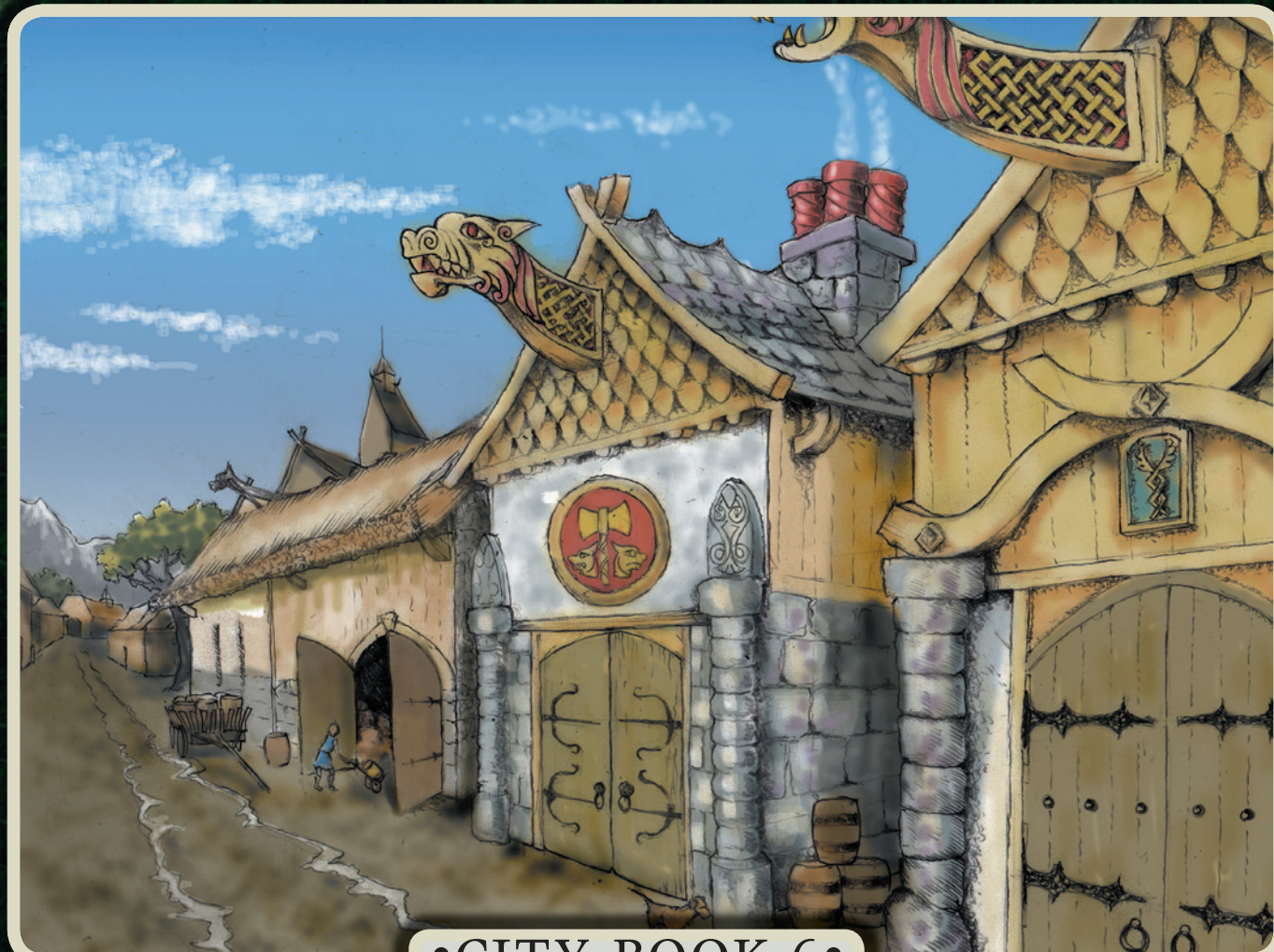


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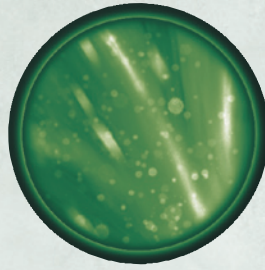
# HELLFROST

•CITIES OF TRADE•



•CITY BOOK 6•





# CITY BOOK 6

## CITIES OF TRADE

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# HALFWAY



Gamemasters should note that much of the *Hellfrost Atlas* entry for Coglelund applies to Halfway. This book does not repeat that material verbatim. Instead, it looks at how existing information relates solely to Halfway.

## ● HISTORY ●

In many minds, Coglelund and Halfway are the same place—you can't think of the former without automatically thinking of the latter. This is hardly surprising, since Halfway is the center of temporal and spiritual power in the realm, and around two-thirds of the small nation's population lives behind or close to its walls.

It is widely accepted that Halfway's origins lie back in the turmoil following the devastating Blizzard War. Alas, time has erased the historical origins of the village and the Cogle family.

The common view, pieced together by fragmentary evidence and best-guess, is that they were a minor Anari mercantile family living along the major trade road linking the ports of what is now the Magocracy to Anari inland holdings further north and east. It is quite possible the original Halfway was little more than a trading post or stopping point, somewhere weary merchants could rest their mules and replenish supplies, and likely one of many along the route.

As the chaos that erupted after the War began to spread, and disease and banditry whittled down the population, merchants restricted their activities to short journeys. With the Anari Empire shattered and many soldiers turning to banditry to survive, Coglelund as-was became a wasteland, a sparsely-populated wilderness through which many merchants refused to cross.

As village after village and trading post after trading post fell to disaster, the Cogles acted to safeguard their meager holdings. First, they hired groups of bandits as mercenaries to protect their home—the bandits received room, board, and a regular wage, whereas other gangs

would now be forced to fight for their booty rather than taking it from unarmed, frightened peasants. The gangs who refused to swear fealty to the Cogles were either weakened by their failed raids against the warehouses or moved away in search of easier pickings.

Having a small army was certainly a boon, but money to pay and equip the soldiery wasn't growing on trees. It was now that the first seeds of the current city were planted. In a move that drained what little remained of their fortune, the Cogles invested in constructing a number of fortified warehouses along the trade road. The family was also quick to patronage the fledgling Iron Guild. An astute business move, it allowed them to offer protection to caravans on the road. Messengers were dispatched into neighboring lands carrying proclamations that the village was a safe haven.

No longer forced to carry their goods to distant markets, with armed escorts available, and the land mostly cleared of brigands and monsters, merchants could safely store their wares here for a fee and purchase goods deposited by caravans from other lands. Acting as brokers, the Cogles soon found money pouring into their coffers.

At first, the site was simply referred to as "the halfway point." Quite where it was halfway to or from depended on one's point of origin, of course. Sages are of the opinion that the name developed around in the late 2nd century IR, with the village located roughly equidistant from Ravensburg and the Green Stream (which at that time marked the border of the Magocracy). The first written mention of the name Halfway occurred in a ledger dated to 207 IR.

The first temple to Var was erected in 105 IR on the site of an older shrine. This date is a verifiable historical record—the contract detailing their purchase of land near to the warehouses still exists in the temple archives. Through their network of clerics and followers, the cult soon brought new customers and settlers. Within a generation, Halfway had become a town.

Until 237 IR, Halfway was protected only by a ditch

## RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Halfway. Since three of the Coglelund rules of the realm apply in Halfway, they are repeated here for completeness.

\* **Caravan Hub:** Characters who make a successful Streetwise roll can locate a caravan departing in the next 1d6 days. On a raise, the caravan is leaving in half that time.

\* **Fashion Trends:** Fashion in Halfway is very important to the nobility. Unfortunately, trends are set by Leon Cogle, a man whose tastes change as frequently as the wind. The Charisma bonus from tailored clothing lasts just one season in Halfway.

\* **Markets:** The markets of Halfway are bursting with all manner of goods. Special Availability items can be found in the Temple of Coin at double the regular price, though the GM has the final word on exactly what is available to purchase.

\* **Money Matters:** In Halfway having money matters—people want to be associated with the rich, for wealth equates to social influence. Characters with the Rich Edge have +1 Charisma in Halfway. This has no effect on the Noble Edge, which grants its regular +2 bonus. Heroes with the Very Rich Edge have an additional +1 Charisma bonus, +2 if they also have the Noble Edge.

Much of this bonus depends on how the hero dresses. If he dresses to suit his wealth, the bonus applies. If he walks around in adventuring gear or otherwise acts to conceal his financial status, it does not.

\* **Native Language:** Characters born in Halfway must take Trader as their first language.

\* **Snobbery:** People with an income that comes from a rural source have any Charisma bonus from a noble title or the Rich and very Rich Edges reduced by one point in Halfway.

**Trade Center:** Village Availability items cost 50% of normal, Town items 75%, and City items 90%. Heroes selling goods in Halfway have +2 to Streetwise rolls to find a buyer.

and palisaded bank. Worried that their investments were vulnerable, the cult of Var, acting as the mouthpiece of various mercantile families, demanded Halfway be fortified. The merchant prince, Robert Cogle, opposed such expense, but sly insinuations that his neighbors were watching Halfway with greedy eyes soon had him digging into the coffers. Despite his initial reluctance, the merchant prince had the foresight to build the walls to accommodate further population growth.

The years 320 to 325 IR were a turbulent time. At this point in history, the rules of succession required only that a Cogle wield the title of merchant prince. Their hearts and souls turned black by the insidious whisperings of Vali's clergy, members of the extended family hatched

plots, sharpened their knives, and committed murder. Eight merchant princes ruled in just five years.

As the power struggle threatened to send the city into a spiral of chaos, the cult of Var acted swiftly and harshly. Hiring a mercenary army, the cult seized power. All members of the Cogle family involved in the coup were outlawed in perpetuity or executed.

Acting as regent, the high priest of Var nominated a young child, Elena Cogle, to become the next merchant prince. To give them their due, the cult willingly relinquished the regency when she reached her majority. In order that history might not be repeated, the law of succession was changed and the modern system introduced.

Halfway has suffered minor troubles since, such as plague (387, 419, and 422 IR), the strange simultaneous disappearance of every cat in the city (401 IR), and various trade disputes (the worst resulting in the Labor Riot of 450 IR), but it has continued to prosper.

## SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Halfway's social hierarchy follows that of Coglelund as a whole, as described in the *Hellfrost Atlas*.

Regardless of any titles, the citizens of Halfway are utter snobs when it comes to their rural cousins. In general, they see their rural kin as being one step lower on the social ladder than their title presumes. For instance, any of Halfway's Merchant-Counts, no matter how they earned their money, would consider a rural Merchant-Count to be of lower status than themselves simply because he doesn't come from the city. Similarly, a citizen whose Very Rich Edge came from rural activities (such as farming or mining) wouldn't be quite as respectable as one whose money was made in Halfway.

## GOVERNMENT

The Merchant Prince, currently Leon Cogle IV, is absolute ruler of Halfway and the realm of Coglelund. No one person can hope to run a city, let alone a nation, single-handed, however.

Coglelund has two noble courts. The first, the National Court, handles affairs outside the capital. Its name aside, it is very much considered the junior court, a poor second choice for those who want influence. The second, the City Court, helps govern Halfway and is actually the premier advisory and bureaucratic body.

### THE CITY COURT

City courtiers, officially titled Ministers, fall into categories. The first comprises those whose existing titles guarantee them a place at court. For example, the two Ministers of Military Justice are always the Commanders of Foot and Horse, while the Minister of Trade is always

the high priest of Var. These individuals are known as High Ministers.

As a plutocracy, Halfway's second tier of ministers is neither elected by the people or chosen for their experience, but purchase their positions directly from the merchant prince. These individuals are called Low Ministers. Each time a position becomes open, candidates the title is auctioned off. Any citizen can bid, but the price starts at 5,000 gs a year and then rises in minimum bids of 250 gs. The sum is for a three-year term.

Many positions are filled by clerics, not because such individuals are wealthy, but because their temple uses its collective funds to help get one of its own clerics into court where he or she can exert influence. In some cases, regular citizens pool together to help an individual, cleric or otherwise, become their mouthpiece.

One notable instance occurred in 257 IR. After a hot summer, the stench of raw sewage in the streets became unbearable. The small cult of Brúni, god of dung, persuaded hundreds of citizens to donate money in order that a cleric might become Minister of Sewerage. Halfway still has no sewers, but at least the filth is regularly scraped clear.

There is no set number of Low Ministers. Any local noble prepared to pay can petition Leon Cogle to create a ministerial post. Although greedy, the merchant prince knows that having too many courtiers would result in chaos. Thus, the post must come with some benefit to the city. For instance, a Minister of Sewerage has a useful purpose—to maintain the drains and runnels. A Minister of Flower Arranging, on the other hand, does not.

Being a minister means one has additional duties, but there are plentiful perks. The obvious one is access to the merchant prince, both at court and at social functions. Likewise, it is a chance to befriend other people with money and influence.

Perhaps more importantly, it is a chance to skim monies from the treasury. The merchant princes have always accepted that ministers should be able to profit from their posts, so long as they do not get too greedy. As a rule of thumb, a minister earns a minimum additional 50% of his annual income from accepting bribes, overcharging for services, serving fines, using substandard materials and charging for higher quality ones, and the like. In many cases, a minister can double or treble their annual income.

## LAW AND ORDER

Halfway has two separate law enforcement departments, each with its own remit.

The first are the Constables (also known as the City Watch), who answer to the Minister of the Constabulary. They serve to uphold criminal and religious law. Understaffed, underpaid, and poorly equipped, they are more likely to accept a bribe (known locally as "paying a constables' fine") to look the other way than make an arrest for minor breaches of the law. The merchant prince takes little notice of this practice—wise constables take their

"bonuses" into account when paying income tax and always donate to the cult of Hothar.

The Constables rarely venture into poorer districts, where there is little opportunity for making a little cash on the side. A token visit every few weeks and a beating or two of known criminals is enough to remind the citizens that the law is still present. At other times, mob justice is the norm.

Civil matters involving money and property fall under the auspices of the cult of Var. More specifically, the cult's paladins. They are also charged with the security of many important mercantile buildings and the markets.

Theft is a matter of contention in Halfway. It falls under criminal law, which means it is the mandate of the Constables rather than the Thieftakers. No amount of money has persuaded the merchant princes to alter the law. As it stands, while Thieftakers can arrest a thief, they must immediately hand them over to the Constables for questioning and charging.

The thieves' guild suffers almost no harassment from the Constables. Not only does the guild pay income tax, albeit at only 25% thanks to some creative accounting, straight to the merchant prince to keep the crime of theft becoming a matter for the Thieftakers, but the Minister of the Constabulary is in their employ. The latter is an open secret in Halfway, but little can be done about it—she has paid for the office (she has two years left to run).

Her only crime is ignoring her officers' taking bribes, but so long as they drag enough captives before the courts to keep the judiciary happy she isn't about to have them arrested. In return, the constables keep quiet about the true extent of their larcenous activities.

## THE COURTS

As noted in the *Hellfrost Atlas*, Coglelund has four courts. Save for the Military Court, all judicial positions are filled by clerics.

The courts typically impose only three sentences. Misdemeanors are punished by fines, though these can be excessive by the laws of other lands. Death sentences are rare—a dead citizen is not a viable source of income. Instead, serious crimes are punished by slavery, as is being unable to pay a fine within one month.

Slaves are sold off at public auction on the first market-day of every month. Starting prices are set based on the convict's skills and the length of their sentence—the longer the sentence, the more the city charges. Since they are considered state servants effectively being loaned out for the duration of their sentence, their new master may not kill them out of hand.

