

IOIIO

PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS

HELLFROST

HEROES & VILLAINS COMPENDIUM





HELLFROST HEROES & VILLAINS COMPENDIUM

AUTHOR: PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS
EDITING: TYLER MORRISON, LEE F. SZCZEPANIK, JR.
GRAPHIC DESIGN: ROBIN ELLIOTT

LAYOUT: ROBIN ELLIOTT, PAUL WADE-WILLIAMS
COVER ILLUSTRATION: PHILLIP SIMPSON
ILLUSTRATIONS: JUSTIN RUSSELL



WWW.TRIPLEACEGAMES.COM

©2015 Triple Ace Games. Hellfrost Rassilon Expansion II and all related marks and logos are trademarks of Triple Ace Games. ©2015 All Rights Reserved.

978-1-908237-30-9

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

THIS GAME REFERENCES THE SAVAGE WORLDS GAME SYSTEM, AVAILABLE FROM PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP AT WWW.PEGINC.COM. SAVAGE WORLDS AND ALL ASSOCIATED LOGOS AND TRADEMARKS ARE COPYRIGHTS OF PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. USED WITH PERMISSION. PINNACLE MAKES NO REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY AS TO THE QUALITY, VIABILITY, OR SUITABILITY FOR PURPOSE OF THIS PRODUCT.

● INTRODUCTION ●

The population of the winter-wracked northern lands is not particularly high, but it is varied. Commoners and nobles, mages and clerics, healers and warriors, merchants and thieves, wise men and fools, heroes and cowards, all walk the frozen realm.

Most have mundane dreams. They want to feed their families, earn enough money to pay their taxes, avoid being killed by some horrible beast, serve their lord loyally, survive another winter, and, when their time comes, die a peaceful and painless death. But those the Norns have touched have greater goals, often affecting many lives. Some crave base things such as wealth and power, others desire revenge for actual or perceived wrongs, seek to unlock the mysteries of the world, complete a grand quest, slay monstrous beasts, defeat fell cults, be praised and renowned for their glorious actions, or simply make the world a better place. These are the men and women who, while they may not be the subject of skalds' tales, will feature in them, for their destinies are intertwined with those the Norns have fated to be true heroes.

This supplement contains over 60 NPCs, both villainous and heroic, ready to be dropped into any *Hellfrost* campaign or used as player characters. Whether you're after a warrior, mage, thief, ranger, or cleric, you'll find an example inside.

STAT BLOCKS

Every NPC has an associated stat block. These have all been designed using the rules for creating Novice player characters with no advancements. These stat blocks, combined with the write ups, are intended to show players the wealth of possibilities that *Hellfrost* presents. As fully-fledged characters complete with stats and background, they can also be used in convention games you might be running.

For GMs intending to use the characters as NPCs, we strongly suggest the stat blocks be modified as desired to suit the Rank, playing style, and strengths and weaknesses of the party they will interact with, as well as the individual GM's campaign.

For those of you who have never created an NPC in *Savage Worlds*, the best advice we can offer is, Don't panic! Unlike many other systems, where NPCs must be created using the same rules and restrictions as player characters, *Savage Worlds* has a much simpler approach—just give them the abilities they need to fulfill their role and you're done!

That's right, you just pick the Traits, Hindrances, Edges, spells, and gear you want them to have. You don't have to count advances, balance them against the heroes, or even meet Edge requirements (although some rationale as to how a character with Agility d4 learned Acrobat and Improved Frenzy should be kept in mind in case the players query it).

NAMUS AP-ERNAUT

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Freelands (Aslov); **Occupation:** Paladin and murderer; **Patron Deity:** Dargar.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Anemic, Bloodthirsty, Delusional (Minor; Dargar tells him who to kill), Orders

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Dargar)

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Shooting, and Throwing only), *smite*

BACKGROUND

Namus was born and raised in Aslov. The son of a forester and a potter, he followed in his father's footsteps. Life was always a struggle for the lower echelons of society, but the influx of refugees into the city made things considerably worse. Food was rationed, crime rates rose dramatically, and costs of basic goods increased beyond the affordability of the common citizen. Like a corpse beginning to fester, the city was slowly being devoured by an army of human rats.

Like many natives, Namus began to question why Aslov and its people should shoulder the burden of supporting the rising tide of refugees. Did they not work hard and pay their taxes? Why should they starve and shoulder harsh tax hikes just so that incomers might eat? How could the baroness allow businessmen to fire locals and hire refugees at half the wages? While some citizens turned to violence against the refugees, Namus kept his

feelings and growing hatred locked inside his soul. There they festered, slowly consuming him.

The forester's life changed in 496, when plague swept through the filthy, crowded streets of Aslov. Although his family died, Namus stubbornly clung to life. Hovering near death, he dreamed of a wild-eyed man with pointed teeth and bestial eyes. The figure mocked him, snarling that he was no better than those he reviled in refusing to act against them. Namus awoke a changed man. Recognizing the figure in his dreams as Dargar, he sought out the sinister cult. That he survived the punishing training regime, designed to turn men into monsters, was testimony to his willpower and the cancer that had consumed his soul. Namus reveled in the pain and misery he inflicted on others, finally venting his pent up rage against the rats who inhabited Aslov.

He returned to the city last year. Now a paladin of Dargar, he stalks the streets at night, a specter of death hunting down and eradicating the weak. While many citizens are weak or dying from starvation, Namus thrives, regularly dining on fresh meat hacked from his terrified victims. Namus kills because he must—slaughter the refugees and Aslov shall rise from the ashes, glorious and strong once more!

DESCRIPTION

To look at him, Namus is nothing special. Average height, well-built but not excessively so, and with typical Anari features, he is instantly forgettable—just another face in the crowd. Except if one looks into his gray eyes—they are stone cold, devoid of any emotion even when he smiles. They are not the eyes of a maniac, gleaming with inner madness, but those of a man dead inside. But in Aslov such eyes are growing more common.

When stalking the streets, Namus wears a heavy black cloak, and covers his hair and lower face with a thick scarf. The latter is partly to conceal his features, but more to ward off the night chill, for Namus is not a well man. His weapon of choice is the battle axe, a common implement of warriors and not unlike a forester's tool.

MANNERISMS

By day, when his public persona is in place, Namus is shy and quiet. He avoids eye contact, though he remains alert to danger and signs of weakness. At night, once his mask is in place, he becomes a remorseless killer, a shadow that haunts the night and deals death. Far from a death-dealing berserker, Namus stalks his victims, tormenting them with fleeting glimpses of his concealed face and vile descriptions of the torment he will inflict on them hissed from the shadows before striking.

Namus is plagued by ill-health, the result of eating the flesh of too many diseased victims. He is frequently wracked by violent coughing fits in which his sputum is flecked with blood. He refuses to show any weakness—not because he is stoic, but because weakness would label him a potential sacrifice in the eyes of his cult.



EORBURGH CADWALLASUNU

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Nordmark; **Occupation:** Priestess and diplomat; **Patron Deity:** Eira.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Law) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d4

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Orders, Overconfident, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Connections (cult of Eira), Connections (Nordmark nobles)

Languages: Auld Saxa, Giant, Orcish, Saxa

Powers: *Healing, stun*

BACKGROUND

Eorburgh was orphaned during the civil war that followed the death of King Kol Skulisunu. Still two years away from her majority, she sought sanctuary in the local temple of Eira. For two years she earned her keep, aiding the healers in tending the injuries wrought upon the populace as the various factions battled for supremacy.

On reaching adulthood she elected to train as a priestess. Having already witnessed the cost men paid for war and patched up all manner of wounds, she completed her training with ease. It was during this time she came to realize that while her order could mend the physical wounds inflicted by war, it could do little to rebuild ruined lives or ease the mental trauma suffered by those who witnessed or suffered brutality. Surely, she thought, the order should be concerned not with clearing up after battle, but preventing war in the first place. Although a qualified healer of some skill, Eorburgh devoted her life to diplomacy and peace mongering.

When Geirmund returned from exile, he spent the night at the temple, seeking assurances the priestesses would support his cause and provide healers. Late one night, as the king sat by the hearth and studied reports, Eorburgh brought him his evening meal. Daring to disturb his planning, she spoke with the king at length, espousing her views with elegance and calm, yet inwardly fearful the king would dismiss her as a child.

Much to her surprise, Geirmund, who was only a little older, said he agreed with her in principle, insisting that he favored peace, not war. But, he added, true peace, a peace that would last generations, could not be earned through talk—peace must be earned through pain and loss, for only by experiencing suffering can men truly appreciate the benefits of peace. Eorburgh protested, but Geirmund could not be swayed from his course—war would come to Nordmark, and through it peace would ensue.

Eorburgh knows young King Geirmund's position is far from stable. The civil war may be over and the rebuilding in progress, but Nordmark's lord has enemies within and without his domain, and his promise of peace



is still a dream. There is little she can do about the former, for the wolves lie low, patiently watching for signs of weakness before revealing themselves. But lurking in the mountains that lie to the north and east are many hostile tribes of orcs and giants. Were they to rally, Nordmark's army would be forced to move to intercept them, bringing more pain to its people and leaving the traitors a free hand to act against the king.

Without seeking approval, Eorburgh has made it her goal to broker a temporary truce with the non-humans, buying Nordmark precious time to build up its strength (and thus deter any assault) and the king's intelligence to root out the traitors and force them to the parleying table. Lacking the skills necessary to survive the arduous trip, and well aware that a show of force is necessary to impress orcs, she is currently seeking adventuring companions. That any deal she makes would be invalid without the king's approval has, in her enthusiasm, completely slipped her mind.

DESCRIPTION

Eorburgh is a rather plain woman. Her nose is crooked, broken in her youth; her dirty blonde hair is worn long, unfettered, and unadorned; and her face is just a little too serious to attract men. She wears only the simple white robes of Eira's priesthood. The only jewelry she permits herself is a silver cloak clasp embossed with the goddess' holy symbol.

MANNERISMS

The quietly spoken Eorburgh has a charisma that commands attention. Even during a heated row between bitter rivals, all she need do is quietly raise her hand to bring silence. She endeavors to remain neutral when settling disputes, putting aside personal feelings in favor of the common good.

LIAZE AP-JEHAN

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Magocracy (Eastheath); **Occupation:** Paladin; **Patron Deity:** Eostre Plantmother.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Faith d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Hard of Hearing (Minor), Orders, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Eostre)

Languages: Anari, Arboreal, Fey, Hearth Elven

Powers: *Bolt, entangle*

BACKGROUND

A petulant child and as stubborn as a mule, Liaze saw no use for plants. She hated eating vegetables ("animals eat those!"), saw trees as good only for firewood and building houses, and trampled flowers because certain types made her sneeze or had thorns.

Then she fell ill with chicken itch, a common childhood ailment that causes unsightly itchy pustules. Liaze's case was particularly severe, though, and her parents feared for her life. Luckily, the local priestess of Eostre was an herbalist, and provided the family with a medicinal remedy designed to break the fever and ease the pus that threatened to poison her blood.

Following her recovery, Liaze has a complete change of heart, having finally realized the importance of plants. She pestered her parents into building her a plantiecrub (a walled enclosure designed to stop livestock eating the plants), which she lovingly tended through spring and summer. One morning, as harvest neared, she discovered two boys from the neighboring farm stomping

the plants. Incensed, Liaze, a skinny 12 year old girl who spoke her mind but never acted aggressively, set about the youths with a rake (ignoring the fact she would have joined the boys just a year ago). Had her parents not dragged her off the screaming youths, she would likely have killed the pair, such was her rage.

Liaze was dragged to the temple of Eostre, kicking and screaming, and vowing she would reap a bloody harvest for the loss of her plants (much to her father's shock and mother's eternal embarrassment). Instead of chastising the child or explaining that the plants could be re-grown, the priestess actually smiled, albeit out of the corner of her mouth. Although Liaze was still young, the priestess asked her parents to let the girl join the cult and train as a cleric. Sensing that a strict regime would do the girl good, and provide her with a much needed education and future prospects, they relented.

Liaze's training did nothing to quench the fires that burned in her when she saw plants needlessly destroyed, but it did give her focus and reason. Her mentor introduced her to the hearth elves of Angarion, who taught the human child of the history of the great forest and its decline, and told her of the ways of orcs and the greed of men, who tore down forests to fuel their homes and clear land for crops. To no one's surprise, Liaze chose to become a Reaper after finishing her basic training.

Now a full paladin, Liaze has left the temple to travel the northlands. She greatly desires to see the relatively untouched wilderness of the High Winterlands, especially the Great Forest, and to pay tribute to Eostre Plantmother at the edge of the Frozen Forest. Along the way, she lends her steel and spells to any who are fighting against despoilers.

DESCRIPTION

Liaze has hard features and a stern demeanor, though some of the latter is actually down to her having to concentrate to hear quiet conversations (see below). Her dark eyes light up when she is discussing the wondrous beauty of plants, or when she comes across flowers or woodlands she has never seen before. Her hands and face are usually dirty, for she is always rooting about in the soil or tending damaged plants.

Liaze wears a brown cloak trimmed with fur, practical woolen shirt and trousers (the knees of which are usually encrusted with dirt), and high leather boots. Concealed beneath her cloak hangs a short sword.

MANNERISMS

Liaze is partially deaf, a side-effect of her childhood illness. She doesn't like to discuss her infirmity, especially with strangers. Unfortunately, this means she can come across as snobbish or arrogant, seemingly ignoring people for no apparent reason.

She is a fanatical defender of plant life, showing no mercy to those who despoil the forests or destroy crops (harvesting is a natural act).



Eofrica Black-Arms

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Vestmark; **Occupation:** Priestess and weaponsmith; **Patron Deity:** Ertha.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Faith d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Area: Underearth) d4, Knowledge (Craft: Smithing) d6, Notice d4, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Swimming d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Orders, Pacifist (Minor), Phobia (Major: Claustrophobia)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Ertha), New Power*

Languages: Earthtongue, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Arcane, burrow, smite**

* *Eofrica wanted the smite power, something Ertha does not grant, as it fits her occupation. The GM allowed her to own an enchanted whetstone. It is unusual in that it only functions for clerics of Ertha and activates using the wielder's Faith roll.*

BACKGROUND

Eofrica was in her early teens when the orcs stormed through southern Vestmark. At first the war was a distant event, troubling for sure, but with little effect on daily life in the north. But like countless other souls, it would change Eofrica's life forever.

Time passed, Eofrica grew to womanhood, and married a farmer, a poor man but a good husband. Her plans to become a mother were cut short when her husband was conscripted into the army. Unable to manage the farm alone, Eofrica decided to aid the war effort. Many young men had been drafted, and metalworkers were short of apprentices. The masters, their trade vital to keeping the army supplied, were desperate for assistants.

Eofrica worked hard and learned quickly, for fate decreed her a talent for working metal. Her master, a priest of Ertha, suggested she could improve her art and better help Vestmark by taking holy vows. With no other ties, and being patriotic, Eofrica began her religious training.

Her final examination was no different to those who came before her—a solo journey through the Underearth. She has never revealed what she saw in the sunless depths, but she emerged into the light screaming in utter terror, vowing never to return to Ertha's Realm until the goddess called her to join her in eternity. Although she entered armed with just a dagger, grasped tightly in her left fist was a magical whetstone marked with a strange dwarven rune. Despite her vow and her terrified appearance, she had passed the test.

A decade on, Eofrica, now in her early thirties, still works as a smith. As the war drags on she has become slightly more militant. Each time she arms a soldier with one of her creations she dies a little more, knowing that many of these brave sons, brothers, and fathers will never return home. But, she believes, there is still hope,

still a chance for victory. Orcs may dominate the south, but there are small bands of rebels operating there, waging a guerilla war, and Kings Wood remains free. While she cannot provide them with leadership, she can equip them with the tools they need to strike at the heart of the enemy. Her plan has been turned down by Marshal Theodred, who can ill-afford to spare skilled workers. She now plans to enter Orcmark and locate such a rebel band under her own volition. All she needs is someone to ferry her there and help her locate the rebels.

DESCRIPTION

With her flowing red hair and dark eyes, Eofrica is the living embodiment of the hearth. Her arms and face are covered in hundreds of tiny scars caused by hot embers and sparks. These are usually invisible, concealed beneath a layer of soot. This is the origin of her nickname. Although wiry, Eofrica has great strength in her arm. She prefers not to show off, having learned that is never wise to reveal all one's strengths. She wears a thick leather apron (equivalent to a leather shirt) and carries a hammer (treat as a mace).

MANNERISMS

Eofrica is humorless, dedicated solely to her work and her goal to end the war. She cannot understand why others laugh and joke while Vestmark is on the verge of destruction, having yet to learn that humor is used by warriors to combat stress and despair. The traumatic experience of her training has never gone away, and she suffers intense claustrophobia. It strikes quickly and without warning, leaving her a screaming wreck. She refuses to venture underground for extended periods, giving all manner of excuses.



TYKO HIETANEN

Race: Finnar; **Homeland:** Lakeland; **Occupation:** Paladin and explorer; **Patron Deity:** Foldardröttann (see *Region Guide #11*).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Faith d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Underearth) d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal, Outsider (among Finnar)*, Small

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Dungeon Crawler

Languages: Dwarven, Earthtongue, Finnari, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Agility, Strength, Vigor, Climbing, Survival, and Swimming only), *light*

** Tyko never passed her adulthood test. Now 26 years old, she is considered mentally infirm by Finnar (word spreads, even in the wastes) and treated accordingly.*

BACKGROUND

Tyko was born to a nomadic family whose ancestral grounds encompassed part of northern Lakeland. Unlike most of her family and friends, who were born in tents, Tyko's mother gave birth to her only child in a cave, her labor coming on suddenly while she was hunting in the mountains. Born prematurely, Tyko was a tiny baby. Staunch traditionalists, her parents left the newborn in the cave, for a weak child is a drain on valuable resources. They returned a day later intending to bury the girl, only to find her alive and healthy.

Tyko's next adventure involving a cave came many years later. Her clan had migrated to their summer hunt-

ing grounds in the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains, seeking to replenish their stores with rabbits and deer that thrived on the hardy mosses. When one of the young men failed to return to camp, every member of the clan mobilized, Tyko included. His spear was found close to a crack in the ground, a gap too wide for an adult to slip through. His family was ready to give the hunter up for dead, when faint calls were heard, echoing up through the crack. While many adults made protective signs and murmured about fell earth spirits, Tyko, a mere child, volunteered to go into hole.

Armed with just a short spear and flaming torch, she was lowered into the crack. Knowing nothing of the Underearth, Tyko expected to see a featureless cave, something akin to the interior of a stone tent. Her gasp when she cast her eyes on glittering stalactites and stalagmites, curtains of rock seemingly frozen as they flowed like water, and the vast cathedral-like dome was clearly audible on the surface. The lad was safely rescued, having suffered only a broken leg.

Tyko became fascinated with the Underearth, for her brief visit had opened up a new world. She longed to know what lay beyond the illumination of her torch, where the tunnel mouths she glimpsed led. She returned to the cave as often as possible, neglecting her duties to delve ever deeper into the sunless realm.

Just before her 14th birthday she encountered a cleric of Foldardröttann, who was intent on exploring "her" cave. Man and child spoke at length, the cleric spell-bound by the young girl's knowledge of spelunking. He returned with Tyko to her camp and spoke with her parents, offering to take her under his wing and train her as a cleric. Although upset to see her go, Tyko's parents knew that the earth that lay beneath their feet was always going to be her main focus in life.

When not engaged in her own exploration, she hires herself out as a guide to those wishing to venture into Ertha's Realm or whose battles against hostile creatures take them into the bowels of the earth.

DESCRIPTION

Tyko is short for a Finnar, standing just a fraction over five feet tall, and has a waifish build. She wears her near-white hair short. Her skin is paler than most Finnar, a result of spending almost as much time within the bowels of the earth as walking upon the surface. She is self-conscious about her nose, which is slightly upturned, and her chin, which she thinks is far too angular.

MANNERISMS

Fully aware of the many dangers that lurk in the Underearth, planning and safety are always her first concerns, never speed. Although not stubborn, she refuses to be rushed, even when danger looms. She makes friends quickly, for there is no room for animosity in the utter darkness of Ertha's Realm. Although not suicidal, she has made it a rule never to leave a comrade behind.



EADGYTH THE UNDYING

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Seithrby; **Occupation:** Priestess and necromancer; **Patron Deity:** Hela.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Death Wish, Orders, Vow (Major: free the Liche-Priest)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Hela), Semi-Undead*

Languages: Auld Saxa, Black Tongue, Trader

Powers: Fear, zombie

Special Abilities:

* **Semi-Undead:** +1 Toughness. +1 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. +2 to Vigor rolls to resist disease and poison. Ignores one point of wound penalties.

* *Eadgyth used one of her starting Edges to take the unique Semi-Undead Special Ability.*

BACKGROUND

Eadgyth still remembers how as a child she feared the icy hand of death, how she recoiled from the withered husks of the elderly, their features marred and ravaged by age; how she ran from the sick lest she catch their disease; and how she avoided graveyards. She still remembers how the fear grew steadily stronger as she entered adolescence and slipped toward adulthood, and vividly recalls the recurring nightmares she suffered, in which her flesh slough off to reveal the gleaming bones beneath. She still remembers the day her parents died, hearing in her mind the incantations the cleric recited over their corpses in the hope they would avoid eternity in the Abyss, seeing the wrapped bodies lowered into the ground to be devoured by worms. Most vividly of all, she still remembers the day she died.

So afraid of dying was she that Eadgyth sought solace in the dark embrace of Hela, whose cult promised eternal life to those who served the mistress of death. Like all potential recruits, Eadgyth had to overcome her greatest fear and stare death in the face. She remembers the poison she ingested coursing through her veins, the darkness descending, her struggle to breathe, and then the sudden burst of light as her eyes opened.

Believing she had died, the dark cleric Eadgyth had sought out quickly cast *zombie*, seeking to turn her body into his mindless slave. But Eadgyth's soul had not been claimed by Scaetha's heralds, for it clung to her corpse, unwilling to pass beyond the veil of mortality. Guided by the fate the Norns had woven, the unholy magic fused Eadgyth's lingering soul to her body, which hung in a state between life and death, one heartbeat away from dying. Eadgyth awoke neither alive nor dead, and yet not undead.

Now over 100 years old, Eadgyth craves death, but not



the final death suffered by mortals. Still technically alive, her body continues to age, albeit at a greatly reduced rate, and remains susceptible to injury. All Eadgyth's research into her unique status has failed to answer the most important question on her lips—if she dies, will Hela grant her the status of a truly sentient undead?

She believes that only the Liche-Priest can supply that answer, and he is still imprisoned. Growing ever more desperate as the years drift by, Eadgyth has become fixated on awakening the master of the undead. After much research, she now believes she holds the key in her hands, for she has uncovered fragments of an ancient ceremony laid down by the Liche-Priest before his defeat. All she need do is collect the blood of 13 clerics of Scaetha and Sigel slain by an undead, and smear them on the great wards.

DESCRIPTION

Despite straddling the line between life and death, Eadgyth appears much as she did in life. Her skin is pale and cold to the touch, though not as icy as a corpse. Her heart still beats, though only slowly. Her dark hair is streaked with gray, and her once smooth face is finally showing signs of age. Her gray eyes are like cold embers, lifeless save for a tiny spark of inner strength.

MANNERISMS

Fearful of dying and not returning as a sentient undead, Eadgyth has become extremely cautious, always planning contingencies and never acting rashly. She plots and plans, always trying to ensure she is two steps ahead of her enemies.

VAROCHER GLASS-EYES

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Freelands; **Occupation:** Paladin and scholar; **Patron Deity:** Hoenir.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Faith d6, Fighting d8, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Folklore) d4, Knowledge (History) d4, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor)*, Curious, Habit (Minor: talks to himself), Orders

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Hoenir)

Languages: Fingerspeak, Saxa, Trader

Powers: Boost/lower trait (Smarts and Smarts-linked skills only), detect/conceal

* Has a set of ground lenses he purchased from a merchant hailing from Al-Shirkub. They are virtually irreplaceable outside of the desert realm. He is long-sighted. Without his glasses, the penalty applies to any sight-based roll under 10", not over, as normal.

BACKGROUND

Varocher has long been interested in the past, though not always from a scholastic stance. Born to a poor family, he discovered an ancient grave after the plow he was guiding strayed off course and gouged through a layer of buried stones on the edge of his family's plot. Within the shallow depression he found a handful of coins and a small stone statue, the grave goods of some ancient nobleman or warrior. Although the statue was well carved, Varocher saw no intrinsic value in the lump of stone. Why he placed it outside the family home and did not simply throw it away he cannot remember, but the Norns work in mysterious ways. Many months passed, and Varocher



had all but forgotten about his find. A merchant, in the village to buy surplus grain, noticed the statue. After inspecting it he offered Varocher's father 200 gold scields, hardly a princely sum, but a fortune to poor farmers.

Realizing that seemingly worthless objects could bring wealth, if the right buyer could be found, Varocher became a tomb robber. Although many of his finds ended up in private hands, more than a few were sold to the cult of Hoenir, within which he developed numerous contacts. Over time, and through countless discussions with clerics of Hoenir, Varocher's view began to change. More and more artifacts were given over to the cult, and Varocher spent more time in study, investigating likely sites of interest rather than plundering any old ruin he happened across.

His decision to join the cult and take holy vows was prompted by an accident. While exploring a ruin in Heli-gioland he triggered a trap, which sprayed strange spores into his face. Only his quick decision to douse his face in water saved his sight, for the trap was intended to rob tomb raiders of their vision. Unfortunately, he was not quick enough to escape unscathed—over the next few weeks his eyesight gradually deteriorated. Although the degeneration stopped, it left him severely long-sighted. Varocher thought his life over, for he could neither read clearly nor stop the tell-tale signs of traps before he stumbled into them.

It was then he recalled reading a manuscript translated from the flowing script of the desert realm of Al-Shirkub, in which it spoke of special glass discs which could correct vision. Varocher spent his life savings traveling to Sethnor City and purchasing a pair of these seemingly magical discs from a merchant.

Convinced Hoenir granted him a second chance in life, Varocher has devoted his remaining years to serving Hoenir. He still robs tombs, but he does so in the name of discovery and knowledge, not profit.

DESCRIPTION

Varocher has neatly combed light brown hair, inquisitive light green eyes, and a friendly smile. Perched on his nose is a pair of ground lenses encased in a wire frame. When not wearing his glasses he is forced to squint to see nearby objects clearly. He wears the standard gray robes of a scholar over his armor, and carries a satchel crammed with writing material and his explorers gear.

MANNERISMS

For the most part, Varocher is quiet, thoughtful, and attentive, the stereotypical trademarks of a scholar. He often talks to himself, asking and answering questions about items he is seeking or ruins he is exploring in an attempt to put himself in the mindset of the builders and better understand the current situation.

Although not reckless by nature, his desire to learn often leads him to make rash decisions or become distracted by a curiosity.

VOLAS THE GRIM

Race: Tuomi; **Homeland:** Drachenlands; **Occupation:** Paladin, champion, and enforcer; **Patron Deity:** Jarngrímr (see *Region Guide* #9).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Law) d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Orders (Ramel), Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), First Strike

Languages: Chalcian, Trader, Tuomi

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Intimidation, and Persuasion only), *puppet*

BACKGROUND

Volas was a small child when Voivode Ramel ascended the Dragon Throne. Although Ramel was a tyrant, one far worse than the five generations of his family who came before, Volas was brought up to respect his liege, for he and his line had united the squabbling and power-hungry mormaers under strong leadership, which in turn strengthened the Drachenlands.

As a youth, he watched the annual tax spectacle, reveling in the deadly battle as the village champion sought to secure a better tax rate for his kith and kin. At the age of 11, he watched impassively as his father fought Ramel's champion. Although he put up a mighty fight, he was defeated and killed. Volas felt no grief or desire for vengeance, for the law was the law, and his father's noble sacrifice had earned the village tax exemption for the next year. He waved aside the condolences of his neighbors, for in his heart he felt naught but pride.

Volas' first act of loyalty came two years later. Volas was playing outside a friend's house when he overheard the boy's parents speaking poorly of Ramel and his harsh laws. Ramel and his entourage entered the village a week later to set the annual taxation level. Volas tried to alert one of the guards to the seditious talk, but the youth was ignored. Frustrated, he struck out at the guard, knocking him off balance. Volas was quickly overpowered and dragged before the voivode. Ramel casually pronounced the death sentence, the standard punishment for those daring to strike against his guards. Volas, unafraid, spoke out. With a strong voice he informed Ramel of what he had overheard, pointing out the shocked perpetrators, and then indicating the guard who had refused to take his accusations seriously.

Ramel selected Volas's friend's father as the village champion, pitting him against the unfortunate guard. The villager lost easily, burdening the inhabitants with a crippling tax bill. The guard, although victorious, was executed as a warning. Accompanying him to the grave were Volas' friend, his siblings, and his mother.

Ramel threw a coin purse to Volas, but the boy returned it, claiming he had acted not through desire of reward, but through loyalty to his liege and his divine

right to rule. His curiosity aroused, for such loyalty was rare, Ramel asked Volas would reward he would accept. Unflinching, Volas asked to be trained as a cleric of Jarngrímr, so that he might help ensure the population obeyed the will of the voivode. Praising the boy's devotion in front of his peers, Ramel granted the request.

Now a paladin of the small cult, Volas has served Voivode Ramel tirelessly. Although he has acted as the voivode's champion when setting taxes and as an executioner, he primarily serves as an enforcer, rooting out sedition and punishing perpetrators in full accordance with the draconic laws. He has recently been given permission to operate beyond the Drachenland's borders. Disguised as a bounty hunter, he ruthlessly hunts down and exterminates political refugees fomenting rebellion against the voivode.

DESCRIPTION

Volas is of average height for a Tuomi, standing 5' 5" in his socks, and of average build. His blonde hair is swept back from his forehead, his mustaches droops below his chin, and his beard is woven into a single braid. Volas sports two tattoos, one running from the bridge of his nose across his left cheek, the other curving across the right brow. He wears a plain gray cloak over his armor, symbolizing his adherence to conformity.

MANNERISMS

Volas lives up to his nickname. Stern and humorless, he lives solely to uphold the law and enforce the will of rulers. When it comes to matters of law he is fiercely stubborn—refusing to bend either the letter or spirit. Those who break the law or act in a non-conformist manner, such as daring to speak out or act against a legitimate ruler, he punishes quickly and ruthlessly.



