum headman's coin that serves as their entry fee to the Temple, located in the alley behind the shop. Most of these customers—and the Watch—have no idea that the Temple of Painful Pleasures isn't just a high-end brothel but actually is a real temple dedicated to Marena the Red. They don't suspect that the additional gold piece in their entrance fee goes to supporting her proscribed cult, that their pleasurable activities serve as rites to the Red Goddess, or that the Temple and Book Fetish staff are all her dedicated servants and priests.

The Chartered Brotherhood of Alchemists (§43)

Second only to the Arcane Collegium in its mastery of the mystic arts, the Chartered Brotherhood of Alchemists is obsessed with fire,

TEMPLE OF PAINFUL PLEASURES RULES

1. You may not enter the temple with weapons other than whips.
2. You may only enter the temple clad in a robe or entirely nude. Doing otherwise dishonors Marena.
3. The acolytes, denoted with the red neck ribbons, are here to fulfill your desires, but beating them or being beaten by them requires a private room at 100 gp for an hour session. An hour of pleasurable pain from High Priestess Nariss costs 1,000 gp.
4. Everyone else in the sanctuary is a guest, and any activities you seek with them must be negotiated and mutually agreed upon.
5. There is no fighting in the temple.
6. DO NOT interfere with the other guests' pleasure.
7. If you kill or attempt to kill an acolyte or guest, you will be sacrificed to Marena.

immortality, healing, and a thousand other things, all generated through potions, salves, and oils of various kinds. The Brotherhood is very closely entwined with the city's merchants, as it requires a constant supply of sulfur, quicksilver, phoenix feathers, ivory, amber, dragon's blood, and many other exotic materials. It also works closely with the city Watch and the Order of Griffon Riders to create weapons, poisons, and soporifics.

The Chartered Brotherhood is dominated by humans and has no kobold members. It works in a series of stone bunkers near the river, in chambers constructed with stone runnels to carry failed experiments directly out into the water.

The Hedgehog (\$39)

This is the unofficial tavern of the Arcane Collegium, as it stands just outside the Collegium's grounds on Arcane Square (\$44) (which is, of course, a trapezoid, as any student points out with a sniff to the less geometrically inclined). Magic keeps the Hedgehog clean and unseen servants constitute the entire wait staff.

Its owner, a retired mage named Radomir Schlenk, seems to have been cast out of the Collegium long ago. Since that time, he has befriended many of the apprentices and even some of the masters, but his crime was diabolism, and he has not been forgiven.

The Temple of Celestial Dawn (Dawn Temple) (\$41)

Sometimes called the Moon Temple, this edifice to Lada, the Golden Goddess is built from a pink stone that seems to glow in early morning light. This temple's priests use their healing power on any who ask, not just those who pay, making this a very popular place.

Each morning, the line of petitioners stretches along the street leading to the temple. As soon as dawn breaks, the temple doors open, and the sick and injured proceed into the heady aroma of incense and beeswax candles for cures or—at the very least—painkilling medicaments.

The temple's interior lives up to the goddess's name, as gold covers all of its statues and most of its pillars. Some stories claim that the statues are solid gold, but other rumors hold that most of the golden statues are illusions, and made of nothing more than simple stone or wooden.

The temple is considered a holy site in Zobeck, as the goddess's avatar appeared here on several occasions in the past, and that is one of the reasons the farmers favor it.

The Temple of Painful Pleasures

Officially a brothel, this secret temple of Marena lies in the alley behind the Book Fetish, and both businesses are connected to the same priestess of Marena, Nariss Larigorn (see Chapter 7 pg. 83).

The entrance to the temple is a set of 10-foot-wide stairs leading down 20 feet to double doors. A blond, brawny Northman in a breastplate opens a door to any knocks and holds out his hand. The entrance fee he expects is the platinum headman coin, axe facing up, available only from the right people for the right price, and usually only in the Book Fetish. If he receives anything else, the guard accepts it and closes the door, not allowing entrance.

The entrance leads directly to a disrobing room and then into the sanctuary proper, where the temple's guests and acolyte whores engage in pleasurable activities while Nariss Larigorn, and often the bard Jayzel, watch from a rotating dais. Patrons may also purchase torture sessions as desired. (See "Flesh Fails" in *SoZ* for more information.)

Vigilant Brotherhood of Scribes (\$40)

The Vigilant Brotherhood is a place of careful thought, where every word set down must be checked and corrected. Its members serve not only as the keepers of memory and history, but also as the city's unofficial accountants, making the guild enormously powerful. Scribes report earnings, losses, and taxes to the Lord Mayor through his Praetorian Council. They copy out all reports from visiting merchants, compile information from every visitor, and notate every bill of lading and sale.

The Vigilant Scribes serve as part of Zobeck's secret police. They know the questionable folks to whom citizens write, what people sell to the pawnbrokers and fences in the Docks, and what neighbors really think about one another. And yet they are the most modest of men, with ink-stained fingers, close-cropped hair, and shoulders hunched from long hours at a writing desk or a standing desk.

Winter's Kiss

Winter's Kiss can currently be found at the estate of the spice merchant Enneas Thel located at the court called Alchemist's Folly, in Zobeck's Collegium District. Called "the House of Red Hats", the estate served as the Stross counting house before the Revolt. His Excellency, the Winter Court Ambassador-In-Extraordinary of the Shadow Realm, Glaninin Thelamandrine, moved Winter's Kiss here after he grew bored with its previous location in the Temple of Volund—or more specifically, in the shrine of Ninkash. Enneas Thel's servants think the house is haunted because inexplicable, unusual noises occur throughout all hours of the day. Winter's Kiss remains hidden through glamour and misdirection, though a few of the Mouse King's servants know of its existence, as they live there. Some suspect it may stand over a ley line nexus hidden from the Collegium through fey magic, but no one has pierced all the layers of protection to be sure.

THE CITADEL (\$50)

Rising above the northern section of the city, the Citadel defends the river entrance from upstream threats, but it also houses the Order of Griffon Riders. This group of scouts, arcanists, and daredevils fly patrols against centaurs and other bandits throughout the Margreve and serve as the city's eyes and ears in wartime. Their speckled griffons rarely number more than five or six, each lovingly cared for by a staff of grooms and trainers.

As befits his rank as Field Marshall of the Free Army and Captain of the Zobeck Hussars, General Jorun Haclav (LN male human fighter 2/cleric 6 (Perun)/expert 2) lives and trains in the Citadel. In time of war, he commands most of the city and can even dictate to the Council and (most) guilds. In times of peace, the Citadel prepares for the next assault against the city's freedoms and strives to expand Zobeck's influence into the wilder territories of the North. Haclav and his officers frequently consult with all the major players of the city, masters and journeymen of the Arcane Collegium, griffon knights, guildmasters, and even crab diviners when called for.

Outside of wartime, the Citadel answers more to the scarred but outrageously glamorous Lady Fenyll Marack (LE female human rogue 6/assassin 6). She is feared for her cutting remarks and her powers as Praetor of the Blue House, mistress of the secret police and any malcontents who can be convinced to serve the city's greater good.

Lady Fenyll comes from a long line of successful merchants, is profoundly wealthy, and drives a hard bargain with everyone. A widow

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The Dawn Temple contains a single statue of real gold, and it has been stolen. The PCs must recover it from the Cloven Nine.
- The Collegium infrequently requires a stout person of strength and physical prowess to pass through the Door of Knives into the Collegium Library and capture one of the rogue books that has escaped its chain. These animated objects have metal covers, fly, and are magical enough that spells alone do not return them to the shelves.
- One of the clockwork servants at the Collegium has gone missing, and it might have taken many secrets with it. The Collegium fears that Sikkim, Harpesh, or Osmanli mages took this servant and are questioning its perfect memory for every scrap of arcane lore it has ever overheard.

and a survivor, she is the paranoid mind that helps keep Zobeck free; Sir Jorun's brilliance in matters of strategy and tactics protects the city when her diplomacy, sabotage, and misdirection fail.

Citadel Locations

As a military district, the Citadel is closely watched and heavily patrolled. Visitors may be asked their purpose in visiting the area if they loiter or act suspiciously.

The King's Head (\$53)

From the outside, this building's heavy slate roof and half-timbered walls set on a field stone foundation makes it look like just one of the



ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A centaur asks the PCs to help heal a disease that has struck down many herds lately. The ailment is strangely resistant to magical healing and might not be a true disease at all. Its cure requires special knowledge from the Temple of the Dawn, which leads the PCs to the Smolten Hills south of the city to recover something buried deep beneath a stone circle.
- A Kariv fortuneteller offers to tell a PC his future, in particular the fate of his friends and family, and the death of one of them. If the PC pays, he witnesses a lot of spectacle and very little fortunetelling. If the PC refuses, the fortuneteller secretly curses him.
- The great Trade Fair is in full swing, with items magical and mundane available to those with the gold to pay. Among the many stalls are a group of kobold pickpockets, dwarven duelists looking for a fight, and a priest of the Sun God who seeks new recruits to “root out evil everywhere.” A cartographer offers to sell a map to the legendary Tomb of St. Helba, patroness of thieves, and the kobolds, dwarves, and priest alike seek to get their hands on the map.

city’s many taverns. The sign over the door shows a golden crown and the white-haired head of a bearded man, resembling the last Stross to rule before the Revolt. The first thing that sets the King’s Head apart from other such establishments is that it is notoriously difficult to get in. Peppercorn, a trollwife and the inn’s bouncer, guards the door during business hours. She hates strangers and makes entry difficult (see Chapter 7, pg. 85).

Once inside, the place is warm and smells good. Brewmistress Hazel and Chef Jako keep an excellent beer and wine cellar, and serve first-rate food (blood pudding is a specialty, as is a stinky cheese made onsite). Tymon, the resident bard (see Chapter 7, pg. 90), is very talented, but snide and easy to anger; his music is clearly magical but also haunted and even dissonant. Soldiers, especially hussars, seem to form a large part of the clientele, and the place even has a small dog-door leading into the common room, which the staff calls “the King’s Door.”

The King’s Head serves as the Mouse King’s headquarters. (See *Steam & Brass* and “Tale of the Mouse King” in *ToZ*.)

The White Rose (\$54)

A knightly tavern for the paladins and priests of the Sun God and the War God, the White Rose is not to everyone’s tastes. Shrines and statues to the patron gods and various saints decorate the walls. Bouts of combat occur each night, and prayer services are held at dawn and noon. Candles and incense are available for a modest sum, as are cantors who intone the verses of the Sun God’s mass and the War God’s liturgy for a fee of 200 sp/hour. A number of merchants who are not especially devout use this service when negotiating particularly delicate or secret contracts.

THE PASTURES

This small section of lush green ground on the northern side of the River Argent is reserved for shepherds to keep their flocks, cowherds to ready cattle for slaughter, and hostlers to graze the horses of the wealthy. The fields are also the site of the annual Spring Trade Fair,

when all the far-flung partners of Zobeck’s merchant houses bring their best wares to begin the trading season.

Kariv horse traders in their caravans, the dark-skinned merchants of Siwal and Harkesh, the flying cities of Sikkim, dwarven clans from the Ironcrag, and the pale amber and fine wood traders of Morgau and Doresh all gather for two weeks of often frenzied business on the green pasture land. During the winter and autumn, the pastures commonly host some herds of Rothenian centaurs. Their tents stay until the first blossoms appear in the spring, when they return to their wanderings.

In high summer, the pasturage is used for haying and boarding the horses of the Zobeck Hussars, who often perform maneuvers here. Experts with lance and sword, they patrol the roads that carry goods to the Crossroads City. Most people are quite happy to give them prime pasturage for part of the year.

JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY

Several areas of great importance to Zobeck, and a few steeped in mysteries, lie just outside the walls of the Free City.

Castle Shadowcrag

Once the home of House Stross (and called Castle Stross at that time), this black stone ruin is lightly inhabited by dour dwarves and a few human holdouts. The village below burned the same night that Zobeck’s rebels hung the men, women, and children of House Stross from the battlements. Ever since, the place has had an evil reputation. The castle sits a day’s ride north of the Oros Bridge. The Free Army maintained a presence here for some years but abandoned it as unexplained casualties mounted. Most consider the ruin haunted by fey and dark memories.

Castle Remmauer

Located south and east of the city, Remmauer is a well-garrisoned castle that overlooks the last pass into the river valley and southern vineyards toward the Magdar Kingdom and the plains of the Rothenian centaurs. It is primarily known for its hussars, though its commander is invariably from the Order of Griffon Knights.

Oros Bridge

The Oros Bridge is the main connection to the Margreve and the North, and a required crossing for any horse or mule train going to Niemheim, Morgau, Krakova, and Trollheim. The Zobeck Hussars guard the bridge, the furthest northern garrison of the Free City, although the city claims the whole of the Margreve as its territory.

Outlying Villages

More than a dozen villages of shepherds, dairy farmers, charcoal burners, and peasants dot the countryside around Zobeck and are counted among its lands. These include Villendorf, Riverbend, Kuburg, Ostic, and Eulendorf.

Stefanstor

This small keep (little more than a gatehouse on a steep mountain track) is the easternmost extent of the Free City’s lands. It guards a road leading up into the Brom Plateau of Morgau and Doresh.

Griffon Towers & the Margreve Forest

Long the private property of House Stross, the Margreve Forest retains a certain hushed atmosphere of wild decay and noble privilege. Travellers go quietly through the deepest woods, seeking to avoid throat-slitting bandits, howling barghests, and even kobolds bitterly defending their secret mines.

At the same time, the untamed regions of the Margreve call to Zobeckers' lust for wealth. The forest provides the timber that builds its barges, fuels its smithies, and braces its silver mines. The noise of kobold miners, timber-cutters, and merchants rumbling along the Great Northern Road grows each year. Silence returns only in winter. The road brings goods from cities of the Red Queen, the undead princes of Morgau and Doresh, and the Bemmean Magocracy to the banks of the Argent. Acting as the connection between this route and the river makes Zobeck half its fortune as a trade center. Naturally, castles and towers defend the road.

The most famous of these are the dozen Griffon Towers. Eight of them stand on the road itself while the others guard hunting lodges, mines, or powerful wellsprings of magic. Most people assume that they got their name from the griffon blazons carved in their walls, but that was merely the mark of the Stross border guards.

House Stross built the towers for its griffon riders, an elite company of couriers and shock cavalry, and each served as stables, roosts, and shelters for the animals and their riders. The parsimonious council of the Free City does not pay to maintain these outposts any longer and keeps its own Griffon Knights closer to home.

Now the Margreve griffons run wild, and they come in both black and speckled varieties. Knowing the difference is important. The black griffons are more aggressive and very fond of horseflesh; some claim they are fey steeds. The speckled ones are shy, tamable, and can serve as animal companions to suitable heroes.

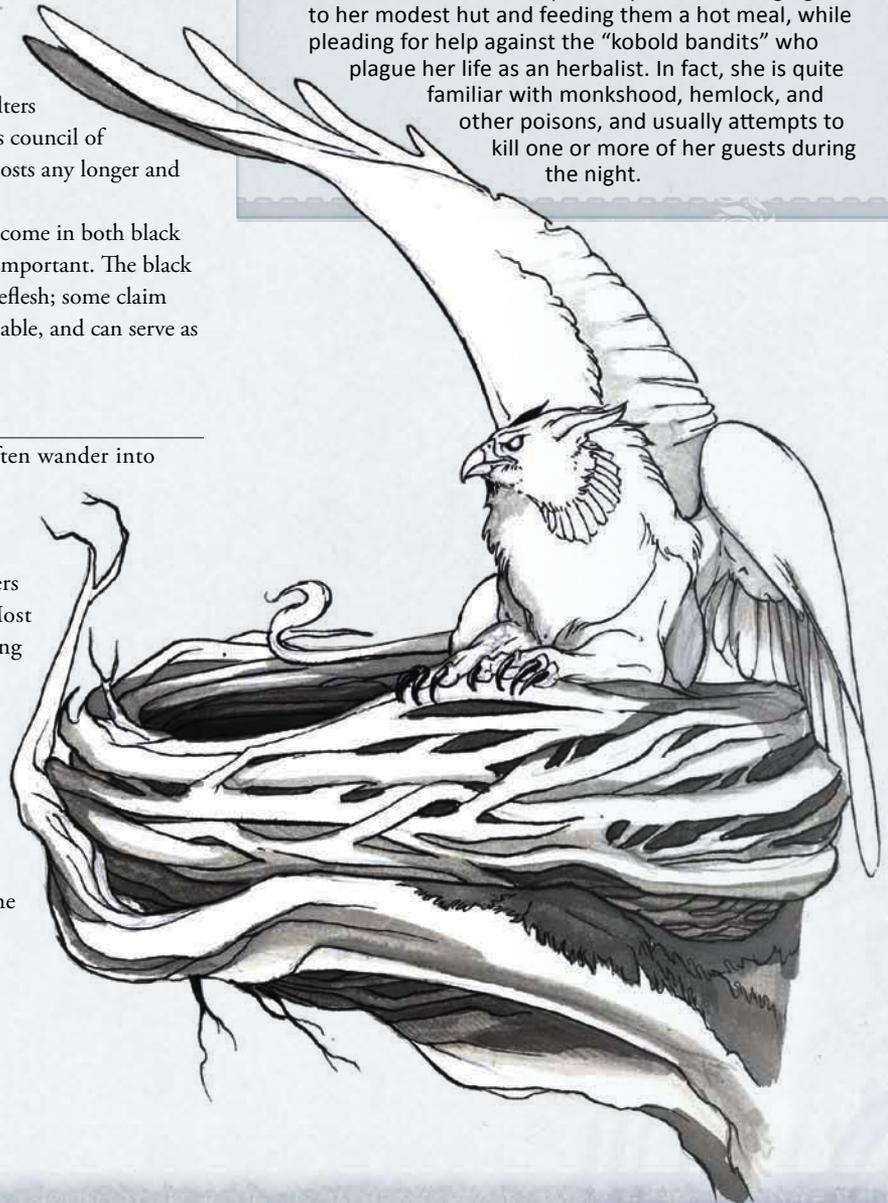
Griffons for Adventurers

With griffon eggs for the taking, adventurers often wander into the Margreve to make their fortune. These expeditions rarely end well. In the vast forest, landmarks attract attention, so the towers are always inhabited by men or monsters. The towers are more than 50 feet tall and half that wide. Most have no easy way up, their wooden staircases long since destroyed.

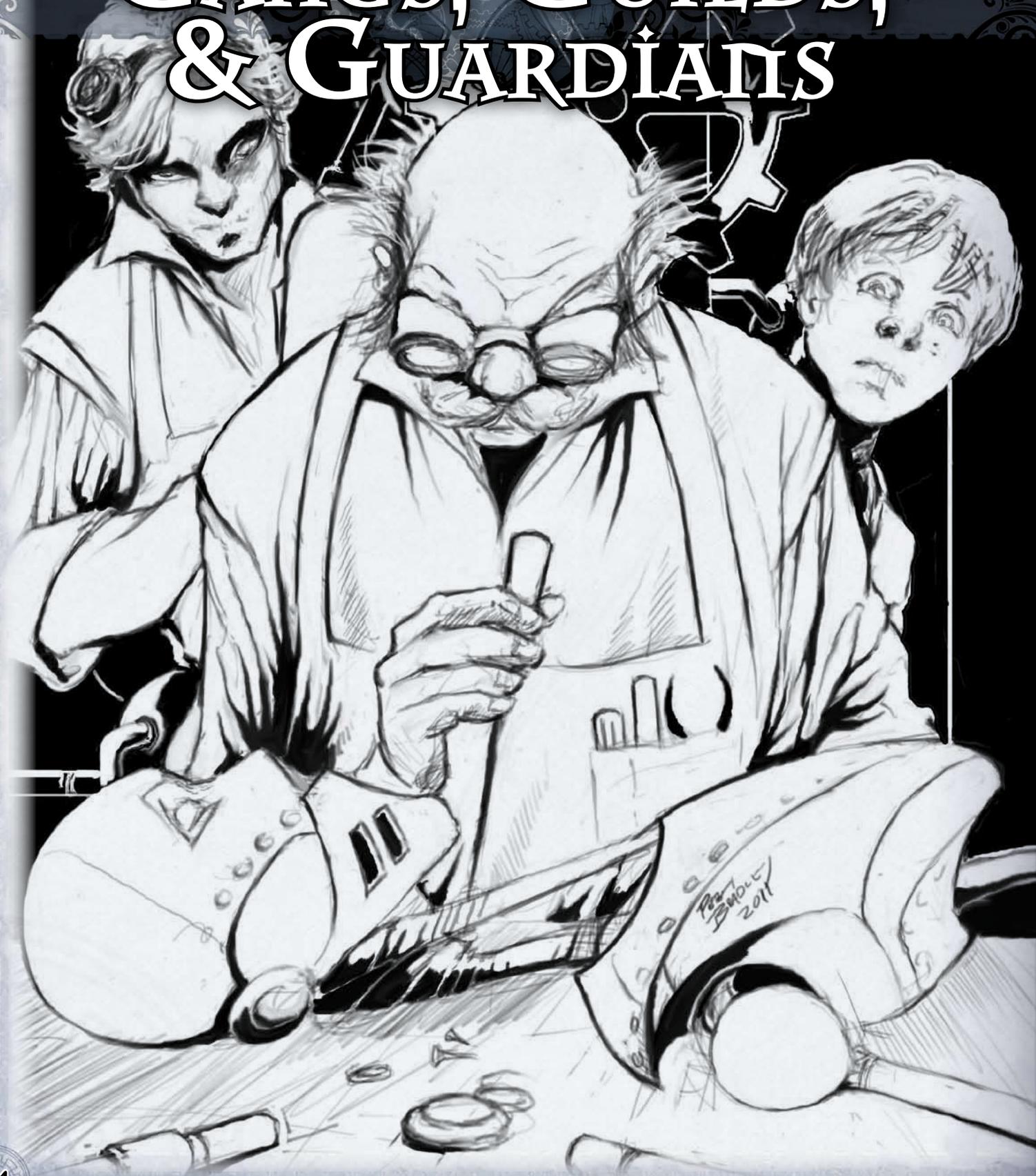
The griffons themselves are careful about who or what may approach a tower during nesting season. Many merchants who travel the Great Northern Road refuse to travel there in spring, when griffon attacks are common. Pikes are the preferred weapons to keep the creatures at bay but difficult to use properly in the dense confines of the forest.

TOWER ENCOUNTERS

- An abandoned tower contains a treasure cache. Unfortunately, centaur bandits have discovered this particular tower and claimed its goods for themselves. Their leader, Radu Voinod, is using the money to buy kegs of ale from the kobold miners near Shadowcrag to reward his followers. If the party takes some of the gold, the centaurs have excellent tracking and ambushing skills, and will try to cut off their escape at several points in the forest.
- Though the forest is dangerous, a few young, rich, and stupid sons of Zobeck merchant houses always try to prove themselves by hunting Margreve deer, boar, or the fabled White Hart. They usually hire a ranger, barbarian, or druid as a guide. Once the young hunters set out, they make a mess of things and might lose a horse to a boar attack. In the worst case, shadow fey might lead the hunting party astray, as they resent this poaching. The moment of truth comes when arrows shot to kill a deer are returned with interest.
- Stories tell of a hag of the greenwood who helps travellers caught in rainstorms or stuck in mires of the road's wetter sections. This help usually involves bringing them to her modest hut and feeding them a hot meal, while pleading for help against the "kobold bandits" who plague her life as an herbalist. In fact, she is quite familiar with monkshood, hemlock, and other poisons, and usually attempts to kill one or more of her guests during the night.



CHAPTER 5: GANGS, GUILDS, & GUARDIANS



TWO WOLF-LIKE CREATURES with goblinoid heads slunk from the darkness and circled the three humans held at bay by the crossbow-wielding kobolds.

“What do we have here, Zela?” said the one to the other.

His companion stopped to sniff the robed human. Fear spread across the man’s face.

“Mmm. Smells like dinner, Holtz,” he replied. “Don’t you just love how food always seems to walk itself to our little part of the Cartways? The gods do love us so.”

“Best share with Vralgor,” one of the kobolds piped up, turning his head toward Holtz. The small reptile had barely finished speaking before Holtz’s teeth ripped its throat out in one swift movement. The kobold collapsed without a sound.

“Looks like I’ll have a snack before supper,” Holtz laughed, blood dripping from his muzzle.

GUILDS AND MASTERS

Each of Zobeck’s dozens of guilds forms its own world, filled with princes and paupers, and each organization is powerful in its narrow sphere. Most importantly for the city, the guilds make things, from the mundane weapons and armor of the Fraternal Order of Arms and Armory (§22) to the magical potions and scrolls of the Arcane Collegium (technically a guild as well as a teaching institution).

From the lowest-ranking apprentice to the most powerful Consul, the guilds define the rhythm of daily life—brewing beer, making clockwork devices, mining, weaving, and plotting against their rivals in the other great trade cities from Siwal to Trollheim.

Apprentices and Masters

There are two types of apprenticeship in Zobeck: one easy and short, the other long, difficult, and sometimes lethal. The easy apprenticeship is the paid, or sponsored, apprenticeship, where a sum of no less than 500 gp is paid for a guild master to teach his trade in three years to an apprentice of any age. For some guilds (alchemy and steamwork, for example), the sum paid can easily reach 10,000 gp. The apprentice must swear to obey his master and preserve the guild’s secrets from outsiders. In some brotherhoods (notably alchemy and the Collegium) these oaths are magically and alchemically enforced.

The more difficult apprenticeship is unpaid and essentially a form of indentured servitude. The guild master agrees to teach a trade to a child as young as eight or nine who shows some promise. The apprenticeship typically lasts for at least five years and sometimes longer (up to eight years in the Steamwork’s Guild and the Arcane Collegium). If the apprentice is obedient and does good work, he may become a journeyman by passing a test. The form of the test depends on the guild but might involve questions, bribes, demonstrations of skill, or simply affirming an oath and paying a tithe of earnings.

A journeyman may accept guild work and commissions in the city and his guild considers him a full member in everything but leadership. Once a journeyman has created a masterwork (a process judged by a council of existing masters), he becomes a master with full guild membership, including voting privileges, the right to establish a workshop of his own under guild auspices, and the right to take on apprentices.

Zobeck’s Most Powerful Guilds

Zobeck’s eight most powerful or influential guilds are the Bargeman’s Fellowship at the Docks (§61), the Geargrinder’s Guild (§2) and the Steamworker’s Union (§1) in the Gear District, the

Vigilant Brotherhood of the Scribes (§61) and the Chartered Brotherhood of Alchemists (§43) in the Collegium District, the Brewer’s Sisterhood in the Market District (§12), the Spyglass and Cartographer’s Guild (§35) in Lower Zobeck, and the Honorable Order of Weavers (§18). Information on each can be found in its associated district.

Guild Names

- Ancient and Honorable Order of Jewelers (§19)
- The Bargeman’s Fellowship (§61)
- The Brewer’s Sisterhood (also known as Kettle and Mash) (§12)
- Free Fellowship of the Arcane Collegium (§42)
- Carpenter’s Brotherhood (§20)
- Chartered Brotherhood of Alchemists (§43)
- Cooper’s Union (§21)
- Foundryman’s Guild (smelting, bars, and wire) (§3)
- Fraternal Order of Arms and Armory (§22)
- Geargrinder’s Guild (§2)
- Glassblower’s Guild (§4)
- Honorable Order of Tanners and Leatherworkers (§23)
- Honorable Order of Weavers (§18)
- Lanternmakers and Tinker’s Guild (§16)
- Limner’s Guild (§17)
- Miner’s Brotherhood (§36)
- Ragpicker’s Guild (§37)
- Ropemaker’s Guild
- Shipwrights and Chandler’s Guild (§62)
- Solderers and Brazier’s Guild (§6)
- Spyglass and Cartographer’s Guild (§35)
- Steamworker’s Union (§1)
- Stevedore’s Brotherhood (§63)
- Stonemason’s Guild (§13)
- The Vigilant Brotherhood of Scribes (§40)
- The Vintner’s Guild (§15)
- Wainwright’s Guild (§14)

GANGS OF ZOBECK

The constant commerce of even a modest river-city like Zobeck calls to certain men as irresistibly as a siren’s song. All manner of thieves, rogues, smugglers, and bandits prowl the shadows of the town and prey on barge traffic, baggage trains, and the fat purses of fatter merchants. The constant quest to prosper from someone else’s labor, especially in such a (literally) cutthroat environment, leads to energetic and creative thieves of all stripes. Indeed, to convert the cacophony of commerce into the clink of hard coin, a few will even barter their souls.

THE GREAT SHIP OF THE DESERT

The guilds of Zobeck have long envied the sandships of Siwal and the Flying Cities of Sikkim, both of which give those southerly lands powerful advantages in trade and war. To counteract those advantages, the Steamworkers, Geargrinders, Scribes, Cartographers, and Alchemists banded together and, two years ago, launched an enormous “landship” fueled by alchemy. The vessel could travel over both land and wave and—carrying a cargo of valuable metals, constructs, glass, and a group of explorers and vigilant scribes—set sail along the Great Southern Road to explore and unlock new lands for trade or adventure.

The ship has not been heard from since. The guilds involved wonder what might have happened to it.

The underworld of Zobeck is a shifting place of mysterious masters, dubious alliances, and hidden secrets. Major players range from the mystic to the mundane to the diabolic. Little is as it appears, and everything changes rapidly.

Once, the formally recognized Spyglass Guild worked hand-in-paw with the more secretive and widespread forces of the ancient Mouse King. Recently, however, a hidden rival—the barghest Vralgor Szarn—has seized control of the Spyglass Guild and uses his new power to carve out an underground empire. A mysterious death has shaken the Cloven Nine, sending these dilettante diabolists running and breaking up their ring of thieves. And lurking behind it all, the mysterious smuggler named the Red Mask deals with anyone able to pay his exorbitant (and occasionally unorthodox) fees.

In addition to the major players, many smaller gangs, guilds, and freelancers operate in the gaps and go largely unnoticed. Each faction strives to seize control of the fluid situation and ensure that every coin that changes hands in the Free City is clipped or shaved ever so slightly.

Welcome to the thieves’ world of Zobeck. May you survive the experience.

The Spyglass Guild

Leader: Ersebet Cemilla (N female human rogue 12)

Lieutenant: Grigory Kaldozh (NG male human cleric fighter 8)

Members: 21 human, 3 gearforged, 3 dwarves

Suspected Headquarters: The Cartographer’s Guildhall, the Green Goat Tavern near the Market District

Activities: Pickpocketing, blackmail, forgery, tax evasion, and spying

Symbol: A scroll case

Alignment: Neutral evil

The men, gearforged, and dwarves of the Spyglass Guild are the city’s spies. The city tolerates its quasi-legal operations because the guild reports everything it learns to the Praetors, who pass it on the Lord Mayor and the Watch. The guild remains a gray organization, however, made up of individuals of dubious backgrounds and morals whose human members have a history of corruption from outside influences—from accepting bribes to acting as double agents for various cults and even the Arcane Collegium.

The Spyglass Guild is an open secret, and its leader, the scarred and embattled Ersebet Cemilla (N female human rogue 12), struggles in a web of treachery that she no longer controls. The Spyglass Guild’s failings in recent years have allowed several embarrassing slips that

caught the rulers of the city flat-footed, including the changes in the court of the Moonlit King, the zealotry among the followers of the Red Goddess, and even the ghoulish stirrings within the subterranean fiefdoms loyal to Morgau and Doresh.

The city responded first by recruiting more heavily among the best-connected informers and younger sons of merchant princes, who easily gather information from well outside the city walls. They altered the patrol patterns of scouts and griffon riders along the roads and rivers, and they changed the focus of what their agents look for in the field.

The second response was to assign the Steamworker’s Guild and the Arcane Collegium to build three incorruptible gearforged spies. These mechanical agents might seem entirely too obvious to gather information, but in practice, they blend in with the city’s other mechanical servants. Their powerful hearing gives them perception beyond any human or dwarf; one of the apprentices who built them claims they can hear a dozen conversations at once, both through walls and several streets away. If true, this powerful eavesdropping tool gives the guild a tremendous advantage. Even if it’s mere fabrication, the story itself seems to have made plotters more cautious, and thieves have curtailed their most outrageous excesses. If it is just a wild tale, perhaps Ersebet is not so overwhelmed as she appears.

Secrets: Ersebet Cemilla has fought magic, steel, and treachery with equal daring, cunning, and bravery for years. A few years ago, though, she fell under the magical domination of the barghest Vralgor, who trapped Cemilla within her own body. Her harsh voice still carries the note of command, and her followers continue to respect her, but they fear that something is terribly wrong.

Her break with the Mouse King is commonly known within her organization. No one likes it much, but no one wants to challenge her about it just yet. Her scarred arms are the souvenirs of many knife fights in her youth, struggling among the lesser rings, and she is still a ruthless hand with a blade. She is known to use poison, which keeps her lieutenants nervous every time she proposes some new madness and asks them to drink a toast.

Ersebet’s chief lieutenant and lover, Grigory Kaldozh (NG male human fighter 8), knows for certain that the woman sharing his bed is not herself, but he cannot figure out what is going on. He is desperate to discover the truth.

The Mouse Kingdom

Leader: the Myzi the First, the Mouse King (N male outsider (native) fighter 10)

Lieutenant: Yiri Tepeck (NE male human, ranger 3/fighter 3/rogue 3)

Members: 32 humans, 15 wererats, 13 river halflings, countless rodents.

Suspected Headquarters: King’s Head tavern, Sixes and Sevens gambling hall

Activities: River smuggling, gambling, burglary, snatch thievery

Symbol: A crown

Alignment: Neutral

The Mouse King has ruled in Zobeck as long as the city has stood. His servants include halflings, humans, and various rats, mice, and more dangerous rodents; supposedly, every rat and mouse in the city obeys him.



