

City of Chains



Lands in Shadow for Shadow of the Demon Lord

On the coast of the Auroral Ocean, almost directly opposite from the Pirate Isles to the east, stands Dis, the City of Chains. One of the member states of the Confederacy of Nine Cities, it sits on the eastern shore of Rûl, perfectly situated at the intersection of several major land and sea trade routes. While nominally a trading city, it is more famous—or infamous, most would say—as the preeminent marketplace for the slave trade on the continent. Despite strict prohibitions on slavery elsewhere in the Empire, the peddling of flesh continues unabated in Dis, flourishing even, just as it has for nearly a thousand years.

The well-to-do citizens of Dis enjoy a great deal of freedom: the freedom to own other people as slaves, enjoying a decadent and heady lifestyle at their chattel's expense. The poor and downtrodden of the city enjoy none of these luxuries, instead living in constant fear of its ruler, the cruel autarch, whose minions snatch up those crippled by debt or who

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break the law, no matter how small the infraction, clapping the hapless victim in shackles and chains from which they will never escape.

City of Chains reveals one of the most cruel and decadent cities in the Confederacy of Nine Cities. As with other installments in this series, the information contained herein is intended to inspire you to develop Dis beyond what is provided in these pages, to help you make this vile and sinister place your own.

Chains of History

Soon after the Witch-King's founding of Azûl, the City of Death, the armies of the Men of Gog under his command pushed further into the southern lands. There, they discovered an inlet that was a perfect site to build a port for both trade and military purposes. Shackling the many thousands captured in his conquest of Rûl in chains, the Witch-King tasked these slaves with the building of a new city on the inlet, one that would serve both as a base for his war fleets and as the slaving hub of his new nation.

Through the blood, sweat, toil, and death of countless slaves, the walls of Dis quickly rose from the shores of the inlet. Under the whips of their masters, armies of slaves cut stone for the city's massive buildings and monuments. Others razed the nearby forests for timber to build a fleet of war galleys, as well as slave ships to export the vile trade in human flesh throughout the continent.

Over the decades, as the city took shape, one monument in Dis rose above all others, and would become the iconic symbol of the city, even unto the current day. Straddling the mouth of the inlet is a mighty bronze Colossus, 75 feet tall, wrought as a faceless naked man, with an engorged and disproportionately large phallus. Each of the statue's wrists and ankles are bound with massive manacles, and a thick collar encircles its neck. Stretched taught between the statue's hands, connecting the manacles, is a giant length of chain. All who see the statue know it to be a symbolic expression of the city's great power, as well as a warning to the enslaved that they can never hope to escape their oppression.

When the Kalasans invaded and wrested Rûl from the Witch-King, they eventually swept toward Dis, shattering any resistance they encountered until they reached the city walls. The slaves, believing their deliverance to be imminent, rose up against their masters to aid the invaders by opening the city gates. However, instead of gaining their freedom, the slaves were quickly rounded up by the Kalasans and thrown back into the slave pens.

What the slaves did not know was that the autarch and guildmasters of Dis had already sent emissaries to negotiate a surrender enabling them to save the city and, more importantly, keep their slaves. By

promising a steady flow of coin into the Kalasans' coffers for their empire-building efforts, the masters of Dis were allowed to remain in power, and to keep conducting their sordid business as usual.

Although the new Empire officially disapproved of the slave trade, Dis was permitted to continue the practice, provided the city masters promised it would only make up a small percentage of their total revenues, and they would also have to pay a heavy tax on what they earned from it. The Empire, however, showed no real interest in auditing the city's ledgers, busy as it was with securing its borders and consolidating its power. So long as Dis appeared to sell more grain and timber than slaves, and paid their taxes, the Empire turned a blind eye.

Eventually, Dis and eight neighboring city-states won their independence from the Empire to form the Confederacy of Nine Cities. Seeing advantage in working together against raiders from the south and pirates from the eastern seas, Dis joined the Confederacy, but somewhat reluctantly. Despite pledging to cooperate with the other cities, rumors continued to abound about secret deals made by the merchants of Dis with the Pirate Isles and other far-flung ports. These clandestine arrangements, it was said, served to enrich the city by finding new markets for slaves in the distant mining colonies beyond the world's edge. Many in Rûl believe that this is still the case today....

Intonious, the Great and Powerful

In Dis, the transition of power from one autarch to the next has always been, with few exceptions, a bloody process, in which the new autarch ascended after the previous one died under suspicious or violent circumstances. Some autarchs fell from their towers or were found drowned in their own baths, while others were simply stabbed, poisoned, or strangled. This brutal series of regime changes has continued up to the present day, when Intonious the Great seized power following the death of Bedoyere the Measured, who was "accidentally" crushed under several tons of building stone.

A shrewd and cunning leader, the new autarch moved quickly to protect himself from reprisals or the scheming of others seeking to wrest control from him. He created the Bronze Elite, a legion of slave warriors who are unquestioningly loyal to him because of their addiction to a powerful drug of which Intonious is the sole source.

To keep his rivals at bay, Intonius has poured huge amounts of his own vast wealth into the Confederacy's coffers, thus earning himself both protection from the Vault and the support of the other cities' autarchs.

Even before becoming autarch, he spent several years building his own spy network in Dis to monitor all political and financial developments, paying his network of agents, informants, and political allies handsomely to guarantee he is the first to learn of any news or significant developments inside the city and out.

