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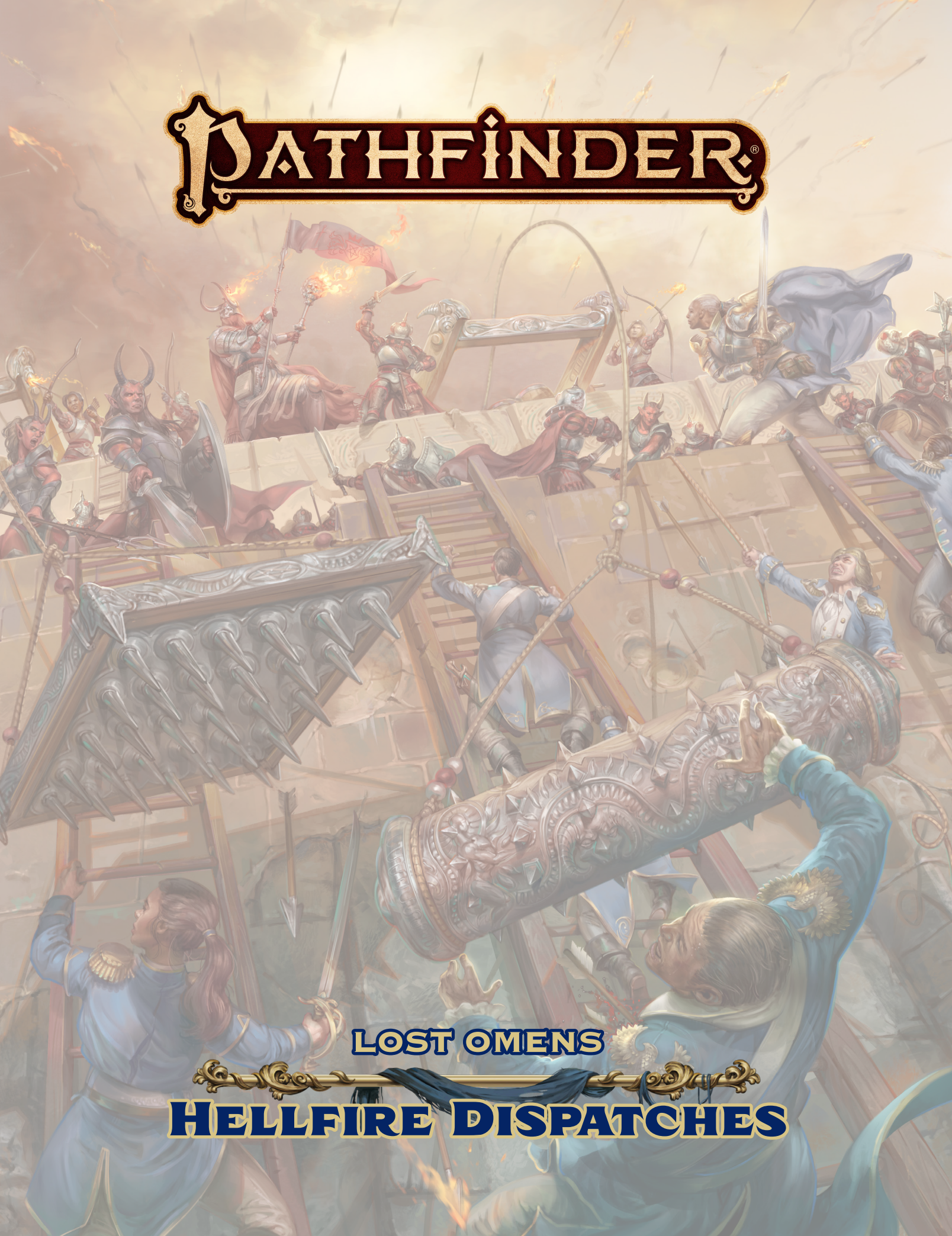
PATHFINDER[®]

Hellfire Crisis

LOST OMENS

HELLFIRE DISPATCHES

PATHFINDER[®]



LOST OMENS

HELLFIRE DISPATCHES

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USING THIS BOOK

After decades of uneasy peace, Andoran and Cheliax have finally gone back to war. This book is your guide to that war—the Hellfire Crisis—as it spirals beyond the boundaries of either nation.

A war, particularly one as expansive as the Hellfire Crisis, contains countless opportunities for adventure. Heroes are needed in fighting the war, but also in containing it and helping those whose lives have been disrupted by it.

After an overview of the war, each front has its own section, showing how the conflict impacts those who live there and what sort of heroes might be needed.

- **Absalom** is embroiled with the espionage and political maneuvers of the battling nations and neutral powers alike (page 38).
- **The Arch of Aroden** deals with street-by-street conflict over the paired cities that give Cheliax its stranglehold on trade (page 50).
- **The Aspodean Wall** fortifies the land border between Andoran and Cheliax, where the most direct fighting takes place (page 62).
- **Fangwood** has been plunged back into war as supernatural forces urge on Molthune and Nirmathas (page 74).
- **The Inner Sea** is rife with privateers as the two great navies struggle for dominance (page 86).
- **Isgar** was where the spark of war first fell, a vassal attempting to find its way, independent of Cheliax (page 98).
- **Nidal** shows a single shadowy light as the native horselords stand against 7,000 years of darkness (page 110).

AS A PLAYER

The Hellfire Dispatches are gathered from characters in all walks of life, showing what's happening on the ground in those regions. They each contain things people living or familiar with that region are likely to have heard. Whether the dispatches are perfectly accurate or your character agrees with any point, consider it the view of an NPC in the world.

In addition to getting up to speed on the most recent events, each section equips you with information about the important figures in the area and their ongoing plans. You can use these details with your GM to set your party's goals, who to overthrow in the long term, and where to go next.

Each front also includes some mechanical options you might find useful along that front. There are many archetypes that might be useful in a given front and quite a few troops that could show up as allies in skirmish combats (*Pathfinder Battlecry!* 158).

AS A GAME MASTER

This book isn't an adventure, but it also isn't quite a normal setting book. It's a situation, a moment full of disaster, and also a chance to build something better.

Each front presents a different sort of war story. They're full of allies, villains, and those who might be either, but they also include hooks and calls to action that can be the seeds to your groups' own plots. These moments of chaos are when PCs truly thrive, from newcomers thrust into positions of responsibility by the fighting to the colossal figures who can turn the tides of battles with their very presence.

Whether you're tending the seeds for side quests alongside published adventures or designing your own campaign, each front will provide you some appropriate foes along the way. However, don't miss out on the opportunity to get further inspiration from your players. Not every player will be interested, but give them the chance to read what their character knows, join organizations tangled in the war, and chart their own course once they understand the terrain.

ADVENTURE PATHS

This book covers one moment in history in the middle of a great war. It collects a bunch of different views on how this point was reached, where things are right now, and where they might go next.

The moment covered takes place shortly after the Hellbreakers Adventure Path. Although the Isgar Front (page 98) only shows one outsider's view of the rebellion in Isgar, it does reveal the broad arc of the Adventure Path. So if you plan to play Hellbreakers, talk to your GM before reading that section.

The *Hell's Destiny* Adventure Path takes place entirely after these dispatches. Indeed, a party seasoned by dangers among these fronts should find *Hell's Destiny* a fitting next step.

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NEWS OF WAR

NATIONS EMBROILED

Although the primary belligerents are Andoran and Cheliox, the Hellfire Crisis has spread throughout the Inner Sea. The following powers are the most embroiled.

Andoran: After splitting off from Cheliox around 50 years ago to pursue democratic ideals, Andoran remains bitter rivals with its former rulers.

Cheliox: Torn apart by decades of civil war, modern Cheliox is ruled by House Thrune and deeply influenced by their faith in Asmodeus.

Isger: The spark of war landed in this vassal state of Cheliox.

Molthune: This militaristic nation has gone wild with bloodlust, attempting to claim its lost territory of Nirmathas and conquer others.

Nirmathas: Trapped between Molthune and the undead forces of the Gravelands, Nirmathas calls out to its allies around Lake Encarthan.

Nidal: Wracked with internal division, this shadowy theocracy can't aid its allies in Cheliox.

Rahadoum: Rejecting all faiths, including that of Asmodeus, Rahadoum has directed its involvement at reclaiming lost territory from Cheliox.

Ravounel: Only recently freed from Chelaxian rule, Ravounel is doing what it can for rebels in nearby Nidal.

Taldor: This empire wistfully remembers controlling Andoran, Cheliox, Molthune, and others.

MONTH BY MONTH

Golarion's months and their Earth equivalents are:

Abadius – January
Calistril – February
Pharast – March
Gozran – April
Desnus – May
Sarenith – June
Erastus – July
Arodus – August
Rova – September
Lamashan – October
Neth – November
Kuthona – December

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

By Arianna Dreth

The conflicts collectively known as the Hellfire Crisis were sparked by the execution of an Andoren diplomat by the Order of the Rack Hellknights, allegedly acting under Queen Abrogail Thrune's orders. Now, they've spiraled throughout the region. This reporter spent the past several months traversing Andoran, Cheliox, and Isger to bring a ground-level understanding of the Hellfire Crisis to you, the reader.

This series of collected dispatches, both penned by this reporter and gathered from other sources, is intended to provide a broader picture of the Crisis. This reporter has sought to not only solicit the accounts of notables who command armies, but also those of the "ordinary" people who are often most affected, yet least noticed, when the flames of war engulf the world around them.

Without further ado, let us begin where the Crisis started.



AFTER YEARS, A WALL

Anon & Afar / 11 Abadius, 4725

Reported by Arianna Dreth

For over a decade, Queen Abrogail Thrune of Cheliox has sought the construction of a wall from the Aspodell Mountains to the Inner Sea. However, the gnomes of Brastlewark tasked with the assignment have added to the massive project in fits and starts, leaving a scattered patchwork of walls that did nothing to protect Cheliox or impede trade.

This reporter took little note as the gnomes resumed the project last year, but it seems now that Cheliox's full resources were behind them. With a powerful working of infernal magic, liquid stone filled in the gaps left by years of fitful work, hardening to complete the wall in basalt. The red-hot stone was visible for miles offshore as it cooled.

Cheliox's army has already begun moving to take advantage of the completed fortification, provoking a matching buildup on Andoran's side of the new wall. The Hellknights are also on the move, with the Order of the Rack moving knights from eastern Cheliox into Isger. Although independent from the Chelaxian throne, high-ranking sources suggest the Hellknights' actions are intended to reinforce Cheliox's hold over its vassal.

STATEMENT FROM THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL OF ANDORAN

Anon & Afar / 15 Erastus, 4725

Released by Supreme Elect Andira Marusek

ALMAS, ANDORAN—The following statement was released following the emergency People's Council called to discuss the execution of General Reginald Cormoth in Isger. It has been reproduced here in its entirety.

"Citizens, neighbors, I stand before you today to relay the declaration of the People's Council regarding the execution of Retired General Reginald Cormoth. General Cormoth was a champion of the people and a good man. When it came to his attention that the residents of Breachill were under assault by the Hellknight Order of the Rack, who claimed on the flimsiest of evidence that anti-Chelaxian forces were conspiring within the town,

he volunteered at once to lead a diplomatic retinue to Isgar and negotiate peace.

“No doubt General Cormoth expected his mission of diplomacy to be greeted in the usual way, by opening channels of communication to discuss the issues. No doubt he believed the Order of the Rack, cruel though they may be, was constrained by the rule of law and would not attack an ambassador. Unfortunately, he was wrong.

“With no attempt to negotiate, the Order of the Rack falsely accused General Cormoth of unspecified ‘crimes’ against Chelaxian holdings and executed him, without trial or opportunity for appeal. We condemn, in the strongest of terms, this unlawful and barbaric action. The Order of the Rack has overstepped its authority not only in subjugating the town of Breachill, but in murdering an Andoren citizen.

“Should any member of the Order of the Rack who was involved in this crime set foot in Andoran, they will be immediately arrested to account for their actions. They will be given a fair trial—more than they offered General Cormoth—but anyone with a hand in this horrific murder will be brought to justice.”

EAGLE KNIGHTS TAKE BREACHILL

Anon & Afar / 13 Arodus, 4725

Reported by Arianna Dreth

BREACHILL, ISGER—The small town of Breachill, tucked in the foothills of eastern Isgar, is an unlikely battleground, but a battleground it has become. Readers who have kept a keen eye on these pages will recall the Order of the Rack took control of the town due to allegations that the Hellbreakers League was using it as a base to hide warshards for use against Cheliox.

This reporter accompanied a unit of Eagle Knights, gaining a firsthand look at the battle—and what a battle it was! Fire blazed night and day over Hellknight Hill, where the Eagle Knights dug trenches to protect themselves during their offensive up its slopes. Citadel Altaerein’s siege engines weren’t the only thing these warriors had to contend with—the Hellknights had a powerful ally, a diabolic dragon. This dragon, Kierothax, is well-known to have ties to Thrune, likely confirming that the Order of the Rack’s operations in Breachill were sanctioned by Queen Abrogail. This reporter kept to the back lines, but even so, nearly got the hairs scorched off her neck by infernal flames.

Just when the Hellknights seemed to be gaining the upper hand, a volunteer force arrived to join the Eagle Knights, turning the tide. Chased out of their citadel, the Hellknights attempted a last-ditch assault on Breachill itself, but these new allies thwarted them. From within their war wagons, the remainder of the Hellknights broke through Andoren lines to escape, withdrawing toward Logas along with Kierothax.

There are rumors that the Hellbreakers League and Andoren forces are engaging in talks, and an anonymous source relayed that the Hellbreakers have gifted the Eagle Knights a powerful warshard. In a statement, Supreme Elect Andira Marusek indicated that Eagle Knights traveling to Breachill to redress the issue were following their own consciences and not official directives.

There is some precedent for the Eagle Knights to protect Isgar’s interests as an independent party. The Hellknights and the Eagle Knights fought side-by-side to defend Isgar during the Goblinblood Wars a generation ago. During that conflict, the king of Cheliox, then Infrexus Thrune, accepted the Eagle Knights’ involvement in his vassal’s territory on the condition of that very independence. Although no official claims have been made, the Eagle Knights in Breachill seem rather well-versed on this bit of legal history.

BEFORE THE CRISIS

4606 AR The god Aroden, prophesied to lead Cheliox into the Age of Glory, instead dies. The Age of Lost Omens begins.

4608 AR House Thrune attempts to take control of Cheliox, beginning a brutal civil war.

4736 AR Molthune takes advantage of the civil war to secede from Cheliox.

4640 AR House Thrune takes control of Cheliox with support from Nidal and the powers of Hell itself. Worship of Asmodeus becomes the state religion.

4648 AR Molthune splits further as its northern provinces rebel, which eventually become Nirmathas.

4669 AR Andoran rises up after decades of infernal rule and breaks off from Cheliox.

4717 AR The Archduchy of Ravounel breaks off from Cheliox, but a broader rebellion, known as the Glorious Reclamation, is suppressed.

4724 AR The god Gorum dies. Shards of his armor, known as warshards, fall across the Inner Sea.

4725 AR Nirmathas enters an alliance with most of its neighbors to defeat the undead of the Whispering Tyrant. Molthune abstains, attacking Nirmathas only months later.

Cheliox completes the Aspodean Wall on its border with Andoran.

A clash between Eagle Knights and Hellknights in Isgar spirals into war between Andoran and Cheliox.

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CHELIAX DECLARES WAR ON ANDORAN, TAKES CONTROL OF HELLKNIGHTS

Anon & Afar / 6 Roa

Reported by Arianna Dreth

AUGUSTANA, ANDORAN—War has erupted on the shores of the Inner Sea, following months of escalating tensions between Cheliox and Andoran. With the Eagle Knights' victory at Breachill, Queen Abrogail Thrune has declared this incursion into Iger as an act of war and begun mobilizing her forces. As hostilities appear inevitable, diplomatic attachés stationed in both countries are returning home. In Andoran, meanwhile, the People's Council voted by a significant margin to respond to Queen Abrogail's declaration in kind.

To support the war effort, Queen Abrogail has declared all Hellknight orders to be under her direct control, which has caused some consternation among non-Chelioxian orders. Lictor Severs "Boneclaw" DiViri of the Order of the Nail, based in Varisia, issued this statement in response: "The Order of the Nail is not a pawn to be used in petty national squabbles." Unsurprisingly, Lictor Octavio Sabinus of the Order of the Torrent in Ravounel also declined the queen's command, stating, "In spite of our name, Hellknights owe no fealty to Hell. The Torrent is no Chelioxian vassal, and we will not betray our compatriots who fought for independence to bend the knee to a tyrant."

Within Cheliox, the Order of the Scourge has splintered over the decree. Queen Abrogail elevated former Paralictor Ivo Elliendo to lead the order, alleging that Lictor Toulon Vidoc was collaborating with Cheliox's enemies to undermine her rule. Meanwhile, Vidoc, rumored to be investigating Queen Abrogail herself for potential malfeasance, has declared both Cheliox's takeover of the Hellknights and his own ouster to be unlawful. A sizable portion of the Order of the Scourge appears to have followed him, though the current whereabouts of Vidoc and his loyalists are unknown.

SWORD OF MORTALITY ISSUES KHARI STATEMENT

Anon & Afar / 11 Lamashan, 4725

Released by Karsakim

SHEPHERD'S ROCK, RAHADOUM—The following was released by Karsakim, the Sword of Mortality, and the leader of Rahadoum's Pure Legion. Although Rahadoum's civilian leadership have repeated their claim on the city of Khari for centuries, Karsakim's statement seems particularly relevant today.

"The city of Khari and the surrounding territories were seized by Cheliox under the direction of the god Aroden. Despite the changes in Cheliox after his death, Asmodeus is no more willing to give mortals freedom than any god.

"Khari will once again be ruled under the Laws of Mortality, freed from the chains of Asmodeus and his puppets. Those who wish in their hearts to follow him are advised to find a new home on Chelioxian soil."

ANDORAN CLASHES WITH BRATTLEWARK AT THE ASPODEAN WALL

Anon & Afar / 22 Neth, 4725

Reported by Arianna Dreth

TIPTRIN, ANDORAN—Rising high enough to blot out the sky if one is near enough to the craggy peaks, the Aspodell Mountains are a formidable barrier between Andoran and Cheliox. However, the land to the south has long been contested. For years, Queen Abrogail Thrune has tasked the gnomes of Brattlewark with creating a wall suitable to defend the long border to the Inner Sea. Work continued in inconsistent fits and starts as the gnomes attempted a variety of plans, but the work is recently completed. With some sections completed by the workers' newfound vigor and others filled in with infernal stone, the wall stands patchwork but whole.

Upon making her way to the Arthfell, where a regiment of Andoran infantry and Eagle Knight Golden Legionnaires maintains a base camp for incursions against the wall, this reporter was greeted by Commander Azhafelle Pennerie, the camp's leader. Once Commander Pennerie was convinced this reporter was not a Chelioxian operative, she agreed to grant limited access to the camp and opened her collection of spices for a feast unbecoming an army camp. She declined an interview, however, indicating they needed to focus on the pass's defense.

In the ongoing struggle the Golden Legionnaires are calling the Battle of the Wall, no clear victor has yet emerged. From the protection of their massive new fortification, Cheliox has been launching waves of infantry attacks along with dispatching groups of imps and other infernal creatures into Andoran's heartland. Although Andoran has been able to fend off these assaults thus far, the wall itself stands strong.

According to reports within camp, fighting alongside the Chelioxians are contingents of gnome warriors from Brattlewark, directed by their king, Drum Thornfiddle, to maintain the wall. Interestingly, a group of several haggard gnomes recently arrived at the pass, undergoing some scrutiny before meeting with Pennerie. This reporter was unable to witness the conversation, but one of the gnomes, identifying himself only as "the Crow," agreed to speak with her afterward. "King Thornfiddle's willingness to play lackey to Abrogail has cost the people of Brattlewark dearly," he said. "If the king won't stand up to her, then we will." The Crow then winked at this reporter and offered her a jet-black feather before departing. It seems there may be dissent brewing in Brattlewark.

A LETTER FROM THE FRONT

Anon & Afar / 10 Kuthona, 4725

Written by Petty Officer Second Class Evalira Caldis, reprinted with permission of the Caldis family

Mother, Father,

I hope you're well. I'm sure you've heard about the attacks on Augustana's harbor, so I wanted to let you know I'm fine. The *Liberty's Feather* is on the move, although I can't tell you her destination, of course. We have good winds, though. I've been trying to keep up the spirits of the newer recruits; I think some of them are worried about fighting those devils. But we're well prepared, so don't you worry either! After we made it through our first battle, Captain Vicray said I might make lieutenant someday. That'd be something, wouldn't it?

Of course, I know it's dangerous. But we're fighting for something bigger than any of us. If Cheliox wants to make us all thralls to Hell, they'll have to get through our ships first. I do miss the sight of Souston's painted houses in the sunshine, though. I hope the battles haven't scared off all the fish. Say hello to Gerstan and Marna for me, too; maybe by the time the baby is born, our shores will be peaceful again.

All my love,
Evalira

EDITOR'S NOTE: Evalira Caldis was killed in a clash with Chelioxian naval forces while the *Liberty's Feather* ran the blockade of the Hespereth Strait on 18 Kuthona. Captain Mestrow Vicray posthumously promoted Caldis to lieutenant, as her heroism saved the lives of her fellow officers during a retreat from the *Dark Prince*. Her family offered her final letter for publication to this newspaper so her bravery wouldn't be forgotten.

CHELIX TIGHTENS GRIP ON HESPERETH STRAIT, ABSALOM VOWS NEUTRALITY

Anon & Afar / 20 Kuthona, 4725

Reported by Arianna Dreth

CORENTYN, CHELIX—Corentyn, a military outpost grown into a trade hub, is called the City of Nine Forts, though this moniker drastically underestimates its defenses. Corentyn's position grants it firm control over the Hespereth Strait and passage out of the Inner Sea, which in peacetime it used to heavily tax travel. In wartime, the atmosphere has turned decidedly bellicose, and Chelioxian naval uniforms are on every corner.

As diplomats of both countries attempt to form alliances with other nations—Andoren attachés in the halls of Galt, Highhelm, Kyonin, and Ravounel; Chelioxian in Molthune and Nidal; and both vying for Taldor's and Druma's ears—Cheliox has tightened their

hold on the strait, no doubt viewing it as a valuable bargaining tool. The Chelioxian blockade is allowing neutral ships to pass through, but stops—or fires on—any ships believed to be allied with Andoran.

Wynsal Starborn, Acting Primarch of Absalom, recently issued a statement of neutrality in the war, joining the governments of Osirion and Katapesh. Though the Acting Primarch cited an unwillingness to embroil the entire region in a conflict between two nations, it's likely that trade considerations played a part in the decision.

A question looms on the southern end of the strait. Rahadom has made it clear they intend to enforce their ancestral claim on Khari. As their armies gather, it threatens to open another front Cheliox can ill-afford to protect, but also one vital to their diplomacy.

HEDVEND IV ASSASSINATED!

Anon & Afar / 8 Abadius, 4726

Reported by Arianna Dreth

ELIDIR, ISGER—As a shock to the nation, Hedvend IV, steward of Isger, was found assassinated in his rooms last night. Though Hedvend was widely regarded as a Chelioxian puppet, his assassination leaves a power vacuum in Isger, for he had no known heirs nor plan for succession.

Details about the assassination are still emerging. Early reports suggest a rebel group is responsible, likely the Hellbreakers League established in Breachill. Statements from Cheliox have also condemned the Eagle Knights, specifically the rumored Twilight Talons, for supporting the rebels.

In the wake of the steward's death, Hellknights have stepped in to declare martial law in the capital of Elidir. It's not yet clear whether these Hellknights are among those who now answer to Queen Abrogail Thrune or one of the independent orders.

NO AID FORTHCOMING FROM MOLTHUNE, NIDAL

Anon & Afar / 12 Calistril, 4726

Reported by Arianna Dreth

AUGUSTANA, ANDORAN—Despite attacks by Chelioxian infantry, humans and infernal alike, the mood in Andoran today is good. News has reached the front that Nidal is withdrawing even its token aid, the shadowcallers returning to their home country to handle unrest there.

Although little news escapes the land of shadows, it has become clear that a rebellion is spreading across the plains of western Nidal. Lighting their way is Horselord Iriatykis, said to bear a warshard of Gorum's armor at the tip of her spear. In the shadows, even that one small bit of light has caught the attention of the nation's ruling Umbral Court. This reporter isn't aware of any

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coordination between these rebels and Andoran, but the timing of their attacks has exposed many weaknesses in the supposedly unshakable alliance between Cheliox and Nidal.

Cheliox's newer overtures toward Molthune have been likewise stymied, as that country has chosen to reopen the wounds of its own civil war with Nirmathas. The new popular movement seems to have taken even Molthune's military leadership off guard. The tide of war is spilling out of Molthune, with raiding parties even threatening neighboring Isgar and Nidal. This reporter's sources suggest a supernatural hand in the matter, perhaps even the Rider of War herself, but the frustration of Molthune's populace at the uneasy peace cannot be overstated.

Not all news is dire for Cheliox, however. It seems Andoran's courting of Ravounel might have fallen afoul of the spreading crisis as well. Reports coming out of that young nation suggest much of its resources are sneaking across the border to aid the horselord rebels in Nidal.



CHELIXIAN SOLDIER

DISPATCH FROM BELLIS COMPANY

Anon & Afar / 19 Calistril, 4726

An appeal by Riallandra Seranel

BELLIS, ANDORAN—Duke Quintus Corcina of Taldor has blockaded the Sellen River to the south, citing “neutrality” in not allowing forces to cross from either side. This is clearly a move targeting Andoran, as Cheliox is not dependent on the river for its supply lines. We of Bellis Company, a combined force of Galtan freedom fighters, Highhelm soldiers, and sharpshooters of Kyonin, have united to free the Sellen River from this blockade and allow trade to move through once more.

Any who wish to donate to the cause, whether in supplies, coin, or arms, are urged to visit the Blackcurrant Taproom in Bellis and ask for Riallandra Seranel. Trained volunteers wishing to join the company are also welcome to join the fight wherever Field Commander Wynvar can be found. With skirmishes continuing throughout the countryside, supply lines are more important than ever. Any contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference!

MOLTHUNE PUSHES SOUTH

Anon & Afar / 24 Calistril, 4726

Reported by Arianna Dreth

CANORATE, MOLTHUNE—A rally in support of Molthune's reignited war took a strange and frightening turn today, with the gathered citizens taking up arms and marching south. The ill-prepared militia's path takes them directly away from Nirmathas and instead leads through the dangerous Menador Mountains into Isgar.

It has become clear that Markwin Teldas and his general lords are no longer in control of Molthune. Although the army still pushes to expand northward, these citizen groups have alienated most of Molthune's neighbors, attacking Nidalese holdings and traders from Druma even before their sudden attempts to cross the mountains into Isgar.

Teldas himself could not be reached for comment, but sources within Nirmathas insist that the influence of the Rider of War has fallen on Molthune as she attempts to fill the power vacuum left by Gorum's demise. This reporter cannot speak to questions of divine scope, but high-ranking priests of Iomedae and Pharasma have supported the claim.

CALL FOR PRIVATEERS

Anon & Afar / 15 Pharast, 4726

Reported by Arianna Dreth

ABSALOM—Andira Marusek and the People's Council of Andoran have made a public call for privateers. Many consider this the latest sign of Andoran buckling under Cheliox's naval superiority.

Although Andoran has traditionally relied on the Eagle Knights to prey on Chelaxian trade, this new call is clearly directed at recruiting outsiders like the Bellis Company and even Shackles pirates. It's these pirates who worry this reporter's sources in Absalom and abroad.

Emir Thalzar Gaatan explained "encouraging piracy throughout the Inner Sea, particularly giving them access to safe harbor under their rights as privateers, is a dangerous gamble for Andoran." He added that this concerns him despite Qadira being relatively removed from the pirates' traditional strongholds in the Shackles.

Despite these concerns, many captains operating out of Absalom or smaller ports on the Isle of Kortos are apparently inquiring about letters of marque. The harbormaster has warned that Chelaxian ships are welcome in Absalom's port and are not to be harassed but stopped short of cutting off access to privateers.

Although Chelax has not made a similarly public call, Andoren merchants have reported dozens of attacks by yellow-sailed vessels in recent months. While previously reported as collapsed due to internal power struggles, the kholo freebooters of Okeno have seemingly found new leadership and new business in these dangerous times.

ISGER DECLARES INDEPENDENCE

Anon & Afar / 18 Gozran, 4726

Reported by Arianna Dreth

ELIDIR, ISGER—In an astonishing political shake-up, the former vassal state of Isger has declared independence from Chelaxian rule. After weeks of pitched fighting between the Hellbreakers League and the Hellknights representing the will of Queen Abrogail Thrune, the Hellbreakers and their allies emerged victorious. The Hellknights' defeat breaks the last of Chelax's hold on Isgeri territory.

It is not yet clear what form or leadership the new governments will have, but Andoren leaders have voiced their full support for the transition. Supreme Elect Andira Marusek stated, "We congratulate Isger on its hard-won freedom. The Isgeri people must chart their own course, but Andoran is prepared to offer any aid its leaders wish of us." Queen Abrogail has not made a public announcement.

Meanwhile, in the north, Lady Kaltessa Iyis's mercenaries are on the march, and though they've driven Molthuni forces away from Isger's borders for now, they may prove to be a destabilizing element in the already fragile region.

AUGUSTANA BURNS

Anon & Afar / 26 Gozran, 4726

Reported by Arianna Dreth

AUGUSTANA, ANDORAN—A devastating nighttime assault has left the port of Augustana ablaze. Under cover

of darkness, the Chelaxian navy attacked Andoran's largest shipyards, inflicting severe damage to the port and Andoran's naval capacity.

Early reports suggest Chelax's flagship the *Dark Prince* led a small fleet in the attack, together with an unknown number of drowning devils. Once defenses were mustered, the attacking fleet was driven off by a combined force of Andoren military, Eagle Knights, and volunteers.

As soon as news reached Absalom's port, questions began circulating about the city's defenses. Acting Primarch Wynsal Starborn assured that "although Chelax's fleet is the greatest in the Inner Sea now, that's only because far greater fleets lie in the depths of Absalom's harbor. Still, research is underway to determine the exact magic they used to conceal themselves and make sure we are not vulnerable to the same attack."

Ambassador Augustyn Naran issued a renewed call for privateers following the attack, suggesting that the Chelaxian navy is a threat to Absalom and the entire Inner Sea.



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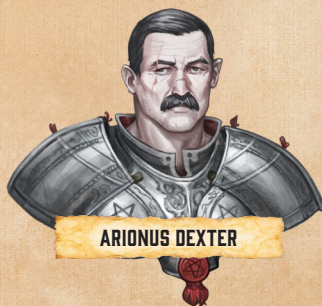
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ABROGAIL THRUNE II



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CHELAXIAN LEADERSHIP

One of the major powers of the Hellfire Crisis, Cheliox boasts a host of notable figures within their leadership, including the leaders of several Hellknight orders after Queen Abrogail's decree. While military victories are vital, collecting warshards for use and experimentation is also a key goal for Cheliox.

ABROGAIL THRUNE II

Her Infernal Majestrix Queen **Abrogail Thrune II** (tyrannical female human sorcerer) is Cheliox's supreme ruler, and all other leadership, military and civilian alike, defers to her authority. Abrogail's reign has seen some stinging defeats, such as the loss of the territory held by Ravounel and failure to reclaim the former colony now known as Vidrian. Thus far, however, these losses haven't undermined Abrogail's power within her homeland, and her response to attempted uprisings, such as the Glorious Reclamation, has been swift and brutal.

Abrogail seems to have taken Andoran's incursion into Isger as a personal insult. Sources in the Chelaxian court indicate the queen is determined to continue the war until all of Andoran once again falls under

Cheliox's control. Abrogail's generals and allied Hellknight lictors carry out the everyday maneuvers of the war, but there's no question that the queen dictates the overall strategy.

ANABETH GRINCEEN

The Chelaxian navy is under the command of Admiral **Anabeth Grinceen** (tenacious female human mariner), formerly a fleet admiral in charge of Fort Gorthoklek in the town of Hinji. After unmasking Hinji's lord mayor's conspiratorial dealings with a drug cartel and a coven of hags, Anabeth was rewarded with a promotion, and she now oversees all naval operations.

Anabeth has a reputation for persistence in hunting lawbreakers and enemy ships alike. Her ruthlessness and tactical acumen have been essential in Cheliox's naval victories in the Hespereth Strait and throughout the Inner Sea, and it's rumored she's using her sorcerous talents to bind devils to key flagships.

ARIONUS DEXTER

From the Chelaxian military headquarters of Hellfire Fortress, General **Arionus Dexter** (implacable male

human tactician) commands the nation's armies. Born to a family with a vaunted history of military service, Arionus has been in his position as general for the past 25 years. He's staunchly loyal to Abrogail, but reportedly, he doesn't shy away from suggesting alternative courses of action when he sees a tactical flaw in her plans.

Andoren intelligence indicates Arionus also oversees high-level spy operations, and some are concerned that he might have seeded Chelaxian operatives passing as Andoren citizens into the country as sleeper agents.

DARCYNE WRENS

Taking the place of Richemar Alamansor upon his retirement, Lictor **Darcyne Wrens** (embittered female human sorcerer) has been saddled with substantial unrest within the Hellknight Order of the Rack, particularly by her rival Paravicar **Vorcouis Perivala** (enigmatic male human signifer). Though Darcyne would presumably like to quell dissent within the organization, her duties force her gaze outward as she hastily trains hundreds of armigers to feed Abrogail Thrune's war machine.

DRUM THORNFIDDLE

King **Drum Thornfiddle** (opportunistic male gnome sovereign) rules over Brastlewark, a gnome settlement within Chelixa known for its academies' alchemical and engineering expertise. King Thornfiddle pledged his loyalty to House Thrune in exchange for Brastlewark's relative autonomy—and his own position as ruler. The king's detractors paint him as a shameless toady, though he argues his clever bargain has kept Brastlewark safe and prosperous.

Thornfiddle prefers his alchemical and wizarding studies over attending war councils, though he ensures the gnomes' maintenance of the newly completed Aspodean Wall. He's pressed Brastlewark's academies into wartime research, and rumor has it that he once promised an unspecified favor to Chelixa's rulers that Abrogail might now have called in.

GORTHOKLEK

As the devil who'd served Abrogail's great-grandmother and namesake, Emissary **Gorthoklek** (devious male nessari advisor) is a valued and—inasmuch as Abrogail trusts anyone—trusted advisor to Her Infernal Majestrix. Gorthoklek is ancient and canny, and it's long been rumored that he restrains Abrogail's more vicious impulses. It's doubtful, however, that the devil does so due to any altruism on his part.

Although Gorthoklek holds no formal military role, Abrogail listens to his counsel. In recent war meetings, sources indicate he's been a voice of caution, urging the queen to make each strategic move like a well-placed stitch in a cloth. It sometimes puts him at odds with Abrogail's other diabolic advisor, the more bellicose Contessa Lrilatha.

IVO ELLIENDO

Formerly a paralictor in the Order of the Scourge, Lictor **Ivo Elliendo** (ambitious male human Hellknight) was elevated to head the order after Lictor Toulon Vidoc refused Abrogail's command to take control. An anonymous source reported that Ivo has had a grudge against Vidoc since a family scandal tarnished his reputation with the lictor, and he jumped at the chance to replace his former superior.

Under its new leadership, the Order of the Scourge's mandate is now to investigate suspected traitors to the crown, a task that Ivo has taken to with great zeal. Appearing to have perceived Vidoc's and his loyalists' defections as a personal betrayal, Ivo has issued large bounties for information on their whereabouts.

LRLATHA

It's said that Contessa **Lrilatha** (vindictive female erinyes) was sent by Asmodeus as a tutor for young Abrogail Thrune, to mold the ambitious and ruthless girl into an unparalleled ruler. Though Lrilatha has neither confirmed nor denied whether it was Asmodeus himself who assigned her the post, there's no doubt that her training has been a key part of Abrogail's success. Lrilatha is rumored to be among the more hawkish voices on Chelaxian war councils, advocating bold and aggressive strategies to keep Andoran on the defensive and crush the will of its populace to fight. She sometimes clashes with Gorthoklek over his subtler, more gradual schemes.

RANIA LAROUNG

Ironquay Commandant Admiral **Rania Laroung** (stern female human magus) oversees the First Imperial Naval War Academy in Ostenso. Rania sets a strict curriculum, leading to a high percentage of washouts, but those who have made it through the demanding training are among Chelixa's most skilled naval officers. With the onset of the war, her standards have risen even higher, and her personal recommendation will guarantee a new officer a top post. It's rumored that a secret division of the academy is developing unconventional warfare techniques, such as psychic abilities to aid the Chelaxian navy, and that the warshard Rania recently obtained is accelerating these plans.

RAUZIO FERIN

Rauzio Ferin (cunning male aiuvarin human spymaster) allegedly cut his teeth in espionage monitoring the raucous pirates of the Shackles. According to a source among the Free Captains, Rauzio used his cleverness and charm to win over allies and sabotage many captains who might pose a threat to Chelaxian aims. After returning to Chelixa, Rauzio dropped out of the public eye, though it's rumored that he now occupies the position of spymaster under General Arionus Dexter, coordinating day-to-day operations of Chelaxian intelligence.

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ANDIRA MARUSEK



JORAB MIRE



TRIBORN WAITS



RIES CUPRIANAS



HELENA TRELLIS

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VALHIA DUNNELL

YANLIA HARVEND

DUNBARR TWISTS

INGRID ODEBER

ANDOREN LEADERSHIP

The leadership of Andoran can be fractious, but currently, they're united behind one goal: defend the region against Cheliaz's tyranny and keep as many warshards as possible from falling into their grasp. Even the most hawkish don't dare believe they can take down Cheliaz entirely—but every fight for freedom must start somewhere.

ANDIRA MARUSEK

Recently reelected for her third and final term, thanks to her leadership during the troubling times of the Godsrain, Supreme Elect **Andira Marusek** (dauntless female human Eagle Knight) knows her time left to serve Andoran in her current capacity runs short. She would never dream of subverting the laws to stay in power, but she fears the consequences of switching leadership mid-conflict. Therefore, she hopes to strike Cheliaz a decisive blow before her term ends.

All of Andoran knows Andira had a distinguished career with the Steel Falcons before entering politics, rising to become general of the entire branch. Some of her record is noticeably sealed, however, and it's likely that at least some of her service took place within the mysterious Twilight Talons. She harbors a clear antipathy toward

Cheliaz and its oppressive system, with a fervor that suggests she might have witnessed circumstances within its borders firsthand.

ERAST FORN

The military forces in Almas are led by Consul **Erast Forn** (impatient male human commander), who made his name in an Eagle Knight battalion serving in the Fifth Mendevian Crusade. When their encampment was besieged by demons and Erast's superior officers were slain, he took charge and inspired his compatriots to fight their way to safety. He accepted his appointment as consul by the Supreme Elect out of duty, though he reportedly finds the attendant political considerations tiresome. Now that Andoran is at war, however, defending Almas has become less of a ceremonial obligation, and Erast has been urging the Supreme Elect not to commit so many forces outside Andoran that the nation's security is neglected.

HASKELL WHALEY

Consul Admiral **Haskell Whaley** (grizzled male human commander) commands Andoran's naval forces from Arsenal Island off the coast of Augustana. Despite his

eventual success in driving off the Chelaxian fleet, calls grow for his retirement following Augustana's burning.

Although nearly 70 years old, Haskell has staunchly avoided retirement, seeing it as abandoning his country in its hour of need. In spite of this, several officers are reportedly jockeying to succeed him, including Captain **Dunbarr Twists** (ambitious male halfling seafarer) and Captain **Elaisha Whaley** (fiery female human swashbuckler), Haskell's daughter and a gifted captain in her own right.

HELENA TRELLIS

Marshall **Helena Trellis** (discreet female human spymaster), allegedly a mid-level bureaucrat in Andoran's civil service, appears to have far greater influence than such a quotidian position would suggest; rumor has it the Supreme Elect and generals alike visit her office. Whispers among those in the know indicate that Helena is in fact the leader of the shadowy Twilight Talons, Andoran's little-publicized intelligence service. Those who have met the lady say she has an unassuming demeanor, save for a piercing gaze that seems to assess all of her conversation partner's secrets.

INGRID ODEBER

The leader of the Golden Legion branch of the Eagle Knights, General **Ingrid Odeber** (innovative female werebear human veteran), was recently promoted to her position after the retirement of former General Hedrik Traxxus. As a devout Iomedaeen, Ingrid reportedly has mixed feelings about the war; she believes it's a noble cause but is concerned it might cause Andoran to stray from its founding principles and pull the Legion away from its humanitarian missions.

To that end, Ingrid has been vocal in her support of missions that would aid freedom fighters in Isgar, while she cautions against military operations pressing too far into Cheliox proper. **Tharine Astella** (devout female halfling legionnaire), a fellow Iomedaeen and the general's closest aide, has recently split from the general by supporting Jorab Mire's more aggressive solutions; like many in Andoran, the death of Reginald Cormoth weighs heavily on her.

The star of Ingrid's subordinate **Anvra Irongaunt** (brilliant female dromaar human runesmith) is also quietly on the rise. Her Platinum Wing's experimental weapons might yet prove their merits on the battlefield.

JORAB MIRE

One of the more outspoken voices for an aggressive campaign, Consul Marshal **Jorab Mire** (expansionist male human general) is the head of Andoran's military forces. Jorab has long advocated for a full-scale assault on Cheliox's borders and believes that recent events have proven him right, which he doesn't hesitate to bring up to those who initially opposed his ideas. With the still-unknown quantity of warshards in play, Jorab argues that Andoran can't allow Cheliox to gain any ground, or the whole region might be in jeopardy. His experience defending Andoran's borders brought him face-to-face with refugees from Cheliox, and like the Supreme Elect, he dreams of the day when all Chelaxian citizens are freed from the tyranny of Hell.

RIES CUPRIANAS

Eagle Knight Commander **Ries Cuprianas** (valiant male human retired commando) has had a long career. Though he's retired from active field duty, he oversees the Eagle Knights with every bit as much enthusiasm as in his younger years with the Steel Falcons. The "Steel Fox" makes no secret of his concerns about militarizing the country and the strategies more hawkish voices advocate. He's quick to caution his compatriots that they must not stoop to measures that would make them as morally bankrupt as their enemies.

Sources indicate Ries was devastated at the death of General Cormoth, whom he served under prior to the general's retirement and considered a dear friend, but he's determined not to let personal considerations interfere with what's best for Andoran as a whole.

TRIBORN WAITS

Command of the Steel Falcons is in the hands of General **Triborn Waits** (ostentatious male musetouched nephilim human commander), a former military envoy in Absalom who succeeded Andira Marusek after she took the office of Supreme Elect. Under Triborn's guidance, the Steel Falcons have grown more bellicose than ever, as he believes military intervention in neighboring countries is necessary to ensure peace in Andoran and the spread of its principles of liberty, an opinion he shares with Jorab Mire. In his view, this war is an opportunity to show both Cheliox and the world the power of a free people and to encourage oppressed souls everywhere to rise up. To that end, he's sent Steel Falcon representatives to governments all over the region to enlist sympathy and support.

VALHIA DUNNELL

The Gray Corsairs, as a branch of the Steel Falcons, are under the overall leadership of General Triborn Waits. The Corsairs' day-to-day direction, however, falls to Vice Admiral **Valhia Dunnell** (adventurous female divine dragonblood human kineticist). Prior to abolition, Valhia spent much of her time harrying slavers' ships in the Fever Sea; recently, her attention has turned to transportation of refugees escaping oppressive governments, especially Cheliox and Nidal. Since the war began, though, most of the Gray Corsairs' focus has been on plausibly deniable privateer operations against the Chelaxian navy.

YANLIA HARVEND

Ambassador **Yanlia Harvend** (charismatic female aiuvarin human diplomat) is a member of the Steel Falcons and one of Andoran's top negotiators. Her friendly demeanor makes her quite approachable, but those who underestimate her do so at their peril, as sharp political instincts underlie the ambassador's nonchalant affability. Yanlia has no permanent post but is dispatched to situations in need of a particularly skilled diplomat; fresh off a posting in Absalom, she's rumored to now be on an unusually covert assignment in Nidal, attempting to negotiate an alliance with the rebel horselords.

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THE FRONTS

This overview of the fronts in the Inner Sea War is intended to provide a summary of the situation in each to our readers. Those interested in delving further are directed to our comprehensive overviews that contain detailed reports from a variety of sources.

ABSALOM

The front in Absalom is largely a political one, and espionage, diplomacy, and skulduggery abound. As a major trade hub, Absalom hosts representatives from all nations involved in the conflict as well as those of neutral countries. Chelaxian and Andoren diplomats jockey for places at Absalomian dinner tables, each hoping to win aid from Absalom, Taldor, Osirion, or Qadira, while the neutral powers debate the merits of embroiling themselves in the conflict versus the risks to trade through the Arch of Aroden if the war drags on. Meanwhile, spies and double agents play a dangerous game to obtain any information that could give their nation an edge. Behind the veneer of détente in a neutral harbor, the tension of war simmers, and more than one careless operative has vanished into the city's alleyways. In Absalom, an enterprising group of agents could

maneuver their patrons—or themselves—into positions of great influence... or end up with blades in their backs.

ARCH OF ARODEN

The Arch of Aroden over the Hespereth Strait is one of the key strategic locations of the war. With Cheliax blockading the strait and allowing only approved ships through, trade throughout the Inner Sea is severely impacted. Though naval clashes happen frequently in the area, the crown jewels are Corentyn and Khari, as any power that controls both ports controls the strait. Much of the conflict thus far has been street-level skirmishes between small units as Rahadoun attempts to seize Khari from Chelaxian control. In both towns, the port restrictions have caused unrest, and locals are split between loyalty to Cheliax and the opportunity to escape from diabolic rule—though some are concerned Rahadoun's staunch anti-divine laws might be just as oppressive. Of course, the Free Captains, never ones to let an opportunity for plunder pass by, are taking advantage of the unrest to prey upon any ships falling into their sights. On the streets of Corentyn and Khari, opportunities abound for a small team to make a name

for themselves in the skirmishes and help their chosen side take control of the ports.

The latest dispatches from the Arch of Aroden include reports that the Bellflower Network has been actively smuggling frightened citizens across the strait and rumors of a planned attack on the Chelaxian admiralty in Khari.

ASPODEAN WALL

On the Aspodean Wall, stretching from the Aspodell Mountains to the Inner Sea along the Andoran-Chelax border, the armies of the two warring nations face each other head-on. From behind the wall, Chelax sends their forces to strike into Andoran before retreating to defensive positions, relying on its fortifications to keep Andoren soldiers and their pernicious ideas from finding a foothold in their eastern territory. Andoran's leadership is well aware that the wall is crucial to Chelax's defense and has devoted considerable resources to besieging it. Scouts risk their lives to investigate the wall's construction, while armies numbering thousands strong dig in for bloody, hard-fought assaults. The Brastlework gnomes who built the wall, however, are far from unified in support for their Thrune-backed king, and even a few defectors could reveal its weak points to Andoran.

FANGWOOD

Spurred on by the effect of the Godsrain and the influence of Szuriel, the Rider of War, Molthune is once again pointing its swords at Nirmathas. Due to the threat of the Gravelands and its undead hordes, Nirmathas now finds itself beset by enemies on two sides, though it's received an unexpected boon in aid from the newly founded hobgoblin nation of Oprak. Nirmathi envoys also seek assistance from the Encarthan Alliance of Druma, Kyonin, Razmiran, and Ustalav to defend their northern border, warning that Molthune's ambitions pose a threat to the entire region. Under the tangled boughs of the Fangwood, hit-and-run warfare rules the day since the terrain doesn't favor movements of massive armies. Molthune might have daemonic power stoking its fires, but Nirmathas has an extraplanar ally of its own as Milani's herald, Courage Heart, lends her support. The Nirmathi and Milanite freedom fighters are in dire need of skilled guerrilla strike teams; conversely, Szuriel never turns away more fuel for the fires of war.

The latest dispatches from the Fangwood include reports that undead troops from the Gravelands are making incursions into the forest and that the fey queen Gendowyn and her Accressiel Court might be getting involved in the conflict.

INNER SEA

With the Aspodean Wall limiting a land advance by Andoran, much of the war is focused on naval battles in the Inner Sea. As the navies of Andoran and Chelax wage war on the high seas, the disruption to trade routes risks drawing in other powers as well, for the navies of

Absalom, Osirion, and Qadira wish to ensure their ships' security in the midst of the conflict. Andoran courts the aid of Free Captains able to break through Chelaxian blockades, while Chelax relies on the Okeno freebooters as privateer forces.

Both sides hope to win the favor of azarketi and underwater settlements in the region, including those of merfolk and sedachies, as assistance from below could literally turn the tide of battle. On the open ocean, however, alliances and fortunes shift as quickly as the waves, especially when pirates are involved. Such circumstances give even neophyte sailors a chance to rise, make their fortunes, and advance causes close to their hearts, though wise captains know their aims are best served by keeping their loyalties flexible.

ISGER

Throughout its history, Isger has been a vassal state, a canvas for proxy conflicts of more powerful nations, and a nation of deep divisions. Now, following its declaration of independence from Chelax, Isger finally has the chance to rise as a power in its own right, provided its fractious factions can unify the nation. The people of Isger bear the scars of many conflicts, from Chelaxian oppression to the Goblinblood Wars to the recent civil war. The Hellbreakers League and the Chitterwood goblins have much in common, but old wounds run deep, and they struggle to trust one another. Meanwhile, both the Hellknights and Eagle Knights endeavor to guide local factions on their preferred course. With threats from without and unification challenges from within, Isger could use the aid of diplomatic nation-builders as well as capable warriors.

NIDAL

In the shadowed country of Nidal, its population has lived under the rule of Zon-Kuthon for millennia, thanks to an ancient bargain struck to save the land. With the warshards scattered by the death of Gorum during the Godsrain, however, the Kuthites' iron hold on Nidal has begun to crack. Horselords opposed to Kuthite rule forged a weapon of immense power, *Shadowpiercer*, from a warshard and now aim to push back against the chains of the Umbral Court.

For now, the liberation efforts focus on the plains and the city of Nisroch, rather than the Court's strongholds of Pangolais or the Uskwood. To contravene a deific bargain, the horselords and their Desnan allies must achieve the impossible, likely requiring allies with powers far beyond most mortals. Those who possess a warshard or artifact of their own, or who have been infused with mythic power, will find ample opportunity in Nidal to alter the fate of a nation, possibly weakening—or even destroying—Zon-Kuthon's hold on the land.