Anyone refusing to give the Mouse King his due supposedly dies a death of ten thousand bites as the Mouse King's servants devour the fool. This might be purely a gruesome story meant to scare newcomers to the city's thieves' dens, but the old-timers and most of the dockworkers swear it's true. Of course, the tale becomes more graphic, and their protestations of its truth louder, as their audience buys more drinks.

The Mouse King, they say, knows everything. The city's rats whisper to him all that happens in Zobeck. They even know when a river barge is about to arrive, so they can come to the wharves to meet it. This may be only rumors and rattish propaganda, but many otherwise jaded people take great precautions to avoid speaking in the presence of a rat.

Few beyond his servants have seen the Mouse King himself. Some describe him as a halfling wererat that rarely takes humanoid form. Some believe he is a ratwere who takes human form only when it suits him. Some believe him merely the figurehead for a group mind resulting from the presence of so many escaped familiars near the Arcane Collegium.

Whatever the truth, the former Mouse King (Theodore XII) ran the city's underworld in partnership with Ersebet Cemilla until four years ago. While the servants of the new king (Myzi I) still take coin purses and snatch jewels, his funds mainly come from smuggling and the gambling hall called Sixes and Sevens between the Gullet and King's Head Tavern. However, the break with the Spyglass Guild has reduced the Mouse King's influence, and his rodent minions now swarm everywhere, seeking to regain that power.

Secrets: The truth about the Mouse King is that he wants

Zobeck to prosper, and he is almost as rich as the Red Mask. At the same time, he is very short-lived; rare indeed is the Mouse King who lives more than five years (the lifespan of a venerable rat). The post itself is immortal, though. Each succession to the throne comes from the Council of Rats, held after the reigning king's death. The successor gains all the memories and many of the skills and powers of the previous king. For this reason, the king is essentially un-killable, and he works to keep merchants fat and to keep the city free of foreign control. No one loves him, and only a few individuals of power swear him fealty, but the Mouse King is one of Zobeck's greatest allies.

The current Mouse King is Myzi the First (see Chapter 7, pg. 89), and he favors red puffed shirts, ash-white hair with a thick moustache, and light weapons such as rapiers while in human form. In mouse form, he is always perfectly groomed, two feet tall, and with dark-streaked pale fur. In humanoid form, he is short as a river halfling, though it is unclear if this is due to his youth or whether he is truly a halfling. Rumor has it that the king has a brother enchanted by the Arcane Collegium and a sister who has taken service there as a familiar. Certainly, he came from a lucky litter.

When prepared for an audience, he always wears a grey frock coat with golden buttons, keeps his whiskers long and white, and wears a golden crown carved with images of nuts, grains, cheese, and a strange spiral symbol. He usually holds court in a tiny chamber that only small creatures can move in without squeezing below the low ceiling. The King willingly hears petitioners out (though he prefers them to address him as "Your Majesty," and he uses the royal "we") and rules

generously. His followers are considerably less forgiving. The Mouse King always has numerous followers around, either grey or brown rats or (as humans) green-jacketed soldiers with exceptionally fine white or brown moustaches.

The Mouse King's current right hand man is Yiri Tepeck, a human horse thief from the Rothenian plains who is known to toss entire ale kegs during a brawl. He has already seen two kings come and go and understands rattish policies and magics well enough to know he would rather serve them than join them—he has rejected several offers of “the Moon Gift,” as some wererats call their lycanthropy. He is honest, as long as he is well fed, and his rolls of fat conceal a lot of muscle.

One of the Mouse King's more dangerous followers, Tymon the wererat bard (see Chapter 7, p. 90) has a sharp temper, quickly takes offense, and often spitefully casts a disguised *suggestion* within his music. Other servants merely carry poisoned daggers and can enter any house within the city with relative ease.

Vralgor Szarn and the Great Hunters

Leader: Vralgor Szarn (CE male greater barghest)

Lieutenant: None (Vralgor will not tolerate one); he has two sergeants: Zelaf and Holtz (CE male barghests)

Members: 4 barghests, 11 kobolds, 3 humans

Suspected Headquarters: The Great Cistern, the Cartways Shed (formerly where Zobeck's highborn kept their carriages for underground travel but now a large underground cavern)

Activities: Murder for pleasure and hire, control of the Spyglass Guild

Symbol: None

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Vralgor Szarn is a large and powerful barghest with expanding power in the Cartways. Pure evil, Vralgor has far less interest in coin than he does in meat. He clearly sees the value of an organized band of fellow predators and keeps them happy with a larder of potential victims in easy striking distance.

Right now, Vralgor and his servants (other barghests and a few intimidated kobolds) are in hiding literally under everyone's feet. In particular, he runs through two sets of tunnels: the waterways (which barely contain his bulk) and the Cartways (see Chapter 3, pg. 35).

With large sections of the Cartways abandoned, and the Watch sealing off most of the entrances, Vralgor has found the dark and damp passages ideal to house his burgeoning kingdom. Vralgor hopes to usurp as much subterranean territory as possible by killing and eating the servants of the Mouse King and the Red Mask who dare venture below the wrong streets. He's made a number of mistakes through arrogance and even more enemies. The advantages he has accumulated may yet save him, but only if he looks up from his latest meal long enough to recognize his danger.

Secrets: Vralgor is described in Chapter 7, pg. 93. Several of his new kobold followers are secretly agents of the Red Mask and seeking an opportunity to set up Vralgor for a big fall into a nasty ambush. Failing that, they want to control the barghest's actions through misinformation and carefully planted rumors. Additionally, two of Vralgor's barghest sergeants, Zelaf and Holtz, seek to oust him. They are bidding their time and looking for ways to increase their own power. In the meantime, they do their best to placate him (see *AoZ*, pg. 4 and “Captured in the Cartways,” KQ #20).

The Redcloaks

Leader: the Red Mask (LE male unknown race/class/levels)

Lieutenant: Jhoram, the Money Changer (LE male tiefling wizard 9)

Members: 22 humans, 88 kobolds

Suspected Headquarters: The Wheatsheaf tavern, the Greymark Warehouse

Activities: Diabolic cult, kidnapping for ransom, smuggling, drugs, counterfeiting, silver caravan ambushes

Symbol: Red feather

Alignment: Lawful evil

Perhaps the least-understood group of gangsters and thugs in Zobeck are the followers of the Red Mask, commonly called the Redcloaks. They work primarily by night, and everyone knows they include both humans and kobolds in their ranks.

Most members of the city Watch assume the Redcloaks are a kobold gang from the Ghetto. Indeed, the Red Mask's lowest (and yet, perversely, most loyal) minions are kobolds, to whom the master has promised a much greater role in rulership someday.

Better still, he offers immediate wealth to his servants. Enough gold and silver flows from his hands that his kobolds need no longer toil in the silver mines but can build their own mansions and rule over much more than a small city ghetto.

Much less widely known, for obvious reasons, is that the Redcloaks use the profits from smuggling and banditry to fuel their deeper purpose of expanding the cult of Mammon (see Chapter 6, pg. 71 and the *Midgard Bestiary*), the arch-devil of wealth and greed. This group of gangsters has a huge bankroll with enough money to hire all the mercenaries, assassins, alchemists, forgers, and other specialists they require.

Some even say that shape-shifters, warlocks-for-hire, and priestesses of the Red Goddess serve the Redcloaks, but this may be nothing more than bluster and rumormongering. It is certainly a topic that the mistress of information brokering, Jayzel the bard (see Chapter 7, pg. 81), will not delve into for any amount of money.

The Redcloak guards are crossbow-wielding kobolds, geargrinders, trapspringers, and trainers of the enormous owls beloved by kobold messengers and scouts. These kobolds work to scout out and organize likely ambushes of silver caravans from the mines in the Margreve Forest, to gather up human and centaur bandits to rob those caravans, and to deliver the plunder to the Red Mask's private storehouses. Other creatures like devils and dark priests sometimes take part in the ambushes. These creatures presumably take their orders from the Red Mask himself.

Secrets: The man behind the kobolds is Lord Greymark Volstaff, a Consul on the Free City Council, master of the Greymark trading house, and the proud owner of an enormous manor on Crown Square. He is also a relentlessly greedy man, never satisfied with great wealth and willing to go to any length to gain more. This has led him to found the cult of Mammon in the city (or rather, to restore the long dead cult, once he gained enough power to ensure political protection).

Volstaff believes in money and nothing else. He is a very confident and charismatic leader and controls the kobolds using a combination of promises and executions. Rumors claim the Greymark warehouses are a front for infernal ceremonies and contracts, but no one can prove it, and people who try to have a habit of disappearing.

Volstaff has a bastard son, the tiefling Edmure Orillian (see Chapter 7, pg. 59), said to be the offspring of a succubus. This may simply be slander, but the young Edmure is a vile one who prefers the company of kobolds and nocturnal revels to any healthier pursuit. Despite the great fortune he stands to inherit, none of the city's eligible young women seem pleased to see Edmure at their door.

Edmure's reputation is too black for any respectable family's daughter to consider him a catch; indeed, the only person who wants to catch him is Horvart Edelstein, the Captain of the Watch. Edelstein is certain Edmure runs the Redcloak drug smuggling ring, but the Greymark warehouses are too heavily defended with kobold traps—and Edmure's father is too powerful—for Edelstein to consider a raid with anything less than an army and ironclad evidence. Even Edelstein does not realize who really holds the Redcloaks' leash.

The Cloven Nine

Leader: Izachar aka "Eyebite" (LE male tiefling magus 9)

Members: 9 tiefling warlocks, 27 human Kariv gypsies, urchins, and minions

Suspected Headquarters: The Broken Seal, a brothel and tavern

Activities: Slave trade, summoning, secrets, enchantments, curses, prostitution, quiet killings

Symbol: Nine-pointed star

Alignment: All Evil

The Cloven Nine are a group of tiefling warlocks who lead a thuggish cabal of old and entrenched gangsters; most believed this small-but-powerful group to be untouchable. Long ago, the Cloven operated as outcasts in the city, shunned even by other underworld groups, but they grew powerful enough to openly flaunt their devilish heritage. The Cloven Nine deal flesh, secrets, and pacts to those desperate enough to ignore the consequences.

To hire them, rumors claim, one need only draw a drop of blood and call their name. They always make the conditions of their agreements clear, but they rarely name a price up front or specify a time of payment. Whether permanent Constitution drain, the death of a loved one, a portion of the bargainer's soul (including several years off their life), information, servitude, etc., the Cloven collect the fee they want when they want. The Cloven Nine worship Asmodeus and claim direct blood ties to him, though many times removed.

As a coven of warlocks, some hire the Nine to cast subtle and horrific curses. They know secrets about everyone of import in town, and their informants, enforcers, and mystique keep much of the city's petty gangs awed and respectful. They hold themselves apart from (and, they believe, well above) the other criminal guilds, and they rarely sully their own hands with criminal activity. That is what lesser gangs are for.

The Cloven Nine reserve for themselves magical crimes and the summoning of evil familiars and servant creatures such as dretch and yeth hounds. They have recently been hired to capture and bind the barghests of the Vralgor Szarn's pack.

The Cloven Nine enjoyed an air of professional and personal invincibility, well founded on their magical prowess and ruthless cruelty. Thus, the recent murder of Akad the Elder, one of their founders, has deeply shaken the gang at all levels. Where once the Nine maintained regular haunts, they have now disappeared into hiding. The

SWAGGER AND BLUFF

Not every encounter with a gang is a fight. The wiser gang leaders try to intimidate visitors into giving them a few coppers as a toll. Some prefer talking their way into a meal and will hint at dark connections with the Cloven Nine or the secrets that the Mouse King has told them in exchange for a beer and some food.

Diplomacy (gather information) checks often result in meeting informers from among the street gangs. For many, joining a gang is a matter of survival rather than a calling. In the city's most famous case, the Order of the Undying Sun years ago took in a street urchin gang leader who became the celebrated Sir Ottracz Grivoly, one of the greatest paladins of his age. It is said he always carried a rat's poniard with him, as a reminder of where he came from and a call to humility.

free flow of orders and jobs to subordinates and client gangs has slowed to a trickle of cutouts, magically encrypted notes, and blind drops. They suspect everyone, and large amounts of their time and resources have turned to finding the culprit.

The Cloven Nine's invincibility was always an illusion, of course. They were simply street children who banded together against a hostile world; some took it more seriously than others, but all are re-evaluating their loyalty to a gang—which they joined as a survival mechanism—that is now an unsafe place to be. The murder shattered their image, meaning that the Nine may have to forfeit their souls to Asmodeus fairly soon, and they are understandably enraged. They have worked for years to reach this point, and many have made pacts for abnormally long lives to service this earthly ambition. They won't give it all up now.

Some among the Cloven Nine believe that they grew soft and overly reliant on their control of the underworld. Many of their minions are little more than bored merchants' sons or posers with a yen to annoy their parents with tattoos, horned masks, and body paint but little taste for real violence. They never expected anyone to walk in unannounced and just kill one of their founders, and this brash show of power has them scared. The founders, however, are old, evil, and very dangerous. The gang may shrink, but the core that remains will be deadly.

Secrets: The most notable of the Cloven Nine is a tiefling named Izachar, nicknamed "Eyebite". Obese and covered in a fresh sheen of sweat, Izachar's corpulent frame is often found draped in a plush seat in a back room of the Broken Seal. Izachar has two white stag horns growing from his forehead, which he keeps trimmed small.

Izachar prefers to wear a velvet purple robe that accentuates his fleshy ebony skin, often left open to reveal the many unnatural eyes on his chest and stomach. Izachar's extra eyes are of all types—humanoid, reptile, feline, and others—and blink at random intervals. The thick smell of opium hangs heavy about Izachar, and the tiefling can often be found taking long drags from his fluted pipe.

Izachar is a master of divination. The past, present, and future hold few secrets for this perpetually bored tiefling. Gossips whisper that his love of the poppy blossom is a result of viewing things best left unseen. They say that he has even glimpsed the moment of his own death and waits it as serenely as the pipe allows.

Izachar works his magic by casting bones, blood, and intestines into a fire. Questions about a living person usually require blood, while the dead naturally require bones. Seeing the future requires intestines, their source varying depending on the client and the nature of the questions.

PAINFUL PLEASURES

Sometimes wealthy Zobeckers do not desire the soft hand of a genteel woman or fascinating conversation. Sometimes, they long for the crisp crack of a whip and steaming oils against bare flesh. Others just want to be bound and spanked. Very few courtesans cater to such requests, knowing how easily such things can go wrong. Consequently, such seekers must look longer and harder to satisfy their needs met, but satisfy them they can.

Recently, Nariss Larigorn, a cleric of the Red Goddess, set up shop at the Temple of Painful Pleasures (see Chapter 4, pg. 50 and “Flesh Fails” in *SoZ*) beneath the Book Fetish in the Collegium District. Her cult—a cult within a cult, really—worships Marena as the goddess of lust and torture, and her temple whores are beyond skilled in the art of torture for pain and pleasure. Their religious affiliation, however, remains a strict secret, as worshipping Marena is forbidden in Zobeck. Most customers consider the name “Temple” a joke or cheeky baiting of moralists.

Nariss welcomes all to experience the love of pain within the Temple’s confines—for a price. Her customers include scholars, merchants, and Consuls. So far, the Watch has not interfered with the Temple, considering it just an exclusive brothel with some powerful clientele. If the religious nature of the establishment ever became public, Blue House would come down on the Temple like Volund’s hammer, and a lot of important people would suffer a great deal.

As payment, Izachar typically requires the client to gouge out one of his own eyes. Up front.

The only one of the Nine still appearing in public, Izachar furiously wards himself in private against magical detection and calls in every favor he has to locate and avenge himself on Akad the Elder’s killer. His continued public presence might be bravado, but he has taken on the role of the Cloven Nine’s public face with all the determined cunning of his youth. He has reverted to fighting for the survival of himself and his gang, as it was long ago, and he has not reached his present age and position without knowing how to survive.

Lesser Gangs

Outside of the five major powers in the city, who influence most of the underworld, freelance thieves, gamblers, whores, and thugs form their own cliques, alliances, and small-time gangs. One might even add some of the more unruly kobold mining gangs into this category.

For most honest citizens, these lesser gangs are called “rings” or even “clubs” and are to be avoided. A few claim to be affiliated with one of the larger gangs, and some actually are. Many, however, just scrape by and refuse to learn an honest trade, believing that riches and fame await, just one big score away. They would rather live bright, quick lives than grind it out in the fields with peasants or at the forge with apprentices.

Their lives are certainly colorful, and only the most successful of these small rings are flashy enough to draw the eye of the larger gangs. Joining one of the big gangs means that the small gang will live longer and better, and the ring’s leader might become an important lieutenant in the larger gang. Minor gangs with enough of a reputation to make them worth mentioning currently include Jimyan’s Men, the Clockwork Boys (see “A Plague of Shadows” in *ToZ*), the Rivermen, the Argus Street Raiders, Slinger’s Ambush Gang (see “The Fish and

the Rose” in *SoZ*; Slinger is detailed in Chapter 7, pg. 88), and the all-female Laughing Ladies. Within two years, three-fourths of those groups will vanish.

The Kariv

The Kariv people are dark-haired, dark-eyed gypsies who seem to continually come and go from Zobeck in droves. Their mustachioed men have dangerous eyes, while their women wear their hair in intricate braids and dance for coins in ways that make softer men blush. The Kariv value horseflesh and horsemanship above just about everything else.

Many Kariv serve the Cloven Nine as low-level thugs, informants, and enforcers. Not all Kariv are in league with the Cloven, but enough are that they have earned the entire people a black name in Zobeck. The Kariv are commonly referred to as “wagon trash,” referring to the colorful wagons that they live in and convert into makeshift ghettos in Zobeck’s pastures and its docks.

Kariv society is matriarchal, and when the Mothers of the clans issue orders, everyone hops to obey. Many of these honorific Mothers made pacts with members of the Cloven to gain powers of divination or to retain their beauty, and their entire clans are now beholden to them. As a result, many Kariv bear the Cloven Nine’s tattoo of a nine-pointed star on their hands.

Those Kariv not so sworn consider their brethren “fallen,” and much bad blood runs between the two factions. Fortunately for Zobeck, the Kariv prefer to keep their internecine warfare hidden from the eyes of “dechas”.

COURTESANS

Though some believe that commerce and clockwork consume all of the Zobeckers’ time, their hearts are rather more passionate than many suppose. Murder, cults, ambition, and lust occupy them as much as their letters of credit and bills of lading. Indeed, trade and lust often intertwine, as traffic in flesh and marriage into wealth are common.

For every wealthy and ambitious merchant prince, there is likely at least one beautiful young gutter princess seeking to ensnare him with her wiles. The search for pleasure drives the engines of Zobeck in rather a different direction, but with no less force, than the temple or the counting house.

The Red Houses

The courtesans of Zobeck are not the whores of Harkesh or the crude slatterns of Morgau. Yes, anyone looking for an hour’s diversion can find it on almost any street corner in Lower Zobeck, but these are not courtesans. The courtesans are not simply tradeswomen for hire; they are intriguers who must be won fairly with gifts, wits, and sometimes, with blood.

The courtesans generally work from one of the Red Houses, establishments along the Street of Joy near the Temple of Lada and the Vineyard District, and operate largely by invitation. They open their homes for feasts featuring fine food and dangerous intrigue all accompanied by the finest music sung by castrati from Valera and played by musicians from Friula. The largest of these houses are the Red Faun and the Lusty Mermaid, though many smaller ones offer much finer pleasures at a much higher price.

The rumors in the street always speak of a courtesan’s parties as events of deep debauchery and gluttony and wild excess, and that may

be true of some. But a courtesan has no reason to take a drunkard or a dull man into her bed. So generally, she doesn't.

Guardians

The secret of the courtesans is twofold: the merchant families and the sons of the Praetors and Consuls must have something to do that has the least potential to damage them or their families. In the cold calculations of power, fighting over a few worthy companions causes fewer problems than bedding every tavern slut. Young men need prizes to win, and if their elders can guide them in learning what constitutes a worthy mistress at the same time, so much the better.

So the families of import in Zobeck encourage their male scions to find a mistress and keep her as a sign of status and their own virility. The most popular courtesans may have invitations to all the great houses, and may receive callers from bitter mercantile or political rivals. Successful courtesans must juggle multiple suitors and keep them all interested, making these women quite accomplished in intrigue, in politicking, and in the act of love. Such women are worth winning, especially because doing so requires more than money. It requires courage.

Proper Dueling

A few new courtesans arrive in Zobeck each year, announcing themselves at the Winter Festival or the Green God's Spring Festival. Each year, just as many seem to retire or even marry into wealth, meaning that the supply of available, educated, stunningly beautiful courtesans is always smaller than the demand from rich, ambitious, and often hotheaded young men.

So, the men ply their suitors with gifts of clockwork birds, with scented oils and elaborate silks from Sikkim, or enchanted and numinous pearls from the distant sea. And if that does not clear the field of competition, they sometimes challenge the honor of their rival.

Proper dueling in Zobeck, where a courtesan is the subject of dispute, does not leave the woman uninvolved, as is sometimes the case elsewhere. Instead, she has the right to turn a challenger away.

A courtesan may ask her suitor to decline a duel if she is truly content (or finds the challenger unworthy), or she may ask him to accept duel after duel if she feels her lover neglects her. The man placed in such straights must constantly defend his name. Sooner or later, his luck runs out or he seeks another mistress.

Courtesans and Consuls

The work can be lucrative. Indeed, one woman of Arbonesse found it worth her while to take up a courtesan's fan and silks for more than a century, serving three generations of House Slygass, and reportedly amassing enough wealth of her own to buy herself a company of Rothenian hussars and a castle in which to lodge them.

The Consuls of the city are expected to keep a courtesan, and only the kobold Consuls flout this tradition (kobold mating customs are a source of great disinterest to the rest of the city, who Do Not Wish to Know). The Consuls' choices are debated on their merits, and a poor choice or a failure to value a courtesan highly enough can reduce a Consul's standing among his peers.

Female Consuls are, perhaps strangely, expected to acquire a courtier (see below) or a courtesan as well, though some of these are advisors first and lovers second.





COURTIERS OF ZOBECK

Lest one fear that the upper class women of Zobeck simply sit quietly while their husbands and sons wile away the days in the company of (ahem) professional young women, be reassured. They have their own private society, one that (mostly) excludes the men of their class, and features as much ambition, intrigue, and lust as that of the menfolk.

Welcome to the salons of Zobeck.

Matrons and Husbands

The salons themselves are a state of mind, a gathering of artistic individuals and their patronesses. While upper class Zobeckian men spend their time gambling, dueling, and drinking in the company of beautiful women of negotiable virtue, the salons instead host poets, artists, and musicians who strive to match in their art the beauty of the matrons and elder daughters who sponsor the gatherings.

At least, that's what the matrons and daughters tell their husbands and fathers.

On the surface, the salons exist to promote culture and the arts. Artists, musicians, and storytellers present new works or recreate popular efforts from previous seasons. A wide variety of arts go on display in the salons, including odes and lyric poetry, sagas, epic poems, paintings, sculpture, portraiture, weapon demonstrations and mock fights, magical crafts, illusions, clockwork, tableaux, speeches, and short plays. For many of the attendants, however, the fine art is secondary to social connections and potential liaisons.

Many young performers, craftsmen, and artists have enjoyed the sponsorship or mentoring of an older woman powerful in her guild,

business, or family. Though both artist and patroness usually deny it, such arrangements come with a cost if not exactly a price tag. So while no coin changes hands, many artistic courtiers get as involved as the courtesans in a trade of favors for support.

Talent is not a requisite for admission into the cadre of courtiers, though it certainly helps. Many a matron or ambitious daughter appears at these events with one or more young braves at her side, with a bright young magical tutor, or with a fiery young theologian who wishes to confront a traditional cleric with radical views. The fact that these young men (and the occasional young woman) inspire jealousy from the other patrons is purely coincidental.

The Artists and Types of Salons

Some artists from this ever-changing roster of the talented and handsome appear for a brief season and find a patroness, gain sufficient support to establish themselves in their own craft, or disappear in a flurry of scandal. Some become fixtures in salon society by switching patronesses several times or playing rivals off against each other, and spend the seasons cattily analyzing and dissecting the latest crop of talented young things. A rare few even marry into the families that have served as patrons.

The most basic of the three types of salons is the afternoon salon, which runs from early afternoon into early evening. Guests and artists gather in the front visiting rooms of a house, either by specific invitation or as a general invite. Artists and amateurs alike provide several readings, songs, and unveilings of recent work. Herbal infusions are served on chill days and sorbets on warm ones. On larger estates, the salons spill over into garden parties, and in the more civilized rural manors south of the city, they can run late into

the night and require the participants stay over. An afternoon salon at a distant manor occasionally morphs quite easily into a house party lasting days.

Aside from the moveable feasts of individual salons, select guilds or individuals host a few permanent salons. Mansions or townhouses whose former owners have passed on without issue make the best venue (the Grand Salon of Zobeck was designated in its previous owner's will for just for this purpose, along with a small endowment to maintain it). Courteous servants become familiar faces, and sometimes players, at these salons, and private chambers are available.

The third type of artistic salon is the legendary Salon of the Night, whose time and location are supposedly set by precise astrological research, though always after midnight. The attendees always arrive masked, and patronesses are encouraged to bring their spouses. The fare is considered more daring and outré than at traditional salons, often including exotic flavors or ingredients from places like Morgau or the Margreve. The wine flows freely, secrets fly quickly, rumors run wild, and indiscretions become unavoidable. The most recent Salon of the Night proved particularly scandalous, when one patroness wooed an aged, masked war hero, only to discover that it was her husband.

The salons are the place of gossip and daring and are tolerated by the lords and husbands in the same way that ladies and wives tolerate the men's activities; attempts to end one or the other have all failed. However, the art and culture generated by these salons has helped establish Zobeck as an enlightened city, an example to communities leagues away.

THE WINTER COURT'S AMBASSADORS

The delegation from the Council of Zobeck sat stiffly at the banquet amid the alien splendor of Winter's Kiss. Their glass goblets brimmed with a pale silver liquid that smelled like sorrow. A forlorn goat crouched, tied and bleating, at the center of the table.

Across from them, His Excellency Glaninin Thelamandrine, Ambassador-In-Extraordinary of the Winter Court to the Free City of Zobeck, fingered a translucent dagger. His servants, little more than shadows and moonlight, flickered just at the edges of their sight.

Ondli Firedrake, High Priest of Rava and Volund, cleared his throat. "The Free City Council has concerns about the tariffs levied by Her Majesty the Queen of Night and Magic—"

The goat screamed like a child as the ambassador gutted it on the table.

"We taught your ancestors to fear the dark," the ambassador said softly, cutting bloody slabs from the still-quivering beast. "When your world was young and this city not yet a dream, your women left us offerings of milk in hopes that we would pass by. I grow weary of your complaints. Speak not of tariffs and taxes." He paused. "I trust you like your meat rare."

The Queen of Night and Magic and her Winter Court needed no convincing to open trade with the Free City, but they feigned

reluctance when first petitioned by Matthias Yronwood to maintain appearances. The Winter Court demanded their first embassy on mortal soil nearly 10 years after trade between the worlds began, and they wanted it in Zobeck.

Zobeck's Council, happy with the influx of trade, acquiesced. Aware of the premium the Winter Court places on protocol and decorum, the city also secured Yronwood a position at the Collegium and placed him in charge of relations with the fey.

He took to the work with vigor. Mere months after Gilgalline of Whisper's End, the first Ambassador-In-Extraordinary to Zobeck, arrived in the Free City, Yronwood ratified the Yronwood-Gilgalline Accord of 4021 A.S. by the fey reckoning. This accord—the first of six—codified the new understanding between humanity and Winter Court fey, delineating in absurd detail the rules governing all interactions between the races.

Gilgalline consulted with none of his kind before committing the shadow fey to the treaty. As ambassador, he spoke for the Queen of Night and Magic; his decisions were hers. It took many meetings to impress upon him that Zobeck, by contrast, could not speak for all mankind.

Once Gilgalline understood, nothing more was said, and trade continued, but within a few years, word trickled into Zobeck that other cities were entertaining requests from the fey to establish a diplomatic presence within their walls.

There were soon as many ambassadors as major cities, from Harkesh to Bemmea.

For the past 14 years, Glaninin Thelamandrine has served as the Winter Court Ambassador-In-Extraordinary to Zobeck. He eschews the traditional sort of embassy, one open to receive guests. Instead, Thelamandrine has established his household—called Winter's Kiss—in a location and manner most decorous for a fey of his station: hidden through glamour and misdirection near the Collegium District.

Currently located at the court called Alchemist's Folly, seekers can find Winter's Kiss at the estate of the spice merchant Enneas Thel. Winter's Kiss has resided there since the ambassador grew bored with its previous location in the Temple of Volund—or more specifically, in the shrine to Ninkash—four years ago.

Thel doesn't seem to have noticed the change. However, once a lively man, Thel has—by complete coincidence, surely—suffered from constant lethargy and foul humors for the past four years.

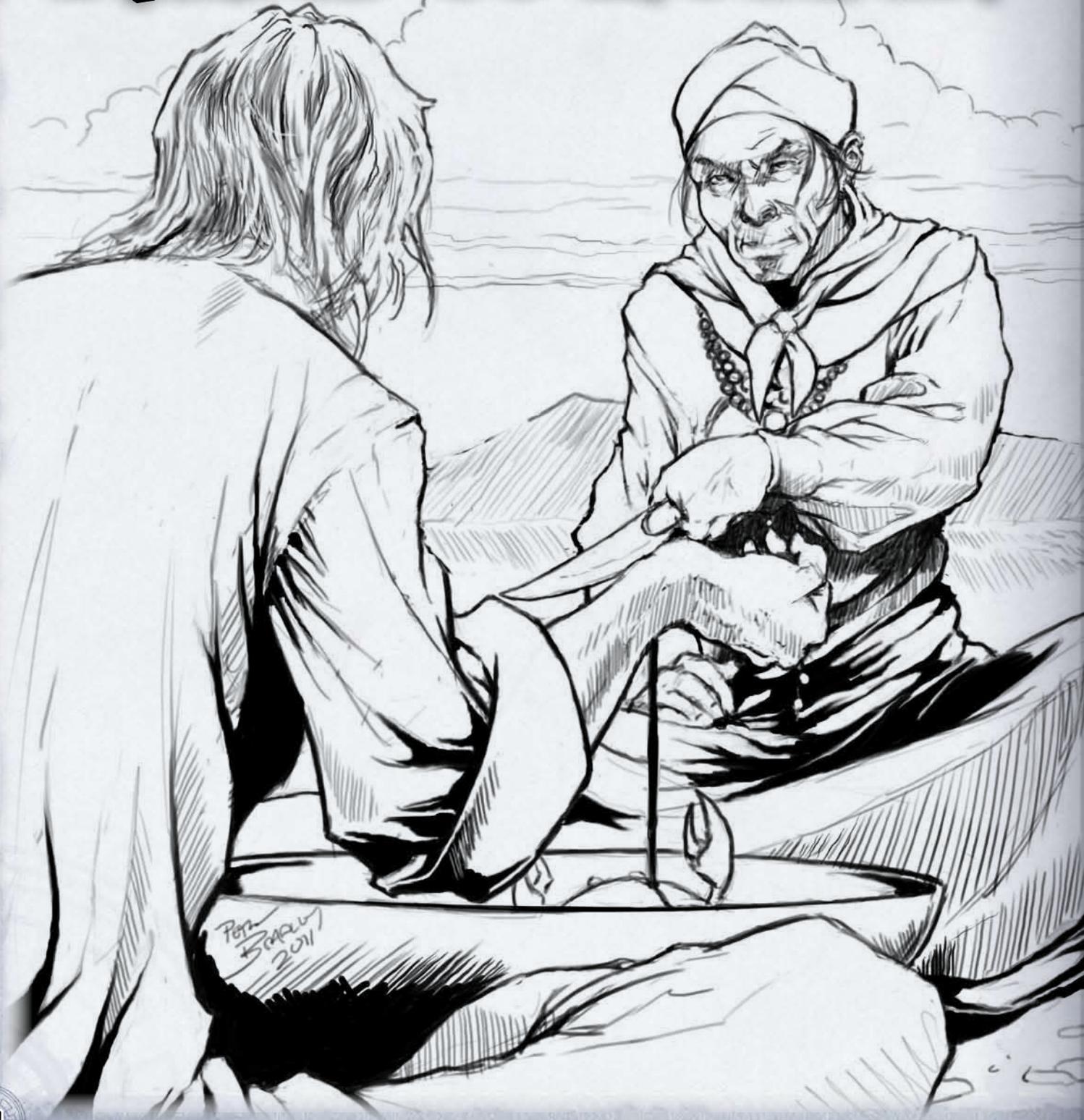
His servants, however, are convinced the manor is haunted. Serving girls and scullions complain that they can't sleep with so many wolves howling inside the forest that they swear has arisen outside the estate. On the contrary, as Thel himself contends, the house is surrounded by paving stones with no tree in sight. The valet complains constantly of acting as a manservant to his master's "difficult" gentlemen guests. Even the cooks are furious, threatening to quit en masse because they are being driven to distraction by outrageous demands for custards spiced with statue's breath and daffodil laughter.

Thel has no patience for his servants' idle chatter and is considering firing the lot of them for less superstitious help. (See *Courts of the Shadow Fey* for more details on Glaninin Thelamandrine and the Winter Court.)



CHAPTER 6

GODS, CULTS & RELICS OF ZOBECK



THE BARGE PILOT sighed pointedly and rolled his eyes when he saw his captain pause in front of the small shrine. "Why are you wasting your time at the altar of the lorelei? The last three trips were just like the last three hundred. Nothing's going to happen."

