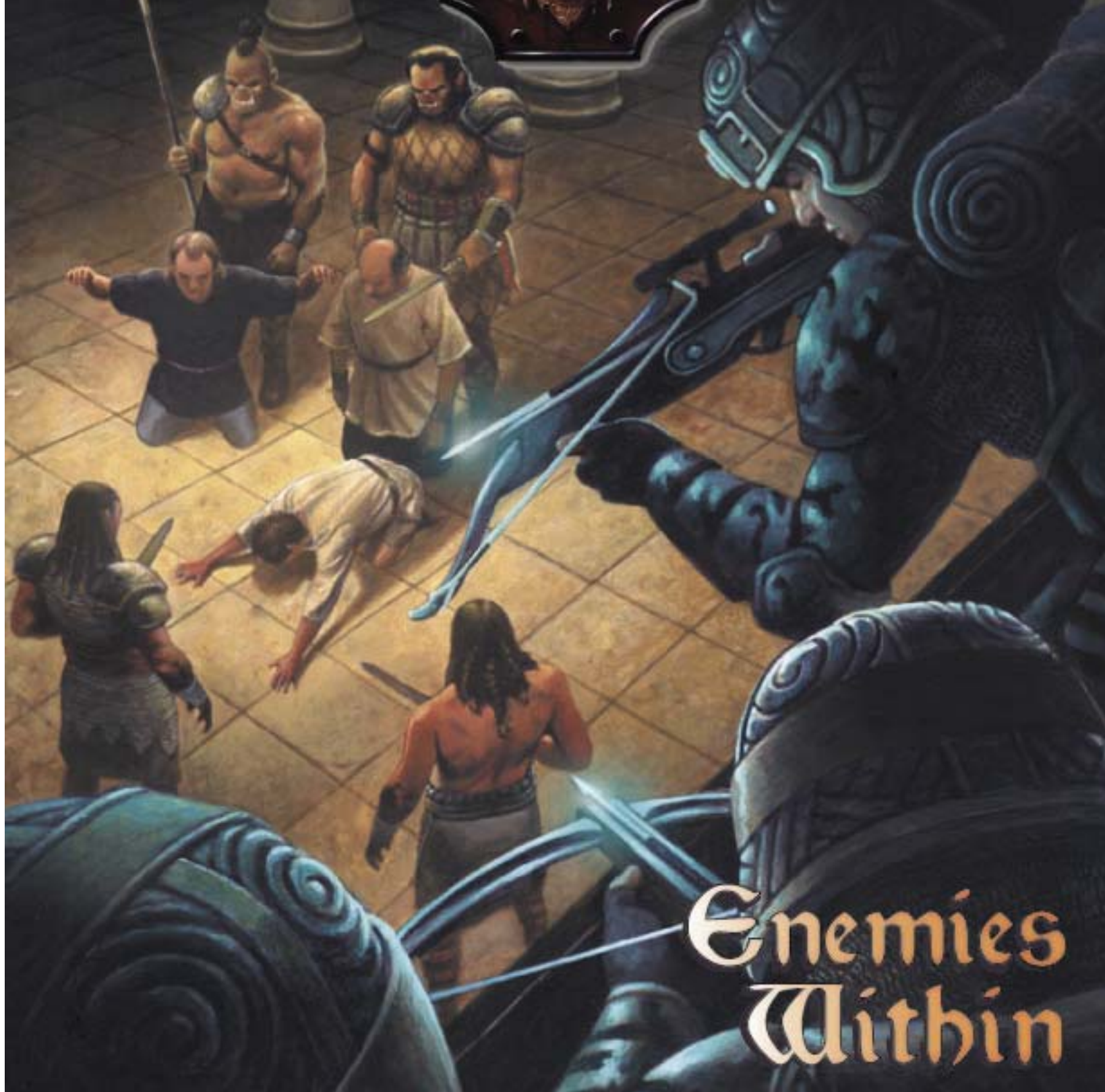


WRAITH RECON



Enemies
Within



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Enemies Within

Credits

Author
Bryan Steele

Editor
Charlotte Law

Layout
Will Chapman

Cover Art
Chris Quilliams

Wraith Recon Logo
Pascal Quidault

Interior Illustrations
Chad Sergesketter, German Ponce,
Furman and Phil Renne

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Introduction

The heavy and heady scent of incense clouds the air, placing a strange but not unfamiliar taste on Markus' tongue. This was his first night, his first meeting. It took him two months to save up his silvers and buy the bronze for his mask, another to find a friendly brother who knew how to craft it and then nearly a full season to get invited to this meeting.

His first and the most important.

Markus had always known that he was different from the other soldiers in his unit. He knew that it felt strange to him to serve an army of war in the name of a god of peace. When he first found the old book of Praxious prayers he thought that they were simply interesting. Now that he knew them all by heart and believed in what they said, his faith was unwavering.

The gathered faithful, each in their brazen masks and woven cloaks, stood in a great circle around a red-robed priest whose mask shone like gold. Markus risked a wayward glance from the floor to look upon the different masks in the room, amongst which he found several more intricate than his but a few that were less as well. It filled him with pride to think he was somehow more than they.

'In strength,' the red-robed man says through his mask, 'we gather.'

'We gather,' the group responds, Markus slightly later in his nervousness.

'With vigour,' he adds, 'we serve.'

'We serve.'

'Through power,' he snarls, 'we conquer.'

'We conquer.'

'Brothers and sisters,' the priest starts, the prayer-tone leaving his voice, 'we join again to discuss the sanctity and the mission of our lord, god Praxious. The writings say that a holy rising is coming, that we must be ready. It is our time to gather our strength, sharpen our blades and make ready the forces. Soon the All Father and his brats will be serving the might of the Brazen One again. But first, an offering.'

'An offering,' the room chimed.

'Blood of their blood,' the priest toned, pointing his finger directly at Markus, 'servant of their false lord.'

'What?' Markus blurted out, stepping back as if struck, 'Wh-what are you talking about? I do not worship, it is...it is...just a job!'

'Prove your faith,' the priest says, drawing a thin dagger of brass and handing it to Markus, 'be His vessel. Be His strength.'

'I...I...' Markus stammers, feeling the warmth in the hilt, 'I...serve...Him.'

Markus held the dagger firmly in his hands, the point etching a nervous pattern in the skin of his bare chest. He wondered if it would hurt. He wondered if Praxious would save him. He wondered if he hesitated, if the templars would just do it for him.

Most of all however, he wondered if his hesitations had already damned him...



Enemies Within

The great kingdom of Dardarrick, the Lion of Nuera, is a powerful nation that sits at the very heart of freedom and civilised life. Such a prized position unfortunately and opposing kingdoms and nations push in against them from all sides. The army and various border militias are on constant lookout for threats originating from the outside of the Dardarrian territory but there are other things that they must be wary of as well – dangers from within.

Beneath the smooth and seamless functionality of the Dardarrian way of life, throughout the cities and the rural places there is something *darker* lurking. Cults, secret clubs, elitist societies – all of these things exist under the skin of the great Lion. Like parasites sucking away at its hide, they thrive in the out of the way places and scatter at the first sign of being discovered.

Enemies Within tears away the veil from these hidden groups and reveals them to readers of the *Wraith Recon* series of gaming supplements. Whether they are straightforward enemies that work against the good will of Dardarrick, more subtle manipulators of its people or something entirely different, they are just as dangerous as any Lornish army invasion or Torresh crusade. They might be more so – they are already at home within Dardarrick's borders.

This sourcebook focuses upon the use of cults and secret societies in *Wraith Recon* games or any other chronicle based in the world of Nuera. How they work, who they work with, for and why are just some of the things this book will show to readers. It is a guide to the unknown dangers that *Wraith Recon* must deal with on its own soil – the types of threats that the public must be spared knowledge of. The book illuminates the enemy in a different light, and gives *Wraith Recon* Games Masters a host of new adventure and mission assignment ideas for use in their own games.

The Faithful and the Fanatic

Too strong is the will of men when working against those of the gods; but stronger still it becomes when obeying them.

– ancient All Father proverb

In the world of Nuera belief in the gods, major and minor, is omnipresent. No one can question the existence of the gods or the scope of their power and many of the world's peoples are driven in everything they do by their chosen religious teachings. Faith is a powerful tool; a reminder that the gods saw fit to grant life to mortals in order them to work in their collective names.

In each religious following there are three main types of worshippers – the lax, the faithful and the fanatic. Each variety of follower serves the gods in their own way. There is no one god that has a perfect congregation.

Those who are lax in their worship are primarily followers of their god in name only. They might attend the occasional service on a religious holiday or make minor prayers in times of need to their chosen deity but they primarily live their lives without the faith in mind. When holy or clerical duties are needed however, a lax worshipper will quickly remember their god and head straight to the nearest temple or shrine devoted to their fair-weather faith.

Faithful worshippers are those who remember and hold dear the teachings of their god's religion. They are loyal followers of the clergy, many times the clergy themselves and they are good representations of what their god embodies. The faithful of a god of family and health will happily serve his god as a village midwife or doctor, while the faithful serving a god of battle lives in his armour and blesses his weapons daily. Faithful worshippers are students of their gods' ways and believers in applying such beliefs to their lives but do not allow their faith to consume them.

When faith is no longer part of someone's life but instead becomes the sole reason they live they cross from being merely faithful into fanatics. Fanatics are

totally devoted to a single principle of their god; a part of the faith that they feel is irrevocably perfect and unalterable. Everything in a fanatic's life revolves around serving the will of his god – nothing else matters in the slightest. Fanatics believe that dying in the name of their faith is the greatest joy of their god and that nothing will earn them a greater seat in their idea of heaven. Fanatics are the most dangerous type of religious follower and they are found at the heart of most secret societies and cults throughout Nuera.

This chapter looks at the various faiths of Nuera and discusses the varying levels of worship that follow them. It shows the various aspects of the different churches and expands on the initial information given in the original *Wrath Recon* setting book.

The Native Religions of Nuera

Every part of Nuera's creation is attributed in some way to one or many of the gods, from the actual pouring of the Ocean from the Elemental Plane of Water to the retrieval of the continents from the Elemental Plane of Earth. Led by the All Father, the gods of Nuera travelled the universe to find all of the various pieces of the world that mortals know so well.

Although it was a collective design and partnership that gave birth to the world, each god coveted their individual portions. This led to pride, avarice and jealousy; paving the way for the War of Creation to nearly split the world.

It was not until after this war that the Godly Court realised how drastically different their beliefs were. When the Veil of Ignorance was lifted from mortal minds, the many faiths of the world took shape and the original fanes and churches of Nuera first were formed. Over the millennia many of these faiths have morphed, evolved and segmented.

The following sections of this chapter look at the major religions of Nuera and give many details about



their followers and their followers' habits. Listed are the types of faithful and fanatic worshippers, as well as a more detailed list of sins against the faith. Although not the *only* religions represented in *Wrath Recon*, the following seven faiths are the largest and most influential in the world of Nuera.

The All Father – The Creator and Defender

Arguably the oldest and most worshipped deity of Nuera, the All Father was said to be the first god to come to the barren world and see it as a blank canvas, on which to create his masterpiece. He walked the world and drew upon it where he believed his design would come together. When he was ready to begin, it was the All Father that called for the other members of his Godly Court to come to help him create the world.

As protective of his fellow gods as he is of the world's inhabitants, the All Father is a warm and loving god that protects his people and the people of his godly peers. He does so by teaching his followers that all life is precious and must be protected. He defends the sanctity of his original idea through the tenets of his faith and the true followers of the All Father detest violence and will go to great lengths to stop others from harming the innocent. No one is infallible however and even the All Father has been forced over the ages to set aside his own teachings to bring order back to his creation.

The All Father represents the better nature of all sentient life, the will and the wish to do better for your children and families. His followers are often generous and loyal to their friends and family, making sure his neighbours are protected before seeing to his own safety. Nothing is more sacred to an All Father worshipper than setting himself in the way of danger targeting others.

The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Starting a Conflict

Worshippers of the All Father consider it to be a terrible crime against the faith to take offensive actions that are not directly tied to the defence of another. Some

consider any military action that is not a border defence, to be a transgression against the All Father's teachings.

2. Abusing Magic

Magic was part of a deal made by the All Father with all of the world's mortals. Using it for selfish or ignoble reasons is a vile act that worshippers should avoid at all costs. The abuse of magic is never thought of in a good light; it is a sign of moral weakness.

3. Betraying Your Rightful Rulers

One of the greatest divine tragedies in pre-history was when Praxious tried to go against the All Father's wishes. The idea of betrayal is an anathema to the All Father and anyone who willingly goes against the right and just ruler of a culture commits a crime against him.

4. Allowing the Wounded to Suffer

When someone is in pain and suffering, it is the All Father's belief that they should be healed when at all possible. This goes for enemies as well as allies. There are some worshippers that take this tenet of the faith as an excuse to dispatch wounded enemies; whereas most believe it to mean the healing of prisoners.

5. Allowing the Nueraen Landscape to be Defiled

Although not terribly focussed on nature and the wilderness, the All Father designed Nuera from the Void and ultimately orchestrated its creation. It is a pity when his followers allow the destruction or defilement of their god's masterpiece.

6. Denying Your Faith

It has always been said that worshippers of the All Father must not ever deny their belief in him, lest they find themselves swayed by evil. This idea became a stronger sin after the long theocracy under the rule of the Praxious Hierarchy, when so many All Father clergymen had to practice behind closed doors and hope to never be asked what faith they belong to.

7. Allow Harm to Befall a Child

The defence of the innocent is at the heart of the faith and nothing is more innocent than a child. Any faithful member of the All Father's church must never stand by idly when a child is put into danger. It is considered one of the most damning sins and many clerics and

paladins will quickly set aside their lean toward defence to bring a sinner of this law to justice.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the All Father faith.

The Lax—Roughly 75% of the population of Dardarrick are worshippers of the All Father and most of them fall into the category of lax believers. Lax worshippers are generally good people that would go out of their way to help their friends, families and neighbours but not likely if it would risk their own safety or comfort level. They live their lives with the idea that everyone should have the same sorts of freedoms that they do but will not readily defend that belief.

The Faithful – The truly faithful members of the All Father’s church are stalwart defenders of their community and often volunteer their free time on the city watch or guard. Clerics and paladins alike seek out those who need their shield to hide behind or their healing touch and are well-liked amongst the people of their community. Some faithful in the All Father disapprove of the use of violence even to defend others, preferring to use magic and trickery to aid the weak.

The Fanatic – There are two types of All Father fanatics; the pacifists and the martyrs. Pacifists believe that any use of force is an offence against the All Father, who is the only being that can punish wrongdoers. Martyrs believe that the All Father will forgive them of their sins of violence and offensive behaviour so long as they target those with evil or worse intentions. Both camps of fanatics are dangerous; the former mostly to themselves and their own allies.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of the All Father capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

The All Father’s Shield [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship All Father.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *The All Father’s Shield*.

The All Father’s Shield Feat Power

The All Father approves of your defence of others, protecting you both from harm.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Minor Action Close Burst 2

Effect: Any one of your Defences and the matching Defence of all allies in range (character’s choice) is increased by +3 until you take any form of offensive action.

Special: You must take The All Father’s Shield feat to use this power.

Hands of Creation [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship All Father.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *hands of Creation*.

Hands of Creation Feat Power

Holding something of Nuera that was broken or torn, you call upon the greater design of the All Father to repair it.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Standard Action Melee Touch

Effect: You may heal 1d4 points of damage to any willing target, living or non-living.

Special: You must take the Hands of Creation feat to use this power.



The King of Beasts – Hunter God of Instincts

One of the most worshipped gods of Nuera by nonhumans, the King of Beasts came to this world from his hunting grounds in the Abyss. Answering the hail from the All Father, he leapt into this world to find its continents empty and without life. The All Father asked him to populate the world with his children and the King of Beasts opened his loincloth and dragged it across the plains and mountains. Where his essence touched the ground, the creatures of the world sprang up.

At first, Nuera had only animals; prey and predator living out their eternal dance of natural selection. It was not until the War of Creation that the King of Beasts sought to create monsters. At the beginnings of the war it was Mersmerro who stole the King's loincloth and used it to create the beasts of the sea and swamps, pitting the two gods instantly against one another. The King then had to create soldiers of his own and soon the ogres, giants and titans of the Wildlands formed his army. This is why there are so few giant-kin in the swamps of Torres and so few lizardfolk in the plains of the Wildlands.

Followers of the King of Beasts tend to be shamanic worshippers that believe that every animal of the world are a piece of their god's holiness and that their most animalistic instincts and urges are his gifts. These beliefs are not wrong and the King of Beasts thrives wherever there is a great deal of natural hunting, breeding and living. He obeys not the laws of mankind and expects his worshippers to do follow in his paw prints. Worshippers of the King feel closest to him when they are farthest from so-called 'civilised' life.

The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Trophy Hunting

To kill without reason is unnatural and disrespectful of the King's creations and doing so just to have some kind of keepsake will anger him. It is not wrong to take trophies from other kills; just the killing solely for trophies.

2. Burying the Dead

Maggots, worms and flies are as much part of the King of Beast's kingdom as lions and bears and placing a corpse in the ground to hide them from scavengers and carrion predators is denying them a potential meal.

3. Denying your Instincts

The animal urges that sometimes come over a person are reminders from the King of what he wants from his worshippers; denying what these urges beg is like ignoring a direct command from the King himself. Instincts can be sated in odd or interesting ways but they must not be put off forever.

4. Obeying a Weak Leader

It is the natural order of things to have the strong rule over the weak. Any worshipper of the King of Beasts that willingly obeys the commands from a weaker leader is fighting against the way things are supposed to be. It is alright to recognise one's position as weaker when a follower, just not in a leader.

5. Putting the Laws of Man Above the Laws of Nature

Civilisation's laws were created to reign in those people that cannot thrive outside of city walls and village barricades. Obeying them in situations where instincts are calling to a worshipper is a major travesty and many King of Beasts shamans consider it an offence worth cursing over.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the King of Beasts faith.

The Lax – Surprisingly, there are not that many lax members in the scattered tribes that worship the King of Beasts. Most worshippers are faithful by habit, not choice. Those followers that are lax in their worship are often those who have moved away from the tribal lands and are somewhat ingrained into civilised society.

The Faithful – Those who are faithful to the ways of the King of Beasts live in wild places surrounded by good hunting grounds and tribes of followers they

control with an iron command. They live to perform the duties of the animal kingdom; breed, hunt, play and kill. Faithful King followers do not recognise the legal rights of others and are actively chaotic in their lives. Leaders of many Savage Tribes in the Wildlands are faithful worshippers, especially those who are very successful in the tribal wars of that area.

The Fanatic – There are few King of Beasts fanatics in the world; most of them have pulled far away from civilisation into the deep wilderness. They are beings of instinct and passion that have little need for spoken language any longer, preferring the company of animals and monsters to those of humanoids. If they are gone long enough they seemingly become animals themselves, obeying only what the King placed in their souls.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of the King of Beasts capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

Howl of Beasts [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship King of Beasts.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *howl of Beasts*.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Howl of Beasts | Feat Power |
| <i>You fill your lungs and roar out a haunting howl that chills civilised men to the bone.</i> | |

Encounter ♦ Divine

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Standard Action | Close Burst 5 |
|------------------------|----------------------|

Effect: All targets with an Intelligence of 5 or higher that are not worshippers of the King of Beasts, Mersmerro, or the Great Dragons suffer a –2 penalty to all Defences and attack rolls (save ends).

Special: You must take the Howl of Beasts feat to use this power.

Hunting Instincts [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship King of Beasts.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *hunting instincts*.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Hunting Instincts | Feat Power |
|--------------------------|-------------------|

Your senses sharpen and focus on the scent and sounds of your quarry.

Daily ♦ Divine

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Standard Action | Personal |
|------------------------|-----------------|

Effect: You gain a +5 bonus to Nature and Perception skill checks for one hour.

Special: You must take the Hunting Instincts feat to use this power.

Matriarias – Goddess of the Home and Hearth

An old friend of the All Father, Matriarias was one of the last gods to come to Nuera. She had little to do with the creation of the world, leaving such matters to her trusted friends and peers. Instead, she did her best to protect the children of the other gods and heal as many wounds as she could manage. Anyone that came to her shelter would be helped – no questions asked. Only those who came with anger or violence in mind found that she was more than just a pretty face.

After the war was done and the All Father declared the world an armistice, Matriarias became an ally to all. Every god suffered wounds and losses in the war and the hearth goddess made it her mission to mend as many of them as she could. Occupying herself with the mending of the gods, her worshippers had to do her work in the world of mortals. Her congregation was mostly dwarves at that time; they came out from their stony fortresses to open their gates and rebuild the world. The wake of the war would have been worse if it were not for the worshippers of Matriarias.

Her worshippers are dedicated to the safety and protection that one can find inside a welcoming home. Her temples are hostels, her shrines located over the mantles of hundreds of cottages and longhouses across the lands. Her followers dedicate their lives to helping others and setting up peaceful places where anyone can get away from the dangers of the world outside. Although they do not have many friends in the more selfish or violent faiths, worshippers of the hearth goddess are rarely turned away in civilised communities.



The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Locking the Main Entrance

Matriarias teaches her followers that their homes are the temples and shrines of the faith and locking the front door to her holy places is like taking the sword from a war god's paladin. No faithful worshipper would dare lock or bar the entrance to where they are currently staying.

2. Showing Greed over Charity

The world provides enough for Matriarias' followers and choosing to hoard things that others would find more useful is a sin against her beliefs.

3. Starting Conflict in Another's Home

The home is taught to be the safest place for all who come under a peaceful banner. Any worshipper that dares to start a conflict under an invitation of hospitality risks the wrath of the hearth goddess and her followers.

4. Allowing the Wounded to go Unhealed

Matriarias could never stand by and watch others suffer during the War of Creation and she expects the same empathy and care from her worshippers. Any follower of Matriarias that dares let a wounded creature or being to go without healing – even mundane first aid – is committing a heinous sin against her faith.

5. Use of Ingested Poisons

Food and drink are sacrosanct in the faith of the hearth goddess and to ever use them in a hostile way is a crime against her beliefs. Anyone found using food or drink to deliver poisons or toxins can be expected to be challenged by Matriarias' paladins.

6. Harming an Invited Guest

An invitation to one's home is the single most important facet of trust and honour a worshipper of Matriarias can offer someone. To break the sanctity of such an offer with violence is punishable in the faith by excommunication for a common member; for clergy – the punishment is death.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the Matriarias faith.

The Lax – Most Dardarrians keep a small blue candle burning over their hearth to honour the goddess, even if they do not hold her teachings as laws in their everyday lives. She has a very large following in dwarven communities but most do not hold by her tenets *all* of the time. It is very easy to help those you invite into your home but most lax worshippers are not ready to throw wide their doors and let any strangers come and eat at their tables.

The Faithful – The faithful of Matriarias are some of the finest people of Nuera to ever come across when hungry, tired or wounded. They will gladly give anything of their own that they do not need to a troubled wanderer and wherever they are staying is as good as a church for those who need blessing or healing. They can be very defensive of their beliefs and if one asks an offender to 'go outside', they should be ready for one hell of a fight.

The Fanatic – A plentiful number of Matriarias' worshippers become fanatics over the course of their lives; as they see the world get darker and more violent around them they turn to their goddess' teachings to get them through. Most fanatics of the faith are vagabonds and nomads with little to show for themselves, choosing instead to give everything to others in order to help make the world a better place. Fanatical paladins of Matriarias seek out troublemakers and those who break hospitality specifically to challenge them in open combat – culling their kind from society one at a time.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of Matriarias capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

Hearth Remedies [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Matriarias.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *hearth remedies*.

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Hearth Remedies | Feat Power |
|------------------------|-------------------|

The hearth goddess enchants your ladle, stove and oven to create wonderful foods that heal wounds.

Daily ♦ Divine

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Standard Action | Melee Touch |
|------------------------|--------------------|

Target: One meal.

Effect: You spend a healing surge to prepare a meal that allows up to six beings eating it to benefit from the *Lay on Hands* Paladin Feature when they eat it.

Special: You must take the *Hearth Remedies* feat to use this power; additionally the meal must be eaten within an hour of being prepared to have any effect.



Stalwart Defender [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Matriarias.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *stalwart defender*.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Stalwart Defender | Feat Power |
|--------------------------|-------------------|

You stand firm in front of a home's entrance, becoming a wall of faith in your defence of the structure.

Encounter ♦ Divine

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Standard Action | Personal |
|------------------------|-----------------|

Effect: You gain a +3 bonus to your AC and Fortitude Defences until you move from the square you currently occupy.

Special: You must take the *Stalwart Defender* feat to use this power.

Mersmerro – Swamp Lord of the Ocean

Diving into the newly poured Ocean of Nuera during Creation from his birthplace on the Elemental Plane of Water, Mersmerro answered the All Father's call early in the process of creating the world. When he arrived he was wearing the mask of the Prey, setting him into a peaceful state of creation and shaping of the landscape under the Ocean. When the King of Beasts arrived however, his mask slipped and he became the Predator – setting his sights on hunting the creatures of the land. He stole the mystic cloth of the King and used it to carry part of the Ocean onto the land, creating the swamps and marshes of the world – and spawned the world's swamp predators.



These beasts and hungry marsh humanoids were the first worshippers and they embodied Mersmerro's current state fully. The All Father forced the Swamp Lord to return the loincloth so Creation could be finished and the battles between the King's children and the Swamp Lord's grew fierce and bloody. Eventually the tides turned once more and Mersmerro donned his Prey mask, retreating beneath the waves and leaving the King's dry land to the dirtwalkers. The marshes and swamps would always be a buffer between the two kingdoms, with Mersmerro's worshippers thriving there to stop the King of Beast from seeking out the Swamp Lord under the Ocean.

Worship of Mersmerro is different from any other type of faith. It is a cyclical belief system that has its holiest of clergy change from introverted 'prey' aspects that build villages and create community to 'predator' crusaders that believe their god can only be sated through the vanquishing of lesser beings that were not born with claws and fangs. The entire kingdom of Torres is the home and central source of the Mersmerro faith, as it is covered in the marshes and swamps that the Swamp Lord once slithered and swam in before the Dawning. It is no wonder why 90% of the Torresh population are faithful members of the faith; many of which are hunting down the other 10% as part of their holy right.

The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Seeking Conquest When the Mask is Prey Ascendant

During the months or years that the high priest(ess) shows Mersmerro's mask is that of the Prey, anyone found starting a crusade will be flogged and ordered to make amends with the community.

2. Forging Peace When the Mask is Predator Ascendant

While the high priest(ess) shows the Swamp Lord's mask to be of the Predator, all faithful worshippers found to be playing the role of Prey will be fed to his children (crocodiles).

3. Harming a Child of Mersmerro

Crocodiles and alligators are said to be the direct descendants of the Swamp Lord, his children on this world. Worshippers that are caught bringing them to

harm are de-toothed painfully and ritually, making them eternally into 'Prey'.

4. Dishonouring a Foe Through Infidel Combat

Mersmerro teaches that the body of his worshippers is their temple and that anything worth doing is worth doing with the burn in their muscles and the aches in their bones. 'Infidel combat' is any form of ranged warfare that does not use the muscle or soul to propel the attacks; magic and thrown weaponry are fine but the use of bows and crossbows is punishable by severed fingers.

5. Dishonouring the Art of the Hunt

Hunting for food or supplies is a necessity in the swamp, especially when on the path of the Predator. Sport or trophy hunting that does not see further use out of the kill is a sin. Worshippers caught doing this are tied to a black oak in the swamp and left for the natural beasts to punish accordingly.

6. Taking Action at Midday

Mersmerro was known to bask in the high sunlight every day, recharging his warmth and vigour through the bright beams. Worshippers of the Swamp Lord are expected to do the same or at least take on a half-hour of inactivity each day at noon to symbolise this period of holy rest.

7. Failing to Bless Any Live Meal

Many of Mersmerro's worshippers are carnivorous (lizardfolk, troglodytes and so on) and frequently hunt and eat live prey. Those that do must always say a quick blessing either before dining or before the hunt begins to give the spiritual portion of the meal to the Swamp Lord. Failure to do so is said to bring about spiritual emptiness and physical intestinal distress.

8. Acknowledging the Equality of Any Foreign God

Mersmerro is a proud and narcissistic god that believes in his own superiority on Nuera. With so much of the world covered by his Ocean and no other god claiming any sovereignty in it, he teaches his worshippers of their religious domination. Any worshipper of Mersmerro that acknowledges any other god's faith to be an equal peer of the Swamp Lord – even in jest – will find his life forfeit in the eyes of his brethren.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the Mersmerro faith.

The Lax – Due to the zealous nature of most Mersmerro worshippers, the faith does not normally tolerate lax followers. When someone begins to pay homage to the Swamp Lord, they are often brought deeper into the fold out of fear of their fellow congregation members!

The Faithful – Those who account themselves among the faithful to Mersmerro are devout in their following of the tenets and codes laid down by the high priest(ess). They are considered conservative by their fellow worshippers but many outside faiths might group Mersmerro’s faithful with common fanatics. They gladly follow the path of Prey or Predator as needed or directed and believe that physical strength and spiritual power should be shown to the world whenever they can, making them more dangerous than the fanatics of some less ‘visceral’ religions.

The Fanatic – Many of Mersmerro’s worshippers fall into the role of fanatic solely because of their willingness to do morally questionable things in the Swamp Lord’s name. Crusading jihads, village genocides, humanoid sacrifices; all of these things have precedence found in the core of Mersmerroism. These oftentimes troublesome practices separate the ‘chosen few’ in the congregation from merely the devoted.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of Mersmerro capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

Hunter’s Grin [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Mersmerro.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *hunter’s grin*.

Hunter’s Grin

Feat Power

The Predator’s mask is strong in you, as shown by your ability to open your mouth wide to reveal rows of serrated fangs.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Standard Action

Personal

Effect: You turn your mouth into a deadly weapon that inflicts 1d6+2 points of damage upon a successful unarmed attack, but you are incapable of speech while in effect. You must spend a healing surge to revert back to your regular mouth shape.

Special: You must take the Hunter’s Grin feat to use this power.

Prey’s Escape [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Mersmerro.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *prey’s escape*.

Prey’s Escape

Feat Power

Your connection to the Prey mask is strong, allowing you to slip away from harm like the swamp shrew leaps out of the crocodile’s jaws!.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Immediate Interrupt

Personal

Trigger: An enemy scores a hit on you with a natural or unarmed attack.

Effect: You instantly shift 2d6 squares away in any direction, ignoring opportunity attacks during this movement.

Special: You must take the Prey’s Escape feat to use this power.

Sacrificial Blessings [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Mersmerro.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *sacrificial blessings*.



Sacrificial Blessings

Feat Power

You dedicate the killing of a sentient being to the Swamp Lord, sharing the power of the bloodletting with the god in order to strengthen your connection with him.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Immediate Interrupt

Melee Weapon

Trigger: Inflicting the killing blow on any non-minion being with an Intelligence 5 or higher.

Effect: You regain either a healing surge or the ability to re-use a Daily power you have already used that day.

Special: You must take the Sacrificial Blessings feat to use this power.



Mortessal – Queen of Darkness and the Damned

The All Father knew that his design for Nuera could not be complete if it were built without some kind of ending to its cycle of life. It was not his expertise to bring about death and decay, so he called upon his youngest sister Mortessal to do so. Slipping silently into the world upon his request, she brought death

and darkness to Nuera; without her the world would be a forever bright and immortal place of stagnation and complacency.

The other gods did not take well to her arrival, especially when she began to cull their growing flocks. Although the King of Beasts saw no harm in what she was tasked to do, Mersmerro and Praxious despised her role – instead wanting their creations to last forever. The War of Creation saw their faiths clash terribly and the two more powerful gods inflicted terrible losses upon the Queen of Darkness. Her living worshippers suffered terribly and Mortessal made a hard choice in order to replenish her defenders – she brought Undeath to Nuera. Her ranks of minions exploded with the risen warriors taken from all over the world and soon her attackers were buffeted back. It was a terrible price this world had to pay; she placed the undead in her reign and forced all of Nuera to weather them for the rest of time.

Mortessal's worshippers are low in number and many do so behind closed doors and in secret. She is considered a 'cult goddess' and only those unwavering in their faith would ever dare say they worship her openly. Her faith teaches that death is the ultimate state of life and that her most (un)holy of followers are granted eternal 'life' in her armies of the risen. Although she has a strong following amongst the drow due to her connection with darkness, her most powerful priests and priestesses are almost all skull lords and liches.

The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Destroying Uncontrolled Undead

Mortessal teaches her followers to command the power of undeath. To bring an end to something that should be controlled and brought into the fold is a minor sin against her. It should be noted that it is NOT a sin to destroy a currently controlled minion.

2. Allying with a Praxious Worshipper

Praxious takes a very firm stance against the faith of Mortessal, making him and his followers the primary enemy the cult of Mortessal has to face. Choosing to ally (and not summarily betray) a worshipper of the Brazen One is a crime against the Queen – and punishable by zombification.

3. Raising a Priest of Another Faith

Undeath, even that found in a mindless minion, is a gift that cannot be wasted on those already dedicated to other faiths. Clergy (clerics and paladins) of other religions should not be granted the boon of eternal unlife. Followers of Mortessal should not meddle in the afterlives of other gods' clergy, lest they create a powerful undying servant for a different faith.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the Mortessal faith.

The Lax – Choosing to worship Mortessal is never a light decision – there are NO lax worshippers in this faith.

The Faithful – Those who hold the Queen of Darkness as their patron goddess rarely do so openly, choosing instead to meet in secret shrines found in cemeteries and mausoleums to discuss the nature of death and how to defeat it. They do not see death as the end of anything but rather as the entrance to another set of experiences altogether. They tend to be fearless warriors and warlocks, many of which surround themselves with necromantic trappings and the risen dead.

The Fanatic – The worshippers of Mortessal that follow her tenets without waver are on a lifelong quest to achieve immortality as a member of the undead legions that make up the risen armies of the Queen of Darkness. They control teeming masses of mindless undead and use them to increase their dark and amoral power bases. Comprised mostly of clerics and warlocks, Mortessal's fanatics are often the targets of heroic adventurers looking to smite evil.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of Mortessal capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

Enthral Undead [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity or Infernal Pact class feature, must worship Mortessal.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *enthral undead*.

Enthral Undead

Feat Power

You enslave the forces that animate undead flesh, turning them into servants of your will and desires.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Implement

Standard Action

Close burst 2

(5 at 11th level, 8 at 21st level)

Target: Each mindless Undead creature in burst.

Attack: Wisdom vs. Will

Hit: Target(s) must pass a saving throw or become your minion for one year and a day.

Miss: Target(s) are immune to further uses of Enthral Undead.

Special: You must take the Enthral Undead feat to use this power.

Praxious – The Brazen God of Self

Praxious came to the world when he overheard the All Father inviting the other gods to his project, slipping in behind the King of Beasts. At first he enjoyed the freedom of running unfettered across the world but soon he grew tired of seeing the same things everywhere – so he began to create tribes of men that he planned on pitting against one another for his own entertainment. The All Father was not pleased and Praxious was told to let his creations evolve in their own time.

The War of Creation was soon upon them and Praxious ignored the All Father and enjoyed testing the strength of his various creations against one another; that is, until he ran out of foes in his own stable. He then turned his creations against those of the other gods', hoping to prove his superiority. His creations did well in the war, especially against the living followers of Mortessal but yet another ruling by the All Father came down and ruined his ongoing test of arms.

Feeling thwarted and blocked of his freedom of choice, Praxious became the voice of dissent in the council of gods, always questioning the All Father's decisions and teaching his followers to be strong and free. His revolutionary ways came to a head when he tried to lift the Veil of Ignorance without the consent of the All Father, letting a handful of dragons out from under it before getting caught. His following exile only



tempered his lust for independence from the other gods – turning the worshippers of Praxious into a religious supremacy group that holds their sovereignty above all other things.

The most powerful faction within the greater Praxious faith, Tomarsson's Cult, is looked into at great detail in a later chapter of this book.

The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Suffering the Risen to Exist

Praxious teaches that undeath is a vile condition – false strength given to failed flesh. Any worshipper of the Brazen One that sees an undead creature must do what it can to destroy it utterly. This is why the faiths of Praxious and Mortessal are never at peace with one another.

2. Following the Orders of the Weak

Praxious went so far as to stand against the will of the All Father because he felt his decisions were meek and poorly thought out. Brazen worshippers are expected to never follow blindly those who are considered weak or inferior. This is often determined by physical strength alone but magical or spiritual prowess can figure into this mentality as well.

3. Doing Something for Another Unpaid or Unrewarded

Charity work is something that the weak use to stay alive in a world that would otherwise devour them and Praxious teaches that nothing is truly free. Even the spoils of war are bought with strength and sweat and the idea of giving anything away without some kind of recompense is sinful. Even if that price is paid without the payer knowing, it *must* be paid.

4. Refusing to Preach the Brazen Ideal

All members of the Brazen One's religion are not only expected to serve him and his ways loyally but they are also to try to evangelise to others about it. A faith is only as strong as its congregation and adding new members to Praxious' is key to his eventually domination of Nuera. Any clergyman that goes 13

days without preaching the strengths of Praxious to another faith's worshipper will need to give himself three lashes in contrition for his 'laziness'.

5. Being Defeated in Single Combat by an Outsider

Strength of faith and strength of arms are considered synonymous in the church of Praxious and deadly challenges between single combatants are commonplace. When these duels take place between a Brazen follower and an outsider, it is a shameful sin to be defeated by someone who does not have the strength of Praxious behind them.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the Praxious faith.

The Lax – At the time of the Dardarrick Theocracy controlled by Hierophant Tomar, most of the kingdom's population could be considered lax worshippers. They were forced to attend masses and holiday gatherings and paid lip service to the Brazen One in order to avoid his templars' wrath. Now that Dardarrick is no longer controlled by the Hierophant, there are few lax worshippers left – most have either become faithful cultists or turned back to more accepted faiths.

The Faithful – Those who are members of the Cult of Praxious within Dardarrick are risking a great deal to call the Brazen One their patron god, so they must have more than a little faith in his teachings. They are almost always physically powerful and many of them live martial lives in town watches and the armed forces. What he loses out in compassion, Praxious makes up for in physical power and prowess.

