

Caecras



Lands in Shadow for Shadow of the Demon Lord

For over eight hundred years, the Empire has dominated the lands of Rûl. A vast realm of incredible wealth and military might, it grew by conquest, annexing nation after nation, until it stretched from the Desolation in the north to the edge of the frozen wastes in the south, and from the feet of the Shield Mountains in the west to the shores of the Auroral Ocean in the east.

Rising from the ruins of the kingdoms it conquered, the Empire became the mightiest nation in all of Rûl, a power whose fall was inconceivable. But fallen it has as the capital city of Caecras drowns in the blood of the orc uprising, and many of its provinces are breaking away. A shadow now creeps across the land, the drums of war are sounding, and chaos and uncertainty spread like wildfire across the continent.

This entry in the *Lands in Shadow* series details Caecras (KAY-ress), the crumbling heart of the Empire. In the following pages, you will read about its history and geography, as well as the portraits of important personages. You will also find statistics for common characters, and several new options

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for player characters. With *Caecras*, you have everything you need to explore the ruined capital, and make it the centerpiece of your *Shadow of the Demon Lord* campaign.

The Heart of an Empire

In the old Kalasan tongue, *Caecras* means “struggle.” There is no name more apt to describe the Empire’s capital. It is a place whose history has been drenched in the blood of countless peoples, with so many nations rising and falling in this otherwise small and innocuous patch of land. Before the Kalasans founded their Empire, *Caecras* was the capital from which the vile and terrible Witch-King ruled over his realm. Before that it was the seat of power of the Edene, built upon the ancient site that served as the home to many tribes of the First People. And long, long ago, well before the earliest reckoning of time by mortal-kind, Titania, Queen of the Faerie ruled here with her husband Oberon. Some have called this land the cradle of civilization, the light in the darkness, and the land of kings. Others say it is better described as the abattoir of history, the destroyer of civilization, and the graveyard of empires.

One question historians have wrestled with is: why these particular lands and not others? What has made *Caecras* and the region surrounding it so important over the centuries? There are far better places with greater strategic value, other regions with better soil, access to the oceans, and abundant resources. In fact, the lands around the capital are so deficient in these things, it makes the decision to found any domain here seem poor. Yet, something about this land has always appealed to would-be rulers.

Geography offers one explanation. Its central location gives the capital access to surrounding territories, annexing those lands to provide a buffer against enemies outside the realm, while also allowing the centralized government to exert pressure on its subject provinces and bring them to heel if they grow rebellious.

Of course, this also means that any tyrannical ruler risks giving common cause to the surrounding lands to unite, attacking the capital from all directions to cast them down from power. This understanding served the Empire well over the most recent centuries, ensuring the emperors could maintain rule over their subjects, so long as they ruled in a manner that fostered loyalty and compliance from their subjects.

Aside from the geographical advantages, another, more mystical reason draws would-be rulers to choose *Caecras* as their seat of power. The city itself stands at the confluence of several currents of magical energy that enable practitioners of magic to cast their spells and conduct their rituals with even greater power and effectiveness. The potent energies of *Caecras* drew Umessa of the Edene to make these lands the hub of

her rule, just as it did the Witch-King of Gog, and the Kalasans who overthrew him. Most recently, the lands drew the mages of Ys to establish their floating Tower Arcane in the skies above the city.



Enhanced Magic

When a creature casts a spell within the bounds of the city of *Caecras*, it can choose one of the following options:

- Make the attack roll with 1 boon.
- Impose 1 bane on challenge rolls made to resist the spell.
- If the spell has a duration of at least 1 minute, triple the spell’s duration.
- Increase the range of the spell from touch to short range, short range to medium range, medium range to long range, or long range to extreme range.
- The spell deals or heals 1d6 extra damage.



The Kalasans

The Kalasans founded the Empire 888 years ago, after defeating the Witch-King and the hordes of undead and demons that formed his horrific army. Historians have argued about the origins of the Kalasans for centuries, who quite literally seemed to arrive out of nowhere upon Rûl’s eastern shore. Their ships were of an unusual design never before seen in Rûl, and they were armed with weapons of steel whose strength rivalled that of the dwarfs. They practiced strange forms of magic and spoke a language unlike any other on the continent.

In fact, writings from the time of their invasion suggest the Kalasans themselves were very puzzled when they made landfall. The stars overhead were completely different from those shining above their homeland, and even the moon itself appeared strange, even alien compared to the one they were used to seeing in the night sky.

None of this, however, would deter their leader, the High Warlord Eronymous, a mighty warrior known for his great strength and courage in battle. He had led the Kalasans here to wage war against their enemies, and that’s exactly what he intended to have them do—despite the fact that those enemies didn’t seem to be in this strange new land.

Having sailed for several months across the vast oceans, through becalmed waters and hellacious storms, Eronymous decisively settled all questions about where they were or what they should do: he ordered all of their ships to be burned, so that the Kalasans would know there was no turning back, no retreat of any kind—the only way was forward, under the command of the High Warlord. Behind the vanguard flying Eronymous’s banners, the Kalasan

armies marched inland, expecting one enemy—and finding another and altogether different one.

By the time of the Kalasans' arrival, the Witch-King Ashrakal had already successfully established Gog, his evil and tyrannical kingdom. A century before, his monstrous legions swarmed out of the Desolation into the gentler, lush lands of Rûl, destroying or subjugating everyone and everything in their path. The Witch-King's armies were aided by two powerful, unearthly forces. The first was a horde of undead the evil sorcerer summoned and bound to himself after using dark magic to smash the gates of the Underworld. The second, a host of demons Ashrakal somehow pulled into Urth from beyond reality's bounds, each demon under the command of demon-binders, magicians so insane and corrupted they were little different from the horrors they controlled.

Armed with overwhelming supernatural strength and profane magic, the Men of Gog swiftly overpowered the weak and decadent Kingdom of the Edene, and then spent nearly a century consolidating their power in Rûl, building powerful city-states on the shores of the Auroral Ocean, while reinforcing the conquered lands of the interior against insurrections and incursions.

Although the Witch-King's armies and kingdom were strong and well-defended, they were caught unawares by the unexpected arrival of the Kalasan fleet on the eastern shores. In their initial battles the generals of the Gog armies quickly discovered their battlefield tactics were no match for the superior tactics and organization and of the Kalasans. The magicians of Gog were shocked to find their own fearsome powers matched and even checked by the Kalasan "destroyers," sorcerers who deliberately wrecked their bodies to amplify the ruinous spells they cast. As Gog's armies of undead and demons issued forth, controlled by warlocks and binders, the Kalasan phalanxes easily dealt with the massive hordes of shuffling corpses, while their destroyers targeted the binders, killing them and loosing the demons to wreak deadly havoc and mayhem in the enemy lines.

These early Kalasan victories over the Witch-King's forces emboldened the oppressed peoples under his heel to rise up against the Men of Gog, disrupting their supply lines and weakening the tyranny's infrastructure. Cities welcomed the Kalasan armies liberating them, swelling their armies with eager, if untrained, levies. Doughty dwarfs descended from their mountain strongholds to join the fight against Gog, followed by the faeries who emerged from their hidden kingdoms to help cast down the Witch-King.

After nearly a decade of war across the continent, Eronymous and Ashrakal finally met at the Battle of Seven Sorrows, fought just outside the walls of Caecras. The battle is so named for the seven great



heroes who gave their lives fighting alongside the Kalasan host. As the two giant armies clashed, the energies of a thousand terrible, destructive spells crackled and ripped through the air, as a multitude of demons ran amok, tearing apart allies and enemies alike.

Knowing the swiftest way to win the battle would be to slay the Witch-King and thus shatter the morale of the Gog forces, Eronymous and his Hundred—a band of elite warriors personally selected and trained by the warlord—charged through the chaos to break through the battle lines and directly assault the Witch-King and his Immortals—a cadre of foul, demon-possessed soldiers totally enthralled to Ashrakal's will.

With the two armies locked in a horrific and bloody battle the likes of which the world had never seen, Eronymous and the Hundred met the Witch-King and the Immortals before the very gates of Caecras. The Hundred moved swiftly to engage the Immortals, allowing Eronymous to confront Ashrakal in single combat.

The Witch-King uttered his bitterest curses and invocations at his enemy, hurling spell after spell to destroy his foe, but Eronymous dodged or shrugged off the effects, and moved in close to force his foe to fight blade against blade. Legends claim Tarterus itself

eclipsed the sun as they fought, the ground trembling and quaking with each clash of their blades. The two battled for hours, neither able to gain the upper hand over the other.

Eventually, Eronymous's vaunted strength began to flag. Seeing his weakness, the Witch-King pressed his advantage and forced the warlord to his knees. As Ashrakal raised his sword for the killing blow, he paused to gloat, his mocking cackle echoing across the entire battlefield. This brief moment of exultation was the chance Eronymous needed. Desperately drawing upon the last of his strength, the warlord leapt up from his knees and slammed into the Witch-King, knocking him to the ground and sending his sword flying. Stunned and reeling, the sorcerer attempted to rise up from the ground, making it to one knee as the warlord bore down upon him. Before Ashrakal could stand, Eronymous lopped off his head with one mighty stroke.

It is said that the severed head shrieked loudly enough to be heard by the centaurs of the Endless Steppe, and that the Witch-King's body instantly dissolved into hundreds of black snakes that quickly slithered off in every direction, vanishing from the world forever.

A New Nation

Although the histories portray Eronymous as a glorious and gallant hero who saved the world from darkness, the truth of the matter is that he was not a particularly good or likeable man. While certainly not an evil tyrant like the Witch-King he defeated, the warlord was extremely ambitious and hungry for power, seeking to rule over not just his own people, but all other peoples they encountered. His aggression toward Gog was not born from some deep-seated compassion or moral obligation to destroy evil, but rather it provided him with a convenient way to deflect attention from his arrogant mistake of commanding the Kalasan fleet to be burned, which stranded his people on an alien shore.

Once the fighting was over, Eronymous quickly established himself as the ruler of the Witch-King's former kingdom in order to prevent any of the sorcerer's allies and minions from attempting to reclaim what had been lost. Rather than seek vengeance against the people loyal to the Witch-King, Eronymous pardoned them, and even invited several to serve as his advisors, an act that the faeries, dwarfs, and other allies saw as a betrayal. Because of this, the faeries withdrew to their hidden kingdoms and the dwarfs left the liberated lands in disgust.

However, Eronymous's decision to preserve much of the Witch-King's governmental structure proved to be a wise one, easing the transition to the new leadership, allowing the rule of law and order under

the Kalasans to take hold. Upon the ruins of Gog, Eronymous declared that a new realm would be created, and would be called the Empire. This empire would be governed out of Caecras, and Eronymous himself would become its first emperor.

The self-proclaimed emperor quickly shored up his power base by granting lands to his soldiers and officers, giving titles to those in the higher ranks in order to form a new noble class. He also poured vast sums of coin into infrastructure, repairing roads, building bridges, and fortifying cities against attacks from pirates and barbarians marauding out of the hinterlands. He also allowed and even encouraged The Order of Light, a new religion brought by the Kalasans from their homelands, to become the dominant faith in Caecras.

Eronymous's descendants proved every bit as able and as accomplished, working to further transform the land into a nation mightier than any that had preceded it. As the Empire's population and strength grew, so did its appetite for new territory. The emperors raised armies to expand the nation's borders beyond those of Gog, including the nine city states in the east, Low Country, and the western lands that eventually would become the Grand Duchy of the West. This massive land grab greatly expanded and enriched the Empire, but also introduced a new threat that would forever change the course of its history.

A War of Vengeance

Even in the days of the Edene and Gog, jotun raiders from Blötland had been sailing north from their frozen lands to plunder towns and cities along the continent's eastern shores. Every spring saw the arrival of jotun longships to raid the eastern shores, taking slaves, livestock, gold, and whatever they could carry from the coastal towns and cities. To deal with this threat, the Empire funneled funds into these communities to increase the size of their garrisons and raise stronger walls to keep out the raiders. These efforts simply encouraged the jotun to strike wherever the defenses were not as strong.

In fact, the Empire was caught completely off guard when a large army of jotun attacked from an unexpected direction: from the Patchwork Lands by way of the rivers, striking deep into the relatively unprotected interior of the Empire. With few forces to resist them, the jotun engaged in a widespread campaign of pillage, slaughter, and destruction that pressed as far inland as Low Country. In a few places, hastily assembled groups of garrison soldiers and local levies were able to stem the bloody tide. It was in one of these that the emperor Titanus's son and heir was killed as he led a ragtag group in battle against the jotun invaders.

Grief-stricken and enraged, Titanus ordered the assemblage of the largest army the continent had ever seen, drawing soldiers from every province of the Empire to send them south to eradicate the jotun. It took two years for the imperial armies to muster, and for all the ships to gather in the ports to carry them to the frozen wastes—over 1,000 ships, the largest fleet the world had ever seen.

The imperial army, 500,000 soldiers strong, was comprised of Low Country slingers, mercenaries from the Nine Cities, Caecras heavy infantry, mounted knights from the Grand Duchy, and numerous other troops from all of the provinces of the Empire. They also brought with them myriad sorcerers, wizards, and other practitioners of magic—a mighty force of arcane power to support them in battle. When the imperial soldiers made landfall in Blötland, they crushed the jotun and conquered their homeland in a matter of months. Titanus, however, wanted nothing less than the total destruction of the barbarians, and ordered the armies to pursue and destroy any and all jotun that remained.