Recent dispatches from Nidal include reports that the horselords intend to launch a full-scale attack on Nisroch and that Ravounel is unofficially aiding the rebels' efforts.

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THE FUTURE

The future is uncertain. This has always been true, and even more so in the Age of Lost Omens. This reporter has interviewed numerous seers and augurs in the course of her work; in her experience, those who profess absolute certainty in future events are either frauds or slightly unhinged—or both. Still, with any major upheaval comes those who insist they know how it'll turn out, and the Hellfire Crisis is no exception.

The following is a collection of the predictions that have gained the most attention since this crisis began. Some seem plausible, while others stretch the imagination, but this reporter is no more a prophet than most and thus presents them on an even footing. Our readers are cautioned, however, to view with skepticism any offered prophecies about the Hellfire Crisis's resolution (particularly if they're being solicited for funds by loyal adherents).

ANDORAN IN CHAINS

As a master of reading Harrow cards, Jehanna has long provided council to the people of Absalom from festival tents or the Gutless Griffon tavern. Sometimes referred to as the Vision, after the card representing esoteric knowledge, her fortune-telling has proven uncannily reliable in

predicting the fates of various *Starstone* aspirants and local scandals here in Absalom.

The Vision's latest predictions, however, have turned ominous. She claims her cards have shown terrible portents related to Hell and devils, reporting they'll rearrange themselves even when she isn't performing a reading. Allegedly, even unrelated harrowings since the Godsrain have warned that Queen Abrogail Thrune will invade Andoran at the first pretext and force its subjugated populace into infernal contracts. Although the first part of her prediction arguably came true, even some of her former supporters quietly accuse her of spreading diabolic propaganda.

A HELLISH BEQUEST

The troll Augurs of the city of Kaer Maga in Varisia are notorious for their divinatory techniques: slicing their bellies open and reading the future in their own entrails before replacing them and letting their regeneration heal the wound. From their temple in the Downmarket district, they sell their services to any willing to pay. Delria Levrell, an Absalomian merchant seeking insight into the likelihood of the conflict dragging on and impacting her business,

recently visited one of these Augurs, a troll named Kivrit. Delria left Kaer Maga in a hurry, seemingly quite disturbed and refusing to speak of what Kivrit told her.

The scholars she'd consulted to make sense of the Augur's enigmatically phrased couplets weren't so closemouthed, with several of them selling the information. The couplets detail how decades of corruption and nepotism have made Chelias's military less formidable than it might appear. Apparently, as their queen draws more and more upon the powers of Asmodeus to make up the difference, she trades off Chelias's people and territory to Hell until the entire nation eventually becomes an extension of the infernal plane.

Kivrit himself has declined to share further prophecies on the subject, stating that he's divined all there is to know on the matter.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCES

In less mystical techniques, a top military strategist in Osirion, General Khumakhet Mektharis, has developed an elaborate predictive model that they claim can be used to analyze the outcome of conflicts. Notably, Khumakhet used the model to correctly predict that the country now known as Vidrian would win independence without falling to anarchy or piratical predations.

Reports from the Osirian court indicate Khumakhet ran an analysis on the Hellfire Crisis to advise the Ruby Prince on Osirion's course of action. They reported several possible results, but the one they deemed most likely was a broader imperial conflict throughout the region. Given recent reformist sentiments among powerful Taldans, including Grand Princess Eutropia, Khumakhet believes Taldor will soon join the war on Andoran's side; an allied victory would weaken a dangerous, diabolically empowered rival while providing an outlet for Taldor's more bellicose factions. With their old enemy gaining influence, Qadira then supports Chelias, hoping to embroil Taldor in a messy conflict.

Despite Duke Quintus Corcina's blockade of the Sellen river (page 10), Khumakhet stands by their prediction of Taldor's leaders siding with Andoran. As Khumakhet has advocated Osirion's neutrality, some have alleged they're twisting their model to support their preferred course of action, an accusation the general staunchly denies.

THE SHADOW WAR

The conflict between Molthune and Nirmathas, though not yet colliding with the Andoran-Chelias war, is another point of destabilization in the region. In the town of Crystalhurst deep within the Fangwood, its druids watch the battles with concern, doing what they can to aid Nirmathas with their limited numbers. One of these druids, Talluna Willow, apparently has a gift for divining the future in whorls of tree bark, and she's reported some worrying prophecies.

Per Talluna's dendromancy, Molthune's invasion of Nirmathas and burning of the great swathes of the Fangwood isn't enough to slake the nation's increasing bloodlust. Seeking a new target and frustrated by the

mountains to the south, Molthuni forces turn east to conquer the prosperous plains of Druma and secure a route into Isgar. However, Talluna claims there's one front that Molthune won't attack, choosing to instead ally with Nidal and trade prisoners to the shadowed nation in exchange for aid against its growing list of enemies.

STALEMATED PEACE

Eveira Serreni, a pyromancer in the Chelaxian port city of Corentyn, has had a thriving fortune-telling business for the past 10 years. Though her predictions were rarely earthshaking, certain merchants in town swore by her divinations when deciding investments. When Eveira was approached by a functionary in Queen Abrogail's court to aid in predicting Andoren troops' movements, however, she offered another prediction altogether: one regarding the outcome of the war itself.

According to Eveira, the flames showed a war lasting years, with both sides taking heavy losses. Battles will be won and lost, disputed territory will go back and forth, but no grand triumph will come for either Chelias or Andoran. With the war at a stalemate and both countries exhausted and drained of resources, neutral Absalomian diplomats will broker a peace. Chelias loses some eastern territory to the liberated Isgar, including Brastlework and Ostenso; Andoran sacrifices valuable trade routes on the Inner Sea to Chelaxian ships.

Eveira, a noted diabolist, likely intended this prediction as a warning rather than an insult to Chelias's presumption of victory, but the distinction was lost on her influential client. No one has seen the pyromancer since, though that hasn't stopped rumors of her foretelling from spreading.

TALMANDOR'S BENEDICTION

In the fey-blessed mining town of Fusil, it could be easy to forget war rages on Andoran's borders and coasts—easy, that is, save for the banners unfurled over the stone town hall proclaiming, "Talmador Brings Us Victory—She Has Foreseen It!"

"She" is eight-year-old Flora Tarvess, daughter of the local tavern keepers, who suffered a fever last year and nearly perished because the town has no priest. Thankfully, she recovered, and since that time, her parents claim she's experienced visions of the future, often predicting minor events around town. Upon declaration of war, however, Flora's visions reportedly took on global significance.

According to her parents, Flora recently had a vision of Andoran's leaders summoning Talmador. In this vision, she witnessed Talmador helping turn the tide in numerous combats, leading Andoran's armies through the frontlines. Her descriptions of the scene of the war's deciding battle are evocative of the Whisperwood in Chelias, and the visions culminate in Talmador striking down Gorthoklek himself before leading Andoren forces to liberate Egorian.

While Flora's accounts do contain descriptive details a rural child would be unlikely to know, it's best not to ask too many questions in town. The locals are protective of their pint-sized prophet.

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HELLKNIGHTS

Imposing in dark armor and faceless helms, the Hellknights are easily recognized around the Inner Sea. Depending on where one sees that armor, it might mark them as the long arm of Cheliox, bounty hunters, emissaries of Hell, or bastions of law on the frontier.

The Hellknights are taught to see themselves as a necessary cruelty. They embrace their own mercilessness as a tool to carve away the world's flaws and bring lasting harmony. Beyond just being part of their name, Hell is the crucible that forges knights to be unyielding and unbreakable. And only by passing through that crucible and defeating the denizens of the Pit can one become a Hellknight.

Few Hellknights actually embrace Hell as a vision of perfection. Instead, it's an example of how order can be maintained in even the most difficult situations. The many horrors it inflicts on damned souls and even devils are tools that can likewise control the worst mortals while they still live. Hellknights teach that most mortals can be guided to the law comparatively gently, though the looming threat of these punishments is an important part of such guidance.

To protect their vision of the law and spread it across the mortal world, many orders of Hellknights have arisen during the Age of Lost Omens. Each of these orders is dedicated to a particular facet of law. Where the Order of the Chain focuses on the capture and imprisonment of criminals, the Nail brings the frontiers and wilderness in line, and the Pyre burns away revolutionary philosophies and revolutionaries alike.

Cheliox has many claims on the Hellknights as both their birthplace and the longtime ally of many orders, but the knights have maintained a stance of independence. Until very recently, even orders that worked closely with House Thrune in Cheliox were technically independent.

THE MEASURE AND THE CHAIN

The Hellknights strive to create a world so peaceful and orderly that it has no further need for them. The Measure is the massive body of law that describes the bounds of such a society, originally based on the mortal laws from Cheliox and Taldor. However, the last 150 years have given the Hellknights much time to tighten up areas they feel are too lax and simplify out countless exceptions.

The Chain is made up of three links, representing the Hellknights' virtues: order, discipline, and mercilessness. In these teachings, order represents progress to the final goal of a peaceful and harmonious world, along with the punishment for any who would stray from that

path. Discipline is required for the emotional state where order can be reached, avoiding distractions and forging others through fear. And mercilessness is the realization that all are flawed, even the Hellknights, and therefore unworthy of mercy when they stand in the way of order.

The Hellknights' zeal is often compared to that of devils, and indeed, many among their number respect or worship Asmodeus. However, the unforgiving nature of the Measure and the Chain forces out many corrupt members who wish to use the Hellknights' power for their own ends or enjoyment. Many Hellknights wear their faceless helms as a reminder that they're only part of a great machine.



THE TEST

Although many begin training in a Hellknight order as an armiger, they aren't considered true Hellknights until they've passed the test. This test is simple but not easy, requiring an armiger to best a devil in single combat. Although the exact details of the test vary between orders, they're generally performed in batches a few times a year, and every available member of the order gather to stand witness.

Most armigers face a vordine during their test, but those entering the Hellknights later in their careers are matched against the devil that can be summoned to give the most even fight. If the armiger bests the devil, they can immediately recite their vows and become a Hellknight. Those who fail, die.

Rarely, someone who defeats an appropriate devil outside of the ritual grounds can become a Hellknight if the event is witnessed by a Hellknight in good standing. The onus of proof in these cases is on the initiate, as many lie about their qualifications to become a Hellknight, in some cases going so far as to create fictitious knightly orders.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ORDER

The roots of the Hellknights stretch back about 150 years, just before the death of Aroden and the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens. Decades before the rise of infernalism and House Thrune, Aroden's faith appeared monolithic in Cheliox but was being subtly infiltrated and undermined. The followers of Sifkesh, the demon lord of heresy, had taken root deep within Aroden's church.

After the death of his wife and son, a little-known champion of Aroden named Daidian Ruel dedicated himself to the eradication of Sifkesh's followers. He soon

gathered a group of merciless vigilantes under his banner, recognized by King Gaspodar as a new knightly order fit to cleanse the nation for Aroden's impending return. Aroden's faithful, however, denounced the new order as "Hellknights," owing to their brutal culling of suspected heretics within the church's ranks.

In the years leading up to Aroden's death, Hellknight citadels sprung up around Cheliox with King Gaspodar's enthusiastic support. Daidian Ruel increasingly left command to his subordinates as he studied the planes and the fate of dead souls, said to be seeking out the soul of his son. It's then that devils entered Hellknight traditions as a model to emulate and overcome.

After Daidian disappeared to continue his research, the Hellknights settled into the rough structure seen today, with many separate orders pursuing different facets of a lawful world. With the death of Aroden and the assassination of their longtime sponsor, King Gaspodar, most orders eventually supported House Thrune's claim in the Chelaxian Civil War.

In a mirror of current events, Abrogail Thrune's great-grandmother and namesake, Queen Abrogail I, offered the Order of the Scourge a role as her official police force. They declined, stating the Hellknights serve no one nation's laws.

THE HELLFIRE CRISIS

As Cheliox entered its war with Andoran, Her Imperial Majestrix Abrogail Thrune II declared all the orders of Hellknights to be under her direct command. Certain orders that already worked closely with House Thrune, such as the Order of the Rack, fell in line without complaint. Others see the very suggestion as an affront to their dignity and to the history of the Hellknights.

More cynical sources note that Hellknights complying with the command are largely those based within Cheliox, while those abroad freely voice their complaints. This trend is generally true but doesn't explain those like the Order of the Scourge in the heart of Cheliox standing against corruption at great cost and personal risk.

With these divisions, Hellknights might find themselves across the battlefield from their siblings under the Measure and the Chain. However, the Chain is quite clear on how to handle Hellknights who have erred: no mercy.

Although the military of Andoran is leery of aid from the Hellknights, less formal groups have been willing to accept the risk of betrayal. Even the Twilight Talons (page 36) have begun cautiously reaching out to the Hellknights disaffected by Thrune's commands.

HELLKNIGHT ORDERS

To handle the unrest in the wake of Aroden's death, the Hellknights split into multiple orders with individual missions and mandates. New orders are frequently created as needs demand and fall into obscurity just as quickly, but there are currently seven major orders recognized across the Inner Sea region.

Even among the major orders, some have fractured under Thrune's demands, and others attempt to find their way. These schisms are still so recent that the martial and magical teachings of those orders have yet to diverge.

The lesser and greater order benefits for certain Hellknight archetype feats can be found on page 28.

ORDER OF THE CHAIN

Members of the Order of the Chain travel the Inner Sea and beyond, tracking down those who have escaped the law. These criminals are turned over to the governments that originally sought them

EDICTS AND ANATHEMA

Hellknights hold fiercely to their edicts and anathema. Although no magical force binds them to these strictures, Hellknights seen as falling short are cast out by their orders. Those suspected of bending the rules often volunteer for infernal contracts, the *geas* ritual, or mental probing by signifiers to prove their innocence.

Edicts apply the lessons of Hell to bring order to the mortal world, uphold the law

Anathema undermine the Measure and the Chain (page 20)



ORDER OF THE CHAIN HELLKNIGHT

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ORDER OF THE CHAIN



ORDER OF THE GATE



ORDER OF THE GODCLAW



ORDER OF THE NAIL



ORDER OF THE PYRE



ORDER OF THE RACK



ORDER OF THE SCOURGE

or imprisoned in the order's headquarters near the Chelaxian city of Corentyn. The great prison of Citadel Gheradesca holds everyone from political dissidents to mass murderers, each condemned by the laws of the country they were in at the time.

Although the Order of the Chain has traditionally avoided favoring any one nation, many responded to Abrogail Thrune's command to work directly under Chelaxian rule. These fractious members, pledging themselves to Thrune's commands over the Measure and the Chain, call themselves the Order of the Manacle. With this increasingly vehement internal struggle, the fate of Citadel Gheradesca and its prisoners is being called into question.

ORDER OF THE GATE

As the only major Hellknight order run by signifers, the Order of the Gate seeks to enforce a lawful society through magical means. From Citadel Enferac in western Cheliax, they test their creations on nearby towns. Despite years of magical compulsions, intrusive surveillance, and summoned fiends, the Order of the Gate has never run out of rebellious test subjects.

The order's research has long been funded by House Thrune, and they were among the first to respond to Abrogail Thrune's call. Many of the order's creations have begun to spread through Cheliax, but the signifers have largely remained at Citadel Enferac. From their position among the mountains, they deter attacks from internal dissidents and the fledgling nation of Ravounel.

ORDER OF THE GODCLAW

The Order of the Godclaw is dedicated to a syncretic faith of five gods, marking it as the most religious of the Hellknight orders. The five talons of the Godclaw (*Pathfinder Divine Mysteries* 244) have long been Abadar, Asmodeus, Iomedae, Irori, and Torag. However, the newly arisen orc god Uirch has recently been accepted into the fold in Torag's place, bringing with him a surge of orc and dromaar members.

Although the order offers prayer to Asmodeus and House Thrune has aided them in the past, Lictor **Resarc Ountor** (page 103) has thus far refused to side with Cheliax in their war. The new armigers and Hellknights brought in by Uirch's ascension form a major block opposed to aiding Cheliax, but even some who favor Asmodeus see restricting the order's vision to favor one talon of the Godclaw as being a bridge too far.

ORDER OF THE NAIL

Headquartered in Varisia, once the northernmost of Cheliax's colonies, the Order of the Nail is dedicated to pushing back the wilderness to make room for ordered civilization. Although best known for dispatching Hellknights around the world to battle monsters, the order also opposes what they see as rural superstitions and independent frontier settlements.

The order has a long history with Cheliax but declined Her Imperial Majestrix's commands to join the war. Publicly, they see fights between nations to be a horrible waste when so much wilderness remains unclaimed.

Many senior members in the order also have complicated feelings about Cheliox following the Battle of Hellknight Hill. Although the citadel at Hellknight Hill was once the headquarters of the Order of the Nail, House Thrune had the citadel occupied by the loyal Order of the Rack.

ORDER OF THE PYRE

The Order of the Pyre dedicates itself to rooting out revolutionary philosophies and purging religions they classify as dangerous cults. The order's definition is so broad it includes almost every faith in the Inner Sea except for the very largest and is quick to update to circumstances, such as targeting Gorum's faithful following the god's death. Despite this broad approach, many nations have invited the Order of the Pyre to target mutual enemies.

However, these Hellknights' closest allies have long been Cheliox and Nidal, as they work tirelessly to wipe out groups that undermine those nations' state religions. The Order of the Pyre eagerly accepted Abrogail Thrune's direct command.

ORDER OF THE RACK

Based near Westcrown on the Chelaxian coast, the Order of the Rack sees itself as the enemy of decadent thinking and fruitless fantasy. It's the most hated of the major Hellknight orders for its history of raiding the homes of those who speak against the status quo and targeting those who have been wronged before they can organize.

Even before Abrogail Thrune claimed power over the Hellknight orders, much of the Order of the Rack were already voluntarily in her service. The order dispatched many of its number to the town of Breachhill in Isgar, putting the town under martial law before the Battle of Hellknight Hill that lit the spark of open war. Despite their losses at that battle, the order has accepted Thrune's control and, with the aid of Her Infernal Majestrix, has begun to train great numbers of new armigers to join the war.

ORDER OF THE SCOURGE

Dedicated to hunting down political corruption and rooting out abuses of power, the Order of the Scourge has long kept a careful eye on Cheliox from near the capital of Egorian. Lictor Toulon Vidoc (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Legends* 112) has taken a personal interest in the corruption of House Thrune and even investigated Abrogail Thrune herself. In part because of this conflict, the lictor is widely respected among commoners and lower nobility even beyond Cheliox's borders.

Naturally, Toulon Vidoc refused the command to work directly for the Chelaxian crown. As a result, Abrogail Thrune has named the ambitious Ivo Elliendo (page 13) as lictor of the order. However, only a handful among the order have accepted Ivo as lictor. This disapproval hasn't stopped him from aiding House Thrune's purges in the order's name and issuing bounties for the Hellknights who remain loyal to Toulon Vidoc.

LESSER ORDERS

There are many lesser orders of Hellknights, branching from existing orders when a faction of their members finds a new mission. Like the greater orders, they've been divided by Abrogail Thrune's commands. Those immediately loyal to Thrune include the censors of the Order of the Glyph and the Order of the Wall assigned to protect Khari (page 50). The Order of the Torrent, dedicated to rescuing the kidnapped, flatly refused. Other lesser orders, like the monster-hunting Order of the Pike and the assassin-hunting Order of the Scar, have thus far clung to their neutrality.

Outsiders have also created a handful of false orders claiming the Hellknight name. The most recent of such orders is the "Order of the Line," established by Karavex Drovenga (page 66).

HELLKNIGHT ORDER FAVORED WEAPONS

The major Hellknight orders each favor a particular weapon or two in their training and combat.

- **Order of the Chain** flail or spiked chain
- **Order of the Gate** dagger
- **Order of the Godclaw** morningstar
- **Order of the Nail** halberd or lance
- **Order of the Pyre** glaive
- **Order of the Rack** longsword or whip
- **Order of the Scourge** mace, scourge (*Pathfinder Battletcry!* 118), or whip

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HELLKNIGHT

You've presented yourself to a Hellknight citadel as a candidate to become a fearsome Hellknight. You believe that all who live must be forced to obey the law, and you adventure as a test of your loyalty, discipline, and courage. You might aspire to become part of a specific order of Hellknights, or you might instead present yourself to any law-abiding authorities as an enforcer and quietly menacing emblem of order.

As such, you begin this career as an armiger. You hope to eventually take the Hellknight Test and battle a devil in single combat to prove your strength and fully join the Hellknight ranks. Until then, you prepare yourself for that day, training with your weapons and armor and meditating on the precepts of the Measure and the Chain.

Once you become a Hellknight, you're considered to be among the fiercest warriors in the Inner Sea region. You become a bastion of law wherever chaos threatens to rear. You've likely officially joined one of the many Hellknight orders (page 21), following their agenda and

favoring their preferred weapon. Each order usually operates in a specific geographical region, but it isn't unheard of for a Hellknight from any order to travel across the world to deal with threats.

Instead of focusing on martial prowess, you can follow the path of the Hellknight signifer instead. These powerful and enigmatic Hellknight spellcasters support and sometimes lead their fellow knights on missions to enforce unwavering law. You're formidable in your own right, keeping your emotions hidden behind an unmistakable faceless mask and wielding magic as a force of order and authority.

Additional Feats: 8th Shatter Defenses (*Player Core* 145), Steady Spellcasting (*Player Core* 103); 12th Fearsome Brute (*Player Core* 147)

HELLKNIGHT DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained by a Hellknight Order; **Access** You're from Old Cheliah.

You've started walking the path toward becoming a true Hellknight, though you're currently considered only an armiger. You've been taught how to terrorize others into compliance, but you also continually study the structure and hierarchy of Hell. You must survive painful tests of your body and mind called reckonings that steady your willpower against all sorts of trauma. You gain resistance to mental damage equal to 1 + your number of archetype class feats from the Hellknight archetype. You become trained in Intimidation; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead.

In addition, you gain the Additional Lore general feat for Hell Lore; if you were already trained in Hell Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice.

ARDENT ARMIGER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

You've trained to resist the manipulations of fiends, and your Hellknight discipline makes you difficult to influence. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saves against effects that could inflict the controlled or frightened conditions.

If a mental effect would compel you to act in a way that violates your Hellknight order's tenets (as determined by the GM), you can attempt to break free from the effect as a free action triggered by receiving the violating order, and you gain a new Will save against the effect. You can attempt this save even if the effect would normally prevent you from acting of your own volition. You can attempt this new save only once for a given effect, even if you're compelled to violate your order's tenets multiple times. You can't receive a worse result on this Will save than you originally got against the compelling mental effect.



HELLKNIGHT ARMIGER

ARMIGER'S PROTECTION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

You've learned to wear the iconic Hellknight armor (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 9–10). You become trained in light armor and Hellknight breastplate, a medium armor. If you were already trained in light armor and medium armor, you gain training in Hellknight half plate and Hellknight plate. Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in any type of armor (but not unarmored defense), you also gain that proficiency in the armor types granted to you by this feat. If you have a class feature that grants you expert proficiency in unarmored defense and you're 13th level or higher, you also become an expert in the armor types granted to you by this feat.

In addition, when you choose this feat, you receive a non-magical suit of Hellknight armor of a type you become trained in (Hellknight breastplate, Hellknight half plate, or Hellknight plate).

DIABOLIC CERTITUDE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE | SKILL

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

Trigger Your turn begins, and you can observe a devil.

Your Hellknight training drilled details of Hell's denizens deep into your mind. Attempt a check to Recall Knowledge about a devil you're observing. If you critically fail this check, you fail instead. If you succeed at this check, you critically succeed instead.

MORTIFICATION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

Your reckonings have prepared your body for physical punishment. Choose bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, based on the nature of your physical reckonings. You gain resistance to the chosen damage type equal to your number of archetype class feats from the Hellknight archetype.

HELLKNIGHT-ERRANT

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication; you've refused to take or have failed the Hellknight Test.

Either through unfortunate circumstances or your own choice, you remain a Hellknight armiger instead of entering the true ranks of your order, though you still believe in the tenets of law and order. You likely take on an adventuring life with a group of like-minded individuals who aren't Hellknights. The resistance to mental damage you gained from the Hellknight Dedication feat increases to 5 + your number of archetype class feats from the Hellknight archetype.

You also gain the Warding Shift action, which allows you to keep your allies from harm.

Warding Shift ◆ **Requirements** You're adjacent to a willing ally; **Effect** You move the adjacent willing ally 5 feet in any direction and can Step into the space the ally vacated.

Special You can't take both this feat and Hellknight Preferment or Hellknight Signifer Preferment.

HELLKNIGHT PREFERMENT

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication; passed the Hellknight Test; trained in Hellknight plate (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 10)

You've forged your body to be able to stand toe-to-toe with a devil, and your mind has been shaped by the strictures of the Measure and the Chain. You've become a true Hellknight. You gain expert proficiency rank in Intimidation (or in another skill in which you're trained of your choice, if you were already an expert in Intimidation). You gain the armor specialization effects of Hellknight breastplate, Hellknight half plate, and Hellknight plate, and your resistance from that armor specialization is 1 higher than normal. In addition, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks while wearing any Hellknight armor.

Special You can't take both this feat and Hellknight-Errant or Hellknight Signifer Preferment.

HELLKNIGHT SIGNIFER PREFERMENT

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication; passed the Hellknight Test; trained in Hellknight breastplate (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 10); you have a spellcasting class feature.

You've bolstered your force of will with the power of the Measure and the Chain. You've officially joined the ranks of Hellknight signifers, and you receive a signifer's mask, often devoid of eyeholes or other decorative features. The mask doesn't obscure your vision, though it makes it impossible for others to see your eyes. While wearing your signifer's mask, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Deception checks to Lie, Intimidation checks to Coerce, and Deception DCs against Sense Motive. You gain expert proficiency rank in Intimidation (or in another skill in which you're trained of your choice, if you were already an expert in Intimidation), as well as in your choice of Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion.

Special You can't take both this feat and Hellknight-Errant or Hellknight Preferment.

HELLKNIGHT MOBILITY

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication; expert in Hellknight half plate or Hellknight plate

You've learned how best to move in your heavy armor. When wearing heavy armor, if you meet the Strength requirement, instead of reducing the movement penalty by 5 feet, you reduce the penalty by 10 feet (typically reducing the penalty to 0). If you're a dwarf with the Unburdened Iron feat, increase your Speed by 5 feet.

MASKED CASTING

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Signifer Preferment

Trigger You begin Casting a Spell.

Requirements You're wearing your signifer's mask.

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You harness the magical energy flowing through your eyeless mask to effortlessly protect you from visual effects. You Avert your Gaze. While Averting your Gaze in this way, you also gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws and checks to disbelieve illusions.

ORDER TRAINING

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

You gain the lesser order benefit (page 28) for the Hellknight order to which you belong.

SENSE INIQUITY

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

Frequency once per hour

Your Hellknight training gives you the ability to focus your senses and root out those who would attempt to deceive or hide from you. For 1 minute, you gain a +2 status bonus to your Perception DC against attempts to Create a Diversion, Feint you, or Lie to you. During this time, if you Seek to locate a hidden creature or to see through a creature's Impersonate attempt, you gain a +2 status bonus to the Perception check.

BLADE OF LAW

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Preferment

Requirements The target has attempted a hostile action against you since your previous turn.

You call upon the power of law against a foe who would dare stand against you. Make a weapon or unarmed Strike against the target. This counts as two Strikes for your multiple attack penalty. The Strike deals one extra weapon damage die and 1d8 spirit damage. At 18th level, this spirit damage increases to 2d8.

GAZE OF VERACITY

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Signifer Preferment

You can channel your mask's power to pierce through lies and see the truth in any situation. You learn the *glimpse the truth* (Player Core 380) focus spell. This has the same tradition trait as the spellcasting class feature used as a prerequisite for Hellknight Signifer Preferment. You gain a focus pool of 1 Focus Point if you don't already have a focus pool or increase your focus pool by 1 (to a maximum of 3). You can Refocus by studying tomes of law or by contemplating the Measure and the Chain.

SIGNIFER'S SIGHT

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Signifer Preferment

The magic flowing through your signifer's mask allows you to see in the dark, and the mask dampens the distraction caused by sudden flashes of bright light. While wearing your signifer's mask, you gain darkvision; if you already have darkvision, you instead gain greater darkvision. Additionally, if you're dazzled while wearing your signifer's mask and the target is concealed only because you're dazzled, you reduce the flat check DC to target that creature from 5 to 3.

ADVANCED ORDER TRAINING

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

You gain the greater order benefit (page 28) for the Hellknight order to which you belong.

CONJURE HELL

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE DIVINE FIRE MANIPULATE SPIRIT UNHOLY

Prerequisites Hellknight Signifer Preferment

Frequency once per day

Though you might not worship Asmodeus or other devils, you've studied enough of Hell to call forth a brief burst of its fire. Each creature in a 15-foot burst within 120 feet takes 9d6 fire damage with a basic Fortitude save against your spell DC. This fire damage ignores an amount of fire resistance equal to your level, but not immunity to fire. A creature that fails its save also has its soul set aflame, taking 2d6 persistent spirit damage (or 4d6 persistent spirit damage on a critical failure). At 14th level and every 2 levels thereafter, the initial fire damage increases by 2d6.



ORDER OF THE NAIL HELLKNIGHT

HELL'S ARMAMENTS

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Preferment; expert in at least one of your order's favored weapons (page 23)

You've trained relentlessly with your order's weapon to maximize their deadliness. When you get a critical success on a Strike with one of your order's favored weapons, the target must attempt a Fortitude save against your class DC. If you have access to that weapon's critical specialization effect, you must choose whether to use that effect or this one.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes a -10-foot circumstance penalty to its Speeds until the end of your next turn.

Failure As success, and the target is slowed 1 until the end of your next turn.

Critical Failure As success, and the target is slowed 2 until the end of your next turn.

ORDER CROSS-TRAINING

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Dedication

You gain the lesser order benefit (page 28) of a Hellknight order other than the one to which you belong. This represents your time spent training with members of that order to learn their techniques and teachings. If you aren't in good standing with a given order, you can't receive their training.

Special You can select this feat multiple times, gaining the lesser order benefit from a different order each time by training with members of that order.

MARCH OF LAW

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE | EMOTION | FEAR | MENTAL | VISUAL

Prerequisites Hellknight Preferment

Frequency once per round

Requirements The target has attempted a hostile action against you since your previous turn.

When faced with lawbreakers, you become almost unstoppable, and your purposeful steps instill terror. Stride toward the required target with a +10-foot status bonus to your Speeds and ignoring difficult terrain. If you end your movement adjacent to the required target, each enemy adjacent to you who saw your movement becomes frightened 2. You can use March of Law while Burrowing, Climbing, Flying, or Swimming instead of Striding if you have the corresponding movement type.

UNFETTER SIGHT

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE

Prerequisites Signifer's Sight

Frequency once per hour

Requirements You're wearing your signifer's mask.

You release the magic within your mask in an invisible burst, allowing it to temporarily flow into your allies' minds. Each of your allies within a 30-foot emanation gains the benefits of Signifer's Sight for 1 minute, as if they were wearing a signifer's mask.

INFERNAL INTERFERENCE

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE | FLOURISH

Prerequisites Hellknight Preferment

Requirements You're wielding your order's favored weapon.

Your attacks force a foe to glimpse the iron, soul-wrenching landscapes of Hell. Strike an enemy with the required weapon twice. If either Strike hits, the target is stupefied 1 and can't use reactions until the beginning of your next turn. If both Strikes hit, the target is stupefied 3 instead.

BRANDING SPELL

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE | CURSE | SPELLSHAPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Signifer Preferment

The flames of your magic mark a target as an enemy of order. If your next action is to Cast a non-cantrip Spell that deals fire damage, that spell brands the target with a mark only you can see if it fails its saving throw. This brand lasts for 1 week. For as long as the target is branded, you always know the general direction and approximate distance of the target's current location, as long as it's on the same plane. You also know the direction the branded target is currently moving, if any, as well as any conditions affecting it. You can have only one brand active at a time.



ORDER OF THE GATE HELLKNIGHT

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ORDER BENEFITS

The following are the lesser and greater benefits for the seven major Hellknight orders. You can gain these benefits by taking the Order Training, Advanced Order Training, and Order Cross-Training feats found within the Hellknight archetype (pages 24–27). Information on benefits from lesser orders can be found in the sidebar on page 29.

ORDER OF THE CHAIN

The creed of the Order of the Chain is “All men lift themselves up upon the backs of others.” These Hellknights seek to punish those who actively impede what they believe to be civilization’s progress.

Lesser Benefit—Shackles of Law ♦♦ (flourish) You attempt to subdue a target with an attack and a follow-up grab. Make a melee Strike. If it hits and deals damage, you can attempt an Athletics check to Grapple the creature you hit. If you’re wielding a flail or spiked chain, you can ignore Grapple’s requirement that you have a hand free, and if you succeed at the Athletics check, you get a critical success instead. Both attacks count toward your multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn’t increase until after you’ve made both of them.



ORDER OF THE RACK HELLKNIGHT

Greater Benefit—Sturdy Bindings Your grapples are incredibly reliable. When you roll a critical failure on a check to Grapple a target, you get a failure instead. In addition, when a creature you have grabbed rolls a failure on its check to Escape, it gets a critical failure instead, and if it rolls a critical success, it gets a success instead.

ORDER OF THE GATE

The creed of the Order of the Gate is “Judgment in the face of depravity.” These Hellknights seek to prevent crime through magic and extraplanar knowledge.

Lesser Benefit—Locate Lawbreakers Your pursuit is relentless, and you can magically locate stolen objects and outlaws. You gain *locate* as an innate spell of a tradition of your choice, which you can cast once per day. If you’re a member of the Order of the Gate, when you reach 14th level, the spell is heightened to 5th rank.

Greater Benefit—Devil Allies You can call forth devils to assist your efforts in preventing criminal acts. You gain *summon fiend* as a 6th-rank innate spell of a tradition of your choice, which you can cast once per day. When you cast this spell, you can summon only creatures that have the devil trait. At 14th level and every 2 levels thereafter, the spell is heightened by one rank (to a maximum of 10th rank when you reach 20th level).

ORDER OF THE GODCLAW

The creed of the Order of the Godclaw is “Righteousness by obedience.” These Hellknights extol the virtues of a pantheon of imposing deities.

Lesser Benefit—Dedication of the Five Your dedication to the Godclaw borders on a cleric’s. You gain the cleric’s Domain Initiate feat (*Player Core* 113) but must select duty (*Divine Mysteries* 265), might, perfection, or protection as your domain. Whenever you cast the focus spell gained from this feat, you gain temporary Hit Points equal to twice the spell’s rank that last for 1 round. In addition, you can use any religious symbol of Abadar, Asmodeus, Iomedae, Irri, or Urch as your divine focus.

Greater Benefit—Blessing of the Five ♦♦♦ (concentrate, divine, healing, manipulate, vitality) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You call out to the Godclaw to heal your allies. You cast the 3-action version of *heal*, heightened to a rank one lower than half your level rounded up. You can select up to five creatures in the area to remain unaffected by the spell. You can instead use this ability to bring a creature within 30 feet that has died within the last round back from the dead. If you do, the creature is restored to 1 Hit Point and is doomed 1.

ORDER OF THE NAIL

The creed of the Order of the Nail is “Savagery must be quelled, in the land, home, and mind.” These Hellknights work to tame wild frontier regions.

Lesser Benefit—Trailblazing Stride While moving on land, you ignore any difficult terrain caused by plants, fungi, or uneven ground. When you succeed at a skill check to Recall Knowledge about a creature with the animal, beast, fungus, or plant trait, you gain a +10-foot circumstance bonus to your Speeds for the rest of your turn.

Greater Benefit—Reveal Beasts You're adept at revealing—or creating—fear among those who threaten civilization. If you succeed at a check to Recall Knowledge to identify an animal, beast, fungus, or plant, you get a critical success instead. Additionally, whenever you critically succeed at a check to Recall Knowledge against an animal, beast, fungus, or plant, that creature becomes frightened 1.

ORDER OF THE PYRE

The creed of the Order of the Pyre is "Reason's flame consumes the shadow of corruption." These Hellknights seek to purge what they call blasphemous ideologies from the world.

Lesser Benefit—Righteous Resistance You can cast *resist energy* as a divine innate spell twice per day, except you can target only yourself. If you grant yourself resistance to fire damage, the resistance is equal to either the spell's normal value or to your level, whichever is higher.

Greater Benefit—Spiritual Disruption ♦♦ You channel disruptive power that severs a foe's spiritual connection to their magic. Make a melee Strike. This counts as two attacks when calculating your multiple attack penalty. If the attack hits, the target takes 1d6 persistent spirit damage. The target is stupefied 1 until it stops taking the persistent spirit damage.

ORDER OF THE RACK

The creed of the Order of the Rack is "The venoms of the mind poison the body." These Hellknights suppress rebellions, usually within Cheliax.

Lesser Benefit—Disillusionment Dreams are pointless illusions you seek to quash. If you roll a success on a saving throw against an illusion or dream effect or a Perception check to disbelieve an illusion, you get a critical success instead. If you roll a critical failure on any of those checks, you get a failure instead.

Greater Benefit—Silence Heresy ♦♦ You channel a power to stifle dangerous words. Make a melee Strike. If the attack hits, the target is unable to speak in a voice louder than a whisper for 1 round. This prevents the target from using most auditory effects involving its voice, and it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check to Cast a Spell or the spell is disrupted. If your Strike is a critical hit, the target is entirely unable to speak for 1 round and is limited to a whisper for 1 minute thereafter. Once a creature has been affected by this ability, it's temporarily immune for 1 minute.

ORDER OF THE SCOURGE

The creed of the Order of the Scourge is "Without culpability, chaos reigns." These Hellknights root out corruption in all its forms.

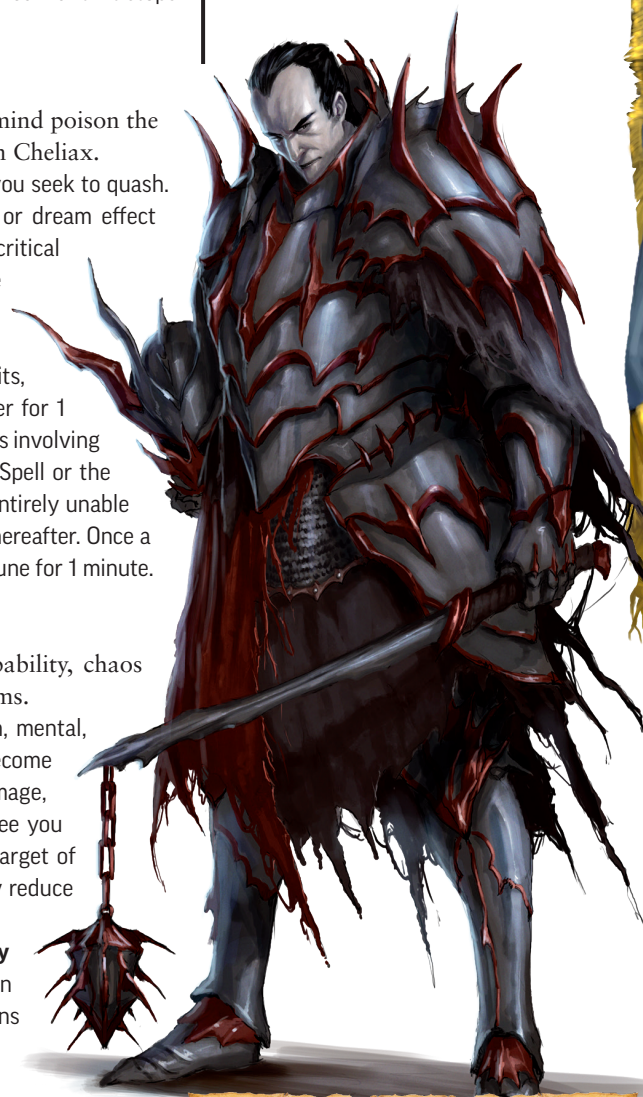
Lesser Benefit—Fear No Law, Fear No One ♦ (emotion, flourish, mental, visual) When your allies see you stand up to fear, they become similarly emboldened. Make a Strike. If you hit and deal damage, each ally within a 20-foot emanation around you who can see you reduces the value of their frightened condition by 1. If the target of your Strike was the source of their frightened condition, they reduce the value by 2 instead.

Greater Benefit—Seek Injustice ♦♦♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** With a moment spent focusing, you can locate the telltale signs of corruption no matter what means it might use to hide from your sight. For 1 minute, you can see through up to 5 feet of stone, wood, or similar barriers as if they didn't exist (though any amount of metal or denser barriers blocks this effect).

LESSER ORDER BENEFITS

Lesser orders of Hellknights typically haven't moved far enough from their predecessors to receive their own benefits, though current events might grant them the opportunity to truly form their identities. Until then, use the benefits of the order listed below for their benefits.

- **Order of the Glyph** Pyre benefits
- **Order of the Pike** Nail benefits
- **Order of the Scar** Chain benefits
- **Order of the Torrent** Scourge benefits
- **Order of the Wall** Rack benefits



ORDER OF THE GODCLAW HELLKNIGHT

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EAGLE KNIGHTS

Andoran's elite Eagle Knights have been a force in the country since even before its founding. Originally chartered as an honor guard in anticipation of the return of Aroden, the god of humanity, the Knights played a pivotal role in the country's struggle for freedom from Chelaxian rule after the god's death. Members are recruited by invitation only, and enrollment requires the sponsorship of a current Eagle Knight or a member of the People's Council.

In the 60 years since Andoran's founding, the Knights have grown and organized themselves into three major branches, along with several specialized cohorts. The Golden Legion, with its shining armor, has traditionally served as the Andoren home guard. The Steel Falcons have safeguarded the diplomatic and political interests of Andoran in international arenas. While the Falcons have always stressed the role of their envoys and ambassadors, the order has a history of taking military action against tyrants, criminals, and outlaws. The Falcons' naval detachment, the Gray Corsairs, has been particularly aggressive in hunting pirates and combating human trafficking. Finally, the secretive Twilight Talons, formally denied by Andoran's government, gather information clandestinely and subtly influence events around Golarion.

These traditional roles have been upended by the Hellfire Crisis. The shocking execution of Reginald Cormoth—the former commander of the Eagle Knights—during a diplomatic mission to Isgar touched members of the organization deeply. The Steel Falcons, more eager for a fight than ever, sent a detachment into Isgar, seeking justice and Hellknight blood. When this spark ignited wider war in the area, it became just the first of many open sorties outside the borders of Andoran. While Steel Falcon diplomats might still serve in Absalom, Osirion, and other ostensibly neutral nations, it's now more common to see Falcons on the battlefield, tearing into the forces of Chelax and their fiendish allies. Twilight Talons, meanwhile, escalated their observation of neighbors into deadly games of espionage as they race to smuggle military plans and political secrets out of Chelax without being exposed by fiendish magic. Most of the Golden Legion have rushed to Andoran's border with Chelax, joining the army in pitched battles against the forces of House Thrune and pushing toward the Aspodean Wall.

Many of the Golden Legionnaires who remained in the heartlands of Andoran joined the Platinum Wing, a new cohort dedicated to developing resources to pour into

the war effort. Under the leadership of Anvra Irongaunt (page 15), the researchers, inventors, and artisans of the Wing have focused on integrating resources gleaned from the Godsrain, particularly godsblood and warshards, into military technology. While most of the innovators within the Platinum Wing are meticulous experimenters, their caution a credit to their Golden Legion backgrounds, they've recruited several enthusiastic daredevils to test their new inventions and partnered with artisans from the Andoran Alchemical

Society, an organization known to prize explosive results over cautious progress. The major success of the Wing thus far has been the integration of warshards into firearms and ammunition, achieved by studying schematics from Alkenstar, Tian Xia, and as far away as the Deadshot Lands of Arcadia. While still few in number, the sharpshooters of the Platinum Wing have made significant impacts on every battlefield where they've engaged.

Based on these preliminary successes, Anvra is pressuring Eagle Knight leadership for additional resources to commit to firearm production. Some in the military hierarchy blanch, however, at the proliferation of such weapons across Avistan, especially within their own figurative (and sometimes literal) backyard.

General Triborn Waits (page 15), leader of the Steel Falcons, contends that the time is ripe for raids through the Aspodell Mountains and all along the land border with Chelax, liberating those along the border from Chelaxian rule and bolstering numbers of resistance fighters. With the Gray Corsairs stretched thin by fighting throughout the Inner Sea and combat-ready personnel needed at the Aspodean Wall, the general has begun to recruit volunteers and train new members in large numbers. Many of these recruits barely finish their training as Eagle Knights before being entrusted with raids into Chelax or asked to root out imp saboteurs within Andoran. However, their patriotism runs deep, with many willing to lay their lives on the line for the ideals of freedom and a general distaste for the infernal monarchy of Chelax.

The Gray Corsairs have been busy on the Inner Sea while their compatriots carry out terrestrial missions. With the passage to the west blocked at the Arch of Aroden by the Chelaxian navy, the Corsairs have made it their goal to harry any Chelaxian or allied forces on, or under, the waters of the Inner Sea. Largely confined to patrols and anti-smuggling operations in recent years, the Corsairs have taken to privateering with gusto, seizing not just ships flying Chelaxian colors,



but any that they suspect of trading with the devilish nation. Favorite targets include the ships of freebooters out of Okeno in Katapesh, who have thrown in their lot with Cheliah. Many of the seized resources have been delivered to the port city of Augustina, fueling the Andoren navy's effort to quickly float more ships in hopes of breaking the Chelaxian blockade. Vice Admiral Valhia Dunnell (page 15), the commander of the Corsairs, has been deputizing any willing captain as a privateer, paying rich bounties to those able to accomplish missions that the Corsairs haven't managed yet. This tactic has proven effective so far, even though some ships ostensibly loyal to other nations have taken similar jobs for the Chelaxian navy after being promised even more money.

Andoran's recruiting missions have recently reached underwater as well through contact with several colonies of azarketis, merfolk, and even sedachies deep below the sea. While most of these colonies are insular, Valhia has stressed the tyrannical nature of House Thrune to recruit some of the independent-minded sea folk. Although only a few members of these communities have been sworn in as Eagle Knights, mysterious mid-voyage sinkings and nocturnal shoreline raids have dogged the Chelaxian navy since these forces joined on as privateers. Some say these aquatic communities have taken matters into their own hands after receiving an insulting offer of allegiance from Chelaxian diplomats, who were summarily drowned for their ill manners. Such stories seem often to be based on xenophobic tropes about these ancestries and so are summarily discounted by the general populace. No matter the reason, the Andoren military is more than happy to take advantage of any setbacks dealt to the Chelaxian navy.

Rumors swirl that the Eagle Knights have garnered naval allies even farther afield. While the government of Andoran might not want to be seen officially courting the Free Captains of the Shackles, the Twilight Talons have kept a close eye on these so-called buccaneers. Traveling under the cover of merchant ships from Absalom and other neutral territories, agents recently passed through the Hespereth Strait, slipping through the blockade and under the noses of the Chelaxian officials stationed there. If Twilight Talon agents can convince even a handful of the pirates of the Shackles to join the cause, Eagle Knight leadership is sure that Cheliah's grip on the Arch of Aroden can be broken permanently. Meanwhile, messages from across the region arrive in Almas daily, proof that though they might remain unseen, Twilight Talon agents are busy securing aid for Andoran. One recent missive from an agent identified only as Duskblade hints that they've gotten the attention of Hurricane Queen Tessa Fairwind and that she might be sympathetic to Andoran's cause or, at the very least, open to hostilities against Cheliah.

EAGLE KNIGHT ARCHETYPES

The archetypes on the following pages represent fully inducted members of an Eagle Knights branch. None of these archetypes require the Eagle Knight Dedication (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Shining Kingdoms* 50), but characters who have already taken that dedication don't need to complete that dedication by taking two other feats from that archetype before taking the dedication feat from one of these archetypes. Once you enter a branch of the Eagle Knights by taking its dedication feat, you must complete that dedication as normal before you can take the dedication feat for a different branch.

The Golden Legionnaire archetype works well for a character who uses a shield, such as a champion, fighter, or guardian, as well as those who want to experiment with firearms as a member of the Platinum Wing. Clerics, investigators, and rangers make capable Steel Falcons, especially when they focus on martial prowess, and a swashbuckler might wish to join the Gray Corsairs. Twilight Talon spies are often bards and rogues.



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GOLDEN LEGIONNAIRE

The home guard of the Eagle Knights, the Golden Legion patrols the cities, towns, roads and byways of Andoran, protecting and serving the people alongside the nation's armed forces. In peacetime, the Legion conducts vigilant border patrols, particularly in far-flung areas, and responds to natural disasters or dangerous incursions of fey, werewolves, and bandits. With the outbreak of open hostilities, however, the Legion has been called to the borders of the nation, building fortifications, training village militia, and responding to cross-border sorties by Chelaxian forces. Stretched thin across the country's entire western border, the Legion has also sacrificed

precious frontline personnel to form the Platinum Wing, a new regiment dedicated to developing innovative weapons, such as firearms, to deploy on the battlefield.

Ideal Golden Legion recruits are those who see the good within the principles of Andoran and selflessly dedicate their lives to preserving it. Often levelheaded and thoughtful in temperament, Golden Legionnaires typically bring a stabilizing influence to the battlefield or a council chamber. The Legion has also been instrumental in ensuring that troops on the front lines are well supplied with materials from across the nation.

The outbreak of open war with Chelax has posed many difficulties for Legionnaires. Many officers worry about the effects that prolonged warfare will have on Andoran's way of life. Members of the Legion, with their responsibility for supply lines, see firsthand how the effort taxes the country's resources. Many also fear that the paranoia and aggression that run rampant in the country undermines the integrity of the Common Rule and the concern that most Andorens once held for their neighbors. Timely Legion patrols have saved the lives of more than one nephilim accused of being a Chelaxian spy in the country's western reaches. While Legionnaires routinely dealt with bandits and corrupt officials in the past, intervening in the attitudes and behaviors of their fellow citizens can be demoralizing.

Within the ranks of the Legion, tension bubbles between the Platinum Wing and the rest of the cohort. Wing members, while concerned with safety, prioritize innovation over more traditional methods of warfare. Many Legion veterans question the Platinum Wing's proliferation of firearms and Godsrain artifacts throughout Andoran.

Additional Feats: 6th Armor Specialist (*Player Core* 2 215); 8th Reactive Strike (*Player Core* 2 80), Reflexive Shield (*Player Core* 145), Shield Warden (*Player Core* 145); 18th Improved Reflexive Shield (*Player Core* 150), Shield of Grace (*Player Core* 2 99)

GOLDEN LEGIONNAIRE DEDICATION FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in heavy armor

Access You're invited by a current member of the Eagle Knights or the People's Council.