## THIEVES' GUILD

The resident thieves' guild is known as the Equalizers. Members are permitted to employ their trade only in certain wards, as determined by their status (see *City Book #5* for more on thieves' guilds).

Apprentices are limited only to Silver Ward. Thieves

may target both Cheap and Foreign Wards as well. Guild thieves are permitted to work Market Ward, while the few master thieves have the run of the entire city.

These restrictions have little to do with a thief's talents or risk of getting caught. Rather, they are a means of ensuring low-rank thieves are not earning as much as their superiors.

While its members specialize in the "liberation of unattended wealth," they are not above extortion. In return for a yearly donation, the guild marks properties with its sign. No theft is permitted from these establishments on punishment of mutilation. The guild also polices crime in the city, making sure outsider rogues do not ply their trade. Those caught are given a severe beating before being handed over to the city watch. If the thief has been particularly harmful to the guild, the watch may be paid a small bribe to ensure he meets with a nasty accident guaranteed to end his larcenous career.

The guild is currently at war with the cult of Vali, who it sees as a threat to their gambling enterprises. So far the war has been waged in the shadows, but it is in danger of spilling out onto the streets.

## GREASING THE COGS

Money greases more than just the cogs of bureaucracy in Halfway. From innkeepers to Constables to priests, everybody expects to be offered a few scields in order to facilitate their best services.

A lowly craftsman might "need" a few silver scields to have goods ready more swiftly, a messenger to run rather than walk, or an innkeeper to pour the good wine rather than the usual watered-down fare. If a priest is needed to cast a miracle, a few gold scields ensure there is no delay while he performs "other temple business" first. Ultimately, a citizen with enough money can have almost anything he wants.

Natives of Halfway learn how much of a bribe is required early on. Strangers, however, may end up paying too much (which is never a bad thing in the long run) or offering too little (which results in bad feelings).

Similarly, giving a gratuity *after* paying for goods or services can help facilitate better service next time. Round up the bill for a night's entertainment in an inn a few times, for example, and the innkeeper is likely to seat his favorite patrons near the hearth, add an additional ladle of soup to their bowls (maybe even with extra meat!), and be more open to discuss his other patrons' personal affairs.

## CRIME

Halfway has a problem with crime, but visitors have little to worry about with regard to their person—assault, murder, and rape are unusual. Petty theft is rampant, despite harsh penalties and the vigilance of the Thieftakers.

Most crimes involve coinage—it is believed that around 10% of the coin currently in circulation are forgeries, and as much as 50% have been clipped. The latter is easily foiled by carrying a set of merchant's scales—ideal for en-

suring you are not short-changed by coins of lower weight than their face value.

A popular scam is the "switch." A shopkeeper or craftsman accepts an order for goods, but says the item needs altering to suit the customer. This is especially true for weapons, armor, and clothes, but it also includes animals, who must be fed and groomed beforehand.

In order that the seller doesn't do the work and the customer not return, he asks for payment in advance. A receipt, stamped with the holy symbol of Var, is issued so the buyer has peace of mind that his money won't vanish. When the customer returns, the items he purchased are handed over. The switch comes in the item handed over being of poorer quality, and thus cheaper than the original.

## EDUCATION

Basic education is compulsory in Halfway—not because the merchant prince gives a damn about the welfare of the citizens, but because it is yet another means of screwing the populace out of more money.

One upside to enforced education is that most of the population, even in the poorest areas, is literate. With advanced education an expensive must-have for those who want to climb the social ladder, Halfway boasts some of the most educated citizens anywhere.

## RELIGION

Worship of Var has been the state religion for centuries. The god of trade is also Halfway's patron deity. As well as dominating the city's religious landscape, the cult wields much secular influence. Merchant Prince Cogle is under no compulsion to heed their advice, but he is at least attentive when the high priest speaks.

Aside from the jobs the cult provides, the average citizen doesn't benefit from the cult's power. For a cleric of Var, though, Halfway is a land of opportunity. Whether running a private enterprise or enlisting in one of the cult's many ventures, there is plentiful chance for promotion for those who work hard, keep their noses clean, and earn the cult money. There are pitfalls, of course—competition is a constant problem, and advancement requires one to pay one's superiors.

Var does not have the city entirely to himself—most every deity has some worshippers. Those whose occupations rely on agriculture or livestock honor Eostre as normal, bureaucrats favor Hoenir, many constables and most judges worship Hothar, craftsmen pray to Ertha or Kenaz, and so on. With Halfway almost entirely reliant on trade for its prosperity, the other cults have little chance of usurping Var any time soon.

Halfway's prosperity hides a deep-seated rot gnawing at its foundations. From the poor who would pay any

price to achieve their dreams of becoming influential to the already-rich who seek new pleasures to fill their dull days, the cult of Vali's corruption aspect has wormed its way to the city's core. Some clerics of Sigel (whose presence here is minimal) claim that no one in Halfway is free of Vali's taint, either being beholden to the cult in some manner or as an innocent pawn in the cult's games.

The cult is actually at war with followers of pestilential aspect. While the latter see a crowded city ripe for infecting with vile diseases or bringing to its knees with famine, the corruption cult sees the city has a perfect playground for its own devices and has no wish to watch its potential victims diminish.

## FESTIVALS

Citizens not working are not making money for the merchant prince. While Cogle would dearly love to abolish all festivals, he also knows that happy workers are productive workers. He would also face a severe backlash from the cult of Var.

Auction Day and Tally Day (see *Matters of Faith*) are public holidays. Ordinary citizens are permitted to honor any other high holy day as they wish, but must do so in their spare time. Local holidays are detailed below.

The third Endedaeg of Plohmonan (which also happens to be the last day of Oath Renewal Day) is the merchant prince's official birthday, as it has been for every ruler for at least five generations. The prince graciously allows the common citizens a day off work so they can drink to his health. He also expects gifts from the nobility. Thus who decline (it is optional) quickly fall out of favor and find themselves socially excluded not only by the merchant prince but also those toadying up to him.

Regardless of the weather and the proclamations of Eostre's cult, the first Heafoddaeg of Eostremonan is marked as the start of spring, the day when trade caravans take to the roads after the winter lull. Although officially a holiday, workers are expected to use this day to prepare for the trading year ahead by ensuring vermin are cleared out of storage buildings, all their tools are ready for use, and the roads are cleared of any snow and ice. Mostly the citizens take advantage of the fact the day gives them three consecutive days off work to drink and feast before another year of hard work begins.

## MILITARY

High walls alone are not enough to protect any city. Despite it being around three centuries since Halfway was bothered by any real threat, there is vast wealth stored in its warehouses and it has a reputation for being a safe haven. There is also the potential threat posed by the orc hordes should they crush Vestmark. In order to appease the Magocracy and Royalmark, not to mention his own merchants and citizens, Merchant Prince Cogle has stationed almost one-half of his army inside the city.

At present, the barracks house 1,000 heavy infantry (one entire division) and two companies of light cavalry (including their mounts). Of these, some 80% have never tasted battle and the remainder has only dealt with bandits testing Halfway's resolve to punish those who might threaten its livelihood.

Due to the enforced, non-paid sabbatical imposed on the army to reduce costs, there are only 700 infantry and 150 cavalry serving in Halfway any time. Their duties are divided between manning the walls, guarding the gates, and standing ceremonially to attention at outside key buildings.

Lacking enough weapons and armor to supply the entire army, only those on active duty are armed. Soldiers on the wall wear chain shirts and carry short bows, while their comrades on the gates have short swords and medium shields. Ceremonial guards wield long spears.

Halfway has artillery pieces, but since they have never been required they were dismantled and placed in storage 26 years ago. Damp has warped the timbers and worms have burrowed through the wood. Of the ten catapults and thirty ballistae in storage, only enough parts could be salvaged to field just 10% of the weapons. Combined with its weak city walls (see Major Locales) and ineffectual army, it is very unlikely that Halfway would be able to resist a siege for long.

Coglelund's three senior officers, the Lord Marshal of the Realm, Commander of Foot, and Commander of Horse, are stationed at Halfway. Much of their time is spent socializing or ordering new dress uniforms.

In times of need, the merchant prince has the authority to draft every paladin inside the city—every cult has agreed to this as part of its being permitted to operate here. The exact number of paladins inside the walls varies from day to day, but there is usually enough to muster an entire company (100 men).

The only other military unit is the merchant prince's bodyguard. They are considered a personal unit and thus not part of the military chain of command. Merchant Prince Cogle maintains five squads (50 men). Of these, three squads are trained warriors and two squads (one male and one female) are kept because they are handsome or beautiful respectively. Cogle doesn't dally with his troops—he just like pretty things.

## MILITIA

Halfway has never had a militia—the merchant princes have been never fond of arming peasants, more so since the Labor Riot of 450 IR. No provision is made for teaching them any combat skills, either.

The merchant prince could call the citizens to muster in the defense of their homes, but any who turned out would be armed with makeshift weapons and no clue how to fight effectively.

## PRIVATE FORCES

Both the various cults and Halfway's nobles are permitted to raise private forces from their own coffers. With

roughly a quarter of the army being involuntarily furloughed for four months at a time, there is no shortage of trained (well, semi-trained, at least) men and women looking for short-term employment in the private sector. With such a large pool of workers available, hirers have the luxury of being able to pay low wages—there is always someone looking to earn a crust.

Save for those who truly require guards to protect their properties or person, most nobles employ guards as nothing more than a status symbol—it is just another way of saying, “look at how much money I have.”

## ● TRADE & TRIBUTE ●

Halfway still exists because of the amount of trade caravans that enter through its gates. As well as benefitting from storage fees, brokering deals, and loaning money, there is an entire industry centered on provisioning merchants, building and repairing wagons, raising mules and draft horses, and so on. Save for the greater scale and amount of money involved, modern Halfway is little different to its humble origins.

Halfway is synonymous with trade as far afield as far west as Crystalflow Confederacy and north to Aslov. Few outsiders realize that the city actually has a prosperous manufacturing base centered around clothing, jewelry, and pottery. In order to encourage suppliers of essential raw materials to sell in Halfway, the city offers significant tax breaks. This has the added benefit of allowing local craftsmen to purchase resources at lower prices. Locally produced wares are also subject to tax breaks, making them attractive to merchants looking to load up their wagons before heading home.

## TAXES

Only the merchant prince has the authority to create taxes and set their levels. Although there is a Ministry of Taxation, collection falls to the cult of Var. Their auditors are diligent in their duties and scrupulously account for every last silver scield owed by the populace. They cannot be swayed by bribes or sob stories. If they suspect fraud, they send Thieftakers to drag the unfortunate soul to the temple of Var, where he is subjected to a full audit.

The city's tax revenue is vast, yet only a portion is funneled back to maintaining the infrastructure. The bulk of it is spent keeping the merchant prince in the opulent and lavish lifestyle he demands. His clothing bill for a single month exceeds many people's annual income and the costs for even a minor feast can exceed 1,000 gs.

Typically, citizens hand over around 50% of their wage in various taxes. The biggest single charge is income tax, which accounts for 40%. Added to that are property taxes, religious tithing, road maintenance tax, cistern maintenance tax, and many more besides.

Only the taxes imposed in Halfway and likely to affect visiting player characters are described below.

**Gate and Road Maintenance Tax:** First implemented as a means of keeping the city's gates and roads in a fit state, the revenue is put to proper use. Living creatures are charged 1 ss per leg (and yes, characters with only one leg pay just 1 ss) and vehicles at 2 ss per wheel. There is no fee for leaving the city.

**Sales Tax:** Whether it is a single loaf of bread or a suit of plate armor, every transaction incurs a sales tax. Any transaction completed in the Trade Hall market is taxed at 5%. Outside the temple, the fee is 10%. There is a minimum 0.25 ss fee on every transaction. Since there are no coins with a denomination lower than one silver scield, coins are cut into quarters. Sales tax is collected weekly from traders. The cult of Var receives one-quarter of the revenue.

**Weapon Permit:** Although the merchant prince is little concerned with armed strangers wandering through his lands, he is reluctant to have them wandering the streets, at least not without profiting from them.

A permit is required for every weapon brought into the city or purchased there. The cost is a modest 1 gs per damage die step of the weapon. For instance, a short sword has damage Str+d6 and thus incurs a 6 gs charge. Bows are charged at a flat 5 gs, long bows at 7 gs, and crossbows at 10 gs.

The permit remains valid until the bearer leaves, at which time he must hand over his permit. There is little use trying to bribe the guards—entry to the city always requires the issuing of a new permit.

Being caught carrying weapons in public without a valid permit incurs an automatic 100 gs fine. Legally, only the Thieftakers can impose the fine, it being a civil matter. Constables are not beyond approaching armed people, demanding to see a permit, and issuing an on the spot fine.

## MARKETS

Halfway has five markets—one in Cheap, Foreign, Gold, and Silver Ward, and the Trade Hall (see location #22). The various markets are open every Marketdaeg from dawn to dusk, and from dawn until noon on Raestdaeg and Sangdaeg.

The Cheap Market is entirely devoted to foodstuffs—meat, vegetables, grain, bread, beer, and so on. Rather than being administered by the cult of Var, management and security fall to the cult of Eostre (both aspects). Unlike the food shops, some may have stock on display for days or weeks, the produce here is fresh.

The Foreign Market caters for Saxa and engro tastes. Goods imported from the Marklands and the Vale can be found here. The Gold Market serves the needs of the wealthy. Stall owners display their best quality wares here at marked up prices. Any items purchased here cost 20% more than normal, but are engraved, inscribed, studded with gems, have filigree, or use rare materials. The Silver Market sells nothing with a value higher than 10 gs (after rules of the realm modifiers). Many of the items are of very poor quality, though this is not reflected in their price.

## ARCHITECTURE

To talk of Halfway is to talk of wealth. Stories of its riches fill the minds of listeners with images of grand houses and broad streets. Like its denizens, Halfway is a city of opposites.

The trade road cuts straight through the city, its cobbled street wide enough to accommodate three wagons abreast. The structures along its length and just behind it are a mix of functionality and style. Here, drab stone warehouses, adorned only with merchant marks and the symbol of Var are interspersed with noble mansions, gaudily decorated and painted to show the owners' wealth. Glass windows, usually too dirty to see through thanks to the dust kicked up by wages and mules, are another indication of prosperity.

Behind the splendor of the main road sprawls the city proper. A network of narrow lanes and alleyways, the cobbles long gone and surfaces caked with filth leads one past through colorless brick (middle-class) and wattle-and-daub (lower-class) houses. Windows are minimal, and those that exist are covered with membranes to keep out the flies and rain.

Where the trade road is well lit at night with lantern and braziers, much of the city is cast into darkness once the sun sets. Here, travelers need a lantern or candle to find their way, not to mention detect any lurking thieves.

## THE SUN

As elsewhere, the inhabitants of Halfway base their working day on the rising and setting of Sigel's Hearth. Below are the local sunrise and sunset times and the hours of daylight for the first day of each month.

Month	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Snaermonan	0723	1627	9h 4m
Frostmonan	0709	1700	9h 50m
Eostremonan	0632	1737	11h 4m
Plohmonan	0544	1813	12h 32m
Sowanmonan	0457	1843	13h 46m
Werremonan	0422	1914	14h 51m
Scerranmonan	0412	1933	15h 21m
Hegmonan	0427	1928	15h 1m
Haerfestmonan	0455	1856	14h 1m
Falmonan	0425	1810	12h 44m
Huntianmonan	0557	1720	11h 23m
Fogmonan	0631	1638	10h 7m
Wulfmonan	0707	1617	9h 10m

## MAJOR LOCALES

In addition to the locales detailed below, all the major crafts are represented. Although it may require a Street-

wise roll to glean the address of a particular business, the characters should have little difficulty finding a craftsman. Inns, taverns, and hostelrys to suit every budget can be found on most streets, though the quality of the fare and the patrons vary from disgusting to luxurious.

