

# Law Enforcement Organizations



As demonstrated in *Thunderscape: Aden Gazette #18*, the threats facing the people of Aden are not limited to the Darkfall and other supernatural threats. There are threats aplenty that stem from other people, those who place their own need for wealth and power above the safety and security of their fellow beings. And as long as these threats exist, there will be those who stand against them. The multi-nation nature of the Known Lands can make matters of law enforcement that cross the borders somewhat difficult, but regardless of such complications, there are a handful of organizations known across the continent for their prowess.

## — ARASTEEN — THE RADIANT ORDER

One of the most visible and iconic forces for justice in the Known Lands, the knights of the Radiant Order are known across the face of Aden for their resolve, their dedication, and in some cases, their self-righteousness. Despite their reputation for meddling and for inserting their own philosophy into the affairs of others, they are nevertheless respecting (even if grudgingly) for their efficiency as investigators with the power to handle whatever crime they may be faced with.

The Radiant Order did not exist when the Peace of the Rose was established, and therefore there were no conditions for their agents' operation in other lands as were written for the Church of All Saints (see below). This was very much a desire of numerous kings throughout Arasteen's history following the order's creation, but the other nations have always been reluctant to afford them such a level of operational

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freedom given their occasional excesses in such areas. In the interest of diplomacy, however, members of the Radiant Order who can present documentation indicating they are investigating a matter relevant to their organization are generally allowed to do so within the boundaries of other nations only so long as they are not a disruptive presence to the people. Local law enforcement in the regions where this takes place can cooperate to whatever extent they feel appropriate.

For more information on the Radiant Order, see *Thunderscape Worlds 1: The Radiant Order*.

## - CARRAWAY - ARBITERS OF THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS



The Church of All Saints is one of the oldest and most venerable organizations in the Known Lands, rivaled by such ancient groups as the Seer Order and the Cartographer's Society. The Church already existed and was serving as an approximate government for the fledgling nation of Carraway when the Rose Accords took place, and one of the requirements that the elven lord Chandrey had for agreeing to the Accords was that her agents, the Arbiters associated with the Church, would possess limited jurisdictional powers when operating outside the nation's boundaries. The other rulers were hesitant, but Chandrey was uniquely respected and admired by all members of the Rose Accords, and she had the endorsement of the Seer Order, so the matter was ultimately agreed upon.

Arbiters are rarely deployed outside of Carraway on official business, although there are many who choose to travel the Known Lands and can make use of their station as a result of their position. In any given settlement in a nation that signed the Accords, an Arbiter is considered a low-ranking member of the local law enforcement, equivalent to a watchman or a member of the town guard. However, the trade-off for this concession in the Accords was that they are also subject to oversight by the local agency, and can be censured if their actions are deemed appropriate. These censures are sent back to the Church in Carraway and can result in disciplinary action if it is determined that such is required.

More information on the Arbiters can be found in *Thunderscape: Aden Gazette 4 - The Church of All Saints*.

## - THE RHANATE - OUTRIDERS OF THE BLACK CITADEL



There is a general attitude throughout the Known Lands that the Rhanate, by far the most vast of all the nations of Aden, is a lawless realm. The reality is that there is some truth to that claim, because the Sundered Desert is simply too large to ever police properly, and so many who choose to make their home there do so in privacy, with no one knowing the location of their mobile tent settlements at any one time. The truth is somewhat different, however. The Dust King does indeed employ law enforcement agents to police his realm, but in keeping with his legendary greed, he does not pay them. Instead, he has established a policy where they are rewarded directly by those they serve in what is unquestionably the most unusual arrangements for such matters anywhere in the Known Lands.

The Outriders have their origin during the earliest days of the post-Darkfall era. When the nocturnals first appeared, the sands of the

Sundered Desert ran red with blood. The people of the region were too isolated to mount any kind of defense, and a great many perished trying to save themselves and their families from new enemies they did not understand. Not all perished, however, and slowly a number of caravans, survivors, and stragglers banded together into the largest group of travelers the desert had ever seen. No one knew what to do, and panic was always just under the surface. There were a handful of potential leaders, men and women with military experience, who could have risen to become leaders, but none of them survived the first few weeks after the Darkfall. It was only this environment that an ambitious bandit, skilled both with the blade and with words, rose to prominence and became the leader of the group. This bandit, Al-Akan, organized his fellow bandits, most of whom had died in the fighting, to defend the entire caravan. Emotions ran high among the nomads and there was a great deal of theft and violence. Al-Akan and his men maintained order within the body of the group, but his most trusted and skilled riders kept the perimeter safe, both preventing incursions by nocturnals and preventing escape by any criminals who had committed grievous offenses within the caravan itself. The rate of attrition was high, but those who survived became unparalleled warriors.