You're a wall of metal standing against the tide of Andoran's enemies. When you Raise a Shield, you also gain your shield's circumstance bonus to your Fortitude DC against attempts to Grapple, Reposition, or Shove you. You also gain the Additional Lore general feat for Warfare Lore. If you were already trained in Warfare Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice.

Special You can take this dedication even if you haven't taken more than two non-dedication feats from the Eagle Knight archetype (*Shining Kingdoms* 50).



GOLDEN LEGIONNAIRE

COMMITMENT TO PROTECTION

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY MENTAL SKILL

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication, expert in Warfare Lore

You attempt to guide an ally into a more defensive pose against a particular danger. Attempt a Warfare Lore check against the hard DC for the level of a creature or hazard you can see. An ally of your choice within 30 feet gains an effect based on the outcome. If you're legendary in Warfare Lore, when you roll a failure or critical failure, you get a success instead.

Critical Success The ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the target creature's or hazard's next attack.

Success As critical success, but the bonus is +1.

Critical Failure The ally takes a -1 circumstance penalty to AC against the target creature's or hazard's next attack.

LEGION'S AIM

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication

Long hours of experimentation with the Platinum Wing have familiarized you with experimental weaponry. You have familiarity with martial firearms and alchemical bombs, treating them as simple weapons for the purposes of proficiency. You ignore the penalty for making ranged attacks within your second range increment with alchemical bombs. You gain access to uncommon firearms and alchemical bombs.

POLISHED DISTRACTION

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE INCAPACITATION LIGHT VISUAL

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication

Requirements You aren't in dim light or darkness.

You take pride in the sheen of your armor, and how useful it is at distracting your enemies when you reflect light from it. Creatures within a 5-foot emanation that can see you must attempt a Fortitude save against your class DC. Once a creature attempts a save against this effect, it's temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is dazzled for 1 round.

Failure The creature is blinded for 1 round and dazzled for 2 rounds.

Critical Failure The creature is blinded for 2 rounds and dazzled for 1 minute.

ARMED AND ARMORED

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication, trained in martial firearms

You're used to juggling defensive equipment and your firearms. You can Interact to reload a weapon using the hand holding your shield.

COMMITMENT TO VALOR

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication

Trigger You would gain the fleeing condition.

While fear might distract you from your duty, it'll never cause you to abandon it. Instead of becoming fleeing, you become

stupefied 1 for as long you would be fleeing. If you have the frightened condition, decrease its value by 1.

CRACK RETORT

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Reactive Strike, trained in martial firearms

You can use Reactive Strike with a loaded firearm you're wielding. The triggering creature must be within 5 feet of you for you to do so.

HELL-LANCER SHOT

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication, trained in martial firearms

Make a ranged Strike with a firearm against a fiend, ignoring the fiend's concealed condition and any lesser cover. If this Strike hits, you gain a circumstance bonus to damage equal to twice the number of weapon damage dice. This counts as two attacks when calculating your multiple attack penalty.

LASTING PROTECTION

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Commitment to Protection

When you use Commitment to Protection, the effects on your ally apply to all attacks the creature or hazard makes until the beginning of your next turn.

COMMITMENT TO VIGILANCE

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE STANCE

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication

Your foes find it difficult to maneuver around you without attracting your attention. While in this stance, all spaces within your melee reach are difficult terrain for your enemies.

WATCH YOUR BACK

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Golden Legionnaire Dedication

You shout a warning to an ally about encroaching foes. Choose a target ally within 60 feet. Until the beginning of your next turn, the target can't be off-guard due to flanking.

OFFICER'S PROTECTION

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Commitment to Protection

When you use Commitment to Protection, you can target all allies within 30 feet. If you have Lasting Protection, the effects on all allies apply until the beginning of your next turn.

NO NEED TO FEAR

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Commitment to Valor

Trigger You or an ally within 60 feet attempts a saving throw against a fear effect.

With a simple reminder of perseverance, you bolster the bravery of yourself and your allies. You attempt to counteract the triggering effect with a Warfare Lore check, using half your level rounded up as the counteract rank.

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STEEL FALCON

Outside of Andoran, Steel Falcons are, by far, the most encountered members of the Eagle Knights. Traveling in small groups trained in diplomacy but equipped for battle, members of the Steel Falcons serve as the political and philosophical vanguard of the nation, attempting to spread the nation's influence and the ideals of Common Rule across the Inner Sea and beyond.

Steel Falcons have a reputation for being unyielding in their goals but flexible in how they accomplish those goals. If what's best for Andoran can be achieved by official or peaceful channels, so much the better. However, when diplomatic efforts break down, the Steel Falcons have a wide authority to engage in espionage or use outright violence, as they did during the Battle of

Hellknight Hill. Now, many active squads lead daring raids into Chelaxian territory. Time out in the field has allowed the Falcons to hone their survival skills and practice guerrilla warfare against the legions of Hell.

The Gray Corsairs, the naval branch of the Steel Falcons, have dedicated themselves completely to the war effort, sinking every ship flying Chelaxian colors and many that they suspect of being allies of the enemy. The Corsairs would love to break the blockade at the Arch of Aroden, though they've thus far been unable to do so. As shipments to Andoran are cut off, the Corsairs have taken to seizing goods from any Chelaxian trading vessels for the good of Andoran, a move that has complicated efforts to build support for the country.

The Steel Falcons attract the most ardent recruits from Andoran's army and navy, and the branch's enthusiasm for liberty, justice, and Common Rule borders on religious zeal. In fact, reports of small miracles performed by the Falcons have become increasingly common. Talmandor, the celestial patron of Andoran and of the Steel Falcons in particular, makes no claims to the power of a deity and brushes off attempts at worship, but it's undeniable that Steel Falcons call on him in their battle cries.

Additional Feats: **6th** Favored Terrain (*Player Core* 158); **7th** Evangelize (*Player Core* 2 230); **10th** Terrain Master (*Player Core* 161); **16th** Sense the Unseen (*Player Core* 162)



STEEL FALCON

STEEL FALCON DEDICATION

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON | ARCHETYPE | DEDICATION

Prerequisites expert in Diplomacy

Access You're invited by a current member of the Eagle Knights or the People's Council.

You serve as an envoy of the ideals of Andoran, whether it's in a foreign court or on the field of battle. Your training in the Steel Falcons enables you to anticipate the attitudes of others to achieve your goals. You gain the Size Up action.

Size Up ♦ (concentrate) You designate a single, non-mindless creature as your focus and assess its motivations. You must be able to see and hear the creature. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks when you Sense the Motive of your focus and a +2 circumstance bonus to your Perception DC should your focus attempt to Lie or Feint against you. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Deception, Diplomacy, and Intimidation checks against your focus. You can only have one creature designated as your focus at a time. If you use Size Up against a creature when you already have a creature designated, the prior creature loses the designation and the new focus gains the designation. Your designation otherwise lasts until your next daily preparations.

Special You can take this dedication even if you haven't taken more than two non-dedication feats from the Eagle Knight archetype (*Shining Kingdoms* 50).

DENOUNCE TYRANNY

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY EMOTION LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Steel Falcon Dedication

Requirements You witnessed a creature harm an ally, harm a noncombatant, or commit a wantonly evil act in the last round.

You call out a creature's despicable or cowardly actions, disrupting its alliances or even making its allies ashamed to be seen with it. Attempt a Diplomacy check and compare the result to the Will DCs of up to three of the triggering creature's allies within 30 feet of you. If you succeed on the check, the target refuses to treat the triggering creature as an ally for 1 round (2 rounds on a critical success). It's possible to get a different degree of success for each target. If you're a master in Diplomacy, you can instead target up to five creatures, and if you're legendary in Diplomacy, you can target up to 10 creatures.

GRAY CORSAIR TRAINING

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Steel Falcon Dedication (*Player Core* 2 209), trained in Intimidation

You strike for Andoran on the waters of the Inner Sea and beyond. You gain the Pirate Dedication feat even if you haven't taken two other feats from the Steel Falcon archetype or Eagle Knight archetype. You can select feats from the Pirate archetype as if they were Steel Falcon archetype feats.

LIBERTY'S PROMISE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Steel Falcon Dedication, trained in Religion

Your devotion to Andoran's ideals is as much spiritual as philosophical. You gain the cleric's Domain Initiate feat but must select freedom, truth, or zeal as your domain. You cast that domain's domain spell as a divine focus spell, and you Refocus by contemplating or spreading the ideas of the Common Rule rather than praying to a god. When an ability would manifest a divine symbol—such as the *word of truth* focus spell (*Player Core* 380)—it instead manifests as an eagle clutching a sword in its talons.

Special You can take this feat multiple times, selecting a different domain each time.

SALT KISSED

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Gray Corsair Training

You have a supernatural ability to survive at sea and keep your companions from drowning. You can cast *air bubble* and *water breathing* as 4th-rank divine innate spells once per day each. Add the water domain to those that you can select with Liberty's Promise.

UNCANNY PREDICTION

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY EMOTION INCAPACITATION LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Steel Falcon Dedication

Requirements You're benefiting from the bonuses of Size Up. You have an eerie ability to guess the next move of creatures you've Sized Up. You inform a foe that you know exactly what it'll do next, momentarily shocking it into inaction. If your focus

from Size Up is within 30 feet of you, your focus must succeed at a Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher, or be stunned 1 (or stunned 2 on a critical failure). Regardless of the result, the target becomes temporarily immune to your Uncanny Prediction for 1 hour.

EYE FOR SMUGGLERS

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Gray Corsair Training

Your time checking seemingly innocent cargo ships for illicit goods has made you as canny as you are suspicious. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to locate hidden panels, secret doors or hatches, concealed objects, and similar items (at the GM's discretion). If you aren't using the Seek action or Searching, the GM automatically rolls a secret check for you to notice these types of objects when you pass within 10 feet of them.

LIBERTY'S DEVOTION

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Liberty's Promise

You've deepened your connection with the ideals of Andoran. You gain an advanced domain spell from one domain you selected with Liberty's Promise. Increase the number of Focus Points in your focus pool by 1.

Special You can take this feat multiple times, each time selecting a different advanced domain spell from a domain you selected with Liberty's Promise.

PERPLEX

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY EMOTION LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Steel Falcon Dedication

You weave a confusing web of half-truths, conspiracy theories, and plausible motives to goad an enemy into lashing out wildly. Choose a target within 30 feet that can hear you, and attempt a Diplomacy check against its Will DC. The creature is then immune to Perplex for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target is stupefied 3 and confused for 1 round.

Success The target is stupefied 1 for 1 round.

Failure The target is unaffected.

FRIGHTENING INDIGNATION

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE AURA DIVINE EMOTION FEAR MENTAL

Prerequisites Steel Falcon Dedication

Frequency once per day

Your anger at the world's many injustices boil out from you in a wave of palpable energy. An enemy that ends its turn within a 15-foot emanation around you must attempt a Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. This aura lasts for 1 minute.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and becomes temporarily immune to your Frightening Indignation for 1 minute.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is frightened 2 and can't reduce its frightened condition below 1 while it's in your aura.

Critical Failure As failure, but frightened 3.

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TWILIGHT TALON

The clandestine arm of Andoran's civil defense, the Twilight Talons are a mystery even to those inside the country. Full details of the branch's missions are known only to Marshall Helena Trellis (page 15), the head of the Talons. While technically under the command of the Supreme Elect and the Eagle Knight Commander, Helena enjoys almost complete autonomy, and she's spent years devising clever ways to obfuscate the operations of the Talons. Twilight Talon agents are even more mysterious. Embedded in other regions of the Inner Sea—or farther afield—agents seldom know anyone active in the organization other than their immediate superiors and the handful of trainers who prepared them for the field. During their assignments, agents assume a cover identity, often for years at a time. While many Twilight Talons merely gather intelligence, some veteran agents spend years integrating themselves into foreign governments or positions of power in multinational organizations, such



TWILIGHT TALON

as the Aspis Consortium. From there, they can subtly influence a faction's relations with Andoran and sabotage those working against the nation's interests. The current most vital posting for Twilight Talon agents is also the most dangerous: within the fiendish bureaucracy of Chelifax.

Due to the demands of the job, intense secrecy and long periods without contact, most recruited Twilight Talon agents are Eagle Knights who lack strong ties of family or friendship holding them in Andoran. The ideal agent is clever, smooth-tongued, and circumspect. Once inducted into the organization, an agent receives individual training from the superior who'll be their handler once they're deemed ready for the field. Agents are expected to be almost completely self-sufficient once in place. After an agent accomplishes their mission, or when they fear exposure, Twilight Talons vanish, cutting ties with all who knew them in their cover identity. Even when working with other organizations that might be sympathetic to Andoran's cause, such as the Knights of Lastwall or the Pathfinder Society, agents will seldom reveal their true allegiance, lest they compromise future missions.

Additional Feats: **6th** Plant Evidence (*Player Core* 169), Sabotage (*Player Core* 172); **10th** Predictive Purchase (*Player Core* 2 109); **18th** Blank Slate (*Player Core* 176), Implausible Purchase (*Player Core* 2 113)

TWILIGHT TALON DEDICATION

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites expert in Deception

Access You're invited by a current member of the Twilight Talons.

Few would even suspect that you're a member of the Eagle Knights, and you use the tricks of the spymaster's trade to keep it that way. You gain the Additional Lore general feat for Espionage Lore. If you were already trained in Espionage Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice.

During your daily preparations, you can brush up on a specific field to gain the trained proficiency rank in one Lore skill of your choice. This proficiency lasts until you prepare again. Since this proficiency is temporary, you can't use it as a prerequisite for a skill increase or a permanent character option like a feat. If you have master proficiency in Espionage Lore, you gain expert proficiency in the chosen skill instead, and if you have legendary proficiency in Espionage Lore, you gain master proficiency in the skill.

Special You can take this dedication even if you haven't taken more than two non-dedication feats from the Eagle Knight archetype (*Shining Kingdoms* 50).

TALON'S MARK

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication

Requirements You have a magical or mundane tattoo.

On the rare occasions that Twilight Talons need to identify themselves as members of the organization, many rely on an easily concealed tattoo to reveal their allegiance. Choose a tattoo you have. If the tattoo wasn't already a magic item, it becomes a level 6 item with the invested, occult, and tattoo traits. It also gains the following abilities.

Activate—Twist Design ◆ (concentrate, illusion, occult) You transform your tattoo to a different form of approximately the same size. You can Dismiss this effect.

Activate—Adopt Persona ◆◆◆ (concentrate, illusion, occult) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Your tattoo helps you create a temporary cover to infiltrate a protected area or escape a dangerous situation. It casts 2nd-rank *illusory disguise* and 2nd-rank *ventriloquism* on you. The duration of both effects is 10 minutes.

MAKE DO ◆

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication

Requirements You're holding a broken tool or weapon.

You sometimes need to act in a pinch, even if you haven't had the time to repair your gear. For the next minute, you ignore the broken condition of the tool or weapon you're holding. You can't use Make Do again on that item for 24 hours.

FABRICATED CREDENTIALS

FEAT 7

ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication, master in Deception

You're so familiar with the paperwork necessary to maintain your cover that you can easily whip up documents that support your fabrications. You can Create a Forgery using Deception, rather than Society, and doing so only takes 10 minutes, or 1 minute if you're legendary in Deception. With your paranoid nature, you're always on the lookout for forgeries. The GM rolls a secret Perception or Society check for you any time you encounter a forgery, even if you don't examine it closely.

DECEPTIVE DEDUCTION ◀

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication

Trigger A creature you can see uses Recall Knowledge.

You've had to take on many roles while working undercover, so you're practiced at following the example of those around you to pretend expertise in a variety of fields. You learn what skill the creature was using to Recall Knowledge and whether that creature is trained in the skill. If it's trained, you can use Deception to Recall Knowledge as if it were that skill for the next minute.

HIDDEN INTENTIONS

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication, master in Deception

You layer meanings in your words, and only those you've taken into your confidence can divine your true plans. You gain the Doublespeak (*Player Core* 2 229) and Slippery Secrets (*Player Core* 262) skill feats. On the first round of combat, if you roll Deception for initiative, creatures that haven't acted are off-guard to you.

INKED CACHE

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Talon's Mark

You've learned to use your Twilight Talon's mark to secret away contraband. The tattoo's level increases to 10, unless it was already higher, and it gains the abilities of a *greater retrieval belt* (*GM Core* 294). As a part of activating the tattoo to Store Item, you can attempt a Deception check against the Perception DCs of all creatures that are currently observing you. On a success, a creature doesn't notice you use Store Item.

FEIGN INNOCENCE ◆

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication

You convince a creature that, despite appearances, you're on its side. Choose an enemy within 60 feet, and attempt a Deception check against its Will DC. The target is then temporarily immune to Feign Innocence for 1 hour. If you've taken a hostile action against it this round, your result can be no better than a failure.

Critical Success You and the target are considered allies until the end of your next turn or until you take a hostile action against it, whichever comes first. In order to take a hostile action against you, the target must succeed at a Will save against your Deception DC or it loses the action.

Success As critical success, but lasts until the end of your turn or until you take a hostile action against it, whichever comes first.

Failure No effect.

Critical Failure The target knows you attempted to fool it and plays along. You're off-guard to the target until the beginning of your next turn.

INSTANT CREDENTIALS

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Fabricated Credentials, Talon's Mark

In a pinch, ink from your tattoo arranges itself into a temporary pass, writ of authority, or similar document. If you're in possession of a blank page of paper, you can Create a Forgery as a single action with the concentrate and occult traits. The forgery lasts for 1 minute, and during this time, you can't use any of the other abilities of your Talon's Mark. You can Dismiss the forgery, leaving the paper blank once again.

BURN IDENTITY ◆◆

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE OCCULT TELEPORTATION

Prerequisites Twilight Talon Dedication

Frequency once per week

You transport yourself up to 1 mile, as a 5th-rank *translocate* spell. Everyone who has seen you in the last 24 hours must succeed at a Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher, or forget your physical appearance as though affected by a 6th-rank *rewrite memory* spell. You can choose to exempt any number of creatures from this effect. You can instead Burn Identity as an activity that takes 10 minutes. If you do, instead of the effects of *translocate*, you can instantly teleport yourself and up to four targets touched (either willing creatures or objects roughly the size of a creature) to the nearest border of Andoran, in addition to its other effects.

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ABSALOM DISPATCHES

As related by Annara Laskin, proprietor of the historic Groggy Froggy tavern, Westgate, Absalom.

You're correct, Arianna, that the front is actually a long way from my Westgate tavern. As the child of Mendevian refugees, of course I'm glad to have the actual battlefields as far away as possible. And with my poor vision, I'd be little help on the battlefield anyway. But to say that we are unaffected or that we have no role to play in a conflict that threatens to upend our world is to deceive ourselves. The war between Andoran and Cheliax is as real a threat to our safety and security as any closer menace—and yes, I am well aware that, any day, Voradni Voon could march on the city with his hordes.

Despite my strong feelings, I do my best to keep my opinions, as well as my allegiances, to myself while I entertain patrons of all backgrounds and inclinations. Stepping up to run the Groggy Froggy has required that feigned impartiality just as much as the rotating menu. It has been the center of my life for years now, even before I found myself running the place, and an establishment with as storied a history as our cherished tavern is bound to bring in a wide assortment of locals and travelers.

Even when they wear their fealty to Asmodeus on their sleeve and brag about their unsavory doings, I still offer them food and drink. So long as they show respect to all around them, including those keeping the place going—and pay their tab with genuine coin—they're welcome.

Moreover, they're welcome to say what they will about their business and their allegiances. Mostly it's just good gossip, the talk of assignations and betrayals or about crimes and revenge. But gossip here in Absalom can be worth a good deal more than a barrel of ale, even if it's good ale.

IMMINENT THREATS

Frankly, the threat most on the minds of my patrons is not the conflict that threatens to break apart nations. No, what my patrons want to discuss, inside and out, up and down, morning 'til night, is that Voradni Voon. Some are absolutely obsessed with the threat that Voon poses, certain that he is in fact the reincarnation of the original minotaur who so terrorized this city long ago. Those who worry most have connections in the mountains of Kortos—families on ranches, friends in mining camps, that sort of thing. Occasionally, a band of

treasure seekers or a nervous logger bends my ear with tales of a brush with enraged harpies or of narrowly escaping from the clutches of centaur bandits. The talk is that Voon has been uniting these fractious, bloodthirsty groups under his banner, together with an increasing number of minotaur clans full of ferocious warspawn. And they're hellbent on decimating Absalom, and we're all fools for not heeding the signs and getting out while we still can.

But for every alarmist patron like that, I chat with another who's had no trouble on the roads from here to Otari or who has a higher opinion of Absalom's defenses, and I think that maybe Voon is the convenient excuse, the distraction that keeps us from focusing on the war that stands to change the world. If we are in fact the city at the center of the world, how much more should we care? Is it really a time for inaction?

Inaction does seem to be the watchword for most of my patrons. I'm hearing the usual hand-waving attitudes about how they'd like it all to end soon but without Absalom having to get involved. And that seems to be an almost universal attitude among those dependent on trade. Whether they're the muscle or the brains of the trading house, they approve a stance of neutrality as the safest and surest course forward. Sure, nobody likes that the Chelaxian navy is blockading the Arch of Aroden, but they're willing to keep Absalom out of the war so that their trade ships can still get through, at least. Harassment is better than losing lives and livelihoods, they insist. You'd think, when they hear that trade goods from Arcadia and even Tian Xia are slowing, they would start to consider how this war could have a direct impact on them—well, then they say it needs to end even faster, without us getting involved.

ANDORAN'S GOT PROBLEMS

I've heard that Andoran was pushing hard for some help from the Absalom fleet a couple months back, but to no avail. Rumor has it that they've resorted to throwing in their lot with Diobel smugglers, so desperate are they to get through that blockade. Here's hoping they don't get double-crossed.

Their failure isn't just due to Primarch Starborn's cautious nature or Captain Asilia's haughty insistence on neutrality. The person handling Andoran's negotiations was that obnoxious Senator Augustyn Naran—infamous for treating us common folk like we're trash. We get members of his staff in here on the regular, and most agree he's the worst, although they also suggest he was chosen to appeal to Absalom's leaders rather than our people. Things are really not looking good for Andoran's chances, even with people who'd like to support them, and they need to take a hard look at how they're approaching the whole thing.

Not that I mean to imply that Andorens generally are desperate or lacking in good judgment. I'm just saying that the stakes are really high for them, so that drives some desperate measures. Andoren spies are loosely based out of Westgate here, though they're having trouble infiltrating the Chelaxian embassy, and that's the information they're most keen on getting. They've made the wise decision to ally with Firebrands, so they've got access to a network of bravos who specialize in both diversions and discretion, even somehow both at the same time.

If you want to know more, I'd suggest seeking out Saphira, high priestess at the big church of Cayden Cailean in the Ascendant Court. She's exactly what you'd hope for in a devotee of that god—she's affable and approachable and always ready to share a good tale or a warm hug. I can say that because I've actually met her, when she came to ask permission to install that little shrine over in the corner. I'm not a fan of most religions, and there's always concerns adding to a historic building such as mine. I do confess I'll raise a glass to



ANDORAN'S NEVER BEEN STRONGER

The sun has long set on the empire of Cheliax. Generations of territorial losses have not curbed House Thrune's abuses but has revealed their weakness.

But they cling to the glory of the past at the crumbling Arch of Aroden, their navy needlessly searching and delaying vessels through that important choke point. If

Absalom will not stand with Andoran to reap the benefits of reopening trade, surely Qadira, Osirion, or even Rahadoum will be happy to do so.

As far as my beloved wife's faithfulness, I trust I know the comings and goings of my own home better than gossip rags or their anonymous sources.

—Augustyn Naran



ANNARA LASKIN

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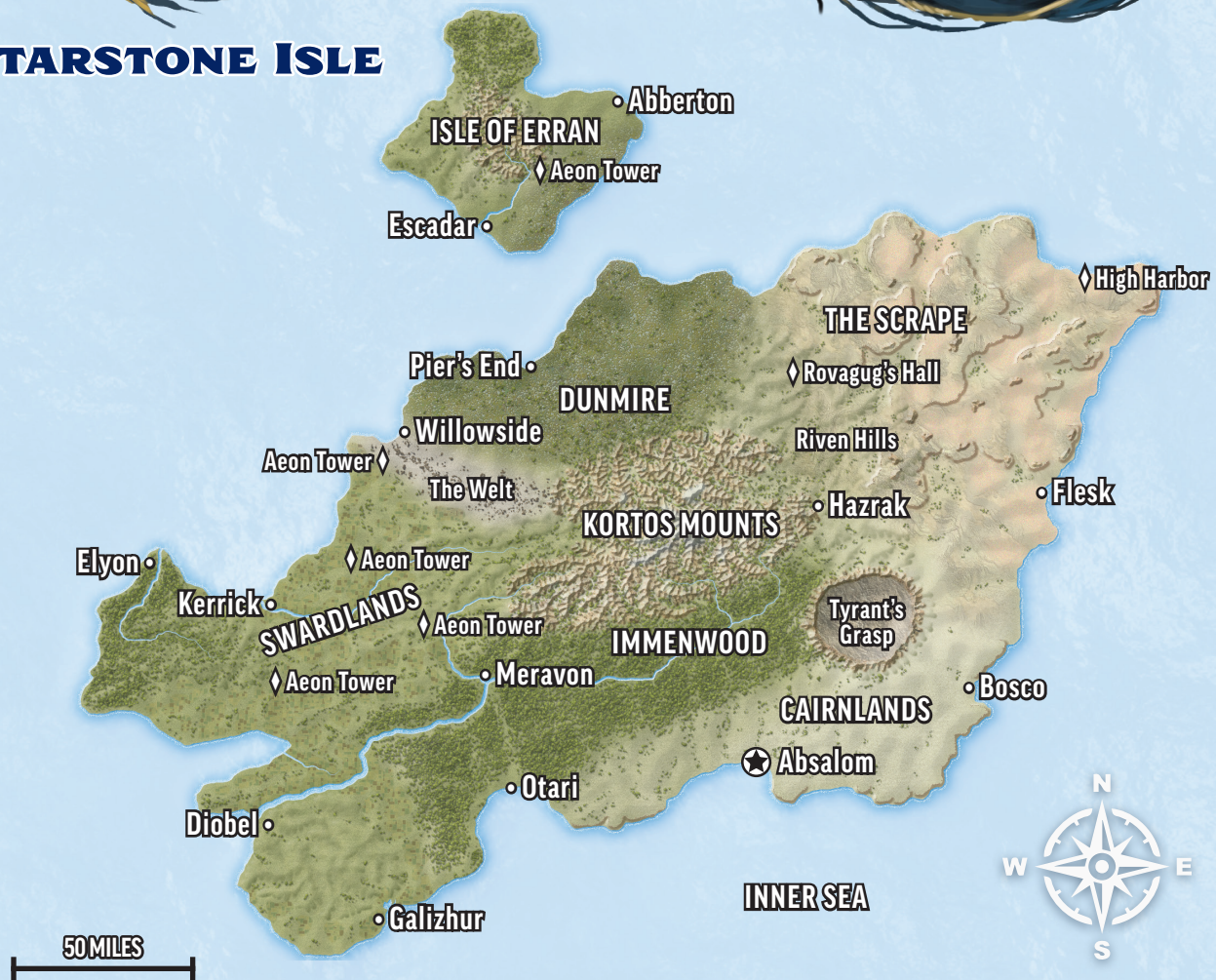
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STARSTONE ISLE



Cayden on occasion, so she won me over pretty fast. But Saphira seems to get her way with pretty much anyone if she has a mind to. I believe most taverns in our city have a little shrine you can spot, if you know what to look for in a shrine to the god of freedom and liquor. Do they serve another purpose? Well, that'd be a question for Saphira.

IS TALDOR ACTUALLY NEUTRAL?

This attitude in favor of not taking a side and just hoping it all blows over soon—it isn't only here in Absalom. My patrons who are visiting from Osirion, Qadira, and Taldor say the same thing, and so do their ambassadors. But that begs the question of how exactly this whole mess does end quickly before it takes down the Inner Sea trade so dear to them all, and I, for one, don't see that happening without all of us—these nations and Absalom—getting involved.

Lately, rumors are flying that Taldor has chosen a side, that they think taking on Cheliah is a losing proposition. There'd been talk before, you know, of Andoran and Taldor being in cahoots, but with poor Eutropia in mourning that all seems to have gone up in a puff of dust. I've heard that Taldans have blockaded the Sellen River, claiming that they won't let either Andoren or Chelaxian boats through. But we all know that it's preposterous to think Chelaxian boats would be anywhere near there, so really it's a move against Andoran. If Taldor is siding with

Cheliah, that could be enough to sway even Primarch Starborn to come out in support for Andoran. I can't say that for certain, but I can say that what would get noticed—including in a coin-in-hand, thank-you-for-your-information kind of way—is tangible proof.

I also can't say that Grand Ambassador Tolara Alverteer of Taldor has ever darkened the door of our humble tavern. I am sure our stone-brick walls are too rustic for her, no matter the elegance of our lighting and tile mosaics. But even though she and her staff all live over in Eastgate, the Winged Sandals delivery folks—who are based next door to her manor house—stop by here quite a bit as they crisscross the city. Not to name names, but one or two have mentioned, over a friendly cup or two, that they know how to get inside the ambassador's office. I suspect, though, that fine manor house might have a few traps or magical deterrents. That's assuming it's not all a trap to begin with. Word is some of the Winged Sandals work for the Lion Blades, Taldor's intelligence service.

FOR THOSE WHO HOBNOB

A more direct way to Ambassador Alverteer—or any of those ambassadors, really—would be to get invited to one of those remarkably dull balls or recitals in hopes of drawing forth information. The ambassador isn't known for being all that chatty, except around a small number of close friends. I have heard, though, that the

most approachable of those friends is the Qadiran ambassador, Emir Thalzar Gaatan. He's the kind of diplomat who actually wants to get to know a place and its people. And his girls are pretty adorable—he and his husband even brought them here! Like I said, this tavern is mildly famous. He was very complimentary, wishing he could ship some of our iced confections back home for the dry Qadiran summer. We're also close to a really great park for flying kites, and Gaatan is a kite enthusiast. Or perhaps the girls are, but I suppose with a doting parent it's much the same thing.

Another ambassador on the approachable side is Vita Aulamaxa of Ravounel—I've met her too, when she came by with handbills for her latest opera, all about personal liberty and self-determination. And she's a plain dealer, even insisted on paying for the ale that I offered on the house. Sadly, I wouldn't call her a regular patron. But I hear you can actually make an appointment to see her at their Consulate in the Ivy District, and you don't even have to cross anyone's palm with coin. Yes, Ravounel is technically neutral, seeing as they just aren't near strong enough to take on Cheliox again so soon after their own independence. I'll wager she knows a lot about Chelaxian tactics and weaknesses.

Frankly, what would be even more valuable than proof of Taldor siding with Cheliox—and doubly useful in combination with that proof—is to uncover Cheliox's plans, because knowledge of what the Chelaxians intend would really get Primarch Starborn's attention. I'm not sure how easily the Chelaxian ambassador, Lord Gulv, could be coaxed into spilling those plans, especially when he's always surrounded by fawning admirers. But I suppose it's worth a try.

The best way to get close to Lord Gulv, unless you're a hellspawn like me, is to spend some quality time at the Second Labyrinth. The right people, wearing the right fashion, with the right amount of coin—they might loosen some lips, especially if they can play a good game of drouge. If you haven't heard, it's Lord Gulv who's behind this overblown drouge resurgence, and he's still the reigning champion. If someone had a few hours and the skill to make it through a drouge tournament, it might just be possible to get close to him or to someone in his retinue.

Such business had better not come to the notice of Gulv's daughter, Lady Azoria—she runs the Second Labyrinth, so she's bound to be around when daddy's there. I understand she wants nothing more than to impress him, but he can barely be bothered to acknowledge her. And to be fair, she's got a reputation for being quick to toss out a cheat. Still, she's as loyal to House Tevineg and their masters in House Thrune as they come.

I have it on good authority that the Gylou Sisters are Lady Azoria's favorite enforcers. One false step and that gang of cutthroats would be lying in wait at every turn. They're merciless and cruel and very skilled with those sharp, curved knives, which makes them about as pleasant as you'd expect fervent Asmodeans to be. But they always pay for their drinks and rarely misbehave, so I have no reason to turn them away when they darken the Groggy Froggy's door. Even if that usually involves hearing about them smuggling or bullying or some other unsavory work. Worth an earful of Asmodean propaganda, I suppose. Anyway, if you want information on the next drouge tournament or Chelaxian ball, buy one of them a drink, and don't look too bored when they go on about their lord and master Asmodeus.

One other thing you need to know about the Second Labyrinth is that another spy network does a lot of their work there. It's the group of spies headed by Dyrianna, the head of the church of Calistria and also the leader of the Courtesans' Guild. You might see Dyrianna herself at that gambling den, but chances are you'll instead run into one or two of her spies there, even on Lord Gulv's arm. But the bigwigs don't pay attention to those beneath them, do they? Especially not the Chelaxians. The guild is more approachable than the Lion Blades and might even offer a way to get to those in charge of Absalom, though tread carefully. Be on your guard. And bring a lot of gold.



THE WAGES OF PEACE

Trust me when I say I know a devil's bargain when I see one. Andoran wishes you to throw Absalom's navy and your very children into the jaws of the Chelaxian navy.

Why? It's not some high-minded ideal! They simply do not wish to sacrifice their own ships and their own children to break the blockade they brought on themselves. What kind of ally would ask you to pull away your pieces as Voradni Voon moves to enclose your city?

There is a simpler and less bloody way to ease the blockade's effects on Absalom. Ships claiming to be from Absalom and nearby Diobel have smuggled Andoran's agents to the Shackles and even brought their pirate allies back. Let the Starwatch know about suspicious ships and their crews. They and we would award you handsomely for your time.

—Lord Gulv of House Tevineg

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FACES OF ABSALOM

Arianna, I doubt much happens in the city without you or your colleagues catching wind of it, but you asked for my opinion. Here's everyone I know who has something to do with the war.

ASILIA OF GYR

The Captain of the Starwatch, **Asilia of Gyr** (tireless female human sleuth), takes her investigations seriously. You can pretty much find her around the clock at Starwatch Keep or on her warship, the *Hurricane Wings*. I'm told that, because of the war, espionage is at an all-time high, so her current priority is neutralizing spies within the city. She clearly believes that the best course for Absalom is strict neutrality, so she's a big part of why we're doing nothing.

AUGUSTYN NARAN

I mentioned that Andoran's Ambassador to Absalom is **Augustyn Naran** (ill-tempered male human aristocrat), and he's a sweaty, ornery man who constantly takes out his frustrations on everyone around him. For all his blustering about the value and honor of us common people, he's as foppish and condescending as they come,



AUGUSTYN NARAN

and he lives like an aristocrat, silks and servants and the works. He's married to the beautiful Dalessa, and he's sure to be crushed when he finds out about his wife's affair with Darius Finch. Augustyn is clearly desperate to gain Absalom as an ally in the war—and he has access to powerful people—but he clearly lacks the influence to convince them.

DARIUS FINCH

Darius Finch (narcissistic male human dandy) is the Ivy District's rake, sometimes known as the "Well-Dressed Gent," who always seems to be smiling. There's no question that he is well-connected and has friends in every social circle in Absalom, including the Firebrands, which is good because I don't think he actually has a home. His current affair with Dalessa, the wife of the odious Ambassador Naran, is dangerous—he might be in over his head this time. To cover up that affair, he tries to make himself an indispensable part of the effort to bring Absalom into the war on Andoran's side.

DYRIANNA OF HOUSE AVENSTAR

The head of Calistria's worshippers in Absalom and head of the Courtesans' Guild, **Dyrianna of House Avenstar** (sophisticated female aiuvarin human survivor) hangs out in the Ivy District, attending the latest symphony or opera on the arm of one of Absalom's elites. But they appear pretty oblivious to the fact that she runs the widest and most effective network of spies in the city. She seems to have a high opinion of Wynsal Starborn, but her public position is neutral nonchalance.

EMIR THALZAR GAATAN

Husband to Trade Prince Aaqir al'Hakam, **Emir Thalzar Gaatan** (loyal male human noble) is a truly sweet man. He's on good terms with the local ambassadors, but who knows what he actually thinks of them. He adores his husband and their adopted daughters Alinzia, Vanissi, and Tikria, and I'd say his loyalty to family might even rank higher than loyalty to his empire. I believe he hopes to keep Qadira out of the war completely. It's possible their ruler Satrap Xerbystes II might take the opportunity to swipe at Taldor, but he can likely be reasoned with, especially considering the growing impact of the blockade on trade.

GULV OF HOUSE TEVINEG

Grand Ambassador **Gulv of House Tevineg** (ambitious male human schemer) doles out promises of gifts and threats of retaliation from his office in the Chelaxian embassy. His ambitions for the war seem restrained, focusing on keeping Absalom neutral. That's one rumored source of the discord in his marriage with Lady **Xansippe** (confident female human high priestess), Asmodeus' high priestess here in the city. Supposedly, she's begun divorce proceedings, but it's not the first time—the pair have been in an open relationship for decades, and those rumors swirl around with every new liaison. Personally, I think it's their way of flirting.

SAPHIRA

The high priest of Cayden's Hall in the Ascendant Court, Sister **Saphira** (vivacious female human devotee) is a charming, boisterous presence, quick to raise a mug to toast a new friend and draw them into a grand tale. Word is that she makes sure Cayden's Hall is a safe haven for freedom fighters, including any and all Firebrands. She has long been an ally of Andoran and makes no secret of her support for that country in what she considers a holy war. She is also good friends with Dyrianna and occasionally passes information to the Calistrian, especially if anyone in Dyrianna's spy network finds themselves in danger.

TOLARA ALVERTEEN

Ambassador **Tolara Alverteen** (relentless female human spy) of Taldor controls both her nation's official diplomacy in Absalom and, I believe, the Lion Blades here in the city, too. I'm told she's ruthless and efficient when not turning on the charm. My sense is that she is fiercely loyal to Taldor and would happily sell out Absalom and all of its inhabitants if she felt it would advance her homeland's political interests.

VITA AULAMAXA

Vita Aulamaxa (theatrical female human patriot) is ambassador of Ravounel and easy to find at the Ravounel Consulate in the Ivy District. Although she's a member of an ancient Chelaxian noble family, she's a reminder that not all those houses fell in line with House Thrune, and her loyalty lies entirely with Ravounel. A big booster for her country's art and theater scene, she's started producing operas here that encourage personal liberty, self-determination, and support for Andoran. I think it's hard for her that her small country isn't anywhere close to strong enough to fight against Cheliax. But she is doing her best and would be delighted if Absalom provides aid to Andoran.

VORADNI VOON

This hulking minotaur warlord claims to be the reincarnation of **Voradni Voon** (calculating male minotaur commander), the menace who laid siege to Absalom shortly after the city's founding. They say as soon as he unites enough minotaur clans under his banner, he'll attack Absalom, determined to finish his failed siege from millennia past.

WYNSAL STARBORN

I hear good things about Primarch **Wynsal Starborn** (visionary male human leader), seems like a decent guy—they say he's building up the Starwatch, First Watch, and the navy so we're safe from attacks by the likes of Voradni Voon. He's supposedly much more sympathetic to Andoran than Cheliax personally, but he wants Absalom to stay neutral so we won't be vulnerable to Voon or any other enemies. Plus, they say he cares about protecting his own people and doesn't much care if a few merchants take a hit in the profit margins. No one in Absalom with any sense is having it. It doesn't help that he keeps trying to resign from his post, something about propriety and all that.

ZARTA DRALNEEN

So **Zarta Dralneen** (dedicated female human archivist) used to be the ambassador of Cheliax, but then she got into trouble with someone higher up. She also got involved with **Vanius Cestanian** (ambitious male human guard), who sold her out, and she spent some time in a Hellknight citadel. For some reason, the Pathfinders rescued her. My understanding is that she spends most of her time in their archives, but she's taking an increasingly active role leading the Pathfinders against her former employers. And who could blame her, really?

ZELVA

The leader of the Gylou Sisters gang, **Zelva** (capricious female human killer), is clever, merciless, and utterly devoted both to her gang and to Asmodeus. Though if you buy her a pint and listen to her religious blathering for a while, you'll get some good information.



GULV OF HOUSE TEVINEG

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FIRES IN ABSALOM

It hardly matters whether or not Absalom wants to stay out of the war, the war has plenty of business with us already. I'd say most of it is keeping to whispers and rumors for now, but I really think that most people just don't want to hear about it. It's been a true challenge convincing others that the best way to keep the war from spreading further into our affairs is to act now. I'd certainly hate to see a battlefield reach the steps of my Groggy Frog, but politicians and socialites always assume such things will never reach them.

AGAINST VORADNI VOON

As I mentioned, what's really on everyone's mind around here is the threat posed by Voradni Voon. Rumor has it that he's rallied hordes of centaurs, minotaurs, and harpies to his cause, and everyone is worried that a huge attack is imminent. Starwatch Captain Asilia has been calling for volunteers willing to make some clandestine forays into the Diobel Hills.

Captain Asilia is said to have the location of a couple different strongholds, but just getting to them in those hills could be dicey. Even the centaur herds that aren't allied with Voon are violent toward intruders, and the harpies have eyes and ears throughout the region.

In one stronghold is the harpy leader known as the **87th Yellow-Eyed King** (ambitious male harpy witch).

Somehow, his harpy minions have access to relics from the long-gone Shory people. They're the ones with the flying cities, and I've heard tale of a staff of theirs that makes it so someone never gets hurt falling. Anyway, relieving the stronghold of some of those items—and of a handful of harpies while you're at it—would be a welcome endeavor.

Another stronghold serves as a lair of centaurs of Zur-Kelivas. Rumors claim that they're vampires who worship someone called Zura. But the rumors also say that these vampires enact terrifying rituals that create horrific monsters imbued with demon powers and then gift these creatures to Voon. At this point, squadrons of these horrors could exist—or it could all be hearsay. Not sure whether Captain Asilia would prefer a dead monster to examine or a disrupted ritual to keep them at bay, but she'd certainly like more to go on than just rumors.

Finally, Voon's stronghold itself is said to be full to bursting with the most vicious warspawn that the Godsrain has set loose. I confess I have a soft spot for minotaurs because I get what it's like to have people making assumptions about those of us with horns and hooves, but even I wouldn't want to face down a fortress full of them! Then again, if anyone could get information or take out a few of their ringleaders without turning it into wholesale slaughter, that would be worth a fair amount of influence in this city, I'd wager.

DIOBEL DILEMMA

A lot of sources, even some in *Anon & Afar*, have been saying Andoran is working with smugglers from Diobel to sneak past Cheliox's searches. Although the town to the west is somewhat independent, Asilia of Gyr considers it part of her responsibilities to end smuggling across the Isle of Kortos. If that weren't enough, Andoran's Twilight Talons have supposedly used these trips to make contact with the pirates of the Shackles, another natural enemy of the Captain of the Starwatch and all who sail the Inner Sea. I'm sure Cheliox is looking hard for proof to turn the merchants and leaders of Absalom against their enemies.

THE EMBASSY GOLDMINE

Another challenge that would yield either substantial influence or coin would be actual proof of Cheliox's plans. And that tangible proof resides in the Chelaxian embassy. Nobody wants to go there, of course. It's intimidating, all tricked out in flamboyant gothic style. If even just a fraction of what they say is true, I wouldn't go in there blind. I've heard that devils patrol the halls and that magical traps somehow single out those who don't worship Asmodeus.

If anyone were planning to go, I'd point them toward two people: Zarta Dralneen and Vanius Cestanian. Zarta used to be the ambassador from Cheliox before they turned on her, and now she works with the Pathfinder Society in their archives. Vanius guards a side entrance to the embassy—it was some kind of servant's entrance when it was a temple, but now it's an entrance for anyone with business too sensitive to use the front doors. Not that they have anything in common beyond knowing about the embassy. I don't want to make it sound like a romantic opera, as much as Vanius would love that.

When someone does get that information, the question arises as to what to do with it. Go to the Andoren ambassador, that pompous Augustyn Naran? Or maybe his unfaithful wife? Trust Saphira or Dyrianna? Work their connections to get it before Primarch Starborn or Captain Asilia? They'd better act fast, because even if the Chelaxians are a bit brutish, they're effective, and someone will tell them something. Before long, half of Absalom will be on the lookout!

KIDNAPPING FORETOLD

Although the fortune-teller **Jehanna** (empathetic female nephilim human harrower) spends far more time at the Gutless Griffon in the Ivy District than at our establishment, her harrow readings are often accurate. They reveal either a gift thought vanished in the Age of Lost Omens or deep knowledge of Absalom's inner workings. And she's recently warned that someone is targeting Qadiran ambassador Emir Thalzar Gaatan and his family. Whether it's Andoran, Cheliox, Cheliox pretending to be Andoran, his own nation's rival of Taldor, or another force changes in the telling. While the ambassador and his husband have been keeping to their usual schedule of operas and the like, I've heard they're arranging increased protection for their daughters.

STATE FUNCTION

On a totally different note, there's chatter that Grand Princess Eutropia of Taldor is making a state visit soon, the first after she leaves mourning. Primarch Starborn is hosting a state reception, dinner, and gala for her at his palace over in the Wise Quarter. It probably goes without saying that anyone with good enough connections to gain entrance to the event would have a rare shot at directly influencing the Taldan monarch.

Security will be high, of course, which is how Zelva and the Gylou Sisters gang got on the payroll as guards—she was here in my tavern bragging about it. I suspect the Lion Blades would like to know that highly partisan Chelaxians are going to be hidden among the supposedly neutral Absalom guards, indistinguishable in their city uniforms. Or perhaps they already do but are stretched too thin with their other duties, so they'll need trustworthy help.

THREATS

For a city as steeped in espionage as Absalom during the Hellfire Crisis, many threats will take the form of influence or infiltration encounters from *GM Core*. Reputation with various factions can also be tremendously important as the party makes alliances or maintains neutrality.

Encounters with spy agencies and criminal organizations can be of any level, drawing on opponents like courtiers, criminals, officials, and villains from *Pathfinder NPC Core*. While the Gylou Sisters are generally low-level, for example, the highest ranks of Chelaxian intelligence are anything but.

Although Voradni Voon is a powerful mythic threat, many of his followers are simply centaurs, harpies, and minotaurs. As with any ancestry, their elite warriors can be far more dangerous. Attacking a fortress in the Kortos Mounts or unseating a leader like the 87th Yellow-Eyed King might require a high-level party. Voon's warspawn also often possess mythic templates (*War of Immortals* 168).

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ABSALOM DANDY

Whether at Petal District soirees or Ivy District taverns, the dandy is a fixture of society in Golarion's largest city. Incurably flirtatious and incomparably charismatic, dandies tend to garner invitations to exclusive events that would otherwise be out of reach—and have access to some of Absalom's most powerful people. Ever the picture of witty decorum and urbane nonchalance, the dandy often appears vain and self-absorbed, bored by politics and opinionated only about matters of taste and fashion. While occasionally showing talent in an impromptu performance, the dandy senses that being witty and knowing the finest points of etiquette are more reliable ways to navigate Absalom's social and political labyrinth than being constantly in the limelight. Beneath this foppish veneer, however, is a

skilled strategist with finely honed abilities. Whether the true aim is espionage, rebellion, or merely personal gain, Absalom's dandies use their adroitness at social manipulation for far more than it seems.

For example, the recent trend of playing draj (or drouge as it's known in Absalom)—a tile-based strategy game originally from Vudra—is seen by many everyday citizens to be just another frivolity for the wealthy to spend their coin on. However, a game of drouge can be a good cover for clandestine conversations, and some dandies purchase custom-carved tiles from Ivy District shops that either act as calling cards or can hide secret messages within their ornate designs.

Many of the feats presented here reference specific places within Absalom but could represent streets and districts in any bustling metropolis where renown and influence are currency just as important as gold coins.

The following feats expand on the dandy archetype presented on page 195 of *Player Core 2*.



IVY DISTRICT INFLUENCER

FEAT 3

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

After mingling alongside the tastemakers of the Ivy District, you understand how rumors spread through larger settlements. When you use the Influence Rumor downtime activity (*Player Core 2* 195) in a city or metropolis, decrease the DC of the check by 5. When you're in the metropolis of Absalom, the DC is reduced by an additional 5. At the GM's discretion, this second reduction might apply to the DC of Influence Rumor's skill check when you manipulate a rumor outside of Absalom but among a group of Absalomians.

IVY PLAYHOUSE STRIKE

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

You've spent so many hours at the Ivy Playhouse or sparring with the Street Performers and Actors' Guild that you've picked up some stage combat techniques. In a fight, you can apply these approaches to make an attack less harmful but more confounding to your foes. Make a melee Strike. If you hit, you take a circumstance penalty to damage equal to the number of weapon damage dice, and the damage gains the nonlethal trait. However, the target is perplexed by the theatricality of your attack and becomes clumsy 1 until the end of your next turn.

SUCH A DISGRACE!

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE FORTUNE

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

Trigger An ally within 30 feet fails a Will saving throw against a mental effect.

You expect the same level of urbane sophistication from your allies as you possess, so whenever one of them

succumbs to egregious behavior from a mental effect, you're immediately mortified. How dare they make you look bad! Whether you respond with noisy contempt or quiet distress, your reaction gives your ally a second chance to shake off the effect and save the moment, at least socially. Your ally rerolls the triggering Will saving throw with a +1 circumstance bonus and uses the higher result. Regardless of the result of the save, your ally is temporarily immune to Such a Disgrace! for 10 minutes.

SUNDOWN STREET POSTURING ◆

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

Frequency once per hour

Whether in the salon or on the street, you've captured the attention of everyone around you. In this moment, they're all hanging on your next word or anticipating your next move. You capture the moment by striking an unforgettable pose, one that your friends find alluring and your foes find alarming. Roll a Diplomacy or Intimidation check. You can substitute the result of this check for one Reflex save you would be required to attempt in the next minute.

PETAL DISTRICT SOCIALITE

FEAT 7

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

Through your experience with the many parties held nightly in clubs and estates within the Petal District, you understand the way rumors and gossip circulate during social events. You can use the Influence Rumor activity during a social event attended by a large group of people, such as a gala or town fair, reducing the time it takes to 1d4 hours. This ability doesn't apply to secret events or other small private gatherings.

MAGPIE MANOR RECOVERY

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

Though you're hardly ready to retire from the social life, you appreciate the luxury the older wealthy elite enjoy within the private social club of Magpie Manor in Absalom's Petal District. And you try to bring that luxury even to the wilds of the world. If you have a four-person tent and spend at least 10 minutes setting it up to your level of comfort before taking an 8-hour period of rest, you regain an additional number Hit Points equal to double your level and reduce the severity of your drained condition by 2 instead of 1. Up to three other Medium or smaller creatures can share the tent with you and gain these benefits.