ANDUIN AP-LOTHAR

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Heligioland; **Occupation:** Paladin; **Patron Deity:** Kenaz.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d10, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Tracking d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Delusional (Minor: Kenaz speaks to him), Orders, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Kenaz)

Languages: Anari, Frosttongue, Trader

Powers: *Burst, deflection*

BACKGROUND

Anduin has no knowledge, no memories, of his parents. His mentor and father figure, a priest of Kenaz, claims he was dozing beside the fire one night when the wood suddenly began to crackle loudly. Awakened, he had the sudden urge to open the temple doors, despite the lateness of the hour and the inclement weather. Lying on the temple steps, wrapped in a red blanket, was a newborn man child. Despite the howling blizzard that blanketed the landscape, no snow lay in the immediate proximity of the gurgling babe. Seeing no tracks, and his later investigations unearthing no trace of the boy's parents, the priest decided to raise the child.

Although he raised the boy as his own son, bringing him up in strict accordance with Kenaz's code of behavior, the priest never deluded himself that he was Anduin's father, nor did he keep the truth from his young charge once he was old enough to understand his mysterious origins. Anduin proved an adept pupil, grasping the

nuances of Kenaz's dogma easily, and constantly asking questions that forced his father to delve deeper into the cult's workings and mysteries. Convinced the boy was fated to be a cleric, and a powerful one at that, the priest began formal training when Anduin was still a child.

Anduin awoke one mid-winter morning after a troubled sleep, his eyes ablaze, his face caught in an expression of rapture. He ran to his father, informing him that Kenaz had visited him in his dreams. The black-skinned god, his beard and hair living fire, dim yet still flickering wildly, informed the boy a great destiny lay before him, that he was the chosen one who would free Kenaz and his father, Sigel, from their imprisonment and return them to their rightful place in the heavens.

Anduin's father was skeptical, for the boy's passion bordered on fanaticism at times. Far older and wiser, he had seen many clerics adopt the lofty quest of discovering the whereabouts of Kenaz, clerics who more often than not died alone in some remote wilderness or consumed by madness and despair when their goal proved unreachable. But he said nothing, for the gods work in mysterious ways, and Anduin's appearance on the temple steps during a winter storm had often vexed him.

Anduin switched his training to that of a paladin, for his desire to fulfill the quest given him by divine origin had grown steadily stronger over the years. Although his father tried to delay the inevitable, Anduin eventually prepared to begin his quest. Standing on the temple steps one last time, Anduin brushed the tears from his father's eyes, telling him not to worry, for the long winter was almost at an end—a new spring would soon dawn.

Anduin did not expect his task to be easy, and he has not been disappointed. He has followed many leads, but all have come to naught. Undeterred, he continues to wage a one-paladin war against Thrym and his fell minions, never wavering from his quest.

DESCRIPTION

Although an adult accustomed to the rigors of life, Anduin retains boyish qualities. His chin is smooth, without a trace of stubble; his cheeks freckle in summer; and he has yet to develop the grim countenance worn by seasoned warriors. His brown eyes are lit with inner determination that belies his appearance. He wears his hair long in the Saxa fashion, dying it a deep red each year in honor of Kenaz.

MANNERISMS

Anduin adamantly believes that Kenaz speaks to him and directly guides his actions. These communications come solely through dreams—Anduin does not talk to himself.

Such is his belief that he has been singled out, Anduin refers to himself as “the Chosen One” and “Favored Disciple” when introducing himself. Anduin rigidly adheres to Kenaz's moral code and expects others to do the same when in his presence, regardless of their patron deity.



LILIANE AP-FIERBRAS

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Alantaris Isle; **Occupation:** Priestess and Reclaimer; **Patron Deity:** Maera.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Folklore) d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Major: believes non-Anari are inferior), Habit (Minor: speaks down to non-Anari), Orders (cult of Maera), Orders (Reclaimers)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Maera)

Languages: Anari, Aspirian, Chalcian, Classical Anari

Powers: *Detect/conceal, dispel*

BACKGROUND

Liliane's family can trace its lineage back to the glory days of the Anari Empire, when they numbered among the nobility. Although noble titles mean nothing in Alantaris Isle these days, she was brought up knowing her ancestry and the power her family once wielded. She was also tutored in the Empire's many achievements, especially its conquest of the Hearthlands, an era which brought peace to the northern continent until the barbarian Saxa rebelled against their rightful masters.

Unsurprisingly, her one-sided education led her to adopt views of Anari supremacy. She blamed the destruction of the Empire not on the Liche-Priest, whose armies ravaged the northern expanse of the Empire, nor at Thrym, whose legions ravaged Alantaris Isle. In her mind, the blame lay squarely in the laps of the "lesser" races, especially the barbaric Saxa.

Liliane never bit her tongue when it came to her views of history, loudly espousing them to all who would listen. She even took part in acts of vandalism against the homes and businesses of non-Anari residents, though she refrained from physically assaulting people, considering it beneath her. She did use her family's wealth to pay others to beat non-Anari, though.

She became a cleric of Maera primarily because her family had long ties to the cult, seeing it as her duty to continue the association with the goddess of magic as her ancestors had done. She also hoped that through her research she could discover the resting places of Anari relics lost in the mayhem that ripped apart the Empire or stolen by rebellious barbarians, thus allowing paladins of the cult to restore the treasures to their rightful place in Imperial City.

Liliane was a natural recruit for the Reclaimers, a band of fanatics who seek to rekindle the last embers of the glorious Empire. Her extremist views quickly earned her a place in the Emperor's Fist, a secret, violent cabal.

Although Imperial City boasts a fine library, she has reluctantly been forced to leave Alantaris Isle to continue her research. She has helped unearth a handful of very



minor relics, all of which have been funneled to the Emperor's Fist for use in their attacks rather than to the cult. Her long-term goal is to uncover the four elemental rings. Her plan is to gift them to Anari elementalists who share her views, enabling them to usurp control of the Convocation and return it to a pure Anari organization. With such power at their disposal, the Anari will surely rise up once more to impose firm rule over the beasts that walk the northern lands.

DESCRIPTION

Liliane has all the hallmarks of a pure-blooded Anari, a living representation of the statues that still adorn parts of Imperial City. She has black hair, which she wears long and unfettered, bright green eyes, high cheek bones, and olive skin. She dresses in fine robes, cut to the fashion worn by nobles at the height of the old empire, and adorns herself in jewelry of traditional Anari design.

MANNERISMS

Liliane is a racist of the first water. It is her firm belief that only pure-blooded Anari are fit to rule, and that the other races and cultures are little more than beasts, sheep in desperate need of shepherds. Those who have partial Anari blood are guilty, by dint of their ancestors, of having committed bestiality. Her racism extends even to the Convocation, for she sees the inclusion of non-Anari as an insult to the founders.

She refuses to speak any languages not rooted in Classical Anari, and most times speaks even modern Anari and its two sub-languages through gritted teeth. If someone cannot understand her, it is further evidence of their backward nature.

RAIMON AP-PICCOLET

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Coglelund; **Occupation:** Priest, gambler, and thief; **Patron Deity:** Auðun (see *Region Guide #10*).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Gambling d8, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Quirk (wagers on any situation), Ugly

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles)

Languages: Anari, Fingerspeak, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Gambling and Streetwise only), *lock/unlock*

BACKGROUND

The son of a poor Coglelund farmer, Raimon was always envious of those who had wealth, for in Coglelund wealth allowed one to rise above the rabble and purchase both power and status, as well as lead an easy life. While many Coglelund nobles were merchants, just as many were crafters who had earned their status through years of hard work. Raimon, though, was a lazy child, aspiring to wealth and status without having to toil for a living.

As a youth, Raimon bullied his peers into handing over anything of value he could sell down the market, happily resorting to his fists when threats failed. Unfortunately he was not alone in this thinking, and he in turn was bullied into parting with his pathetic income.

Over time, the desire to accrue money became an obsession, gnawing away at his soul. He gave up bullying, which netted him very little return and only attracted stronger bullies, and switched to gambling, which prom-

ised better returns, especially to one wily enough to cheat undetected. It quickly became an addiction, a habit he fuelled by committing acts of burglary (a risky venture in Coglelund, where it carries very stiff penalties). Although a moderately talented thief who could have earned a decent living as an adventurer or tomb robber, his true passion remained gambling, which was much less like hard work. Quite how he did not fall prey to the cult of Vali, which preys on greedy souls like Raimon, is more a matter of luck than design.

Raimon, who like all natives of Coglelund was well-versed in the doctrine of the cult of Var and its sub-cults, became attracted to the cult of Auðun, the minor deity of wealth, not because he felt particularly religious, but because it offered him a way to procure more money. Membership came with drawbacks, such as having to sacrifice half of his income each year, but the abilities he would gain more than made up for this.

While the cult of Auðun enjoys a generally good reputation for being honest, albeit one tempered with being seen as scield-pinching misers out to line their own purses at the expense of others, Raimon is a bad egg. Armed with spells and new methods of cheating, but not wishing to develop a bad reputation in Coglelund, he has traveled further afield to ply his craft. Once he has accrued enough money, he intends to return home, purchase a noble title, and maybe open a gambling house (a crooked one, naturally).

DESCRIPTION

Raimon calls his body well-traveled, but most just call him ugly. His beard is wiry and unkempt, his thinning hair is lank and greasy, he is missing several teeth, a scar cuts across his nose and right cheek, his nose is bulbous, and his dark eyes are too cold, coming to life only when he spies gold and silver. Although his face is ugly, he dresses in expensive clothes of ermine and silk and wears many items of gold and silver jewelry.

MANNERISMS

Although he dresses in fine clothes and wears conspicuous amounts of jewelry, Raimon is still very much a peasant, as evidenced by his lack of manners and coarse language. The illusion of wealth he has created about himself allows him to mix with high society, but he fits in about as well as a cultist of Hela at a funeral.

Most gamblers accept that luck runs in good and bad streaks, and that losses are to be expected. Raimon, though, is a very poor loser. Those he loses to may find their houses burgled or, on rare occasions, their heads bashed in as the scoundrel recoups his losses (and takes a little extra to pay for the insult). An unscrupulous cur, Raimon would quite happily cheat a peasant out of his last silver scield.

A compulsive gambler, he accepts wagers on almost anything—from the color of the next dog to cross his path to whether it will rain to the outcome of fights.



TAIMENELLIN "TAI" SEARIDER

Race: Hearth elf; **Homeland:** Angarion; **Occupation:** Priestess and pretend pirate; **Patron Deity:** Neorthe.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Boating d8, Faith d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (The Seas) d6, Notice d4, Swimming d6
Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Cautious, Loyal, One-Eye, Orders
Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Neorthe), Forest Born, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms, Sea Legs*
Languages: Anari, Hearth Elven, Trader
Powers: *Environmental protection* (water only), *water walk*

* See Region Guide #8.

BACKGROUND

Taimenellin (who goes by the abbreviated name Tai) almost died of heart attack when she first saw the ocean, for being born in the enclosed depths of Angarion she could not comprehend so vast and empty a wilderness. Yet as much as she feared it, she was drawn toward its awesome power and majesty, and seemingly limitless expanse. Although elves honor Neorthe as the elemental god of water, few feel the lure to set sail on the ocean—Tai had become one of those few.

She learned the arts of sailing and swimming on the Greenstream before traveling to Leirvik (in Angmark) to sign on with a ship. Her first captain was wary of accepting an elf, a race little known as mariners, but Tai quickly earned his respect by demonstrating her talents at handling a ship. Although the captain was a merchant sailing only between Angmark and Chalcis, it gave Tai her first taste of life on the open sea, and she was not disappointed by the experience, nor put off by the rigors.

The calling of the sea pulled more and more at her heart. In order to fill the burning need to grow closer to the ocean she joined the cult of Neorthe. Her previous experience as a mariner enabled her to progress rapidly through her training. Even her final test was a mere formality, for she was accustomed to handling small boats.

Tai had intended to become a navigator, and eventually a captain, but the Norns wove a different fate. Although something of a novelty among mariners, Tai could find little work of interest. She sailed the ocean as she hoped, but the work was repetitive and dull, save for the occasional storm. Tai's dream began to sour.

Things changed when her ship docked in Aith. Tai, whose reputation was widely-known due to her race, was contacted by the resident high priest of Neorthe. He spoke with her in private, explaining that Lord Blackhand of Freetown had grown more brazen in recent years—his pirate fleet was rapidly becoming a threat, and his opening of the port to merchants endangered lawful trade. The priest sought someone to infiltrate the seedy

port-city and gather information on the mysterious Lord Blackhand. Relieved that adventure had finally come her way, Tai accepted with little hesitation.

Tai has spent three years posing as a pirate and smuggler, surviving the treacherous city largely unscathed (she recently lost an eye in a knife fight) through her wits and her value as a skilled mariner, but she is no closer to discovering anything about Blackhand than she was when she first entered Freetown—and asking too many questions is a danger to one's health. Paranoid after living a false life for so long, Tai is of the opinion that Blackhand has uncovered her true identity and seeks to have her murdered. She is currently looking for allies from outside Freeport to help her in her quest. What was once an adventure is becoming too dangerous, and she wants to get her mission over with as quickly as possible.

DESCRIPTION

As lithe and graceful as any elf, Tai is a slender woman of average height. Her thick, light brown hair is encrusted with salt and brittle due to exposure to the wind and waves. Her remaining eye is deep green. In order to better play her part she wears large gold earrings, and her fingers are adorned with gold and silver bands.

MANNERISMS

Naturally cautious, Tai has become almost paranoid since going undercover. Fully aware that if the truth ever came out her so-called comrades would execute her without a moment's thought, she takes great pains to act the part of a pirate and smuggler, and conceal her true identity and loyalty.



NIGHTSHADE

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Coglelund; **Occupation:** Paladin and assassin; **Patron Deity:** Niht.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Healing d4, Knowledge (Alchemy) d8, Lockpicking d4, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Anemic, Orders, Vengeful (Major), Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Niht), Hedge Magic

Languages: Anari, Fingerspeak, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Bolt, obscure*

BACKGROUND

Born Anseir ap-Maugris, the only child of a poor Coglelund family, the deadly assassin known as Nightshade had few aspirations as a child. Anseir married once she reached womanhood because that was what was expected of her. Her dreams of how married life should be were shattered when she discovered her husband was a lazy, brutal thug. While she worked as an herbalist and healer, he spent his days drinking and gambling, and his nights beating and mocking her. Unable to escape the marriage (the length of which had been set at ten years) and too fearful to try and flee (she tried once before, but was caught and beaten senseless). Anseir saw only one course of action to earn her freedom.

Playing the devoted wife, she cooked her husband a meal, lacing it with several poisonous herbs and species of fungi. As he died in agony, his organs failing and his muscles spasming violently, she calmly continued eating

her supper, ignoring his pleas for help. Anseir grieved openly at her husband's funeral, questioning with tear-filled eyes as to why he chose to eat mushrooms without first checking with her as to their edibility. Next to die were her parents, who had arranged the marriage, and then the priest who performed the ceremony.

By now bordering on insanity, for the taking of a life is not without punishment, Anseir fled Coglelund. Driven by her madness to avenge any slight against her, she tried to poison a stranger whom, she believed, had insulted her. To her surprise, he not only survived the attempt, but he detected and named the poison.

Instead of punishing her, the stranger spoke with his would-be assassin, asking whether she had ever taken a life. Anseir, her will suddenly enslaved to the man, heard herself reply affirmatively. Instead of handing her over to the authorities, the man offered her a choice. He could kill her where she stood as punishment for failing to murder him, or she could put her talents to good use. Having no wish to die, Anseir chose the latter, and was inducted in the sinister cult of Niht.

Now a fully-trained paladin of Niht, Anseir is a killer-for-hire. She has discarded the last vestiges of her former life, and now goes only by the name Nightshade. She maintains a disguise as a healer and herbalist.

DESCRIPTION

Anseir is attractive, though not physically beautiful. Her charm comes from her innocent appearance, the girlish way she averts her glittering green eyes from the stares of men, and the way she twirls strands of her long, dark hair in her slender fingers. The tips of her fingers are stained black, a result of handling toxic plants, and her lips are tinged blue, a side effect of ingesting poisons (to build up an immunity).

MANNERISMS

Anseir is not a cold-hearted killer—she gets a visible, childlike thrill from committing murder. A true psychotic, she remains cheerful even when watching a victim choke on his own vomit. She cares nothing for causes, nor does she balk at murdering those of good heart.

CREATING HERBAL POISONS

As well as curative balms, herbalists can create a range of poisons from plants, herbs, and roots. See *Savage Worlds Deluxe* for the four types of poison an herbalist can create (knockout replaces the usual soporific remedy). Unlike other herbal remedies, the purpose modifier for poisons is variable, set by the herbalist at the start of the process. This allows them to create weak, mild, or strong poisons. The modifier chosen for the poison also applies to the victim's Vigor roll, and a healer's Healing roll. Player characters who use poisons should suffer a Glory penalty—poisoning is not a praiseworthy or heroic act, even when employed against monsters.



CENTWINE THE IDIOT

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Angmark; **Occupation:** Priest, idiot savant, and seer; **Patron Deity:** The Norns.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Riddles) d8, Notice d4, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Clueless, Illiterate, Orders, Poverty
Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of the Norns), Strong Willed
Languages: Auld Saxa, Saxa
Powers: Boost/lower trait, precognition

BACKGROUND

Centwine's parents always thought him a little odd. At first they just thought he was a slow developer, for he did not speak until he was three, and even then his words were gibberish. He exhibited repetitive behavior, lacked any interests, and seemed unable to form social bonds outside his immediate family. While his parents loved him, many in the village believed him possessed by evil spirits sent by Vali.

As he grew older even his kin began to fear him, for what little he did speak in understandable terms revealed an uncanny knowledge of the future, especially regarding the time and manner of deaths. Scared witless and by now convinced their son actually had the power to cause death, rather than just foretell it, they abandoned their child in the wilderness, trusting in the mercy of the gods to grant him a swift, painless death. No one questioned Centwine's parents when they returned home without him, and none ever spoke his name again. But the strand of Centwine's life, woven by the Norns at his birth, was not yet at an end.

Guided by a cryptic omen, a cleric of the weird sisters found Centwine sitting by a brook, laughing at the gurgling water. Realizing his patrons had fated their paths to cross, the cleric spoke with the youth, slowly deciphering Centwine's cryptic replies. He recognized in them a mortal blessed by the Norns with the true gift of prophesy, yet cursed to reveal the future without a clear understanding of what he was saying.

The cleric took Centwine under his wing, patiently instructing him in the dogma of the Norns, trying to teach him the basic skills he would need to survive the harsh world, protecting him from predators who preyed on the weak, and helping him phrase his visions in ways that would benefit others, as the Norns intended. Although the cleric hoped he could stay with Centwine, his fate took him in a different direction.

Once again Centwine found himself alone in the world. He has earned a meager living as a seer, though his answers are still highly cryptic and open to interpretation. Recently, though, his visions have become more persistent, revolving around a common theme rather than being general revelations. When his visions strike



he speaks of the shadow of a black raven rising in the mountains, of ancestors returning to the world of the living, and of a dark master who is also a slave. What scares those who know of recent events is that he always faces toward the Liche-Lands when reciting his cryptic messages. Centwine feels compelled to journey to that desolate realm, though he does not understand why, nor does he have an inkling about what awaits him when he gets there. While he knows much about the future, the Norns have kept his fate a closely-guarded secret.

DESCRIPTION

Centwine places little emphasis on his appearance. His dark hair, which he cuts himself, is coarse, wiry, and sticks out at all angles; his chin is covered in rough stubble, and his clothes are little more than grubby rags. He frequently forgets to wash for days on end. Aside from his patched cloak, his only other possession of note is his staff, a fallen tree branch used as a walking stick rather than a weapon.

MANNERISMS

Centwine has the mind of a child. He is trusting, innocent, and naive, and largely unaware of the world around him. He rarely speaks clearly, instead phrasing his words and revealing his visions in riddles and cryptic messages. Although basically clueless about the world, he has phenomenal talent when it comes to riddles.

He has no real understanding of money, and is constantly poor—robbed by greedy shopkeepers who take advantage of his mental infirmity, conned by beggars into handing over large sums, or just giving it away to whoever happens to cross his path.

CATHELINITH (CAT'S PAW)

Race: Hearth elf; **Hometown:** Freelands (Stone Forest); **Occupation:** Paladin and rat catcher; **Patron Deity:** Veth (see *Region Guide #13*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Tracking d6

Charisma: -3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Habit (talks to his cat like it is sentient), Mean, One Hand (as One Arm)

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Miracles), Beast Master (hunting cat), Forest Born, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms

Languages: Fey, Hearth Elven, Trader

Powers: *Beast friend* (cats and ratted dogs only), *fear* (only affects mice and rats)

BACKGROUND

Although it meant spending long months away from home, Cathelinith enjoyed being a hunter. Returning from a long hunt late one fall, Cathelinith and his fellow hunters were surprised that no one came to greet them, for they had launched signal arrows to indicate to the sentries they were close to home. Weapons drawn, they stole into their village, only to find a scene of devastation. Bodies lay scattered among the undergrowth, their flesh torn and partly devoured.

They did not have long to wait to learn the culprits' identity, for within moments a swarm of giant rats rushed from the vegetation, their long front teeth stained with fresh blood, long shreds of flesh hanging from their disease-ridden jaws. Cathelinith slew two with his bow and his hunting cat, Pouncer, mauled one before the elf was knocked to the ground by a monstrous specimen. As the

beast tore at his left hand, Cathelinith repeatedly stabbed the beast with his dagger, feeling its hot blood soak his clothes, while Pouncer's long claws gouged out its eyes.

The rats finally slain, Cathelinith's surviving companions bandaged his grisly wound—the rat had bitten off all the fingers on his left hand and had clawed off part of his right ear. Seeking to alleviate the horror and grief they felt, one of his fellow hunters joked that Cathelinith's mangled limb now resembled a cat's paw. The name stuck. While the others sought solace among more distant kin, Cat's Paw vowed to reap a bloody harvest for his dead kith and kin. After much searching, he finally located a cleric of Veth, goddess of vermin slaying. Showing the cleric his mangled hand and telling him of the carnage he witnessed, he begged the cleric to take him as an apprentice. Already a trained hunter, Cat's paw needed only minimal training.

Cat's Paw and Pouncer spent many months tracking a paladin of Vali, Gautrek, across the Freelands after learning he was planning to raise an army of rats using a fell relic. Delayed by bad weather and numerous giant rats, the pair arrived too late to save the small village of Dunross, and later discovered that others had already slain the unholy paladin. After defeating a small cell of cultists lurking in the Icebarrier Mountains, Cat's Paw has learned that Gautrek, powerful as he was, was a mere pawn in a greater game. The cult of Vali is planning something bigger, something that threatens more than a few villages. Unfortunately, the trail has gone cold.

DESCRIPTION

Tall and lean, Cat's Paw lacks the natural grace of the other elves, which is ironic since he follows a cat goddess. His eyes are large and luminous, constantly darting to and fro. By day they appear pale green, but when illuminated at night they shine a vibrant shade of green, not unlike a feline. He wears his light brown hair swept back. Cat's Paw is missing the fingers and thumb on his left hand, and half of his right ear has been chewed away.

His clothes are sturdy and practical but of poor quality—he sees little point in investing in fine garments given his profession. Dozens of dead rats hang from his belt, evidence of recent kills and snacks for Pouncer. He shuns bathing, preferring to mask his natural odor in grime and filth.

MANNERISMS

Sullen and ill-tempered, Cathelinith is an atypical hearth elf. He prefers his own company, though he will work with others when it suits his needs. Such friendships are usually short-term affairs, and Cat's Paw sees little need in trying to forge any lasting bonds.

Although Cathelinith talks to his hunting cat like it can understand him, the elf isn't mad. He knows full well his companion is just a regular cat, but life on the road is lonely and rat catching is not a profession in which one makes many friends.



EDGERT WULFHERESUNU

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Royalmark; **Occupation:** Novitiate and Deathdealer; **Patron Deity:** Scaetha.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Knowledge (Undead) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Cursed*, Loyal, Novitiate (Major), Orders (cult of Scaetha), Orders (Deathdealers)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Scaetha), Connections (Deathdealers), Deathdealer**, Gravetouched

Languages: Auld Saxa, Black Tongue, Trader

Powers: Weaken undead

* This unique Hindrance gives Edgert -2 to Vigor rolls during periods of the Deorcmonan, on other days holy to Hela, and within 5" of a Wild Card undead.

** See Region Guide #6.

BACKGROUND

Edgert's first encounter with undead came while he was training to be a paladin. Born and raised in Hereford, a town accustomed to fending off undead, it was a career choice for many youths seeking to prove their bravery and patriotism, though few ever made the grade.

Edgert was part of a group of novitiates serving under the command of a paladin. Full of the rashness of youth, Edgert charged ahead of the party, venturing onto the mist-shrouded Mounds of the Dead in search of a necromancer the band had been tracking for many weeks. Unfortunately for Edgert, the necromancer had already summoned allies from beyond the grave.

Badly mauled, Edgert survived only thanks to the quick actions of a cleric of Eira who was accompanying the cultists in order to gain experience of treating wounds inflicted by undead. Although he survived, Edgert has never fully recovered—his health is very poor, especially when Hela holds power, the shadow of death hovering constantly over his shoulder.

Convinced the youth needed to taste true battle to temper his recklessness, his superiors sent him to serve with the Deathdealer mercenary company, a position many clerics must endure at some stage. Edgert surprised his superiors by not only surviving his tour, but asking to be seconded to the company for an indefinite period. Although the call to serve Scaetha as a cleric still filled his soul, he had found true kindred spirits among the mercenaries. The request was unusual, but there were precedents for clerics who had come close to death at the hands of undead. Sensing an extended tour would make him a better cleric in the long run, Edgert was granted permission to join the company.

Edgert has served with the Deathdealers for six years. He is currently on sabbatical. As a servant of Scaetha, albeit still a novitiate, he considers it his holy duty to

visit the prison of the Liche-Priest and report on the state of the seals. Along the way, he intends to slay as many undead as he can.

Although he has been a member of the cult for some seven years, Edgert has not yet completed his religious instruction. Until he does (achieved by taking the New Power Edge), he is forbidden from holding either the Eulogist or Divine Slayer title. He introduces himself by his Deathdealer title, Sergeant of Infantry.

DESCRIPTION

Unusual for a Saxa, Edgert prefers to be clean shaven and wear his dark hair short. Several scars mark his face, and his forearms and chest are badly marred, permanent reminders of his close encounter with death. Those on his face are not numerous or livid enough to attract much attention.

During the Deorcmonan and on other days holy to Hela, and in close proximity to major undead, the scars cause Edgert to suffer a debilitating loss of stamina, seeming to suck the life force from his body. Edgert is left handed. His sword, chipped from years of battling undead, is inscribed with prayers to Scaetha and serves as his holy symbol.

MANNERISMS

Edgert tries to do right by others, as any good soul would. He is modest about his exploits, seeing them as his duty, not something of which to boast or scare peasants seeking tales of glory. Although he has long rid himself of his rashness, he remains willing to place himself in danger for the sake of a comrade.



ALIX LIGHTBRINGER

Race: Anari; **Hometown:** Heligioland; **Occupation:** Priestess and standard bearer; **Patron Deity:** Sigel.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Healing d4, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Riding d4, Survival d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Orders, Overconfident, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Command, Connections (cult of Sigel), New Power

Languages: Anari, Frosttongue, Trader

Powers: *Bless, deflection, light*

BACKGROUND

Growing up in southwest Heligioland, Alix spent her youth watching Hearth Knight patrols traipse through her village and running for shelter when marauding orcs were spotted by the small settlement's sentries. Brought up on stories of the destruction wrought by the Blizzard War and of the warmer days that existed beforehand, Alix hated Thrym and his all servants with a passion.

She always dreamed of becoming a Hearth Knight, but her weak body prohibited that career. Seeking to assist the struggle against Thrym's minions in any way she could, she instead joined the cult of Sigel, learning the art of healing while secretly studying the more militant arts of tactics and strategy.

As a novice she was sent to accompany a trainee Hearth Knight squad on a routine patrol through Heligioland. Although the area was supposedly safe, the recruits were ambushed by orcs. The Knights' commander

and instructor was slain in the early stages of the attack, deliberately targeted by cowardly orc snipers. Suddenly bereft of leadership, the young recruits' morale faltered. Without thinking, Alix grabbed the fallen standard and raised it high, screaming out that Sigel shone on the Knights this day and that they would emerge victorious if they kept their faith. The Knights rallied to the standard, eventually winning the day.

On their return to Hellfrost Keep, Alix was taken to see Lord Marshal Jaufre, head of the order. Expecting a dressing down, for as a healer and a civilian she had no right in issuing orders to Hearth Knights, Alix spoke first, explaining that her actions were born out of devotion to Sigel's cause and her love of Heligioland, and that had the patrol fled or been destroyed without a fight the orcs would have secured a propaganda victory that would have led other tribes to grow bolder. Jaufre, to her surprise, agreed completely, praising the young healer for her leadership qualities. Although he could not accept her as a knight, he offered her a post as a standard bearer. Sensing Sigel had rewarded her for her devotion, she accepted without hesitation.

Although still a civilian, Alix holds a special position with the Hearth Knights. As standard bearer she is responsible for morale, instilling courage into the hearts of the warriors. She is also an adjutant to the local commander, offering advice on military matters and, in battle, permitted to issue orders at a tactical level.

The abortive goblin assault on Watchgap Fort has led her to become more militant. While the Knights are primarily a defensive force, Alix constantly pushes for a more aggressive stance. While the Hearth Knights falter, Alix knows there are adventurers set on destroying frost giants and their minions. Such groups can secure her services for a suitable donation to the cult of Sigel.

DESCRIPTION

Tall and possessed of noble bearing, Alix could be an attractive woman were it not for her constantly furrowed brow, mirthless brown eyes, and stern demeanor. Her hair, naturally brown, is dyed brilliantly yellow. She wears it long, tying it back with a simple leather band except in battle, when she allows it to blow freely in the wind. She wears her armor beneath her robes, and wields a short spear, which doubles as a standard.

MANNERISMS

Alix is a serious woman, totally devoted to the cause of Sigel and fanatically loyal to the Hearth Knights with whom she serves. She is fearless in battle, wading into the fray to raise the morale of the warriors with magic and shouts of encouragement.

Unfortunately, her total faith in the righteousness of Sigel's cause leads her to take unnecessary risks. She distrusts frost dwarves, frost born, and taiga elves as a matter of course, though those who prove their worth can earn her friendship.