By the time the caravan settled around the location where Al-Akan, now calling himself the Dust King, would build his Black Citadel, the Outriders were a group unto themselves. They were in charge of securing the build tight until the Citadel could be completed, another impossible task at which they succeeded at great personal cost. When the Dust King finally took his seat atop a throne of dragon bone, he declared the Outriders the keepers of his kingdom, responsible for maintaining his peace and prosperity, and that they would be rewarded by all those to whom they lent aid. The people, perhaps simply grateful for the constant protection of the Outriders, accepted this arrangement without complaint.

While not as large as other peacekeeping organizations, the Outriders are larger than many realize. Their tendency to operate in small groups keeps the perception of them relatively subdued. The original Outriders, the ones who survived the Darkfall and the period that followed, now remain largely at the Black Citadel, each responsible for overseeing a number of teams of Outriders operating throughout the Rhanate. The senior officers often coordinate with the Rhans who serve the Dust King to ensure that their individual realms are properly policed. The Rhans tend to treat the Outriders well out of respect for the senior officers who command the force, having experienced firsthand the chaos that they kept at bay during the earliest days of the Rhanate's existence.

Outriders operate in small groups, typically numbering ten or a dozen but occasionally as many as two dozen. They are nomadic, with no set pattern or fixed route to travel during their duties, instead moving around as they please within an assigned, typically large territory. They are responsible for maintaining law and order throughout these regions, and for the sake of mobility and speed they are an exclusively mounted force. Most Outriders ride the hardy breed of shaggy pony that can be found many places in the Rhanate, although some are more exotic and choose camels, particularly those Outriders who police the central regions of the Sundered Desert. The most senior and skilled among them, however, are mounted on the so-called lightning lizards, massive reptiles that can survive with much less water than horses and are incredibly fast over short distances, hence the name. The lightning lizards are one of the most common symbols associated with the Outriders but in truth perhaps a quarter of all Outriders have them as mounts due to their relative scarcity compared to other domesticated species.

As mentioned before, Outriders are not paid for their duties. They receive payment from those whom they assist, and the fee is determined based upon the nature of the crime in question. Theft, which is perhaps the most common matter to be investigated, is paid based on the value of the items stolen and a suitable percentage of the recovered items' worth is paid to the Outriders depending upon how long the investigation and recovery took. Murder is based upon the value of the deceased's estate or belongings, with again another percentage paid based on the difficulty of the resolution. Violence against others that does not result in death and does not stem from robbery is much more difficult to gauge, and is often simply based on donations by individuals

or from settlements where the incidents occur. One of the most significant means by which the Outriders profit from their activities is confiscating the possessions of those they arrest. While there are some corrupt individuals who exploit this to make money, the majority of Outriders are honorable if not completely honest men and women.

Because of their largely undeserved reputation and the reputation of the king they serve, the Outriders have no formal law enforcement authority anywhere outside the Rhanate. Individual groups of Outriders who earn the respect of their neighbors across the boundaries of Yzeem and Vanora may have limited courtesies extended to them as a result of their relationship with authorities in those regions.

## - URBANA - CONSTABLES OF THE EYE

Although extremely maligned throughout the Known Lands for the actions of some of the organization's members, the Inquisitors of the Eye are nevertheless a legitimate law enforcement organization, or at least it was prior to the ascension of Lord Urbane. Its current level of legitimacy varies depending upon the outlook of the party in question, with most agreeing that the Eye is now little more than an enforcement arm for the will of the Iron Tyrant, and are more likely to persecute those who speak out against their lord than they are genuine criminals. The truth is somewhat more complex than that, of course.

As an organization, the Eye dates back to the time of Columbey, where it was created by an early king of the Tarello line to try and ensure that the Seer Order would not meddle in the affairs of their nation. Even though Columbey was a nation in its infancy, at least formally, it was populated by a fiercely independent people, and King Albirus Tarello did not trust them. As a prince, he attended the Rose Accords alongside his father and saw how the seers whispered in the ears of different rulers, trying to manipulate events there. When his father finally abdicated the throne and Albirus ascended as the second king of Columbey, one of his first edicts was to organize a group to monitor all seer activity within his nation's borders. Over time, the Eye transformed into an espionage network that was unrivaled throughout the Known Lands.