BLOOM CABARET ENTRANCE ◆

FEAT 10

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE INCAPACITATION MENTAL VISUAL

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

Frequency once per day

Trigger You're about to roll initiative.

In socially exclusive venues like the Ivy District's Bloom Cabaret, you've learned how to make an entrance. This confidence doesn't betray you when you find yourself

about to enter combat, allowing you to throw enemies temporarily off-balance. Once per day, you can choose to not roll initiative. Instead, you voluntarily go last. If more than one character uses this ability or another ability to go last, use the normal rules for resolving a tie: NPCs and monsters act before PCs, and within those groups, the creature can choose whichever order they want.

Enemies who can see you must attempt a Will saving throw against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. On a failure, the enemy is overcome with anticipation for what you'll do or say next and can't use reactions for 1 round.

In addition, during your first turn, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the first Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check you attempt.

FLOWER STREET INFAMY ◆

FEAT 11

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC MENTAL SKILL

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication

Your history of coquetties, flirtations, dalliances, and liaisons is so lengthy that, even in a city as large as Absalom, you're bound to run into your past at inopportune moments. Fortunately, the individual involved might be just as shocked as you are by the unexpected encounter. Choose a target within 30 feet and spin a lascivious tale of how the two of you might have met before. Attempt a Deception check against the target's Will DC. Regardless of your result, the target is temporarily immune to your Flower Street Infamy for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target is stupefied 3 for 1 minute.

Success The target is stupefied 2 for 1 minute.

Failure The target is stupefied 1 until the start of your next turn.

Critical Failure The target is unaffected.

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? ◆◆

FEAT 12

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE EMOTION FEAR LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Prerequisites Dandy Dedication, master in Intimidation

Frequency once per hour

Your reputation casts a long shadow, allowing you to throw your cultural weight around, especially in larger settlements. With a well-timed tirade or attention-getting shout, you can break a foe's mind and bring them low. Choose a foe within 30 feet, and attempt an Intimidation check against the target's Will DC. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to this check if you're in a city or a +2 circumstance bonus to this check if you're in a metropolis. If you're specifically in Absalom, the bonus is instead +3. The target is then temporarily immune to your Do You Know Who I Am? for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target takes 12d6 mental damage and becomes frightened 3. It can't reduce its frightened condition below 1 if it ends its turn adjacent to you.

Success The target takes 6d6 mental damage and becomes frightened 2.

Failure The target is unaffected.

Critical Failure The target is unaffected, and the embarrassment causes you to take 6d6 mental damage.

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STARSTONE ASPIRANT

An imposing marble structure, crumbling ever so slowly into ruin, stands near the Starstone Cathedral in the Ascendant Court. The abandoned Sanctuary of Prescience was meant to be a temple dedicated to the Mwangi mathematician Mbali Xohosta after her success at the Test of the *Starstone* made her a god of advance planning and foresight. Mbali prepared for her ascension meticulously, including designing the temple and directing her many adherents to build it. But instead, she failed the test and disappeared forever. The nearly completed temple was duly abandoned, yet Mbali's exacting legal provisions have rendered the Absalom authorities powerless to demolish or transfer ownership of the large building. So it remains, a palpable warning to presumptuous overachievers—a warning that *Starstone* aspirants pointedly ignore.

When told that they're impressive enough to be gods, *Starstone* aspirants don't dismiss the comment as mere flattery. Instead, they internalize yet another token of encouragement for what they know in their heart of hearts to be their ultimate fate: apotheosis. In striving to join the ranks of the Ascended (those gods who achieved their divine status through the mysterious power of the *Starstone*), *Starstone* aspirants believe that they'll continue to be exceptions, ever counted among those few individuals so favored by fortune that, no matter the odds, they'll triumph.

While deification through the Test of the *Starstone* is better attested than any other of the myriad paths that have led a handful of individuals to immortality and eternal power, even this route is unique—no two aspirants ever arrive at the doors of the Starstone Cathedral having made the same choices. For some, the transition to godhood is sudden and unexpected, as famously happened with Cayden Cailean; for others, it's the result of decades of study and preparation, of undertaking colossal tasks and nurturing a following, such as the case for Iomedae. For those willing to embark on a long and intentional journey, dedication to the path of *Starstone* aspirant has the potential to bring them one step closer to their lofty goal. But like with so many ventures, it isn't a guaranteed road to success.

While this archetype doesn't allow you to achieve full godhood, it serves as an excellent precursor to the godling mythic destiny (*War of Immortals* 130) if your GM decides to use the mythic rules. Whether you eventually assume godhood because you passed the Test of the *Starstone* or through other means is up to you, your GM, and your campaign!

STARSTONE ASPIRANT DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Divine glory awaits! You embrace your longing to make a true and lasting difference in the Universe by embarking on

the path to apotheosis. You dedicate yourself to this journey, striving to overcome all your imperfections. Each day during your daily preparations, choose a skill you're untrained in. You can attempt skill actions that normally require you to be trained in that skill, and you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks with that skill until your next daily preparations. At 8th level, this bonus increases to +2, and at 15th level, this bonus increases to +3.

FOR THE FALLEN! ♦

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH PRESS

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication

So many other hopefuls have attempted the Test of the *Starstone* before you and failed. Whether they were killed or disappeared, you vow to honor their memories by succeeding where they failed. This drive allows to push forward after you've already made an attack. You Step and then Strike.

MINOR DEIFIC POWER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication

Your mental, physical, and spiritual training have granted you access to divine magic that doesn't rely on any other deity or patron. Choose a common divine cantrip and one common 1st-rank divine spell. You can cast the cantrip as a divine innate spell at will and the 1st-rank spell as a divine innate spell once per day.

NORGORBER'S SECRET

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication

Being the god of secrets, Norgorber has erased all traces of his life before his ascension so that his every mortal act and even his identity remain unknown and unknowable. Something about this path intrigues you, and you've trained your own mind to defy intrusions. You gain mental resistance equal to half your level and a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against effects that attempt to read your mind or discern your location.

CAYDEN'S FREEDOM

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication

Even if you've never downed a tankard of ale nor indulged in a night of rowdy revelry, you appreciate the dedication to freedom from Cayden Cailean and his worshippers. After much physical practice, you've become difficult to restrain, and if you're ever grabbed, you can access a little bit of the Accidental God's luck. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude DC when resisting an opponent's attempts to Grapple you or Swallow you Whole. In addition, you gain the Liberate Self action.

Liberate Self ♦ (divine, fortune) **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** You're grabbed, immobilized, or restrained;

Effect Attempt to Escape, rolling the check twice and taking the better result.

IOMEDAE'S VALOR

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE | DIVINE

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication

Frequency once per day

Trigger You would be reduced to 0 Hit Points but not immediately killed.

Though you might not be walking the virtuous path of honor and justice most often associated with Iomedae, you have studied her mortal bravery and can emulate it when you're on the brink of defeat. You avoid being knocked out and remain at 1 Hit Point. You also gain a number of temporary Hit Points equal to your level that last for 1 minute and a +1 status bonus to AC for 1 round.

ADVANCED DEIFIC POWER

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Minor Deific Power

Like a muscle, the more you flex your divine power, the stronger it gets. Choose two common divine spells, one of 2nd rank and one of 3rd rank. You can cast each of these spells as divine innate spells once per day.

ARODEN'S INNOVATION

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication

As befits the god of humanity and innovation, Aroden left teachings that continue to inspire. You've studied his works, and you understand the need to constantly reinvent yourself to meet new challenges. Each day during your daily preparations, choose a general feat of 3rd level or lower. If you meet the feat's prerequisites, you gain the benefits of that feat until your next daily preparations.

GATHER DISCIPLES

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Starstone Aspirant Dedication, master in Religion

Gods need followers, and you know that its best to gather a flock in the present to support you in your endeavor. Of course, you'll reward their faith in you in the future when you become a true deity. You can spend 1 week of downtime in a settlement to evangelize your coming godhood and establish a small group of disciples to your faith. Once this group has been established, these disciples are always helpful to you. You can use Religion to Request something of them, though your request must be able to be performed by the type of people who would follow you, at the GM's discretion. If you critically succeed at this check, your disciples give a piece of helpful advice or let you in on a small secret, granting you or a member of your party a +2 circumstance bonus to the first skill check you attempt when acting on the favor. If you critically fail this check, your disciples' attitude toward you doesn't worsen.

You can have three groups of disciples at any one time (or five if you're legendary in Religion). If you exceed this

number, the oldest group disbands and must be established again if you return to that settlement.

GREATER DEIFIC POWER

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Advanced Deific Power

Divine power continues to fill you. Choose two common divine spells, one of 4th rank and one of 5th rank. You can cast each of these spells as divine innate spells once per day.

MAJOR DEIFIC POWER

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Greater Deific Power

As your apotheosis into living godhood approaches, you accrue the strongest of divine power. Choose three common divine spells, one of 6th rank, one of 7th rank, and one of 8th rank. You can cast each of these spells as divine innate spells once per day.



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DISPATCHES RECEIVED IN KUTHONA 4725

Derth,

“Watch the servants,” the Farmers advised me when I accepted my post in Khari. At first, I believed they meant for me to monitor the workers. The Chelaxian nobility abused their staff regularly. Perhaps they would need rescue. However, this past week revealed their true wisdom: the servants disappeared.

The nobility didn’t send them away. Instead, a rash of resignations became parlor gossip. The former servants came to me, asking if I could whisk them from our little slice of Cheliox into Rahadoun, before the end of the next week at the latest. One mentioned that he heard his employer—a court bureaucrat—speaking of an oncoming blockade. The noble was arranging for a resupply of oranges and spices, afraid that prices would rise. My contact wanted his children south in Rahadoun.

I’ve ferried out a dozen families within the last 72 hours. The lucky ones, I expect. My normal methods work, at least for now. I think of them, though I rarely hear what becomes of my wards. I hope Desna watches their journeys.

Lovage

Derth,

All is normal, until it isn’t.

Last night, Cheliox slammed the strait shut. There were always patrols, but now the black-hulled warship *Impervious* sits between the shores and turns away all seeking passage, unless they bear the Chelaxian colors. A dozen supporting ships surround her. I’ve stolen a glance at their masses while pretending to take an evening stroll. The navy swarms the streets of Khari.

No one in the city knows what’s happening. Citizens quell their questions, since the navy takes offense to any curiosity about their arrival. Lord Mayor Marsiol Giovenci’s swarms of informants listen in the streets, taking word from the complaining shopper at the butcher and carrying it to his ears. Disappearances dot the days. It seems like everyone knows someone who’s gone missing, and they come asking me about it.

Two days ago, my friend Luicity came to me, asking sideways if I could help her visit family in the south. I should have known asking her to wait would be a mistake, even though it was only long enough to prepare for her escape. Marsiol had collected a thick file on her, a consequence of her tendency to praise Vidrian’s

revolution when she spent too long in the tavern. Still, I told her to come back after sunset. No one has seen her since she left my florist shop. If the lord mayor sought a scapegoat, I'm afraid he found her.

Lovage

LETTERS RECEIVED IN ABADIUS 4726

Derth,

Perhaps it is time for me to explain my situation. You know that I am the tiller of Khari and Corentyn, though I keep my offices in the southern city in a florist shop. I am a florist by trade. It was the network's flower code that attracted me first. That curiosity grew into my life's cause.

Khari changes as I watch it. The citizens of Khari are unhappy, but wary to show it. The number of disappearances off the street grow. They're mostly younger people, those who weren't old enough to be involved in the rash of rebellion that birthed Ravounel. Those of us that survived those years know to keep dissent private. Even now, I'm afraid that I'll be baited into revealing my true loyalties to a spy, then taken from my bed. The lord mayor keeps his information network active, keeps the merchants afraid of him despite the blockade.

The families of the disappeared come to the shop, asking for a bouquet of southern blooms. I weigh it; they want to leave, but I can only help a few. Who needs it the most? Who might betray me? I suggest the weather in Corentyn might be nicer. Khari is on the outskirts of the empire, so Abrogail directs her energy to suppressing us. Even an additional gasp of breath provides relief.

Lovage

This letter was sewn into the lining of an admiral's jacket.

Derth,

Long story, but I'm undercover in the laundry of the lord mayor's estate. More officers come and go than I expected. Marsiol attempts to direct them. Claims circulate that he stopped smuggling with the help of his portmaster, that sniveling woman Obriana Corieyn. The officers seem uninterested in his attentions, preferring their chain of command. Their admiral is young, not even thirty years old. Haven't caught his name. Did catch stories about how he fought pirates in the Shackles. Seems a tyrant. His officers jump when they catch his attention. Perhaps a fracture to stoke division?

Last night, I overheard the admiral complaining. The strait is meant to be a major front in the war, he was saying. Promises were made that he could make his career if he succeeded. No resources seem to be available. The navy has its fleet stretched thin. He's considering mercenaries and cursing those above him for starving his operation.

I must admit, I could not help myself. Yes, I'm in the laundry, but servants are servants. I selected a carafe of the finest red and offered to pour it for him. Instead, I spilled it on his coat. This coat, which he threw at me and told me to clean it before he had me flayed. Laundry service is not stopped by the blockade, and I do hope it makes it way to you.

Lovage

The following letters arrived pasted into the endpapers of book of propaganda.

Derth,

Alabastaine Norinnio—the young man I thought was an admiral—serves as vice admiral. He is one of the most pustular boils I've ever met. The difference between vice admiral and admiral is a grudge he holds against those below him. I do not care to learn more about him, unless it is in the service of overthrowing him.

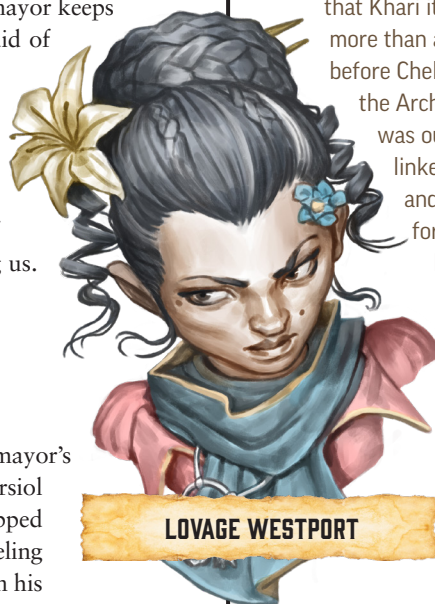


ANCIENT GRIEVANCES

The people of Khari have been proud citizens of Cheliox for over five hundred years. Although the city once belonged to Rahadoun, their current claim to it is no more relevant than that of the Jistka Imperium in the Age of Destiny.

If they wish to dredge up such ancient history, it bears mentioning that Khari itself was little more than a fishing village before Cheliox constructed the Arch of Aroden. It was our forebears that linked the continents and provided refuge for those fleeing Rahadoun.

—Lord Gulv of House Tevineg



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ARCH OF ARODEN



300 FEET

BRIDGE IS NOT TO SCALE

He has held true to his promise for mercenaries. Kholo privateers station on the streets nearest the sea. They've driven the residents out of their homes and shops. My own building houses one such rowdy group; they tipped the remaining flowers out onto the street as though they were emptying chamber pots. The vice admiral keeps order with his sailors, but the lack of order with the mercenaries seems to be the point. Citizens of Khari shelter together and barricade their doors at night. No one lingers on the street, for a friendly face is likely to be an informant, and an unfriendly face is likely to seize any valuables.

Lovage

DISPATCHES FROM PHARAST 4726

Derth,

I've wormed my way into a courier position with the navy. Filthy work, bringing orders between ships and shore, orders whose seals I cannot break but I know contain horrors. It brings me ever closer to sabotaging the front.

The Pure Legion has come to Khari. They are occupying the southern neighborhoods, and my duties keep me to the north. It isn't an overt force, at least not yet. Rather, Rahadoun has a spymaster of its own, a mysterious Mazzarki. I wonder if I have met them in my wanderings and did not know it.

The vice admiral boils over with nerves about the Pure Legion. The lord mayor's personal staff report that he's nearly in a rage over their intrusion. While I haven't spoken to the Rahadoumi contingent, their motives seem clear. Khari belonged to Rahadoun hundreds of years ago, and they too see the opportunity to topple Chelias's control. An additional front in the south is something Chelias can ill afford. The news we receive is sparse—Derth, your replies do not reach me, if you ever attempt to respond—but they sound stretched thin with few allies.

Still, I do not know if I welcome the Pure Legion in our city. I pray to the gods. They guide my work. To be severed from them under the Laws of Mortality seems like trading one tyranny for another. It might be a better tyranny, but I would prefer none. A pit grows in my stomach as the war shifts.

Lovage

Derth,

A funny sight from today: a brawl in the streets. Not a battle—I've dodged a few of those as of late, chaotic affairs where I couldn't tell the Rahadoumi agents from the plainclothes mercenaries. No, I saw kholo freebooters that found a fight in a tavern and brought it into the open. Delightfully, they were losing.

For the first time in months, I took myself to the bar and enjoyed a beer as I watched the melee. It didn't last long. I barely received my half pint before it was dying down. The mishmash wandered back in, laughing, as they took their seats. They chattered with the ease granted by winning, and I unwound next to them. I felt like the cats that used to slink through the streets and bask in the sunlight.

Lovage

DISPATCH FROM GOZREN 4726

The following dispatch arrived in a dream. Perhaps it was sent via rite, or perhaps this reporter's conscience grows heavy.

A halfling huddles in a limestone tunnel. Scaffolds stabilize the structure, though they creak and threaten to fall apart as the world shakes. A faint sound of explosives—perhaps cannon fire—precedes each rattle. A shriek comes from down the passage, echoing against stone and water.

The halfling moves forward. Her lily hairpin confirms that it's Lovage. She leads a dozen others forward, left hand signaling to slow or stop, right hand holding a crossbow. She snaps the sight up, and a bolt flies. An azarketi thuds to the ground ahead. She signals her wards to retreat.

"Gods watch us," she mutters. Her voice picks up as she addresses her companions. "We will survive this battle, then the next. We just need to survive."



TENUOUS RELATIONS

Rahadoun has long struggled to reclaim its stolen territory from Chelias. We are hopeful that they can finally succeed.

Although I suspect they do not want our prayers, we should offer whatever other support we can. It's an important step to break Chelias's stranglehold on trade west to Arcadia and further north to Tian Xia. The ever-increasing searches and embargoes reinforce that they cannot be trusted with that power.

—Senator Augustyn Naran

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FACES OF THE ARCH

In my dispatches, I have made mention of a few key figures to watch. These summaries should provide additional context for understanding them.

Lovage

KETTERMAUL CHARTHAGNION

The Archheathen of Corentyn, **Kettermaul Charthagnion** (affable male human mayor) rules with a friendly influence. He laughs often in meetings, regularly defuses tensions with a joke, and enjoys the social calendar in Corentyn. Despite this, he maintains Cheliax's stranglehold on the city, particularly alongside his infernal aide **Oronthos** (legalistic male devil advisor). His advisor walks regularly alongside him when surveying the city, causing the commons to shrink back and hope the devil looks away. Whether they think of Kettermaul or Oronthos as the devil is unknown, as the Archheathen orders atrocities with a smile.



URO ADOM

Ah, Lictor **Uro Adom** (severe male human lictor). He commands the Hellknights in Citadel Gheradesca. Ostensibly, he commands the Hellknights in Corentyn as well, but Kettermaul carries more sway within the city's walls. This hasn't yet damaged their relationship, as they're often seen together and cooperate on matters of shared interest. Uro encourages Kettermaul to devote resources to repairing Corentyn's century-old battle damage, but the mayor's focus is elsewhere. The lictor readily takes political prisoners into his citadel, and he even travels to Corentyn to preside over trials when warranted. Every ounce of mercy was wrung from his bones in his ascent to power, including sentencing his own mother to hard labor for insulting a court devil. The Hellknights beneath him consider this fair, but only a particular type of person would choose the Order of the Chain and its commitment to ensuring everyone stays in their societal place.

MARSIOL GIOVENCI

Lord Mayor **Marsiol Gioveni** (unpleasant male human spymaster) has few true friends or allies. His decades of amassed power and political blackmail in Khari constrains the rest of the nobility. Marsiol maintains files on every resident in the city and created a sprawling web of social connections within his offices. Give him a name, and he'll provide the date that person came to the city, their goals, their connections, and possible weaknesses. He watches for potential attempts to unseat him. Dismissal from his service becomes commonplace, particularly among those who begin to form friendships with other members of the Khari court.

He occupies the queen's good graces by sending her copies of his files. Watching over the region of Kharijite and updating her on the southernmost border grants him regular meetings with her, which he accomplishes via an enchanted mirror kept in his quarters. A surprisingly large number of nobles are invited to serve in his court after they run afoul of the queen, leading to the assumption that he collects them in order to gather blackmail that will enhance his station.

OBRIANA CORIEYN

The Hespereth Strait fuels the economy of Khari, and **Obriana Corieyn** (ambitious female aiuvirin human portmaster) maintains Khari's side of the port. When the lord mayor cracked down on smuggling over a decade prior, she enforced the rules and increased the patrols. No one knows the tunnels beneath the city better than she does, as she walked them daily until the merchants learned of the true prohibition. When arranging for travel for my wards out of Khari, I've encountered her on a rowboat as she watched the shorelines.

Still, no love is lost between portmaster and lord mayor. Marsiol senses her desire to unseat him one day, and Obriana collects information on his rule in Khari to undermine him. She might serve as an ally against

Marsiol if her position can be secured, but she's just as likely to come to his aid if the port's control would turn to someone else. Given the money that flows through her hands, it's more a matter of time for when she attempts to unseat him.

KARSAKIM

Despite staying in Shepherd's Rock, leagues away from Khari, **Karsakim's** (watchful male human Sword of Mortality) influence hangs over the city. As the commander of the Pure Legion, his orders spur them into action. If Rahadoun were to take Khari back, the city's divine texts and objects would fill its Vault of Lies. The sigils for devils and the signs to Asmodeus would disappear in it. Perhaps the gargoyles on the lord mayor's estate would be removed and installed there.

If Karsakim were to march on Khari directly, he would lead the Pure Legion in its mighty forces. Marsiol would see his force approach as clouds of dust. There would be enough time to prepare for the strike. Karsakim is no fool, so I expect him to wait until the city is exhausted, and then act.

KASSI AZIRIL

Kassi Aziril (innovative female human alchemist), known blasphemer to Cheliox with a standing execution order decreed by Queen Abrogail Thrune, resides in her homeland of Rahadoun as one its foremost medical experts. With war on the horizon, she is acutely aware of her ability to undermine her persecutors and has loaned her aid more directly to the Pure Legion forces as they approach Khari. While her surgery remains in the capital city Azir, she has approached the border to provide lessons in battlefield medicine and subverting the effects devils may have on soldiers. Her alchemical goods supply the anti-Chelaxian forces on the front, so even Shackles pirates carry elixirs with her seal. Marsiol promises a week's worth of the port's profits to anyone who brings him her head, so that he may gift it to the queen.

MAZZARKI

I only learned of **Mazzarki** (elusive nonbinary human infiltrator) once the war began. They appear to be driven to retake Khari, though I have not become close enough to understand why. What I have found is that they joined the Pure Legion shortly after the Glorious Reclamation, when it was possible to retake the city as Cheliox distracted itself with internal fighting. When the city was not returned, Mazzarki became fixated on the idea. I hear they are currently hiding out in the southern neighborhoods of Khari and preparing their emissaries to strike.

TAKKSAN RAFANDOR

Takksan Rafandor (divided female human exemplar) serves as a curiosity. When a droplet of the Godsrain struck her, divinity imbued her. She fought against it, swearing a vow of mortal defiance and claiming

continued loyalty to the Laws of Mortality. Rahadoun did not know what to do with her. The Council of Elders met to beseech the Keeper of the First Law to rule on her existence, as she rejected the divine spark that empowered her. The Keeper ruled that the council would observe her for a period and make their judgment once more is known.

She's collected others made divine by the Godsrain into a Host of the Involuntary Divine. They've established an encampment in the outer edge of Kharijite. In the group's manifesto, the *Litany of Unwilling Deification*, she establishes her goals: to create a place where she can maintain her connection to the Laws of Mortality while avoiding prosecution for her ascension. They might run afoul of both Rahadoun and Cheliox; consider them to be independent.



KARSAKIM

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FIRES AT THE ARCH

After a decade in Khari and Corentyn, I know the faults and strengths of the cities. Derth, if you're directing resources toward the front, these fights are worthwhile. Truly breaking the blockade will require an army, but a small force may weaken these points. Take heed.

CHAOS IN THE STREETS

Hypothetically, let's say I had access to a small trusted group, and our goal was to tip the scales in Khari or Corentyn. I would take aim at the faction I most want to hurt, and let the other groups swoop into do my bidding. Most of the forces in the cities aren't familiar with each other. The kholo freebooters couldn't tell a Chelaxian sailor from a pirate. The locals recognize new faces, but can't say who's a Twilight Talon spy, an agent for House Thrune, or a member of the Pure Legion. A strike force aimed at fanning this confusion would do very well.

Consider the port. Even with the portmaster, her underlings, and the regular dockworkers moving about, it's vulnerable to arson. The harbor seals might complicate matters, since they push all creatures out of their territory, no matter what uniform those creatures wear. Still, if a fire starts in the port, it'll draw attention. Distractions work.

The balance of power is unsteady; control of every street counts. The smallest shove can sway it.

THE RISKS OF A SIEGE

Rahadoun desires Khari, and Corentyn would be a fine second prize. The Pure Legion spies lead me to believe that they won't take the cities in a single strike. Rather, subterfuge and siege are most likely. With the factions converging, they will likely wait until the Chelaxian navy suffers an attack from another force, then swoop in while the advantage remains.

I have no love for the Pure Legion, so I cannot recommend in good conscience how they might approach. Rather, I consider it in terms of defenses. Infiltration into Khari is common; it's why the lord mayor obsessed over spycraft as he came into power. First, there are ocean-carved tunnels beneath the city. They flood regularly, but a well-timed attack could unexpectedly find access to the city. The ones that the authorities know of have been closed off. However, it's possible to carve through the stone—most of the city sits on lime deposits.

Second, Khari is surprisingly vulnerable to siege. Fresh water arrives in the city via aqueduct. Damaging that source would force the city to find additional water stores. These sites on the outskirts are the most likely for an outright battle, particularly if the Pure Legion sends troops to destroy the water holding tanks. The shoreline is exposed and vulnerable to watchers, particularly those armed with ship-sinking siege weapons. Not only does that prevent resupplies from approaching the strait, it

also scares the citizens away from fishing. The faster food stores deplete, the sooner the siege ends.

The final taking of Khari likely will come once it destabilizes. Lord Mayor Giovenci's rule likely won't survive outright discontent, and the vice admiral is not prepared to rule. Remove the lord mayor, and the city belongs to the Pure Legion. Perhaps someday it will belong to others.

ousting Lord Mayor Marsiol Giovenci

Lord Mayor Marsiol Giovenci is a known spy of Queen Abrogail and petty despot of Khari. The merchant class dislikes him but still bows to him, but any one of them would be eager to depose him if the opportunity arises. The general citizenry of Khari fears him. The staff of his manor receives wages slightly higher than elsewhere in town, but enough have been killed by his paranoia that the wages feel like golden manacles. His support, as it were, is thin. Only the most opportunistic sycophants attach to him.

Removing Marsiol would likely require an assassination. Bribing the night guard would not cost much. Perhaps nothing at all, if a silver-tongued offer wormed its way into their ear. He has his human guard on land, but less likely to be swayed are the sarglagon devils (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 88) that he bound to protect his secrets. They *translocate* throughout his manor, harrying those who make it past the walls.

Marsiol's paranoia runs deep. Even if the guards are dispatched, he trapped the corridor between his public-facing offices and the private quarters on the upper floors. During my time working in his laundry, I discovered that he regularly rotates these traps. Servants would injure themselves on collapsing staircases, summoning runes, and rugs enchanted to trip intruders regularly. Nearly every door is rigged to alarm if opened without that week's code word.

Finally, he is a formidable opponent in his own right. He's trained to defend himself even in the middle of the night, typically sleeping with a poisoned dagger under his pillow. Weapons are hidden throughout his bedchamber, and several are rigged to strike with a simple command. His most valuable secrets are kept in a trunk under his bed alongside the mirror that apparently lets him contact Queen Abrogail directly, although I have no doubt she's quite busy these days.

THE CORENTYN PROBLEM

Ah, Corentyn. As I've been stationed in Khari, my attentions have focused on that city. Truth be, the borders between the cities have always blurred. I consider them sisters, joined together in hand. However, with the war unfurling, Corentyn poses a problem. Khari is not likely to stay in Chelax's grasp. It was always a stretch of empire, a flag planted in Garund. It's now a lonely holding with Vidrian having thrown off Chelaxian rule. But families are split between the cities. Friendship, love, professional boundaries; none understand borders. Keeping Corentyn in check is Citadel Gheradesca, the Hellknight Order of the Chain's headquarters. Political prisoners live within those walls. Lord Mayor Giovenci's preference for suppressing revolution keeps it well stocked with Kharijite citizens.

So, what to do about Corentyn?

Let me set aside Citadel Gheradesca; that is a conflict for a more adept thinker. I have not broken a prison since I was young and, frankly, the internal politics of the Hellknights baffle me.

Rather, Corentyn needs a revolutionary spark, and a breeze to fan that into a flame. Those best suited to liberate might combine the eagerness of a Firebrand with the wisdom of a grandparent. Not me, please don't assume that. Perhaps a Firebrand, or one of the Tessa Fairwind's pirates, or another person I cannot imagine will rise to the occasion. What comes after that will be up to Corentyn. Freedom offers many possibilities.

THREATS AT THE ARCH

Most low-level groups in Khari are dealing with chaos in the streets and the risks of a siege, with more powerful characters perhaps being prepared for ousting the lord mayor. Moving across the strait to Corentyn is a more threatening endeavor, either laying the groundwork for or moving into the Hell's Destiny Adventure Path.

Most threats at the arch are humanoid, such as the criminals, military, seafarers, and villains found in *NPC Core*. The amphibious azarketis and the kholo mercenaries can also be found in *Monster Core*.

In addition to humanoid threats, Chelax's leadership is eternally propped up by devils, and many aquatic animals pass through the strait alongside merchant vessels. The deserts around Khari are also haunted by divs (*Monster Core* 2 110-113) who are eager to take advantage of the city's weakness, as well as genies with their own agendas.

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ARCH OF ARODEN TROOPS

As a major passage of trade in and out of the Inner Sea, the strait is hotly contested during this period of strife.

HELLKNIGHT RETRIEVAL UNIT

These bands of Hellknight armigers sworn to the Order of the Chain are tasked with tracking down and apprehending those deemed criminals by House Thrune. They are trained to take their targets alive whenever possible but will employ lethal tactics when necessary.

HELLKNIGHT RETRIEVAL UNIT

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +15

Languages Common, Diabolic

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +15, Hell Lore +12, Intimidation +14, Religion +9, Society +9, Survival +9 (+13 to Track)

Str +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

AC 24; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

HP 90 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 60 (3 segments), 30 (2 segments); **Resistances** mental 5; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, splash damage 5

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Bola Barrage ♦♦ The unit draws bolas and hurls them in a 15-foot cone, inflicting 3d6 nonlethal bludgeoning damage to creatures in the area (DC 21 basic Reflex save). Any creature who critically fails its save is also knocked prone and takes an additional 1d4 nonlethal bludgeoning damage.

Coordinated Subdual ♦♦ **Requirements** The retrieval unit's last action was a Whirling Onslaught that dealt damage to at least one creature of Medium size or smaller; **Effect** The unit attempts a single Athletics check to Grapple, comparing the result to the Fortitude DC of each creature that they currently have grabbed or restrained or was damaged by the required Whirling Onslaught. It can target up to a maximum number of creatures equal to double the troop's current number of segments.

Identify Targets ♦ The unit Seeks in a 30-foot burst within line of sight and Points Out up to three creatures in that area.

Pacify ♦ The unit's Whirling Onslaught gains the nonlethal trait until the end of their next turn.

Whirling Onslaught ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The unit brutally pummels all enemies in a 5-foot emanation with their flails (DC 21 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d8 bludgeoning damage

♦♦ 2d8+5 bludgeoning damage

♦♦♦ 2d8+10 bludgeoning damage

You're Coming with Us ♦ **Trigger** The unit Strides; **Requirements** The unit has one or more creatures grabbed or restrained; **Effect** Before moving any of its segments, the unit attempts a single Athletics check against the Fortitude DC of all creatures it has grabbed or restrained. On a success, the creature is moved alongside the unit, moving the same distance and direction until the end of the unit's current turn. The unit can't move a total number of creatures greater than double its current number of segments.

PURE LEGION REGIMENT

The Pure Legion is the national law enforcement agency responsible for imposing Rahadoum's Laws of Mortality by ensuring that the nation is kept free from religion in any form. This includes worship of or proselytizing for deities, as well as possession of written scripture or religious paraphernalia.

PURE LEGION REGIMENT CREATURE 10

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +19; *detect magic* (divine magic only)

Languages Common, Osiriani

Skills Acrobatics +20, Athletics +22, Intimidation +22, Religion +21 (+25 to recognize or identify religious paraphernalia or iconography and divine spells or effects)

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +2

AC 29; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +19, **Will** +22

HP 180 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 120 (3 segments), 60 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 10, splash damage 10

Nonbelievers When attempting a saving throw against a spell or effect with the divine trait, a Pure Legion regiment gets an outcome one degree better than the result of their roll. However, the regiment can't ever be a willing target for helpful divine spells.

Troop Defenses (page 124)

HELLKNIGHT RETRIEVAL UNIT

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Occult Innate Spells DC 26; **3rd** ring of truth (at will); **Constant (5th)** detect magic (divine magic only)

Crossbow Volley ♦♦ The regiment draws or reloads their crossbows and concentrates fire on creatures in a 10-foot burst within 60 feet that deals 4d8 piercing damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). When the regiment is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Denounce Divinity ♦♦ (auditory, linguistic, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** With one voice, the Pure Legion regiment decries the authority of a single deity of their choice, forcing all worshippers of that deity within a 30-foot emanation to attempt a DC 28 Will save. Regardless of the result of the saving throw, a creature is temporarily immune to Denounce Divinity for 24 hours.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature becomes stupefied 1 for 1 hour, with the flat check from stupefied for Casting a Spell applying exclusively to spells from the divine tradition.

Failure As success, but the creature is stupefied 2.

Critical Failure As success, but the creature is stupefied 3 and frightened 1 as their faith is shaken to its core.

Rebuke Strike ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The regiment strikes with their longswords against enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 26 basic Reflex save). Damage dealt depends on the number of actions. If a creature critically fails the Reflex save while affected by the regiment's Denounce Divinity, it is unable to reduce its stupefied or frightened condition by any means for 1 round.

♦ 1d8+2 slashing damage

♦♦ 2d8+11 slashing damage

♦♦♦ 3d8+13 slashing damage

SHACKLES PIRATE CREW

The fleets of ships sent by the Free Captains of the Shackles have proven invaluable to Andoran's efforts to break the Hespereth blockade, all while acting as a consistent thorn in the side of Chelaxia by conducting regular raids to plunder its settlements along the southern coast. Pirate crews will sometimes get rowdy when their ship docks and start drunken bar brawls.

SHACKLES PIRATE CREW

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +12

Languages Common, Mwangi

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +13, Intimidation +12

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

AC 21; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 75 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 50 (3 segments), 25 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 4, splash damage 4

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Disarming Twist ♦ **Requirements** The crew's previous action was a Scurvy Strike that dealt damage to at least one enemy; **Effect** The crew uses their weapons to knock the weapons out of their enemies' hands. The crew attempts a single Athletics check to Disarm, comparing the result to the Reflex DC of each creature that was damaged by the required Scurvy Strike. If the result is a critical failure, the crew gets a failure instead.

Scurvy Strike ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The crew strikes with belaying pins, hooks, and cutlasses at enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 19 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d6 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage

♦♦ 2d6+4 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage

♦♦♦ 3d6+6 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage



TROOPS AT THE ARCH

In addition to the troops listed here, some others that might show up as enemies or allies in skirmishes include:

- bill-band (NPC Core 190)
- city guard squadron (NPC Core 114)
- conscript squad (NPC Core 89)
- Hellknight cavalry brigade (NPC Core 93)
- mercenary band (NPC Core 84)

MILITARIES AT THE ARCH OF ARODEN

Most active troops at the Arch of Aroden front are stationed in the cities of Khari and Corentyn, on either side of the Hespereth strait. The Rahadoumi forces fighting to liberate Khari from Chelaxian control include a number of Pure Legion regiments, strategically deployed to weaken the enemy by stripping them of the divine aid provided by their infernal patrons. The Order of the Chain detachments dispatched from nearby Citadel Gheradesca to aid in the defense of Corentyn regularly employ the order's elite retrieval units to neutralize and capture key enemy officers and other high-value targets. Meanwhile, gangs of pirates from the Shackles regularly inject chaos into the ongoing conflict by striking at Chelaxian supply depots along the coast, then withdrawing into the sea before military support can arrive to drive them off.

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THE PURE LEGION

Violate the Laws of Mortality and face the Pure Legion. Rahadoun forbids all things related to the divine, but evangelists, pilgrims and smugglers attempt to return the worship of gods to its shores. Enforcers patrol the country to find any stray prayers or cults to gods and root out worshippers, with no consideration for if it is worship of Sarenrae or Asmodeus.

Although the Pure Legion enforcers are seen as the fearsome guardians of the Laws of Mortality, part of the legion's responsibility is in making sure that the populace of Rahadoun is not tempted by the divine. To this end, many in the Pure Legion study medicine or alchemy, even teaching those arts to others in Rahadoun. Although she's not officially attached to the Pure Legion, many legionnaires study the works of Kassi Aziril (page 55).



GODLESS HEALING

FEAT 2

GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites Battle Medicine, can't have a patron deity

You recover an additional 5 Hit Points from a successful attempt to Treat your Wounds or use Battle Medicine on you. After you or an ally use Battle Medicine on you, you become temporarily immune to that Battle Medicine for only 1 hour, instead of 1 day.

MORTAL HEALING

FEAT 2

GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites expert in Medicine, you follow the Laws of Mortality

You grant greater healing when the gods don't interfere. When you roll a success to Treat Wounds for a creature that hasn't regained Hit Points from divine magic in the past 24 hours, you get a critical success on your check instead and restore the corresponding amount of Hit Points.

PARAGON BATTLE MEDICINE

FEAT 7

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites Battle Medicine, master in Medicine

Access You're from Rahadoun.

You've learned the modern uses of Battle Medicine originated by Kassi Aziril. When you successfully use Battle Medicine, you can also reduce the target's sickened, enfeebled, or clumsy condition by 1 (this has no effect if you are subject to an effect continually applying the clumsy condition, like *enlarge*). If you are legendary in Medicine, you can choose to reduce the target's frightened or stunned condition by 1 instead, and if you have the Godless Healing feat, you can choose to reduce the target's stupefied or drained condition by 1 instead. If you have the Mortal Healing feat, you can reduce all available conditions by 1 for a target who hasn't benefited from vitality or healing magic in the last 24 hours, and if you roll a critical success before applying the effects of the feat, you reduce all available conditions by 2 for that target instead.

PURE LEGION ENFORCER

Pure Legion enforcers stand against the encroachment of religion into Rahadoun. You sniff out illegal divine magic and take care of those who carry it into your country. To protect yourself and carry out your duties, you ward yourself against gods-given abilities. Outside of Rahadoun, you probably still find the divine to be distasteful but are not obliged to destroy it at all costs.

Additional Feats: 2nd Godless Healing, Mortal Healing; 7th Paragon Battle Medicine

PURE LEGION ENFORCER DEDICATION

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Pure Legion

You are sworn to uphold the Laws of Mortality within the borders of Rahadoun. As part of your commissioning, you learned about the different types of worship and divine magic

that you might encounter. You become trained in Intimidation and Religion. If you are already trained in one or both of these skills, you become an expert in that skill. If you are already an expert in both skills, you become trained in a skill of your choice.

You also gain the Recognize Spell skill feat. Whenever you attempt to recognize a divine spell, you always learn it is divine and gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the Religion skill check.

Finally, you gain the following edicts and anathema. Knowingly committing acts that violate the anathema result in you losing access to abilities granted by this archetype, as determined by your GM. You can regain these lost abilities by spending an appropriate amount of time rededicating yourself to the Pure Legion, typically by donating an amount equal to 20 gp × your level to appropriate causes and eschewing all divine magic (including spells cast by others) for at least 1 day.

Edicts confiscate, contain, or destroy all divine objects in Rahadoum; drive out divine casters from Rahadoum

Anathema use divine abilities, items, or spells; permit proselytizing of religion in Rahadoum; worship a deity

EDICT OF MORTALITY ◆◆ FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY LINGUISTIC

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

You recite an excerpt of the Laws of Mortality, often the first law: "Let no mortal be beholden to a god." Attempt an Intimidation check against all enemies within 60 feet that worship a deity, comparing your result against each target's Will DC. Targets are then temporarily immune to your use of this ability for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target becomes frightened 2. Until the start of your next turn, if the target attempts to Cast a Spell with the divine trait, it must succeed at a DC 7 flat check or the action is lost.

Success As critical success, but frightened 1, and the DC of the flat check is 5.

UNASSAILABLE ENFORCER FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

Your faith in the Pure Legion protects you from spiritual harm. You gain resistance to spirit damage equal to half your level. This resistance is doubled if the effect that caused the damage has the holy or unholy trait.

NO GODS, ONLY MORTALS! ◆ FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

Frequency once per 10 minutes

Trigger You successfully Recognize a Spell with the divine trait. You order the caster to stop their spellcasting. Attempt an Intimidation check to counteract the triggering spell, using half your level rounded up as the counteract rank.

TRACES OF THE DIVINE FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE EXPLORATION

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

You can detect those who use divine magic like an additional sense. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception

checks to Seek and Survival checks to Track creatures that can cast divine spells. In addition, you automatically succeed at the flat check to target a concealed creature that can cast divine spells, and the flat check to target a hidden creature that can cast divine spells is reduced to DC 5.

SHAKE OFF THE GODS ◆◆ FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

Requirements You're under an effect with the divine trait that required a saving throw.

Your trust in the Pure Legion rushes forth as you fight off the influence of a god. You can attempt a new saving throw against the required effect with a +2 status bonus to the save. You can't get a worse result than your original saving throw.

THROTTLE THE DIVINE FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE MISFORTUNE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

You grasp the godly by their throats and damage their connection to their deities. When you have a creature grabbed, it must roll its flat check to use manipulate actions with the divine trait twice and take the worse result. Each time it attempts such an action while you have it grabbed, you tighten your grip further, dealing bludgeoning damage equal to 2d6 + your Strength modifier to that target.

WRATH AGAINST THE DIVINE ◆◆ FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

You channel your commitment to removing the divine from the world as you recite the Laws of Mortality. Strike a foe that can cast divine spells. The Strike deals two extra weapon damage dice. The target must also attempt a Will save against your class DC. On a failure, it loses its highest-rank available divine spell prepared or its highest unused spell slot to cast a divine spell. If it has multiple spells at its highest rank available, it randomly selects which spell is lost. On a critical failure, it also can't cast divine spells until the start of your next turn.

REPELLING ENFORCER FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

Your conviction reflects damage from the divine. Whenever you are dealt damage by a creature that can cast divine spells, that creature takes 5d6 spirit damage that ignores any resistance to spirit damage the creature has (but not immunity).

MORTAL POSSIBILITY FEAT 20

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pure Legion Enforcer Dedication

You made yourself into a paragon of mortality and prove that deities aren't needed to achieve greatness. Choose a skill you have master proficiency in. You become legendary in that skill. In addition, you gain a skill feat of your choice for that skill. The first time each day that you succeed at a skill check with that skill, you gain a +3 status bonus to your next skill check of any skill within the next hour.

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DISPATCHES FROM THE WALL

Dear Arianna Dreth,

Renna Serilla here, reporting in as requested. Honestly, given all the war and politics you write about, a stylist from Tiptrin hardly seems like she'd be at the top of your contact list. I'm happy to do my part, tell you what I can about life here in—how did you put it?—the shadow of the AspoDean Wall. I'm still getting used to thinking of the wall as a real thing, even though I can see it through my window clear as day—tall and imposing, but with that odd mix of patterns and styles that make me remember how many times the construction style or design technique changed without a hint of warning. We never knew exactly what the Brastlewark gnomes responsible for building the wall were up to.

Over time, we got to know some of the builders in our own way, by paying attention to the parts of the wall they each created. Sometimes, when life was slow, we'd try to figure out what the builders' next ideas would be, or who was currently in charge of a wall section, as if there was a conversation between them all that we were eavesdropping on from afar. Those were simpler times.

We were far from the only ones watching the wall go through change after change. At one point, the most

popular show in Arthfell was the mocking skew play *The Wallmaker's Woe*. In it, a single gnome tries to balance a growing stack of bricks and stone while a line of devils demand more and more outlandish designs. Eventually, the whole pile comes tumbling down and crushes him, and his bones are ground up to make bricks for the next gnome. The play fit the mood of those of us on the Andoren side of the construction perfectly; sure, the wall was a bit of a local joke, but there was something beneath the surface worth worrying about. Eventually, Cheliox was going to get around to finishing their glorious wall, as the officials patrolling the construction zone were fond of telling me, and then we'd be the ones getting ground down.

Got some new visitors in town from the Andoren army, and if they're anything like the last group, I'll have my hands full giving out free trims for a while. I'll send more as soon as I can.

Sincerely,
Renna Serilla

Arianna Dreth,

I'm glad you enjoyed my letter! Or report, to use your words. It's funny to think of Tiptrin as being a place

to report from, but we've probably been on someone's map since Cheliox decided to build the Aspodean Wall on our doorstep. When Cheliox first announced the Aspodean Wall project, we thought it would be built in a matter of months. Merchant's circles from Tiptrin to Arthfell Forest stocked up on supplies, and we tried to find the hidden truth in every rumor about a new builders' schedule or Brastlewark invention. A few of us even went as far as trying to find new suppliers in case the wall disrupted trade.

No matter what we did to prepare, it didn't seem to make much of a difference. After a while, the pace of work would slow and the rumors would fade, until eventually there was nothing left of the active wall construction but empty platforms and ladders and a few vats of who-knows-what, drying out in the sun on the top of an unfinished section as if a crew of workers would be back any minute. And each time, we'd purchase fewer supplies and pay less attention, until even the Piren's Bluff council stopped caring.

(My friend Rafel claims that this was Cheliox's plan all along, to lull us into thinking the wall would never be finished so that we'd be caught unawares once they started moving in earnest. I believe that about as much as I believe the rumors that King Drum Thornfiddle of Brastlewark was the real reason for the delays. Yes, there were a few whispers that he was secretly working against Queen Abrogail II by ordering constant changes to the wall's design, but from everything I've heard, he's always bent over backward to stay in her favor and in control of his city. It's far more likely that everyone forgot to care about the project for a while.)

Even during the years when no real progress was made, we received annual updates from both sides of the border: *Our Victorious Progress: Blocking the Influence of Andoran at Our Border* from Cheliox, filled with terrifying optimism and somehow delivered to everyone's door in Tiptrin whether we wanted it or not; and *Information on the Progress of Cheliox's Aspodean Fortification* from Andoran, which always sounded like it was co-written by a dismissive general and a very worried Council administrator. If nothing else, they were great to quote lines from over a drink at Tell's Tavern. Whoever wrote the Cheliox pamphlets always described the merchant's circle members as "Andoren infiltrators" and used the most inflammatory terms—there's nothing quite like seeing yourself described as an "information broker, supplier of potentially lethal alchemical substances, and wielder of illegal sharp-edged weaponry" because you gave someone across the border a cut and color.

It seems odd to say now, but back then the Aspodean Wall seemed like it would be unfinished forever. Until the Godsrain came and put everyone on edge, and construction started moving at a terrifying pace, as if they were making up for every moment wasted. What I remember, more than anything else, is the sound—a low rumbling that seemed to whisper something wrong into the air before we even knew a change was coming. A few days later, the hum became a rhythm, a constant drumbeat of hammers pounding and liquids pouring, shouted words and the steady march of feet. It sounded as if the wall had come alive on the other side, but all we could see for sure was the height of it, growing taller every day. The Hellknights patrolled the gaps that had yet to be filled, their expressions so stern that I didn't dare meet clients across the border, no matter how scraggly their edges. Looking at the wall for too long suddenly made my skin crawl, and folks woke up with nightmares they couldn't fully remember. Somehow things had changed, and not for the better.



THREATS FORESEEN

Abrogail Thrune has been threatening to fortify our shared border for years now. The Eagle Knights warned that the moment she had that shield, she'd feel free to strike forward into Andoran.

Whether the Eagle Knights were responsible for slowing the construction or just classic Chelioxian management, Thrune eventually resorted to infernal magic to finish their construction. And, as the Eagle Knights said, she began her attack soon after.

—Augustyn Naran



RENNA SERILLA

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THE WALL



The wall even looked different. It was still a mix of styles and ideas and materials, but where once it seemed like Brastlewark was trying one thing after another, now it was as if everyone was told to work, all at once, on anything they could get their hands on. The individual styles that we'd all gotten used to either disappeared completely or became impossibly muddled, mixing together in ways that didn't seem quite right. It was if completing the task was more important than doing it with any particular rhyme or reason. I wonder, sometimes, if Cheliox is regretting that now.

The commander's got some of her troops giving some basic training in weapons, in case we ever need it. I'm sure there's some kind of standard issue equipment, but I'm thinking of bringing my shears and dye and proving those old Cheliox reports right. Just call me a dangerous infiltrator.

Best,
Renna

Arianna,

It feels like something's going to happen soon. Everyone who's come to sit in my chair the last few days has been unnaturally quiet, and it feels like the whole area is holding its breath. Reminds me of that feeling right before a storm breaks when everyone walks around limp-haired, staring at the sky. Could be we're worrying for nothing; Cheliox built the wall to defend against Andoren attacks (or so they claim), so there's no reason for them to be on this side of it. Then again, they could change their minds at any moment. Even if nothing happens, I don't know that I'll ever think of Tiptrin the way I used to. I'm sure you know this, but the threat of waking up to war at your front door really changes your idea of normal, makes you look at things differently. A few months ago, I wouldn't have known how to make a barricade out of my least favorite rickety chairs, or used my best swivel scissors to cut up scraps of cloth for bandages, just in case. It's exciting to feel like we're doing our part. We've built something real in this town and we're ready to put ourselves on the line to defend it.