Any who dared defy him disappeared, often along with every member of their family, and sometimes even some of their closest friends. In Dis, it is said, an enemy enslaved is more valuable than one entombed—flesh is money, after all. Presumably, all of Intonious's missing enemies were not killed, but rather thrown in chains onto slave ships and shipped out to finish the remainder of their days toiling in the harsh conditions of the mining colonies beyond the Pirate Isles.

Intonious himself is still an active slaver—though not as involved as he once was. While his fleet of slave ships still brings in a great deal of coin, much of his wealth now comes from behind-the-scenes deals with the various economic interests of Dis. The autarch courts the city's Guilds by ensuring they have unprecedented freedoms to conduct business as they see fit, and he has even lowered their taxes to keep them loyal. Of course, in return, he expects and receives reasonable kickbacks and bribes from them for his efforts, and he uses those secret funds to enrich his most loyal subjects, which further insulates him from any enemies.

As one might expect, Intonious also consorts with the slave lords who drive the city's economy. One in particular is subject of many rumors: Black Delilah, an infamous slaver and pirate who, it is said, has won his heart. Whether that is the case or not, he certainly gives her the choicest flesh to sell in the slave markets in the city and abroad. The *Ghost*, her ship, is regularly seen moored at the Central Dock at the autarch's personal pier, which serves to further feed the whispers and rumors about the two.

Intonious is not the fat, slobbering peddler of flesh some might expect him to be. He is incredibly fit, rather attractive, and exceptionally courteous to a fault, always conducting himself in a most impeccable manner. He is a master of etiquette, well-versed and knowledgeable in the customs of nearly every land and culture of the Known World. He is famous for being a gourmand, a raconteur, and a most gracious host—the fêtes he holds in his palace are famous throughout Rûl for their sheer luxury, excess, and entertainment.

It is also rumored, with good reason, that Intonious is a man of boundless sexual appetite, frequently seeking and enjoying the company of any and all, regardless of race or gender—it is rumored that some of his former lovers have described him by way of reference to the Colossus of Dis, in which they

demurely imply the Colossus suffers by comparison.

When traveling through the city, Intonious never ventures out without a company of Bronze Elite to protect him, despite having a well-established reputation as a great swordsman, perhaps the finest in the city.

The Guilds of Dis

Intonious's active support of the Guilds of Dis enables him to retain power in the city—he keeps them in line through cooperation, however, rather than by terror. This alliance ensures he has a solid and powerful faction that has a stake in seeing him stay in power, making it extremely difficult for any rival to gain a foothold against him.

The Guilds of Dis include the Mercantile Consortium, the Bankers Guild (an arm of the Vault in Kem), the City of Gold, the Shipwrights, the Fishers, and, of course, the powerful slavers' guild known as the Iron Brotherhood. In addition to these major guilds, there are a slew of minor trade guilds representing nearly every craft and trade within the city-state. The Guild Council represents all of these guilds with each guild holding an individual seat—although some guilds wield significantly more power on the council than others.



The Guild Council does nothing without the autarch's consent. He requires they bring their plans and proposals to him first, holding a weekly meeting with all the guildmasters at his lavish palace at the end of the Avenue of Sighs. These meetings also allow the guildmasters to air their grievances, and for Intonious to mediate disputes before they become bigger problems for all involved. Although the autarch tends to be fair in his decisions, ever focused on whatever profits all involved, the guildmasters know better than to gainsay or oppose him.

The Manacles

One of the first things Intonious did upon taking power in the city was to disband the city guard. A thoroughly corrupt organization, they were more interested in extortion and lining their pockets than they were in actually policing the city and maintaining order. The autarch replaced them with a stalwart force of warriors called the Manacles, restricting them from the use of lethal force unless no other option presents itself. In Dis, as is often said, flesh is money, so capturing criminals alive to sell into slavery is always the preferred option.

All Manacles keep a pair of well-polished, sturdy metal cuffs on their person at all times, which serve both as a symbol of their office, and as a functional way to restrain offenders. The city has one patrol of a dozen Manacles per district under the command of a lieutenant, all reporting to the Captain of the Manacles—the Captain reports directly to Intonious. In addition to carrying the cuffs, all Manacles wear tabards displaying a pair of hands bound in chains, set against a bronze circle.

The people of Dis respect and fear the Manacles in equal measure. While the Manacles keep the city safe and crime low, their propensity for using the slightest pretext or provocation to arrest someone and toss them into the slave markets prompts free citizens to avoid them whenever possible—the Manacles earn a bounty if those they arrest are found guilty and sent to the slave markets.

Those seeking to join the Manacles can do so if they can demonstrate fighting skills and the ability to follow orders without question. The various precincts hold tryouts once every few months, though commanders might recruit individuals who impress them at any time.

MANACLE

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human

Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 15 (mail); **Health** 23; **Corruption** 1d3; **Insanity** 1d3
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)
Crossbow (long range) +0 with 1 boon (3d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Net The Manacle flings a net at one Size 2 or smaller creature within short range, making a Strength attack roll with 1 boon against the target's Agility. On a success, the net hits and the target becomes slowed. While slowed, the target makes attack rolls and Agility challenge rolls with 1 bane. The target can use an action to either cut its way free from the net, or escape it with a success on an Agility challenge roll. Another creature can also use an action to remove the net.

Take Down The Manacle moves up to half their Speed and then makes a Strength attack roll with 1 boon against the Agility of one slowed creature it can reach. On a success, the target falls prone and the Manacle can use a triggered action to attempt to cuff the same target. The Manacle makes a Strength attack roll with 1 boon against the target's Agility. On a success, the target becomes cuffed. While it wears the cuffs, it makes attack rolls and challenge rolls involving the use of its hands with 2 banes.