At the same time that the Eye was watching over the Seer Order and gradually becoming an increasingly freelance organization, the capital city of Tarello was growing larger and more heavily populated. It did not take long for it to rival Balaquim in size and in the sheer quantity of cargo being moved through its port. Merchant houses became increasingly more powerful and protecting their assets became more of an issue. The throne created a law enforcement arm, the constables, to ensure that law and order was maintained and that the merchants who made up such a vital aspect of Columbey's economy were not preyed upon by criminals. When the Tarello Dynasty was overthrown and the Warrain Dynasty established, all with the shadowy manipulation of both the various merchant houses and the Eye itself, the Eye was placed in command of the constables that were still required to oversee the city.

Initially the union of constables with the Eye resulted in very little. The Eye's leadership was content to allow the constables to act largely autonomously and they continued their more sensitive operations without being distracted by what they considered to be mundane matters. Only the lowest level of Eye agents, known as Operatives, would ever have direct interaction with the constables, usually when they required warm bodies for a mission or occasionally to serve as officers for whatever reason. Beyond that, however, the constables served the Eye in name only, and were generally very well regarded among the people of Mekanus specifically and Columbey as a whole for their service in the name of the throne and the people.

The Darkfall changed everything, as is so often the case.

The ascension of Lord Urbane to the throne of the renamed Urbana saw an immediate and enthusiastic pledge of loyalty from the leaders of the Eye. For what seemed like centuries, they had conducted their

shadow wars for nothing more than political and economic influence, and it had begun to feel more like a game than something with substantial purpose behind it. Additionally, the Eye is governed by a document created during its founding centuries ago, one simply called the Doctrine. The driving purpose of the Eye, as dictated by the Doctrine, is the preservation of Columbey, or in this case Urbana. The leaders of the Eye regard themselves as having lost their way for a time, but now that Lord Urbane is dedicated to destroying the forces of the Darkfall and establishing Urbana as the great power of the Known Lands, they are fiercely devoted to him and his ideals.

The formally titled Constables of Mekanus are more closely tied to the Eye than prior to the Darkfall, perhaps because the Eye now operates more publicly and with greater authority than before. Unfortunately, this increased public profile has come with a somewhat tarnished reputation, as the more zealous members of the Eye tolerate little dissent to Lord Urbane's rule and have been known to imprison people for treason even for relatively minor offenses. This stigma has extended somewhat to the constables as well, who now bear badges that clearly displays their status as subordinates of the Eye. Some have embraced their role as muscle for the Eye, and of course there are always a small number who are corrupt, but the majority are very hard-working (and over-worked) individuals who want only to keep the peace in a city that is bursting at the seams with the greedy, the desperate, and the amoral.

The Constables of Mekanus are an investigative force overseen by the Eye that works hand-in-hand with a variety of different forces that all collide in what many call the largest city in Aden. The day-to-day street patrols and security functions of the city are largely performed by members of the Shadow Army, which is the rank-and-file of the Urbanan military. When there are too few available, there is also the Mekanus Militia, a volunteer force that receives minimal training but which is essential in trying to keep the peace. Key installations that are of significant importance to the government may instead be protected by the Rusters, one of Urbane's elite units. They also sometimes encounter members of the Cogswheel Irregulars, a freelance investigation group that are essentially sanctioned bounty hunters. And of course, there are Inquisitors of the Eye who operate within the city to ensure that loyalty to the Iron Tyrant remains high at all times.

Constables do patrol the city, but it is on a more personal level. They typically work in pairs and are assigned "beats" that they patrol each shift. The idea is that constables who are frequently seen in the same regions will develop a better sense of that area and the people who live there, as well as the people coming to trust the constable. When a crime takes place that requires investigation, which is to say when the culprit is not caught, the constables who are assigned to the beat where the crime took place are in charge of investigating the matter. Unless of course the Eye takes a keener interest, which typically happens if there is a political aspect to the crime, the culprit is suspected to be a foreigner, or there is a seditious nature to the event. When this happens, the Eye can automatically claim jurisdiction and remove the constables from the event altogether, which is frequently a source of tremendous frustration for them. While constables are not always trusted by the people they protect, they are much preferred to Inquisitors, so cooperation typically remains high because they wish to avoid involving a more punitive authority in the investigation.

The Constables of Mekanus are very well known throughout Urbana, of course, but the sheer volume of traffic through the city has ensured that word of their work has spread to many other nations and cities as well. They are not considered to have extra-territorial jurisdictional authority, and tales of the organization's corruption is grossly overblown in some areas, but on occasion local law enforcement may accept or even solicit assistance from constables visiting their area if the circumstances call for it.

### New Trait

**Warrior of Justice:** You are a soul devoted to the pursuit of law and order above all things. Whenever you combat an opponent with an alignment of chaotic evil, your CMB and CMD are both at +1.

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