After many long and terrible years of bloodshed, only a few scattered bands of jotun remained, who fled deep into the hinterlands where the exhausted imperial army was loath to pursue. Deciding that enough was enough, Titanus ordered the armies to return home, and to bring whatever jotun they had captured to stand trial. Several hundred jotun were hauled back to Caecras in chains, and forced to kneel before the emperor to suffer his wrath and judgment.

A Legacy of Evil

Among the many courtiers and advisors counseling the emperor, the warlock Ahriman stood closest to the throne. He somehow managed to gain Titanus's trust and confidence, despite his reputation in court as a vile and loathsome character, and of less than noble birth to boot. The other members of the court whispered about him, saying he was a descendant of the hated Gog, or that he bound demons, or, more ludicrously, that he was the grandson of Ashrakal himself. Many believed he had used some kind of dark magic to bewitch the emperor. Whatever the truth was, there was no doubt Ahriman had the emperor's ear, and that Titanus prized the warlock's advice over all others.

Everyone expected the emperor to order the jotun prisoners to be tortured and executed in the public squares of Caecras as an example to any who would challenge the might of the Empire. After all, these barbarian scum had killed his beloved son—they deserved nothing less.

But, just as construction of the hurdles, posts, and gallows for the drawing and quartering began, Titanus did something that took all by surprise. The

emperor spared their lives, saying only, "Slaves shall serve." He then gave them over to Ahriman, who had persuaded the emperor that the prisoners were too valuable to be executed. Rather, the warlock convinced Titanus that they could be transformed into loyal servants, slaves to the Alabaster Throne.

In the deepest, darkest dungeons of the Imperial Palace, Ahriman employed the most powerful, blackest magic—from grimoires reputed to have belonged to the Witch-King himself—to twist and warp the jotun into orcs. In the process of their creation, the warlock also bound them, and all their descendants to come, as thralls to whomever sat upon the Alabaster Throne.

As described in *Born to Kill*, the new orcs proved their mettle in a brief and bloody war against the dwarfs of Guldurak, in which the dwarfs were slaughtered down to the last man, woman, and child. The Empire would then go on to use the orcs to expand the borders even further. Orc legions conquered what would become the March Lands, crushed the resistance in Balgrendia, and cleared several troublesome bandit princes from the Patchwork Lands. Later, the orcs would be used to drive back the undead from the Northern Reach, fight the beastmen in the Borderlands, and bolster the defenses in the Nine Cities against raiders from the Pirate Isles.

Even though the orcs won the Empire greater stability and more territory, they were a blot on its reputation, a force of brutish, bloodthirsty killers, a blunt instrument used to keep its citizens obedient and its enemies at bay—they were the ultimate symbol of the Empire's willingness to employ any means necessary to preserve itself.

The Cult of the New God

Since the Empire's founding, the Order of Light had been the official faith in Caecras. As its influence spread out into the imperial provinces, it weakened the Old Faith. A dour and militant faith, its adherents believed their god to be an Eternal Light at the center of all things, whose radiance spread through the universe, shining upon all things to foster life and defeat death.

Opposed to this god of light, who they also called the Lord of Morning, was the Adversary, its evil twin yet opposite in every way, who reveled in darkness and sought to plunge the world into shadow. The Order taught that while light and darkness resided in all things, it was the duty of all living things to embrace the purity of the Eternal Light by rejecting the Adversary's temptations that always led one down the path of destruction. Thus, the Order's priests were vigilant in their work to root out evil wherever they saw it and punish the wicked.

These priests also believed they possessed the sole truth, and that all other religions were simply manifestations of the Adversary's evil work in the world. Thus, the Order did what it could to purge the Empire of other religions, pushing the devotees of the Old Faith into the wilderness, persecuting any who still clung to the tenets of what they deemed "witchcraft."

The Order of Light was organized and strong, and might even have had greater success had they not been so aggressive and overreaching in their efforts to supplant all other religions. Because of their fanatic crusade to become the one true religion, the faith soon became unpopular, encountering great resistance throughout the Empire. The Order soon found itself confined to the imperial province of Caecras, the Kingdom of Tarra, and a few other places scattered about the provinces. Stifled in their crusade, the Order of Light grew stagnant and turned in on itself, with multiple factions and sects forming and bickering internally, each claiming to have the truth in their struggle for dominance.

Then came the Prophet of the New God, an event that changed everything. Astrid, a young acolyte of the Order of Light, belonged to the Believers, a faction preaching tolerance, compassion, and peace. Like all other followers of the Lord of Morning, her sect believed in their god's infinite power and inherent goodness. Where Astrid's sect differed from the others, however, was their complete rejection of any belief in a paradisiac reward after death for those who live good and virtuous lives.

Astrid traveled through Caecras, preaching the Believers' radically different tenets. She claimed that mortal souls survived death and returned to live many lives. Death merely freed the soul from the mortal coil, she taught, to descend into the Underworld where it would bide its time until it forgot its old life in preparation for the new. Thus souls would be born again into new bodies, live out their lives, die, only to be born again. The goal for every soul, Astrid preached, was to escape this endless cycle and transcend reality to become one with the divine. Such a transcendence was possible only if the mortal lived an exemplary life, one ever in service and submission to the New God, always resisting the worldly temptations of the Adversary.

Astrid's message rekindled the fervor and zeal of many in the Order, who began to call her "the Prophet." She also found many enemies among the various factions and sects of the Order: those who resented her and her growing number of followers, or feared her because of the weakening of their own power in the church, or hated her for what they believed to be her heretical beliefs. After evading multiple assassination attempts, Astrid began to move around constantly to evade her would-be killers,

spreading her message even wider, until she finally found refuge in the Kingdom of Tarra (see *Kingdom of God* for more information about Astrid and the emergence of the Cult of the New God as a major political force).

Astrid's ascension—whether she was murdered by her enemies or plucked from the mortal world by the Lord of Morning—sparked a religious revolution. Her followers, believing her to have ascended to become one with the divine, spread her message to every corner of the continent. With the aid of King Roland of Tarra, her teachings were codified and a new religion was born.

Soon thereafter, the Order of Light collapsed into factional in-fighting and disarray. Most of the faith's adherents eventually joined the Cult of the New God—the Swords of Astrid, for example, saw a huge influx of the Order's priests (see *Kingdom of God* for more information about the Swords of Astrid, also known as the Inquisition). Many others continued to cling to the old beliefs for a generation or so, but eventually even they turned away from the old in favor of the New God. Now, the Order of Light is considered an old-fashioned name for the New God's Cult.

Plagues and Dark Times

The years following the emergence of the New God's cult were largely quiet ones. The new religion gradually spread out from the Holy Kingdom, while art, philosophy, the sciences, and other disciplines of knowledge flourished, helping to bring the Empire out of the darkness and into the golden age of civilization. These centuries were not, however, without their challenges.

Three major plagues swept through the Empire, claiming over ten million lives. Rampaging beastmen gathered into a horde that poured out of the borderlands to harry the capital province. The Desolation vomited forth undead, the Nine Cities began to break away, and the jotun reached sufficient strength to resume raiding in the south. Earlier emperors could have easily dealt with these challenges, but over time, the line of rulers had grown weak and slow to respond to threats, which allowed and even encouraged the provinces to gain greater independence and exert more influence on the throne.

During this time, the Empire did manage to annex the Borderlands of Tear and the Northern Reach. The House of Healing worked ceaselessly to contain the apocalyptic plagues. And the Empire successfully pushed the undead threat back into the Desolation—for the time being, at least.

But each of these events weakened the Empire. The Northern Reach was too far away and too wild for the Empire to settle and develop, and the Holy

Kingdom had actually done more to blunt the undead invasion than did the Alabaster Throne. Similarly, Horus's exile into the borderlands, intended to rid the emperor of a son believed to be nothing but a troublesome ne'er-do-well, would instead transform him into a great leader and one of the most influential lords in the Empire—and possibly a threat to the throne itself. The weakening of the imperial line, combined with unanswered pushes for independence by several of the Empire's richest provinces, would set the stage for the final calamity.

The Last Emperor

Eras IX ascended to the throne just over ten years ago. Young, tempestuous, and quite insane, Eras constantly swung from petulance to cruelty, an ineffective ruler in his most lucid moments, and a terrible monster when in the throes of his madness. He turned the Imperial Palace into a den of wanton debauchery, with orgies taking place there day and night, around and even upon the Alabaster Throne itself. When the madness came over Eras, he would rage among his lovers, chasing and beating them. Those who did not escape had their skin flayed from their backs by the crazed emperor wielding a barbed scourge—who would then flee the scene weeping when he went too far and killed a favored companion. When a sculptor perfectly captured his likeness in marble, Eras had the artist and her entire family executed so the work would remain unique and unequalled.

As much as possible, the court advisors contained whatever damage they could by keeping Eras within the imperial palace, all the while doing their best to conceal his excesses and misdeeds.

King Drudge and the Uprising

Just after the first orcs were created, Ahriman found it useful to elevate one orc above the rest to serve as their monarch, a leader to whom the other orcs could look and through whom the emperors could communicate with their legions. Orc monarchs bore the name king or queen as a ceremonial title, possessing no real authority other than to convey directives from the Alabaster Throne. Over the centuries, though, there were notable exceptions. Some orc monarchs led troops in battle, while others were chosen for their ineptitude as an insult to the orcs who served. Regardless of the monarch's capabilities, they always had a place at court, standing two paces back and behind the throne as a symbolic reminder of the Empire's might.

Antimony, the second-to-last emperor and Horus's brother, chose Drudge, a veteran of the war against the undead in the Northern Reach, to serve as the orc king. The orc soldier earned many accolades in his youth for his fighting prowess and tactical cunning,

rising up the ranks until he was named Marshal of the Northern Reach, an extremely rare honor for a non-human. When the last orc king, Egg, was sent to "retirement" (see below), Antimony raised Drudge up to take his place, who then served him until the emperor's death. So prized was he, the emperor denied him his retirement, leaving instructions on his deathbed to his son, Eras, to keep him in his post.

When Eras ascended to the throne, the tenor of the imperial court greatly changed. Antimony was not a great man, but there was at least a veneer of respectability about his rule. Eras, on the other hand, was the product of generations of inbreeding, thoroughly insane by the time he came to power. At first, his courtiers and hangers-on tried to exploit the uncertainty of his reign, angling to expand their power and influence—only to discover that Eras's affections and attentions were fickle at best, and could just as quickly turn to anger and contempt. He exiled anyone he disliked from court with impunity, regardless of their standing, ties to the throne, or political rank. In addition to the aforementioned near-constant orgies, he had nobles drawn and quartered for rumored indiscretions and crimes, seizing their assets and holdings to heap upon whoever caught his fancy.

With such an erratic, despotic emperor in power, the court became a hotbed of intrigues, with various factions jockeying for power and vying against one another. As described in the *Lands of Shadow* entry, *Kingdom of God*, the Matriarch wanted to assume control over the orcs and break the hold of the centuries-old dark magic upon them, in order to convert them into devout soldiers who, she believed, would then serve the New God.

To accomplish this, she dispatched a bishop to persuade Eras to relinquish control over the orcs to the Cult or, failing that, to persuade Drudge to rebel against the emperor. Both of these efforts failed spectacularly, leading to the horrific revelation to Drudge of the fate that awaited "retired" orcs: summary execution at "farms" in the far north, followed by the butchery of their bodies into meat to be mixed with grains and made into fodder to feed the Empire's orc armies (see *Born to Kill* for more details on this gruesome practice).

The discovery of this horrific truth enraged Drudge and enabled him to break the ancient oaths of servitude imposed by Ahriman's dark magic. He confronted the emperor with what he learned, and when Eras dismissively acknowledged it, the orc king drew his greatsword and swiftly beheaded the emperor, cast his body from the throne, and then sat himself upon it.

The emperor's murder set in motion the most violent and bloody uprising Rûl has ever witnessed. From the blood-splattered throne, Drudge ordered the emperor's stunned orc bodyguards to go forth

and slaughter each and every human throughout the rest of the palace, and to command any orcs they encountered to join them.

Realizing that they, too, were free of Ahriman's sorcerous shackles, the orc warriors swiftly moved through the great palace, clearing every room in the palace of any human they found with the cold, methodical efficiency of a butcher. As they did so, other orcs shrugged off their bonds and joined them in the carnage. Soon, mobs of bloodthirsty orcs spilled out from the palace and into the city on a frenzied and murderous rampage. Before anyone knew what was happening, Caecras, the capital city of the great Empire, was bathed in blood and flame.



A Land in Turmoil

Caecras stands at about the center of the continent, with provincial borders approximately 250 miles in all directions. The Grand Duchy of the West sits on its western border, the Holy Kingdom to the north, Low Country to the south, and the Confederacy of the Nine Cities to the east. The name Caecras refers both to the city and to the surrounding lands under its direct control, with locals referring to the capital as “the city” and the surrounding lands as “the countryside.”

The Countryside

Since the Empire's founding, emperors have always carved up the countryside into smaller pieces and bestowed them as prizes to the nobility, usually as a reward for some service. Unlike a feudal system, however, these grants rarely passed down to heirs: ownership of the lands would return to the throne upon the death of the grantee. Over the centuries, so many dukes, barons, counts, and knights have had claims on the lands around the city that no one has any idea as to whom they truly owe fealty—other than the emperor, of course. Ordinary people scratching a living from the land might believe they live in one barony, while their neighbor down the road might claim they are both part of a different duchy. In all, the constantly shifting boundaries and the incessant parade of noble landlords causes most of the land's residents to throw up their hands and ignore the whole mess as they go about their lives.