The Fanatic – Many of the current Praxious worshippers in Dardarrick are fanatics. They follow the words of the obsessed Tomarsson; meeting secretly in hidden places and offering bloody sacrifices to the Brazen One to appease their current situation. These devotees might practice their religion in secret to avoid the All Father's spies but many of them are ready to fly their colours – damned be to anyone who would say otherwise.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of the Praxious capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

Brazen Defiance [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Praxious.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *brazen defiance*.

Brazen Defiance *Feat Power*

Your will becomes as unyielding as the metal in your blade, refusing to allow others' to change your position – physically or otherwise.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Your Will Defence increases by +5 and you may not be pushed until you willingly move from the square you occupy.

Special: You must take the Brazen Defiance feat to use this power.

Strength of the Free [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Praxious.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *strength of the free*.

Strength of the Free *Feat Power*

With a defying roar you put your faith behind a single attack, inflicting staggering damage on your target.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Standard Action **Melee Weapon**

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: Your attack inflicts maximum damage and pushes the target back 1d3 squares.

Miss: Your attack overextends you; you are stunned for the remainder of the combat turn.

Special: You must take the Strength of the Free feat to use this power.

Vulka – Father of the Forgefires

When the All Father drew his design for Nuera, he knew that he would need a good smithy to draw up the mountains and pound the trees into place. Gems, ore and stone would need to be forged from nothingness and he knew only one fellow god he trusted with this task – his younger but larger brother, Vulka. Called from the Elemental Plane of Fire, the black-skinned god arrived and instantly began to forge the world how the All Father instructed him.

Creating two families of sons to help him in his work, the fire giants to work with the larger projects and the azer dwarves to handle things too small for their hands, Vulka helped his brother create the world. Unfortunately for him, the War of Creation ruined much of his work and pitted his two lines of sons against one another – no doubt due to Praxious' meddling. Like a fire being stoked with a poker, Vulka went to war with his larger sons in tow. The azer dwarves were told to stay behind and keep making weapons for their big brothers, a command that would later lead to their entire race's slavery at the hand of the fire giants.

Vulka's anger never cooled and worshippers that follow his teachings are often seen in the same state of choler. They are hard-arsed warriors that believe in the strength of their crafts and the durability of their faith. The majority of Vulka followers are Aphaxusian fire giants and azer dwarves, making the clergy of the Forge God a formidable force despite their gifts of the faith.

The Hierarchy of Sins

1. Using a Weapon of Wood

Wood is taught to be fuel for fire or planks for ships and nothing more. Any worshipper found using a weapon made of wood will soon find themselves disarmed – as a fellow worshipper burns it to cinders.

2. Agreeing Without Debate

A hasty answer to a question or inquiry is seen as a weak one in the church of Vulka. Worshippers must



at least force the inquirer to explain himself and his reasoning before giving an answer. The Forge God never undertakes tasks that he has not at least thought through and a good argument keeps things honest between friends.

3. Allowing a Forged Item to be Sundered

What a follower of Vulka crafts is precious and any worshipper that dares allow one of these items to be broken or destroyed without trying to defend it commits a heinous sin against the faith. The only way to make amends for such a crime against the church is to spend countless hours at the forge anvil recreating the broken object – getting no food, drink or sleep until that is accomplished.

4. Never Ignore an Iron Challenge

A worshipper of the Forge God will *never* back down from a challenge stamped or written on a sheet of worked iron. This is a very old tenet in the faith and anyone that takes the time to work out the process and deliver it to a Vulka worshipper knows that the challenge will be accepted – lest they be exiled from the church altogether for their cowardice.

The Different Worshipper Attitudes

The following are general attitudes of the three types of follower in the Vulka faith.

The Lax – Almost every metalworker in the world keeps a small coal and obsidian desktop altar in his workshop, touching their hammer to it before starting any project. All of these smithies may not be faithful to the church's teachings but paying some homage to the birthplace of all forges and metalworking is a good way to help stave off forge accidents and tempering cracks.

The Faithful – Mainly made up of fire giants and azer dwarves, there are a good number of Vulkites in Torres, Lorn and Parennax. They are without a doubt the most prolific and profitable metalworkers in those lands due to their connection to the Forge God but are not necessarily Aphaxusian. The belief in Vulka is

surely strongest on the continent of Sando but it is not alien anywhere that forges see metal worked.

The Fanatic – There are not many true fanatics in the church of Vulka. His teachings are somewhat standard and give room for devout worshippers but are perhaps too strict and standardised to find overzealous behaviour in large numbers. Those who do show fanatical belief in the Forge God tend to live at their forge's side, never to leave it, creating streams of masterful items that put other smiths to shame.

New Channel Divinity Feats

The following are new Channel Divinity feats and their associated powers usable by Clerics, Paladins and any other character belonging to the faith of Vulka capable of choosing *Divinity* feats.

Emberfist [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Vulka.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *emberfist*.

Emberfist

Feat Power

The skin from your hand blows away like ash, revealing blue-hot embers in place of bones as you reach out to set something ablaze.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Fire

Standard Action

Melee Touch

Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude

Hit: Target suffers 2d10 fire-based damage the first round, 1d6 ongoing fire each turn thereafter (save ends).

Miss: Target suffers half damage and avoids ongoing damage.

Special: You must take the Emberfist feat to use this power.

Forge Hands [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Vulka.

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *forge hands*.

Forge Hands *Feat Power*

Your hands blacken, but a nimbus of red light surrounds them. Metal in your hands is like clay, allowing you to shape it almost effortlessly.

Daily ♦ Divine

Standard Action **Melee Touch**

Target: One metallic object.

Effect: You spend a healing surge and 1d6 hours moulding a non-magical metallic object in your hands. At the end of that time you must pass an Arcana skill check (DC 20), allowing you to do any one of the following things to the object if successful. Failure destroys the item. An item may only have one of these effects in place at a time.

- ♦ Reduce its AC bonus or Damage by -2
- ♦ Increase its AC bonus or Damage by +1
- ♦ Add interesting designs or art, doubling its effective worth
- ♦ Turn one item into another of the same relative size (sword into crowbar, helmet into mask, etc.)

Special: You must take the Forge Hands feat to use this power, gold is too soft a metal to be worked with *forge hands*.



The Interaction of Faiths

The table overleaf shows the general feelings between the various Nueraen faiths. This is not to say that there are not Vulkites that are not allies with Mersmerrons but that the vast majority of their congregations are quite the opposite.

A – Allied; these faiths often seek each other out for companionship and aid.

T – Tolerated; these faiths can co-exist and sometimes help one another in most circumstances.

I – Ignored; these faiths tend to try to avoid one another and only work together in strange circumstances.

E – Enmity; these faiths are opposed to one another and would much rather work against one another than together.

Common Deities in the World of Nuera

The *Wraith Recon* game setting is unique in its own way but it is also a part of the larger universe of information presented in the various Dungeons and Dragons 4E sourcebooks. Although Nuera has several unique faiths to be worshipped and potentially battled against, the common faiths found in the *D&D 4E Player’s Handbook* do exist in some form and fashion within the world if the Games Master wishes them to be.

We will not be detailing any major cults or churches dedicated to these common D&D 4E gods and deities but we would be remiss if we did not at least mention their roles and relationships in Nuera.

The following is a quick list of the common gods of D&D 4E and how they are perceived in *Wraith Recon*.

The Good and Unaligned Deities

Avandra – The goddess of change is strong on Parenax and the Wildlands.

Bahamut – Considered secondary to the belief of the All Father in Dardarrick, Bahamut is still well-worshipped wherever goodness is held in high regard.



Faithful and the Fanatic

| | All Father | King of Beasts | Matriarias | Mersmerro | Mortessal | Praxious | Vulka |
|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------|
| All Father | – | A | A | T | I | E | A |
| King of Beasts | A | – | I | E | I | T | I |
| Matriarias | A | I | – | T | E | E | T |
| Mersmerro | T | E | T | – | I | A | E |
| Mortessal | I | I | E | I | – | E | I |
| Praxious | E | T | E | A | E | – | I |
| Vulka | A | I | T | E | I | I | – |

Corellon – The god of spring is strong in Torres and Dardarrick.

Erathis – Although a separate entity, many feel that Erathis is just another face of the All Father in most areas of Nuera.

Ioun – There is not much worship of Ioun on Nuera, except by a select number of clerics in the Brotherhood of Magnus.

Kord – Many former followers of Praxious that turn away in order to be more good-aligned turn to Kord.

Melora – The sea goddess goes without worshippers on Nuera, as Mersmerro's followers hunt her clergy down as soon as they crop up.

Moradin – Considered an enemy of Vulka, the two smithing gods are constantly trying to 'outforge' one another.

Pelor – The sun god finds many worshippers in Dardarrick; he has small temples in many Dardarrian cities.

The Raven Queen – Often thought of as the twin sister of Mortessal, this goddess is not often regarded at all where the Queen of Darkness now reigns.

Sehanine – Another hunted faith, the clerics of Sehanine are hunted and sacrificed by the followers of the Nueraen goddess of night, Mortessal.

The Evil Deities

Asmodeus – The god of the Hells is not openly worshipped on Nuera but small demonic cults exist in Lorn and Torres.

Bane – Strong in the Wildlands, Bane is an ally of Praxious from the days of the War of Creation.

Groomsh – Many orcs follow the King of Beasts but still owe their original creation to the One-Eyed God.

Loth – Very strong amongst the various houses of Drow, the faiths of Loth and Mortessal have a dark alliance written in the shadows of Zritec.

Tiamat – Although some kobolds worship aspects of the Dragon Queen, her true followers worship her eldest children in the Uramandi Empire – The Great Dragons.

Torog – With no real Underdark to speak of, the god of jailers has only the catacombs of Zritec to find worshippers.

Vecna – Sometimes called the 'Father of Mortessal', his is the only faith that the Queen of Darkness does not try to usurp power from. Even so, his shrines are few and far between.

Zehir – The only temple to the snake god is found on Swordtooth Hill, where the yuan-ti of Torres do his dark and sinister bidding.

A History Of Secrets

When the world can handle the weight of its own mistakes, it will remember them and tremble.

– writings from the Tearing of the Veil

Nuera has long been a world both troubled and elated by the actions of its peoples. Entire kingdoms have been called to war as many times as they have had reasons to celebrate their victories. It is a world that has seen its share of ups and downs and the various people and creatures that live upon it have had to adjust their lives throughout time to accommodate for them. Throughout this tumultuous past, Nuera has seen a lot of activity in its cultures, kingdoms and communities.

Yet there was even more going on behind the scenes, under the cover of secrecy.

Secret cults, hidden societies and other undercover sects have been active in the shadows for eons. Whether it is the dark machinations of Mortessal's Black Circle or the secret actions of the Wraith Recon organisation,

Nuera has many hidden players moving their pawns around the proverbial game board. Even in the time of the gods this was the case and their mortal creations learned well from their immortal lords...

This chapter is a timeline similar to the 'Accepted History and Timeline of Nuera' found in the main *Wraith Recon* sourcebook. Instead of detailing major events that shaped Nuera as a world, this timeline focuses upon the events and activities of forces behind the scenes – the types of secret events that Wraith Recon specialise in dealing with because no one else can.

These events are known to very few; with several elven scholars only being able to cite one-third of what is listed here. We have included them not as a way to educate characters but rather as a resource for readers to better understand what some of the cults and secret societies in this sourcebook were, are or could be capable of.

- 1,000,000 YBD** The rise of the All Father and his Godly Court; Praxious sneaks into the world and begins to create warring factions to battle one another.
- 500,000 YBD** Mortessal forms her *Black Circle* of Liche Priests and Dread Warlocks, making enemies of nearly every other god and goddess in the Nueraen Pantheon.
- 200,000 YBD** Vulka's *Lords of the Forge* begin work on a weapon for the Forge God to wield against Mersmerro, taking almost 100,000 years to complete.
- 100,500 YBD** Vulka nearly kills Mersmerro with 'Magmannon', an sword made of the world's molten core; but is stopped by Praxious.
- 70,000 YBD** The illithids (mind flayers) of the *Xuchot Enclave* are somehow immune to the All Father's Veil of Ignorance, allowing them to chronicle the truth behind the pre-history of the world.
- 50,000 YBD** Praxious learns of a tiny rip in the Veil and chooses to free the mortals from their mental fugue instead of listening to the All Father. When he did so, the *Great Dragons* escape through the widened tear and fly away to safety. The All Father catches Praxious and repairs the widened tear, exiling Praxious but is not aware of the escaped demi-gods.



A History Of Secrets

The Great Dragons retreat to hidden lairs while the Godly Court argues over the All Father's judgment of Praxious, sparing them any punishment for escaping the Veil.

- 49,000 YBD** Mersmerro secretly gives Praxious a place to hide under his waves, forging a bond between the two gods and keeping Praxious near enough to his people to continue teaching them whenever the Godly Court was not looking.
- 32,000 YBD** The first of Nuera's warforged leave Vulka's workshop to go make lives for themselves, forming the *Dei Pro Machina* – a self-reliant culture of living machines living at the world's north pole, on a metallic continent they call Hyrr.
- 10,000 YBD** The eladrin of the *Wyhlder Tribe* separate themselves from the territories of the King of Beasts and sail to the island continent of Parenmax, bringing society to the packs of wild dragonborn.
- 1,500 YBD** A ritual goes very wrong within the Dei Pro Machina and the Hyrric Tempest explodes out from the ether, segregating the area from the rest of the world. All other warforged elsewhere in the world collapse into a torpid state.
- 1,000 YBD** The All Father disbands the Godly Court and the gods turn inward toward their many creations to help guide them in the last millennia of Ignorance. The base religions of Nuera are officially created and clerics of the faiths begin to spontaneously appear throughout the lands. Even Praxious emerges from the deep to help usher in his own churches, avoiding the watchful eye of the All Father and his allies.
- 100 YBD** The Great Dragons come out of hiding, taking advantage of the gods' attentions turned elsewhere. They find the worshippers of the demonic entity Uru and join with them in the creation of a new and powerful empire – the Uramandi.
- 0** The All Father lifts the Veil of Ignorance and mortals are given awareness of their own magical potential. The boundaries of the Nueraen kingdoms are drawn by the gods' children and ratified by holy doctrine. Praxious is not given a kingdom due to his exile, forcing him to raise small followings all over the world instead.
- 25** The Patriarch Lorn is approached by a masked emissary of the *Bronze Fist*, a fanatical cult of Praxious, who leads him away from the teachings of Matriarias and into a series of inter-clan wars that eventually make him into King Lorn. The Bronze Fist takes over as Lorn's chief religious advisor of the king and an army is built up to strike at the All Father's territory next.
- 45** Matriarias' chosen kingdom of family clans taken from her, she is forced to rebuild her churches and clergy under the protection of the All Father's realm – the 'kingdom' of Dar. She warns the All Father about Praxious' takeover of Lorn but the defence-minded god chooses to wait and see what will happen.

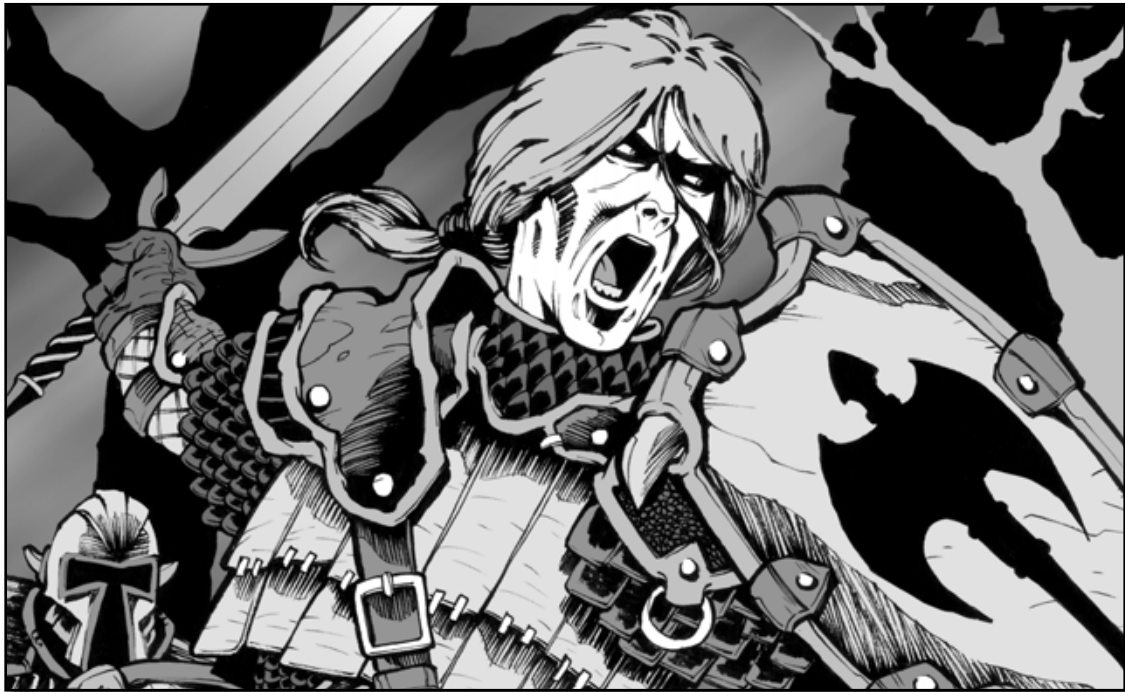
- 50 Praxious' puppets in Lorn take Dar by force and immediately begin to reshape the kingdom according to Lornish ideals. Matriarias secretly empowers her paladins to become the *Hearth Guard*; protecting the weak from the Lornish soldiers.



- 85 The *League of Shamans* in Torres successfully defend their northwestern borders from a tribe of giant-kin savages from the Wildlands but suffer terrible losses. The clergy of Mersmerro see what is happening in Dar through the eyes of the Prey mask and send emissaries to the Lornish to remind them what good friends the Swamp Lord and the Brazen One were known to be. King Lorn accepts, knowing that the swamp kingdom could not stand against his might if he chose to conquer them too.
- 88 The fire-giant Aphax, a heralded member of the Lords of the Forge, enters in a trading agreement with the powerful kingdom of Lorn. Knowing that the Lornish were already allies with the thrice-damned followers of Mersmerro, the fire-giant king bit back his pride and made trade agreements with *both* of them. This brought the *Smoking Embers of Aphax* into Torresh lands, where they continue to be a threat to Mersmerron worshippers.
- 190 The Hearth Guard choose a young man, Darrick, to protect and nurture through secret operatives into becoming a faithful follower of the All Father. Matriarias is scolded by the All Father for her worshippers' meddling. Darrick grows into the first paladin of the All Father, a warrior in a faith that detests violence.



- 208 The uprising in Lorn-controlled Dar sees the deaths of several major Praxious worshippers from the Bronze Fist, Hearth Guard and the newly-trained paladins of the All Father. Assassins from Mortessal's *Twilight Society* of drow and shadar-kai are responsible for several of the highest profile ones – including the dart that weakened Darrick enough to be killed by Lornish troops.



- 212 Dardarrian territory pushes the Torresh high priest to say Mersmerro wears the mask of Predator, calling the *Sancoatyli* up from their homes and villages. A little-known brotherhood of devout Mersmerron warriors, the Dardarrian explorers and would-be expansionists go missing while on Torresh land.
- 220 Anonymous members of the Bronze Fist convince the Lornish King to invade eastern Dardarrick.
- 230 The Bronze Fist withdraws their support of Lorn after the Dardarrick counter-attack, blending in with the Dardarrian troops as they return home.
- 295 The Wyhlder Tribe helps the earth titan Granix assume the title of warlord over a huge savage warhost and convinces him to attack Dardarrick; thus begins the cycle of attacks upon Dardarrick's borders.
- 318 Hearth Guard representatives sent to Torres to aid them in fighting the new threat of dragonborn pirates from Parennax are met with resistance and violent refusals.
- 428 Several members of the inner circle of the Xuchot Enclave come to Rardarri on allied drow ships from Zritec. They created a subterranean home near the Torresh city of Sandy Launch, using it as a base of operations for their ancient machinations.

- 500 Uesificus, a demi-god great dragon, takes the form of an elf and creates the elite *One Thousand Masts*, a seemingly neutral fleet of trading ships. Within his fleet he hides his true self and learns all he can from the peoples of Rardarri for his brothers and sisters.



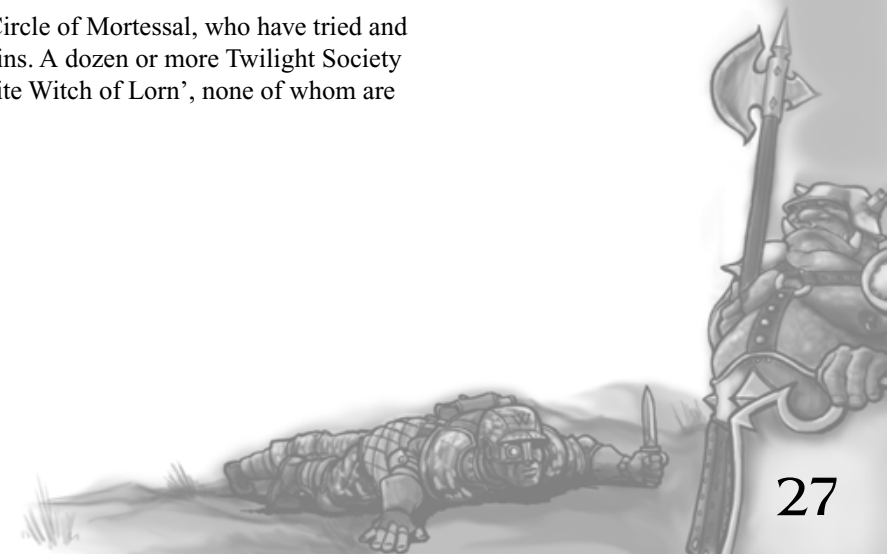
- 695 The All Father sends dreams to the Guildmaster Baestra, leading to the discovery of the Omnicieix – one of Vulka's finest creations from the Age of Creation.
- 898 Agents of the Bronze Fist work on both sides of the Lornish border to harbour ill feelings toward the Dardarrian people, making sure to cover their tracks and make it look like 'natural aggression'.
- 950 An Aphaxusian trade galley successfully defends itself against a powerful Parennaxian pirate ship, discovering several strange 'machine-men' in its hold. These warforged samples are claimed by the Lords of the Forge and reanimated by the Sando efreets. Knowledge of the new warforged is kept from King Bandovaur and the first wave of re-engineered mercenaries is sent anonymously to the mainland.
- 995 The *Father's Stern Hand*, a cell of martyr-paladins take up their swords against Lorn in the All Father's name. The Dardarrian church of the All Father shies away from their fanatical actions, especially when the war takes members into Torres on what the Leader of the Faith calls a 'political mistake that befouls our souls'.
- 1,000 The church of the All Father recalls all clergy from the front lines of what they believed was a wrongful and offensive war.



A History Of Secrets

- 1,002** The members of the Bronze Fist gather in secret and name the eladrin Tomar as their spokesperson and voice. Tomar is unaware of the organisation or its reasoning for elevating him but he takes advantage of the situation by creating a 50-year plan that will see him on the throne of Dardarrick.
- 1,005** Tomar's *Heralds of Praxious* seek out and hire a massive number of dragonborn and warforged mercenaries; many of the machine-men are those designed by the Lords of the Forge. Combining their physical might and the magical power of the warpriests, the Brazen Legion is formed.
- 1,006** A member of the Bronze Fist kills the Grand Cleric of the All Father, opening the way for Praxious to usurp the role of lead deity in Dardarrick. Tomar begins to call himself a hierophant openly. Five members of the Father's Stern Hand are flogged to death in a Graenwich public pavilion.
- 1,009** Members of Mortessal's Black Circle begin to weaken and undermine the fortified places in Lorn. Sensing the Hierophant's wishes to push back the siege, her worshippers go into Lorn and begin secretly killing those strong enough to fight a counter-offensive. This allows the Circle to add hundreds of new bodies to their risen army.
- 1,014** The Black Circle's risen army becomes strong enough to march southward into the Grave Marsh of Torres, home of the largest temple to Mortessal on the continent.
- 1,056** The Hearth Guard and Father's Stern Hand are forced into hiding by the rise of the Hierophant Tomar. They try to defend what shrines and temples they can, but are ultimately too few in number to make a dent in the Brazen One's army of worshippers.
- 1,062** The League of Shamans is forced further south by Dardarrian pilgrims of Praxious. Violent interactions are common and the Brazen forces are steadfast and numerous.
- 1,130** Hierophant Tomarsson is contacted anonymously by an agent of the Bronze Fist, who instructs him on several political decisions. Tomarsson 'decides' to closely guard borders and infuse the Dardarrians with nationalism and xenophobia.
- 1,182** The Hearth Guard leave a list of names of the original royal families with Guildmaster Arcos – a staunch supporter of theirs. The list reveals the whereabouts of the soon-to-be-crowned King Archiveldt. The young man is protected secretly by the Hearth Guard for several months before he is crowned; assassins from the Bronze Fist are thwarted *twice*.
- 1,185** The Bronze Fist pulls away from Hierophant Tomarsson completely, seeing his position being usurped by King Archiveldt as weakness. His allies hidden amongst the common people fade and worshippers of Matriarias and the All Father begin to grow in number.

- 1,195** The *Lion's Wolves* are formed by the Brotherhood of Magnus from rogues, rangers and other miscreants to serve as spies and smugglers for SpellCom. They are held completely secret from the remainder of the Pillars to better let them do their job unhindered.
- 1,200** The Xuchot Enclave sends two emissaries to King Guntheor V's court to warn him of potential dangers from another plane but are arrested as potential spies. His disappearance took place three days after the two mind-flayers are taken into custody; both of whom were found murdered the night Guntheor vanished.
- 1,201** Hierophant Tomarsson's exile sends him into the northern mountains to regroup at an ancient Praxious temple. He turns many of the Heralds of Praxious into his own *Cult of Praxious* bent on the humiliation of the crown and the destruction of those worshipping the All Father.
- 1,202** The warforged remaining from the Brazen Legion have scattered under a dozen different banners and colours but the oldest ones gather northeast of Pierceling to form the *Assembly Secundus* – a Vulkite society trying to rebuild the warforged race.
- 1,204** The Wyhlder Tribe sends emissaries to several savage tribes under false tribal colours, sparking off a series of warlord-creating clan wars that will strengthen the chaotic hangers slaving toward Dardarrick. They unleash Feralgorn Bonesplinter, All-Chieftain of the Gnolls upon Fort Vigilant.
- 1,206** The lords of the Black Circle recognise the surge of infernal and necromantic magics happening in Lorn since Guntheor's return with his eladrin witch. They send spies to learn what the tiefling king is doing but all are killed by uncontrollable undead knights.
- 1,207** The Sancoatyli swear their allegiance to Lord King Bloodak of Torres, adding their might to his holy crusades. They mingle amongst the faithful forces on the march, helping the common Torresh soldier to become a true, bloodthirsty zealot.
- SpellCom reduces funding to the Lion's Wolves by half, adding those resources and much more to the covert operations of the Wraith Recon program. Several Wolves are tapped to become the first Wraiths; those that do not get picked are not allowed to know about the Wraith Recon program – but most know more than they let on.
- 1,208** The dracolich attack angers the Black Circle of Mortessal, who have tried and failed in the past to raise draconic remains. A dozen or more Twilight Society assassins are dispatched to kill the 'White Witch of Lorn', none of whom are successful.



Agents from the Cult of Praxious begin their own schemes to weaken Dardarrick from within its own borders, including forming their own inner circle of secret worshippers willing to sacrifice themselves to further the Brazen One's hold on the kingdom.

1,209

The River King's One Thousand Masts send a number of ships into the eastern Ocean, toward Zritec and the otherwise unknown Uramandi Empire. They fly a banner with a dragon's talon on it and seem to have no fear of the previously suicidal journey toward the enigmatic continent.

The Hierophant Tomarsson acquires a way to unleash monstrous things upon the unwary populace of Dardarrick. Knowing that the military will be too focussed on the Third Lornish War, he sees the perfect opportunity to have the people of Dardarrick begging his templars for help once again. (see *Shadow of the Hierophant*).

Wraith Recon agents stop a mysterious foe in the northwest Claws from spawning powerful and deadly flying terrors upon Dardarrick (see the events in *Mission Pack 1: Skies of Fire*).

The Assembly Secundus and the last surviving members of the Dei Pro Machina join forces and knowledge pools, achieving the success both groups desired. The first two Hyrric-pattern warforged, called the *Godforged*, step out of their artificer forge in the Salt Crag of the Stone Forest Mountains.

The mind-flayers from the Xuchot Enclave debate with one another if they should try to warn the king of Dardarrick of the growing enemy, wondering if they will be received as poorly as their emissaries were in Lorn. Would it be worth the risk telling the king about the coming tides of darkness?



Cults: The Dardarrian Stance

‘Through the words of the All Father we learn that all religions have a place in the hearts and minds of their people. It is only when the teachings of those religions put my fellow Dardarrians in harm’s way that this crown becomes heavy and I must rule against their worship. It is for your safety...may the All Father forgive me.’

– King George Archiveltdt I

The kingdom of Dardarrick has had a long history of religious ups and downs, most notably the theocratic conquering of the kingdom by the followers of Praxious. Originally designed to be the seat of faith for the worshippers of the All Father, the primal kingdom of Dar lies at the heart of many religious conflicts. Being the home of the first god of Nuera has made Dardarrick a target for enemy faiths and would-be conquerors for millennia.

With such a tumultuous past of dealing with internal uprisings and religious coups (including the one that placed Archiveltdt in power), the current powers that govern Dardarrick have to be always aware that potential enemies lurk inside their borders at all times.

The existence of hidden threats and growing forces aligning against the crown has forced Dardarrick’s powers that be to take some significant actions toward keeping the kingdom’s internal enemies from rising up against them.

This chapter looks at how Dardarrick deals with these possible threats logistically, legally and covertly. Whether it is through the use of commonplace constabulary, arcane divinations or the relatively new application of the Wraith Recon strike teams – the kingdom must deal with the dangers of enemies rising from within their lands.

King Archiveltdt’s Edicts

Since taking the responsibility of the crown in 1,184 YBD, George Archiveltdt I has placed a great deal of his interior legislation in the hands of his closest advisors

and allies. Between the Pillars of Dardarrick and the High Cleric’s office in the church of the All Father, the young king has a stable and trusted base of friends that are looking after him and the Dardarrian people.

Together with these allies, the king has managed to set up several individual legal edicts that protect Dardarrick from domestic threats; known or unknown to them. Policing these edicts requires support from local magistrates and other managerial figures, many of whom are directly affiliated with the most powerful governing agencies in Dardarrick.

The following are several of the most important and influential royal edicts in Dardarrick that affect the way the kingdom discovers, reveals, protects against and eliminates the threat of domestic enemies within their borders.

‘No Faith May Desire the Harm of a Dardarrian’

Even though King Archiveltdt I would like nothing but for everyone in his kingdom to have complete religious freedom to worship who they want, when they like – past events dictate that he cannot. The followers of Praxious alone did enough damage for decades to the people of Dardarrick; the crown cannot allow for another selfish or evil faith to become strong enough to fracture the populace.

Whether or not a faith is ‘good’ for the people however, is not something that Archiveltdt never wanted to be responsible for deciding. Persecuting someone’s religious beliefs is one of the fastest ways to make an enemy out of an indifferent citizen. Upon the advisement of High Cleric Rustavi, King Archiveltdt came to the decision that he would not judge churches and faiths based on the disposition of their deity – instead he will watch to see if their common practices bring harm to the Dardarrian people.



There are several definitions of ‘harm’ but the king’s researchers and diviners have spent hours looking into the religious practices of the Nueraen faiths in order to advise him as to which ones to add to the list of ‘cults versus churches’. Those faiths that regularly inflict harm upon sentient beings fall into the *dangerous cult* category and therefore are considered a threat to the safety of Dardarrick. These religions therefore become illegal to worship in the kingdom; a sad truth that King Archiveltdt has been pushed to enforce in his otherwise free nation.

Any religion that falls into the category of ‘dangerous’ is made illegal by the king’s edict. Dardarrian soldiers and government agents are to keep watch for members and impromptu worshipping sites of these faiths, reporting to the nearest agents of the Brotherhood of Magnus whenever they crop up. Holy or perhaps *unholy*, sites are immediately razed and cleansed by paladins of the All Father or Matriarias. Normal punishment for being a member of these dangerous cults is dependent on how the cultist reacts to being caught. A cultist that fights the arresting agents will likely be dealt with quickly and decisively but a generally peaceful arrest will end with incarceration or exile from the kingdom.

The faiths that have defined as being harmful to Dardarrick (and the reasoning why) are as follows:

- ◆ **Cult of Praxious** – After their history of usurping the Dardarrian throne and the continued threats and violence stemming from the Hierophant-in-Exile, the worship of the Brazen One has become completely vilified.
- ◆ **Crusaders of Mersmerro** – The rise of Lord King Bloodak and his crusading zealots from Torres have been the reason for many violent encounters with followers of the Swamp Lord in the southern parts of the kingdom.
- ◆ **Cultists of Mortessal** – The worship of death and the mastery of undeath is inherently opposed to the safety of the common Dardarrian citizen. Cultists of Mortessal are to be considered dangerous and potentially *deadly* whenever encountered.

‘Know thy Neighbour’

The best way to protect the kingdom from hidden threats is to ensure that all the new faces that come to Dardarrick are familiar to their neighbours. King Archiveltdt found the reasoning behind this edict in the writings of the All Father, seeing a good way to help protect his people and forge bonds between the citizens of his kingdom.

Difficult to enforce on a regular basis, this edict tells the people of Dardarrick to make sure they introduce themselves to anyone who lives near to them. This often comes in the form of a gathering of several households a few days after a new family or citizen moves into an area but can sometimes be as simple as a brief introduction and exchange of names. So long as a Dardarrian citizen makes the effort to meet a new face in the neighbourhood, they are abiding by this unique law.

Rarely monitored, this edict has two main purposes. In the simplest of senses it makes a community stronger by getting them to know one another, hopefully making friendships and household alliances with one another. In a more complex point of view, the need to meet one’s neighbours must be on the forethoughts of any would-be troublemakers looking to come and hide within a Dardarrian community.



Using this edict, the authorities are not on the look out for Dardarrians that do not go out of their way to make friends of their neighbours. Instead, it is a tool for wary Dardarrians to hopefully discover potential threats within their own communities and report them to local agents of the Brotherhood or at least the local magistrate. Most of these reports are little more than disgruntled simple folk that do not care for their new neighbours but from time to time one of them lead Brotherhood diviners to a discovery that warrants closer attention.

'Unsanctioned Spellcasting Will be Investigated'

The use of magic in Dardarrick is prevalent due to the open schooling that magically-inclined citizens can sign up for through the Wizard's Guild. Not only does this help keep down the number of dangerously inexperienced spellcasters in the kingdom but the Guild also keeps a secret log of everyone they train in the magical arts – even those who only get rudimentary schooling. This log helps them know who they can turn to – or scry upon – in case of a magical emergency in the area.

Whenever magic users unleash their powers (no matter how minor) in the view of Dardarrian citizens, someone will take notice and likely talk about it. If that person has not been logged by the Wizard's Guild, they will attract some attention and get looked at closer. Minor spells and effects will get lesser treatment, of course but sooner or later all cases are investigated.

This edict, the investigation of unsanctioned spellcasting, was put into place by the Brotherhood of Magnus after learning about the Guild's logging system. Advisement from the Brotherhood urged the king's hand to pass this law to the Guild, forcing them to not just log but also *investigate* unauthorised uses of magic in Dardarrian communities. If someone would be wielding magic where citizens live, they will have to answer for it.

Being a spellcaster is not a crime; neither is the use of magic in public but those who are unknown to the Wizard's Guild could turn out to be untrustworthy or

even dangerous. It is safer for the Guild to look into any unknown case of spellcasting than allow a potentially threatening foe go unchecked.

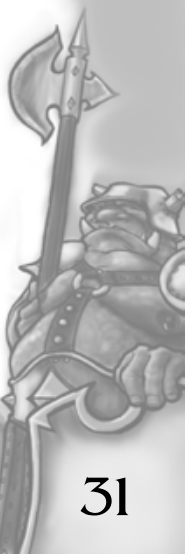
This practice has uncovered several covens of witches and warlocks unrecognised by the Guild, some of whom were actively working against the good of the kingdom. There are many cults and secret societies that employ magic users to help and hide their activities. When they make mistakes and use their magic openly, the Guild can seek them out and uncover their whereabouts for Brotherhood agents (perhaps even the Wraiths) to deal with according to the law.

Clerics, paladins and other divine conduits of the gods' will employ magic as well and the layperson rarely knows the difference at first glance. A reported spellcaster that turns out to be using divine magics has the witnessed events and facts surrounding them turned over to Guild theologians and arcane experts to decipher. Once the type of religion that the magic wielder calls upon has been determined, including whether or not they hail from an illegal faith, the person in question is either asked to report to the High Cleric for temperance training – or turned over to the Brotherhood for arrest and possible exile.

'All Dead Must be Blessed'

A recent edict passed down from the king in 1,209 YBD after the drastic rise in risen undead in Dardarrick, the High Cleric of the All Father suggested that all deceased people that fall in civilised areas could be saved from a hellish afterlife of mindless undeath. The High Cleric believes solidly that the common blessings of one of the good-aligned deities (and perhaps even the unaligned) will protect a corpse from being raised as a member of the damned.

This edict can only actually be enforced by cities and villages that have capable clergy of the All Father or Matriarias on hand and those who die on the roads or rivers of the kingdom are not likely to have a cleric nearby. The blessing process, as designed by the High Cleric himself, was written on 1,000 scrolls to be given to every shrine, temple, church and fane that the messengers can find within the boundaries of Dardarrick. The in depth ritual was designed to be



easy to follow and only consume a few tablespoons of holy oil and an hour of a clergyman's time and *hopefully* will prevent the remains from returning as the undead.

Of course, this simple blessing would be of no protection against powerful necromantic magics like the ones taught regularly by the cults of Mortessal – or the dark rites that had to be called upon to create the dracolich that ravaged the eastern borders.