Captain Bastard

The current Captain of the Manacles is a brutal orc named Bastard, or Captain Bastard, as he demands to be called. A former slave-soldier of the Empire, he was tasked with hunting down orcs who escaped "retirement" (see *Born to Kill*). After the orc rebellion in Caecras, Bastard made his way to Dis, and soon made a name for himself by tracking and capturing runaway slaves.

His reputation as a slave-catcher won Intonious's attention a few years ago, and earned him a place in the autarch's slave operations. There are some who whisper that Bastard helped bring about the demise of the previous autarch, clearing the way for Intonious's rise to power.

Captain Bastard cuts a fearsome figure. Standing just shy of 7 feet tall, a veritable maze of scars crisscrosses his body. He wears his black hair in thick dreadlocks, and a deep rent runs down the top of his forehead to the middle of his left jaw.

CAPTAIN BASTARD

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 orc

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight
Defense 16 (mail); **Health** 40; **Corruption** 3; **Insanity** 5
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 10
Rising Fury When Bastard takes damage, he makes his next attack roll before the next round ends with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Battleaxe (melee) +4 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2 plus Combat Expertise)
Hatchet (melee or short range) +4 with 2 boons (2d6 plus Combat Expertise)
Combat Expertise Once per round, Bastard either deals 1d6 extra damage or makes another weapon attack against a different target at any point before the end of his turn.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Two Weapon Attack Bastard makes an attack with his battleaxe and with his hatchet.

The 300 Chains

A small army of slave soldiers is responsible for Dis's defense from outside threats. Called the 300 Chains, their officers keep the Chains in a state of constant battle readiness. When they are not patrolling the city's western walls, the Chains spend their days drilling. So effective are the 300 that they fight in the nude, wearing nothing but iron collars around their necks.

CHAIN

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 15 (large shield); **Health** 23; **Corruption** 0; **Insanity** 3
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12

ATTACK OPTIONS

Spear (melee or short range) +3 with 2 boons (2d6)
Large Shield (melee) +3 with 2 boons (1d3 plus 1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Shield Smash The Chain attacks with their large shield. On a success, the Chain can use a triggered action to attack with their spear, making the attack roll with 1 boon and dealing 1d6 extra damage on a success.

The Bronze Elite

The Bronze Elite is Intonious's personal guard. Their existence demonstrates the lengths he is willing to go to ensure he holds his position—as well the depths of depravity he sinks to feed his lecherous appetites.

Intonious ensures the loyalty, and compliance, of his private guard by addicting them to “the elixir” (see sidebar), of which he is the sole source. The elixir sharpens the warriors' minds and dulls their pain, all without diminishing their fighting ability. Once imbibed, addiction to the elixir develops almost immediately, and the dependency upon it is so severe that to go without a regular dose can result in madness, even death. As far as anyone knows, this addiction is nearly impossible to break—the slave warrior, therefore, is bound to the autarch for life.

In addition to protecting Intonious, the Bronze Elite frequently serve as his lovers and playthings. For this reason, from among the highest quality slaves culled from the markets—mostly, but not exclusively, human—only the most attractive and capable candidates, male and female, are selected for this elite guard.

Therefore, the Bronze Elite serve the autarch, without question, hesitation, or resistance. To do otherwise means excruciating pain, madness, and, most likely, death.

BRONZE ELITE

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human

Perception 9 (–1)
Defense 19 (plate and mail, large shield); **Health** 45;
Corruption 1; **Insanity** 1d3

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 9 (–1), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 8

Addicted to the Elixir While under the effects of the Elixir, the Bronze Elite is immune to the charmed, fatigued, frightened, and impaired afflictions. As well, the Bronze Elite imposes 1 bane on attack rolls made against his or her Intellect and Will (see “The Elixir” sidebar for details).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +5 with 2 boons (3d6 + 2)
Large Shield (melee) +5 with 2 boons (1d3 plus 2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack A Bronze Elite makes two weapon attacks.



The Elixir

Intonious ensures the loyalty of his slave guard by addicting them to a substance called “the elixir,” a concoction of wine, the juice of a strange berry found on one of the far-flung mining islands east of the Pirate Isles, and the petals of an orchid-like flower of unknown origin that Intonious discovered years ago on a slaving voyage, which he personally grows and cultivates in his garden.

A creature ingesting the elixir becomes immune to the charmed, fatigued, frightened, and impaired afflictions. As well, the elixir imposes 1 bane on attack rolls made against its Intellect and Will. The effects last until the creature completes a rest. Each time a creature ingests the elixir, it must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes or become addicted to it.

Each time an addicted creature completes a rest and did not ingest the substance during the previous day, it must make a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature suffers withdrawal.

A creature suffering from withdrawal has a –1d6 penalty to Health and makes challenge rolls to avoid gaining or to remove the charmed, fatigued, frightened, and impaired afflictions with 3 banes. If the creature was already suffering from withdrawal when it gets a failure on the Strength challenge roll, the penalty to its Health worsens by 1d6.

Withdrawal lasts until the creature gets seven successes on the Strength challenge rolls required to overcome the addiction or until the creature takes the elixir again.



A Cowed Populace

Dis is a cosmopolitan city, a melting pot of people from across Rûl, with humans making up most of the 40,000 souls living in the city. Humans come from various ethnicities, with many being Kalasan, Edene, and even Gog. Other ancestries include dwarfs, orcs, and a smattering of faerie people, though most fair folk find slavery reprehensible.