WHITEBLADE

Race: Frostborn (Tuomi parentage); **Homeland:** The Borderlands; **Occupation:** Paladin and Iceblade; **Patron Deity:** Hrimheorte (Thrym).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d8, Hrimwisardry d8, Intimidation d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: God Cursed (Kenaz), Heat Lethargy, Orders, Outsider, Quirk (marks victims with a cut to the forehead), Wanted (Minor: cult of Sigel)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of Thrym), Frigid Form, Winter Soul

Languages: Frosttongue, Trader, Tuomi

Frostborn Powers: *Armor, environmental protection (cold only), smite, speed*

Miraculous Powers: *Burst, entangle*

BACKGROUND

Whiteblade is one of those rare frostborn, sired by parents of human stock. Originally taking the name Winterchild, she suffered little intolerance as a child, though she had very few true friends. That changed one fall, when an itinerant priest of Kenaz came to her village. While there the cleric learned that sheep had been going missing. A zealot, he quickly convinced the simple peasants that frostborn were to blame, calling them minions of Thrym, and accusing them of trying to starve the villagers into submission.

Stirred by his impassioned speech, the villagers raised a mob. All frostborn in the community were dragged from their homes, Winterchild, barely in her teens, included. She watched helplessly as her fellow frostborn were beaten and then burned alive by the crazed mob. While awaiting her turn in the flames she was violently assaulted by those she once called neighbors, her forehead cracked open by a cudgel, her face bleeding profusely from numerous other injuries.

At last her time to burn in the "purifying flames" came. Kicking and screaming in fear, Winterchild's inherent magical powers manifested. A shield of thick ice grew over her flesh, while her feet became encrusted with ice. Startled by her sudden transformation, the peasants recoiled, allowing Winterchild to make good her escape.

She drifted across the Low Winterlands, eventually joining with other frostborn refugees headed for the Barony of Cul. There she received a warm welcome, finally feeling that she had found a home. Seeking to ensure others of her kind did not suffer persecution, she joined the cult of Hrimheorte and began her religious instruction. Sensing an innocence in the girl he could corrupt to suit his goal, Frostweaver gently indoctrinated the naive girl in his malicious fallacies, fuelling the ember of hatred that already burned in her heart.

A firm supporter of the baron, she spoke often and openly about the vile cult of Kenaz, a topic that soon



brought her to the attention of the Iceblades. Playing on her now deep-seated hatred, Winterchild's recruiters convinced the teenager they were dedicated to ridding the world of those who used fire to punish frostborn, neglecting to mention their true goal of bringing about the Fimbulvintr.

Officially changing her name to Whiteblade, the frostborn maiden secretly trained as an assassin (Thrym does not wish Frostweaver to openly worship him, lest his enemies strike hard to crush the barony, and so the Iceblades are outlawed in Cul). For several years she has served her people by striking at their foes, acts of terror and retribution that have earned her a price on her head and the eternal animosity of the god of fire.

DESCRIPTION

Were it not for the deep, jagged scar that runs across her forehead and numerous smaller scars across her cheeks, Whiteblade would be an attractive woman. Her skin is the deep blue-white of a glacier, her hair as pure white as fresh snow, and her eyes a vibrant shade of blue. Her woolen clothes and cloak are lined with polar bear fur. Around her neck she wears a torc made from teeth pulled from her victims.

MANNERISMS

Although possessed of a deep hatred of clerics of Kenaz and fire elementalists, Whiteblade is otherwise very personable, even among races who consider her a freak. She is also a cruel, calculating assassin, merciless in ending the lives of those who seek to destroy her kind. She honors Thrym not as god of winter, but in his guise as Hrimheorte, patron of frostborn.

RAEDWALDA CHAINBREAKER

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Orcmark; **Occupation:** Paladin and slave liberator; **Patron Deity:** Haptsönir (see *Region Guide #9*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Orcs) d6, Lockpicking d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4, Survival d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Enemy (Minor: Nagrat), Heroic Edges*: Arcane Background (Miracles), I Hate You, Orc Lore, Vengeance Shall Be Mine

Languages: Orcish, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Intimidation, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Stealth, and Streetwise only), *charismatic aura*

* Has the Orcmark package from *Region Guide #4*.

BACKGROUND

Raedwalda was 11 when orcs conquered his village. While the men folk were butchered, Raedwalda, the other children, and the women were shackled together and marched to the foothills of the Mace Mountains, where the great iron mines had already fallen to the invaders.

Here he was forced to toil under the lash of the whip for 16 hours a day. Life in the camps was brutal—disease was rampant, injuries festered, and any signs of weakness meant someone stronger took your daily ration, a few mouthfuls of thin soup and black, coarse bread. Raedwalda survived through cunning, though not without sustaining injuries from his cruel masters.



Raedwalda eventually escaped the mines, though it took many years. Crafting a crude lockpick from a nail, he spent long months learning to pick the lock on his shackles. His fellow captives pleaded with him to liberate them as well, but Raedwalda knew that whereas a lone slave would not be missed for many days, a mass breakout would result in orc warriors scouring the hills. Fighting back the tears, he refused, though he did vow he would return one day. Raedwalda made his way north, eventually reaching the banks of the Elverun. Although weak, he threw himself into the cold water and began swimming. Fate decreed he would survive, for although he passed out he was washed up on the far bank, his frail body discovered by a huscarl patrol.

Throughout his lengthy debriefing, Raedwalda repeatedly asked the Vestmark army to storm the mines and liberate their kin. Hard-pressed by the advancing tide and struggling to hold the border, the officers refused. Disgusted that his kith and kin were being abandoned, Raedwalda refused to join the army—he saw little gain in spending his days sitting in a fort gazing out over the river or sacrificing his life on a foolish attempt to gain a sliver of land. Instead, he sought out the cult of Haptsönir. As a former slave who knew the abject misery of bondage, his application was quickly accepted.

Since becoming a paladin, Raedwalda has made frequent forays into Orcmark, usually operating alone. He has liberated many slaves and guided them to the north, acts which have earned him the animosity of the orc king, including some of those he previously left behind (many had died by the time he returned), but there are countless others suffering under the yoke of orc oppression. Raedwalda knows he cannot save them all, but he intends to give it a good try.

DESCRIPTION

Forced to grow his beard and hair by his orc captors to make him resemble an animal, Raedwalda now keeps his chin clean shaven and his hair shorn. He has a serious countenance, rarely smiling. His blue eyes have a haunted look, the look of a man who has suffered more than his fair share of hardship. His back is a mass of scars, the result of frequent scourging by orc slave masters.

MANNERISMS

Raedwalda refuses to be rushed when making decisions, and he does nothing without carefully thinking through all available options. Some may think him indecisive, but he has suffered at the hands of orcs, and he has no wish to become a prisoner again by rushing into a situation before knowing all the facts. Despite his refusal to act on impulse, he never turns down a request for help from those suffering oppression.

Despite his years of imprisonment and mistreatment, Raedwalda has no desire to slay orcs. He prefers to hurt them by liberating their slaves, scoring propaganda victories that give heart to Vestmark's defenders.

ORLAITH "DRAGONBANE"

BLIESBLITUTH

Race: Tuomi; **Homeland:** The Borderlands; **Occupation:** Paladin and dragon slayer; **Patron Deity:** Sigmundr (see *Region Guide #10*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Dragons) d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d4, Tracking d4

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Death Wish, Heroic, Orders (Dragon Guard), Ugly

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (Dragon Guard), Dragon Guard*

Languages: Anari, Draketongue, Tuomi

Powers: *Deflection*, *smite* (spells only function against dragons)

* See *Region Guide #44*

BACKGROUND

A native of Scayle, Orlaith had her life mapped out from an early age. She would marry a good man, raise many children, and die old, surrounded by grandchildren. The Norns, though, had other plans for the once-attractive girl. Orlaith managed to achieve two of her goals, marrying a humble but gentle sap gatherer and giving birth to twin sons, before her life changed forever.

Orlaith often accompanied her husband into the fringes of the marshes to harvest the thick, sticky tree sap that formed a vital part of Scayle's exports, bringing the twins along once they were old enough. The warning shouts of the Dragon Guard that accompanied the gathering party came too late. A monstrous, one-eyed marsh dragon rose from the mire, slashing wildly with its claws and spitting its acidic sputum at the panicked humans.

Orlaith's next memory was waking in the healing house, her face wrapped in thick bandages, the pungent aroma of the herbal paste used to treat acid burns filling her nostrils. Although still weak, she demanded the healers tell her what had happened. With tearful eyes they told her the beast had been driven off, but not before killing eight villagers, her husband and children among them. They informed her she was lucky to be alive, for she had suffered hideous injuries, but Orlaith did not hear their words—her heart was full of grief and rage.

Bereft, Orlaith tried to commit suicide that winter by consuming poison. As she lay there, her life ebbing away, a huscarl armed with a long spear knelt down beside her. He stroked her brow, gently telling her that she would join her family in death, but not yet. First, the figure said, she had a duty to perform, one that would purge her soul of sin and ready her for the Afterlife.

Orlaith awoke once more in the healing house. She asked the healers who had brought her there, for she recalled the figure lifting her. The healers told her she was found on the steps of the building, her hand clutch-

ing a silver dragon head pendant with red gem chips along its severed neck. Recognizing the symbol at once, for Sigmundr, god of dragon slaying, was popular among the Dragon Guard, and believing the god had intervened to save her, Orlaith devoted herself to the deity. Through prayers, meditation, and training, she became a paladin, though it took several years.

Once well enough to leave the healing house, Orlaith sought out the Dragon Guards who had accompanied them into the marshes that fateful day. She ignored their condolences, demanding to know every detail about the marsh dragon who took her family, her life. The following year she entered, and won, the contest to become a Dragon Slayer, slaying a juvenile dragon single-handedly. She has spent five years hunting for the one-eyed beast that killed her family, yet the fiend eludes her. The fire that fuels her heart has not diminished, though.

DESCRIPTION

Orlaith still bears the scars of her first encounter with a marsh dragon. The right side of her face is marred by long, vivid scars, while the left side and much of her scalp is a mass of scars, the result of the dragon's acidic breath. When not wearing her coif, she wears a hat to conceal her head. She makes no attempt to conceal her face.

MANNERISMS

Although fixated on protecting Scayle and slaying the dragon that marred her features, Orlaith has a fine wit, though it tends toward gallows humor. She cares little if men stare at her ravaged face, but any who dare taunt her quickly learn that Orlaith is no meek and mild woman.



MÄKITAMMI JÄÄSKELÄINEN

Race: Finnar; **Homeland:** Unclaimed Lands; **Occupation:** Paladin; **Patron Deity:** Earhclud (see page 69).
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Clueless, Loyal
Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Steady Hands
Languages: Finnari, Frosttongue, Orcish
Powers: *Aim*, *boost/lower trait* (Notice, Shooting, and Stealth only)

BACKGROUND

Mäkitammi, who goes by the shortened Mäki, did everything his culture expected of him. He learned to hunt and butcher game, and tend the reindeer herds that provided his family's wealth, he memorized the folklore and history of his people, he honored the ancient gods who had guided and watched over his people since time immemorial, and he learned to survive in the arctic wastes his family called home. A skilled archer and competent hunter, he became an initiate of Earhclud the day after he reached adulthood, and earned his right to use the title paladin before his 16th birthday.

Mäki had always intended to marry a fine Finnar woman and start a family, for that was also expected of him. But as with so many others across the land, the Norns had other plans for the young hunter.

Separated from the rest of his hunting party in a blizzard, Mäki was making his way alone back to his family's camp when he spied a battle. Half a dozen strangers,

southerners he judged by their strange garb and lack of proper footwear, were fighting for their lives against twice their number of orc warriors.

Without hesitating, Mäki kicked the flanks of his reindeer mount and charged forward, unleashing arrow after arrow with unerring accuracy. Caught by surprise and with their numbers being whittled down, the orcs fled. One of the strangers spoke Finnar, though his mastery of the tongue was poor. Eventually Mäki learned they were on a quest, but had been forced to abandon much of their equipment after the rations ran out. Though his kin were far from rich, Mäki invited the outsiders to his family's camp, for hospitality is important to the Finnar.

They stayed in the camp for several weeks, regaining their strength, and earning their keep by performing minor chores. In the dark evenings, they told stories of their homelands, of realms where the snow did not lie on the ground all year, of camps where people lived all year round in great numbers, and of the hornless reindeers that men rode.

Eventually the strangers departed to continue their quest. Entranced by their stories, Mäki decided that before he married he would visit these distant realms and see the things of which the strangers spoke with his own eyes. Packing his saddlebags, Mäki mounted his trusty reindeer and headed east and then south, his eyes continually scanning the horizon for the line of endless mountains that separated the north lands from the warmer realms in the south. Mäki has recently entered the Hearthlands. Friendless and unable to make himself understood, he is a fish out of water.

DESCRIPTION

Mäki is tall for a Finnar, standing 5' 9" in his reindeer fur socks. His long, black hair is carefully tied back with a strip of dried reindeer hide to prevent it falling across his blue eyes. Although life in the wintry wastes is harsh, Mäki has a strong sense of humor, as evidenced by the many laugh lines that mar his weathered face.

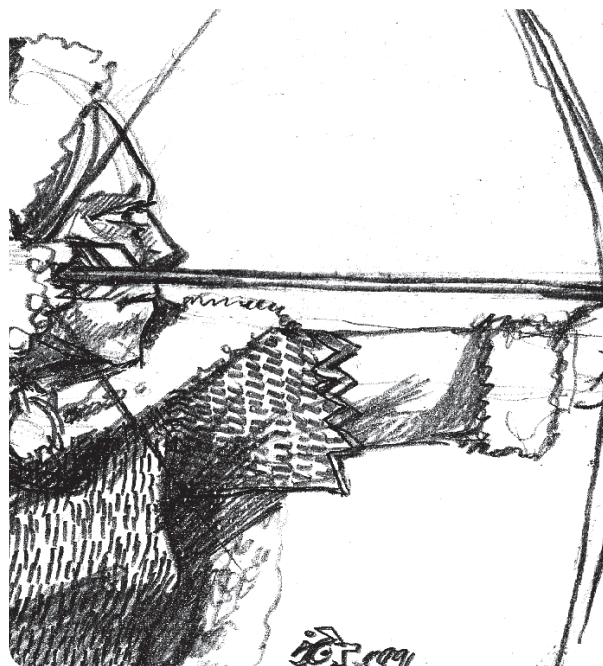
He dresses in traditional Finnar garb—reindeer hide trousers and shirt, a fur cloak, and fur-lined reindeer hide boots. The little jewelry he owns is made of bone.

MANNERISMS

Born and raised in a harsh environment where personal possessions are freely shared and communities are small and quickly moved, Mäki has no understanding of privacy, personal possessions, or how to cope in a place crowded with people. Outside of the High Winterlands, he is very much a stranger in a strange land.

Mäki avoids technological devices to avoid embarrassing himself—he has no understanding of even simple devices such as locks and crossbows.

One strength of his sheltered upbringing is that he forms strong bonds of loyalty, treating his friends as he would his family. Of course, this also means that he freely helps himself to their possessions.



DODERIC

Race: Engro; **Homeland:** None (nomadic); **Occupation:** Priest; **Patron Deity:** The Unknowable One.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Riddles) d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Taunt d8, Throwing d6
Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Big Mouth, Lamé, Orders, Outsider, Sea Fear (Minor), Small
Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (cult of the Unknowable One), Luck, Sneaky, Spirited
Languages: Anari, Engrosi, Saxa, Trader
Powers: Boost/lower trait, *shape change*

BACKGROUND

Shunned by other races, mocked by his peers because of his deformed leg, and bullied by the strong because of his weak frame, Doderic is well aware of the misery prejudice can cause. Believing his infirmity would prevent him being a useful member of the tribe, his parents abandoned him, sending him ashore from their river barge at Scathmoor and then quickly setting sail.

A bright child, Doderic hoped to train as a skald. Uneducated and knowing only engro tales, he was ridiculed by his fellow students, eventually abandoning his studies. He drifted from settlement to settlement along the Crystalflow, begging and stealing to survive, continually persecuted and mocked for his many flaws.

Doderic spiraled into a deep depression. As he sat by the banks of the river, heavy stones tied around his legs, an itinerant skald deliberately made camp beside the suicidal engro. She said nothing beyond a polite greeting, but offered him a slice of fresh rabbit once her meal was cooked. Without knowing why, Doderic told the stranger his life story, lamenting his many weaknesses and the many strengths of others. The skald smiled, replying that everyone was flawed—they just needed to be reminded occasionally. As the sun set, she told Doderic to sleep and think about her words before throwing himself into a watery grave, for things could always get better.

Doderic awoke to find the skald gone. Disconcertingly, there was absolutely no evidence she had ever existed. Even more troubling, Doderic instinctively knew he had awoken possessed of strange powers. Recognizing the hand of the Unknowable One at work, for the trickster's antics and methods, are well known to engro, Doderic untied the knots from around his legs and limped off into the new dawn, his heart filled with fresh purpose.

Since that day Doderic has used tricks and words to teach others, forcing them to confront their own flaws, reminding folk to be humble, and showing the persecuted how to stand up against their oppressors. For all the people he has taught, Doderic knows there are countless others filled with vanity and pride. He only walks slowly, but he'll get to them in due course.



DESCRIPTION

Doderic is short and thin. Were it not for his aged and weathered face he could be mistaken for a human child. His eyes are dark green, gleaming brightly with mischievous intent one minute and betraying the deep unhappiness he feels within the next. His face is gaunt, his cheekbones so high and pronounced they hide his lower face in shadow.

Doderic's right leg is badly malformed, the result of a childhood illness. Although he walks with a very pronounced limp, he is remarkably nimble.

Slightly vain, he hides his thinning brown hair beneath a brightly colored headscarf. Doderic wears gaudy clothes, and he positively jingles when he walks, such is the amount of brightly polished jewelry he wears. Much of this is costume jewelry, intended to be discarded to fool thieves or distract pursuers.

MANNERISMS

Doderic's mouth works faster than his brain. He lets slip the plans of his companions, insults kings and beggars alike, and has a habit of revealing embarrassing facts about his friends at the most inappropriate times. Although Doderic claims he cannot help himself, many suspect his ill-timed words are merely part of his clerical activities, and thus deliberate.

After nearly drowning in the Crystalflow after falling from a barge (Doderic maintains he was pushed by his brother), he has developed a fear of large bodies of water. He tries to make light of his fear, and has slowly grown more accustomed to it, but seeing lakes, rivers, and the ocean still causes him to shiver involuntarily.

AELWYNNE HARIKSUNU

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Ostmark; **Occupation:** Priestess and corrupter; **Patron Deity:** Vali.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Lockpicking d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d4

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Orders, Pacifist (Minor), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Connections (cult of Vali)

Languages: Anari, Engrosi, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait, charismatic aura*

BACKGROUND

Even as a child, Aelwynne understood that people had unspoken desires, things they craved and for which they would bend or break the unwritten rules of society, not to mention the law. At first her acts were trivial, guiding her young peers into committing petty crimes or breaking minor taboos. Inevitably her victims suffered in some way, but watching them plummet from grace, no matter how slight the fall, gave her a thrill. As she grew older, so her schemes grew in vileness, the falls of her victims were deeper, and the excitement she felt was more intense. For those skilled at corruption, the stain on the soul of a kindred spirit is easily discerned. So it was that Aelwynne became known to the cult of Vali. Utterly debased and corrupted by her mentors, Aelwynne finally understood the depths to which men could fall in the fulfillment of their dreams, and it drove her into a state of sheer ecstasy. Her life finally had meaning.



Like all novitiates of Vali, Aelwynne was betrayed toward the end of her training, accused of a heinous crime and turned over to the authorities. Her judge was a bitter man with a strong dislike of women, especially those accused of murdering a "client." Aelwynne was sentenced to indentured servitude with the city guards, forced to serve their manly needs. Down but not out, Aelwynne turned her manipulative charm on the soldiers, slowly transforming herself from helpless slave to domineering mistress. Intelligent and cunning, Aelwynne quickly realized the trail pointing to her supposed betrayer was a false lead—the evidence was too damning, the clues too easy to follow. Although it took her two years and several disgusting favors, she eventually tracked down the true culprit. His death followed swiftly, but Aelwynne's hands were physically clean of blood—it was the city guards' daggers that pierced his flesh over and over.

Her sentence complete, Aelwynne quickly left the city behind, lest the guards realize they had been manipulated. Her actions during those three years were fun, but they left her urge to corrupt the innocent unfulfilled. Her hunger could only be sated by some grand scheme.

She has chosen Nordmark for her new schemes. The young king's grip is far from secure, and recent raids against caravans in the south are straining relations with Ostmark, her native realm. Aelwynne has no intention of directly targeting the king—although young, Geirmund is no fool, and is likely capable of securing his heart's desire by legitimate means. Aelwynne intends to stir up a lesser noble, her long-term plan to bring Nordmark and Ostmark to war. Only then will she turn her attention to Geirmund.

DESCRIPTION

Aelwynne is not particularly attractive, but she has an aura that quickly enables her to earn confidences. She varies her appearance and attire to fit the social status of her latest plaything, as at ease in filthy peasants garb as in exquisite noble finery. Her thick, black hair is similarly worn in a variety of styles.

MANNERISMS

Aelwynne is manipulative in the extreme. Every person has a weakness, a vice. Through subtle questioning she roots it out and exploits it, carefully leading her prey down the path of corruption into a life of wickedness. Aelwynne never rushes her prey into taking his or her first tentative steps—such behavior only scares the unwilling back onto the path of righteousness. Her concept of corruption is remarkably flexible—leading a follower of Dargar into adopting civilized behavior is just as corrupting as debasing a servant of Eira.

Aelwynne tries to avoid violence, not because she thinks life is sacred or abhors inflicting pain, but because she has no wish to be injured. If she needs someone killed, she can always manipulate a dupe into fighting her battles for her.

GENEVIEVE AP-GALIEN

Race: Anari; **Hometown:** Crystalflow Confederacy (Drakeport); **Occupation:** Priestess and thief hunter; **Patron Deity:** Forseti (see *Region Guide #10*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Investigation d8+2, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Streetwise d8+2, Tracking d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Attractive, Investigator

Languages: Anari, Engrosi, Fingerspeak, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Agility, Strength, Vigor, Investigation, Notice, and Streetwise only), *entangle*

BACKGROUND

Born to a moderately wealthy family, Genevieve, an only child, was doted on by her father, her mother having died when Genevieve was just four. That she never grew up a spoiled brat is testament to her character. A merchant by trade, he paid for his daughter to receive a good education, hopeful that one day she would join the family business. Naturally intelligent and quizzical, he nurtured her desire to solve problems by hiding small items around the house and leaving clues for her to find. This was his great mistake.

After completing her schooling, Genevieve announced she planned to join the cult of Forseti, intending to put her education and natural problem-solving talents to good use by investigating crimes. Her father's heart broke, for while he was a merchant, he also happened to be a senior member of Drakeport's thieves' guild. Unwilling to refuse his daughter anything she had set her heart on, he arranged for her to be trained at a temple in Ostmark. Although it would break his heart to see his daughter leave, he knew that if she uncovered the true source of his wealth his larcenous comrades would arrange for her to suffer a fatal accident. (And he had no hope of inducting her into the family business.)

Genevieve was upset at the notion of having to leave home, what with Drakeport having a perfectly good temple of Var, but her father convinced her that Ostmark was beset with thieves (which is true), and that she would receive better training and job prospects there.

On arriving in Ostmark with letters of recommendation from the high priest of Var in Drakeport, a friend of her father, she was inducted into the cult. She almost quit in the first year, during which novitiates learned to appraise the value of goods, but her instructors convinced her to stay. She flew through the remainder of the course, being granted full priestess status a year ahead of her peers.

With glowing praise from her instructors, Genevieve quickly found work as an agent of the Trada Council. She was given a one year contract and charged with rooting out and bringing to justice the many thieves' guilds



that plague Ostmark. Her diligence quickly netted her a string of high profile arrests, securing her a permanent post, as well as benefitting with her a lucrative sideline in private investigations from wealthy patrons.

She has recently uncovered evidence indicating that at least one of Sandvik's powerful merchant families has ties to one or more of the city's many thieves' guilds. Unsure how far the corruption has spread, and unsure who she can trust with such sensitive information, she is looking to hire outsiders to begin an unofficial investigation on her behalf.

DESCRIPTION

Genevieve is an attractive, slender young woman in her late teens. Her hair is light brown, matching the color of her eyes. Her skin is paler than most Anari, a gift from her Saxa mother. Although an adult, she retains a youthful charm and innocence that is reflected in her face. As an agent of the law, she takes pride in her appearance. Her clothes, while not extravagant, are of good quality, as is her jewelry.

MANNERISMS

Genevieve is absolutely honest and a stickler for following both the letter and spirit of the law, even if that means a criminal has to go free. As a cleric of Forseti, she technically has jurisdiction in any realm. Anyone traveling with her who breaks the law may find themselves reported to the local constabulary. Although close-mouthed about on-going investigations so as not to jeopardize them, she is openly friendly and quite jovial.

She considers violence a last resort, and never strikes first unless her life, or that of a close friend, is in danger. Should violence be necessary, she calls on paladins or local constables to carry out the deed.

MARIGOLD

Race: Engro; **Hometown:** The Vale; **Occupation:** Druid and Bludgeoner; **Patron Deity:** Eostre Plantmother.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Druidism d6, Fighting d4, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Habit (Major: pipeleaf), Illiterate, Loyal, Orders (Bludgeoners), Outsider, Small

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic: Druidism), Bludgeoner, Connection (Bludgeoners), Luck, Sneaky, Spirited

Languages: Engrosi, Fey, Trader

Powers: *Beast friend, deflection, smite*

BACKGROUND

Marigold is the niece of Jym Ivens, perhaps Weem's most famous (some might say infamous) resident, by his sister, Peony. She has no idea who her father is, and her mother refuses to speak of events that led to her only child's birth. Marigold grew up listening to tales of the wild from her mother, a druid, and her uncle's wild stories of adventure. Torn between which path to follow, for both appealed greatly to her spirit, she opted to walk both. She did not tell her mother of her desire to follow in her uncle's footsteps, for it was well-known she frowned on his youthful antics. Marigold first studied to become a druid, for the magical art required much patience, as well as a deep understanding of the natural world. When time allowed, she secretly practiced with



her sling behind her uncle's shop, copying moves she had witnessed the Bludgeoners performing during their regular drill practices. Only after becoming a fully fledged druid did she apply for membership in the Bludgeoners. Her mother tried to dissuade her from her chosen path, but Bludgeoners and druids had long served together in defending the engros from their persecutors, and Marigold argued she was merely combining both roles.

Despite fierce competition and some prejudice, Marigold earned her place in the elite unit, becoming only the second female currently serving with Weem's defenders. She served loyally for four years, but her uncle's tales still resounded in her ears, and the nomadic blood coursing through her veins made her restless. Eventually she could resist the lure no longer. Resigning her position, though still sworn to protect engros wherever she traveled, Marigold left the Vale to see what lay beyond its borders. Her uncle loaned her equipment he had once carried, ensuring she at least had some protection.

There is much Marigold wants to see and do, but so far she has just followed her feet, wandering without rhyme or reason, and enjoying whatever adventures she happens to come across. She is shocked by the persecution suffered by her people, for folk outside the Vale are less understanding of engro ways. She hopes her brave deeds will help set the record straight.

DESCRIPTION

Marigold has hair the color of autumnal leaves. Disliking attention, she usually hides it beneath a plain white headscarf. Her bright green eyes have a mischievous twinkle and her lips are set in a constant sly smile, the sort of expression that leaves one with the impression she knows something the viewer does not.

She wears garments of browns and greens, over which is a heavy, fur-lined, sleeveless jacket. Like most engro she prefers to display her wealth, wearing it as rings and large, hooped earrings. She carries her sling wrapped around her left arm, and a pouch crammed full of sling stones hangs from her wide, leather belt. She is rarely seen without a pipe full of smoldering leaf clenched between her yellowed teeth.

MANNERISMS

Marigold is a mischievous creature, always ready to tease or trick, but never with malicious intent, at least not among those she calls friend. She takes her oaths as a druid and bludgeoner very seriously, never turning her back on any engro or animal in need, even at the risk of her own safety. She applies the same rule to her close friends, regardless of their race or faith.

She is addicted to pipeleaf, though she vehemently denies this is confronted about her habit. Coming from a culture that favors oral passing of lore, Marigold never bothered to read and write. Now exposed to the wider world, she is slightly embarrassed by her inability to decipher written words.

HERMENGART AP-HUIDEMAR

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Chalcis; **Occupation:** Elemental; **Patron Deity:** Neorthe.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Elementalism d8, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Swimming d6+2

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Major: thinks she's from the elemental realm of water), Outsider, Phobia (Minor: fire)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic: Water Elementalism), Merman Blood (see *Region Guide* #8)

Languages: Chalcian, Fey, Seatonque*, Trader

Powers: *Beast friend* (aquatic beasts only), *elemental manipulation* (water only), *environmental protection* (underwater only)

* *Dialect spoken only by water-dwelling fey.*

BACKGROUND

Hermengart trained in the art of water elementalism at the Tower of the Four Paths in Highmoor. Although her tutors saw in her the potential to become an arkhwisard in due course, Hermengart lacked all interest in studying air, earth, and fire. While the other graduates from her class went on to study a second element, Hermengart devoted her time to researching elemental water loci and the nature of the elemental realm of water.

A keen and competent swimmer, the young elemental often swam in the cold waters of the Inner Sea, finding the exercise invigorating and relishing the opportunity to immerse herself in the physical embrace of her chosen element. Here she learned to communicate with the haymandr who inhabited the area, gaining much sea lore from the aquatic race, and swam with whales.

One fateful day, Hermengart suffered a fit while far from the shore. Having lost consciousness, her *environmental protection* spell failed. Weighed down by her heavy robes, she slowly began to sink into the dark depths of the ocean she so loved. Fortunately, a fisherman saw her plight and hauled her onto his boat before Neorthe could claim the young woman.

Hermengart has no memory of any of this. Her first memory is waking up on a beach (the fisherman left her there while he went to fetch help), her robes and hair sodden and covered in thick strands of seaweed. Her sudden fit damaged part of her brain, scrambling her memories. Hermengart immediately came to the conclusion she was a native of the realm of water, an elemental spirit in service to Neorthe reborn in human form so as to experience life as a mortal.

Without waiting, Hermengart dove back into the ocean and began swimming, only to realize she no longer had a natural ability to breathe in water. At least Neorthe had seen fit to grant her some magical powers. Since then, Hermengart has traveled far and wide, usually staying near the coast, but sometimes venturing



far inland to see what wonders lie there. She has seen many wonders—vast forests; awe-inspiring mountains; and majestic rivers of frozen water—but she has also witnessed greed, disease, treachery, death, and misery.