'Jackals Will Not Have This Lion's Pride'

This edict, the most radical of notions from such a staunch believer in the All Father's ways, is a simple and direct statement to all those who might work against the throne – Dardarrick will use force to punish those who would hurt its families. King Archiveltdt laid down this law at one of his public courts when rumours of Hierophant-in-Exile Tomarsson's agents had set fire to a small Hearth Shrine to Matriarias in the outskirts of Tradeston.

The king's disgust and rage toward what he called 'a cowardly act' was open and plain for all to see and he told everyone in attendance that Dardarrick would not stand for such behaviour any longer. Tolerance and stalwart resilience against a terrorist like Tomarsson would not be the limit of the kingdom's position any longer.

The king's statement was direct and cold; the Lion of Dardarrick will not be sheathing its claws against its enemies any longer. Foreign or domestic, neither will not be allowed to hurt the Dardarrian people anymore.

The Pillars' Secret Edicts

Although the king has the final say on all major laws and edicts, the people in charge of the three Pillars of Dardarrick are often the source for these laws. Through their encouragement and advising, King Archiveltdt puts his seal on most of the things that they bring before him.

Where the above edicts are written in the Dardarrick Code of Laws, the following *secret* edicts are written publicly nowhere. They were scribed upon vellum by the ranking members of the Pillars of Dardarrick and given to the king to ratify. Once sealed and made into laws, the vellum is dipped in purified wax and vaulted away in the lowest basement of Fort Brazen. These edicts were never meant to be on record for all to see, merely known to those who would enforce them.

The secret edicts of Dardarrick would be some of the kingdom's greatest scandals – if they were ever to be known outside of those sworn to secrecy.

'Mercy Not Unto the Monsters'

Passed into power in early 1,205 YBD on the ushering of the Brotherhood, this edict came on the heels of their discovery and arrest of a Mortessal cult member named Euphanimedes. A sinister half-drow priestess that was indulging herself in the sacrifice of the homeless of Pierceling, Euphanimedes went willingly into the custody of naval guards. Some said she even flirted with them as they placed her in her cell. Three weeks later a magistrate came to Pierceling for her trial and not only found her escaped but all 12 of her warden gaolers remained as twisted ghouls that fell upon the magistrate's guards like starving wolves. The necromanceress was never caught and was said to have fled into the awaiting arms of the Lornish.

After the magistrate's report, the Archmage Daramin pored over the pages of the arresting soldiers' logbook. It seemed that Euphanimedes went so easily into capture so she could charm and enchant the men of her jail. When they were hers she simply walked out of an unlocked cell and cursed them all to undeath. Daramin was incensed by this and wrote the edict that the leniency of Dardarrian laws should not apply to the true monsters of the kingdom.

The law states that all criminals are to be treated fairly and without ire but when some of these criminals use that mercy to give them more time to work their evils – such as it was in the case of Euphanimedes – they cannot be extended that right. These foes are just as

vile as an orc or troll and should be dealt with out of hand just as they would be. This edict says that they can be.

Archmage Daramin laid out a series of qualifications for this edict, a few points of order that automatically qualify a criminal for the sort of summary punishment to them it sentences.

- ◆ Any who would willingly harm a child or sickly person.
- ◆ Criminals from nations currently at war with Dardarrick.
- ◆ Any who are in league with demons or dragons.
- ◆ Any who risk revealing the nature of the Wraith Recon project or organisation (added in 1,207 YBD)

'Teleportation Runes Can Be Altered for Security'

The use of teleportation circles in Dardarrick has been commonplace for several centuries, with older sites found annually and new ones built in important places throughout the land. These circles are a very important part of travel for all of the large cities in the kingdom and many of the smaller ones as well. Personal journeys from one circle to another are fast but rather expensive.

The ability to travel thousands of miles in a single step can be used to great benefit not only by the average social traveller but also by military personnel and agents. Teams of soldiers can respond to a magical message halfway across the kingdom in less than an hour instead of a week, getting to where they need to be in order to ensure the safety of the Dardarrian people. In this case, teleportation circles are as much a military asset as they are a transportation one.

After the first mission that a Wraith Recon strike team used another nation's teleportation circle (after

learning its coordinate runes) for a covert insertion, the arcanists at SpellCom urged the Pillars to look in to the safety of Dardarrick's own circles.

The only fool-proof way to keep outsiders from using a teleportation circle is to make sure they never get the runes that link it to the rest of the teleportation lay lines. For circles in common use throughout civilised cities, this is nearly impossible – they have been confirmed hundreds of times over the last few centuries. For less-known or hidden circles that the kingdom wants to remain that way, this edict makes it legal to alter the runes as written to keep outsiders from using them.

When a circle is desired to be kept private, the Wizard's Guild to send agents out to log what the actual coordinates are for a circle (in order for it to be used later) before using magic and stonemasonry to engrave a new set of nonsensical runes in their place. This will mean that the circle will read a set of coordinates that simply will not work for any who read them at the site; while the real runes will be on record at the Wizard's Guild for Dardarrian use only.



'Only By Wraiths are Wraiths Themselves Judged'

The creation of the Wraith Recon covert operations program put a lot of weight and power in the hands of Spellcaster Command and the Wraith Commander. The king put his seal on this edict at the organisation's activation as a military asset and the Pillars of Dardarrick have worried about its inception ever since.

A group like Wraith Recon will sometimes be called upon to do morally right but legally unlawful things that would have a common soldier in front of a court magistrate in a snap of his commanding officer's fingers. Because of the need for these actions to take place nonetheless, the very reason Wraith Recon was created, the agents involved cannot worry that they are going to be set before an archery execution for essentially just doing their jobs as ordered.

This edict, begrudgingly ratified by the king in 1,208 YBD after the dracolich attacks, gives the Wraiths of the strike teams' legal immunity for their actions – except when policed by their own organisation. Within the organisation there has been a ranking progression that helps assign who can police whom, with team leaders policing their own teams when in the field. Of course the Wraith Commander has the final say on any punishment, if necessary but it is said in the halls of SpellCom that 'no Wraith retires from the service'.

Since the edict's passing there has yet to be a reason for any Wraith to be actively pursued legally by the Commander. There have been more than a few mission-side reprimands by team leaders when dealing with selfish or maverick Wraiths in their strike teams but nothing worthy of a 'Wraith court'. The teams are normally so busy with their missions and trying not to be killed, they rarely have time to think about abusing the legal immunities they have been given!

The Dardarrian Views on the Many Faiths

The average opinion of a Dardarrian toward the faiths and religions of Nuera varies greatly from family to family, especially depending on the proximity that family might have to a temple – or an active and menacing cult.

Overall there is a 'general view' of the faiths (and their worshippers) as seen by the common Dardarrian citizen and the opinion of the military personnel that sometimes have to interact with them. The following are the basic thoughts and views on the Nueraen faiths and a few personal opinions thereof from prominent members of Dardarrian society.

The Church of the All Father

The most powerful and prolific religion in all of Dardarrick, the All Father has fallen in and out of favour for several decades at a time – but it has always and likely will always be the backbone of Dardarrian beliefs. Many believe that it was the All Father's presence in the kingdom that has made it so great and powerful amongst Nuera's many nations. Except for the hidden worshippers of opposing faiths, the All Father is almost universally admired within Dardarrick.

'When times are rough and crops are lean, or when tales trickle in from the roadhouse that we are going to war out east; that is when I clutch my Father's idol tighter. He will protect us all as his children, and see us through this storm. Trust in the All Father.'

– Reginald Ploughsson; Rivermarck-area
Plantation Owner

'I know that the good book tells us that we are not to strike first, but what do you call that flying sack of dragon bones that came across our line in the sand and killed our friends and relatives? I call that an attack, that's what. The High Cleric can say that the shield is more holy than the blade, but any of us that have been in the trenches know better.'

– Captain Whensil Bleaux of the 7th Heavy
Infantry of Dardarrick

The Shamans of the King of Beasts

The chaotic and savage religion of the Wildlands is somewhat rare in the civilised kingdom of Dardarrick. There are groups of rangers and other naturalists that might keep a small trophy altar to the god of animals as a thank you for their hunting successes. The often violent ways of the King's followers make them difficult to deal with inside any Dardarrian community, which is why they are oftentimes hermits or wilderness travellers that only deal with the common populace when they must.

'The prey people are so happy to have venison steaming on their spits, but they shy away from the hunter's arrow and the skinner's knife? They want to walk the roads at night, but pale at the blade running up into the bandit's ribcage. Build your walls and hide from the wild...not all of us have lost our claws in the Great Kingdom of the Lion.'

– Firewind Autumnscale; Dragonborn Shaman of Southfork Ford

'We have to deal with these Wildlands types every day, and most of 'em are alright. Sometimes you get one that is all painted up and head dressed out like some kind of savannah chicken; but they are only a problem when bothered. Sure, they're savages...but at least they are not Lornish, yes?'

– Legionnaire Brocalda; 6th Heavy Infantry out of Tradeston



The Hearth of Matriarias

Uprooted ages ago from her original home of Lorn, the religion of family and safe homes was welcomed with open arms in Dardarrick. Although only slightly less-worshipped than the All Father, Matriarias never lost most of her worshippers during the Praxious theocracy. Her shrines and temples have always been inside of people's homes and such, making it easier to survive the templar purges and the Hierophant's rule. After the All Father reclaimed the High Cleric's position in the kingdom, several powerful clerics and many of the Hearth Guard came forward to help. Matriarias found a new home to bless and protect in Dardarrick.

'Keep your wars and your battles. They just change the lines in the sand. We know the truest and greatest kingdom of all resides around a warm fire and a good story. The best flag is a cosy quilt. The only weapon I want is the soup spoon that fights off hunger. I know the king cannot think like I do, but what a perfect place it would be if he could.'

– Sister Wilma of the Southwatch Convent

'I have heard tell that the Hearth-worshippers have paladins? How can that be? What good is a sword and shield if you cannot use it? I will look to Matriarias when I have a belly grumble or a runny nose, not when the invaders are batting down our doors.'

– Henrich Palsson; Town Guardsman of Graenwich

The Crusading Followers of Mersmerro

Once thought of as solely a primitive faith that was worshipped in the swamps and marshes of Torres, the shamanic/fanatical following of Mersmerro is much more. To most Dardarrians it is something that is foreign, strange and exotic – to the average citizen of Torres it is their way of life. Dardarrick does not have nearly the marsh or swampland areas to warrant a strong following to the god and the faith's prerogative toward violence and humanoid sacrifice has named it as an illegal cult following. The growing crusade against Dardarrick from the Mersmerron horde from the south is not going unnoticed.



'I have seen from agent reports the sorts of things that the swamp god's worshippers due to their captives, and I for one believe that a great threat brews beyond our southern borders.'

– Archmage Ruger Daramin; High Mage of the Brotherhood of Magnus

'The talking heads in the office of the High Cleric claim to have religious freedom in mind when they lay out their vilifying edicts and hateful laws against us, but we know it is only because of their fear and their unworthy ways that they try to bind us! One day the waters will rise and our lord will swallow them all!'

–Fhanghallow; Secret Follower of Mersmerro

The Dark Cult of Mortessal

One of two strictly and unyieldingly forbidden faiths in Dardarrick, the following of the Queen of the Damned is enough of an offence to get someone put into irons. Too many outbreaks of the undead can be traced back to followers of this dark religion and arrests rarely go bloodlessly. The crown has forbid the worship of Mortessal within Dardarrick's borders and agents of the law are always to be on the lookout for signs of a cult cell rising in the shadows.

'The sheer idea that our loved ones' remains could be called up from their eternal rest to be used to hurt the living is almost reviling enough to put me back into my armour against those damnable death-cultists.'

– Sir Varren Sheldsson; retired paladin of the Hearth Guard

'The living mourn the dead for far too long in the lands of the Lion, and they persecute those of us who can make use of the condition. Why leave soulless meat to worms and flies, when we can turn each loss into everyone's gain?'

– Tyssama Zrutoc; priestess of Mortessal

The Brazen Cult of Praxious

It should come as no surprise that the cult of Praxious has been outlawed in Dardarrick after its scandalous usurping of the throne and the vocal dissent from Hierophant Tomarsson. There are hundreds of Praxious worshippers hidden throughout Dardarrick, most of which who belong to the secret Brazen Cult of Tomarsson. Not all of the worshippers of Praxious are evil manipulators that are seeking the downfall of the kingdom but considering the majority of them belong to Tomarsson's sect – it is safer for King Archiveldt to label them all as enemies of the nation.

'Some of us in the Pillars remember the regime under Hierophant Tomar. The presence of the warforged, the midnight floggings and the constant sermons that condemned the weak and innocent; these keep me awake at night. I will go to my grave before I see those times return.'

–Archmage Arcos, Guildmaster of Wizards

'We are sons of strength itself. This world is stronger because of the tests we have put it through and survived. The Brazen One will not be silenced...his voice will be the bronze blade through the flesh of the weak; his gospel will be the screams of our enemies.'

–Hierophant-in-Exile Tomarsson; Leader of the Cult of the Brazen One

The Fiery Church of Vulka

The god of flame and forges has a small following within the kingdom of Dardarrick. Patron to all smiths despite being an otherwise evil faith based on destruction and aggression, Vulka has a moderate amount of worshippers in the kingdom. Most metalsmiths and siege engineers keep an altar to the fiery deity and although his teachings are directly opposed to those of the All Father he remains a respected faith. There are two known icon-bearing

temples that keep a full clergy to Vulka in Dardarrick; one amongst the coinsmiths of Goldston and another in the industrial area of Graenwich. Due to the great craftsmanship and precision work that the artificers of the Brotherhood require in many of their projects, Archmage Daramin has persuaded King Archiveldt to overlook some of the questionable tenets of the Vulkites that openly worship.

'They are admired for their work and our tenacity in the forge, but not their moral guidelines or temperament. It is such a quandary to all of us that a congregation capable of such amazing works of creation should be so bent on the force of destruction.'

– Sir Uriel Hellermon; High Paladin of the Father's Stern Hand

'Our presence amongst the white walls and soft songs of the Father's children is a cinder in their boot. Our fire priests have been the centre of their arguments and debates for decades. If only they would draw their blades and call us to the circle to defend our faith...we could prove our right to smoulder in the Lion's den.'

– Master Cyndreh Suveaux; Priestess of Vulka

The Unknown Cults

Throughout Dardarrick and the borderlands there are secret societies and minor cults that occasionally appear to interact with the local populace. Most of these small events come and go without the larger kingdom ever being aware of their existence. Small villages and military outposts might be called upon to deal with cults or cultures in their area under the common edicts of the king concerning their activities but for the most

part they are too small to make much of an impact on the kingdom – as far as they are aware.

Some examples of lesser cults that can appear in Dardarrick are as follows: draconic-worshipping kobolds, orcs of Gruumsh, warforged in the Dei Pro Machina, demon-worshippers, shamanist fanatics, and so on.

'With Lorn rising in the east, Torres boiling in the south, the Wildlands building to the west, and every shore open to Nuera's other invaders...how can we spare the blood and sweat from our soldiers to deal with every foolish group that follows some inane ideal?'

– Wraith Commander Derrall Ruhrk



Tomarsson's Cult of Praxious

'Do not despair, my brothers. Despair is a sign of the weakness that we have given up to serve our lord. Let our enemies despair. Let them know the fear of failure...for our zeal will keep its bitter taste from our mouths.'

– Hierophant-in-Exile Tomarsson

14th day of Dawning, 1,201 YBD. It is a date that King Archiveltdt will remember with bittersweet irony for the rest of his life and the kingdom of Dardarrick will note it well for centuries to come. It was the day that saw the end of the Praxious Theocracy in Dardarrick and the exile of the charismatic Hierophant Tomarsson. In one bold gesture the new king managed to remove his most vocal opponent...

...turning him into possibly his most dangerous enemy.

Once exiled and vilified for his stance against the throne, Hierophant Tomarsson retooled the goals of his congregation and sank deep into the throes of revenge. He focussed all of his thoughts and drive on finding a new way to target the king and his fellow All Father mewling whelps. Tomarsson put all of himself into surviving his banishment in order to see the fall of the All Father's worshippers – King Archiveltdt chief amongst them.

This chapter looks at the largest and most active domestic enemy of the kingdom, working its machinations and schemes from within the borders of Dardarrick. From the general ideology of the cult, its many branches and assets and its chief methods to two new paragon paths that *Wrath Recon* Games Masters can use to build terrifying enemies or interesting characters; this chapter details potentially the greatest threat that Dardarrick may yet have to face.

The Cult Under Tomarsson

Raised in the open and powerful theocracy of Praxious by his father Tomar, the Hierophant-in-Exile had never known anything but the vice grip of his god upon the throne of Dardarrick before it was taken away from him. When the Pillars of Dardarrick swept in and named a new king through the ancient edict of royal blood, Tomarsson knew the taste of defeat for the first time in his life.

This first defeat did not sit well with the Hierophant's desire to be loved, cherished and most of all – empowered. The dynasty that his father had built was shaking apart around him, the weakness of the All Father pooling up like pus from an open wound to fill the cracks. Tomarsson's stability wavering, he made a few mistakes in publicly speaking against the king, thinking that his religious background would protect him.

When Brotherhood agents came to arrest him for sowing dissention, his followers rioted against the Royal Guard and wounds were suffered on both sides. Tomarsson was taken into custody and sentenced to banishment, willingly joined by over 300 of his followers in a huge march out of Graenwich. During the march it is said that one of the king's advisors told him that Tomarsson would not stop being a threat.

That advisor could not have been more right.

His exile tore the veneer off of Tomarsson's dealings with the public. As he marched slowly across Dardarrick toward a secret temple complex being sanctified for him by his templars and war priests, he realised that he no longer had to care at all what the common person believed – if they were not with him, they were pawns

to be used against his enemies. Without the tethers of public opinion holding him down like when he was running the nation as a theocracy, he could do whatever he felt was necessary to do Praxious' work on this world.

This revelation fresh in his mind, Tomarsson began to arrange his affairs. Setting up the proper wards and enchantments to keep his enemies from scrying into the Brazen Halls, his new hidden temple complex in the Claws mountains, he began to change the Church of Praxious into his own stylised cult. This new cult was devoted to the rise of a new Praxious Ascendant, a new Brazen Legion and a new offensive against the current power structure of Dardarrick. The new Cult of Praxious would be ten times the threat to Archiveldt and the All Father devotees that the theocracy ever was.

From his base of operations in the Claws, Tomarsson orchestrates well over 1,000 active cult members spread across the kingdom. Half that number lives with him in the Brazen Halls, helping him protect the new heart of the faith while arranging for supplies and such. The dozen miles or so of tunnels have been fully converted into a city of sorts; 100 separate chambers linked by long stretches of hall and archways dedicated to the style of the old fanes of Praxious. It is a marvellous sight to see for the faithful and is commonly the destination of many holy pilgrimages.

Tomarsson once used all of his charisma and charms to make the people of Dardarrick love him and his god but now he uses it solely to incense his followers into performing some of the most inhumane and debased acts in the name of the faith. Kidnapping, murder, sacrifice...even self-sacrifice is not beyond the Hierophant's abilities to call upon. His followers happily throw themselves into his will; they firmly believe his voice is that of the Brazen One himself.

The Cult of Praxious under Tomarsson's newly evolved outlook upon the world is a very dangerous thing that could well be the knife in Dardarrick's ribs as the kingdom progresses into 1,209 YBD and beyond. The escalating war with the Lornish, the rise of a new crusade in Torres and the increasing numbers of warlords in the Wildlands all pull attention away from the kingdom's interior to its borders. This gives Tomarsson's followers much more room to work unnoticed by the powers that be.

Tomarsson's Goals for the Cult of Praxious

Hierophant Tomarsson has a plan for the future that goes beyond simply getting revenge upon the king and the Pillars. He knows what must be done and what must be given up to achieve success. To better understand what lengths he is willing to go, we must first look upon what exactly he wants to accomplish on this world through his army of zealous worshippers.

The new Cult of Praxious has five main goals the Hierophant has set for his followers.

Rebuild the Brazen Legion

Well on its way to being fulfilled, Tomarsson grew up hearing the fantastic tales of what the Brazen Legion his father had created was capable of. He saw the ranks of polished warforged marching in columns through the streets of Graenwich; admiring them for their strength and seemingly perfect metal bodies. He marvelled at the rows of gleaming bronze halberds in the hands of the templars. It was a striking image that never left Tomarsson's mind as he grew old and took control of the faith and the kingdom.

Now that Tomarsson equates his situation with a war on the All Father and the king of Dardarrick, he needs a new Brazen Legion. The number of available warforged is drastically smaller, with most of the original Legionnaires joining the Dardarrian armed forces or simply going back into mercenary service. The bronze templars remain; forming the bulk of the new Legion but Tomarsson knows he will not be able to wage war upon the might of Dardarrick's army with a few hundred faithful soldiers. Even with the army's troubles toward the Lornish border, he knows his forces would be swept away by the Dardarrians' might.

There are many more faithful soldiers of Praxious out in the kingdom that Tomarsson has yet to reach and bring into his fold. He continues to try and arrange for those people to be made aware of the new movement, most often through the use of messenger acolytes and recruiting templars. These actions must be undertaken in private of course, lest the Pillars hear and begin snooping around.



Tomarsson has recently sent emissaries to the island continents of Sando and Parenax to try and hire new mercenaries from those lands. With little in the way of riches or political power to sway them, he can only hope that they could be persuaded with promises of payment *after* their success. This is highly unlikely, especially with the might of Dardarrick standing between them and their wages.

Retain Anonymity

One of the greatest strengths of the new cult is that its limitations and resources are unknown to its enemies. The Usurper King might know that Tomarsson's cult exists but he cannot fathom how large or small the Hierophant's power base is. Secrecy and misdirection are useful tools when fighting a larger or superior foe; Tomarsson's plan is to keep Dardarrick in the dark for as long as it takes until he is ready to strike.

It has always been in times of battle that the followers of the Brazen One would wear their masks to show solidarity in Praxious' name, all looking forward to the battle with emotionless perfection on their metallic faces. Tomarsson's declaration of holy war against the Usurper King and the All Father has given everyone in the cult a reason to where their masks at all times when able. Donning their masks of rank, the worshippers fulfil their duties to the cult with anonymity from one another and any spies that might lurk amongst the faithful.

Not only does this remind everyone in the cult that they are indeed at war with Praxious' enemies but it also makes every member of the cult just another 'face in the crowd'. The varied mask types denote rank and title, which is enough for cult members to address one another if needs be. It also means that outsiders that see the masks have no idea whether they are seeing the same cultist a dozen times or a dozen different cultists once. It helps blur the actual population of cultists in a given area and offers misinformation to onlookers.

It should be noted here that even the Hierophant himself wears his magical mask when amongst his congregation, despite its unique shape and inability to hide who he is to onlookers. It is a symbol to them that he is willing to practice what he preaches – and a powerful magical item as well!



Make the Dardarrian People Beg Forgiveness

This is one of the simpler goals in design – and likely one of the hardest in execution. When Tomarsson was deposed from the throne by the young King Archiveldt, he was expecting public outrage to explode across the lands. He wanted to see cities in uproar; magistrates dragged through the streets for supporting the Usurper King.

He did not get any of these things from the common people. His faithful followers were angry and acted in the manner he expected but the rest of the kingdom's peoples were *glad* to see him deposed! They seemed joyous that the All Father-worshipping whelp was sitting on his throne. It was a shock to Tomarsson at first, being swept aside by the fickle people of Dardarrick but soon his shock turned to anger.

It was made apparent to him that the kingdom did not, for the most part, truly worship the Brazen One. They simply paid him lip service when the faithful were looking, secreting back to their All Father altars and Hearth goddess idols whenever they could. It sickened Tomarsson to see so many fall back into the weak and flabby arms of the old gods and he would not forget how quickly Praxious was forgotten.

The new Cult of Praxious has designs on the throne as well as the souls of the nation but Tomarsson plans to force the people of Dardarrick to *beg* for Praxious to take them back. When his templars and priests are done with them, they will beg to serve merely as slaves to the church. Praxious teaches that one's enemies must be punished and mercy never shown; and Tomarsson will undeniably show no mercy to the people of Dardarrick – they who turned their backs on him when he needed their support most.

Crush the Usurper King

Although not directly the *cause* behind Tomarsson's loss of the throne, the Hierophant has decided that King Archiveltdt is the figurehead for what happened and the primary reason for the ascendance of the All Father's church back into the government. He has sworn vengeance against the 'puppet king' and claims that he will not be able to rest until he humiliates and destroys Jeorge Archiveltdt.

The Hierophant knows that it is difficult to keep ire stoked and anger boiling in a group over a long time, especially when the target of that rage is an otherwise likeable gentleman that has dedicated his life to the kingdom he leads. Throughout the cells and camps of the Cult of Praxious Tomarsson has dozens of hatemongers whose sole role is to keep anti-Archiveltdt sentiment high and hot amongst the faithful. These 'Brass Friars' hold the same rank as any common acolyte but are on assignment no matter where they go.

It is Tomarsson's hope that he will one day enjoy hearing the people of Dardarrick spurning their king and praising the return of the theocracy. If he cannot have the latter he will simply have to relish in the complete crushing of Archiveltdt and all of his supporters under the might of the Brazen Cult.

Abolish the All Father's Church

Above all else, Tomarsson is a fanatical worshipper of his god. He feels the power of Praxious work through him in all things; all things come second to the strength and virtue of his faith in the Brazen One. He spends an hour of each day in self-flagellation for the sin of being too weak to fight Archiveltdt's decree and he longs for the day when he can return Praxious

to his rightful power. To do that however, he must first lay low the ramparts of the All Father's church and set siege to the faith itself.

The Hierophant believes that his father's only mistake at the dawn of the theocracy was not actively hunting down every All Father worshipper and eliminating them. Secret sects of worshippers lingered and festered away from his gaze and it allowed the cancer to become strong enough to eventually take shape as the Pillars' new king. If Tomarsson was in charge at the time, especially the newly embittered version, he would have personally led the purges of the All Father's literature from every tongue, library and home.

Where it did not happen then, he hopes to bring it to pass now. His orders to his followers are to find anything that might pass the All Father's religion on in some way and claim it in Praxious' name. Whether it is a collection of litany scrolls, a copy of the collected proverbs or even a member of the clergy – Tomarsson wants it brought to the nearest Praxious shrine for sacrifice. If every member of the cult accomplishes this whenever they can, his hopes are that the toppling of the All Father in Dardarrick will be easily undertaken.

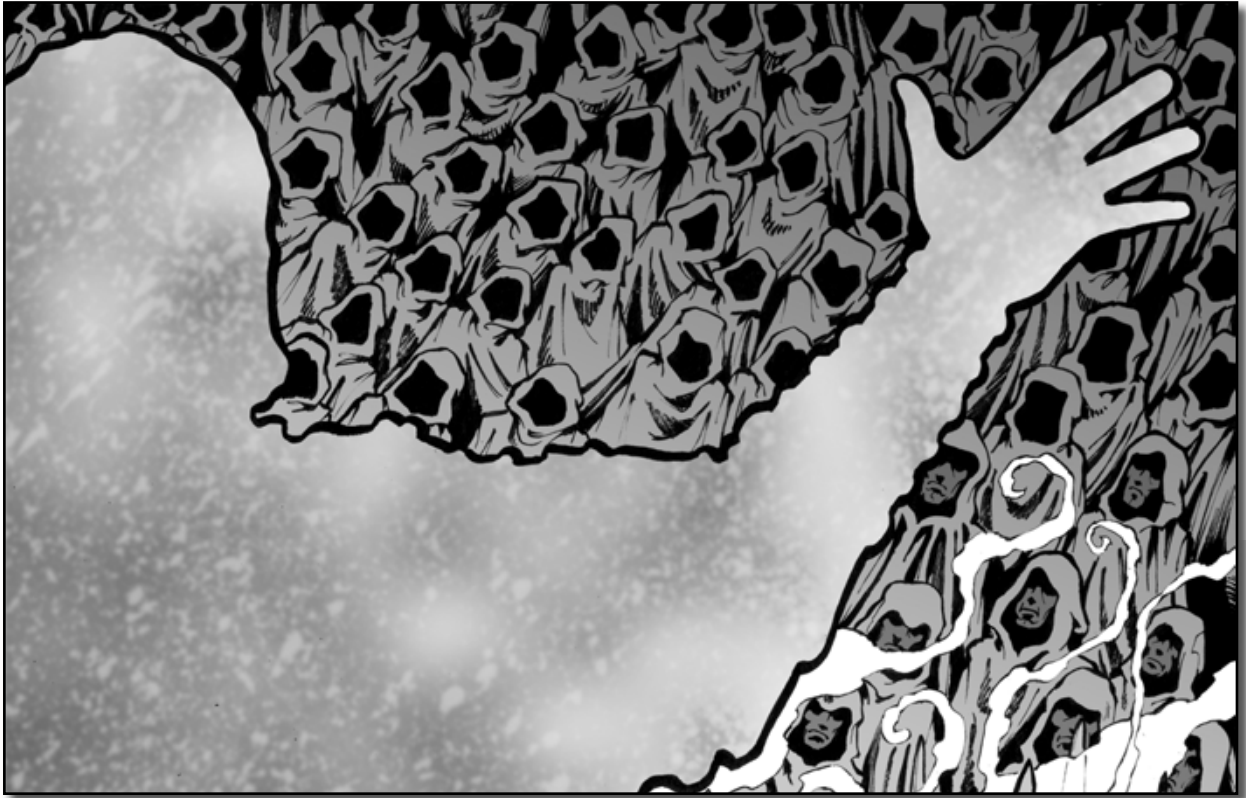
His dream is to have Archiveltdt alive to see the churches burn and the clergy sacrificed to Praxious but he will be satisfied enough just to see them all in ashes.

The Cult's Many Cells

Hierophant Tomarsson may be consumed by revenge and hatred but he is not an unintelligent eladrin. He knows that if he creates a single religious front in one place too strong or large, it will surely be discovered and dealt with. To combat this, Tomarsson arranged for each of his neophants (all thirteen) to start a 'cell' of the cult somewhere in the world.

Each of these cells is given a specific area of the world to act within, always keeping in mind the overall goals of the cult and any special assignments tasked to them by the Hierophant. The cells are categorised not by any special naming convention or code, they are merely titled by the area in which they are based out of.





The Brazen Hall

The main head of the many cells, the primary cell of the cult at Brazen Hall in the Claws is from where the Hierophant himself holds his masses and directs the entire cult. Like any other cell however, he hands much of the day-to-day planning and tedium to the local neophant – a sardonic half-elf named Callistare (pronounced *kahl-iss-taar-eh*). The Hierophant can focus on the greater plans and schemes of the cult while Callistare takes care of the Hall and its many inhabitants.

With dozens upon dozens of faithful cult members living in and around the Brazen Hall, this is undeniably the largest of the cells. It is also the most important. A full quarter of the cultists at the Hall are bronze templars, making it additionally the most well-protected. Callistare is a busy neophant, always heading from organisation meetings and procurement investigations whenever he is not on special assignment from Tomarsson. The cell is the heart of the cult and it runs seamlessly because of the nigh-obsessive attention paid by the half-elf.

Tradeston Shrine

Headed by the trusted and feared neophant templar Anders Krail, the Tradeston shrine cell is small but important. Several of the three dozen hidden cultists are members of the local Dardarrian armed forces, like Krail. From their various uniformed positions and duties they can help keep the cell secreted away under the city and protected from the loyalist soldiers swarming the area.

Neophant Krail is a prestigious member of the local Air Cavalry unit and a vocal supporter of the constant patrols over the Wildlands border. The Hierophant tasked him and his cell to try and gather some kind of influence amongst the savages that come to Tradeston for commerce, smearing some of his trust with the Dardarrian troops but putting him in a position to hire mercenary savages whenever the need for direct action is called for. Krail may be a templar and a soldier but he knows that random violence will do nothing but get him caught. For safety, he always wears his mask and helm when dealing with the savage chieftains; forcing

them to deal with the blank bronze face of Praxious instead of his own.

Goldston Bluffs

The cell at Goldston is small but important to the Hierophant's larger goals. From their refuge in a small outcropping of sharp stones a mile or so from the northern edge of town, the cultists blend in with the local populace and work amongst the coining mints. Overseen by the dwarven neophant Gerardo, the cell has been tasked with the obvious goal of acquiring financial resources for the greater cult. Weekly shipments of stolen coin and minted wages are moved at night to the Brazen Hall, donating their spoils to the Hierophant's coffers.

Vigilant Pastures

Once assigned to the cabins within of Fort Vigilant, this cell was unfortunately present during the attack on the fort by the horde of gnolls and was nearly destroyed. The remaining few faithful members, including the badly wounded neophant Tyros, moved easterly into the rolling pastures of the Fort Vigilant livestock herd. The gnolls rarely left the fort's close proximity and Tyros has made sure that two templars are always on watch around the three makeshift shelters that serve as the cell's temporary home until the fort is made available again.

The Hierophant had originally asked Tyros to secure the cell within the military personnel at Vigilant but the attack made that impossible. Instead, Tomarsson has told the neophant to recruit from local towns and villages until back at full strength of 25 combat-worthy members. At that point they are to move in the godless gnolls to retake the land. It will surely help Dardarrick, but it will implant the neophant in local hero worship – potentially gaining more support for the cult as a whole.

Southwatch Bog

Located on the wet and spongy border between Dardarrick and Torres, this cell is one of the few groups of cultists that the Hierophant has asked to be placed on *defence* of Dardarrick. The hulking shape of the only warforged neophant, a holdover from the original Brazen Legion, named Sisevyn (pronounced *see-sevuhn*) can be seen leading small groups of faithful

cultists over the border into the swamp kingdom to try and hobble the crusade efforts of Lord King Bloodak. This cell is a group of guerrilla warriors bent on the cult's common goals but also in handicapping any forces moving against the southern border.

The Hierophant knows about the Mersmerron crusade against Dardarrick and is happy to let such feelings boil into righteous fury but he cannot allow another faith to come into the kingdom and steal his chance for revenge against Archiveltd and the All Father. If Tomarsson could manage some kind of joint scheme with the lizardfolk king he would gladly aid the crusaders, but Bloodak has refused audiences for months – claiming that even Praxious is secondary to Mersmerro's claim on the Dardarrian lands.

Saerding Keep

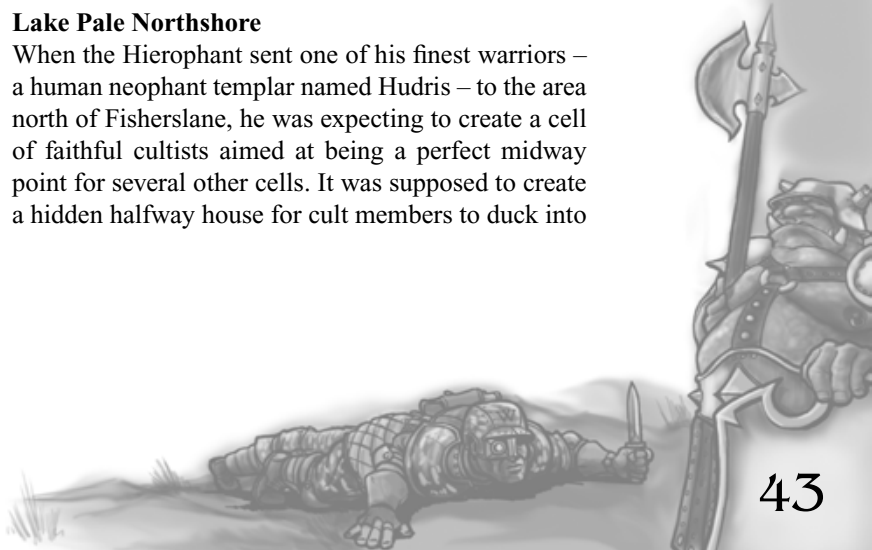
At one time this cell was among the cult's largest forces of brass priests in one place. Headed by Tomarsson's own cousin, a neophant named Romaris, the cell consisted of nearly 50 members that had fully integrated themselves amongst the population throughout the military fortification. The dracolich attack in 1,208 YBD killed many of their number and sent the others into the tunnels beneath the keep for survival.

When it was discovered that all of the survivors disappeared from their hiding place in the catacombs, the Hierophant sent one of his most skilful investigators to the area to look into it. All the investigator managed to find was a roughly scrawled pair of letters on the stone wall, a bloody fingernail left behind to punctuate the desperation of the message's leaving. The letters spelled 'DR'; perhaps the beginning of the word *dragon* or another word that could point to what happened to all of the survivors down in those tunnels.

As of yet the Hierophant has yet to name another neophant or reinstate the Saerding Keep cell.

Lake Pale Northshore

When the Hierophant sent one of his finest warriors – a human neophant templar named Hudris – to the area north of Fisherslane, he was expecting to create a cell of faithful cultists aimed at being a perfect midway point for several other cells. It was supposed to create a hidden halfway house for cult members to duck into



Cult of Praxious

for a few days of rest and prayer while they travelled across the kingdom. This was how it served the cult for the first two years of its inception.

Once the dead began to rise out of Lake Pale and attack the city, Hudris and his closest templars donned their armour and began to rid the city of its risen plague. Careless as to whether or not anyone recognised their helms and masks as the clergy of Praxious, they destroyed dozens of undead beasts in just the first few weeks. At first Hudris was worried that his cell's actions would earn him chastisement but the Hierophant applauded his actions when he came to the Brazen Hall to report.

Other members had reported on the situation before he could and Tomarsson was glad to hear that Hudris' actions were being praised by the folk of Fisherslane. Several new devotees had come forward from the beleaguered city, all thanking Praxious for sending his warriors to smite the undead foes. This strange rash of rising dead in Lake Pale have made the cell an almost accepted secret for the people in the area – a resource that the Hierophant will not let go unused.

Grainington Mills

This small cell suffered heavy casualties when the Lornish dracolich attacked the city, having ignored the call to evacuate in order to better reinforce their hidden shrine beneath one of the granary mills in the city's outskirts. A strong-willed neophant, the human called Bhurnod, reinforced the cellar of the shrine and held his closest cult members there while the dracolich raged above them.