Not everyone feels that way, of course; I hear the murmurs here and there, of folks wondering if they should have left town right when the wall was being finished. The wall went up so quickly in the end that most of us in the towns near the border weren't able to make any sort of quick action plan. But there were folks who made do, leaving with whatever they had on them. Overnight, Aspodell Pass was clogged with travelers who'd decided they needed to be closer to family or further from trouble. The rush to travel through the pass didn't last too long, especially once the Andoren army set up nearby and took control of the area to prevent Cheliox from using it as an attack point, but I think that's for the best. Everyone tried their hardest to move in groups, but sometimes travelers tried to take short cuts through areas filled with monsters, or they ran into the wrong Chelaxian patrol. Weeks later, their ripped and ruined packs would be found, with no sign of where they'd gone.

Personally, I never really considered it abandoning the place, though some of that was just practicality. Plus, if I went on the run, who would send you official Aspodean Wall reports?

More when I can,
Renna

Arianna,

First of all, thanks for the reassurance! With all the contingencies and safety measures you mentioned, I'm pretty sure this letter is safer than I am. But honestly, I'm not sure quite what to say, other than yes, I'm safe, and no, the Battle of the Wall didn't get all the way here, but it's close enough that we've activated some of the injury stations. We're trying not to use too many supplies, and I'm not sure how much more I'll be able to write you. If there's anything you really want to know, tell me, and I'll do my best to share while we've still got a line of communication out of here and haven't repurposed the pens to poke the Chelaxian army in the eyes.

All I can say about the battle itself is that it isn't one battle, not really. This is a hundred small fights, as if Commander Pennerie and the Eagle Knights and the rest of the Andoren forces are poking at the wall, trying to find the weakest point and burst through.

A group of Eagle Knights, I think they call themselves the Platinum Wing, have been passing through with new weapons. The roar of alchemical explosions echo off the hills now, joining the crackling of hellfire in drowning out the shouted commands. I won't get into too many details in what's probably a state secret, but Drovenge and the rest of the Chelaxian commanders have sent enough of their people into the fire that they should know better than me anyway.

I think they're close to piercing it, I really do. And once that happens, who knows what comes next?

Wish us luck,
Renna

A LETTER FOUND IN THE HANDS OF A DEAD ANDOREN SCOUT

Your Infernal Majestrix,

Thank you again for alerting me to the security lapses in Brastlewark. I know that King Thornfiddle amuses you, but he has done little to protect the city from mass infiltration by the enemy. His associate Silvernale, on the other hand, has a sharp mind, and we have devised a plan to help uncover anyone who may harbor sympathy toward Andoran in our midst. We will open the Aspodean Gate for the first time since the wall was completed in an all-out surprise offensive, sending through waves of troops to strike at any target of opportunity on the Andoren side of the wall—supplies, campsites for the ungrateful gnome deserters, the small towns that harbor Andoren spies and feed their soldiers.

The key to this offensive? Anyone who we suspect of treachery will be put on the front lines, presenting the Andorans with an impossible choice—keep their secrets and kill those they've aligned with, or attempt to keep their associates from harm but expose them in the process. Either way, we rid ourselves of those whose loyalties are suspect (in the latter case, with a sharp sword thrust to the back). In the best of all worlds, those at the front of the line prove themselves with their actions, but we will be prepared for the worst—a few groups of talented and trustworthy front-line mercenaries will be placed in the middle of the possible rebels. These stalwarts will note anyone who appears to be avoiding the fighting, cutting them down where they stand. If they're wrong (or use the opportunity to avenge some small slight), so be it. I would rather one more dead soldier than one I cannot trust.

I hope you will see the wisdom in this plan—as always, your opinion is one I trust above all others.

Lictor Karavex Drovenge



KNOWN THREATS

Ambassador Naran thinks that fortifying our borders is some presage to war, just another dastardly scheme. It must be easy for him to forget the so-called "Glorious Reclamation" that saw zealots and traitors move against the government of Cheliox 11 years ago.

He was not there, of course, on the battlefield. But his country and their Eagle Knights did support Iomedae's zealots in their attacks on our nation. Is it any surprise we'd prepare for the next attack?

Truly, if we didn't move our pieces to defend that front, wouldn't we just be fools?

—Lord Gulv of House Tevineg

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FACES OF THE WALL

Arianna,

As promised, here are a few more details about the folks I've mentioned in my letters, along with the best sketches I can put together of each of them. A bit of guesswork was involved in tracking down a few of these descriptions, and their hair probably looks a little better in my versions, but it's close enough that you'd recognize them on the street. I only ask that you be careful with the drawing of Flintfeather—I'm sure the sketch that I've included is accurate, but the fewer people who know her real face, the better.

Renna

AZHAFELLE PENNERIE, SIEGE COMMANDER

Anyone within a few miles of the Aspodean Wall can tell you two things about **Azhafelle Pennerie** (commanding female dromaar human officer)—the troops under her command are disciplined, and their voices carry. The commander leads her troops in a rallying cry before every major action on the battlefield, and despite the roar of voices joined as one, hers can always be heard first and last, urging her soldiers to fight.

Like the rallying cry itself, Commander Pennerie is bold, straightforward, and deceptively strategic. While she claims publicly that she uses the shared cheer to build

morale for the troops and let civilians in the area know that they're being actively protected, its main purpose is to mislead her enemies. A small group of war callers, who report directly to her, can make their voices sound identical to the larger bulk of forces under her command, and often work to confuse Cheliox about where Andoren troops are located and where they're headed next.

Outside of her official duties, Commander Pennerie is known for her bold flavors as much as her daring actions. In a time when supplies are limited, her collection of spices and recipes, built up over her years of service in the Eagle Knights before taking wider command, have made rations in the area taste more like fine dining and won her more than a few friends.

LICTOR KARAVEX DROVENCE, ORDER OF THE LINE

The Drovence family's name is well-known in Cheliox, both for its close connections to House Thrune and the number of unfortunate "accidents" that have befallen its members. Perhaps that's why the forces in Cheliox closest to the wall, who call themselves the Order of the Line, are led by **Karavex Drovence** (shrewd male human commander), a minor cousin of the family who most would describe in a single word: forgettable.

Those who have seen Karavex Drovence on the battlefield describe a pale wisp of a man who hardly seems to notice what's going on nearby, often giving orders through a stifled yawn while sitting astride his mount, his body nearly drowning in expensive armor that overpowers his frame. Still, House Thrune placed him in this position for a reason, and his rapid ascent within his family suggests that his sleepy boredom has all been an act, designed to keep his relatives from putting in the effort to kill him. Now that he's begun to gather some power, Karavex is starting to show remarkable cunning—not only has he somehow gotten Thrune's recognition for his invented Order and given himself a lictor title, but his rotating series of code words and use of honesty-inducing talismans has made his immediate retinue nearly impenetrable to rebel groups. Despite (or maybe because of) his policy of having anyone he even suspects of turning on him reassigned to particularly deadly assignments, his troops remain steadfastly loyal.

DRUM THORNFIDDLE

Drum Thornfiddle (opportunistic male gnome sovereign), the self-declared King of Brastlewark, has long been a figure of both pity and ridicule on the Andoren side of the border. He has publicly claimed, more than once, that his many actions aligning with Queen Abrogail II are intended to keep Brastlewark an independent city of gnomes within Cheliox. Those who leave Brastlewark behind complain that he has given up too much and gotten too little, agreeing to everything from frequent building inspections by Chelioxian authorities to the recent requirement that every gnome of age in Brastlewark "do their part" to help support the building of the Aspodean Wall.



AZHAFELLE PENNERIE

While the sudden rush to build the wall has not helped Drum Thornfiddle's popularity, the loudest complaints against him have been about a deal he struck with Queen Abrogail II to create a design and invention paradise called the Wonderment in the center of the city. The contract included a requirement that anyone who uses its tools and resources devote part of their time to the production of goods meant for Chelaxian military pursuits and personal House Thrune endeavors. It's unclear whether Drum missed the contract's fine print or simply didn't care, but many have taken to calling him King Drum—all boom and no bite. For his part, Drum seems either unaware, or uncaring, of how those around him think of him. He continues to flaunt the status and wealth that his deal with Queen Abrogail II has given him, commissioning regular paintings of him as a benevolent god-king overlooking the city.

SILVERNALE, BRATTLEWARK BUILDINGS LIAISON

Most of what we know about **Silvernale** (ruthless female gylou supervisor) comes in whispers from the gnomes who defected to Andoran after the recent Battle of the Wall. From what I've pieced together, she oversaw the burst of final construction of the Aspodean Wall and continues to monitor and supervise its many ongoing repairs. She also ensures that the Chelaxian military receives regular shipments of spellcasting materials and siege warfare innovations from Brastlewark's central design and engineering shop, the Wonderment. Given a free hand to manage by King Drum Thornfiddle (whether by his choice or not), she's believed by many to be a gylou sent directly from Hell to guarantee the completion of the wall at any cost, not the young pink-haired gnome that she appears to be.

Personally, Silvernale is said to be charming but ever-changing, willing to be, do, or say anything to see her work completed. During her first few days in Brastlewark, for example, she met with each creator and builder in the Wonderment individually, convincing them to reveal some friend's or colleague's secret by portraying herself as everything from a frustrated artist seeking help with a hidden masterpiece to an overworked manager on the verge of tears. Once she was formally introduced to the group and revealed her back-breaking work schedule, she used those same secrets and betrayals to create dissension between those who might otherwise turn their mutual grumbling about her demands into a coordinated resistance.

FLINTFEATHER

Though her true identity is hidden from all but a few trusted confidantes, rumor has it that **Flintfeather** (independent female halfling spy) gained her freedom from Chelax through the Emancipation Edict, only to find that the document's hidden clauses would force her into military service or worse. Unwilling to risk her life or give her talents to those who had once held her in bondage, she escaped from her new

conscription by unknown means, though it's rumored that the Bellflower Network might have been involved. In the years since, Flintfeather worked several missions with the Network, as well as the group of Chelaxian rebels known as the Midnight Flock and the spies of the Eagle Knights' Twilight Talons. She's even crewed on the occasional Salt Breakers ship, where she works alongside revolutionary-minded Firebrands on smuggling missions.

While Flintfeather is trusted implicitly by everyone she works with, and has never divulged any of their secrets or operations, even to each other, she isn't officially a member of any faction. This gives her the freedom to pick and choose which missions she wants to focus on at any given moment. Sometimes she even seems to be in two places at once. While that unpredictability can make it difficult to anticipate who she'll help next, she has become a symbol of freedom to many who romanticize her ability to live life however she chooses.



KARAVEX DROVENGE

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FIRES AT THE WALL

Arianna—

It's getting harder to send messages out, so this one's probably gonna be my last. From here on in, it's heads down and eyes on the wall. I never thought that Tiptrin would be part of an all-out war, but the moment comes when it comes, and we're doing our best to be ready.

Thanks for everything, and consider yourself an honorary member of Tiptrin—if I see the other side of this, I'll keep a styling chair open for you.

Renna

SALTED SHIPMENTS

I'm sure you won't be shocked if I tell you river trade is a disaster right now. You already knew it was getting bad from our first meeting, and that was only with us being concerned about the routes blocked by the wall itself. Now that war has finally come, the rivers have been cut off from us as well. Cheliox is happy to starve out any settlement not on their side of the wall if it hurts Andoran's forces. No one's got an empty pantry yet, even with Andoran's hungry army nearby, but we're all eyeing our larders a little more anxiously. I can survive without dye for the sake of the war effort, but food and bandages are harder things to go without.

With Cheliox accosting members of the merchant's circles and confiscating their goods, many of us fear we'll

feel the pinch sooner rather than later. Now, no one here wants say the words *smuggling* or *theft*—we're all very upright, proper people, you know—but if someone were to wheel a crate of vegetables into town, I doubt anyone here would ask where it came from, even if it happened to have the symbol of Cheliox painted on the side.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

The various commanders in Andoran must be looking north of us as well, into the Aspodell Mountains, to find a land route around the wall. In theory, this is a simple thing, as the Aspodell Pass leads through Andoran-held Piren's Bluff and into Cheliox.

Of course, the pass is narrow and rugged, subject to harsh winds on even the sunniest days and treacherous at the first drop of rain. It's a route for trained teams or careful merchant caravans, not the columns of infantry. I've also heard that Piren's Bluff, the little town that holds the pass, has been entertaining Cheliox's offers and that most of its 200-odd residents are now embroiled in espionage—a knife fight in a broom closet.

FEATHERING THE NEST

Commander Pennerie's troops made one of their first direct assaults on the Aspodell Wall early this morning, targeting a fortified section just south of the wall's main gate. Compared to the swift strikes the Eagle Knights

made during the Battle of the Wall, this attack is loud and slow and probably futile, but it's only meant to be a distraction from the real mission—finding and retrieving documents left by Flintfeather in a hidden cache she's codenamed the Nest. The exact location of the Nest is unknown, but it can be found somewhere north of the wall, in the foothills of the Aspodell Mountains. A small group of trusted operatives has been tracking down the cache.

Flintfeather's scouts and spies have done their best to mark a clear route to the Nest with scratches on trees and a liberal use of cast-off bird feathers, but no one has yet found any rhyme or reason to the pattern of the Chelaxian patrols. Worse still, the gnomish traps are disrupting some of the creatures of the Aspodell Mountains, including several vicious beasts that were once the pets of giants and trolls and now stalk the lands near the northernmost section of the wall.

DESIGNED FLAW

One of Commander Pennerie's scouts was the first to spot it—an intentional pattern in the cracks and mismatched colors of a section of the Aspodean Wall. A coded message from a group of gnomes in Brastlewark who've grown tired of life under King Drum's rule, asking for a way out. In response, a team of Eagle Knights and rescue specialists have been sent to Brastlewark to evaluate the situation and evacuate any gnome who still wishes to leave the city, without alerting the gnome king, his supporters, or any visiting Chelaxian officials.

The rescue team should have no trouble covertly making their way across the wall into Cheliox, but in Brastlewark, change is a constant. Today's clandestine path through the city could be tomorrow's blocked-off construction site or debris-filled walkway. Moving quickly is important, as some of the defectors' current gathering places are precarious at best, including an empty cistern with a tendency to flood and a hidden room on the bottom level of the Wonderment. If the rescue team can distract or incapacitate Silvernale, they might be able to sabotage some of the supplies designated for the Chelaxian military or steal materials that would benefit the Andoren army, but their first priority must be gathering the gnomes for the mass evacuation.

To avoid being spotted or surrounded by King Drum's loyal supporters, the rescuers will likely split up and stagger their departures, each escorting a different group to a shared meeting place outside of the city. Hopefully they'll all be able to slip away unseen, but if their attempts at stealth fail, King Drum and Silvernale will request military support to prevent them from making their way back to Andoran, and the group will have to race to reach the wall ahead of Lictor Drovence's troops, some of whom are rumored to have drakes at their disposal for long-range aerial attacks.

INTO THE BREACH

Every victory holds a seed of defeat; every defeat a seed of victory. There's truth in that saying. Had the clandestine actions Commander Pennerie took against Lictor Drovence been less successful, he might not have struck on the Andoren side of the wall. And had Andoran not lost so much during what some are calling the Battle of the Gate, we might not be on the verge of breaking through it. Now it begins, in earnest. Andoren troops have begun pouring through the hole in the wall, their first mission to open the gate from the Cheliox side and let the rest of the forces through.

The main threats to these soldiers are the groups of assassins, many pledged to Hell and drawing on its infernal power, who target anyone who appears to be in command. Commander Pennerie has seemed unfazed by recent attacks, but there are some troops whose leaders have fallen, and they hesitate as they move forward. It is in these moments that the rallying cry from simpler times can be heard, echoing from one small group to another, picking up volume and urgency as it encourages everyone to lift their swords and keep pushing forward: "For us, for all, for Andoran."

THREATS AT THE WALL

More than any other front of the war, conflict at the Aspodean Wall involves countless troops, such as the ones on page 70. Other engineers, mercenaries, and especially military figures are certain to be encountered individually and can be found in *NPC Core*.

Cheliox has also been deploying many devils, particularly vordines (*Monster Core 87*), to the wall.

Andoran has fewer summoned troops, but the rare angel or azata stands out as a symbolic beacon of hope beyond their combat capabilities.

The gnomish designers of Brastlewark have also seeded the wall with magical hazards in many places. These enchantments are as idiosyncratic as their creators, turning the fey magic of the gnomes to assist the defenders.

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ASPODEAN WALL TROOPS

Troops at the Aspodean Wall can be found protecting or undermining the dividing structure, depending on their allegiance.

BRASTLEWARK SAPPER SQUAD

Discoveries made in Brastlework played as substantial a role in the construction of the Aspodean Wall as in the battles now raging in its shadow, as teams of gnomish sappers trained in the creation and deployment of powerful explosives developed by alchemists seize the opportunity to put their studies to practical use.

BRASTLEWARK SAPPER SQUAD

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN GNOME HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +11; low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnomish

Skills Acrobatics +12, Crafting +10, Stealth +12, Survival +10

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 20; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

HP 60 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 40 (3 segments), 20 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 4, splash damage 4

Demolition Expertise A sapper squad's offensive abilities ignore the first 5 points of Hardness when deployed against inanimate objects or structures.

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet, burrow 10 feet; excavation, troop movement (page 125)

Excavation While Burrowing, the sapper squad can position its segments into a 20-foot-wide straight line and move at half Speed to leave a 20-foot-wide tunnel behind them that can be safely traversed by other creatures. Unless shored up by a crew of skilled laborers, the tunnel collapses after 10 minutes.

Fire in the Hole! ♦♦ The squad bombards a 10-foot burst within 30 feet with satchel charges, dealing 2d6 fire

damage and 1d6 bludgeoning damage to all creatures in the area (DC 18 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, a creature is also deafened for 1 round. When the squad is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Pick Assault ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect**

The sapper squad strikes with their picks against enemies in a 5-foot emanation with a DC 18 basic Reflex save. The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d6 piercing damage

♦♦ 2d6+4 piercing damage

♦♦♦ 2d6+7 piercing damage

Undermine ♦♦♦ **Requirements** The sapper squad is underground; **Effect** The sappers deploy explosive charges to displace the earth above them. The surface area within 15 feet directly above the sappers' spaces becomes difficult terrain until the start of their next turn. Any creature already in the area takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, the creature also falls prone.

HELLBOUND HONOR GUARD

Chelaxian nobles, military officers, and other dignitaries deemed deserving by House Thrune are sometimes granted the protection of a detail of these elite soldiers: unwavering champions of the Chelaxian military machine who have sworn themselves to Asmodeus in exchange for unmatched strength and resilience.

HELLBOUND HONOR GUARD

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP UNHOLY

Perception +22

Languages Common, Diabolic

Skills Acrobatics +20, Athletics +23, Hell Lore +21, Intimidation +22, Religion +21, Society +21

Str +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

AC 33; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21

HP 210 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 140 (3 segments), 70 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 10, holy 10, splash damage 10; **Resistances** physical 5, fire 8, mental 5

Frightful Presence (aura, divine, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 29

Final Reward (divine, unholy) When the hellbound honor guard is reduced to 0 Hit Points, a fiery fissure forms beneath their feet and a host of screeching devils pours forth to drag their souls to Hell. All creatures within a 5-foot emanation take 3d8 fire and 3d8 spirit damage (DC 29 basic Reflex save), and all creatures within a 10-foot emanation must attempt a DC 29 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). The rift then immediately closes.

Opportunistic Strikes ♦ **Trigger**

A creature within 5 feet uses a manipulate action or a move action, makes a ranged attack, or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** The honor guard mobs the



ORT MOB

triggering creature, inflicting 2d6+9 bludgeoning plus 2d6 spirit damage (DC 29 basic Reflex save).

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Crush the Spirit ♦ to ♦♦♦ (magical, unholy) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect**

The honor guard strikes with their maces against enemies in a 5-foot emanation, battering souls as well as bodies (DC 29 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d6+1 bludgeoning damage plus 1d6 spirit damage

♦♦ 2d6+9 bludgeoning damage plus 2d6 spirit damage

♦♦♦ 3d6+12 bludgeoning damage plus 2d6 spirit damage

Vigor of the Damned ♦ (concentrate, divine, healing, vitality) **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** The hellbound honor guard has only 2 segments; **Effect** On the edge of defeat, the honor guard calls a paean to Asmodeus for aid. The honor guard regains 3d8 Hit Points. As standard for troops reduced to 2 segments, they can't regain Hit Points above the lowest listed threshold.

ORT MOB

Pathetic masses of quivering flesh crafted from the souls of the damned, orts are the least of devilkind, making them the perfect cannon fodder for more powerful devils and mortal diabolists alike.

ORT MOB

CREATURE 5

GARGANTUAN DEVIL FIEND MINDLESS TROOP UNHOLY

Perception +9; greater darkvision

Skills Athletics +14

Str +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -3

AC 21; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

HP 75 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 50 (3 segments), 25 (2 segments); **Immunities** fire, mental; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, holy 5, splash damage 5; **Resistances** physical 5 (except silver), poison 5

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 20 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Subservience An ort mob can be commandeered by any non-ort devil within 60 feet of it with a single action, which has the auditory and concentrate traits. The devil picks one of the following commands, and the ort mob follows it to the best of their ability. The command and its effects end once the commander is out of the mob's sight or when a new command is issued by the same or another devil.

- **Hustle** The mob gains a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed until the command ends.
- **Kill** The mob moves adjacent to one target singled out by its commander and spends all its available actions to use Grasping Claws until the target is dead or the command ends. The targeted creature takes a -1 circumstance penalty to its Reflex save against Grasping Claws and it takes an additional 1d6 slashing damage from the attack.
- **Rally** The mob moves so that it shares a space with its commander. The commander doesn't treat the mob's spaces as difficult terrain and gains lesser cover while it's in the mob's spaces until the command ends.
- **Work** The mob performs drudge work dictated by its commander.

Faceless Horde An ort mob is less organized than most troops. It can move into other creatures' spaces, and other creatures can move into its spaces. Its spaces are difficult terrain to other creatures.

Grasping Claws (magical, unholy) ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The ort mob claws at all enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 19 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d6+1 slashing damage

♦♦ 2d6+5 slashing damage

♦♦♦ 3d6+6 slashing damage



OTHER TROOPS AT THE WALL

In addition to the troops listed here, some others that might show up as enemies or allies in skirmishes include:

- conscript squad (NPC Core 88)
- heavy cavalry (NPC Core 92)
- Hellknight cavalry brigade (NPC Core 93)
- line infantry (NPC Core 90)
- phalanx formation (NPC Core 91)

WAR-TORN FIELDS

As the largest front in the war and the location of some of its largest battles, the trench-torn fields before the Aspodean Wall have been ravaged by skirmishes between troops of all kinds. It's here that Andoren infantry regularly faces off against wave after wave of Chelaxian vordine legions (*Pathfinder Battlecry!* 193) and ort mobs, overseen by mortal officers protected by retinues of hellbound honor guard, and Brastlework sapper squads on both sides of the conflict seek either to bring down the wall or defend it against enemy incursion, all the while launching strategic missions against the siege weapons employed by their enemies whenever the opportunity should arise.

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BRATTLEWARK SNARECRAFTER

With the experience gained from your time with the Brattlewark gnomes or their teachings, you can manufacture snares that function as walls, creating blockades that shape the battlefield around you. While these blockades might not stand forever, they can help turn the tide of battle against your foes, giving you a place to defend against, hide from, or repel those who oppose you.

The following feats expand on the snarecrafter archetype presented on page 216 of *Player Core 2*.

BRATTLEWARK SNARE ENGINEERING FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Magical Crafting, Snarecrafter Dedication

You've trained with the Brattlewark gnomes or studied their teachings, and learned the art of crafting their more magical snares. More information on magical snares can be found on page 71. You learn the formulas for crafting the *pit illusion snare* and the *shadow cloak snare* or two uncommon magical snares of your level or lower that you have access to. When you set a magical snare, the DC of any saving throw it requires uses your spell DC if that's higher. When you craft a non-magical snare, you can choose to give

it the magical trait. When you do so and the snare is one that normally deals damage, it deals an additional amount of force damage equal to its level.

BARRICADE SNARE

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Snarecrafter Dedication

Using clever gnomish engineering, you can quickly erect small barriers in which your snares are hidden. When you prepare snares for quick deployment, you can prepare some of them as barricade snares. A barricade snare consists of a small barricade in which the snare is hidden, but it costs two of your quick deployment snares. Though creatures can automatically see the barricade, the snare hidden inside the barricade must be detected like a standard snare, but with a +2 circumstance bonus to the DC. The barricade occupies the same space as the snare and is 5 feet high; it provides standard cover, can be Climbed with a successful DC 12 Athletics check, has an AC of 10, Hardness 5, and 20 Hit Points, and is immune to critical hits and precision damage. The barricade lasts as long as the snare does. A creature triggers and is affected by the hidden snare when it attempts to Climb the barricade or successfully attacks the barricade while adjacent to it. The snare and barricade are destroyed when the snare is triggered or if the barricade is destroyed, whichever comes first.

Special Even if you have the Surprise Snare feat, you must craft a barricade snare in an empty square.

REMOTE DETONATION

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE FORCE MANIPULATE

Prerequisites Brattlewark Snare Engineering

Brattlewark snarecrafters know that sometimes it's more advantageous to magically destroy a snare before it's triggered. Choose a magical snare within 120 feet that you crafted. The snare is automatically destroyed and each creature in a 5-foot emanation takes 1d6 force damage per level of the destroyed snare with a basic Reflex save against the higher of your class DC or spell DC.

Special If you detonate a broad snare or giant snare, choose one square that snare occupies to be the center of the emanation.

BROAD SNARE

FEAT 10

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Snarecrafter Dedication

You can create longer snares for quick deployment, creating lines on the battlefield. When you prepare snares for quick deployment, you can prepare some of them as broad snares. A broad snare takes up a 20-foot line starting from the square in which you craft the snare but it costs two of your quick deployment snares. A broad snare can trigger from a creature entering any portion of its area, and all its effects apply over the full area.



DOMINO EFFECT

FEAT 14

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE

Prerequisites Brastlework Snare Engineering

Trigger A creature triggers a magical snare you crafted.

You've learned to pull the invisible strings of magic to affect targets that wouldn't normally be. A creature you choose within 15 feet of the triggering creature is affected by the same snare as if they had also triggered it.

MAGICAL SNARES

In Brastlework, the creation of snares is considered an art, and many gnomes design them for use both as protection and entertainment. This includes magical snares, which create devastating (or humorous) magical effects on those who trigger them.

Magical snares have the magical trait. Unlike nonmagical snares, their presence can be detected with *detect magic*, though not their precise locations. A discovered magical snare can be disabled with *dispel magic*; the DC of the counteract check is the Crafting DC of the snare's creator. Magical traps with the mental trait aren't triggered by mindless creatures. A snare that is purely magical and doesn't have the mechanical trait might not be triggered or destroyed by large effects or by effects that specifically target unattended objects at the GM's discretion.

FREEZING EMBRACE SNARE

SNARE 8

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE COLD MAGICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 75 gp

This snare hides a tiny humanoid figurine made of enchanted ice among leaves or just beneath a thin layer of dirt in the square. The first creature to enter the snare's square crushes the statuette, releasing an incorporeal figure of chilly mist that grabs at the triggering creature, dealing 8d8 cold damage. The creature must attempt a DC 26 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature takes no damage.

Success The creature takes half damage and is clumsy 1 for 1 round as the icy figure clings to its legs.

Failure The creature takes full damage and 1d6 persistent cold damage from the icy figure's embrace. It is clumsy 1 for as long as it takes this persistent damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and 2d6 persistent cold damage from the icy figure's embrace. It is clumsy 2 for as long as it takes this persistent damage.

GLITTERING LIGHTS SNARE

SNARE 5

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE LIGHT MAGICAL SNARE TRAP VISUAL

Price 25 gp

Some of Brastlework's youth craft lesser versions of this snare to prank their friends. A creature that enters the square's square is subjected to a rapid series of flashing lights that overstimulate the senses. They must attempt a DC 22 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is dazzled for 2 rounds.

Failure The creature is dazzled for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The creature is blinded for 1 round and then dazzled for 1 minute.

MOCKING MIRROR SNARE

SNARE 7

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE ILLUSION MAGICAL MENTAL SNARE TRAP

Price 60 gp

A reflective rune is hidden in the snare's square. A creature that enters this square suddenly sees a twisted reflection of themselves appear nearby and perform some action that they would never do. The creature takes 8d6 mental damage with a DC 25 basic Will save. On a critical failure, the creature is also confused until the end of their next turn.

PIT ILLUSION SNARE

SNARE 3

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE ILLUSION MAGICAL MENTAL SNARE TRAP

Price 9 gp

You add a touch of illusion magic to a magical sensor that makes the target believe a bottomless pit opens below it when the snare is triggered. A Medium or smaller creature that enters the snare's square must attempt a DC 20 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is cautious moving forward, treating the snare's square and all adjacent squares as difficult terrain until the end of its turn.

Failure The creature falls prone.

Critical Failure The creature falls prone and takes 1d4 mental damage.

PUDDLE SHOVE SNARE

SNARE 6

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL SNARE TRAP WATER

Price 40 gp

This snare magically contains a pressurized jet of water activated by an invisible sensor. When a creature enters the snare's square, a powerful blast of water deals 4d10 bludgeoning damage to the creature and potentially pushes them. You determine the direction of the blast of water when crafting the snare. The triggering creature must attempt a DC 24 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is pushed 10 feet in the determined direction.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage, is pushed 15 feet in the determined direction, and is drenched with water, taking a -1 circumstance penalty to saving throws against electricity effects for 1 minute.

SHADOW CLOAK SNARE

SNARE 4

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE DARKNESS MAGICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 15 gp

When a creature enters the snare's square, it is plunged into an unnatural darkness for 1 minute. Light can't enter the square, any non-magical light sources within the square do not emanate any light, and magical light emanating from a spell of rank 2 or below is suppressed. Those outside the area can't see directly into or through the darkness, and all adjacent squares are reduced to dim light.

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FANGWOOD DISPATCHES

Well met, Master Dreth. I understand you have sought correspondence with this humble servant for some time now, an effort which has caused you all manner of inconvenience. Please accept my twin apologies: firstly, for how onerous it has been to reach me; secondly, for if my avian message-bearer has happened to, uh, empty your garden, pantry, or cellar of fruits, cakes, and wines. It is indeed one of the wonders of nature that one so small could boast an appetite so prodigious... As harmonas go, Cleite is but a fledgling, yet he possesses a remarkable edacity that would put his full-grown kin to shame. If it pleases you, might I request a dram or two of cider or mead—whatever you can spare—for my fey friend? The sweetness of spirits will lend much-needed strength to the beat of his valiant wings.

Alas, onto more pressing matters. You seek news from me of this Godsrain-impelled war, burgeoning upon the Fangwood across a thousand battles? Well, in one sentence, here it is: there is much cause for despair as old grudges erupt into open conflict, yet there are also moments where I feel what can only be described as hope.

Let me also report the circumstances of my position and identity, so you may better account for my subjective

biases in your reckoning of the truth. I am Kieran of House Graytree, minor nobility of the Southern Fangwood, descended from Kelish chieftains of old who swore oaths of loyalty to Queen Gendowyn of the Accressiel Court. Some of this ancestral affinity for primal magic yet lurks within me, which is probably how I was able to request Cleite's aid, but it is a rough and imprecise talent at best.

I suppose my aptitudes rest more comfortably within the spheres of intelligence and tactics, gifts I discovered during the Ironfang Invasion. Like so many in Nirmathas and Molthune, I was displaced by these incursions; I fought the hobgoblins' advance alongside my Nirmathi countryfolk as an irregular. I was in love, then; before the war, we were to wed and start a family, but the fighting put paid to that. Although my then-betrothed and I both survived the war's flames, its long shadows haunted us. Though we tried our best, we drifted apart, bodies whole but hearts broken, constantly reminding the other of all we had lost.

I forged my way northeast toward Vigil. Life was good there for a brief spell. My experience as a guerrilla caught the eye of the officers, who enrolled me into the prestigious Crusader War College. There, I formally

studied tactics and fieldcraft to supplement my practical knowledge, and I proved competent at reconnaissance and scouting.

Then Tar-Baphon released his accursed Radiant Fire upon the city, and my second home in as many years was destroyed. As I was on a scouting assignment near the border with Ustalav, I wasn't killed in the initial blast, but instead by the undead legions that poured into the broken city and surrounding countryside. It happened so fast; an unending deluge of corpses poured down on our positions. I recall pain, then a hollow, burning cold, and suddenly, a furious flash of red. According to eyewitnesses, after I was transformed into an undead, I stood harmlessly on the battlefield, ignoring orders given by the necromancers and lieutenants of the Whispering Way.

This unusual occurrence marked my potential to the Crimson Reclaimers, whose ranks boast many other undead members. The best guess the Reclaimers could offer was that I was protected by the legacy of my bloodline; that the ancestral blessings of Queen Gendwyn had helped preserve my mind and spirit. The Reclaimers explained that Queen Gendwyn was one of the patrons of the Knights of Lastwall and offered me the chance to pledge my service and swear the Crimson Oath, a magical vow that would shield me from the progression of the Void's corrosive influence and empower me to protect others from Tar-Baphon's forces. I accepted, of course. I had loathed myself for so long for surviving that, when I finally died, it was such a relief. To be able to help others, to boot? That was a blessing I didn't expect, and not one I would reject.

AGAINST THE WHISPERING TYRANT

In the wake of renewed aggression from Molthune and the Isle of Terror, the Reclaimers have sent me on a twofold mission. I am on wightwatch duty, a task named for the winterwight Jomah Gildas, a cat's-paw of the lich king's will; we work to unearth and neutralize Tar-Baphon's roving undead agents. I am also an attaché to the Encarthan Alliance. At their behest, I exorcise and purify battlefields and sites of war crimes to ensure such atrocities do not lead either to spontaneous creation of new undead or serve as ample fodder for existing ones.

To continue, before my tangent of introduction: I provided specialized support in a joint rescue operation organized by the Encarthan Alliance and helped war-displaced communities withdraw to safer locations away from the fighting along Lake Encarthan's shores. This Alliance is, depending on whom you ask, either a compact based on mutualist principles that commits Druma, Kyonin, Razmiran, and Ustalav to sharing defense efforts against a source of "regional destabilization," or, as I've heard a tetchy Chernasardo forest-hound put it, a union of "odd bedfellows trying to put out the fire in the bedroom, but nobody wants to get out of bed first, so everyone goes to sleep with soot on their..."

I'll omit the last of that statement. It's unbecoming for a knight, even one unusual as myself, to repeat that exact turn of phrase, evocative and entertaining as it might be. The Encarthan Alliance's impact upon the Fangwood lies somewhere between their high-minded aspirations and the tremulous realities of an accord between such disparate nations. This is an unlikely assembly. There are Sovyrian liberators, shining heroes clad in samite and dawnsilver, fearlessly going toe-to-toe with their foes. They're not the tip of the spear, though; that dubious honor belongs to Razmiri heretics and prisoners given a second chance to redeem themselves as the Living God's shock troops. A throwaway tactic of limited utility against the undead. Trust me, I'd know.



A NEW ALLIANCE

Although I am Andoran's representative to Absalom and not the new Encarthan Alliance, I must extend my hand to them regardless. The Whispering Tyrant threatens shores far beyond the misty bounds of Lake Encarthan, and those who know their history should expect his gaze to turn southward toward us in due time.

As far as Molthune's resumed aggression against Nirmathas, I can only say that we're in this together. Cheliox and Molthune have long been allies; the best help we can offer is resolving matters with Cheliox as quickly as possible.

—Augustyn Naran



KIERAN GRAYTREE

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There are also the famed Blackjackets, the best and brightest plucked from a hundred mercenary companies, funded and managed by the Kalistocrats of Druma. Behind the front lines, in the support tents, physicians from Lepidstadt mend broken bones and rent flesh with knifework so technically precise and recklessly inventive that it chills even my undead marrow. While their surgery is doubtlessly effective, I've heard soldiers quip they'll fight harder to avoid injury just to avoid Ustalavic healing.

As you might gather, the Encarthan Alliance doesn't get along all that well—tactics, after all, involve more than moving pieces on a board. They're expressions of the strategic objectives and moral principles of the parties involved, and these are definitely parties with many disagreements and incongruities. Even before the Godsrain, its member nations had scant motivation or opportunity for amity, and misunderstandings and conflicts of interest were rife. In the cauldron of the battlefield, these tensions threaten to boil over, yet even so, they rarely have. Perhaps this perception is colored by my weakness for romanticism, but I suspect the nations' recognition of a shared existential menace, of a fundamental threat to life itself, has taken root among the staff on the ground, even if it has not quite reached the leaders in their respective capitals.

It is precisely this dawning appraisal of shared stakes, and of shared futures, which I wish to emphasize for your consideration, Master Dreth. This is the hope I wish to highlight in these dismal times.

Here in the Fangwood, I have witnessed frissons of bravery, camaraderie, and ingenuity dance like sparks leaping from Torag's forge. Those with ample reason for disdain or distrust can still grasp one another's hands in comradeship and together seize faint but undeniably important victories. During this rescue operation, I've watched helplessly as a veteran elf demon hunter, her years numbering more than those of all the jittery Razmiri conscripts under her command combined, endured wound after wound to secure the refugees' retreat before finally falling. I've seen these same raw recruits sally from their entrenchments to extract their maimed officer, belting forth their inexperienced renditions of elven battle-hymns (their melodies truly more mangled than their commander's body), to draw the surrounding undead's attention and attempt to shout life itself, I suppose, into her failing body. She made it, by the way; as they dragged her back to the Lepidstadt sawbones, I swear I saw her eyes flit open at a particularly egregious example of poorly-enunciated Elven with a mixture of utter annoyance and surprised gratitude.

INTO THE CRUCIBLE

It is this solidarity amid slaughter that I present as my main point of hope about war in the Fangwood. Where most see only war-drunk cruelty or war-weary defeat, I also behold something else: this is a chance for the region's nations to shed their solipsistic isolationism.

What is the basis of this position? I admit, it is more personal revelation than formal hypothesis, yet as the history of alchemy and invention reminds us, intuition is just as important as observation in the process of discovery. We stand upon the cusp of a shift. The Knights of Ozem fought to contain Tar-Baphon, but he escaped all the same, reducing my adopted home to the ash-ridden Gravelands. Many would argue this turn of events is proof of the futility of struggle; the surviving Knights of Lastwall, of whom I am a member, are a much smaller force than they were under Ozem's banner, so what hope do my diminished brethren have now?

Where Tar-Baphon's containment was once the purview solely of preceptors and tribunes, it is now the duty of entire societies working together despite their differences. Armies might have won or lost battles in the past, but now it is not just soldiers and auxiliaries who contend with the Isle of Terror. Mystics and merchants, fiend hunters and natural philosophers; farmers and herbalists, teachers and scribes. All these and more labor to ensure we see tomorrow and tomorrow's tomorrow. While the Knights of Lastwall rely extensively upon our non-military pillars, we rarely seek their counsel or opinions in a similar fashion; instead, they often enact and execute our orders and directives.

Yet now, as demonstrated by the Encarthan Alliance, you can see societies with different perspectives and disciplines applying different paradigms and techniques to their pursuit of peace. War may be fought by soldiers and generals, but it is fought *for* societies and communities. Be it one sword or a thousand, these instruments of war are good for fighting, but they alone don't motivate or grant meaning to any battle. The pen and the plowshare guide—not serve—the spear and the sword.

The Whispering Way's pseudo-utilitarian necromancers construe undeath as a brute-force solution for all of existence's problems and inconsistencies. Theirs is a lazy path; a cheap, one-size-fits-all approach to the Universe's infinite phenomena. They see only the independent variable that is death, and the dependent variable that is undeath. Tar-Baphon's followers exalt and justify reductionism; this simple-mindedness, I dare say, is proof they are truly dead, for they subscribe readily to this creed without doubts, bearing only answers. They think no new thoughts, and they do not question. They are, for all purposes, intellectually and culturally dead.

It is humbling, Master Dreth, to consider how quickly we assume a lockstep against them. We become like the dead to fight the dead, barely stopping to ask or observe before we react. A long time ago, our Ozemite forebears fought undeath not as a means, but as an end, and made a foe needlessly and swiftly of Geb. Perhaps it's our turn to finally shake the lure of these simple answers? A military solution, especially a reactive one, was neither practical nor possible, and no vigil, as recent history can attest, can last forever.

My point is... if we wish to win, we mustn't fight the dead with war. Instead, we must fight this mockery of death itself with a sincerity for life and living. We fight selfishness and tyranny with community and freedom, creating a world where people can do their best or be their worst, even if disappointment follows inconstancy and inconsistency. Above all, we cannot shy away from our discomfort, fear, or pain or hope some state of undeath will remove these woes. In my experience, undeath doesn't take those miseries away; these things are just a part of living.

The Encarthan Alliance, imperfect as it is, represents a glimmer of that possibility. It is a patchwork of life fighting to live, and while I don't think it will succeed, it still deserves my—no, our—respect and protection. When even the most miserly Drumans are willing to spill coin and blood to aid our shared interests; when the most bereft and desperate Razmiri stand ready to fight for something greater than themselves; when the spear-dancers of Kyonin are willing to defend not just their forest homes but the region at large, and when Ustalavic nobles halt their deadly games of primogeniture to stand against annihilation... I see something inspiring. Something worth championing.



CHOOSE YOUR TIME

Having visited Molthune a number of times myself as an ambassador, I have to admit I'm confused by their current course of action. I understand their desire to reclaim their rebellious northern provinces, but wild attacks and lashing out at other neighbors simply will not do.

More than that, it's not Molthune's way. Military precision has been replaced with rampaging mobs, which gives some credence to the story that the Godsrain unhinged something within their citizens.

Whatever has happened, I hope they can solve their internal issues soon, and honor our alliance.

—Lord Gulv of House Tevineg

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FACES OF FANGWOOD

Salutations again, Master Dreth.

In light of recent escalations, I pray you and yours are keeping well. On my end, beyond some routine injuries, I am glad to report few compromises to my faculties or prowess. Here in the field, I meet few who can reliably provide medical care or magical healing suitable for my condition, so I must simply let my body mend itself slowly. This enforced convalescence, however, presents an overdue opportunity to pen my observations. As much as I would have appreciated sweet Cleite's alacrity for this undertaking, he is my friend, not my servant, and it would be churlish to twist favors freely given into obligations so demanded. These writings will thus reach you through the Pathfinder Society; given the increasing presence of their agents in this region, I deemed it shrewd to tap their much-storied resources. The fact that Molthune has frequently opposed the Pathfinder Society only adds to my willingness to trust their networks.



SZURIEL

FACES OF MOLTHUNE

When last we spoke, I mentioned my curiosity around Molthune's increasingly erratic aggressions. My search yielded some vexing fruit; there are, as I feared, unwholesome powers behind this harlequinade of blood. I had personally suspected the Whispering Way's influence, given the lack of respect for life in Molthune's new tactics, but found no evidence of their involvement. Instead, I discovered another pernicious entity behind these machinations: **Szuriel**, the Rider of War (misanthropic female daemon goddess of war).

Yes, the Angel of Desolation has cast her gore-stained shadow over the south. I have crossed blades with her adherents; they stalk Molthune's blood-soaked streets and halls, eyes unfocused like flickering flames while they rampage across Nirmathas's borderlands and hamlets. They're an undisciplined rabble, for the most part, yet they're also prodigiously strong. Perhaps these are the gifts of daemoniac corruption, or another hitherto unexamined effect of the Godsrain.

I've found it impossible to discern what these mobs ultimately serve. The imperial pretensions of Molthune, or the hateful fist of Szuriel? Are they at cross-purposes, or are they one and the same? I know not how Szuriel attained such sway so swiftly in Molthune; neither do I know whether her following reflects a loss of popular support for the traditional hierarchy of power held by the General Lords under High Commander **Markwin Teldas** (judicious male human general) or if Szuriel's influence is imbricated with the Imperial Army's goals. In all honesty, I'm not certain what possibility disturbs me the most: whether Molthune is using Szuriel's cult, or whether Szuriel's cult is using Molthune.

Teldas is a proud and forward-thinking leader; he may be committed to subjugating my homeland, but I'll give credit where it's due. He has Molthune's glory and its long-term future at heart, not personal or short-term gains. Szuriel's influence is corrosive to the new order desired by Teldas and his fellow General Lords; it invites unflattering comparisons to Chelaxian diabolism, erodes morale and discipline, discourages equanimity and meritocracy, and consolidates power in an unpredictable non-state actor.

Why not crush such a potentially subversive movement, then? One possibility is that the cult has powerful backers; perhaps **Katra Sebina** (ambitious female human governor). Not all the General Lords are as far-seeing as Teldas, and some would seize power no matter its source.

I have another similar, if more dismal, hypothesis—perhaps this backing comes from Szuriel herself? Magical power and supernatural fury, the accumulation of so many zealots within such a short period of time... all of this points to the Rider's direct influence and divine presence. If that is indeed the case, what's her objective here? I cannot ignore these dreadful implications.

FACES OF NIRMATHAS

Onto more hopeful matters, however. There are others who share my dour sentiments on Nirmathi military posture, though unlike me, they have taken to making positive changes in this regard. We are graced by the presence of a divine agent in our midst! **Courage Heart** (inspiring female celestial herald of Milani) roams the Fangwood; it seems she is everywhere at once, and she's been witnessed fighting oppressors and invaders, personally healing the wounded, and succoring the weak. While Szuriel's involvement in Molthune still worries me, I count among my blessings that we can enjoy support from the Everbloom through the works of her herald.

Courage Heart trains Nirmathi villagers to become effective guerrillas and skirmishers; she builds upon our traditional strengths as hunters, herbalists, loggers, and miners to develop a rugged and adaptable fighting force that excels at asymmetrical combat. The trampling of warhorses, the trebuchet's thunder—these advantages of Molthuni resource and technology are minimized and sometimes upended by a combination of canny stratagem and divine power. Courage Heart's irregulars blend with the trees and hide among the caves of the misty Fangwood, confounding archers and arbalesters alike.

Courage Heart understands how we work and did not change what we do; instead, she adjusted what we do it for. She encouraged us Nirmathi to think of ourselves as a community with a shared bond and common goal; thus, rather than fighting or retreating for our own sakes, we now fight to defend each other and to allow others to retreat, and we retreat that we might live to fight another day. She understood that we fight only for people we respect, so her first order of the day was to show us why and how we all deserve respect for and from ourselves.

I admit, when I first heard this, I scoffed. Embittered by a history of loss, I thought our tactics were doomed to failure and had unfairly compared the weakness of my people's formations to the strength of the Knights of Lastwall. Yet that was an unproductive appraisal. Courage Heart saw the same things I did, but she perceived entirely different possibilities. Like a gardener tending personally to Milani's roses, she cultivated them into martial actuality.

Such developments have allowed Forest Marshal **Weslen Gavirk** (passionate male human ranger) to flourish as well. I concur he is a good community leader, but when Nirmathas doesn't have a strong sense of community across its settlements, there's little for him to work with. By nature, Gavirk isn't given to issuing orders or proclamations, and so he makes a terrible leader in

terms of logistics and implementation. He is incredibly popular, however, both within Nirmathas and beyond. If Molthune were not gnawing at our borders, I suspect he'd have marched to aid Andoran himself. Reginald Cormoth, the ambassador executed by Hellknights all those months ago, was a close friend of his, as are several others within Andoran's parliamentary elites. He uses those connections, as well as those he has with regional leaders, to act as a traveling ambassador for alliance and amity across the Fangwood. From what I hear, our forest marshal is one of the main drivers behind Nirmathas's participation in the Encarthan Alliance, but per his self-effacing nature, he deflects the credit to Kyonin's representatives. I suppose our figurehead makes a better leader internationally rather than domestically. There's a jest somewhere there about how international leaders are easier to manage than stubborn Nirmathi villagers, I'm sure.



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FIRES IN FANGWOOD

Master Dreth, while I've striven to be open about my biases, I can hardly claim to be an impartial observer in these conflicts. My loyalties are not merely to my birthplace of Nirmathas or my adopted home of Lastwall; in this dreadful moment in history, I believe I must stand for and alongside all those who peace and freedom from tyranny and devastation.

Please indulge me, then, as I close with a more interventionist appeal. Instead of restricting myself to geopolitical facts, I present you with my opinions on situations in the Fangwood where the timely actions of a heroic few could lead to the saving of countless lives. I entrust this information to you and implore you to use your reach to realize these opportunities; I sincerely hope our writing, and our knowledge, can help make a better world.

ENEMY MINE

Elite bands of Molthuni operatives who possess unusual skill in covert tactics and shadow magic have repeatedly breached the Oprak-Nirmathas border along the Mindspin Mountains and near the Nesmian Plains. The Encarthan Alliance's presence here is weak; they consider this region and its problems to belong to the dwarves of Kraggodan. It's also dangerous for outsiders to patrol there; while Oprak and Nirmathas share a common enemy, I can't say they care much for each other. The hobgoblins have also

recently suffered great losses in a magical calamity, whose details they remain tight-lipped about to outsiders, so they are definitely more on edge than usual.

After investigating further, I discovered these squads of Molthuni operatives loot dwarven mines and foundries on Kraggodan's outskirts. Armed with dwarven weapons, they then assault hobgoblin settlements across the border. These brutal attacks draw dwarven and hobgoblin sentries like flies to honey; both peoples, antagonistic toward one another since the Ironfang Invasion, are inclined to regard each other with deep suspicion.

I was unable to surveil further; despite my best efforts, I was spotted, intercepted, and nearly destroyed, but my undead state protected me from the powerful void spells these operatives favored. Indeed, some of their magic more closely resembled that of Zon-Kuthon's followers in Nidal than anything I'd seen in Fangwood.

These sporadic attacks are still ongoing; I suspect these Molthuni seek to ignite another war on the Oprak-Nirmathas border by inflaming old wounds between hobgoblin and dwarf. If someone could swiftly root out this deceit, it would go a long way toward preventing Nirmathas from having to face war on yet another front.

GRAVE TIDINGS

From the Isle of Terror, the Whispering Way continues to send plague barges across Lake Encarthan. These

vessels glide through the darkness, carrying zombies and other undead. The commanders of the vessels—often shadows or wraiths, but occasionally more powerful undead like liches and graveknights—continually probe defenses along the shores of the lake.