Now thoroughly bored with mortal existence, Hermengart wants only to return to the endless waters of her native realm. Neorthe has ignored her prayers, leading the elemental to conclude that in order to return home she must locate a suitable portal. Unfortunately, that has proven more difficult than she expected.

DESCRIPTION

Convinced she is an otherworldly entity in human form, Hermengart has woven strands of dried seaweed and shells into her hair. Her deep green eyes stare into the distance, as if she is perpetually lost in thought, and her lips are curled in strange expressions. She moves with a languid motion, as if unaccustomed to walking.

Her long, flowing robe is dark green, the color of the deep ocean, her shirt a light shade. Silver thread resembling stylized waves runs through the rich, heavy fabric. She wears a single ring of polished coral on the index finger of her right hand.

MANNERISMS

Hermengart's belief that she hails from the elemental realm of water and her resultant phobia of fire stem from her near-death experience. Unfortunately, no amount of evidence or reasoning can shake her out of this delusion. Her persistence in sharing knowledge of her "unearthly origins" with everyone, coupled with her strange expressions, bizarre way of walking, and often erratic behavior quickly alienates her from those around her.

MAGE-BARON STEFAN OF RENVIK

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Chalcis (The Magocracy);
Occupation: Heahwisard; **Patron Deity:** Ullr.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6,
Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Heahwisardry d6, Intimidation d4,
Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stewardship d6*, Sur-
vival d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic: Heahwisardry), No-
ble

Languages: Anari, Chalcian, Classical Anari, Trader

Powers: *Aarmor, boost/lower trait, fear*

** If you're not using the Resource Management rules,
exchange this for Persuasion d4 and Streetwise d4.*

BACKGROUND

Mage-Baron Stefan of the First Sphere, head of House Esther, vassal of House Darovia, is something of an oddity among the nobles of the Magocracy, and especially those of the Principality of Darovia. Since returning from his adventures, Stefan has become loved by his peasants.

As a boy he was a typical noble, pompous, arrogant, domineering, and oblivious to the needs of the people. Following the death of his father, Stefan, an only child, inherited the barony. Quickly bored by affairs of state, he left his Council Elect vote in the hands of Mage-Prince Dartuk, placed his steward in charge of governing the village, and left to seek adventure and excitement, planning on returning in middle age to enjoy his wealth and social position.



Stefan unexpectedly returned home two years ago, a little over a decade since he left. His behavior was immediately odd—he took control of running the estate, dismissing his former steward; he joined the peasants in their hunts; he lowered taxes; and he even helped gather the harvest. Through careful investment, Stefan has raised the rundown estate to one that generates a modest income. The peasants are beginning to wonder what happened on his sojourn to change his personality so drastically.

What they do not know is that Mage-Baron Stefan is an impostor. Actually a Chalcian hunter by the name of Mayeul ap-Gontier, he befriended the real Stefan nine years ago. Believing himself hunted by a sinister cult whose treasure he had stolen, the real mage knew he could not return home. A devious cur, he spun a web of lies, telling the hunter that he had tired of leadership and sought only a life of adventure. As a nobleman, he could not simply abandon his people, and he had no kin to whom he could pass the title. The two men were of similar appearance, and any differences could easily be explained away by the passage of time.

The pair slowly traveled south, Stefan teaching the hunter the basics of heahwisardry (a crime), how the government operated, and enough history to avoid raising immediate suspicion. The tutoring cost Stefan two years of his life, but it was better than the other option fate had decreed him. Unwilling to waste any more time training Mayeul, Stefan declared his replacement ready to assume his role. With any luck, the cult would find and execute his double, allowing Stefan to reemerge a few years later and proclaim the corpse a usurper.

Stefan recently learned the cult had been destroyed, leaving him free to return home. His spies have informed him his double is a popular ruler and that no one doubts his identity. Worried that simply turning up and claiming he is the real Stefan won't work, he now intends to have Mayeul discredited and then assassinated.

DESCRIPTION

Unlike the normally pale-skinned nobles who lurk in their courts, Stefan has a weathered face from his years as a hunter. His hands are rough and calloused from hard work, and his long brown hair is sun-bleached. His gray eyes are kind, though they can become stern in an instant if his anger is riled. Stefan's robes are cut in the latest fashion, but they are also of drab brown and green, toughened to serve as outdoor wear rather than courtly garb intended to impress.

MANNERISMS

Stefan is an atypical Magocratic noble—he cares about his people, speaks out against the excesses of his peers and superiors (in carefully worded form), and takes an active role in the running of his estate. His one negative trait is his stubbornness, but his people do not mind that he wants his own way—he is their lord and master.

BETH AP-ACOSTANT

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** The Magocracy; **Occupation:** Hrimwisard; **Patron Deity:** Maera.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Hrimwisardry d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Survival d4

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Bad Eyes, Black Sheep, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic: Hrimwisardry), Spell Finesse (Selective: *stun*)

Languages: Anari, Classical Anari, Frosttongue, Trader

Powers: *Armor, stun*

BACKGROUND

Beth (she refuses to use her birth name, Bethilie) was born the third child of an influential Magocratic family beholden to House Tharkness. Her older siblings, a brother and sister, were both given away at birth by her parents for they had been born frostborn. Like many parents, they considered the siring of frostborn shameful, and certainly had no desire to see one in power.

Although she was sent to a fine school and had a pedigree (and potential future) many heahwisards would kill for, Beth had no interest in the ancient art of her ancestors. Having accidentally discovered the family's dark secret, she took an intense interest in the nature of the Hellfrost, the disappearance of Kenaz and Sigel, and the rise of the frostborn. Had her siblings not been afflicted with the "winter curse," perhaps this would have been a phase she was going through, but she remained fixated with the subjects. Refusing to bow to pressure from her family to cease her studies and to the family line, she quit school. Traveling to neighboring Eastheath, where her family had no influence over the clergy, she began studying hrimwisardry at the temple of Maera.

Unable to bring their last child back in line, and fearing a political backlash if they allowed a non-heahwisard to continue as heir, her parents publicly disowned their young daughter, stripping her of all titles and inheritance, removing her name from the family tree and banishing her from their holdings. In her place, a distant cousin was named as heir to the title and estates. Unperturbed, for she considered the abandoning of her siblings based on their race abhorrent, she shortened her name and took the name of a rebellious ancestor, another black sheep, in place of her father's.

Beth headed north, spending several years exploring and studying the Hellfrost first hand. Although she respected and feared the awesome might of Thrym, she sensed that something else lay behind the rise of the Hellfrost, something far beyond the power of a god to control. She cannot prove it, but she suspects the phenomenon somehow ties into the elemental realms.

Although the cult of Kenaz considers her a potential agent of Thrym, Beth is actually a supporter of their

cause. Her magical power may stem from the winter, but she has no desire to see the northern lands succumb to permanent ice and snow.

Now well-versed in winter magic, Beth has taken leave from her studies to undertake a personal quest. Knowing that her siblings were given up to frostborn families rather than murdered, she plans on tracking down the brother and sister she never knew.

DESCRIPTION

Beth's study and practice of hrimwisardry is changing her body. Her dark hair is turning snow white, her skin is much paler than other Anari, her eyes, pupils and whites, have become a brilliant, glacial blue (she sees as if looking through a constant blizzard), and her fingernails have transformed into solid shards of ice.

Although resistant to freezing temperatures by dint of her art, she continues to wear a heavy, fur-lined cloak. This is partly because it is comfortable, and partly because it conceals the most shocking aspect of her transformation—her torso is bone white, with a spider web of thick, blue-black lines emanating from the heart, as if her veins are literally turning to ice.

MANNERISMS

Beth is immensely stubborn, a trait which led her to forsake her heritage and begin her study into hrimwisardry. She doesn't believe she is always right—she merely seeks to follow her own path in life, and dislikes being given orders. She does not speak of her past, avoiding the subject by quickly changing the topic. She has a curious streak, but only with regard to matters relating directly to the Hellfrost.



MJÖDVIÐNIR BREAKSPEAR

Race: Frost dwarf; **Homeland:** Karad Zor; **Occupation:** Rune mage and huscarl; **Patron Deity:** Tiw.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Cut-Rune d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Heat Lethargy, Insular, Mean, Slow, Vow (Minor: never drink alcohol), Vow (Major: recover lord's standard and restore his honor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic: Rune magic), Low Light Vision, Mountain Born, Tough, Winter Soul

Languages: Dwarven, Orcish, Trader

Powers: Cut-Rune (*boost/lower trait* (Strength and Fighting only), *battle song*, *smite*)

BACKGROUND

A huscarl who learned rune magic to bolster his fighting prowess, Mjödvitnir ("Mead-wolf") served in the bodyguard of Jarl Thorgrim Frostmane, lord of Karad Zor. Considered well past his prime and too fond of strong alcohol, Mjödvitnir's duties largely consisted of guarding unimportant locations within the city. Given the chance to escort a caravan carrying supplies to Dvergtón on the outskirts of the Frozen Forest, Mjödvitnir leapt at the opportunity, partly to prove his critics wrong and partly because he suspected it would be his last chance to wield his axe in anger.

Technically the most senior huscarl in the party, Mjödvitnir was placed in charge of protecting the caravan leader, Thorgrim's youngest grandson, Thegn Gloin. As a member of the jarl's immediate family and journeying as a representative of his lord, Gloin would be traveling under the royal standard. The trip began well, the cara-

van winding its way through Hellfrost Pass and up the trade roads into Heligioland. Here, though, things took a drastic turn for the worse.

After getting steaming drunk one night, Mjödvitnir was left behind with a handful of huscarls as the caravan carried on northward, the thegn intending to punish the drunkard by making him catch up on foot. When Mjödvitnir did catch up with the caravan he found only burnt out wrecks and dead dwarves, slain by orc raiders. Thegn Gloin numbered among the dead, his head cleaved from his shoulders by an orc blade, but of the royal standard there was no sign.

Mjödvitnir blamed himself for the slaughter, for his inebriation had left the caravan with fewer guards. After burying and lamenting the dead, he ordered the remaining huscarls to return to Karad Zor with the thegn's mortal remains and carry news of the disaster to Jarl Thorgrim. Filled with remorse, self-loathing, and anger, Mjödvitnir declared himself an exile, vowing that he would die unmourned and in ignominy, or return the royal standard to his lord's keep.

To Mjödvitnir's horror the orcs had split into three separate parties. He chose to follow the largest group back to their lair, but his efforts were for naught. Driven by righteous rage, he slew a dozen orcs, but the standard was not among the booty they had plundered from the caravan. With the other trails now obliterated by snow, Mjödvitnir began the long process of hunting down every orc he could find, torturing them for information before sending their souls to their fell gods.

Mjödvitnir's quest has consumed fifty years of his life, and yet there is no end in sight. He has traveled far and wide, bathed in orc blood, and still his quarry eludes him. A human might have given up after such a lengthy endeavor, but Mjödvitnir is a dwarf. Even if it takes another century, he will complete his quest or die trying—he has nothing else to live for.

DESCRIPTION

Well-muscled, Mjödvitnir is almost as wide at the shoulder as he is tall. He is completely bald, a natural occurrence (he began to lose his hair shortly after becoming an adult). He still wears his beard into three braids, the mark of a dwarven huscarl, though he dyes it bright yellow, a symbol of shame among the dwarves of Karad Zor. When he chooses to speak (he normally grunts a lot), he has a deep, rough voice.

MANNERISMS

Since his self-imposed exile, Mjödvitnir has forsaken alcohol, refusing to touch a single drop. He vehemently berates those who drink too much, especially warriors and sentries. Although all dwarves appear gruff to outsiders, they have a sense of humor. Mjödvitnir lost his long ago, his once jovial nature now replaced by an ill-temper, general surliness, and a burning desire to complete his task so that he might restore his honor.



NYLE DUTTSUNU

Race: Anari/Saxa; **Homeland:** Angmark; **Occupation:** Song mage and retired adventurer; **Patron Deity:** The Unknowable One.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d4, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Area: Alantaris Isle) d4, Knowledge (Area: Aspiria) d4, Knowledge (Area: Glittersands) d4, Knowledge (Area: The Great Swamp) d4, Knowledge (Area: The Liche Lands) d4, Knowledge (Area: The Magocracy) d4, Knowledge (Area: Royalmark) d4, Knowledge (Area: Unclaimed Lands) d4, Knowledge (Folklore) d8, Knowledge (Heraldry) d4, Persuasion d6, Notice d6, Riding d4, Shooting d4, Song Magic d8, Survival d4

Charisma: +3; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Bad Eyes, Elderly, Enemy (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic: Song magic), Noble, World-Wise

Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Saxa, Trader

Powers: Healing, stun, wilderness step

BACKGROUND

Nyle is the living embodiment of the old saying that money can buy anything but happiness. Born to a noble Saxa family (his mother is Anari), Nyle grew bored with a life of privilege. His education finished and with an older brother due to inherit his father's title and lands, Nyle set out to find excitement.

He eventually joined up with a band of similar bored nobles, who together adventured under the name the Seven Sons. For 15 years they wandered the length and breadth of the northern realm, hunting undead, engaging in revolutions against corrupt leaders, fighting orcs, and defeating bandits. Although one would be hard-pressed to imagine it now, Nyle was one of the Sons' warriors.

Their greatest adventure, which would also prove to be their last, ended in tragedy. After crossing paths with a priest of Hela on multiple occasions, they eventually tracked their quarry into the haunted Liche Lands. Through skill, magic, and a little good fortune, the Seven Sons managed to seal the cleric in a cairn, though not before two of their number, the founder and co-founder as fate would have it, fell in battle. These were the first casualties the Sons had suffered, and the loss of them as friends and leaders weighed heavily on the survivors' hearts. Recriminations and guilt sundered the once tight bond, the five remaining members going their own ways. Unwilling to take up adventuring with new comrades, and seeking to keep the memory of the Sons' exploits alive, Nyle turned to more cerebral arts, forsaking the life of a swordsman for that of a song mage and skald.

Thirty years have passed since the Seven Sons went their own ways. Although Nyle's father and brother are dead, his grand-nephew, the current ruler, has allowed his uncle to retain his noble title and stipend. In those three decades, Nyle heard nothing from his former comrades,



save in gossip and news passed on by fellow skalds. At least he had heard nothing first hand until a month ago. Disturbed by knocking at his door in the dead of night, Nyle found Odel Lowthwaite, the younger brother of the Sons' late co-founder, standing outside.

Odel informed his old friend that his retirement was over. Two of the five survivors, all of whom had lived to old age, had recently been viciously murdered. Traveling to the Liche Lands on a hunch, Odel discovered the tomb in which they imprisoned the cleric of Hela so long ago now open to the elements. Convinced their old nemesis is seeking revenge and hunting down the surviving Sons, Nyle has taken up adventuring once more. His first task is to find, Grindan, the last remaining Son accounted for.

DESCRIPTION

Nyle's memory of the adventures of his youth may be fresh in his mind, but the passage of time has taken its toll on his body. His once luxuriant dark hair has turned white with age, his brown eyes are cloudy, his muscles have atrophied through inaction, and his fingers are bent with arthritis. His clothes, though of good quality, fell out of fashion three decades ago.

MANNERISMS

The fire of adventuring has been rekindled in Nyle's heart, but the flame burns weakly. While he retains all his mental faculties, his body is that of a frail old man. He refuses to admit his weakness, especially when in the company of young adventurers. He is fond of reminiscing about the "glory days" through song and verse, even though few alive today remember the Seven Sons.

TELETHALITH

Race: Hearth elf; **Homeland:** Dreamwood (Royal-mark); **Occupation:** Paladin and bodyguard; **Patron Deity:** Kvara (see *Region Guide* #26).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Survival d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Heroic, Loyal, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Miracles), Forest Born, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms, Two-Fisted

Languages: Auld Saxa, Health Elven, Saxa

Powers: *Armor, deflection*

BACKGROUND

Telethalith's name is actually a title granted him by King Geirmund of Nordmark. It translates very loosely as "shield of the king." He is usually addressed simply as Tel, a diminutive of the hearth elven word for a shield.

Tel always dreamed of becoming a bladedancer, the elite bodyguards of the elven nobility. Naturally graceful and skilled at wielding two blades, Tel purposefully delayed his candidacy in order to first train as a paladin of Kvara, the deity goddess of bodyguards, believing it would ultimately make him a better bladedancer.

A native of Dreamwood, he watched with concern as neighboring Nordmark was torn apart by bloody civil war on the death of King Kol. Although several factions tried to secure elven support for their cause, the elves refused to participate in human affairs.

Three years ago, the then Prince Geirmund, rightful heir to Nordmark's throne, made camp not far from the forest's borders during his preparations to claim his birthright by force of arms. Several elf nobles went to

meet the king in order to discern his intentions and to reaffirm their neutrality. Tel, by now a paladin of Kvara, was acting as bodyguard to one of the nobles. He listened intently as the young human spoke of his dreams for a united Nordmark, of his ambitions to impose fair laws and equality so that all might prosper, and his promise that the elves would not be drawn into the war. Tel felt a strange attraction to the youth, for here was a human talking of putting others before his own needs.

That night, Tel awoke from a nightmare in which he had seen the young prince murdered. Without a firm leader, Nordmark become embroiled in a lengthy war, a conflict which spread to encompass the entire region in blood and misery. Believing that as king, Geirmund might not only bring peace and prosperity to Nordmark but initiate a new era for mankind, Tel begged permission from his lord to serve with the human, sensing that unless he did his dream would come to pass.

Permission was granted, though Tel would have to serve as a mercenary, not as an official agent of the neutral elves. Geirmund accepted the elf into his retinue, for he needed all the blades he could muster if he was to be victorious, and held no racial prejudices. Tel served the prince throughout the war, thwarting several assassination attempts. His heart was filled with immense pride as Geirmund was crowned, for Tel was one of a chosen few huscarls permitted to stand at his side.

Although Geirmund still has many enemies, Tel has left the king's retinue. He senses there are others with important destinies that will help shape a better future, and he aims to ensure they live to fulfill them. He still dreams of becoming a bladedancer, but as an elf he knows that time is something he has in abundance.

DESCRIPTION

Tel is a typical elf—tall, slim, and graceful. His blonde hair is well groomed, swept back behind his finely-tapered ears and held in place with a silver band decorated with a single sightstone. His green eyes are wide and alert, constantly scanning for danger.

His clothes, a gift from King Geirmund, are finely made yet practical, and lavishly embroidered. He prefers light armor, relying on his magic and whirling blades to deflect blows rather than encumbering metal.

MANNERISMS

Tel takes his role as a bodyguard extremely seriously. He understands that it is his job to lay down his life to protect his charge, and puts himself in harm's way without a moment's thought. Although technically a warrior, he disdains violence. He'll happily end a threat, doing so with brutal efficiency, but he refuses to initiate trouble.

When on duty he is extremely serious and focused, letting nothing distract him. Like most elves he enjoys singing and dancing. Two years serving the king has also given him a fondness for human ale, though he never drinks to excess.



GALARITHIEL DARKGLADE

Race: Hearth elf; **Hometown:** Kings Wood (Orcmark); **Occupation:** Priest and hunter; **Patron Deity:** Tvíblindi (see *Region Guide* #20).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Cautious, Orders (Lord of Kings Wood), Yellow

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Miracles), Forest Born, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms, Woodsman

Languages: Arboreal, Hearth Elven, Orcish, Saxa

Powers: *Invisibility, obscure*

BACKGROUND

Before the creation of Orcmark, Galarithiel served his community as a hunter. He had an inherent feel for the forest. He could spot the bent twig that showed the route of prey, move without disturbing a single leaf or cracking a dry twig, and live off the land for months.

Once it became clear the orc advance had been stalled and their attention had turned to Kings Wood, the lord of the elves commanded all hunters to take up arms, as is the way of elves. Although a competent archer, Galarithiel's talents were stealth and tracking. At first, Galarithiel served as a scout, helping to hunt down orcs daring to cross the leafy border. It was during this time he experienced the carnage and misery of battle, the brutal exchange of blows, the screams of the injured, and the passing of the living into the realm of the dead. What he witnessed scared him to the depths of his soul.

Afraid of dying young, Galarithiel sought refuge in religion. Although Rigr or Ullr would have served him well, as they had generations of elves, the young hunter began to worship Tvíblindi, the minor god of concealment. Although now a priest of Tvíblindi, he has no loyalty toward either Nauthiz or Niht. Pragmatic and cowardly, he chose Tvíblindi simply because the god granted abilities that would keep him concealed from enemies.

Now isolated by a ring of orc encampments and constantly under attack by probing patrols, the elves of Kings Wood were desperate for information regarding their enemy's strength and plans, as well as the intent of their allies in Vestmark and the besieged city of Ostersund. In order to gain that knowledge, warriors had to leave the safety of the wood, and infiltrate orc camps or capture prisoners. Unfortunately for Galarithiel, his skill as a tracker, his ability to move silently, and his talent for living off the land had not gone unnoticed. Although he protested, he was sent to serve with one of the ranger units tasked with carrying out operations beyond the forest, and often deep behind enemy lines. For 15 long years he has ranged far and wide across Orcmark, stalking orc patrols, conducting ambushes, locating camps, passing messages to resistance groups or firing them

across the Elverun or into Ostersund, always knowing that death could strike at any moment. And yet despite all his victories, he has become ever more afraid.

DESCRIPTION

Galarithiel lacks the grace of other elves. Although humans see him as equal to a normal member of their species, to elves his is clumsy and ungainly. He wears his light brown hair swept back in the traditional fashion. His pale green eyes are ever active, darting to scan every shadow. His nose is long and sharp. Galarithiel's face bears a constantly worried look.

He disdains metal jewelry, wearing only a single bone cloak pin. Unlike most hunters, he prefers metal armor—the more protection it offers, the better.

MANNERISMS

A young elf, Galarithiel greatly fears death. His head constantly twists to and fro as his eyes scan for danger, he bites his bottom lip in worry, and he dives for cover at the slightest noise. He serves with the army because he sees it as his duty to help protect his homeland from orcs, not because he wants to be a hero. A coward by nature, he would think nothing of abandoning his comrades in order to save his own skin. In order to reduce the risks, he plans meticulously, always ensuring he has multiple escape routes.

Like all clerics of Tvíblindi he never discusses his faith with outsiders. Because the Unknowable One is the only benevolent deity to grant both miracles Galarithiel has learned, he claims to be a cleric of the trickster when pressed as to the origin of his powers. Since there are no standard trickster clerics, few can argue otherwise.



SALABERGE AP-BURCAN

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Seithrby; **Occupation:** Paladin, murderer, and thrall; **Patron Deity:** Vagr (see *Region Guide #2*).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Faith d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Major: believes Hela will help her liberate Seithrby), Poverty, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Assassin

Languages: Anari, Black Tongue, Saxa

Powers: *Deflection*, *summon beast* (bat, giant bat, or bat swarm only)

BACKGROUND

Salaberge grew up on a small but prosperous farm in Seithrby. Although her parents were Anari, over half the farm laborers were Saxa, freemen earning a decent income. Her father was highly respected in the community, serving as a doomsman on multiple occasions, and privately settling many trivial cases to everyone's benefit. His eldest daughter had many Saxa friends, and was even betrothed to one, the son of a farmer in the next valley. With the arrival of Aethling Cuthwulf and his warlike kin, all that changed.

Salaberge's family was one of many Anari whose lands were confiscated. Her father was murdered, his throat slit in front of his family's gaze. Salaberge, her mother,

and her two younger sisters were taken as thralls by the victorious invaders. Salaberge, who once enjoyed a comfortable life of comparative luxury, was put to work plowing fields and collecting dung.

At night, while her master slept, Salaberge would sit outside the hovel she now called home, gazing at the bats that lived in the barn and hunted by the moonlight, wishing she could be free like them, wishing she could avenge herself on those who had taken away her life. Children have long been warned to be careful what they wish for, and Salaberge was about to find out why.

A few days after her 17th birthday, her nocturnal musings were disturbed by a stranger who appeared out of nowhere. Clad all in black and wrapped in a voluminous cloak, he confronted the startled girl with her words, claiming he had heard them whispered on the wind and could, if she were willing, help her achieve her dreams. Although he professed to be an outsider, he claimed he too despised the invaders. Serve him, he said, and not only could Salaberge fulfill her desire for vengeance, but he would help her liberate Seithrby from its oppressors.

Blinded by hatred, Salaberge failed to see the dark road onto which the stranger was leading her. She accepted his offer. Over many months he visited her again, always at night, instructing her in the ways of murder and the cult of Vagr, patron of the bats she so envied. At first she had doubts, suspecting she had walked down a path to damnation, but her mind was filled only with thoughts of vengeance, and such thoughts were soon banished forever. Salaberge's final test, the one that would make her a true paladin, was to murder her master. She slipped unseen into his bedchamber and slit his throat, before vanishing into the night.

Since then she has drifted across Seithrby, infiltrating the homes of her enemies and enacting a bloody revenge. She has killed many, but there are always more waiting.

DESCRIPTION

Salaberge is fairly non-descript. Once she hated being ordinary, possessed of typical Anari features like so many others, but she has come to love her appearance, for it allows her to be anonymous, another thrall among many. Her dark brown eyes are cold and alert, the eyes of a predator seeking prey.

MANNERISMS

Salaberge's lust for revenge has warped her mind. Once she blamed only Aethling Cuthwulf's kin for the cruelty inflicted on her, but now she tars all Saxa with the same brush. In her madness she also blames the Hearth Knights and cult of Scaetha, who did nothing to stop the conquest, instead bartering with the new ruler to ensure their activities continued without interruption.

Except when in the company of bats or taking a life from those she calls enemies, she rarely smiles. Any smile toward her foes in a public place is forced, her true feelings betrayed by her eyes, which burn with vengeance.



HENGIST AESCWINESUNU

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Royalmark; **Occupation:** Priest, herbalist, and brewer; **Patron Deity:** Gullveig (see *Region Guide #0*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Alchemy) d8, Knowledge (Craft: Brewing) d8, Survival d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Mean, Small, Ugly

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Hedge Magic

Languages: Auld Saxa, Fey, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Smarts, Spirit, Vigor, Knowledge (Craft: Brewing only)), *feast* (alcohol only)

BACKGROUND

Hengist's parents never had much time for their son. As proprietors of a busy brewery, their work left them little time to entertain a child. Not only that, but they found their son's appearance repulsive, secretly suspecting that Hengist was actually a fey changeling swapped for their real son. Having no friends, and with his parents uncaring about his activities, he would spend long hours roaming the fields and hills. Over time he became interested in the many plants that grew there, experimenting with herbal remedies to help pass the time. That early hobby quickly consumed much of his time, and he made a modest income selling his remedies to local villagers.

Despite his father's refusal to let him learn the family trade (although he did fetch and carry for him), Hengist silently watched his father at work, developing an understanding for the brewer's art. One night, just before his father was due to deliver a consignment of mead to the local noble, Hengist added something to the mix.

Unaware, Hengist's father faithfully delivered the consignment to his lord's feast hall in time for a major feast. After sampling the brew, the nobleman praised Hengist's father, for this mead was the finest he had ever tasted. He then asked the brewer to reveal the ingredients that gave it such a fine flavor. Quickly sampling the mead, his father was flabbergasted to discover he did not know, for the mead was not his recipe. He tried to bluff the noble, claiming that a brewer never revealed a secret, but this only served to offend his liege, who changed his request to a demand. Hengist stepped forward and said that his father could not name the ingredient because he had not added it to the mead. Avoiding his father's fist, Hengist admitted that it was he who had altered the recipe, adding to the honey common heather flowers. Amused at the ugly creature in front of him, the noble questioned Hengist as to his skill. Hengist replied honestly, claiming that he knew much about both flowers and brewing, though he admitted he was self-taught. Impressed by the boy's skill and openness, he offered him a post as his personal brewer, terminating the contract with Hengist's father there and then.



Hengist served the nobleman for 10 years, slowly perfecting his craft. In that time he joined the cult of Gullveir, eventually becoming a priest. Having achieved the status of master brewer, Hengist quit the noble's household to open his own brewery.

Although he earned a decent living, Hengist knows competition is fierce. In order to stay ahead of his rivals he craves new recipes from distant lands, especially those of the frozen north lands and the scorching desert to the south. He has taken a gamble by leaving his business in the hands of his apprentice while he journeys.

DESCRIPTION

When it came to looks, the Norns dealt Hengist a cruel fate. He is short, hunchbacked, and with arms that seem too long for his body. His face is permanently crunched, his nose large and beak-like, his eyes too close together and deeply set, and his mouth thin. Old age has further added to his misery, for his pate is bald and what remains of his hair is thinning rapidly. His bald spot and forearms are frequently covered in angry, red bee stings.

MANNERISMS

Taunted all his life because of his appearance, Hengist has grown into a bitter and twisted man. He rejects attempts to befriend him, believing that such people only want to try and hire his services at a reduced rate, or set him up for a fall later, building up what little remains of his self-respect before cruelly mocking him. He prefers his own company, something hard to achieve for a master brewer and herbalist whose talents are much in demand. When he does work with others, he does so reluctantly, and never without charging for his services.

AVALANCHE

Race: Frostborn (Saxa stock); **Homeland:** Hrimthyr Isle; **Occupation:** Paladin; **Patron Deity:** Langbarðr (see *Region Guide #12*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d10, Hrimwisardry d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Survival d4

Charisma: -8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Heat Lethargy, Mean, Outsider, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Frigid Form, Winter Soul

Languages: Frosttongue, Saxa

Frostborn Powers: *Armor, environmental protection (cold), smite, speed*

Miraculous Powers: *Barrier, boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Strength, and Vigor only)

BACKGROUND

Avalanche's parents served a frost giant jarl as minor members of his court. Born to a frostborn hrimwisard and frostborn priestess of Thrym, Avalanche grew up listening to tales of his race's chosen status, of the persecution they suffered at the hands of others, and how the god of winter would one day make the world a paradise for his kin. He also learned that many frostborn denied their rightful heritage, seeking to live among the other races, although in doing so they submitted to being second-class citizens, little better than thralls.

Avalanche, who made up in brawn what he lacked in brains, was never going to follow in his father's footsteps. He decided that he would join the army as one of King Nagal's frostborn heavy infantry. There he learned a fundamental lesson—only the strong survive. Mercy and compassion were beaten out of him by his instructors, and his place in the pecking order was achieved by

defeating his peers. Possessed of phenomenal strength, Avalanche quickly rose up the ranks.

His training complete, Avalanche was assigned to serve under a frost giant priest. During a raid against the hated inhabitants of the Battlelands, the priest found himself surrounded by foes. Without thinking (never his strong suit, at the best of times), Avalanche waded into the fray, his body clad in a sheath of ice, his weapon bristling with jagged icicles. Faced with a seemingly unstoppable foe, the humans fled, allowing the priest to make good his retreat from the battlefield.