The people of Dis have learned that voicing their discontent is a quick way to lose their freedom, so few, if any, dare say or do anything that hints of sedition. Instead, Dis's citizens present themselves as happy

and content, polite and smiling to all they meet. A visitor might disparagingly attribute this behavior as either mere simplemindedness, or, worse, tacit acceptance and approval of the evils of slavery. The visitor, however, would be wise to keep these views to themselves, as these same overly compliant people will not hesitate to summon the Manacles when some foreigner spouts off about the tyranny of the autarch, the horror of slavery, or the depravity of the city. There is no better way for a citizen to prove themselves loyal, and earn the approval of the Manacles, by helping to remove a disruptive element from the community.

Everyone in Dis speaks the Common Tongue, many with a slight inflection of Dark Speech, a throwback to the Men of Gog who originally founded the city. In addition, the city is the origin for another language, one spoken in the city and in the mining colonies in the east. Referred to as “slave-cant,” it is a quiet, almost whispered language that developed among the shackled as a way to communicate with one another safely and quickly from eavesdropping overseers.

Despite its origins, slave-cant is sometimes used by the slavers themselves, believing it necessary to learn something of the tongue used by the chattel they bought and sold. Most slavers and overseers, however, are dismissive of its subdued and quiet phrasings, preferring the bellow and the crack of the whip to secure obedience. Also, the slaves themselves are constantly adapting to their circumstances by shifting meanings and inflections in order to keep the masters from understanding what they hear.

Flesh and Gold

The economy of Dis largely depends on a vibrant and active slave trade. While the practice of slavery has been outlawed within the Empire for centuries—with the exception of the orc armies, of course—and has never been permitted on the Pirate Isles, the practice of owning people remains legal throughout the Confederacy of the Nine. The mining colonies on the far-flung islands in the distant east depend on slaves for labor, and there is little in the way of law in the colonies to prevent the practice.

So, even though some markets have been closed to Dis’s slavers, others continue to open up, and the city is ever ready to meet the demand for flesh.

Slaves in Dis have little hope for freedom. Once someone becomes a slave, they remain a slave until they die; children born to slaves are slaves for life as well. Some try to flee, against nearly hopeless odds, to the free provinces in the west. A ring of towns and settlements surrounding Dis, beholden to the autarch, makes escape nearly impossible. Slave catchers in these communities form a tight net, allowing them to easily track down and capture runaways. Furthermore, Dis law forbids aiding runaway slaves;

anyone caught aiding or harboring fugitives forfeits their own freedom, so it behooves the people living on the city’s edges to cooperate in recapturing them.

With escape nearly impossible, slaves have at various times risen up in revolt against their cruel masters. Although the authorities have brutally crushed each uprising, and made examples of the revolt leaders by either burning them alive or tearing them apart with pincers in public squares, rebellions still occur once every generation or so. Despite the success of the city in putting down revolt after revolt, autarchs long ago determined that someday there just might be an uprising that would catch them off-guard, one the slaves might just win.

To help ease the tensions between the free and the enslaved, on the first day of summer each year, the city hosts the Freedom Games: a week-long, bloody affair that offers a chance of freedom to a select few among the enslaved. City law requires each household owning ten or more slaves to offer up at least one of their slaves to participate in the games. Slave owners often use the games to rid themselves of the old and infirm, or other wretched souls who have outlived their usefulness.

Being selected is no mercy. The promise of freedom is only made good on surviving the games, which are a series of violent contests between slaves and professional gladiators who are quite adept at making a spectacle of cold-blooded murder. The games take place in the Blood and Iron Circle, an arena at the city’s center. The contests range from straightforward butchery to more elaborate scenarios involving wild animals, traps, and sometimes even magic. Slaves who survive the games earn their freedom and are set loose to make their way as best they can in the city.

Those who don’t survive become trophies for the vicious men and women who compete, their brutal deaths serving as entertainment for the bloodthirsty crowds who crave the release and catharsis derived from watching extreme violence as an escape from the drudgery of their existence.



Buying Slaves

Unscrupulous characters interested in purchasing slaves can do so in this city and elsewhere in the Confederacy of Nine Cities. Prices vary based on age, ancestry, training, health, attractiveness, history, and more. A typical slave sells for 1 gc and you can adjust that value up or down based on the individual and circumstances under which the slave is being sold.



An Evolving Economy

Even though slavery remains an integral part of Dis's economy, the city has several other burgeoning industries. The rock quarries outside the city, famous throughout Rûl since the city's origins, produce high-quality cut stone for construction. The lumber industry long ago denuded much of the countryside of trees, which opened the lands up for farming and grazing. The abundance of offshore fishing grounds has led to the development of fisheries that feed the city, and the fishers have started to export their excess production as tinned fish to other markets. Merchants from all the great maritime city-states and nations pass through Dis, delivering textiles, spices, and foodstuffs in trade for the city's main commodities.