More worrying are the rumors of massive figures hauling even greater barges as battleships. Undead behemoths certainly seem the most likely culprits, though some point to an ancient Jistkan construct known as an aolaz. Some of the fey in Queen Gendowyn's court are old enough to remember Jistka, but the ancient imperium stretched only up into Cheliaz. Still, rumors from Molthune's side of the border suggest the Molthuni have seen the vessels in action—that they serve as platforms crawling with trained undead that could shatter fortifications as they make landfall, leaving shock troops in their wake. Perhaps the Whispering Tyrant learned how to replicate Jistka's lost art at some point.

If such a weapon exists, Tar-Baphon can take his pick from any of the surrounding hostile nations and demonstrate its terrifying power. Molthune's frenzied citizens may embrace the chance to fight, but the nations of the Encarthan Alliance have become more reluctant to send aid as these rumors spread. Caliphaz, Thronestep, Kerse, and Tamran all stand on the shores of the lake, with only Kyonin's capital further inland.

BUTCHER'S NEST

Although separate from the Fangwood, the Shrikewood in Molthune shares a little of our fate. Like the Fangwood, the Shrikewood has long been a haven for those who wish to escape Molthune's strictures, whether they're revolutionaries or simple bandits. Although it's not as alive with fey as the Fangwood, some whispers from mitflits and other gremlins do reach the north.

After the war began, those small voices reported a growing sense of dread, then the panic of a pitched battle. It would seem neither Nirmathas nor the Accessiel Court consider them a priority, but I can't help worrying about them. The battle seemed to be part of the southern war that wandered afield, involving Eagle Knights, infernal powers, and even a dragon, if you believe them—but few do. The Eagle Knights never breathed word of it to Nirmathas, so these reports have been discarded as an exaggeration.

This has made Nirmathas and the court even less likely to believe the mitflits' new tales about whispers in the dark offering them power. They've since stopped sending word to the Accessiel Court, although whether that's due to their destruction or their acceptance of the whispers' offers, I can't say.

Whether they've fallen to infernal charms or not, their aid in the current war could be of service far beyond their size. That's what I think, at least.

NIGHTMARES' END

Many of Molthune's recent operations follow a sickening pattern. First, Szuriel's mounted killers descend upon isolated camps, farms, and villages, and then, when Nirmathi forces dispatch interceptors in response, the attackers retrace their steps and converge upon exposed and understaffed garrisons. The Nirmathi irregulars' greatest strengths are thus turned into gaping weaknesses; my country's newfound emphasis on solidarity and compassion, as well as the adaptability that makes us such excellent guerillas, are being exploited by this dishonorable maneuver.

It's truly a tactic that exemplifies the unholy union of daemonic nihilism and imperial cruelty in contemporary Molthune... To break this onerous lockstep, I can only hope for brave allies willing to offer themselves up as bait for Szuriel's forces. Given that these daemonic attacks are more coordinated than usual, there has to be an officer or base of operations; their steeds are also hard to replace on the field, so they might have standing orders to return somewhere. Thus, we must do what the Molthuni do, but better; we catch and release, track their steeds to their base, then wipe both sets of fiends out.

THREATS IN FANGWOOD

The Gravelands are a constant threat to the Fangwood, with the wandering packs of skeletons and zombies sometimes gathering under the leadership of Whispering Way graveknights (*Monster Core 2* 170) or liches. Despite Gendowyn's leadership, the fey are also naturally fickle creatures, and more violent fey like redcaps have been inspired to new heights by the recent bloodshed.

The living forces on all sides can be found in *Pathfinder NPC Core*. Molthune is filled with engineers, mercenaries, military, and officials, with Szuriel lashing the downtrodden and laborers into a fever pitch. Nirmathas has more explorers and primalists, with Courage Heart inspiring devotees and healers of her own. Oprak is a nation founded by mercenaries, but the hobgoblins there hold their military structure dear.

Many daemons also serve the Rider of War in the shadows, from cacodaemons scavenging the battlefields to terrifying obcisaemons (*Monster Core 2* 82). More common are the nightmares ridden by her most dangerous followers. Milani's equivalent forces are spread thin, but they include many azatas and even a few aeons from when the goddess served as one of Aroden's saints.

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FANGWOOD TROOPS

While Nirmathas and Molthune have been clashing for decades, the presences of Courage Heart, herald of Milani, and Szuriel, the Rider of War, has led to even more fighting within their borders.

FANGWOOD SENTINEL CORPS

These disparate groups of insurgents seek to defend Nirmathas from conquest by launching a guerrilla offensive from the depths of the Fangwood against the armies marching across their border.

FANGWOOD SENTINEL CORPS

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +11

Languages Common, Elven, Empyrean, Varisian

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +7, Diplomacy +7, Stealth +12 (+16 in forests), Survival +10

Str +1, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2 **Cha** +1

AC 20; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

HP 60 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 40 (3 segments), 20

(2 segments); **Immunities** fear; **Weaknesses** area damage 4, splash damage 4

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Hail of Thorns ♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The sentinels draw or reload their longbows, then let fly an arcing volley of arrows as a 10-foot burst within 100 feet that deals 4d4 piercing damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save). When the troop is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Strike from the Heart ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The sentinels bring their morningstars to bear against enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 18 basic Reflex save). Damage dealt depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d6 bludgeoning damage

♦♦ 2d6+4 bludgeoning damage

♦♦♦ 3d6+4 bludgeoning damage

Thus Always to Tyrants ♦ (aura, emotion, mental, visual)

Frequency once per hour; **Trigger** The sentinels reduce an enemy with a level equal to or greater than their own to 0 Hit Points; **Effect** The sentinels' victory inspires allies and demoralizes enemies. Each ally in a 15-foot emanation gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls for 1 round. Each enemy in the same area must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or take a -1 penalty to attack rolls for 1 round.

DEVASTATION CAVALRY BRIGADE

Despite the influence of the Apocalypse Rider of War, the Molthuni armies pushing into Nirmathas remain efficient and disciplined units, acting tactically and with purpose. The same can't be said for Szuriel's devastation cavalries, chaotic mobs of wild-eyed warriors mounted on blood-red steeds suffused with the daemonic essence of Abaddon.

DEVASTATION CAVALRY BRIGADE

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN ANIMAL HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP UNHOLY

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common, Daemonic, Varisian

Skills Abaddon Lore +11, Acrobatics +11, Athletics +15, Intimidation +13, Religion +10

Str +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

AC 23; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

HP 90 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 60 (3 segments), 30 (2 segments); **Immunities** fear; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, holy 5, splash damage 5

Crushing Despair (aura, divine, emotion, fear, mental) 10 feet, DC 24. Enemy creatures that enter or begin their turn in the area must attempt a Will save. Regardless of the result of the saving throw, the creature is then temporarily immune to the aura for 1 minute.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is frightened 1 and can't use reactions for 1 round.

Critical Failure As failure, and the creature slowed 1 as it sobs uncontrollably.

Troop Defenses (page 124)



DEVASTATION CAVALRY BRIGADE

Speed 40 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Astride a Red Horse While moving on land, a devastation cavalry brigade ignores all difficult terrain.

Mounted Troop Effects that target only animals, humans, or humanoids may not work on the brigade, subject to the GM's discretion.

Rain of Ruin ♦♦ The brigade draws or reloads their crossbows, then launches a ranged attack in the form of a volley. This volley is a 10-foot burst within 120 feet that deals 3d8 piercing damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save). When the troop is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Swords of Szuriel (magical, unholy) ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The brigade slashes mercilessly at enemies in a 10-foot emanation (DC 21 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d8 piercing damage plus 1d4 spirit

♦♦ 2d8 piercing damage plus 2d4 spirit

♦♦♦ 2d8+4 piercing damage plus 2d4 spirit

Trample ♦♦♦ Medium or smaller, 4d8 bludgeoning, DC 21; a creature that critically fails the save is also knocked prone (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360).

OPRAK FIRESTORM BATTALION

Among the troops sent by Oprak's Ironfang Legion to aid Nirmathas against the Molthuni invasion are its dreaded firestorm battalions, units with special training in the tactical use of bombs and explosives. Each of these battalions carries enough alchemical ordnance to bathe an entire battlefield in flame several times over.

OPRAK FIRESTORM BATTALION

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HOBGOBLIN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +13, Craft +17, Intimidation +12

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +6, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

AC 24; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 120 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 80 (3 segments), 40 (2 segments); **Resistances** fire 10; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, splash damage 5

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Blaze of Glory ♦♦♦ **Requirements** The firestorm battalion has been reduced to 2 segments; **Effect** In the face of imminent defeat, the battalion detonates its remaining explosives to take its enemies with it. All creatures within a 10-foot emanation, including the battalion itself, takes 5d8 fire damage with a DC 22 basic Reflex save; a creature that fails the save also takes 1d8 persistent fire damage. The battalion automatically critically fails this save and, should any members survive, can't use its Rain of Fire ability until it spend 8 hours crafting a new batch of incendiary devices.

Close Ranks ♦ The battalion raises a perfect guard against explosions and enemy attacks. It gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC and Reflex saves until the start of its next turn.

Rain of Fire ♦♦ The battalion draws and hurls alchemical bombs with practiced precision. The bombs rain down in a 10-foot burst within 30 feet that deals 3d8 fire damage and 1d4 persistent fire damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). When the troop is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst. Creatures adjacent to the burst take 1d4 splash fire damage.

Surgical Strikes ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The battalion stabs with their pikes at enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 22 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d6+1 piercing damage

♦♦ 2d6+8 piercing damage

♦♦♦ 3d6+10 piercing damage



TROOPS IN FANGWOOD

In addition to the troops listed here, some others that might show up as enemies or allies in skirmishes include:

- bandit gang (*NPC Core* 22)
- conscript squad (*NPC Core* 89)
- deluded mob (*NPC Core* 155)
- dwarf battalion (*NPC Core* 175)
- line infantry (*NPC Core* 90)
- woodland scouts (*NPC Core* 179)

TROOPS AT THE FANGWOOD FRONT

Most of the conflicts between Nirmathas and Molthune take place relatively close to the border between the two nations, as Nirmathi insurgents struggle to push back the Molthuni army. Due to Nirmathas's lack of a traditionally organized military, its most common troops are conscript squads (*NPC Core* 89) whose efforts are bolstered by the hit-and-run tactics of bands of Fangwood sentinels operating from the depths of the forest, while the Oprakan military presence, focused primarily on weakening the Molthuni army's southwest flank, consists of both traditional hobgoblin battalions (*NPC Core* 194) and firestorm battalions in roughly equal measure. Though fewer in number and mostly operating far from the front itself, Szuriel's devastation cavalry brigades nonetheless loom large in the minds of any Nirmathi who witness one of their rampages or the ruin left behind.

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ROSE WARDEN

Tyrants may try to destroy the seeds of dissent before they can bloom, but the goddess Milani and her followers strive to cultivate the hope that helps nourish those seeds, allowing them to one day sprout into revolution. As a rose warden, you advocate for such change, perhaps emerging from the ranks of the downtrodden yourself to defend your fellow citizens and push to unseat all tyrants everywhere. You tend not to seek personal fame or glory and perhaps even work as a swift blade from the shadows that strikes at the heart of oppression.

But you are no mere criminal or anarchist. You would rather that innocent people not be harmed as part of your quest for societal revolution. So that rightful demonstrations do not turn into destructive riots, you intercept those who would spark that explosive powder, perhaps even taking on the ire of the authorities solely

on yourself. You also look to gain allies in these fights, but you still try to protect those friends from being captured or shackled. The sound of freedom rings out in your every word and deed.

More and more individuals calling themselves rose wardens have begun to appear in Nirmathas recently, possibly bolstered by Courage Heart's arrival. She is a herald of Milani who has aided Nirmathas's army in its battles against Molthuni invaders.

Additional Feats: 4th Quick Draw (*Player Core* 171); 6th Reactive Pursuit (*Player Core* 172); 8th Light Step (*Player Core* 173); 14th Spring from the Shadows (*Player Core* 176)

ROSE WARDEN DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Stealth, you worship Milani

As a follower of the Everbloom, you stand up against tyranny and oppression, understanding that revolution against an unjust ruler must sometimes be enacted in secret. You become trained in Deception. If you're already trained in Deception, you become an expert in your choice of Deception or Stealth. When you get a critical success to Lie to a figure of authority, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude DC and saving throws against being confused, controlled, grabbed, immobilized, or restrained by that figure of authority for 24 hours.

You add the edicts and anathema of Milani to your own (see sidebar). Failing to uphold edicts or committing acts that violate the anathema result in you losing access to any abilities granted by this archetype, as determined by your GM. You can regain these lost abilities through the *atone* ritual as normal.

BLESSED THORN STRIKE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE DIVINE FLOURISH SANCTIFIED

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Requirements You witnessed an enemy harm an ally with a Strike or spell last round.

When you see a foe hurt one of your allies, your righteous retribution causes your weapon to sprout holy thorns. Make a Strike against the triggering enemy. If you hit and deal damage, the target must also succeed at a Fortitude saving throw against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher, or become enfeebled 1 (or enfeebled 2 on a critical failure).

HOLY BLOOM

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Though you might not be a priest of Milani, her divine spirit flows through you. You gain holy sanctification. Select the freedom or zeal domain. You gain the initial domain spell for that domain. If you don't have one, you gain a focus pool of 1 Focus Point. You can Refocus by praying to Milani or by working with others to plan a just uprising. You become



trained in spell attack modifier and spell DC, and your spellcasting attribute for these spells is Wisdom.

Special You can choose this feat a second time, gaining the initial domain spell of the domain you didn't gain the first time.

UNBALANCING APPEARANCE ◆

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Requirements A creature within your reach is off-guard to you, and you are unnoticed by that creature.

When you attack from the shadows, your foes are thrown off balance. Make a melee Strike against the creature. If your Strike hits, the target remains off-guard for the rest of your turn and is clumsy 1 (clumsy 2 on a critical hit) until the beginning of your next turn.

UNFETTERING STRIKE ◆

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Requirements A creature within your reach has an ally grabbed or restrained.

With a damaging blow, you cause a foe to loosen their grip on an ally they're holding down. Make a melee Strike against the creature. If you hit and deal damage, your ally can attempt to Escape from being grabbed or restrained as a free action. If your Strike is a critical hit, your ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the attempt.

LIBERATED MIND ◀

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE FORTUNE

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Trigger You fail a saving throw against a mental effect.

Your mind won't be held hostage by those who would seek to control you. You reroll the triggering save, taking the new result. If the effect would cause the confused or controlled condition, you gain a +2 status bonus to the reroll.

WALL OF ROSES

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Roses are the symbol of Milani, and you can call forth a wall of them to stymie those who don't follow her teachings. You can cast *wall of thorns* once per day as a 4th-rank divine innate spell. The wall is immune to fire and the piercing damage its thorns deal counts as silver for the purposes of resistances. Followers of Milani don't treat the wall's spaces as difficult terrain and don't take damage when they enter one of the wall's spaces.

HOLY FLOWER

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Holy Bloom

Milani's grace empowers you further. You gain the advanced domain spell from the domain you chose with Holy Bloom.

Special If you selected Holy Bloom twice, you can choose this feat a second time, gaining the advanced domain spell of the other domain.

RISE UP! ◆◆

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE DIVINE LINGUISTIC

Prerequisites Rose Warden Dedication

Frequency once per day

Sometimes, you must even slip the chains of gravity to rebel. You shout a brief call to Milani, and you and two allies within 60 feet who can hear and understand you can Stand as a free action without triggering reactions. All targets then gain a fly Speed equal to their Speed or 20 feet, whichever is greater, for 1 minute.



MILANI'S EDICTS AND ANATHEMA

The Everbloom's faith concerns hope and those who war against oppression. Her edicts and anathema are printed below for convenience.

Edicts confront oppression in all its forms, defend the common folk, overcome despair to seize victory

Anathema abandon those in need, enslave or oppress others, harm the innocent through direct or inadvertent action

Edicts and anathema are intended as tools for roleplay. You, the GM, and other players should work together to determine how they'll influence your game.

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THE WAR COMES

Neth 4725

The wrecks that littered Andoran's shores last month and the attack on Augustana's shipyards were just precursors to greater horrors across the Inner Sea. The following days made it clear this was only the beginning of Chelax's revenge for the events in Isger.

We set out just two days ago on our journey to Corentyn, and tensions have been high. Every ship that comes into our sights is immediately assumed to be Chelaxian by at least one of my crew. None of them have been; we are still close enough to Andoran that our navy patrols these waters. I'm trying to trust that we will be safe even as we journey farther from home. Our vessel is not made of duskwood, so we are not notably Andoren, and we fly the flag of merchants rather than that of our navy. I have heard rumors that multiple supply ships taking the Conerica River to Chelax were attacked, but must hope they are exaggerations.

Unfortunately, markets run, at least in part, on rumors. I'm already feeling the effects of idle speculation. My crew has demanded a higher rate (including an up-front advance!) for sailing into danger, and I could not argue

with their logic. I will have to ask for more on the other end and hope others have not been similarly squeezed.

Though I love Andoran and believe we must act to protect our ideals, this conflict did not arise solely from pure motives on our part. Chelax wrongly captured and executed General Cormoth, yes, but it was Andoran's choice to respond with a company of Eagle Knights. If Marusek did not foresee the potential for escalation, she should not be our supreme elect! And if she did, she shares the blame for all the deaths that have resulted and will result from this conflict.

If we must fight, then let the fighting be done quickly. No matter how just and well-meaning a war, the people who suffer the most will be those who had no part in starting the conflict and who cannot protect themselves.

THE SIEGE OF THE ARCH

Kuthona 4725

The light of the setting sun bathed the Hespereth Strait in red, making it look as though our ship was cutting through waves of blood as we approached. Battle did not find us as we crossed the Inner Sea, but we have arrived to find a new threat. The Chelaxian navy has

set up a siege at the Arch of Aroden! Corentyn, one of the biggest trading centers available to merchants of the Inner Sea, is now first and foremost enemy territory under the watchful eyes of the *Impervious*.

All is not lost: We can still find and trade for goods from the High Seas and further afield in the Arcadian Ocean. But under the guards' observation, we feel the burden of this Chelaxian power play.

The multiple searches the *Fortune's Balance* has faced since docking, along with the near-constant military presence all of our crew members have marked, suggest we will face costly delays here. The suspicion also weighs on us. Though we know we have done nothing wrong, we find ourselves constantly second-guessing every word and action.

I met up with dear Drusa, as I always do when we stop over in Corentyn, and was relieved to find things have not changed between us despite our countries' enmity. She's as kind as always, and similarly clear-headed regarding the politics of the war and the propaganda that both sides are sharing among their people. For her part, Drusa suggested the blockade might be a positive development if it can prevent the war from escalating. A quick resolution is best in her mind, even if such a thing requires the Andoren government to swallow the death of our good general and diplomat.

I left the meeting freshly optimistic that this conflict was one between our leaders, and most Chelaxians (like most Andorens) would reach out to us as neighbors if given the chance. That feeling was short-lived; two days later, a runner delivered a coded letter to the *Fortune's Balance*. Drusa was detained after our meeting and questioned under suspicion of spying. Though she was released eventually, she thinks it unwise for us to meet again while I'm here.

The guard presence around our ship has nearly doubled, and Captain Kostas was alerted that our departure date has been postponed. No reason was given, but with the timing, I must assume it was a result of my meeting with Drusa. I dare not mention this to the crew—since the announcement of the delay, there has been an upwelling of hatred toward Chelaxians. While I, too, dislike those who fight this infernal war, this rush to judgment seems unwise. How many others like Drusa are out there, hoping both nations should have peace? But I fear my crew will not agree, not without any personal ties to bind them to Cheliah. I have even heard complaints and idle threats made against Absalom, Osirion, and Katapesh for staying out of the conflict!

NEW DEPTHS OF ANIMOSITY

Abadius 4726

The situation remains grim in the Hespereth Strait, and any who hoped the blockade would force tensions to de-escalate have been proven wrong. I have done my best to stay busy as long as we are stuck here—though, wary of the guards always following me, I now only contact those I will not bring trouble down upon. Still, the war finds its way into the lives of even the unaffiliated with increasing regularity.

A dear friend of mine, the azarketi merchant Tishia, recently shared that agents of Cheliah and Andoran have braved the deeps to petition her clan for support. She tells me other clans have received similar contacts. Surely if azarketi communities are receiving appeals, so are the merfolk and sedachies who make the Inner Sea their home.

Cheliah has not slowed its aggression, though I'm sure Andoran is attempting to negotiate peace. It seems the war will be fought until one side



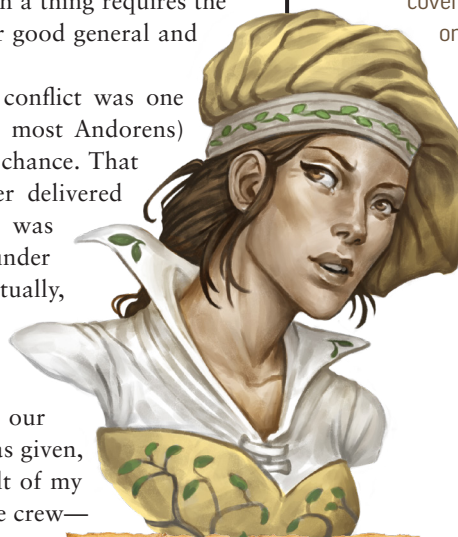
LAWLESSNESS

The "liberty" Andoran speaks of seems to involve a great deal of liberty with others' belongings. They've not only contracted privateers from every corner of the Inner Sea, they even conspire to bring the Shackles pirates through the Arch of Aroden.

Take it from those who have sought to leash them in the past: these pirates will not obey any contract or covenant. They will not raid

only Chelaxian ships or burn only Chelaxian cities. They are a threat to everyone on the Inner Sea.

—Lord Gulv of House Tevineg



IOVITA PESCENNIUS

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experiences a great enough loss to force a surrender. Without reinforcements, I fear we will be the nation that suffers more. What reports I hear from the continental fronts suggest Andoren forces are struggling. Then again, deep in Chelaxian territory, we are surely hearing news filtered through that nation's propaganda networks.

The only hope I have lately comes from conversations with Captain Kostas, who I must admit has been extremely helpful in keeping my spirits high. She's known by many Gray Corsairs, of course, and shared whispers that reached her ears regarding a clandestine Andoren operation. It seems our nation has snuck spies through the blockade by installing them on merchant ships! If the rumors are true, we might win alliances among the Free Captains even as our efforts in the Inner Sea falter.

I have kept mum about these efforts, as even the rest of our crew does not know. I also find myself unwillingly glad for Drusa's and my separation. We now communicate only through coded letters, where I can easily conceal what I know; were we to talk in person, it would take her but a second to realize I was lying. She and I have had difficult conversations of late. I have been arguing that a consolidation of force behind the Eagle Knights will lead to the best outcome of this war, as a wide alliance would enable a swift end to the hostilities. Drusa, of course, put up a well-reasoned argument that it might not be so, asking what would become of Chelax and its people if Andoran prevails completely.

I only hope I can come up with the right words to assure Drusa that Marusek would not seek to harm any Chelaxians were we to assume control of some of their

lands, and that her people would not be the target of undue prejudice. However, given the way my crew still talks whenever the topic of Chelax arises, I do not even believe that enough to write it.

THE FREE PEOPLE OF LAND AND SEA

Pharast 4726

The *Fortune's Balance* was searched from rigging to keel, its crew aggressively questioned, and its ledgers unbalanced by a bevy of wartime tariffs; but its spirit was unbroken when it once again set sail. After more than three months stranded in Corentyn, our humble vessel has started the journey home. Most of our crew are too happy to wonder what prompted this change. I suspect we were set free because the Chelaxian navy sees bigger threats on the horizon. Ships that recently arrived through the strait have brought word of increased pirate activity moving north from the Shackles. Any Chelaxian leaders who can read the writing on the wall will understand that threat.

We all understand it well enough, especially now that Captain Kostas can be freer with what she learned of Andoran's covert operations. Surely it will not take much convincing for the Free Captains to help us end the siege! There are many pirate vessels that could pass through the blockades as "merchants," then render aid once they're free of Chelax's fleet.

The hope of an upcoming alliance that could turn the tides of this war and free us from the Chelaxian navy has put the crew in much better spirits these days. I have not heard so much laughter and song since at least a week

before we docked! Nor had I realized how oppressive the atmosphere was in Corentyn until we were free of it. It was not just the guard presence that affected me, but also the paranoia among its populace and the rumors about what was done to any who stood in the way of Cheliox's war machine. Drusa told me, after her arrest, that it was expected for a country to crack down during wartime. I agreed with her then because it did seem natural, caught in it as we were, but with the clarity brought by distance, I can see she was only making excuses for an operation that caught two innocent individuals.

A FRESH WAVE OF HOPE

Early Gozran 4726

Having finally left Chelaxian seas and passed their new wall of harsh black stone, the crew is able to breathe a sigh of relief. As I arranged for new cargo, aid came from an unlikely source: Qadiran ships far from their home, slipping down the Sellen River. They were small and sleek, painted glistening black, and cut through the waves without open sails—diving underneath the Taldan vessels in our waterways and reaching us without so much as a volley fired! Captain Kostas informed me that the ships were powered by genie magic, and didn't mince words about what she thought of Qadira's practice of genie binding.

Even so, many of the captain's concerns were more pragmatic. The Qadiran ships went vastly out of their way to openly flaunt the blockade of the Sellen River. There's no doubt that these ships, while fortuitous for us, were sent by Satrap Xerbystes II to publicly thumb his nose at the nation of Taldor. Qadira has been rattling its sabers like this for over a decade, but Xerbystes has been held back from attacking Taldor by imperial decree of the wider Keleshite Empire. Of course, if Taldor responded to this provocation and attacked first, no one would stop the satrap from responding in kind.

It is heartening to see the wheels of war turning in our favor. We did receive reinforcements when Qadira slipped through the blockade: volunteers from Galt, Kyonin, the Five Kings Mountains, and even farther north. I don't believe they are official envoys of their countries, but they call themselves the Bellis Company. I hear they're well-trained fighters and hope their combined might helps the Eagle Knights hold the line.

THE BURNING OF AUGUSTANA

Late Gozran 4726

We and our Bellis Company passengers were in high spirits as we anchored a day south of Augustana. But that cheer wore away during the night when a suffocating darkness fell, punctuated by the splashes of sea life and the creaks of wood and rigging. Even the dwarves of the Bellis Company could see nothing out in the night. Stories began to circulate of a ghost ship plying the waters. Distorted peals like muffled thunder and screams carried by distant winds did nothing to calm the night watch, until the first hint of duskwood smoke set them to their bells, rousing the rest of the ship.

We crept forward with all possible haste as the infernal darkness gave way to a starry night. The scent of smoke grew stronger as we finally caught sight of the fires in Augustana. Flames consumed every inch of the docks, and every home and business within reach of the water's edge. In silhouette, the Chelaxian flagship, the *Dark Prince*, stood amid the attacking fleet and the drowning devils that had led them through the too-dark night.

A red dawn rose over Augustana as the combined forces of the city pushed the invaders back to their fleet, and many to Hell itself, but the *Dark Prince* withdrew with its banners still flying proud. We disembark now to help contain the fires and aid the injured. Was it was fate that we brought our cargo a day too late, or did Cheliox strike the moment they learned repairs might begin?



HIDDEN OPPORTUNITY

It can be hard to see the good in all that's happening, but there are countless opportunities for those willing to seize them. Even the rebuilding of Augustana will make rich those supplying the lumber and other supplies.

But I think the greatest opportunity, which should be considered by everyone with access to a vessel that floats, is the chance to get a letter of marque from the People's Council. With it, you can operate as a privateer, reclaiming some of the wealth Cheliox's attacks and blockades have been stealing from you.

Chances like this, to line your pockets while also doing the right thing, don't come along too often. I'd suggest you don't miss it.

—Augustyn Naran

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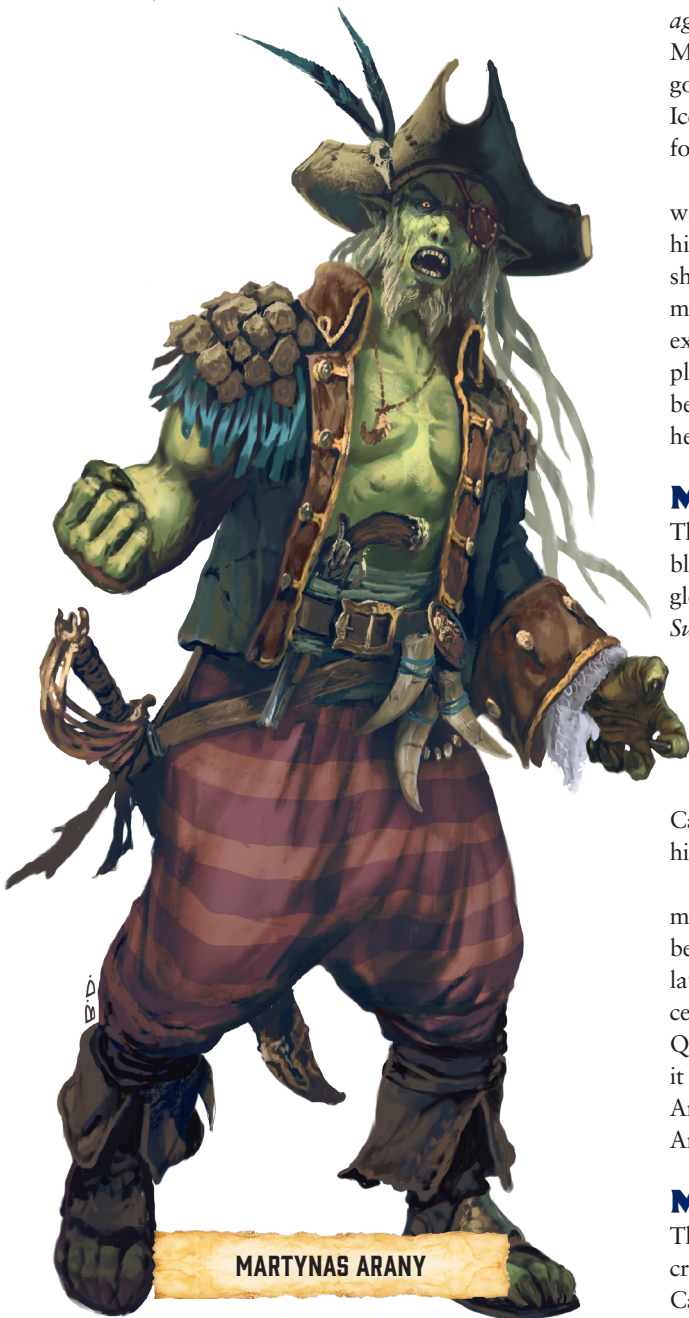
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Most of these names come from conversations I had with Captain Kostas, as my business tends to be with those on land rather than those we sail past at sea.

CAIUX TARONIA

Cheliox's pirate hunters are loved throughout the nation, and I do understand why they would gain the support of any whose livelihood depends on trade. While Drusa, like myself, is no cheerleader for the grisly realities of battle, even she finds it hard to root against Captain **Caiux Taronia** (relentless male halfling nephilim enforcer). He has, by her measure, kept the Inner Sea and the closer parts of the Arcadian Ocean safe for merchant vessels and travelers for the better part of two decades. He's known as a man who never runs from a fight—he'll chase down a threat, eliminate it, and then leave in search of the next.



MARTYNAS ARANY

For now, Caiux—or at least his flagship—remains at the Arch of Aroden. Captain Kostas pointed it out: a four-masted warship that looks as though it could easily turn most pirate vessels into kindling. However, he also has a smaller, faster ship that doesn't fly Chelaxian colors; useful, I'm sure, when stealth is necessary.

ICE PLANT IN RAGE

Katapesh has no official stake in this war, but mercenaries from Okeno are always ready to help whoever pays the most. I have heard talk of a kholo fleet allied with the Chelaxians and headed up by Admiral **Ice Plant in Rage** (canny female kholo community leader). Ice, as she refers to herself, was already a veteran of the seas when she reunited the fractured Okeno pirates almost a decade ago. Captain Kostas even has friends who fought alongside Ice in previous skirmishes! Although, admittedly, Ice fights *against* the Eagle Knights more often than she joins them. Members of her crew tend to be strong, pragmatic, and good at collaboration. While most of her crew are kholos, Ice accepts anyone who is content to serve under her and follow the kholo practices popular on the ship.

Ice seems to have some admirable traits despite her willingness to fight for whatever cause is backed by the highest bidder. Though hot-headed in her younger years, she matured into a measured and strategic decision-maker. Kholos often take names based on their past experiences; she added "in Rage" to hers after a poorly planned engagement ended with almost all of her crew being slaughtered. The reminder seems to have helped her chart a better path forward.

MAJID TALEBI

The first Qadiran ship to break through the Taldan blockade had a golden eagle as its figurehead, its wings glowing white in the light of the dawn. The captain said the *Sun Eagle* was named in honor of the goddess Sarenrae, but he admitted with a wink that there was a reason he insisted on being first to dock. I got the impression he was flirting with me, just as his very presence was a flirtation between Qadira and Andoran. Still, there's no doubt that the nation owes a debt of gratitude to Captain **Majid Talebi** (charming male human sailor) and his fellows, one that will prove very hard to sour.

I had a chance to question him about Satrap Xerbystes' motives, though I suspect he only agreed to talk with me because I agreed to take lunch with him. Captain Majid laughed off the possibility of Taldor retaliating, but with a certain gleam in his eye. It left me with the impression that Qadira did indeed hope to spark another war. Perhaps it was too much to hope that this was simply a sign of Andoran and Qadira putting aside former differences. Andoran needs whatever allies it can get, but at what cost?

MARTYNAS ARANY

The Free Captains are not our natural allies as a merchant crew, but a good commander knows her enemy—or so Captain Kostas tells me. That's why she's familiar with

Martynas Arany (bold male dromaar human sailor), the captain of the *Gale Roar* and a man who will likely jump to join Andoran's cause. Captain Arany, according to Kostas's tales, set sail seeking gold, glory, and a bit of good trouble. The opportunity to retake the Hespereth Strait will offer him the opportunity to find all three.

Captain Kostas has only talked to him once (on land, where there was no chance of a rivalry developing); she tells me he's straightforward and blunt, but not unkind. As a lover of freedom, he has a dim view of Cheliah—as if he needed more reason to ally with us! However, his help might not be immediate. Like most pirate ships, the *Gale Roar* runs light on both crew and supplies. Such an arrangement makes sense when speed is your priority, but the calculus changes when heading into a battle.

MERIDIAN

Tishia's settlement is not the only azarketi stronghold being courted for this war. She has heard rumors that a clan that lives north of Merab is already sharpening its spears in anticipation of a new underwater front. **Meridian** (industrious female azarketi politician), the leader of this settlement, was known to Tishia from her previous sojourns through the Inner Sea. Tishia recalls her as an ambitious woman with little time for idle chatter. Such a woman would see the potential to build her community's reputation and open up new opportunities.

Historically, Meridian has not held any loyalties to Andoran or Cheliah, and Tishia tells me she's not the type to pick sides based on land-dwellers' politics. Winning her over will likely take more than shows of force or promises that could easily be walked back. She's more likely to respond to flattery, particularly if the emissaries focus on the unique abilities her people can bring to their cause. The ability to breathe underwater does open up new possibilities for warfare, after all. While negotiators might exploit this weakness for approval, they'll need to offer something more tangible to win a pledge from Meridian, if Tishia knows her at all. Gold speaks—as long as it comes with an advance and an ironclad contract.

RANERIEL WYNVAR

Rank among the Bellis Company seems to be an unsettled matter, given that it's made up of disparate troops from different countries; this group appears to be a platoon of a larger force. The actual field commander is **Ranieriel Wynvar** (morose female elf sniper), if Captain Kostas is to be believed. The Kyonin archer apparently has a depressive disposition, treating everything as the worst-case scenario and everyone under her command as inevitably doomed. Fortunately, from what I've seen, the Bellis Company treats this attitude as an amusing quirk; I've even heard the Galtan soldiers encouraging it. I can only assume it's due to their success under Ranieriel's command, despite all of the naysaying from the woman herself.

I find myself worrying about these soldiers of the Bellis Company. I know little of military affairs, but I'm not the only person who reads reports of the soldiers' actions

and thinks they're too casual with their lives. Ranieriel's pessimism could be a larger reflection of attitudes within the ranks. Maybe that's the key to their current success, as I doubt it was a safe or easy task to break through the blockade, under the circumstances. Even so, I pray they are more careful now that they're here.

VITA MINATIUS

Captain **Vita Minatius** (idealistic female human soldier) was a fresh recruit back when Captain Kostas still served as one of the Gray Corsairs. Now, the captain has command of *Liberty's Light* and has eagerly dived into the fray with Cheliah. We know she's seeing success by the number of Chelaxians who curse the ship and swear their revenge against its crew. Captain Kostas tells me that when Vita joined the Eagle Knights, she did so due to her strong belief in their mission. I can only imagine she's enthusiastic to do her part now, though who knows whether this campaign will free any Chelaxians from infernal rule.

Captain Minatius is willing to throw herself into any situation, even those other captains might see as too dangerous. Her boldness has worked out to date—she and her crew have sunk more than one Chelaxian vessel, if the rumors are true. I only hope she keeps a seasoned strategist by her side and reinforcements close at hand. Otherwise, I fear she might leap too quickly into peril and find herself unable to get out.



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Our rivers and ports are the lifeblood of the Inner Sea, the arteries and beating hearts of many of our nations. If the war is to be won, it will be won on the ocean's waves; take it from someone who has made her living within its marketplaces.

ASPO BAY

Aspo Bay has already seen action during the war and is likely to remain a hot zone as long as the fighting lasts. Both powers have shipyards on their respective sides of the bay—Ostenso in Cheliox and Augustana in Andoran. That means the area is not only a border, but also the source of both countries' naval powers. Either side, upon capturing the other's shipyard and city, could at once cut off the enemy navy and gain a foothold in their nation.

That said, such a mission would be costly. Admiralty Hill, of course, oversees Augustana's shipyards with its great fort and fire-laden catapults. I'm sure defenses have only tightened since Cheliox's sneak attack. I'm less familiar with Ostenso, having spent little time there. However, I know it too has a military fort protecting its shipyards, and I would not be surprised if more defenses were added when war fell upon us.

Even if one nation were able to capture the other's shipyard, they would still have to subdue the whole town and then defend the territory from two fronts: land

and sea. I presume this is why Cheliox did not attempt to hold the port following their attack. But if their allies were to sneak into our city and disable our defenses, they might feel comfortable making a bigger push.

SEABOUND ALLIES

The more Andoren forces coordinate with allies outside of the Inner Sea, the better our chances. Cheliox's main naval allies are based in Okeno, a two-month journey by sea. Captain Kostas agrees with me that even a minor distraction further east would tie those ships up long enough for an assault launched from the Arcadian Ocean to succeed. Of course, Andoran would need a sizable group of allied Free Captains to face down the Chelioxians, but the pirates have eagerly plundered Chelioxian territories in the past.

Captain Kostas says I'm overly hopeful to think a victory against the Chelioxian navy could pull allies to our side. But I have heard other merchants from neutral nations complaining about the blockade. Plus, Andoran's generous offer has led a lot of privateers to try their luck out on the Inner Sea. If they were to see a chance for profit or opportunity in sailing against Cheliox, they could be tempted to Andoran's service.

Whatever the outcome, I do not see Cheliox retreating without some losses here—and it will retreat, sooner or later. If that belief makes me foolishly optimistic, so be it.

THE GEMCROWN SHELF

With Cheliox's capital safely inland, combat on the Inner Sea is unlikely to deal a decisive blow to Abrogail Thrune's seat of power. We would be hard-pressed to launch an assault that could strike at the heart of Chelaxian territory, as it is quite some distance from our borders by land and well-defended by their ships by sea. At the same time, we know Westcrown is a very active port. It's not a strategic foothold for our forces, like Ostenso would be, but capturing it would frighten Cheliox and strengthen our position in negotiations to end the war.

We need not write off the Gemcrown Shelf as a potential target if we can gather enough allies among the underwater peoples. It's true Cheliox might station its own underwater forces here, but I imagine its safety is a secondary concern given the distance from Andoran waters. A guerrilla approach to this region could tie up Chelaxian troops and resources, granting more margin to fighters on other fronts.

One of the downsides of attacking on Gemcrown Shelf is the potential for harm to civilians. Westcrown is central to Cheliox's economy because of the high volume of trade that happens there—and it would be poorly done of Andoran to target this population. However, I have no problem with endangering the nobles, as they're likely supporting Her Infernal Majestrix's war plans.

CAPE EREBUS AND THE BAY OF DENG

The eastern side of Cape Erebus is home to Ostenso. The western side has a much smaller naval presence, and is thus vulnerable to attack. The only major port in that area is Laekastel, a city on the mouth of the Brastle River that sees trade from the alchemists of Brastlework.

An assault in the Bay of Deng might lead Cheliox to fortify its defenses with ships from Aspo Bay. Once that shift was made, Andoran would find it easier to take Cheliox's shipyards there. If we managed to subdue the whole of Ostenso quickly, we could even send the Eagle Knights over the bluff to threaten Laekastel from land as well—though we would have to beware the Hellknight presence in Citadel Krane and the gnome troops from Brastlework during such an assault. Though, Cheliox might decide to leave its forces in place in Aspo Bay, which would make taking Laekastel much easier. If captured, the city could help us maintain our engines of war with its great manufacturing capacity. It would only be fair for a Chelaxian city to help us overcome the shortages caused by the siege at the Arch and the blockade of the Sellen River!

STAR BAY

Taldor's blockade of the Sellen River proved harmful for Andoran, as it stopped us from receiving reinforcements and much-needed materials from the Verduran Forest. If Cheliox and its Okeno allies managed to take the entire bay, it would be a hard blow to a nation already struggling to keep its forces strong.

Our safety here is dependent on Taldor's actions—and given the direction of this war so far, I'm hesitant to proclaim that Taldor would back us if conflict came to their shores. Taldor has long been mistrustful of Cheliox despite the official peace between the two countries; but it is clear that many in their government, if not the Grand Princess herself, believe Cheliox has the upper hand. On the other hand, the Grand Princess might see the wisdom in proving Taldor's strength by helping us repel the Chelaxian threat.

However, even the Grand Princess's full support would not save us were Cheliox to launch an underwater siege here. If they raised even a small group of azarketi fighters to sink our vessels from below, our supply line would become hopelessly fragile. It would be simple to single out Andoren ships for attack. Thus Cheliox could greatly harm us while posing no threat to Taldor.

It's not just important goods that would be cut off from Star Bay. Any further reinforcements from the north might come straight down the Sellen River and into the arms of our enemy! It would be a painful strike indeed.

THREATS IN THE INNER SEA

The most common dangers on the seas are humanoid, particularly mercenaries and seafarers from the *NPC Core*. Kholos, particularly among Cheliox's Okeno allies, and tengu can be found in far greater numbers on sea than on land.

Many ancestries live beneath the waves of the Inner Sea, with azarketis allying with both sides and sedachies raiding ships and coastal communities alike. The sea also has a wide range of wildlife: fish, sea serpents, sharks, and more are all found in great abundance and often dine on those who fall overboard.

Devils aid Cheliox, including coarti messengers and sarglagon elites. Experiments with undead like draugr (*Monster Core* 2 140) are not as widespread, but they have begun to menace Andoran's ports. While Andoran seeks alliances with celestials like ghaele azatas, they and other navies gathering supernatural power tend to contract with water elementals and faydhaan genies.

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INNER SEA SHIPS

Andoran and Cheliox both hold their naval power as a matter of national pride. Their shipyards in Augustana and Ostenso, respectively, are known for constructing mighty vessels to support their naval ambitions.

The Andoren navy's ships are known by the eagle banner they proudly fly, but the Gray Corsairs display no flag at sea. Their ships are more easily identified by their duskwood construction; this special lightweight lumber has a unique purple sheen to its ebony.

Chelaxian ships, on the other hand, tend toward the heavy and sturdy. The nation's vessels are marked by their red-and-black flag and the devilish and flame motifs favored by its leaders. Cheliox, with no ready supply of duskwood, builds its ships out of a combination of wood and iron.

While the two navies have the most prolific shipyards in this conflict, other parties bring their own vessels as well.

ANDOREN SHIPS

DUSKWOOD CORVETTE

VEHICLE 12

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN

Price 7,500 gp

This triple-masted warship is crafted mainly from sturdy duskwood brought down from Andoran's Darkmoon Vale. Naval captains must prove their worth before securing a post on such a valuable vessel.

Space 90 feet long, 20 feet wide, 20 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 10 crew, 10 rowers; **Passengers** 20

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 28), Diplomacy (DC 31), or Intimidation (DC 31)

AC 28; **Fort** +22

Hardness 20; **HP** 200 (BT 100); **Immunities** object immunities;

Weaknesses fire 15 until broken

Speed swim 40 feet (rowed, wind)

Collision 8d10 (DC 30)

Stealthy Due to its ebony coloration, a duskwood corvette is difficult to detect under certain conditions. It is concealed in dim light.

Weapon Mounts This vehicle has 2 weapon mounts, one on each side of the vehicle. At purchase, these weapon mounts are initially empty. Installing or uninstalling a weapon into a mount requires 1 day, a successful DC 28 Crafting check, and an appropriate weapon. The weapon mounts can be equipped with Huge or smaller ranged siege weapons.

FLAGSHIP

AUGUSTANA'S PRIDE

VEHICLE 20

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN

Price 240,000 gp

The majestic *Augustana's Pride* is usually kept docked at its eponymous port, but is put on active duty in times of great need. Constructed almost entirely of duskwood, with accents painted in Andoren blue and gold, this warship is the crowning jewel of the navy.

Space 280 feet long, 40 feet wide, 30 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 50 crew; **Passengers** 50

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 40), Diplomacy (DC 42), or Intimidation (DC 42)

AC 40; **Fort** +34

Hardness 20; **HP** 300 (BT 150); **Immunities** object immunities;

Weaknesses fire 20 until broken

Speed swim 35 feet (wind)

Collision 14d10 (DC 40)

Inspiring Presence (aura, emotion, mental, visual) 300 feet.

The sight of the Andoren navy's flagship bolsters its fleet and its crew. At the beginning of their turns or when they enter the aura, allied creatures on board the ship and allied creatures within a 300-foot-emanation who can see the ship gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saves against fear for 1 round.

Weapon Mounts This vehicle has 6 weapon mounts, three on each side of the vehicle. At purchase, these weapon mounts are initially empty. Installing or uninstalling a weapon into a mount requires 1 day, a successful DC 40 Crafting check, and an appropriate weapon. The weapon mounts can be equipped with Huge or smaller ranged siege weapons.

CHELAXIAN SHIPS

HELLCLAD TRIREME

VEHICLE 13

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN

Price 9,000 gp

This imposing warship is known for transforming into an ironclad juggernaut when plates of blackened iron covered in spikes are lowered over its rowing ports. Most hellclad triremes have threatening figureheads shaped like screaming devils.

Space 120 feet long, 15 feet wide, 25 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 10 crew, 10 rowers; **Passengers** 20

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 31), Diplomacy (DC 33), or Intimidation (DC 33)

AC 30; **Fort** +23

Hardness 15; **HP** 200 (BT 100); **Immunities** object immunities;

Weaknesses fire 15 until broken

Speed swim 30 feet (rowed, wind)

Collision 9d10 (DC 31)

Armor of Nessus Over the course of 1 minute, the ship's crew lowers spiky metal plates across key sections of the hull. The ship gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its AC and immunity to precision damage. Its collision damage becomes piercing damage. Its weakness to fire is reduced to 5, but its swim Speed is reduced to 15 feet and it can no longer be rowed. The crew can retract the plates by taking another minute.

Weapon Mounts This vehicle has 2 weapon mounts, one on each side of the vehicle. At purchase, these weapon mounts are initially empty. Installing or uninstalling a weapon into a mount requires 1 day, a successful DC 31 Crafting check, and an appropriate weapon. The weapon mounts can be equipped with Huge or smaller ranged siege weapons.

FLAGSHIP

THE DARK PRINCE

VEHICLE 20

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN

Price 210,000 gp

A massive red-and-black warship, the *Dark Prince* sports an imposing figurehead of Asmodeus and terrifying faces carved along its gunwales. It patrols the area around the Arch of Aroden, keeping the waters free of pirates and enemies.

Space 280 feet long, 60 feet wide, 30 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 50 crew; **Passengers** 50

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 40), Diplomacy (DC 42), or Intimidation (DC 42)

AC 42; **Fort** +35

Hardness 18; **HP** 320 (BT 160);

Immunities object immunities;

Weaknesses fire 20 until broken

Speed swim 20 feet (wind)

Collision 14d10 (DC 40)

Dreadful Aura (aura, emotion, mental, visual) The flagship of the Chelaxian navy exudes a malevolent air. At the beginning of their turns or when they enter the aura, enemy creatures on board the ship and enemy creatures within a 300-foot-emanation who can see the ship must succeed at a DC 39 Will save or become frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure). Regardless of the result, the creature is temporarily immune to this aura for 1 minute. However, an enemy creature on board can't reduce its frightened condition below 1 until it is no longer on board.

Weapon Mounts This vehicle has 6 weapon mounts, three on each side of the vehicle. At purchase, these weapon mounts are initially empty. Installing or uninstalling a weapon into a mount requires 1 day, a successful DC 40 Crafting check, and an appropriate weapon. The weapon mounts can be equipped with Huge or smaller ranged siege weapons.



THE DARK PRINCE

Maneuverable With a full complement of skilled rowers, a rowed speronara can turn swiftly, turn in place, and even row backward. Each 90-degree turn made in less than a vehicle length costs 5 extra feet of movement. It can row backward no faster than half its speed, and it can't turn while rowing backward.

Smuggling Compartments The speronara can hold up to 20 Bulk of items in secret compartments that require a successful DC 23 Perception check to find.

UNDERSURF BOAT VEHICLE 5

UNCOMMON LARGE

Price 480 gp

Resembling a large, oared kayak with closable hatches, the submersible surfboat was designed by azarketi shipwrights for use above and below the waves.

Space 15 feet long, 10 feet wide, 5 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 2 rowers; **Passengers** 2

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 20), Diplomacy (DC 22), Intimidation (DC 22), or Nature (DC 22)

AC 18; **Fort** +12

Hardness 10; **HP** 60 (BT 30); **Immunities** object immunities;

Resistances fire 5

Speed swim 30 feet (rowed)

Collision 3d10 (DC 20)

Submersible This vehicle can travel below the surface of the water, usually to a depth of no deeper than 60 feet. Though enclosed, it is not watertight, so crew and passengers must hold their breath or be able to breathe underwater.

YELLOW-SAILED SCHOONER

VEHICLE 9

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN

Price 2,100 gp

Hailing from Okeno, this schooner usually keeps its allegiance a secret until it gets within boarding range and unfurls its saffron-colored sails.