The priest paid for the failure of his raid with his life, but not before he reported the prowess of Avalanche to his liege. Pleased by the frostborn's willingness to lay down his life for a giant, and sensing his strength would be better utilized elsewhere than as a common soldier, King Nagal ordered Avalanche to begin training as a cleric of Langbarðr. Having more interest in slaying than saving, Avalanche followed the path of a paladin. Though Avalanche's low intellect meant his training took many years, he eventually became a Crushing Hand of Thrym.

Avalanche was selected as one of the guards to a diplomatic team sent to White Lake, where a powerful frost giant had apparently taken up residence. By the time they arrived, the giant had been defeated and his army scattered. Before they could return home, the party was ambushed by Hearth Knights. Although he fought well, Avalanche was subdued and captured. On the journey back to Hellfrost Keep, where he was to be interrogated, he snapped his manacles and killed his guards, fleeing into the wilderness. Unsure how to get home, Avalanche has decided to stay on the mainland and wage a one-frostborn war on the accursed races.

DESCRIPTION

Avalanche's physical build—tall, muscular, and wide at the shoulders—combined with his frostborn physical traits give him the appearance of a walking glacier. His dirty-white hair is thinning with age, though his beard is thick and luxuriant, a fitting sign for one who worships Thrym's beard. When he speaks, his voice is a low rumbling, filled with menace.

MANNERISMS

Avalanche is everything Thrym expects from his minions. He is as stubborn and relentless as his patron, refusing to bow before any man (or frost giant). He is ill-tempered and surly, cooperating with others of his extended faith only to promote the Fimbulvintr, and even then he dislikes doing so. A fanatic, he believes that the weak are not fit to live in the coming Fimbulvintr—he shows no mercy toward captives, and it takes a creature with a will comparable to that of Nagal to halt his bloody rampage. Avalanche's faith, coupled with his low intelligence, make him slow to act. He is not cautious—it just takes his brain a while to form a plan of action. Once he makes a decision, he is a force of nature.



COENHELM AELFRICSUNU

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Coglelund; **Occupation:** Priest and rat catcher; **Patron Deity:** Haratt (see *Region Guide #24*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Healing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Enemy (Major: cleric of Veth), Greedy (Minor), Phobia (Minor: cats)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Beast friend* (rats and giant rats only), *summon beast* (rats and giant rats only)

BACKGROUND

Coenhelm was once a merchant, a wealthy citizen of Coglelund with friends, influence, and a title. His fall from grace was as spectacular as it was sudden—even by Coglelund standards, where wealth is often fleeting. Today, ten years on from the shameful event, skalds sing of it in the taverns of Halfway as a warning to others of the perils of straying into sin.

Homeless, destitute, and a social pariah (and lucky not to be outlawed), Coenhelm took the only work he could find—rat catching. The work was filthy, and not without hazards, and the wages pitiful, but at least it was an income. Rat by rat, he dreamed of rebuilding his life.

Often working alongside clerics of Veth, especially around harvest time, Coenhelm gradually became aware of the cult of Haratt, the minor god of rats. At first he thought little of it, for there were countless minor deities, and there was no reason rats shouldn't have one. Then an idea dawned. Although he had no desire for revenge (he had no one to blame but himself), and saw little to be gained by destroying granaries, he immediately recognized a business opportunity in following Haratt. Spending what little he had saved on loosening tongues, and employing all his charm in the seediest parts of Halfway, Coenhelm eventually located a temple of Haratt. Here he pledged loyalty to the god.

Now a priest of Haratt, Coenhelm is a con artist of the highest caliber. He employs two methods. If rats already exist in a settlement, he approaches the local ruler and claims he can rid him of the problem in record time, in return for a sizeable fee, of course. Once a deal is struck, he uses his *beast friend* spell to lure the rats away, masking his miracle behind a song he invented. Should there be no rats, he creates a problem through his *summon beast* miracle, before approaching the ruler. Once he is paid, he quickly disappears, allowing any native rats to return to their lairs. In the event he is cheated by his employer, he uses his miracles to bring forth greater numbers of rats.

Unfortunately, Coenhelm's devious money-making scheme has not gone entirely unnoticed. A cleric of Veth



stumbled across his latest dupes and deduced a cleric of Haratt was at work. Although Coenhelm cannot be called a devotee of the rat god, clerics of Veth do not make differentiations. Coenhelm has had several run-ins with his antagonist, always managing to escape, but never able to defeat his nemesis.

DESCRIPTION

Coenhelm's appearance changes as readily as the wind. Knowing that should he be recognized by his former clients, he may face retribution, he changes the length, style, and color of his hair regularly. Sometimes he grows a mustache, other times a beard, and sometimes he goes clean shaven. He never uses his given name, adopting an alias at each settlement he calls. He bathes frequently, though the stench of sewers and rat filth is never entirely washed away. He carries a bag full of dead rats. All died of natural causes, but Coenhelm claims them as his kills in order to impress potential clients.

MANNERISMS

Coenhelm cares little for Haratt's cause, seeing rats only as a way to make easy money. Since he operates in society, Coenhelm is loathe to kill cats in public, lest it attract attention. Unwilling to sin, he has trained his vicious dog not to hunt rats, but to hunt cats. Of course, he is very apologetic to anyone witnessing the mauling, claiming that his dog simply made an honest mistake.

As a side-effect of his faith (possibly a curse from Haratt for taking his name in vain and misusing his miracles), he has developed a fear of cats. He explains this away to others as a severe allergy to felines or having been attacked by a wild cat as a baby.

GREYSER DOOMWALKER

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Crystalflow Confederacy; **Occupation:** Song mage; **Patron Deity:** None (though he makes sacrifices to both Nauthiz and the Norns).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Area: Helgioland) d4, Knowledge (Area: Nordmark) d4, Knowledge (Area: Seithrby) d4, Knowledge (Area: Sutmark) d4, Knowledge (Area: Vestmark) d4, Knowledge (Folklore) d8+1, Knowledge (History) d6+1, Notice d6, Song Magic d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Apprentice (Minor), Bad Luck, Vow (Minor: recover idol)

Edges: Arcane Background (Song Magic), World-Wise

Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait, stun, warrior's gift*

BACKGROUND

Greyser was born in Scathmoor, where he attended the Three-Notes Academy, learning the art of song magic. Raised on tales of great heroes, he was struck by the desire to adventure, to see the world, and to leave his mark in legends. He joined up with a small band of adventurers seeking glory in the foothills of the Sigil Peaks, where an old temple had been discovered by silver miners.

After driving out the small tribe of orcs who had taken up residence, the adventurers began to explore the ruined structure in earnest. The hand of fate guided them to a hidden chamber deep beneath the crumbling structure, wherein lay a small golden idol in the shape of a coiled sun dragon.

That night, while his comrades sat around the campfire discussing the value of the idol they had taken from

the crypt, Greyser slept a troubled sleep. Nightmares plagued him until dawn, filling his mind with images of clashing armies, terrible monsters ravaging towns, and citizens suffering from famine and pestilence.

As the sun rose, he pleaded with his companions to return the idol to its resting place, lest doom befall them all. They met his pleas with mockery and laughter, dismissing his cries as the ravings of an old woman. Greyser hastily collected his belongings, bade his friends farewell, and departed for Chalcis. Three days after he crossed the border, Silverdale was swallowed by mist.

A decade later he found himself in Vestmark when the orcs began their conquest of the southern lands. He was visiting Seithrby when Aethling Cuthwulf and his warlike kin invaded. He departed Ostvik shortly before the lizardmen's vast armies lumbered out of the Great Swamp and began their siege. He was exploring Nordmark when the king's return sparked a bloody civil war. He had passed through Watchgap Fort just days before a goblin army attacked. He vacated the Freelands' settlement of Dunross just a day before it was overrun by an army of rats. Wherever Greyser has walked since helping steal the idol, death and misery have followed in his wake, though not always to such notable and catastrophic degrees.

Greyser fervently believes he is cursed for his part in removing the idol, a curse that can only be lifted by finding the golden dragon idol and placing back on its plinth. Unfortunately, he has no idea if his former companions managed to flee Silverdale before the mists blanketed the land. That his presence in areas that subsequently suffer some disaster could be nothing more than coincidence has never crossed his mind.

DESCRIPTION

Weather-beaten by a life on the road and on the run from his fate, Greyser looks (and feels) a decade and more older than his 47 years. His long hair is gray and bedraggled, his skin sallow, and his sunken, pale green eyes have a haunted look. A worried look mars his features, creasing his brow into deep furrows. His shoulders are permanently slumped, as if he carries on them the weight of the world. Greyser's heavily-patched and frayed clothes are the rugged garb common to adventurers. Around his neck he wears holy symbols of Nauthiz and the Norns. Across his back is strapped a battered lute, while dangling from his belt is a short sword.

MANNERISMS

Greyser is of an extremely nervous disposition. He constantly fiddles with his holy symbols and rubs his lips with his long, bony fingers.

Whenever he encounters strangers he asks of news from lands he has just departed, always asking if there have been any wars, plagues, or other disasters. Should he hear bad news, he mutters over and over that it was his fault, rebuking himself for going there and bringing catastrophe on the citizens.



MAGE-BARON DEVAN VEIGHT

Race: Frostborn; **Hometown:** The Magocracy; **Occupation:** Heahwisard; **Patron Deity:** Maera.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Heahwisardry d10, Hrimwisardry d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Arrogant, Elderly, Heat Lethargy, Outsider, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Heahwisardry), Frigid Form, Noble, Winter Soul

Languages: Anari, Classical Anari, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Armor, bolt, fear*

BACKGROUND

Born the third child of a minor Magocratic family beholden to House Haldir, Devan is a frostborn. His father is said to have gazed upon his newborn son, a creature of his blood but not his race, for long minutes before proudly proclaiming him a true scion of House Veight.

Bullied by his peers for his frostborn heritage, Devan, who was never physically strong, quickly learned to manipulate others into fighting his battles.

The nobleman has made it his life's goal to locate one of the missing staffs of the mage-princes. In the innocent days of his youth he traded thoughts of his tormentors for dreams of gifting the staff to the ruler of Haldir, whose family had fallen from power centuries ago. Such an act would earn him widespread recognition, noble titles, wealth beyond imagination, and perhaps even marriage into the ducal line.

As he grew to maturity and fully grasped what the staffs represented, his aims changed. Yes, he would still locate one of the missing staffs, but now he would present himself as its rightful owner, claiming the title of Mage-Prince and becoming founder of a new principality. His name would live on forever through his descendants, the future Mage-Princes of House Veight.

After completing his Staff Day rite, Devan was awarded the title Mage-Knight and given lordship over a small agricultural village. Never one for the endless politicking of court and caring little for the workload involved in running a village, he placed a steward in charge of his holdings and set out into the world to begin his quest.

For nigh on 40 years he has wandered the length and breadth of the continent, following up every rumor that might lead to the discovery of one of the precious staffs. So far he has had little success, though he has grown wealthy from plundering ruins, and gained much arcane knowledge and power. But not even the gods can halt the tide of time.

Now an old man, Devan has but few remaining years to complete his lofty goal. Each day of failure wearies his soul further, and what began as a noble quest has become an all-consuming ambition.



DESCRIPTION

A frostborn in his 60s, Devan's skin is wrinkled and weather-worn, more gray than blue-white, and his hair is turning dark. Only his eyes, piercing blue, show any signs of youth.

As a member of the nobility, Devan likes to dress the part. His shirt is made from silk imported at great expense from the Jade Empire, his ornately embroidered jacket is white leather, and his trousers are soft kidskin. Whatever the weather, he wears a sable cloak trimmed with ermine and mink. Devan also believes in publicly displaying his wealth, primarily to remind people they are dealing with a nobleman. His cloak clasp is a silver disc emblazoned with the holy symbol of Maera and studded with small moonstones. On his fingers he wears rings of gold and silver, many of which are alchemical devices. Atop his head is an iron skull cap covered in beaten gold and adorned with a single moonstone. Even his staff is conspicuous—a length of ash tipped with yet another moonstone, this one the size of a child's fist.

MANNERISMS

Devan is a typical member of his culture—arrogant, haughty, and self-obsessed. He rarely engages in conversation with those he considers his inferiors, though he regularly issues them orders. He expects these to be carried out without hesitation. When he feels an underling has spoken out of turn he looks down his nose at them, raising one eyebrow in questioning disdain. Having suffered persecution based on his race, he prefers to judge others by their actions, not their looks.

VIKY AP-BAVOR

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Aspiria; **Occupation:** Lorekeeper; **Patron Deity:** Hoenir.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d8+2, Knowledge (Folklore) d8+2, Knowledge (History) d8+2, Notice d6, Streetwise d8+2

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Clumsy*, Loyal, Orders

Edges: Connections (Lorekeepers), Investigator, Lorekeeper, Scholar

Languages: Anari, Classical Anari, Selari, Trader

BACKGROUND

Viky was left on the step of the local temple to Eira as a young child. Her parents told her they were just going to the shops, but she hasn't seen them since. The clerics took the girl in, intending to train her in the ways of medicine. Alas, it quickly became clear that the girl was a walking disaster. Everything she touched seemed to break, she frequently spilled jars of herbs, dropped hot food on patients she was supposed to be feeding, and soaked bed-ridden patients she was meant to be sponging down. Things only got worse during puberty, for she grew into a lanky, flailing young woman. Although physically inept, Viky had an astute mind. She was always keen to learn, soaked up information like a sponge, and could recall facts as if she were reading a book.

Deciding she was more of a menace than a help in the hospital and dispensary, the clerics nurtured her intel-



ligence, finally suggesting she might find an apprenticeship with the Lorekeepers more to her liking.

As in the temple, her clumsiness quickly proved a major liability. Dozens of ink-soaked manuscripts, several injuries with a knife while sharpening quills, a collapsed stack holding fragile scrolls, and three major fires later, the Lorekeepers decided Viky should become a field agent tracking down forgotten lore rather than stay on as a copyist or librarian. Elated at the unexpected promotion, Viky packed her satchel and set out into the world.

She spends her time locating old ruins that might contain lost lore and convincing adventuring parties to let her join their ranks. She has little interest in gold and gems beyond what she needs to survive, and few adventurers place much value in musty tomes and crumbling scrolls written in archaic tongues.

DESCRIPTION

Viky is forever gasping, cringing, shrugging, and frowning, which is unfortunate, for her freckled face is attractive when she can keep it still. Her light brown hair is usually stained with ink or smeared with candle wax, as are her clothes. She prefers simple clothes of plain colors, as they are easier to clean and cheaper to replace. She wears a waterproof satchel containing her scrolls slung across her back. In her hand she clutches a staff, which serves as both a walking stick and a weapon (and sadly extends her reach for creating accidents).

MANNERISMS

Viky is an accident waiting to happen. Although intellectually focused, her arms seem to have a mind of their own, constantly swaying without any apparent conscious control and waving hither and yon as she emphasizes points of fact. Those who know her try never to leave anything breakable, spillable, or flammable within arms reach. Those who don't know her quickly learn.

After a life of being rebuked for knocking things over, dropping them, fetching the wrong item, or touching things she shouldn't, Viky has become meek and apologetic. On a bad day, every other word she utters is "Sorry." Her confidence grows only when discussing her specialties, but so does the animation of her limbs.

*NEW HINDRANCE

CLUMSY (MAJOR)

The character is a walking disaster. A natural roll of 1, or a modified roll of 1 or less, on an Agility or Agility-linked skill roll (regardless of Wild Die) is treated as a critical failure. If the Wild Die indicates a success, then any disaster occurs after the success has been handled. For instance, she may successfully strike a foe with her staff, only to then knock her opponent's lantern into a bed of dry straw, setting it alight.

CAPTAIN SABAT INUSUNU

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Midmark; **Occupation:** Sea captain; **Patron Deity:** Neorthe.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Area: The Seas) d6, Streetwise d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal, One Eye

Edges: Sea Legs*, Styrimathr

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

* See Region Guide #8

BACKGROUND

Sabat grew up on the coast of Midmark, the son of a humble fisherman. As a child he learned to gut fish and mend nets before taking his turn riding the perilous sea in search of its bounty. He had no need to learn his letters as a boy, and to this day has never bothered learning to read and write.

Although Midmark took no official action during the orc invasion of southern Vestmark, many captains saw the chance to make a profit ferrying weapons and warriors to the besieged city of Ostersund. Sabat enlisted as an oarsman on a snekke, not because he craved adventure, but because he felt it was his duty as a fellow Saxa.

For the best part of his late adolescence and early manhood, he sailed the treacherous Crystal Sound, battling orcs and sea monsters to keep the vital supply line open. Save for the loss of his right eye to an orc blade during a boarding action, he survived his tour unscathed.

Embittered by watching his comrades drown or be cut down by orc buccaneers, frustrated that while his comrades died the king of Vestmark did nothing to help liberate Ostersund, and seeing the financial rewards grow smaller and smaller each trip, Sabat resigned his post five years ago, having survived ten years on what had become known as the "Death Run."

Sabat's captain was hard but fair. Those who served him well were amply rewarded from the riches Vestmark offered the mercenaries, and the loss of his eye gained him a sizeable weregild payment taken from the orcs' plunder. A man of simple tastes and few needs, Sabat saved his wages while his shipmates squandered theirs on women and drink. When he left, he had wealth enough put away to buy his own knarr.

For several years Sabat and his crew operated as independent contractors, hauling cargo and passengers up and down the relatively safe waters of the Crystalflow. While he earned enough to keep his crew fed and his ship seaworthy, Sabat found life dull. Although loathe to admit it at first, the captain missed the fearful tension and constant threats that came with sailing the Death Run. Back then, he mused, he valued every minute of his life, for the shadow of death followed every ship that hoisted sail for Ostersund.



Sabat recently acquired an old map indicating the location of the fabled Isle of Maera. He plans an expedition to the island, but first he needs to earn enough money to buy a large ship and hire a stronger crew. To that end, he has begun engaging in smuggling, as well as ferrying passengers whose business they would rather keep quiet.

DESCRIPTION

Constant exposure to sun, wind, and salt spray has turned Sabat's skin the color and consistency of leather. The skin on his palms is rough and hard after a lifetime hauling ropes and pulling oars. His long hair and braided beard are sun bleached and wiry from salt spray. Sabat is missing his right eye. He is never seen without a pipe clenched between his teeth, though he rarely smokes.

His clothing is woven of heavy wool and treated with seal oil to waterproof it. During rough weather he dons a set of worn sealskin waterproofs. A dagger, encased in a sharkskin scabbard, hangs from his belt.

MANNERISMS

Life at sea is hard, and it leaves its mark on a man. Sabat always checks the palms of new crew and passengers, stroking the skin with his callused hands. Those whose skin displays trappings of hard work are met with a knowing nod, while those unaccustomed to physical labor are greeted with a disdainful look.

The veteran mariner is a man of few words, a trait he values in others. He judges those who wish to sail with him by their actions, not their boasts or flowery speech.

He is the master of his ship and dislikes others telling him his business. Those who disagree with him are casually told they have two choices—shut up or get off.

NICHOLAS AP-DANAIN

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Heligioland; **Occupation:** Explorer, numismatist, and travel writer; **Patron Deity:** Hoenir.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Area: Freelands) d4, Knowledge (Area: Liche-Lands) d4, Knowledge (Area: The Magocracy) d4, Knowledge (Area: The Marklands) d6, Knowledge (Folklore) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Streetwise d8, Survival d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Lame, Quirk (collects coins)

Edges: Connections (Cult of Hoenir), World-Wise

Languages: Anari, Heligi, Saxa, Trader

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in a popular Heligioland tavern, Nicholas suffered a childhood illness that left him crippled in one leg. Unable to play “huscarls and orcs” with the other village kids, he spent his days working for his parents, earning a few silvers cleaning travellers’ equipment and clothes. Believing he would never travel, he spent the evenings sitting among the tavern’s patrons, questioning them about their homeland and customs.

It was at this time he developed an interest in numismatics. Although the scield is the universal currency, each realm mints its own coins. Over the centuries since the scield was first adopted, each nation has minted many dozens of variations. While the other kids spent any coins they earned on sugary treats, Nicholas kept one of each, ordering them by realm and then by date. He developed something of a reputation in Heligioland, and adventurers would call on the tavern just to flick the youth an unusual coin to add his collection.



Shortly after his 14th birthday a cleric of Hoenir stayed at the tavern. He and Nicholas talked long into the night, the cleric filling his head with stories of lands the young man had never heard of. Knowing that no visitors from these distant lands would ever come to Heligioland, Nicholas decided he would go to them.

Despite his infirmity, Nicholas’ parents had never mollycoddled him or prevented him from doing what he wanted. Realizing that insisting he stay at the tavern would break his heart, they used what little money they had saved to buy their son a horse to help him on his travels. Although he regularly sends letters home, he has not returned to Heligioland in the better part of a decade.

After a brief foray into the Liche-Lands, about which he had heard much (and now never wishes to visit again), he headed south, passing beyond Hellfrost Keep into the warmer Hearthlands. Realizing he could never store all the knowledge he was learning in his head, he began recording his travels and findings. At first they were a travel journal, a shorthand list of what he had learned, but as time passed he began to write them up more formally, setting down the many customs and seemingly endless amounts of local folklore so that others might in turn learn from his experiences. Constantly in need of writing equipment and somewhere to store his journals, he quickly made many contacts among the cult of Hoenir.

Although currently still exploring the Hearthlands, Nicholas is keen to head further afield in the near future. While he is not suited to a life of active adventuring, his social skills, connections, and wide-ranging knowledge would make him a valuable asset to any travelers intent on exploring new lands.

DESCRIPTION

Despite spending his days travelling the wilds, Nicholas takes great pride in his personal appearance. His beard is well-trimmed, his hair always combed, and his clothes kept as clean as circumstances allow. He wears tough adventuring clothes—a thick woolen shirt, leather trousers, and knee-high boots. Over those he wears a reversible cloak; mud-brown on one side and gray-white on the other.

MANNERISMS

Nicholas suffers from curiosity, especially when it comes to local customs and coins. Although he has travelled extensively, he knows that while each realm has a unique identity so do the provinces and settlements that form them. He has little interest in wealth, though he always keeps an eye out for coins to add to his collection.

Years of dealing with strangers in the tavern prepared Nicholas for life in the wider world. He is a good judge of character, and adept at ingratiating himself with others. He is polite, an attentive listener, and knows just enough about the southern realms to put travellers at ease by speaking of their homeland in familiar terms.

STEFAN AP-PETO

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Chalcis; **Occupation:** Paladin; **Patron Deity:** The Norns.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6
Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Curious, Habit (Minor: staring), Orders, Quirk (leaves thread on corpses)
Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (Cult of the Norns)
Languages: Anari, Black Tongue, Trader
Powers: Boost/lower trait, precognition
Special: Due to his gift, once per session Stefan can elect to grant a +2 or -2 modifier to a single Trait roll made by a living creature within his line of sight. The modifier must be declared in advance of the roll.

BACKGROUND

A cleric of the Norns performing the Fate Day ritual is an omen. Stefan was attended by three clerics as he entered this world in utter silence. Each took the babe in their arms and whispered into his ear in turn.

Stefan was an odd child. He didn't talk until he was five years old, though it was apparent to all that he understood what others were saying to him. His first words were to his grandfather, a devout follower of Thunor—"The raven will knock thrice, and then you'll fly away with it." That night, a lone raven entered the house and tapped thrice on the old man's bed with its beak. He died shortly afterward of natural causes.

Throughout his youth he remained a quiet child, speaking only to reveal some cryptic glimmer of insight into the future. Perhaps not surprisingly, he had few friends. On his 10th birthday, a priestess of the Norns came to his parents' house and offered to train Stefan. His parents agreed without hesitation, for some of their neighbors were whispering the boy was mad, or worse, guided by an evil hand.

Stefan learned quickly, mastering the complex relation between free will and preordained destiny faster than his mentor believed possible. Throughout his training he remained largely silent, except when his mentor spoke of demons, golems, undead, and other creatures not bound to the Norns' loom. They presented Stefan with a conundrum he has yet to solve.

He understood that demons existed before Time, which began when the Norns first wove the threads of fate, and thus fell outside their jurisdiction. But it was the Norns who decreed that mages and necromancers would create soulless creatures, for without the threads being woven such acts could not have come to pass. After endless circular arguments he decided that whatever the truth, the abominations could not be allowed to continue their eternal existence. On his 13th birthday, Stefan took the holy vows of a paladin.



His relationship with his mentor ended a year later. One night, Stefan drew a single thread from his cloak and handed it to her. Grasping the meaning at once, his mentor thanked him, for he had given her a great gift—the time to make her final peace and prepare for her death. The following day, she was killed after being thrown from her horse. Since that day Stefan has wandered Rassilon, silently ending the existence of soulless creatures, and subtly guiding those with a great destiny toward their fate, for the will of the Norns cannot be ignored.

DESCRIPTION

Stefan prefers the full beard and long hair common to Saxa, rather than the neatly trimmed, clean-shaven look of the Anari. His chestnut brown mane clashes with his emerald green eyes. His eyes appear slightly dull and glazed, as if he is staring at some distant object. Otherwise well-kept, his cloak is heavily frayed, leaving the threads loose. The only ornamentation he wears is a leather bracer on his right arm embossed with a sandglass, and a silver brooch in the guise of a weaving loom.

MANNERISMS

Stefan has the unsettling habit of staring at people and smiling wryly, as if he knows something they do not. Combined with his taciturn nature, he comes across as slightly odd. When he does choose to speak, he is laconic, saying very little but imparting a lot of information. Unfortunately, he is prone to speaking cryptically, leaving others to discern the true meaning of his few words.

Each time he kills, he draws a single thread from the hem of his cloak and lays it on the corpse, a reminder that the Norns control a creature's destiny, and that all threads are cut at some point.

SKYLION

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Nordmark; **Occupation:** Huscarl; **Patron Deity:** Thunor.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d10, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Enemy (Minor: frost giant), Heroic, Loyal

Edges: Beast Master (Griffin)

Languages: Battletongue, Giant, Saxa

BACKGROUND

Named Torvald Cuthbertsunu at birth, the boy who would later become Skylion grew up playing with the scions of Nordmark's high nobility and royalty, including the current king. Torvald's father was a huscarl in the old king's household. A simple man of common stock, Cuthbert's service had nonetheless earned him the non-hereditary title of ridder.

Torvald killed his first man at 13. Following the king's untimely death, Cuthbert remained at his post, defending the royal place against rival claimants, and buying young Prince Geirmund time to flee to the west. His loyalty cost him his life. As the usurpers' armies battled for control of the capital, Cuthbert was felled by a sword. Without hesitation, Torvald, who was acting as a squire, snatched up his father's fallen spear and rammed it through the assassin's chest.

Fleeing the rapidly unfolding civil war, Torvald found his way to the stead of Lendmann (now Jarl) Bard Styrsunu, an old friend of his father and a loyal supporter of

the rightful king. On hearing his tale, Bard ordered the lad be given martial training. Two years later, Torvald, having blossomed into manhood, took his place alongside the other huscarls beneath the fluttering banner of his old childhood friend, Prince Geirmund.

During the campaign, Torvald was part of a small band sent to hound elements of the usurpers' armies attempting to take refuge in the Thunor Range. Separated from his comrades in a blizzard, the young huscarl sought shelter in a cave. He quickly discovered it was a larder, wherein something monstrous kept griffin carcasses and a vast store of huge eggs (no doubt those of griffins, he surmised). Torvald's musings were cut short by a huge pair of hands—the blue-white hands of a frost giant.

Dragged before the giants' jarl, Torvald swallowed his fear, held his head high, and proclaimed himself a servant of King Geirmund, in whose lands and under whose authority the giants' dwelt. Angered at the youth's statement, the jarl ordered the proud warrior be thrown back to his king. As the giants moved to grab him, Torvald darted for the nearest escape route he could see—a chained griffin. Without fear he leapt onto its back, sliced through the chain with his sword, kicked its flanks, and held on for dear life as it shot out through one of the huge window slits in the giant' fortress.

Torvald flew to his liege's camp, whereupon he told the king his tale and presented him the beast as a gift. Geirmund gazed into the creature's eyes for long minutes before insisting his huscarl keep it. "I have no need of such a beast with a lion of the sky among my huscarls," he said. Thus did Torvald become known as Skylion.

Three years have passed, and the griffin remains with Skylion, serving as his mount in gratitude for the human saving its life. With the king distracted by the task of rebuilding his shattered realm, Skylion has taken it upon himself to help expand Geirmund's army in a way that will enable the monarch to dispatch troops quickly to any part of the realm. He is seeking worthy companions to return to the mountain and steal griffin eggs from the giants' hold. In a few years he hopes Nordmark will boast an aerial cavalry company, with him as its captain.

DESCRIPTION

Barely out of his teens, Skylion's body has never quite developed. His facial hair is soft and downy, the mark of an adolescent, forcing him to keep it short. He wears his hair equally short, claiming that long hair is too easy for an enemy to grab. The only scar he bears from his time on campaign is a broken nose.

MANNERISMS

Skylion comports himself with dignified bearing, but is never condescending or arrogant. His speech is formal and stilted, the mark of a man used to dealing with the nobility, yet who does not rank among their number, and who holds a special place in society to which he has yet to become accustomed.



LADY ADELINE AP-BOVERT

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Aspiria; **Occupation:** Reluctant adventurer; **Patron Deity:** Eostre Plantmother.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Heraldry) d4, Notice d6, Riding d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Clueless, Stubborn, Wanted (Minor: by her father—he has hired investigators to track her down)

Edges: Noble*

Languages: Anari, Classical Anari, Fey

* Grants Charisma bonus only. Given +1 Skill point to make up for the loss of income.

BACKGROUND

Lady Adeline is the only daughter of a wealthy Aspirian vintner. Her family holds the title Count-Baron by dint of his impressive vineyard.

She was a troublesome child, prone to temper tantrums if she didn't get her way, constantly demanding attention, and refusing to lift her finger and perform anything even resembling manual labor (such as tidying away her clothes or combing her own hair).

Her father, a patient man, but one with finite limits, began searching for a suitable husband as soon as his daughter turned 12. While Adeline had fanciful notions of marrying a handsome baron, her father favored an economic union that would join his vineyard with that of another lesser noble.

Adeline did not meet her intended husband until the night before the wedding was due to take place. Sneaking out of her room, she peered through the door of the grand hall as her father welcomed his future son-in-law. Adeline's heart almost stopped, for there stood not a handsome young man with strapping muscles, but a bloated pig of a man, with greasy locks and beady eyes.