The countryside of Caecras has four main regions, mundanely named the north country, east country, south country, and west country. Aside from a few differences in geography, there is little to distinguish one region from another. While the north country rolls with hills as it rises toward the Weathertop Mountains of the Holy Kingdom, and the south is flat and covered in grain fields, the people of each area, and their lives, are more or less the same.

Farming and Grazing

The capital city demands a steady supply of food, water, and raw materials, all of which is provided by the country. Every inch of land has been dedicated to producing the necessary materials to sustain Caecras's constantly growing population. The south country and east country grow grain, while the west country provides vegetables, pigs, and chickens. The north country, unsuited to farming due to the rocky soil and hilly terrain, is blanketed by giant pastures for cattle and sheep.

Any forests were cleared away long ago for timber, as well as to make room for farming and grazing. Small lakes and ponds still dot the region, and one can find rivers fed by snowmelt from the Weathertops in the north meandering through the countryside. Most of these, however, have been diverted to feed irrigation systems and to keep the city supplied with water.

Roadside Settlements

Although most people in the countryside live on farms, dozens of smaller communities have grown up alongside the roads leading to the capital. These towns are rarely destinations in their own right, but instead offer respite to travelers, offering warm meals

and comfortable beds for those en route to the city. The settlements depend on travelers and thus are more common in the east and north, less so in the south, and very rare in the west, as few people have any good reason or desire to travel to the Grand Duchy (see *The Grand Duchy*).

Routes north see larger towns accommodating the steady flow of pilgrims bound for the Holy Kingdom, often named after the famous saints and religious leaders of the Cult of the New God. Some places claim to have been sites of miraculous events in order to attract more pilgrims and their coin. At least three claim to have been visited by Astrid, and one has an enormous cedar water bucket in which it is said the reflection of the prophet has been seen at least twice.

Commerce with the Confederacy of the Nine Cities has always been strong, so the communities along the trade routes have grown quite large and wealthy thanks to the influx of merchant caravans headed in and out of the imperial province. Many of the communities try to individuate themselves with attractions that range from classy to garish. Several boast famous wineries and exotic foods, while others offer restorative hot springs, freak shows, and other extravagant diversions.

Southern and western towns are smaller and farther apart. One might travel a couple of days before coming upon a roadside in or a tiny village built up around an old, rotting temple. What little traffic there is comes from further south for the most part, usually farmers moving grains and livestock into the province for sale in the city. Banditry and beastmen have troubled the west for years and, until the uprising, orcs routinely cleared the area once every few years.

Ruins

People have lived in these lands since the earliest days of human expansion, and so the landscape is filled with the wreckage of history. All across the countryside stand crumbling castles, old bridges, forgotten monuments, menhirs, and stone circles. People take these remnants for granted and think nothing of plundering them for raw materials or incorporating the ruins as part of their homes and communities. One might find a lean-to shack propped up against a broken pillar, a family of twelve living in the turret of an abandoned castle, or a farmhouse constructed from heavy blocks of stone that once made a fortress wall.

With the abundance of ruins, people also pull all kinds of interesting things from the ground—scraps of armor, broken weapons, arrowheads, old coins, bones, and the like. Sometimes, darker and more insidious things lurk just under the soil, remains from the dark times of the Witch-King. After several disasters—unleashed demons, arcane explosions, and dreadful curses, to name just a few—people

generally don't go purposefully hunting for buried treasure very often. Rather, they report anything they might deem unusual or dangerous to the authorities, secular or religious.

Aside from beastmen in the west, the countryside has relatively few monstrous troubles compared to other lands in the Empire. Harvesters sometimes set up shop in a town to pick off locals, and bands of boggarts have been spotted in the northern hills. There are, however, an abundance of spirits. So much blood has been spilt on these lands over so many centuries, and so many have lived and died here that many souls, for one reason or another, have not moved on to the Underworld or Hell. Apparitions (see Common Characters, below) can be seen wandering the ruins at night, while wraiths, specters, ghosts, and other malevolent spirits frequently cause great trouble to the living.

After the Uprising

The countryside has become a bloody battlefield of burning villages and abandoned farms. The orcs, freed from the dark sorcery that bound them, swarmed outward from the city to vent their wrath on an unsuspecting populace. Bands of orcs traveled the roads, moving from town to town, killing and plundering indiscriminately. Some communities tried to resist the marauding orcs, but stood no chance against the veteran warriors, and were either quickly slaughtered or enslaved.

As word of the mass killings spread, people began fleeing from their homes, seeking refuge far from the city. Most headed north for the Holy Kingdom, but a few went east and south. Refugees who made for the Grand Duchy found the border closed to them, which forced them to head north into the Borderlands or back south.

Although a few still roam and raid about the countryside, Drudge has managed to establish some semblance of order and command over the vast majority of the orcs in the region, slowly molding them into an army in preparation for the coming war. The surviving people of the countryside have been left to pick up the pieces of their lives, and even encouraged at sword point to get back to the business of growing crops and herding livestock. Anyone who refuses usually suffers an excruciating end at the hands of their orc masters, as an example to any who might consider resisting the new order.

King Drudge has ordered the construction of four new strongholds in the countryside. Work on these is still underway, but without timber, the workers—mostly human slaves—have had to build them using scavenged materials from nearby towns and ruins. Each stronghold has a garrison of one hundred orcs who patrol the lands around them and enforce the orc king's commands.

Countryside Sights

You can use the following table for inspiration when describing what the characters see while traveling through the province.

Caecras Countryside Sights

d20	Sight
1	The burnt wreckage of a farmhouse
2	A row of 2d6 crucified humans
3	A gang of 2d6 + 3 orphaned children
4	A pack of 2d6 wild dogs feeding on a dead horse
5	The burnt effigy of the old emperor
6	A collapsed building with a red fist painted on a wall
7	A column of smoke rising on the horizon
8	A mass grave
9	A band of 2d6 angry orcs spoiling for a fight
10	The corpses of a mother clutching her child, both hacked apart
11	A scarecrow in a wheat field
12	A pasture littered with dead livestock
13	A broken signpost
14	A patch of scorched earth
15	A line of 5d20 refugees fleeing for the border
16	A dying human soldier lying on the side of the road
17	A group of 1d6 + 2 orcs leading 2d20 human slaves back to the capital
18	An utterly destroyed town, corpses left to rot where they fell
19	A broken, burnt wagon
20	A group of 1d20 + 50 orcs laying siege to an estate

The City

No city in the Empire has ever matched the majesty, splendor, and magnificence of Caecras. It has been a beacon of light in a world steeped in shadow, ignorance, and violence for thousands of years. The city's great age shows everywhere, from its ancient fortifications and the arches built by the Edene, to monuments of great perversity still standing since the dark times of the Witch-King and the countless additions made by the Kalasans over their eight-century reign. Caecras is a city in which history is alive in nearly everything: in the stones of its cobbled streets, the water sluicing down its aqueducts, the pale white spires left by the faeries at the dawn of the world, and the crowded shops and homes huddled tightly along the twisting streets that wend their way through the city.

At its height, the city was home to over one hundred thousand souls, a great melting pot of peoples from all across the Empire and beyond. Despite the great numbers of people, the city largely contained its population inside roughly five square miles of a hilly

island rising from the center of the Wyne River, a sluggish waterway that meanders down from Mercy Lake in the Holy Kingdom, pools in a large polluted lake around the city, before turning westward to end in the vast marshes of the Grand Duchy.

With space at a premium, Caecras built up rather than out. A veritable forest of turrets, spires, and sharply canted roofs climb above the walls, shrouded by a haze of smoke and filth coughed up by the denizens of this claustrophobically crowded place. Those people the city could not hold or did not want spilled over onto the banks of the Wyne River, collected into ramshackle shantytowns populated mostly by the wretched and poor. Those industries deemed unfit or undesirable to exist within the city walls can be found here as well, in communities with such charming names as Beggars' End, Shit Town, and Buboos.

Today, from a distance, the capital looks much as it always has, and the air remains thick with the same foul odors that have always characterized it. Upon closer approach, signs of upheaval can be seen everywhere: from unburied and dismembered corpses, makeshift crosses upon which hang the remains of crucified humans, burnt structures everywhere, and multitudes of dead-eyed survivors shuffling about in the heavy chains and shackles once worn by the orcs, living in constant fear of the crack of the whip or random beating from their orc overseers.

The nearer one gets to the center, the more disturbing the sights, the more horrifying the violence, and the thicker the pall of suffering, hopelessness, and death becomes.

Emperor's Arms

Two bridges, called the Emperor's Arms, stretch from each bank, across nearly a mile of the Wyne, connecting them to the island upon which the main portion of the city is built. Huge stone pillars climb up from the foul waters to either side of the 300-yard-wide expanses, reaching 50 feet overhead. A web of steel cables stretches from these pillars to support the bridges against the weight of traffic moving across them.

Walls and Maws

A 100-foot-high wall encrusted with battlements and turrets, decorated with the carvings of cruel demons and strange monsters dating back to the era of the Witch-King, encircles the entire island. From the top of the wall hang swinging poles with dangling cages, in which the bodies of convicted criminals and political enemies were once left to rot. In the aftermath of the orc uprising, the cages are again filled, but now with a more random assortment of victims, all human.



The Maws, massive 50-foot-high gates, grant access to the city from the Emperor's Arms. The Maws look like yawning mouths with heavy portcullis spikes serving as their teeth. The gates normally stand open, but can be sealed using a gigantic stone disc that can be rolled into the gateway and secured with chains.

Another, far less appealing way into the city, is through its sewers. All around the base of the walls, about three feet over the water line are 6-foot diameter tunnels covered by iron bars. Water oozes out from these passages, carrying the city's filth out and into the Wyne. These rat-infested sewers twist and wind under the city, their ancient walls sagging in many places, the mortar crumbling, with everything covered in slime. Madmen, criminals, political exiles, and others having nowhere else to go make the sewers even more dangerous—most of these wretches are desperate to survive, willing to kill over a crust of bread.

But rats and desperate citizens are but minor threats compared to the harvesters, monsters, and other deadly creatures lurking in the gloom. City leaders have always left the sewers unaddressed to deter or hinder smugglers and others who would otherwise take advantage of these stinking passages for their own nefarious purposes.

Wards

Caecras is divided into six wards. Standing outside of these wards are the Heights, a set of high hills rising in the city's center. Each ward has a peculiar character,

owing to the many different functions they have had over the centuries. While the orcs now consider the city to be theirs, they have made no effort to remake the city, content to leave things just as they are—human inhabitants excepted, of course.

Lost Souls

A district of modest size, confined to a few streets at the city's center, Lost Souls was the religious center of the city where one could find all the various religions, sects, and cults known in the Empire. The largest structure is the ancient Cathedral of Eternal Radiance, built by the Order of Light in the Empire's infancy, and re-consecrated in the name of the New God. The various old gods also have their shrines here, and countless other structures offer salvation, answers, and purpose from a bevy of strange and inscrutable deities.

The main artery into the district, Petitioners Way, is broad and largely clean by the standards of the rest of the city, with numerous temples, shrines, and monuments to forgotten gods standing on either side. The rest of the district, accessed by smaller, narrower streets, is a series of neighborhoods where the clergy and their families lived, as well as shops that both cater to the temples and exploit their followers. Lost Souls is home to the city's only graveyard, where all the emperors have been laid to rest since the Empire's founding.

The temples are all now empty, their priests tortured and murdered, altars desecrated, and vaults plundered for riches. So much blood was spilled here, with no answer from the gods in whose names these structures were raised. Now, the surviving population avoids this place, grimly believing the gods have abandoned them.

Traitor's Square

Traitor's Square covers the city's east side. Despite the name, the ward encompasses far more territory than the square for which it was named. The commercial heart of Caecras, merchants from all over hawk their wares in its crowded streets, while merchant princes argue and set prices in the coffee houses that have popped up on almost every corner. The main streets through Traitor's Square are larger than those found elsewhere in the city, designed so to accommodate wagons and carts laden with goods that come from such faraway places as the Pirate Isles, Blötland, and beyond.

In addition to bazaars and marketplaces, Traitor's Square also houses the city's merchant class, whether they are natives of the city or visiting from elsewhere. Gates open onto streets from fine townhouses, with tiny gardens out back, policed by private guards. A dozen or so fine inns offer well-appointed accommodations for all travelers according to the weights of their purses. There are also diversions aplenty here, such as public houses, specialty shops, fine restaurants, and discreet houses of pleasure.

Traitor's Square was hit just as hard as the rest of the city by the orc uprising. Most merchants fled, but only the luckiest were able to do so with their fortunes intact. The orc mobs ran wildly through the upscale neighborhoods, burning many of its houses, and killing or enslaving anyone they captured. The destruction was not as widespread as in other wards, however, and many orcs have taken up residence in the intact dwellings evacuated by their previous occupants. Drudge has recently allowed foreign merchants back into the city, and those few who have taken him up on the offer have settled here.

Clamorhome

Dismayed by the technological achievements of Lij, the City of Wonders, several merchant princes met with Eras just after his coronation to persuade him to support the development of a new center of commerce inside Caecras: a city ward for engineers and alchemists to gather and bring glory through their industry to the city and, by extension, the Alabaster Throne. The young emperor saw no reason to say no, so he approved their plans.

To make space for this new construction, orc soldiers were sent in to clear out the Warrens, a

slum that had spread across the southern side of the city. The orcs went door to door, driving out the inhabitants with fist, sword, and flame. Workers came behind to tear down and clear away the emptied structures, and built factories where the former homes once stood. As most people who lived in the Warrens were poor, they had no place left to go. Many moved to the already overcrowded shantytowns outside the city walls, while a few scurried back in after the orcs' departure, rebuilding their homes from scavenged materials in the shadow of the great factories and workshops that produced strange engines, weapons of war, and flying ships.