Halfway is divided into five distinct wards, each separated from its neighbors by a 30 feet high brick wall. A means of controlling traffic rather than part of the fortifications, they are broken only by a handful of gates. The walls were erected with only a few gates, and in many cases with little regard for existing streets. Thus, one may turn down an alley to see it blocked halfway down.

## CITY WALLS & GATES

Halfway's city walls are a sham. Stretching 40 feet high with a base of width of 50 feet at the base and 15 feet at the top, they appear to be an imposing stone structure capable of protecting the city from siege. In truth, the stone is a mere facing some one foot thick, with the rest a mass of packed rubble and dirt.

There are two main gates. The Wizards' Gate leads out into the Magocratic end of the trade road, while the Prince's Gate allows access from the northern arm of the trade road. Each gate is wide enough to accommodate wagons through a double arched gatehouse. Each gatehouse serves as a barracks for 40 soldiers, with 20 on duty at any one time directing traffic, checking for contraband, and hoping for a bribe.

Located around the perimeter are six smaller gates, each wide enough only for foot traffic. From north moving clockwise they are the Gem Gate, East Gate, Old Silver Gate, New Silver Gate, West Gate, and Forest Gate. Each gate is guarded by a single squad of heavy infantry.

The gates are open only during hours of daylight. Access after dark requires a small bribe, and even then only a postern gate is opened.

## OUTSIDE THE WALLS

### 1. THE CRYPTS

Untroubled by the Liche-Priest and the cult of Hela, the citizens of Halfway still inter their dead in the ground with their grave goods. The main cemetery lies outside the city walls, where a solitary priest of Scaetha maintains watch and intones prayers over the dead.

Mausoleums stand in honor of the wealthy dead, though none are occupied. The wealthy dead are actually laid to rest in a necropolis excavated from the chalky soil. Lining the walls are numerous niches fronted by engraved stone panels, behind which corpses are laid to rest. While a common burial costs just a few silvers, a noble burial costs upward of 100 gs. Such is the price of being buried out of the grasp of tomb robbers.

No one has opened any of the vaults in decades, there being little need to inspect the dead. That most of them are empty would shock the population of Coglelund.



## halfway

1. the crypts
2. TRAVELERS QUARTER
  - a. packs for backs
  - b. the mule market
3. clothing quarter
  - c. BUTTERCUP the tailor
4. jewelry quarter
5. lanterns-for-hire
6. brewery on the hill
7. workhouse
8. eastheath alchemical school
9. street of wagons
  - d. JONTY'S ROASTERY wagon
10. cogle's mansion
11. house of pleasure
12. embassy of magocracy
13. embassy of chalcis
14. embassy of aspira
15. embassy of vestmark
16. embassy of royalmark
17. embassy of spyre
18. embassy of the crystalflow confederacy
19. shrine to egludr
20. grand theater
21. cogle's folly
22. temple of coin
23. guildhall
24. halfway investment house
25. the mint
26. the golden die
27. iron guild barracks
28. iron warehouse
29. the rukh's nest
30. temple of maera
31. office of entitlement
32. travellers' guild
33. frederick & snare
34. the arena
35. the temple of eira
36. house of mercy
37. barracks

population: 23,688

## CHEAP WARD

The name cheap comes from the Classical Anari word *ceap*, which means bargain or market—it has nothing to do with the quality of the goods sold here. Cheap Ward is the industrial heart of Halfway. Roughly half the buildings have a shop or workshop facing the street, with living space behind.

### 2. TRAVELERS QUARTER

Situated near the trade road, the industries are dedicated to keeping merchant caravans on the move. Cartwrights and wheelwrights work alongside farriers, harnessmakers, wineskinners, grocers (sells provisions), ropemakers, coopers, and boxmakers.

#### A. PACKS FOR BACKS

Despite its name, this shop sells backpacks, bandoliers, pouches, scroll cases (waterproof and mundane), and waterproof satchels. A former adventurer, Solveig Vidarsdohtor's (the proprietor) days of excitement were cut short by an arrow through the knee.

She has a number of maps showing the location of tombs and ruins in the Hearth Range. Adventurers who make purchases are allowed to copy one map per 25 gs spent in the shop. Solveig makes no claims the maps will lead to treasure, as she has never investigated and no customers have bothered to return to the shop to relate their tales of fortune and glory.

#### B. THE MULE MARKET

Odric ap-Martense breeds mules. As well as ordinary mules (150 gs each), he has several excellent bloodlines at higher prices. Prices below are in addition to the basic cost of a mule. These options can be combined. Odric accepts part exchanges on "used" mules, offering a flat 25% of their price regardless of their condition.

*Gutsy*: the mule has Fighting d6 and Parry 5 (+200 gs); *Relaxed*: the mule has no Orner special ability (+250 gs); *Strong Back*: the mule has the Brawny Edge (+300 gs); *Swift*: the mule has Pace 8 (+250 gs).

### 3. CLOTHING QUARTER

Whether it is hard-wearing everyday garments for peasants or exquisite outfits using silk and fur for the high nobility, one can find weavers, tailors, dyers, broderers (embroiderers), cordwainers (shoes), mercers (sell silk and lace), feltmakers, woolers (sell woolen clothing), fullers (beat cloth), girdlers (belts), hatters, haberdashers, furriers, shearmen (cut cloth or leather), and leatheworkers hard at work in the Clothing Quarter.

#### C. BUTTERCUP THE TAILOR

Keeping up with the latest fashions in Halfway can be expensive. Buttercup, an engro seamstress, has an almost magical touch with a needle and thread. For a mere 150 gs, she can transform any existing set of tailored clothes to resemble a new outfit. Many nobles make use of her services, though none would be seen having old clothes altered—they leave their servants to make all the arrangements.

One trick Buttercup uses is to add exotic furs to distract the eye from the rest of the garment. The fur of Hellfrost beasts is most favored, but by the time the skins from the northern lands have passed through the hands of a dozen merchants or more the price is astronomical.

Buttercup always asks adventuring customers if they are heading beyond the Icebarrier Mountains, in which case she offers to purchase any furs at a good rate (10 gs for Size 2 and increasing by 25 gs per point larger).

## 4. JEWELRY QUARTER

A district within a district, the Jewelry Quarter is home to the majority of Halfway's jewelers and gemcutters. The workshops and shops are built of solid stone broken only by sturdy, iron-banded doors. The thieves' guild does good business offering protection here, though not every craftsman or trader is prepared to pay. These individuals safeguard their wares by hiring guards and investing on quality locks.

## 5. LANTERNS-FOR-HIRE

With much of the city unlit after dark, moving around requires a source of illumination. Lanterns are a luxury for most citizens, who often have little need to walk the dark streets on a regular basis.

For those who want to light their way inexpensively, the shop rents out lanterns. Rates are 1 ss per night or 6 ss for a week. The owner has little concern about lanterns not being returned—she pays her dues to the cult of Var and the thieves' guild.

The shop also sells homemade tallow candles (8 ss each, but they produce a lot of smoke), lanterns (at standard prices), and oil (also as standard rates).

## 6. BREWERY ON THE HILL

Standing on the summit of a low, flat hill, the building is Halfway's largest and most notable brewery. Currently owned by Wilhelm the Swift, the brewery has supplied Halfway's thirsty citizens with ale and beer for well over 200 years. Among the brewery's best brews are Auld Money (3.5% ABV), Merchant's Tipple (5% ABV), and the potent Eira's Bane (8% ABV).

The brewery currently has a clurichaun infestation. Wilhelm is offering free ale to anyone who can rid him of the drunken fey without it growing vengeful.

## 7. WORKHOUSE

Families who cannot support their children have the option of giving their children to the workhouse. Here they are fed by the state at taxpayer's expense. In return, they are hired out to families and businesses as cheap labor. Since they are too weak to work as laborers, their tasks include sweeping floors, clearing hearths, chasing away vermin, scooping out dung, carrying small loads, running errands, and so on.

Recently, a number of children have disappeared from their cots during the night. A reward is offered for their safe return and a lesser one for information leading to the capture of the perpetrators.

## FOREIGN WARD

Race and culture mean little in Halfway, for here only money matters. Halfway considers itself a cosmopolitan city, its population is made of Cogelund and Magocratic Anari, Saxa (primarily from Royalmark and Vestmark), a healthy quantity of settled engros, and even a handful of hearth elves. Although Halfway has its own cultural identity, many engros and humans of Saxa tend to congregate together in the Foreign Ward.

## 8. EASTHEATH ALCHEMICAL SCHOOL

A recent addition to the many services available in Halfway, the Eastheath Alchemical School offers courses on alchemy and arcana. Unlike a traditional heahwisard school, this one accepts tutors and students from any arcane art or cult. It is run by Mage-Knight Henelex Praetor of the Third Circle.

The school has a license to sell alchemical devices at the standard rates (and cannot offer discounts). The license forbids the school from selling destructive devices, except to the cult of Var. Nothing prevents the students from actually creating such devices, however. Such creations are usually exported.

Not every heahwisard is happy with the school's location, not to mention it accepting students from "lesser arts." House Eastheath has not bothered to defend its decision, either to its own heahwisards or those of other provinces—the school makes good money, the heahwisard tutors get to broaden their knowledge of other arcane arts, and the House is forging contacts with a variety of mages and clerics.

If you are using the rules from *Arcane Lore*, the school has the following statistics: **Enrolment Requirement:** Arcane Background (Any); **Course Length:** 3 years; **Graduate Requirements:** Knowledge (Alchemy) d6+, Knowledge (Arcana) d6+; **Schooling:** Skills: Knowledge (Alchemy), Knowledge (Arcana); **Edges:** Alchemy.

## 9. STREET OF WAGONS

Of the settled engros, around two-thirds choose to reside in houses. The others maintain a traditional caravan. No houses border this street. Instead, each marked space is occupied by an engro wagon. During winter, nomadic families park up their wagons here, whiling away the days until the thaw comes and they can leave for the open road.

## D. JONTY'S ROASTERY WAGON

Jonty, a jovial engro with a bald pate and thick, mutton chops, owns both a house and a wagon. His house is

his home, while his wagon has been converted into a thriving business.

From dawn until dusk he and his two teenage daughters, Petal and Petunia, offer passersby a variety of freshly roasted meat. From a few nuggets of gristle on a stick (hard to chew but great for sucking, and cheap at 0.25 ss) to whole legs of lamb and pork (2 gs each), each is basted with Jonty's secret blend of herbs and spices.

Jonty is always happy to talk to customers, especially about his travels. Not only has he seen much of the western Hearthlands in his time, he once spent three years in Al-Shirkuh. This, he claims, is where he learned to blend spices and where he discovered his signature dish, *döner kebabs*—slices of succulent meat wrapped inside unleavened bread.

Jonty is always in need of exotic spices—there is little call for them this far north and prices are astronomical. Characters who have adventured in Al-Shirkuh can sell native trade goods here as spices. Jonty pays 10 gs per unit, to a maximum of 200 gs in any calendar month. Customers can take payment in hard coin or credit toward future meals.

## GOLD WARD

Gold Ward is home to the city's rich elite. Whereas the gates to the other wards are left open day and night, those offering access to Gold Ward are kept closed. Only those who live or work in the ward, who have a written permit issued by an inhabitant, and members of the Constabulary or cult of Var are permitted entrance. Natives of the ward wear a gold amulet to identify themselves to the soldiers on duty here.

## 10. COGLE'S MANSION

The most garish building in the city, the sprawling, single-story mansion of Merchant Prince Leon Cogle IV utilizes building styles from differing cultures (including Al-Shirkuh) and is furnished in the same style.

From the solid gold door knocker shaped like Var's holy symbol to the carved wall panels made of rare woods harvested in the far north to the erotic mosaics made from chips of gemstones, everything screams extreme wealth and lack of fashion sense.

Few commoners have ever seen inside, but this does not prevent them from spreading talk of marble fountains that pour wine, scantily clad serving girls, solid gold drinking vessels, golem servants, bathtubs filled with milk scented with rose petals, and other extravagances. Not all the rumors are false.

## 11. HOUSE OF PLEASURE

Known locally as the House of Sin, Cogle maintains an extravagant hostelry close to his mansion in which he entertains important merchants and dignitaries. The hostelry is not open to the public—entrance is by invitation only—but the services are free.

The establishment is run by Vesper ap-Penrith, one of Cogle's courtiers in his capacity of Minister of Entertainment. The House of Pleasure is actually is a temple to Vali, though Cogle is blissfully unaware of this. Vesper ap-Penrith is a Corruptor of Vali.

## HERALD STREET

Located just behind Cogle's impressive mansion, Herald Street houses the residences of foreign dignitaries. The Magocracy, Chalcis, Aspiria, Vestmark, Royalmark, Spyre, and even the distant Crystallflow Confederacy maintain permanent ambassadors to Coglelund.

Embassies are not interested in the plight of citizens who fall foul of local laws or who need support—each exists solely to improve the interests of their home nation at the court of the merchant prince. Naturally, with so many ambassadors with varying goals, the street is a backdrop of political intrigue.

King Nagrat of Orcmark has recently sent letters to the merchant prince asking for permission to open an embassy. While the thought would be abhorrent to most citizens, Cogle sees Orcmark as another possible trading partner, not an enemy at his door. Besides, if he funds both Vestmark's and Orcmark's economies, the war is likely to drag on even longer, and war is profitable.

## 12. EMBASSY OF MAGOCRACY

In order to prevent abuse, the Magocracy appoints its ambassadors from the Great Houses on a rotating basis. Each ambassador serves for three years and brings with them their own bureaucrats, advisors, and security.

The current ambassador, two years into her tenure, is Mage-Baroness Alectrix Hergenwald of the Second Circle, a scion of House Hergenwald. Like most of the Magocracy's ambassadors, her only goal is to ensure trade continues to flow through Halfway and that its merchants are not unduly tied by needless bureaucracy.

No one outside the embassy staff realizes that the red-headed, stern-faced lady to whom they are introduced by fawning heralds is not actually the ambassador. Rather, she is Mage-Baroness Alectrix's Arcane Hand and lover.

Alectrix spends much of her time acting as a lowly functionary. While high-ranking people keep their cards close to their chests and say little of value, servants are more open to talk about their masters' and mistresses' affairs. Thus, the true ambassador learns far more about events than she would at balls and dances.

## 13. EMBASSY OF CHALCIS

Problems in Chalcis have reduced its iron imports to Halfway to a trickle, but is beginning to take up the slack with the loss of silver from Vestmark. As a result, it remains an important trading partner, at least until the Scavengers reach the silver mines.

Chalcian ambassadors are appointed by the High Council, though the duke has to sign his consent. Ambas-

sadors serve for four years. The incumbent is Profiteer Mederic ap-Victorin, a recent appointee. So long as the ore continues to flow, Mederic has little to do but show his face at social events (which are not his thing) and try to make a little extra money on the side by any means open to him.

## 14. EMBASSY OF ASPIRIA

Aspiria trades three commodities to Halfway in any quantities. Wine and luxury goods are minor imports, sold only to sate the wants of the wealthy. Gems are its sole major import. With little threat to ongoing trade, Aspiria sends only a minor functionary as its ambassador.

Being Aspiria's ambassador brings with it no influence back home and little opportunity to expand one's personal fortune. The role is nothing more than a token nod to diplomacy, the appointee there to maintain an Aspirian presence in court and smooth over any minor political ripples. Should a major issue arise, a more senior official would be dispatched to replace them.