She ran to her mother, pleading with her to call off the marriage, but it was to no avail. Distraught, she fled to her room in tears and bolted the door. No one noticed her absence until an hour before the ceremony was due to begin, when guards, sent to escort her to the temple, had to break down the door. Adeline was gone. Unwilling to marry her father's choice, the young girl had packed a bag, stolen a horse, and fled into the night.

A year later, Adeline is still on the run from her father, who lost a lot of face (not to mention a profitable business partnership) when his daughter absconded.

Adeline has drifted across the continent, tagging along with numerous adventuring parties for safety and as a means of earning a crust. She is desperate to find a husband, one that ticks all the boxes on her list of what an ideal mate should be—titled, rich (preferably very rich), handsome, and totally attentive to her every desire. Adeline would actually make someone a fine wife, if she grew out of her childish ways, that is.

DESCRIPTION

An attractive girl with hard-lined features, Adeline tries her best to keep herself presentable, no easy task given her current lifestyle. She wears her auburn hair pulled back and tied in a single braid. Her large, blue eyes are the only soft features on her face. She highlights them using a mixture of wood ash and berry juice.

Years spent trudging through the wilderness have ruined all her decent clothes, leaving her nothing but the sturdy and unattractive garb common to adventurers. She wears a thin silver circlet adorned with a single bloodstone across her brow, and a silver cloak clasp fashioned to look like a coiled grapevine. Each "grape" is a deep purple alestone chip.

MANNERISMS

Although 16 and legally an adult, Lady Adeline remains a spoiled child. If she doesn't get her way, or if ordered to do something she finds disdainful, she crosses her arms, furrows her brow, purses her lips, and stares intently. Pushed too far, she breaks into tears and fits of sobbing. Even when forced to comply, she does so reluctantly and half-heartedly, hoping that someone will take pity on her and relieve her of her duties.

She constantly whines at every little thing she finds displeasing—her clothes are dirty, the ground is too hard, her food isn't cooked properly, no one is treating her with the proper respect her title deserves, and so on. The only time she stops is when she is asleep. Despite several years on the road, she remains totally clueless about life outside the nobility.



MITCH WULFRICSUNU

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Angmark; **Occupation:** Eager torch bearer; **Patron Deity:** Freo

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d4, Survival d4, Tracking d4, Throwing d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Inept (Major)*, Loyal, Overconfident

Edges: Luck, Scavenger

Languages: Orcish, Saxa, Trader

BACKGROUND

Mitch wanted to be an adventurer for as long as he can remember. Growing up in the bustling port of Leirvik, he would listen to adventurers' tales and the poems of skalds with wide-eyes, slack-jaw, and undisguised admiration. Such was his fondness for heroic stories that he neglected his studies and sought reports of heroic endeavors while his peers were learning a trade. Before he knew it, Mitch was an adult. With no particular skills of note, he had little hope of earning a living as anything other a laborer. But Mitch had a plan—he was going to be a famous hero!

At the age of 17, Mitch finally managed to convince a band of would-be heroes to take him along on their next adventure, accepting a position as torch bearer and pack mule in return for a half-share of any spoils.

The party headed north into the western Icebarrier, where rumors indicated there stood the remains of a old temple abandoned during the Blizzard War. The trip was an unmitigated disaster. Ill-prepared, the adventurers lost two of their number during a blizzard. The survivors managed to locate the crumbling temple, only to discover it was now inhabited by orcs. Driven by gold lust,

the party began their exploration. They emerged a day later, marginally wealthier than when they entered, but only because another three party members had died.

On reaching civilization, Mitch immediately began to tell the story of their "heroic" exploits against a fearsome foe. He expected cheers and handshakes, perhaps even some praise, but all he received was jeers and mocking laughter. It was an ignominious start to his adventuring career, but Mitch vowed to keep trying.

He has since served a dozen adventuring groups as a torch bearer, two as a full member, and explored countless ruins. Although his exploits have gone unnoticed by the world at large and his pockets remain empty of coin, Mitch's enthusiasm remains as great as ever.

Despite nearing middle age, Mitch still spends his days hanging around taverns in the hope of finding more adventuring work. He's not fussy whether he's hired as a lowly torch bearer or as a full party member, so long as he can earn a crust and prove how useful he is. He hasn't achieved his dream of becoming famous yet, but he remains confident it won't be long before the right opportunity comes along.

DESCRIPTION

A man in his late thirties, Mitch has a thick red beard and a shock of auburn hair. His blue eyes glitter like diamonds at the thought of adventure and excitement.

Mitch owns a lot of equipment, believing it is best to be prepared for any eventuality, no matter how remote it might seem. Most of his gear is second-hand or scavenged from corpses.

MANNERISMS

Mitch visibly brims with exuberance and confidence. He is always the first to volunteer for any task, gleefully ignoring that he might not be the best suited. Possessed of indomitable spirit and stamina, he is always pushing to continue on for another hour when others want a rest, to give battle when others favor prudence, and to stand when others elect to run.

Nothing has yet managed to dampen his spirits—he handles criticism with furious nodding, and rebukes fly over his head. Even when things go horribly wrong, Mitch sees it as just another opportunity to shine. More annoying than all this is his constant, cheerful whistling.

*NEW HINDRANCE

INEPT (MINOR/MAJOR)

For some reason the character isn't as skilled as others. He might be lazy, stupid, a slow learner, or just raised in isolation. The hero receives 2 fewer Skill points with the Minor version and 4 fewer with the Major version. Points earned from taking this Hindrance cannot be spent on Skills.



BERNARD

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Freelands; **Occupation:** Paladin; **Patron Deity:** Scaetha.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d8, Knowledge (The Withered Lands) d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Death Wish, Habit (Major: alcohol addiction), Orders, Yellow

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (Cult of Scaetha), Liquid Courage

Languages: Anari, Black Tongue, Trader

Powers: *Smite, weaken undead*

BACKGROUND

To see Bernard as he is now, one could be forgiven for believing the stories about his past exploits are fanciful fabrications of imaginative skalds.

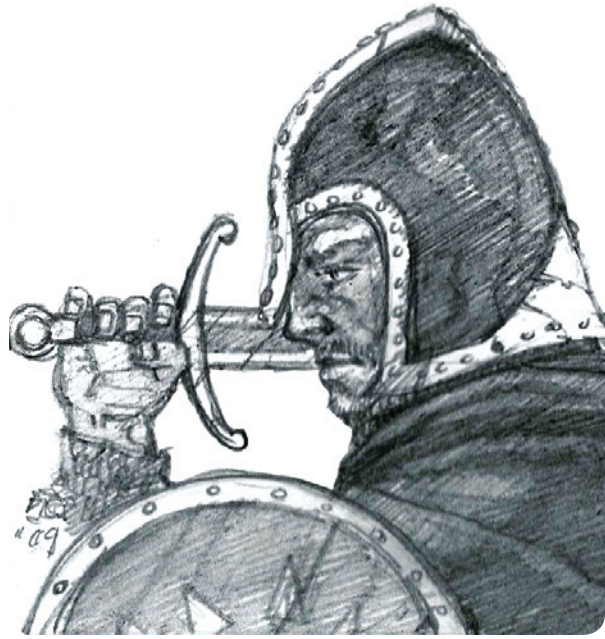
Bernard was 11 when he first encountered the cult of Scaetha. A band of grim-faced, dour warriors turned up at his village one morning and began mustering the militia. A small undead force had left the Withered Lands, and the village lay in their path. Too young to fight, Bernard watched the preparations through the window of his home, marveling as the holy warriors set men to work building defenses and prayed for strength in the coming battle, displaying no emotion as what might be their last few hours on the mortal realm passed.

His admiration for them grew greater still when, during the fight, the village militia fled in terror, leaving the small band of paladins standing alone. Although several were cut down, the rest remained resolute, eventually winning the day through a combination of faith and steel. Bernard knew then that it was his destiny to become a paladin of Scaetha.

At the age of 13 he was apprenticed to the local temple to begin his training. Many clerics argued against his appointment, claiming he had never tasted the fear of death expected of candidates. Bernard forced them to eat their words, for he showed no signs of fear as he was shown mangled corpses and the aftermath of battles, nor did he quail when told of the fearsome powers of the undead. Bernard took his holy vows at the tender age of 15, entering the order of paladins a year later.

His service has taken him to the most feared lands on the continent. He braved the bleak, haunted Liche Lands, casting his gaze upon the divine seals on the Liche Priest's tomb. He spent two years fighting frost wights alongside the garrison at Icedale. He ventured into the Withered Lands more than once, searching for clues to the disappearance of the feared liche Angtharinox, and bringing the second death to many fell horrors that lurked in its gloomy expanse.

His name is still spoken of reverentially in the cult, for among the many undead he has slain, none were as great or as feared as the vampire warlord Blackfang, who



Bernard bested in single combat on the steps of an accursed temple of Hela deep in the heart of the Withered Lands.

But the years spent faithfully serving the goddess of death took their toll on Bernard, insidiously gnawing away at his faith and his spirit. He witnessed many friends die fighting for an endless cause against legion enemies. He experienced first hand the gut-wrenching horrors and twisted malevolence of the Withered Lands, carrying the burden of fear the realm generates on his soul.

His slide into abject despair was as gradual as it was total. A stiff drink before battle, excuses to avoid entering haunted lands, reluctance to lead the charge. For the last two years Bernard has wandered the lands, trying desperately to avoid his holy duties. When he must fight, he seeks courage in hard liquor. In times of peace, he drinks to forget the death and horror he has witnessed.

DESCRIPTION

Years of heavy drinking have left the paladin with ruddy cheeks, a red nose, and deep bags under his sunken, bloodshot eyes. He frequently goes months without trimming his beard or hair, and his personal hygiene is poor. His breath reeks of cheap, strong alcohol.

MANNERISMS

Bernard has lost his nerve and is in serious danger of losing his faith. Once a proud warrior, he now avoids eye contact and physical confrontation, hiding his shame and trying to erase the memories of his past in a bottle of cheap grog. He is morose and morbid at the best of times, but grows increasingly worse the more he has to drink. Where once he would have led, he now prefers to shelter behind his comrades' shields.

WOOD WARDEN ELLENEIRLIR

Race: Hearth elf; **Hometown:** Angarion; **Occupation:** Wood warden; **Patron Deity:** Eostre Plantmother.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Druidism d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Bloodthirsty (Minor version affecting only orcs and those who despoil forests), Orders, Phobia (Minor: Claustrophobia), Small

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Druidism), Connections (Wood Wardens), Forest Born, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms, Wood Warden

Languages: Fey, Hearth Elven, Orcish

Powers: *Barrier, beast friend* (+2 to cast), *entangle, voice on the wind*

BACKGROUND

Elleneirlir's parents died when she was young, ambushed by orcs while gathering herbs. She displayed no emotions during the funeral rites, took no comfort in the well-meaning condolences offered her, and shed not a single tear during the mournful dirges. Instead, she stared impassively as her parents were laid to rest.

The orphan was adopted by her father's brother, a wood warden captain. His duties left him little time for his niece, though he loved her as his own daughter. For her part, Elleneirlir remained aloof, refusing to display

any affection in public or private. Although she had intended to become a druid like her mother, she began the journey down a different road. While the other children played after their druidic studies, Elleneirlir practiced archery alone, firing arrows at target dummies with a cold stare until her young muscles ached.

Upon reaching adulthood (30 years old) she declared her intention to join the wood wardens, something her uncle took with a mixture of pride and concern, for he saw behind her eyes the desire for bloody vengeance rather than the desire to protect the forest from all harm. Despite his misgivings, the ancient laws forbade him from refusing her, so long as she passed the final test—slaying an orc warrior. After years of theoretical and practical exams, Elleneirlir departed her village to claim her right to wear the hallowed badge of the wood wardens. She returned a week later and dumped the heads of three orcs at the captain's feet.

Now 80 (approximately 25 in human terms), Elleneirlir remains a wood warden. Her desire to slay orcs and protect the forests has carried her beyond the leafy borders of Angarion, though she returns every decade without fail to lay a single flower on her parents' grave.

DESCRIPTION

Elleneirlir is very short for an elf, standing barely five feet in her socks. Combined with her slight build, she is almost girlish in appearance. Although attractive, she wears her face as a stern mask, betraying emotions only with her large brown eyes.

Her clothes are typically elven, well-made yet durable, and colored to blend in with the vegetation of her forest home. Over her armor she wears a heavy, fur-lined, waterproof cloak of green and brown hues. An iron brooch fashioned in the wood warden symbol—a cluster of oak leaves growing from a stylized sun disc—fastens the cloak just below her angular chin.

MANNERISMS

Elleneirlir lives behind a serious mask, keeps people at arm's length emotionally, and prefers her own company. Time has not healed the pain she felt at the loss of her parents. She is afraid to open up to others in case she cries, something she sees as weakness, and refuses to form close bonds in case those she cares about die. She says little, preferring not to waste her breath on meaningless small talk. Her inability to speak any human tongues only reinforces her self-imposed isolation.

Having spent much of her life either outdoors or in the natural environment of an elfhome, she becomes nervous and agitated if confined. This only affects her when underground or in small stone buildings. That she is suffering is noticeable only by her constantly clenching fists and wide, darting eyes.

She hates being called Ellen, and refuses to answer to that name under any circumstances. The only thing she hates more is orcs, creatures she shows no mercy.



ARMOS THE BLACK

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Heligioland; **Occupation:** Bandit paladin; **Patron Deity:** Ellanhere (minor goddess of canines in her Dargar aspect, see page 70).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Survival d6, Tracking d4

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Minor), Mean, Wanted (Major: in Heligioland)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Beast Master (war dog), Followers*

Languages: Anari, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Beast friend* (canines only), *fear*

Special: In return for taking an additional Major Hindrance, Armos has been allowed to take an extra Edge because it rounds out his backstory. Only his main hound, covered by the Beast Master Edge, is replaced if killed.

BACKGROUND

Armos the Black began life as a lowly serf. Orphaned by disease, he was taken into the household of a minor nobleman and set to work looking after his master's hunting hounds, a particularly vicious breed of war dog. Frequently beaten in order to remind him of his place, Armos' took brutal vengeance on the younger and weaker servants.

For all his faults, Armos' master allowed the youth to study with the cult of Ellanhere at the local Eostre temple. This was no act of generosity intended to improve his servants' lot in life—the training intended purely to boost the efficiency of the hounds. But Armos' soul was tainted by anger and violence, and he was easily swayed to the darker path of Dargar, god of mindless violence and lord of wolves. In secret he dominated his master's hounds, besting each of the creatures in physical combat to become the pack's top dog.

One summer day, while accompanying his master on a hunt, Armos and the nobleman became separated from the main group, having raced ahead with the hounds. Their quarry, a large boar, gored one of the valuable dogs before escaping into the dense undergrowth. Armos' lord took his frustration out on his servant, striking him repeatedly with his riding crop and accusing him of incompetency. Something in Armos' soul snapped.

With a cruel laugh he casually ordered the snarling hounds, already driven into near frenzy by the smell of the blood of one of their own, to attack. Cowered into obedience by the paladin, the dogs brought down man and horse. As his master screamed for mercy, Armos watched, a look of feral excitement on his face as flesh and muscle was ripped from bone. Hearing the horns of the other hunters, Armos fled into the wilds, taking part of the dog pack with him.

Armos could easily have escaped punishment for his crime—there were no witnesses, and his master was



renowned for his cruelty to his dogs. It was an accident waiting to happen. But Armos had no wish to return to a life of servitude—he was a free man at last, the master of his own destiny, and lord of loyal servants.

Unwilling to bow to others ever again and driven to prove his superiority, the former huntsman took to banditry. For years he has plagued the hinterlands of Heligioland, preying on the weak and killing without conscience, yet never backing down from a fight with a superior foe. Such is his reign of terror that the disparate communities have worked together to raise a substantial reward for Armos' capture.

DESCRIPTION

Tall and lean, Armos has a feral look about him. His dark brown eyes are cold and hard, with a gleam not unlike those of a wolf seeking prey. His mouth is permanently set in a cruel sneer. Several deep scars run across his face, trophies earned in proving his superiority.

MANNERISMS

Mean, greedy, and excessively violent, Armos keeps his dogs, and those few bandits willing to work with him, in line through fear and intimidation. Any follower who steps out of line or exceeds their authority is given a swift and brutal reminder who is top dog. Due to his clerical vows, his hounds are only rarely beaten. Unlike most bullies, Armos does not back down if threatened by a stronger creature. Instead, he seeks to dominate it, for he knows that a moment of weakness would cost him the support of his hounds, an act which could lead him to become the next victim of their powerful, snarling, saliva-stained jaws.

MAARIT VADDA

Race: Finnar; **Homeland:** The Unclaimed Lands; **Occupation:** Protector of the wilds; **Patron Deity:** Eostre Animalmother.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Craft: Jewelry) d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Clueless (regarding civilization), Delusional (Minor: thinks her bear can talk), Small

Edges: Beast Bond, Beast Master (polar bear)

Languages: Finnari, Orcish, Trader

BACKGROUND

Born to a nomadic Finnar tribe in the High Winterlands, Maarit thought her destiny was to follow the ways of her ancestors—learn a useful trade, get married, and sire children. But the Norns had other ideas, and their will cannot be refused for long.

Like most young children she was given the task of tending the reindeer herds while they grazed, watching for predators, keeping the valuable beasts from eating poisonous moss, and such like. On the day her life fate was set in motion she was in the Great Forest, chasing down a calf which had strayed from the herd.

As she crept up on the lone animal with lasso in hand, arrows whistled from the vegetation, striking the calf dead. Shocked into inaction, she stood helpless as a band of orcs burst into the clearing. She had barely mumbled a prayer to Eostre, asking that her death be quick, when a mother polar bear accompanied by a young cub charged

into the orcs, swatting them with its gigantic paws and cleaving through their limbs with its powerful jaws. No orc survived the encounter, but neither did the mother bear. As it lay dying, its blood staining the snow pink, Maarit whispered another prayer to Eostre, this time thanking the bear for its aid and wishing it a speedy journey to the next world.

After covering the carcass in snow to hide its scent from predators, she scooped up the cub and carried it back to her tribe's camp. Hunters collected the dead bear, for its bones, sinews, and furs were invaluable to her people—Finnar never waste usable animal parts, considering it disrespectful to the beast's spirit and an affront to both Ullr and Eostre.

Fully aware the cub would die if abandoned, Maarit adopted it, naming it Luminen (Finnari for "Snowy"). The young Finnar and Snowy grew to adulthood together, forming an inseparable bond. Despite being a wild beast by nature, Snowy showed no aggression toward the girl or her tribe, except in defense of Maarit or when ordered to drive away wolves.

On her 15th birthday, having proven herself an adult, Maarit approached her parents and declared she had received a vision from Eostre, informing her she was to become a protector of the wilds, an itinerant wanderer whom the gods would guide to those in need of assistance. As is normal when a Finnar decides to find his own path in life, Maarit's family gifted her what they could—a spear, a short bow, leather armor, a saddle (Maarit being small enough to ride Snowy), a small felt tent, a month of food, and a sledge to carry her belongings.

Maarit has spent the last two years roaming the High Winterlands with Snowy, aiding those she comes across. She never stays in one place for long, for the Unclaimed Lands are vast and there are many in need of succor.

DESCRIPTION

Maarit stands 5' 2" tall, small for her people. Whereas most Finnar are lean, she is of thin build, which only serves to make her look even smaller. Her brown hair and eyes are almost the same color as her weather-beaten, sun-tanned skin.

She dresses in simple yet effective winter clothing made of reindeer hide. Her fur belts and the lining of her cloak are made from the fur of Snowy's mother. She wears a lot of jewelry, all of it homemade from silver or bone, and studded with tiny gems.

MANNERISMS

Maarit is initially shy around strangers, though she quickly warms to them and opens up if they prove friendly. Generous by nature, she often gives people she encounters gifts of homemade jewelry, both to brighten up their day (and appearance) and because it makes her feel good. She is under the delusion that Snowy can talk, and spends a lot of time consulting with him, something others find a little odd.



ARTURIUS AP-ALEVAN

Race: Anari; **Hometown:** Shattered Moor (Seithrby);
Occupation: Priest and explorer; **Patron Deity:** Kenaz.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d4, Faith d8, Fighting d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Selari)* d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Anemic, Cautious, Delusional (Minor: believes the Selari knew a great secret), Orders
Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (Cult of Kenaz)
Languages: Anari, Frosttongue, Selari
Powers: *Deflection, light*
** Covers folklore, heraldry, history, law, religion, and so on for the extinct Selari culture.*

BACKGROUND

Although he claims Seithrby as his birthplace, Arturius was a young child when his parents fled to Shattered Moor ahead of the advancing army of Aethling Cuthwulf. His family settled in Far Reach, where his father, a smith, quickly set up a forge.

A sickly child highly susceptible to the cold, Arturius spent his days huddled around the forge for warmth, listening to the rhythmic clang of metal on metal and the stories of adventurers, frequent patrons of his father, who had explored the Shattered Moor. It was from these heroes he first heard of the Selari, whose culture dominated the northern lands before the Blizzard War.

Arturius joined the cult of Kenaz at the age of 14, drawn by the heat of the temples and the desire to rid the world of the Hellfrost, which he blamed directly for his many ailments. Considered too sickly to become a paladin, he was ordained as a priest and placed in charge of the archives.

Although he craved a more active role, the library was warm and comfortable, and Arturius grew to enjoy his sedate life. Once again he came across references to the Selari. According to the records their lands were deliberately targeted by the Hellfrost armies, their civilization laid to ruin, their culture exterminated. What, he mused, singled out the Selari for such devastation?

Over the next few years he painstakingly pieced together fragments of lore, studying what little knowledge existed regarding the Beacon, Cave of Shadows, and Tomb of the Golden Kings, and accidentally uncovering the location of numerous lesser sites previously forgotten, and unexplored for centuries. He came to the conclusion that many of the major ruins fit together like the pieces of a child's puzzle, linked in some inextricable way to form a bigger picture.

To his dismay, he realized that studying books would only lead him so far to solving the riddle. Although still subject to bouts of sickness, his superiors saw the wisdom in his argument that the Selari ruins must be ex-



plored, mapped, and studied first hand. Several believed as Arturius did that the Selari may have possessed, or had at least had knowledge of, a means to defeat the Hellfrost, a secret that cost them everything.

Arturius has spent ten summers, a short season this close to the Icewall, studying the Selari ruins. During that time he has unlocked much forgotten lore, though he admits he is no closer to discovering the true secret of the lost culture. He is always willing to accompany adventuring parties headed onto the Shattered Moor, trading knowledge of the location of unexplored ruins in return for protection and help mapping them and recording their ancient texts.

DESCRIPTION

Arturius has a long, straight nose, high cheek bones, an angular chin marked by a distinct cleft, and a wide, thin mouth. He dyes his long hair orange, and wears it swept back from his forehead. His fingers are long, tapering to finely cut nails. His frame is thin, lingering sicknesses preventing him from gaining weight.

His dresses in the red and orange colors common to his cult, favoring a thick wool shirt and trousers reinforced with leather on the knees when adventuring. A heavy fur-lined cloak wards off the cold, held in place by a gold brooch resembling two curling tongues of flame. A single gold ring adorns each hand, each engraved with Kenaz's holy symbol.

MANNERISMS

Whereas many clerics of Kenaz have a fiery temper and are quick to leap into action, Arturius prefers to think long and hard before he acts. A sickly man, he is frequently wracked by fits of violent coughing, and shivers even in warm temperatures.

WILHEIM MAERSCALSUNU

Race: Saxa; **Hometown:** Vestmark; **Occupation:** Murderer and vengeance; **Patron Deity:** Dargar.

Attributes*: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d4

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: All Thumbs (gnarled hands), Ugly (partially lupine face), Vengeful (Major), Wanted (Major: Bernard Kunungrsunu, paladin of Sigel)

Edges: Fleet Footed

Languages: Beastspeech, Saxa, Trader

** In return for taking such a horrendous fate and an additional Major Hindrance, Wilhelm has an extra point spent in his attributes.*

BACKGROUND

Wilhelm Maerscalsunu lost everything during the orc invasion of southern Vestmark. One day he had a loving wife, children, a comfortable home, the next he had nothing save a gaping hole in his soul. Grief rapidly turned to anger.

He voluntarily enlisted in the army, becoming renowned for his zeal in slaying orcs, but no amount of orc blood could mend the hole. He began torturing orc captives, inflicting injuries and torments so barbaric that even his battle-hardened comrades could not stomach the sight. Few would serve with him, and he was eventually ejected from the army.

His desire for vengeance had become all-consuming,

gnawing away what little humanity remained. He prayed to the gods to grant him the power to enact his revenge. No god answered, but something did.

One stormy night, Wilhelm was approached by a strange, dwarflike creature. It said it had heard the human's prayers, and that it knew a ritual, one so ancient, so dark, that it had never been carried out to its full extent. On the first night of the Deorcmonan, Wilhelm must kill an innocent with his own hands at the hour of moonrise, rip out its heart, and consume it raw before the next sunrise. Thirteen times the ritual must be carried out without fail or the magic would end, and the ritual for naught.

When the final heart, which must be that of a blood relative, was eaten, Wilhelm would become a remorseless killer, a creature immune to physical harm, a fiend driven only by its burning desire for vengeance. The ritual would involve certain physical changes, for no human could host the power the ritual granted. It would also make Wilhelm a wanted man, for the gods of light would seek to end the ritual before it could be completed.

The strange creature departed before sunrise, leaving Wilhelm alone with his thoughts. For two weeks he mulled over the creature's words and the actions he would have to take to earn his revenge on those that had taken everything he held dear. On the first night of the next Deorcmonan, Wilhelm stepped onto a road from which they could be no turning back.

Three months have passed since that dark, moonless night. Three hearts have been consumed. Wilhelm still has a long way to go, but each passing month, each terrible meal in his stomach, he feels his power, and his desire for vengeance, growing ever stronger.

DESCRIPTION

Wilhelm stands on the dark border between man and beast, for his form is now neither one nor the other, but some terrible hybrid. His hands, which are concealed beneath gauntlets, are gnarled, the fingers stubby, covered in dark, wiry hair, and tipped with rough claws. His jaw extends from his face in a short, canine muzzle, his mouth filled with jagged teeth. Further changes are no doubt yet to come before the unholy ritual is finished.

He keeps his gruesome visage concealed beneath a tightly-wrapped scarf and a long, wolfskin cloak, revealing it to no one.

MANNERISMS

Wilhelm has been driven down a path of utter darkness by his burning lust for revenge. It has consumed his soul, and now it is consuming his flesh and his mind. He desires only the completion of the barbaric ritual, and lets no man stand in his way. Although still human, his voice is changing. It is now deeper, harsher, more guttural, and he is prone to snarling and growling when angry. His appetite has been replaced by the longing for raw flesh, and he isn't fussy as to what species.



ULF BENQTSUNU

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Midmark; **Occupation:** Huscarl; **Patron Deity:** Rigr.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6+2, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Illiterate, Loyal, Vow (Minor: Find King Orr)

Edges: Alertness

Languages: Auld Saxa, Battletongue, Saxa

BACKGROUND

The son of a huscarl, Ulf was trained to fight and wear armor from an early age, developing a fine physique and excellent reflexes. His induction into the king's huscarls was a formality, for his father was a loyal servant and that Ulf was his father's son was obvious to all.

He had served for four years before his father volunteered to follow King Gust Surnirsunu into the High Winterlands. Night after night for three years he stood watch over the main gate to the king's palace, patiently watching for the return of his father and his liege. It was at this time he took Rigr as his patron, for his duties as watchman were long and arduous.

Worry and long hours on sentry duty began to dull his fighting edge. To take his mind off his father's disappearance and ensure he remained in fighting shape, he volunteered for a tour in Ostersund, braving the perilous journey across the Crystal Sound to the besieged city. He had intended to remain there for just a year, but when no word of his father's return reached him he decided to remain where he could best serve the Saxa people.

On hearing that the king's son, Orr, had come of age and was ready to accept the crown, Ulf, by now a veteran warrior renowned for his tenacity and courage, returned to Midmark to pledge allegiance to the new king and resume his duties as a loyal huscarl. But no sooner had Orr taken the throne than he planned to head north in the hope of discovering his father's fate. Ulf requested permission to accompany the king, as his father had done to his liege. The young lord refused, for he had heard of Ulf's devotion in maintaining long vigil during Gust's absence. Orr publicly praised his huscarl, stating that he would feel safer knowing he had men such as Ulf watching over his lands while he was away. Ulf protested, as was his right, but it was to no avail.

Thus Ulf resumed his vigil for a second time. Two years passed without sign or word of the king and his entourage. Ulf vigilance stretched far beyond the palace, for he had many friends among the huscarls of the nobles. Although he knew no specific details, he knew of plots against the queen—the nobles would not stand for another absentee king. The huscarl approached the queen, informing her of the dissension, and asking permission to track down Orr—dead or alive, he must



return to Midmark to settle the succession and thwart any possibility of a civil war.

Although reluctant to lose a trusted ally in perilous times, she granted Ulf permission, seeing wisdom in his words. In order to speed up the search Ulf appointed other huscarls to venture north in different directions. He has been on his quest for almost a year, and while he has discovered nothing concerning Orr's fate, he remains dedicated to his endeavor.

DESCRIPTION

Ulf carries himself tall, for he is a proud Saxa from good stock. He wears his straw-blond hair long, and braids his impressive beard into two strands. His eyes are dark green, the color of a storm-tossed sea. His dress is a little archaic, for Midmarkers have been slow to adopt new ways. His gear is traditional for a huscarl—spear, medium shield, armored shirt, and a helm. Although old (it being handed down from his father), it is in immaculate condition.

MANNERISMS

A staunch Midmark Saxa traditionalist, Ulf looks upon and treats Anari as second-class citizens. He refuses to learn their language, or meet them halfway by learning Trader. He lives by the code of his ancestors, prizing confidence, courage, honesty, loyalty, and piety above all other traits. Although he appears relaxed, he is always alert, noticing and noting small details that may be useful later. He is always the first to volunteer for sentry duty in the middle of the night, using this time to honor Rigr, his patron, and plot the next step in his quest.

THE HAND OF MAERA

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** The Magocracy; **Occupation:** Assassin; **Patron Deity:** Niht.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Black Sheep, Magic Forbiddance, Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Hand*, Arcane Resistance

Languages: Anari, Classical Anari, Trader

* *She has no Connections or Orders due to being an ex-member of the organization.*

BACKGROUND

No one knows the name of the Arcane Blade, nor where she was born. Indeed, beyond the fact she is a woman, she is a total mystery to those seeking to catch her—and that's the way she intends things to stay.