Clamorhome, taking its name from the incessant noise emanating from the new buildings, has the distinction of being the filthiest ward in Caecras. Between the smoke pouring from the tall stacks overhead and the chemicals spilling out in the wastewater, the ward has become a toxic place. The few people who reside here show signs of the contamination in the wreckage of their bodies. Missing teeth, unseemly tumors, patchy hair, and other physical maladies afflict the survivors, who have come to be known as calibans.

The uprising did not touch Clamorhome in the same way it ravaged the rest of the city. In fact, it remains as desperate and as filthy as it was before. However, the factories were emptied and the workshops abandoned. The orcs found the calibans to be ready allies, eager to serve their new overlords by toiling in the factories and even helping to combat the Resistance. While the orcs accept the aid of the calibans, they neither trust nor mingle with them.

Rebels from the Stacks make regular forays into Clamorhome to forage for materials from which they can make explosives. The frequent explosions rocking the Heights and other parts of the city testify to their success. Drudge has ordered patrols of the ward increased, but they have had little effect so far in reducing the bombings.

Stacks

The largest district in Caecras, the Stacks extends west and south from Lost Souls, following the curve of the Heights until it comes to an abrupt end at Clamorhome. With space at a premium, the district became a maze of towers and bridges, all of which cast the streets below into deep shadow. Most structures here reach ten stories high, though there are some higher and lower structures interspersed throughout.

The highest levels belong to the wealthiest and most influential citizens while the poor are relegated to the darkened depths, places that scarcely, if ever, see the light of day. Mixed in with residences are shops, restaurants, taverns, and the like. The Stacks district is the most cosmopolitan part of the city, with

a rich and diverse mixture of people, from various humans to halflings, fauns, hobgoblins, elementals, and others.

The dense population, crowded conditions, and labyrinthine nature of the buildings have kept the orcs from finding much success in establishing any control over the ward. Many people living here were able to escape the city, albeit slowly. Most chose to remain behind, however, unwilling to abandon their homes and livelihoods. Some have pledged loyalty to Drudge, while others have vowed to take the city back, clandestinely fomenting rebellion against the orcs. Because of this, the ward is a hotbed of deceit and intrigue, as constantly shifting loyalties and surprise betrayals keep everyone on the edge of paranoia.



Faerie Spires

Caecras has eight gleaming white spires believed to have been built by the faeries. Like the other faerie spires found in the Northern Reach, no means of ingress present themselves and no stain or damage has ever marred their surfaces. They appear as they have for thousands of years, silent witnesses to the march of centuries. The purpose they serve has been a mystery that has not yet been solved and the range of speculation includes beacons for calling the faerie folk back to the world, physical incarnations of the wards that keep the Demon Lord at bay, or conduits for magical energy.



Fighting breaks out often in the Stacks. Each time the rebels kill an orc or blow up a building in the city, a new force of troopers tries to push deeper into the ward. Often, their efforts wind up killing more of the innocent than the guilty, but then these victims are hailed by the rebels as martyrs to the cause. Smoke from buildings set aflame by both sides contributes to the city's already unhealthy atmosphere.

Inkpots

The Imperial University dominates the ward covering the northeastern side of the city. Founded shortly after the Empire, the Kalasans sought to educate their subjects in an attempt to bring them out of ignorance into a new era of progress. The University was established to promote a culture of learning and advancement the emperor believed would be crucial to creating a new nation.

Placing the University in Inkpots was an obvious choice as the area had once housed the Academy, an ancient institution of learning burned by the Gog. The ward was also the home for the Library of Melfhor, numerous copyist and scrivener halls, and all the industries supporting such endeavors,

such as papermakers, mixers of inks, bookbinders, and illuminators. Numerous public houses peppered the ward, catering to University students and professors alike.

Inkpots suffered terribly in the uprising. The orcs, disinterested in preserving knowledge, stormed the district in the weeks following the emperor's death, and executed a large number of students and faculty, deeming them useless in the new order. Fires were allowed to burn themselves out in the district, with the worst damage occurring in the University buildings. Now, very few people remain here, but those who do have grown quite skilled at hiding from the roving bands of orcs looking for easy prey.

Palace of Antiquities: One of the only museums in the Empire, the Palace of Antiquities was built two hundred years ago to collect and preserve artwork, literature, and objects of historical significance for posterity. The Palace once belonged to Rudolfen Mattico, a rich and well-connected merchant who made his fortunes by edging out his rivals in Caecras's extensive trade with the Confederacy of Nine Cities, most notably Kem. His children proved to be disappointments to him, so he willed his considerable fortune and property to the city in the hope of preserving imperial history for all.

The Palace is a five-story building surrounded by manicured gardens and a high stone wall capped with iron spikes. Found within walking distance of the Imperial University, students often came here to research and achieve a better understanding of significant historical and political developments. Surprisingly enough, the Palace remains intact since the orc uprising, but its doors were shuttered and it has not opened since.

The Great Library of Melfhor: One of the greatest wizards of antiquity was the Edene magician, Melfhor, whose accomplishments and adventures inspired generation of would-be apprentices to seek out mastery of the arcane arts—before being conquered by Gog, that is. The Witch-King's reign largely erased memory of the wizard from the world and, aside from a few monuments to him in the city, only the Great Library remains to commemorate his legacy.

Historians believe the Library's collection once included all the great works of the ancient world, from the philosophical writings of Plentus to the nine great dramas of Quentas the Elder. Thousands of texts and bound manuscripts covering every subject, from astronomy and complex mathematics to gourmet cooking and social etiquette, could be found on shelves or stacked in piles throughout the thirty-seven chambers into which the Library was divided.

The Witch-King ordered much of the library's collection to be burned, effectively erasing much of the continent's earliest histories. After the founding

of the Empire, efforts were made to restore the Library to its former glory, though its lack of magical lore and ancient works was conspicuous. Like the Palace of Antiquities, the Library did not suffer the ravages of the orc uprising, and it too remains shuttered and closed.

Nine Vices

The arts and entertainment district of the city stands at the base of the Heights on its northern side. A raucous and lively place, Nine Vices offers every kind of diversion a person could imagine, plus many unimaginable entertainments as well. Big draws to the ward include the Great Arena, the Imperial Menagerie, and the Legendary Circus, a permanent encampment with spectacles to boggle and amaze. Brothels, some of the finest in the city, offer different kinds of distractions, while opium dens, taverns, gambling halls, fighting pits, and more offer ways for visitors to spend their coin. So much wealth passed through this district that, until the uprising, the Nine Vices ward attracted the very best performers in the Empire. From fortunetellers and singers to acrobats and clowns, people with any kind of talent could make a living here.

Like much of the city, Nine Vices suffered in the uprising, but not to the same degree as Inkpots and Lost Souls. At Drudge's command, the orcs spared most of the buildings and the people living here, as the orc king wisely understood his warriors would need the distractions the district offered. Blood sport can be found in the Great Arena, and numerous fighting pits continue to see men and women tear each other apart for the amusement of the crowds. A few brothels closed their doors, but most stayed open, sensing new opportunities with the new regime. The zookeepers were able to escape with some of the more exotic creatures, but most of the animals met their end by being butchered for sport or meat.

Great Arena: Built during the peak of the Witch-King's reign as a way to both dispose of political enemies and undesirables as well as provide entertainment to keep the population complacent, the blood of hundreds of thousands of people, animals, and other creatures has stained the stones of this grotesque monument to the excess and violence of a lost era. The Arena is an enormous, oval amphitheater, covering about eight acres in the center of Nine Vices. Standing 180 feet tall and constructed from basalt, the purpose for which the structure was built is made evident in the surviving statuary found in the many archways dimpling the building's exterior. Within, one can see statues of people dying in many gruesome ways, like being torn apart by wild animals, demons, and monsters, or crucifixion, dismemberment, and disembowelment,



to name just a few. At various times, citizens have begged the emperors to remove the most egregious examples, but they always refused, stating that the Arena should stand as a reminder of the horrors of the Witch-King's reign.

The Great Arena still holds gladiatorial contests, but, until recently, the battles fought were not the grisly affairs of ancient times. Instead, the contests were rarely fought to the death and the focus was more on spectacle rather than public execution. Now, though, Drudge has turned the Arena back into an abattoir and, like the Witch-King before him, uses it to make public examples of rebels and political enemies. In fact, many priests from Lost Souls met spectacularly grisly ends here, either butchered by orc gladiators or mutilated by a variety of animals liberated from the Imperial Menagerie.

The Heights

Six high hills occupy the center of the city, five of which are about the same height, with one rising above the rest. Here is where the nobility has traditionally lived, in the shadow of the Imperial Palace, governmental buildings, and the infamous Warrens of the Accursed—the breeding and training grounds for the orc soldiers. Much of the Heights survived the centuries unchanged since the time of the Witch-King, so everything here reminds people of what came before and what could become again if people cease their vigilance against evil.

The nobles live in small estates surrounded by

walls and gardens. The higher the family's standing, the closer their lands are to the Palace, and only a handful of estates stand high enough to have a good view of the emperor's home. The rest cling to the sides of the steep hills, growing like barnacles on the hull of a ship. The steepness of the lands make them wholly unsuited to farming or grazing, so the nobles have been free to beautify their houses with terraced patios, fountains, gardens of flowers and statuary, and innumerable winding staircases.

Cathedral of Hate: Crowning the top of one of the lesser hills are the ruins of the old Cathedral of Hate, a structure that once housed the vile, devil-sworn clergy who served the Witch-King. While little has survived of this once-mighty stronghold of blasphemy, the broken walls, toppled columns, and obscene statuary still evoke the atmosphere of a much darker times. People whisper that beneath the cathedral ruins stands one of the entrances to Hell, a place called Gaethira. Whether true or not, something must indeed lurk under the hill: long ago, an emperor set the Bone Guard—a small force of intentionally maimed orcs with no eyes, ears, or tongues—to stand guard (see *Exquisite Agony* for more information about Gaethira). The Bone Guard has stood watch ever since—until the uprising.

Imperial Palace: A collection of twenty-six buildings rises from the highest hill of the heights, named the Conqueror's Crown. It is here where the emperors and their extended families have made

their homes for nearly a millennia. Promenades and covered staircases connect the various buildings, some of which serve as living quarters, audience halls, courts, armories, kitchens, and more. A 10-foot-high wall of white stone wraps around the hill to keep out unwanted visitors, while ornamental trees, flower gardens, and strange beasts fill the grounds between the wall and the buildings. It is rumored that there is a labyrinthine network of secret tunnels beneath the palace that connect to the city sewers, but no one has ever confirmed this.

The Imperial Palace witnessed the worst of the slaughter to strike the city. No one who was not an orc survived the slaughter, and their blood still stains the walls, floors, and ceilings—a testament to the hatred and rage of the orcs who answered Drudge's call. Now, the Palace houses the orc king, his closest advisors, and many dignitaries from lands brave enough to treat with the new monarch.



The Alabaster Throne

Carved by dwarf hands over 1,500 years ago as a gift to the queen of the Edene, the enormous throne has become a symbol of imperial power and endurance. By some miracle, the 12-foot tall, 6-foot wide seat survived the Witch-King's rule and was restored to its place of pride in the imperial palace. The throne features elaborate carvings of armored warriors battling strange, unknown monsters. Despite its fine appearance, it is an uncomfortable seat and no amount of cushions make sitting upon it pleasant. Most emperors came to believe that this was as it should be, as no ruler should ever rest easy on the throne.



Tower Arcane

High above the capital city floats the Tower Arcane, a 160-foot-tall stone tower rising from a rocky island from which spills a waterfall to rain down onto the city below. The Tower Arcane has looked down on the city for so long and has become a presence so constant that most people hardly notice it unless the drifting tower passes overhead. Few people outside the wizards who attend the archmage have ever set foot into the place and its contents have been the subject of great speculation and rumor. Whether these suppositions are right, the colorful wizards who sometimes descend from their aerie never say.

The order of wizards housed in the Tower Arcane came to Rûl centuries ago from a distant land named Ys (see *Beyond the World's Edge* for more details), a faraway place some claim lies beyond the Eternal Storm in the east or somewhere north of the Desolation. These masked magicians brought



wonders and gifts to the emperor, bargaining with him to secure permission to construct a center of learning above the city in exchange for passing on their lore to worthy pupils. While suspicious of these strangers, the emperor also feared what might result if he refused, and so he agreed. One week later, the tower appeared in the sky above Caecras and has remained ever since, drifting over the city in a tightening spiral until reaches the city center and then reverses course.

The tower perches atop a hill-sized chunk of volcanic stone that tapers to a point at the bottom. Caves pit the sides all around, with a massive waterfall spilling out of one particularly large opening down to the ground below. The water has no source that can be determined and has never stopped flowing, leading some to believe the waters are magical and possess healing properties. People in the city leave basins and buckets to collect the falling water as the tower passes overhead so that they can be restored, though few, if any, can give proof to its supposed restorative properties.

Drakes inhabit many of the caves, flying about the structure day and night. The drakes never trouble the people on the ground nor do they take livestock from the countryside. Rather, they pick off sheep, goats, and the occasional shepherd from the Grand Duchy—it is not unusual to see a struggling animal (or shepherd) in the clutches of these monsters before they disappear into the darkness of the caves.

The great tower stands thirteen stories tall and features dozens of minarets that climb up around it, each one home to one of the twenty-one wizards attending the Archmage, who himself or herself dwells in the central tower. The central tower's top boasts an enormous Orrery—not to be confused with the relic found in Lij—that the wizards use to track the movements of celestial bodies and keep precise time. The rest of the central tower holds a vast repository of books covering a wide range of topics such as histories, magical theory, and various religious tracts.