Thundersister Suzette ap-Genotin, an attractive priestess of Eylúðr, minor deity of heralds, is the current postholder. She attends numerous social events every week, never wearing the same dress twice. The other ambassadors treat her with contempt, seeing her as nothing more than a pretty face with no political authority. What they do not realize is that Suzette is a Puppeteer, quietly and gently pulling on the many threads she has woven run deep into Halfway's high society.

Her current missions are to foment war between Coglelund and Royalmark, keep Vestmark from expanding its influence in court, and ensure that merchant Prince Cogle continues to hoard iron.

## 15. EMBASSY OF VESTMARK

A veteran of the war against Orcmark, Ridder Oddr Agmundrsunu was sent to Halfway with orders to negotiate a treaty for the supply of iron for Vestmark's ever-hungry forges. Oddr doesn't give a damn about trade agreements or political niceties. As far as he is concerned, the thousands of male Vestmarkers should be released and sent back home to serve in the military.

At present, he is butting against his head against a wall in his attempts to sway the merchant prince to open the gates of the internment camp. Until local merchants have bled the refugees of their last silver scield they are captive consumers, desperate for food, water, and clothing, and the merchants' taxes are worth more to Cogle than appeasing an impoverished state. Even when forced into total poverty, many refugees likely work as slaves rather than return home and be forced to carry arms.

## 16. EMBASSY OF ROYALMARK

Royalmark maintains an embassy only because it is a neighboring state, not because of any trade treaties. Indeed, between the nations is minimal.

Ambassador Hauld Stigr Jatvarðrsunu spends half his time attempting to convince his Chalcian counterpart to have his nation increase its silver exports to Royalmark and the other half denying rumors that Royalmark is preparing to expand its western borders to encompass the northern trade road.

Stigr would dearly love to find whoever is whispering these vile rumors into the merchant prince's ear. An official investigation would likely be met with a wall of silence. To that end, the nobleman is prepared to hire outside investigators with a reputation for discretion to look into the matter on his behalf.

## 17. EMBASSY OF SPYRE

Ambassador Tregar ap-Peredur is not happy with his position. Rumors say that on learning of his appointment he tried to fly Spyre and was physically dragged to Halfway in chains. He goes nowhere in public without two bodyguards, and astute observers are aware that their eyes are focused on the ambassador rather than watching out for potential assassins.

Tregar's reluctance stems from Spyre having sent four ambassadors in the past four years. Each and every one of his predecessors met a gruesome death within a year of taking up the post. In every case, the murders were committed behind locked doors, with no evidence to the nature of the perpetrator, how they gained access, or why they might wish to see Spyre's ambassadors butchered.

Twelve months have passed since Tregar was installed in the embassy. As the days tick by he is becoming increasingly paranoid. In the last week alone, his bodyguards have thwarted escape attempts. Tregar claims he has witnessed strange shadows in the embassy and heard ominous voices. In his mind at least, the building is haunted by a vengeful or demonic spirit.

## 18. EMBASSY OF THE CRYSTALFLOW CONFEDERACY

The Confederacy and Coglelund dominate trade in the Hearthlands, though there is minimal competition, or indeed direct trade, between them. The Confederacy maintains an ambassador in Halfway as both a mark of respect and to gather information about Halfway's trade deals with its mercantile partners.

As the largest trading centers, Bridgewater and Drakeport were given the right to assign ambassadors to speak for the entire Confederacy. The cities take turns with this duty, with each official's tenure lasting two years. The current ambassador, Treasurer Lukan ap-Trevain, a priest of Auðun, minor god of wealth, was assigned here by Bridgewater just three months ago.

An accountant by trade, he is very keen to learn more about the financial status of Halfway's major merchant houses. Since that information is not common knowledge, Lukan is prepared to offer adventurers good money to locate and copy their ledgers.

## 19. SHRINE TO EYLÚÐR

The covered shrine of Eylúðr, minor god of heralds, houses a statue of the god and a long, rectangular table. Rather than portraying the god in human form, he is shown as a broiling storm cloud carved from basalt with a solid silver lightning bolt emerging from the bottom.

The table is permanently set for ten people. Each place setting has a wooden plaque exquisitely engraved with the emblem of one of the seven embassies, the cults of Ertha (representing most craft guilds) and Var (the merchant houses and related crafts), and Leon Cogle's personal seal. These denote where the representative sits when the ambassadors gather. The embassy plaques are removable, whereas the others are permanently affixed—that of Var to Cogle's right and that of Ertha at the foot of the table.

Even when dealing with important dignitaries, there is an opportunity for Cogle to profit. On the first day of the year, the ambassadors bid to have their plaque positioned close to that of the merchant prince.

## 20. GRAND THEATER

Entertainment is big industry in Halfway—visiting merchants need something to fill their time when not working. For a few silver scields, one can find a skald in one of a number of playhouses and hostelrys.

Given its location, it is not surprising the Grand Theater caters to wealthy patrons. Admission ranges from 3 to 10 gs, depending on the quality of the entertainer. Many patrons pay attention to the performance only when a renowned skald takes the stage. Otherwise, the song or poetry is a convenient cover for hushed conversation.

Skalds can earn 5 gs times their Knowledge (Folklore) die, plus 10 gs for each point of positive Charisma, for a single night's work. Naturally, there is plentiful competition for this lucrative gig.

## 21. COGLE'S FOLLY

Always ready to proclaim his greatness to the masses, Leon Cogle erected a 30 feet tall statue of himself in the center of the trade road. Made of wood, it is covered with beaten gold. Debates about the value of gold used are commonplace in Halfway's inns and taverns, with estimates ranging from a few hundred to ten of thousands of gold scields.

The statue holds the holy symbol of Var in its right hand and a lantern held aloft in its right. The lantern, which, in Cogle's own words is representative of his enlightened guidance of the nation, is functional and is lit every night. The lantern's glass is colored and changed regularly to suit Cogle's mood.

Despite the constant presence of a squad of soldiers, large areas of the statue's legs from the knee down have been stripped of their gold covering. Cogle has recently decreed that anyone caught defacing his statue faces lengthy torture before being executed.

## MARKET WARD

The heart of Halfway's mercantile affairs, Market Ward dominates the center strip and the streets behind. Although primarily a place of business, it is home to many wealthy citizens.

## WAREHOUSES

Many of the buildings lining the trade road are warehouses. Around half of them belong to Halfway's mercantile families, having been passed down through the ages. Others belong to the cult of Var, Magocratic merchants, and consortia of lesser merchants.

Not every warehouse owner concerns themselves with buying and selling goods—some just rent out space to merchants waiting to find a buyer for their cargoes. Rates vary with owner's greed and reputation, and the security in place. Warehousing space is most expensive in the cult of Var's buildings, but customers are at least comforted that Thieftakers watch over their wares.

Built to be functional rather than attractive, the great stone buildings display a maximum of three signs—the owners' symbol, that of the cult of Var (indicating the cult provides security), and that of thieves' guild (indicating the owner pays the guild to leave his warehouse alone). It is rare for a warehouse to be marked with all three signs—the cult takes offense that their security is lax if the thieves' guild is also involved.

## 22. TEMPLE OF COIN

The true center of Halfway, the Temple of Coin is a monumental site of worship and trade devoted to Var and his affiliated minor deities.

Initially found by Nari Cogle in 105 IR as a modest stone building containing just a shrine and a treasury, every merchant prince has shown their devotion by expanding the temple. It now covers 250,000 square yards. Inside are offices, auction houses, moneylenders, evaluators, vaults, separate temples (not just shrines) to Auðun and Forseti, inns, and a huge covered market known as the Trade Hall. There is limited warehousing in the vaults—the cult owns and operates several warehouses along the trade road.

Only clerics of Var or craftsmen holding a license are permitted to erect stalls in the Trade Hall. Rates are higher than the other markets, but there is higher footfall here and, as part of the temple, security is provided by Thieftakers rather than constables.

## 23. GUILDHALL

An annex of the Temple of Coin, the Guildhall is the center of guild activity in Halfway. The dominant guilds are the Cartwrights and Wheelwrights, Porters and Teamsters, Potters, Silversmiths, and Weavers and Tailors.

The resident guildmasters, all of whom are nobles of varying rank, meet here each Marketdaeg to discuss busi-

ness they feel needs to be brought before the merchant prince, albeit through the Minister of Guilds. The guildmasters wield great power, being able to make or break merchants by awarding choice contracts or refusing to deal with them.

## 24. HALFWAY INVESTMENT HOUSE

Operated by the cult of Auðun, the investment house offers loans and savings. Money deposited here earns 1% interest per year, less a 50 gs administrative fee. Thus, it requires a minimum deposit of 5,051 gs before any profit is earned.

Loans of up to 2,000 gs require good references (ideally from the cults of Hothar, Sigel, or Var) and 50% collateral, which is handed to the bankers in case of default. Not that defaulting is a wise choice—the cult of Auðun's paladins are adept at recovering loans.

The loan carries a 2% compound interest per week and must be repaid within one year.

## 25. THE MINT

Every major population center has its own mint, and Halfway is no exception. Local coins are referred to as merchants (silver scields) and princes (gold scields). Since his reign began, Leon Cogle IV has had every coin minted here bear his image.

The merchant princes have skimmed money and cut investments on many projects, but never the mint's security. The cult of Lasesmed, minor deity of locks and traps, is paid handsomely for its services. Considered part of the Temple of Coin, security is handled by Thieftakers.

Very few people have ever stepped beyond inside, and even the thieves' guild is reluctant to try and rob it, but rumors concerning the mint's security are rife. Most stories, which typically involve *glyphs* charged with deadly spells and mundane traps to mangle intruders in the most ghastly fashion, were fabricated by the Thieftakers as a deterrent to would-be thieves.

## 26. THE GOLDEN DIE

Gambling is rife in Coglelund. The spin of a wheel, the roll of a die, or the draw of a card can leave a man penniless or raise him to nobility. At least that is the marketing used to lure citizens into the many gambling houses. The Golden Die, which is in the Gold Ward, caters to the wealthiest citizens.

Although entry is free, as are the drinks, anyone wishing to step foot inside the door must be carrying a minimum of 100 gs in cash or gems and be wearing formal or tailored clothing. No weapons are permitted. Although not affiliated to the thieves' guild, the owners do pay them protection. As well as being a place one can gamble large stakes (the upper limit is 500 gs), it is a place where many of the rich come to do business they would rather keep unofficial. As such, adventurers looking for wealthy patrons are likely to be pointed here sooner or later.

## 27. IRON GUILD BARRACKS

Halfway maintains a sizeable force of heavy infantry, but only to protect the town itself. Merchants wishing to protect their caravans must deal with the Iron Guild, which has a barracks complex just outside the town. At any one time, the Guild has a 50 medium infantry, 30 heavy cavalry, and 20 archers here. In its heyday it had twice these numbers.

With caravans from Vestmark now rarer than hen's teeth and the Magocracy preferring to use house soldiers as caravan guards, customers usually only protection for the small stretch of road crossing between the Lesser Hills and the Hearth Range. As a result, the local Guild's fortunes have steadily waned.

The current franchise holder, Guild-General Matilda ap-Simon, is considering selling up and retiring. She is currently offering her franchise for 25,000 gs instead of the usual 30,000 gs. As the months pass, she is likely to drop the price further.

## 28. IRON WAREHOUSE

Arguably the second-most secure building in Halfway after the Mint, this warehouse is where Cogle keeps his growing store of iron ingots. The sturdy, iron-banded doors are engraved with the holy symbol of Ertha, whose paladins are charged with protecting the valuable stock.

Even with the high levels of security, the warehouse's contents are scrupulously checked each Marketdaeg to ensure there have been no thefts. According to the official paperwork, everything is in proper order.

For the last three months, there have been discrepancies in the actual stock and what should be there. Fearing his job, and maybe his life, will be forfeit, the official in charge, Walter ap-Morgrui, has kept his silence. Since the last inventory, where more iron was found to be missing, he has decided to act in a private capacity.

He seeks adventurers to investigate the thefts without raising suspicions—a difficult task since the hirelings won't be able to inspect the scene of the crime. There is no point contacting the thieves' guild—the theft of iron ingots in such small quantities is not worth their time.

## 29. THE RUKH'S NEST

Halfway rarely sees visitors from Al-Shirkuh, though their expensive and exotic goods pass through its warehouses. The tavern proprietor, who likes to be called Sultan, a title he heard from a merchant, has decorated his inn in what he believes is the style of an Al-Shirkuh palace. Sadly his garish furnishings are way off the mark, though few locals know any better. The tavern offers fine wine, exotic foodstuffs, and scantily clad dancers for those who can afford the equally exotic prices.

## 30. TEMPLE OF MAERA

When Merchant Princess Alicia Cogle granted the Ma-

gocracy permission to construct a temple to Maera, the Mage-King seized the opportunity with both hands.

The temple itself is a modest structure where Mago-crat citizens can worship and meet with their fellow countrymen. An annex contains well-appointed suites for use by mage nobles who don't wish to mingle with Halfway's citizens or conduct business if private, while there are common rooms for their servants.

Each of the Great Houses garrisons a handful of Arcane Hands here. Heahwisards preparing to venture further afield can hire a single bodyguard here at the cost of providing the bodyguard's food and board for the duration of their trip.

### 31. OFFICE OF ENTITLEMENT

Citizens who wish to purchase a noble title (see the Cogelund rules of the realm in the *Hellfrost Atlas*) must apply at the Office of Entitlement. Although it is only money that matters, the scribes and heralds create genealogical charts (adding ancestors of note as required by the client for an extra fee) and a heraldic design.

Save for that of the main line of the Cogles, the heraldic and genealogical archives are not open to members of the public. Of course, a handful of gold can soon have the scribes scurrying for scrolls. Aside from names and dates of birth and death, the information on the scrolls is of little importance.

### 32. TRAVELERS' GUILD

Cogelund isn't geographically central to the Hearthlands, but traders and travelers from across the continent pass through. The guild purchases information regarding various aspects of foreign lands (a maximum of 10 gs, dependant on the amount and quality of lore) and writes them up as a series of region guides. While the guild endeavors to ensure the information is accurate and up to date, it takes no responsibility for the veracity of its writings. Guides cost 1 gs apiece.

### SILVER WARD

A cramped and run-down district, Silver Ward is home to the city's poorest inhabitants—which is the bulk of them. The name derives from the belief the citizens are so poor they only possess silver scields. In most cases this is true.

### 33. FREDERICK & SNARE

Frederick ap-Marl is the head of the rat catchers' guild. Snare is his hunting cat, a mangy, vicious feline. Rats are a common problem in a city this size, and Frederick is kept busy, particularly in the wealthy homes and warehouses. He professes to follow Veth, goddess of rat catchers, but is actually a cultist of Nauthiz. His access to rich homes allows him to scope out the contents and layout, information he then sells to the thieves' guild.

### 34. THE ARENA

In days of yore, the Anari nobility would force prisoners to fight to the death for their entertainment. The practice had long been abolished before Halfway came into being, but the Cogles were aware that spectacle brought in money.

The Arena is a private enterprise. Here, citizens can pit their luck against a range of champions in pugilistic bouts. The fights draw large crowds from among the city's poor hoping to see a good show and turn their silver into gold through wagers. While few nobles attend the fights, believing it beneath their station, most have agents placing bets on their behalf.

For those with enough cash, the owners can organize armed conflicts to the death. This is illegal, but the owners bribe the constables to be elsewhere.

### 35. THE TEMPLE OF EIRA

Until recently, the cult of Eira had a monopoly on health services. While their rates were tailored to meet a citizen's income, medicines and treatments still cost money. Since the House of Mercy (see below) opened, the small temple has seen the number of poor clients drop dramatically, though the number of worshippers attending services has not altered.