Space 85 feet long, 25 feet wide, 20 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 10 crew; **Passengers** 30

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 26), Diplomacy (DC 28), or Intimidation (DC 28)

AC 22; **Fort** +17

Hardness 15; **HP** 150 (BT 75); **Immunities** object immunities;

Weaknesses fire 15 until broken

Speed swim 30 feet (wind)

Collision 6d10 (DC 26)

Unfurl Yellow Sails ♦ (emotion, fear, manipulate, mental, visual) With the pull of a rope, the pilot or one of the crew unfurls the yellow sails that Okeno freebooters are so infamous for. Each enemy creature within a 100-foot emanation who can see the sails must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or become frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure). Regardless of the save's results, the creature is temporarily immune to Unfurl Yellow Sails for 24 hours.

OTHER SHIPS

SMUGGLER'S SPERONARA

VEHICLE 7

UNCOMMON HUGE

Price 1,080 gp

This merchant craft has no deck and only one mast. It has a relatively shallow hull for storing cargo, but also several hidden compartments for smuggling illicit goods.

Space 45 feet long, 20 feet wide, 15 feet high

Crew 1 pilot, 2 crew, 4 rowers; **Passengers** 5

Piloting Check Sailing Lore (DC 23), Diplomacy (DC 25), or Intimidation (DC 25)

AC 21; **Fort** +14

Hardness 10; **HP** 110 (BT 55); **Immunities** object immunities;

Weaknesses fire 10 until broken

Speed swim 30 feet (rowed, wind)

Collision 4d10 (DC 23)

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UNDERSEA PRIVATEER

In past naval battles, azarketi communities found themselves outnumbered and overpowered by foes who can bring a country's worth of resources to bear against them. In response, they perfected a method of fighting that plays to their strengths while capitalizing on their opponents' weaknesses. Most azarketis prefer to fight while submerged, but elite undersea privateers are adept both on land and underwater, though some choose to specialize. They're dangerous not only because they're experts at their chosen style of fighting, but also because they have ways to force enemies to face them in their arena of choice.

Azarketi warriors have honed their techniques by studying other creatures of the sea. A trained azarketi privateer might claim to be as slippery as an eel and as

stealthy as an octopus. While these assertions are best understood as boasts, they're based in truth.

The originators of this marine combat style took on few disciples. However, as azarketis made treaties and agreements with their neighbors, and memories of alghollthu control faded further into the past, the masters of their unique combat style became less and less guarded.

Today, those who prove themselves friends to azarketis may be welcomed into their underwater training halls. Athamarus, undines, merfolk, and other underwater humanoids have even started to adapt azarketi fighting styles to work with their own strengths and physical advantages.

The prowess of these privateers has gotten the attention of many coastal nations, including those that border the Inner Sea. Azarketi warriors refuse to participate in training exercises with any national navies; while their skill is known, their tactics can still surprise and overwhelm a ship of highly trained combatants. Knowing this, both Andoran and Cheliox seek to hire mercenaries to join their cause and disrupt their enemy's naval maneuvers.



UNDERSEA PRIVATEER DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Requirements trained in Athletics

Your training has taught you the basics of underwater combat. You become an expert in Athletics and gain the Underwater Marauder skill feat. If you're at least an expert in the weapon you're using when fighting in or underwater, you get the critical specialization effect of that weapon when you get a critical hit with it.

ANCHOR STANCE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE STANCE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

Requirements You're in or under water.

You tense your muscles to make yourself neutrally buoyant and more difficult to move. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude or Reflex DC against attempts to Reposition or Shove you. This bonus also applies to saving throws against spells or effects that attempt to force you to move. If any effect would force you to move 10 feet or more, attempt a DC 11 flat check. On a success, you move only 5 feet. Additionally, you don't have to take a Swim action each turn to avoid sinking or moving with the current.

FAST SWIMMER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication, you have a swim Speed

You move more quickly underwater. Your swim Speed increases by 5 feet.

TRAINED SWIMMER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

Thanks to tireless practice, water has become a natural environment for you. You gain a swim Speed of 15 feet. If you already have a permanent swim Speed, swimming up or down isn't difficult terrain.

FLOAT FREE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

Frequency once per round

Requirements You're underwater.

You move 5 feet or up to half your swim Speed vertically through the water. This movement doesn't trigger reactions normally triggered by movement.

SLIPPERY AS AN EEL

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication, trained in Acrobatics

You mimic the serpentine movements of an eel. While underwater, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Acrobatics checks to Escape, Squeeze, and Tumble Through.

STEALTHY AS AN OCTOPUS

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication, expert in Stealth
You're an expert at using the dark of the ocean to conceal yourself. As long as you're separated from a creature by 20 or more feet of water, the turbulence of the water grants you enough cover to attempt to Hide from that creature.

BOARDING PARTY

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

You're practiced at scaling ships, and even a wet and slippery exterior won't stand in your way. You can Climb a sea vehicle even if you have one hand occupied. If both your hands are free, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Athletics check. You aren't off-guard while Balancing or Climbing on any part of a sea vehicle.

RIPTIDE

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE ATTACK MANIPULATE

Prerequisites Anchor Stance

Requirements You're in Anchor Stance, and your target is within 5 feet of the edge of a water vehicle or already in the water.

You swirl water around you to make a current that pulls creatures closer. Attempt an Athletics check against the Fortitude DC of a creature within 20 feet. If the creature is willing, you increase your degree of success by one (turning a failure into a success and a success into a critical success).

Critical Success The target is pulled 10 feet toward you.

Success The target is pulled 5 feet toward you.

Critical Failure Your movements cause you to be off-guard until the beginning of your next turn.

SHIP'S SHADOW

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication, expert in Stealth

After extensive training around and on board ships, you've learned how to use their size and contours to conceal yourself. When in the water within 20 feet of a sea vehicle or climbing aboard one, you can move at your full Speed while Sneaking.

PROPELLED LEAP

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

Like a flying fish, you can build up momentum and launch yourself into the air. Swim toward the surface at up to twice your swim Speed, then attempt a DC 30 Athletics check to propel yourself out of the water. If you do not swim at least 10 feet, you automatically fail. If your Leap takes you near any structure or object and have at least one hand free, you can use the Grab an Edge reaction. If you do not succeed in Grabbing an Edge, you do not take any falling damage as you re-enter the water but are submerged to a distance that equals the height of your Leap.

Critical Success You Leap up to 15 feet vertically and 5 feet horizontally.

Success You Leap up to 10 feet vertically and 5 feet horizontally.

Failure You Leap up to 5 feet vertically and 5 feet horizontally.

Critical Failure You're off-guard until the start of your next turn.

SHROUD OF THE SEAS

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

You've learned to camouflage yourself among the shadows and currents of the ocean so you're hard to see from above. When you're fully underwater, you're concealed to all opponents who are out of the water, and hidden to those who are out of the water and more than 10 feet away from you.

SAILFISH STRIKE

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication, Propelled Leap

Trigger You reach the top of your Propelled Leap.

You've learned how to convert your upward momentum into a powerful attack. At the top of your Propelled Leap, you can make a melee or ranged Strike as a reaction instead of choosing to Grab an Edge. Your Strike gains a +4 circumstance bonus to damage. After your attack, hit or miss, you fall back into the water.

TIDAL WAVE

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Undersea Privateer Dedication

Like the ocean in a storm, you overwhelm your opponents with speed and force. Move up to your Speed and make two Strikes. These Strikes can happen at any point during your movement. If either Strike reduces a target to 0 Hit Points, you gain the quickened condition for 1 round. You can only use the extra action to Stride or Swim.

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ISGER DISPATCHES

Dear Arianna,

Your questions seem so curious to me, but I suppose it's only fair to conclude your readers in Absalom are missing some vital context. Perhaps the children of Absalom know about the struggles between your houses. The children of Isger likewise knew that another great war would arise, with the question being "when" rather than "if."

I can't quite speak for everyone, but at least some hoped the war could be avoided. Gorum's death—painted so vividly in the sky above Elidir among the falling stars—gave rise to a few weeks of cautious celebration. If Aroden's death a hundred years ago broke the prophecy of his return, perhaps the death of the god of battle might break the fate of the coming war.

It's a bitter turn indeed that his death instead provided the spark that lit our country ablaze. One of those falling stars drew the eyes of Her Infernal Majestrix Abrogail Thrune to the town of Breachill. But that was just the spark.

THE GOBLINBLOOD WARS

A few pedantic nobles claim the roots of today's problems stem from the Chelaxian Civil War that lead

to our nominal independence and the rise of House Thrune. I've never seen it that way, as that war ended over 80 years ago. Still, when I asked an aiuvarin friend who lived through those days, his eyes grew hollow and distant. It's the same gaze I've seen countless times from survivors of the Goblinblood Wars, and likely one I've shown myself.

In any case, I trace the current state of Isger back to the Goblinblood Wars around the turn of the century. I was too young to understand the sweeping details myself, but the hobgoblins in Chitterwood forged the tribes of their cousins into something between an army and a hungry mob. Fields were stripped bare, towns were burned to ash, and countless children became orphans.

The response the government in Elidir provided was slow and lackluster, focused solely on keeping the city's nobles safe. Even today, many in southern Isger hold the old government in more contempt than they do the goblins. Only when the war expanded beyond Isger's border did that help actually come: the Eagle Knights of Andoran, several orders of Hellknights with support from Cheliax, and the Mercenary League from Druma. The other nations did what Elidir would not and

formed a united human front against the goblins. The fighting was brutal. The amassed armies forced the goblins back into the Chitterwood and then burned the forest around them.

Although plenty of families around Elidir survived unscathed, it feels like my entire generation was raised by the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys. With aid from House Thrune, the sisters took in those orphaned by war and raised us according to their ways. They were harsh, forging each child in the image of Asmodeus. Although Andorens love to criticize the sisters, their pretty words won't fill an orphan's stomach. Better to have survived with nursery rhymes of Hell's hierarchy than to have died in a ditch dreaming of better things.

I digress. In any case, the Eagle Knights were among those who came to our aid in that dire time, and Isgar is eternally grateful.

WHERE THE SPARK FELL

That falling star—a piece of Gorum's divine armor called a warshard—impacted near Breachill. The Order of the Rack moved in, seeking to claim it with all the nuance and tact typical of Hellknights. Although I hadn't heard of them at the time, a small rebel group called the Hellbreakers League got to the warshard first.

What we heard from Breachill was a distorted echo of the Goblinblood Wars. Hedvend ignored the town's plight in favor of appeasing Cheliox. The Hellknights and Eagle Knights met again in Isgar, crossing blades instead of joining forces. During the Goblinblood Wars, Andoran clung to the fiction that the Eagle Knights weren't part of their military, which His Infernal Majestrix Infrexus Thrune accepted at the time, allowing the knights to come to our aid. His replacement Abrogail, however, is far less inclined to allow their intervention.

The Eagle Knights forced the Hellknights from Breachill, driving them toward Logas for the winter. Perhaps that was all the sign the goblins needed. Since the war, Logas has clung to its hatred of goblins like a badge of honor, regularly launching attacks into the Chitterwood in the name of thinning out goblin numbers. Having an army suddenly taking up residence there, of all places? I can't blame the goblins for assuming the worst.

Clashes at the Aspodean Wall down south were a relief of sorts. With Andoran and Cheliox fighting directly, surely they wouldn't waste time marching through a completely unrelated country? A misplaced hope.

CONTRACT CALLED DUE

As it turns out, they've actually kept their attention to the south. Fate had another lesson for us.

I've already discussed southern opinions of Elidir's government, but Hedvend himself has always been a separate matter. Outsiders without a full understanding of his situation call him a puppet. Even some within Isgar don't have the education to understand what signing an infernal contract with House Thrune means. Hedvend accepted not only an afterlife in Hell, but a life as little more than an extension of Thrune's will.

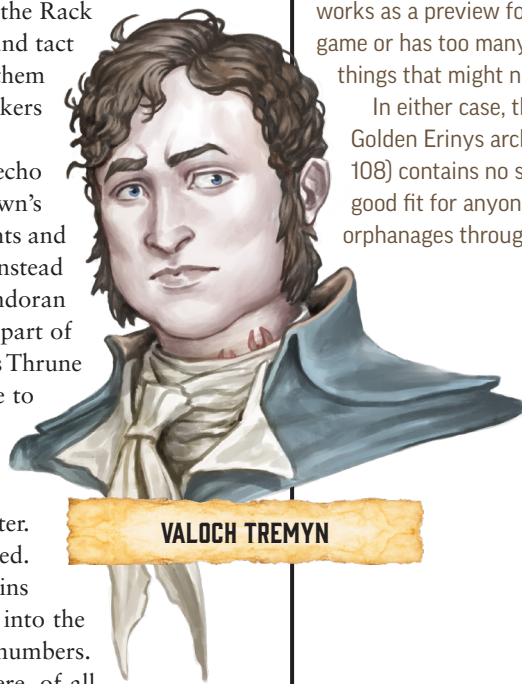
I held quite some sympathy for the man in my youth. His situation seemed to mirror my experiences in the orphanage: bending knee to Asmodeus in exchange for a chance to live. After a few opportunities to meet the man, however, it became obvious that the hellish efficiency so prized by House Thrune was nowhere to be seen in their pawn. Even among those who supported Isgar's position as Cheliox's vassal, there were few indeed who supported *him*. At most, some were glad it was his neck on the line if Her



WARNING FOR ALL HELLBREAKERS

This section describes the situation in Isgar during and immediately following the Hellbreakers Adventure Path, so it does contain some spoilers. If you're playing in that campaign, hold off on reading it until you have a chance to talk to your GM. They can help you decide whether the section works as a preview for your table's game or has too many details of things that might not come to pass.

In either case, the Sister of the Golden Erinys archetype (page 108) contains no spoilers and is a good fit for anyone raised in the orphanages throughout Isgar.



VALOCH TREMYN

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255 MILES



Infernal Majestrix ever got angry. The sisters aren't the only ones who teach gylou politics...

So, to answer another of your questions, his death was met with more confusion than mourning. Factions scrambled to take control before it even became clear who'd killed him. There was no shortage of rebel groups, some competing to claim responsibility and others subject to unjust blame. The rumors I heard most pinned it on the Hellbreakers League, the Eagle Knight spies known as the Twilight Talons, or both working together.

HELL IN THE STREETS

As much as the people of Elidir had little love for Hedvend, many of them reconsidered his legacy in the time that followed. The Hellknights declared martial law in the city.

Legally speaking, it was similar to the Hellknights' reign in Breachill. In practice, however, devil enforcers roamed the streets alongside Hellknights.

Their passage filled the air with a constant tang of sulfur and branded the ground with countless smoldering hoofprints. It seems no amount of scrubbing will get either out.

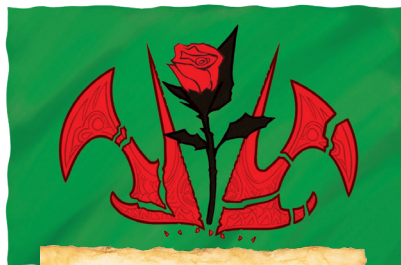
The Hellknights' choice of aid says something about their mission. Publicly, they were allegedly helping purge Elidir of the rebel elements who killed Hedvend, among other crimes. However, devils are nothing if not suited to their intended jobs. You wouldn't field an army of humans for an investigation, and it's all the more true for devils.

MARCH OF THE DEAD

I already mentioned that we all knew the next war was coming, but we also knew the south would get the worst of it. They weren't surprised that the Battle of Hellknight Hill and Hedvend's death were only the beginning.

Undead poured through the south as rebel factions like the Hellbreakers struggled to unify their own ranks and to bring the disparate towns together. I'd like to blame the steward's death for Elidir's slow response, but that help was never coming. Even among those fleeing

the ravaged areas, few chose to come north to Elidir. Instead, they headed into Cheliox, throwing themselves upon the questionable mercy of the Chelaxian army. I've heard the terms of the infernal contracts they were forced to sign are quite harsh, even by the standards of such things.



FREE ISGER FLAG

BATTLE OF LOGAS

Logas was stuck between the hammer and anvil, although I'd argue the anvil was of their own making. Certainly, no aid was coming from the Chitterwood goblins. With their confidence buoyed by the strength of their fortifications and the gathering of retreating Hellknights, Logas sought to stand and fight.

Most of what I've heard about the battle there is conjecture. Bards have spread the news of the town's destruction, but with a certain narrative flair that obscures the truth. They were always going to sing of

a glorious last stand, even if nothing of the sort occurred. Perhaps the goblins have a similar problem. As they tell it, the Hellknights charged out of Logas into the Chitterwood, where the goblins had been waiting. The result was an utterly one-sided victory for the goblins. Dozens of them now wear suits of Hellknight armor crudely modified for their smaller statures or merely use the armor as trophies, proof of their triumph. The victory seemed to surprise many of the goblins. Surely, the Hellknights are among the most formidable fighting forces north of the Inner Sea.

I am no great tactician, but it seems likely some exhausted Hellknights were the last survivors among Logas's defenders and fled into the forest when the town was lost. Followed by the remaining undead, they and their pursuers found themselves comparatively easy prey for the goblins' ambushes.

Whatever scholars eventually discover about the battle, the final state is quite clear: what remains of Logas is in goblin hands. It must be a bitter irony for the survivors of the town—if any remain at all.

HELLBROKEN

A new flag has been raised in Elidir. With Her Infernal Majestrix distracted to the south, the Hellbreakers have achieved their goal of liberating Isger from her stewardship.

Despite many advising caution, that war may return at any point, the streets are still clogged with revelers. For the moment, they smile and laugh, heedless of how they look to outsiders. Although the Hellbreakers promise to bring peace to Isger, some in the streets call for purges to rival Galt's, and just as many demand Chelaxian rule—though with a better steward than Hedvend.

The nobility is largely silent on such matters, instead jockeying for power and position within the new government. Well, not just any position, as I found out when I mentioned the new generation of war orphans in front of Phoebe Demetrias, her husband Alceo, and the other Hellbreakers. I expected the other nobles' eyes to glaze over, of course, as they'd grown up with families to keep food on their plates and roofs over their heads. But they fled so fast it seems I somehow volunteered to organize such things for the new government.

If your reporting draws the eye of a few wealthy Absalomians to the children of places like Logas? Well, I'd be eternally in your—and their—debt.

THE DAYS AHEAD

My pestering is sadly the least among the new government's problems. The south is in shambles, of course, the worst it has seen since the Goblinblood Wars. But simply raising a flag in Elidir is not enough to unite Isger, as little as Hedvend had been doing to keep it together.

For now, Chelax is focused on the naval conflict and its direct war at the Aspodean Wall. I won't belabor those points—you likely understand them better than I—but Her Infernal Majestrix will turn her gaze north the very day she's finished with Andoran.

The new government seeks to form a united front before that occurs, deterring a war-weary Chelax from interfering. It has certainly worked before, as the delegation from Ravounel can testify.

But each town and village in Isger drifted apart under Hedvend's stewardship, and it won't be a simple matter to unite them under one flag. While the shores of the Inner Sea are being stained red and some of the revolutionaries call to press into Chelax's exposed flank, the Demetrias have their own battles ahead of them.

Your friend,
Valoch Tremyn



FACES OF DIPLOMACY

The fire of war was lit when the Hellknights executed Reginald Cormoth in Breachill. Setting aside Chelax's response when the Eagle Knights opposed their supposedly independent Hellknights, we wanted only the best for our cousins in Isger trapped under Chelaxian rule.

Cormoth died reaching out to the people of Isger, and we do not intend to abandon them now. Andoran hopes to form bonds of friendship and trade with the new free Isger.

—Augustyn Naran

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FACES OF ISGER

The halls of power in Elidir are, frankly, a bit of a mess at the moment. Under Hedvend, everyone from the wealthiest merchants to the beggars on the streets largely had the freedom to pursue their own agendas. With him gone, the powers that had been waiting in the shadows are being drawn out into the light.

Even in areas where the Hellbreakers leave old powers in place, the process of untangling who actually controlled different sectors is a daunting one. That also means this list may have some curious gaps in retrospect. Many of those with real power are reluctant to volunteer any information while there are calls for executions.

ALCEO DEMETRIAS

Sitting at his wife Phoebe's right hand, **Alceo Demetrias** (wise male aiuvarin human cleric of Milani) could be seen as the moral light of the revolution. I can't decide whether to envy his position. It seems every follower of



PHOEBE DEMETRIA

Milani has spent countless hours dreaming how they would overthrow the standing order—in this case, finding that narrow gap between Hell's grip and Galt's Red Revolution. But now he must test those ideas in the fires of reality.

DANEV

A glassblower's apprentice this time last year, **Danev** (fierce male halfling orator) got caught up in the winds of change. He spends little time in Elidir now, traveling to spread his vision of Isger directly serving under Asmodeus. It might seem strange to your readers, particularly those in places like Andoran, but he's attracted quite a flock. There are many faithful of Asmodeus here who place blame squarely on Hedvend, or even House Thrune, rather than their dark prince.

DENNA TREMYN

I admit to a little bias in this entry. There are a handful of nobles who have joined hands with the new government, equally worthy of being counted as leaders, but I'll obviously give the spot to my wife **Denna Tremyn** (inquisitive female human aristocrat). Although official titles are still quite scarce, the Tremyn family's trade connections have put her in a good position to supply grain to the fledgling government.

How exactly that grain is distributed is largely up to the government, with the outskirts receiving the lion's share. That's certainly a pleasant change from Hedvend's reign and enough reason for me to cheer even if Denna weren't involved, but raids on Tremyn caravans are becoming more and more common. Unless Resarc Ountor and his Godclaw respond to our requests, it looks likely Denna will be mustering troops along with her other responsibilities.

KALTESSA IYIS

Although she rarely leaves her fortress of Iron Rose in the Menador Mountains, the shadow of the Widow Queen falls over Elidir's politics. Lady **Kaltessa Iyis** (mysterious female human priestess of Mammon) is the center of countless rumors: she's immortal and ageless, she serves as Mammon's high priestess on Golarion, she orchestrated the undead attacks in southern Isger, she controls the minds of half the nobles in Elidir—among other hearsay.

THREE-BELL TIBB

Although no older than me, **Three-Bell Tibb** (steady female goblin bell ringer) is considered an elder among goblins. Despite carrying herself with the weight of years, or perhaps because of that weight, she seems more inclined to find peaceful solutions to problems than the hobgoblins who lead several other tribes. However, the nobles who believe she can be somehow tricked into leading the goblins back into the caves under the Chitterwood will be sorely disappointed. Although her duties as a de facto peacekeeper and political leader are probably of the most interest to your readers, she claims her main responsibility is frightening off lingering spirits in Logas. Although I

haven't seen any spirits running to Pharasma's judgment, it's easy to see the need in a town so steeped in human and goblin blood alike.

PHOEBE DEMETRIAS

Among the revolutionary Hellbreakers, **Phoebe Demetrias** (righteous female human warrior) was something of a field commander. Now she's been thrust into the unfortunate position of replacing Steward Hedvend. Although history should be kind to her in comparison, and indeed it would be hard to do worse than her predecessor, the amount of work Hedvend left undone was truly staggering even before the Battle of Hellknight Hill.

Although I work more with Alceo, I glean that Phoebe is just as busy bringing disparate communities under her banner, keeping the nobles in line, and transforming rebel irregulars into something resembling a nation's military. Meanwhile, the nobles and our neighbors fight over the scraps like imps.

RESARC OUNTOR

Lictor **Resarc Ountor** (exhausted male human Hellknight) has guided the Hellknight Order of the Godclaw through many challenging years. It was just before I left the orphanage, back in 4715, that the Godclaw announced they'd recovered Iomedae's sword from her mortal life. They were heterodox even then, embracing Iomedae alongside Asmodeus and other pillars of order. The so-called Glorious Reclamation, sponsored by Andoran, fell heaviest upon the Godclaw. Hedvend, as was his wont, sent no aid.

Chelaxian agents drove back the Glorious Reclamation, freeing Lictor Ountor but also claiming the sword for their mistress. Abrogail used that very sword to slaughter the church of Iomedae in Egorian. Whatever personal debt the lictor may feel toward Her Infernal Majestrix was not enough to bring him into the fold when she claimed control over the Hellknight orders. But several of his Hellknights attempted to impose martial law after Hedvend's death, and he's been silent to the new government's pleas, claiming internal concerns among his order.

SCIFF

I can't quite say if **Sciff** (organized male hobgoblin war leader) is looking for revenge or simply doesn't trust the new human government to be better than the old one. Thus far, his messengers have only demanded that humans stay out of the Chitterwood, as though he speaks for the whole forest. Sciff was part of the force that ambushed the Hellknights coming out of Logas, and the core of his support are goblins he commanded in that battle. This group shouldn't be enough to police all of the Chitterwood, although they do seem to always be at exactly the right place to turn back human delegations. They certainly have some supporters among the other goblins of the forest, but rumors whisper that he's supported by the bloody fey in the caves beneath.

VALKA

Although she looms particularly large in my eyes, it's safe to say Mother **Valka** (devoted female human monk) is also a powerful force in Isgeri politics. She oversees those orphanages run by the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys, maintaining control with ruthless political acumen that would make a gylou proud and physical prowess that eclipses sisters 40 years her junior. She's also humble enough to let the more popular Sister **Marcella** (pious female human monk) handle public appearances, usually after story time reading *The Noble Nessari*.

As the star of Asmodeus begins to waver in Isger, Valka is looking for new allies. Although their ranks might seem unbreakable to an outsider, the Golden Erinys—Eiseth—does not bend the knee even to the King of Hell.



FIRE STARTERS

The violence in Isger began with Andoran's spies and Eagle Knights, disrupting the lives of Isger's people for their own pride. After all, where was Andoran in the rebuilding after the Goblinblood Wars?

Their honeyed words are not a contract, and once their pride is satisfied, they will leave once again.

—Lord Gulv of House Tevineg



KALTESSA IYIS

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FIRES IN ISGER

With Hedvend's contract coming due and chaos in the south, the new government has their work cut out for them. Some of the reporting from your competitors talk about a great divide in Isger, but I fear they've missed the point. If the Hellbreakers succeed, it'll be the first time Isger is united under one rule, at least in my lifetime. Hedvend's control was never more than a veneer to begin with, and yet House Thrune left entirely too much in his hands. Each town has its own leaders who stepped up in Hedvend's absence, along with its own collection of problems.

DUSTPAWN

Near the border with Druma, Dustpawn used to supply that country and Chelias alike with iron from its mines. When the mines dried up, the settlement should have drifted into a peaceful sleep herding goats. Instead, the town's history is something out of a nightmare. A crystalline structure, apparently of elven make, fell from the sky a decade ago and poisoned the town. Although the immediate crisis was swiftly resolved, the lingering effects of traumatic visions and gruesome transformations apparently still haunt the locals.

So when the blood and armor of Gorum rained down like falling stars, the residents were understandably more alarmed than intrigued or inclined to celebrate. A few even found themselves reverted to their warped shapes from

that previous incident, heightening the panic. In another way, the residents were perfectly prepared. Before the rest of the world had even settled on the name "warshards," Dustpawn had already spirited theirs across the border into Druma. It seems that's where the locals had been smuggling the fallen elven structure for years as well, one chunk of dream-warping crystal at a time.

Their former mayor fled with the profits, leaving behind a populace he'd forced to mine a toxic ruin for his own enrichment and a history of scapegoating the changed residents for the town's many problems. The inexperienced **Ruprecth Haesmith** (anxious male human politician) has succeeded him as mayor and is now a common sight in Elidir, petitioning for aid from the new government. As far as I can tell, the mutated former adventurer **Dalviss Crenn** (eager male fleshwarp innkeeper) is tenuously holding the town together in Mayor Haesmith's absence.

ETRAN'S FOLLY

Better known as Plaguestone even by its neighbors, Etran's Folly is on tenuous footing. Although its position in the north spared it the worst of the Goblinblood Wars, a plague tore the town to ribbons as the rest of the country recovered. It received all the care that Steward Hedvend was known for. Now, it's little more than a few turnip farms and a caravan stop on the border with Andoran.

The town's nominal leader **Delma Fulst** (determined female human bartender) is in an awkward position, though perhaps one others would envy. Rumor has it that the Eagle Knights have been using Plaguestone as a base within Isger, particularly following the Battle of Hellknight Hill. More certain is that other traders are pressing to control the increasingly profitable route. Kaltessa Iyis (page 102) made a rather public offer to buy out the town, while larger organizations like the Aspis Consortium are keeping a lower profile. Blood will likely be shed no matter what decision Fulst makes.

ELIDIR

On the surface, Elidir is calm. Particularly compared to the short rule of the Hellknights, the streets of the city are peaceful and notably free of devils. Some of the factions in the Hellbreakers' broad alliance are still agitating, arguing among themselves about what direction the new government should take and whether aristocratic families should be allowed to keep our heads. Thankfully, most of these arguments take the form of pamphlets and impassioned speeches rather than the Galtan mobs many were expecting.

Beneath the rhetoric and revolutionary glamor, the city is in chaos. Hedvend had bloated the ranks of the aristocracy with toadies and wastrels, leaving his replacements with little choice but to clean house. Now those same aristocratic dregs clamor for positions in the new government, alongside countless charlatans who claim to have sided with the revolution from the beginning and, presumably, a few legitimate revolutionaries. If anything, investigation is the latest booming business as the new government sorts these applicants.

HAUGIN'S EAR

Although Haugin's Ear was effectively destroyed in the Goblinblood Wars, aid from the Church of Asmodeus rebuilt the town from ashes. Even today, the largest structure in the small town is the orphanage operated by the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys. Unless you count the rock that the locals claim is a petrified giant's head, I suppose. In any case, those close ties to Chelias are now a source for concern. Misarias, the next major stop along the river, has been a major military base since the Goblinblood Wars. Although most of those forces have marched for the Aspodian Wall, even the remnants are a potent threat. The residents are understandably terrified of angering the infernal powers, with a Chelaxian army on the border and Mother Valka's (page 103) orphanage the most important institution in their town.

IRON ROSE

Less a settlement than a palace fortress, Iron Rose is the home of Kaltessa Iyis (page 102). As a symbol of her tremendous wealth, it's both opulent and well-protected by Blackjacket mercenaries from Druma. In more peaceful times, she might have been the new government's most dangerous foil. At the moment, however, her palace occupies the lowest valley between Molthune and Isger. With as chaotic as things have been there, her aid could save untold bloodshed if she resists Molthune rather than throwing in with their mob.

LOGAS

Ask me another time about my investigation in Logas, but what I've found thus far suggests undead wiped out the town and goblins reclaimed it for the living. That answer won't satisfy everyone, but my main concern at the moment is tracking down those children sent away from Logas before the undead assault.

The town's new residents have been quite helpful in that regard, caring for over a dozen children who want to stay together. Aside from upset stomachs and some questionable ideas about firework use, they're healthy and as happy as the last few months allow. I'm seeing if we can reopen the local orphanage for them and more children like them, but doing anything in Logas is complicated at the moment.

THREATS IN ISGER

Hedvend's decades of mismanagement and recent chaos have left great sections of Isger unprotected.

Abandoned fields have become home to fungus leshies and twigjacks. Bloody battlefields attract ghouls and redcaps, while the remnants of a cursed undead army are scattered throughout southern Isger. Predators like drakes, griffins, and hodags (*Monster Core 2* 192) lurk deeper in the wilds.

Criminals and mercenaries from *NPC Core* raid grain caravans and provide dubious protection in settlements. Devotees of Asmodeus also cling to power in places, with aid from Golden Erinys martial artists. But anyone seeking to unite Isger will likely need a lot of influence (*GM Core* 187) alongside the strength to back it up.

Although some devils certainly remain in the shadows, threats also lurk literally beneath the surface. Extensive caves beneath the Chitterwood and throughout the Aspodell Mountains connect to a great rift in the Darklands below, allowing hryngars, vulgaths, and other buried threats access to goblin and human lands.

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TROOPS IN ISGER

Forces from within and without fight for the future of this small nation.

GOLDEN ERINYS NOVITIATE CIRCLE

The convents of the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys train female monks who study a form of martial arts based on the devils of Hell

GOLDEN ERINYS NOVITIATE CIRCLE CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP UNHOLY

Perception +12

Languages Common, Diabolic

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +12, Intimidation +11, Religion +12, Stealth +13

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

HP 75 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 50 (3 segments), 25 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 5, splash damage 5

Opportunistic Halt **Trigger** A creature within 5 feet uses a move action or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** The novitiates strike at the triggering

creature, dealing 2d8+3 bludgeoning damage (DC 19 basic Reflex save). If the save is a critical failure and the trigger was a move action, that action is disrupted.

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Unholy Quickness Sisters of the Golden Erinys are renowned for their uncanny reflexes, which grant them a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against ranged attacks.

Speed 35 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Flurry of Vengeance **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The novitiates unleash a barrage of painful unarmed blows against enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 19 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

◆ 1d8 piercing damage

◆◆ 2d8+3 piercing damage

◆◆◆ 2d8+7 piercing damage

Pain Points **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The novitiates are taught how best to cause pain with their strikes. The novitiates use a 1-action Flurry of Vengeance. Each creature that fails its Reflex save is also clumsy 1 for 1 round as its body is wracked with excruciating agony.

Storm of Blades The novitiates unleash a hail of thrown blades, dealing 3d8 slashing damage in a 10-foot burst within 20 feet (DC 19 basic Reflex save). When the novitiates are reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

THRUNE CHAMPION ARMY

When House Thrane asserted its authority over all Hellknights, those willing to declare their loyalty to the rulers of Chelias joined with champions of the Asmodean faith to enforce the will of their Infernal Majestrix.

THRUNE CHAMPION ARMY CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP UNHOLY

Perception +21

Languages Common, Diabolic

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +23, Hell Lore +18, Intimidation +18, Religion +19,

Society +19

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

AC 30; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21

HP 195 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 130 (3 segments), 65 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 10, holy 10, splash damage 10

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Massacre **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The champions slash mercilessly with their broadswords against enemies in a 5-foot emanation (DC 27 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

◆ 1d8+3 slashing damage

◆◆ 2d8+12 slashing damage

◆◆◆ 3d8+14 slashing damage

Unleash Hell The champions draw or reload their longbows, then launch a ranged attack in the form of a volley. This volley is a 10-foot burst within 100 feet



THRUNE CHAMPION ARMY

that deals 5d8 piercing damage (DC 27 basic Reflex save). When the troop is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Wrath of Asmodeus ♦ (divine, emotion, fear, mental, unholy) The champions channel the infernal power of Hell itself into their strikes. If their next action is a Massacre that deals damage to at least one creature, all creatures that take damage from Massacre must also attempt a DC 27 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The creature is frightened 2, becomes stupefied 2 for 1 round, and takes 1d6 persistent fire damage.

TWILIGHT TALON INFILTRATOR TEAM

These teams of elite Andoren field agents possess specialized training in executing covert operations. Many have recently been dispatched to Iger to assist the insurgents of the Hellbreakers League in throwing off the yoke of Chelaxian oppression.

TWILIGHT TALON INFILTRATOR TEAM

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +16

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +14, Deception +18, Stealth +18

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

AC 27; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

HP 135 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 90 (3 segments), 45 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 8, splash damage 8

Now!! ➤ **Trigger** A creature moves adjacent to the infiltrators or takes a hostile action against them; **Requirements** The infiltrators are disguised; **Effect** The infiltrators cast aside their disguises and unleash a 2-action Blindside against all enemies in a 5-foot emanation. A creature that critically fails the save takes an additional 1d6 precision damage.

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Undercover (concentrate, exploration, manipulate, secret) By spending 2 hours preparing disguises, performing reconnaissance, and the like, the infiltrators can convincingly impersonate any troop unit of their level or lower that has the humanoid trait. Alternatively, they can disguise themselves as a mixed assortment of humanoid noncombatants who don't obviously form a cohesive unit. This functions as the Impersonate action with the infiltrators gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to their Deception DC. Infiltrators can't use Undercover to appear as specific individuals, nor can they impersonate groups that require resources unavailable to them, at the GM's discretion (impersonating a cavalry unit without access to mounts, for example).

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Blindside ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The infiltrators strike against enemies in a 5-foot emanation, dealing damage of a type appropriate to any weapons or implements incorporated into their disguise, with a DC 23 basic Reflex save. The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d8+1 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage

♦♦ 2d8+8 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage

♦♦♦ 3d8+9 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage

Faces in the Crowd Twilight Talon infiltrators are masters of blending into and dispersing seamlessly among large groups. While disguised as noncombatants, they can move into other creatures' spaces, and other creatures can move into the team's spaces.

Snap Shot ♦♦ The infiltrators draw or reload concealed hand crossbows and launch a hail of bolts in a 10-foot burst within 60 feet that deals 5d6 piercing damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save). When the unit is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.



TROOPS IN ISGER

In addition to the troops listed here, some others that might show up as enemies or allies in skirmishes include:

- bandit gang (NPC Core 22)
- conscript squad (NPC Core 89)
- deluded mob (NPC Core 155)
- ghostly mob (Monster Core 2 161)
- goblin get gang (NPC Core 187)
- Hellknight cavalry brigade (NPC Core 93)
- hobgoblin battalion (NPC Core 194)
- shambler troop (Monster Core 2 358)

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SISTER OF THE GOLDEN ERINYS

The Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys is a women's monastic order named after a mercenary company of fiendish erinyes who often work under Eiseth, a Queen of the Night who fosters wrath and vengeance. Although best known for raising a generation of Isgeri youth in the ways of Asmodeus, the sisterhood is still fundamentally a martial order, training in a vicious blend of unarmed combat and esoteric weaponry.

The order has embraced many weapons in the time since its founding, but the current iteration under Mother Valka prefers the asp coil, a flexible sword of many segments. Most of the order's martial techniques focus on using the flexible weapons to capture the targets of their vengeance, while their fingers dig into those targets like the fangs of a viper, causing intense pain. The pain is often a punishment in itself but can also render the

targets unconscious for capture. Older iterations of the order focused on death as a punishment, using swords and bladed scarves to swiftly dispatch prey, although such techniques are rare among the sisterhood in Isgerr.

Although the organization has a long history in the shadows of Chelax as the Sisterhood of Eiseth, the rise of House Thrune allowed a branch of that order to change their focus from worshipping Eiseth to serving the Church of Asmodeus. Following the Goblinblood Wars in Isgerr, the Chelaxian government desired to strengthen its vassal's military without giving it any ideas about freedom. Infrexus Thrune was deeply impressed by the sisterhood's training facilities and had recruited many of them as assassins and even as guards for the women of the imperial family. He offered the order his support to build orphanages across Isgerr, training a generation of children (and potential warriors) loyal to Hell. In exchange, the sisterhood recruited the most promising girls into their own ranks.

While they provide food and shelter for the orphans as promised, the sisters' guidance is harsh. The constant physical training, with even more assigned as punishment, resembles a military camp more than a traditional orphanage. They give their charges a classroom education comparable to aristocrats in Elidir but quite focused on the sisterhood's mission. Literacy and even arithmetic are taught from infernal ledgers, leaving many charges knowing more about Dis than Isgerr.

The promise of a new generation of sisters bore fruit, with the order growing exponentially through those early years. There are now far more than needed for training the next generation, in fact. Sisters can now be found across the Inner Sea, returning to their order's roots of avenging Hell's grievances. With the war, many of them have been working alongside the Chelaxian military or as spies, while others have found more comfortable positions with merchant groups like the Aspis Consortium.

However, nowhere near every orphan joined the sisterhood. Even among the women eligible to join, almost every child showed some degree of rebellion before reaching adulthood. The order encourages its members to sublimate pain by taking revenge against those who caused it but is silent on the topic of those who feel wronged by the order itself. Many of these rebels eventually return to the fold of the order or worship of infernal powers in general, but even more resolve to avoid those gods or directly reject them by embracing rebellion in the form of deities like Milani. Recently, a growing number have turned to Ragathiel as a symbol of vengeance who would support their case against the sisterhood.

Between the sheer number of children drilled in the basic forms of the Golden Erinys and how many have



turned their back on the order, there's no shortage of people in Isgar using some form of the sisterhood's arts. Reconstructing the full techniques of the sisterhood is beyond most practitioners, however, particularly those reluctant to accept the stain of the techniques' infernal elements. Despite the difficulty, a few gifted graduates of the sisterhood's orphanages have managed to find their own ways to Hell.

Additional Feats: 18th Fuse Stance (*Player Core 2* 126)

SISTER OF THE GOLDEN ERINYS DEDICATION FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Access You're from Isgar or a member of the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys.

The fighting style of the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys is rooted in their understanding of devils. You gain the Additional Lore general feat for Devil Lore. When you choose this feat, you can choose to become sanctified as unholy.

You gain access to the asp coil. You have familiarity with the asp coil and scourge (*Battlecry!* 118), treating them as simple weapons for the purposes of proficiency. If you're unholy, your Strikes using those weapons and your unarmed Strikes gain the unholy trait.

Special If you have the Monastic Weaponry feat (*Player Core 2* 118), the asp coil gains the monk trait for you.

GOLDEN ERINYS STANCE FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE STANCE

Prerequisites Sister of the Golden Erinys Dedication

Whether you're a keen student of vengeance or you picked up techniques after being a common target for the sisters' punishment, you've learned to dig painfully into your opponent's flesh. In this stance, you can make fury's fang unarmed attacks. These deal 1d6 piercing damage; are in the brawling group; and have the agile, backstabber, finesse, forceful, nonlethal, and unarmed traits.

While in the stance, if you critically hit with a melee Strike that deals piercing damage, the target is sickened 1 (with a DC to remove equal to your class DC); this is in addition to any critical specialization effect you might gain from the attack.

EYE FOR WEAKNESS FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Sister of the Golden Erinys Dedication

When you successfully Recall Knowledge about a creature you can see, you automatically learn if it has a weakness to holy or unholy in addition to any other results. If you critically succeed at the check to Recall Knowledge, that creature is off-guard to you until the end of your turn.

FIENDISH BRAND FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE DIVINE UNHOLY

Prerequisites Sister of the Golden Erinys Dedication

Make a Strike with a weapon or unarmed attack that deals piercing or slashing damage. If it's successful and deals damage, you carve bleeding words into your target. The target takes 1d6 persistent bleed damage, which has the unholy trait. Anytime the creature casts a holy spell while

this bleed damage persists, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or the spell is disrupted.

VENGEANCE STRIKE FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Sister of the Golden Erinys Dedication

Trigger An enemy damages you and is within your reach.

You lash out at the foe who dared to attack you. Make a melee Strike against the triggering enemy. If you hit and deal damage, the enemy is off-guard to you until the end of your next turn.

CRUEL PIERCING FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Golden Erinys Stance

You learn to impale your targets. When you're in Golden Erinys Stance, you gain the Puncture Flesh action.

Puncture Flesh ◆ **Trigger** Your last action was to deal piercing damage to an enemy within your reach; **Effect** Attempt an Athletics check to Grapple the same enemy. The weapon that dealt the triggering damage gains the grapple trait for this check. On a success, the target also takes 1d8 persistent piercing damage (or 2d8 persistent piercing damage on a critical success). When the target is no longer grabbed or restrained by you, the persistent damage ends.

PROMISE OF PAIN FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE DIVINE LINGUISTIC MENTAL NONLETHAL

Prerequisites Sister of the Golden Erinys Dedication

Frequency once per minute

You call out to an enemy in distress, promising them a future of unending pain. Choose an enemy with the sickened condition that you can see within 120 feet. That creature takes 10d4 mental damage with a basic Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. At 12th level and every 2 levels thereafter, the damage increases by 2d4.

WRATHFUL PRESENCE FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE AURA DIVINE EMOTION FEAR MENTAL

Prerequisites Sister of the Golden Erinys Dedication

Frequency once per 10 minutes

You channel the unending wrath of the erinyes all around you. You have a 30-foot aura for 1 minute or until you Dismiss it. You and your allies in the aura gain a +3 status bonus to damage with Strikes. Your enemies who end their turn within the aura can't reduce their frightened value below 1.

WEAPON OF THE SISTERHOOD

In addition to most monk weapons, the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys in Isgar trains with the asp coil, a balanced one-handed sword that the wielder can transform into a series of segments connected by elaborate metal cables.

ASP COIL ITEM 1

UNCOMMON REACH VERSATILE P

Access You're from Isgar or an agent of the Aspis Consortium.

Price 10 gp; **Damage** 1d6 S; **Bulk** 1

Type melee; **Category** martial; **Group** sword

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NIDAL DISPATCHES

This series of torn interviews comprises the only missives this reporter has managed to receive from Nidal.

A MEETING

She is a small woman, bent beneath a cloak that hides her face. One thing is certain, however: she is native Nidalese, for no one else is so deeply steeped in terror and secrecy that it shapes the very way they move.

We meet outside an abandoned house in a battle-scarred village outside Nisroch. The village is still populated, but barely. Over half the houses stand empty but for carrion crows in the rafters and pale silver rats below. The people who remain walk through the streets swiftly, heads lowered, and do not glance at strangers.

"This is as safe a place to speak as we will find," the woman says as she pushes open the house's door. It looks like it should creak, but it never makes a sound. "Those who hunt secrets believe they have found all that were once held here. Those who hide them believe that, once a sanctuary has been discovered, it remains forever after too exposed to trust again.

"Both are wrong. Only slightly, but enough. In their mistake, we will find a space to talk for a little while."

"What's your name?" I ask.

It's a foolish question. I can't see her smile under the hood, but I can hear it, faint and fleeting, in her weary voice. "Call me Whisper. Only whispers will speak in Nidal."

"Very well," I say, trying to recover as smoothly as I can from my blunder. "What will the whispers tell me?"

"What you wish to know," she replies. She steps inside and beckons for me to follow. "How the reverberations of your war have come to the land of the Midnight Lord."

When my eyes adjust to the gloom, I see that there are two figures inside. Both appear to be riders of the plains people. One sits; the other stands. They are wounded, and I surmise they have come here for healing. Whisper moves to tend to the one who is seated. The other turns toward me.

The standing horselord is tall, grim, and pale, as are most of the warriors of the Nidalese plains. Long black hair hangs over his left shoulder in a ceremonial plait, woven with braids of horsehair, bone and obsidian beads, and knots of dried gray grass. His upper body is marred by myriad wounds, some half healed, others raw and fresh. Arrows, swords, and the cruel barbed chains of velstracs have all made their marks on his flesh. I shiver to imagine how he survived.

OPHEIROS OF THE TWILIGHT ARROWS

Gorum's death gave us hope.

Not only because his death created the warshard that became the heart of *Shadowpiercer*, Horselord Iriatykis's famous weapon, but because it told us that gods can die. If the God of War himself could fall, why not another? Why not the Maimed Tyrant?

We of the Atteran Ranches have long hated our cruel god. Yes, some among us swore themselves to his cause, but their loyalty was not freely given. It was that of a dog born under a brutal master, who has never known or dared to dream of anything other than enduring torment at incomprehensible whims, and whose only respite comes from inflicting that borrowed pain on others.

But we were not as the shadowcallers of Pangolais or the druids of the Uskwood. They gave themselves truly to the Midnight Lord, spirit and soul. We did not—or, at least, far fewer of us did.

I believe the horses kept us human. A human can be deceived into thinking there is some transcendence in pain, some value in needless misery. A horse cannot. A horse is an honest beast. Hurt it, and it will flee, or fight, or have its spirit broken. But it will never love you, and we saw the wisdom in that.

In our deepest hearts, where we kept our hopes hidden from even our closest kin, many of us wished for freedom. But we never believed it possible.

Zon-Kuthon has ruled our land since time immemorial. He ruled our ancestors, and our ancestors' ancestors, for so many generations that no empire of the living or the dead survived to recall the beginning of his reign. None, of course, save our own. His grip was so absolute, so pitilessly cruel, that he bled the very color from grass and sky.

We had no hope. Because we had no hope, we did not fight.

Until Gorum died.

The warshard that became *Shadowpiercer* offered a glimpse of starlight amid the darkness. It was a sliver of one god's death that, we believed, could bring about another's. Even if it did not—even if we could not slay Zon-Kuthon, who after all was a creature of eternity beyond our knowing—perhaps it might drive him back, or break his hold on our plains.

It was worth the trying. Worth the fighting, and the dying. We had already seen the price that Zon-Kuthon exacted over generations, and we had learned to measure the shortness of our own lives.

If we died, what of it? We fought not for ourselves, but for our children's children. They would not pay the toll of pain that we had. They would ride free on the plains. Perhaps they might even know the full glory of the sun.

First we withheld our tribute. When the shadowcallers came, we did not send our young and our horses to Pangolais. We told the whispering servants of the Umbral Court to leave our lands, and we refused to admit the ones who came to replace them.

Then the velstracs came, and our war began.

VYNTIELE THE UNCHAINED

Whisper moves away from the seated person, who I can now see is a woman, and begins dressing the horselord's wounds.

The woman in the chair looks up. She is older, her face deeply lined and her hair gray as winter steel. Some of the horsehair woven into her locks has frayed with age and weather. A tattoo of a black bird with

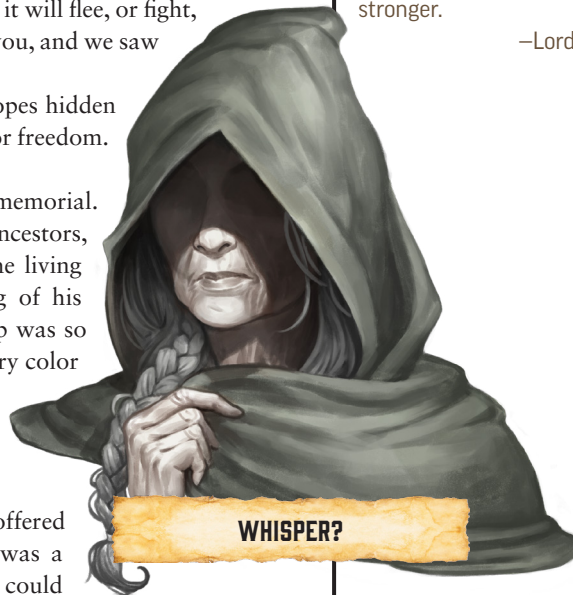


BONDS OF ALLIANCE

During this period of strife, Nidal has proven a beacon of support for Cheliox. Nidalese shadowcasters can be found from the Arch of Aroden to the Aspodean Wall. Meanwhile, House Thrune has honored its alliance by sending specialists in turn, supporting Nidal wherever our ally needs us most.

Truly, our alliance has never been stronger.

—Lord Gulv of Tevineg



WHISPER?

Content Warning:

The following page contains descriptions of gore and violence inflicted by velstracs, creatures of pain and torture. Please take care when reading this section, and consult with your friends when using velstracs in your game.