Finally, a circle of rune-encrusted gold stands in a large hall at the bottom of the great tower. The mages use this circle to move from the Tower to the city and back again, traveling from one location to the next in an instant. Only mages of the Tower have the ability to use this circle.

Mages of the Tower Arcane: The mages of the Tower Arcane live apart from Caecras's people and, as demonstrated by their lack of action in fighting against the orc insurrection, consider themselves wholly independent from the Empire and under no obligation to come to its defense. Since the tower's appearance, it is believed the original wizards making up the order have largely died off, replaced by apprentices who found a place within their

secret society. How and why certain individuals are chosen to join the order is a secret known only to the members, though it is thought they scour the lands of the Empire for suitable candidates, whisking away any they find worthy for training and indoctrination. One is not invited to join, but conscripted.

The identities of the various members remain unknown, as the founders' descendants maintain the customs of Ys, which require each member to don clothing covering them from head to toe, and to never show their faces to outsiders. Over the years, the wizards have descended from their remote aerie to move among the people on the ground. These rare appearances have allowed people to identify certain wizards by the color of their clothing. No two wizards wear the same color, which extends to everything the wizard might wear, from robes and gloves to boots and jewelry. The color white is reserved for the Archmage, who heads the order and is believed to be the most powerful practitioner of magic on the continent, if not the world. Aside from the Archmage, nineteen wizards live in the tower, with two others traveling the known world.

Arcane Colors

Color	Notes
White	Archmage
Red	Great wizard
Yellow	Great wizard
Blue	Great wizard
Orange	High wizard, attends the red wizard
Green	High wizard, attends the yellow wizard
Indigo	High wizard, attends the archmage
Violet	High wizard, attends the blue wizard
Sage	Lesser wizard
Turquoise	Lesser wizard
Vermilion	Lesser wizard
Magenta	Lesser wizard
Scarlet	Lesser wizard
Azure	Lesser wizard
Aubergine	Lesser wizard
Amethyst	Lesser wizard
Teal	Lesser wizard
Viridian	Lesser wizard
Chartreuse	Lesser wizard
Brown	Lesser wizard
Gray	Secret wizard, known to great wizards and Archmage, at large
Black	Secret wizard, known only to Archmage, at large

Navigating the City

Getting around Caecras was trying even in the best of times—in the aftermath of the orc uprising, it borders on the impossible. Many of the streets never had signs to begin with, and most that did have since lost them. After the orc rampage, all city services—like rubbish collection, policing, and maintenance—came to an end. Collapsed buildings, widespread rubbish and debris, dog-worried corpses, roving bands of murderous orcs, the attacks of resistance fighters, and so much more make simply traveling a few blocks an adventure in itself.

The initial outbreak of the uprising was brutal and bloody, but the worst of it petered out after a few days. Thus, most buildings remained intact by the end of the uprising, and what damage there was came from people fleeing ahead of the vengeful orcs. Since the uprising, various resistance groups have fought against the orcs by setting fires and blowing up buildings, resulting in extensive damage across much of the city. Great swathes of the city now stand in ruins, the burnt remains of buildings offering mute testimony to the horrific struggle that has unfolded in this city.

City Encounters

Peril awaits anyone who seeks to travel through Caecras. Between packs of wild dogs, orc patrols, and rebels fighting to drive out the occupiers, wherever one goes there's risk of running into something unfriendly and, most likely, dangerous. Whenever you like, roll on the following table to determine what a group encounters in the city.

Caecras Encounters

d20	Encounter
1	A pack of 1d6 + 3 wild dogs (small animals with pack fighting) worrying the carcass of a small child
2	A patrol of 5 orcs searching for rebels
3	An explosion sounding in the distance
4	A band of 2d6 orphans (commoners with improvised weapons) scavenging for food
5	A swarm of rats (as animal swarm) rushing out from the darkness of a sewer or abandoned house
6	Mad, shrieking laughter echoing down a street and then ending abruptly
7	A crucified and disemboweled human
8	A patrol of 10 orcs looking for loot
9	A ruined building collapses, filling the air with dust
10	A band of 1d6 + 1 rebels (as hired killers) searching for weapons
11	A pack of 1d3 ghouls dragging off human corpses into the darkness
12	The bodies of 2d6 orcs and 4d6 humans strewn about a side street
13	An old man or woman hobbling down the street, weeping
14	A pitched battle between 2d6 orcs and 3d6 humans (as commoners)
15	A dying man seated on the ground, moaning, his entrails heaped into his lap
16	An organ filch extracting body parts from a struggling victim
17	A flock of ravens picking over the dead heaped up at the end of an alley
18	A fountain choked with body parts
19	A band of 1d6 + 2 orcs on patrol
20	A killing mist creeps down the road

Law and Order

Enforcing law and keeping the peace fell to the Capital Guard, known as the Gray Cloaks for their homespun hooded cloaks. The Capital Guard had twelve precincts at key positions throughout the city, with 666 constables divided between them, all under the command of the Watch Captain.

Staunch requirements and rigorous discipline made the force well-liked throughout the city, as they maintained order without being oppressive or corrupt.



When the orcs threw off their chains, the Capital Guard were the first to respond to the threat. The orcs disposed of them quickly, butchering them with axes and swords, or simply tearing them apart with their bare hands. The Gray Cloaks' brave efforts did little to slow the orcs in their rampage, and their dead numbered among the appalling casualties in the first days of the uprising.

A few Gray Cloaks somehow managed to survive the violence and, true to their natures and loyalties, stayed instead of fleeing. Most have thrown in their lots with the rebels, taking positions of authority in the various cells working against the orcs. A few, though, have put their efforts into protecting the innocents who have remained behind, working to spirit people out of the city.

Drudge has yet to rebuild a force to police the city, instead assigning the duties to his soldiers. Most orc patrols move through the city looking for any sign of troublemaking or rebellion, and brutally making examples of anyone who resists them. While bluntly effective, these efforts do not inspire the survivors or would-be visitors to support or trust that the new regime will make any commitment to restore Caecras to any sort of law and order.

An Uncertain Future

Although small pockets of resistance continue to cause trouble, Drudge considers Caecras secured, and he has begun to turn his attention to enemies beyond the imperial province's borders. The orc king has divided the orcs into three armies of 20,000 soldiers, bolstered by slaves taken from the city to maintain the supply lines. The first army is stationed in the capital and countryside to enforce order. The second army is stationed along the borders of the Grand Duchy and Low Country to fortify the borders against possible invasion from the west or south. The third army sits near the borders of the Holy Kingdom, as Drudge intends to carry war to that province.

The orc king has made no secret of his loathing for the New God's cult, or of his desire to crush the Holy Kingdom and stamp out the religion forever. However, he understands the unifying influence any assault on the province could have on many of the remaining provinces, so he is biding his time until he can reinforce his army with a fresh crop of new recruits from the training grounds. Until that time, Drudge has begun sending out agents and emissaries to sow division and unrest throughout the remnants of the Empire in the hope of sparking some kind of unrest, dissent, and maybe even an uprising or two.

The Stirrings of War

War appears inevitable. Too many centuries of oppression and exploitation have passed for the orcs to simply forget their grudges—and, certainly, forgiveness isn't something that was ever bred into their nature. They want vengeance and will do whatever it takes to free all orcs on the continent, as well as exact vengeance upon those who placed the chains on their people.

Even if the orcs could overcome their hatred, they were bred to kill, and violence is all they know or have ever known. Certainly, some orcs seek peace after all the hard years of fighting, but most believe their training and suffering have led to this decisive moment in time.

The flood of refugees pouring out from Caecras into the bordering provinces brings with it tidings of atrocities occurring during and after the uprising. This news, along with the logistical problems of having to deal with the fleeing masses, has spread alarm and fear through the provincial populations. Even as they begin mobilizing for what appears to be the coming war, several of the provincial leaders have sent envoys to Caecras in the hope of forestalling the conflict, as well as to get a sense of the current conditions in the capital.

The battle lines are still being drawn and, for now, Drudge has more enemies than allies. That could change, however. The Confederacy of Nine Cities broke from the Empire long before the uprising, and while each member city has made noise about their neutrality, each has also sent a trade emissary to Caecras. The debts owed by the Empire to the Vault brought the banking consortium to the city to look after their interests. Kem, the Golden City, has a vested interest in a continent-wide war, as it will certainly profit by making loans to both sides. Of all the cities in the Confederacy, only Azūl, the City of Death, has made any public sign of siding with Caecras, leading provincial leaders everywhere to beef up their personal protection measures to guard against the dreaded assassins of the Black Hand.

Balgrendia and the March Lands in the south are too far away to be drawn into a war anytime soon. Balgrendia, however, has always chafed under imperial rule and many believe the province will break away from the Empire soon. Founded as a military state to guard the Empire's southern borders from beastmen incursions, the March Lands have always been loyal to the Alabaster Throne. Ansa Hargrove, the current duchess of the March Lands, has not moved for independence, but she has been pulling troops from the southern front to secure the province's northern borders against possible orc aggression out of Caecras.

Low Country and the Grand Duchy of the West both remain part of the Empire. The leaders in Low Country know if they tried to break away, the orcs would simply overrun them, so they continue supplying Caecras with textiles, grains, and other materials. The Grand Duke of

the Westers is too feckless to take a serious stand. He has sent an emissary to the imperial city, with a very tepid pledge of loyalty to the throne (see “The Orc King and His Court” below), but little more than that. He believes that will be enough to appease Drudge, although his advisors tell him even that small gesture might antagonize Tear and the Holy Kingdom.

With the orc king’s attention fixed squarely on the Holy Kingdom, it appears that province will be the first to face the onslaught of the orcs. As a result, the Kingdom is massing troops along its borders and has started calling in old debts, most notably those owed by the Borderlands of Tear. Tear’s ruler Horus has been reluctant to declare against Drudge, despite being the last surviving human heir to the Alabaster Throne. He has some sympathy for what he sees as the rightness of the orcs’ anger, as well as worry his small province will once again be plunged into warfare. Horus knows, however, that he owes much to the Holy Kingdom for its faithful support during Tear’s darkest days. Tear is ready to take the fight to Caecras if need be, or, at the very least, send reinforcements to shore up the Kingdom of God if it is attacked.

The Orc King and His Court

Like all his predecessors, Drudge’s loyalty to the Alabaster Throne was absolute. The curse binding his people to the emperors ensured that neither he nor they could take up arms against their human masters—they had no choice but to do whatever was asked of them, even if it meant laying down their lives. Yet, the moment Drudge discovered the truth behind the Empire’s policy of orc “retirement,” the vile act of execution and cannibalism as a way to both control and feed the growing orc population, the curse’s hold on him was broken. As the orc king gained the free will denied to him his entire life, so too did orcs everywhere.

Before the uprising, Drudge had no ambition beyond serving the throne and leading his people—but the shedding of those shackles, along with centuries of oppression and exploitation, awakened in him a greater sense of purpose. No longer bound to serve, he committed himself to rule his people. Drudge is determined to make the world safe for orcs and visit justice upon those who enslaved them.

A serious, driven, and focused man of few words, Drudge does not revel in his new status. Far from it. He finds the trappings of his station to be a burden and has ordered the finery of the palace sold to raise funds for the war effort. While he demands that he is now the rightful ruler of the Empire and all its lands, he refuses to call himself emperor and only with great reluctance does he accept the title of king. Rather, he sees himself as the first among equals, the representative of all orcs, leading with their consent.

Drudge stands just shy of seven feet tall and weighs just over three hundred pounds. He has long black hair, gray, scarred skin, and dark, smoldering eyes. He dresses in the manner of a warrior, a mail shirt covering his torso down to his knees, with his greatsword either strapped to his back or never far from hand.

KING DRUDGE

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 orc

Perception 11 (+1); shadowsight
Defense 18 (mail); **Health** 68; **Insanity** 3; **Corruption** 2
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12

Battlefield Leadership When Drudge gets a success on an attack roll, he can choose one creature within short range. Before the end of the round, the target makes its next attack roll with 1 boon.

Fighter’s Resolve Drudge makes challenge rolls to resist attacks with 1 boon.

Rising Fury When Drudge takes damage, he makes his next attack roll before the end of the next round with 1 boon.

Weapon Mastery When Drudge makes an attack roll with a weapon and the number on the d20 is 9 or less, reroll the d20 and use the second number in place of the first.

Combat Mastery When Drudge uses an action to attack with a weapon, he can choose to deal 2d6 extra damage, 1d6 extra damage and make one additional attack against a different target, or make additional attacks against two different targets.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Greatsword (melee) +6 with 1 boon (5d6 plus 1d6 on attack roll 20+)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Attack Command Choose one creature within short range. If the target can hear and understand Drudge, it can use a triggered action to attack and it makes the attack roll with 1 boon and the attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Catch your Breath Drudge can use an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to heal 22 damage. Once he uses Catch your Breath twice, he must wait until he completes a rest before he can use it again.

Direct the Troops Drudge can use an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to choose one creature within short range. If the target can hear and understand what he says, the target moves up to half its Speed.



Shadow of the Demon Lord

In both *Shadow of the Demon Lord* and *The Hunger in the Void*, Drudge is presented as the figure on whom the Demon Lord’s shadow has fallen as the default threat to the world of Urth. If you adopt the “Fall of Civilization” shadow, Drudge becomes a far more monstrous figure, one eager to spread chaos and destruction across the continent. If you have *Hunger*, you can apply the Demon Spawn role to the above statistics box to represent the effects of demonic influence on him.