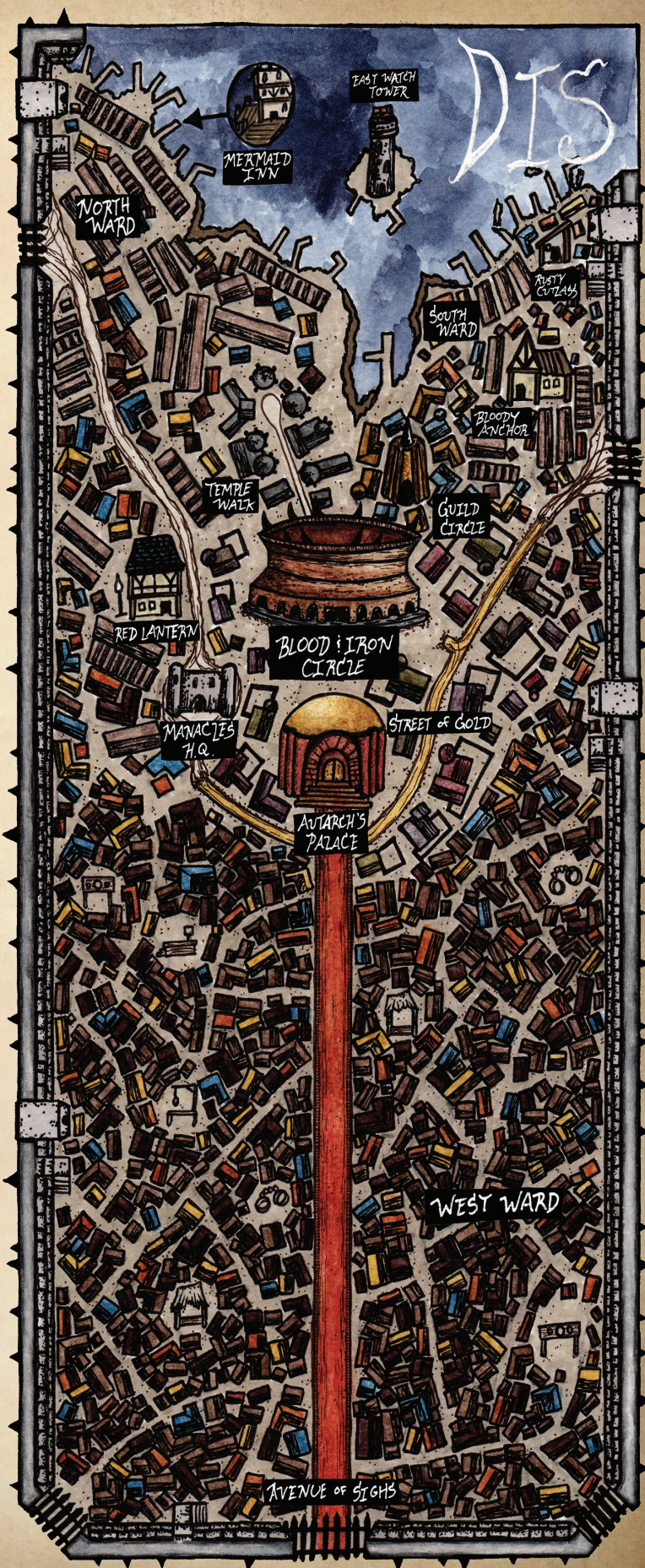
All of these trades have been growing in recent years, encouraged by recent autarchs—and most certainly by Intonious, while keeping a careful eye on the orc rebellion in the Empire, and its possible fallout—in order to preserve the city against any possible economic downturn should the demand for slaves fade.

Faith in Chains

For most people in Dis, religion has little impact on their lives. While the city does boast temples and shrines along the Temple Walk, these places see few visitors and many shrines now stand abandoned. It's not that people here disbelieve in the gods. Rather, they think of gods as distant figures, disinterested in, or even irrelevant to, the affairs of mortal peoples.

Of all the gods acknowledged in the city, the priests of Revel have had the most success in maintaining a congregation, and the cult claims numerous "holy" sites throughout the city. Little more than brothels, petitioners worship Revel in vast orgies while wearing masks cast in the likeness of the god's joyful hedonistic aspect. Revel's priests, often drunk, can be found wandering the city streets, shouting nonsensical sayings in between bouts of vomiting.

One faith has virtually no presence in the city. The Cult of the New God has tried many times to bring the light of their wisdom to the city, but has found it difficult to win the hearts and minds of the population. Many priests, particularly those bold (or foolish) enough to preach against the evils of slavery, have found themselves roused from their beds in the dark of night by hooded figures—who may or may not have been Manacles—and whisked off in chains to a ship departing at sunrise, bound for the mining colonies.



A Great and Powerful City

The huge city of Dis positively hums with activity, nearly every one of its streets filled with the hustle and bustle of commerce, spectacle, and noise of all kinds. Wretched slaves plod down the streets in shackles and chains, as rag-wrapped beggars hold out their trays seeking whatever pennies any might bestow—all of these ignored by elegantly dressed lords and ladies chatting merrily as they carefully step over and past the sewage gutters of the thoroughfare. Fat merchants in palanquins carried on the backs of straining slaves push through the crowds, while rickshaws bearing natives and visitors impossibly weave in quick fashion through and past the press.

It is organized chaos, a riot of color and sound that rages day and night, without end. And over it all looms the Colossus in the harbor, whose brazen presence in the sky constantly reminds all to prize their freedom, which can be taken away at any time.

Interesting Sights in Dis

d20	Sights
1	A slaver and guards marching a procession of chained slaves down the street.
2	An unruly child being beaten by his mother.
3	A patrol of Manacles interrogating a witness.
4	An angry merchant fending off a customer who furiously demands a refund.
5	A group of drunk priests of Revel, one of whom is busy being noisily sick on the street while her fellows laugh.
6	An exotic-looking ship captain leaning against the bar of an open-air tavern.
7	An extremely attractive courtesan looking for a little action.
8	An escaped slave charging out from an alley into a group of screaming women.
9	Three members of the Bronze Elite dragging a man from a building.
10	A glimpse of the autarch's coach as it rolls down the street.
11	A worker scratching his head while inspecting building plans.
12	A great pile of stone blocks spilled out onto the street from a cart that has thrown a wheel.
13	A panicked horse charging down the street, trampling bystanders.
14	An urchin loudly advertising her services as a guide to passersby.
15	A beggar, reeking of urine, howling with laughter as he weaves madly down the street.
16	A dead slave, left on the street to rot.
17	A shrieking woman lashing a slave on a street corner.
18	A band of cruel-looking slavers walking down a street.
19	A member of the Manacles running down the street in pursuit of a thief.
20	A dead child on the street, having just fallen out of a window.