Now that the attack has passed and Grainington is under martial control, placing the cell's remaining members into a state of complete secrecy and stealth. They pose as field-working farmers when they can but prefer to move only at night and when the garrison cannot find them. Their goal is to use the wanton destruction that befell the city to hide the sacrifice of any prominent All Father clergy they can kidnap and bring to the ashen ruins.

The Last Drink at Pierceling

Forging the deed to a large docked galley called the *Last Drink* formerly owned by a dead man, the cult

converted the belly of the ship to become a seaside temple that could easily throw ropes and set sail if the cell was in danger of being caught. The cell's neophant is a retired eladrin naval officer named Josiah Talorsson; the man who officially owns the ship as far as the city is concerned. He claims to be a textile trader but he never takes the ship far from the coast whenever he leaves the dock – a rare occurrence.

From within the *Last Drink* Talorsson leads over two dozen faithful cult members in weekly services. He hands out cell assignments and duties to his people, sending them on resource gathering raids and message details all over the port. The neophant himself rarely ever leaves the ship because of the local populace, who knows that he once served as a young eladrin in the first Hierophant's Brazen Legion immediately before it was disbanded.

Tomarsson knows that this cell will be important when it comes to the actual strikes against Dardarrick. When that time comes he will call upon Talorsson to sink as many ships as he can through magic and sabotage in order for the cult to wage their war without fear of attacks from the coast.

Olde Graenwich

Nestled in the very heart of the enemy like a worm in an apple, this cell has the most dangerous and important task of the entire cult's cells – to watch over the king and his activities. Led by a fanatical tiefling neophant, Zharuul (pronounced *za-root*), the cell is filled with spies and rogues dedicated to the Brazen One. Together they form a network of the faithful that watches the king and the leaders of the Pillars at all times, making note of specific habits and routines they might have that could be useful later.

Zharuul is feisty and somewhat bloodthirsty, her knife tasting 'infidel meat' as often as she can help it. Dead guards and All Father acolytes occasionally turn up in Olde Graenwich and many of them are due to the neophant's inability to go a full lunar cycle without sacrificing someone to Praxious in thanks for her 'vast power'. She and her 30 faithful agents are simply waiting for the order from the Hierophant that her cell can be turned upon the people of the city – all of whom she views as pathetic, weak lambs that require culling from Praxious' sight.

Merstorres

The faith of Praxious being legal to be a part of in the kingdom of Torres, Hierophant Tomarsson happily set up a small cell under neophant Dreyfuss Caile in the capitol city of the swamp kingdom. Asking permission to serve Praxious' will in the foreign land, the cell was allowed to exist amongst the Torresh by Lord King Bloodak himself (only because of the High Priestess intervened on their behalf). Caile has his faith tested almost daily in the land of 'marsh savages' but he and his 20 followers are treated as begrudged guests by the Torresh holy royalty.

The Hierophant has asked that Caile's cell report on the overall strength and disposition of the Torresh crusade, allowing the cult to prepare accordingly. Recent months have seen a growing impatience in the moods of the Lord King and his royal guardians. The number of humanoid sacrifices made to bless Bloodak's decisions has doubled since the turning of the calendar year and Caile has reported that he believes that something larger than a common border raid or skirmish is on the horizon in Torres.

Unfortunately for him however, the messenger was secretly caught and killed by Bloodak's agents a few dozen miles from the city's limits...



The Mettanbaugh Fork

The cell placed at the point where the mighty Mettanbaugh River splits into its two Dardarrian halves, just beyond the Lornish border, has recently become a testing grounds for bronze templars looking to test their martial prowess against the risen dead. So many of the undead have sprouted up around the riverbed and the Lornish mining fields to the east, the young but skilled neophant Dyers has had his hands full with dispatching them.

His cell was originally tasked with looking into the state of affairs within Lorn but any progress further east was stopped after King Guntheor returned from his mysterious sabbatical. The undead in the area all began to migrate to the border, flocking around the dreaded Black Knights and Dyers found himself gathering his templars together to deal with them. He has lost many men and women in this time but he is never without a steady supply of new templars from back west. It seems that the Hierophant places more trust and duty in the hands of any cult templar that has proven his worth by slaying these dark children of Mortessal – no matter by what or why they were raised.

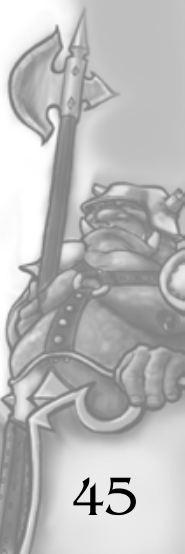
Parennax Islands

The last neophant is a sailor named Amberglint, the spawn of a Brazen Legion dragonborn that swore itself completely to the faith under Tomar. In an effort to raise another Brazen Legion at the request of the Hierophant himself, Amberglint trained fifty cult members in the way of sailing the Ocean and made for the Blooded Harbour in the Wildlands. There he and his 'mobile cell' would be able to acquire a ship and set sail for the islands of Parennax. Once there, the neophant was tasked with spending 10,000 accumulated golden coins to bring back as many loyal mercenaries as he could buy with that amount.

His ship set sail in the Browning of 1,207 YBD – and has yet to be seen again off the shore of this continent or any other known to the Hierophant.

The Cult's Armoury

Hierophant Tomarsson knows that his war against the All Father and his foolish worshippers will not be a bloodless one and that the Brazen Legion will need



to rise again to put the faith's enemies down once and for all. Arming and armouring the Cult of Praxious' many warriors is a task that Tomarsson believes he can undertake over several years, equipping everyone for the next stage of the revolution before the day comes to put these items to use.

This section covers the special weaponry, armour and magical equipment that the Cult of Praxious has available to their members. As these items have been revealed through the capture or elimination of cultists in the past, they could be used by any characters in *Wraith Recon* but generally are solely used by followers of Praxious.

The Weaponry of the Brazen One

The following are specialised weapons that are forged within the armouries of the Brazen Hall and sent out to the many cultists across the continent. There are enchanted versions available in the standard 'magic weapon' variety, with a few unique versions appearing in the hands of higher ranked members (see the Reliquary section below).

Blade, Offering (Brazen Nail)

The common weapon of initiates and less-martial followers, the offering blade is a stout, straight blade with a runner of bronze at the centre of the wedge-tipped blade. It is an excellent weapon for quick kills, like when making an animal sacrifice, cutting deeply into flesh and bone when a focussed strike can be delivered. When the wielder has a Combat Advantage over his target, this weapon inflicts one additional point of damage per hit.

Gladiar

A short sword with a wide blade, the gladiar is the standard weapon of the clergy. It is a stabbing weapon for the most part that has a reinforced, flat pommel that allows the wielder to use the heel of his other hand

to put all of his weight into a carefully placed stab. When using this weapon for a Coup de Grace attack, it inflicts *double* critical damage.

Templar Blade

A sadistic-looking cross between a cleaver and a cutlass, the templars of Praxious are known to use these weapons to chop down wounded or prone enemies, leaving behind ruined flesh and cleft bone. Most of these weapons are cast in bronze but a few ceremonial ones are gilded in gold – despite that this reduces the weapon's damage to a 1d6 and increases its weight to 12 lb.

Templar Greatblade

Found only in the hands of bronze templars when at war or in defence of a temple, these beautifully crafted blades are five-feet in length and two handspans wide. The blade is etched with one of the many lines of the Litany of Strength and has a reinforced hilt that is large enough for two flared gauntleted hands to hold it comfortably. A templar wielding a greatblade is not only a fearsome sight but the kinds of blows he can deliver are titanic.

Man-and-a-Half Axe

The preferred weapon of the warforged in the first Brazen Legion, this enormous chopping blade was named for the habit of its blows bisecting one target and sinking deeply in the next during the Legion's march into Lorn during the 1,010 YBD. Its blade is four feet of tempered bronze riveted to the reinforced haft at the far end *and* halfway up the handle to make sure it does not snap from the weight of a two-handed swing.

Throwing Ingot

A simple weapon carried by cultists that do not want to give away their role in the cult, throwing ingots are made from the cast off bronze from weapon forging. They are small squares of tempered bronze with hard edges that can be hurled at a foe with surprising force and no training necessary.

Weapons (Melee)

| Weapon | Prof. | Damage | Range | Price | Weight | Group | Properties |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------------|---------------------|
| Simple Melee Weapons | | | | | | | |
| One-Handed | | | | | | | |
| Blade, Offering | +2 | 1d4 | 3/6 | 5 gp | 2 lb. | Light blade | High crit, off-hand |
| Military Melee Weapons | | | | | | | |
| One-Handed | | | | | | | |
| Gladiar | +2 | 1d6 | – | 5 gp | 4 lb. | Light blade | Off-hand |
| Templar blade | +2 | 1d8 | – | 15 gp | 6 lb. | Light blade | – |
| Two-Handed | | | | | | | |
| Templar greatblade | +3 | 1d10 | – | 32 gp | 15 lb. | Heavy blade | High crit, reach |
| Superior Melee Weapons | | | | | | | |
| Two-Handed | | | | | | | |
| Man-and-a-Half Axe | +2 | 2d6 | – | 40 gp | 25 lb. | Polearm | Reach |

Weapons (Ranged)

| Weapon | Prof. | Damage | Range | Price | Weight | Group | Properties |
|------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------------|
| Simple Ranged Weapons | | | | | | | |
| One-Handed | | | | | | | |
| Ingot, throwing (2) | +1 | 1d6 | 4/8 | 2 gp | 2 lb. | None | – |

The Protection of the Faithful

The following are the commonly used types of armour that the members of the Cult of Praxious can be found wearing. Like the weaponry, there is a stockpile of these items made and stored in the Brazen Hall for use by loyal cult members.

Banded Robe

Ceremonial armour worn by acolytes, priests and templars alike, these wool and leather robes have seven wide bands of bronze riveted to the chest, arms and back to give it a decent amount of protection as well as several surfaces where the priests can engrave the many litanies of Praxious.

Brass Cuirass

The normal protection worn by the brass priests, this hammered and riveted sheet of brass over denser

iron is a solid layer of protection that extends from the shoulders of the wearer to just above the hips, front and back. It is not comfortable but followers of Praxious know that personal comfort should come second to battle worthiness.

Brass Piping

Worn by acolytes throughout the cult, these long woollen robes are sewn in two layers over a central space run with thin brass rods and piping that cushion blows and turn away blades. Unfortunately for the wearer however, the piping get bent out of shape and punch through the cloth after a few powerful blows, making the armour uncomfortable and obvious to behold. Anyone wearing brass piping armour that suffers 5 or more points of damage in a single attack has the check penalty of the armour increased by –1 and the armour bonus it offers lowered by 1. When the armour bonus is 0 (making the check a –3), the armour is twisted, torn and useless.



Bronze Plate

Taking the form of half-plate armour, templar bronze plate is much lighter in construction, allowing the fighter greater mobility at the expense of heavy protection. It is the common armour worn by bronze templars whenever they are operating in an official capacity of any kind.

Chained Cowl

Worn by the penitent and the fanatic within the cult, chained cowls are leather hoods that are locked into place over a cultist's mask and held in place by a ring of chains. The chains are looped under the arms and groin of the wearer, then held by a keyed lock at the base of the spine. Although it offers some protection, it is said to bring the same weight that the All Father's Veil of Ignorance once had upon the brow of all mortals – a weight that was almost lifted by Praxious.

Flared Gauntlets

Heavy bronze and iron gauntlets with wide fingers and drastically flared cuffs, these items are common amongst the templars in battle dress. Although they

are large enough to get in the way of wielding most swords, a pair of flared gauntlets counts as having a light shield due to the protection they lend.

Templar Helm

These bronze and steel helmets are quite elaborate, with widely-flaring neck guards at the back and brow helping to deflect blows away from the incorporated mask of Praxious. In combat, a templar helm counts as having a light shield due to the protection it lends.

The Reliquary of the Brazen Hall

Found within the heavy vaults under the Claws, deep within the Brazen Hall of Praxious, Hierophant Tomarsson keeps a collection of important magical artefacts and items that are useful to the Brazen One's worldly work. Normally only accessible by neophant command, the vault contains hundreds of thousands of gold pieces worth of magical items – some of which are detailed in this section.

It should be noted that some of these items are *unique* and are noted as such in their description's level summary.

Armour and Shields

| Item | Armour/Shield Bonus | Minimum Enhancement Bonus | Check | Speed | Price (gp) | Weight |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|------------|--------|
| Light Armour | | | | | | |
| Brass Piping | +3 | – | – | –1 | 30 | 15 lb. |
| Chained Cowl | +2 | – | –1 | – | 5 | 30 lb. |
| Heavy Armour | | | | | | |
| Banded Robe | +4 | – | –1 | –1 | 30 | 25 lb. |
| Brass Cuirass | +5 | – | –1 | –1 | 45 | 25 lb. |
| Bronze plate | +6 | – | –1 | –2 | 45 | 40 lb. |
| Shields | | | | | | |
| Flared Gauntlets | +1 | – | – | – | 5 | 2 lb. |
| Templar Helm | +1 | – | – | – | 20 | 5 lb. |

Mask of the Hierophant

Level Unique

A golden representation of the god Praxious' face, this mask is a direct conduit of his divine power on the world of Nuera.

Item Slot: Head Slot

Priceless

Property: You and each ally within 10 squares of you gain a +5 item bonus to saving throws against fear effects.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you grant an ally a basic attack. That ally can take a standard action instead. The ally gains a +10 power bonus to any damage rolls made during that standard action.

Power (Encounter): Minor Action. Use this power to transfer the full effects and damage of the next single attack that successfully rolls against one of your defences to any ally within 10 Squares.

The Sword Patricide

Level Unique

Held by the Hierarch and charged with the power of Praxious' will to overthrow the All Father, this shining brass shortsword is capable of ending the life of anyone opposing the faith.

Weapon: Light Blade (shortsword)

Priceless

Enhancement: +6 to attack and damage rolls

Critical: +6d6 damage

Property: This weapon provides Resist 10 to all types of damage from a magical source.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. You say one of the seven deadly names of Praxious' own weapon from the War of Creation, imbuing your next successful attack with the power to kill anyone or anything. After rolling damage for this attack, the target will immediately take this damage again unless they succeed in a save with a -3 penalty. If the save is failed, the damage number doubles and the save must be taken again. This doubling continues until either a save is made or the target dies.

Templar Vestment Armour

Level 13+

Partially ceremonial bronze plate armour swathed in ivory-coloured sashes and robes, suits of blessed vestment armour fortify the wearer's body and mind with the stubborn strength of the Brazen One.

| | | | | | |
|--------|----|-----------|--------|----|--------------|
| Lvl 13 | +3 | 20,000 gp | Lvl 23 | +5 | 445,000 gp |
| Lvl 18 | +4 | 92,000 gp | Lvl 28 | +6 | 2,200,000 gp |

Armor: Bronze Plate

Enhancement: AC and Will Defence

Property: When an enemy scores any hit based on your Reflex Defence, you gain Resist 2 to that type of damage until the end of encounter.

Lvl 18: Resist 5

Lvl 23: Resist 8

Lvl 28: Resist 10



Risenbane Weapon

Level 5+

Used by many members of the faith to dispatch the undead plaguing the world, this weapon glows with a violet light when undoing the work of the Queen of the Damned.

| | | | | | |
|--------|----|-----------|--------|----|--------------|
| Lvl 5 | +1 | 900 gp | Lvl 20 | +4 | 105,000 gp |
| Lvl 10 | +2 | 4,000 gp | Lvl 25 | +5 | 600,000 gp |
| Lvl 15 | +3 | 20,000 gp | Lvl 30 | +6 | 2,750,000 gp |

Weapon: Light Blade, Heavy Blade, Mace

Enhancement: Attack and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 radiant damage per plus

Property: This weapon ignores the Resist traits of any form of undead creature.

Power (At-Will ♦ Radiant): Free Action. All damage dealt by this weapon is radiant damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal. This power *automatically* goes into effect when the weapon is brought within 10 squares of an undead creature.

Symbol of Defiance

Level 2+

The power of Praxious flows through you, bolstering your strength and tenacity.

| | | | | | |
|--------|----|-----------|--------|----|--------------|
| Lvl 2 | +1 | 500 gp | Lvl 17 | +4 | 50,000 gp |
| Lvl 7 | +2 | 2,000 gp | Lvl 22 | +5 | 275,000 gp |
| Lvl 12 | +3 | 11,000 gp | Lvl 27 | +6 | 1,250,000 gp |

Implement (Holy Symbol)

Enhancement: Attack and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 radiant damage per plus

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Until the beginning of your next turn, your Defences are increased by +2 and you cannot be forcibly moved from your current square.

Lvl 12: Defences are increased by +5

Lvl 22: Defences are increased by +10

Merciless Bands

Level 5+

Bands of bronze and red leather, you can crush the lives of lesser opponents with ease.

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|------------|
| Lvl 5 | 2,000 gp | Lvl 25 | 750,000 gp |
| Lvl 15 | 30,000 gp | | |

Item Slot: Arms

Power (At-Will): Minor Action. Whenever making a melee or unarmed attack against a target over which you have Combat Advantage, you add +2 to each of your dice for damage.

Lvl 15: Add +4 to each of your dice for damage.

Lvl 25: Add +6 to each of your dice for damage.

Brazen Mask of Zeal

Level 12

This simple beaten mask of brass and silver is an enchanted version of the acolytes' mask, imbuing you with the hard and icy stare of the Brazen One. All who try to stand against your gaze will buckle and falter.

Item Slot: Head

18,500 gp

Property: Gain a +2 bonus to Will Defence.

Power (At-Will): Minor Action. You may try to Shift into an occupied square, forcing the target currently in the square to succeed in a save or be pushed directly back one square. Members of the Cult of Praxious automatically make this save.

Potion of Vigorous Rage

Level 10

This foul concoction of blood, bile and alchemical reagents spread a bitter fire through the imbiber's veins and muscles, empowering him with righteous fury.

Potion: 1,000 gp

Power (Consumable): Standard Action. Drink this potion and spend a healing surge. Instead of healing any hit points, gain +2d4 to all attack and damage rolls for the remainder of the encounter.

Other Common Magic Items Found in the Reliquary

The following is a list of magic items from the appropriate section in the *D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK* that Hierophant Tomarsson and the Cult of Praxious can commonly call upon to bolster their faithful members.

Armour – *Battleforged Armour, Bloodthread Armour, Exalted Armour, Magic Armour, Tombforged Armour.*

Weapons – *Berserker Weapon, Magic Weapon, Terror Weapon, Vicious Weapon.*

Holy Symbols – *Magic Holy Symbol, Symbol of Battle, Symbol of Power, Symbol of Victory.*

Orbs – *Magic Orb, Orb of Sanguinary Repercussions.*

Rods – *Magic Rod, Rod of First Blood.*

Staves – *Magic Staff, Staff of the War Mage.*

Wands – *Magic Wand, Wand of Ray of Enfeeblement.*

Arms Slot Items – *Bracers of Mighty Striking, Shield of Defiance.*

Feet Slot Items – *Battlestrider Greaves, Dwarven Greaves.*

Hands Slot Items – *Gauntlets of Destruction, Gauntlets of Ogre Power, Gauntlets of the Ram.*

Head Slot Items – *Circlet of Authority, Crown of Command, Helm of Battle, Iron of Spite.*

Neck Slot Items – *Amulet of Protection, Cloak of Resistance, Cloak of Survival, Scarab of Invulnerability.*

Rings – *Iron Ring of the Dwarf Lords, Ring of Freedom of Movement, Ring of Protection.*

Waist Slot Items – *Belt of Giant Strength, Belt of Titan Strength, Belt of Vigor, Ironskin Belt.*

Wondrous Items – *Revenant Ankh, Sending Stones.*

Potions – *Potion of Healing, Potion of Vitality.*



Paragon Paths for the Followers of Praxious

As originally shown in the *D&D 4E Player's Handbook*, characters in D&D 4E grow into experienced versions of their classes called 'Paragon Paths'. *Wraith Recon* is no different in these cases and for readers and players of this setting we have decided to quickly include two new paragon paths based on the faithful members of the Cult of Praxious.

These paths are not necessarily suited for use *by* the characters in a Wraith Recon strike team. Even so, clever Games Masters looking to make interesting and powerful NPC villains could add them to their own characters in order to augment them with unique powers and abilities. Alternatively, readers roleplaying in the world setting of Nuera might find these paths useful for non-Wraith characters as well.

Regardless how readers might wish to utilise them, we have included them to add to the completeness of the world of Nuera and of *Wraith Recon*.

Brass Priest

'Through my lips His litanies are spoken, but through my hands they are worked and done in His name.'

Prerequisites: Cleric class, worship of Praxious

You take on the polished brass mask of the higher priesthood, donning gloves to keep your skin from showing and long robes that hide even the simplest degree of your persona. You lose yourself within the duties of the priesthood and *become* the faith embodied. Your zeal and piety in the Brazen One makes you stronger and more resilient than the common cultist.

Brass Priest Path Features:

Priest's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you also gain a +4 bonus to all Defences until the start of your next turn.

Brass Aspect (11th level): While you are bloodied, your attack and damage rolls are made with a +2 bonus.

Weapon Symbolism (11th level): You are proficient with the Gladiar (see above) and can always substitute it as your Implement if you wish to.

Never Surrender (16th level): You embody the stalwart stubbornness of the Brazen One and you will not give ground when you do not wish to. Whenever you spend a healing surge for any reason, you are immune to fear-based effects and cannot be pushed from your current square until the start of your next turn.

Brass Priest Prayers

Brazen Might**Brass Priest Attack 11**

You whisper one of the litanies of Praxious to yourself, putting titanic strength behind a single attack that can bring any foe to its knees.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Melee Weapon**Standard Action****Melee Weapon****Target:** One metallic object.**Attack:** Strength vs. AC**Hit:** 3[W] + Strength modifier damage; target must save or be pushed back 1d6 squares and knocked prone.**Litany of Strength****Brass Priest Utility 12**

By chanting the litany containing one of Praxious' displays of strength in the War of Creation, you fill your muscles with liquid bronze and can rend tempered iron with your bare hands. Nothing made of mortal hands can hope to stop you.

Daily ♦ Divine**Standard Action****Melee touch**

Effect: Any single object (weapon, shield, door, section of wall and so on) that you put between your hands and either push upon or pull apart will crack, shatter, tear or split as appropriate to it having great force applied to it. Mundane items are made useless instantly with no save. Magical or somehow protected items (Games Master's discretion) can make a save (using the item or effect's power level as the normal modifier) to avoid destruction.

Roar of Defiance**Brass Priest Attack 20**

Praxious told the Hierophant the 13 words of undoing and he has shared one of them with you. Although it is very taxing, you scream it out until your lungs ache – ripping apart a piece of Creation around you.

Daily ♦ Divine, Thunder**Standard Action****Close burst 10****Attack:** Constitution vs. Fortitude**Hit:** 7d8 damage**Miss:** 2d8 damage

Bronze Templar

'Savages, beasts and mewling kittens are the followers of the lesser faiths. We are strength, power and the freedom to use both.'

Prerequisites: Paladin class, worship of Praxious

You strap on the helm and mask of the higher role of templar and become the hand that wields Praxious' sword. Your faith is steadfast and unyielding; your physical prowess a sign of your dedication to the greater cult of the Brazen One. You do battle against his foes and seek the return to power of your god and his congregation.

Bronze Templar Path Features:

Templar's Stroke (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you are considered to have Combat Advantage over a single enemy of your choosing until the end of your turn.

Tempered Bronze (11th level): You may add +1 to the damage rolls of any attack you make with a weapon cast from bronze or bronzed-iron.

Weapon Training (11th level): You are proficient with the man-and-a-half axe (see above).

Behind the Mask (16th level): When you are wearing your templar's mask (and potentially your helm) you are emboldened to be Praxious' servant. You are utterly immune to fear and charm effects and receive a +1 bonus to all saving throws and Defences.

Bronze Templar Prayers

Word of Judgment

Bronze Templar Attack 11

You speak one of the litanies of the Brazen One, ending it with a shout that calls forth a burst of divine force from your holy symbol, crushing the weakened under Praxious' judgment.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Implement, Thunder

Standard Action

Close burst 6

Target: Each bloodied enemy in burst

Attack: Strength vs. Will

Hit: 2d10 thunder damage, and the target is knocked prone by the wave of force.

No Mercy for the Weak

Bronze Templar Utility 12

You steel yourself with the knowledge that any weakened part of creation should not be allowed to weaken the whole, making it easier to deliver the finishing blow upon them.

Daily ♦ Divine

Standard Action

Personal

Effect: For the duration of one encounter you gain a +3 bonus to hit and damage against bloodied targets.

Stroke of the Sacrament

Bronze Templar Attack 20

It is your job to kill those unworthy to stand in the light of Praxious upon the final days of Creation and your blade is charged with the glowing force of your task as it destroys its foe utterly.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Radiant

Standard Action

Melee Weapon

Target: One enemy within 1 square

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + Charisma modifier radiant damage, target must save or attack is considered a critical hit.

Miss: Half normal damage, and the target is marked until end of your next turn.

How to Use Tomarsson's Cult of Praxious

The Hierophant-in-Exile Tomarsson and his secret cult of Brazen worshippers will no doubt play a large part in the overall story and metaplot of the *Wraith Recon* series of game sourcebooks and mission packs. Their masked faces will surely rise up and bring about problems for Dardarrick in future products. Their activities are focussed on, for example, in the mission included within this book, *Shadow of the Hierarch*.

They can be much more than just a collection of religious zealots lurking in the shadows to thwart the *Wraith Recon* characters' every move or the moustache-twirling villains that plan to take over the world. They are a powerful force to be reckoned with living amongst the characters' families and friends, they look and sound just like everyone else and they represent the negative impacts of the king's decision to show leniency upon a known enemy of the state. By letting Tomarsson live, Archiveltdt planted the seed of a potential religious rebellion – the exact sort of decision that the *Wraith Recon* organisation was created to solve long before the king has to even know about it.

The Cult of Praxious under the Hierophant Tomarsson is a source for espionage, drama, betrayal and moral dilemma. Exactly how the *Wraith Recon* strike teams deal with the occasional uprising of Praxious worshippers is simple enough but when all of these

occasions are being orchestrated by one devilishly intelligent person – the ends are a little less likely to justify the means.

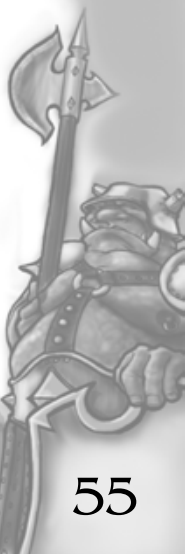
Cult of Praxious Mission Hooks

This section is devoted to several plotline hooks for *Wraith Recon* Games Masters to use the Cult of Praxious as driving forces within their own game sessions and chronicles. Besides the *Shadow of the Hierarch* mission pack found later in this sourcebook, these are good ideas on how to integrate the Cult of Praxious as a steadfast foe of Dardarrick, King Archiveltdt and all *Wraith Recon* Player Characters.

The High Cleric is Missing!

While out on a trip to a small village or town away from Graenwich to bless the foundation stones of a new temple to the All Father, High Cleric Rustavi is kidnapped by cultists of Praxious posing as Dardarrian soldiers. He is whisked away to a hidden site to await the coming of the nearest neophant to oversee his trafficking to Brazen Hall – for his sacrifice to the Brazen One.

SpellCom can use the Omnicix-chip ring the High Cleric wears to locate his whereabouts and send in a *Wraith Recon* strike team to rescue him but they cannot do so until they are sure that no witnesses will be around to speak of the Wraiths. The High Cleric himself cannot know about the covert organisation either (he would certainly oppose its use). Sending in the Wraiths could get messy, both physically and politically.



The question becomes, is High Cleric Rustavi's life worth the potential unmasking of Wraith Recon?

Temple Construction Mishap

The Brotherhood of Magnus has volunteered to oversee the construction of a new major temple to the All Father in a city in the western half of the kingdom. This construction site has suffered dozens of minor setbacks and unlikely mishaps throughout the year, with the latest being the *accidental* deaths of several workers while on the job.

This is obviously not a simple case of labour errors or faulty workmanship and the Brotherhood is extremely concerned. Their concerns are doubly deep because of Archmage Daramin's plot to build a secret SpellCom teleportation circle and field office under the temple. The underground intelligence office has already been built and sealed away from the workers but until the temple is actually finished SpellCom cannot hope to utilise the site.

To make matters worse, it is a local cell of the Cult of Praxious that has decided the temple will not be finished. They plan to continue to escalate their sabotage and raids until the worksite is utterly abandoned and what little work has been done can be razed to the ground. If they manage to do this, the circle will be discovered and attentions could be raised – this is extremely bad due to Daramin's decision *not* to tell the church about his creation.

Now he must send in the Wraiths to find these cultists and dissuade them from working against the temple's progress. It will not be easy to do but it is either that or the willing removal of the teleportation ring before it is discovered; something that Archmage Daramin is not willing to concede.

Loyalties Tested

A member of the SpellCom Arcanist teams has been discovered by his friends and co-workers to be a member of a less radical sect of Praxious worshippers. He confesses to be a worshipper but swears that he is not one of Tomarsson's flunkies and simply believes in freedom

and strength – the original and unmolested views of the Brazen One before Tomar got a hold of them. The Arcanist General believes him but sees an opportunity to utilise his faith rather than punish him for it.

As a show of loyalty to Dardarrick and not to the faith of Praxious, SpellCom tasks this young arcanist into seeking out a local cell of Tomarsson's cultists in order to join them. It will be easy enough with his knowledge of the religion and his actual faith in the controversial god.

Once joined, he will go to where they hold their secret meetings and find a secluded spot to quickly cast a *linked portal* to call on the Wraith Recon strike team waiting to sweep in and take out the entire cell.

A Brazen Forge

A concerned citizen from Goldston noticed one of the minting facilities was working long hours after normal work shifts and wanted to see if he could make some extra money but found he was not allowed to help when he knocked upon the locked doors. Being a goldsmith himself, he recognised the smell of smelting *bronze*, not gold coming out of the building – and told the local watch. One of the watchmen had a feeling what that meant and Wizard's Guild agents were informed.

Archmage Arcos needs a Wraith Recon team to go in and investigate this nocturnal bronze smelting operation without uprooting any of the equipment or supplies in the minting facility. The building in question is an important producer of gold coins for the kingdom and any damage done to its rate of production during a time of war could leave soldiers unpaid or resources not purchased.

What the Wraiths do not know is that the mint is being held by a very powerful local templar and his entire unit of acolytes – all of whom would gladly burn the mint to the ground if they were caught; if only to prove their willingness to sacrifice. It will be a hard fought battle but it will be a massacre if the Wraiths do not use caution and stealth.

Savages and Masks

A group of misled and misinformed savages from the Wildlands, orcs and primal men mostly, have been deluded by a charismatic brass priest into attacking a local fortification. The savages do not know exactly why but they have been told to demand the ground force chaplains (All Father clerics assigned to infantry units) be handed over to them. Of course, the brass priest – an insidious elven worshipper named Ryacliff – wants them so he can sacrifice them to the Brazen One.



The citadel's walls have done well enough keeping the savages at bay but soon the attacking force will turn on the nearby ranching population and decimate it utterly. Without the soldiers to help them, surely their fields will burn and their small families will end up as prey to the misguided raiders. Scouts believe that the savage tribe will move on the ranches in three days' time. The chaplains will not allow it and will walk out willingly to be taken if it means staving off the attacks from innocent people.

Wraith Recon has only two days to go in, find Ryacliff, neutralise him and sow some discontent in the tribe. Without the priest to lead them in their actions, they would soon drift apart and eventually go back home. The issue becomes, how does the strike team move about in a war camp of 100 savages to find one masked man without getting caught – or starting a full scale war upon themselves?

The Future for Tomarsson

Exactly what Hierophant Tomarsson has in store for his cult and the people of Dardarrick is a kaleidoscopic scheme that could bring dozens of different enemies in line to bear upon the throne. His plans and plots are cunning and villainous; each one a piece of a much larger goal. Exactly how he will move to accomplish it is unknown to the closest of his advisors and neophants – they all are pieces of the larger puzzle.

What happens with Tomarsson's Cult of Praxious is yet to be seen but watch future *Wraith Recon* sourcebooks and mission packs to see some of the Hierophant-in-Exile's machinations come to pass...unless the Wraiths can stop them.



Threats From Within Dardarrick

'It is not the enemies we know that should frighten you, milord. It is all of those we have yet to discover.'

– Arcanist General Matteau Raspeng

Dardarrick is a large kingdom; a nation full of splendour and wonder that stretches for hundreds of miles. It is the home of many happy family lines that can trace their lineage all the way back to the Dawning. Through the glory and the teachings of the All Father, Matriarias and even Praxious for some centuries, the 'noble lion' that is the Great Kingdom of Dardarrick has grown into the most powerful nation on the continent – perhaps even the world.

Amidst the shining parapets and the fairy tale cottages scattered across the kingdom however, there are many places where Dardarrick's eyes are not looking all the time. These places could just be normal shadows that are simply waiting to be explored or they could contain the sorts of cults and secret forces that *Enemies Within* has been written to show to readers.

This chapter looks at several cults and secret communities, clubs and societies that are hiding within the boundaries of Dardarrick. It details their whereabouts, their reasoning for existing and their motivations for acting in secret (if indeed they do). Along with a list of what a typical 'minor' encounter involving the group would consist of, each entry also includes at least one mission idea or plot hook involving the group – and how a *Wraith Recon* Games Master could utilise them.

As a note, the following entries are listed in alphabetical order; they are NOT arranged by size, importance, power, etc. Due to the extensive coverage

in the previous chapter, Tomarsson's Cult of Praxious does not reappear here.

Assembly Secundus

When the Brazen Legion disbanded after the rise of King Archiveltd, several hundred warforged mercenaries were suddenly without cause, career or purpose. Serving no purpose is a personal hell for most warforged and it did not take long before the artificial humanoids began to gather for camaraderie and safety. When a few of their number came forward with ancient writings and schematics to recreate the 'forgetopia' that was the Dei Pro Machina (before the Hyrric Tempest complication), they formed this secretive collective.

The aptly-named 'cult' of Assembly Secundus (the second collective of warforged) nominally worships the god of their creation, Vulka. They are actively seeking a way to recreate the legendary (mythical?) perfection that was part of the Hyrric society at the top of the world. They have agents moving about the nation, normally as soldiers or mercenaries but they are concentrated at the northeastern most coast of the Stone Forest mountains without crossing into Lorn. From these ore-rich mountains and the salty cliffs nearer to Pierceling, the Assembly has no lack for raw materials to create more of their kind. A population of nearly 1,000 warforged make up the main body of the Assembly and they give life to new members weekly.

The Assembly is searching for the perfect combination of Vulkite faith, natural life-giving salts and refined alloys to bring back the age of the Hyrric warforged – perfected creations by the Forge Father himself. Those ancient warforged that still hobble around on weathered tendons, grinding gears and dried-up

pistons know that such creations are powerful enough in numbers to make the foolish King Archiveltd to give the Assembly Secundus a piece of the kingdom to call their own. Unfortunately much of the schematic gospels of Vulka were lost in the Tempest and only two functioning Hyrric warforged have been constructed as of yet.

For statistics on the Hyrric warforged, see the *Appendix of Enemies* within this book.

Typical Encounters

Level 5 Encounter (XP 775)

- ◆ 1 warforged captain (level 6 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 3 warforged soldiers (level 4 soldier)

Level 9 Encounter (XP 1,600)

- ◆ 1 warforged captain (level 6 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 2 warforged soldiers (level 4 soldier)
- ◆ 1 shield guardian (level 14 soldier)

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ The Assembly Secundus needs to test one of their new Hyrric warforged, which are too ‘young’ to know the full extent of their abilities as of yet. They are mentally like adolescents but physically powerful enough to deal with numerous foes single-handedly. The Assembly has chosen to send one of their new creations toward the southern side of the Stone Forest as a ‘training exercise’. Unfortunately the exercise’s path has led it directly into the secret refugee camp consisting of the escaped citizens of Grainington. One force of soldiers have already tried to stop the metallic giant and failed; it is time for the Wraiths to come and deal with the situation.

◆ A warforged member of another Wraith Recon strike team has received an invitation to visit the Assembly Secundus and potentially join them. While it will not betray Dardarrick in this way, it did report the invitation to Commander Ruhrk. The Commander formed a new plan immediately; he would send the invited Wraith into the Assembly with a locatable Omnicix chip. While visiting the Assembly, it will stash the chip somewhere private that could be used later to drop in the characters’ Wraith team to acquire otherwise impossible-to-witness intelligence on the growing cult of the warforged.

The Black Circle

A truly ancient collection of necromancers, liche priests and dread warlocks from the ages before history, this is the main ruling body of all cults dedicated to Mortessal. Some of these powerful and millennia-old creatures have faint memories of when the Queen of Darkness and the Damned walked the world, especially Baphomes (pronounced *baff-o-mehz*) – the oldest liche priest in existence, who claims to have known Mortessal’s love during the War of Creation. Whether this is true or not is beyond the knowledge of any mortal being but nothing live or dead would dare question.

The Black Circle was once very strong in Lorn but moved west into Dardarrick 100 years before Lorn conquered it. Using common witch covens and necromantic cults as their eyes and ears, the Circle has managed to thrive in hidden mausoleum-temples and morgue-shrines across the continent. Even during the religious purges under the Praxious theocracy the Black Circle remained strong yet elusive. Whenever a force of authority that would stand against their practices would get close, the Circle would choose a lesser cult to ‘make mistakes’ and get caught, taking the attentions away from the dark heart at the cult network’s centre.

In Dardarrick the Black Circle is quite strong but not as active as it could be, especially as of late with the increase of undead on the eastern borderlands. The undead rising up in the wake of the Lornish minions are not of Mortessal’s creation; they come from another dark source and her Circle sees them as a challenge to her authority. The liche priests tend to keep their temple-lairs in the badlands to the west where they can carry out their dark schemes and experiments without constant meddling from would-be heroes and Dardarrick soldiery. Especially along the seldom-travelled caravan routes in the southwest, the Black Circle enjoys several small cells of faithful servants. The witch covens and necromancer cults of southwest Dardarrick seed the rural places with mindless undead, trying to feed the risen forces of Mortessal as well as herd potential ‘flesh donors’ into areas where they could be taken by loyal cultists.