The cult of Eira is growing suspicious as to the nature of the recent outbreaks of disease, but lacks the staff to investigate more fully.

### 36. HOUSE OF MERCY

Halfway's largest hospital is operated by the Sisters of Mercy. Their services are open to rich and poor alike—most of the city's population owes them some small favor, including Leon Cogle.

Matron-Sister Agatha ap-Bendrik, the senior official, is actually in league with the cult of Vali. Every now and then the cult causes an outbreak of disease, forcing the populace to flock to the temple for succor. The last outbreak was confined to the Gold Ward, placing many of the city's richest citizens deeper into the organization's debt.

### 37. BARRACKS

Since soldiers number among the poorer members of society, the Cogles opted to construct the barracks in Silver Ward. The presence of hundreds of soldiers also helps to keep the peasants from rebelling against the system designed to keep them impoverished.

There are nine accommodation blocks, each housing a company, a mess hall and kitchens, an officers' block, the military courthouse, and extensive stables. A small temple honors Tiw, with shrines dedicated to Atriðr (cavalry) and Geirvaldr (spear combat). Given the amount of manure the horses produce, the cult of Brúni has a small shrine here.

# GLASSPORT



## HISTORY

Before the Anari Empire invaded, the site where Glassport would come to stand was a small Tuomi fishing village called *Àite iasgaich* (literally “the fishing place”).

Arguments still rage as to whether the harbor was the initial landing place of the Anari invasion force or not. Many scholars are of the thought that the Anari fleets first sailed east and conquered what is now the Magocracy. From there, possibly from Port Helgen, they sailed directly north until they reached land at the spot now marked by ruins.

Modern Glassporters, despite having no love for the old empire and its tyrannical ways, fervently dispute this, and take pride in declaring that this is where their ancestors first stepped ashore. After all, the Anari were merchants before they were conquerors and it is more than possible they traded with the Tuomi living here. Thus, their armies would already be aware the site was an ideal harbor.

Historically, there is no written mention of an Anari port here until –425, though records from the era are extremely rare thanks to the later Blizzard War. A military logbook suggests the harbor was used to transport troops from Alantaris Isle to Aspiria to fight in the Demongate Wars. Arguably, it would be very unlikely that much-needed reinforcements would be landed at an inhabited spot, especially since there was by then an extensive road and trading network across Aspiria.

The first mention of a named Anari settlement comes a century later, during the time of the Liche-Priest. Then called Southport, as it has been for most of its existence since, the record makes clear mention of extensive wharves and warehouses, as well as a “fortress from which we commanded the seas.” Unfortunately, the records make it unclear whether the fortress was a motte-and-bailey or a more substantial structure. Given the settlement’s name included the word “port,” it is as-

sumed the site was already a known trading enclave and had been for some time.

Until the Blizzard War, Southport went through an extended period of booms and busts, its fortunes waxing and waning the fortunes of the Empire and the wons of the emperors.

Southport escaped the Blizzard War with minor damage, with only the fortress being destroyed outright. Local folklore tells how the brave and noble citizens drove off a flight of marauding dragons, though modern scholars quietly suggest it was more likely the Hellfrost army commanders saw it as a target of no great importance—few scholars doubt that the intention was always to cut off the Empire’s head at Imperial City rather than strike at mercantile settlements.

With the empire broken and the provinces rapidly falling into chaos, the town may have fallen into ruin. Fortunately, the newly self-appointed king moved quickly to bolster the various ports’ defenders and ensure they did not fall into other hands or declare themselves free cities.

By the middle of the third century, the town had become a small city, though it still competed with Eastport further along the coast. Although heavily damaged by rampaging golems during the brutal Golem Uprising, Southport fared better than its rival, which was razed to the ground. While the dead of Eastport were publicly mourned, Glassporters also gave thanks, for their city’s future was now assured.

With parts of the city laid waste and the need to expand the harbor to take advantage of the growing trade passing through Southport’s gates, the count ordered the city to be expanded and reorganized.

Slabs of glass cut in the distant Glittersands had passed through the port for many years, but they were seen only as a raw commodity to sell on. It was Count Gobert ap-Jaufre (367-415) who first suggested it would be more beneficial to transform the glass into glassware here rather than in the workshops of foreign artisans.

As the fledgling industry began to lay down its roots,

envoys were dispatched to the remote Glittersands with orders to strike a deal for more glass to be exported. Happy knowing they had guaranteed customers, the natives of Glaston quickly signed a trade pact.

By 425 IR, Southport began a period of great growth. As more glassblowers and glaziers began opening businesses, so more glass was imported, leading to more workshops began operating and the need for raw materials. By 459 IR, glassware had become Southport's major industry, outstripping all others combined.

It was also a time of religious and civil change. Neorthe and Var were relegated in stature as the cults of Ertha and Sigel gained prominence, new guilds were established and soon entered into the city's politics, and old parts of the city were torn down to make room for new industries. More importantly, the city changed its name to fit its new identity. After some 800 years, Southport had become Glassport.

## SOCIAL HIERARCHY

As the seat of the County of Glassport, the city's highest ranked noble is the count or countess. Aside from her children, no true nobles live in the city—what few nobles titles the counts have issued have lands on the borders of the county, with the counts holding on to areas surrounding the city and trade road.

Since Glassport's renaming, three new count-barons have arisen from the ranks of the guildmasters and cults of Ertha and Kenaz respectively to take their place on the Noble Council. Likewise, the upper-class now includes master glassblowers, a station usually reserved for the middle-class elsewhere in Aspiria.

## GOVERNMENT

Countess Erolwyn ap-Ceithern has ruled Glassport for the last 25 years. She is known locally as the Glass Countess, partly because it was her ancestors who transformed the city's fortunes and partly because she is transparent in her dealings with her advisors and her subjects.

She has four adult children. Although she retains final authority, the countess has nominated her heir, Baroness Salaberge (29, female) to serve as the city's seneschal. In daily matters, she is now the voice of Glassport, though she is wise enough to act as her mother's counsel. Erolwyn's eldest son, Sir Acostant (27, male), is a captain in the king's army and is rarely present at court. The youngest children, Jules (20, male) and Cadmar (17, male), are junior priests of Ertha and Sigel respectively, having forfeited their noble titles on taking their holy vows.

As with the king, and having no wish to fall back into the corruption of the old empire, the Counts of Glassport have a council to act as a check and balance to their authority. The City Council meets on the first Endedaeg

## RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Glassport.

\* **Bad Air:** Glassport is often blanketed in a thick cloud of choking smoke. Each week, characters must make a Vigor roll at +1 or suffer a minor respiratory tract infection.

*Minor Respiratory Infection (Airborne, +0):* Victims are Fatigued while infected due to shortness of breath. Any roll of 1 (regardless of Wild Die) on a physical Trait roll made under strenuous circumstances causes the victim to be Shaken by a hacking coughing fit. A Vigor roll to remove the disease made be made every four days.

\* **Cheaper Goods:** Goggles with smoked glass, glass flasks, lanterns, sandglasses, and such like cost 30% less. Likewise, such items are worth 30% less before modifiers if sold as booty.

\* **Justice for All:** The courts of Glassport are run by the cult of Hothar. In their eyes, all men are equal. As such, nobles do not gain the usual +2 Charisma bonus awarded them by dint of their social station when involved in court cases.

\* **Languages:** Heroes used to conversing in Trader are out of luck in Glassport. Aspirian is the native language, followed by Engrosi and Hearth Elven. Very few natives speak more than a few words of Trader.

\* **Respected:** Members of the Convocation and clerics of Ertha are treated with great respect. They have +1 Charisma when dealing with nonmembers or cultists in Aspiria.

\* **Transit Hub:** Characters who make a successful Streetwise roll can locate a ship departing in the next 1d6 days. On a raise, the ship is leaving in half that time. With a suitable bribe (200 gs per point of the ship's Toughness), the ship can be made ready to sail on the next tide (assume the next morning or evening for ease).

Hiring a ship costs 50 gs per point of Toughness per week or part thereof if the captain is allowed to trade on the voyage, or 200 gs per point of Toughness per week or part thereof if not. Allowing the captain to conduct trade is cheaper, but it trebles the journey time unless the characters are heading to the next port anyway.

## NATIVE CHARACTERS

\* **Clerics of Ertha:** Clerics of Ertha trained in Glassport cannot take darkness trappings. They may take light trappings for their miracles.

\* **Glassworking:** During character generation, native Glassporters with Smarts d6+ may take Craft (Glassblowing) d6 for one skill point. Characters who take this benefit are assumed to have undergone an apprenticeship.

of each month to discuss business, unless an emergency requires immediate action. All laws and trade agreements, and military action involving Glassport's soldiery, must be approved by the Council. The councilors have no say on the appointment of nobles, since the lands are the personal fief of the countess. Each member has a single vote, with the high priest of Ertha's vote breaking any ties.

The Council is comprised of 12 members. The high priests of Ertha, Neorthe, Sigel, and Var, and the senior captain of the city's garrison are automatically entitled to seats due to their station. The others are elected by their peers.

The guildmasters appoint one of their own to speak for them for a period of three years. Between them, the Guild of Glassblowers and the Glass Merchants' Guild represent a powerful mercantile and political bloc, and are often in dispute with the countess over matters of trade, not to mention each other.

The nobles beholden to the countess send a representative elected from their number for a single year. One common citizen (in that they must be from the middle or lower class) is elected from each of the city's four districts. Appointments are for two years. Finally, the Convocation elects one of its own to serve for one year. This position is an honorary one—while the official is permitted to raise business before the court and speak on matters, they cannot vote.

The names, gender, race, and age of the major Council members are given below, along with a brief resume. The details of the citizen councilors are left for the GM to determine.

**High Priest of Ertha:** *Incumbent:* Forge Daughter Abonde Glasshands (female, Anari, 62); *Notes:* Named for the many colored glass beads embedded on the back of her hands. A staunch ally of the Guild of Glassblowers and Guild of Glaziers, but dislikes her Var counterpart. Considered the senior cleric in Glassport.

**High Priest of Neorthe:** *Incumbent:* Navigator Rosebud (female, Engrosi, 35); *Notes:* Allied with the elected citizen from the Dock District.

**High Priest of Sigel:** *Incumbent:* Sun Priest Riton ap-Corneus (male, Anari, 56); *Notes:* Official spokesman for the cult of Heimdallr and Guild of Lamplighters.

**High Priest of Var:** *Incumbent:* Profiteer Liliane ap-Gaidon (female, Anari, 41); *Notes:* Seeks higher profits for glassware, even if that means paying craftsmen less.

**Captain of the Guard:** *Incumbent:* Captain Serin ap-Argius (male, Anari, 43); *Notes:* Has no interest in politics.

**Guild:** *Incumbent:* Guildmaster Argius Long-lived (male, Anari, 92); *Notes:* Head of the Guild of Glassblowers.

**Lesser Nobility:** *Incumbent:* Knight Lanval ap-Valeray (male, Anari, 27); *Notes:* Eldest son of Baron Remi, a border noble. Secretly courting Baroness Salaberge behind her mother's back.

**Convocation:** *Incumbent:* Arkhwisard Helosie ap-Gontran (female, Anari, 56); *Notes:* Unofficial spokeswoman for the Alchemists' Guild. Ends every meeting

with a demand to raise taxation on alchemical devices not sold by the guild.

## LAW AND ORDER

Glassport's city watch comprises just 100 men and women. They are divided into three watches. Delling Watch patrols from 4 am to noon, Daeg Watch from noon until 8 pm, and Heimdallr Watch works the night shift from 8 pm until 4 am.

The watches are divided unequally—Delling consists of 30 watchmen, Daeg has 20 members, and Heimdallr has 50 watchmen. Each is sub-divided into five-man squads. In addition to the watchmen, each Heimdallr squad is accompanied by either a cleric of the god of light or a member of the Lamplighters' Guild. Neither has any legal authority, but serves as a lantern-bearer. They are also responsible for refilling street lanterns as necessary.

Thanks to the cooperation of the Alchemist's Guild and the Glaziers' Guild, each Heimdallr squad carries two alchemical devices—glass globes that cast *light* when shattered.

## THE COURTS

Such is the Aspirians' regard for justice that every county capital has a temple to Hothar, and Glassport is no exception. Across the land, the temples of Hothar use the same system of justice—lesser cases are heard by a lone cleric and serious cases by a panel of three clerics. In military and religious trials, the clerics are assisted by either the Captain of the Guard or a cleric of the faith that has been wronged, who can advise on appropriate matters.

Every member of guilds related to the glass industry pays 1% of their annual income to the guild. As well as providing for members who cannot work due to industrial accidents, it pays toward legal representation. Most members are provided only with a junior cleric of Hothar (Knowledge (Law) d4 or d6), while more senior members have a more skilled cleric.

## THIEVES' GUILD

Two thieves' guilds operate in Glassport. So long as the lesser outfit, the Slippery Fingers, keeps its activities restricted to cutting purses, picking pockets, and petty theft (burglaries whose total plunder doesn't exceed 10 gs), its members do not draw the wrath of the true thieves' guild. Most of the guild's membership is drawn from street urchins. Those with nimble fingers and the ability to keep their mouths shut may be invited to join the true guild as apprentices.

The greater guild, the Broken Shards, have a total monopoly on major crimes. Burglaries form the bulk of their larcenous operations, but they also control smuggling. Not that there is much profit in this—exercise duties are so low that only the most desperate merchants feel the need to involve the guild.

The Shards were once heavily engaged in the protection racket, but this has tapered off since the cult of Ertha ascended. Thieves who try to extort any persons involved with the glass industry may find their second visit to collect payment results in a cleric beating them senseless.

The two guildmasters—Alienor of the Fingers and Varocher of the Shards—are brother and sister, though there is little love lost between them.

## EDUCATION

With no temple of Hoenir in Glassport, only the rich can afford to have their children educated beyond the knowledge passed on by their elders or the temples their family attends. Since merchants deal almost entirely with their peers in Alantaris Isle, Chalcis, and the Magocracy, there is little need to learn Trader. As such, many Glassporters are ill-suited to exploring further than realms once part of the Anari Empire.

For children not accepted into the Convocation or the cults, the only form of further education is through an apprenticeship. Families naturally wish the best for their offspring, but masters must be paid to accept an apprentice and vacancies are limited.

There is a source of advanced education in Glassport. The Guild of Alchemists in Glassport provides courses, but only to mages and clerics. Courses last for three years, after which time the student should have achieved basic knowledge of the art. In game terms, any mage or cleric from Aspiria with Knowledge (Alchemy) is likely to have studied here.

## RELIGION

Changes to the city's economic focus have seen once prominent faiths lose influence and faiths that had little presence rising to the fore.

Nowhere is this most evident than in the cult of Ertha. Until five decades ago, the goddess didn't warrant a shrine. Regarded as something of an upstart by the older cults and some elderly citizens, Ertha is widely regarded as Glassport's patron deity. Ertha's aspects concerning the underworld receive little worship.

Without heat to melt them, imported glass slabs are useless for anything. In 472 IR, the local high priests of Ertha and Kenaz performed a marriage ceremony, spiritually bonding goddess and god together as a couple. Through this union, the fortunes of the fire god's cult have also waxed.

The reaction of Ertha's cults elsewhere in Aspiria has been mixed. Many have declared this an act of heresy, despite there being no doctrinal prohibition. Others are more open to the idea—the relationship between deities has always been subjective and shaped by local viewpoints.

### FIRST LIGHTING DAY

**Deity:** Kenaz

*The day after Hard Clay Day.*

Forges and furnaces are nothing without Kenaz's intervention. The day after Hard Clay Day, a cleric of the fire god inscribes his god's holy symbol on the inside surface while intoning prayers.