The captain hesitated, a few silver ducats in his rough fingers. "Nothing happened because I left candles and gear oil and silver for the gods." His hand hovered over the altar as he considered. "All the gods."

"Well, they like their gifts, true enough. I left a silver foot charm at Lada's temple, and now?" He hopped from foot to foot. "Walking with hardly a limp." He gestured to the small shrine. "But these? Not even a proper goddess."

"Never hurts to be play it safe." He dropped two coins onto the altar. He still didn't feel quite right.

"Hah! You want to play it safe, hire a priestess to guard this cargo. I've heard that that Barge King is loose again, with giants."

"Giants?" the captain muttered. He dropped the third coin onto the altar and rose. He felt lighter, like the coins had been weighing him down. He smiled. "Then get off to the temple of Perun." He chuckled at the pilot's confused look. "Tell any priest of Perun there's giants to fight, and he'll pay us for the chance to knock them into the river!" The captain laughed and walked toward the docks. The gods would watch over them, he was sure of it.

The gods of Zobeck are complicated. Not simply distant power sources for divine magic, they are present and demanding players in a game of influence and bragging rights played through the actions of important people. In Zobeck, gods do not simply listen and respond to prayers. They dabble and interfere. Frequently.

Dwelling in a crossroads city, the gods of Zobeck are sometimes known by two or three names. Dwarves and humans differ in their names for the god of smiths and fire, for example, although they recognize and respect the alternate names. The gods are listed here alphabetically by their most common names, and each has only a brief description. The *Midgard Campaign Setting* contains more detail on each of the major deities, including domains, subdomains, favored weapons, symbols, and additional masks—other names and personalities they wear throughout Midgard.

Lada, the Golden Goddess

The Golden Goddess of Healing, Love, and Mercy



Everyone loves Lada, although few truly follow her tenants of mercy and forgiveness. A maidenly goddess of the dawn and the day, she is the tireless enemy of Marena, the Red Goddess. Most idols and images depict Lada as meek and mild, but she has a powerfully wrathful side, sometimes called the Bear Maiden, that defends children, the elderly, and the weak. She champions compassion and mercy, though her mercy can sometimes seem harsh, such as granting merciful death to suffering plague victims.

Lada always appears as a young woman, with braided black hair and bright green or blue eyes. She wears flowers in every season but winter, and her altars are often fragrant and covered in rose petals.

Lada has many worshipers among the centaurs, the Rothenian elves, and humans. These followers see her take the form of their own species, but they acknowledge that this outer seeming is simply a bridge to her worshipers. Their prayers are similar, and their rites are always held at daybreak.

Lada's holiest sites are on high ground, where the dawn breaks earliest. For this reason, her temples always sit on hills or mountaintops or (in places without high ground) incorporate a large steeple. The main doors always face east.

High Priestess: The current high priestess is Lucca Angeli, a human woman born and raised in Zobeck. She spent her youth adventuring and made her reputation during one of the many sieges

of Zobeck, when her steadfastness helped the Griffon Knights repel a dark army of fey.

What Lada Demands: Heal all who ask. Defend lovers from all dangers and trials. Show mercy to those who ask. Lada's followers must make a pilgrimage to the healing school in the south once every seven years.

Marena, the Red Goddess

The Red Goddess of Winter, Lust, Sickness, and Death; the Blood Maiden; Patron Goddess of Morgau and Doresh



Although she has no official temple in the city, Marena is the dark face of Zobeck's fears. All flesh fails, and unbridled lust and rampant plague can destroy any happy life. Her cults flourish in secret, especially in the small surrounding villages when times are hard and in cellars and sanctuaries within the Vineyard District and Lower Zobeck.

Those who see her face—reportedly both beautiful and chilling—and survive are invariably marked with white hair, wine-colored birthmarks, or haunted silver eyes. Most of her followers believe that her strict worship grants them power, and her orders include anchorites, flagellants, torturers, and orgiasts. (See "Cults and Heresies of Zobeck," pg. 70, for more information on Marena's followers.)

Marena is very popular north of the river Argent in the Principality of Morgau and Doresh, and she serves as the patron goddess of whores, vampires, ghouls, and the Ghost Knights of Doresh. Indeed, she is worshiped openly both in the Principality and, with somewhat less fervor, in Rothenian lands in her aspect as the Winter Maiden. Some kobolds worship her out of fear or awe, although most kobolds prefer the simple faith of Volund or St. Piran, patron of miners.

High Priestess: Nariss Larigorn, an elven Arbonesse exile who joined the cult of Marena while residing in Morgau, has set up a temple disguised as a brothel in the Collegium District. As worship of Marena is forbidden in Zobeck, her residency could quickly end once anyone realizes that the Temple of Painful Pleasures is a temple of Marena. (See Nariss Larigorn in Chapter 7 and "Flesh Fails" in *SoZ*.)

What Marena Demands: The goddess of lust and death is stern but not unrelentingly cruel. She demands her followers kill her foes (especially followers of Lada), and she requires rites of seduction, blood sacrifice, and flagellation. Although her worship is harsh and bitter, she grants strength and magical power far more often than other gods, even to non-clergy. Marena's followers must make a pilgrimage to Morgau if they reach the age of 50.

ALTERNATE LUST DOMAIN

Nariss Larigorn leads a sub-cult within the cult of Marena, one that practices the combined arts of pleasure and torture. Her clerics use the following Lust domain.

Deity: Marena.

Granted Powers: You can charm others with your wiles, inciting lust within them and the desire to do your bidding.

Lustful Performance (Su) Like a bard, you may use performance skills to create fascination and lust within others. The cleric can use this ability a number of rounds per day equal to 2 + his Charisma modifier + 1 round per level after 1st. Each creature within range receives a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the cleric's level + the cleric's Charisma modifier) to negate the effect. (See Bardic Performance and Fascinate in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.) The ability is as per fascination, but the affected subjects, no matter their preference, lust for the performer as well.

Aura of Awe (Su) At 6th level, you can create a 30-foot aura of awe for a number of rounds per day equal to your cleric level. You must speak for 1 round. Thereafter, those within this aura are affected by an *enthrall* spell unless they make a Will save (DC equal to 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Wisdom modifier). The effect ends immediately when the creatures leave the area or the aura expires. Creatures succeeding on their saving throw are immune to this aura for 24 hours. These rounds need not be consecutive.

Domain Spells: 1st—*charm person*, 2nd—*eagle's splendor*, 3rd—*suggestion*, 4th—*dominate person*, 5th—*mind fog*, 6th—*irresistible dance*, 7th—*symbol of stunning*, 8th—*demand*, 9th—*dominate monster*

Ninkash, the Beer Goddess

Mother of Beer, Goddess of Merriment, Patron of Brewers and Tavern Keepers, Matron Goddess of the Cantonal Dwarves

Many humans believe all dwarves love ale and customarily consume prodigious amounts of it—at least by human standards—and become incoherent and unable to stand or stay conscious. The dwarves call this last condition “gone,” short for “gone to visit Ninkash.” The matron mother goddess of ale and merriment was a great gift to the dwarves from the Kariv, who brought their goddess with them to the cantons and the Crossroads. Ninkash turned brewing and drinking from the rarity of Wotan's stern priests toasting the dwarven dead at midwinter to a more frequent and joyful sacrament, though still a serious one. Ninkash embraced the dwarves, and they embraced her.

The public face of Ninkash is an oversized tankard with a golden glow and a simple handle, an ever-full vessel made of steel that floats in midair. To her faithful, she appears as a jovial, buxom dwarf woman clad in simple garments as a tavern maid in ever-shifting colors. She goes barefoot with her clothes unbelted and low-cut. Ninkash always smiles. When displeased, her smile is slight and she



shakes her head, and when pleased, she beams and extends her arms to sweep all to her bosom.

Dwarves from Zobeck to the Cantons to the South all revere Ninkash, as do the lower classes of Nuria-Natal and even some in the Mharoti Empire, Khandiria, and Sikkim. She is also widely popular among the Kariv, who sometimes call her simply “Mother Ale.”

High Priest/Priestess: Ninkash has a shrine in Zobeck but no official temple, and no one person heads her worship. Her temples blanket the Ironcrag Cantons but lack a central authority even there. In Zobeck, many of the Sisterhood of Brewers serve Ninkash as clerics.

What the Goddess Demands: All must procure or make a tankard of their own and use it to drink ale every day. Learn to brew ale before you marry. Offerings of ale are always accepted at her altars. Her clergy must learn the craft of brewing and often alchemy as well. A dwarf is not a true dwarf unless that dwarf faces his fears, wants, and delights. The ales of Ninkash help worshippers set aside the armors of civility, reserve, and secrecy for a time, to let them see more clearly. While ordinary ale is a road to truth, the holy ale of Ninkash is the road to the Truth.

Perun, Lord of Lightning (Mavros Perun)

God of Lightning and War

Superficially, Perun is perhaps the simplest of gods—a creature of destruction, strength, and war. He has a deeper, stranger side, however, of healing and rebirth. His mysteries involve not just death and glory but also resurrection and a cleansing of the soul. Most soldiers, guards, watchmen, bandits, and scouts make offerings to Perun.

Perun's role in resurrection is tied to his role as a master of the spear-maidens, angelic figures said to have once visited Zobeck in corporeal form to rule it in complete justice. Records from the period are mixed with references to flower angels, but it is clear that Perun was behind it to some degree.

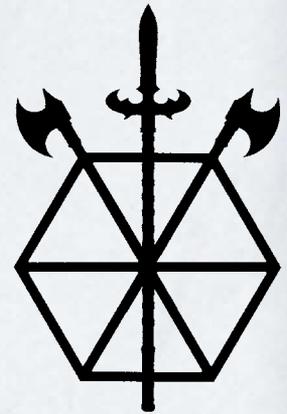
The worship of Perun is most visible in spring when the campaign season begins. Many of his worshipers use a lightning bolt, a red bull, or a red circle in their heraldry.

His priests are often indistinguishable from mercenary captains, and indeed, some serve as captains in the Free Companies.

The cities of Triolo and Valera call him Mavros. Worshipers in the north call him Thor or Donar, but in Zobeck he is Perun. As the war god, he is also quite popular among centaurs. The Windrunner elves of the Rothenian Plain know him as Tilla the Bull-God.

High Priest: Medlin Gorzax, a balding, gruff man in his fifties and a veteran of many wars, leads the church of Perun in Zobeck.

What Perun Demands: Perun wants action! Worshipers must seek out battle and keep their martial skills well honed. The perfect death is on the battlefield—death of old age is abhorred. Followers of Perun must attend the mysteries at his temple (or at least overseen by a priest) before any great battle or long journey.



Porevit and Yarila, The Green Gods

*Twin Green Gods, the Goddess of Fertility,
Wealth, Forests, and Wine*

The most complicated of deities is Porevit, the Forest God of harvest, wine, and greenery who is also the goddess Yarila during the spring planting and even the goddess Kostroma as the earth mother. The mystery of how one god carries so many forms, names, and genders is best left to the druids and field priests, who prepare the many sacrifices to Porevit and Yarila.

As a deity both wild and tame, both growing and harvested, only his priests (and the peasants who rely on his blessings) seem to know when to call on Porevit and when to call on Yarila. It really surprises no one to learn that the fey brought Porevit and Yarila to Zobeck.

The rites of Porevit and Yarila almost always involve food, wine, or green wood burnt to smoke, and often extend for six or eight hours. Spring equinox and the winter solstice are especially sacred times, when symbolic human sacrifices are buried in the fields, and figures made of straw are set alight to bring back the sun, respectively.

High Priest: The current high priest of Porevit and Yarila is Ogolai Kiyat, an elderly centaur who wandered in from the Rothenian plains one winter and has led the faith in the Vineyard temple ever since. His wisdom is profound, and his unusual race seems only to confirm the dual nature of his god to the pious followers he guides in worship.

What Porevit and Yarila Demand: More than merely respect for the wild and growing things, Porevit's mysteries demand that one frequently abstain from meat, plant as often as reap, and be fruitful, drunken, and generous on high holy days. Worshipers must provide alms if asked. Male followers of Porevit must participate in the harvest, while Yarila's female followers must participate in the spring planting.

Rava, Goddess of Gears

*Gear Goddess, the Clockwork Oracle,
Mother of Industry, Spinner of Fate,
Merchant Goddess, patron of the city
of Zobeck*

Rava is a goddess whose beneficence has given Zobeck autoscibes, clockwork scullions, the gearforged, and many more inventions. Merchants believe she blesses their hard work, and her mark goes on many contracts and bills of lading as a surety of delivery or payment. She is the patron goddess of the city and a sponsor of magic, knowledge, and industry.

Rava's physical form resembles a six-armed woman, and she is often shown weaving or spinning. She is depicted as a maiden, as the mother of industry, and as a wise crone in different shrines and at different seasons.

The industrious, the learned, and the gearforged are Rava's closest followers, and dwarves, humans, and kobolds all have shrines to her. Most of her followers are hard working and willing to try new things; novelty and invention are a part of her teachings as much as tradition and crafting. Alchemists, wizards, scribes, guild masters, weavers, and merchants all turn to Rava for wise counsel.



MASKS OF THE GODS

Midgard's gods do not steadfastly embody a certain alignment or control very specific domains. Instead, the appearance and goals of these mysterious, malleable, and unfathomable deities shift in unpredictable ways from town to town and region to region. They change names, tenants, and sometimes portfolios, and they become many different things to different peoples.

For this reason, Midgard's religious scholars say the gods wear masks, and they liken these divinities to powerful universal forces rather than superhuman individuals. The scholars say these beings' true identities can never be known or their motivations fully understood; and because of their "masks" these gods' faiths cannot ever be fully eradicated as they manifest themselves in so many ways all across Midgard.

Though scholars may claim that the ultimate truth of the divine is unknowable, this doesn't stop people from guessing at the gods' alliances and enmities and which entities are simply different names for the same divine force. Some gods are rather open about the names they prefer in different lands, but others are quite secretive and actively obscure the links between their followings in various parts of the world.

High Priest/Priestess: The current human high priestess of Rava is Lena Ravovik. Her surname is the traditional one for priests and priestesses of Rava, who abandon their families and former lives when they enter the service of the goddess. The current dwarven high priest is Ondli Firedrake.

What Rava Demands: Rava demands her followers be wise and hard working. While learning and scholarship are prized among her followers, so too is the discovery and the making of new things. As a goddess of both novelty and fate, she demands her followers seek out new learning and steer the world's fate to peace and plenty. In Zobeck, Rava's followers must defend her patron city against any threat that the Clockwork Oracle identifies.

Volund, Lord of Fire

*God of Fire, Smiths, Marriage, and
Horsemanship*

Called Svarog among humans and Volund among dwarves, the god of smiths and fire is a friend and rival to the Gear Goddess Rava. Bearded and often a traveler, the work of the smith-god is part of many things, from tools to weapons, from nails to hearths. Every dwarven anvil is sacred to him and bears his mark.

Among humans, Svarog is also the god of marriage and horsemen, although dwarves consider this a corruption of the true faith. In Zobeck, Svarog's son, the Sun God Khors, is worshiped in his father's temple. The old temple was associated with the nobility and burned to the ground during the Great Revolt.

The great festival of Volund is the autumnal equinox, when the Fire Blessing is laid on weapons, armor, and metal tools (and some say on the gearforged as well) at a great and fiery nighttime service that culminates in the Anvil Prayer. The noise of it is tremendous, as nearly every priest, smith, geargrinder, and steamworker in the city brings an anvil or a metal pan to hammer on during the chorus.

High Priest: Ondli Firedrake serves the community as both the high priest of Volund (in addition to his duties as high priest of Rava for the dwarves).



What Volund Demands: Volund demands that his dwarven followers master metalwork and have no fear of fire, smoke, and ashes. He demands his human followers master the horse and marry by the age of 23 or leave his priesthood. All Volund's followers must make pilgrimages to his shrines in the South and in the North once in their lives, carrying a hammer as his token. The truly devout pull an anvil on the pilgrimage for his blessing.

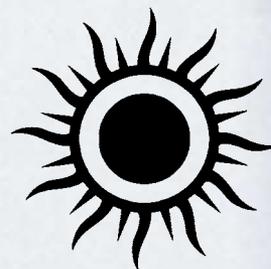
SAINTS AND LESSER GODS

The shrines in Zobeck are intermingled and syncretic, with some gods appearing to visit in other gods' temples, and some temples drawing worshippers of many races and lands. Two of the gods who are not native to Zobeck, but who have some following there, are Sarastra and Khors. Neither has a dedicated temple or shrine within the city, although the Sun God once did, and his followers in the Order of the Undying Sun maintain a shrine to him in their commandery.

Khors, the Sun God

Lord of the Sun, Bright Master of the Chariot, Son of Svarog

Son of Svarog (whom the traders of Siwal call Aten or Amon-Ra), Khors resembles one of the elemental gods of the Eastern Empire, though he is their foe. He is popular primarily among a few of the Collegium, and the knights of the Order of the Undying Sun are his followers. Though the Sun God is generally in decline in the Crossroads, Khors stands supreme within the Magdar Kingdom. He is a creature of hope, magic, and the glory that a noble cause may win. Kings and aristocrats are among his most devoted servants.



What Khors Demands: Rise and pray at dawn and noon. Bring light to the darkness; never approach a foe by stealth, but only bravely and openly. Cast down demons, devils, and the dark gods without quarter. Stand fast in battle, for courage is the greatest virtue of the warrior. If you must retreat, make clear your intention to return and win the day.

THE CLOCKWORK ORACLE

The temple of the Gear Goddess inspires the citizens of Zobeck to great deeds of industry, to the manufacture of ever-better clockworks, to the understanding of mechanisms and the natural philosophy of breath, blood, and steel that led to the birth of the gearforged. But the temple is also a place of mysteries, and nothing is more mysterious about the Gear Goddess than the Clockwork Oracle, a wall of silver dials, actuators, golden balance wheels, and reciprocating gears that together form a face said to be inhabited by the goddess herself on high holy days.

On those occasions when the Oracle speaks, roughly every 60 days, the temple is packed with supplicants that the priests must organize and whose petitions the priests weigh. Unlike the city's crab diviners, the Oracle's pronouncements are not a matter of simple yes-or-no fortunetelling.

The Clockwork Oracle tells when a person might die, who might betray a merchant's hidden dealings, and other secrets of the Free City's highest and most powerful. More than that, she speaks to the members of the Spyglass Guild, and she actively works to keep Zobeck independent. The Oracle is the goddess's most powerful form of support for the city's peace and prosperity.

Supplicants to the Oracle

In any particular session, the Oracle may speak for hours or may refuse to speak at all. As a result, the priests of the Gear Goddess monitor access to the Clockwork Oracle very strictly indeed.

Wealth and power are important considerations when determining who might speak to her, but so are arcane knowledge, piety in the faith of the city's patron goddess, and devotion to civic duty.

Only four supplicants are usually chosen, though in times of great danger, more supplicants are sometimes granted a chance to ask their questions. A donation to the temple helps one's odds, and many desperate merchants offer hundreds of gold ducats to the temple for this purpose; many are disappointed.

Citizens are always given preference in gaining an audience with the Oracle. One Consul from the Free City Council and one guildmaster from the city's great guilds always receive invitations, and one hero or arcanist of note is usually invited to attend the day. The fourth is usually a petitioner from the public.

The Face of the Divine

The lucky few enter the sanctum beneath the temple's rotating pulpit, a place filled with the smell of metal and oil, not far from the workshop where the goddess's followers create small examples of clockwork magic in her name. The small shrine below the temple is just large enough for the supplicants and two priests. One priest is invariably Lena Ravovik and the other often the youngest and strongest in the temple. The chosen supplicants may each ask one question. If the goddess deems the question worthy she may answer, but on many occasions, the goddess answers no questions. Instead, she charges her listeners with a quest or task in service to the city. Those who refuse are invariably exiled or even attacked by zealous gearforged.

The supplicants who succeed in such tasks are hailed as heroes, if they survive. Those who fail are said to be reborn within the forges of the Foundryman's Guild as new gearforged souls.

Voice of the Goddess

The Gear Goddess's answers are often strange and sometimes physical. A strip of paper may scroll out of the Oracle's mouth or rest on its clacking wooden tongue. This small paper is neatly marked with a map or a message written in some strange cipher that the priests will solve for a small fee.

Sometimes the Oracle's communication takes the form of a weaving or a clever piece of inlaid steel instead, but the physical prophecies of the Oracle are always holy items, kept and revered by the priests of the shrine.

A few of these items are hidden away from public eyes, but many of the older ones are displayed as a manifestation of the goddess's power, her word made real. Gearforged and clockwork mechanisms that ask questions of the Oracle generally understand the answer without speech. No one but the clockwork creatures seems to understand how this works. A small clockwork mechanism (usually but not invariably humanoid) may step forward to act out a scene in answer to a question. Or the many-gearred face of the Oracle may whirl and click and buzz, and within the overtones and harmonics of her mechanism, the faithful may hear her voice speaking, though the impious or faithless hear nothing but noise.



Sarastra, the Goddess of Night and Magic

Said to be a goddess among the fey and certainly popular in Triolo, Corremel, and the South, Sarastra's priests claim she is the source of all darkness and raw arcane energies. She is also the patroness of the shadow fey.

Saints

Many gods who rate no temple or priests in Zobeck nevertheless have shrines or statues somewhere in the city, such as the altar of the lorelei and the River God along the docks, or the shrines of St. Charon, St. Piran, St. Helba, and St. Hubertus. The lorelei and River God receive offerings from all who work the river, and yet the city has never fully embraced them.

Followers of St. Charon are not priests but simply mourners or gravediggers who call on the saint in times of grief. Followers of St. Hubertus are hunters and woodsmen who rarely do more in town than sell their furs and venison taken from the Margreve. The followers of St. Piran are miners, almost all of them kobolds.

Although lesser holy places, everyone concedes that a small spark of the divine resides in these shrines. Almost any god from outside Zobeck may (and likely does) have a shrine somewhere in the city, which the people respect and do not vandalize. The size and frequency of the offerings are a sign of the god's popularity among the citizenry. If no offering is left for a year, another god's followers may adopt and rededicate the shrine, and so the sites of such altars sometimes are renewed.



St. Piran

King of the Kobolds, Caretaker of the Cradles, The True Vein, Mammon's Bane

Domains: Artifice, Darkness, Community, Earth, Trickery

Subdomains: Caves, Deception, Family, Home, Thievery, Toil

St. Piran is a god of caves and those who work or dwell in them. Like many of the most ancient gods, he is a little bitter, very wily, protective of his own, and has amassed considerable resources. Anyone spending a serious length of time within the earth, seeking its protection or mining its treasures, lights candles and speaks devotions to St. Piran eventually, even if by a different name.

The True Vein appears most often as a humanoid appropriate to his viewer, wearing the heavy clothing, helmet, and mask of a miner and covered in such dirt, dust, and filth as to make details of his appearance impossible to determine. Other forms include a vein of light that appears in darkness and pulses with his words or a point of blinding light above a pair of stone hands veined with gold.

Worshippers: Caves were, and still are, the first homes for countless peoples and races. Altars to St. Piran, whatever his local name, appear in mining town chapels, the shelters of bandits or rebels, and the dens of monsters the world over. So St. Piran is worshiped in nearly every culture to some small degree. His most visible worshippers are kobolds, who value all of his aspects and mimic many of them in his name. Dwarves, and humans to a lesser extent, venerate him as well, though both claim the right to do so to the exclusion of all others. The majority of his faithful are rumored to be of the various savage peoples, hiding and multiplying throughout the world.

Symbols and Books: St. Piran's most common symbol is "The Light in the Darkness," a still flame of copper and gold backed by a silver

disc. A black bulls-eye lantern tattoo or brand and a square with four or more inward facing triangles inside it, the “Spiked Pit”, are two others. His holy texts often double as guides for mining and cave exploration in civilized lands and remain purely oral in the wilderness.

Famous Shrines and Priests: The most famous Temple of St. Piran stands in Lillefor, the great kobold capital, and is said to house that city’s treasury. As one gigantic building filled with so many traps that even the attendant clergy don’t know all of them, it is considered an act of worship simply to enter it to deposit a tithe. Shrines and altars found elsewhere serve in a similar fashion, and are always expected to be trapped for the glory of the god.

The current Tunnel-Saint of St. Piran is Goylevick Sarri (NE female derro cleric 5/rogue 2/expert 5), a derro “Merchant Queen” who has agents throughout the underground areas around Zobeck and conducts significant trade through its passages for the enrichment of the faith.

Masks: Mammon’s Bane is sometimes accused of being that very devil for his tightfisted grip on his treasures and tricky nature. Other times, with his influence over darkness, he has been called a Mask of Anu-Akma. Surprisingly, his flame symbol and focus on family, community, and their protection has even caused rumors that he is Lada attempting to bring her holy warmth to those in the darkness.

Other Faiths: As an ancient deity, St. Piran gets on best with other old faiths. Sarastra, The Hunter, and even The White Goddess have known him as an ally. Newer gods, like most of the Crossroads’ gods and those of the Dragon Empire, have yet to earn his trust. The devil Mammon is an old rival who always seeks St. Piran’s treasure and power and has attempted to kill him on many occasions.

What the Piran Demands: Dig deeper. Find treasure. Protect what is yours. Confound thieves. Steal what is theirs. Punish them with pain.

St. Helba

Foolish Fortune, Rebellion’s Yell, The Instigator and Investigator, The Blue Exorcist

Domains: Knowledge, Liberation, Magic, Travel, Trickery

Subdomains: Deception, Divine, Exploration, Freedom, Revolution, Thought

Probably the youngest of all the deities of Midgard, St. Helba Stross is credited with redeeming her family line and freeing the Crossroads through selfless action, foolish directness, and heroic faith. She is the patron of investigators, adventurers, and other fighters of corruption.

St. Helba appears as she did in life. A brilliantly blue-skinned tiefling with long blue-white hair, tiny horns, and wearing robes closely resembling one of Rava’s faithful. She has yet to appear in any other form, although she has been known to send heralds, who have occasionally been heard complaining of someone not quite understanding the situation.

Worshippers: St. Helba is worshiped primarily by the citizens of the Free City of Zobeck and its surrounding lands. Her followers have been spreading her faith into other lands with limited success, focusing on regions where they perceive oppression by any sort of “higher class” and have found themselves popular with slaves desiring liberation.

Symbols and Books: Flaming and broken blue shackles are the holy symbol of St. Helba. Shattered locks, doors off of their hinges, and a halo of blue flame are common in her other iconography.

The holy words and battle cries of the saint have yet to be compiled into a single book. Flyers and broadsheets from her time supporting the

citizenry before the Great Revolt are currently copied and distributed by her faithful. Her hymns were once protest chants. Correspondences to other nobles that argued against corruption both infernal and mundane are still being compiled and verified and any aid finding more is richly rewarded.

Famous Shrines and Priests: The entire city of Zobeck is considered holy to St. Helba’s church, and numerous small shrines exist throughout the city. A handful of locations within the city are considered pilgrimage sites: the Redrock jailhouse where she was supposedly imprisoned and tortured for her words, the dock where she was executed by her own infernally corrupted family, and the shrine to Rava where she is said to have appeared in a vision to the rebellion’s leaders and their first gearforged allies.

Masks: The Investigator and Instigator is sometimes accused of being Rava or a mere mouthpiece for her and other times of being a corruption of a different kind as a mask for the Goat of the Woods.

Other Faiths: The church of St. Helba is on friendly terms with most of the gods of Zobeck, especially Rava. Few other faiths even know of her church’s existence.

What the Saint Demands: Defend the weak. Root out corruption wherever you find it, be it supernatural, magical, mortal, or within your mind, your blood, or your community. Explore, and learn the truth.

CULTS AND HERESIES OF ZOBECK

Most citizens of the Free City are hard working, thrifty, and honest, the foundation of a prosperous polity and the envy of nations of serfs, peasants, and slaves. But there are always exceptions.

While Zobeckers are mostly honest, they also have their share of bandits and robber barons; trade and commerce are nothing if not cutthroat enterprises. To gain an edge in that struggle, some merchants and barge captains will pledge blood and souls to dark masters.

Marena, the Red Goddess

The goddess of death and the debauched has a cult that simply cannot be stamped out, no matter how hard the Watch and the Griffon Riders try. The Red Goddess’s lust for flesh and sacrifices is unquenchable. Her followers snatch citizens from the streets; children are warned that the Red Bride will take them away if they do not obey their parents.

Marena’s shrines are often small, little more than an innocuous stone smeared with blood that serves as an altar. She is exceedingly popular with both the very wealthy (who enjoy her debaucheries) and the very poor (who lust for revenge or at least protection against her plagues). Her sign of a small red-stained skull is a common bit of beadwork or broach, though technically even this is forbidden within the city walls.

Her more devout followers use strangling sashes to murder their offerings, though her kobold followers are supposedly quite inventive in their sacrifices. Kobolds seem quite insanely fond of the Red Goddess, despite that she seems to offer them little in return. Rumor has it, though, that she is seen as a kobold equivalent to Yarila and Porevit, and that Marena blesses all kobold eggs to hatch and grow stealthy.

Mammon, Arch-Devil of Wealth

In a city where everyone seems to be growing rich, some can never quite get enough. The arch-devil Mammon's worship spreads among the guilds and the merchants of Zobeck, despite all efforts to destroy it, and they honor him with shrines boasting floors of hammered coins and bejeweled idols of gold and silver. The devil of wealth promises Zobeckers exactly what they want to hear. Indeed, so prevalent is the cult that any successful businessman soon finds himself hounded by rumors of a pact with Mammon.

The reality is much less than the rumor, in this case. Mammon preys on the wealthy of the city, but rarely does he grant wealth. Rather, he plays on the fears of those already rich that they might lose their good fortune, and in this way ensnares them into his vile service, coupling with devils and abasing themselves to win the Golden Devil's favor. Dwarves seem more than usually tempted by Mammon's offers to make their wealth safe, and to make it breed.

The Redcloaks and the Sons of Mammon (also called Levelers) are worshippers of Mammon. (See *Steam & Brass*, "The Devil You Know" in *ToZ*, and the *Midgard Bestiary*.)

Pacts with the Scáthesidhe

Not all malign cults are those of demons, devils, and dark gods. The Lords and Ladies of the Shadow Kingdoms are also fond of pacts and gifts with foolish men and women. Sometimes the shadow fey take children and leave changelings behind to lead stolen lives. More often the scáthesidhe take grown men or women as lovers, and many of those do not return.

Worst of all, these humans often see the truth of the fey realms, which are so beautiful and so desirable that they make strong men weep and beg to return. By keeping paradise just out of reach, the fey gain devoted followers.

Kobolds and dwarves seem remarkably resistant to fey blandishments. Gnomes are, if anything, fey lackeys and thralls, serving the Shadow Court as its couriers, toadies, and (sometimes) arcane enforcers.

Cults of the Yellow Sign

Little is known of this cult outside the Arcane Collegium—though perhaps some hint exists in the records kept at the Blue House and the Spyglass Guild. The cult of the Yellow Sign is one of alien magic and power granted to those initiates to a mystery tied somehow to the wellsprings of star and shadow magic (see "School of Illumination" in Chapter 8: Magic). The masters of the Collegium say little about it, though they look worried when the subject comes up.

What is known is that the Cult of the Yellow Sign originates in the East. It is tied to the worship of Khors and involves the imminent return of a messiah or herald of some great power. This herald is sometimes called Hallisar or sometimes the Shining One, and he will speak directly to the minds of those who grant him obeisance and worship.

What Hallisar wants is unclear; a "pure land" and a "great cleansing" are both popular images in the repetitive, mind-numbing chants and screeds of his followers. His cultists seem to have some mastery over space and time, appearing and disappearing within the city at will, and no shrine to the Yellow Sign has ever been found.

The clockwork mages are experimenting to see if they might isolate some clue to Hallisar's origins or determine any weaknesses of the cult, so far without success.

CRAB DIVINERS OF ZOBECK

"You, boy! You have the look of a lost one about you. I can speak with Mother Crab on your behalf, but her truth does not come cheaply. Will you bare your soul to Mother Crab? More importantly, boy, can you bear the weight of your destiny?"

—Mama Rye

The future is not seen in crystalline orbs, tealeaves, or paper cards. It is whispered by crabs. For ages untold, the Kariv matriarchs have passed down to their daughters the secret rites of the ancient practice of Caruth, better known as crab divining or crab soothsaying. Originally, the travelling Kariv practiced Caruth to survive, divining safe passages, the weather, and sources of food and water. Now, however, the Kariv use crab readings to divine the answers to any number of topics.

During Caruth, a crab diviner or soothsayer will draw a female garroter crab (see *Midgard Bestiary*) from the waters of the river Argent, ritually cleanse it, and use it to perform a divination. The crabs can reputedly answer yes-or-no questions and reveal portents of the future through their actions and behavior. A crab divination always ends in the death of the chosen crab, and their corpses are examined for hidden clues about what the uncertain future holds.

The Kariv and the garroter crabs reputedly have an ancient pact whereby crabs willingly divulge secret truths to the Kariv at the price of their lives. What the crabs gain in return is a mystery, and certainly the Kariv say nothing of it. If crabs are unavailable, the Kariv can substitute a red-banded line spider (see *Midgard Bestiary*), but they dislike doing so. Spiders are known to lie and are not bound by any truth pacts with the Kariv.

People that have experienced a crab reading are often awestruck by the power of Caruth and the eerie accuracy of the reading. These readings are not cheap, however, and a river of golden coins flows into the pockets of Zobeck's more renowned crab diviners. Often, a crab diviner will demand gold or favors as payment, depending on their whims at the time.