Although the actual cult of the ‘true’ Black Circle is very small (10 to 15 members), the larger network



of Mortessal-worshipping cults that fall under their influence is enormous, widespread and ultimately sacrificial for the greater good of the Circle.

For statistics on Dread Warlocks and Liche Priests, see the *Appendix of Enemies* within this book.

Typical Encounters

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,352)

- ◆ 2 drow warriors (level 11 lurker)
- ◆ 4 zombie rotters (level 3 minion)

Level 12 Encounter (XP 2,700)

- ◆ 1 lich (human wizard) (level 14 elite controller)
- ◆ 4 zombies (level 2 brutes)
- ◆ 8 decrepit skeletons (level 1 minion)

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ A ‘dread warlock’ from the Black Circle has been somehow trapped in a dungeon complex under an old ruin in the southwest that was being used as a depository for SpellCom scroll cabinets. These cabinets hold highly sensitive information under mystical wards; the same wards that accidentally trapped the undead sorcerer. Sending common soldiers or adventuring heroes into the complex not only puts them at risk but it also endangers the confidential information tucked away in those scrolls. Only Wraith Recon can be trusted to deal with the situation.

◆ The rise of the undead in the east has forced the mummified hand of Baphomes, who has sent a mouthpiece-emissary to the Pillars of Dardarrick to serve as his conduit to them. He claims to want to help King Archiveldt in dealing with these ‘poorly animated meat trinkets’ but SpellCom is not yet trusting of him. The mouthpiece brings with him a powerful anti-undeath ritual, a way for Mortessal worshippers to clean up their mistakes. The Wraiths have to put the liche priest’s ritual to the test – without anyone knowing who is doing it and where it came from.

The Bronze Fist of Praxious

There are very few cults that are ‘cults-within-cults’ but the Bronze Fist is exactly that. Wherever there have been followers of Praxious in large enough numbers

to require an evangelising clergyman, there has likely been a member of the Bronze Fist somewhere nearby. They are master manipulators and mighty combatants, buying fully into Praxious’ tenets of might makes right. They are happiest playing several sides of a situation against one another, ensuring that the winner is someone they can then control or crush as the scene demands.

Mysterious and powerful, the Bronze Fist are honestly only known to Hierophant Tomarsson, his closest neophants and the leaders of both Dardarrick and Lorn. The cult has interacted with both of these kingdoms in the past, helping overthrow leaders and initiate new allies in their stead. The actual numbers of the Bronze Fist fluctuate depending on who is asked but roughly 100 members exist. These men and women do not wear the traditional masks or flowing robes as the Hierophant taught his priesthood; they wear simple clothes and no mask at all – it is easier to be anonymous when you look just like everyone else.

The Bronze Fist has chosen not to interact with Tomarsson’s cult of Praxious. They instead manipulate what Tomarsson’s minions find or ‘discover’ in their world investigations and research into the old ways. Making certain artefacts and rituals available to them, the Fist empowers the Hierophant-in-Exile without actually making a direct link to the vengeful eladrin. The Fist knows that Tomarsson is too volatile and bent on revenge (rather than focussed upon the bolstering of the faith) to be Praxious’ perfect instrument, forcing them to try and use him against the All Father in the meantime.

Typical Encounters

Level 1 Encounter (XP 319)

- ◆ 2 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion)
- ◆ 3 brazen initiates (level 2 minion)

Level 10 Encounter (XP 1,852)

- ◆ 1 brass priest (level 13 controller)
- ◆ 4 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion)

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ The Bronze Fist originally set up a small collection of powerful Praxious litany scrolls for a group of Tomarsson’s cultists to find but they were sidetracked and ended up missing their first opportunity. Their

actions attracted the attention of SpellCom and now the area is being watched by a Wraith Recon team. The cultists will surely be back but the Fist member cannot risk those writings to end up in an infidel's hands. The Wraiths may suddenly get a chance to capture a member of the Bronze Fist – a surprising and beneficial target indeed!

◆ One of Tomarsson's neophants has been skimming far too much coinage from the tithes that are supposed to go to the Brazen Hall and a local member of the Bronze Fist sees this as a sin against Praxious. The Fist has decided that this neophant has to happen into a terrible situation, so they have fed his whereabouts to the Brotherhood. Now a Wraith Recon strike team is being sent in to deal with the wayward neophant. When something does not add up right and the Bronze Fist member springs a triple-cross upon the Wraiths (to cover up his involvement), they are caught in a very tough predicament!

Father's Stern Hand

Formed at the closing of the first millennium after the Dawning, the Father's Stern Hand rose out of the ranks of angered paladins in the service of the Dardarrian church to battle the forces of Lorn. Worshipers of the All Father had been watching people suffer under the Lornish War for years and a circle of veteran paladins of the faith had enough. They gathered in secrecy, branded themselves pariahs from the common teachings of the church and went out to protect the All Father's creations by putting evil to the sword.

They equate themselves to the bittersweet feeling that a father gets after physically disciplining a misbehaving child. They know it casts a poor pallor upon their piety but surely the All Father will forgive them for ending such dark and terrible evils in his name?

Based out of Rivermarck, the Father's Stern Hand are led by an old eladrin veteran of the Second Lornish War named Jhuradeil (pronounced *Yoo-rah-deel*) from out of an old paladin training shrine on the outskirts of town. Every member is tattooed between their thumb and forefinger on the palm of their hand the symbol of their 'order', a mailed fist. Jhuradeil was there as a boy at the forming of the Stern Hand and he carries all of

the old traditions with him into the future – including secrecy. With a member population of roughly fifty, the Stern Hand is relatively easy to hide from the scolding clergy and the meddling authorities throughout the kingdom they are trying to protect.

Father's Stern Hand is still very active in the kingdom of Dardarrick and sometimes across the borders of Lorn or Torres despite the official disapproval they received from the High Cleric and the king in 1,199 YBD. They actively seek out enemies of the All Father's teachings and force them to recant their evil ways – oftentimes leaving unexplained dead villains in public places in their wake.

Typical Encounters

Level 2 Encounter (XP 500)

- ◆ 1 dwarf hammerer (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 2 human guards (level 3 soldier)

Level 3 Encounter (XP 650)

- ◆ 1 eladrin fey knight (level 7 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 2 human berserkers (level 4 brute)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ One of the character Wraiths is a family member of a member of the Father's Stern Hand, who believes he and his 'order' have found a powerful necromancer within the boundaries of the local city. He tells the Wraith that he wants to go and deal with the problem but would like some help from the character and his friends. This puts the character in an odd place. If he refuses the Stern Hand member will likely go to his death but if the Wraiths go they risk revealing the family member's presence or their own!
- ◆ An important member of a visiting envoy from the Wildlands has been targeted for 'justice' by the Father's Stern Hand because of his religion's penchant for violence and preying the weak. The envoy and his entourage are visiting Dardarrick to talk about a potential military trade of resources and several members of the Stern Hand are going to ruin everything and likely make *another* enemy for the king to deal with. They might not like having to deal with good-aligned paladins but the kingdom always comes first.



The Hands' Bound Alliance

This strangely charismatic collection of All Father and Matriarias fanatics have been making the military's life hard for roughly seven years. They are the stalwart believers that the gods will protect Dardarrick from its enemies once the kingdom has fully given itself over to the idea of 'defence, not offence'. It is their firm stance that the very existence of an armed forces that is trained to go to war is what keeps 'holy sanctity' from falling upon the kingdom. Only through a complete disarming of the kingdom can it hope to find complete peace, so they believe.

The Hands' Bound Alliance would not be much of an issue, just another activist group speaking out against battles and wars, if it were not for their self-righteous belief that it is their *duty* to disarm the sovereign kingdom. On the least end, they march in protests and stand in the way of armed columns. In a more worrisome regard, they instigate sabotage missions and vandalism of military assets – going so far as to set food stores alight or damage essential wartime goods.

They are not dangerous in and of themselves but what they do inflicts major harm and hindrances upon the greater war engine of Dardarrick's armed forces. Dealing with them harshly is a political nightmare but ignoring them gives their movement credence. How the king can hope to wage a successful war on his enemies when his own people fight against his chances?

Typical Encounters

Level 1 Encounter (XP 375)

- ◆ 1 elf scout (level 2 skirmisher)
- ◆ 2 human lackeys (level 7 minion)

Level 1 Encounter (XP 375)

- ◆ 1 halfling thief (level 2 skirmisher)
- ◆ 4 human bandits (level 2 skirmisher)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ An army training grounds has come under social attack by the Hands' Bound Alliance, who have camped their wagons directly in front of the training

grounds' entrance (and exit, as it happens). Those soldiers are needed on the front lines in a week but they cannot mobilise with the Alliance in the way. King Archiveltdt would never send soldiers against a bunch of unarmed naysayers – but Commander Ruhrk has no problem using the Wraiths to do a little 'forcible relocation' of the Alliance's leaders in the area.

- ◆ Something strange has happened to the Alliance in the area surrounding Southwatch. They have taken a more offensive stance upon how they are treating the local soldiery and it is not like them. SpellCom is worried that they might have been infiltrated by another more-militant faction, something that could be very detrimental to the area's defence. Wraith Recon is being sent in to investigate this potential new leadership factor and if they have to, eliminate it.

The Hearth Guard

Only considered a cult because of its reliance on activities outside of the temples and shrines of Matriarias, the Hearth Guard is a fully sanctioned force of paladins and clerics devoted to protecting Dardarrick. Being uprooted by manipulative followers of Praxious, the faith of the Hearth Goddess was taken in by the All Father's worshippers and given a warm fire and a new home. This respected group of faithful warriors has made it their long and steadfast tradition to ensure that such hospitality is never forgotten or taken for granted.

From healing the sick, feeding the hungry and giving shelter to the homeless *between* seeking out threats, uncovering corruption and standing watch over holy places; the Hearth Guard are not typical clergymen of Matriarias. They have no qualms about drawing a blade against a known threat or even of taking that first step toward an enemy.

In Dardarrick, the symbol of their cult – a fireplace behind crossed swords – is a welcoming sight in many larger cities. Where there are holy sites of Matriarias and the All Father, there will likely be at least a small number of Hearth Guard around to safe keep it. It was one of the Hearth Guard's most vital and important

actions to find and protect the good King Archiveltdt as a child. Few know that they were instrumental in the bloodless overthrowing of the Praxious theocracy; else they would be even well-loved in Dardarrick.

Typical Encounters

Level 4 Encounter (XP 700)

- ◆ 2 dwarf hammerers (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 2 human guards (level 3 soldier)

Level 5 Encounter (XP 875)

- ◆ 5 dwarf bolters (level 4 artillery)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ The leader of the Hearth Guard, a dwarven paladin named Terronce, has been kidnapped by Torresh mercenaries looking to make an example of how ‘weak’ other religions’ warriors are. They took him at night with great numbers (and not without losses), but they managed to steal him back over the border into the swamp kingdom. The king cannot send troops to retrieve him; things are just too tense at the moment. It is the perfect mission for a skilled Wraith Recon strike team.
- ◆ A radical member of the Hearth Guard, a half-elf that goes by Faytpathe (pronounced *fate-path*) is gathering other zealots from around the kingdom to try and make a massive move against the Lornish battle lines forming beyond the border. A lot of good and faithful soldiers are being misled by the charismatic cleric and the Pillars want his rumour-mongering and rabble rousing to stop before it gets too large to control easily. They are sending the Wraiths in to the zealot groups to undue any damage done, staying their hand, while seeking Faytpathe out to unfortunately silence him – hopefully with a magical ritual or potion instead of the edge of a blade.

The Heralds of Praxious

Another example of an elite sect within a given cult, the Heralds of Praxious were initially clergy serving under the first Hierophant, Tomar. It was their goal and their right to bring the word (and paymaster’s coffers) of Praxious to the ‘pagan heathens’ of Parennax.

Although Tomar truly believed he was bringing the faith to the pirate continent, it was the gold and silver that spoke to their hearts, not piety. Several boatloads of dragonborn mercenaries joined the Vulkite warforged from Aphaxus and formed the Brazen Legion; all by the actions taken by the Heralds.

During the theocracy, the Heralds took on a different form; that of evangelising pilgrims. They donned the masks of the priesthood, picked up the blades of the Order Templar and took the litanies of Praxious to the lands of ‘lesser faiths’. They were often met with great resistance and oftentimes violence, which they returned tenfold. Forced confessions, the torture of those who resisted conversion and even public bisecting (the ritual execution method of Praxious) of prisoners were all in the theatre of the Heralds in Tomar’s rule.



With the theocracy removed and the Hierophant exiled, the Heralds have evolved once more. They are the fleet-footed messengers and delivery men that move from cell to cell bringing supplies and news of what the rest of Tomarsson’s cult is undertaking. They are also still in charge of any torture that needs to take place in Praxious’ name but they no longer handle executions;

that is the duty of the templars. They primarily work in the public eye, travelling between cells to serve as the best communications network they can.

Dardarrick's rangers and soldiers on road patrol know what to look for in a lone traveller, keeping their eyes peeled for these troublesome cultists – for where a Herald of Praxious walks, the Brazen One's zealots are soon to appear.

Typical Encounters

Level 9 Encounter (XP 1,700)

- ◆ 1 bronze templar (level 12 elite soldier)
- ◆ 2 human guards (level 3 soldier)

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,050)

- ◆ 1 brass priest (level 13 controller)
- ◆ 6 human lackeys (level 7 minion)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ A very important message was memorised by Rhella, a Herald of Praxious, to be run down to one of the neophants from the Hierophant-in-Exile himself. This messenger was intercepted and arrested by local authorities, who cannot even begin to try and get the message out of him. After the sun goes down and the gaolers all go home, the Wraiths will need to break into the dungeon and *question* him a little more effectively.
- ◆ Gorran is a known sadist that was convicted of crimes against the people during the last days of Tomarsson's rule and a steadfast member of the Heralds of Praxious. After his escape in 1,199 he had yet to be seen or heard from but the arcanists have found him. He has surfaced in one of the small border towns out west and is still seemingly active in the cult of Praxious. Command wants him recaptured so he can be executed properly and as a symbol to other cultists. This puts the team in the position to nab him; he is not likely to go quietly, which could hurt the anonymity of the Wraiths.

The League of Shamans

Based for the majority in Torres, this cult of Mersmerro worshippers has only recently become more active across the border into Dardarrick. The people that

make up the League of Shamans are all part of the overarching faith but each member orchestrates a small group of worshippers in order to keep the congregation strong. They are devout believers and serve as a spiritual conduit from the High Priest(ess) at Merstorres, whipping their crusading sub-cults into a frenzy with the Predator's mask mantras or forming them into an impenetrable wall when the Prey mask is in power.

With Lord King Bloodak's recent call to arms for his faithful servants, he relies upon the League of Shamans to keep them all in line and directed upon the proper and righteous path toward victory. Their crusade has led several small cult groups of lizardfolk, troglodyte and human worshippers across the border into southern Dardarrick. The League knows they are outnumbered, out-magicked and woefully ill-equipped compared to the Dardarrians – but they have the steely relentlessness of their faith on their side.

These recent incursions into Dardarrick's southern lands have resulted in several small villages to come under raid and peasant kidnappings are on the rise (for human sacrifices to appease Mersmerro). They have yet to strike at a military or culturally significant target but their presence cannot be ignored. The cults rise up from the rivers and streams at night to steal away livestock and lone citizens, making them more of a nuisance than an army-worthy threat.

Typical Encounters

Level 2 Encounter (XP 500)

- ◆ 1 greenscale marsh mystic (level 6 controller (leader))
- ◆ 2 elf scouts (level 2 skirmisher)

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,050)

- ◆ 1 troglodyte curse chanter (level 8 controller (leader))
- ◆ 2 human berserkers (level 4 brute)
- ◆ 2 visejaw crocodiles (level 4 soldier)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ The League of Shamans have a cell of Mersmerron crusaders growing rapidly into a warband just south of Southwatch, in the protected lands of Torres. Several people have gone missing in the dead of night when on perimeter patrol but no proof can be mustered to urge the king do anything official about it. Civility says that Dardarrick cannot attack the

warband, despite what common sense says of the situation. When one of the Commander's nieces, a young dwarf girl of nine years, goes missing, he does not wait for approval – sending the Wraith Recon teams to go across the border and find the scared little girl to bring her home.

- ◆ The strange and enigmatic, not to mention supposedly *neutral* River King Uesificus has informed the Arcanist General about a particularly bloodthirsty cell of Mersmerron crusaders led by a nasty troglodyte League of Shamans member named Oorlur. This cell is swimming up the Walker River toward Rivermarck and the River King thinks they are going to be bad for business. The Arcanist General cannot act on his neutral word *officially*, lest he involved the River King in political actions, so he instead turns to Wraith Recon to dissuade these zealots from coming too far north, river or no.

The 'Jury' of Pierceling

This criminal crew is unsurprisingly based out of the social underground of Pierceling and made up of two dozen retired soldiers, magistrates, watchmen and even a former member of the roguish Lion's Wolves – Graycoen Bennetent (pronounced *gray-suhn behn-eh-tehnt*). Although murderers, opportunists and profiteers all, the Jury is actually looked upon favourably by the people of Pierceling. The Jury makes its living as a heavy-handed group of vigilantes that do not wait for courtly approval or royal edict – they exact their brand of justice without the law's backing.

Every 'Juror' comes to the Jury after being dismissed from their career or service because of some technicality or so-called dishonourable act. Soon after this instance a member of the crew comes to the person with an invitation or *summons*, to help clean up Pierceling off the books and out from under the law's loopholes.

What the Jury attempts is to turn the tables on the criminal element of Pierceling, which has always been substantial. They do this by ignoring the moral and legal leashes of common law, using the 'law of the sword' above all else. The Jury is, by all accounts, a group of violent repeat offenders; but how different are they truly from the strike teams of Wraith Recon?

Typical Encounters

There is no 'typical' encounter for the Jury of Pierceling, they are *all* character-classed antagonists that should be created individually by the Games Master to best fit his game.

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ A member of the Jury has come forward to surrender to the local authorities, knowing that he will likely hang for the numerous crimes he supposedly committed. This is a strange act for the organisation and the powers-that-be know it. Considering the chief gaoler of his holding cell is known to be corrupt and targeted by the Jury in the past, Command believes that this is just a way to get an agent close to the gaoler. A few Wraith Recon team members 'arrested' and placed in the complex could save the gaoler's life – but should they?
- ◆ The Jury is making a move against a specific member of a local criminal family, the head of which is also being targeted by Wraith Recon for elimination. Having two sets of experts moving on the family estate at the same time could get interesting – especially if the two sides are actually targeting the *same* individual!

Mysterious Followers of The Great Dragons

From the first days after their return to the continent, those few Great Dragons that came back from the blossoming Uramandi Empire (which they created with the aid of a demon called Uru) found mortal followers to worship them. Not a true religion, as they keep no clerics or paladins, the Great Dragons remain a source of great power for those who dedicate their lives to them. To kobolds, dragonborn and a few other enigmatic races, the Great Dragons are the only divine beings they worship. It is this sole devotion that sparks the Great Dragons' ability to grant divine powers to few of their followers; as demi-gods themselves.

Other than in the mountains and badlands, where entire tribes of kobolds worship one of the chromatic faces of the Great Dragons, their followers tend to be solitary beings that hide their relationship with the demi-gods. They act almost like dragons themselves;



Threats From Within

they hoard their power and wealth to themselves while manipulating others and orchestrating their will through respect, fear and occasional violence. It is said that all empowered worshippers of the Great Dragons have one eye the colour of the dragon they most recognise as *their* facet of the 'faith'.

Other than the unknown presence of Uesificus (who is actually the Green Great Dragon) and the daughter of the Blue who lives up in the Claws, the existence of the Great Dragons is mostly unbeknownst to the Dardarrian people. The leaders of the Pillars do not even know about the strange yet powerful demi-religion. Only the Arcanist General is aware of the Great Dragons, mentioning them in passing once to the king when Spellcaster Command argued against sending exploration vessels to the Uramandi Empire.

Exactly why Raspeng is hiding the true nature of the Great Dragons from his friends and allies is unknown but the golden dragonscale he has framed like a trophy on the wall of his office must be related to this in some way...

For statistics on kobold Draconic Prophets, see the *Appendix of Enemies* within this book.

Typical Encounters

Level 3 Encounter (XP 550)

- ◆ 1 kobold wympriest (level 3 artillery (leader))
- ◆ 3 kobold skirmishers (level 1 skirmisher)
- ◆ 4 kobold minions (level 1 minion)

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,175)

- ◆ 1 kobold draconic prophet (level 6 artillery (leader))
- ◆ 1 kobold wympriest (level 3 artillery (leader))
- ◆ 3 kobold dragonshields (level 2 soldier)
- ◆ 1 psuedodragon (level 3 lurker)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ A gifted draconic prophet in a nomadic kobold tribe to the north has been given a vision concerning the hatching of a new dragon in the Stone Forest mountains. They have pulled up their camp and now plan to march *directly* to the hatching, as per the vision told them to. It just so happens that several small towns and the fishing villages south of Pierceling are not prepared for 200 kobolds to

rampage through their area. Wraith Recon must deal with this prophet before the kobolds reach raid momentum – or else a much larger issue will become of the wayward tribe.

- ◆ Arcanist General Raspeng has arranged for a very special and *very* classified mission for the Wraiths to undertake. He needs the team to portal drop onto what looks like a derelict ocean vessel and sink it before it reaches the salvage patrols of Salt Bay. What he does not inform them of is the fact that a young child of the Black Great Dragon is living in the hold of the ship, coming to Dardarrick by way of ship in order to surprise them when the ship is towed into port.

Red Hand of Profit

A solidly criminal element present in Rivermarck, the Red Hand is a secret guild of gangs, muggers, slavers and pirates that have taken their trade to the alleys and streets of this otherwise fair city. They have only existed in concerning numbers for a decade at most, when a crafty young hobgoblin stowaway on one of the Rover King's boats jumped ship. He was forced to carve his way into the local thieves' guild, making a name for himself – Bloody Handed Rorn. Rorn quickly earned a following amongst similar-minded folk and his gang turned to the glitter of gold as their single reason for existence.

The Red Hand is named partly for the bloodshed that Rorn expects from his subordinates and partly due to the initiation rite of becoming a member. Every member is commanded to take an unruly prisoner and beat them bloody, not stopping or pausing in this pugilism no matter how bad the prisoner looks or how pained their fist. When the initiation is over, red tattoo ink is poured over the cut and torn fist to forever mark the dedication the member has.

The Red Hand is not politically active or in truth, *aware* of the larger picture. They thrive on their crimes and their ability to blend in with the copious amount of wharf traffic in Rivermarck. It is said that the River King pays a small fee to the Red Hand each month to save his ships the trouble of defending their cargoes, but no proof of this has ever been discovered.

Typical Encounters

Level 5 Encounter (XP 900)

- ◆ 1 hobgoblin commander (level 5 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 2 dragonborn soldiers (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 1 tiefling darkblade (level 7 lurker)

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,300)

- ◆ 1 dragonborn raider (level 13 skirmisher)
- ◆ 4 human bandits (level 2 skirmisher)

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ An important member of a noble family has been kidnapped on her way back to Graenwich while in Rivermarck. It is surely the work of the Red Hand, but no ransom has been called for as of yet. This actually has the woman's family *more* worried of her fate and they have called a few favours in with a Brotherhood official – who has called in a few favours to get the Wraiths on the job.



◆ King Archiveldt is planning to go and visit the dockworkers' union of Rivermarck, against the advice of the Pillars of Dardarrick and they want to make sure that the Red Hand has something else to worry about while the king is in town. It is not often that Wraith Recon is used as a diversion but they are more

than capable of causing enough grief to the unruly criminals to keep them fully and completely occupied for three days' time.

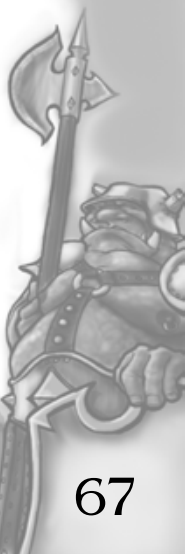
The Twilight Society

Even though they are directly controlled by the Black Circle of Mortessal, the Twilight Society is a cultish society of assassins, thieves and brigands. Mostly shadar-kai and drow, the Twilight Society are pious members of the Dark Church of the Damned. They follow the teachings of Mortessal and her undying lords of the Circle without question, gladly giving up their lives for the greater machinations of the faith. They fully understand that death is not the end; especially in the service of the Queen of the Damned.

Every cultist in the Society sheds the heart's blood of a direct family member (child, parent, sibling) in order to prove their loyalty to the cult before they are actually allowed entry. Once proven, they still have to single-handedly kill an enemy of the faith before they receive their thin, spidersilk garrotte bracelet that symbolises their membership. Enemies of the faith include anyone in the clergy serving Matriarias or preferably Praxious and special circumstances can always be made by the local necro-priest. When this slaying is complete the cultist is branded with a stylised version of Mortessal's sign over their heart and added to the cult community.

The Twilight Society has been active in Dardarrick ever since the first Darrish (people from the original kingdom of Dar) counter-offensive into Lorn. Its dark cutthroats and death dealing assassins came to the central part of the continent to have a better advantage to target anyone they needed to and it simply became easiest to remain over the centuries. Rulers have come and gone but the Twilight Society have remained tucked away in the deep darkness under Saerding Keep.

Only when the Black Circle commands that someone absolutely must find death does the Society move in large numbers against a target, ensuring its demise. This does not mean that the cult is inactive between those rare instances. The devoted fanatics that make up the Society's ranks are constantly testing their abilities and their faith by assassinating random targets, adding their deaths to the scope of influence of the Queen of Darkness. The Twilight cultists of



the shadar-kai are coldly devout; when they receive a target's name, either the target or the cultist will soon be uncompromisingly dead.

Typical Encounters

Level 5 Encounter (XP 800)

- ◆ 1 shadar-kai gloomblade (level 6 lurker)
- ◆ 2 zombies (level 2 brute)
- ◆ 2 skeletons (level 3 soldier)

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,150)

- ◆ 1 shadar-kai warrior (level 8 soldier)
- ◆ 2 battle wights (level 9 soldier)

Level 13 Encounter (XP 2,976)

- ◆ 1 shadar-kai twilight blade (level 10 solo lurker)
- ◆ 2 ghouls (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 2 zombie rotters (level 3 soldier)

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ A vocal and vengeful magistrate has just sentenced several Mortessali to hang for grave robbing and tinkering with the eternal rest of local deceased. Such was his sentencing that the Twilight Society want to make an example out of him – a grisly example that will take weeks to clean off of his bed chamber floor. The magistrate is already under surveillance by the Wraith Recon organisation for potentially being a Tomarsson supporter, which will make for a very strange evening when the shadar-kai assassins come for him!

◆ Archmage Arcos has been targeted by the Twilight Society for uncovering a powerful anti-undead ritual that could very well protect entire villages for days at a time if enacted properly. The Black Circle cannot risk this ritual being distributed, so they have aimed the Society at him. Until he can scribe the ritual to a permanent scroll, both he and it are in danger – which is exactly why a Wraith Recon strike team have been placed on escort duty for him until he has it finished and tucked away in the vault.

Wyhlder Tribe Minions

The most powerful collection of servants of the King of Beasts is a cult-like following known as the Wyhlder Tribe (pronounced *weel-duhr*), most of whom are ancient eladrin shamans and primal leaders that subscribe wholeheartedly to the tenets of the King's faith. They dominate the savage tribes of the Wildlands through strength of arms, magic and muscle and they control a huge portion of the 'wild' dragonborn on the continent of Parnax. They think of themselves as the 'alpha tribe' over all other worshippers of the King of Beasts – and most other tribes agree.

The many tribal cults to the King of Beasts throughout the continent and beyond are all splinter groups from the original Wyhlder Tribe, and the many tribal warlords of the Wildlands and western Dardarrick pay homage to them. Some are not aware that they pay allegiance to the ancient cult but they respect the power and might found in the elder shamans.

Most of the savage tribe warlords that rise up in the Wildlands are only following the portents and auguries the Wyhlder shamans give to them, reading their future successes in the entrails and blood flow of slain foes. Through these readings and sending messengers to particular tribesman in a specific order, the Wyhlder Tribe controls the ebb and flow of how the savage tribes work toward the eventual goal of storming Dardarrick and claiming the mighty Lion's pelt as the trophy of the King of Beasts.

Typical Encounters

Level 5 Encounter (XP 850)

- ◆ 1 eladrin fey knight (level 7 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 2 elf archers (level 2 artillery)
- ◆ 2 ogre thugs (level 11 minion)

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,400)

- ◆ 1 eladrin twilight incanter (level 8 controller)
- ◆ 3 werewolves (level 8 brute)

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ The gnolls of Fort Vigilant have received a visitor—an eladrin in the woven robes of shamanic tradition—and they did not seek to tear her apart. Instead, they opened the gates and let her in without issue. Recognised later by eavesdropping arcanists as Denaylda (pronounced *deh-nayl-duh*) of the Wyhlder Tribe. Knowing that she can only be trusted to manipulate those gnolls into more violence, SpellCom needs the Wraiths to go and take her out as quickly as possible without enraging an entire fort full of gnoll raiders.

◆ Several small savage tribes are camped throughout the Dardarrian ranch lands surrounding Tradeston. They are peaceful for the most part, for being primitive savages but they are making several local families very nervous. Productivity has fallen and many ranch hands have gone and quit to move easterly, something that the war effort with Lorn cannot tolerate. Cattle processing for meat and leather is being stifled, and requisition forms are being left unfilled. A team of Wraiths have to escort a crafty Lion's Wolf agent dressed as a Wyhlder Tribe augurist to each of these tribes to convince them to move back home into the Wildlands.



Other Secret Societies

‘No one is so arrogant or foolhardy to ever believe that they are alone in their faith. Someone, somewhere shares your god’s love, respect, or hell...even wrath.’

– Sister Knight Saramina, Paladin of Matriarias

The world of Nuera is a large place with thousands of miles of uncharted territory and wilderness. There are areas of Torres that only the scaly folk have ever waded through and ancient clan homes in Lorn that have not been as vacant as many might believe. Most Lornish or Dardarrian citizens never see the shores of Zritec or Sando – let alone the mysterious lands of the Uramandi. These places are filled with unknown elements and peoples, many of which deal with their own cults and secret organisations within their own borders. Sometimes these hidden groups somehow interact with the greater Nueraen story, making them worthy of taking note of here.

This chapter details some of the cults and secret communities, clubs and societies that are active beyond the borders of Dardarrick. It looks closer at their whereabouts, their motives and their capabilities. Along with a list of what a typical ‘minor’ encounter involving the group would consist of, each entry also includes at least one mission idea or plot hook involving the group – and how a *Wraith Recon* Games Master could utilise them. It might be far too dangerous for a Wraith team to wander the globe in search of these unique unions but if the kingdom requires it – they will go.

As it was with the cults within Dardarrick, the following entries are listed in alphabetical order; they are NOT arranged by size, importance, power and so on.

Fire Knights of Alleros

Not all of the azer dwarves on Sando succumbed to the oppressive slavery of the fire-giants of Aphaxus. There is a group of these flame-bearded dwarves fighting a constant guerrilla war against their ‘older brothers’ as they call them, a group called the Fire Knights of Alleros. They are directly opposed to the rule of King Bandovaur and actively seek a way of destroying his efreet allies to weaken his hold upon the kingdom. Even though they only number three dozen members on the outside estimation, they are nothing short of amazing in their war efforts.

These diminutive warriors worship no god, bow to no king and ask nor give quarter from any foe. Following the secret teachings of an ancient azer freedom fighter named Alleros, the Fire Knights believe that they can eventually kill the efreet triad and rattle the king’s power base enough to cause an azer uprising throughout the kingdom. They have a secret stockpile of magical armour and weaponry tucked away in the jagged cliffs of southern Sando; most of which bear some kind of ice or water-based enhancement. It pains the fire dwarves to use them but when battling a kingdom of fire giants they have little choices that can even the odds.

Alleros was put publicly to death in 998 YBD, his body immersed in alchemical silver and frozen through arcane means to be displayed as a trophy in Bandovaur’s courtroom. It is the goal of the Fire Knights to somehow break open his impromptu sarcophagus and steal back his bodily remains. In secrecy they can use a powerful resurrection ritual to bring back their leader, adding strength to their cause in their greatest hour. This ritual, unknown

previously to the likes of mortal beings, was given to them by a mysterious eladrin from Dardarrick – Matteau Raspeng.

For statistics on Fire Knights of Alleros, see the *Appendix of Enemies* within this book.

Typical Encounters

Level 9 Encounter (XP 1,800)

- ◆ 1 azer rager (level 15 brute)
- ◆ 1 firelasher (level 11 skirmisher)

Level 12 Encounter (XP 2,600)

- ◆ 1 azer fire knight (level 16 soldier)
- ◆ 3 azer warriors (level 17 minion)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ The Arcanist General has connections with the Aphaxusian rebels and seems to be quite interested in their status. He is so concerned with their underground battle that he is sending the Wraiths on a classified reconnaissance mission to the southern coast of Sando to investigate. Going by way of trading ship out of Pierceling, this will be a long mission to get them to the fiery continent and a dangerous one considering they are investigating known rebels in a land where the common townsfolk are fifteen feet tall!

- ◆ The daughter of Alleros managed to escape Sando when her father was executed, carrying on the bloodline away from King Bandovaur's influence. Now, over two hundred years later, the infamous rebel's grandson Allaron is ready to join his people's fight for independence. Arcanist General Raspeng has asked that the Wraith team escort the azer dwarf to the Blood Ports in the Wildlands; it is the only place where he can buy secret passage back to his ancestral homeland. There are agents of the fire giant king throughout the lands looking for a way to stamp out the Alleros bloodline, so the Wraiths will need to be very cautious where they go and who they deal with.

Lords of the Forge

The second oldest religious sub-group in Nueraen, the Lords of the Forge began as a group of fire giant smithies and metalworkers that aided Vulka himself in the crafting of the world around him. They held the blade still while he pounded out his godly weapon and

they learned all of the secrets of mastercrafting metal of all kinds throughout the world. Theirs is a tradition of power, strength and pride unmatched by anyone; not even the Cult of Praxious holds a candle to the forge fires of the Lords.

The ancient traditions and techniques of the Lords of the Forge were spared the Veil of Ignorance to make sure that city walls and metal tools were not forgotten while the All Father worked out his disappointments. When the Dawning came and the mortals inherited the world, the Lords of the Forge remembered all they needed to in order to help rebuild what had been broken. This allowed many sub-sects within the Lords to branch out to other continents, forming a network of Aphaxusian metalworkers and siege craftsman.

Primarily active only on the continent of Sando under King Bandovaur, the Lords of the Forge are only truly considered a 'cult' around any of its forge-temples built in Dardarrick, Lorn and even the Wildlands. It is from these holy houses of craftsmanship and fiery tempers that the Lords work their secret schemes. Being allowed to remember their role in the Creation meant that they remember their hand in building the godslayer 'Magmannon' and *why*. It is the task of the Lords of the Forge to build another version of this weapon and wield it against the Lord King of Torres and his swamp-witch priestess – taking the southern kingdom as an expansion to Aphaxus and a symbol of their faith in Vulka.

Typical Encounters

Level 12 Encounter (XP 2,775)

- ◆ 1 fire giant (level 18 soldier)
- ◆ 1 warforged captain (level 6 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 3 warforged soldiers (level 4 soldier)

Level 16 Encounter (XP 6,150)

- ◆ 1 fire giant forgecaller (level 18 artillery)
- ◆ 1 efreet fireblade (level 22 soldier)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ Spellcaster Command has reason to believe that the smiths working in the Vulkite temple near Port Safune in the Wildlands are stockpiling a shipment of godplate armour to be shipped to Lorn for the war effort. Even though it means that they will be



forced to do battle with several members of the powerful Lords of the Forge, Wraith Recon must do everything they can to stop that shipment from getting to its destination. If they can sink the vessel and all of that armour to the bottom of the Ocean in the process – all the better.

- ◆ The members of the Lords of the Forge allowed to practice their faith and crafting in the capital Dardarrick have closed their doors to the public for the better half of a month, but smoke still pours from their chimneys and the ringing of hammers on anvils peals at all hours of day and night. The High Cleric is concerned that the faithful of Vulka could be planning something sinister and has asked the Brotherhood to look into it without angering the volatile worshippers – which means Wraith Recon will need to break in, look around and get out without causing a scene; at least one that can be traced back to Dardarrick.

One Thousand Masts

This society of politically neutral river and coastal trading boats are one of this world's greatest secrets. The entire organisation was created by and is still managed by a shapeshifted green dragon that calls himself 'River King' Uesificus. Oddly based from the Dardarrian dockyards of Rivermarck for no reason other than its central location on the continent, the One Thousand Masts is more realistically no more than a

hundred ships spread out on trade and travel routes that span half the globe.

Formed to serve as an intelligence-gathering network for the Great Dragons of the Uramandi, Uesificus designed the society as a way for him to hide very much in plain sight while becoming ingratiated with nearly all of the world's societies' leaders. Through the trade, commerce and travel potential his ships provide, the River King ensures that every nation from the mighty Lion of Dardarrick to the smallest savage tribe of the Wildlands find his services useful. It has given him almost complete access to the waterways and coasts of Nuera – something that no single nation can dare to claim. Exactly what Uesificus and his draconic brethren are planning to do with over 700 years of gathered wealth, intelligence and favours has yet to be seen.

Typical Encounters

Level 3 Encounter (XP 575)

- ◆ 1 dragonborn soldier (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 5 human lackeys (level 7 minion)

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,025)

- ◆ 1 eladrin fey knight (level 7 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 1 human mage (level 4 artillery)
- ◆ 2 human guards (level 3 soldier)
- ◆ 2 elf archers (level 2 artillery)



Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ One of the River King's trading vessels has been boarded by Parrenax pirates and is far off course just off Pierceling's coast. Uesificus has pleaded with King Archiveltdt to bring his ship back to him – mostly as a test of Dardarrick's naval assets. The Dardarrian navy could easily bring ships up into the northern waters to bring the ship back in line but Archmage Arcos does not completely trust the situation. It was decided that if the Wraiths can get to the ship and take it back over 'anonymously', then perhaps any trickery can be thwarted. The question is however, what will Uesificus think of the mysterious return of his ship without naval action?