After placing firewood in the furnace, the cleric ignites it with a torch burning with flame from the sacred fire burning in the local temple. Where there is no Kenaz temple, the cleric must create a torch from strips of his vestments, affix it with a wooden holy symbol, and then ignite from an existing forge or hearth. The cleric must then pray until the furnace reaches its working temperature.

In decades to come, the union may result in the birth of a new minor deity with a glassblowing aspect. The creation of a new deity is not a mortal endeavor—one cannot just think one into existence. Rather, clerics must meditate long and hard, their minds extending deep into the cosmos. Eventually, they will discover the name of the existing god of glassblowing, for one surely exists. Then, and only then, can a new sub-cult be formed based on the wisdom the deity sends through dreams.

Var, once the city's main deity, is still important, though the cult has slipped influence. The cult has repeatedly attempted to ally itself with that of Ertha, but the latter has no wish to share its powerbase.

As a port, Glassport has always had a small but fervent cult of Neorthe watching over its harbor. The temple has never concerned itself with political machinations, although it has a permanent seat on the City Council. It has long acted as the unofficial voice of the Dock District, whose elected member is typically a follower of Neorthe.

The last major cult in Glassport is that of Sigel. Like much of Aspiria, the cult gained influence during the Demongate War. Sigel technically remains Glassport's war god, though the military now favors Tiw. Arguably, the cult of Heimdallr, minor god of light, has more influence here than anywhere else in Aspiria thanks to support from the Lamplighters' Guild and Lantern-makers and Chandlers Guild.

### FESTIVALS

In days of yore, the counts permitted one high holy day of each of the city's primary deities to become a public holiday for all citizens. The number of festivals and the specific ceremonies have changed over the centuries depending on which cult was ascendant and its particular bias, and the count's personal beliefs. Today, there are five public holidays—Auction Night (Var), Delling Day (Sigel), Feeding Day (Ertha), Hearth Day (Kenaz), and Quenching Day (Neorthe).

Only two other public holidays are celebrated in Glassport. The first, held on the third Waescdaeg of Werremonan, celebrates the countess' enthronement. While the city's elite attends a grand ball at the manor, other citizens gather to host street parties (if the weather is good) or meet in the homes of family and friends (if raining).

The second festival marks the day the last golems in Glassport were destroyed. This takes place on the second Sunnandaeg of Plohmonan. Children spend the weeks beforehand building "gols," effigies of golems made from wood and rages. During the day of the festival, they parade their gol through the streets, extorting a few coins or sweets from adults under the threat of "unleashing the gol on them."

The union of Ertha and Kenaz combined with the focus on glassware has resulted in some alterations to Ertha's usual festivals. On Feeding Day, for instance, clerics have swapped sacrificing metal and gems for smashing glassware. Hard Clay Day is now celebrated whenever a new glass furnace is constructed.

## MILITARY

One of the seven hereditary counts, Countess Erolwyn maintains a private army. With orcs and giants no threat to the county, she maintains a standing army of just 200 heavy infantry (two companies) and 200 crossbowmen (two companies). One-quarter of the crossbowmen are also trained artilleryists.

Two companies—one of each type—are garrisoned inside the city. The infantry mainly protects the city gate, although there is a barrack block in the Dock District in the off-chance that the city is attacked by water. The crossbow company patrols the walls, as well as a small island at the mouth of the harbor.

The other two companies are tasked with protecting the trade road as far as the southern boughs of Silverleaf Forest. Positioned every day's march along the road is a small motte-and-bailey, where merchants can camp their wagons for a small fee.

The companies are rotated every six months, not that any posting brings with it anything other than routine boredom and the occasional patrol.

Although there are only four companies, Glassport has five captains. The fifth is commander of the city's garrison and holds the title Captain of the Guard. While officially the county's senior officer, the role is largely an administrative and logistical position.

Paladins of Ertha and Kenaz form an auxiliary company. The seneschal may call them to arms without having to inform the City Council, but the high priestess of Ertha—their commander-in-chief—is under no obligation to obey.

The city also has three snekkes for anti-pirate duties. Only a single vessel is at sea at any one time, its crew serving for a month. A second vessel is kept at anchor in the harbor in readiness for providing assistance or combatting pirates. The third is usually undergoing routine

maintenance. The ships are manned by a mix of light infantry and archers. The three ship's captains are subordinates of the Captain of the Guard.

## MILITIA

Glassport maintains a fixed militia of just four companies (400 men and women). Only the countess (and currently the seneschal) have the authority to muster them to war and even then it requires approval from the City Council. In the event neither official is in the city, the Captain of the Guard is next in line. The Council's vote is usually a token gesture—the militia is called out only when the city is threatened and no official wants to see their home plundered or razed. Regular training sessions are held for one company at a time. In that way, the city guard is never outnumbered by armed peasants.

The militia is not permitted to keep their official armor and weapons at home. When a call to arms is given, they are equipped with leather armor and spears from the city armory. Richer citizens are permitted to purchase heavier armor and different weapons from their own pockets, but must deposit them in the armory.

Given that adults are charged 10 gs a year for not serving in the militia and there is a restriction on numbers, there is a frenzy of applicants when a vacancy arises.

## PRIVATE FORCES

Only true nobles beholden to the countess are permitted to maintain a private army of any strength, and even then there are restrictions. A baron may keep a maximum of 50 soldiers, a baronet a maximum of 30, and a knight just ten soldiers. More importantly, for the safety of the county, whose borders the nobility safeguard, the nobility must maintain a minimum of 50% of these numbers.

The cults have no restrictions on the number of paladins they may maintain, but no temple can hire more than ten soldiers from the laity. Similarly, the count-barons are restricted to just five soldiers.

## FIRE WATCH

Wooden houses and roaring furnaces are an incendiary combination. Every citizen is required to help form a bucket chain should a fire break out, and the cult of Neorthe and the Convocation's water elementalists are always ready to douse conflagrations using miracles and spells. The city also maintains a fire watch. Made up of just ten officials, their sole responsibility is to patrol the city and raise the alarm if they spy a fire.

## TRADE & TRIBUTE

Glassport is the southern terminus of the Glass Road, a long trade route that winds its way northwest to New Asper before continuing north as the Winter Road. Much

of the produce carried along the Glittering Road passes through its gates and wharves as well.

As Aspiria's largest port, all manner of goods pass through Glassport's streets. Metal ingots from Chalcis (Witchwood and the Granite Mountains prohibit land trade), the largest export in terms of quantity, enter Aspiria here before being sent to workshops in New Asper and Kingsmead. Meanwhile, local merchants deliver cargoes of gems mined in the Granite Mountains, olives harvested and pressed into oil on the chalky southern hills, and wine, national's drink, from across the southern counties.

The city's sole import of note is the slabs of raw glass cut in the Glittersands. The Glass Merchants' Guild, which has a monopoly on the commodity, then hacks it into smaller chunks for sale to the various glassblowers. These craftsmen then turn the glass into bowls, glasses, vases, windowpanes, vials, and panels for lanterns.

Most of the bottles manufactured here head back up along the trade road for use in the wineries. Chalcis purchases works of art crafted from glass. Most of the ware end up in the markets of the Magocracy.

The furnaces require huge amounts of fuel. Silverleaf Forest's hearth elves sell timber to Glassport's charcoal burners in return for glass. The elves could purchase glass from the caravans passing through their southern border, but in forging a trade pact with Glassport the elves can ensure the forest is not stripped bare by greedy woodcutters.

Given that is in the elves' interests to keep imports of raw glass flowing, Glassport has formally asked for a military pact. In return for the elves help manning and maintaining the mottes-and-baileys closest to their realm, Glassport offers to sell glass at a better rate. The elves have acknowledged receipt of the treaty but have yet to sign. While some on the City Council are growing impatient at the delay, others argue the elves have a different view of time and will sign in their own good time.

In order that the small Charcoalers' Guild could not bring the city to its knees by reducing the flow of charcoal, it was consumed into the Glass Merchants' Guild. Private producers still exist, but the Guild always purchases from affiliated producers first, going to the lesser suppliers only when the others cannot meet demand. The individual charcoal-making families primarily earn a living selling to metalworkers, private citizens, and clerics of Kenaz and Sigel (who dislike the Glass Merchants' monopoly).

## TAXES

Taxation in Glassport is governed by the king, who oversees taxes in the entire realm. The countess' father secured a single concession, allowing glassware to be imported and imported at lower rates than other goods.

**Alchemical Tax:** All alchemical devices except those sold by the Alchemists' Guild are subject to a 10% sales tax. This raises the cost of alchemical devices in Aspiria by a similar amount.

## TRADE GOODS

Trade goods is a catchall term for small, portable goods of little individual intrinsic value. It is important to note that any items found for purchase in gear lists or that have a game mechanic are never trade goods. A few wooden plates, a bag of cooking herbs, a few animal pelts—such day-to-day items can all be considered trade goods. Trade goods can be spent in any settlement in lieu of coin (bartering).

Trade goods need not be detailed individually—their exact nature is unimportant, though characters are always welcome to add flavor by offering specific items. For instance, instead of saying he is using 20 gs of trade goods in a purchase, a player might say "I'll barter using these engraved wooden drinking cups I found."

A hero who finds or spends 100 gs on trade goods need only record "trade goods: 100 gs" on his character sheet, leaving the exact nature of the goods flexible. For convenience, every 5 gs of trade goods weighs 2 pounds.

The king's decision to tax alchemical devices yet exempt the Alchemists' Guild (essentially part of the Convocation) has not gone down well with the cults. Unable to persuade the monarch to exempt them as well, Aspiria's four main cults have taken matters into their own hands.

Instead of selling alchemical wares, they give them away in return for a donation to their temples. Naturally, the minimum donation is exactly equal to the standard price of the device. So as not to be seen to be snubbing the law, the cults only offer this service to those who have their deity as patron—other buyers must pay the inflated price.

**Docking Fees:** As a port, and with only limited wharf space, Glassport is permitted to charge a berthing fee. Ships may berth for free for the first 24 hours. After that, they are charged 5 gs per point of ship's base Toughness (i.e., ignoring armor) per day or part thereof.

**Customs Duties:** Imports are taxed at 4%, except for beer and spirits, which are taxed at 10%, and raw glass, which is taxed at 2%. Export tax is set at 3%, except on glassware, which is taxed at just 1% (approved by the king).

**Hearth Tax:** All households pay 1 gs per annum for each fireplace in the home. In Glassport, this helps ensure the street lanterns are maintained and fuelled.

**Income Tax:** Citizens pay 10% tax based on their annual income to their feudal superior and 10% directly to the king's treasury. The countess, whose only superior is the king, pays 20% to the monarch. Income tax paid to the countess helps maintain the network of fortifications along the trade road.

**Sales Tax:** A fee of 3% is paid on each transaction.

**Scutage:** Males between the ages of 15 and 50 who



 glassport 

1. gateway island
2. customs house
3. warehouses
4. ship chandler street
5. the drunken oarsman
6. crushing claw outfitters
7. the sand dweller
8. shipyards
9. the temple of neorthe
10. the manor house
11. the old manor
12. barracks
13. county courthouse
14. tower of the four that are one
15. guild of alchemists
16. glass merchants' guild
17. guild of glassblowers
18. the temple of glass
19. guild of pigmenters & pastelers
20. old alchemists' guild
21. temple of heimdallr
22. guild of lamplighters
23. silverleaf supplies
24. the house of light
25. lantern glass
26. godbert's goggles
27. the glass house
28. market
29. hergenald trade mission
30. iron guild office
31. the hireling hall
32. the house of teeth and claws

population: 10,634

do not join their local militia or an army are taxed 10 gs per year to help maintain those forces. This is paid to the countess's personal treasury.

## MARKETS

Glassport has two markets located in the Merchant District. The open market opens at dawn and closes at dusk. It is closed on public holidays, as are most businesses, and during times of city-wide crisis (such as outbreaks of plague). The other temple is located in the temple of Var.

The wares on sale depend on the day of the week. *Heafoddaeg*: fresh food and drink; *Waesdæag*: metal goods, including weapons and cooking pots; *Markedæag*: glassware, candles, oil; *Monandæag*: clothing (including raw items, such as cloth and wool); *Sunnandæag*: services (astrologers, messengers, mercenaries, miracles, scribes, and so on); *Healfdæag*: wooden, pottery, and leather goods (cutlery, bowls, storage pots, barrels, pouches, backpacks, and such like); *Milcdæag*: livestock; *Endedæag*: everything else.

While most of the sellers also own a shop or workshop, they rent stall space because it allows them to display their wares and keep an eye over their rivals' goods and prices. Part of the rent goes toward paying Thieftakers to protect the stalls from thieves. Thanks to their presence, the city watch rarely bothers to patrol here.

## ARCHITECTURE

Situated far from easy access to quarries, much of the city is made from wood. As the city grew, and with the counts reluctant to spend fortunes extending the city walls, buildings were extended upward. Most houses and three stories high, with each floor occupied by a family.

Due to the constant risk of fire, buildings are roofed with wooden slates rather than thatch. Likewise, they are primarily made of wood—only the countess' house, temples, military buildings, and the Convocation's holdings are made of stone. In this way, buildings can be hurried to demolished to make fire breaks in the event of a major conflagration.

Save for the subterranean temple of Ertha, every building has glassed windows. Even the lowest peasant's house has at least one tiny window with poor quality, and mostly opaque, glass. As the buildings grow grander, so the amount of windows increases, as does the quality, transparency, and color of the glass.

Most cities are cast into darkness after sunset, with only the watch patrols providing any illumination. With glass in plentiful supply, and whale oil provided by villages located a short distance along the coast, the streets of Glassport are illuminated by lanterns maintained by the Lamplighters' Guild. Local by-laws (introduced by the cult of Sigel and accepted by the City Council) make it a serious crime to tamper with or extinguish with the lanterns. The typical punishment is the loss of one's dominant hand for the first offense and death by burning for the second offense.

## THE SUN

As elsewhere, the inhabitants of Glassport base their working day on the rising and setting of Sigel's Hearth. Below are the local sunrise and sunset times and the hours of daylight for the first day of each month.

GMs should note that Halfway and Glassport are, by coincidence, at roughly the same latitude. As such, sunrise and sunset times are identical.

Month	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Snaermonan	0723	1627	9h 4m
Frostmonan	0709	1700	9h 50m
Eostremonan	0632	1737	11h 4m
Plohmonan	0544	1813	12h 32m
Sowanmonan	0457	1843	13h 46m
Werremonan	0422	1914	14h 51m
Scerranmonan	0412	1933	15h 21m
Hegmonan	0427	1928	15h 1m
Haerfestmonan	0455	1856	14h 1m
Falmonan	0425	1810	12h 44m
Huntianmonan	0557	1720	11h 23m
Fogmonan	0631	1638	10h 7m
Wulfmonan	0707	1617	9h 10m

## MAJOR LOCALES

In addition to the locales detailed below, which are among the most important or interesting, all the major crafts and services are represented. Although it may require a Streetwise roll to glean the address of a particular business, the characters should have little difficulty finding armorers, and weaponsmiths, herbalists, healers, glassblowers, potters, weavers, dyers, tanners, blacksmiths, farriers, parchment makers, carpenters, masons, wheelwrights, scholars, and so on.

Inns and taverns are less common than in similar-sized cities, there being fewer visitors. Quality of furnishings, entertainment, and service varies immensely from downright disgusting to luxurious.

## CITY WALLS & GATES

The chances of an army attacking Glassport from the landward side are minimal. Even if the orcs and giants did manage to combine their forces into one vast army, Glassport would have plenty of time to either bolster its defenses by withdrawing from the mottes-and-baileys and hiring mercenaries from overseas or, in the worst case situation, evacuating the city.