Calling the Crab

Before attempting Caruth, diviners spend long hours choosing the right crab. The crab diviner will speak to various crabs to determine which is most knowledgeable about the topic at hand, a process known as Calling the Crab. Once she finds the proper crab, the Kariv cleanses it in a solution of equal parts rock salt and powdered silver. Thereafter, the diviner must wear gloves, for the touch of flesh will contaminate the cleansed crab.

The crab diviner must then prepare her soothing vessel—a large bowl made of woven river reeds and painted with arcane symbols. Many such bowls have passed through the matriarchs of each clan for generations. Meticulously, the crab diviner sprinkles handfuls of white-grey ash into the bowl while uttering barely audible intonations. This special ash comes from the cremated remains of prior crabs that gave their bodies to Caruth.

Apprentice crab diviners receive a pinch of their mentor's ash to cultivate their own soothing bowl, and in this way, modern practitioners trace their power back to the very first crab diviners. Using a special ivory comb, the crab diviner then grooms the bed of ash 13 times, top to bottom, then side to side, until the ash is perfectly level and even. She then reverently lowers the crab into the bowl.

The garroter crab sits listless in the bowl, slowly moving its strangling claw back and forth. When the crab diviner enchants the crab using *charm animal*, however, the crab stops whipping the air and stands on its hind legs with claws outstretched in a penitent position.

DIVINING THE SHELL

As with all divinations, the best readings during play are often vague or riddles, and the full weight of their meaning is not realized until a crucial point in time when the PCs have that sudden “Aha!” moment. You should never part with more information than you want to the players to have. If used correctly, divinations can make wonderful tools for adventure and campaign advancement. If all else fails, and the players are absolutely stumped and need help getting to the next point of the adventure, a crab divination is a flavorful (no pun intended) way of getting them back on track and into the game. Of course, a visit to a crab diviner is also a great way to supply the party with adventure hooks, as their destiny unfolds according to the ken of Mother Crab.

Mood and tone are central to a crab divination scene. The reading should be methodical and not rushed. The crab diviner’s dagger scrapes the reeds as it slowly circles the soothing bowl (which you can pantomime for the players). She phrases questions as such, “Mother Crab, we must know your truth. If the vampire is truly slain, choose the blood, if not, then grasp the bone,” for basic true or false questions.

Additionally, the spot of blood can represent life or good, whereas the bone can represent death or evil. Play up the culture of the Kariv as well. If a spider is being used instead of a crab, for example, instead of using the reverent title “Mother Crab” the crab diviner uses the term “foul witch.” The Kariv believe that wicked people reincarnate as spiders.

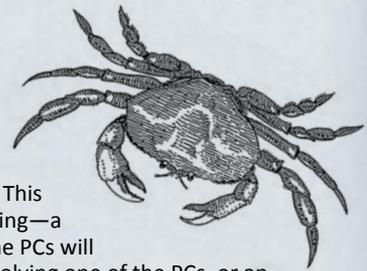
After a series of “yes” or “no” responses, a particular question that stymies Mother Crab or leads to indecision on her part could also be a powerful plot catalyst. (“Mother Crab says you are not ready for such knowledge” or “Mother Crab cannot answer that question. Your acts shall decide the answer.”) It is also a particularly useful way of dealing with unexpected or off-topic questions directed to the crab diviner from the players.

Less significant points should be the subject of direct “yes” or “no” questions directed to the crab while larger issues and plot points should be saved for the final vague divination of the crab’s shell. As the crab diviner scrutinizes the crab’s behavior, certain responses become more emphatic and meaningful based on the crab’s actions.

For example, the crab could dip its claw into the blood and taste it, signifying “yes” to a question but with a decidedly macabre undertone. An emphatic “no” response might entail Mother Crab snapping the finger bone with her claw or flinging it across the bowl. If possible, make the crab’s behavior symbolic of something the PCs are likely to encounter later. This requires some planning on your part, but a little planning can go a long way when it comes to foreshadowing events.

Reading the actual markings beneath the crab’s shell provides a wonderful opportunity for the GM to create a climactic and spooky moment to cap off the entire scene. Examples of possible signs include:

- Garroter crabs reproduce prolifically and carry hundreds of eggs beneath their shells, but this crab has no eggs. The crab’s barren nature is a sign of impending death.
- An actual word or short phrase, easily read by the party but ambiguous in its meaning, appears on the underside of the shell formed out of natural convolutions in the shell’s structure.
- A rudimentary map can be seen on the underside of the shell, made by the scratching of the crab diviner’s blade as the crab squirmed beneath it in its death throes.



- A crude picture, resembling an inkblot, formed of the crab’s blood appears on the underside of the shell. This picture could be anything—a portrait of someone the PCs will later meet, a scene involving one of the PCs, or an ominous symbol.
- Peeling back the shell reveals an object that plainly should not be there, such as a lock of hair, a pearl, or a key. This is especially powerful if the party is tracking someone and something of the target’s appears beneath the crab’s shell.
- When the crab’s shell is removed, an incomplete proto-shell is found beneath. Under the surface, things are not as they appear.
- The bottom of the crab’s shell is rotten and diseased. Something evil has been fomenting for some time and threatens to consume the party.
- The crab’s shell is brittle and breaks into hundreds of tiny pieces. The party’s current plans may fall apart and fail.
- When the crab’s shell is removed, a noticeable and strange scent escapes. This scent could be anything, and the PCs could notice it again in the future at a critical time to warn them of danger or help them find someone.
- A rough outline of a spider can be seen beneath the shell, huddled above a number of dots equal to the number of party members. This signifies that an evil force pursues the party.

Knowledge of Caruth

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can learn more about the practice of Caruth. When a character makes a successful skill check, reveal the following information, including the information from lower DCs. PCs who associate with the Kariv receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their skill check.

Knowledge (Local) Result

- | | |
|----|--|
| 10 | Many Kariv are known to practice a type of divination known as Caruth where garroter crabs are drawn from the river and used to reveal the future during a special ceremony. The technique is passed down from mother to daughter and is never taught to “dechas” (non-Kariv). |
| 13 | Only female crabs are used in Caruth. They can be called on to answer questions, and their bodies examined to reveal portents of the future. A true Caruth reading always ends in the death of the crab, which delivers the final message. If a crab survives, the reading is incomplete and is bad luck, as the crab carries that person’s future away with it (-2 to all saving throws for a month). |
| 17 | Due to their semi-nomadic nature, the Kariv cannot always find crabs for their divinations. They may substitute a large spider, but they rarely do. Spiders are known to lie, whereas the crabs’ pact with the Kariv ensures they always tell the truth. A crab diviner using a spider in a Caruth reading is either a fraud, intentionally trying to swindle the party, or unable to call a crab for some reason. |
| 20 | Reveal all information from the “Calling the Crab” section above. |

Now the reading may begin, and the crab diviner pulls the tools of her trade from a black velvet sack—a masterwork dagger of exquisite design and a polished, rune-scored finger bone.

With the finger bone placed on the left of bowl, the crab diviner takes the client's right hand and, without explanation, quickly slashes the client's palm with the dagger. She holds the bleeding palm over the right side of bowl to guide a single drop of blood onto the ashen bed. The client's hand must bleed throughout the reading; any attempt to stop the bleeding or bandage the hand brings a sharp warning: "Close the wound, you close my window. Hold still."

The crab diviner may ask only yes-or-no questions as she slowly circles the top of the bowl with the dagger, alternating clockwise and counter-clockwise with each question asked. To signal "yes", the crab paces to the right and touches the client's blood. To signal "no", the crab veers sharply left and touches the finger bone.

This crescendo of questioning builds until the crab diviner feels the time has come to bark a sharp command at the crab, which rolls over onto its back. The crab diviner then kills the crab with a single smooth stroke of her dagger. She removes the crab from the bowl and examines the shapes in the ash left by its wanderings, and the blood spattering. Finally, she peels back the crab's shell and scrutinizes the markings on its inside to discern Mother Crab's secret truth.

Prophet of the Crab: Mama Rye

Mama Rye (see Chapter 7, pg. 82)—matriarch of the powerful Galati clan and the closest thing the Kariv have to nobility—is the most renowned crab diviner in Zobeck. Despite standing just over five feet tall with thin, iron gray hair, no one is fooled by Mama Rye's age and physical frailty; a domineering personality instantly establishes her as a force to be reckoned with in any social exchange.

Her prowess in Caruth (see the Caruth Practitioner feat in *Crossroads Player's Guide*) is legendary, and her readings are only given to those of prestige and standing in Zobeck. Even then, her readings often cost thousands, and this price can increase dramatically depending upon the nature of the information sought or the person seeking it.

Mama Rye is so named because of the elixir she frequently brews from rye infected with ergot, which produces vivid hallucinations. Under the influence of her concoction, Mama Rye's consciousness travels to other planes. Her frequent use of ergot led her to suffer a stroke several years ago, and as a result, her right eye is dead and clouded. The Kariv believe Mama Rye's dead eye only increases her divinatory powers.

Mama Rye also prominently bears the sign of the Cloven Nine, a nine-pointed star, on the back of her left hand. If asked about her diabolical branding, Mama Rye coolly responds, "Aye, in the battle between the heavens and hells, my allegiance was chosen for me." She refuses to elaborate.

Mama Rye's familiar, a homunculus named Aden, resembles a kewpie doll covered in black raven feathers. Mama Rye often carries Aden around on her belt, and he appears as nothing more than a strange fetish. Aden can often be found lying about motionless in Mama Rye's wagon, mentally recording all that he sees and hears about Mama Rye's clients while they wait for their crab divining. To those who know about Aden though, he is quite animated and chirps frequently. Aden has a long prehensile tail completely hidden by his feather coat, and he can occasionally be found hanging upside down from one of his various perches in Mama Rye's wagon.

RELICS AND RELIQUARIES OF ZOBECK

Hidden in darkened shrines and catacombs beneath gilded altars, the relics of Zobeck's multitude of saints linger in sacred monstrances and phylacteries as physical embodiments of the power of the faithful and the miracles of belief. Of the many saints, there is St. Gregario for alchemists and St. Charon for gravediggers. Dwarven airship captains curse their crews in the name of St. Kalimachus, and the taverns of the Gullet hang empty mugs to honor St. Emeric. The Kariv crab diviners invoke Mother Crab, also known as St. Caruth, who gives her name to their art. Minions of the Mouse King pay homage to the Thousand-Mouthed St. Norvegicus, to whom commoners pray to relieve toothache. Some ironies persist as well, such as St. Agnetta, who receives homage from the courtesans of the Red Houses though she herself was chaste.

Unlike common magic items, infused with arcane and divine energy through elaborate rituals, no man's hand controls the spontaneous divine spark that gives a relic its miraculous power. Faith and veneration somehow gives rise to a relic's holy energy. Yet the process is unpredictable, and no one has ever witnessed the birth of a relic. For instance, a family may find that generations after their grandsire cut a souvenir finger from the corpse of St. Lodovico, martyred patron of portals, the shriveled and morbid keepsake prevents the picking of nearby locks; or the finger may simply remain a powerless curiosity of faith.

True relics, the bodies and personal items of saints, are rarely entrusted to individuals except in the most dire of circumstances. They are usually held within castles or secured deep within temples. Lesser relics, such as scraps of cloth and small items of jewelry, can take on a divine spark over time. Below is but a small selection of the thousands of hallowed objects found in Zobeck and the powers these bones, ashes, and other fragments grant to those who venerate their source.

The Ark of St. Bellandrus

Once a source of tremendous power for House Stross, this ark is a large, solid gold receptacle that acts as a massive arcane battery. Now held by the Arcane Collegium, the Ark contains the single remaining bone fragment of St. Bellandrus—the most powerful sorcerer to ever attend the college. A prideful and petty child, Bellandrus was disintegrated by jealous rivals, but this remnant retains a powerful spark of his arcane energy. The Ark weighs 1,500 lb. and requires at least two to lift it.

The influence of the relic within causes the Ark to amplify arcane energies and allows for incredible modifications of spells. The jealousy of Bellandrus infests the Ark, however, and once a spellcaster removes his hand from the device, his remaining spells or potential spells disappear from his memory.

Previous attempts to translate the relic into a smaller, more portable reliquary failed. However, this power may have inspired the many metamagic rods since manufactured by the college, which are all said to contain some of the dust of Bellandrus collected after his disintegration.

A minimum combined Strength of 30 is needed to lift and carry the Ark, and then only as a heavy load. Up to ten times per

day, an arcane spellcaster touching the Ark may use any use one of the following metamagic feats: Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, or Quicken Spell. An arcane spellcaster touching the Ark who loses contact with it for any reason loses all remaining spells or spell slots for the day.

Brandea of the Pillar Saints

In protest against of the despotic regime of House Stross, six hermits now revered as saints perched atop skinny, four-story pillars outside the walls of Zobeck. Preaching from that height, they made a public display of morality and rejection of the greed and corruption of the nobility. Martyred by House Stross, their deaths sparked a seed of dissent that would lead to revolution. Grateful citizens regularly honor their crypts in the Shrine of Martyrs in the Temple District.

Stored in close proximity to the saints are small bone boxes containing portions of silk, known as brandea, carefully snipped from the death robes of the saints. After lying for a time in contact with the holy remains and being properly prepared, these brandea are thereafter treated as relics. They carry the martyrs' belief that unbridled pursuit of earthly ambition corrupts.

If one of these small snippets is worn as a tied cloth ring, it confers an immediate *feather fall* effect on the possessor (1/day) and can confer *levitate* on command (1 round/level, minimum 1 round).

The Clockwork Mummy of St. Heviticus

The incorruptible body of St. Heviticus still rests where the dwarf hermit expired—hunched over a scribe's desk deep below the Temple of Rava. However, his well-preserved corpse is now almost completely hidden by a nest of complicated gears, golden levers, pulleys, and pneumatic ink pumps.

Responsible for the design and construction of the Clockwork Oracle, the dying hermit produced a final set of schematics: meticulous plans for the preparation of his own corpse that involved the incorporation of enchanted gears and blessed cylinders. Acolytes transformed the saint's body where it expired, turning his secluded



alcove into a marvelous contraption to venerate the divinely inspired inventor. His humble desk became a shrine.

The grand contraption can be reset and wound but once a month, and it operates for one week. During this time, the contraption produces a single set of plans for miraculous mechanical wonders—usually clockwork familiars, advanced scullions, clockwork hounds, and steam golems—that provide the guilds of Zobeck with technology that grows more complex each year. Considered relics themselves, these meticulous technical drawings are masterpieces of clarity and innovation. Pious prayers to Rava for the bequest of some specific technology are often heard by the saint if made in his presence, although access to the chamber is granted rarely and only in times of great need.

Each technical drawing provides a +10 equipment bonus to all Craft (clockwork) checks to produce the creation described. Instead of diagrams, the *Clockwork Mummy* can produce up to 20 spell levels of scrolls each day from the school of clockwork magic (see Chapter 8).

Holy Gears of Rava

Once per decade, acolytes replace the worn gears of the *Clockwork Mummy of St. Heviticus*, sharpening and recycling the sacred components and donating them to the production of scullions and clockwork familiars, granting these gifted creations enhanced sentience. The filings and shavings from these recycled gears are meticulously collected and worked into small amulets, worn by the faithful as an encolpion.

Clockwork creatures containing some of these *Gears* gain +4 Intelligence and Wisdom. Each amulet grants +5 to Craft (clockwork) checks 3 times per day.

Mummified Monks of Marena

Scattered throughout dark sanctuaries and hidden cellars in lower Zobeck are roughly two dozen self-mummified monks of the Red Goddess. Typically older male followers of the goddess who have outlived their usefulness as subordinates to the priestesses of the faith, they end their own lives in a slow sacrificial suicide by eating only harsh, mildly poisonous strands of cavelight moss. This diet preserves their bodies to a remarkable degree in a foul mockery of holy incorruptibility.

These relics are periodically displayed as an example of loyalty to the Red Goddess, at which time her priestesses remove patches of parchment-like skin from these perfect specimens, which is a rare prize among the faithful.

The mummies bestow *gentle repose* on any corpse within 30 ft.

Mummy-Skin Tea of the Red Goddess

This potent concoction is brewed from a fine, brown powder ground from thin strips of parchment-like skin meticulously removed from the preserved bodies of devout monks. Those imbibers with the strength to drink this tea fall into a gentle state of dulled sensation but heightened consciousness lasting several hours, which also elicits a certain recognition, and grants some concessions, from the dead.

Anyone drinking the tea must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or suffer a debilitating *enervation* with no further effect. Success grants the imbiber gains *false life* (1d10+10 temporary hp) and lets him sense sickness and injury as if under the effects of a *deathwatch* spell. This effect lasts for 2d4 hours. All undead recognize and respect this state, and all checks to rebuke undead while so affected gain a +4 sacred bonus. In addition, imbibers gain the ability to *speak with dead* and may ask three questions of any corpse they encounter.

Resurrection Relics of Perun

Long ago, Perun sent the spear-maidens to walk the streets of Zobeck in corporeal form and bring justice to the young city in a time of great suffering. These angelic maidens fought bravely through dismemberment and death, reborn each time to wage war on injustice until their earthly incarnations finally failed, and they passed into true death with honor.

These spear-maidens continue to serve their god in the mortal realm via the relics venerated in Perun's temples. While their bodies lie in deep catacombs, the spear hands of several maidens rest in elaborate gilded reliquaries that depict scenes of great victories. Once per week, a *Holy Hand of the Spear Maiden* can bestow a powerful blessing on heroes who die with their quests unfulfilled.

Any priest using a *Holy Hand of the Spear Maiden* when casting a *raise dead* spell can treat the spell as a *resurrection* spell instead. In addition, druids can use this relic to direct the target of a *reincarnation* spell to a specific species. A living member of the desired species, who cannot have recently performed any unjust acts, must be present. This artifact has no effect on those dying of old age.

St. Norvegicus, the Thousand-Mouthed King

Unique among patrons, St. Norvegicus is not a single individual or even human for that matter. Rather, St. Norvegicus is an accumulated and growing mound of relics—the desiccated remains of dozens of rats and mice intertwined and knotted at their tails. Indeed, the city's mice and rats believe this mound contains the interwoven corpses of each and every past Mouse King of Zobeck.

Kept in a golden idol shaped in the form of multiple rearing rats, ownership of the relic serves as the true badge of authority for all sitting Mouse Kings and enables them to reliably consult the collective wisdom of their predecessors three times each day. Due to the sometimes treacherous relationship between generations of kings contained in the relic, however, any consultations beyond the first three in a single day are often colored by spite and falsehoods. When jealousy and ancient rivalries rupture into argument in this way, the relic goes silent for a month or more.

In addition, the relic commands the obedience of all rodents. They pay it homage and whisper information to it from throughout the city, feeding the knowledge of the relic. It can call rats and mice to do the bidding of the sitting Mouse King, and the Kings make excellent use of this power.

When a Mouse King passes, the body is recovered if possible and moved to the center of the relic. In this strange ritual, the relic animates in a ravenous display of gnashing teeth, consuming the spirit

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Kobolds of the Geargrinders Guild, fed up with Rava's monopoly on the dissemination of technology, attempt to sabotage the *Clockwork Mummy of St. Heviticus*. The PCs are hired to perform the deed or investigate the disappearance of the missing gears.
- When ground to a powder, the poisonous bark of the yam yam root is deceptively similar to that used to brew *Marena's Mummy-Skin Tea* and is a key ingredient in the manufacture of *dark reaver powder*. The adventurers investigate a series of mysterious poisonings of the followers of the Red Goddess.
- Ghouls are stealing true relics and corrupting them in unholy rites, staging elaborate feasts of the mummified flesh in hopes of absorbing the power they believe lies within. The church of Lada requests the party's aid and loans them the powerful *Thigh Bones of St. Mauritz*.
- The Mouse King is murdered, and the adventurers are caught in the ensuing power struggle (see *ToZ*, "Tale of the Mouse King"). They must discover and return his body to the relic's care.
- The PCs seek to bring a companion back from the dead and wish to gain the blessings of Perun's relics. However, there is a price.
- An army of ghouls advances on Zobeck, and spellcasters are called to repel the invaders with incredible arcane blasts from the *Ark of St. Bellandrus*.

and knowledge of the deceased king before absorbing the body, adding another corpse to the relic's growing collection.

Consulting the relic adds +10 to any Knowledge check as the mummified relic erupts in a chattering chorus. Any consultations past the third in a 24-hour period have a cumulative 20% chance of providing misinformation or outright falsehood. The sitting Mouse King can use the relic to call 2d6 rat swarms in urban environments, which arrive within 1d2 rounds.

Thigh Bone of St. Mauritz Frumarch

A giant of a man and a dedicated hunter of the undead, the paladin St. Mauritz Frumarch infamously died not at the hands of the quarry he spent his life pursuing but in the jaws of a great drake that threatened Zobeck. Though little remained of his body, adventurers later recovered both of the saint's thighbones.

Hard as iron and sporting wrapped grips of moldering shrouds, each bone displays an extraordinary power to harm undead and ward off ghouls, who well remember the sting of the paladin's holy crusades against their kind. One of the bones rests in Lada's healing school to the south of Zobeck, while the church often loans other to righteous heroes when Zobeck faces threats from the ghoulish empire.

Each bone counts as a *+1 undead bane club*. Whenever the wielder attacks, charges, or otherwise threatens a ghoulish ghast of any sort, the creature and other such creatures within 30 ft. of the target must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 wielder's HD + wielder's Charisma modifier). On a failure, ghouls or ghouls with 4 HD or less become panicked for 4d6 rounds, and those with 5 HD or more become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

CHAPTER 7: DENIZENS OF ZOBECK



"A BARREL HERE, a few coins from the dock tax there." The young stevedore grinned and winked at the dock foreman. "These aren't for a Consul, nor the Mayor, nor any of their friends, so where's the harm?"

"You don't know who you're crossing," the foreman said, frowning.

"What? There's someone else with the clink to bring this stuff in? Someone else who spends his nights eating veal and aspic and farting through silk?" He glanced around and spotted a dusky woman sauntering down the River Road. "Whoever they are, they won't miss a barrel or two and few coins."

"The Council wouldn't miss it, but the master merchants here all do sums in their sleep." The foreman glanced up at the young man, who was clearly not paying attention. He tapped the stevedore's shoulder. "And some keep closer count than them. Don't do anything stupid. Pay the tax, keep the Watch happy, keep things moving, and don't try to steal anything from Mama Rye and the Nine."

"Mama who? Nine what? Are they new on the Council?" The stevedore flexed his muscles and tried to catch the Kariv woman's eye. She paused and cast him a sly grin.

The foreman glanced from the stevedore to the Kariv and back. He worked hard not to smirk. "There's more powers in Zobeck than the fat behinds on the Council. You'll learn soon enough never to cross Mama Rye. One way or the other."

Some of Zobeck's more colorful NPCs appear below. When these characters came from Open Design adventures, this information is detailed in their listing.

The Draggled Woman

A wild-looking woman with ashen grey skin and rich but tattered clothing, her hair falls over her face, and her ember-like eyes pierce the veil. A frayed rope trails from one wrist. Her voice is a half-choked sob that threatens to become a despairing wail, and she leaves fading, bloody footprints wherever she walks.

THE DRAGGED WOMAN, A SLUAGH

CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Medium fey

Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge)

hp 46 (8d6+16)

Fort +10, Ref +14, Will +15

Defensive Abilities DR 10/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +4 (1d4)

Special Attacks blinding fear

Spell-Like Abilities

1/day—open the path, phantasmal killer (DC 20)

Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +13)

3rd (5/day)—deep slumber (DC 20), suggestion (DC 20)

2nd (8/day)—blindness/deafness (DC 18), invisibility, touch of idiocy (DC 19)

1st (8/day)—chill touch (DC 17), obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, silent image, sleep (DC 17)

0 (at will)—daze, detect magic, light, ghost sound, ray of frost, read magic

TACTICS

Before Combat The Draggled Woman is found when she chooses to be found.

During Combat The slugh attempts to flee using her open the path ability and remembers the insult for later.

Morale An immortal creature that died once already, the Draggled Woman has no stomach for combat.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 22

Base Atk +4; CMB +4; CMD 16

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment), Combat Casting



Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +17, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +13

Languages Trade, Northern tongue

SQ unearthly grace

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spells (Su) A sluagh casts spells as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Blinding Fear (Su) As a standard action, a sluagh can panic a creature within 30 ft. with a look. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or be panicked for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Open the Path (Su) As find the path, but this effect leads the recipient to a magical door or passage which delivers them to a desired location within 5 miles. This passage is different each time and only works once.

Unearthly Grace (Su) A sluagh adds her Charisma modifier as a racial bonus to all saving throws and as a deflection bonus to Armor Class.

Background

When you need to find lost places in Zobeck—the hidden passages into the Cartways, the door to the shadow fey embassy, the secret



tunnels into the Kobold Ghetto—you ask the Draggled Woman. The unquiet soul of a noblewoman dragged to death across the cobblestones during the Revolt, brave souls can pay her to reveal magical byways that never work twice, but the only payment she accepts is memories.

The Draggled Woman appears in “The First Lab” in *SoZ*.

Motivations & Goals

Bound to walk the route of her death, she considers the memories of first loves, righteous victories, and lost children the richest of all treasures. These are only to ease her misery, however. What she truly wants is to rest, and she may provide great service to those she believes can and will aid her.

Schemes & Plots

The Draggled Woman needs her bones pulled from the Argent and buried. She desires her journal returned from a secret place in her old home. She wants her husband’s skull back from the mass grave it occupies.

Dame Teragram

Standing roughly six feet tall, Dame Teragram is fashioned of brass and dark iron with copper highlights and a heavy helm set with a thick braid of hair the color of polished mahogany. The mechanical frame suggests a woman, and the polished greatsword leaves no doubt as to her soldierly profession.

DAME TERAGRAM

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female gearforged honor guard cavalier 11

LN Medium humanoid (construct)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

Aura Banner (+3 morale bonus vs fear, +2 morale bonus on attack rolls made as part of a charge.)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 60 (11d10)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities aid allies +4, strategy; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, poison, magical sleep effects, enchantment effects, paralysis, effects requiring a Fortitude save (unless those effects can also affect objects)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork greatsword +11 (2d6+4/x3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks intercept, Power Attack, sworn defense 4/day, warding charge

TACTICS

Before Combat Dame Teragram understands the value of diplomacy and attempts to parlay before engaging the enemy. She gained a second chance in a fairly resilient form and remembers all too well the weaknesses of old age and injury. She prefers to keep combat to an absolute minimum.

During Combat Teragram holds the line and rallies troops, keeping defenses holding.

Morale An old soul who fought House Stross, this professional soldier does not brook insubordination. She does know when to retreat to preserve her allies or to gain an advantage.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12

Base Atk +7; CMB +10; CMD 22

Feats Alertness, Bodyguard, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Outflank, Power Attack, Precision Strike, Standstill

Skills Climb +10, Craft (clockwork) +6, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Local) +6, Linguistics +2, Perception +10, Profession (Soldier) +9, Ride +8, Sense Motive +11; **Racial Bonus** +2 on Craft (clockwork) and Intimidate checks

Languages Trade, Draconic, Dwarven, Northern

SQ expert trainer, tactician, greater tactician, mount, Order of the Dragon

Combat Gear +1 chain shirt, masterwork greatsword, +2 cloak of resistance, ring of protection +2; **Other Gear** 30 gp.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sworn Defense (Ex) At 1st level, whenever an honor guard issues a challenge, she can select one ally as her ward for the duration of the challenge. Whenever the honor guard is adjacent to her ward, she takes a -1 penalty to Armor Class, and the ward receives a +1 dodge bonus to AC. This modifies the challenge ability.

Intercept (Ex) At 3rd level, an honor guard learns to better disrupt the attacks of her enemies. She gains Bodyguard as a bonus feat even if she does not meet the prerequisite. In addition, whenever the honor guard uses the aid another action to increase an ally's Armor Class, the bonus thus granted increases by +1. This ability replaces cavalier's charge.

Warding Charge (Ex) At 11th level, an honor guard can flash across the battlefield to protect her ward against the target of her challenge. Whenever the target of the honor guard's challenge makes an attack against her ward, the honor guard can move up to her speed and make a single melee attack against the target of her challenge as an immediate action. This movement and attack can be made as a charge if the movement qualifies. This ability replaces mighty charge.

Background

A former matron of a well-moneyed, rather than well-born, house, Teragram's military service made her the black sheep. She "married her lance" and never had more of a family beyond the nieces and nephews of her brothers.

Years of service and the unjust (in her opinion) executions of two of her brothers soured her on the nobility in general and the Stross in particular. She joined the Great Revolt from the first, but her age prevented her from providing more than moral support and advice. With the creation of the first gearforged, she jumped at the chance to serve actively again. To this day, she continues to protect Zobeck and the extended family it has come to represent.

Motivations and Goals

Teragram is strange for a gearforged in that she still maintains a vain streak regarding her appearance. She has purchased several thick braids of human hair and affixed them to her steel skull. She cares for these if they were her original hair and tends to hold vicious grudges against any who damage the hair in any way. She's relentless in seeking out potential weaknesses in the city's defenses and finding ways to secure them. Her handpicked unit of "tunnel rats" is absolutely loyal to her and includes Kariv, dwarves, and kobolds.

Schemes and Plots

The bones of her brothers were never returned, and both had several brass teeth. Part of her underground investigations is an attempt to locate these skulls and have her siblings raised from the dead. She knows they would be excited to see the city now, and they would give Teragram someone to socialize with beyond her fellow Gearforged. While she enjoys her duty, she misses the sound of children in the familial household she maintains. Someone who managed to acquire the skulls or knew their specific location could gain considerable leverage over her.

Edmure Orillian

A tall, cloaked man with dark hair and pointed ears. He wears a mithral chain shirt and has well-used weapons and gear.

EDMURE ORILLIAN

CR 11**XP 12,800**

Male tiefling fighter 6/anti-paladin 4

LE Medium humanoid (tiefling)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10**Aura** evil, cowardice

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 75 (10d10+20)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +12 (+14 vs fear)**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +1 longsword +12 (1d8+6/19-20) and +2 dagger +12 (1d4+4/19-20)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th)

1/day—darkness

Special Attack channel negative energy (2d6, DC 12), cruelty (fatigued, shaken, sickened, DC 14), smite good 2/day, spell-like abilities, touch of corruption (2d6) 4/day, weapon training (heavy blades +1)**Blackguard spells prepared** (CL 1st, +12 melee touch, +12 ranged touch; concentration +3)1st—*cure light wounds*

TACTICS

Before Combat Edmure enjoys berating his opponents and intimidate them before entering combat.**During Combat** Edmure uses his corrupting touch and smite good abilities.**Morale** Edmure is not afraid to die, so he will fight to the death. He believes Mammon will grant him eternal life, providing him another form in which to come back to seek his revenge.

STATISTICS

Str 14 Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 14**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +12 (+14 to sunder); **CMD** 24 (26 vs sunder)**Feats** Channel Smite, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion)), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)**Skills** Bluff +9, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (Local) +8, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Linguistics +5, Perception +10, Ride +7, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +8, Swim +6**Languages** Aklo, Trade, Draconic, Dwarven, Infernal

SQ armor training 1, detect good, Plague Bringer, Unholy Resilience
Combat Gear +1 mithral chain shirt, +2 dagger, +1 longsword, headband of mental prowess (Int, Wis, Diplomacy, Sense Motive) +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Aura of Cowardice (Su)** Enemies within 10 ft. of Edmure take a -4 penalty on all saving throws against fear.
- Aura of Evil (Ex)** Edmure's aura of evil is equal to that of a level 4 cleric.
- Channel Negative Energy (Su)** Edmure may channel negative energy like a 1st-level cleric. Using this ability consumes two uses of his touch of corruption ability. This is a Charisma-based ability.
- Cruelty (Su)** Cruelty adds an effect to Edmure's touch of corruption ability. Whenever he uses touch of corruption to deal damage to one target, the target also becomes fatigued, shaken, or sickened for 4 rounds. Edmure selects the status condition upon making touch attack. The target receives a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid this condition, though it still suffers the damage as normal.
- Detect Good (Sp)** Edmure can detect good at will, as the spell of the same name.
- Plague Bringer (Ex)** Edmure does not suffer any damage or penalties from diseases. He can still contract diseases and spread them to others, but he is otherwise immune to their effects.
- Smite Good (Su)** Twice per day, Edmure may smite good with one normal melee attack using his anti-paladin abilities. If the target is good, he adds +2 to his attack roll and +4 to damage. While smite good is in effect, Edmure gains a +2 deflection bonus to his AC against attacks made by the target of his smite. If the target is an outsider with the good subtype, a good-aligned dragon, or a good creature with levels of cleric or paladin, the bonus to damage on the first successful attack increases to +8. If the creature Edmure smites is not good, the smite has no effect, but the ability use counts against his daily total.
- Touch of Corruption (Su)** Up to 4 times per day, Edmure may surround his hand with a fiendish flame and cause 2d6 damage to any target he strikes with a touch attack. Using this ability is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.
- Unholy Resilience (Su)** Edmure gains a +2 bonus on saving throws.

Background

The bastard son of Lord Volstaff Greymark, Edmure is a powerful member of the Redcloaks. He is also a devout follower of Mammon and has connections to the cult called the Sons of Mammon. He enjoys brawling in taverns and in the streets, loves kicking an opponent when he's down, and always mocks his foes.

Edmure uses Disguise (and, when needed, an active *potion of misdirection*) to hide his tiefling features. He keeps his tail tucked under his cloak and lets people believe his pointed ears to be a sign of elven blood. He cannot conceal or explain away the fact that his eyes glow red in dark shadows, however.

Motivations & Goals

Money and power motivate Edmure, and he is always looking for ways to increase both. He has recently made himself available as an advisor to the kobold King Nerborg the Stitched (see "Redcloak Ruckus" in *TōZ*).