Born Jenni of House Wadehoff, a minor Magocratic family allied to House Wyse, it quickly became apparent that she possessed absolutely no magical talent. The cult of Maera was summoned to investigate the child. After lengthy examinations, they deduced she had absolutely no ties to the threads of magic, being unable even to use alchemical charms. Furthermore, so great was Maera's curse that the girl was resistant to magic.

Shamed by their daughter's curse, her parents gave her to the cult of Maera, washing their hands of the taint to their weak yet proud bloodline. As far as the other houses were concerned, the child was stillborn, earning Jenni's mother much sympathy among her peers.

Plucky, obedient, and yet also with a free spirit, Jenni

was eventually spotted by a nobleman from House Darovia. On hearing she could work no magic, he purchased the child to train as an Arcane Hand, knowing that she would have no interest in stealing his secrets. Better still, her resistance to magic would make her less susceptible to enemy attacks, and would save him the arduous task of empowering her with spells.

Jenni served as a secret bodyguard, her true identity as an Arcane Hand known only to her master and mentor. Her master had many enemies, perceived and real, and in addition to her regular duties he employed Jenni as an assassin against his rivals. She thrived on the danger, becoming a cold, merciless killer.

Her master was a cruel lord, fond of punishing his servants for any infraction. During a feast, where Jenni was acting as a serving girl, she accidentally spilled a goblet of wine on her lord's robes. He reacted swiftly and harshly, blasting her with magic. Her curse saved her life, though the attack left her badly scarred.

That night she enacted a bloody revenge, plunging a dagger into her master's heart. She disguised her crime and faked her own death by torching the manor, knowing full well the authorities would never bother checking for the remains of the servants.

Masterless, trained as an infiltrator and killer, skilled at interrupting the spell workings of mages, and capable of resisting their offensive powers, she chose to become a full-time assassin. Calling herself the Hand of Maera, she is both valued and feared by the Magocratic nobles, hunted both to hire and capture. She only accepts contracts on mages (through a network of agents) and charges a high fee. Such is her reputation for success that it is a price those who need rid of their enemies happily pay.

DESCRIPTION

Beyond an approximate height and weight, the nobility of the Magocracy have no accurate description of the feared assassin, for she wears a black face mask and long leather gloves when working her trade.

Beneath the mask is a woman with two large scars cutting across the left side of her face. Despite her injuries, she is not an unattractive woman. Indeed, the scars give her a strange beauty. She wears her raven-black hair long and unbraided, a simple black headscarf keeping it out of her gray eyes. When not on a mission, she dresses in whatever style is unlikely to draw attention. She may wear the drab garb of a peasant woman while walking the market, only to waltz through a court in the extravagant robes of a nobleman's servant the next.

MANNERISMS

The Blade switches her demeanor as often as her outfits, adopting whatever mannerisms suit her current disguise. Her true demeanor is one of calculating, icy cold calm. No matter how she is acting, she is constantly analyzing the situation and plotting two steps ahead.



ROBERT AP-FORTAIT

Race: Anari; **Hometown:** Coglelund; **Occupation:** Priest; **Patron Deity:** Hela.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+2, Knowledge (History) d8+2, Persuasion d4, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Anemic, God Cursed (Eira), Orders, Phobia (Reflective surfaces)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (Cult of Hela), Scholar

Languages: Anari, Black Tongue, Classical Anari

Powers: *Sanctuary, zombie*

BACKGROUND

Robert was born to a life of privilege. His father was a prosperous Coglelund merchant, a man with the ear of Prince Leon and who enjoyed great status. With vast sums of money at his disposal any path in life might have been open to him, but the Norns had dealt him a cruel fate, a fate that would lead him down a dark path.

Robert was a sickly child, always thin and constantly afflicted by illness. The shadow of death fell over him several times, and it was only by sheer force of will the boy survived to adulthood. His parents spared no expense in hiring healers, but all gave the same diagnosis—the boy was incurably ill and would die an early death.

Apprenticed to his father's mercantile business, Robert began training to be a merchant. His parents hoped he would become a cleric of Var, but the Norns once again had plans of their own. Frustrated after yet another serious bout of sickness, Robert went to the local temple of Eira, demanding a healer cure him of his blight and offering a sizeable fee as reward. On being told to his face there was no cure (something his parents had kept from him), Robert lashed out, striking the cleric dead. With his dying breath, he cursed the youth, vowing that Eira would no longer protect him from death.

Robert's father managed to cover up the incident with a huge donation, but he disowned the angry young man for bringing shame to his family. Penniless, Robert left Coglelund, vowing to find a cure without Eira's help.

It was in the Freelands, while seeking shelter from a storm at a gloomy temple of Scaetha, that he first heard of the Liche-Priest and his immortal servants. He at once knew what he must do to survive—he would become an undead. Robert had no wish to become a mindless skeleton or a vampire forced to feed to survive the ages; he wanted the ultimate prize—to become a liche!

Knowing that only the cult of Hela would possess the secret rite necessary to become such a powerful immortal, he methodically tracked down a cell of cultists. He joined their unhallowed ranks, quickly rising to the position of priest. Although he now worshipped the goddess of undeath in name, he had little true devotion to her



long-term cause. The cult served a purpose, and any fell ceremonies he participated in were stomachable because they were a means to an end.

Unfortunately for him, the ritual required to become a liche had been long lost. Indeed, no new liches had existed since the time of the dreaded Liche-Priest. Undeterred, for he had not expected instant success, he began scouring the ruins from that era, vainly hoping that one of the diabolical undead lord's minions had left a record somewhere. Not much of a warrior, he relies on adventuring parties for support, offering them his wisdom in return for their swords. He claims to be a historian searching for relics capable of defeating the soon-to-be-released Liche Priest.

DESCRIPTION

Robert's poor health has left him gaunt and pale, an image of walking death. His hair has turned prematurely grey and is rapidly thinning. Only his eyes, bright green pinpricks shining from his shrunken flesh, display any vibrancy. He is clean shaven, as is the Anari custom.

He disdains bright clothing, having discovered it only accentuates his deathly pall. Now he dresses in drab greys, the traditional colors of a scholar. He wears a plain gold ring on his right hand.

MANNERISMS

Apart from the fire burning in his eyes, Robert comes across as a typical scholar—slightly dull, studious, and dedicated. He has a growing fear of reflective surfaces, for his skeletal appearance is a constant reminder the shadow of death stalks him. He visibly shakes and breaks out in a cold sweat on seeing one. Embarrassed by his condition, he puts these uncontrollable panic attacks down to his ailment.

AUDE AP-HERNAUDIN

Race: Anari-Saxa; **Homeland:** Heligioland; **Occupation:** Hearth Knight; **Patron Deity:** Sigel.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Survival d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bad Eyes, Cautious, Loyal, Orders

Edges: Connections (Hearth Knights), Hearth Knight

Languages: Anari, Frosttongue, Orcish

BACKGROUND

Aude comes from a long-line of Hearth Knights, though she is the first woman from her family to enlist.

The youngest of five daughters, Aude was always a tomboy, much to her father's delight and her mother's dismay. While her sisters mastered cooking, weaving, and running a household, skills vital to securing a good husband, Aude would watch her father training in the training lists, mimicking his moves with a wooden stick while battling imaginary orcs and giants.

She would walk with him while he patrolled the indomitable walls of Hellfrost Keep, where the family lived, fetching him bowls of steaming soup and mugs of warm ale from the kitchens to keep off the chill. She was popular with the knights under her father's command, whom she served similarly, becoming something akin to an adopted child to those knights without families.

Sensing that his youngest child would never make anyone a good wife, and regretful the gods had not seen fit to bless him with a son, her father began to train the

growing child. While the girl wanted to wield weapons, her father first built up her physical and mental stamina, instilling in her the belief that a healthy body and mind was key to winning any battle, not strength of arms. During his days off, he would take her into the wilds, instructing her in building shelters and hunting.

Aude was just 11 when her father, an experienced Sword Captain, led a patrol out of Hellfrost Keep to hunt down a band of orcs marauding the western border of Heligioland. He returned laid over the back of his horse, slain by cowardly archers while leading the charge. While his family and peers mourned his passing, Aude grieved hardest of all, for she out of all her family was closest to him. She had lost not just a father, but a role model.

Aude's mother tried to steer the girl toward finding a husband, or at least learning a worthwhile trade that would serve her well in the future. But Aude made it abundantly clear she intended to follow her father's footsteps and join the Hearth Knights, shouting down her mother by claiming that not to do so would break the family tradition of serving the illustrious order, an act which would dishonor their ancestors.

Aude expected no favors from the masters of the order, and she received none. Still, her father had prepared her well, and Aude quickly earned her right to spot the Shield Knight's sacred emblem. Her mother attended her passing out ceremony, but did so with tears in her eyes.

Now 16, Aude has served with the Knights for two years. She has gone on a few patrols and engaged in minor skirmishes against goblins, but she has yet to face a truly dangerous foe. In secret, she preys she never will, for although a capable warrior of stout heart and strong sword arm, Aude has no confidence in her abilities.

DESCRIPTION

Aude is pretty in a girlish way, and has yet to develop a full figure. Many people mistake her for a boy at first glance. Removing her helmet doesn't help, for she wears her dark brown hair cut short. Her blue eyes, a gift from her Saxa mother, and mouth are sorrowful even when Aude is enjoying herself. Her long sword, an heirloom handed down her mother's side, is never far from her hand, being a source of comfort.

MANNERISMS

Aude is a quiet, contemplative soul, fanatically loyal to her comrades yet more at home with her own company. Although a fully-fledged Shield Knight, she suffers from indecisiveness and a lack of confidence. She prefers to plan everything in minute detail so as to alleviate the chance of failure and stall having to make a decision that may prove the wrong one. Part of her problem is that she struggles to live up to her father's reputation, fearing that she will shame his memory. The other problem is her degenerating eyesight, a result of snow blindness she suffered as a youth that has left her extremely short-sighted.



AVHOLDT FLAMEHELM

Race: Frost dwarf; **Hometown:** Karad Marn; **Occupation:** Rune mage and healer; **Patron Deity:** Ertha
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Healing-Rune d8, Notice d6, Survival d6, Swimming d4, Throwing d6
Charisma: -3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Habit (Minor: constantly fidgeting), Heat Lethargy, Insular, Overconfident, Slow, Stubborn
Edges: Arcane Background (Rune Magic), Low Light Vision, Mountain Born, Tough, Winter Soul
Languages: Dwarven, Frosttongue, Orcish, Trader
Powers: *Healing-Rune (boost/lower trait)* (Healing and Vigor only), *healing, succor*

BACKGROUND

Avholdt grew up the youngest son of a minor clan elder. With older brothers destined to ascend the seat of power or become military commanders, Bori was left to his own choice when it came to a career. He had initially wanted to be a warrior, but he lacked the typical dwarven fortitude, being something of a runt. Refused permission to enlist, he went around the problem by becoming a rune mage specializing in healing, intending on serving alongside the army should they ever be called to battle.

While researching something for his mentor, he stumbled across a reference to the moðsognar, the first race of dwarves created by Ertha. He told his mentor of his discovery, believing he had stumbled upon some great secret lost to his people. He was dismayed to learn that not only was knowledge of the first race known, but that the subject was taboo, never to be discussed. Bori maintained an interest in the subject, though he never informed his peers as to the nature of his research.

Avholdt was present sixty years ago when the orcs invaded his homeland. During the bitter retreat his wish to serve alongside the warriors came true, though it was one he quickly regretted. His head filled with stories of courage and honor, he found the reality to be a bloody, violent, soul destroying affair. He expected the mighty dwarf huscarls to wade through their foes, but instead he found himself dragging mangled and dead dwarves from the field of battle. For 20 years he labored, putting aside his feelings and carrying out his duties without question. But the day dawned when he could stomach no more.

Playing on his father's status, he gained audience with Thegn Rugnar. In front of the assembled noble council he raised the matter of the moðsognar, asking why the beleaguered dwarves did not seek the aid of their forebears. If the legends were true, he argued, then surely victory was assured. Better yet, he continued, with their help the dwarves could retake Karad Khan from what-ever evil had befallen it. Thegn Rugnar flew into a rage, ordering the young medic to return to his unit and never speak such words again. Avholdt stood his ground.

Drawing his knife he vowed that he would find the moðsognar and enlist their aid, even if the thegn was too weak to do so. Before the huscarls could beat him senseless for his insolence, he hacked off great swathes of his beard, invoking the name of Ertha and vowing never to rest or regrow his beard until he had completed his quest and resorted his honor.

Promptly exiled, Avholdt has spent the past 40 years exploring the labyrinthine passages of the Underearth, desperately seeking a way to reach the hidden lairs of the first race. He is not above enlisting outside help, though he is careful never to reveal his true purpose, for even he has no wish to speak of the moðsognar to non-dwarves.

DESCRIPTION

Avholdt is highly unusual in that he has shaved his hair and beard, considered a mark of great shame among his people. He is underweight and generally unfit, something he has never been able to improve.

He cares little about his general appearance, though as a physician he understands the need to bathe regularly. His clothes are scruffy, with worn elbows and knees. Frequently they are covered in caked on grime from one of his frequent subterranean expeditions.

MANNERISMS

Avholdt is filled with a nervous energy, a trait rare in dwarves. Whereas most of his kin are sedentary except when it comes to matters of war, Avholdt has to keep moving, even if that means drumming his fingers or pacing up and down.

When discussing or working toward his goal, his eyes become those of a fanatic: wide, bright, and filled with an inner fire that borders on maniacal.



ORYZARIX

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** The Magocracy; **Occupation:** Arcanologist and priest; **Patron Deity:** Maera.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, City Dweller, Greedy (Major), Orders (Cult of Maera & the Reliquary)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Connections (Cult of Maera), Connections (The Reliquary), Reliquary (Arcanologist), Rich

Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Classical Anari. Heligi

Powers: *Dispel, sanctuary*

BACKGROUND

Oryzarix, the son of a courtier of House Tharkness grew up around magic. Although he had absolutely no talent for the art, he found it fascinating, for it offered limitless potential. When he came of age he joined the cult of Maera, studying arcane lore and working alongside mages to better understand their art.

His studies brought the young cleric vast knowledge concerning relics. Oryzarix quickly fell under the spell of the enchanted items, desiring to possess one of the fabled items. After years of diligent research, Oryzarix uncovered his first minor item. A week later, a stranger called at the temple and asked audience with the cleric.

He told the young scholar he was an agent of the

Reliquary, and that he had an offer to present. He spoke at length to Oryzarix over dinner, telling him of the danger of relics, and how the Reliquary was devoted to protecting mankind from his own greed. Later that night the stranger offered Oryzarix membership in the order, for he had long been watched and displayed the talents necessary to serve as an Arcanologist. Furthermore, his status as a cleric of Maera would grant him access to the cult's libraries, wherein lay much arcane lore.

Oryzarix accepted without a moment's hesitation, though purely for selfish reasons. He had made it known to a few trusted heahwisards that he had found a relic, and they had offered him huge sums of money. Although the stranger's arrival had thwarted a sale, with the resources of the Reliquary at his disposal, he could unearth more relics.

A decade after entering the Citadel, during which time his service was exemplary, Oryzarix was granted rare status, being allowed to travel outside the walls without an escort. He does so as a cleric of Maera seeking to recover relics for the cult, never revealing his true allegiance or purpose. For eight years he has used his dual status to track down numerous relics. To begin with he called upon the services of the Reliquary to retrieve the relics and return them to the Citadel, at least in most instances. He kept a few relics back, quietly selling them to those who could his rates through a network of agents.

Oryzarix's superiors are becoming suspicious, for in recent years the Arcanologist has found very few relics. What they do not know is that he has unearthed as many as before. Grippled by gold-fever, Oryzarix has become a relic trader, caring nothing for their intended use or the morals of their new owner so long as their money is good. He has a secret sanctuary set up in a ruined fortress, from where he runs his illicit business.

DESCRIPTION

Tall and lean, Oryzarix shows little signs of impending middle age. His thick, light brown hair is long and thick, his chin clean shaven, his skin as smooth as when he was a youth. His fingers are long and thin, more like those of a skaldic musician than a scholar. His green eyes are serious, though there is a twinkle behind them.

MANNERISMS

A man bent on acquiring wealth beyond imagination, Oryzarix passes himself off as a humble priest, acting meek and mild, concealing with excitement when a true relic is discovered behind an air of mere curiosity. But once such a treasure is found, his mind begins scheming, plotting a way to acquire the valuable object.

Born and raised in the town of Tharkness and spending much of his young adult life in the Citadel, Oryzarix finds the wilderness a vast and frightening place, full of hidden dangers. He is extremely nervous and jumpy outdoors, prone to gesticulating wildly at rustling bushes and naively insulting those who live a rural life.



HESELBINE SHARP-TONGUE

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Royalmark; **Occupation:** Skald; **Patron Deity:** The Unknowable One.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Folklore) d8+1, Knowledge (Riddles) d8+1, Persuasion d6, Song Magic d8, Taunt d8
Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Illiterate, Pacifist (Major), Quirk (Never takes anything seriously)
Edges: Arcane Background (Song Magic), Rich
Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Saxa, Trader
Powers: *Elemental manipulation, stun, voice on the wind*

BACKGROUND

Heselbine is the eldest of nine children. While his father worked to feed his brood and his mother tried her best to keep the house clean, their firstborn kept his siblings amused with stories. By the age of ten he was earning money as a storyteller, entertaining patrons in the village mead-hall with songs and tales learned from his elders. He attracted the attention of a passing skald. Seeing great promise in the young man, he paid for him to enroll in the prestigious Three-Notes Academy. Although upset to lose their childminder, his parents also rejoiced, for as a skald their son could earn a decent living and mingle in the higher echelons of society, perhaps even earning a position in a nobleman's court.

Heselbine proved an adept pupil. Although illiterate, he was capable of memorizing the key points of lengthy and complex tales and filling in the gaps around them with his own imagination. A rural peasant, Heselbine was bullied by his wealthier peers. While some might have ran away or resorted to violence, the young skald retaliated with his tongue, mocking his tormentors and making them the subject of ridicule. Quickly realizing that harmful words stung as painfully as weapons and that the injuries lasted much longer, Heselbine renounced violence, an oath he has maintained throughout his life.

His training complete, Heselbine set out into the world to play his trade. His jovial nature and happy-go-lucky attitude gained him work, while his vast repertoire of stories and quick imagination opened many doors. With a knack of relating heroic stories directly to his patrons, thus alluding to them having the same qualities as the heroes of old, he rapidly became a favorite among the Nordmark nobility. As a result, both his reputation and wealth swelled.

Although he lived a good life and wanted for little in terms of material goods, Heselbine wanted more than playing for generous patrons. He knew that while the stories of old could never be allowed to pass from memory, new tales of brave heroes overcoming terrible odds were also required, tales that related specifically to the troubles of here and now, not the bygone days of old.



Heselbine hires himself out as a chronicler, offering adventuring groups the chance to have their exploits recorded in song and verse for posterity. He refuses to lie about heroic deeds, but he is willing to goad would-be heroes into taking risks so as to make their story more interesting.

DESCRIPTION

Heselbine suffers from borderline vanity. His beard is immaculately trimmed, his long hair frequently washed and combed, tied back over his ears with a simple leather band, his nails cut neat and short, and his clothes always clean. Even his teeth are white and straight.

Patronized by the nobility and rewarded well for his entertainment, Heselbine is bedecked in expensive jewelry. A gold torc sits around his neck, a gem-studded brooch fixes his ermine cloak around his shoulders, and silver ring adorn his nimble fingers. His clothes, while wool and linen, are well-woven and stitched, worthy of any senior courtier or lesser nobleman.

MANNERISMS

Heselbine is a jocular and jovial chap, always cracking jokes and making light of serious situations. Fond of practical jokes, he claims to have an invisible lute, which he plays with exquisite skill. It is actually a clever use of the *elemental manipulation (air)* spell accompanied by accurate pantomime actions.

Possessed of quick wit and sharp tongue, Heselbine is never at a loss of words. Instead of rebuking others, he uses quips to satirize them, hoping to shame those who have a destiny into decisive action. A man of peace and a shrewd judge of character, he uses well-aimed words to wound his enemies.

EPOCHENRELLIAN

Race: Hearth elf; **Homeland:** Angarion; **Occupation:** Bladedancer; **Patron Deity:** Sigel.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Clueless (Outside of forests), Loyal, Vow (Minor: complete his quest)

Edges: Agile, Bladedancer, Forest Born, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms, Two Fisted

Languages: Fey, Hearth Elven, Trader

BACKGROUND

On the day Epochenrellian was born his parents received a visit from a cleric of the Norns, a rare event indeed, for hearth elves put little faith in the machinations of the triple goddesses, rarer still because the cleric was a human. As she cut Epochenrellian's cord and whispered his destiny into his ear, a beam of sunlight fell across the babe's face, bathing him in Sigel's divine glory.

Naturally graceful and as fluid in his movements as running water, Epochenrellian always wanted to become a bladedancer. As a child he neglected his chores and other duties, preferring to watch the warriors practice their deadly dances. At night, while his parents slept, he stole out from the house, flawlessly mimicking the complex moves with a pair of stout sticks.

No one was surprised when the young elf was awarded the twin blades of a bladedancer by his village's ruling noble. What came as a total surprise to the assembled crowd was that no sooner had the ceremony ended than members of the Shining King's personal bodyguards, the Brilliant Blades, strode into the village, locked their

blades around the panic stricken boy in a protective circle, and demanded Epochenrellian follow them.

Epochenrellian was marched to the capital and into the Shining King's palace, an honor few elves of even high noble status had been awarded in the past century. He expected to be greeted by the king's chamberlain, the king's spokesman. His heart nearly leapt from his chest when he was informed his audience was with the Shining King in person, for no one except the chamberlain had stood in the king's presence for nigh on 100 years.

To this day, he refuses to discuss the appearance of his liege with anyone. All he will say regarding the meeting is that the monarch spoke to him in gentle yet authoritative tones, telling the awestruck elf that Sigel had granted him a vision. The sun god told him that the "beacon must be rekindled," further instructing him that the "one who dances and cuts the dark" was ordained to act as his agent on this quest. Epochenrellian's name literally translates as the "dancer who slashes through the darkness."

Duty bound to obey his liege's commands, Epochenrellian did so with great humility, immense trepidation, and a healthy measure of abject terror. His task is but a few months old, and the elf warrior is still making his way out of the Hearthlands. Although the elves are famed for their knowledge of olden days, they know little of the modern world beyond their leafy borders, for the realms of other races are of scant interest to them.

Epochenrellian has no real idea where he must journey to fulfill his goal. He has heard word of a human culture of Sigel-worshippers known as the Selari, who he believes live far to the north. Visiting them seems a good place as any to begin.

DESCRIPTION

Slender and graceful, Epochenrellian has the gaunt, angular features common to his race. His mouth is thin, almost lipless, with down turned corners that give him a glum look. His fine, golden yellow hair falls to the middle of his back and is worn swept back in the traditional elf style, held in place by a thin gold band adorned with a sunstone. Two thin braids hang down in front of his ears. His bright green eyes are alert and attentive.

He wears green and brown leathers, favoring the mobility the lightweight and sturdy material allows over encumbering metal armor. His only weapons are a pair of thin bladed elven short swords, one of the traditional weapons of the bladedancers.

MANNERISMS

Epochenrellian is a natural hunter—always alert, and ready to leap into action at a moment's notice. He tries to maintain an air of seriousness, but like his kin he is fond of music and dance. He treats strangers with aloofness, sizing them up and waiting for their actions to reveal their true motives. He gives his trust only rarely, but when he does, he would die to protect his friends.



NEORIC AP-SAMUR

Race: Anari; **Hometown:** Blackstone Barony; **Occupation:** Resistance leader; **Patron Deity:** Thunor.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Wanted (Major: agents of Regent Blackstaff)
Edges: Noble (currently dispossessed)
Languages: Anari, Classical Anari, Trader

BACKGROUND

Life was good for young Neoric. The only son of an important Blackstone knight, he spent his youth hunting and feasting while learning the arts of politics and leadership. His life, like those of so many of the barony's citizens, changed 15 years ago.

His father was a loyal supporter of Baron Godwin. When the baron died, he was the first to speak out against Orol Blackstaff taking the title of Regent, claiming that it was the right of the College of Knights to guide the people until young Pendel came of age. Within weeks, Neoric's father was accused of sedition and arrested. A jury of his peers, hand picked by the Regent, sentenced him to death.

At the age of 17, barely old enough under Blackstone law to hold office, Neoric inherited the title of knight, becoming ruler of his family's extensive and prosperous lands. Although young, Neoric had sense to keep his tongue still, refusing to speak out against the man he privately accused of murdering his father, yet never once supporting the Regent's position or policies.

As Blackstaff's excesses grew and his stranglehold on power tightened, Neoric found it impossible to be an idle spectator any longer. In a defiant gesture he summoned the College of Knights to session, as was his right as a member, speaking out against Blackstaff and calling upon his peers to remove the tyrant.

But Neoric found no allies. Some of his peers were too afraid to speak out, for many of those who had done so had been arrested and their lands confiscated. Others were lackeys of the Regent, either seeking to benefit through loyalty or outsiders placed in positions of power by Blackstaff. Like his father, Neoric was arrested.

The young nobleman was popular with the masses, and Blackstaff hesitated in ordering his execution, fearing an uprising. Instead, he had Neoric cruelly tortured, hoping to extract a confession that would seal the rebellious nobleman's fate. Neoric suffered unspeakable torment for six months before the newly-formed Lord's Men rescued him and smuggled him into Ostmark.

Blackstaff used the escape to condemn Sir Neoric, claiming that an innocent man had nothing to fear. He declared his lands confiscated, installing a black-hearted lackey as the new ruler.



Since his liberation, Neoric has served with the Lord's Men, recruiting allies both in and around Blackstone Barony, and using his contacts to acquire weapons with monies taken from the Regent's treasury shipments. Thanks to his fervor, his willingness to lead raids against the Regent's interests, and his former status as a knight, he has become something of a figurehead among his fellow resistance fighters.

DESCRIPTION

Neoric is of average height and build, though he carries himself with a quiet air of authority that demands attention. Most noticeable about him is a livid, red, jagged scar, a constant reminder of Regent Blackstaff's tyrannical rule, that runs down the left side of his face from temple to chin.

Neoric's once black hair is now streaked with premature grey, though his luxuriant moustache has lost none of its sheen. Although his scar is an identifying mark, he wears his hair swept behind his ears, displaying the ugly wound so others can see the truth behind his words.

Despite being dispossessed of his lands and wealth, he retains a fine set of clothes, for his honor and heritage have not been taken from him.

MANNERISMS

Although his life is imperiled, Neoric refuses to hide behind aliases. A man of immense honor, he speaks his name with pride, having no fear of the assassin's blade, for he believes his cause is righteous and just, and thus he is protected by Thunor. That said, he refuses to use his noble title until he once again rules his ancestral lands.

He speaks of his homeland with a mixture of passion and sorrow, making no attempt to disguise his love of his people and his hatred of Regent Blackstaff.

DARAN BEAR-ARMS

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Royalmark (outlawed); **Occupation:** Pugilistic paladin; **Patron Deity:** Tiw.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Survival d4

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Death Wish (find a worthy foe), Habit (Minor: always cracking his knuckles), Outlaw

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Berserk, Martial Artist (Pugilism & wrestling)

Languages: Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Riding, Shooting, and Throwing), *smite*

** Daran commits a mortal sin if he ever uses weapons other than his fists or grapples. This includes offensive spells such as bolt or blast, even in alchemical devices. Smite is permitted, but only on his fists. In return for this restriction, he has an additional Edge.*

BACKGROUND

After a difficult and lengthy labor that almost killed her, Daran's mother finally delivered a hulking baby boy. His enormous strength was evident from an early age, for even as a child he could carry weights that grown men struggled to lift. Although not the village idiot, Daran ran a close second, for what he gained in muscle he lacked in brains and common sense.

Unable to find a skilled apprenticeship, Daran became a logger, his strength allowing him to do the work of a team of lesser men. The hours were long, the work back-breaking, and the rewards pitiful, but Daran found the hard, laborious work to his liking.

One evening, Daran was in the mead-hall drinking

when strangers entered, seeking shelter for the night. On seeing the massive form of the lumberjack, they began to tease him in a light-hearted manner. Daran's kith and kin had long known to mind their words, for he had a temper as mighty as his physical strength. Daran pleaded with the men to stop, but his words only fuelled their taunts. Before anyone could warn the strangers to back off, Daran had lashed out with one of his immense fists, breaking the man's neck in a single blow.

Although much loved in his community, the locals had no choice but to put Daran on trial. He was found guilty and outlawed, never again allowed to return home. Collecting his few personal effects, Daran trudged into the wilds, still unsure what he had done wrong.

Months later he found himself enlisted in a temple of Tiw. An itinerant paladin had witnessed Daran beat three orc warriors to death single-handedly, and immediately recognized a soul blessed by the god of strength and war. Daran told the man of his exile, for he was an honest soul prone to speaking his mind. The paladin waved away his past, claiming that through training he could learn to master his temper and focus his strength.

With his prestigious strength, his mentors expected him to become a servant of one of Tiw's two-handed weapon sub-cults, such as the Tiw the Great Swordsman or Tiw the Pikeman. Instead, he opted to honor a little known aspect, Tiw the Pugilist, swearing a holy vow never to use any other weapon than his fists and grapples.

Although he is not entirely sure what the term means, Daran is an itinerant mercenary, wandering the land in search of work and the opportunity to test his strength and faith. Somehow he has convinced himself that Tiw has set him a challenge—to find a foe worthy of defeating him before he will be allowed into the Afterlife.

Daran has beat goblins, orcs, and ogres to death with his hands, suffering many injuries yet always emerging from battle the victor. Now beginning to wonder if he will ever encounter a creature he cannot defeat, he intends to head north in search of a frost giant, or maybe a dragon. Sadly, he has no true concept of the awesome might of these creatures.

DESCRIPTION

Standing well over six feet, barrel-chested, and with arms like tree-trunks, Daran is a hulking brute of a man. He wears his hair and beard long and shaggy, adding to his reputation for being more bear than man. His chest, shoulders, and arms are covered in thick black hair.

MANNERISMS

Daran has a fiery temper he is barely able to keep under control in normal circumstances, yet alone when truly riled. He takes any slight personally, reacting with punches before his brain has time to engage. Honest, innocent of the ways of treachery, and gullible, he is unable to grasp the concept of keeping secrets, making him something of a liability.