The King's Court

Compared to the last emperor's court, Drudge's throne room is rather barren. The orc king rid himself of the previous emperor's sycophants and hangers-on by simply killing them. Now, the court attendants are a mix of orc and human advisors, along with those few diplomats who have come to see who has taken the place of the slain emperor.

General Skullsplitter: One of the personal guards assigned to Drudge before he came to power in the Empire, Drudge named Skullsplitter Protector of the City, charging him with the establishment of order, with the authority to do so in any manner he chooses. Skullsplitter hates humans and therefore takes special pleasure in the task assigned to him. He directs his troops to show no mercy to traitors, rebels, or anyone else who would threaten the new order.

Skullsplitter is an enormous orc, nearly eight feet tall, with a powerfully built body covered in scars and tattoos that account for all the humans he has killed in his career. He has a large notch in his forehead from the time his head caught an axe, which he subsequently pulled out and used to slay its former wielder.

General Weeper: The supreme commander of the three orc armies, Weeper gained renown leading orcs against the beastmen in Tear, crushing a rebellion in Old Edene, and hunting down and killing Eron the Red, a notorious bandit who spent the summer of 871 terrorizing the countryside of Low Country. A combination of a keen, strategic mind with a fearsome disposition won her the loyalty of her troops and the king's confidence.

Weeper stands six feet tall and has a wiry body. She scarred her cheeks with a knife to make it appear as if tears run down her cheeks. When she talks, she does so in a husky whisper, due to a slash to the throat she suffered in battle.

Lord Alonzo Flench: Fearing invasion, the Grand Duke of the West dispatched an ambassador to the court of the orc king to monitor events in the capital and to provide assurances that the Duchy would remain part of the Empire despite the recent troubles. The task of accomplishing this fell to Alonzo Flench, an utterly inept and incompetent noble from a very minor family. The Grand Duke dispatched him because he was expendable—if anything happened to him, he could easily ignore the protests from his kin. Flench does not want to be in Caecras and has lived in abject terror since his arrival in the city, which he is incapable of hiding.

Lord Flench is a nervous young man in his mid-twenties. He sweats and wrings his hands a lot, his eyes wide in horror from what he has seen. He has not mustered up the courage to broach the topic to the orc





king for which he was sent and has been, for the most part, a silent guest and the butt of several cruel jokes by the other court attendants.

Eran Sumple: Not part of the Empire, the Freeholds of Nar dispatched Eran Sumple to gauge the situation in the capital and, if possible, maintain her nation's neutrality. A skilled negotiator and diplomat, Sumple has managed to establish cordial relations with the orc king and feels confident that he will respect her nation's independence and unwillingness to become embroiled in any conflicts. She is concerned about Irinith Qui's efforts to spark a war and sends regular reports to her masters back home, urging them to prepare for the conflict.

Sumple is a middle-aged human woman with short brown hair streaked with gray. She wears spectacles on her face and has a quick smile. She dresses in a black suit and keeps a pistol inside her jacket pocket.

Irinith Qui: The Golden City wasted little time in sending representatives to Caecras, seeing in the new king an opportunity to enrich themselves in the coming war by bankrolling the orc armies. Irinith Qui, a dark-skinned human with bright blue eyes and a smooth scalp, leads the entourage from Kem, bringing gifts of gold and gems to entice Drudge into forming an alliance. If the carnage in the city has affected him, Qui shows no sign of it. In public he is all business, all the time. In the privacy of his lodging outside of the palace, however, it is rumored he and his retinue of servants hold parties of splendor and excess to rival those of the slain emperor's orgies.

High Banker Levon Latrice: The Vault in Kem dispatched Levon Latrice, one of the high bankers, to accompany Irinith Qui to get a sense of the situation in Caecras and to determine whether Drudge intends to continue making payments toward the debts incurred by the last emperor. If Drudge defaults on the loans, the damage to the continent's economy would be severe, forcing the Vault to pressure the neighboring provinces to take up arms against the orcs and reestablish the human monarchy. Should it become necessary, Latrice has agents in Tear and the Holy Kingdom awaiting his command to open negotiations with Horus and the Matriarch. It remains unclear which way Drudge will go and Latrice worries that the orcs might be too many to stop if it comes to war.

Latrice is a human in his fifties, with silver hair and a long, drooping mustache. He wears violet robes and rings of white gold on each of his fingers. Around his neck, he wears a white gold chain on which hang nine keys, one for each city in the Confederacy.

Martinius Edder: Rumors have been circulating about an early alliance between Drudge and Azûl, the City of Death, and Martinius Edder's presence in the capital further stokes the fires of speculation. An ancient man, bald and liver-spotted, he moves

with the aid of a cane and assistance from six young boys who see to his needs. His age and infirmity disguise a ruthless determination forged over a lifetime spent killing people for money. A senior member of the Black Hand, he and Drudge are, in fact, secretly negotiating an alliance in which the Black Hand would eliminate key political figures in neighboring provinces in exchange for territory in the Holy Kingdom and Edene upon Drudge's final victory over his enemies.

Pilsby Benjan: The representative of Low Country is effectively trapped in Caecras, having been in the city on business when the uprising began. Pilsby Benjan was appalled by the violence and would have left with the other refugees, but he felt he could help the people by staying behind. A halfling 3 feet tall, with broad features and a mop of curly brown hair on his head, Benjan has been secretly feeding intelligence to the Resistance at great risk to himself. In fact, he was nearly caught but managed to kill the orc soldier who had stumbled onto his meeting in the maze of secret tunnels beneath the palace.

Guy Pemberton: Many stayed in the city during the uprising. Some remained as Caecras was their home and they were willing to stick it out. Others felt it was their duty to fight against the orcs, while many felt they were simply trading one tyrant for another. Guy Pemberton represents the people who want peace in the city and who have accepted Drudge as their new ruler. Called the Collaborators by their enemies, Pemberton's faction has been complicit in many of the atrocities taking place in the city. They out members of the Resistance, report suspicious activities, and give food, shelter, and aid to the orcs, who would simply take these things from them anyway if not offered. Pemberton might not like the orcs, but he feels cooperation will save more lives than fighting them.



Guy Pemberton is a middle-aged human with short blond hair and green eyes. He wears tattered green robes and a simple silver chain around his neck. Cringing and obsequious, he laughs a little too loud at the orcs' jests and is a little too helpful when dealing with his new masters. Other members of the court call him the King's Creature.

The Vermilion Mage: Since the Tower Arcane appeared in the sky above the city, there has always been a member of the order in attendance at the imperial court. Acting more as observers than counselors, the wizards rarely act in a political manner, offering insights only when asked directly. Such insights tend to be cryptic and mostly unhelpful. When

Drudge slew the emperor, the wizard in the court cast a spell and disappeared. A few weeks after the uprising died down, a new wizard appeared in the Imperial Palace. Clad head to toe in vermillion, with only his or her eyes visible, the new wizard has said little, but seems keenly interested in the events at court.

A Beleaguered Population

Diversity has ever been a hallmark of Caecras's population. Even though humans have always had the greatest numbers, they live alongside dwarfs and halflings, hobgoblins and salamanders, and countless others. While orcs were a regular sight, they lived in the city as slaves, confined to their barracks around the imperial palace or marching through the streets to go on patrol or stand watch on the walls.

The city's population has, understandably, undergone some stark changes. Taking into account those slain during the uprising and the refugees fleeing the violence, Caecras has but a fraction of its former population, numbering between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, about half of which are orcs. The remaining people are humans, for the most part, with smatterings of goblins, clockworks, and representatives of other ancestries.

The Victors

The orcs make up the largest cultural group in the city. When the enslavement curse that bound them to the throne was broken, centuries of pent-up rage and hatred drove them to commit acts of appalling violence against the human citizenry. After weeks of fighting, the bloodletting slowed until something close to stability returned to the city. The orcs have turned their attention from vengeance toward the coming war against the Holy Kingdom, in addition to securing and fortifying all they have conquered.

The freedom wrested from the imperials fills orcs with pride and enthusiasm for what is to come. For too long, the orcs have seen themselves used and discarded, exploited by their weak and unworthy masters. Now is the dawn of a new age, the Age of Orcs, and the world will tremble before their might. Toward that end, orcs ceaselessly train and work, making ready for the great conquest to come.

Much of the random, rampant violence in the city has died down—at least compared to the uprising—and the orcs have come to see themselves as the masters of the city. They tolerate no disobedience or resistance from the other peoples living in the city, publicly executing dissidents and rebels in extremely painful and gruesome ways. So long as the other people accept their lots and do as the orcs say, they can live. If not, they will most certainly die.

The Collaborators

Sensing the way the wind was blowing, many people came forward to pledge fealty to Drudge. Called Collaborators by the members of the Resistance, they have done everything they can to find normalcy in their new circumstances. Many go about their lives as they did before the uprising, returning to their homes and working in their professions, all the while turning a blind eye toward the atrocities and chaos swirling around them. However, as conditions worsen and the city is slowly being transformed into something unrecognizable, their ability to tolerate the horror diminishes and more and more of them either take up with the Resistance or leave the city altogether.

The Resistance

Few in Caecras dispute the horrible conditions under which the orcs lived or the disturbing efforts to which the Empire went to check their growing numbers. Their violent and bloody overthrow of the government, however, and the staggering civilian casualties that followed, destroyed what little human sympathy they might have had. A growing group of survivors in the city, calling themselves the Resistance, have been working to wrest control of the city from the orcs, or at least make them pay dearly for trying to hold it.

The orcs' patrols and tight grip on the city effectively prevents the various groups of resisters from working together. Instead, the Resistance has cells scattered throughout the city. Former priests, constables, adventurers, and ordinary people lead these groups, doing whatever they can to sabotage the orcs' control efforts and weaken their grip on the city. Tactics vary by the group. Some stockpile weapons and armor to arm the populace for their own uprising. A few groups blow up buildings, while others prey on orc soldiers, luring them into traps and murdering them.

The factions in the Resistance agree the orcs must be removed, but what comes after is a matter of great debate. The Loyalists want to weaken the orcs so that Horus, the last human heir to the Alabaster Throne, can crush them easily when, it is believed, he will come to liberate the city. The New Order, a group made up of common people, resents the excess of the old emperors and the huge disparities in wealth and lifestyle between the rich and poor. While the horrors of the orc uprising were regrettable, they believe, the orcs have broken the imperial line and created an opportunity for all people to become truly free. Other factions simply try to help people escape the city, seek revenge, fight injustice, or simply revel in the chaos.

The Slaves

In an act of incredible hypocrisy, or revenge, the orcs have made slaves of many people living in Caecras in order to maintain control of the city and support preparations for the coming war. Slaves live in the old orc camp, forced to labor twelve hours a day or more to produce arrows, spears, clothing, rope, and other materials the orcs will need when they invade the neighboring provinces. Others are marched out to the other two orc armies in the north and south, to toil away in the construction of ramparts and roads on the front lines. Each week, orc patrols move through the city, rounding up more people to swell the ranks of the slaves.

The Refugees

People fled Caecras in droves during the uprising and the landscape all around the city shows the signs of their flight, from the discarded clothing and possessions left where they fell to the picked-over bones of people who could not withstand the rigors of the exodus. The massive flood of refugees has been reduced to a mere trickle, but people continue to leave the city, knowing that to remain is to face violence, enslavement, or death at either the hands of the orcs or the bombs of the Resistance. A few priests of the Old Faith who escaped the slaughter have opened routes out of the city through the sewers, trying to keep them clear by fighting against the harvesters and other strange things infesting them.

The Parasites

Harvesters have always lived under Caecras, extending their lives by stealing flesh and organs from the people above. The new arrangement in the city has only emboldened these creatures. For reasons of their own, the harvesters here don't prey on orcs, and the orcs don't really care if the humans in the city get torn apart by these parasites. In a few places, harvesters have begun moving in the open, even settling in homes vacated by dead or fled citizens. The Collaborators press for protection against the creatures, but their cries have been ignored as the orcs have far greater concerns than the pleas of the conquered.

For more details on harvesters, be sure to check out *Horrific Parasites*.

Military Industry

Caecras depends on imports to sustain its people and economy. Food poured into the hungry city from the surrounding farmlands, suitable only for raising livestock and growing crops after the landscape was denuded of forests and other natural resources long ago. Mines in the north continue to extract a bit of iron and copper, but most have been played out. Reliant as the capital was on materials from outside its borders—much of which was required by the throne as tax revenue—it is unclear how long the new government can maintain its hold on power, with the flow of goods slowed to a trickle and the future of trade uncertain at best.

Not long after the uprising, the orcs looted the city for materials to prepare for the coming war. Bells were taken down from temples and melted down to become swords, axe blades, and arrowheads. Entire buildings were dismantled to build ballistae and catapults. Nothing in the city went to waste: clothing, leather, pottery—anything and everything was gathered up and put to use to build the orc armies. While somewhat diminished now, some looting and scavenging still continues, as slaves and citizens alike are forced to gather these materials and help turn them into the machines of war.

A New Tyranny

The people in Caecras have no rights, no freedoms, nothing other than that which has been granted to them by their orc masters—which is very little. The orcs organize themselves in a loose military society with King Drudge at the top of a chain of command that leads down to the troopers making up the bulk of the armies. The city's rulers expect deference from all noncombatants and utter subservience to the military's needs. Rebellion, sedition, theft, arson, or

any other crime perceived as anti-military is rewarded with summary public torture and execution.