With stone an extensive luxury, the early counts opted to create a huge bank of packed chalk and earth (50 feet thick), directly in front of which was excavated a steep V-shaped ditch. The height from the base of the ditch to the top of the ramparts is 40 feet. The ramparts are topped with an 8-foot wooden palisade, behind which

is a wide catwalk. Wooden towers, each an additional 20 feet higher than the rampart, provide firing and watch platforms.

The sole gatehouse is actually constructed from stone. A major fortification, it is flanked by two 40-feet high towers. Passing through the first set of gates, which can be protected by a portcullis, the road takes a series of 180 degree turns before reaching the second gate. Murder holes in the roof allow defenders to fire missile weapons or drop alchemical devices on attackers.

The gates are kept open day and night, though the number of soldiers on guard duty is doubled after dark. A double two of large lanterns illuminates the approach to the trade road. Any shadows spied outside their illuminated area are automatically fired at by crossbowmen perched on the gatehouse towers.

## DOCK DISTRICT

As Aspiria's largest port, Glassport boasts extensive wharves, not to mention industries related to shipping and shipbuilding and provisioning Ships from Alantaris Isle, Chalcis, and the Magocracy regularly call here, and the dock area is awash with foreign sailors.

On rare occasions, a ship from Al-Shirkuh, the desert realm south of Rassilon, berths here with a cargo of rare goods. When it does, folk gather from far afield to see the dusky-skinned sailors and listen to their tales of endless burning sands, strange beasts, and alien forms of magic.

## 1. GATEWAY ISLAND

Rising from the cold waters at the harbor mouth, Gateway Island is a craggy, seaweed-draped pinnacle of rock. Built into the rock is a low, stone tower.

Inside the tower are barracks for 20 soldiers. The cellar, hollowed out from the living rock, serves as a jail for those awaiting trial. The building also serves as home to the city's only resident priest of Rigr, Eye of the Vigilant Josiane Ever-Wake.

Pirates, which while a hypothetical threat, have never seriously troubled Glassport. Josiane spends much of her time gazing out to sea for approaching ships or vessels in trouble, her eyes augmented by *farsight* and her clothes kept dry through *environmental protection*.

Two trebuchets and four ballistae are mounted on the flat roof, the first line of defenses against sea-raiders. Instead of rocks, the trebuchets launch a barrage of a dozen glass orbs at a time, each one a fiery *blast* alchemical device, packed in straw to protect them against shattering on launch. The city can only afford six loads of orbs, but each one is enough to destroy several ships sailing in close proximity to each other.

A huge lantern hangs suspended from an iron frame. Glutinous for fuel, the beacon is lit only during storms, when the color of the sea and sky merge into one indistinguishable mass, and at night. Smaller lanterns positioned on the crags warn mariners of the island's treacherous rocks.

## 2. CUSTOMS HOUSE

Whether arriving or departing by land or sea, merchants must declare their cargoes to customs officials, who then evaluate and collect exercise duty. Unloading or unloading cargo and storing and removing it from a warehouse requires a valid tax receipt. This takes the form of a carved wooden disc, the designs varying based on whether import or export excise has been paid.

Appraising taxation can be a lengthy process—most officials insist on opening barrels, casks, and crates in order to check the contents. This can take anywhere from a few hours to several days, depending on the quantities involved and how busy the officials are.

Captains who need to catch the next tide or who have perishable goods can speed up the inspection, as can those who would rather not have officials poking about in their cargoes, with a small bribe.

## 3. WAREHOUSES

Straddling the boundary between the Dock and Merchant Districts are wide streets bordered with wooden warehouses. Most are owned by local merchant families or the Glassblowers' Guild. The Principality of Hergeland maintains three warehouses here for storing goods going to and from Port Helgen.

The warehouse area is not just a place for storing goods. Nestled between the large buildings are the workshops of craftsmen devoted to producing various storage items. Here one can find basketmakers, bottlemakers, boxmakers, cofferers (wooden coffers), sackers (sacks), and wineskinners. While repairs to ships are handled at the shipyards (see location #8), merchants using carts can find cartwrights and wheelwrights also ply their trade here. Similarly, there are craftsmen producing pavilions, tents, bedrolls, and provisions—staying at the few roadside inns in Aspiria costs money and merchants tend to be a frugal lot.

Given its size, not to mention the businesses operating here, many citizens consider the area a separate area of the city. Unofficially, it is known as the Warehouse District. The borders are not particularly defined (many warehouse workers live to the east and there are warehouses to the west), but this doesn't prevent the cult of Var and Glass Merchants' Guild from making a request for the area to be considered a unique district. Not only would this mean adding a new citizen to the City Council, but it would undoubtedly expand the power of the main proposers.

## 4. SHIP CHANDLER STREET

Every shop along this street is a ship's chandler. Captains can find everything they need to keep their vessels seaworthy—oil, tallow, rope, hatchets and hammers, nails, candles and lanterns, leather goods, sail cloth, and even provisions.

The shops do not compete on price. Instead, they pride themselves on the time it takes to fulfill an order—time

is money for merchants. Chandlers with a reputation for timely and accurate delivery are naturally the most preferable, but they also have more customers to satisfy. Unless the chandler has spare capacity, captains must frequently use one with a poorer reputation.

## 5. THE DRUNKEN OARSMAN

A popular inn with sailors looking for employment, the Drunken Oarsman has a reputation for bad food (cheap meals, the only sort available, cost 2 ss), strong alcohol, and drunken brawling. The back wall is covered with notices posted by captains with vacancies. Sailors are usually conversant with the latest gossip. Streetwise rolls to learn gossip concerning Port or Port Helgen have a +1 bonus here.

The establishment is owned by Fromondin ap-Begue. A retired sailor, the innkeeper is troubled by constant nightmares involving black tentacles and hungry maws. His problems began a year ago, shortly after accepting a curiously-carved statuette from a sailor from Sirhan, City of Stars on the western coast of Al-Shirkuh, in lieu of payment for a week's board. Fromondin has yet to put the two events together.

## 6. CRUSHING CLAW OUTFITTERS

Seafood is a major part of Glassporters' diet. Especially prized by the rich is flavorful flesh of the giant crabs native to Crushing Claw Island (see *Hellfrost Atlas*). Good money can be made hunting down the gigantic crustaceans. The shop is an outfitter for those wishing to try their luck crab hunting. Racks of polearms, hammers, and maces, crowbars (for prising shells open), bundles of rope and nets, and grappling hooks fill the store to the rafters.

## 7. THE SAND DWELLER

An inn located near the docks, the Sandpit, as the establishment is better known locally, caters for visiting merchants from Al-Shirkuh and those who wish to trade with the Free Emirates located on the continent's western coast. The decor is thoroughly southern in style, as is the cuisine, which uses a lot of unusual spices. Meals cost twice the usual rate.

The innkeeper, Omid ibn-Hazid, is an ex-patriot who has taken Aspirian citizenship. Although Omid is fluent in both Aspirian and Trader, he permits only Sand-speech, the trade language of Al-Shirkuh, to be spoken in the Sandpit. Patrons who cannot speak the language are shown the door. Customers may pay in scields or dinars.

## 8. SHIPYARDS

Glassport's shipyards both construct new vessels and repair existing ones. The shipwrights have a long history of building busses, the most common merchant vessel.

Standard busses cost 80% of normal here. Construction takes five weeks. Buyers must pay 50% in advance and the rest on completion. The craftsmen can also more advanced busses, albeit at a much higher cost. Prices below are in addition to the basic cost of a busse. These options can be combined, but only one of each modification can be added to any one ship. Each modification adds a further two weeks to the construction time.

*Greater Seaworthiness:* Handling 0 (+2,000 gs); *Reinforced Hull:* the ship has Heavy Armor, but its Armor rating is not changed (+1,500 gs); *Sleek Hull:* Acc/Top Speed change to 2/8 (under oar) and 4/12 (under sail) (+5,000 gs); *Strengthened Hull:* +2 Toughness (+1,500 gs).

## 9. THE TEMPLE OF NEORTHE

Out of long tradition, any ship that sinks within the confines of the harbor automatically belongs to the cult of Neorthe, as does its cargo. Constructed from salvaged timbers, the temple appears to be a ramshackle structure ready to blow down with the next storm though it is actually extremely strong.

Inside, the structure is adorned with many statuettes carved from whale bone and scrimshawed bone objects or shells. Some of these items have been donated, but many more were purchased from the sale of cargoes salvaged from sunken vessels. Most often, the cargoes are sold back to their original owners for a percentage of their market value.

For much of the day, Navigator Rosebud, the high priest, sits in a small rowboat anchored near Gateway Island. Visiting captains can hire her as a pilot to guide them through the swirling currents of the harbor for 5 gs. She also offers departing captains a blessing for 2 gs.

## COUNTY DISTRICT

Situated on the western bluffs, County District is the political center of Glassport. Home to many of the wealthiest and most influential citizens, it is rarely troubled by the veil of smoke that constantly hovers over the rest of the city.

## 10. THE MANOR HOUSE

Constructed by the countess' grandfather, this grand edifice serves as the current seat of power for the County of Glassport. Unlike its predecessor, which can be barely seen from the city below, the new manor is located on the leeward side of the bluffs.

A tunnel runs from one of the cellars to the Convocation's tower. The passage allows the seneschal and her advisors to meet with the arkhwisards in secret.

There is another door in the cellar. Made of solid iron, it has no lock and no handle, and no adornments save for a poorly scratched symbol of Scaetha. The older servants claim it marks to the catacombs, where the counts of old lie in rest, though can mention it without an involuntary shudder and a whispered prayer. Given the door must

have been installed by the countess' grandfather and that the crypts are located on the other side of the hill, not to mention is being unopenable, many younger servants wonder as to why it was installed at all.

## 11. THE OLD MANOR

With a commanding ocean view and mostly hidden from the city, the modestly-sized fortified manor served as the counts' seat of power for countless generations. Constantly battered by wind and rain, its stonework is crumbling, the beams are rotting, and the slates are cracked, though it remains structurally sound.

Having chosen to withdraw from public life save for appearances at grand feasts and visits to the appropriate temples on public holidays, Erolwyn has chosen to make her home in the old manor. Aside from two guards and a handful of elderly retainers, she resides here alone.

Her closest servants are worried their mistress is losing her mind. Erolwyn has complained about strange noises in the dead of night, unusual odors, and shadows that seem to move on their own. Despite a thorough search and sleeping in the otherwise vacant wing, no one else has detected anything unusual. The general agreement is that the noises and odors are nothing more than the old stones settling and the occasional waft of mold.

## 12. BARRACKS

Surrounded by a low wooden wall, the barracks can accommodate all four infantry companies, though only two are resident at any time.

Although Sigel is the official god of war, counts born after the Liche-Priest was defeated were keen not to offend Tiw. Instead of constructing a fortified temple, as would the norm, the decision was made to cover the parade ground with stone slabs. A huge version of Tiw's holy symbol is carved across the slabs. Technically only a shrine, the soldiers gather here in their massed ranks to celebrate Tiw's high holy days.

The parade ground's corners are marked with stout poles from which flutter the banners of the county's infantry companies. Those of the companies operating outside the city are lowered to half-mast to indicate that they are not resident.

## 13. COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Properly the temple of Hothar, the building is circular with four small, square extensions. The central hub is the temple proper and contains the clerics' rooms, storage, the main library, and the hall of worship. The four annexes house a court, these being those for civil, criminal, military, and religious offenses.

The library is stacked with scrolls and books of law, as well as a record of all judgments passed down by the courts dating back to the end of the Blizzard War. For those using the library rules in *Hellfrost Expansion 1*, the temple has the following statistics.

**Admission:** Restricted to clerics of Hothar, laity who work in the temple and have reason to consult the collection (such as court clerks or scribes), and those who can prove knowledge of the law (Knowledge (Law) d6+).

**Specialties:** The law, County of Glassport legislation and judgments.

**Investigation Rolls:** +1 for specialties only.

#### 14. TOWER OF THE FOUR THAT ARE ONE

The Convocation of Elementalists has long been an ally of Aspiria. Established in 36 IR, and largely unchanged since that date, the Tower of the Four that are One is both a refuge and a place of learning.

Any member of the Convocation in good standing may stay here for as long as they like at no charge, though they may be asked to work if they intend to remain here for more than a week. As a major Convocation facility, all the major offices (see *Arcane Lore*) have at least one resident member.

The Tower is not divided by element or title. Although the arkhwisards have suites and the apprentices shared common rooms, they eat, work, and study without division. The Tower is run by a council of four arkhwisards, each representing one of the elements. Age rather than skill determines who sits on the council. When it comes to appointing a representative to the City Council, every elementalists of Prynciple rank or higher has a single vote. Despite the more informal nature of the Tower, most elementalists vote for a candidate with the same principle element as their own.

The senior arcanologist, Maegister Gormlaith “Dancing Spiral” Argentocoxus (female, Tuomi, 40), has recently come into possession of a document that purports to show the location of the fabled Golem Workshop (see *Hellfrost Atlas*). Wary the workshop may be protected by deadly traps or active golems, and with all study of golems prohibited, Gormlaith seeks to hire adventurers with no ties to the Convocation.

#### 15. GUILD OF ALCHEMISTS

A branch of the Convocation, the elementalists established the first alchemical workshop in Glassport (see location #20) in 471 IR to take advantage of the cheap glassware, as well as the city’s trade network. As part of the agreement struck with the then-count, the guild sells alchemical devices to the city at a reduced rate.

Master Alchemist Maegister Ivoid Soot-Face (male, Saxa, 46), so-named because many of his experiments end in explosive failures, is the current guildmaster. Elementalists make up the bulk of the membership, but any mage or cleric can join. Many do so only in order to access the guild’s advanced laboratories.

Using the laboratories grants +2 to die rolls when creating alchemical devices. Access to the laboratories is highly sought after, however, and the guildmaster has recently imposed a charge of 100 gs per day, something many elementalists resent.

As well as workshops, the building runs a shop. Any citizen can purchase a device here, but the guild only sells destructive alchemical wares to mages and clerics.

### GLASS DISTRICT

Despite its name, the Glass District serves as the main industrial area for the entire city. Many traditional crafts have fallen out of favor in the last 40 years, but one can still find everything from armorers to tailors and potters to vellum-makers. Among the industries of interest to adventurers looking their way through ruins are chandlers (candles), lantern-makers, torch-makers, and tinderbox-men (tinderboxes).

The constant streams of smoke belching from glass furnaces blankets this district in a constant cloud. Tendrils of soot-laden smoke drift lazily down the cliff and sit across the harbor and the lower parts of the city, with only County District spared from the acrid fumes. Keeping the city clean is a thankless and endless task.

#### 16. GLASS MERCHANTS’ GUILD

Neither the largest or most powerful guild, the Glass merchants’ Guild is still a potent influence on city politics. Whereas the Guild of Glassblowers sides with the cult of Ertha, the Glass Merchants are allied with the cult of Var. It is the merchants who control the price of glassware, but doing so in a delicate balance of appeasing foreign merchants—who want the lowest prices—and the glassblowers—who want a high price for their produce.

#### 17. GUILD OF GLASSBLOWERS

True guild power in Glassport lies with the Guild of Glassblowers and the affiliated Guild of Glaziers. The guild’s main functions are to speak out for its members, ensure quality standards remain high, and argue for the highest prices (and then profits) possible.

Guildmaster Argius Long-lived has run the guild for over 50 years. Although he speaks for the members on the City Council, he has passed down daily running of the organization to his subordinate, Deputy Guildmistress Alix ap-Brantome (female, Anari, 34), his sister’s eldest grandchild.