JASA ASH-HANDS

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Chalcis; **Occupation:** Elemental of the Convocation; **Patron Deity:** Kenaz.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Elementalism d8, Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Folklore) d8*, Notice d6
Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Shy (-1 Charisma), Stubborn
Edges: Arcane Background (Fire Elementalism), Attractive, Spell Finesse (Arcane: *bolt*)
Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Classical Anari, Trader
Powers: *Bolt, deflection, elemental manipulation (fire)*
**Jasa has a -1 penalty to generic Folklore rolls, but +2 regarding stories of Angar Kindlefire.*

BACKGROUND

Jasa had an unhealthy fixation with fire even as a young girl. As a youth, she spent most of her time helping her mother around the hearth and watching the lowly charcoal burners at work, showing little interest in learning to weave or, as she matured, in the young men of her village. Her nickname, Ash-Hands, is not complimentary, yet it has stuck with her.

Jasa knew of the Convocation from the tales of skalds, and, upon reaching puberty, asked her father if she could join. Jasa's father was only too keen to be rid of the girl, for although she had a womanly figure she had few abilities that would make her an attractive wife. Furthermore, the Convocation did not demand any fees for tutoring, which pleased the simple farmer to no end.

Jasa learned well, but unfortunately, she quickly became distracted from her studies in following a legend. Said to be the greatest fire elementalist who ever lived, legends state Angar Kindlefire achieved fantastic power. All fire elementalists agree that none of their ilk has ever come close to reaching his level of mastery. Almost a thousand years later, Angar is still regarded as one of the top five arkhwisards of all time—among fire elementalists he is regarded as the greatest ever arkhwisard. Driven by the desire to learn his secrets, the Convocation dispatched numerous expeditions to find his fabled workshop down the centuries. All returned empty-handed, though not without severe losses.

The Convocation lost interest after the Blizzard War, and the story of Angar Kindlefire's Workshop faded into myth. Jasa, though, believed the many stories. She admitted the passage of time had likely distorted the facts, but at their heart was a kernel of truth. Her fixation with the great arkhwisard led to her being mocked by her peers and chastised by her superiors, for the great promise she showed as a student was being wasted on futile research into a legend.

Even when Jasa uncovered documents written by Angar long believed lost, her fellow elementalists scorned



her for chasing a dream. Frustrated and driven by what she had learned, Jasa packed her bags and set off to find the lost workshop on her own.

DESCRIPTION

Jasa is an attractive young woman, with fine features framed by flowing auburn hair. Her eyes are the color of cold ashes, but glitter with energy. She could be a truly beautiful woman, but her downward gaze and nervous smile distracts from her natural allure.

Although she has no interest in marriage, she has received many gifts from would-be suitors within the Convocation. Her clothes are well-made and exquisitely decorated, her thick cloak is luxuriant velvet, a soft shade of red bordered with yellow that compliments her hair. All are decorated with glittering bloodstone and hearthstone chips. Seen from a distance, she has the appearance of a walking flame.

MANNERISMS

Bullied as a child because of her disinterest in the womanly arts, Jasa remains a very shy young woman. She is clumsy around the opposite sex, and tongue-tied around strangers. Only when speaking about the great Angar Kindlefire does she talk with confidence, though often she tends to get carried away and babble unless stopped.

Jasa also has a stubborn streak a mile wide, something her mentors have chastised her for more than once. Rather naive regarding the ways of the world, she expects people to behave as she does—with honor and honesty.

WAYAN

Race: Engro; **Homeland:** None (nomadic); **Occupation:** Priest; **Patron Deity:** Nauthiz.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Gambling d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Outsider, Quirk (Fiddles with his jewelry), Small

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Luck, Sneaky (Lockpicking), Spirited, Thief

Languages: Engrosi, Fingerspeak, Trader

Powers: *Bolt, boost/lower trait* (Agility, Climbing, Lockpicking, Notice, and Stealth only)

BACKGROUND

Wayan's father was a wainwright (a craftsman who made and repaired wagons), moving from village to village throughout spring and summer months in search of work. Although his skills were much in need, Wayan's father was never paid as much as human wainwrights, and he was always treated with an air of suspicion. A mischievous youth, Wayan did little to improve the engros' reputation for thievery, for he was always stealing small items. He had little interest in acquiring wealth, and his larcenous activities were a mixture of alleviating boredom and making up the difference in his father's wages.

Wayan saw inequality in wealth as a great injustice, unable to comprehend why those with wealth and material possessions did not share their riches and goods with others, as was the engro way. He began to steal more than his father was owed, leaving the excess outside orphanages and the houses of the poor in a bid to

try and balance out the injustices he felt made the world such a bad place.

Wayan was caught cutting the purse of a man he believed to be a rich merchant. The pale-faced engro, who expected a beating at best and the wrath of the law judiciary at worse, was shocked when the man robbed him of everything he owned, even down to his loincloth! His intended victim politely told the engro he could win his possessions back in a game of chance. If he lost, Wayan would have to work for the stranger until he stole enough to cover his losses. Angered at yet more injustice, Wayan nonetheless accepted. Nauthiz was with him that day, for he won back his few goods and made a small profit.

The man took the loss with good grace. He revealed himself to be a paladin of Nauthiz, and offered to train the engro in the finer arts of thievery. Idealistic, Wayan replied that he had no interest in personal wealth, and that he only stole to help the poor. When the thief stopped laughing, he informed Wayan that Nauthiz did not care what a thief did with his earnings, only that he stole from those who could afford it. Informing his father he had found an apprenticeship, the engro promptly joined the cult of Nauthiz.

Now middle-aged, Wayan is a fully trained thief and priest of Nauthiz whose morals would shock most other thieves. He steals only from the rich, giving all but the little money he needs to survive and appease his greedy god to those in need. In addition to his independent acts of burglary, Wayan actively helps those who have been unjustly taxed or robbed of their few possessions.

He never reveals he is a thief, nor that he has any intention of helping the victim. Instead, he acts as a concerned citizen interested in the victim's sorry tale. He then recovers the missing artifact, covering his costs by lifting other items from the victim's oppressor.

DESCRIPTION

Wayan is getting on in years. His weathered skin is showing more wrinkles than he would like and his hair is beginning to thin. His brown eyes are alert, shining with a mischievous gleam. He covers his balding pate with a headscarf, the traditional headgear of his people. One side is jet black and used only during missions, while the other is brightly colored.

Wayan positively glitters in sunlight. Like many engro, he prefers to wear his wealth rather than conceal it. Each finger is adorned with a gold ring, large gold hoops hang from his ears, and he wears a gold pendant and a string of silver beads around his neck.

MANNERISMS

Wayan has a serious and playful side. His serious nature comes to the surface when listening to stories of injustice. During this time he twists the gold rings on his fingers, his eyes never leaving those of his "client." Only when engaged in larcenous activities does he begin to relax and enjoy himself.



HERESWITH THE BLIND

Race: Saxa; **Homeland:** Freelands (Aslov); **Occupation:** Priestess; **Patron Deity:** Eira.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Healing d8+2, Knowledge (Alchemy) d6, Persuasion d6, Survival d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Blind*, Orders, Pacifist (Minor), Poverty

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles)*, Connections (Cult of Eira), Healer, Spell Finesse (Arcane: *healing*)

Languages: Anari, Engrosi, Saxa, Trader

Powers: *Healing, succor*

* During the Deorcmonan, Herewith loses her Blind Hindrance and Arcane Background Edge. She is still subject to sins, though.

BACKGROUND

As a child, Herewith was orphaned and taken in by the cult of Eira. Raised by the cult, she was trained as a healer and herbalist. The girl had little interest in caring for others, for she was selfish and vain by nature. Instead of learning about herbs, she preferred to play or flirt with the local boys, for she knew they found her attractive and she greatly enjoyed their attentions.

One day, a priestess of the Norns came to the temple seeking a cure for a minor ailment. Busy with tending the injuries of warriors wounded in a recent action against orc raiders, the healers ordered Herewith to brew up the simple herbal remedy. Herewith' mind was not on the here and now. She had arranged to meet a boy she fancied later that evening, and her thoughts were filled only with him. Distracted, she mixed the wrong herbs, creating not a curative tonic but a potent poison. The Norn priestess drank the mixture the girl offered her. Within seconds she was writhing on the ground, clutching her throat as the toxin began to destroy her organs. With her dying breath she cursed the careless healer, invoking the name of Maera with bitter fury.

Bound to carry out the curse, for it had been uttered in her name by one devoted to her, Maera struck the girl blind, transforming her eyes into milky orbs. Herewith was distraught, for she could no longer gaze upon her reflection or see the look of admiration on the faces of her admirers. Considering her life pointless, she swallowed poison.

As she lay dying Eira appeared to her, asking her why she sought to end her life. The deity listened impassively as Herewith's spirit spoke. When she had finished, Eira offered her a simple choice—devote herself to the goddess and tend the needs of the many sick, or perish and risk Scaetha's judgment. Herewith gazed back along the thread of her life and saw that she had squandered her existence. She accepted Eira's offer.

Out of pity, Eira counted part of Maera's curse, decreeing that she would regain her vision during the four days of Deorcmonan, when Maera was distracted. Eira's



interference was not without cost, though—while she was sighted, Herewith would not be able to call upon the goddess' aid.

Since that day, Herewith has served Eira with total devotion, travelling the land and offering her services free of charge. Mostly blind, she has learned to treat men as equals, swayed not one iota by physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION

Except during the period of Deorcmonan, Herewith's eyes are milky white, sightless orbs. Her face is calm and serene, a gentle smile perpetually on her soft, pale lips. When the moon is dark, her eyes are brilliant green orbs filled with sorrow. Her chestnut brown hair is unfettered and well-groomed, held in place beneath a plain, white headscarf.

She wears a simple white gown, adorned with two silver brooches. Around her head is a cowled cloak of midnight blue, its hem adorned with a Saxa knotwork design symbolizing the eternity of existence. She wears her holy symbol, a silver brooch studded with small bloodstones, as a cloak fastener.

MANNERISMS

Hereswith comports herself with a calm composure and compassionate manner. She is attentive to her patient's needs, soothing their worries with gentle words and allaying songs. She accepts offers of assistance with immense humility, yet holds no ill will to those who refuse to show her compassion. When others argue for violent action, Herewith is the voice of reason, always seeking a peaceful solution to any dispute. When she has her sight returned, she cries often, for only then can she witness the terrible suffering men endure.

KNIGHT-SQUIRE ENPAZ

Race: Anari; **Homeland:** Vestmark; **Occupation:** Knight Hrafn; **Patron Deity:** Tiw.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Survival d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Orders (Knights Hrafn), Orders (Marshal of Vestmark), Vow (Major: Find the Hrafn Banner and return it to Vestmark)

Edges: Command, Command Presence, Connections (Knights Hrafn), Knight Hrafn

Languages: Anari, Auld Saxa, Saxa

BACKGROUND

Enpaz has only vague memories of his father, though his mother spoke of him fondly. Enpaz was just four years old when the orcs surged out of the mountains and into southern Vestmark. His father, a proud patriot despite being of Anari blood, answered the king's call to arms. He died alongside his kinsmen in the Battle of Torn Ground.

The boy grew to manhood, and dutifully joined the army as his father had done. Enpaz's mother died of a broken heart shortly afterward, mourning for a dead husband and a son she believed would soon join him.

Death did not concern Enpaz, for Vestmarkers were accustomed to its constant presence. What disgusted him was the lack of strong leadership, for many of Vestmark's company commanders were nobles appointed for their status, not their talents. More than once he was pun-

ished for issuing orders in direct contradiction to those of his superiors. Although his actions saved many lives, the nobility would not tolerate disobedience.

Fortunately, reports of his leadership qualities had filtered back to Marshal Theodred, commander of Vestmark's army. Sensing the boy would make a fine commander if properly trained, he withdrew him from active service, sponsoring his membership in the Knights Hrafn and personally vouching for his abilities.

It was during his training that Enpaz learned of the fabled Hrafn Banner, a powerful relic once wielded by the old Saxa kings. Although the war banner was captured and taken to Alantaris Isle by the Anari, legends claim it was smuggled back to the mainland before the Blizzard War. Although it had not been seen since the days of the Liche-Priest (at least according to one vague Saxa legend), the Knights Hrafn have long sought it.

On completing his train, Enpaz volunteered for every post that put him in charge of a Vestmark company, his desire to serve his country undiminished. Fortunately, he did not have to wait long to earn his first command. He served on the frontline for three years, earning many victories, yet constantly frustrated by the armies' inability to drive the orcs back from the border.

Although a loyal Knight Hrafn and an Anari, Enpaz's first loyalty was always to his homeland. He approached Marshal Theodred after a military briefing, telling his commander about the Hrafn Banner. Should it be found, Enpaz said, Theodred could lead Vestmark's army to victory, hopefully before the war ruined the country beyond salvation.

Dubious the relic still existed, Theodred nonetheless contacted the Knights Hrafn and extended Enpaz's contract with Vestmark for a further five years, ensuring the commander would have money to support him on his quest. Enpaz has packed his bags and is now ready to begin his long and no doubt arduous quest.

DESCRIPTION

Enpaz is 26 years old, though three years serving on the frontline have left him with the look of a man two decades older. His brown hair is already heavily streaked with gray, his eyes have a haunted, tired look, and his brow is constantly furrowed. Although an Anari, he has grown a short beard, knowing his men respect him for adopting Saxa custom.

MANNERISMS

Enpaz is a decisive and capable commander of men, totally lacking arrogance or vanity. He listens to advice from his underlings, and has no qualms about acting on sound wisdom. He is fanatically loyal to those he leads, acknowledging that some must die in order to secure the greater objective, yet never wastefully sending them into battle. When it comes to Vestmark he is very defensive, accepting no slander of its proud military, and refusing to accept that the battle is already lost.



AILINIL OF THE WILD

Race: Hearth elf; **Homeland:** Dreamwood (exiled);
Occupation: Druid; **Patron Deity:** Eostre Plantmother.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Druidism d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Alchemy) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6
Charisma: +0/-4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Bloodthirsty, Orders (Guardians of the Wild), Outlaw
Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Druid), Forest Born, Hedge Magic, Low Light Vision, Natural Realms
Languages: Arboreal, Hearth Elven, Taiga Elven
Powers: *Armor, bolt, smite*

BACKGROUND

Ailinil has always considered herself blessed by Eostre. Plants she tended as a child always grew strong and tall, she skipped unimpaired through brambles, the thorny plants seeming to part for her, and the first time she became eligible to participate in the great Birthing Day ritual she was chosen as Eostre Queen.

That she chose to become a druid surprised no one, for she already knew the names and medicinal properties of every plant in her forest home and in lands beyond, despite never having travelled.

Her first excursion beyond the forest's borders was a pilgrimage to the Stone Forest. It was on this journey she witnessed the rapacious nature, for her mentor, an elder, recalled a time when large swathes of farmland were forested. Then she saw the village of Wudusmoca and the effects of its extensive charcoal burning industry. At that moment her heart broke and her soul withered.

On returning home she spoke passionately about the destruction of their homeland, but her people were not prepared to enrage the humans by acts of violence. One elf, a lesser noble, studied the girl intently as she tried to rally her cousins, smiling ever wider as her argument grew more toward violence.

Later that summer, while patrolling the edge of the forest, Ailinil spied a small band of humans hacking down mighty trees. Angered, she reacted with violence, shredding the flesh of the despoilers with barrages of magical thorns. By the time her fury had vented the humans were dead, their blood oozing into the thick, dark soil.

Ailinil's crime (the humans had permission from the local elf noble to harvest a few trees each year in return for certain favors) did not go unnoticed by the elven sentries. She was arrested, tried, and outlawed. As she made her way to the forest's edge to begin her exile, she found an elf noble blocking her path. He said he had followed her trial with interest, before asking whether she would kill again to protect Eostre's garden from despoilers. Her answer obviously pleased him, for Ailinil was offered membership in the Guardians of the Wild.

Since then she has waged a constant war against humans, leading brutal raids against small logging camps,

killing lone woodsmen, and torching wood mills and crop fields. No one who despoils nature without making suitable recompense is spared her fury.

DESCRIPTION

When in the bosom of Eostre's garden, Ailinil is a radiant beauty, her amber eyes wide and gleaming, her face split by a wide smile, her long blond hair flowing freely in the wind. To many, she is the ideal image of Eostre the provider. But her mood can turn in an instant, and with it her face. Her eyes narrow to catlike slits, her smile replaced by a stern grimace, her pale features darkening with near uncontrollable rage.

Ailinil dresses in simple but functional green robes. She disdains jewelry, favoring simple floral adornments to brighten her garb.

MANNERISMS

Ailinil has a dual personality. On the one hand, she is a caring child of the forest, displaying tenderness toward all plant life, tending sick and injured plants, and even singing to the trees. When in natural surroundings her face beams like that of a child seeing the wonders of the world for the first time.

Yet when presented with destruction of the forests or the growth of human civilization she becomes a calculating, sadistic, cold-hearted killer, slaughtering those who would despoil the forests without mercy, feeding the ground with their blood. When so riled she is the personification of the dark side of Eostre, the raging beast that lurks within the hearts of all mortals. She shows great intolerance and apathy toward all humans, though those who respect nature are spared her rage.



TAVOS BLADESINGER

TOLARGGAN

Race: Tuomi; **Homeland:** The Borderlands; **Occupation:** Warrior poet; **Patron Deity:** Tiw.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Folklore) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Song Magic d8, Stealth d4, Taunt d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Habit (Minor: always talking about himself), Overconfident, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Song Magic)

Languages: Giant, Orcish, Trader, Tuomi

Powers: *Boost/lower trait, fear, warrior's gift*

Special: Tavo always plays up his own actions at the expense of others. If the party lets him recount their deeds, they suffer a -2 penalty to any Glory awards, while Tavo gains a +1 bonus.

BACKGROUND

Fascinated as a boy by the heroic tales told by skalds around glowing hearths, and seeing the rapt faces of the audience as the storytellers spoke carefully intoned words to bring their stories to life, Tavo decided at an early age that he too wanted to be a storyteller. Born to a humble family with no ancestors of any significance, he longed to be somebody, to have his name spoken of fondly for ages to come. Having memorized the core facts of many of the epic stories he heard in his youth, he easily found a mentor willing to instruct him in the time-



honored art. Although he enjoyed the traditional stories of his youth, he wanted to create new legends, thinking that through these we would immortalize his name.

As soon as he finished his training he set out into the world, joining adventuring parties as they sought out ancient ruins and deadly orcs. On returning to civilization he composed his comrades' exploits into new stories, carefully judging the meter to emphasize the deeds. He told his stories in taverns and to hosts who offered him hospitality, delighting as he watched their faces.

As the years passed, Tavo heard others speaking about the new tales he had created. Beaming with pride, he introduced himself to people, expecting them to marvel at his name. Instead, he received nothing but blank stares and shrugs. Tavo has learned a hard lesson—few of an audience could ever recall a single storyteller's name, though they could recall the names and deeds of the heroes they spoke about. It was then Tavo realized the stark truth—if he wanted to become famous he would have to stop telling tales about others and tell stories about his own brave deeds. In order to have tales to tell, he would need to perform heroic deeds, for no good ever befell those who claimed to be heroes and could not back up their claims.

Spending his meager wealth on some basic equipment, Tavo set out to build a glorious reputation. Despite a few successful (albeit it very minor) solo adventures, Tavo's tales have made little impact on his audiences. Now he intends to join an adventuring party and lead them to face a truly formidable foe, something worthy of praise.

DESCRIPTION

Tavo's appearance doesn't live up to his inflated opinion of himself as a mighty hero. His long, thin face is marked by permanent woad tattoos, but they are haphazard, self-inflicted markings, not the true tattoos of a Tuomi warrior. He is clean shaven, though his hair is long, unkempt, and dirty, as is the Tuomi way.

His equipment is equally ill-suited to his self-aggrandizement. His meager wealth has allowed him only a simple spear, a dented pot helm, a leather shirt, and a shield, hardly the trappings of a warrior hero.

MANNERISMS

The first word out of Tavo's mouth is usually "I." He constantly talks about his exploits, exaggerating them as much as he feels his audience can accept in order to try and boost his own reputation. He never lies, knowing that falsehoods have a habit of catching up with the liar.

He frequently yawns during adventurers' recounts of their endeavors, feigning disinterested in their pitiful adventures before leaping in with his own anecdote of his own that surpasses the one he has just heard.

Headstrong and reckless, Tavo has yet to realize that true heroes are forged by *having* to overcome adversity, not by deliberately seeking glory.

EARHCLUD

Titles: Ullr's Bow, Divine Archer, Celestial Marksman, He Who Kills at Range.

Aspects: Archery.

Affiliations: Tiw, Ullr.

Symbol: An arrow.

Priesthood: Master Bowyers (priests); Master Archers (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Any battle before a battle. Archery Day (see sidebar). Although it does not involve marksmanship, Arrow Hunt Day is a high holy day for hunters.

Duties: To use archery to defeat foes.

Sins: (Minor) using a ranged weapon other than a bow for more than one round during a combat, training someone in the use of any weapon except the bow; (Major) using a weapon other than a bow for the majority of a battle; (Mortal) ignoring a community's call to arms.

Signature Power: *Boost/lower trait* (Notice, Shooting*, Stealth).

Powers: *Aim**, *blast*, *deflection*, *prolonged blast*, *smite**, *weapon immunity* (arrows only).

Trappings: All trappings relate to arrows.

Special: Spells marked "*" only function when cast on or using bows or crossbows, and their ammunition. Clerics of Earhclud may take the Armor Piercing Shot (see *Hellfrost: Rassilon Expansion 2*) and Double Shot Edges, ignoring the elf racial requirement.

While wandering Godsheim in search of something to beat up, Tiw came across Ullr practicing with his bow. As proud and boastful as ever, the war god mocked Ullr's weapon, hewing down a mighty tree in a single blow to prove the worthiness of his sword. Ullr protested, claiming that his bow allowed him to kill at range, something Tiw's sword could not do. Tiw laughed loudly, and mocked Ullr, for his weapon was only good for killing rabbits, not armored warriors.

So it was the gods made a wager. Capturing a frost giant, they promised the creature its freedom if it could escape their weapons. Fully aware of Tiw's prowess, the giant quickly fled, Tiw in hot pursuit, cursing loudly. Finally controlling his laughter, Ullr drew his bow, took aim, and felled the giant with a single shot.

As much as it pained him to admit any form of defeat, Tiw conceded that perhaps the bow did have some benefits over the sword. Tiw demanded that Ullr teach him archery, as he wished to add it to his combat prowess. Ullr had other duties, but he nominated one of his hunters, Earhclud ("Arrow-Cloud") to teach the god of war.

After receiving adequate training, Tiw promoted Earhclud to commander of his new archery companies, elevating him to the status of minor deity.

Like most minor deities, Earhclud has no temples in his honor. Shrines are found within many temples of Tiw and most of Ullr's, as well as outside the barracks of archery companies and in hunting communities. Some shrines are elaborately carved statues of stone or wood arrows of great size. Lesser ones might be a bundle of

FESTIVAL TO ULLR

ARCHERY DAY

Raestdaeg of Eostremonan

Although settlements must be protected all year round, especially in these troubled times, this ritual was devised by the cult of Ullr, and originally applied only to hunters. It is now jointly undertaken by followers of Tiw who favor archery.

Having (largely) rested over the long winter, archers and hunters begin preparing for the coming season. Archers compete against each other in a series of contests designed to test their range and accuracy. In some communities, the best archer is awarded some form of title for the year.

actual arrows, or simply an arrow shape rune etched into wood or stone. When shown in art as an individual, he takes the form of a member of the dominant local race, lightly-armored, and carrying a bow. Usually there is a notched arrow, indicating he is always ready to fire. Most often he appears alongside one of the major gods he is affiliated with, taking the form of a bow and quiver.

Although Saxa use bows in hunting and warfare, he has more worship among Anari, who field companies of archers. His most devoted servants are Finnar, for among the nomads archery is an essential skill (and hunters and warriors are one and the same), although both species of elves are close behind.

Priests generally serve as archery instructors, bowyers, and fletchers, ensuring archers are properly trained and equipped. Paladins are full-time archers, serving in armies or militias, working as hunters, and hiring themselves as mercenaries. Although Ullr has little to do with horses, Tiw is also the major god of cavalry. Earhclud cares little whether his followers fight on foot or mounted.

Prayers to Earhclud are never spoken. Rather, they are inscribed on arrows, which are then fired high into the air. If the arrow lands without breaking, Earhclud has heard the prayers and will respond favorably. A broken arrow indicates the god's displeasure.

Character Guidelines: Shooting is a cleric's most important skill. Notice and Stealth are also useful, especially for snipers. Marksman is the quintessential archery Edge, followed closely by Armor Piercing Shot, Double Shot, and Mighty Shot. Clerics who wish to be mounted archers need a few dice in Riding and the Steady Hands Edge. Dead Shot can be very powerful, but it is best combined with Level Headed.

Dodge is the best deterrent against enemy missile troops. Although nothing prevents the cleric being a capable melee combatant as well, it is definitely not his focus (and may be sinful). Consider Fleet-Footed as both a means of keeping distance between yourself and your foes and quickly closing the gap to Short range.

ELLANHERE

Titles: Pack Mother, She-Wolf, Lady of Hounds, Mistress of Wolves, Dargar's Bitch.

Aspects: Canines.

Affiliations: Dargar, Eostre Animalmother.

Symbol: Wolf's head facing head on.

Priesthood: Pack Lords (priests); Pack Brothers/Sisters (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Fulmonan of Wulfmonan.

Duties: To serve your community and lord. To aid those in need (not Dargar's followers).

Sins: (Minor) accidentally harming a canine, allowing a canine to be mistreated (does not apply to her Dargar followers), not owning a canine, petting or feeding a cat; (Major) owning a cat, willfully harming a canine except in self-defense; (Mortal) willfully killing a canine except in self-defense.

Signature Power: *Beast friend* (canines only).

Powers: *Fear, knockdown, shape change* (canines only), *speed, smite, summon beast* (canines only), *wilderness step*.

Trappings: Trappings always relate to canines. *Fear*, for instance, might involve the cleric howling or conjuring a ghastly spectral hound, while *knockdown* may be represented by an illusory wolf leaping at victims.

Ellanhere is patron of domesticated dogs and wild canines, including wolves and dire wolves. She is thus both tame and feral, obedient servant and cruel killer. She has little authority over supernatural breeds, such as Fenris and varcolac wolves or moon dogs, though they respect her position as mother of lesser canines.

According to many legends she is the daughter of Dargar and Eostre, though this is highly disputed. Clerics of Eostre claim she is the spirit of Eostre's first dog, granted divine status for her loyalty and obedience. In that faith, she is the mother of all canines. The cult of Dargar say she was a wolf cub granted their god by Eostre in the hope tending it would calm his unruly nature. Dargar was so impressed by her vicious nature he elevated her to godhood during the God War.

She is rarely depicted in humanoid form in art. Rather, she takes the form of a she-wolf that slinks around Eostre or Dargar's legs or, more rarely, a wolfskin cloak worn by either deity. Similarly, she has no temple, but shrines to her exist in most temples to Eostre Animalmother and Dargar. Often they are little more than a wolfskin or a wolf's skull, though more elaborate ones may have a carved image.

Many priests act as veterinarians specializing in canines. Typically they serve a community or nobleman, tending the war dogs, as well as regular domestic breeds. Others serve as master of the hounds for nobles who hunt with dogs. They will not, however, participate in the hunting of wolves. Among orc tribes that keep wolves (and dire wolves), priests are responsible for ensuring the wolves are trained and kept in top condition.

Paladins are warriors. Like canines serving a master, they are expected to serve a community or lord loyally, either as

FESTIVAL TO DARGAR

SATING THE WOLF DAY

Second Monandaeg of Wulfmonan

Only madmen and idiots lack understanding of the danger the cult of Dargar poses. This ritual is intended to placate the vile god rather than offer him true worship. As winter draws near, the poorest villagers dress in wolf skins and smear their faces with animal blood. They then call upon their neighbors, demanding flesh. Their appetites are sated with donations of cooked meat, which they eat. Any food not consumed by midnight must be fed to dogs, for a human consuming it risks becoming a crazed follower of Dargar. Those who refuse to gift Dargar risk being beaten with sticks and their property damaged. Such acts are not considered crimes, and many villagers consider the tight-fisted soul to have gotten away lightly.

a frontline fighter or a bodyguard. Among orcs they serve as cavalry commanders as well as bodyguards. However, lone wolves that come to the aid of those in need are common in stories, and clerics of Ellanhere may adopt this role. Many take this road until they find a lord worthy of their service. Others have served a lord, but, like a faithful hound, have vowed to take no other master after his death.

The phrase being "top dog" means being a leader. Clerics of Ellanhere cannot help but jostle for position when they gather in any strength. Most often juniors stretch their neck upward and arms outward before renowned peers, accepting their status as lesser members of Ellanhere's mortal pack. When one refuses to acknowledge another's position, they must decide who outranks the other. While violence sometimes occurs, most often they growl and stare at each other in a contest of intimidation.

Among the cult of Dargar, clerics are feral creatures, heavily devoted to wolflike behavior. Pecking order within their ranks always involves contests to the death, for Dargar does not accept weaklings who bow without first testing their opponent's strength.

Religious ceremonies vary, but there is always a hunt. Typically, clerics dress in wolfskins and hunt either a real animal or someone dressed in a deerskin cloak. Real animals are eaten raw. All hymns and prayers take the form of howls. It is considered a good omen if local hounds or wolves join in the chorus, for it means Ellanhere has heard the prayers and is pleased. Hearing a cat yowl during a ritual is a bad omen for the future.

Character Guidelines: While paladins need decent combat skills, priests need very little save for a few dice in Healing. Intimidation is handy, since it enables one to dominate others without resorting to violence, behavior not uncommon in canines. The Beast Master and Beast Bond Edges are solid choices, since together they provide a faithful hound or wolf the cleric can support with bennies.

\$12.99

IOIIO

AN ARMY OF CHARACTERS AWAIT YOUR COMMAND!

The population of the winter-wracked northern lands is not particularly high, but it is varied. Commoners and nobles, mages and clerics, healers and warriors, merchants and thieves, wise men and fools, heroes and cowards, all walk the frozen realm.

Inside you'll find over 60 characters ready to be dropped into any Hellfrost campaign or used as player characters.



Hellfrost is an epic fantasy setting for the award-winning *Savage Worlds RPG*.

Heroes & Villains Compendium requires the *Hellfrost Players Guide*.

ISBN 978-1-908237-30-9



5 1 4 9 9 >

9 781908 237309



WWW.TRIPLEACEGAMES.COM

© 2008-2015 Triple Ace Games. Hellfrost and all related marks and logos are trademarks of Triple Ace Games. Savage Worlds, and all related marks and logos are trademarks of Pinnacle Entertainment Group. © 2015. All rights reserved. Used with permission.