The city's layout looks a lot like a Y turned onto its side, with the leg pointing west and the two arms extending east. A 40-foot high stone wall protects the city. A row of sharp iron spikes angle down from the wall on either side, to help keep enemies out and to make it harder for slaves to escape from within. Stone staircases placed at regular intervals lead up to sentry posts where squads of four to six Manacles keep watch.

A few gates can be found along the city walls. The primary entrance, the Chain Gate, commands the westernmost part of the city. Closed only in times of war, the Chain Gate sees the most traffic in and out of the city, and thus is the most heavily guarded.

Two smaller gates grant access to the western side of the city, Lost Gate and Low Gate, while the northeastern and southeastern arms each boast one gate, North Gate and South Gate. The Manacles normally keep these gates open for just a few hours each day, usually to take pressure off the Chain Gate at peak times.

The West Ward

The West Ward sees visitors from all across the continent, and is thus the most cosmopolitan and lively district in the city. Much of the commerce there caters to traveling merchants, so one can find taverns, inns, and brothels crowding the main street, the Avenue of Sighs, which stretches from Chain Gate to the Crux at the city's center. Off the main street, one finds seedier accommodations and diversions, and beyond that, the tenement buildings built to house the people who work in these industries.

Avenue of Sighs: From the Chain Gate extends a long red-paved road to the center of the city, ending at the steps of the autarch's palace. Called the Avenue of Signs, it is the main thoroughfare of the city. The Avenue also forms the backbone of the largest slave market in Dis, with stalls set on lavish platforms along the entirety of the long road. Here it is possible to buy any kind of slave for whatever need or desire there is, supplied by a seemingly endless multitude of vendors along the length of the Avenue. It is the ultimate exemplar of both the incredible variety and abject misery of the slave markets of Dis.

The Crux

The city's center, the Crux holds the greatest concentration of powerful and influential citizens. It is here that one finds the greatest concentration of powerful and influential people. From the gilded palace of the autarch to the imposing arena known as the Blood and Iron Circle, the Crux is the ultimate display of the city's vast fortunes and power.

The Autarch's Palace: The autarch's palace stands at the end of the Avenue of Sighs. The palace dwarfs most other structures in the Crux, second in size only

to the Blood and Iron Circle, although it sits atop a hill that places it higher than the great arena. A massive structure built entirely from red stone, save for its giant gilded dome, it is kept sparkling clean by an army of slaves whose daily task is to scrub the stone and polish the dome. The palace has a steady influx of many visitors throughout the day, including dignitaries from other lands, merchant princes, slave lords, sea captains, and countless others, all coming to pay their respects to the autarch in the hopes of currying his favor.

Manacles Headquarters: Not far from the palace stands the central headquarters of the Manacles. A large stone keep, it sits overtop a deep dungeon with hundreds of cells and torture chambers for prisoners. The inner yard is given over to drilling and training, while the rest of the keep provides accommodations and offices for the various members.

Street of Gold: Lured to the Crux by its offers of proximity to the autarch, the city's nobles and most of its powerful merchants have their homes along the Street of Gold. Most people who live here employ their own bodyguards to protect their property from thieves, or the looting that usually coincides with the slave uprisings.

The Temple Walk: A relatively short street passing behind the Blood and Iron Circle, the Temple Walk is where one finds the shrines and temples devoted to the various gods and powers worshiped in Rûl. Many shrines here have long been abandoned from lack of interest, the various religious paraphernalia one might expect to find within having long ago been carried off. There's one conspicuous absence: the Cult of the New God has no temple here, not even an abandoned one.

The Blood and Iron Circle: The great arena of Dis was built close to and in the shadow of the autarch's palace. When not in use for the Freedom Games or other blood sports, the arena serves as an open-air slave pen for the many slaves who find themselves unable to be sold, or who have been sold to the arena master, a cruel and despicable sadist named Karam Krach. The arena master uses the slaves here either as practice fodder for the professional gladiators, or rents them out as disposable labor with little concern as to whether they will be returned intact or alive.

The North Ward

The North Ward extends northeast from the Crux and terminates at the many piers and docks that form the northern section of the harbor. Here, one finds the many fisheries, shipyards, and warehouses serving the city's various maritime industries. The North Ward also caters to visiting sailors, with its many inns, taverns, and brothels staying busy all year long.

Red Lantern Brotherhood: The distinction of being the most famous brothel in the North Ward goes to the Red Lantern Brotherhood. For those

seeking the company of impressively endowed male prostitutes, one need look no further than the Brotherhood. These courtesans are said to be skilled in the 96 ways of love and accommodate all comers.

Mermaid Inn: A fine three-story inn and public house found at the end of Pier 6, the Mermaid Inn has been in operation for over 600 years. The proprietor, Enelmenary Fent, claims the place was founded by one of his distant ancestors, the son of a mermaid and a sailor, who found he could not live underwater nor bear to be far from the sea. For the skeptical, Fent happily displays his webbed fingers and toes to dispel any doubts about his unusual heritage.