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wings spread wide is inked at the front of her neck, disappearing into the collar of her bloodstained jerkin. Runes encircle the bird, but in this poor light I cannot make them out.

Seven and sixty years have I lived in Nidal, and never had I seen a velstrac until the Battle of Seven Stallions.

They emerged from the grass in a wave of shadow. I could not tell whether they had merely been hidden by the darkness, or if the Midnight Lord himself had given them the power to swim through the soil and erupt wherever their force was needed. Our horses reared in terror, and the younger warriors exhaled sharp breaths of fear.

Have you ever seen a velstrac? Even the least among them is a horror. The smallest are balls of bleeding flesh wrapped in mangled metal and chains, with nothing save an eye or three visible through gaps in the biting iron. The greater ones defy description. Some bleed profusely, walking on carpets of crimson gore that pours from their flanks. Others shed neither blood nor tears, though every inch of their skin has been flensed away and chains grind against their raw sinews with each step.

They might have human shapes, or merely human limbs grafted onto their monstrous machinery of steel and bone; there is always some vestige of mortality evident in them. That makes it easier to imagine the pain they embody, and adds to the aura of dread that is their greatest weapon.

I quailed before the velstracs. I am ashamed to say

this, and I was more ashamed to live it. I stepped back and lowered my spear, and I might have cast it aside in surrender had it not been for Iriatykis and *Shadowpiercer*.

The horselord raised her spear to the sky, and moonlight broke through the clouds to shimmer upon its blade. Not sunlight—we children of Nidal would not have believed that—but the silver light that softens the night, that guides us across the grassy sea. Our fear died.

I seized my spear, and I fought. Around me the velstracs tore my companions apart. Their chains ripped skin from faces, arms from shoulders, bloody hearts from warriors' chests. They snared our horses' ankles and tore open their throats.

But we took our kills in turn. And though the velstracs inflicted as much pain as they always had, we no longer feared that pain. We understood it, accepted its necessity, absorbed it as the price of our victory.

They hurt us, killed us, but they could not frighten us. Not with *Shadowpiercer* at our head.

That day, I saw my first velstracs, and I saw them afraid. We drove them from the plains. The stars shone on our joy.

On the field of our victory, seven clans swore oaths on the lead stallions of their herds: So long as their bloodlines persevered, we would not bow to Zon-Kuthon again.

WHISPER

My guide finishes her ministrations, and the two horselords leave without another word. They do not look back. I am irrelevant to them, to their war. They

never even asked whether Andoran might be willing to aid in their efforts. Perhaps it did not occur to them as a possibility—or perhaps they have been so long in Zon-Kuthon's thrall that they are unwilling to incur a debt to any other power.

Some of my misgivings must be visible to my host, for Whisper pauses in collecting her tools and regards me for a moment from beneath her hood. She begins with a question.

You have doubts about our war?

I wonder why the horselords seek no allies. Andoran might—

Andoran will not. They can ill afford to divert their forces here. The land is too hostile, their own needs too great. Ravounel has sent a few volunteers to join the fight upon the plains. Idealists, loners, religious crusaders. No one who rides under their nation's flag; no one who would invite the wrath of the Umbral Court upon their young nation if they were caught.

Many of them will be caught and tortured in ways you cannot imagine. That is part of why the horselords do not invite others to share in their suffering. But the greater part, in truth, is that they believe this is a war within Nidal for their nation's soul, and it must be fought by those who are bound to its soil.

Does the Umbral Court share that sentiment?

She laughs. I can scarcely tell. There is almost no sound to it, only a little shake of her hood.

The Umbral Court is not a unified force. The Black Triune is. But the Court... it is all schemers and schisms. Some see advantages for themselves in this war, or disadvantages for their enemies. Few, or none, truly believe that Zon-Kuthon's grasp on this land can be loosened. Their belief in his victory leads them to quarrel among themselves over who will pay the cost for the horselords' defeat.

They hoped, for a time, that Cheliox might bear that burden. But the court's allies to the south have their own distractions now.

I was there, you know, when the Chelaxian envoy came. I served in Lady Velenne's palace as a... maid, you would call it. A cleaner of things.

That must have been a dangerous deception.

It was. But I did not have to carry it for long.

The Lady Velenne is an old friend to the Umbral Court, and she aids them as best she can. I fear her. Her devils make clever spies, and the Adamant Guard uses them well. The horselords suffered badly at Broken Moon Ford.

But her attentions are divided. Lady Velenne's family is in Taldor, and she must pretend it is for some reason other than to keep them safe. As Cheliox's war expands, her queen has called her to fight at home as well.

So she has been too distracted to find a little mouse like me. And that has shown us that Cheliox, the Umbral Court's great imperial ally, cannot spare the undivided attentions of even one woman. They certainly cannot send any armies to Nidal. They are too badly taxed fighting their own foe. So we must thank Andoran, for they have proven a useful ally in that regard, at least.

The Umbral Court was disappointed to learn that no soldiers would be coming, but not devastated. To them, this war in the hinterlands is still a game. If—when—that changes...

Do you believe the horselords will lose?

The horselords believe they can win freedom for their people and their herds by fighting. The Umbral Court believes that the Midnight Lord has permitted them to hold this illusion so that they can suffer all the more when it is snatched away.

As for what I believe... what does it matter? I am one small person. One quiet whisper. Not the arbiter of a nation's fate.

But one thing I believe is that you should leave Nidal very soon.



BEACON IN THE DARK

The hearts of Andoran go out to the horselords and other rebels in Nidal. We can only hope that our own efforts on Cheliox's borders distract the diabolists from assisting Nidal.

It seems our struggles have also freed Ravounel from the Chelaxian threat, allowing them to aid as well. Their ambassador, Vita Aulamaxa, has been making a strong case for the neutral powers to at least help the uprising. But it seems none have interest in making an enemy of the Midnight Lord.

—Ambassador Augustyn Naran

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FACES OF NIDAL

My ship, the Leaping Tiger, does not leave port as scheduled. An error in our paperwork, the harbormasters say. I cannot tell whether this is a lie. Captain Rondaya fumes at the delay, openly wishing that she were in Cheliox so she could bribe her way to the water.

But in Nidal there is no buying off the authorities, at least not with coin, and so we wait. To pass the time, the captain tells me of the players in this war.

DAIYE ATTERAN

It's long been said that the horselords of the Atteran Ranches are secretly Desnan. Well, it's true of Daiye. She was born to the Atteran bloodline, that grand old family itself, and swore herself to Desna decades ago. When Iriatykis's rebellion erupted, Daiye broke her silence and proclaimed her faith openly, urging her father to throw their family's might behind the uprising.

They listened, but it cost 'em. Daiye's best friend, Odarac Blackraven, was slain in one of the first battles. Daiye's father, Vaide, who had protected her from the Umbral Court's wrath since she was a child, died at Broken Moon Ford.

Those losses cut Daiye deep. She knew that they only joined the war because of her.

Before their deaths, Daiye was as happy-go-lucky as a Nidalese can be. After? I've heard she's a changed woman, bitter and hardened. She still holds faith with Desna and still champions Iriatykis's cause. Now, though, she doesn't shy from harsh tactics. She's become almost as cold as the velstracs she fights, they say. But that could be a lie. I'd like to think so. Surely, surely, even they couldn't crush a spirit as bright as hers.

IRIATYKIS

They say the horselords' general was born during a summer storm. She first opened her eyes to the lashings of lightning and rain, but she did not cry. That was when she was a newborn babe. Since then, she's only gotten tougher, and it's said she's still never shed a tear.

What's certain is she's brave, and canny, and unafraid of suffering. She's faced down velstracs, shadowcallers, and the Adamant Guard without flinching. No rider can match her, no general can outfox her, and so long as she has *Shadowpiercer* in her hand and the horselords at her back, the Umbral Court fears her as they have feared no rebel before.

Horselord Iriatykis isn't after the liberation of all Nidal, or at least not that I've ever heard. She isn't trying to overthrow the Midnight Lord or conquer Pangolais. All she wants is freedom for the Atteran Ranches. Freedom for the riders and their horses, no more and no less.

Still, what she's trying to do might well be impossible. And even if she succeeds, how long can it last?

MEREA ETROVAIN

One of the junior members of the Chelaxian delegation is Lady Merea Etrovain. Silly girl.

Might be in her twenties? Sings too loudly at parties, and when she's really in her cups, she tries to juggle whatever's at hand. Girl's broken more than a few precious things that way.

My sources say Lady Merea was sent to Pangolais as a hostage. House Etrovain has never been too loyal to House Thrune, and she's fifth or sixth in line to inherit. That makes her a useful pawn. Queen Abrogail shipped her off to Nidal so she could be kept isolated and under close watch... but that watch isn't as close as it might be, owing to Lady Velenne's distractions.

That's led to the interesting discovery, now confirmed by no fewer than three reliable friends of mine, that Lady Merea isn't quite the empty-headed trifter she seems. She's been leaking information on the Umbral Court's schemes to rebel spies, and has also been ferrying messages to allies outside Nidal.

But the fact that three of my friends know about this is... troubling. She's too sloppy.

MYKOS ROARIK

Vampires. I hate them, don't you? Leeches who drain their victims dead and then turn the husks to thralls. Bad



HORSELORD IRIATYKIS

enough they do that, but they're always so dishonest about it. General Mykos Roarik is no exception. He's very polite, if you ever meet him. Genteel, you might say. He's also one of the cruelest bastards ever produced by a nation that made cruelty its central principle. He leads the Adamant Guard, a band of mercenaries that uses its atrocities as propaganda to demoralize its opponents.

They slaughtered captives and innocents after Broken Moon Ford, and they did it all in the ugliest ways. Horses, too. You don't want to know what they did to the horses. I don't know what would be worse: what'll happen if he ever takes Iriatykis, or what Iriatykis will do if she ever gets him.

SALIFETH

The leader of the Xoskerik shadow giants is the scarred priest Salifeth, master of the witch-rites of Soth-Silir. Xoskerik has been a byword for terror on the plains since... well, since long before I ever sailed here. They've hunted rebels and Desnan malcontents through the Atteran Ranches for generations.

At first, the shadow giants stepped up their attacks in response to the rebels' defiance. The horselords can fight them back when the giants come in ones and twos, but they can't stand against the full massed might of the Xoskerik. What's peculiar, though, is that they've barely had to. After two battles—both of which were bad losses for the rebels, and barely seemed to dent the giants' numbers—the shadow giants withdrew. Spies whispered that they'd gone to Soth-Silir to consult with the basalt monolith and study whatever strange meanings they glean from its shadows.

Now the giants have finished their prayers. They're preparing to march again, and no one knows what to expect. There are rumors that they intend to issue a demand for a specific warshard. Maybe giving it to them will buy them off, but I wouldn't like to see what they do to the horselords if they're denied.

UTOKLAI SPIKEBREAKER

One of Horselord Iriatykis's lieutenants—well, I call him that, but the horselords don't use such titles—is Utoklai Spikebreaker. Brave boy, but he's a fool when it comes to a fight. Always charges right in, never considering whether it might be a trap. He did that at Broken Moon Ford, and the Adamant Guard tore his forces apart. Utoklai came within a whisker of getting killed himself, and there's many who say it'd be better for Iriatykis if he had been.

In a regular army, she'd probably dismiss him, but Utoklai's the leader of his clan. As long as he holds their loyalty, Iriatykis has to let him command. So that's a problem. It'd be best if Utoklai found himself a sensible advisor. Failing that, Iriatykis had better hope a challenger beats him for the clan's leadership, or else that he gets himself killed double quick. Otherwise, it's just a matter of time until they get pulled into another Broken Moon Ford.

VELENNE THRUNE

Surely you know that name. Lady Velenne's been visiting

the courts of Pangolais for decades, tirelessly strengthening Cheliox's ties with their closest ally. She's a devil-binder of extraordinary power and a loyal member of the queen's own house. No surprise she was sent back to Nidal as Cheliox's senior envoy as soon as war broke out.

What is a surprise is that she's been so distracted. Ever since that disaster in Westcrown, she's been trying to cover for that Iomedaeen husband of hers. He won't fight for House Thrune, and he won't renounce his faith, and she won't renounce him. So she shipped him out to Taldor and told Queen Abrogail that he'd be useful as proof to the outside world that Cheliox wasn't persecuting Iomedae's faith itself, only a handful of illegitimate rebels.

It worked then, so she's playing the same gambit again. But this time there are children in the picture, so her attention is even more split. And whenever Cheliox's own war starts going poorly for the crown, the queen calls Lady Velenne back to help. It's no wonder some have started risking subversion right under her nose.



MYKOS ROARIK

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FIRES IN NIDAL

After several idle days in port, Captain Rondaya reluctantly allows me ashore. There is nothing for me to do aboard, and no sign of when we might be permitted to leave. At least if I'm off the Leaping Tiger, I won't be eating her supplies.

THE WAR FOR NISROCH

The first thing I notice in port is that the usual bustle of activity in the side streets is diminished to near nothing, even by Nidalese standards. I slip into a dingy tavern, intent on learning why.

It doesn't take long. The bartender is a foreigner like me, and glad to see a face that reminds him of home. He greets me with a raised arm and slides a tankard of beer across the counter before I even ask.

War's coming to Nisroch. Can you feel it? In the air, like a gathering storm. It's why we're empty some days, full to bursting on others.

The horselords mean to attack. If they can take the port and hold it, they'll really frighten Pangolais. Some say they could use Nisroch to invite allies into the Nidalese heartland, maybe purge the Midnight Lord's temples and drive Zon-Kuthon out for good.

I think that's balderdash, myself. My guess is they only want Nisroch as a bargaining chip. What do horselords

know about sailing, or naval tactics? Nothing. The port's useless to them as a base of operations. But Nidal needs Nisroch, and if the horselords have it, maybe they can trade the city for their freedom. Liberation for the Atteran Ranches, in exchange for releasing Nisroch.

Otherwise they'll never win. They'll get pinned up against the mountains and crushed, sooner or later. If they want to survive, they need something to force the Umbral Court to the treaty table. That "something" is Nisroch. 'Course, it's a risky gamble. If they stretch their forces out that far, they'll leave their homelands unguarded.

ALLIES AMONG THE BARROWS

One of the few patrons in the tavern is a bent old woman with faded tattoos of hoofprints and looped horsehair braids woven into her sleeves. She doesn't appear to be from the Atteran Ranches herself, or even to be Nidalese, but her bowlegged gait and weathered face suggest that she's spent most of her life on horseback.

Yes, the horselords will take Nisroch. Oh, I'm sure, yes. They'll go to the Barrowmoor. That's where they'll find the reinforcements they need for their army. The spirits of the ancient dead, the ancestors who lived wild and free before the Midnight Lord claimed their lands... Oh, they will fight, now that their descendants have finally mustered the courage to shake off Zon-Kuthon's oppression.

Of course, it won't be easy. No, I don't know the rites. I don't know how to call forth those shades, or what the spirits will demand as proof of their descendants' bravery and determination. It will be something, of that I'm sure. It always is. But what? Ahh, if I knew those secrets, I wouldn't be wasting my life away in cups of ale, now would I?

RUMORS OF THE EHROTAI

After finishing another tankard offered by the bartender, the old woman leans in closer still. She seems eager to talk, eager to persuade herself that there's hope.

That's not the only rumor I've heard, you know. There are whispers that the Umbral Court has been sending agents out to Ghorvaul's Crossing, to speak with a great abomination of corpses that lurks in the pass of the Sulfur River. Since their first emissaries returned from that task, the Umbral Court has sent others out to scour the foothills of the Mindspin Mountains, searching for something. Perhaps it's a warshard that the abomination wants; perhaps it's some other secret or key to undermine the horselords' strength. But there is something in the mountains' shadow that they believe is important enough to warrant the attention of powerful agents, so it must be vital to this war.

It's a false sun, *the bartender interjects. He leans over the counter, nodding knowingly.* The abomination you speak of, it's old. Older than the Midnight Lord's dominion. It remembers how others tried to survive when the darkness came. They made a false sun to grow their crops and feed their animals in the endless night. In the end, it wasn't enough—or else something else slew them, or they fell to infighting, or Zon-Kuthon himself swooped the thing away to punish them for not declaring fealty—but surely it must have been powerful when it shone.

If the horselords had the false sun, they'd be able to maintain more of their strength on the battlefield. Wouldn't be dependent on the Uskwood druids' magic to sustain their pastures so they don't starve.

How do you know?

The old woman only smiles and shakes her head.

No one knows anything. Not for certain. We all guess. But what if it were true?

A WHISPER IN PARTING

I return to the streets with my mind abuzz, my new acquaintances' speculations echoing in my ears. I almost miss the flicker of movement in a nearby alley. A hooded figure beckons, nearly invisible in the shadows. It is my first source here, the woman who called herself Whisper.

What you have heard is true: there will soon be a battle for Nisroch. In the spiked temples of Zon-Kuthon, the faithful pray for the Midnight Lord's intercession. He will answer with velstracs and shadowbeasts, with crushing darkness and despair. I do not know what will meet his forces. But one way or another, this battle will decide the war.

What of the Barrowmoor? Can the horselords enlist the aid of their ancestors' shades? Is there really a "false sun" hidden in the Mindspin Mountains, its secrets known only to an undead abomination in Ghorvaul's Crossing?

These are... possibilities. Whether they come to pass depends on much. Does the Chelaxian envoy realize that the Etrovain girl is sending snippets of the Umbral Court's findings to friends outside Pangolais? Does she silence the traitor in time? Does the girl succeed in passing those messages to those who might understand them?

Do those recipients have the courage, or the contacts, to trail the Umbral Court's agents to Ghorvaul's Crossing? What, then, do they do with what they learn? For that could tip the tide of the war.

She holds out a crumpled slip of paper.

Can you take this to one who might act?

THREATS IN NIDAL

Nidal is an inherently dangerous place for rebels, outsiders, and all but the most faithful citizens. Although servants of Zon-Kuthon like devotees (NPC Core 28) and velstracs are a constant threat, Nidal is also a natural home to shadows, shadow giants, and vampires.

Although social intrigue, intelligence work, and open warfare can help free the people of Nidal, breaking the chains that bind the land itself will be a mythic tale. The Mythic Monster Templates (War of Immortals 168–169) and complex hazards can help show the direct influence of the Netherworld and Zon-Kuthon.

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TROOPS IN NIDAL

Though Chelax and Nidal have been allies for centuries, the two are stretched too thin to aid one another with their respective conflicts. The Nidalese government in particular has begun to struggle with internal threats fighting back against the nationwide influence of Zon-Kuthon and his priests.

IRIATYKIAN OUTRIDER BAND

Named for Horselord Iriatykis, forger of the mythic spear *Shadowpiercer* and instigator of the most successful rebellion against Nidal's shadowy overlords in living memory, these grimly determined riders seek to resist the brutal authority of the Umbral Court over the lands and peoples they call their own. While their efforts have mostly been focused on liberating rural communities on the nation's outskirts thus far, they have also begun targeted strikes against mercenary bands and supply caravans traveling through Nidal on their way to aid the Chelaxian war effort.

IRIATYKIAN OUTRIDER BAND

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN ANIMAL HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +14; low-light vision

Languages Common, Shadowtongue, Varisian



SACRISTAN SCOURGE

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +15, Intimidation +14, Occultism +12, Survival +15

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

AC 24; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +14; +2 status bonus to all saves vs. darkness and shadow

HP 120 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 80 (3 segments), 40 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 7, splash damage 7

Elusive Target The Iriatykian outriders gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC and a +1 circumstance bonus to Reflex saving throws against attacks and effects from unmounted enemies.

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 40 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Mounted Charge ♦♦♦ The outriders Stride twice with a +10-foot circumstance bonus to their Speed. If they move at least 10 feet, they deal 2d8+6 piercing damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save) to enemies in a 10-foot emanation at the end of their movement. If at least one enemy damaged by the charge is the source of a magical darkness effect, the outriders can immediately use their Shatter Shadows ability as a free action, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus to the counteract check.

Mounted Troop Effects that target only animals, humans, or humanoids might not work on the outriders, subject to the GM's discretion.

Mounted Volley ♦♦ The outriders draw or reload their longbows, then launch a volley of arrows at creatures in a 10-foot burst within 100 feet, dealing 3d8 piercing damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). When the squadron is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Shatter Shadows ♦♦ (concentrate, manipulate, occult)

Requirements The outriders are within an area of magical darkness; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The outriders call on the power wielded by Iriatykis, attempting to dispel any darkness effects in a 20-foot emanation with a +14 counteract modifier and a counteract rank of 4th. Each successfully counteracted effect explodes in a storm of tenebrous fragments, inflicting 2d6 spirit damage to enemies in a 20-foot burst centered on the effect (DC 22 Reflex save). Velstracs and worshippers of Zon-Kuthon get an outcome one degree worse than the result of their rolls on this saving throw.

Skewering Strikes ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The outriders plunge their longswords at enemies in a 10-foot emanation (DC 22 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d8 piercing damage

♦♦ 2d8+6 piercing damage

♦♦♦ 2d8+11 piercing damage

SACRISTAN SCOURGE

Pressed into servitude by the shadowcasters of the Umbral Court, these shambling assemblies of

scarred flesh, jagged metal, and darkness incarnate would be pitiable if they did not pose such a deadly threat to those who meet them on the battlefield. Each of these companies is made up of dozens of velstracs whose bodies and spirits have been utterly broken by the agonies of the Netherworld. The horror of their brutal combat tactics is exceeded only by the chilling howls that herald their arrival, shattering the minds of even the most disciplined soldiers. Once a battle has concluded, many members of a sacristan scourge search for those who were wounded but are not yet dead to taste their exquisite suffering in their final moments.

SACRISTAN SCOURGE

CREATURE 15

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN FIEND TROOP UNHOLY VELSTRAC

Perception +26; greater darkvision, painsight

Languages Common, Diabolic, Shadowtongue

Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +30, Intimidation +25, Stealth +28, Torture Lore +21

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Painsight (divine) Each member of a sacristan scourge automatically knows whether a creature they can see has any of the doomed, dying, and wounded conditions, as well as the value of those conditions.

AC 36; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +25, **Will** +24; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 270 (4 segments), regeneration 10 (deactivated by holy or silver); **Thresholds** 180 (3 segments), 90 (2 segments); **Weaknesses** area damage 15, holy 15, silver 15, splash damage 15

Staggering Servitude (aura, divine, fear, mental, visual) 30 feet. When a creature ends its turn in the sacristan scourge's aura, it is subjected to an overwhelming vision of the entire scourge groveling piteously before it. The creature must succeed at a DC 33 Will save or become stunned 1.

Troop Defenses (page 124)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement (page 125)

Divine Innate Spells DC 35; **5th** *chilling darkness* (×2); **3rd** *fear* (×2)

Focus Gaze ◆ (concentrate, divine, fear, mental, visual) The sacristans stare at a creature they can see within 30 feet. The creature must immediately attempt a Will save against staggering servitude. In addition, if the creature was already stunned, on a failed save its revulsion toward the sacristans' presence causes it to be stupefied 2 for 1 minute. After attempting this save, the creature is then temporarily immune to staggering servitude until the start of the scourge's next turn.

Shadow Scream ◆◆◆ (aura, concentrate, darkness, divine, mental, sonic)

Frequency once per hour; **Effect** The sacristans open their mouths in unison to unleash a chorus of ghastly wailing infused with the mind-shattering darkness of the Netherworld. This creates a 30-foot emanation of darkness and pandemonium around it that's impenetrable even to creatures with darkvision (but not greater darkvision). They can Sustain Shadow Scream for up to 1 minute. Non-velstrac creatures in the area when the ability is used, as well as those that enter or start their turn in the area, must attempt a DC 33 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Success The creature is deafened for 1 round.

Failure The creature is confused and deafened for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature takes 60 mental damage and is confused and deafened for 1 round.

Storm of Agony ◆ to ◆◆◆ (divine, unholy) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The scourge lashes with barbed chains against enemies in a 10-foot emanation (DC 33 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions. A creature that critically fails is also knocked prone.

◆ 1d8 piercing plus 1d6 spirit and 1d4 persistent bleed

◆◆ 3d8+6 piercing plus 1d6 spirit and 1d6 persistent bleed

◆◆◆ 4d8+9 piercing plus 1d6 spirit and 1d8 persistent bleed



TROOPS IN NIDAL

In addition to the troops listed here, some others that might show up as enemies or allies in skirmishes include:

- arrester squadron (NPC Core 118)
- bandit gang (NPC Core 22)
- conscript squad (NPC Core 89)
- heavy cavalry (NPC Core 92)
- shambler troop (Monster Core 2 358)
- skeleton infantry (Monster Core 2 290)

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NIDALESE HORSELORD

The Umbral Court of Pangolais has held Nidal as its unquestioning thrall for millennia. Zon-Kuthon is its one and only master, and to many of the country's citizens, it seems inconceivable that anyone could escape his chains. Most accept this fate as stoically as possible. But with Gorum's recent death, some have gained the strength to finally fight back. After all, if one god could perish, why not another?

Many riders of the Atteran Ranches have begun to gather under the banner of Horselord Iriatykis after she forged the spear known as *Shadowpiercer* from a fallen piece of Gorum. Iriatykis's crusade has brought hope to a place that never believed it possible. Now, war casts its own shadow over Nidal. The freedom of the riders and their horses is at stake, and perhaps even Zon-Kuthon's dominion may crumble.

You count yourself as one of the horselords who are ready to take up arms against the Midnight Lord and

his Umbral Court. Whether you were born into one of the ancient, close-knit families of the Uthori Steppes and learned to sit in the saddle before you could walk or have spent years working for the stoic ranchers, you have formed a strong bond with one of the nation's breeds of horses. From the swift, stoic *nidarrmar* to the wild, gray-dappled *chiardmar*, these animals are considered by many to be the finest horses across Golarion. Their lineages are as familiar to you as your own blood kin and are equally dear.

Through your connection to a Nidalese horse, you understand the hardships suffered by the nation's people. You perhaps even survived them yourself. It is time to fight back against the darkness, so that all this suffering is not in vain.

Additional Feats: 4th Favored Terrain (*Player Core* 158); 6th Mature Animal Companion (*Player Core* 130); 10th Incredible Companion (*Player Core* 132); 12th Penetrating Shot (*Player Core* 161); 16th Sense the Unseen (*Player Core* 162), Specialized Companion (*Player Core* 135)

NIDALESE HORSELORD DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Nature, horse animal companion (*Player Core* 209)

Access You're from Nidal.

Thanks to the deep bond you share with your Nidalese horse, the two of you gain remarkable abilities. You both gain darkvision and a +1 status bonus to saving throws against effects with the darkness or shadow trait. Your horse's Speed also increases by 5 feet.

You gain the following edicts and anathema.

Edicts oppose the forces of the Umbral Court where possible, provide comfort to those who suffer in darkness

Anathema mistreat your horse, worship Zon-Kuthon or permanently ally with those who worship Zon-Kuthon

Special You can pledge yourself to the cause of the Nidalese horselords if you've already taken the Cavalier Dedication feat (*Player Core* 2 192), allowing you to take this dedication feat even if you haven't taken two additional cavalier feats.

FACE YOUR FEARS

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE EMOTION MENTAL

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Frequency once per hour

A lifetime of facing Nidal's terrors has taught you to fight through fear. Although you aren't immune to it, you can subdue the emotion to such an extent that many believe it doesn't affect you. Reduce the value of your frightened condition by 1. If this would reduce the value to 0, you are no longer frightened and gain a +1 circumstance bonus against fear effects for 1 minute.



REPEL DARKNESS ◆◆

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE AURA CONCENTRATE OCCULT

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Frequency once per hour

Your stoicism and courage seem to drive off darkness and shadow. For 1 minute, you suppress magical darkness effects of a rank equal to or lower than half your level rounded up within a 10-foot emanation. This doesn't provide light, but merely restores the area to its natural illumination level. You can Dismiss this aura.

If your horse is at least a mature animal companion, you can use Repel Darkness to cause the aura to emanate from your horse instead of you, as long as your horse is within 100 feet.

FEAR NO PAIN! ↻

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY FORTUNE LINGUISTIC

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Frequency once per day

Trigger An ally within 30 feet fails a save against a mental effect.

You have learned to endure pain without complaint and are capable of steeling your allies with similar resolve. When you give them a shout of encouragement, the triggering ally can reroll their failed save with a +2 circumstance bonus.

SWIFT SUPPORT

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Nidalese horses are known as some of the fastest across all Golarion, and your mount has trained to ride quickly into battle. When you command your horse to take the Support action, it gains a +5-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed until the start of your next turn.

DISMOUNTING STRIKE ◆

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Requirements You are mounted on your horse, and your last action was to Command an Animal to order your horse to Stride at least once.

You leap from your horse, using the momentum of its movement to deal a devastating blow with your melee weapon. You use the Mount action to dismount your horse but can move to any space within 10 feet of your mount, as long as your horse moved at least 15 feet. You then make a melee Strike. This counts as two attacks when calculating your multiple attack penalty. If this Strike hits, you deal an extra die of weapon damage. If you're at least 14th level, increase this to two extra dice.

SWALLOW PAIN

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

You're capable of absorbing pain with less difficulty than others, and your bond with your horse helps it similarly ignore such suffering. You and your mount gain resistance to mental damage equal to half your level.

HORSELORD'S BOND

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Your bond with your horse becomes supernaturally strong as the two of you continue your crusade against Zon-Kuthon's dominion. You and your horse gain greater darkvision. In addition, when your horse succeeds at a save against effects that would cause the confused, controlled, or fascinated condition, it gets a critical success instead.

SHADOWPIERCING CHARGE ◆◆◆

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Requirements You're riding your horse and wielding a melee weapon.

You charge into the fray on horseback, and those that lurk in the shadows will feel your wrath. You Command an Animal to have your mount Stride up to double its Speed. You can make a melee Strike at up to two enemies that are within your reach at any point during your mount's movement. Both attacks count toward your multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after you've made both of them.

Each Strike that hits a creature in dim light or darkness deals an additional 3d6 damage of the same type as the Strike. This additional damage increases to 4d6 at 15th level and to 5d6 at 18th level.

DEFY CHAINS ↻

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE OCCULT SANCTIFIED

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Trigger A fiend within 15 feet of you damages you with a Strike.

You turn to face a fiend that attacked you, looking them squarely in the eyes (if it has them) and showing no fear. You increase the amount of damage you take by 4d6, and deal 4d6 spirit damage to the triggering fiend. The damage you take and deal increases to 5d6 at 18th level.

In addition, if the fiend has an aura and you're in it, you can attempt an Intimidation check to counteract the aura's effect, using half your level rounded up as the counteract rank. If you succeed, the effects of the aura are suppressed until the end of the triggering fiend's next turn.

GALLOP ACROSS SHADOW

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE OCCULT

Prerequisites Nidalese Horselord Dedication

Though your enemy wields shadow and darkness as weapons, they are no impediment to you when you ride your trusted horse. To that end, your mount can step onto patches of darkness as if they were solid. When your horse moves through an area of darkness, it can treat empty spaces as solid ground. This allows your horse to move across gaps bridged by darkness or even into the air, ascending or descending at a maximum of a 45-degree angle. If your horse isn't on actual solid ground and the area your horse is in becomes dim light or brighter, your horse falls.

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This appendix contains brief explanations and page references for the content presented in this book, including new rules, locations, organizations, deities, and so on.

Abadius The first month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to January. 6

Abrogail Thrune II Ruler of Cheliah and head of the thrice-damned House of Thrune. 12

Absalom The largest city in the Inner Sea region, Absalom was founded by Aroden and is located on Starstone Isle. *Absalom, City of Lost Omens*

Absalom Reckoning The most commonly used calendar in Avistan and Garund, consisting of 52 weeks across 12 months. The current year in 4726 AR. 6

aiuvarin Descendants of an elf and another ancestry. *Player Core* 82

Almas Almas is the capital of the nation of Andoran. *Shining Kingdoms* 44–49

Anabeth Grinceen Admiral of the Chelaxian navy. 12

Andira Marusek Supreme Elect of Andoran and former member of the Eagle Knights. 14

Andoran A relatively young nation in southern Avistan known for its adherence to democracy and personal freedom. *Shining Kingdoms* 30–43

AR See Absalom Reckoning.

Arcadia One of Golarion's continents, lying west of the Inner Sea region past the ruins of Azlant.

Arcadian Ocean This ocean is between Arcadia and Avistan.

Arch of Aroden A titanic bridge that once spanned the Hespereth Strait from Corentyn to Khari. Although ruined followed the death of Aroden, the remnants still symbolize Cheliah's control of the strait. 50–57

archetype A special additional theme for your character that you can choose using your class feats.

Dandy expansion 46–47

Golden Legionnaire 32–33

Hellknight 24–27

Nidalese Horselord 120–121

Pure Legion enforcer 60–61

Rose Warden 84–85

Sister of the Golden Erinys 108–109

Snarecrafter expansion 72–73

Starstone Aspirant 48–49

Steel Falcon 34–35

Twilight Talon 36–37

Undersea Privateer 96–97

Arianna Dreth Reporter for *Anon & Afar* based out of Absalom. 6

Arionus Dexter General of Cheliah's armies. 12–13

Aroden God of humanity, innovation, history, culture, and fulfillment of destiny. Known as the Last Azlanti. Now deceased. *GMC* 143

Arodus The eighth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to August. 6

Aspodean Wall Cheliah's fortified border with Andoran, completed by infernal magic after years of effort. 62–69

Augustana A large port city in southwestern Andoran, Augustana is the primary home of Andoran's navy. *Shining Kingdoms* 40–41

Augustyn Naran Andoran's ill-liked ambassador to Absalom. 42

Avistan One of Golarion's continents. It makes up the northern half of the Inner Sea region. *GMC* 114

Battle of Hellknight Hill First battle of the Hellfire Crisis, with the Eagle Knights and allies clashing with Order of the Rack Hellknights in Isger. 7, 99

Bellis Company A volunteer army from several nations, gathered to aid Andoran. 10

Brastlework Largest gnome settlement in Cheliah. 8

Breachill A small town in Isger near Hellknight Hill where the fighting began. 7, 99

Calistril The second month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to February. 6

Canorate The capital of Molthune under strict control of its General Lords.

Cheliah A nation in southwest Avistan. Known for its ties to diabolic rule. *GMC* 153

Corentyn The City of Nine Forts guarding the northern end of the Arch of Aroden. 50–57

Courage Heart Celestial herald of the goddess Milani, rumored to have been a revolutionary in Galt during her mortal life. 79

Darcyne Wrens The Order of the Rack's lictor and leader of the Hellknights loyal to Abrogail Thrune. 13

Dark Prince Chelaxian flagship named in honor of Asmodeus. 95

Desnus The fifth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to May. 6

dromaar Descendants of an orc and another ancestry. *Player Core* 83

Drum Thornfiddle King of the gnome city of Brastlework under House Thrune's supervision. 13

Druma A nation in southern central Avistan. Known for its prominent trade and great wealth. *Shining Kingdoms* 54–67

duskwood A very lightweight wood found primarily in old-growth forests in south-central Avistan. *GMC* 254

Eagle Knights Elite military organization within Andoran separate from the traditional armed forces. Includes the Golden Legion, Steel Falcons, and Twilight Talons. 30–37

Eiseth An infernal warlord who allies with Asmodeus and others for her own ends. *Divine Mysteries* 175

Elidir The capital and largest city in Isger, formerly the seat of Hedvend IV under Chelaxian supervision.



Erast Fom Commander in charge of defending Andoran's capital. 14

Erastus The seventh month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to July. 6

erinyes Winged fiends who sometimes work alongside Asmodeus and his devils.

Eye of Abendego An enormous hurricane nestled between Mediogalti Island, the Shackles, and the Sodden Lands. *GMC* 150

Fangwood A forest in central Avistan split between Southern Fangwood in Nirmathas and Northern Fangwood in the Gravelands. 74-81

Galt A nation in eastern Avistan. Known as a land of constant political upheaval and revolution. *Shining Kingdoms* 102-115

Garund One of Golarion's continents. Its northern portion makes up the southern half of the Inner Sea region. *GMC* 144

Goblinblood Wars A series of wars between the goblin and human inhabitants of Isger. Ended 25 years ago by a combined human force including Eagle Knights and Hellknights. 98-99

The Godclaw Pantheon of five gods worshipped primarily by the Order of the Godclaw Hellknights. *Divine Mysteries* 244-245

Godsrain A rain of divine power, warmongering blood, and sacred metal falling across the Universe as Gorum's body was ripped apart. *War of Immortals*

Golden Legion Eagle Knights focused on the defense of Andoran. 32-33

Gorthoklek Abrogail Thrune's most prominent devil advisor. 13

Gorum The recently slain god of war whose blood and armor scattered across the mortal world in the Godsrain.

Gozran The fourth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to April. 6

Gray Corsairs Members of the Eagle Knights operating at sea. 30-31

Gulv Tevineg Cheliox's ambassador to Absalom. 42

gylou Devils known for their mastery of diplomacy, bureaucracy, and other skilled pursuit. *Monster Core* 91

Harrow A method of divination that uses cards known as a harrow deck to tell fortunes. Especially popular in Varisia.

Haskell Whaley Admiral in charge of Andoran's navy. 14-15

Hedvend IV Steward of Isger under Chelaxian supervision. 9

Helena Trellis Mid-level functionary believed to run the Twilight Talons. 15

Hellbreaker's League Revolutionaries in Isger opposed to House Thrune's rule.

Hellknights Harsh warriors that study the ways of Hell in their attempt to bring order to the world. 20-29

Order of the Chain 21-22, 28

Order of the Gate 22, 28

Order of the Godclaw 22, 28

Order of the Nail 22-23, 28-29

Order of the Pyre 23, 29

Order of the Rack 23, 29

Order of the Scourge 23, 29

Hespereth Strait A narrow channel of water that connects the Arcadian Ocean with the Inner Sea. Flanked by the cities of Corentyn and Khari, the strait has been under Chelaxian control for centuries. 50-57

Highhelm Most prominent of the dwarven cities in the Five Kings Mountains. *Lost Omens Highhelm*

horselord Residents of Nidal keeping to traditions passed down and adapted since that land's conquest by Zon-Kuthon millennia ago. 110-117, 120-121

Ingrid Odeber General of the Eagle Knights' Golden Legion. 15

Inner Sea This sea cradled between Avistan and Garund was created by the reshaping of the region during Earthfall. 86-93



Iriatykis Leader of the horselords in their uprising against the Nidalese government and bearer of *Shadowpiercer*. 114

Isger This nation in southern central Avistan was a vassal of Cheliox and home to several goblin clans. 98-105

Ivo Elliendo The Order of the Scourge Hellknights' new lictor under Thrune's supervision. 13

Jorab Mire Head of Andoran's military forces and longtime advocate for attacking Cheliox. 15

Karsakim Commander of the Pure Legion and important military leader in Rahadom. 8

Khari Cheliox's only holding in Garund, Khari is the southern end of the Arch of Aroden. 50-57

kholo A hyena-headed ancestry native to Garund. *Player Core* 217

Kierothax A diabolic dragon allied with House Thrune. 7

Kuthona The twelfth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to December. 6

Kyonin A nation in central Avistan. Known as the center of elven culture in Avistan. *Shining Kingdoms* 126-139

Lamashan The tenth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to October. 6

Laws of Mortality Ancient laws of Rahadom rejecting divine influence as dangerous. *Divine Mysteries* 247

lictor Leader of a Hellknight order.

Lrilatha Abrogail Thrune's erinyes tutor and longtime advisor. 13

Milani The Everbloom. Goddess of devotion, hope, and uprisings. *Divine Mysteries* 151

Molthune This nation in central Avistan is dominated by its military and is at war with Nirmathas. 74-81

nephilim Those influenced by celestial or fiendish energies, displaying those traits in addition to those of their ancestry. *Player Core* 78

nessari Tyrant devils that lead the vast armies of Hell. *Monster Core* 92

Neth The eleventh month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to November. 6

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Nidal This nation along the southwest coast of Avistan is watched over by Zon-Kuthon. 110-118

Nirmathas A nation located in central Avistan, Nirmathas is known for its vast wilderness and war with Molthune. 74-81

Octavio Sabinus Lictor of the Hellknight Order of the Torrent, a lesser order that investigates kidnappings. 8

Okeno A southern port whose residents are longtime allies of Cheliah.

ort Mindless devils commanded by their more powerful kin. *Monster Core* 86

Osirion A nation in northeastern Garund, Osirion boasts countless tombs and temples from the great empire of Ancient Osirion.

Pharast The third month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to March. 6

Platinum Wing Part of the Eagle Knights' Golden Legion focusing on development of new weapons. 30

Pure Legion Military force in Rahadom dedicated to enforcing the Laws of Mortality. 60-61

Qadira A nation located in southeast Avistan, Qadira is the westernmost satrapy of the great Padishah Empire of Kelesh. *GMC* 149

Rahadom A nation located in northwest Garund, Rahadom is known for prohibitions against religious practice of any kind.

Rania Laroung Cheliah's leading naval instructor. 13

Rauzio Ferin Spymaster for Abrogail Throne. 13

Ravounel This young nation in southwest Avistan is known for its successful uprising against Cheliah and continued push for individual freedoms.

Reginald Cormoth Retired Andoren general turned diplomat, killed by the Hellknight Order of the Rack. 6-7

Ries Cuprianas Head of the Eagle Knights. 15

Rova The ninth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to September. 6

Sarenith The sixth month of the Absalom Reckoning calendar, equivalent to June. 6

sarglagon Drowning devils. *Monster Core* 88

Severs DiViri Lictor of the Hellknight Order of the Nail. 8

Shackles A collection of islands off the western coast of Garund, the Shackles are known for rampant piracy.

Shadowpiercer A mythic spear forged from a fragment of a dead god's armor. *War of Immortals* 152

Shepard's Rock Stronghold of the Pure Legion in Rahadom.

Sisterhood of the Golden Erinys A monastic order dedicated to Eiseth primarily active in Isger. 108-109

snare (trait) Snares are traps that follow special rules that allow them to be constructed quickly and used on the battlefield. *Player Core* 2 297

new snares 73

Steel Falcons Eagle Knights given a broad remit to spread Andoran's influence and philosophy throughout the Inner Sea. 34-35

Szurriel The Rider of War, one of the mythical rules of daemons. 78, *Divine Mysteries* 172-173

Taldor A nation located in southeast Avistan seeking to reclaim former glory. *Shining Kingdoms* 150-163

Talmandor The celestial patron of Andoran. *Shining Kingdoms* 22

Tar-Baphon A necromancer killed by Aroden, Tar-Baphon rose again as the lich-king known as the Whispering Tyrant; he threatened the Inner Sea region for centuries before being imprisoned. In 4719 AR, he broke free to terrorize the region once more. *GMC* 148, 153, 155, 163

tengu Gregarious and resourceful avian humanoids. *Player Core* 2 32

Tessa Fairwind The Hurricane Queen who leads the pirate fleets of the Shackles.

Tiptrin Small town in Andoran near the border with Cheliah. 62-63

Triborn Waits Commander of the Eagle Knights' Steel Falcons. 15

troop (trait) A troop is an organized collection of component creatures, typically Small or Medium in size, working as a cohesive whole. Over the course of enough attacks and downed comrades, troops shrink in size. A troop typically has the troop defenses and troop movement abilities, and most troops have weaknesses to area damage and splash damage. Because they consist of multiple discrete creatures, they can't be summoned.

Brastlework sapper squad 70

devastation cavalry brigade 82-83

Fangwood sentinel corps 82

Golden Erinys novitiate circle 106

hellbound honor guard 70-71

Hellknight retrieval unit 58

Iriatykian outrider band 118

Oprak firestorm battalion 83

ort mob 71

Pure Legion regiment 58-59

sacristan scourge 118-119

Shackles pirate crew 59

Throne champion army 106-107

Twilight Talon infiltrator team 107

troop defenses (ability) Troops are composed of many individuals, represented by four "segments" on a battle grid. Each segment is 10 feet on each side and as tall as the individual members of the troop. Segments must remain contiguous. Each one has to share at least 5 feet of one of its edges with another segment—being adjacent on a diagonal isn't sufficient! You can measure flanking, cover, and the like using the center of any segment.

A troop has two Hit Point thresholds in its HP entry and loses segments as it crosses thresholds. Typically, the higher threshold is at 2/3 of the troop's maximum Hit Points and the lower is at 1/3 of its maximum. Once the troop drops below the higher threshold, it loses one segment, leaving three segments (12 squares) remaining and setting the first threshold as the troop's new maximum Hit Points. This repeats when the troop drops below the lower threshold, leaving two segments (8 squares). At 0 Hit Points, the troop disperses entirely, with the few remaining members surrendering, fleeing, or easily dispatched, as determined by the GM. Typically the creature who caused the troop to lose a segment decides

which to remove, or the GM decides when a specific creature wasn't responsible. To restore lost segments and maximum Hit Points, a troop needs to spend downtime to use long-term treatment on casualties or recruit new members to replace the fallen.

Troops are typically immune to non-damaging effects that target a single creature, such as a charm spell or the Demoralize action. An ability that can target 5 or more creatures can target an entire segment, increasing to two segments if it can target 10 or more creatures and to the entire troop if it can target 20 or more creatures. An ability that affects all creatures in a certain range affects all segments in range (make any checks or saves separately for each segment). As examples, an 8th-rank charm spell (with 10 targets) can affect two segments, and an ability that Demoralizes all creatures within 30 feet of you would affect all segments that are fully within that range. A non-damaging ability that would prevent a segment from acting, cause them to flee, or otherwise make them unable to function as part of the troop for a round or more removes the segment entirely. The troop loses a number of HP required to bring it to the next threshold. If an ability both deals damage and has a non-damaging effect, apply the damage then the rest of the effect.

troop movement (ability) Whenever a troop moves, you move one of its segments and the other segments follow behind it. At the end of the movement, you can group the other segments adjacent to the one you moved as you see fit, provided none of them moves farther than the moving segment. If you choose not to move the troop any distance, you can instead reshape the position of all the segments as long as one stays in place.

Twilight Talons Branch of the Eagle Knights focusing on clandestine missions. 36–37

Valhia Dunnell Leader of the Gray Corsairs, the Eagle Knights' naval arm. 15

vehicles (subsystem) GMC 210–213

Inner Sea ships 94–95

Voradni Voon A minotaur warlord who laid siege to Absalom thousands of years ago or the modern minotaur claiming to be his reincarnation. 43, *Absalom* 15

vordine Infantry devils forming the rank-and-file of Hell's armies. *Monster Core* 87

warshards Fragments of Gorum's armor which fell to the ground during the Godsrain. *War of Immortals*

Whispering Tyrant Another name for the lich Tar-Baphon.

Yanlia Harvend Prominent Eagle Knight diplomat. 15

TROOPS BY LEVEL

For reference, troops at the following levels can be found in this book.

Level 4: Brastlework sapper squad (page 70), Fangwood sentinel corps (page 82)

Level 5: Golden Erinys novitiate circle (page 106), ort mob (page 71), Shackles pirate crew (page 59)

Level 6: devastation cavalry brigade (pages 82–83), Hellknight retrieval unit (page 58)

Level 7: Iriatykian outrider band (page 118), Oprak firestorm battalion (page 83)

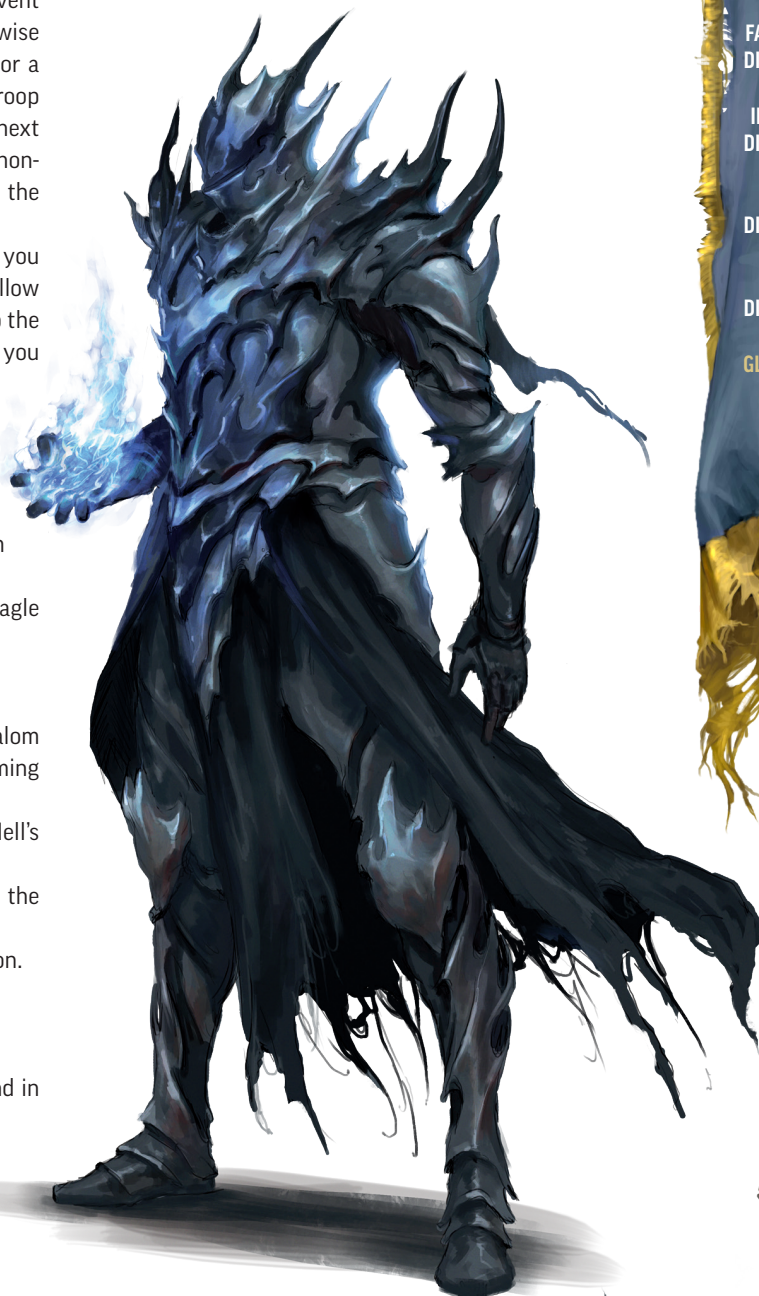
Level 8: Twilight Talon infiltrator team (pages 107)

Level 10: Pure Legion regiment (pages 58–59)

Level 11: Thrune champion army (page 106–107)

Level 12: hellbound honor guard (pages 70–71)

Level 15: sacristan scourge (pages 118–119)



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