Schemes & Plots

Edmure desires to capture the mage Orlando's soul for Mammon, though he has no idea why his patron would desire such a thing. He is even willing to pay adventurers to acquire it for him (see *Steam & Brass*).

Goldscale

Set apart from his kin by much more than the faint golden sheen of his hide, this kobold exudes an inner strength that can only spring from unflagging faith.

GOLDSCALE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male kobold paladin 7 (Lada)
 LG Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, buckler +1, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 47 (7d10)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities aura of courage, divine grace +2; **Immune** disease, fear

Weaknesses Light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *disarming flail* +11/+6 (1d6 +2/X2)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +8/+3 (1d6/19-20/X2)

Special Attacks smite evil (3/day, +2 attack and AC, +7 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +9)

0 (at will)—*detect evil*

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*bull's strength* (DC 14)

1st—*divine favor*, *bless weapon* (DC 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat As a negotiator and defender of the weak, Goldscale places himself between innocents and danger while attempting to diffuse tensions.

During Combat Goldscale first attempts to disarm opponents or incapacitate them. When mercy fails, he does anything necessary to defend himself and others.

Morale Considered fearless and unhesitating, Goldscale fights to the death in order to defend his beliefs.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7 (+13 disarming); **CMD** 18 (20 vs. disarm)

Feats Weapon Focus (flail), Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Greater Disarm

Skills Diplomacy +10, Heal +8, Perception +6, Ride +4, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +6

Languages Trade, Draconic

SQ aura of good, channel positive energy (DC 15, 4d6, 2/day), lay on hands (3d6, 5/day), link, mercies (diseased, sickened), share spells, summon mount (dire weasel, 1/day)

Combat Gear buckler, +1 *disarming flail*, +1 *scale mail*, masterwork light crossbow; **Other Gear** backpack, holy symbol, travelers outfit, anti-toxin, alchemists fire

Background

Goldscale developed his signature golden scales while quite young. Soon after, his father sparked a bloodbath by claiming Goldscale's appearance proved draconic heritage and his family's right to Ghetto leadership. Traumatized, Goldscale swore to never again allow the

criminals of Zobeck's streets to trample innocents and pledged himself to Lada as a paladin.

Motivations & Goals

Serious about his role as a defender of the weak, Goldscale works toward improved relations between humans and kobolds. Although popular with the average citizens of Zobeck, criminal gangs detest him. However, many gang members believe his golden-hued scales do indeed indicate that the blood of dragons runs in his veins and refuse to confront him.

Schemes & Plots

Goldscale worries he should do more to safeguard the common people. He patrols the city looking to right injustices and protect innocents. Goldscale recognizes no boundaries and goes where he is needed most.

He feels his patrols are insufficient, however, and that he must root out the causes of crime. Crime lords should stay wary for Goldscale is a one-kobold crusade looking to improve the lot of the common citizen. (Goldscale is an adventure hook in "The Ripper" in *SoZ*).

GOLDSCALE'S BONDED MOUNT

Dire Weasel

LG Medium animal

Init +4; **Senses** Low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat footed 17 (+4 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 33 (6d8+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +8 bite (1d8+4)

Special Attacks attach, blood drain

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 19, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** +21

Feats Improved Natural Attack, Improved Natural Armor, Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception+ 7, Stealth +10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) After a successful bite, dire weasels may immediately attempt to grapple without provoking attacks of opportunity. If successful, the weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC, grabs hold, and automatically inflicts bite damage each round. An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled. Prey that manages to win a grapple or Escape Artist check detaches the dire weasel.

Blood Drain (Ex) Dire weasels drain blood each round they remain attached, inflicting 1 Strength and 1 Constitution damage automatically.

Jayzel

This tall, raven-haired bard exudes a bold, sensuous, and confident air that borders on arrogance. She is clearly used to getting her way with both men and women, and she has a knowing, appraising look in her eyes.

JAYZEL CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human bard 11

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 75 (11d8+22)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +10 (1d4/19-20/x2), whip +10 (1d3/x2)

Ranged light crossbow +9 (1d8/19-20/x2)

Special Attacks bardic performance 20 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate (DC 19), cantrips, dirge of doom, inspire competence +4, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, suggestion (DC 19))

Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +15)

4th (3/day)—*dimension door, detect scrying, modify memory*

3rd (5/day)—*cure serious wounds, deep slumber* (DC 18), *dispel magic, displacement*

2nd (5/day)—*cat's grace, cure moderate wounds, detect thoughts, invisibility, tongues*

1st (6/day)—*charm person, grease, hideous laughter, obscure object, silent image, undetectable alignment*

0 (at will)—*daze, detect magic, light, prestidigitation, read magic, summon instrument*



TACTICS

Before Combat Jayzel casts *cat's grace* and *displacement* on herself.

She casts *charm person* or *dimension door* to avoid combat.

During Combat Jayzel stays in the background and leaves melee to those more capable. She initially attacks with a *deep slumber* spell, then fires her crossbow and sings to boost allies' morale.

Morale Jayzel doesn't fight to the death. She uses *dimension door* to escape when necessary.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6 (+10 to disarm); **CMD** 17 (19 vs disarm)

Feats Additional Traits, Bend Spell, Combat Expertise, Great

Fortitude, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Traits All Flesh Fails, Vigilante (Perception)

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +10, Intimidate +12, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +10, Linguistics +6, Perception +12, Perform (oratory) +14, Profession (torturer) +12, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +11, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +11

Languages Trade, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Northern

SQ bardic knowledge +5, jack of all trades, lore master 2/day, versatile performance (comedy, oratory, song), well-versed

Combat Gear *cloak of resistance +1*, *+2 leather armor*, light steel shield, masterwork dagger, masterwork whip, *+1 ring of protection*; **Other Gear** backpack, *potion of cure light wounds*, noble's outfit.

Background

The estranged daughter of a renowned scholar, who still lives and works in the Collegium District, Jayzel rebelled against her strict upbringing by joining the cult of Marena in her youth. There she learned how to use music and her feminine wiles to best effect. She currently consorts with the goddess' Cult of Pain, headed by priestess Nariss Larigorn, and uses the Temple of Painful Pleasure's private chambers to torture information from victims to use for blackmail.

Motivations & Goals

A master information broker, Jayzel listens for gossip at the galas she attends and uses her wits, glib tongue, and seductive wiles to trick others into revealing secrets. Jayzel loves luxury and decadence as much as the thrill of the chase, and though she enjoys playing with fire, she will not pursue inquiries that threaten her life or lifestyle.

Schemes & Plots

If Jayzel's seductive approach fails, she often lures targets to the Temple of Painful Pleasures to torture information from them—a service she provides to clients, although always under the anonymity of an intermediary. She has irons in a great many fires across Zobeck's society, high and low, but involves herself only enough to make some money and gain a little leverage.

Mother "Mama" Rye

Despite standing just over five feet tall with thin, iron gray hair and a dead, clouded right eye, this craggy woman's advanced age and physical frailty fools no one. Her domineering personality instantly establishes her as a driving force in any conversation.

MAMA RYE

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human (Kariv) sorcerer 7/oracle 4

N Medium humanoid

Init -2; **Senses** clouded vision, darkvision 30 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, -2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 42 (7d6-7 + 4d8-4 plus 11)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities fated +2, revelation (*coat of many stars* (4 hours: +4))

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +4 masterwork dagger (1d4-3)



Special Attacks spells

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th):

1/day—*divination* (practicing Caruth), *speak with animals* (crabs or spiders only)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

6/day—*touch of destiny* (+3)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +11):

3rd (5/day)—*arcane sight*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *protection from energy*

2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *charm person*, *mage armor*, *protection from evil*, *sleep*, *silent image*

0—*detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *read magic*

Bloodline destined

Oracle Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +8):

2nd (4/day)—*cure moderate wounds*

1st (7/day)—*color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *endure elements*

0—*create water*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *purify food and drink*, *spark*, *stabilize*

Mystery heavens

TACTICS

Before Combat Mama Rye always casts *mage armor* before meeting with clients.

During Combat Mama Rye attempts to use *color spray* and *charm person* to subdue an opponent and, if necessary, an *empowered scorching ray*. Mama Rye is always surrounded by members of her Galati clan, and if she is in trouble, 1d10+1 Kariv appear within 1d3 rounds. Further, her homunculus Aden will give its life to buy Mama Rye time to escape.

Morale Mama Rye is frail and never enters battle by choice. She attempts to flee as soon as violence breaks out.

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 7, **Con** 9, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 11

Feats Caruth Practitioner, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Familiar, Iron Will, Leadership, Skill focus (Profession (crab diviner)), Toughness

Skills Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Craft (alchemy) +11, Craft (sculpting) +13, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +4, Perception +17, Profession (crab diviner) +18, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +13; +4 to Wisdom-based skills while under the night sky.

Languages Trade, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnome, Infernal

SQ oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelation (guiding star), summon familiar (homunculus named Aden)

Combat Gear masterwork dagger, Raven skulls necklace (*amulet of natural armor* +2), *ruby ring of protection* +1, fetish adorned darkwood walking cane (*lesser metamagic rod*; *maximize*);

Other Gear 1,500 gp jewelry

Background

Mama Rye—the 62 year-old matriarch of the powerful Galati clan and the closest thing the Kariv have to nobility—is the most renowned crab diviner in Zobeck (see “Crab Diviners” in Chapter 6).

Her name comes from the elixir she frequently brews from rye infected with ergot, which produces vivid hallucinations. Under this influence, Mama Rye's consciousness travels to other planes. Her frequent use led to a stroke several years ago, and her right eye is now dead and clouded. The Kariv believe this only increases her powers, giving her second sight into the world beyond.

Mama Rye also prominently bears the Cloven Nine's nine-pointed star on the back of her left hand. If asked about it, she coolly says, “In the battle between the heavens and hells, my allegiance was chosen for me.” She refuses to elaborate. She has a homunculus named Aden that resembles a child's doll with a scaly skin.

Motivations & Goals

Other than understanding which side of good and evil she rests on, Mama Rye is motivated by the money she gains from divining. She uses this, her powers, and her position to look out for her own Galati clan and the Kariv in general, especially their place and well being in Zobeck.

Schemes & Plots

Mama Rye does not actively participate in scheming and plotting; she simply divines answers for money. She does aid the Cloven Nine in their plots, however. Aden keeps an eye and ear out on any clients who seek readings from her, though, and he informs her of anything useful.

Nariss Larigorn

This golden-haired elven woman wears scarlet gauze and a golden, ruby necklace, neither of which cover much. She has a glint of mischief in her eyes.

NARISS LARIGORN

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female elf cleric 10 (Marena)

LE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8

Aura awe aura (30 ft., as per enthrall, DC 19)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +2 deflection)

hp 68 (10d8+20)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12 (+14 vs. enchantments)

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *anarchic whip* +9/+4 (1d3+2; ignores damage reduction and deals +2d6 vs lawful creatures)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (5d6, Will DC 22, 10/day); bleeding touch (melee touch for 1d6/round, 5 rounds, DC 15 Heal check to stop; 7/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

16 rounds/day—*lustful performance* (DC 20)

10 rounds/day—*aura of awe* (DC 19)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 10th)

5th—*greater command* (DC 19), *flame strike* (DC 19), *slay living* (DC 19)

4th—*discern lies* (DC 18), *divine power*, *dominate person D* (DC 18), *summon monster IV* (2)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *invisibility purge*, *searing light*, *suggestion* (DC 17)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *cure moderate wounds* (DC 16), *death*

knell D (DC 16), *enthrall* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC16), *zone of truth* (DC 16)

1st—*charm person D* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *cure light wounds* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*
0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect poison*, *resistance*, *virtue* (DC 14)
D Domain spell; **Domains** Lust, Death

TACTICS

Before Combat Nariss casts *divine power* and *shield of faith* on herself, if possible.

During Combat Nariss attempts to *enthrall* enemies in her aura, talk them down, or incapacitate them using *dominate person*, *greater command*, *enthrall*, and *hold person* rather than fight. She relies on *summon monster IV* and *slay living* as a last resort. She has no problem killing, especially for her goddess, but combat can damage her temple, patrons, and the anonymity of both, and she can't afford that. If she gets the upper hand, she allows enemies to negotiate for their lives.

Morale Nariss believes in negotiation. She has a thriving temple in Zobeck, and she intends to keep the gold, orgiastic rituals, and torture sessions flowing in the name of her goddess Marena. She takes every opportunity to end combats quickly.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** +22

Feats Additional Traits, Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Traits All Flesh Fails, Charming, Crossroads-Born, Indomitable Faith

Skills Appraise +8, Bluff +6 (+7 vs those attracted to her), Craft (leather) +5, Diplomacy +13 (+14 vs those attracted to her), Heal +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +7, Perform (act) +8, Perform (dance) +8, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +6

Languages Trade, Draconic, Elven

SQ elf blood, death's embrace (negative channeled energy heals you)

Combat Gear *bracers of armor +5*, *ring of protection +2*, *+2 anarchic whip*, *wand of cure light wounds*

Background

A rather exotic Arbonesse exile who arrived by way of Morgau, and possibly the only elven resident of Zobeck, Nariss has been building the Red Goddess' following in the Free City for over a decade. Recently, she opened the Temple of Painful Pleasures, a brothel in the Collegium District that serves as a front for Marena's temple. She works with Jayzel to find and torture victims for secrets, money, and pleasure.

Motivations & Goals

Nariss is interested in building the Red Goddess' power in Zobeck. Over the years, many of Marena's cults have been stomped out, but she intends to be the one cleric who succeeds in growing the religion in the Clockwork City.

Schemes & Plots

Nariss keeps tabs on the wealthy and learns many of their secrets through the Temple and Jayzel. The two use this information to benefit and the cult. They intend to gather enough information about the Consuls to protect themselves and the Temple, should anyone discover its true nature. (Nariss Larigorn appears in "Flesh Fails" in *SoZ*.)

Orlando

This old man clearly takes no care for his appearance, but he has a sharp and alert look about him. He wears a long wizard's robe, a bit tattered around the hem and sleeves, with a bandolier of potions and an elegantly carved quarterstaff in one hand.

ORLANDO

CR 13

XP 25,800

Male human wizard 14/expert 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** normal vision; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 17 touch 17 flat-footed 15 (armor +3, deflection +2, Dex +2)

hp 88 (14d6+2d8+30)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *quarterstaff* +8 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks spells

Arcane School Spell-Like Ability (CL 14th, +10 touch)

10/day—*Clockwork Body*

8/day—*Repairing Touch*

Wizard Spells Known (CL 14th, Prohibited schools: Evocation and Illusion; concentration +19)

7th—*animate construct VII**, *banishment* (DC 22/W), *tireless engine**

6th—*animate construct VI**, *catapult** (DC 22), *dismissal* (DC 20/W), *greater dispel magic*

5th—*bind guardian* (DC 21/W), *dominate person* (DC 20/W), *feeblemind* (DC 20/W), *magic jar* (DC 20/W), *teleport*

4th—*black tentacles*, *charm monster* (DC 19/W), *dimension door*, *enervation*, *scrying* (DC 19), *steam blast** x2 (DC 20/R)

3rd—*animate construct III**, *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 18/R), *ray of exhaustion*, *suggestion* (DC 18/W), *thousand darts* (DC 19/R)

2nd—*animate construct II**, *armored heart**, *lock armor** (DC 18/W), *resist energy* (DC 17/F), *touch of idiocy* (DC 17/W), *web* (DC 17/R)

1st—*armored shell**, *disguise self*, *identify*, *pendulum** (DC 16/W), *protection from good* (DC 16/W), *reduce person* (DC 16/F), *shield*

0—*analyze device**, *daze* (DC 15/W), *open/close* (DC 15/W), *read magic*

* A new spell listed in Chapter 8.

TACTICS

Before Combat Orlando casts *armored shell* and animates any nearby constructs.

During Combat He casts *dominate person* and *feeblemind* to remove opponents quickly.

Morale Orlando flees battle with his *teleport* spell.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 20, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Spell Focus (Clockwork), Spell Penetration, Scribe Scroll

Skills Appraise +15, Craft (Clockwork) +20, Craft (Metalworking) +20,

Diplomacy +13, Fly +17, Knowledge (Arcana) +24, Knowledge (Local) +20, Knowledge (Planes) +20, Linguistics +10, Perception +21, Profession (Teacher) +12, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +12

Languages Aklo, Trade, Celestial, Dwarven, Draconic, Infernal
SQ arcane bond, aura of despair, clockworker's charm, enchanting smile +4

Combat Gear +2 *quarterstaff*, *ring of protection* +2, *bracers of armor* +3, *potion of shield of faith* +5, *scroll of cone of cold*, *scroll of disintegrate*, *scroll of project image*

Wizard Spells Prepared

0—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*

1st—*burning hands*, *detect secret doors*, *feather fall*, *grease*, *hypnotism*, *mage armor*, *magic weapon*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *sleep*, *true strike*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *bear's endurance*, *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *minor image*

3rd—*deep slumber*, *major image*, *wind wall*

4th—*shout*, *wall of ice*

5th—*cone of cold*, *dream*

6th—*acid fog*, *disintegrate*, *true seeing*

7th—*control undead*, *project image*, *phase door*

Background

Orlando was once a simple clockmaker, the expert in gearing, hydraulics, and balances who built the Puffing Bridge and many of the early steam devices in the Free City. Most considered him a harmless crank, but he stayed gainfully employed for years while building and refining his art.

Gradually, he spent more and more time working on his gears, balance wheels, and mechanical forms of magic, learning wizardry as a way to expand his skills with machinery. Ten years ago, he joined the Arcane Collegium and began teaching his craft to others.

Orlando currently serves as Guildmaster of the Arcane Collegium and a Consul on the Free City Council. As a master of clockwork magic, he has created several interesting clockwork creatures that he keeps hidden in his labs. He hopes to someday replace the need for human servants and apprentices entirely.

Motivations & Goals

Orlando wants to keep creating various clockwork experiments, and thus often is in need of money. He seeks outside funding when possible, but he can occasionally be talked into creating magical items for patrons for a high fee. His desire for knowledge is a form of greed, in that he can never resist just one more experiment, even when it threatens others or runs a little bit out of control. In some cases, his devices have caused significant damage to the city, but his usefulness always outweighs the risk.

Schemes & Plots

Orlando is building himself a steam golem body, which he intends to inhabit upon completion. Volstaff Greymark is Orlando's greatest enemy, for reasons not particularly clear to outsiders—a few say that Volstaff once refused to fund Orlando's first successful experiment, and Orlando has born a grudge ever since. Others claim that Volstaff

seduced Orlando's late wife Ikaterina, and that Edmure was Volstaff's bastard child by her. This may be entirely untrue, but it is very evident in Council meetings that they hate each other, and other Consuls have spread this bit of gossip. (Orlando appears in *Steam & Brass* and "The First Lab" in *SoZ*.)

Peppercorn, Bouncer at the King's Head Tavern

A trollwife, broad in the shoulders and the hips, with skin that looks dusted with dirt or pepper looks at you with a sour expression. "I don't know any of you. Why should I let you in to see the King?"

PEPPERCORN CR 11

XP 12,800

Female troll barbarian 6

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 162 (6d8+6d12+96); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +18, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities Improved Uncanny Dodge, rage powers (renewed vigor, superstition +3), Trap Sense +2;

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork greataxe +17 (2d10+9/x3) and bite +11 (1d8+6) or bite +16 (1d8+6), 2 claws +16 (1d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+9), rage (18 rounds), rage power (strength surge [+6 to Str 1/rage])

TACTICS

Before Combat Peppercorn rages.

During Combat She attacks with her greataxe and bite. Any of the Mouse King's faithful servants present will come to her aid. In time, this means rat swarms fill every square for 100 ft. in every direction, and wererats may arrive as well.

Morale Peppercorn does not back down from a fight.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 12, **Con** 27, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 28

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Climb +20, Intimidate +20, Linguistics +4, Perception +19, Sense Motive +10

Languages Trade, Draconic, Dwarf, Giant, Infernal

Combat Gear +1 *chain shirt*, masterwork greataxe, *hand of the mage*, *ring of protection* +2, *potion of greater magic fang* +5;

Other Gear 150 pp, 150 gp, 30 sp.

Background

Peppercorn works as the bouncer at the King's Head tavern, secret headquarters of the Mouse King. Unless she knows a patron, she does not allow anyone entrance without a Diplomacy check (DC 15 to get from indifferent to friendly, and DC 30 to get to helpful). If the party cannot smooth talk their way in, they can offer a minimum 200 gp bribe to gain a second attempt at Diplomacy, or they can try to

convince one of the regulars to bring them in as a guest. Forcing their way in or failing to sneak in brings out Pepper's beloved greataxe.

Motivations & Goals

Peppercorn's motivations are simple: she wants to keep the tavern clear of riffraff, especially anyone who might make trouble for the Mouse King and his gang.

Schemes & Plots

Peppercorn is occasionally involved in the Mouse King's schemes, but she pursues none of her own. She likes her job as bouncer, her employers, and the staff at the King's Head. (Peppercorn appears in *Steam & Brass*, "The Ripper" and "The First Lab" in *SoZ*, and in "The Maiden in the Glass" in *ToZ*).

Radu Underhill

A broad shouldered and athletically built darakhul, this confident and clearly intelligent creature could pass for human in the proper light.

RADU UNDERHILL

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male darakhul rogue 6

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 57 (6d8+24)

Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +7

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; DR 5/magic; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses daylight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d8+5 plus disease and paralysis/20/x2) and 2 claws +9 (1d4+5 plus paralysis/20/x2) or short sword +9 (1d6+5/19-20/x2) and bite +4 (1d8+5 plus disease and paralysis/20/x2)

Ranged heavy crossbow +8 (1d10/19-20/x2)

Special Attacks disease (darakhul fever), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 17, elves are immune), sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Calm and collected, Radu is a shark in a sea of fish, biding his time. If he senses trouble in the offing, he tries to position himself to paralyze the enemy leader in the first round.

During Combat Radu prefers to paralyze foes using natural attacks to deal with them later.

Morale Radu views situations for the long-term, retreating when appropriate. He keeps one use of his *vanish* spell handy for such escapes.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 19, Con —, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 18

Base Atk +4; CMB +9; CMD 23

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Acrobatics +13, Appraise +14, Bluff +13, Climb +17, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +14, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +9, Heal +10, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +17, Knowledge (local) +14, Linguistics +6, Perception +13, Profession

(merchant) +11, Sense Motive +13, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +13, Use Magic Device +12

Modifiers Hard to Fool (2/day), Honeyed Words (1/day)

Languages Trade, Darakhul, Draconic, Ghoulish, Dwarven

SQ major magic (*vanish* 2/day [*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide*, pg. 253]) minor magic (*prestidigitation* 3/day), Trapfinding +3

Combat Gear *brooch of shielding*, *cloak of resistance +1*, +1 mithral shirt, heavy crossbow and 20 bolts, short sword; **Other Gear** handy haversack, courtier's outfit.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daylight Weakness (Ex) Darakhul suffer a -4 penalty to attack and saving throws when in full daylight. A *daylight* spell causes only a -2 penalty.

Disease (Su) Darakhul Fever: bite—injury; save Fortitude DC 17; onset 1 day; frequency 1 day; effect 1d6 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Hard to Fool (2/day) (Ex) Roll 2d20 for Sense Motive, take the better result.

Honeyed Words (1/day) (Ex) Add +10 to a bluff check.

Background

A known fixer and common sight in the Cartways Black Market, Radu is a slaver, businessman, murderer, likely a spy, and always a gentleman. Ever polite and unusually reliable for an undead, Underhill claims to be a sort of diplomat and liaison to the Ghoul Imperium. It is a claim no one has yet been willing to test.

Motivations & Goals

Radu is a middleman in the Black Market. He connects those who want with those who want to sell and asks no questions. For now, he appears content to wait and watch.

Schemes & Plots

Sometimes you need things you don't want people to know you need; a body to disappear, a person to stay quiet, an item of questionable use. "When you need those things," people whisper, "you need to find Radu." Radu works to collect favors and contacts.

Sergeant Hendryk

This Watchman has a slight build, unusually good clothes for his profession, and a thick but well-trimmed, coal-black beard. He looks at the world with a mercenary eye.

SERGEANT HENDRYK

CR 3

XP 800

Male human rogue 4

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 33 (4d8+12)

Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +6 (1d4 plus poison/19-20/x2), short sword +6 (1d6 plus poison/19-20/x2)

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20/x2)

Special Attacks sneak attack (2d6)

TACTICS

Before Combat Sergeant Hendryk is full of bravado and bluster. He threatens, cajoles, and insinuates but never draws first. It keeps him legal.

During Combat Hendryk uses nonlethal force until foes get violent, then he uses blue whinnis-poisoned weapons.

Morale Dead men collect no bribes. Hendryk flees when he must and never forgets such an embarrassment.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Additional Traits (Partners in Crime, Thick as Thieves), Persuasive, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +5, Appraise +7, Bluff +9, Climb +4, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +7, Profession (guardsman) +5, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Languages Trade, Draconic

SQ combat trick, finesse rogue

Combat Gear *cloak of resistance*, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork short sword, dagger, sap; **Other Gear** backpack, *potion of cure light wounds*, tankard, traveler's outfit.

Background

The illegitimate son of a barrister guildmaster, Hendryk got his position in the Watch through his father's influences. His cloak and appointment were his father's final supporting gifts.

Motivations & Goals

Sometimes, dealing with the Watch is worse than dealing with the problem at hand. Times when Sergeant Hendryk darkens your door are just such times. Irredeemably corrupt, Hendryk leads a roving patrol in Lower Zobeck (3 street thugs: fighter 1/rogue 1 AC 15, 16 hp, CR 1, *Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide*, pg. 265), taking food and drink from street vendors when he pleases, collecting protection bribes from businessmen, and earning a healthy cut from thugs who follow up on the scores he scouts. He prevents just enough crime to avoid attention and turns enough of a blind eye to live well.

Schemes & Plots

Hendryk has no intention of spending his life as a guardsman taking shopkeepers' bribes. He plans on becoming a wealthy man (and a Praetor) by any means necessary and over any number of bodies. (Hendryk appears in "Everyone Lies" and "The Ripper" in *SoZ*.)

Scaler

This dwarf-sized lizardfolk is as tall as he is wide. A set of wings rising from his back marks his half-dragon heritage.

SCALER

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male half-dragon lizardfolk fighter 7

NE Medium humanoid (dragon)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 30 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +9 natural, +4 shield)
hp 101 (2d8+7d10+54)

Fort +14, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5* (+7 vs fear); *may reroll once/day

Defensive Abilities armor training 2, bravery +2; **Immune** fire, sleep, paralysis

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average), swim 15 ft.

Melee +2 *morningstar* +17/+12 (1d8+10), bite +11 (1d4+3)

Ranged javelin +9 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks red dragon breath weapon (1/day, 2d6 fire; Reflex DC 17 half), weapon training 1 (flails)

TACTICS

Before Combat If he has time, Scaler drinks a *potion of invisibility* before he enters melee. He spends one round surveying the battle to determine the most threatening enemy and then moves to attack that individual, hopefully by surprise. The sound of the battle imposes a -4 to Perception checks to hear him.

During Combat Scaler uses his multiple attacks to take out individual combatants quickly. When an enemy falls, he moves on to the next rather than deliver a killing blow. Losing opponents can bribe him; he ceases attacking if they lay down their weapons and offer him 500 gp. Individuals may attempt to talk him down lower, depending on how or why the fight started, but he won't go below 300 gp and a favor to be named later.

Morale Scaler doesn't want to die. He just wants to be left alone. Before any fatal blow is delivered, he yells out to his attackers (in Draconic) that they may have whatever it is they want if they let him live.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 23, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15 (+19 on bull rush, enemies provoke); **CMD** +26 (+28 vs bull rush)

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Greater Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills* Acrobatics +5, Fly +1, Intimidate +6, Perception +4, Swim +8;

Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics

*Scaler drops his tower shield before attempting skills, so no skill penalty is applied. Armor check penalties are applied.

Languages Draconic

SQ hold breath

Combat Gear masterwork banded mail, +2 *morningstar*, tower shield, quiver and 8 javelins, *potion of cure moderate wounds* x2, *potion of invisibility* x2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hold Breath (Ex) A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Background

Scaler has built an infamous reputation in the Ghetto. He took over the L-shaped alley that now bears his name over a decade ago, which is a long time in kobold years. He has allowed Slinger's Ambush Gang, a group of goblin slingers, to make the surrounding buildings their home in exchange for rooftop security in keeping others out of his alley. His home guards an entrance to the Cartways, and treasure hunters are always seeking a way down. Many of them do not make it past the ambushers or the alley traps to confront Scaler himself. Those that do make it to Scaler rarely make it further.

Motivations & Goals

Scaler just wants to be left alone. He wants for naught, as Slinger's Ambush Gang, a runt kobold runner, and his reputation see to his every need.

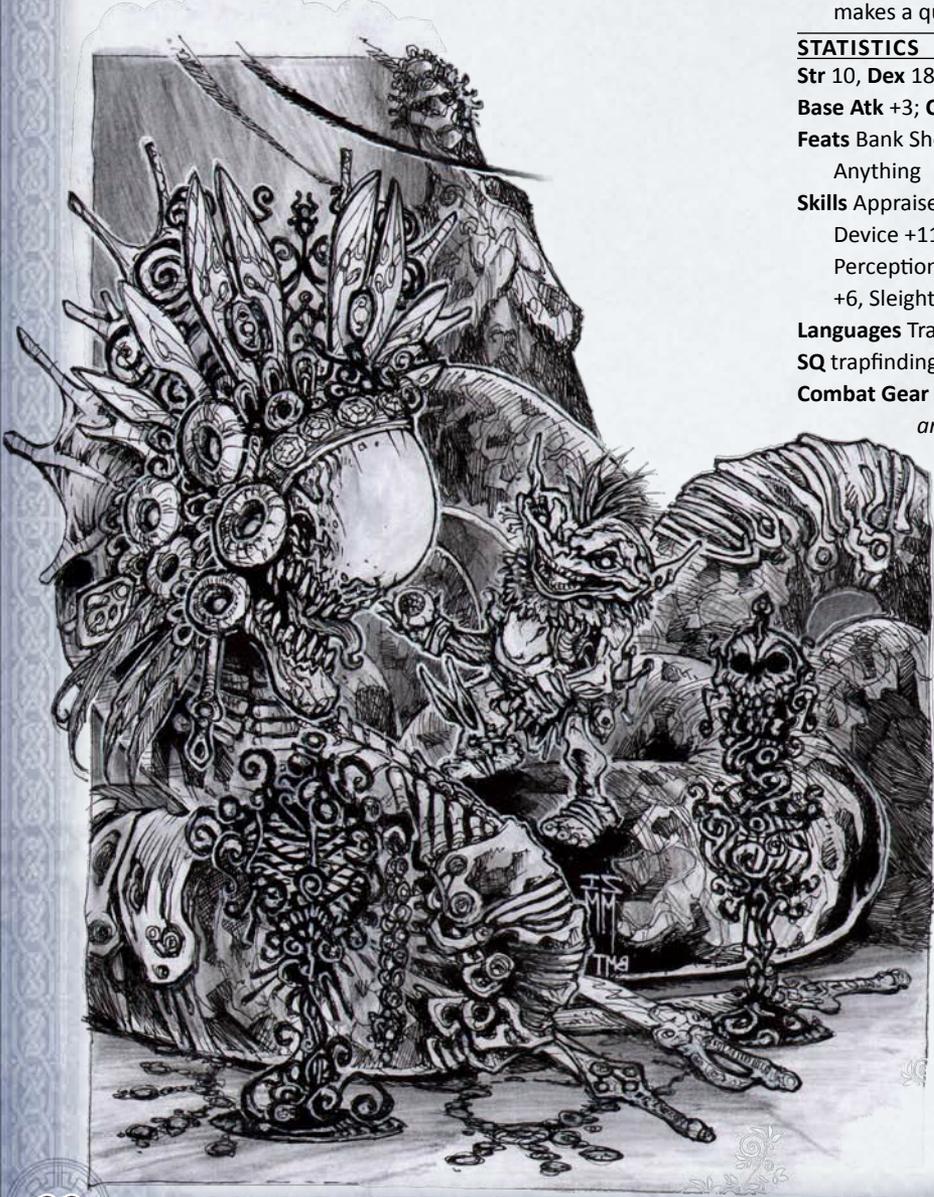
Schemes & Plots

Scaler is not related to any schemes and plots. He is primarily an encounter for adventurers seeking a Cartways entrance from the Ghetto (see "The Fish and the Rose" in *SoZ*), but he does keep a close eye on activity in the tunnels near his home. If anything unusual and big is going on under the Ghetto or the Cartways tunnels under it, Scaler likely knows it.

Slinger

This skinny goblin of average height has a distinctive tuft of spiky red hair sticking out from under his cap. A well-used sling hands from his belt, and his pockets bulge with all manner of random shapes.

SLINGER **CR 4**
XP 1,200
 Male goblin rogue 5



CN Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, trapsense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +4 (1d3/19-20/x2), short sword +4 (1d4/19-20/x2)

Ranged sling +9 (1d3/x2)

Special Attacks combat trick (x2), sneak attack (3d6)

TACTICS

Before Combat Slinger always pockets usable sling ammunition (he can sling unusual objects) from his surroundings and seeks out the best point of cover.

During Combat A master with the sling, Slinger prefers to attack opponents with his Bank Shot feat to stay out of their direct line of sight.