◆ A ship in Uesificus' fleet has been sighted sailing into monitored waters by way of Zritec, a known supporter of Lornish policies. Commander Ruhrk has decided to send a covert Wraith team to the landing sight of the ship, which happens to be completely on the other side of Torres. The team must survive the risks that Torres presents them, find the River King's landed ship, and investigate it fully before returning. When they find that the ship is utterly empty except for a giant lair-like hold filled with a veritable treasure of furs and leathers made into a large nest, what will they do?

The Sancoatyli

(pronounced *saan-coh-ah-tee-lee*)

The backbone of the Torresh crusade, the Sancoatyli is the singular and plural naming convention for both the cultish order *and* its members. As old as the first holy crowning of a Lord King in Torres, the Sancoatyli are a mix between royal guards, elite special forces, and common militia. Chosen by birthright and shamanic augury, the members of the Sancoatyli are trained through a series of mystical rituals and practices before being sent back to their homes, families and jobs. They are to live normal, pious lives in the name of Mersmerro – until they are Called.

When the Lord King blows the cypress horn (purely symbolically in the last thousand years), he Calls the Sancoatyli from their lives to become his spear and shield. The word of a Calling spreads like wildfire throughout Mersmerron congregations and faithful servants from all over his holy lands set down their ploughs or their leatherwork, pick up their blades, don their armour and move directly to Merstorres for their holy sanction and assignment.

The Sancoatyli are arguably the most dangerous foe that any enemy of Mersmerro (or what the Lord King claims to be). They are completely consumed by their desire to achieve a good death in the service of their god. They are utterly fearless, strengthened physically through drug use and rituals, and selflessly dedicated to their missions. Most members of this secret cult/order are lizardfolk but the recent religious transformation of Torres has seen troglodytes, kuo-toa, humans and even *elves* wearing the tell-tale helm-cloaks of the Sancoatyli.

For statistics on members of the Sancoatyli, see the *Appendix of Enemies* within this book.

Typical Encounters

For typical encounters for the Sancoatyli, see their entry in the *Appendix of Enemies*, starting on page 98.

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ A small group of Sancoatyli crossed the border into Dardarrick early last week and have since vanished into the wilderness surrounding the crossing point of the Goldpan River. The presence of these fanatical zealots is enough to worry the Commander but knowing that another Wraith team that was active in the area is well over 90 hours past their expected debriefing time has his concerns fully focussed on the area. SpellCom cannot seem to reach them magically and it will be up to another team of Wraiths to find them – and hopefully deal with the Sancoatyli in the process.
- ◆ The Sancoatyli receive their holy orders from the high priestess of Mersmerro in an elaborate ceremony that often takes several hours. During this time there is prayer, gospel readings, sacrifices, self-flagellation, song and dance. It is a huge event that could be equated to a party or rally of sorts. Command wants to know what these zealous warriors are going to soon be up to and the order ceremony *might* be hectic and haphazard enough to sneak a Wraith Recon team in to get the information at the same time that the priestess gives it to the crusaders. It will very dangerous for Dardarrians to be anywhere near this event and to be caught would surely mean being sacrificed. Good thing for the Wraiths that the SpellCom arcanists have several polymorphing rituals that will make the team into lizardfolk for one full day...



The Smoking Embers of Aphax

Formed by the great King Aphax of Sando, one of the progenitors of the Kingdom of Aphaxus, the Smoking Embers are pilgrims of the Vulkite faith. They go wherever Aphaxusians require their worship and they are almost all fire giants or Sandoan humans. When they were created the Embers were to serve as forward missionaries, building shrine forges and seeing that the teachings of Vulka reach as far as his works did during the Creation.

When they were first applied to the mainland of Rardarri, landing purposefully in the Mersmerron kingdom of Torres, the Smoking Embers made no attempts to be civil to the Torresh. They stormed inland seeking a dry patch of ground to build their first mainland temple – damned be all of the Torresh that got in their way. The resulting bloody battles between the Mersmerro worshippers and the Smoking Embers set the precedent for following centuries. The two kingdoms of Torres and Aphaxus managed to make political allies of one another but the two religions would never be at peace; especially due to the actions of the Smoking Embers.

As their name implies, the Embers never quite stop smouldering. They hold long and heated grudges for centuries, setting situations ablaze wherever they go. They are particularly active along the southern coasts of Torres and Lorn, coming ashore as part of a trading landing long enough to disappear and begin their search on how to wage a religious siege against Vulka's enemies. They are not subtle most of the time and many altars and shrines to opposing gods have been found in ashes after a Smoking Ember arrives in the area.

Typical Encounters

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,125)

- ◆ 1 warforged captain (level 6 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 2 human mages (level 4 artillery)
- ◆ 3 warforged soldiers (level 4 soldier)

Level 12 Encounter (XP 2,800)

- ◆ 1 fire giant forger (level 18 artillery)
- ◆ 2 azer warriors (level 17 minion)

Plot and Mission Hooks

- ◆ A group of Mersmerron crusaders just south of the Torres/Dardarrick border are being harassed by the arrival of a local member of the Smoking Embers of Aphax and his followers. Commander Ruhrk thinks that it might behoove the kingdom if these two forces do battle with one another – weakening both. The Wraiths have to work both sides of the area well enough to get the two forces into conflict; their religious opposition will do the rest.
- ◆ A new temple to Matriarias is being built near the Wildlands' border in the southwest of Dardarrick and some supply tents have mysteriously caught fire during an otherwise wet season. The Hearth Guard have put in many hours protecting the area since the first incident, only recently discovering that a zealous human Vulkite cleric of the Smoking Embers has decided that the building must be destroyed. SpellCom is worried that the cleric is not alone in his faith in the area, and the Wraiths are supposed to track him to where his cult is practicing and evaluate what sort of threat they might present to the safety of the kingdom, if any.

The Xuchot Enclave

From within their deep and warded complex of tunnels and reverse-space subterranean spires below the black beaches of Sandy Launch in Torres, the ancient and powerful illithid chroniclers of the Xuchot Enclave watch the events of the world unfold. After being left exempt of the Veil of Ignorance due to their astonishingly powerful minds, the Enclave evolved past the ideologies of 'good' or 'evil'; they view the world in an alien way. Seeing events and people as pieces to a puzzle they cannot quite finish, the Xuchot illithids are beyond the comprehension of most mortals. It is only locked away in their diamond and onyx vaults that they have hundreds of thousands of scrolls containing a bottomless font of Nueraen information spanning a million years; the treasured collection of their lives' work.

Being 'psionic cerebravores' (eaters of brains and thoughts), the Enclave requires a steady supply of sentient beings to live and thrive in their underground city. Making thralls of the troglodytes and swamp elves of the Sandy Launch islands, the Enclave frequently sends out for their meals. Deals with Zriteci slavers

from House Xuan keep the illithids well fed and sated as well as supplied with equipment and goods for their thralls but they do not hold the drow in any higher standing over any other non-Enclave race.

Exactly what the Xuchot Enclave is doing with their unfathomable library of information and facts is a complete mystery. They venture out into the occupied world a few times a year to interact with common mortals, often putting on the guise of 'normal' mind flayers in order to avoid detection as the superior beings they truly are. Their supreme neutrality should not be taken as pacifism however and a Xuchot illithid will not hesitate to psionically liquefy a lesser being that pesters it with attempts of heroism or villainy.

Possibly the most enigmatic and mysterious group in all of Nuera, the Xuchot Enclave is the closest thing to an omniscient culture in this reality. They know nearly everything that has happened in this world's past and have theorised and extrapolated what will happen in its future. It is just too sad that no other inhabitants of Nuera think them anything other than brain-eating monsters looking to devour or enthrall the world.

For statistics on the Xuchot illithids, see the *Appendix of Enemies* within this book.

Typical Encounters

Although any number of psychically enthralled or controlled creatures could actually be encountered because of the Xuchot Enclave's machinations, there is no set style of encounter that can be listed here. For typical encounters for the actual Xuchot Enclave, see the entry for Xuchot Illithids in the *Appendix of Enemies*, starting on page 98.

Plot and Mission Hooks

◆ One of the Xuchot illithids has surfaced in Dardarrick to study the strange arcane lay lines that connect most of the world's magical focal points. Unfortunately it was spotted and the local militia was called in to deal

with the 'horrible beast'. The watch came and tried to kill the illithid; a task that failed catastrophically. Now the Enclave has decided to seed the entire area with new thralls to help cover up its presence – just in time for the Wraith Recon team to arrive and have to try and save Dardarrian lives from the mindless hordes.

◆ A self-proclaimed 'psionic' sailor visiting Sandy Launch to do some trading claimed to 'feel a cold mental presence' in his mind unlike anything he had before. He told his captain, who told someone at a tavern, and so on. Eventually the word reached the Arcanist General, who has always been curious about the real applications of psionics in SpellCom. A Wraith team will be assembled and shipped to Sandy Launch, where they will begin the search for the psionic powers in the area. If they actually find what they are looking for, will they possibly be able to survive the full attentions of the Xuchot Enclave?



Campaign E - Shadow of the Hierarchy

'It will come a day when the people of this soft and fickle kingdom will chant the name of our lord, and they will beg for us to return to power. We will help them of course, if we can hear their pleas over the sound of the screams.'

– Hierophant-in-Exile Tomarsson

This chapter is a mini-campaign of mission assignments that involve one of the largest and most threatening enemies that endangers King Archiveltdt and the safety of Dardarrick from within its own borders.

The mission assignment campaign, *Campaign E*, occurs outside of the overall *Wrath Recon* chronology and metaplot but could make for a fantastic few gaming sessions in between other published events take place. The mission assignment dates are set chronologically *before* even the first published campaign but could be moved to accommodate any date or time to fit a Games Master's needs.

Mission Assignment E.I: Looking Into Storent

There have been some strange rumours flying out of travellers passing through the western town of Storent, located just south of Goldeston. Some of these tales revolve around terrible creatures that have taken to stalking the town streets at night and several citizens have been injured and a few even killed. The local military is currently tied up with a savage uprising near Riverspire, so the town is seemingly on its own until help can arrive.

It is a very good thing for those miners and gold panners that the Wrath Recon organisation has a spare team to send out and deal with these things, whatever they might be.

Mission Start Date: 12th day of Bloom, 1,207 YBD

Deployment Location: Town of Storent, Dardarrick

Deployment Method: Riverboat to Goldeston

Primary Mission Goal: Investigate and eliminate threat to Storent civilians.

Secondary Objectives: Keep anonymity. Do not initiate engagement with unauthorised threats, but defend yourselves normally.

Expected Resistance: Unknown animal threats; potential large predators.

Useful Information: Storent is only a day's walk south from Goldeston.

Pre-Mission Briefing:

Good morning, Wraiths, hope you slept well. I know I did...up until my aide came banging on my door about this little town out west that apparently needs our help. It is called Storent and it is basically a smithing town that smelts down a lot of the copper and silver from the mountains and makes some of Goldeston's coinage for them. It seems that this town has picked itself up a nocturnal stalker or three that have made it unsafe to be out at night. With over two-thirds of their soldiery sent to Riverspire to battle some encroaching goblins, the king would like us to go and deal with the problem.

For this mission you are going to be common adventurers; just another set of heroes for hire headed

out to kill a few orcs and raid their linens for some coin. Easy as that. Try not to overcomplicate things if people ask about you, just tell them you are normal, greedy sellswords looking for some coin. Whatever you do though, don't take any side jobs.

You will be taking one of the River King's transport barges up and through the Southfork to Goldeston, then your on foot to Storent.

The barge leaves in two hours; do not be late. Dismissed.

Mission Segment E.1.1: The River King's Ride

The team is on board the *Peerless Swan*, a wheel-driven riverboat in the River King's neutral fleet of ships. The vessel is to take them up the Walker River, down the Southfork River, then upstream for a short while into the Goldpan before docking again at Goldeston. This should take four days of travel, during which the characters will need to manage to protect their vessel, hide their identities from snooping crewmen and convince the ship's bosun that he did not see what he thought he saw.

Complication 1 – Staying to Themselves

Riding on a smallish riverboat with a set of classified identities can be tricky, especially when crew keep coming and going as they please. You are going to have to be very careful not to leave too many questions to answer or worse – gossip to silence.

This skill challenge puts the Wraiths in a position that their combat prowess and arcane might are meaningless – the arena of nosy bystanders and snooping passengers.

Setup: The team can use several of their skills to keep the boat's population from guessing that they are more than meets the eye.

Level: Lower than the level of the team.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 2 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Stealth.

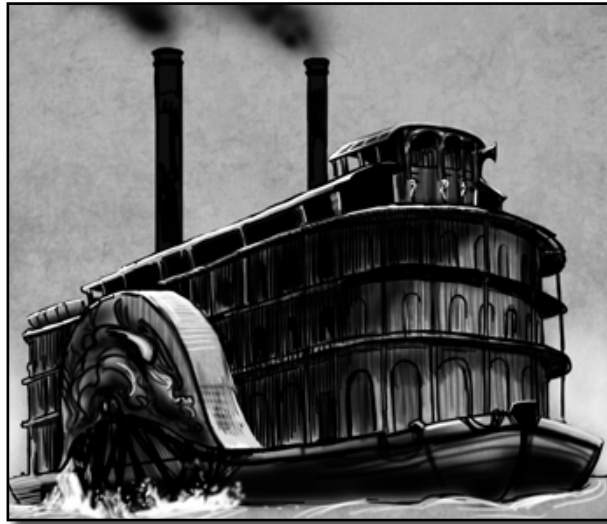
Bluff (easy DCs): You flatly lie to the people on the ship, filling their questions with half-truths and misdirection.

Diplomacy (moderate DCs): You are going to persuade the crew that it is better for them if they did not know too much about you.

Stealth (easy DCs): Moving like a stowaway, you plan to simply avoid all contact with the other passengers.

Success: The team make the entire trip without giving away their identities or earning too much mistrust from the crew.

Failure: The passengers and crew of the *Peerless Swan* are extremely wary of the Wraiths and rumours have begun to spread around the ship, making it difficult to persuade Bosun Garne later in the trip. In Complication 3, you begin the Complication with 1 Failure toward that skill challenge.



Complication 2 – Troll Off Starboard!

A cry rings out from the right side of the ship and the crew begin to shout. 'Troll! River troll!' As several crewmen reach for their swords, one looks at you with a touch of urgent fear in his eyes.

'Are you going to help us?'

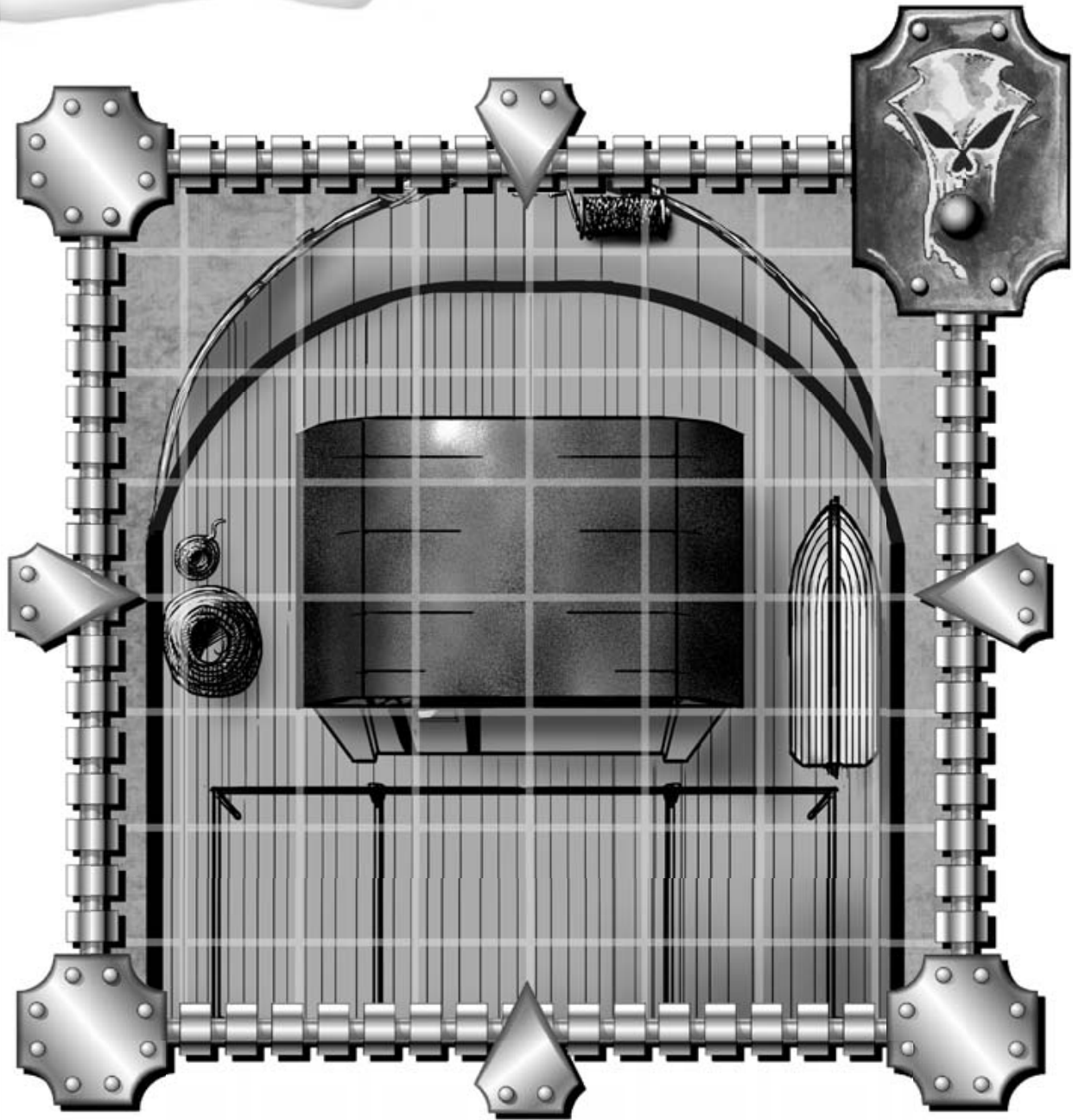
This is a combat Encounter (standard) with the following enemies involved:

Level 1 Encounter (XP 400)

- ◆ 1 troll (level 9 brute)

As a note, the Wraiths will have aid from 2d3 of the boat's crewmen, which are considered Human Rabble (level 2 minion).





Complication 3 – Who Are Ye, Really?

It is the final night of the voyage, Goldeston's dock lamps glowing in the distance and the swarthy bosun of the ship swaggers up to you. His name is Radcliffe Garne, and he has never trusted you since you boarded. As he approaches he looks over his shoulders, a not-so-subtle sign that he has privacy in mind.

'Alright then,' he whispers to you, 'I saw that nifty little 'ead thingy you guys 'ave 'idden under them 'ats when you was fightin' that troll. Who are ye...really?'

This skill challenge forces the Wraiths to sate the inquisitive mind of the ship's bosun – or silence his tongue.

Setup: The team will have to force bosun Garne to think differently than he does or they will have to make sure he does not talk to anyone else...ever again.

Level: Lower than the level of the team.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

Bluff (moderate DCs): You have a good story why the bosun thinks he saw what he saw; now you must get him to believe you.

Diplomacy (hard DCs): Getting the bosun to see that you are better to have as friends than enemies is the optimal result of your friendly tone and mannerisms.

Intimidate (moderate DCs): He saw what you did to that troll; what does he possibly think would stop you from doing the same to him?

NOTE: Failing in an Intimidate check against bosun Garne will anger him enough to cut off the conversation early, claiming that you are trying to set him up. This counts as two Failures against this challenge.

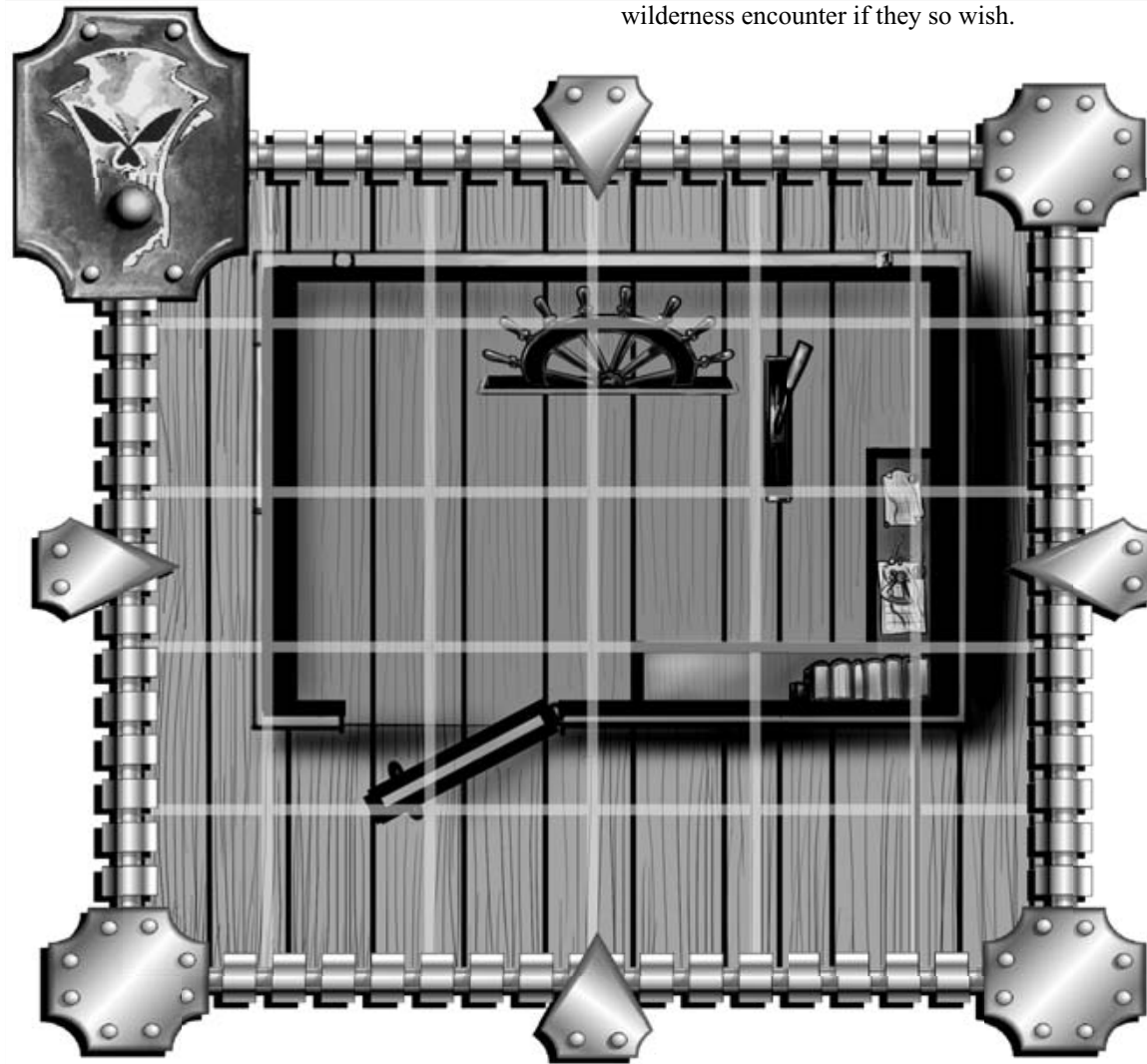
Success: The team convinces bosun Garne to go about his business and forget what he thinks he saw. It is better for everyone if he just stays sure that he was mistaken.

Failure: The bosun is not quelled and he decides to find out for himself, reaching for the nearest Wraith's headgear to try and see if he can reveal the Omnilems – starting a battle with the bosun and a few of his loyal crewmen. The following combat ensues:

Level 1 Encounter (XP 268)

- ◆ 1 human berserker; Radcliffe Garne (level 4 brute)
- ◆ 4 human rabble (level 2 minion)

If this fight does break out and the Wraiths choose to use *deadly* force in dealing with the bosun and his crew, they will be forced to leave the ship immediately. The captain saw that Garne started it – that is why they are not being brought up on charges. They will have to swim/walk the rest of the way to Goldeston, which could allow Games Masters to add in another wilderness encounter if they so wish.



Mission Segment E.1.2: Storent's Plight

Stopping by in Goldeston for a little while for a drink, meal and perhaps some supply shopping, the Wraiths then walk south to Storent. While there they will have to find out what sort of beast is stalking their streets at night and set up a proper ambush for it.

Complication 1 – Gossip Mongering

The town of Storent during the day is much like any other small town you have been to, save for the row of fresh graves lining the main thoroughway on your way into town. The fact that you are new faces seems just as intriguing to these folk as your weaponry.

If you are going to hunt and kill this thing that is plaguing them, you need to find out more about it. That means spreading out and getting some good intelligence from the townsfolk.

Setup: The team must mingle with the townsfolk of Storent in order to get the real story as to what is happening here.

Level: Lower than the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures)

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate.

Diplomacy (easy DCs): A few kind words and the truth about your intentions to remove the threat will loosen some tongues to be sure.

Insight (moderate DCs): Certain looks and glances are key to deciphering exactly what these people are afraid of.

Intimidate (easy DCs): You are just going to scare the information out of an already scared population.

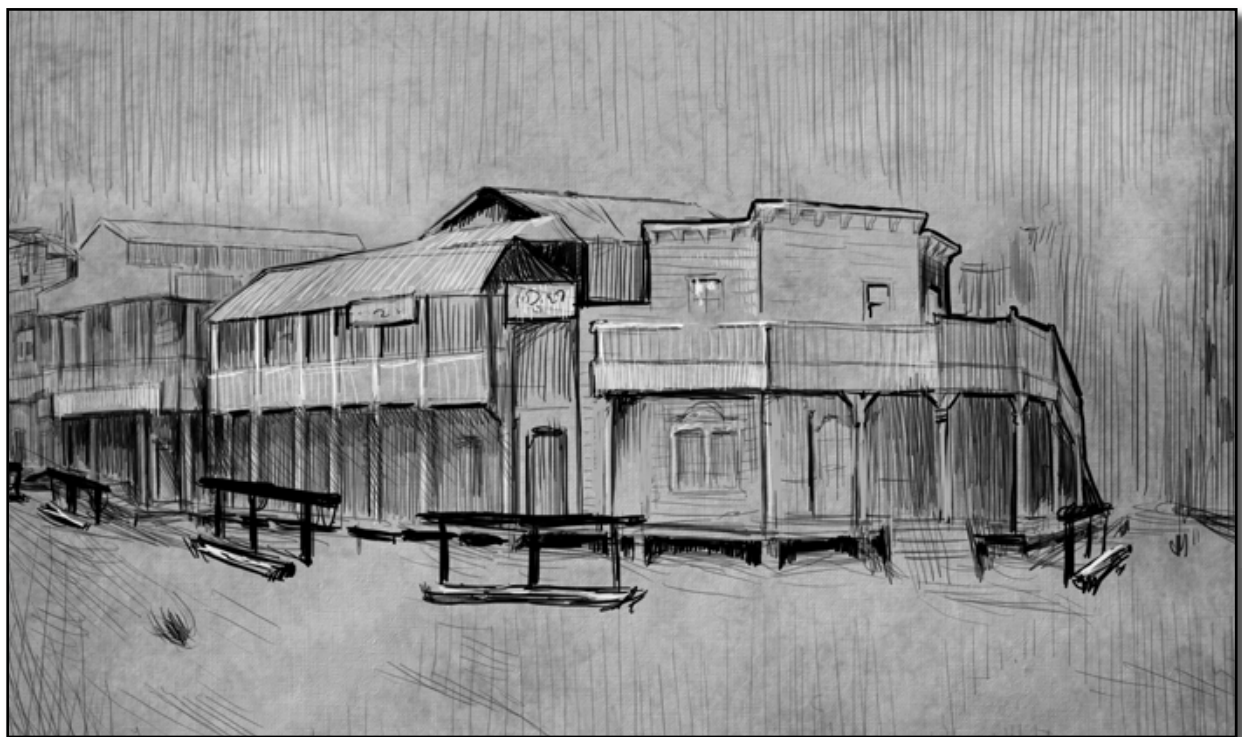
NOTE: Every failure of this overly harsh skill counts as 2 Failures for the challenge total.

Success: You got some important information from the townsfolk. Depending on the number of failures in this challenge, the team can learn a lot about the 'night hunter'.

3 Failures – The streets are being stalked by a large reptile that leaves little to be recognised of its kills.

2 Failures – (As above) The corpses left behind by the hunter have their eyes bulging and filled with some kind of green haze.

1 Failure – (As above) Dozens of tracks are found around each of the kills, a column of them leading to the southern end of town.



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0 Failures – (As above) Several members of the town do not believe the Player Characters need to be here due to the appearance of a ‘masked hero’ that has appeared and chased the hunter away three nights in a row.

Failure: The team cannot get the townsfolk to open up about the beast that stalks their streets at night, and will simply have to try and find the creature the old fashioned way. This will allow the creature in Complication 2 to get the ambush on *them*.

Complication 2 – The Hunter Becomes the Hunted
The southern side of town is where this beast has been doing all of its killing, so it makes sense for you to seek out the thing in its chosen hunting grounds.

If the Wraiths were successful in Complication 1:
A smithy is in the street, trying to adjust a thrown shoe on one of his horses, when the animal rears back and gives a worried whinny. The smithy is knocked to his rear and he gives a quick laugh and offers some old world curses toward the beast.

Then the hissing begins. At first you think it is a snake, perhaps some kind of savannah lizard but this is immediately dispelled as the hunter turns the corner. You count as four pairs of taloned legs carry its scaled body around into the street, its green eyes trailing wisps of smoke as they settle upon the smith – who cries out, grasping his face as green mist seeps out from between his fingers!

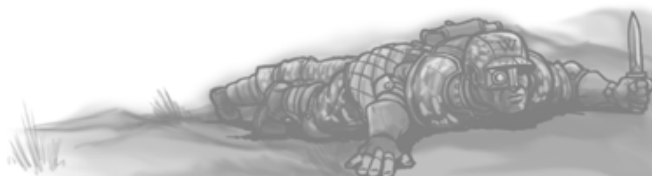
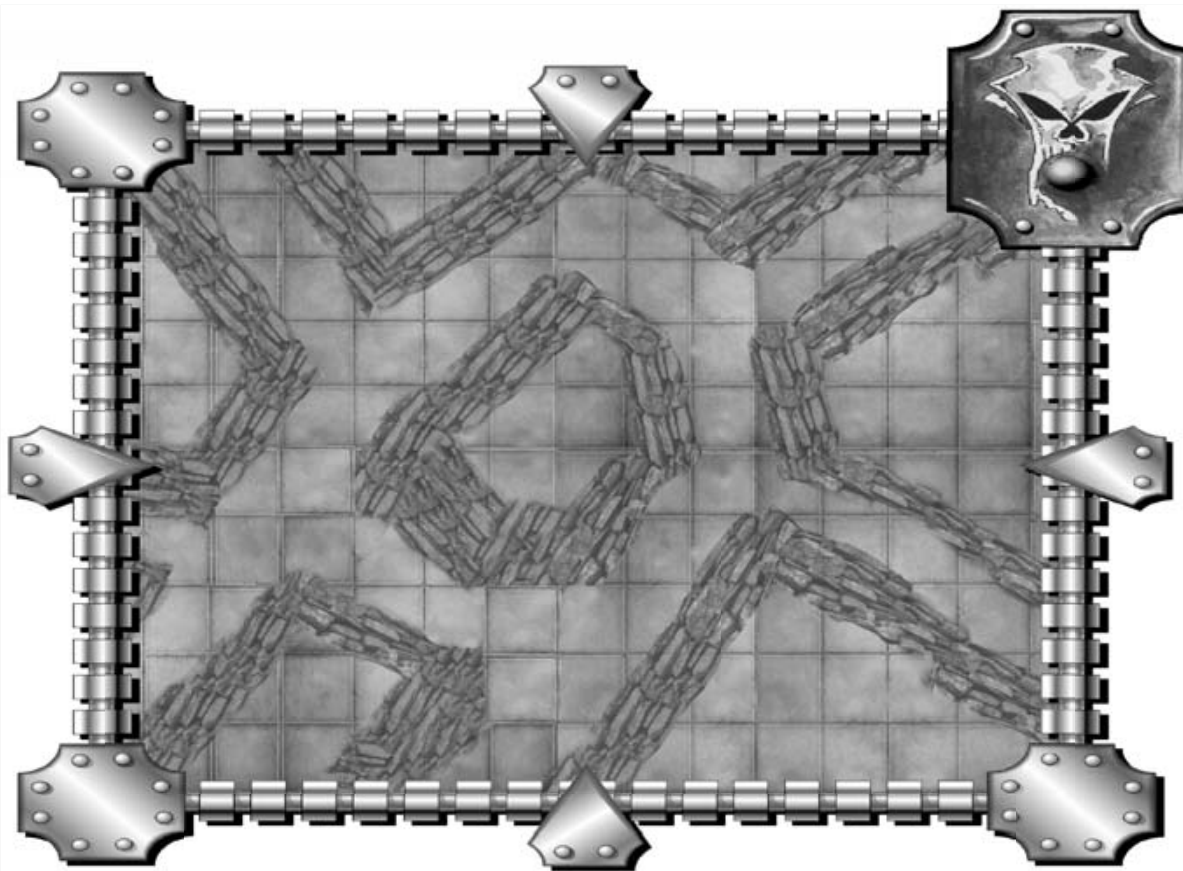
If the Wraiths failed in Complication 1:
You hear a scream from one street over and you arrive to see a poor blacksmith next to his frightened horse. The man is clutching at his face in agony, green smoke of some kind rising out from between his clenched fingers.

Suddenly, from behind you...the hissing strike of a great reptile takes you by surprise!

This is a combat Encounter (standard) with the following enemies involved:

Level 2 Encounter (XP 500)

- ◆ 1 venom-eye basilisk (level 10 artillery)



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When the basilisk is brought to less than 10 hit points (and not killed), it will begin to make its retreat toward the southern sewers. If the creature tries to escape *or* is killed outright, the ‘masked hero’ arrives to help the smithy.

Read the following:

‘By his bronze blade, you have dealt with the beast, your chests still heaving from the battle, you turn to see an armoured man in bronze plate, helm and mask stride out of the shadows, ‘but the battle is far from over. More of those things live in the southern tunnels, the old copper mines. In his name, I will save these people. They have no more need for your type of penny men and coins whores.’

With a twirl of his robes and a clanking of his greaves, he vanishes back into the night without so much as another word...

The Wraiths could choose to follow him, but an urgent message from SpellCom will give them pause:

SpellCom Urgent Message via Omnilens

The team leader is given the following message:

‘Find the southern tunnels. That Praxious-worshipping coward is not your concern, let him go for now. You have to follow that creature’s trail to its den and deal with the mission objective. Command, out.’

Complication 3 – Finding the Basilisk Tunnel

The southern end of Storent is not in the greatest of shapes. As the coining smiths moved northward, so did all of the care and money for this neighbourhood. It is no wonder that the reptile’s tracks led you into this slum. Where else could such a terrible lizard and its family thrive away from prying eyes?

That masked man claimed that the things lived in tunnels. It is time to find those tunnels and make this town’s streets safe again.

This skill challenge gets the Wraiths to utilise their urban tracking skills as they try to find the lair of the basilisks.

Setup: The team members are on the hunt for the lair of the deadly beasts that are plaguing this town.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures)

Primary Skills: Dungeoneering, Nature, Perception, Streetwise.

Dungeoneering (moderate DCs): You venture down into the town sewers to seek out the tunnels that could be used as a lair.

Nature (easy DCs): You look for ground tracks of an eight-legged lizard to follow to its den.

Perception (moderate DCs): You look for clues on the surface, like tracks or dripped blood to get bearing on the right direction.

Streetwise (moderate DCs): You know how most towns are laid out and it helps you figure out where to turn and where to look.

Success: The lair of the basilisk is located but the beast (or any others like it) are nowhere to be found. The Wraiths will now get a chance to investigate the scene in Complication 4.

Failure: The Wraiths search all night and cannot find any such tunnel that the masked ‘hero’ claimed to exist. Unfortunately for them they will have to spend another day/night searching, starting this Complication’s skill challenge over again. If they manage to fail this skill challenge three times, they must admit defeat and skip the next Complication, going directly to Exportation (since the town is obviously safe).

Complication 4 – Searching the Basilisk ‘Den’

The tunnel’s mouth, slick with the waste and dried blood from the creature’s passage, leads you into a much larger chamber. As your omnilens adjusts your vision to take in the gloom of the underground, casting the room in a blue glow, you are prepared for the beasts to strike...

...but you are surprised not to find a creature’s nest or lair. Instead, you are looking at a huge open crate lined in faeces-clotted-straw, several bloody sacks of rotting meat, some overturned chairs and a refuse pile in the corner of the room. If you were not sure that you fought the beast and found it wild, you might swear that it must have been someone’s pet?

It should not take long for your team to look around and see what all of this means.

This skill challenge is the definitive search of what the Wraiths believed to be the basilisk's den, revealing a strange mystery and potentially a clue as to why the base is empty.

Setup: The team must focus on its investigatory skills to get all of the clues out of this strange scene.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Dungeoneering, Nature, Perception.
Dungeoneering (moderate DCs): You search ceiling, walls and floors for potential secret safes or panels that could contain information.

Nature (moderate DCs): You focus your investigation on the animal transport crate, sifting through the bedding to get answers.

Perception (hard DCs): You look for something out of place; a clue to what this chamber actually holds.