Adventures in Caecras

The uprising threw Caecras into chaos, making it an exciting and dangerous place in which to set your adventures. Orc patrols constantly prowl through the streets, public executions are almost a daily occurrence, buildings explode without warning, refugees seek help in sneaking out, and a massive war between the orcs and the rest of the Empire looms on the horizon. Caecras is the perfect place to kick off a campaign that will ultimately determine the fate of Rûl and its people. Use the following ideas to inspire you when creating your own adventures set in this war-torn land.

- People in the city start going insane and acting in wild and self-destructive ways. An investigation reveals that a fungus has contaminated the grain stores.
- The harvesters have made a pact with King Drudge and are now allowed to move in the open, as well as prey on the populace. With authority from the king, the harvesters hold a lottery each week to see which lucky soul will have to offer up a vital organ.
- The Resistance manages to set bombs off inside the imperial palace, killing one of the king's advisors and seriously injuring Drudge. The orcs clamp down on civilians everywhere in the city using brutal, draconian methods.
- Saboteurs from Tear have infiltrated the city, to bring arms to the Resistance and begin a campaign of terror against the orcs.
- Food shortages lead to widespread hunger. Someone has to bring food into the city or the whole place might collapse.
- An orc gothi, a priest of the Dark Gods, has climbed to a position of influence with the orc king, advising him to start sacrificing humans to win the gods' favor for the coming war.
- The characters are trapped in the city during the uprising and must find a way out.
- The Tower Arcane falls from the sky, crashing into the city. There's no sign of any of the order's wizards.
- After war breaks out between the Holy Kingdom and Caecras, a powerful devil leads an army of hogmen (see *Exquisite Agony*) out from Hell through the gates of Gaethira to put everyone, orc and human alike, in the city to the sword.

- An explosion rocks the city, killing hundreds of innocent civilians. The Collaborators turn against the Resistance and the city is once more plunged into violence.
- The characters are sent to infiltrate the city and recover an important relic from the Great Library.
- Several cults devoted to the various aspects of the Demon Lord seize the opportunity gained from the city's unrest to move out from hiding and work their wickedness in the city.

New Creatures

Spirits haunt the lands of Caecras, lurking in old ruins or prowling the lands under the cover of darkness. The following spirits supplement those presented in *Shadow* and other sources.

Apparition

The echoes of people long dead, apparitions appear as they did in life, but are semi-transparent, revealing their ephemeral nature. Apparitions appear only in places where they lived and died, and then only at night, dissipating in sunlight, and reconstituting when night falls. Each performs the same activities it did when it was alive, running the same errands, toiling at the same task, conversing with the same people, each night without end. Apparitions never alter their behavior and do not recognize other creatures or changes to their environment.

APPARITION

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1/2 to 1 horrifying spirit

Perception —
Defense 10; **Health** —; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** —
Strength —, **Agility** —, **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Speed 10

Immune all damage; gaining Insanity; all afflictions

Ephemeral An apparition can move through creatures and solid objects. It ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Relive the Past An apparition performs the same set of tasks it performed in life. It cannot detect the presence of other creatures other than apparitions or acknowledge changes to its environment.

END OF THE ROUND

Night Bound If the apparition is in an area lit by sunlight, it ceases to exist until the area is no longer lit by sunlight.

Ghost

Some souls, through sheer power of will or by dint of their great power resist the natural order and remain in the mortal world, existing as ghosts. Most ghosts remain until an undone task is completed, but their time between life and death strips away what compassion they might have had, inculcating them with an enduring hatred for the living.



Ghosts move unnoticed in the world, their invisible presence spied only out of the corner of the eye by children, animals, and, of course, other spirits. They can, however, reveal themselves by exerting their will, appearing in whatever form they last had when they lived. Thus, most ghosts appear to bear ghastly wounds or to suffer the infirmities of great age. Such an appearance is both startling and unnerving, for it manifests the horrors one is bound to face in death.

Unlike many other spirits, ghosts remain anchored in the world, so when they become incapacitated, they vanish and return to the space they left 24 hours later.

Ghosts typically know High Archaic and some know the Common Tongue.

GHOST

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 horrifying spirit

Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 20; **Health** 100; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 1d6 + 3
Strength —, **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8; flier

Immune damage from cold, disease, fire, and poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, blinded, deafened, diseased, fatigued, immobilized, poisoned, slowed

Insubstantial A ghost takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Naturally Invisible A ghost is invisible to all creatures except animals, children, and other spirits. The ghost cannot use its attack options while it's invisible.

Shocking Appearance When a creature gets a failure on a challenge roll to resist the ghost's horrifying trait, it gains 1d6 extra Insanity. While frightened from gaining the Insanity, the creature is also impaired and slowed. A creature driven mad by gaining Insanity in this way takes damage equal to its Health, having died of fright.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Touch the Soul (melee) +6 with 1 boon against the target's Agility (6d6 plus Possession)

Possession The ghost can attempt to possess the target of its attack as part of the same attack. The ghost makes a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the ghost enters the target's body and remains there until it moves out of the target's space or is forced out by the target (see below) or an effect that ends possession. A possessed target becomes compelled by the ghost and the ghost can access the target's memories, knowledge, and spells. Each time the possessed creature takes damage, it can make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, it forces the ghost out of its body into a space of the ghost's choice within 1 yard. If the ghost gets a failure on its attack roll or is forced out of a target's body, the ghost cannot use Possession on the same target again until it completes a rest.

Telekinetic Slam (short range) +3 with 1 boon (4d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Manifestation The ghost uses an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to become visible. It remains visible until it uses an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to become invisible once more.

MAGIC

Power 5

Telekinesis *mind over matter* (6), *crush* (3), *dancing weapon* (3), *hold* (2), *force wave* (2), *telekinetic outburst* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Epic Recovery The ghost removes one affliction from itself.
Epic Adversary Roll 1d3 + 1 to determine how many actions the ghost can use during the next round. The ghost can use these actions during any turn and can do so before its enemies act. Each time the ghost uses an action, it can move up to its Speed before or after the action.

Flee the Light If the ghost is in an area lit by sunlight, it becomes invisible if it's not invisible already.

Common Characters

Adventures set in and around Caecras might involve any of the following characters in addition to the usual sorts of characters described in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*.

Caliban

The wretched, mutated people of Clamorhome, calibans sport all kinds of strange maladies in their flesh, such as shuddering tumors, weeping sores, and odd scaly patches. Cursed to live in agony, they despise the hale and healthy.

Calibans speak the Common Tongue.

CALIBAN

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 frightening human

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight

Defense 10; **Health** 12; **Insanity** 1d6; **Corruption** 1d3

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 9 (-1)

Speed 8

Life is Pain A caliban takes half damage while not injured.

A caliban takes double damage while injured.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Club (melee) +2 (1d6)

CALIBAN MOB

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 3 frightening human

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight

Defense 10; **Health** 48; **Insanity** 1d6; **Corruption** 1d3

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 9 (-1)

Speed 8

Life is Pain A caliban mob takes half damage while not injured. A caliban mob takes double damage while injured.

Mob A mob takes half damage from attacks that target individual creatures and double damage from attacks that affect an area. The mob acts as a single creature, but it counts as ten creatures for the purpose of choosing targets. A mob makes Strength, Intellect, and Will challenge rolls with 1 boon.

Creatures can move through a mob's space, but they treat the area as difficult terrain. The mob can squeeze through openings large enough to permit the passage of an individual member and can move through spaces occupied by other creatures.

Spawn When the mob becomes incapacitated, it dissipates and 1d6 calibans appear in open spaces within the space the mob formerly occupied. The spawned calibans take the next available turn.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Improvised Weapons (melee) +2 with 2 boons (3d6 or 1d6 if the mob is injured)

END OF THE ROUND

Overwhelm If the mob is not injured, each creature that isn't a swarm or a mob that is in the mob's space or within 1 yard of it must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or take 2d6 damage.

Gray Cloak

The beleaguered constables who survived the uprising now fight to carry out their duty by protecting the surviving citizens against the depredations of the conquerors. Once the city's enforcers of law and order, they now serve as defenders, leaders of the Resistance, or vigilantes.

GRAY CLOAK

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human

Perception 12 (+2)

Defense 17 (mail, large shield); **Health** 23; **Insanity** 0;

Corruption 0

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)

Crossbow (long range) +0 with 1 boon (3d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Last Ditch Effort If the Gray Cloak would become incapacitated by an attack, it can use a triggered action to heal 5 damage. Once it uses Last Ditch Effort, the Gray Cloak cannot use it again until it completes a rest.

Stand Fast If the Gray Cloak would be moved against its will, the Gray Cloak can use a triggered action to cancel that movement.

Guerrilla

Certain members of the Resistance hope to defeat the orcs by making it too costly for them to remain in the city. They hope to achieve this by blowing up buildings, setting booby traps, and sabotaging supplies.

GUERRILLA

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

Perception 9 (-1)
Defense 12 (hard leather); **Health** 10; **Insanity** 1d6;
Corruption 1d3 - 1
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10
Unstable Possessions If the guerrilla takes damage and is carrying one or more bombs, it must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or explode, taking damage equal to its Health and sending fire and fragments out in a 3-yard radius centered on a point in its space. Everything in the area takes 2d6 plus 2d6 extra damage for each bomb the guerrilla carried after the first. A creature in the area that gets a success on an Agility challenge roll takes half the damage.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Axe (melee) +0 (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Explosive A guerrilla carries 1d3 + 1 bombs. Using an action, the guerrilla can set or throw an explosive. If the guerrilla sets the bomb, it detonates after a period of time chosen by the guerrilla, up to 1 hour from when it was set. If the guerrilla throws the bomb, it detonates when it impacts against a solid surface. A guerrilla can throw the bomb up to 20 yards.
When the bomb detonates, it explodes in a 1d6 yard radius, dealing 2d6 damage to creatures in the area and 12 damage to objects in the area. A creature takes half the damage with a success on an Agility challenge roll.

Looter

Opportunistic scoundrels have taken to looting the abandoned buildings and making off with their gains. The orcs shut down these activities whenever they find them, but the city is too big for the orcs to be everywhere.

LOOTER

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

Perception 9 (-1)
Defense 10; **Health** 11; **Insanity** 1d3 - 1; **Corruption** 1d3 - 1
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 8 (-2)
Speed 10
Quick Reflexes The looter can use a triggered action on its turn to hide or retreat.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Club (melee) +1 (1d6)
Stone (short range) +0 (1d3)

Orcs

The orcs enslaved by the Empire conquered the capital and have since organized their society in the ruins of their former prison. The following entries provide additional variations of orcs. All orcs speak the Common Tongue and Dark Speech.

Orc Bone Guard

The elite guard once entrusted with guarding the gates of Hell under the Cathedral of Hate, the Bone Guard now protect the orc king and make up his personal retinue. Although deprived of eyes, ears,

and tongues, they are not at all discomfited by their lack of senses and can handle themselves with incredible skill in battle.

ORC BONE GUARD

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 orc

Perception 12 (+2); sightless
Defense 20 (full plate, large shield); **Health** 45; **Insanity** —;
Corruption 3
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Immune gaining Insanity; blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened
Rising Fury When an orc takes damage, it makes its next attack roll before the end of the next round with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Greatsword (melee) +5 with 1 boon (5d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The bone guard attacks twice with its greatsword.
Swift Strike When a creature moves into the bone guard's reach, the bone guard can use a triggered action to attack the creature with its greatsword.

Orc Gothi

Priests of the Dark Gods, orc gothi eschew armor and display a triquetra scarred on their chests. They are savage combatants, eager to kill and die to earn their place in the company of their deities.

ORC GOTH

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 orc

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight
Defense 9; **Health** 30; **Insanity** 1d6 + 1; **Corruption** 1d3 + 1
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 9 (-1), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12
Spill the Blood While injured, the gothi makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon.
Warpriest When the gothi gets a success on an attack roll, it can grant 1 boon on the next attack roll made by a creature it chooses within short range.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Battleaxe (melee) +3 (1d6 + 2)
Hatchet (melee or short range) +3 (1d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Battle Resurgence The gothi can use an action to heal 7 damage and then grant each creature within short range 1 boon on attack rolls until the end of the round.
Prayer When the gothi or a creature within short range makes an attack roll or challenge roll, the gothi can use a triggered action to grant 1 boon on the triggering roll.

MAGIC

Power 2
Battle augmented attack (3), close wounds (2), mighty attack (2), arc of death (1)
Destruction ruin (3), rend (2), erode (1)

Orc Overseer

Charged with maintaining order among the slaves, or bringing up orc young in the customs and manners of their kind, orc overseers are hulking brutes, cruel bullies by nature, who unflinchingly dish out pain.

ORC OVERSEER

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 orc

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight
Defense 13 (brigandine); **Health** 17; **Insanity** 1d3;
Corruption 1d3 + 1
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 8 (-2)
Speed 12

ATTACK OPTIONS

Club (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6)
Whip (melee; reach +1) +2 with 1 boon (1d3)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Painful Lash The orc overseer uses its whip to attack one creature it can reach. On a success against a target wearing light or no armor, the target also becomes impaired for 1 minute. If the target is already impaired, the target takes 1d3 extra damage.

Orc Renegade

Not all orcs were willing to obey King Drudge, or at least not yet, for they have yet to quench their hate for humans, or slake their thirst for blood. Few in number, these renegades roam Caecras, brutally killing anyone they can catch.

ORC RENEGADE

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 orc

Perception 9 (-1); shadowsight
Defense 15 (mail); **Health** 23; **Insanity** 1d6; **Corruption** 1d3 + 2
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 9 (-1)
Speed 12

ATTACK OPTIONS

Battleaxe (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2 or 3d6 + 2 against an injured target)

Orc Sergeant

Sergeants lead squads of four to five orcs into battle. They are usually veterans that rose through the ranks after several engagements.