Morale Slinger doesn't believe any job is worth dying for, so he makes a quick exit when things turn sour.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 16

Feats Bank Shot, Deadly Aim, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sling Anything

Skills Appraise +5, Bluff +8, Climb +5, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +11, Disguise +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Linguistics +5, Perception +7, Profession (gambler) +4, Ride +8, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +13, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Trade, Draconic, Goblin

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear cloak of resistance +1, dagger, +1 studded leather armor, short sword, masterwork sling with 15 bullets, 2 tanglefoot bags; **Other Gear** backpack, *potion of cure light wounds*, traveler's outfit.

Background

Slinger runs a gang of 30 ambush specialists headquartered near Scaler's Alley in the Kobold Ghetto. Slinger's a goblin of some personality who has managed to make a home and a living deep in kobold territory.

Motivations & Goals

Coin motivates Slinger, but he very much enjoys harassing the law, so he occasionally takes such jobs on the cheap.

Schemes & Plots

Groups and individuals hire his gang to cause disruptions, harass people, or to outright kill targets from a distance with their slings. Slinger will not accept jobs to assassinate Kobold Kings, as he prefers to let the kobolds deal with their own political issues. Everything else is fair game. (See "The Fish and the Rose" in *SoZ*.)

Syssysalai

*Golden horns and a matching fin crown this regal dark naga's head.
Twenty gem-encrusted golden bands encircle her purple, serpentine body.*

SYSSYSALAI	CR 12
XP 19,200	
Female dark naga sorcerer 4	
LE Large aberration	
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts; Perception +22	
DEFENSE	
AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +1 Dodge, +7 natural, -1 size)	
hp 129 (10d8+50 plus 4d6+20)	
Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +15 (+17 vs. charm effects)	
Defensive Abilities guarded thoughts; resist fire 5, Immune poison	
OFFENSE	
Speed 40 ft.	
Melee bite +9 (1d4+1), sting +9 (2d4+1 plus poison)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.	
Sorcerer Bloodline (Infernal) Bloodline Power (6/day) corrupting touch (Sp)	
Spells Known (CL 11th, +13 ranged touch; concentration +18)	
5th— <i>cone of cold, dominate person</i>	
4th— <i>black tentacles, detect scrying, dimension door</i>	
3rd— <i>dispel magic, displacement, haste, lightning bolt</i> (DC 20)	
2nd— <i>invisibility, protection from good, rope trick, scorching ray, summon swarm, touch of idiocy</i>	
1st— <i>expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement</i> (DC 18), <i>shield, silent image</i>	
0 (at will)— <i>arcane mark, daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic</i>	
TACTICS	
Before Combat Syssysalai casts <i>invisibility</i> on herself if she can avoid battle. Otherwise, she casts <i>displacement</i> on herself.	
During Combat Syssysalai casts <i>black tentacles</i> and <i>summon swarm</i> as her first two attacks. She also uses her <i>wand of magic missiles</i> .	
Morale As a criminal leader, Syssysalai knows better than to fight to the death. She will <i>dimension door</i> away when combat turns sour.	
STATISTICS	
Str 12, Dex 21, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 25	
Base Atk +9; CMB +9; CMD 25 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Alertness, Bend Spell, Combat Casting, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy	
Skills Appraise +11, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +15, Escape Artist +15, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (local) +21; Perception +22, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +22	
Languages Trade, Draconic, Infernal	
Combat Gear <i>headband of alluring charisma +4, wand of magic missiles</i> ; Other Gear gem-encrusted golden bands (500 gp each)	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Detect Thoughts (Su) A dark naga can continuously use <i>detect thoughts</i> as per the spell (caster level 13th; DC 22 Will negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.	
Infernal Resistances (Ex) At 3rd level, Syssysalai gains resist fire 5 and a +2 bonus on saving throws against poison.	
Guarded Thoughts (Ex) Immune to any form of mind reading, such as that granted by <i>detect thoughts</i> , Syssysalai gains a +2 racial bonus on all saves against charm effects.	

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1 round; effect sleep for 2d4 minutes; cure 1 save.

Background

The vain Syssysalai lives for intrigue and power and covets artistic masterpieces. Residing in an abandoned temple in Lower Zobeck, she instigates trouble among the Kobold Kings, seeking to destabilize their power structure. She believes herself the most worthy leader of the kobolds.

Motivations & Goals

Syssysalai controls a group of kobold cat burglars and their human leader Ziv the Sly, who procure objects d'art for her growing gallery.

Schemes & Plots

Syssysalai plans to overthrow the Kobold Kings within the next five years. She watches Zobeck's human community, looking for wealth she can gain from them and to learn how best to manipulate them when she's the Kobold Queen. (See "The Fish and the Rose" in *SoZ*.)

Myzi the First, His Majesty the Mouse King

This mouse is about the size of a large dog. His fur is ash-white with streaks of dark gray across his back in an asymmetrical pattern, his tail is hairless, and his eyes are copper.

HIS MAJESTY MYZI THE FIRST, THE MOUSE KING	CR 13
XP 25,600	
N Small male outsider (native)	
Init +11; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +27	
DEFENSE	
AC 30, touch 22, flat-footed 23 (+7 Dex, +4 insight, +8 natural, +1 size)	
hp 171 (18d10+72)	
Fort +15, Ref +13 Will +15	
Defensive Abilities DR 15/magic and cold iron; Immune lightning bolt, <i>disintegrate</i> (ring of counterspells); SR 29	
OFFENSE	
Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 30 ft.	
Melee +26 bite (2d4+6 plus disease) or +30/+25/+20/+15 +4 rapier (1d4+4/18-20)	
Special Attacks disease, greater disarm, spell-like abilities, summon rodents	
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +22)	
At will — <i>confusion</i> (DC 17), <i>detect evil, detect good, displacement</i>	
2/day — <i>ethereal jaunt, greater magic fang</i>	
1/day — <i>astral projection, greater teleport</i> (self plus 50 pounds of objects only).	
The save DCs are Charisma based	
TACTICS	
Before Combat The Mouse King casts <i>greater magic fang</i> on himself.	
During Combat He enters combat using his bite. When enough foes are within range, he unleashes <i>confusion</i> and uses <i>displacement</i> on the next round.	
Morale If combat goes against him, he summons other rodents to aid him or to cover his escape.	
STATISTICS	
Str 18, Dex 25, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 18	
Base Atk +18; CMB +24 (+28 vs disarm); CMD 38 (42 vs disarm)	

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Greater Disarm, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +28, Bluff +25, Diplomacy +12, Escape Artist +28, Handle Animal +25, Knowledge (nature) +25, Knowledge (planes) +25, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +28, Survival +16, Swim +22.

Languages Trade, Druidic, Elven, Goblin, Gnome, Halfling, Rodent, Sylvan (telepathy 100 ft.)

SQ Change shape, keen senses, outsider traits, rejuvenation, rodent passivism

Combat Gear +4 rapier, two rings of counterspells (lightning bolt and disintegrate); **Other Gear** fashionable frock coat with gold buttons (400 gp), 1,500 pp, two 1,000 gp diamonds.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) Black fever—bite, Fortitude DC 21, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d4 Dex and 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based. The Mouse King can suppress this ability (as a free action) if he wishes.

Summon Rodents (Sp) Twice per day, the Mouse King can automatically summon 10-100 rats or mice, 2d6 dire rats, or 1d4 wererats, or 1d4+1 rat or mouse swarms.

Change Shape (Su) The Mouse King can assume the shape of a human as a standard action. In human form, the Mouse King cannot use his natural weapons or disease special attack but can wield weapons and wear armor. Unlike the normal change shape ability, the Mouse King retains his movement modes (and speeds) in human form.

Keen Senses (Ex) The Mouse King sees four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. This also provides him a +4 insight bonus to his Armor Class.

Rejuvenation (Su) The Mouse King is effectively immortal and nearly impossible to slay. When slain, the Mouse King's soul reforms on the Astral Plane. Within one week, it inhabits another mouse or rat on the Material Plane and the Mouse King reforms. No form of mortal magic (such as magic that would contain or trap his soul) prevents this. To permanently kill the Mouse King, one must destroy every mouse and rat in existence (so his soul has no creature to inhabit).

Rodent Passivism (Ex) No rodents, such as mice, giant rats, dire rats, or wererats, willingly attack the Mouse King. They can be forced to do so through magical means.

Sealed Mind (Ex) The Mouse King is immune to mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). This immunity includes any psionic effect or attack that targets the Mouse King's mind.

Speak with Rodents (Ex) This ability functions as the *Speak with Animals* spell, but allows the Mouse King to converse only with mice, rats, dire rats, and other rodents. This ability is always active and cannot be dispelled or negated.

Background

Like the Cat Lord, there is only one Mouse Lord, and he is the King of all rodents. In his natural form, he resembles a large dire rat with copper eyes. He can assume a human form of either a woman with darkened skin, raven-black hair, and copper eyes, dressed in robes of

flowing silver or gray; or a man with pale skin, ash-white hair, a long moustache, and dark eyes, dressed all in tailored white or black frock, breeches, and waistcoat.

The Mouse King spends his days looking after the concerns of rodents on the Material, Astral, and Ethereal Planes. When slain (often by the Cat Lord), a new Mouse King is crowned within a week.

Motivations & Goals

Ultimately, the Mouse King wants to see Zobeck prosper, as that is good for his people and his coffers. Trade and river barges take his people far and wide.

Schemes & Plots

While his servants still take coin purses and snatch jewels, his main source of funds is smuggling and the gambling hall called Sixes and Sevens. The Mouse King schemes to make sure his wealth continues to grow, and that often means entering into conflict with other gangs. When it comes to making money, he additionally takes into account what is best for Zobeck's long-term prosperity, as he correctly believes its wealth and his are entirely connected. (See *Steam & Brass* and "Tale of the Mouse King" and "The Gullet War" in *ToZ*.)

Tymon, the King's Bard

A thin, charismatic man with a narrow, drooping moustache and mouse-brown hair, this bard dresses in fine clothing, and has a voice like velvet.

TYMON, THE KING'S BARD

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male wererat bard 7/aristocrat 1/shadowdancer 1
NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 58 (9d8+18)

Fort +5 **Ref** +8 **Will** +11; +4 vs sonic/language-dependent effects

Defensive Abilities well-versed

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+1/19-20)

Special Attacks cantrips, disease, fascinate (DC 17/W), spells

Bard Spells learned (CL 7th, +7 melee touch, +7 ranged touch; concentration +11)

3rd (2/day)—*haste*, *invisibility sphere* (DC 17/W)

2nd (4/day)—*invisibility* (DC 16/W), *scare* (DC 16/W), *suggestion* (DC 16/W), *summon swarm*

1st (5/day)—*cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *magic aura*, *reduce person*, *sleep* (DC 15/W)

0—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14/W), *know direction*, *open/close* (DC 14/W), *resistance* (DC 14/W), *summon instrument*

TACTICS

Before Combat Tymon casts *invisibility* on himself and then *expeditious retreat*.

During Combat Tymon avoids combat if at all possible and uses Diplomacy or *suggestion* to try to get opponents to stand down or leave. He calls for aid from the Mouse King's wererat hussars or other minions if they are around, especially Peppercorn. He will play his *pipes of pain* on the first round that he gets the chance.

Morale Tymon does not fight to the death. He flees or bargains for his life.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Mobility, Perform Spell*, Weapon Finesse

*See fixer archetype in *Crossroads Player's Guide*.

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Disguise +14, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +15, Perform (dance) +15, Perform (string instruments) +15, Sense Motive +15, Slight of Hand +13, Stealth +13, Use Magic Device +15.

Languages Trade, Celestial, Elven, Rodent, Sylvan

SQ bardic knowledge, bardic performance 20 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, inspire courage +2, inspire competence +3), change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; *polymorph*), loremaster 1/day, lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats), versatile performance (dance (Acrobatics, Fly), string (Bluff, Diplomacy)), well-versed

Combat Gear +1 studded leather armor, +1 buckler, +1 rapier, zither of mass suggestion (2 charges remaining), oil of magic vestment +3, pipes of pain; **Other Gear** 14 pp, 13 gp, 12 sp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alternate Form (Su) When Tymon shifts into animal form his gear is unchanged, he does not regain hit points for changing form, and he can only take the form of a mouse. He does not assume mouse ability scores, but instead adds the animal's physical ability score modifiers to his own ability scores. Tymon can also assume a bipedal hybrid form with prehensile hands and animalistic features. Changing form is a standard action that does not draw attacks of opportunity. If slain, Tymon reverts to his humanoid form, although he remains dead.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su) Tymon can use the Stealth skill even while being observed. As long as Tymon is within 10 ft. of an area of dim light, he can hide himself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. He cannot, however, hide in his own shadow.

Lycanthropic Empathy (Su) In any form, Tymon can communicate and empathize with normal or dire rats or mice. He receives a +4 racial bonus on checks when influencing the animal's attitude and can communicate simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands.

TYMON, THE KING'S BARD, HYBRID FORM

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male wererat bard 7/aristocrat 1/shadowdancer 1

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +15

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 67 (9d8+27)

Fort +6 **Ref** +8 **Will** +11; +4 vs sonic/language-dependent effects

Defensive Abilities well-versed; **DR** 10/Silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+1/19-20) and bite +2 (1d4 plus disease (DC 12/F) and curse of lycanthropy (DC 15/F))



Special Attacks cantrips, disease, fascinate (DC 17/W), spells

Bard Spells learned (CL 7th, +5 melee touch, +7 ranged touch; concentration +11)

3rd (2/day)—*haste*, *invisibility sphere* (DC 17/W)

2nd (4/day)—*invisibility* (DC 16/W), *scare* (DC 16/W), *suggestion* (DC 16/W), *summon swarm*

1st (5/day)—*cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *magic aura*, *reduce person*, *sleep* (DC 15/W)

0—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14/W), *know direction*, *open/close* (DC 14/W), *resistance* (DC 14/W), *summon instrument*

TACTICS

See Above

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18

Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Mobility, Perform Spell*, Weapon Finesse

*See *Crossroads Player's Guide*.

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +10, Climb +11, Disguise +14, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +15, Perform (dance) +15, Perform (string instruments) +15, Sense Motive +15, Slight of Hand +13, Stealth +13, Use Magic Device +15.

Languages Trade, Celestial, Elven, Rodent, Sylvan

SQ bardic knowledge, bardic performance 20 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, inspire courage +2, inspire competence +3), change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; *polymorph*), loremaster 1/day, lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats), versatile performance (dance (Acrobatics, Fly), string (Bluff, Diplomacy)), well-versed

Combat Gear +1 studded leather armor, +1 buckler, +1 rapier, *zither of mass suggestion* (2 charges remaining), *oil of magic vestment* +3, *pipes of pain*; **Other Gear** 14 pp, 13 gp, 12 sp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) In hybrid and animal forms, Tymon's bite carries filth fever (Fort DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con).

Background

Tymon, the resident performer at the King's Head tavern, is a racist wererat in the Mouse King's court. He covets the Rat Throne and is tired of waiting for his reign to begin. For three long years, he bit his lip as the former Mouse King Theodore XII entrusted secrets to human lieutenants and watered down the kingdom's blood with afflicted lycanthropes. When the mouse kingdom parted company with the Spyglass Guild and the underworld influence of the Rat Throne diminished further, Tymon took action.

The precise events that followed remain murky to outside observers, but the bard's plans obviously failed. Theodore XII died, but Tymon did not take his place. With his schemes derailed, if not his ambition, Tymon has gone back to keeping a low profile and waiting for the new Mouse King, Myzi the First, to slip up. In the meantime, he does Myzi's bidding, which sometimes includes casting *suggestion* spells on patrons of the King's Head to perform tasks for the Mouse King.

Motivations & Goals

Tymon seeks to kill the Mouse King to take his place.

Schemes & Plots

Tymon aids the Mouse King in his various schemes to make money and better Zobeck's lot. His main goal remains to become the next Mouse King, however. (See *Steam & Brass* and "Tale of the Mouse King" in *ToZ*.)

Tyron, King of Fixers

This older and well groomed man has a warm voice and the rich clothing of a respectable business owner. The hard glint in his hazel eyes, however, shows just how he got so successful and how far he'll go to stay that way.

TYRON, LORD GREYMARK'S FIXER

CR 7

Male human rogue 8 (fixer)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +0 Dex)

hp 44 (8d8+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork short sword +6 (1d6-1/19-20/x2)

Ranged masterwork darkwood light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20/x2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

TACTICS

Before Combat An older gentleman of high standing, Tyron ensures he's nowhere near combat. He hires thugs to take care of that for him.

During Combat If he must fight, Tyron fights defensively unless an opening presents itself to escape using his *cape of the mountebank*.

Morale Tyron knows Lord Greymark doesn't pay dead men, and he likes the lifestyle that comes with regular paychecks. He avoids or escapes combat at the first opportunity unless ordered to remain for some reason.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

Feats Additional Traits, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse

Traits Black-marketeer (+1 Initiative), Butcher's Son (+1 Fortitude)

Skills Appraise +13, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (local) +15, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Linguistics +8, Perception +17, Profession (merchant) +9, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +14

Modifiers Black-marketeer, Charmer, Hard to Fool, Honeyed Words, Knowledge (local, nobility) +2; Perception +4; Sense Motive +4

Languages Trade, Draconic, Dwarven, Ghoulish

SQ A Jaded Eye*, A Magpie Among Songbirds*, Names and Faces*, Resiliency Scrounge*

*See fixer archetype in *Crossroads Player's Guide*.

Combat Gear 10 crossbow bolts, mithral chain shirt, masterwork short sword, masterwork darkwood light crossbow; **Other Gear** *Cape of the mountebank*, *circlet of persuasion*, walking stick, waterskin

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Charmer (Ex) (2/day) Roll 2d20 for Diplomacy, take the better result.

Hard to Fool (Ex) (2/day) Roll 2d20 for Sense Motive, take the better result.

Honeyed Words (Ex) (1/day) Add +10 to a Bluff check.

Background

Tyron, Lord Greymark's fixer, owns and runs the Silk Scabbard in Upper Zobeck with Greymark's approval and protection. Never ambitious (or, as he thinks of it, stupid) enough to step forward and run his own operation, Tyron greatly enjoys the security of having a powerful patron and partner. He sees Greymark's orders and restrictions as just part of the price of doing business.

Motivations & Goals

Tyron seeks to make his business lucrative. He's even willing to make a deal with a devil to ensure that this happens.

Schemes & Plots

In his connection to Volstaff, Tyron is often involved with the Redcloaks' affairs, though he spends many of his off-duty hours taking care of messes for Greymark himself (see "The Ripper" in *SoZ*).

Vralgor Szarn, Leader of the Great Hunters

A barghest of striking size and girth, this creature seems barely able to maneuver through the tunnels, despite its obvious rage and frustration.

VRALGOR SZARN

CR 10**XP 9,600**

Male advanced greater barghest rogue 2

CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., x-ray vision, scent; Perception +27

DEFENSES

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural)**hp** 210 (15d10+2d8+119)**Fort** +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16**Defensive Abilities** 20% miss chance, evasion; **DR** 5/magic

OFFENSES

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** +27 large adamantine greatsword (3d6+20/19-20) and +23 bite (2d6+4), or +28 bite (2d6+9) and 2 claws +26 (1d8+4)**Special Attacks** feed, Harbinger of Death, improved sunder, Portent of Doom (DC 26), Power Attack, sneak attack +1d6, Soul Feed**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15; concentration +23):At will—*blink*, *deathwatch*, *doom* (DC 19), *invisibility sphere*, *levitate*, *misdirection* (DC 20), *rage* (DC 21)1/day—*charm monster* (DC 22), *crushing despair* (DC 22), *death ward*, *dimension door*, *mass bull's strength*, *mass enlarge*, *nightmare* (DC 23), *slay living* (DC 23)

TACTICS

Before Combat He casts his *invisibility sphere* and *dimension door* if need be.

During Combat Vralgor prefers his underlings to take care of fights, and he casts *mass bull's strength* on them. He will cast *crushing despair* the next round. If pressed into combat, he battles with his greatsword and bite.

Morale Vralgor does what he can to save his hide. His large girth makes him vulnerable in the Cartways' smaller tunnels, however, but he uses his *dimension door* to aid his retreat.

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 14, **Con** 24, **Int** 19, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 26**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +25 (+27 to sunder); **CMD** 37 (39 vs sunder)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Harbinger of Death, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Portent of Doom, Power Attack, Soul Feed**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Bluff +28, Climb +29, Diplomacy +28, Disable Device +20, Disguise +20, Intimidate +28, Jump +29, Perception +27, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +22, Survival +27, Swim +29**Languages** Abyssal, Trade, Giant, Goblin, Infernal, Worg**SQ** alternate form, rogue talent (combat trick, combat reflexes) trapfinding**Combat Gear** +2 large adamantine greatsword, +3 amulet of mighty fists, +4 bracers of armor, minor cloak of displacement, ring of x-ray vision; **Other Gear** a human skull studded with sapphires (1,200 gp), partial map of the Cartways and streets above, sack with 235 gp

Background

Vralgor rose to power by ambushing and consuming a powerful priest and his paladin guards. He saw the benefits of moving into the dark spaces below Zobeck, and now he and his lessers feed on the city folk at their leisure.

Vralgor devours any lesser barghests that threaten his position as pack leader. He has *charmed* the head of the Spyglass guild, Ersebet Cemilla, and this has allowed him to use the guild as his private spy network. With plenty of victims delivered to his waiting maw, Vralgor has grown too huge to leave the tunnels without using his *dimension door* ability. His *ring of x-ray vision* helps him keep tabs on the streets above.

Motivations & Goals

Vralgor seeks to carve out an underground empire, and will do anything necessary to take out all rivals. His inability to trust his followers rather stymies his efforts to expand his power base.

Schemes & Plots

Vralgor's control over Ersebet Cemilla gives him a tremendous advantage in Zobeck's cutthroat underworld, but it also illustrates just how unprepared his organization is to capitalize on this advantage. He is seeking to gain more kobold underlings to increase his power aboveground. (Vralgor's gang shows up in "The Fish and the Rose" in *SoZ*.)



CHAPTER 8: MAGIC OF ZOBECK



AZREN ATTACHED THE last wing to the owl and tested the gears. Both golden clockwork wings extended easily, flapped smoothly, and made a pleasing tick-tick-tick as their armatures moved. He smiled fondly, and Master Orlando nodded at the sight of a mage not pleased with his own power to create so much as awed by what he had made.

He clapped the young man on the shoulder, his own smile as wide as Azren's. "Well done, my boy. You've become quite adept over the years." His gaze roamed over the contours of the delicate machine and picked out small artistic details on the acid-etched feathers and carved into the brass joints. "And developed quite an eye. Let's do your last check."

Orlando lifted the owl but frowned when he could not find the gear panel. Azren's smile became impish, and he traced a pattern in the yielding metal feathers on the machine's back. The body split open along delicate hinges. Orlando nodded approvingly and spent several minutes examining the inner workings. He poked and tested the gears and inspected the actuators for the creature's eyes. He closed it again with gentle pressure and felt a satisfying click as it locked together.

"Excellent work. But I expected nothing less, Azren." He set down the owl and took the younger man's hand. "You make your former teacher proud. Now, let's see you finish what you've started."

Azren nodded and began chanting the words that would call an animal soul to give animation to his new familiar.



Zobeckers value all forms of magic. The Arcane Collegium recognizes clockwork, divination, elementalism, enchantment, illusion, necromancy, stars and shadows, and summoning as the proper schools of arcane study. The study of alchemy is considered a lesser craft, rather than a full school, as are shamanism, spirit magic, and pacts, though they acknowledge the last only grudgingly and consider it corrupt.

MAGIC OF ZOBECK

The spells of the clockwork school, Gear domain, and star and shadow magic are presented here. Clockwork spells are taught at the Collegium, but not widely known outside the city. The Gear Domain is related to all the elements of mechanical work, including artifice, invention, devices, forgecraft, and steam power. It is common among advanced dwarven, gnome, and even kobold priests, among certain societies of scholars and engineers dedicated to constructs and automatons, and among planar travelers from mechanical realms. (More information on the Gear Domain appears in the *Midgard Campaign Setting*.)

School of Clockwork Magic

Stories claim the magic of clockwork is derived from a divine gift, as the weaver goddess who became Rava of Gears granted knowledge of these devices and automatons to one of her earliest followers. Others say that the arcane power of clockwork magic was discovered by an artificer who harnessed steam and gearing to build the first device and animated it with primitive enchantments.

Regardless the murky origins of their power, Clockwork Mages are clearly masters of time manipulation, constructs, and mechanical devices of various kinds. Their school thrives in areas rich in automatons, golems, and other constructs. Their relatively few spells display a wide range of styles.

The Clockwork Mages themselves possess an eye for mechanisms, springs, gearing, and balanced forces. Many have difficulty distinguishing them from gear grinders and clockworkers, though they usually wear better, and their tools include wands as well as hammers and loupes.

Clockwork Mages can build clockwork familiars using the Improved Familiar feat. Use the clockwork template from the *Advanced Bestiary* from Green Ronin to generate the resulting creature (typically a normal familiar, although sometimes a hunting dog, an eagle, or even a winged monkey).

Clockwork School

The clockworker focuses on the study of combining magic with machines.

Clockworker's Charm (Su): Whenever you cast an *animate construct* spell, increase the duration by a number of rounds equal to ½ your wizard level (minimum 1). At 20th level, you can change the duration of all *animate construct* spells to permanent. You can have no more than one *animate construct* spell made permanent in this way at one time. If you designate another *animate construct* spell as permanent, the previous spell immediately ends.

Repairing Touch (Sp): As a standard action, you can touch a metal object or construct, sealing up rents and bending steel back into place, repairing it for 1d6 points of damage +1 for every two wizard levels you possess. You may repair up to 1 lb. of metal per wizard level. You can do this a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier.

Clockwork Body (Sp): At 8th level, you can change your body for a number of rounds per day equal to your wizard level into a construct body, gaining +2 natural armor, 1d4+1 temporary hp per wizard level, darkvision 60 ft., and temporarily gaining construct traits for the duration of the effect. The metal body adds 60 lbs. to the wizard's existing weight, reducing movement as per full plate (30-ft. movement rate becomes 20 ft.; 20-ft. movement rate becomes 15 ft.) and adds a -6 Armor Check Penalty to Dexterity- and Strength-based skills. The metal does not, however, affect arcane casting. At 12th level, the AC bonus increases to +3 and the temporary hit points increase to d6+1 per wizard level.

School of Illumination Magic

The school of illumination includes the study of star and shadow magic, which is unknown outside the Free City of Zobeck and a few elven wizards, who regard it as more a curiosity than anything else. Indeed, it is considered a quirk of Zobeck to call it a separate school at all. More properly called the school of illumination, it is closely related to illusion and tangentially related to creation, conjuration, and necromancy, but it stands apart from all of them.

The Nature of Illumination

Star and shadow magic uses the power of the Shadow Realm to generate spell effects, in the same manner that elementalists use the various elemental planes to generate their magic. Its spells power force

effects, light and shadow spells, and limited forms of divination and magical compulsion.

But all this misses the point. The school of Illumination is a mystery much like Summoning, Divination, and Abjuration. Its practitioners believe that its wellsprings of power come from an understanding of the stars, their alignments, and the power they give an arcanist over every living creature.

All star and shadow spells belong to the Illumination school.

Day and Night Casting

Star and shadow magic is popular among explorers because of its power in the dark. Illumination matters to the caster of star and shadow magic. Whenever a spell from this school is cast at night or in darkness, the DC for its saving throw is affected as shown below. The illumination at the caster's location, not that of his target, determines the effect. (See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Core Rulebook* for illumination sources.)

Illumination	Spell DC Change
Darkness	+2
Shadowy Illumination	+1
Bright Illumination	0
Twilight or Deep Forest	-1
Daylight	-2

BARD SPELLS

1st-Level Bard Spell

Silent Sound: Inflict 1d6 points of sonic damage/level (5d6 max).

Volund's Vengeful Grasp^M: Grasping hands rise from the earth to grab and harass targets.

2nd-Level Bard Spell

Rogue's Stab: May sneak attack creatures denied Dexterity bonus to AC.

CLERIC SPELLS

1st-Level Cleric Spell

Blessing of Volund: Bless your allies with 1+1 per/3 caster levels on skill checks made for one particular spell.

Pendulum^M: Target creature succeeds and fails in a predictable manner.

Volund's Instant Pillar: A pillar rises from the earth, granting cover.

2nd-Level Cleric Spell

Repair Metal^M: Repair 1d8+5 hp damage to metal object or construct.

3rd-Level Cleric Spell

Lada's Sacred Servant: Summon servant of light to deliver 1d6 +Wis modifier healing.

Volund's Instant Pillar, Greater: As *Volund's instant pillar* but affects area.

Volund's Rending Grasp^M: Prevents target from charging and deals 1d4 hp damage/round.

4th-Level Cleric Spells

Animate Dead, Improved^M: Create small zombies from body parts.

Meld^F: Metal plates bond to your skin to provide armor bonus and DR.

Repair Metal, Greater^M: Repair 2d8+10 points of damage to metal object or construct.

5th-Level Cleric Spell

Lada's Sacred Servant: Summon servant of light to deliver 2d6 +Wis modifier healing.

Winding Key^M: Construct gains extra action each round.

7th-Level Cleric Spell

Summon Star^M: Summon a star to do your bidding.

Timeless Engine: Drastically reduce the rate of degradation in a machine.

DRUID SPELLS

1st-Level Druid Spell

Douse: Douse a small source of natural light.

Porevit's Mantle: Camouflage physical characteristics to match terrain, gaining +3 to Stealth checks.

Snap the Leash^M: Remove the shackles of domestication from animals.

Volund's Instant Pillar: A pillar rises from the earth, granting cover.

Volund's Vengeful Grasp^M: Grasping hands rise from the earth to grab and harass targets.

3rd-Level Druid Spell

Volund's Instant Pillar, Greater^M: As *Volund's instant pillar* but affects area.

Volund's Rending Grasp^M: Prevents target from charging and deals 1d4 points of damage/round.

4th-Level Druid Spell

Yarila's Bounty: Gain fast healing 1 when bathed in direct sunlight for 30 minutes.

INQUISITOR SPELLS

1st-Level Inquisitor Spell

Compelling Question: Compels creature to answer a question.

ORACLE SPELLS

1st-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct I^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Compelling Question: Compels creature to answer a question.

2nd-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct II^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

3rd-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct III^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Compelling Fate^M: View actions through the influence of stars.

4th-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct IV^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Flickering Fate: Gain +4 Insight bonus to attack rolls by glimpsing foes' future actions.

5th-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct V^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

6th-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct VI^F: Animated material or construct serves you.
Starry Vision^M: See the fate of all creatures up to 4-5-ft squares/level.

7th-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct VII^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

8th-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct VIII^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

9th-Level Oracle Spell

Animate Construct IX^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

RANGER SPELLS

1st-Level Ranger Spell

Porevit's Mantle: Camouflage physical characteristics to match terrain, gaining +3 to Stealth checks.
Rogue's Stab: May sneak attack creatures denied Dexterity bonus to AC.

4th-Level Ranger Spell

Yarila's Bounty: Gain fast healing 1 when bathed in direct sunlight for 30 minutes.

SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

0-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells (Cantrips)

Clwk Analyze Device^F: Identify all properties of clockwork device.
Clwk Trans Tick Stop: Construct can take only one move action on its next turn.
Illum Shadow Bite: Prick creature with a needle of sharp pain.
Illum Shadow Blindness: Impair darkvision.
Illum Silhouette: Create shadow figures against a screen or wall.

1st-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Animate Construct I^F: Animated material or construct serves you.
Armored Shell^M: You don a suit of heavy armor.
Pendulum^M: Target creature succeeds and fails in a predictable manner.
Tireless^M: Target gains the stamina of a machine for 24 hours.

Conjuration

Summon Blade: Summon a light, one-handed weapon via a string.

Evocation

Silent Sound: Inflict 1d6 points of sonic damage/level (5d6 max).

Illumination

Compelling Question: Compels creature to answer a question.
Douse: Douse a small source of natural light.
Lengthen Shadows: Darkened area causes creatures to suffer a -2 penalty to Perception checks.
Orb of Light, Lesser: Ranged touch attack deals 1d8 points of positive energy/2 caster levels.
Shadow Hands: Hands deal 1d6 points of cold damage/level (max 5d6).

Transmutation

Light Blindness: Blind creatures that see in daylight.
Rogue's Stab: May sneak attack creatures denied Dexterity bonus to AC.

Step Like Me^M: Steal the footsteps of a target creature within one size category of you.

2nd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Analyze Device, Greater^F: Identify all properties of clockwork device.
Animate Construct II^F: Animated material or construct serves you.
Armored Heart^M: Target gains DR 2/adamantine +1/5 levels.
Clockwork Timer^M: Delay activation of spell by rounds or minutes.
Gear Barrage^M: You launch a cone-shaped burst of gears.
Lock Armor^M: Metal armor become immobilized as if welded.
Repair Metal^M: Repair 1d8+5 points of damage to metal object or construct.

Enchantment

Snap the Leash^M: Remove the shackles of domestication from animals.

Illumination

Light Warding^M: Barrier of light wards against creature type.
Shadow Jump: Move through shadows within medium range (100 ft. + 10 ft./level).
Starbolt: Cast star bolts dealing 1d6+1 points of damage/2 levels.

Necromancy

Stolen Identity^M: Acquire the voice and facial features of another by touching his face.

Transmutation

Silent Combat: Subject of spell is rendered utterly silent.
Spy My Shadow: Use your shadow as a spy.

3rd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Animate Construct III^F: Animated material or construct serves you.
Thousand Darts^M: Create a single-target line of darts within range.
Winding Key^M: Construct gains extra action each round.

Illumination

Compelling Fate^M: View actions through the influence of stars.
Terror^M: Panic one living creature.