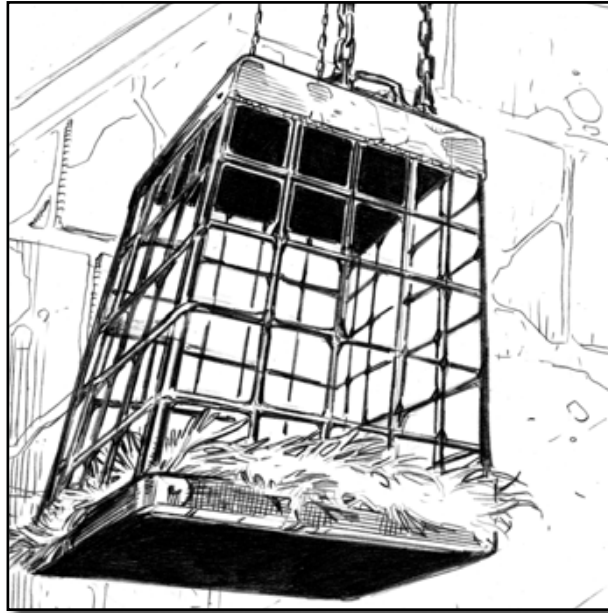
Success: You found some important clues as to what this chamber means to the basilisk's hunting of Storent. Depending on how many Failures you had accumulated before succeeding, you get the following information:

2 Failures – There are several strange mushroom stems and caps in the straw of the animal crate; some of them look partially digested.

1 Failure – (As above) A brass-ringed muzzle with blinders was tucked in the refuse pile; it looks perfectly fitted for a beast of the basilisk's size.

0 Failures – (As above) A small, cult-style hand-carved copper holy symbol of the god Praxious on a leather thong can be found lying under one of the chairs.

Failure: The team finds nothing noteworthy within the 'den', and must head back to Command with nothing to help solve why it is vacant and looks more like a squatter's hole than a creature's lair.



Exportation Details

The team can choose to use the teleportation circle located in Goldeston to return quickly to Wraith Recon headquarters with their findings, if any. They could also choose to hire another riverboat to Graenwich or even decide to walk if they feel the extra week or two is acceptable.

Post-Mission Debriefing (The Basilisk Den was Found):

Something is not right with that whole scene, team. The arcanists say that the beast you battled was a basilisk and that what you found was not its natural lair. It looks to us, at first glance, that someone brought that creature to Storent and unleashed it upon the citizens. I have my feelings as to who that might be but I cannot fathom why.

That masked, thrice-damned 'hero' is a templar of Praxious – an enemy of the crown to be sure. His presence, no matter how altruistic he appears, is not a good sign. Where there are templars there are cultists,



and where there are cultists Tomarsson's goons are sure to strike. I'd like to send you Wraiths in to throw him in shackles but we will just have to keep an eye on Storent for now. I do not like it but we all have orders.

Regardless, it seems that the last few nights have gone by free of attacks in Storent, so you did a good job. We will take a closer look at your reports and get back with you on this one. Stay close, team. I will need you soon enough.

Dismissed.

Post-Mission Debriefing (The Wraiths Found No Den):

Well, the beast has not turned back up in several days, so it looks like you or that damnable Brazen cultist – a templar by the look of it – got him good. Its kin will hopefully not be back anytime soon, which gives us a chance to look into why a templar of Praxious is active in Storent at all.

Go get some sleep; we are going to have send some specialists into town to do a bit more research.

Mission Assignment E.2: Find the Brazen Cult Outside Storent

After further research was done on the Wraith team's findings in Storent, SpellCom is sure that the appearance of a bronze templar of Praxious in such a small town is no accident. Tomarsson's schemes are often convoluted and intriguing, so the Commander is interested in understanding why Storent is important to the Hierophant-in-Exile's plot (whatever it might be).

Now it is time for Wraith Recon to find the cultists, gain access to their gathering point, get in and then out quietly. Tomarsson will speed up his timing if he thinks that the crown is onto him, so the Wraiths cannot get caught.

Mission Start Date: 28th day of Bloom, 1,207 YBD

Deployment Location: Town of Storent, Dardarrick

Deployment Method: Portal-Drop to Westwatch

Primary Mission Goal: Investigate the presence and mission of the Cult of Praxious in Storent.

Secondary Objectives: Keep violent action against the cultists to a minimum if possible. If cover is blown, no cultist can be allowed to report back to Tomarsson.

Expected Resistance: Fanatical cultists of Praxious.

Useful Information: Tomarsson's cultists are masked and anonymous; taking robes and masks from a handful of them could be very useful gaining entrance to their gathering.

Pre-Mission Briefing:

I love it when I am right about something. When we saw that masked so-called hero in your arcanists' report, I knew those bronzie were up to no good – they never are. Now we get the chance to know what that is.

Our Wolf on the scene discovered a small cell of Brazen cultists holding worship in secret on the south side of Storent, not far from where the basilisk's lair turned out to be. We have not seen more of that templar yet, but that does not mean that he is not lurking around waiting to do something terrible to you, got it?

You are going in, portalling over to Westwatch in some fake officer uniforms before heading to Storent to find those cultists. The captain over at Westwatch know not to let anyone get in your way, he thinks it has something to do with the savage tribe uprisings, so it should not take you but a day to get back to Storent. Once there you have to find the abandoned millhouse where our man says the cultists meet every other night. Which, by the way, should get you there on a meeting night if you do not get distracted.

Find their gathering, get inside and find out what the hell they are doing in Storent. Try not to make too much of a mess either, the Arcanist General says we should try to do this sans bloodshed. Just between you, me and the arcanist looking through your omnilens right now...just make sure no cultist that sees you makes it back to Tomarsson, got it?

You portal in two hours. Dismissed.

Mission Segment E.2.1: The Praxious Cult in Storent

Portal-dropping to Westwatch and taking the short walk (or ride, if they managed to get horses from the fort) to Storent should only take the greater part of a day, bringing them to the small town a few hours before dusk. Once in the town they have to start looking around the south end for the old millhouse that houses the Cult of Praxious meetings in this area.

The Wraiths are to make sure that they do not get caught investigating the cult – else this simple reconnaissance will cut up a high butcher's bill.

Complication 1 – What Millhouse?

So many of the buildings on the south end of Storent are in disrepair and abandoned, finding the right decrepit structure that used to be a millhouse could pose a problem. Considering you have to find the building before the cult gathering begins...time is of the essence.

This skill challenge is designed test the craftiness of the Wraiths, bringing some of their less-utilised skills to the fore.

Setup: Looking for telltale signs of a former millhouse, the team has to find the gathering site quickly and without attracting too much attention.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Insight, Perception, Streetwise.

Diplomacy (moderate DCs): You ask one of the random locals for the building's location, knowing that someone might actually be able to give you innocent directions.

Insight (hard DCs): You watch the body language and actions of the occasional passersby, who will surely know which building houses the scandalous cult.

Common folk have a tendency to know more than they are willing to let on openly.

Perception (moderate DCs): You watch for buildings that have old wheel housings, refuse piles that contain old grain sacks and so forth. One of them is sure to be the right one.

Streetwise (moderate DCs): Knowing the best places to hide shady dealings, you follow your hunches to where a secret cult gathering would fit right in.

Success: The team finds the old millhouse before the gathering actually begins, giving them a chance to get inside and investigate the goings on.

Failure: The Wraiths accidentally make it a little too obvious that they are looking for the cult gathering place. A few members of the cult on their way to the meeting decide to *dissuade* the team from further searching. The following combat occurs:

Level 1 Encounter (XP 363)

- ◆ 1 human berserker (level 4 brute)
- ◆ 2 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion) –
- ◆ 2 brazen initiates (level 2 minion) –

After the fight the characters will find a small snippet of parchment on the person of one of the acolytes that draws a perfect map to where the Wraiths need to go, bringing them to Complication 2.

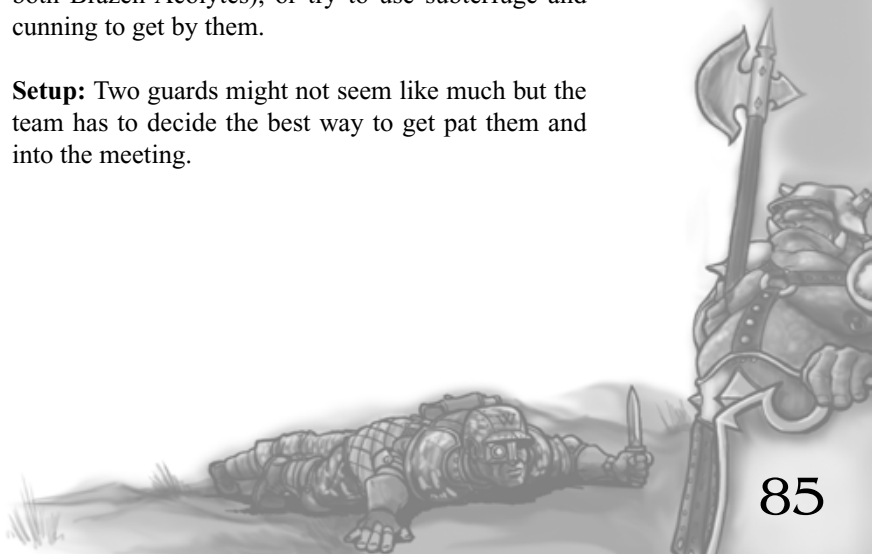
Complication 2 – Getting Past the Guards

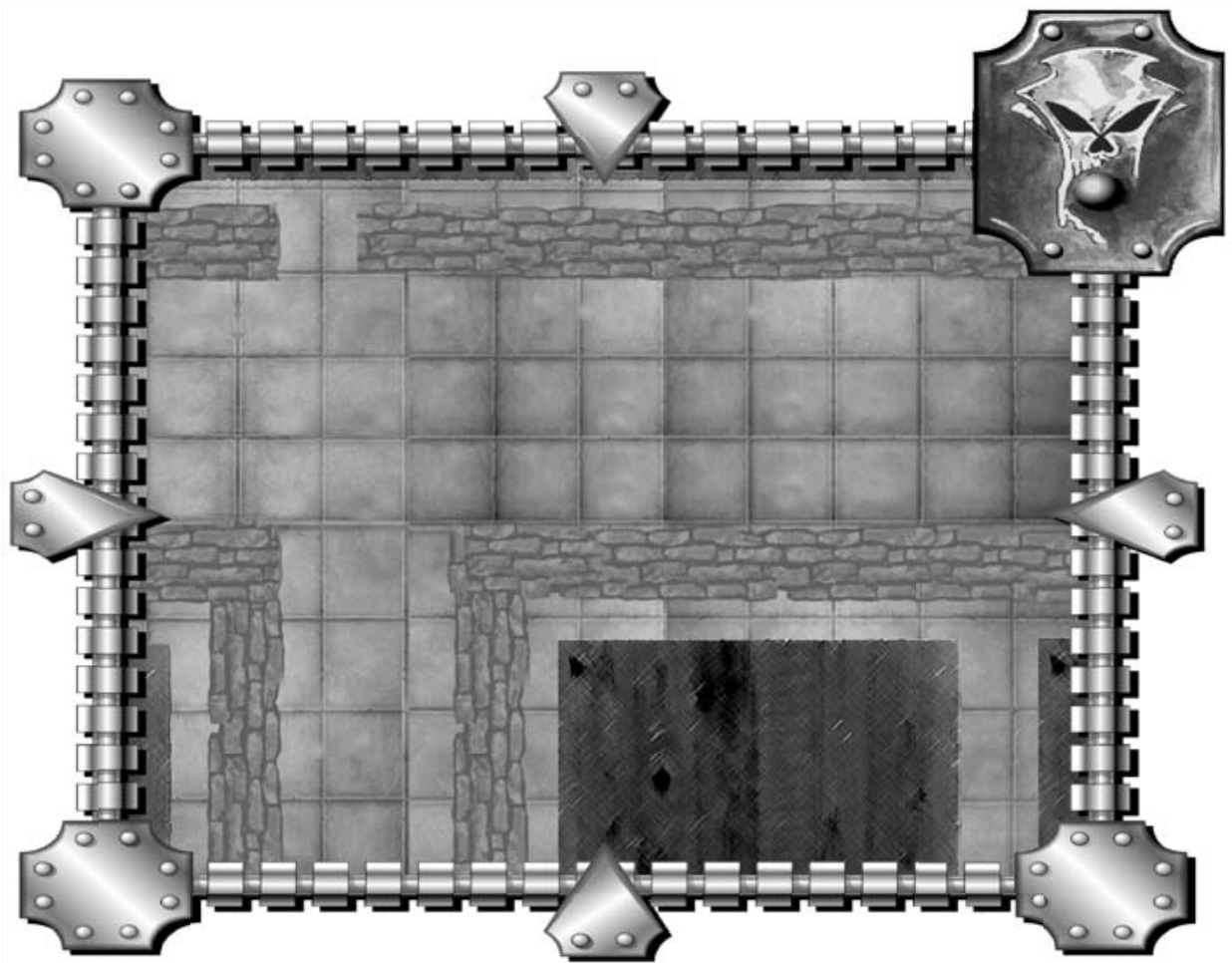
The millhouse is ahead of you but a pair of cloaked and masked guards is standing at its door. As you watch, they stand aside for a trio of similarly garbed people to let them into the building and you assume, the cult meeting.

You need to get inside...but how?

This skill challenge lets the Wraiths choose the best way to gain access to the millhouse. They can either simply go forward and deal with the guards (who are both Brazen Acolytes), or try to use subterfuge and cunning to get by them.

Setup: Two guards might not seem like much but the team has to decide the best way to get past them and into the meeting.





Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Bluff, Religion, Stealth.

Athletics (hard DCs): You are going to climb the side of the building to try and sneak in through an upstairs hole or window.

Bluff (hard DCs): You will tell the guards that you belong in the meeting and they should let you pass. If any Wraith has a Praxious cult mask (perhaps from the cultists in Complication 1), they can consider this skill test an *easy DC* instead of a hard one.

Religion (moderate DCs): You know the correct quotations and mannerisms that a Praxious follower could use to convince the guards to let you pass.

Stealth (moderate DCs): Under cover of night, the guards will not even notice you sneaking past them.

Success: The team gets inside the millhouse without further issue, following the dimly lit braziers to the

meeting hall and Complication 3.

Failure: The Wraiths give their intentions away and are caught by the guards, who are joined by other cultists arriving for the meeting. The following combat occurs:

Level 3 Encounter (XP 677)

- ◆ 1 human mage (level 4 artillery)
- ◆ 1 tiefling heretic (level 6 artillery)
- ◆ 4 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion) –

Complication 3 – The Cult Meeting

You wind your way through the dilapidated building into a central chamber. Several of the internal walls of the building have been torn out to reveal their supporting planks and bricks and the pair of coal braziers at the middle of the room cast a troupe of dancing shadows throughout. A dozen or so masked men and women stand grouped at the far end of the

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room, a single one amongst them standing on a crate to read a scroll of parchment to them.

You will need to get closer to hear what has to be said, however...

This skill tests the team's ability to do silent reconnaissance to gather the information they were tasked to retrieve.

Setup: The team can use stealth or misdirection to get close enough to the gathering's crowd, listening to what the meeting leader has to say.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Religion, Stealth.

Bluff (hard DCs): You explain to those at the meeting that you are supposed to be closer to the speaker. If any Wraith in the group does not have a Praxious

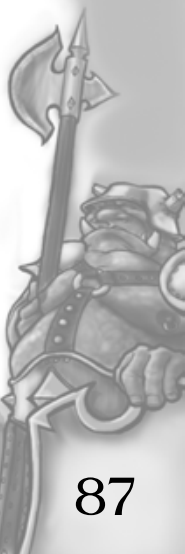
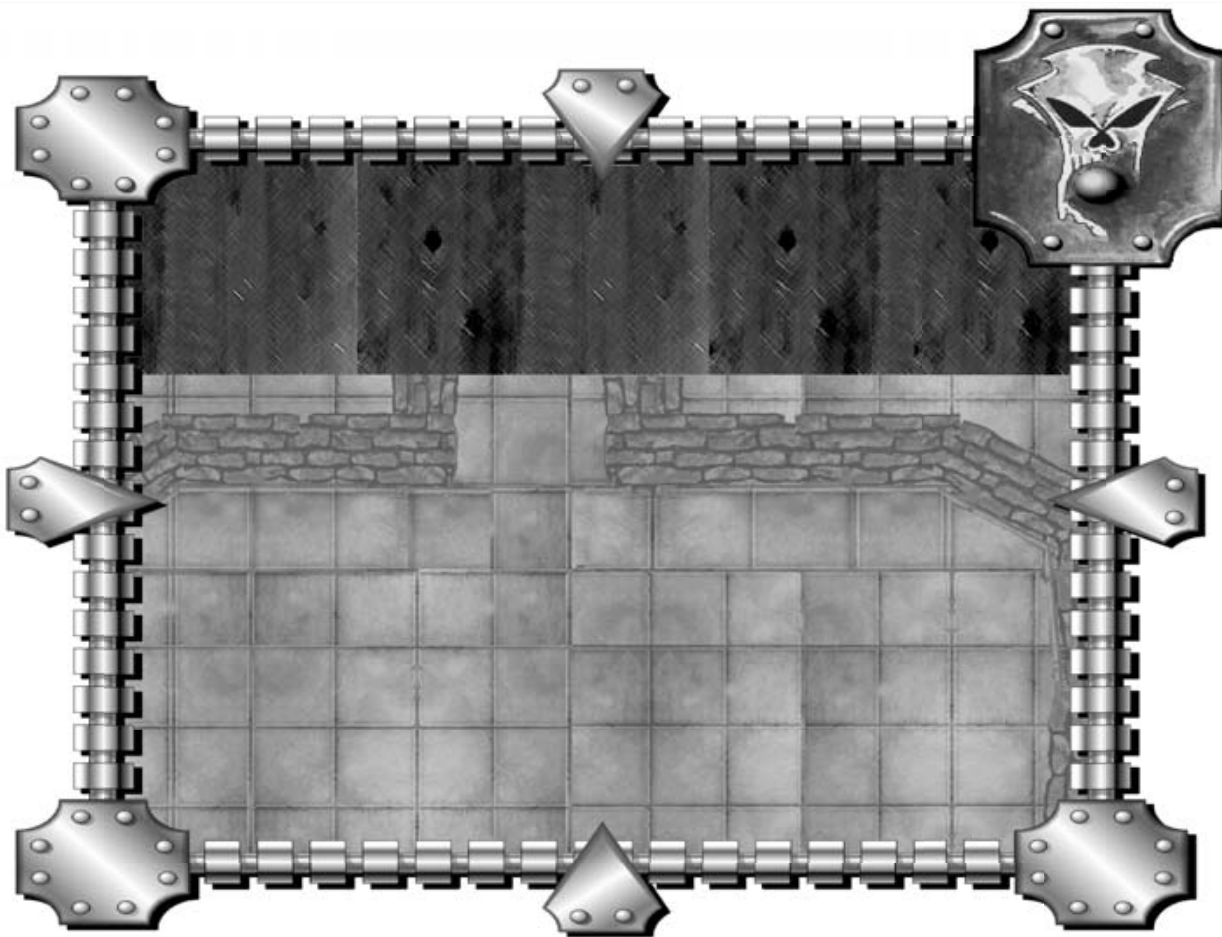
cult mask on when attempting to use this skill – this challenge automatically fails fully.

Religion (moderate DCs): You use the proper mannerisms and group answers to blend in with the cultist crowd.

Stealth (moderate DCs): It can just be a matter of not being seen to get your close enough to hear what is going on.

Success: The team manages to clearly and fully understand the following piece of information from the meeting's speaker:

'We are strong, brothers and sisters. Strong to have been able to help Templar Fentour become a shining light to this town's dark times. I know some of you lost friends and relatives to the attacks of our beast, but the sacrifices you made were not in vain. We now know that our holy project – bringing pain, death and then salvation to Dardarrick's populations – works exactly as the Hierophant has planned it.'



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Templar Fentour has moved on to Goldeston to meet with the beast handlers again, as we must replace the weapon taken from us by those meddling infidels. We will meet him two morrows from now in Goldeston at the Planepan Mint, where we will begin this project anew. Soon all of Goldeston will be begging for Praxious to save them from the beasts the All Father cannot keep from killing them.

Go now, go in strength and pride that we will soon be heroes to these people once again...just as Hierophant Tomarsson commands it.'

Once the meeting has adjourned, the team will either need to decide to sneak out with the crowd (Complication 4.A) or battle the crowd to eliminate the future threat to Dardarrick (Complication 4.B).

Failure: The Wraiths said or did something to reveal them as posing members, causing the entire meeting to fall upon them in a zealous combat. The team must immediately go to Complication 4.B, where they will have to fight the whole cult meeting's population.

Complication 4.A – Out With the Flock

As the meeting comes to a close and the cultists begin to file out of the building into the night, you find yourself doing your best to follow them out to



where you can get to safety and return to base with your information.

This skill challenge is a true test of the Wraiths' ability to see the end of the mission as more important than just 'stopping the villains'.

Setup: The team will need to be nonchalant and somewhat social to blend in with the crowd as it leaves the meeting hall, else they will trigger the inherent paranoia in any secret cult member.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Religion – or – Stealth.

Bluff (moderate DCs): You make small talk and misdirect looks and conversations elsewhere.

Diplomacy (easy DCs): Being friendly and honestly talking about everyday things can sometimes be the best way out of a sticky situation.

Insight (hard DCs): You have to judge body language and such more than anything else in a crowd of masked cultists.

Religion (moderate DCs): There is a good and a bad way to leave a cult meeting; you are hoping you remember the former.

If the Wraiths do not have masks of Praxious on, they have no choice but to sneak out of the building. They cannot 'blend in'. They have the following skill to use:

Stealth (hard DCs): Most of the building has been cut away for easy movement, which also makes it difficult to hide in but you have to try.

Success: The team gets out of the millhouse and away from the exiting cultists without further trouble. The information in hand, they can then head on to Exportation.

Failure: The Wraiths could not quite get out of the millhouse without someone noticing that they do not belong. The Cult of Praxious are not known for their understanding or mercy – which throws the team immediately into Complication 4.B.

Complication 4.B – Get the Non-Believers!

'They are not of the faith!' a masked man shouts out, drawing a blade from his belt and pointing a finger toward you, 'Stop them!'

This is a combat Encounter (difficult) with the following enemies involved:

Level 5 Encounter (XP 755)

- ◆ 1 eladrin twilight incanter; meeting leader (level 8 controller)
- ◆ 2 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion) –
- ◆ 9 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion) –

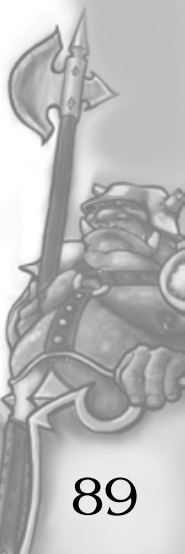
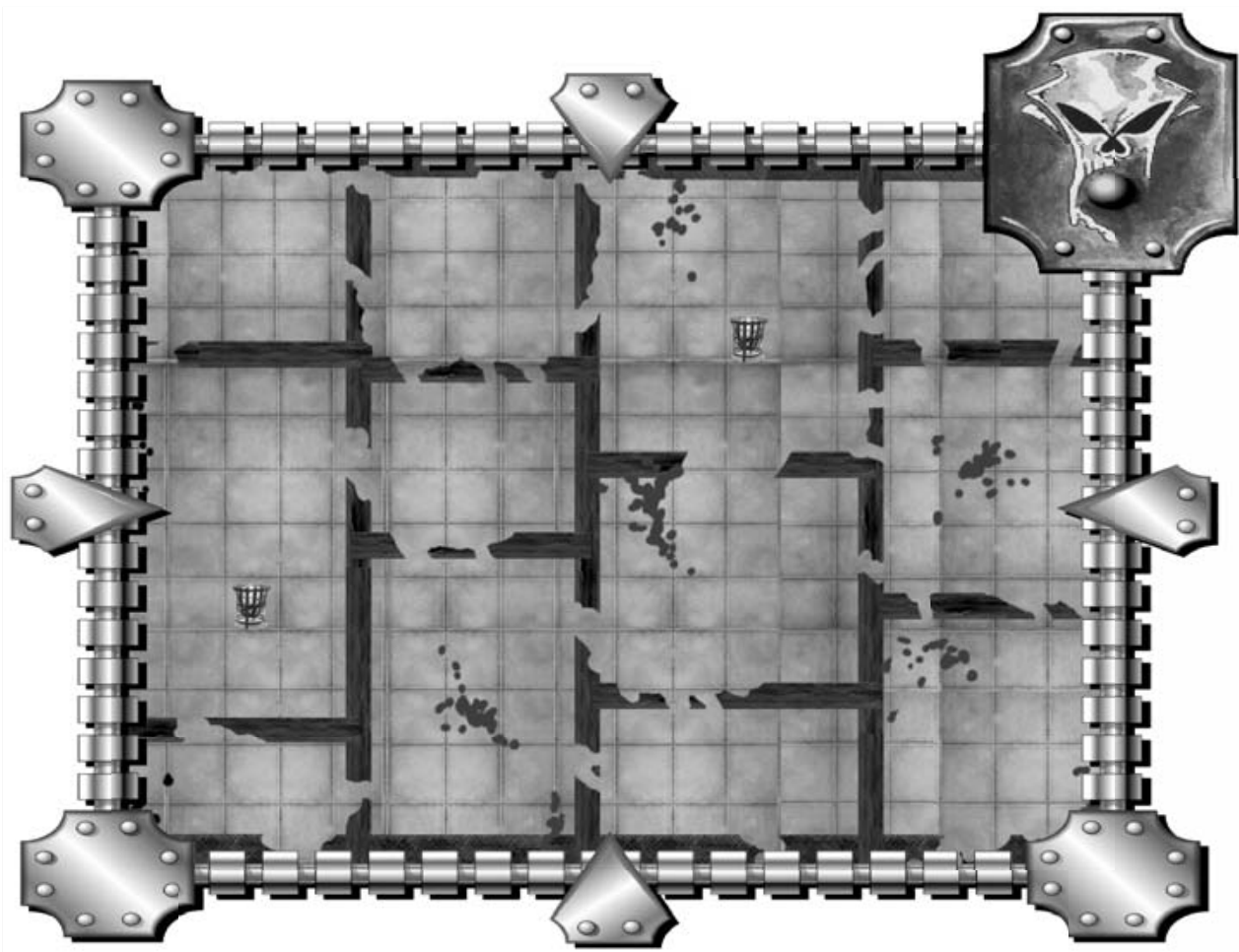
The eladrin twilight incanter has a parchment on him that explains all of what he said in the ‘Success’ section of Complication 3. If they had not already heard this information, they will have the evidence they need now to move on with Mission Assignment E.3.

Exportation Details

The team will likely want to travel either north to Goldeston or west to Westwatch in order to use a teleportation circle back to Headquarters. If they cannot, or somehow choose not to travel quickly, they will need to hire a riverboat for 100 gold pieces or take the two weeks overland back to Fort Brazen.

Post-Mission Debriefing:

Good job all around, Wraiths. We have everything we need now to go in and get those bronziez once and for all in that area. I knew that they were up to no good



but to put an entire town in peril by releasing that basilisk...just to try and make their cowardly templars into heroes? Just wait until people start to hear about how that lizard was a pet of their 'masked man', eh?

Regardless, do not go too far from HQ team. Get some rack time, clean up your gear and come back here. We are sending you after that templar in the morning.

Dismissed.

Mission Assignment E.3: The Goldeston Gambit

There has always been a sizeable cult presence in the sprawling territory of Goldeston, mostly due to the coming and going of river panners, coinsmiths and savage tribe traders. Making the addition of Cult of Praxious activity in the area particularly worrisome. Their plans to release creatures into the city just to sweep in a save the citizenry could seriously attract numerous new followers to their cause.

Wraith Recon has to get to the city and find where these beasts are being held, destroy them, and then find the Brazen One's worshippers to put an end to this travesty.

Mission Start Date: 10th day of Sunning, 1,207 YBD
Deployment Location: City of Goldeston, Dardarrick

Deployment Method: Portal-Drop to Goldeston

Primary Mission Goal: Find and eliminate the new Cult of Praxious plot.

Secondary Objectives: Destroy the dangerous predators the cult has brought to the city. Do not raise attentions of other factions within the city.

Expected Resistance: Fanatical cultists of Praxious, potentially drugged predatory creatures.

Pre-Mission Briefing:

Good evening. This is it, Wraiths. Tomarsson has played his hand and we have to beat his three-card

run. You are our ace in the sleeve, team. He does not know that we are onto him, and hopefully that will give your team the upper hand.

The ploy in Storent, releasing trained predators to terrorise a community before saving that same community to earn public trust, cannot be allowed to happen a second time. Especially not in a city as important to us as Goldeston. Well over half of the kingdom's coin is minted there and SpellCom is on full alert for the possible lack of alchemical gold. This might just be another ploy for Tomarsson and his flunkies but it could cause significant harm kingdom-wide.

You are going in hot, Wraiths. Wizard's Guild agents have set up a window of terribly off-climate weather for the city, allowing you to portal-drop directly into town and vanish under the cover of rain – or whatever they have arranged for. Goldeston has several other minor factions in the area that could pose problems for you if your are discovered, so move quickly and covertly.

Find the templar, eliminate him and his scheme. Put down those poor beasts, too if you can. They are too dangerous to simply release into the wild and who knows what those bronzies have been doing or feeding to them.

Grab your gear, the Guild says you will need to leave within the hour.

Good luck, and Godspeed. Dismissed team, go get 'em.

Mission Segment E.3.1: Arriving in Goldeston

The arrival into Goldeston is important, as the Wraiths will need to make sure that they are not seen in their tactical gear leaping into the city by outsiders. The Wizard's Guild have given the team as much cover as they can in the form of a blinding sandstorm (unseasonable in summer, but explainable), giving the team a few minutes to get into hiding and begin their mission unseen.

Once they are in position and assured that no one saw them arrive, they can then move on to trying to find the cult and eliminating the threat.

Complication 1 – Into the Storm

The portal shimmers in front of you, but you cannot see where it leads. Due to the dark of night and the swirl of blown sand and dirt, the other side of the portal is obscured. The wizards' weather is surely doing its job, but you wonder if there is so much a thing as 'too much cover'.

Exactly what you need, you prepare to start your run through the portal to Goldeston...

This is a basic skill challenge that sets the hectic and urgent mood of the Wraiths' mission.

Setup: The sandstorm and the urgency of the movement into hiding makes things difficult for the team at first, but the alternative is getting caught arriving by nosy locals.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

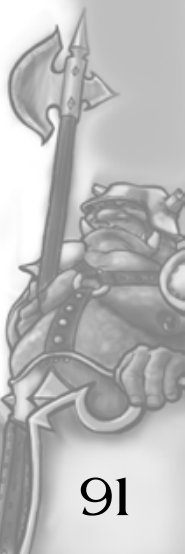
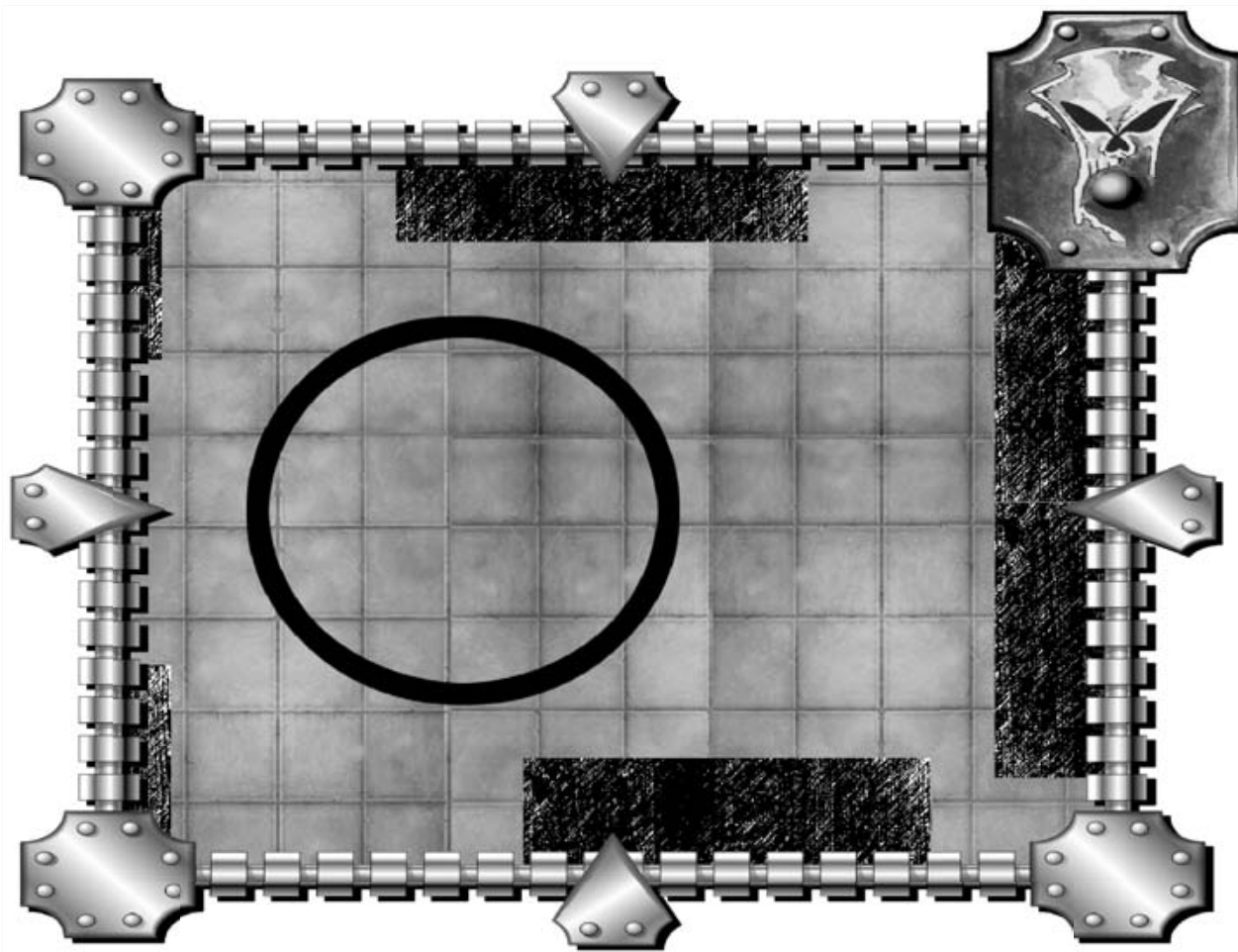
Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Nature, Stealth.

Athletics (hard DCs): Despite the blowing detritus and shifting sand on the street, you are going to sprint into the nearest cover.

Nature (moderate DCs): You can predict the visibility and clarity of perception most creatures could have in this kind of weather, especially at night, and you will use that to your advantage.

Stealth (easy DCs): Between the darkness and the wizards' sandstorm, you can essentially hide in plain sight. As a note, any failures of this skill type mean



that the team member literally bumped into someone else caught in the storm – earning 2 Failures toward challenge total.

Success: The team reaches a good shelter and hiding place to get ready for the midnight investigation after the storm ‘passes’.

Failure: The Wraiths are seen by a few curious parties, savage tribe members that are used to sandstorm activity. They like the look of the team’s equipment and want to use the sandstorm as good cover to ambush and raid them. The following combat occurs:

Level 1 Encounter (XP 405)

- ◆ 1 hobgoblin warcaster (level 3 controller (leader))
- ◆ 4 goblin cutters (level 1 minion)
- ◆ 4 hobgoblin grunts (level 3 minion)

Complication 2 – Searching for the Cult

Goldeston is a large enough city built in sections around the mills and mints surrounding the river, making it easy to move around at night without being seen – or at least noticed. There is only six more hours of darkness this night on the outside, meaning that you have got to get a move on if you are going to find those beasts and put them down.

This challenge forces the Wraiths to move stealthily and quickly to find their target before they have too much of a chance to dig in and prepare.

Setup: The team must look in windows, pick locked doors, climb fences and the like all night if they have to in order to find where the cult is hiding.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures)

Primary Skills: Perception, Streetwise, Thievery.

Perception (moderate DCs): Just by being attentive and staying alert you will find the clues you need.

Streetwise (moderate DCs): You know where Goldeston could hide a cultist cell, especially one that might contain savage beasts used to terrorise a population.

Thievery (hard DCs): Opening latched shutters and popping locked doors to peek inside is something that must be done quietly and with great care, else the town watch will make things even more complicated.

Success: The team discovers an old minting facility currently ‘closed for repairs’ and they see lights on

inside of it. They look a bit closer only to discover a brass-masked man walk past a window. They have the right place, now they must stop them.

Failure: The Wraiths are taking too long to find the building and unbeknownst to them, more cultists are arriving to reinforce the location while they continue looking. The combat that takes place in Complication 4 of this mission segment adds 2 more Brazen Initiates to the total encounter enemies and the Wraiths must begin this skill challenge over again from the beginning.

Complication 3 – The Way is Barred

The main doors to the cult’s hideout are locked with a heavy iron padlock and many of the windows on the first floor are shuttered with heavy plates. You have to get inside to deal with the cultists but how?

This challenge is a routine breaking-and-entering challenge that will hopefully give the Wraiths the element of surprise in the following complication.

Setup: The team has to use their skills and tools to gain entry to the building without giving away their presence.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 4 (requires 10 successes before 5 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Thievery.

Athletics (hard DCs): You are going to pry off a shutter or try to force a door, getting entry the old fashioned way. Failing in this skill means that you have made a great deal of noise, adding 3 Failures to the skill challenge total.

Thievery (moderate DCs): Picking a lock or latch, you can let your entire team in quietly and hopefully quickly.

Success: The Wraiths gain easy entry to the building, giving them the ability to surprise the cultists waiting inside (see the different introductions and combat notes in Complication 4).

Failure: The team has been discovered by the cultists, who begin immediately to prepare to defend their hideout (see the different introductions and combat notes in Complication 4).

Complication 4 – Stop the Cultists!

The building is dimly lit and filled with the passionate voices of prayer and gospel, allowing you to easily track down the central minting workshop. As you arrive you can tell it has been turned into a makeshift

temple to Praxious, a sight that gives a chill to the hardest of you.

If the Wraiths were successful in Complication 3:
A half dozen or so masked cultists are caring for a pair of heavy wooden crates, thankfully closed, that you can hear heavy breathing and movement from within. A more ornately-masked elf is at the far end of the room, kneeling in prayer in front of the heavy bronze idol.