ORC SERGEANT

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 orc

Perception 11 (+1); shadowsight
Defense 17 (mail, large shield); **Health** 33; **Insanity** 1d3 - 1;
Corruption 1
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 12
Rising Fury When an orc takes damage, it makes its next attack roll before the end of the next round with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)
Large Shield (melee) +3 with 1 boon (1d3 plus 1d6)



SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The sergeant makes two attacks with a weapon it is wielding.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Rally the Troops The orc sergeant uses an action to rally any number of creatures it chooses within short range and that can hear it. Each target removes one affliction and heals 1d6 damage. Once the sergeant uses this action, it must wait until it completes a rest before it can use it again.

Orc Trooper

More reliable than ordinary orcs, troopers have had discipline drilled into them since birth, selected from the ranks to serve as the Empire's heavy infantry. Most troopers have their squad and company numbers tattooed on their faces.

ORC TROOPER

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 orc

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight
Defense 17 (mail, large shield); **Health** 29; **Insanity** 0;
Corruption 1
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 12
Disciplined An orc trooper makes challenge rolls to resist the frightening and horrifying traits, as well as to resist or remove the charmed and frightened afflictions, with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +3 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2)
Spear (melee or short range) +3 with 2 boons (2d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Shake It Off When the trooper takes damage, it can use a triggered action to reduce the damage by 13 (minimum 0 damage). Once the trooper uses this talent, it cannot do so again until it completes a rest.

Slave

A growing number of slaves drawn from the ranks of once-free citizens now toil in oppressive conditions in Caecras. Malnourished and worn down, the slaves look forward to death as a welcome end to their never-ending misery.

SLAVE

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 9; **Health** 10; **Insanity** 1d6; **Corruption** 0
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 9 (-1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 8 (-2)
Speed 10
Broken A slave makes challenge rolls to resist or remove the frightened affliction with 1 bane.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +0 (1)

Tower Wizard

The wizards of the Tower Arcane are thought to be the most powerful users of magic in the Empire. A secretive cabal of powerful mystics, they consider themselves above the petty disputes of mortals are content to watch events unfold from afar. The following statistics box can be used to represent any of the lesser wizards. Trade out traditions and spells as needed to customize this character.

TOWER WIZARD

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 human

Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 13 (staff of magic); **Health** 34; **Insanity** 1d6 - 1;
Corruption 1d3 - 1
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Grimoire The Tower wizard makes challenge rolls to recall information about magic with 1 boon.
Grimoire Casting While holding the grimoire, the Tower wizard can cast one of the following spells by expending the casting of a spell he or she has learned of the same or higher rank: *sanctuary* (rank 1 Protection), *vigor* (rank 2 Protection), *shortcut* (rank 2 Teleportation)
Spell Mastery The Tower wizard has 6 spell points. When the wizard casts a spell, he or she can spend a number of spell points equal to the spell's rank (minimum 1 point) to cast the spell without expending a casting, or to cast a spell for which the wizard has no castings remaining. The wizard replenishes all spent spell points when he or she completes a rest.
Staff of Power The wizard's staff of magic grants 1 boon on attack rolls the wizard makes when casting an attack spell and imposes 1 bane on challenge rolls made to resist that spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +2 with 1 boon (2d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Spell Recovery The Tower wizard can use an action to heal 8 damage and regain two castings of spells he or she

cast. Once the Tower wizard uses this talent, he or she cannot use it again until he or she completes a rest.

Counterspell When a creature the Tower wizard can see attacks him or her with a spell, the Tower wizard can use a triggered action to counter it. The triggering creature makes the attack roll with 1 bane and the Tower wizard makes the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.

MAGIC

Power 6

Arcana *arcane armor* (8), *magic dart* (8), *arcane shield* (4), *empowered magic* (2), *arcane lightning* (2), *arcane retribution* (5)

Conjuration *conjure useful item* (8), *direct conjuration* (8), *conjure small monster* (4)

Illusion *clamor* (8), *disguise* (8), *thimblorig* (4), *phantasm* (2)

Magician *sense magic* (8)

Teleportation *dismiss* (8), *fetch* (8), *boundless step* (2), *portals* (2), *travel* (1)

Survivors and Victors

Caecras's importance to the Empire and role in the coming war makes this setting an ideal place for characters to claim as their homeland. Characters from Caecras use the normal rules for creating characters as presented in *Shadow*.

Ancestries: Characters from any ancestry might be found in the capital and surrounding lands.

Languages and Professions: Nearly everyone in Caecras speaks the Common Tongue. In addition, all human characters from Caecras speak Kalasan (see *Only Human*).

Imperial Background: Characters of ancestries other than orcs can use the following table in place of the background tables normally provided for their ancestries.

Caecras Background

d20	Background
1	You were a member of the Capital Guard. Start the game with a uniform and 1d3 Insanity. Add guard to your list of professions.
2	A temple you visited was sacked and burned by the orcs.
3	You accepted the orcs as masters of the city and count yourself among the Collaborators.
4	You worked on a farm or raised livestock in the lands around the capital. Add farmer or herder to your list of professions.
5	You seized the opportunity created by the chaos to loot a few shops. Gain 1 Corruption and 2d6 ss.
6	As the orcs moved from temple to temple, you tried to help an injured priest. He died, but he gave you an object important to his faith and told you to protect it. Gain a random enchanted object.
7	You witnessed friends and loved one brutalized by the orcs. Horrified and angered by what you saw, you have joined the Resistance.
8	A friend or a loved one was dismembered by a harvester. Gain 1 Insanity.
9	You were an entertainer in Nine Vices. Add singer, courtesan, musician, dancer, or entertainer to your list of professions.
10	You earned a living working in your profession. Nothing significant has happened to you so far.

- 11 You lost everything in the uprising and were enslaved by the orcs. You have recently escaped. Add slave to your list of professions and your starting lifestyle is destitute.
- 12 You were a librarian at the Great Library. Add High Archaic to the list of languages you know. You can also read and write all the languages you have learned so far.
- 13 You fought in the Great Arena. Start the game with a few scars and a military melee weapon of your choice.
- 14 You found the entrance to Hell under the Cathedral of Hate. Gain 1d3 Insanity.
- 15 The Resistance blew up a building near your home. The resulting fires wiped out your neighborhood and killed a loved one.
- 16 You worked in a factory in Clamorhome. There, you befriended a few calibans.
- 17 You worked as a merchant in Traitor's Square. Add merchant to your list of professions.
- 18 You were a servant in the Imperial Palace. You survived the slaughter by hiding. Add servant to your list of professions.
- 19 You were born into a noble family. Your starting lifestyle is rich.
- 20 You were apprenticed to the wizards of the Tower Arcane. You quit when it became clear your masters were not going to do anything to stop the orcs. You discover one tradition of your choice.

New Paths

The following new paths represent avenues of character development that reflect the changing circumstances in Caecras, though characters from any setting might choose these paths.



Saboteur

Expert Path

A building collapses. A wagon throws a wheel. A champion's armor fails at the most desperate moment. These events could be a turn of bad luck—or they could be the work of a saboteur.

Saboteurs sow chaos and unrest by dismantling and destroying the works of their enemies. By attacking their equipment, they weaken their foes and create confusion when something fails to work as it should and with little explanation. Saboteurs need access to the items they seek to undermine, which means most saboteurs are skilled at stealth, infiltration, and disguise.

Saboteur Story Development

d3	Story Development
1	You learned your techniques to help fight tyranny and oppression.
2	Your saboteur talents arose naturally from your criminal pursuits.
3	You developed your skills at dismantling objects and setting traps as a way to frustrate and terrorize your enemies.

Level 3 Saboteur

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +3

Languages and Professions You speak another language or add a criminal profession.

Breaker Your attacks against constructs and objects deal 2d6 extra damage.

Quick Reflexes On your turn, you can use a triggered action to hide or retreat.

Sabotage You know how to use a tool kit to sabotage objects so that they break under specific conditions. Choose one object or part of an object you can reach. You must then concentrate, during which time you use your tools to weaken the target. The amount of time it takes depends on the object's Size. If the object is smaller than Size 1, you must concentrate for 1 minute. If the object is Size 1, you must concentrate for 10 minutes. If the object is Size 2 or larger, you must concentrate for 1 hour plus 1 hour per point its Size is greater than 2. When you finish, you sabotage the object.

When you sabotage an object, you can either choose to break the object, in which case the object takes damage equal to its Health, or you can have the object break under a specific condition as you decide. You might choose to have the object break after a period of time, when it's used, or under some other circumstance with the GM's approval. When the condition is met, the object or part of the object takes damage equal to its Health. Breaking an object in this way could have other results. For example, if you sabotage a bomb (see *Demon Lord's Companion*), it might detonate when it's destroyed. If you sabotage a boat, it might sink, carrying any passengers and cargo with it.

The GM can decide certain objects cannot be affected by this talent or that some uses might take even more time. For example, you can't use this talent to sabotage an entire sailing ship, though you could sabotage the mast or part of the hull. Similarly, if you try to use this talent to sabotage part of a floor in a passage, the GM might rule that you have to spend a significant amount of time digging under it to weaken the floor.

Level 6 Saboteur

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3

Trap Expertise You make challenge rolls to find, disarm, and resist the effects of traps with 2 boons.

Set Trap You know how to create minor traps using a tool kit and trap components worth 5 ss. Choose a cube of space you can reach, up to 2 yards on each side. You must then concentrate for 10 minutes, during which time you use your tools to assemble the components into one of the following traps. When you finish, the trap is set. When a creature enters the trapped space, it triggers the trap with the effects described below. The trap remains until triggered or until you use an action to dismantle the trap. If you dismantle the trap, you regain all the trap components you used. A creature can find the trap by searching the spot where you placed it and getting a success on a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane. A creature can use tools to disarm it by making an Intellect attack roll against your Intellect score.

Alarm: When triggered, the trap creates a loud noise that lasts for 1 minute. The alarm can be heard from up to 1,000 yards away.

Harm: When triggered, the trap deals 4d6 damage to the triggering creature. The kind of damage depends on the nature of the trap you created.

Obstacle: When triggered, the trap makes passage through its space difficult or impossible. You might rig a deadfall or collapse the floor.

Snare: When triggered, the triggering creature becomes immobilized. A creature can remove the affliction by getting a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane.

Level 9 Master Saboteur

Characteristics Health +3

Deadly Sabotage When an object is destroyed by your Sabotage talent, any creature in direct contact with the object must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. A creature takes 3d6 damage on a failure, or half the damage on a success.

Rapid Trap It takes you only 1 minute to use your Set Trap talent.

Evasive Maneuver When you get a success on an Agility challenge roll and your Speed is at least 2, you can move up to 2 yards without triggering a free attack.

Grooper

Expert Path

Veteran soldiers, troopers make up the elite fighting force of any army. Disciplined, skilled, and thoroughly dangerous, they march into the thick of battle, overpowering their foes with their superior skill and endurance. Orcs made up the majority of troopers in the Empire, though troopers of all ancestries can be found across the continent and beyond.

Grooper Story Development

d3 Story Development

- 1 You were part of an elite unit in an army and learned your techniques on the battlefield.
- 2 You trained under an orc veteran, who taught you advanced combat techniques.
- 3 After suffering a terrible defeat, you redoubled your efforts to improve your fighting ability.

Level 3 Grooper

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +6

Languages and Professions You speak another language or gain a military profession.

Combat Veteran When you attack with a weapon, you make the attack roll with 1 boon.

Shake It Off When you take damage, you can use a triggered action to reduce the damage by an amount equal to your Strength score (to a minimum of 0 damage). Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until you complete a rest.

Level 6 Trooper

Characteristics Health +6

Deadly Advance Your attacks made as part of a charge deal 1d6 extra damage.

Level 9 Master Trooper

Characteristics Defense +1, Health +6

Crush your Enemies Once per round when you roll a 1 on a d6 for a damage roll, you can reroll the die. You must use the result of the second roll.

Undaunted You ignore banes on attack rolls imposed from being fatigued or frightened.

Mage of the Tower

Master Path

The mages of the tower are a secretive society based in the Tower Arcane that floats above Caecras. Known for the colorful clothing that completely conceals their appearance, they are devoted to the study of magic and the advancement of their understanding and capabilities. Mages of the Tower Arcane do not reveal the inner workings of their organization to outsiders, and add to their numbers with great reluctance only when necessary.

To choose this path, there must be an opening in the ranks of the mages as determined by the GM.

Level 7 Mage of the Tower

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You speak another language and add an academic area of knowledge to your list of professions.

Magic You discover a tradition or you learn one spell.

Color of Magic When you choose this path, the GM grants you a color from those available within the order. You are then given hooded robes, veil, gloves, and boots in that color and you are expected to don these garments wherever you go. While wearing these garments, you gain all of the following benefits:

- A +2 bonus to Defense
- Normal precipitation does not touch you, light wind does not affect you, and you are not discomfited by cold or heat, though the garments do not protect you from damage that sources from cold or heat.

Tower Refuge If you are within 100 miles of the Tower Arcane, you can use an action to teleport yourself and everything you wear and carry to the hall; at the bottom of the Tower Arcane.

Level 10 Mage of the Tower

Characteristics Health +2

Magic You discover a tradition or learn one spell.

Spell Defense When a creature attacks you with a spell, you impose 1 bane on the creature's attack roll. As well, you make challenge rolls to resist spells with 1 boon.

Tower Lore You can expend a casting from a spell you have learned to cast a spell from a tradition you have not yet discovered. The spell must be of the same or lower rank. Each time you use this talent, you gain 1d3 Insanity.