The Hidden Road: Even though slavery has been a cornerstone of Dis society, not everyone in the city is so eager to allow the practice to continue unhindered, seeing it as nothing but pure horror and evil. A small society of well-to-do citizens from the North Ward have been quietly working to somehow bring an end to slavery and liberate the city's slaves. Calling themselves the Hidden Road, the members keep their identities secret to prevent exposing the rest if any one member is discovered. They have at least a dozen safe houses for runaway slaves throughout the North Ward, and constantly raise funds to spirit them out of the city.



Unfortunately for them, the autarch is aware of the Hidden Road and the Manacles have been monitoring their activities for years, working to identify the traitors one by one. Once they have identified the ringleaders, the autarch will order the Manacles to destroy their group, brutally executing the leaders in public as an example, and selling the lesser conspirators off into slavery.

Central Pier and Sea Chain Control

Between the North and South Ward juts the Central Pier, the personal dock for the autarch's fleet. His ships, as well as any with his favor, can moor here without having to deal with the harbormaster, or pay any of the steep tariffs imposed on imported goods. There are no taverns or services in this area—just dozens of slave pens and holding facilities for the slaves brought to the city.

East Watch Tower: A stone keep occupies a small island that rises from the waters in the harbor. Here, workers control the massive hidden sea chain that stretches between both upper points of the North and South Wards. When deployed, the chain prevents ships from leaving and cripples ships attempting to enter the harbor during times of war.

Guild Circle: Not far from the Central Pier stands the Guild Circle, where one can find the various headquarters for the many guilds based in Dis. At the center stands a towering building of marble and bronze. The guild leaders meet here to discuss matters of trade and governmental policy—always under the watchful eyes of the autarch, of course.

South Ward

The poorest and most dangerous district in the city, the South Ward is a sprawling slum barely contained by the city walls. While it too has docks and piers for ships, they are used infrequently, and then only by pirates, smugglers, and other scum of the seas.

Aside from the maze of rotting and decaying buildings that house the city's most desperate people, the South Ward has an assortment of hazardous brothels and dangerous taverns, pawn shops, loan sharks, and markets selling goods of questionable quality and provenance. Crime lords, who keep their identities secret lest they find themselves thrown into chains, own the few warehouses here, moving drugs, strange creatures, and other illegal cargo through for eventual distribution into the city and beyond.

Unlike other parts of the city where space is now at a premium, large chunks of the South Ward have been abandoned, left to rot and ruin. Rumors out of the autarch's palace suggest that these areas are being looked at for development and expansion, though for what purpose, none can say. Such development

would likely displace squatters and the poor, and such people, already living in terrible conditions, might resist such an expansion into their territories.

The Rusty Cutlass: Barnacle, a one-eyed dwarf, opened up the Rusty Cutlass the day after he murdered its previous owner, whose head he keeps preserved in a great glass jar behind the bar. A rough-and-tumble place, it offers no seats, other than a length of filthy wood on stone blocks held up by the few barflies courageous or drunk enough to frequent this place.

The Bloody Anchor: The murder capital of the South Ward, the Bloody Anchor is a dive primarily frequented by orcs, tucked between two large warehouses near the district's center. Violence occurs here every night, and at least one person dies each week, sometimes two (or three). The Manacles ignore any troubles swirling around this place, as the problems usually resolve themselves, and anyone arrested here would likely make terrible slaves.

Flesh Thieves: People have a tendency to disappear in Dis, and most blame these vanishings on slavers and arrests by the Manacles. So while people find the occasional loss of family members and friends disconcerting, they explain them away as being the fault of the missing—insulting an officer, being caught committing a petty crime, or running afoul, in one way or another, of the law. A good number of the missing do wind up in slavery, but a sizeable number disappear for another, far more sinister reason: being harvested for their body parts.

A cabal of harvesters settled in a series of caves under the South Ward a century ago and they have been extending their unnatural existence by stealing the skin and organs of Dis's poorest and most wretched citizens. Cautious in the extreme, they have managed to avoid detection, operating under cover of the city's draconian measures to hide their activities.

In recent days, the harvesters have grown bolder and, in a serious lapse in judgment, they claimed the eyes of the daughter of one of the city's crime lords. The young woman survived the experience and her father, Romani Pokoi, has been amassing a force to root out the monsters and destroy them.



Adventure Ideas

Whether groups begin their stories in the City of Chains or visit the city en route to some other destination, Dis presents an excellent backdrop for all kinds of adventures. The player characters might be slaves fighting to win their freedom, despicable agents of the autarch hunting traitors in the city, opportunistic adventurers looking for cheap passage to the eastern islands, or enemies of the autarch working behind the scenes to incite a massive slave revolt to finally topple the corrupt and tyrannical regime.

What follows are some story ideas you can use to build adventures of your own design.

- The Manacles try to arrest one or more of the player characters for a crime they didn't commit. The characters must either try to escape the city before the guards round them up or find evidence to clear their names.
- A nasty disease rips through the slave pens along the Avenue of Sighs. Concerned slave owners offer a reward if anyone can stop the spread or produce a cure.
- An assassin infiltrates the autarch's palace and seriously injures the tyrant of Dis. The would-be killer escapes, and the PCs are recruited to hunt down the killer and discover who was behind the attempt on the autarch's life.
- A band of escaped slaves hiding out in the South Ward rise up, encouraging the poor and disenfranchised there to join them, and manage to beat back the Manacles for now. Having fortified their position, they fight a desperate battle for their freedom. Will the player characters help the resistance or side with the autarch to restore order?
- A massive fleet of ships flying unknown flags appears on the horizon. It is clear they mean to attack. As Dis prepares its defenses, the player characters might join in the city's defense, foment an uprising, or try to escape before the city goes up in flames.
- Missionaries of the Cult of the New God try yet again to establish a foothold for their religion in the city. Shortly thereafter, they all disappear. Agents of the Cult approach the player characters, urging them to find the missing missionaries and, if they still live, help them to escape the city.
- A member of the Hidden Road asks the characters to help spirit an important ex-slave out of the city.