Rumors have spread along the trade routes of a city in the easternmost part of Al-Shirkuh. Called Balyana, the city shares the same industrial focus as Glassport, but on a much grander scale. Alix is desperate to learn the secrets and techniques of the native glassblowers. Through this, she hopes to boost the guild’s fortunes to newer heights. She has no idea of where Balyana lies, nor the vast distances that must be covered to reach it, but she is prepared handsomely to fund an expedition to the desert lands.

#### 18. THE TEMPLE OF GLASS

Glassport’s largest temple is actually two holy places in one. The surface buildings are devoted to Kenaz. In

the holy of holies burns the sacred, eternal flame, from which all furnaces in the city are lit. The windows are glazed with panes of orange and red glass. Candles are lit behind each pane after dusk, giving the impression the building is on fire.

Carved into the cliffs is the extensive temple of Ertha. Rather than being decorated with gold, silver, and gems, the temple has numerous works of art made from colored glass. The only affiliated minor deity honored here is Fjörgynn, goddess of industriousness (see *Bonus Matters of Faith* web update). As befits the city's focus, she is depicted blowing glass.

Bee of Fjörgynn Yon ap-Begon, head of the sub-cult, is deputy high priestess of the temple. She is also the liaison between the temple and the Guild of Glassblowers (of which she is a senior member in her own right).

## 19. GUILD OF PIGMENTERS & PASTELERS

Clear glass vessels can be beautiful, but colored objects fetch a considerably higher price. Guild workers are a mix of herbalists and alchemists, grinding and mixing biological material and minerals into dry pigments. Molten glass can be rolled into the resultant powder to add color or the pigment used to produce canes (colored glass rods).

The guild is very secretive about its methods. Guildmaster Elizabeth ap-Richard is thus prepared to offer a sizeable reward for the retrieval of a manual of techniques stolen from the guildhouse last month.

## 20. OLD ALCHEMISTS' GUILD

The first guild building was constructed in the Glass District in 471 IR. It exploded in 487, killing everyone inside and a number of innocent civilians living in adjacent buildings. The half-ruined structure was abandoned in favor of constructing a new sanctuary elsewhere.

The cause of the devastation was diligently investigated by a team of experienced arcanologists, inquisitors, and master alchemists from Imperial City. Their report was sent to the Four and was hastily consigned to the restricted archives. As far as everyone in Glassport is concerned, the final verdict was "human error."

The ruins are enclosed behind a wooden wall marked with warning signs. The Convocation used to assign a junior heahwisard outside the wall as a deterrent to the curious, but when three of the wardens vanished over a six-month period, the practice ceased.

Not that many citizens are interested in scavenging in the ruins. Not only did the investigators remove anything they considered of interest or value, strange magical effects are produced periodically. Among the effects have been transformation to mundane animals, twinkling lights of colors that cause temporary entrancement, and even explosions that produce no noise.

## 21. TEMPLE OF HEIMDALLR

Traditional worship of Sigel is waning—the military

now favors Tiw and the city has faced no threat from the forces of darkness since before the Blizzard War. The old temple has been repurposed and is now devoted to Heimdallr, the god of light. Despite this, the high priest is always a cleric of Sigel. The highest-ranking cleric of Heimdallr, currently Lightbringer Senach "Torch" Pertacus (female, Tuomi, 25), serves as temple seneschal and as the guildmaster of the Lamplighters' Guild.

The old temple's roof was torn down, replaced with large panes of glass donated by the Guild of Glaziers. In this manner, worshippers can honor Sigel in his form of the sun whatever the weather. The entire temple is brilliantly lit with lanterns and candles, day and night.

With fewer clerics working here (many work as glassblowers, chandlers, lantern-makers, and lamplighters), one outbuilding has been given to the Guild of Lamplighters (see below).

## 22. GUILD OF LAMPLIGHTERS

The guild is responsible for maintaining the many lanterns that light the streets and ensuring they keep burning through the night. At dusk, workers move through the streets with long, glowing tapers. During the night, it falls to those serving alongside the city watch to keep the lanterns burning. As the sun rises, so their colleagues dampen the lanterns and begin the task of refilling their reservoirs.

## 23. SILVERLEAF SUPPLIES

Burns are an occupational hazard for those working with molten glass or metal. Eldaerneth (female, hearth elf, 212) has lived in Glassport for 25 years, where she works as a herbalist. As the shop of her name indicates, she sources herbs from Silverleaf Forest. Although she sells a range of raw ingredients and concoctions, her best sellers are healing (burns & regeneration), hydrating, and restorative herbal balms and salves. Members of the Glassblowers' Guild, the Metalworkers' Guild, clerics of Ertha and Kenaz, and elementalists with a knowledge of fire magic can buy these remedies for just 30 gs.

Silverleaf's residents are not fond of outsiders picking roots, buds, and flowers from their forest. Herbalists may leave Eldaeneth a list of their requirements. She then has her peers in Silverleaf pick the ingredients. She charges 2 gs per bunch for this service, but it is better than ending one's life peppered with elven arrows.

## 24. THE HOUSE OF LIGHT

Renaud ap-Girber (male, Anari, 54) is a master craftsman. He is unusual in that he blows his own glass, using secret techniques passed down by his father. In addition to ordinary lanterns and bullseye lanterns, Renaud manufactures and sells a range of specialist lanterns. Prices below are in addition to the basic cost of an appropriate lantern. These options can be combined.

*Bright:* provides light in a 6" radius, can only be added

to a standard lantern (+50 gs); *Fuel Efficient*: burns for five hours per point of oil (+30 gs); *Sturdy*: 20% chance the lantern breaks if dropped (+30 gs).

Renaud has tried several times to purchase the secret of the colored glass by Eldaithas (see below), offering ever larger sums. Rebuffed every time, the glassblower has become embittered to the point of madness.

## 25. LANTERN GLASS

Eladithas (male, hearth elf, 356), a glazier, arrived in town only a year ago. The elf products and cuts his own glass for lanterns, but has no interest in producing or selling lanterns. Most of his wares are ordinary glass and primarily sold to replace broken panes. He has two specialist panes he produces in his small workshop. These can be added to any unmodified lantern or bullseye lantern and cannot be combined. Prices below are in addition to the basic cost of an appropriate lantern.

*Green Glass*: sheds invisible light that grants those in its radius the Low Light Vision ability (+500 gs); *Red Glass*: sheds invisible light that grants those in its radius the Infravision ability (+1,000 gs).

The red and green lensed lanterns are especially favored by adventurers. The light they shed is not in the visible spectrum, so their glare cannot be discerned by distant opponents. The lanterns are not magical devices, but works of exquisite skill. Crafting these special lenses requires powdered calmstone or fatestone (both red) or huntstone or luckstone (both green) to be added during the molten stage in exacting quantities.

Eladithas is always short of these precious stones and is always ready to buy them at full price. He insists that all gemstones be appraised by the cult of Auðun, though.

## 26. GODBERT'S GOGGLES

Godbert (male, engro, 69) spent his youth exploring the High Winterlands. Arrogant and overconfident—traits he has grown out of with age—he suffered permanent semi-blindness from the glare. Hearing talk of special lenses that could offset problems with vision, he traveled to Al-Shirkuh, where he purchased a set of corrective lenses. What little was left of his adventuring earnings he sank into a glassblowing and glazing apprenticeship.

Godbert has learned to create corrective lenses, though they are bulbous things. They are held in place with horned rims to prevent them coming loose and a thick leather strap to prevent them being dislodged.

A single set takes two months to grind, requires consultation with the customer (they must be available at least one day each week), and cost 300 gs. When donned, they offset the minor Bad Eyes Hindrance penalty.

## MERCHANT DISTRICT

The Merchant District is home to the city's mercantile families, the temple of Var, and the city's sole market. There are grand houses here, but the district is not an

## WORKING FOR A LIVING

*Hellfrost* is a game about heroes, not merchants and shopkeepers. That said, characters who have invested points in a Knowledge (Craft) skill should be able to use it. Two options are given below. Note that neither is likely to make the average character rich, and it will certainly cramp his adventuring.

### EMPLOYMENT

Sometimes the characters might need to rest up for a few weeks or months. Maybe a comrade needs to recover from wounds, for instance. Characters with a Craft skill can find employment with a successful Streetwise roll made each week. The craftsman doesn't have to make the roll himself—any hero can try to find him work.

No die roll is required when working for someone else. Instead, the character is paid 5 gs a week times his Knowledge (Craft) die type. This assumes an 8-hour working day, eight days a week save for two rest days at the end of the month and maybe one or two holy days.

A character with Knowledge (Craft: Jewelry) d6, for example, would earn 30 gs a week, or 1,560 gs a year, before paying any taxes.

### SELF-EMPLOYMENT

A character may craft items he can sell himself. Whether or not he can work his art away from a settlement depends on the nature of his craft, and is left to the GM to determine. For instance, a potter can construct a rudimentary kiln from mud or sand, but making a complete forge to work iron to any degree of skill while in the wilds is unlikely.

At the end of each working week (as explained above), he makes an appropriate Knowledge (Craft) roll. Success gives him 25 gs worth of common trade goods, and a raise 50 gs worth. This isn't much, and it certainly won't let the hero retire in luxury, but there are several limiting factors to what a single person can produce in a single week with rudimentary facilities.

The craftsman has to source and purchase raw materials (which are taxable). He likely lacks a full set of tools—few heroes are likely to be transporting a forge and anvil around on their mule, for instance—and space to work, forcing him to build or hire them.

Without additional staff to complete basic and/or time-consuming tasks, his work takes time—pots have to be formed, fired, painted, and glazed; creating silver jewelry requires patience and precision; and daggers need to be forged, sharpened, and polished.

especially wealthy one. Common laborers and warehouse workers live here in their ramshackle homes, as do workers related to the production of vellum and ink, while the middle-class includes accountants and scribes.

## 27. THE GLASS HOUSE

Devoted to Var, the temple is a vast, stone hall with many brilliantly painted stained-glass windows, a gift from the Guild of Glaziers.

The indoor market is held only on Marketdaeg, although the Glass Merchants have a concession allowing them to trade daily. Few citizens bother to attend this market, as it is concerned with the purchase and sale of bulk goods, rather than daily wares. An accommodation block and tavern cater for merchants wishing to engage in trade deals, as well as visiting clerics of Var.

## 28. MARKET

Save on Sunnandaeg, the market is bustling with citizens. On this day, the regular stalls are replaced with small stands and pavilions occupied by those with services to sell. The market's by-laws consider anything which does not involve the sale of physical goods.

The services available fall into two categories. Low services include cobblers (who repair shoes but do not make them), servants-for-hire, blade sharpeners, the Rat Catchers' Guild, fortune-tellers, and tailors (making repairs only). High services tend to attract higher class citizens. These include accountants, architects, builders, sages-for-hire, bookbinders, scribes, heralds, bodyguards, and even adventurers looking for employment.

Any person can apply for a space here, so long as the application is made at the Glass House before the sun sets on Monandaeg. The initial fee is a mere 1 gold scield, but the cult of Var takes 5% of the value of any sales.

Where an agreement involves a true service rather than one involving a repair made there and then, it must be sealed in blood. Every seller is given a stack of wooden disc bearing Hothar's holy symbol. When a deal is struck, both parties prick their flesh and smear it on to the wooden disc. All discs are collected when the market ends. Used ones are ritually burned by Hothar's clergy, thus sending the oath straight to their god.

## 29. HERGENALD TRADE MISSION

The Principality of Hergenalld maintains a trade mission in Glassport. Whereas the Magocratic's embassy is located in New Asper and speaks for the nation as a whole, the mission is a private enterprise. Its sole purpose is to maintain Port Helgen's status as preferred trading partner for all Aspirian goods. Some merchant ships do sail to Dargon, but thanks to the mission's influence, goods sold by local mercantile families or handled by the cult of Var only use Port Helgen.

Its members have their work cut out trying to ward off constant interest from Dargon, through whom Chalcian

goods enter the Magocracy. The exchange of favors and payments to merchants and the cult of Var have so far stymied Dargon's attempts.

Dargon is not alone in its effort. Sailing to Dargon would extend maritime journeys, but it would cut travel times from the ports to Coglelund and thus ultimately lower prices. Mage-Princess Olvia Hergenalld cannot prove that Coglelund and Darovia are colluding, despite the best efforts of her spies.

## 30. IRON GUILD OFFICE

With the countess' army watching over the trade road as far as the Opur Hills, few merchants are prepared to pay the Iron Guild for protection they don't need. Even after passing beyond the county's borders, the road is rarely troubled by bandits or orcs until Chepwyke.

The maritime trade routes to Port and Port Helgen are extremely profitable, which means that are attractive to pirates. With this in mind, the Iron Guild hires out marines (sailors trained to fight aboard ships). In addition, merchants can hire out ballistae and artilleryists. The Iron Guild has 100 marines and 20 artilleryists on its books.

## 31. THE HIRELING HALL

Merchants and nobles rarely go far without having menials to make their camps, carry torches and personal items, or even keep clothes clean. Adventurers, however, rarely have such minions in their employ. The owners of this business hire out lowly servants for long durations.

Torchbearers, camp-makers (experts at lighting fires), porters, cooks, armor and weapon cleaners, and even tailors can be hired here. The hirelings are not trained in combat and, in general, are poor specimens of humanity. Many are young children whose parents cannot afford to keep them. In game terms, they may not possess a skill with a die rating and they *never* earn experience unless turned into a Sidekick.

Rates vary with the intended duration of their employment. The longer the employment, the less it costs. The base rate is 2 ss per day. Employment for a week or more comes with a 10% discount, whereas a month or longer has a 20% discount. Payment equal to double the length of the contract is required up front, along with a 300 gs indemnity in case of a hireling's death. Once the employee is returned safe and sound, any excess payment is returned.

## 32. THE HOUSE OF TEETH AND CLAWS

This large house is entirely populated with semi-feral hunting cats. No one knows who owns the property or who ultimately pays the butcher's bill for the fresh meat brought here every day—the cult of Var receives money every month to pay for the provisions, but they have no other records. Suspects include the cult of Veth, the Convocation (who get blamed for many odd events), and a nobleman using the cats to protect a valuable treasure.

## TWO CITIES, ONE AIM - PROFIT!

Halfway, where money can buy power and influence, and where having the right clothes is as important as having the right contacts. A place where adventurers can buy and sell all manner of goods, and use their loot to buy noble titles.

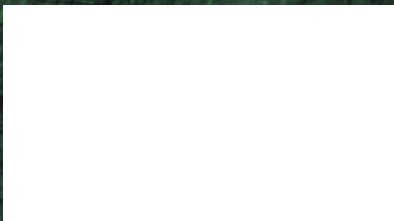
Glassport, gateway port to Aspiria, wreathed in smoke from the many furnaces that burn day and night, has become famous for its glassware. It is also a major center of alchemical learning and production, where mages and clerics can hone their arts and turn a tidy profit at the same time.

Both cities are centers of trade, but both have a unique flavor. Which one will your adventurers seek out?

Inside you will find:

- \* Information concerning the cities' history, social hierarchy, government, military, religion, and more. Gamemasters can weave this information into their adventures, while native player characters can use it to enhance their heroes.
- \* A full color map of each settlement.
- \* Dozens of unique locales that can serve as places to visit or spend money, or as the focus for an adventure.

*The Hellfrost City Books* are guide books that expand upon the information detailed in the *Hellfrost Gazetteer* and *Hellfrost Atlas*. They are written for the epic Hellfrost setting, which is designed for use with the award-winning *Savage Worlds RPG*.



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