4th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Absolute Command^M: Gain control over construct you built.
Animate Construct IV^F: Animated material or construct serves you.
Repair Metal, Greater^M: Repair 2d8+10 points of damage to metal object or construct.
Shatter, Greater^M: Sonic vibration damages objects or crystalline creatures.
Steam Blast^M: Creates a 30-foot-radius burst of steam centered on you.

Illumination

Black Hand: Touch attack deals 1d3 Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage.
Flickering Fate: Gain +4 Insight bonus to attack rolls by glimpsing foes' future actions.
Net of Comets^M: Creates net of positive energy, dealing 1 hp damage/level.
Orb of Light: Ranged touch attack deals 1d6 hp positive energy/level.

Necromancy

Leeching Lanthorn^F: A lantern siphons 1d4 ability damage.

5th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Animate Construct V^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Mechanical Union^M: Gain control of target construct.

Necromancy

Animate Dead, Improved^M: Create small zombies from body parts.

Bind Guardian^{M F XP}: Bind a soul to animate a construct.

6th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Animate Construct VI^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Catapult^M: You violently hurl creatures or objects into the air.

Illumination

Black Well: Summoned mass devours nearby creatures.

Heavy Burden^M: Slow foes' movement by 20 ft.

Prismatic Fist: Create rays with the effects of prismatic spray.

Starfall: Cast up to 3 bolts at different target (1 bolt/level), which deal 3d12 points of damage.

7th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Animate Construct VII^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Timeless Engine: Drastically reduce the rate of degradation in a machine.

Illumination

Starry Vision^M: See the fate of all creatures up to 4-5-ft squares/level.

8th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Clockwork

Animate Construct VIII^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Machine Sacrifice^M: Target gains some benefits of being a construct.

Time Jump^M: Throw touched construct into future 1d4+1 rounds.

Illumination

Summon Star^F: Summon a star to do your bidding.

9th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spell

Clockwork

Animate Construct IX^F: Animated material or construct serves you.

Dominate Clockwork^M: Gain control over clockwork device permanently.

Illumination

Star's Heart: Increases gravity to an area, dropping all affected creatures prone.

WITCH SPELLS

1st-Level Witch Spell

Step Like Me^M: Steal the footsteps of a target creature within one size category of you.

2nd-Level Witch Spell

Snap the Leash^M: Remove the shackles of domestication from animals.

Spy My Shadow: Use your shadow as a spy.

SPELLS

ABSOLUTE COMMAND

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** gear 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a pair of small gloves fitted with a conduit and worth 100 gp)

Range Touch

Effect Mechanical construct touched

Duration 5 minutes +1 minute per level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

The spell allows the caster to control a servitor he has built with a number of Hit Dice equal to or less than his level. The caster possesses such a level of control that he can manipulate objects with his mechanical servitor as precisely as the servitor's construction allows. The servitor uses the caster's base attack bonus (modified by the servitor's Strength and Dexterity scores) and saving throw modifiers for Reflex and Will saving throws. The caster can use the manipulators of the servitor to perform any number of skill-based tasks, using the servitor's Strength and Dexterity modifiers when using skills based on those particular abilities. The caster's body remains immobile, as if paralyzed, for the duration of the spell.

The construct must remain within 100 ft. +10 ft. per level of the caster. If it moves beyond this distance the spell immediately ends and the caster's mind returns to his body.

ANALYZE DEVICE

School clockwork (divination); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 0

Casting Time 1 hour

Components V, S, F (a complete set of clockworker's tools)

Range Touch

Targets One touched object

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

You discover all mechanical properties, mechanisms, and functions of a single construct or clockwork device, including how to activate those functions (if appropriate).

ANALYZE DEVICE, GREATER

School clockwork (divination); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 hour

Components V, S, F (a complete set of clockworker's tools)

Range Touch

Targets One touched object

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

You discover all mechanical and magical properties, mechanisms, and functions of a single construct or clockwork device or magic item, including how to activate those functions (if appropriate), and how many charges are left (if any).

ANIMATE CONSTRUCT I

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 1, cleric/oracle 1

Casting Time 1 round

Components V, S, F (an oil can and a set of bellows)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect One animated object or construct

Duration 1 round/level (D) or Special

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

This spell animates an object or a carefully prepared construct. The object acts immediately, on your turn, and may attack your opponents to the best of its ability. You can direct it not to attack, to attack particular enemies, or to perform other actions as a move action. The spell animates one of the creatures from the Animated Constructs list (see below). You choose the object to animate, and you can change that choice each time you cast the spell.

If you wish, you may animate a prepared construct rather than a mass of metal or stone. This requires preparing a carefully crafted form. The cost of this form is half the usual gp cost of building such a construct, for it is not animated permanently. In this case, the duration is 1 hour/level outside of combat and 1 round/level during combat.

With this spell, a caster may animate no more than twice his level in Hit Dice of constructs; animating more simply means that a previously animated construct becomes immobile and lifeless.

A construct destroyed in combat cannot be reanimated until a *repair metal* spell is cast on it, or (in the case of stone or wood) until it has been rebuilt at the same cost as the original construction.

ANIMATE CONSTRUCT II THROUGH IX

These spells are identical to *animate construct I* but are of 2nd through 9th level and animate constructs as shown in the Animated Constructs list.

Animated Constructs Level/Construct Source

1st Level	5th Level
Animated Object, Tiny <i>PFB1</i>	Animated Object, Huge <i>PFB1</i>
Clockworks Overseer <i>ToH1</i>	Golem, Bone <i>PFB3</i>
Clockworks Scout <i>ToH1</i>	Golem, Wood <i>ToH1</i>
Clockwork Spy <i>PFB3</i>	Tupilak <i>PFB3</i>
2nd Level	6th Level
Animated Object, Small <i>PFB1</i>	Animated Object, Gargantuan (2)
Clockwork Scullion <i>MB</i>	Tophet <i>PFB3</i>
Clockwork Servant <i>PFB3</i>	Taotieh <i>PFB3</i>
Clockworks Warrior <i>ToH1</i>	
Homunculus <i>PFB1</i>	7th Level
	Animated Object, Colossal (2)
3rd Level	Clockwork Leviathan <i>PFB3</i>
Animated Object, Medium <i>PFB1</i>	
Caryatid Column <i>PFB3</i>	8th Level
Necrophidius, Rattler <i>ToH1</i>	Steam Golem <i>MB</i>
4th Level	Golem, Brass <i>PFB3</i>
Animated Object, Large <i>PFB1</i>	Golem, Cannon <i>PFB3</i>
Clockwork Choker <i>AB</i>	9th Level
Clockwork Soldier <i>PFB3</i>	Clockwork Goliath <i>PFB3</i>
Clockwork Watchman <i>MB</i>	Golem, Greater Stone (2)
Graven Guardian <i>PFB3</i>	<i>PFB1</i>
Terra-Cotta Soldier <i>PFB3</i>	

For entries with a (2) after them, two creatures of that type are animated by the spell. On the above table, AB is *Advanced Bestiary* from Green Ronin, PFB1 is the *Pathfinder Bestiary 1*, PFB2 is the *Pathfinder Bestiary 2*, PFB3 is the *Pathfinder Bestiary 3*, ToH1 is *Tome of Horrors 1* (the Pathfinder version of this book), and MB is *Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder RPG*.

STAR AND SHADOW FAMILIARS

As unique as star and shadow magic is, its practitioners summon equally unique familiars. Whether they be forged of shadowstuff or seemingly drawn from the night sky, these familiars are anything but ordinary.

Shadow Familiar

At 4th level or higher, a shadowsworn (see the *Crossroads Player's Guide*) or an illumination mage may conduct an all-day ceremony that releases his own shadow to serve as a familiar for him. His shadow is referred to as "unbound."

This shadow familiar has the usual statistics and abilities of a sorcerer or wizard familiar, but is a creature of shadow and is thus incorporeal. It resembles a flat, flickering shadow and is invisible in full or partial darkness. The shadow familiar can move under doors and through other tiny openings, and can hide itself perfectly by posing as its master's normal shadow.

The master may communicate with his shadow familiar normally as soon as he gains it. All other abilities are as normal level. Gaining a shadow familiar requires the Improved Familiar feat (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Core Rulebook*).

Improved Familiars

Familiar	Alignment	Arcane Spellcaster Level
Shadow	Neutral	4th
Witchlight	Neutral	5th

ANIMATE DEAD, IMPROVED

School necromancy [evil]; **Level** cleric 4, sorcerer/wizard 5

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (an onyx gem worth at least 25 gp per Hit Dice of the undead)

Range Touch

Target One or more body parts

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

This spell turns the separated body parts of dead creatures into animated undead. The spell is similar in all respects to *animate dead*, except that it does not require complete bodies. The resulting undead operate as Small zombies with the following modifications:

Any class-based HD become racial HD (d8).

They retain class-based Reflex saves but use the Fort and Will saves of a zombie of equal HD.

They retain the defensive abilities of their base creature, including Dexterity bonus and natural bonuses to armor. They gain DR 5/slashing, any size bonuses and penalties to AC, and the natural armor bonus of a zombie by size.

They fly at 30 ft. (poor). Fast movement affects their speed.

They retain all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature(s). They gain a slam attack as a zombie one size larger. If this spell is cast on a spellcaster's arm, the arm retains the last spell cast by the original creature in life at its original caster level, which it may cast once per day without need for material or verbal components.

They retain any of the base creature's special attacks feasibly usable by the body part animated.

They retain the original Dex and add +2 to Str. They have no Con or Int score, and their Wis and Cha become 10.

Their BAB is as per their original class.

They have no skill ranks.

They gain Toughness as a bonus feat and retain all feats from their former life still useable in their current form, including Improved Initiative.

They retain the special qualities of their base creature(s) that remain useable in their current form, unaffected by the zombie staggered special quality.

Material Components: You must place a black onyx gem of at least 25 gp in the hand of each arm or place it on the retained body part. The spell consumes the gem in the casting.

ARMORED HEART

School clockwork (abjuration); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (50 gp worth of mithral dust sprinkled on the target's skin)

Range Touch

Target Creature touched

Duration 1 hour/level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

The warded creature gains resistance to blows, cuts, stabs, and slashes. The subject gains DR 2/adamantine. The DR increases by +1 for every 5 caster levels.

ARMORED SHELL

School clockwork (conjuration) [creation] [earth]; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a rivet)

Range Touch

Target Personal

Duration 1 hour/level

A suit of heavy armor appears around you, granting a +8 bonus to Armor Class, but applying a 40% chance of arcane spell failure, a -5 armor check penalty, and the normal speed reduction for wearing heavy armor. The spell fails if you are already wearing any kind of armor when you cast it.

BIND GUARDIAN

School clockwork (necromancy); **Level** gear 6, sorcerer/wizard 5

Casting Time 8 hours

Components V, S, M (Luring souls into the shell requires the sacrifice of 1,000 gp in gems for each HD of the final creature.), F (a piece of bone from a humanoid and a rivet), XP (XP cost 1/25 the market price of the finished construct).

Range Touched host shell

Target One "loose" soul or spirit

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** No

This exhausting ritual lures and traps a soul to provide a permanent motive force for various constructs, such as steam golems, clockwork scullions, and advanced animated objects. This ancient ceremony provides an alternative to living sacrifices to acquire an animating soul for the construct.

The caster must first construct the host shell. Once done, casting this spell over the shell creates a powerful lure for loose souls, such as

incorporeal undead or other spirits of the dead. There is no guarantee that a soul is near enough to be lured into the shell.

Each time the spell is cast there is a 20% chance that a free soul is close enough to be affected by the spell. This chance increases by 2% per rank of Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion) the caster possesses, to a maximum of 90%. Nearby souls may make Will saves to avoid being lured into the shell. Only after the soul has entered the construct does its true peril become clear. At that point, the soul makes a second Will save to avoid being forever bound as a subservient guardian creature.

Once the soul is bound, the guardian creature is animated and has all of the normal abilities for a guardian of its type. It is also bound to the will of its creator, can understand his commands, and must obey them.

BLACK HAND

School illumination (necromancy); **Level** shadowsworn 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Personal

Target You

Duration Until discharged

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (special, see text); **Spell Resistance** No
You gather the powers of darkness into your fist and strike with a paralyzing and shadowy chill. Black and purple flames encase your hand.

With a successful touch attack, you deal 1d3 Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage to an enemy. These points are added to your own attributes as an enhancement bonus for 1 round per caster level. If the victim makes a Fortitude save, he suffers (and the caster gains) just 1 point of Constitution damage.

BLACK WELL

School illumination (creation) [shadow]; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6

Casting Time 1 full action

Components V, S

Range long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Effect 5-ft.-diameter black pit; see text

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Fortitude half, see text; **Spell Resistance** No

You summon a black mass of seething energy that attracts creatures and devours the life force of those it touches.

When the spell takes effect, creatures within 90 ft. of the black well are pulled toward it a total number of squares equal to your level. Creatures pulled into the well suffer 1d8 negative energy damage per caster level (Fortitude save halves) and are affected as per *hold person* (Will save negates, no save if target takes damage from the spell). Creatures only take damage upon entering the well; they take no additional damage by remaining within it, but they do take additional damage by leaving and being pulled back in. Only one creature may be pulled into the well each round, but a total number of creatures equal to your CL can be squeezed into the single square. Other creatures pulled toward it are simply held next to it; any excess "pull" is deducted from their movement on their turn.

You are never drawn toward the *black well*, and you may stand near it and use it as a form of defensive terrain.

For example, a 13th-level sorcerer casts this spell among a party of adventurers; it centers 40 ft. from the dwarf (who is furthest away), 30

ft. from two humans, and adjacent to an elf. With 13 5-ft. squares to spend moving foes, the caster moves the elf 1 square into the well to take 13d8 negative energy damage. The two humans are both moved 6 squares adjacent to the well. The dwarf is unaffected.

Creatures killed by this spell may be raised normally, but they shift in alignment one step toward neutrality unless first receiving a *major restoration* spell.

BLESSING OF VOLUND

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** cleric 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components DF, V

Range 30 ft.

Targets You and all allies within 30 ft.

Duration 1 min/level

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

When you cast this spell, you and your allies brim with a divine courage that grants a morale bonus equal to 1 +1 per 3 caster levels on skill checks made for one particular skill (chosen when cast).

CATAPULT

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small platinum lever and fulcrum worth 400 gp)

Range Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Targets One object or creature per 2 caster levels

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You violently hurl one or more objects or creatures into the air.

You can hurl one object or creature per two caster levels (maximum 10) that are within range and all within 40 ft. of each other, toward any target within 400 ft. of all the objects. You can hurl up to a total weight of 50 pounds per caster level (maximum 1,000 pounds at 20th level).

Objects hurled at moving targets require an attack roll (one per creature or object thrown) to hit, using your base attack bonus + your Intelligence (if a wizard) or Charisma (if a sorcerer) modifier. You deal 1d4 damage to the target creature per 50 pounds of the object or creature thrown.

Creatures who fall within the weight capacity of the spell can be hurled but receive Will saves (and spell resistance) to negate the effect, as do held possessions targeted by the spell. If a catapulted creature is hurled against a solid surface, it takes damage as if it had fallen 10 ft. per 3 caster levels (1d6 points).

CLOCKWORK TIMER

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 swift action

Components V, S, M (an hourglass filled with mithral sand worth 25 gp)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One spell

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw See spell description; **Spell Resistance** No

You delay a spell by up to one minute/caster level. This delay affects an area or instantaneous spell that you cast immediately after casting *clockwork timer*. When the time expires, the delayed spell is immediately activated. The spell generates a distinctive ticking sound that can be heard with a DC 15 Listen check within 50 ft. of the spell effect.

A successful *dispel magic* removes both *clockwork timer* and the spell it is delaying. A caster who spends 10 minutes crafting a *clockwork timer* and then succeeds on a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the spell level) makes the timer more resistant to *dispel magic* and similar effects, increasing the dispel DC by +4.

COMPELLING FATE

School illumination (divination); **Level** oracle 3, shadowsworn 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components S, M (a sprinkling of fine-ground mithral dust worth 200 gp)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target One creature

Duration 1 round

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** No

You view your own actions or those of a single creature through the influences of the stars and read what is written there. If the target creature fails its saving throw, you can predict that creature's actions. This has the following effects:

- The creature is automatically flat-footed against you.
- For each square the creature moves, you can move one square (up to your normal movement) on the creature's turn when it has completed its movement. This requires using your move action for that round out of sequence.
- You warn others of the affected creature's offensive intentions as a free action, and any creature targeted by a spell or attack by the affected creature gains a +2 circumstance bonus to a saving throw or AC.
- You gain a +4 circumstance bonus to your AC and any saving throws against attacks or spells originating from the affected creature.

COMPELLING QUESTION

School illumination [language-dependent, mind-affecting]

(enchantment); **Level** inquisitor 1, oracle 1, shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target One creature

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You ask another creature one simple question that it can answer with a single word. On the target's next turn, if it fails the save, it must answer you as truthfully as possible as a free action.

The DM may assign modifiers to the saving throw based on how important the target considers the information. Asking someone whether she is the king's murderer, for example, involves a closely guarded secret and provides a +2 circumstance bonus. An assassin or inquisitor always gains a +4 competence bonus to this saving throw.

DOMINATE CLOCKWORK

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** gear 9, sorcerer/wizard 9

Casting time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a chunk of crystal wrapped in copper wire, costing 50 gp)

Range Close (25ft. + 5ft./2 levels)

Target 1 clockwork device, vehicle, or construct

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

This spell brings a clockwork device under your control. A clockwork affected by this spell will only respond to your commands and activations and no one else's (not even its creator's). You can command and activate it with your voice only. A construct or vehicle dominated in this way does not attack you and obeys all your commands, even if the command is to attack the original owner. A construct with a bound soul is still dominated, and the spirit within loses control of its clockwork body unless you allow it any control.

DOUSE

School illumination (transmutation); **Level** druid 1, shadowsworn 0, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Area One light/level in a 40-ft. radius

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex negates (object); **Spell Resistance** Yes (object)

You douse one small source of natural light, such as a candle, lantern, or torch. A caster of 2nd level or higher can extinguish multiple fires at the same time, as long as they are all within the spell's area. Larger fires such as hearth fires, campfires, bonfires, and magical fires are unaffected.

FLICKERING FATE

School illumination (divination); **Level** oracle 4, shadowsworn 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Personal or close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target You or one creature

Duration 1 round

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** No

The target sees the flickering shadows of a few seconds into the future.

When the spell is cast, all creatures within range must declare their actions for the round before the subject of the spell declares his. All creatures receive a Will saving throw; those who succeed need not follow the course of action they declared. Those who fail must take their action exactly as declared.

The subject of this spell gains a +4 insight bonus to attack rolls, Armor Class, and saving throws against any creature that failed its saving throw.

GEAR BARRAGE

School clockwork (evocation); **Level** gear 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small handful of sprockets and gears worth 5 gp)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./ 2 levels)

Effect Cone shaped burst

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** Yes

The caster launches a cone-shaped burst of telekinetically propelled gears. The spell deals 1d4+1 hp damage per level (maximum 10d4+10). Anyone within the burst can make a Reflex saving throw for half damage.

HEAVY BURDEN

School illumination (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a lodestone worth 100 gp)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target One creature per two levels

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw None; see text; **Spell Resistance** Yes

This spell makes targets' limbs feel remarkably heavy, making them drop all held items and slowing their movement by 20 ft. (40 ft. for flying movement). If this penalty reduces movement to zero, targets can no longer take move actions, use items, or cast spells with material components, though they can defend flat-footed.

At the end of the spell duration, affected creatures must make a Fortitude save or be exhausted. Creatures that successfully save are fatigued.

INDULGENCE

School abjuration; **Level** trickery 5

Casting Time 1 hour

Components V, S, M (alcoholic drink), F (prayer device worth 500 gp), DF

Range Touch

Target Living creature touched

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes

Like *atonement*, this spell removes the burden of misdeeds from the subject. The target of this spell may be unrepentant or even want to commit the misdeed again.

The casting cleric's deity (who must have Trickery in its portfolio) accepts the stain of the evil act, absolving you before your own deity becomes aware of it. You must sacrifice at least 2,500 gp in rare incense and offerings, but the casting cleric may ask for more. *Indulgence* must be cast before you commit the evil act or before the next time you pray, including prayers for new spells. If you have prayed since committing the deed, it is too late for *indulgence* and only *atonement* can restore you.

LEECHING LANTHORN

School necromancy (shadow); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F (an inscribed and carefully prepared silver lantern fueled with pure oil and shadowstuff; such a lantern always has hardness 4 and 30 hp, and it costs 400 gp)

Effect One 30-ft.-radius circle

Duration 1 round/level or until lantern destroyed

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** No

By lighting a ritually prepared lantern, you generate an area within which one ability score is drawn out of all creatures around you and channeled through the lantern into you. At the time of the spell's casting, you choose Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. All creatures within the lantern's light must make a Fortitude save each round that they remain in the area. Success means they are unaffected that round. Failure means they suffer 1d4 ability damage in the relevant ability score, and you gain points in the same ability equal to 1 per creature damaged in this way. You retain these points for 10 rounds after the spell ends.

If the lantern is destroyed, the spell ends immediately, and you lose all leeching ability score points.

LADA'S SACRED SERVANT

School conjuration [healing]; **Level** cleric 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, DF

Range Close (25 ft. +5 ft./level)

Effect One healing sphere of light

Duration 1 round/1 level (D)

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

Upon completing this spell, you summon a small ball of light, similar in appearance to a will-o'-wisp, that hovers about a foot off the ground. As a move action, you can direct the sacred servant to move to and touch one living target in range, restoring hit points equal to 1d6 + your Wisdom modifier. The sacred servant cannot make attack rolls and thus cannot use its positive energy to damage undead or other creatures damaged by positive energy.

The sacred servant cannot be harmed by physical attacks, but *dispel magic*, *disintegrate*, a *sphere of annihilation*, or a *rod of cancellation* affects it normally. The sacred servant's AC against touch attacks is 12 (10 + size bonus for Tiny object).

If a touched creature has spell resistance, make a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) against that spell resistance the first time the sacred servant touches the creature. If the sacred servant is successfully resisted, the spell is dispelled. If not, the sacred servant has its normal full effect on that creature for the duration of the spell.

LADA'S SACRED SERVANT, GREATER

School conjuration [summoning]; **Level** cleric 5

As *Lada's sacred servant*, but the greater servant restores hit points equal to 2d6 + your Wisdom modifier.

LENGTHEN SHADOWS

School illumination (transmutation) [darkness, shadow]; **Level** shadowsworn 0, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components: V, S

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Area 40-foot-radius emanation

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

You channel darkness and shadows into your surroundings. The spell's area becomes gloomier, murkier, and more difficult to see in without actually becoming dark enough to impede movement or combat. Low-light vision or darkvision is required to see normally. All Perception checks within the area suffer a -2 penalty for the duration of the spell.

LIGHT BLINDNESS

School transmutation [shadow]; **Level** shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target Creature touched

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You blind a creature that can see in daylight; the subject can see only in shadows or in darkness for the duration. If a creature with darkvision is targeted, it can see only in shadowy illumination or in bright illumination—it can no longer see in full darkness.

LIGHT warding

School illumination (abjuration); **Level** shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a quartz lens ground to a fine sheen and backed with silver (50 gp))

Effect One 5 ft. square per level

Duration 1 day/level or until discharged

Saving Throw Reflex negates; **Spell Resistance** No

You draw an invisible line as a barrier against one or more types of creatures. When these creatures cross that line, the warding releases a powerful flare of light, visible for miles.

The types of creatures affected must be set when the spell is cast: choose any of the standard monster types (aberration, humanoid, dragon, etc.) or subtypes (Fire, Law, Incorporeal), plus one additional type or subtype per 4 caster levels. Only creatures of the chosen type trigger the spell. Creatures with the Shadow or Dark subtype must make a Will save to cross through the warded square, even after the spell has been triggered.

When the appropriate creature type or subtype enters a square where the spell is present, the light warding releases a burst of pure light. Creatures in any of the affected squares must make an immediate Reflex save or be blinded for 1d4 hours. The DC of this save increases by 2 for every 60 ft. of darkvision that the target has and by 1 for creatures with low-light vision.

LOCK ARMOR

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a pouch of rust and metal shavings)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target Metal equipment of one creature per two levels, or one construct per two levels

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates (see description); **Spell Resistance** No

Lock armor makes metal cling to metal as though soldered or rusted through, making it impossible to move the pieces against one another. This effectively paralyzes a creature in any form of metal armor, although speech is still possible. The effect is negated if the armor can be removed by a compatriot. In addition, the creature in armor gains a Will save each round to overcome the effect.

A creature wearing a chain shirt, breastplate, or other metal armor that only covers part of the body (at the GM's discretion) can still move but cannot attack or effectively defend itself.

Animated metal constructs are completely paralyzed and unable to speak. Each round, a construct affected by this spell may attempt a new Will save to end the effect as a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. A winged construct affected by *lock armor* cannot flap its wings and falls. A swimmer can't swim and might drown. *Grease* counters and dispels *lock armor*.

MACHINE SACRIFICE

School clockwork (necromancy); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 8

Casting Time 1 swift action

Components V, M (a construct with at least 3 HD, which is entirely consumed in the casting)

Range Creature touched

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes

The target creature is filled with the power of a machine and becomes immune to almost all forms of death for a limited period. As part of the spell's casting, a construct or device is destroyed as a material component of the spell. An intelligent animated creature or device used in this way must be willing (except for gearforged or those actively opposing the spellcaster, most animated creatures and devices are considered willing).

While the spell is active, the target gains hardness 20/adamantine and a +6 circumstance bonus on all saving throws. In addition, the target gains immunity to death effects, critical hits, and death from massive damage. If the animated construct sacrificed had 10 or more HD, the spell grants temporary hit points equal to one-quarter of those of the sacrificed construct.

MECHANICAL UNION

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 5

Casting Time 1 round

Components V, S, M (a tiny hammer and adamantine spike worth 100 gp)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One construct

Duration 1 hour/level or concentration

Saving Throw Special; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You can control the actions of any construct by voice or mental commands. Once you give a command, the construct attempts to carry out that command to the exclusion of all other activities. Changing your instructions or giving a construct a new command is a move action.

By concentrating fully on the spell as a standard action, you can receive full sensory input as interpreted by the construct.

Intelligent constructs resist the mechanical control, and any construct forced to take actions against its nature receives a new saving throw with a +2 bonus.

Self-destructive orders are not carried out and immediately end the spell. Once control is established, the range at which it can be exercised is unlimited, as long as you and the subject are on the same plane. You need not see the subject to control it.

MELD

School transmutation (conjunction); **Level** cleric 4, gear 3

Casting Time 3 rounds

Components V, S, F (four plates of metal, crafted by you, worth at least 50 gp).

Range Personal

Target Caster

Duration 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

This spell adheres metal plates to the caster's skin, bonding armor to you. The metal plates are the material focus of the spell and grant a +5 armor bonus and damage reduction 5/magic. The armor bonus increases by +1 for every 3 caster levels above 10th (to +6 at 13th level, +7 at 16th, and +8 at 19th).

Due to the nature of the spell, the plates confer no armor check penalty, arcane spell failure chance, or movement reduction. When the spell expires, the armor plates simply drop off.

NET OF COMETS

School illumination (evocation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a meteor fragment)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect 40-ft.-radius spread

Duration Concentration plus 1 round/level

Saving Throw Reflex negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You create a net of shining starstuff, thrumming with celestial energies and shot through with a luminescent trail of stars. This net sheds light equal to a *daylight* spell.

Anyone in the spell's area must make a Reflex save. Success means the creature is burned for 1 positive energy damage per caster level but not prevented from moving. Failure means the creature is burned for 3 positive energy damage per caster level and must make a Will save in each following round or become fascinated and take another 3 positive energy damage per caster level. If a Will save succeeds, the creature escapes the shining net of comets, suffers no damage, and can move normally that round. Undead suffer double damage from a *net of comets*.

If at least 5 ft. of the net are between you and an opponent, it provides concealment. If you have at least 20 ft. of net between you, it provides cover.

ORB OF LIGHT

School illumination (conjunction (creation)); **Level** shadowsworn 3, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)

Effect One orb of light

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude partial; see text; **Spell Resistance** No

An orb of pure light the size of your hand shoots from your fingertips at a target. If you succeed with a ranged touch attack, the orb causes 1d6 hp damage per caster level (maximum 15d6). Undead suffer 1d8 hp damage per caster level (maximum 15d8).

A creature struck by the orb is also blinded for 1 round. A successful Fortitude save prevents the blinding effect but not the damage.

ORB OF LIGHT, LESSER

School illumination (conjunction (creation)); **Level** shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Effect One orb of light

A smallish orb of pure light shoots from your fingertips at a target. If you succeed on a ranged touch attack, the orb causes 1d8 damage. For every two caster levels beyond 1st, you inflict an additional 1d8 hp damage; 2d8 at 3rd level, 3d8 at 5th, and so on, to the maximum of 5d8 at 9th level or higher.

PENDULUM

School clockwork (enchantment) [lawful]; **Level** cleric 1, gear 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small pendulum or metronome made of brass and rosewood worth 10 gp)

Range Touch

Target One creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You give the target creature a degree of complete regularity in its motions and fortunes, succeeding and failing in a simple pattern. While under the effect of this spell, the target's attacks, saving throws, and skill checks do not require die rolls. Instead, they always follow this sequence: 20, 1, 19, 2, 18, 3, 17, 4, and so on, until the spell expires. The initial result of 20 occurs when the target must next make any die roll.

POREVIT'S MANTLE

School transmutation; **Level** druid 1, ranger 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a handful of toadstools)

Range Touch

Targets One creature/level

Duration 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

You take on the physical characteristics of the terrain around you. Grass and tiny mushrooms sprout in your hair, moss beards your chin, and your flesh takes on the mottled hues of leaves and bark. This grants a +3 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks in the appropriate terrain.

The material component is a handful of toadstools, dried or fresh.

PRISMATIC FIST

School illumination (evocation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range 60 ft.

Target One creature/round

Duration Concentration up to 6 rounds

Saving Throw See text; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You generate a red and an orange prismatic ray in a 60' line on the first round, and then yellow, green, indigo, and violet rays in the following rounds, provided you keep concentrating. You may target different creatures with the rays each round, but only one new color is generated each round.

The different rays' effects are as described for *prismatic spray*.

REPAIR METAL

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target One construct or metal object

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

This spell repairs 1d8+5 damage done to a metal object or construct, sealing up rents and bending steel back into place.

REPAIR METAL, GREATER

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** cleric 4, Sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target One construct or metal object

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

This spell repairs 2d8+10 damage done to a metal object or construct, sealing up rents and bending steel back into place.

ROGUE'S STAB

School transmutation [shadow]; **Level** assassin 1, bard 2, ranger 1, shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target Creature touched

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes

The target gains the ability to make sneak attacks as a rogue against opponents denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class or flanked. The target deals +1d6 damage when making such an attack. If the target can already make sneak attacks, that sneak attack damage increases by 1d6.

SHADOW BITE

School illumination (illusion); **Level** shadowsworn 0, sorcerer/wizard 0

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target One humanoid creature

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You create a momentary needle of cold, sharp pain in a target creature. This causes no damage, but it may break a spellcaster's concentration (DC 13). The target uses its next move action to stand up or fall prone (whichever the DM deems most appropriate). There is a 50% chance the subject will drop a held item.

SHADOW BLINDNESS

School illumination (transmutation); **Level** shadowsworn 0, sorcerer/wizard 0

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target Creature touched

Duration 1 round

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You negate one creature's darkvision. The victim is considered to have normal human sight and cannot see in complete darkness for the duration of the spell.

SHADOW HANDS

School illumination (evocation) [cold]; **Level** assassin 1, shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range 10 ft.

Area Semicircular wave of shadow 10 ft. in radius, centered on your hands

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** Yes

A freezing blast of shadow leaps from your hands in a fan pattern. Any creature caught in the shadows takes 1d6 cold damage per caster level (maximum 5d6).

SHADOW JUMP

School illumination (conjunction (teleportation, shadow)); **Level** shadowsworn 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V

Range Personal

Target Caster

Duration Instantaneous

You may move from one shadow directly to another within 100 ft. +10 ft./level and line of sight without passing through the intervening space. After moving, you can't take any other actions until your next turn. You can bring along any object you are able to carry. You cannot bring creatures along with you, other than your familiar.

SHATTER, GREATER

School clockwork (evocation) [sonic]; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (an earthquake-broken stone and a small brass bell)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area or Target 25-ft.-radius spread; or one solid object or one construct

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude special; see text; **Spell Resistance** Yes (object)

This spell creates a loud, chiming clangor that breaks non-magical objects; sunders a single large, non-magical object; or damages crystalline, stone, and metal creatures.

Used as an area attack, *greater shatter* destroys all non-magical objects of crystal, glass, ceramic, brick, stone, or porcelain within a 25-foot radius of the point of origin, smashing them into dozens of pieces. Objects weighing more than 1 pound per caster level are not affected. All creatures within the area of effect must make a Fortitude save or be deafened for 1 round per caster level.

Alternatively, you can target a single object, regardless of composition, weighing up to 1,000 pounds per caster level, such as a portion of a bridge, cliff wall, dam, or glacier.

Finally, this spell deals 2d6 sonic damage per caster level (maximum 20d6) to crystalline creatures or constructs of any weight, with a Fortitude save allowed for half damage.

SILHOUETTE

School illumination (illusion); **Level** shadowsworn 0, sorcerer/wizard 0

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Area Wall up to 100 square ft.

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You make a shadow play against a screen or wall. The screen or wall can encompass up to 100 square ft. and can show as many people or animals as your Intelligence score. The shadow figures do not make any sound, but they can dance, run, move, cast spells, kiss, fight, and so forth. Most of the figures are general types such as a rabbit or a dwarf, but a number of forms equal to the caster's Intelligence modifier can be recognized as particular individuals, such as "Prince Banda" or "Silverlock the elf."