Character Backgrounds

Player characters who hail from the City of Chains can use the following table in place of their ancestry background table to determine an important event from their past. Most of these backgrounds are appropriate only for humans. If you have another ancestry, you should adjust the event as needed to fit with your character.

Dis Background Event

d20	Background Event
1	Slavers brought you to Dis to sell you in the slave markets. You managed to escape and survive in the city until you eventually found your way free. Add slave to your list of professions.
2	You were born into a wealthy family. You might or might not condone the slavery business they own.
3	You were a member of the Manacles for a time. Add patroller to your list of professions.
4	One of your relatives was active in the Hidden Road, but was later enslaved for abetting a runaway slave.
5	You fought for your life in the arena and won your freedom.
6	You became addicted to the elixir used by the Bronze Elite. You somehow managed to overcome your addiction, but you still suffer cravings, bad cravings.
7	Your family gained the autarch's favor.
8	You spent time training slaves as gladiators at the Blood and Iron Circle.
9	You were part of a pirate crew based in the South Ward. You did many terrible things in your time at sea aboard that ship. Gain 1 Corruption and add pirate to your list of professions.
10	Your lover angered the Manacles and disappeared. You believe they were enslaved and you search for them still.
11	You were born in the slums of the South Ward and struggled to make ends meet.
12	You watched your father, a slave, beaten to death by a petulant noble. Add slave to your list of professions.
13	Your family worked in a trade other than slavery. Add a random common profession to your list of professions.
14	Your family owned several slaves. Your parents gave you a slave when you came of age. You might have this slave still, or not, as you decide.
15	Your parents were secret followers of the Cult of the New God and kept their religious affiliation secret to avoid persecution.
16	You were born in Dis, but your family fled the city when it became clear that they would lose their freedoms.
17	You worked as a slaver for a time. Add slaver to your list of professions.
18	Your ancestors helped build the great Colossus, and you know secrets about various things within the massive statue.
19	You secretly worship the New God and have been growing a small congregation in the city.
20	Although you live in Dis, you spent much of your time away from the city, sailing the high seas. Add sailor to your list of professions.



Bounty Hunter

Expert Path

Bounty hunters specialize in finding people who don't want to be found. Whether chasing down fugitives from justice, runaway slaves, or outlaws, bounty hunters draw upon a range of skills useful for finding their quarry. They know the right questions to ask, the best ways to pressure people into cooperating with their hunt, and how to get inside the heads of the people they track. And when they find them, they can bring them down with sudden, overwhelming force. Although fully capable of killing their prey, most bounty hunters tend to bring their captives back alive, because the pay is better for returning them that way.

Warriors and rogues are the most likely to become bounty hunters. Warriors have the durability to face down tough quarry, while rogues have the skill and cunning to outwit their prey. Magicians and priests might become bounty hunters, their magical abilities becoming a critical asset when on the hunt.

Bounty Hunter Story Development

d3 Story Development

- 1 You have made a career tracking down fugitive criminals to bring them to justice.
- 2 You worked as a slaver and learned how to take people alive and put them in chains.
- 3 You have spent months, if not years, hunting down someone who wronged you. Along the way, you picked up some useful skills for finding anyone.

Level 3 Bounty Hunter

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Languages and Professions You speak one additional language or add one profession to your list of professions.

Brutal Takedown You make attack rolls to knock down with 1 boon. Furthermore, if the total of your attack roll made to knock down is 20 or higher and beats the target number by at least 5, the target becomes impaired for 1 minute.

Collar You can designate a creature as your collar.

The creature must be one you can see or one for which you have a description. You can have up to three collars at a time. Your collar grants you 1 boon on rolls you make to find or track it, as well as rolls made to learn information about it.

A creature remains your collar until you capture it or you would exceed your maximum number of collars by choosing another creature to become your collar.

Stay Down When a prone creature you can reach would stand up, you can use a triggered action to make an attack against it. On a success, the target also falls prone and cannot stand up until the next round.

Level 6 Bounty Hunter

Characteristics Health +5

Truss up and Clap in Irons Creatures you tie up with rope make challenge rolls to escape your bindings with 3 banes. Any creatures you place in manacles are impaired as long as they wear the manacles.

Track Collar Whenever you spend at least 1 hour in a community of 100 people or more talking to locals and eavesdropping on conversations, you can make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 boon. On a success, you learn 1d3 things about your collars. Examples include a place where a person matching your collar's description was last spotted, to which direction your collar left town, or the identity of someone with whom your collar was speaking. If your collar is not in the community, you learn it.

Level 9 Master Bounty Hunter

Characteristics Health +5

Master Bounty Hunter You make attack rolls against your collar with 1 boon. As well, your attacks against your collar deal 1d6 extra damage.

Take Alive When a surprised creature or a creature from which you are hidden takes damage from an attack you make, the creature must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or fall prone and become unconscious for 1d6 minutes. A creature with a Health score of 50 or more makes the roll with 1 boon. If the creature was your collar, it makes the roll with 1 bane.