SILENT COMBAT

School transmutation [sonic, shadow]; **Level** shadowsworn 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target One creature

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

An attack made by the subject of the spell is rendered utterly silent. The spell covers the noise of shouts and screams, rattling armor, clashing blades, or the heavy fall of a body. It does not prevent spellcasters from casting spells with verbal components, and it does not prevent whispers or normal speech—only abrupt or loud noises that carry for a distance.

SILENT SOUND

School evocation [sonic, shadow]; **Level** bard 1, shadowsworn 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components S

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target One creature or object

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You fire a ray of sonic energy too shrill to hear from your fingertips. Make a ranged touch attack. A hit inflicts 1d6 sonic damage per level (5d6 maximum).

SLITHER

School illumination (transmutation); **Level** shadowsworn 2, Sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, M (ashes from a wooden statue of you, made into ink and used to draw your portrait, worth 50 gp)

Range Personal

Target Caster

Duration 1 round

You momentarily become a shadow, able to slide under a door, through a keyhole, or any other tiny opening. All of your equipment is transformed with you, and you can move up to your full running speed during the spell's duration.

If you return to your normal size while in a space too small for you (such as a mouse hole, sewer pipe, or the like), you suffer 3d6 hp damage while creating a space just big enough to fit into. You can cast spells without somatic components, speak, and breathe while in such a space.

If the duration ends with you within a keyhole or door, it breaks and you take damage equal to its hardness.

SNAP THE LEASH

School enchantment [mind-affecting]; **Level** druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (used leash or similar object)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One living creature of Intelligence 2 or less

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You remove the shackles of domestication from a creature's mind, causing it to entirely forget being broken or trained. Mounts refuse all riders, and other animals forget any tricks learned and obedience taught. Memories are not affected, so creatures may remain drawn to those who have treated them kindly and aggressive towards those who have harmed them. The animal can be domesticated again, but the trainer must start from scratch.

This spell is only partly effective against animal companions, familiars, and paladin mounts. Although the spell removes any tricks they know, the bond between animal and master is otherwise unaffected.

SPY MY SHADOW

School transmutation; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V

Range Personal

Target Caster

Duration 1 min./level

Saving Throw None (harmless); **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

You whisper a fey rhyme to your shadow, bringing it to life as a tenebrous spy that can slip under doors, between shutters, and through the narrowest of cracks. You may stretch your shadow up to 10 times your height and move it as you wish, although it remains two-dimensional and cannot interact with physical objects.

You may spy through your shadow's eyes and ears as if they were your own, but magically enhanced senses do not work through this spell. Your shadow uses your Stealth skill normally to remain hidden. It gains a +4 bonus to Stealth checks in dim lighting but suffers a -4 penalty in brightly lit areas. Enemies who see your shadow can make attacks against it using your touch AC, although the shadow is incorporeal.

Damage or effects inflicted upon your shadow affect you as though the attack had hit you.

STARBOLT

School illumination (evocation) [force]; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)

Effect Scattered bolts in 20 ft. cube

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude partial; see text; **Spell Resistance** No

You unleash a shower of bright force bolts that fall from the heavens in a 20-foot cube and illuminate their targets. This spell creates one bolt at 1st level and one additional bolt for each two additional levels; thus, you command two bolts at 3rd level, three at 5th, and so on.

The bolts deals 1d6+1 damage and can be targeted separately at any creatures in the area. In addition, a creature hit by a *starbolt* must make a Fortitude save or be dazed for the remainder of the round.

STARFALL

School illumination (evocation) [force]; **Level** shadowsworn 4, sorcerer/wizard 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target One creature/level

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Reflex halves; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You release a number of powerful force bolts from your body equal to your level. Each strikes a creature within line of sight. No more than 3 bolts can strike a single target. Creatures struck take 3d12 damage, and a Reflex save halves that damage. Those that fail their saving throw are also blinded and knocked prone.

STAR'S HEART

School illumination (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 9

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (an ioun stone)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area Up to one 10-ft. cube per two levels

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw None; see text; **Spell Resistance** No

This spell increases gravity tenfold, causing all creatures in the area other than the caster to drop all held objects and fall prone and helpless. If some solid object (such as the ground) is encountered when flying or levitating creatures fall, objects and creatures strike it in the same manner as they would during a normal downward fall, but take triple normal falling damage.

Any affected standing creature must make a DC 20 Strength check each round or fall prone. Once prone, creatures remain there, crushed by their own weight and suffering 3d12 bludgeoning damage each round until they make a successful DC 25 Strength or Dexterity check, at which point they stop taking damage but must continue making Strength checks to stand and say upright. Affected creatures may take free



or swift actions but may not move or take standard actions. Creatures under the influence of a *freedom of movement* spell gain a +8 circumstance bonus to all Strength or Dexterity checks required by this spell.

At the end of the spell's duration, affected creatures must make a Fortitude save or be exhausted. Creatures that save successfully are fatigued.

STARRY VISION

School illumination (divination); **Level** oracle 6 shadowsworn 5, sorcerer/wizard 7

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components S, M (a sprinkling of fine-ground diamond dust worth 500 gp, which is thrown into the air)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Area 4 5-ft. squares/level

Duration 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

You see the fate of all creatures in a square area up to the spell maximum. You can act on this knowledge with these effects:

- All creatures in the area are flat-footed against you for the spell's duration.
- You may move during any creature's turn in a round. This expends your move action this round.
- You gain a +8 insight bonus to your AC and any saving throws arising from the actions of a creature within the area of the spell.
- As a swift action, you can warn one other creature, which has not yet acted in a round, whether its spell or attack will fail. If the warned creature wishes, it may choose to take another action when it acts. The creature's player may re-roll one failed attack roll this round against an affected creature, or the player may take a different action or attack a different target.

For purposes of this spell, all attack actions are considered equivalent to one another, and all spellcasting actions are equivalent to one another.

STEAM BLAST

School clockwork (evocation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a tiny copper tea kettle or boiler)

Range Personal

Area 30-foot-radius burst

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You unleash a burst of superheated steam, centered on you. Creatures within the burst take 1d8 fire damage per caster level (maximum 15d8). Non-magical unprotected fires smaller than a bonfire within the area are extinguished. Everything within the area becomes soaking wet, and normal fires cannot be lit within the area for 1 hour after the burst.

You are unaffected by your own blast. *Steam blast* works exactly the same way underwater. *Steam blast* counters and dispels a wall of ice.

STEP LIKE ME

School transmutation; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 1, witch 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (personal item such as blood, hair, footprint, or other connection to target)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One creature

Duration 1 day (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You steal the footsteps of a target creature within one size category of you. For the duration of the spell, you leave the tracks of the target while they leave tracks as if they were you. In addition, creatures capable of identifying creatures using tremorsense mistake you for a creature of the subject's species.

STOLEN IDENTITY

School necromantic; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2, trickery 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (touching subject's face)

Range Touch

Target Person touched

Duration 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates (see below); **Spell Resistance** No

By touching the face of another person while casting this spell, you acquire his or her voice and facial features. Other aspects of body and equipment are not duplicated, but the spell gives a +5 enhancement bonus to the Disguise check to impersonate the individual (+10 if only the face and voice are needed—like poking around a corner or through a curtain). A dead or unconscious owner of the stolen face dead still gets a saving throw. While the spell is in effect, the target may only speak in a hoarse whisper.

SUMMON BLADE

School conjuration (summoning); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 1, trickery 1

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, M (a short string or leather strap)

Range Special, see text.

Effect One light, one-handed weapon

Duration 1 hour / level or until activated

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

The caster prepares a light, one-handed weapon (usually a dagger or sap), or item that can be easily held in one hand, by wrapping and tying it with a string or strap. The end of the string is cut off. The fragment detects faintly of summoning magic. As an immediate action, the final word is spoken while holding the string. As long as the item is on the same plane of existence, it appears in the activator's, hand ready to use.

SUMMON STAR

School illumination (conjuration (summoning)); **Level** cleric 7, sorcerer/wizard 8

Casting Time 1 round

Components V, S, F (arcane focus required for this spell is a sunrod, which is consumed if the star dies)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect One summoned creature

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

You summon a star from the heavens to do your bidding. This manifests as a glowing humanoid with long white hair, birdlike talons as well as hands, and a staff made of pure force. All creatures, other than the caster, who view the star must make a DC 20 Will save or be fascinated for the duration of the spell.

The star is otherwise equivalent to an avoral of maximum hit points (91 hp) whose lightning bolt ability deals force damage.

TERROR

School illumination (necromancy) [fear, mind-affecting]; **Level** shadowsworn 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (an eagle's claw)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect Ray

Target One living creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will partial (see text); **Spell Resistance** Yes

You wave a withered eagle's claw and create a sense of unrelenting fear from the heavens. An invisible ray of terror (requiring a ranged touch attack) causes one living creature to become panicked. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature is shaken for 1 round.

THOUSAND DARTS

School clockwork (evocation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a set of mithral darts worth 25 gp)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect Line of needle-like darts

Duration Instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You launch thousands of needle-like darts as a short-lived continuous line 5 ft. long per caster level. You may set the starting point, direction, and end point of the line anywhere within range. The spell's effect ends with the first creature it strikes, who is allowed a Reflex save for half damage. The spell deals 1d4+1 hp damage per level (maximum 20d4+20).

TICK STOP

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 0

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect One animated object or construct

Duration 1 round; see text

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You speak a word, and the target construct may only take a single move action on its next turn (it may make free, swift, and immediate actions as normal, but no standard or full-round actions). The construct is immune to further *tick stop* spells from the same caster for 24 hours.

TIME JUMP

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 8

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target Touched construct

Duration 1d4+1 rounds

Saving Throw No; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You throw a construct forward through time. Effectively, the target disappears for 1d4+1 rounds. During this time, the creature simply does not exist. It cannot be perceived or scryed upon in any way, nor can it act or be acted upon, even with a *wish*. Persistent effects with durations that affect the creature each round do not affect it, and spells or effects on the creature with durations do not have their durations decreased. When the creature returns to the time stream, it is unaware that any time has passed.

TIMELESS ENGINE

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** cleric 7, gear 7, sorcerer/wizard 7

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range Touch

Target One clockwork device or construct

Duration Permanent

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

This spell halts the normal processes of degradation in a non-magical clockwork device, rendering normal maintenance unnecessary and slowing fuel consumption to 1/10th normal. For magical devices and constructs, the spell greatly slows wear.

The affected magical device does not suffer any penalties for long-term wear, nor does it need fuel, grease, or winding nearly as often. A magical clockwork device, machine, or creature that normally requires daily maintenance instead needs care only once per year. One that requires only monthly maintenance can go a decade between checks.

TIRELESS

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components S, M (an everwound spring worth 50 gp)

Range Touch

Effect One creature

Duration 24 hours

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

The target requires no food, drink, or rest, and gains the stamina of a machine. This allows the target to move three times its normal overland movement rate, perform three times the usual amount of labor (such as crafting a magical item or potion), or read and learn material at three times the normal rate. Creatures under the effects of this spell are immune to non-magical fatigue and exhaustion and suffer no consequences for not sleeping or for overexertion. *Tireless* has no effect on magical fatigue or exhaustion.

WINDING KEY

School clockwork (transmutation); **Level** cleric 5, sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components S, M (an ornately carved silver key worth 50 gp)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One animated object or construct

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

Target construct gains an extra standard action or move action each round.

VOLUND'S INSTANT PILLAR

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range Close (25 ft. +5 ft./level)

Area 5 ft. square

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Special; **Spell Resistance** None

Upon completing this spell, a short pillar of stone and earth abruptly rises 5 ft. from the ground in the target area. The 3-ft. diameter column has hardness 8, 300 hit points, and a break DC of 25. The pillar

does not fill the entire space, and so it does not block movement but does count as difficult terrain. The pillar grants cover to a Medium or smaller creature in its square. A Medium or smaller creature in the square when the pillar rises must make a Reflex save to avoid being suddenly shoved upward with the force of the pillar. Those that fail are knocked prone in the square.

VOLUND'S INSTANT PILLAR, GREATER

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** cleric 3, druid 3

Area 15-ft. radius burst

This spell functions like *Volund's instant pillar*, except it creates one pillar in each square in the area of effect.

VOLUND'S RENDING GRASP

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** cleric 3, druid 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small clay disc carved with an image of a claw)

Range Touch

Target 1 creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Special (see text); **Spell Resistance** Yes

This spell functions like *Volund's vengeful grasp*, but it also prevents the target from charging and deals 1d4 damage per round. Any round in which the target makes its Reflex save, it avoids taking damage and can move and charge freely (but this does not end the spell effect).

VOLUND'S VENGEFUL GRASP

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small clay disc)

Range Touch

Target 1 creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Special (see text); **Spell Resistance** Yes

This spell causes tiny, grasping hands to burst from the earth to grab and harass the target. Each round, the target must make a Reflex save as a swift action or suffer a 10 ft. penalty to its base speed (minimum 0 ft.). A successful Reflex save does not end the spell but frees the target from the spell's effects for 1 round.

This spell affects other modes of movement as well, such as burrow and climb, but specifically does not affect flying and swimming. The movement slowing effect of this spell does not stack with those of similar spells, such as *slow*.

YARILA'S BOUNTY

School conjuration; **Level** druid 4, ranger 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Target One creature touched

Duration 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

The sun's life-giving energy heals and sustains your body. For the duration, you gain fast healing 1 whenever exposed to direct sunlight; 30 minutes of exposure also provides a day's normal nourishment and removes the fatigued and exhausted conditions.

Limited exposure to sunlight—such as dim light—reduces the spell's

healing to 1/minute. Normal or magical darkness suppresses the spell's effect entirely.

Undead are especially vulnerable to this spell. If a targeted undead fails its Will save, it gains the shaken condition and suffers damage instead of healing while in sunlight.

MAGIC SHOPS IN ZOBECK

Zobeck has no true magic shops to speak of. For the most part, the Arcane Collegium frowns on such establishments. What magic someone finds in the course of his travels, however, is none of their concern—unless they want to acquire it. That said, a few faculty members might, with some persuasion, create items for patrons. Most faculty members are too busy with personal studies and classes to take on commissions, but they do enjoy being asked over a free meal or two.

The Book Fetish in the Collegium District does deal in a limited selection of magic items, including those acquired through the Temple of Painful Pleasures. The shop does some buying and trading, and the priestesses also make certain potions and wands for sale. As their clients run the magical gamut, they offer a few non-clerical items. The temple concentrates on divine and sex-related magic, but the temple's high priestess acquires many items in trade or through confiscation, and—for an additional fee—she can talk some of her Arcane Collegium patrons into creating items for her that they normally wouldn't make.

Additionally, customers may purchase more mundane magical items at Pentrick's Mundane Magical Items stall in the Kobold Ghetto. His stock constantly changes, and customers with specific desires may have to visit often. (See the sidebar for his most common items.)

Pentrick's Mundane Magical Items

Item	Market Price
Blinding lantern	900 gp
Boots of solid footing	1,100 gp
Brawler's leather	250 gp
Burglar's key and lock	1,000 gp
Hardening polish	400 gp
Jungle mess kit	500 gp
Scoundrel's gambit	50 gp
Shifting shirt	850 gp
Spicebox spoon	700 gp
Spider grenade	300 gp
Tactile gel	250 gp
Tailor's clasp	1,100 gp
Whispering powder	250 gp

MAGIC ITEMS

ALCHEMICAL LANTERN

Aura minor evocation; **CL** 3rd

Slot —; **Price** 2,500 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Once per night for two consecutive rounds, this lantern can spit enhanced alchemical fire as a touch attack for 2d8 fire damage. The fire burns for an additional round for another 1d8 damage, and it counts as a magic weapon for damage purposes.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *scorching ray*, Craft (woodwork) 3 ranks; **Cost** 1,250 gp

BAG OF TRAPS

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 9th
Slot —; **Price** 23,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Anyone reaching into this apparently empty bag feels a small coin, which resembles no known currency. Removing the coin and placing or tossing it up to 20 ft. creates a random trap that remains for 10 minutes or until discharged or disarmed, whereupon it disappears. The coin returns to the bag only after the trap disappears. The user may draw up to 10 traps from the bag per week.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *fabricate*, *glyph of warding*; **Cost** 11,500 gp

BLACK BOOK OF CONFESSION

Aura moderate abjuration; **CL** 9th
Slot —; **Price** 9,500 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This slender black book is filled with empty pages. Writing a full and detailed account of a misdeed and signing one's true name relieves the user of the metaphysic burden of that act, thus forestalling the loss of class abilities and divine spellcasting as a result of behavior, as per the *indulgence* spell. The book doesn't prevent alignment changes resulting from the misconduct. The book cannot be used prior to the misdeed and must be used before the next time the owner prays (such as to acquire divine spells).

The book is a single-use item, but its magic prevents it from deteriorating over time. It otherwise has the same saving throws, hardness, and hit points as a normal book. Anyone fluent in the language of the confession may read the book. If it is ever destroyed, the deity of the confessing user immediately becomes aware of the transgression and its concealment, even if that user has died and his soul departed to an afterlife.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *indulgence*; **Cost** 4,750 gp

BLINDING LANTERN

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 900 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This ornate brass lantern comes fitted with heavily inscribed plates shielding the cut crystal lens. With a flick of a lever, as a standard action, the plates rise and unleash a dazzling array of lights at a single target within 30 ft.

The wielder must use two hands to direct the lights precisely into the eyes of a foe. The targeted creature becomes dazed

for 1 round (DC 11 Will save prevents). A creature dazed by the lantern is immune to its effects for 1 minute afterward. Creatures with 5 or more HD are immune to the effects of the lantern. This power can be used at will in dark conditions; it has no effect in full daylight.

By opening the shutter on the opposite side, the device functions as a normal bull's-eye lantern, yet illuminates magically, requiring no fuel and giving off no heat.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *daze*; **Cost** 450 gp

BOOTS OF SOLID FOOTING

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 2nd
Slot feet; **Price** 1,100 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A thick, rubbery sole covers the bottoms and sides of these stout leather boots. Useful for maneuvering cluttered alleyways, slick sewers, and the occasional patch of ice or gravel, they allow normal movement over difficult terrain for up to 10 rounds in a 24-hour period.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 5 ranks in Acrobatics; **Cost** 550 gp

BOOTS OF STRATEGIC MOVEMENT

Aura minor enchantment; **CL** 3rd
Slot feet; **Price** 5,500 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These boots grant the wearer a +10 ft. enhancement bonus to his base land speed. In addition, these boots allow the wearer to use the Run feat for 4 rounds once per day.

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *longstrider*, creator must have the Run feat; **Cost** 2,750 gp

BRAWLER'S LEATHER

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot hands; **Price** 250 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

These rawhide straps have lines of crimson runes running along their length. They require 10 minutes of bathing them in salt water before carefully wrapping them around the forearms. Once fitted, they provide a +1 enhancement bonus to unarmed attacks and damage. The straps become brittle once they set and only last for the 10 attacks after fitting before crumbling away.

CONSTRUCTION

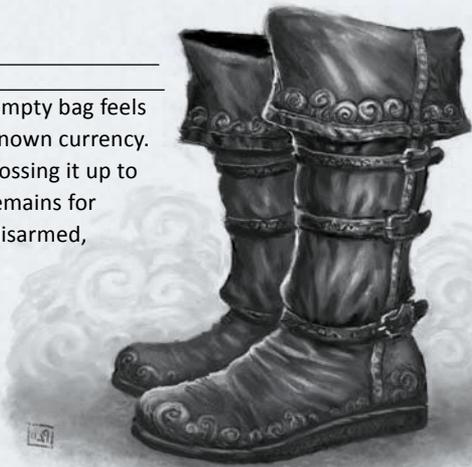
Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic fang*; **Cost** 125 gp

BURGLAR'S LOCK AND KEY

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 1,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This heavy iron lock bears a stout, pitted key permanently fixed in the keyhole. Using a standard action to twist the key



NEW WEAPON ABILITY

Disarming

This ability allows you to attack as if you had the Improved Disarm feat. If you have Improved Disarm, you gain an additional +2 bonus to your CMB and CMD for disarm attempts, which stacks with any feat bonuses.

Minor transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved Disarm, *mage hand*; Price +1 bonus

counterclockwise instantly opens one designated door, chest, bag, bottle, or container within 30 ft.

Any container or portal weighing more than 30 lbs. or restrained in any way (latched, bolted, tied, or the like) automatically resists this effect.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *open/close*; **Cost** 500 gp

CATALYST OIL

Aura strong abjuration; **CL** 13th

Slot —; **Price** 9,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This special elemental compound draws on nearby energy sources. Catalyst oils are tailored to one specific energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or fire) and work once per dose. Whenever a spell or effect of this type goes off within 60 ft. of a dose of catalyst oil, the oil catalyzes and hurls a bolt of the same energy directly at the source of the effect (i.e. the caster of a spell).

This bolt strikes unerringly and inflicts half the amount of energy created by the catalyzing effect. For example, if a sorcerer casts a 6d6 *fireball* near a fire-based catalyst oil, the oil hurls a 3d6 bolt of fire back at the caster. A successful Reflex save versus the spell or effects DC, if it has one, halves this damage.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Brew Potion, *spell turning*; **Cost** 4,500 gp/dose

CLOAK OF THE INCONSPICUOUS

Aura moderate enchantment and abjuration; **CL** 10th

Slot shoulders; **Price** 15,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Spun from simple grey wool and closed with a plain, triangular copper clasp, this cloak may activate once per day as an immediate action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. For 5 minutes after speaking the command word, the wearer becomes completely forgettable.

Those who see the wearer must pass a DC 16 Intelligence check to remember what she looks or sounds like. The witness remembers a person doing whatever the wearer did but can only describe the wearer in the most general terms, “an androgynous person, of average height, dressed like everyone else.” For every 2 that the Intelligence check exceeds the DC, the witness may recall a single detail, such as race, gender, a facial feature, clothing, tone of voice, or other distinguishing characteristic; so a total check of 23 would permit the witness to remember four details.

True seeing pierces this effect. Creatures with blindsight are unaffected by this item.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *modify memory*, *nondetection*; **Cost** 7,500 gp

CLOAK OF THE RAT

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot shoulders; **Price** 12,400 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This gray garment bestows a +5 competence bonus to Perception checks. Once per day, the wearer can contort his body as a swift action to shimmy through small spaces (if not wearing metal armor) normally accessible only by creatures one category smaller (as per *alter self*) or to escape bonds. Also, once per day, the wearer may transform himself and his carried or worn possessions into a dire rat (as per *beast shape I*).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, 5 ranks in Perception, *alter self*, *beast shape I*; **Cost** 6,200 gp

CLOCKWORK HAND

Aura minor transmutation; **CL** 3rd

Slot hand; **Price** 12,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Beautiful works of articulated brass, these prosthetic clockwork hands provide a +2 equipment bonus to Strength when used for any purpose and to CMD versus disarm attempts.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, Graft Clockwork, *bull's strength*, crafter must have 5 ranks in Craft (clockwork); **Cost** 6,000 gp

CLOCKWORK PENDANT

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 6th

Slot neck; **Price** 25,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This pendant resembles an ornate, miniature clock. By winding the dial and consciously expending one charge, the user can cast *haste*, *slow*, or *displacement*. The spell lasts for 3 rounds. Only one spell cast from a *clockwork pendant* can be active at a time. Casting a second spell negates an existing spell effect. Destroying the pendant creates a temporal stasis effect in a 10-ft. cube if at least 3 charges remain. A new *clockwork pendant* has 10 charges.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *displacement*, *haste*, *slow*; **Cost** 12,500 gp

FANGED MASK

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 6th

Slot face; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This primitive mask is made of wood and adorned with teeth. Once donned, it melds to the wearer's face and grants a bite attack that deals 1d4 hp damage regardless of the



wearer's size. This is a secondary natural attack. A creature that already has a bite attack and dons a fanged mask gains the benefit of the Improved Natural Attack feat for its bite attack instead.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic fang*; **Cost** 1,000 gp

GLIDING CLOAK

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd

Slot shoulders; **Price** 7,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

By grasping the ends of the cloak as a free action while falling, the user is affected as though by a *glide* spell.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *glide*; **Cost** 3,750 gp

HARDENING POLISH

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 1,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This unguent, when applied to a melee weapon, hardens its edge and strengthens the material, granting the weapon or material the properties of adamantite for 10 rounds. One vial coats a single melee weapon or 20 units of ammunition.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item; **Cost** 500 gp

JUNGLE KIT

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 1st

Slot —; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This crucial piece of survival gear guarantees safe use of the most basic of consumables. The hinged metal container acts as a cook pot and opens to reveal a cup, plate, and eating utensils. This kit renders any spoiled, rotten, or even naturally poisonous food or drink safe to consume (it does not neutralize brewed poisons, venoms, and similar toxins). It can purify only mundane, natural effects and functions on up to 1 cu. ft. of food and drink 3 times per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *purify food and drink*; **Cost** 250 gp

LIFEBLOOD GEAR, SMALL

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot shoulders; **Price** 150 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This small bronze gear, if attached to a statue, pile of junk, or object, creates a Small animated object. The animated object lasts for 5 hours, if asked to perform non-combat tasks, or for 5 rounds of combat. Once affixed, the gear pulsates like a beating heart. If the gear is removed, the owner loses control of the construct, which then attacks indiscriminately until its duration expires. Once the duration expires or the animated object is destroyed, the *lifeblood gear* becomes a normal, non-magical gear.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate construct II*; **Cost** 75 gp

ORB OF FASCINATION

Aura faint illusion; **CL** 3rd

Slot —; **Price** 300 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Upon activation, this orb levitates and emits multicolored light that fascinates 2d4+3 HD of creatures within a 10-foot radius. The effect lasts 2 minutes, after which the orb falls to the ground. Affected individuals can remember nothing from the time they were fascinated.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *hypnotic pattern*; **Cost** 150 gp

POCKET CLOCK

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 17th

Slot neck; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This mass of enchanted gears can cast *haste* 3 times per night as a standard action. It can also create a *time stop* for 1d4+1 rounds, but this destroys the item permanently.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *haste*, *time stop*, Craft (clockwork) 3 ranks; **Cost** 10,000 gp

RED LADY'S SCALPEL

Aura faint necromancy; **CL** 6th

Slot none; **Price** 24,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

COSTING ARCANIC POWERS FOR THE NON-ARCANIST

The *scoundrel's gambit* was originally priced at 50 gp, and it still seemed too cheap. While a one-shot scroll prices out at 25 gp, this is an item useable by any class and not requiring any Use Magic Device skill check—features which make the *scoundrel's gambit* eminently open to abuse by any minion, henchman, or other cannon fodder in the game. The cost has been doubled to 100 gp, but it's still quite inexpensive for what it does. Introduce to your campaign with caution.

DESCRIPTION

This silver surgeon's scalpel is permanently stained with dried blood. It acts as a +1 *wounding dagger*.

Further, once per day, the wielder can use a *contagion* effect (as the spell, save DC 16) upon a creature struck by the blade.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *contagion*; **Cost** 12,000 gp

RING OF GIANT MINGLING

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 7th

Slot ring; **Price** 27,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

On command, this ring makes a Large humanoid wearer Medium size while within 100 ft. of four or more Medium humanoids. Likewise, this ring makes a Medium humanoid wearer Large size while within 100 ft. of four or more Large humanoids. This ring also works with creatures with the outsider and dragon keywords.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *alter self*; **Cost** 13,500 gp

SCARF OF DECEPTION

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 7th

Slot neck; **Price** 10,080 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

When this scarf is worn in an attempt to hide one's identity, it causes the user to appear differently to everyone who observes her. A successful DC 16 Will save allows an affected individual to perceive the user's actual appearance.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *confusion*; **Cost** 5,040 gp

SCOUNDREL'S GAMBIT

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 1st

Slot —; **Price** 100 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This fluted silver tube, barely two inches long, bears tiny runes etched between the grooves. When held and activated using the command word and a standard action, the tube fires a single *magic missile* at a target within 100 ft.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic missile*; **Cost** 50 gp

SHADOWHOUND'S BELL

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 7th

Slot —; **Price** 10,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Once per day, as a swift action, you can summon a shadow hound.

It stays for 4 minutes or until slain.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster IV*, Craft (metalworking) 3 ranks; **Cost** 5,000 gp

SHIFTING SHIRT

Aura faint illusion; **CL** 1st

Slot body; **Price** 850 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This non-descript, smock-like garment changes its appearance on command as a swift action. One moment, it might resemble filthy beggar's robes and the next become glittering court attire. The wearer's appearance cannot be changed, only the mode of dress. Anyone physically interacting with the wearer sees through the illusion with a successful DC 12 Will save.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *silent image*; **Cost** 425 gp

SHOES OF THE SHINGLED CANOPY

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot feet; **Price** 5,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

These well-made, black leather shoes have chimney-shaped brass buckles. They grant the wearer a +5 competence bonus to Acrobatics checks. In addition, as an immediate action, the wearer may *feather fall* once per day as the spell by holding his nose while falling. This function recharges at sundown.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *feather fall*, creator must have 5 ranks in the Acrobatics; **Cost** 2,750 gp

SIGNET RING OF KARREMARK, THE KOBOLD PRINCE OF THE NIGHT GHETTO

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot ring; **Price** 11,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This ornate signet ring bears an insignia well known to Zobeck's human guards and clockwork watchmen, and often deters them from harassing its bearer (+3 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy or Bluff checks when dealing with the Watch). The ring's real power, however, is to summon Karremak's personal giant riding owl (use giant eagle stats). The owl communicates with the ring wearer telepathically and informs her of all it sees and hears.

The owl can carry two Small creatures or one Medium-size creature and will fight on the ring bearer's behalf with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. If the owl dies, the ring loses its power.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *summon nature's ally III*; **Cost** 5,500 gp

SPICEBOX SPOON

Aura faint universal; **CL** 1st

Slot —; **Price** 700 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This lacquered wooden spoon carries an entire cupboard within its smooth contours. When you swirl this spoon in any mixture, whether drink or stew, it exudes a flavorful aroma and infuses the edibles. This culinary wonder mimics any imagined variation of simple seasonings, from salt and pepper to aromatic herbs and complex spice blends. These flavors persist for 1 hour.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *prestidigitation*;
Cost 350 gp

SPIDER GRENADE

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 3rd
Slot —; **Price** 300 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This preserved spider—silver runes burned into its hairy legs and plump abdomen—barely fits in an adult human's hand. It can be thrown up to 30 ft. as a grenade-like weapon. When the *spider grenade* hits a solid surface, it explodes in a sticky burst of fibrous webs, as the *web* spell, ensnaring everyone within a 20-ft. radius. These webs persist for 30 minutes before crumbling to dust.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *web*; **Cost** 150 gp

TACTILE UNGUENT

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 250 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Cat burglars, gearworkers, locksmiths, and even street performers often use this gooey substance to increase the sensitivity of their hands. Any tactile Perception checks, Sleight of Hand checks, or Disable Device checks receive a +10 competence bonus for 1 hour.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, the creator must possess 5 ranks in the following skills: Disable Device, Perception, Sleight of Hand; **Cost** 125 gp

TAILOR'S CLASP

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 2nd
Slot —; **Price** 1,100 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This ornate brooch often appears in the form of a jeweled weaving spider or scarab beetle. When activated, it skitters across the attached fabric, mending any tears, adjusting frayed hems, and reinforcing seams. This item only works on objects made out of fibrous material (e.g., not leather) such as clothing, rope, and rugs. When used on any of these items, the clasp removes the broken condition.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *mending*; **Cost** 550 gp

TICK STOP WATCH

Aura faint transmutation (clockwork); **CL** 3rd
Slot feet; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This small, silver pocket watch magically stops a single clockwork device or creatures within 10 ft. for 1d4+1 rounds. Users must succeed on a melee touch attack against the target to use the watch.

Users must wind the watch every 24 hours, just like a pocket watch, or the magic fails to work. If left unwound one day, the watch loses its magic, but the power returns 24 hours after the next time it is wound.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *tick stop*; **Cost** 3,000 gp

TIPSTAFF

Aura minor enchantment; **CL** 3rd
Slot —; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

To the uninitiated, this short, ebony baton (equivalent to a Small club) resembles a heavy-duty truncheon with a cord-wrapped handle and silver-capped tip bearing the seal of Zobeck. After a successful attack or touch attack, however, as a free action, the wielder may say the command word to expend a charge and target their opponent with *hold person*, 1/day (lasts 3 rounds, DC 13 Will save negates). The Watch use tipstaves to ambush and immobilize enemies.

An officially issued warrant slipped under the cords of the grip adds a +2 to the save DC for persons named in the warrant. A tipstaff may have only one warrant on it at a time, naming no more than three people. A tipstaff has 50 charges when first constructed and provides a +2 equipment bonus to CMB to initiate or maintain a grapple. It cannot be recharged outside of Blue House, but an 'empty' tipstaff retains its CMB bonus. The Watch works vigorously to keep these items out of private hands.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *hold person*, Craft (woodwork) 3 ranks; **Cost** 3,000 gp

WHISPERING POWDER

Aura faint illusion; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 250 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

When sprinkled from its paper envelope, this fine dust covers up to 4 5-ft. squares and reacts audibly to friction. Any creature of Small size or larger stepping into an affected area causes loud squeals and pops to erupt with each footfall, audible up to 150 ft. (subtract 10 ft. for each closed door and 20 ft. for each substantial wall between the area and the listener).

The creator dictates the manner of sounds produced, making custom variations available at a 20% markup. The first creature to enter an affected square sets off the alarm and renders the powder in that square inert. Otherwise, the effect lasts indefinitely.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item; **Cost** 125 gp



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