You have not been discovered yet, allowing you to plan your attack and retain the element of surprise.

If the Wraiths failed in Complication 3:
You enter a large chamber that was once the minting workshop but the presence of a huge bronze idol in the shape of a mask tells you that it has become a temple or shrine to the Brazen One. If that was not enough to worry you, the two large empty crates lined in straw and leather are.

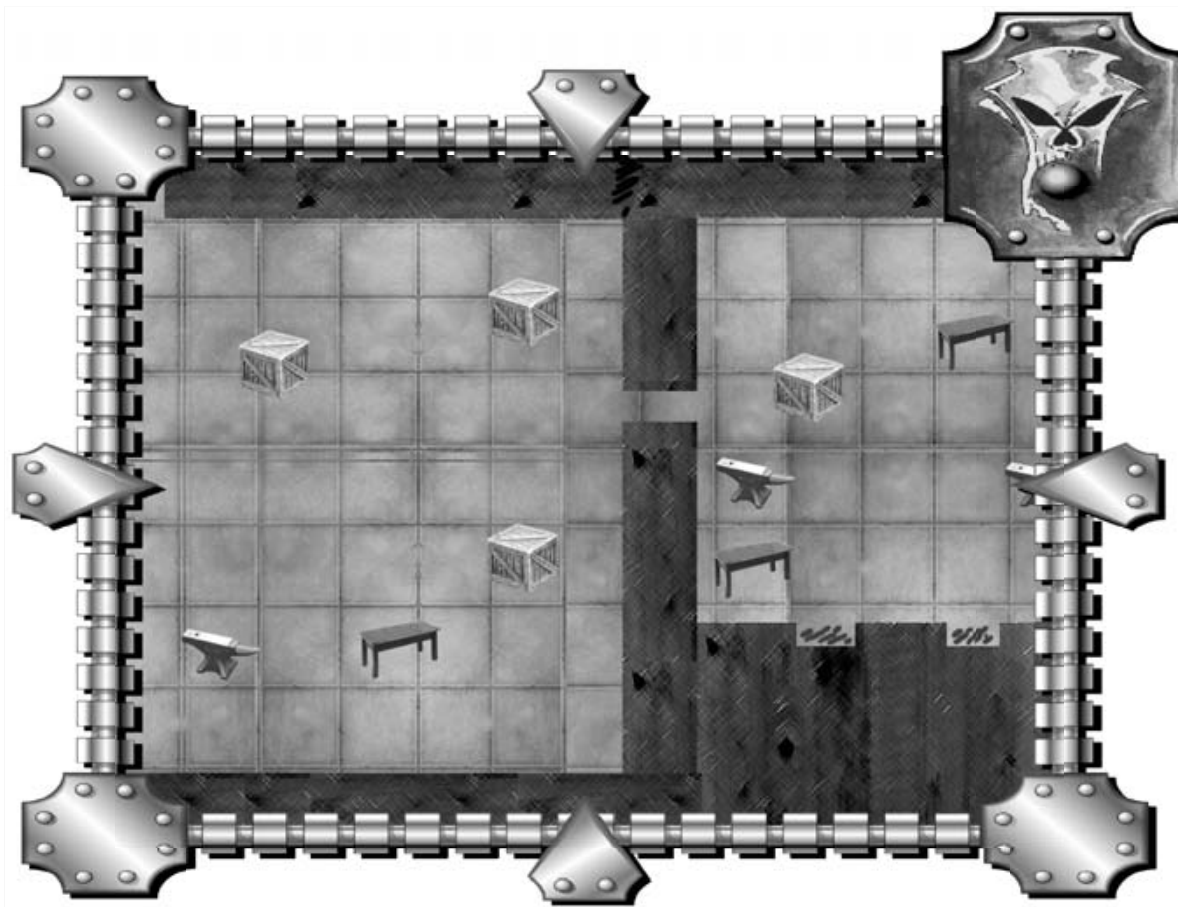
'I do not know who you are,' a elven voice says coldly from behind you, 'but you cannot stop our destiny. Get them!'

This is a combat Encounter (difficult) with the following enemies involved:

Level 5 Encounter (XP 876)

- ◆ 1 elf scout; beastmaster (level 2 skirmisher)
- ◆ 3 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion) –
- ◆ 2 brazen initiates (level 2 minion) –
- and –
- ◆ 2 gricks (level 7 brute)

Combat Notes: If the Wraiths failed Complication 3, both of the gricks will have been freed by the elf and are considered to be combatants. If they succeeded in Complication 3 the gricks will still be latched inside of their crates and the elf will try at first to take standard actions (when adjacent to the crates) to release the beasts into the combat.



Three rounds into the combat, read the following:

'What in his name?' a familiar voice shouts from the rearmost doorway, the form of the helmeted templar filling it, 'No! I will not be foiled, not this close! No! Stop them, my brothers!'

He then turns and escapes into the rear part of the building.

The remaining cultists will do everything in their power to stop the Wraiths from going after templar Fentour, even throwing themselves upon the Wraiths' weapons to slow them down. After the combat the team will need to go after the templar (Mission Segment E.3.2).

Mission Segment E.3.2: Templar Fentour's Escape

With the deadly Templar Fentour on the run from the Wraiths, he must be tracked down and dealt with before he manages to get away from the area and back to Hierophant-in-Exile Tomarsson. The templar is headed toward the teleportation circle, careless of any who might see him on the way (including a few town guards), potentially giving him an escape route back to the Brazen Hall.

The Wraiths MUST stop him before he can get away, else they will not be able to go after him without it being suicide.

Complication 1 – Follow the Masked Man!

You shoulder your way through the back door to the building, wood splintering to give way and you are greeted by the gentle violet of the approaching dawn on the horizon filling the street. A pair of early-morning travellers headed to work stand in the thoroughway, jaws agape, pointing shaking fingers toward the centre of town.

You have to get that templar before sunrise, else the streets will fill with people and you may never get another chance!

This is a hurried challenge that forces the team to decide between expedience, thoroughness and necessity.

Setup: The team must find the templar as quickly as they can, otherwise he will escape and they will never find him again.

Level: Equal to the level of the team.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 4 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate / Nature, Perception.

Note: There are three real ways to try and find the templar but the team must decide how they plan to do so before the skills used are decided. Using the population for information will allow Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate. Tracking the boot prints and footfalls of the templar's route allows Nature and Perception.

Bluff (moderate DCs): You say something witty and misleading to the bystanders to get them to tell you what they have seen.

Diplomacy (easy DCs): All a good Dardarrian citizen needs to know is that the man is a villain and they will give him up.

Intimidate (easy DCs): It does not take much in the way of a show of force in the morning to get at least a direction to go by from a common citizen.

Nature (hard DCs): His boots will leave a specific type of track but it could be anyone's trail you are following if you are wrong.

Perception (moderate DCs): A running templar of Praxious will leave several turned heads, quickly shuttered windows and the like in its path. You can keep your eyes searching for such clues as you race to find him.

Success: The team reaches the teleportation circle just as the ritual to open it is underway, allowing them to engage Templar Fentour before he gets closer to his escape.

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Failure: The templar arrived to the circle long before the Wraiths caught up, allowing him to kill the two guards at the circle and get his minions to begin opening the escape portal. Not only will the two guards already be dead at the teleportation circle's entrance but the initiates will be partly done opening the portal for the templar's escape. The combat in Complication 2 will not include the two dwarf hammerers and the portal will only need 2d4 more turns before it is opened.

Complication 2 – He Cannot Get Away!

You round the corner into the central square of Goldeston's teleportation site, bounding past the front gate and into the courtyard, where Templar Fentour is trying to make good his escape!

If the Wraiths were successful in Complication 1:

Four robed and masked cultists stand in prayer around the runes of the teleportation circle, their heads bent as they chant the opening of the ring. You can see two bloodied guards fighting against your quarry, his large blade crashing down onto them mercilessly.

'Help us!' the dwarven guardsmen in a Dardarrian uniform says as he deflects another blow with his shield from the bronze-masked warrior, 'He is too strong!'

If the Wraiths failed in Complication 2:

'Finish the ritual,' the templar growls to the four robed men frantically praying around the runic ring, 'I will handle these worms in his name.'

'Now,' templar Fentour says with a laugh, stepping over the headless bodies of two dwarves in Dardarrian uniforms, 'which lion's cub dies first?'

This is a combat Encounter (difficult) with the following enemies involved:

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,400)

◆ 1 bronze templar; Templar Fentour (level 12 elite soldier)

– and –

◆ 4 brazen initiates (level 2 minion) –

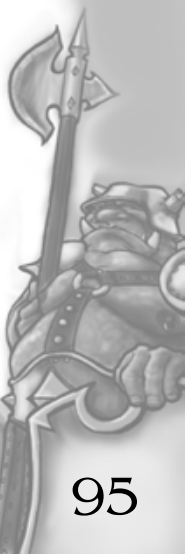
Combat Notes: If the Wraiths succeeded in Complication 1 there are two Dwarf Hammerers (level 5 soldier) currently set at their Bloodied hit point level in melee combat with Templar Fentour. If Complication 1 was failed, the two dwarves are dead and the Wraiths will have to fight the templar without aid. Regardless of how Complication 1 ended, Templar Fentour has already used his *word of judgment* ability today while fighting the dwarves and is currently at 100 hit points instead of his maximum.

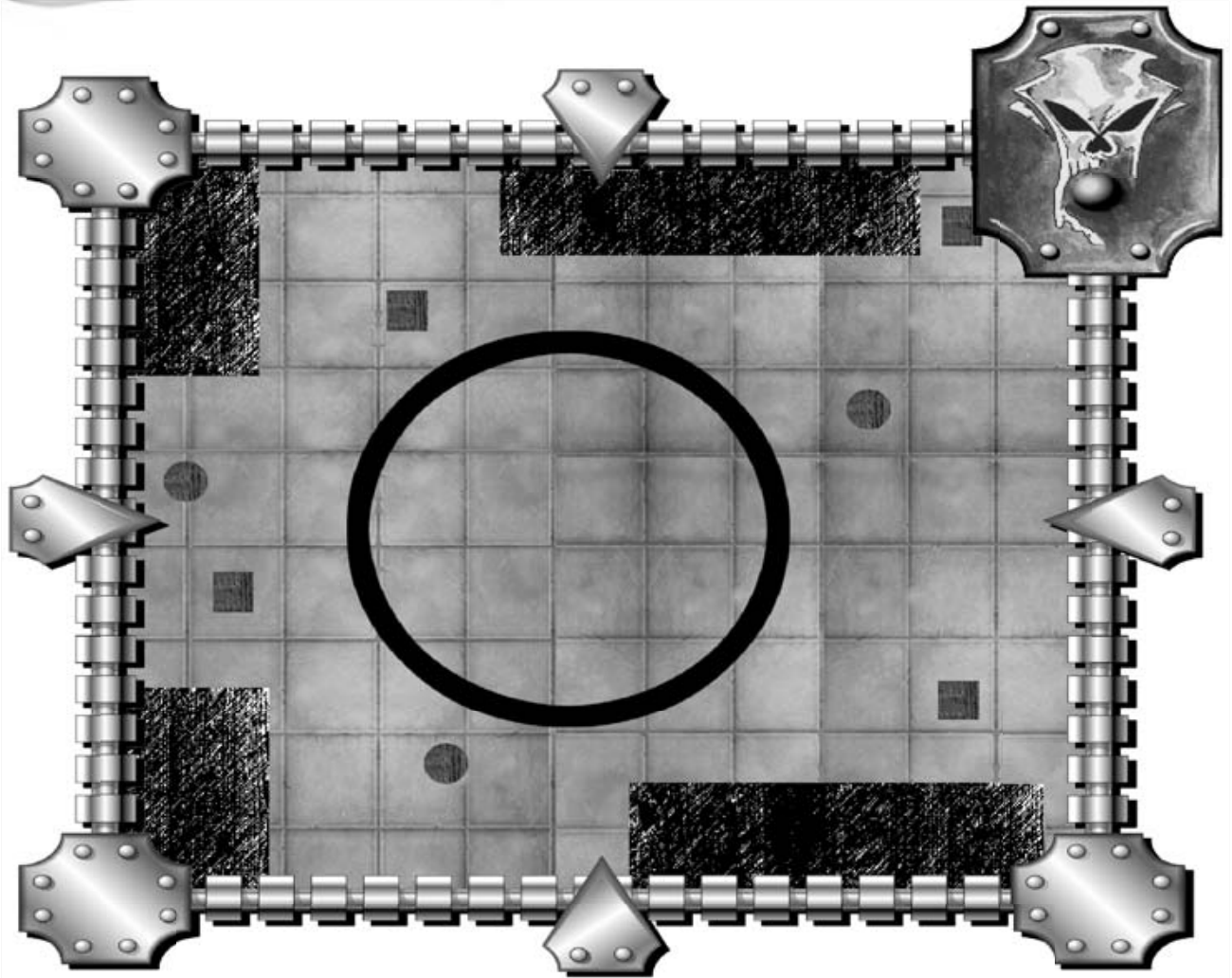
The ritual to open Templar Fentour's escape route will be finished in 3d6 combat rounds (or less depending on Complication 1). When this is complete the initiates will exclaim that Fentour must go; at which point he will disengage the Wraiths to move to the portal (which will only stay open for 3 turns). The initiates will then try to hold off the characters to help him.

Additionally, the brazen initiates will NOT fight until after the portal is opened or until the templar is dead.

If Templar Fentour gets to the opened portal, read the following:

'You have stopped our work today,' the templar says between heaving breaths, his body shimmering as it draws near the portal, 'but now we know what our enemy looks like, and we will not soon forget your accursed faces!' He then steps into the darkness of the portal, which blinks closed behind him.





If Templar Fentour is killed, read the following as he dies:

'You pathetic fools,' the masked man chokes out, blood seeping down under the chin of his helmet, 'Tomarsson will not be stopped as easily as this flesh was. He is more than a man...he is an ideal...he is the future.' He coughs hard, a sputter in his breathing.

'Though I go to the heavens,' he prays to himself, 'I go knowing the Brazen face of the true god will soon greet me, pleased I caused his foes to suffer and die... die...dehhhh....'

The Wraiths will need to get out of the public eye as soon as they can. Such an open battle was surely seen by lots of outsiders and the team cannot hope to keep anonymity and covert-status if they stick around to

answer questions – even those by the grateful dwarf guards (if they survived!).

Exportation Details

The team will not have time to use the teleportation circle there at Goldeston mostly due to the attention that the combat surely gathered. They will be better served running out of town on foot to find a different place to cast a *Linked Portal* ritual or simply to begin the week-long walk back to Fort Brazen. Considering this is the last segment of the overall mission, how they return to headquarters is generally up to them and the Games Master.

Post-Mission Debriefing (Templar Fentour was Stopped):

I could not have done it better myself and I wish I was out there with you. Sure, we have a few rumours

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to squelch and more than couple of loose ends in Goldeston to tie up, but the main target is dealt with. The templar is down and his cell is scattered. They will not be terrorising Dardarrick anytime soon, that is for sure. Tomarsson now knows that he cannot hope to frighten our people into serving him and hopefully it will make him think twice the next time he tries to use the king's own people against him.

You all did amazingly out there today and I know every Father-worshipping soul in this building are proud to know it, myself included. Today is a day for celebration



and pleasantries. In your wage box downstairs you will each find a bottle of Torresh peat whiskey. Consider them a thank you from my family's own reserves for a job well done.

Pour a few out from me, team. I wish I could join you but I have very good news to go tell the king.

Dismissed, Wraiths. Have a great night. You have earned it.

Post-Mission Debriefing (Templar Fentour Escaped):

Damn those faceless curs and their seemingly endless supply of mislead fools! I am sorry, team. I wish we had more intelligence to go on about those ritual initiates, maybe we could have had you...I do not know...it is just frustrating when the target gets away. Oh well, at least the cell is done for and the templar on the run. We will find him sometime, be sure.

He will decidedly go and tell Tomarsson about your involvement, and although that villain is quite insane – he is not dumb enough to try this ploy again. You have saved dozens of Dardarrian lives yet again, Wraiths. I am proud of you, and so are the others in this building that know what you did.

Go take some time off, team. Have a few drinks and put your feet up.

Dismissed, and thank you again for your loyalty to our king and country.



Appendix of Enemies

‘There is a lot more in this world for the common man to be afraid of. It is our job to ensure they never have to be.’

– Commander Ruhrk of Wraith Recon

The *Wraith Recon* game setting was originally designed to fall squarely into the *Dungeons & Dragons 4E* gaming system with no need for additional sourcebooks and such (save for the *Wraith Recon* setting book). As we progress through the entire product line for the setting however, the need to add new and interesting facets for our readers to utilise is apparent. This chapter is dedicated to that need.

Games Masters for *Wraith Recon* games can draw upon the new creatures presented in this chapter to populate their own mission assignments and adventure ideas. Though the encounters listed here are designed for use in a Nueraen campaign, readers should feel free to use them in their own games however they see fit.

Cultists of Praxious

It is a huge array of individuals that make up the collective Cult of Praxious, most of which are human or half-elven. Despite their racial and physical differences, all followers of the Brazen One are physically fit and willing to prove their might in any contest set before them. They are skilled combatants in order to survive the religious persecution they both

wield and suffer from. They hide their faces from view, but their message is clear – the holy rule of Praxious will come on a road paved with the bodies of his enemies.

Brazen Initiate

Level 2 Minion

Medium natural human

XP 31

Initiative +1

Senses Perception +0

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 13; see also

Indomitable

Speed 6

⊕ **Offering Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Indomitable

The brazen initiate gain +1 power bonus to Will defence for each other brazen initiate within 5 squares of it.

Alignment Any

Languages Common

Str 14 (+3)

Dex 12 (+2)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 10 (+0)

Cha 12 (+2)

Equipment offering blade, copper mask.

Brazen Initiate Tactics

Rarely called upon to due battle, most Brazen initiates fight to defend the higher ranked members of the cult, grouping around foes in order to relentlessly stab at them with their specialised blades. They find great strength in numbers, however, and rarely turn away from combat.

Brazen Acolyte*Level 6 Minion*

Medium natural humanoid

XP 63

Initiative +3**Senses** Perception +5**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 19; Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 16; see also*Indomitable***Speed** 6⊕ **Gladiar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+10 vs. AC; 6 damage

⊕ **Throwing Ingots (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

Ranged 4/8; +9 vs. AC; 4 damage

Indomitable

The brazen acolyte gain +1 power bonus to Will defence for each other member of the Cult of Praxious within 5 squares of it.

Alignment Evil**Languages** Common**Str** 15 (+5)**Dex** 12 (+4)**Wis** 14 (+5)**Con** 15 (+5)**Int** 11 (+3)**Cha** 14 (+5)**Equipment** gladiar, 6 throwing ingots, armoured tabard, bronze mask**Brazen Acolyte Tactics**

The rank and file soldiers in Praxious' battle against his godly foes, Brazen Acolytes are trained in the combat arts and confront foes head-on in order to give proper thanks to their god. They will tend to gather around a single enemy, stabbing at it until it falls, then move on to the next target.

Bronze Templar*Level 12 Elite Soldier*

Medium natural humanoid

XP 1,400

Initiative +8**Senses** Perception +10**HP** 140; **Bloodied** 70**AC** 25; Fortitude 19, Reflex 23, Will 22**Speed** 4⊕ **Templar Greatblade (action; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.

⇒ **Word of Judgment (standard; encounter)****♦ Thunder**

Close burst 6; +10 vs. Will; the target suffers 2d10 damage and is knocked prone.

⇒ **No Mercy For the Weak (daily; encounter)**

Bronze templar gains +3 attack and damage against Bloodied targets.

Rigorous Training

A bronze templar is always considered to have combat advantage over their nearest foe. In the case of a tie in distance, it is the templar's choice.

Alignment Evil**Languages** Common**Str** 18 (+10)**Dex** 14 (+8)**Wis** 14 (+8)**Con** 16 (+9)**Int** 13 (+7)**Cha** 15 (+8)**Equipment** templar greatblade, bronze plate, flared gauntlets, templar helm**Bronze Templar Tactics**

The martial fist of Praxious, the bronze templars are mighty warriors that battle against the Brazen One's foes without question or fear for their lives. They march forward into the thick of things, bringing their heavy blades down into their enemies to weaken them before finishing them with their powerful *word of judgment*.

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Brass Priest *Level 13 Controller*
Medium natural humanoid XP 1,600

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +12

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50

AC 23; Fortitude 18, Reflex 23, Will 26

Speed 5

⊕ **Gladiar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage

⇒ **Command (standard; encounter) ♦ Charm, Divine**

Ranged 10; +15 vs. Will; target is dazed until end of next brass priest turn and knocked prone.

⇒ **Brazen Might (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon**

+15 vs. AC; 3d6 + 3 damage and target can be pushed back 1d6 squares and knocked prone [*save*]

⇒ **Divine Power (standard; daily) ♦ Divine, Healing, Radiant, Weapon**

Close burst 2; +15 vs. Fort

Hit: 2d6 + 3 radiant damage and push target 1 square

Effect: Brass priest gains Regeneration 5 and all allies within burst gain +2 AC until end of encounter.

Brass Aspect

When Bloodied, the brass priest adds +2 to all hit and damage rolls.

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Alignment Evil | Languages Common | |
| Str 16 (+9) | Dex 12 (+7) | Wis 16 (+9) |
| Con 15 (+8) | Int 15 (+8) | Cha 16 (+9) |

Equipment gladiar, brass cuirass, brass mask

Brass Priest Tactics

Rarely going into battle unaccompanied by several acolytes and initiates, the brass priests are still tough combatants capable of dealing with small groups of foes singlehandedly. They much prefer to use their *command* and *brazen might* abilities to knock enemies prone before setting their less-powerful allies upon them.

Neophant-in-Training *Level 16 Controller (leader)*
Medium natural humanoid XP 2,800

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +14

HP 158; **Bloodied** 79

AC 28; Fortitude 22, Reflex 25, Will 30; see *Righteous Tenacity*

Speed 5

⊕ **Mace of Judgment (standard; at-will) ♦ Divine, Weapon**

+20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage

⇒ **Awe Strike (standard; encounter) ♦ Divine, Fear, Weapon**

+20 vs. Will; 2d8 + 6 damage and target is immobilised until end of neophant-in-training's next turn.

⇒ **Brazen Might (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon**

+20 vs. AC; 3d8 + 6 damage and target can be pushed back 1d6 squares and knocked prone [*save*]

⇒ **Divine Armour (standard; daily) ♦ Divine, Healing**

Close burst 3

Neophant-in-training and all allies within burst gain +2 power bonus to AC and resist 5 to all forms of damage until end of encounter.

⇒ **Tomarsson's Revenge (standard; daily) ♦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon**

Close burst 5; +22 vs. Will

Hit: 4d6 + 5 radiant damage and push target back until outside of burst area and knock them prone.

Effect: Neophant-in-training gains Regeneration 8 and all allies within burst gain +2 AC until end of encounter.

Brass Aspect

When Bloodied, the neophant-in-training adds +2 to all hit and damage rolls.

Righteous Tenacity

The neophant-in-training is completely immune to fear and charm-based effects and cannot be pushed or knocked back for any reason.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Alignment Evil | Languages Common, Elven | |
| Str 16 (+11) | Dex 14 (+10) | Wis 20 (+13) |
| Con 18 (+12) | Int 18 (+12) | Cha 22 (+14) |

Equipment magic mace [+3]; magic brass cuirass [+4]; gold mask; holy symbol of Praxious; 1d3 *potions of vitality*

Neophant-in-Training Tactics

Leaders of Tomarsson's forces away from the Brazen Hall, the neophants-in-training are working desperately to earn the Hierophant's respect in order to achieve one of the thirteen revered positions of neophant. In battle they wade into the enemy amidst their fellow cultists, sending enemies careening away from their controlling abilities like *awe strike*, *brazen might* and *Tomarsson's revenge*. They are skilled fighters as well, making a good show of battle even when they cannot rely on subordinates to fight lesser battle for them.

Encounter Groups

Cultists of Praxious rarely work alone and frequently hire local mercenaries to help them stay protected while they work the Brazen One's will across Dardarrick. Their most powerful members cannot trust to have non-cult followers, but most baseline cells keep many swords-for-hire on hand.

Level 2 Encounter (XP 499)

- ◆ 2 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion)
- ◆ 5 brazen initiates (level 2 minion)
- ◆ 3 human rabble (level 2 minion)
- ◆ 1 human bandit (level 2 skirmisher)

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,045)

- ◆ 1 warforged captain (level 6 soldier (leader))
- ◆ 1 dragonborn soldier (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 5 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion)
- ◆ 5 brazen initiates (level 2 minion)

Level 12 Encounter (XP 2,790)

- ◆ 1 bronze templar (level 12 elite soldier)
- ◆ 5 brazen acolytes (level 6 minion)
- ◆ 5 warforged soldiers (level 4 soldier)

Level 20 Encounter (XP 11,200)

- ◆ 1 neophant-in-training (level 16 controller (leader))
- ◆ 4 bronze templars (level 12 elite soldier)
- ◆ 2 brass priests (level 13 controller)

Draconic Prophet (kobold)

Kobolds are often viewed upon by the other sentient races of the world as lesser beings, or at least somewhat less intelligent due to their primitive ways and culture.

To be truthful to their history however, they are one of the oldest and most diverse cultures found anywhere on Nuera due to their connection to the Great Dragons. They have not adapted their lifestyle to that of the other races because the Dragons have not told them to.

It is through rare draconic prophets that the Great Dragons supposedly 'speak' to the tribes of Nueraen kobolds. Powerful shamans that draw upon the spiritual essence of the draconic demi-gods, these prophets are famous amongst their own kind. This is true to the point that any dragon-worshipping kobold tribe will know exactly where and how far they would need to migrate in order to petition augury from one.

Kobold Draconic Prophet *Level 6 Artillery (leader)*
Small natural humanoid XP 500

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

Auguries and Portents: The draconic prophet can pass a save anytime it is hit with a critical hit; success changes the attack back to a normal hit.

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23

AC 18; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17; see also *trap sense*
Speed 6

⊕ **Spear (standard; at-will)** ◆ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d8 damage

⇒ **Energy Arc (standard; at-will)** ◆ **see text**

Close blast 2; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 damage of a chosen type (based on the Great Dragon served).

⇒ **Word of the Dragon (standard; encounter)** ◆ **see text**

Close burst 10; all non-minion kobold allies in the burst gain 5 temporary hit points, resist 5 of a chosen type (based on the Great Dragon served) and may shift 1 square.

⇒ **Dragon Breath (standard; encounter)** ◆ **see text**

Close blast 3; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 5 damage of a chosen type (based on the Great Dragon served). *Miss:* Half damage.

Shifty (minor; at-will)

The kobold shifts 1 square.

Trap Sense

The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defences against traps.

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Alignment Evil | Languages Common, Draconic |
| Str 9 (+2) | Dex 16 (+6) Wis 19 (+7) |
| Con 12 (+4) | Int 10 (+3) Cha 13 (+4) |

Equipment hide armour, spear



Kobold Draconic Prophet Tactics

Much like their lesser subordinates, the wympriests, draconic prophets rule the battlefield from the centre of their tribal allies. They send forth zealous kobolds invigorated by the prophet's *word of the dragon* while getting enemies into a position to unleash their *energy arcs* and *dragon breath*.

In the same manner as wympriests, a draconic prophet's various energy attacks and powers are based on the type of Great Dragon the prophet serves or worships. For example, a kobold draconic prophet dedicated to the Great blue dragon deals lightning damage with its *energy arc* and *dragon breath* powers.

Kobold Draconic Prophet Lore

A character knows the following information about draconic prophets with a successful skill check.

Arcana DC 20: The colour of tattoos, warpaint and vestments of a kobold tribe led by a prophet can not only tell what kind of energy the prophet and his wympriests deal in, but also their overall social outlook. For example, green prophets are tricky and cunning where red prophets are arrogant and wrathful.

Religion DC 25: The draconic prophets believe that a council of demi-gods, the Great Dragons, speak to them through the organs and entrails of animals the kobolds trap and sacrifice. They see some relevance to future events in these auguries and can seem to predict when bad things are about to happen to them.

Encounter Groups

Draconic prophets never go anywhere without a veritable horde of kobolds with them, whether by choice or the kobolds' wish to be near the prophet. When at home in the kobold warrens however they often have a different ally living with them.

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,400)

- ◆ 1 kobold draconic prophet (level 6 artillery (leader))
- ◆ 1 kobold wympriest (level 3 artillery)
- ◆ 4 kobold dragonshields (level 2 soldier)
- ◆ 6 kobold minions (level 1 minion)
- ◆ 1 guard drake (level 2 brute)

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,000)

- ◆ 1 kobold draconic prophet (level 6 artillery (leader))
- ◆ 1 young red dragon (level 7 solo brute)



Dread Warlocks of Mortessal

Coursing with necrotic powers blessed unto them by the liche priests of the Black Circle, the dread warlocks are the lieutenants and manipulators of the Queen of Darkness's chief cult. They are chiefly responsible for the raising and organising of the Circle's undead forces, and are among the first chosen to deal with a large enough threat to the cult that the Twilight Society cannot be tapped to do so.

Only the liche priests can create dread warlocks through their own insidious rituals, making these powerful undead magic wielders out of devoted necromancers and fanatical priests. The process is brutal and lengthy, with all of the recipient's organs being removed through necromantic surgery before being replaced with several pouches of required elements and implements. The body is then sewn back up with the skull of animated servant nestled within the organ cavity. It is said that the skull speaks to the newly risen dread warlock, goading him to do Mortessal's bidding as she floods his body with new, dark powers.

Dread Warlock *Level 15 Artillery (leader)*
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 2,400

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +15;

darkvision, see *invisible*

HP 210; **Bloodied** 105

Regeneration 5

AC 26; Fortitude 30, Reflex 28, Will 27

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 15 shadow; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7, climb 5 (spider climb)

Action Points 2

⊕ **Rod of Darkness** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 11 damage and target is blinded [save ends]

⇒ **Necrostatic Bolt** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Ranged 8; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 8 necrotic damage and target is marked for all undead until end of its next turn.

⇒ **Consume Death** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Healing**

Dread warlock must be in contact with and target an allied undead creature. Target suffers 5d10 damage immediately which is added as temporary hit points to the dread warlock's current total.

⇒ **Touch of Darkness** (standard; encounter)

♦ **Shadow**

+15 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 damage and target is blinded for 1d4 turns.

⇒ **Damning Curse** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Arcane, Necrotic**

Ranged 10; +18 vs. Will; target loses the ability to gain combat advantage over undead enemies and undead attackers have combat advantage over it until the end of the encounter.

⇒ **Rise!** (standard; daily)

Close burst 10; all inanimate corpses within the area of effect immediately rise as *zombie rotters* or *decrepit skeletons* under the control of the dread warlock. Previous undead creatures return as their former creature types, but at half of their Bloodied hit point value (round up).

Combat Advantage

The dread warlock deals an extra 2d6 damage with its attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Shadow Stepping (minor; encounter) ♦ **Shadow, Teleportation**

The dread warlock dissolves into darkness and reforms elsewhere. It can shift up to 10 squares from his current position before reforming.

Whispers From Within

The skull within a dread warlock whispers details about the world to them whenever it is important, making the dread warlock impossible to surprise or gain combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Telepathy 15

Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+10)

Con 14 (+9) **Int** 23 (+13) **Cha** 14 (+9)

Equipment robes, magic rod [+6]

Dread Warlock Tactics

Mortessal's lieutenants are fearsome foes that wield tremendous arcane power as well as an impressive degree of control over the battle. Sending waves of undead minions into his opponents while blasting



away from the rear with *necrostatic bolts*, deciding who the most deadly foe is before subjecting them to the *damning curse*. When most of his allies have fallen and hopefully a few of his enemies, the dread warlock can *shadow stepping* into the midst of the battle to refresh his force with the *rise!* ability.

Dread Warlock Lore

A character knows the following information about dread warlocks with a successful skill check.

Religion DC 25: The dread warlocks are the upper management of Mortessal's armies and cults, and they will never travel without a host of undead minions at their command. Be wary of a dread warlock's retinue, for not all of their minions will be minor creatures.

Arcana DC 30: Dread warlocks have many similarities between them and some other types of undead, including a potent vulnerability to radiant damage. They are infused with Mortessal's essence of darkness, and being protected against elemental shadow and necrotic energies will go a long way to surviving an encounter with one.

Encounter Groups

Dread warlocks are not called upon lightly, and they never travel without a large retinue of undead creatures to serve them. Those dread warlocks that have foreknowledge of what they will be battling may structure their retinue around specific types of undead in order to bolster their chance for victory.

Level 14 Encounter (XP 4,000)

- ◆ 1 dread warlock (level 15 elite artillery (leader))
- ◆ 1 battle wight (level 9 soldier)
- ◆ 3 wights (level 5 skirmisher)
- ◆ 4 zombies (level 2 brutes)
- ◆ 4 decrepit skeletons (level 1 minions)

Fire Knights of Alleros (azer)

The fire knights of Alleros are azer rebellion fighters seeking the liberation of their people from the fire giants of Aphaxus. They are fearsome and dedicated warriors



that train constantly to do battle with individually superior foes using a mixture of enchanted weaponry, tactical advantage and inherent abilities some azer dwarves possess.

Centuries of slavery have made the azers tougher than standard dwarves and this shows in the tenacity and willpower of the fire knights. They battle long beyond what a standard warrior could weather, and use their own suffering to fuel their rage and spite toward their foes. It is said that the fire knights line some of the plates of their armour with jagged spikes and hooks that stab and slice them as they are battered around inside – the pain of their modified armour reminding them what is at stake if they fail.

Azer Fire Knight*Level 16 Soldier*

Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 1,400

Initiative +9**Senses** Perception +12**Warding Flame (Fire)** Any enemy adjacent to two or more azers at the start of its turn takes 5 fire damage.**HP** 190; **Bloodied** 95**AC** 32; Fortitude 31, Reflex 24, Will 25**Immune** fear; **Resist** 30 fire**Speed** 4⊕ **Hoarfrost Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon**

Reach, +24 vs. AC; 1d10 + 8 damage plus 1d6 cold damage, cold damage equal to half the target's Resist fire amount (round up), or 2d10 cold damage if target is Immune to fire; whichever applies.

⊕ **Forgefist (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire**

+20 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 fire damage plus 1d6 fire damage, fire damage equal to half the target's Resist cold amount (round up), or 2d8 fire damage if target is Immune to cold; whichever applies.

⇒ **Ironskin Belt (free; daily)**

Resist 10 to all weapon damage until end of the fire knight's next turn.

Giantslayer

The fire knight automatically has combat advantage against any large-size or larger target and inflicts an additional 2d6 damage with its attacks upon them.

For Alleros! For Freedom! (standard; encounter)♦ **Fire, Healing**

Close burst 2. The fire knight concentrates a burst of elemental fire from between all the joints in its armour. All creatures of elemental (fire) in the area automatically heal 25 hit points, where other types of creatures take 2d10 fire damage instead.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** Giant**Str** 19 (+12)**Dex** 12 (+9)**Wis** 12 (+9)**Con** 20 (+13)**Int** 15 (+10)**Cha** 15 (+10)**Equipment** godplate armour [+5], hoarfrost greatsword [+4], *Ironskin Belt***Fire Knight of Alleros Tactics**

Heavily armoured and trained to deal with nearly any opponent, azer fire knights of Alleros simply wade forward shoulder-to-shoulder with their comrades into the enemy. Between their ancient hoarfrost blades designed to deal with creatures resistant to fire and

their ability to inflict fire-based damage, enemies cannot hope to find a good defence against their powerful attacks.

Fire Knight of Alleros LoreA character knows the following information about the fire knights of Alleros with a successful skill check. **Arcana DC 15:** Despite the fiery nature of the azer dwarves, the fire knights are equipped to deal both cold and fire damage equally well. Choosing to protect oneself against either type of damage will only worsen the effects of a fire knight's attacks.**Religion DC 25:** The fire knights are still devotees of Vulka even though they deny the fire giants' right to rule over them. Appeasing an azer fire knight by appealing to their ongoing battle against their race's oppression could end a battle instantly and make an ally of them.**Encounter Groups**

The fire knights are not many in number and understand that they cannot hope to win a battle against Aphaxus if they make themselves easy targets. Because of this they tend to go into battle with other azers on their side, but not with other fire knights. The risk of losing two members of the order is too great.

Level 15 Encounter (XP 4,600)

- ♦ 1 azer fire knight of Alleros (level 16 soldier)
- ♦ 2 azer foot soldiers (level 14 soldier)
- ♦ 3 azer warriors (level 17 minion)

Hyrric-pattern Warforged

Constructed from ancient rituals and schematics drawn by the original warforged of Nuera, the Hyrric-pattern are large and beautiful creations to behold. Gifted with an adolescent intelligence that makes it seem curious and intrigued by the world around it, it is easy to forget each of these powerful magical constructs (which there have been two successfully created by 1,209 YBD) is a powerhouse of magical energies. The unique combination of precious metals, natural salts and secret arcane 'organs' makes the Hyrric warforged into something beyond common



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belief. There is a reason why common warforged call them 'godforged'.

These masterpiece beings have skin made of gold, silver and platinum wrapped around a crystalline endo-form of enchanted alchemical salts that contain the titanic arcane energies that give them life. Through small glyph-conduits on the warforged's palms, it can deliver devastating electrical attacks at amazing ranges. Those that have seen these bolts claim they look *exactly* like the silver arcs of lightning coursing through the Hyrric Tempest to the far north Ocean.

It should be noted that while common warforged make perfectly suitable Player Characters, Hyrric-pattern warforged *cannot*.

Hyrric Warforged *Level 18 Solo Soldier*

Large natural humanoid (living construct) XP 10,000

Initiative +8 **Senses Perception** +10;

low-light vision

Alkaline Arcs (Lightning) Any enemy adjacent to a Hyrric warforged at the start of its turn takes 8 lightning damage.

HP 380; **Bloodied** 190

AC 30; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 25

Immune lightning; **Resist** 10 magic

Saving Throws +4 against ongoing damage

Speed 7

Action Points 2

⊕ **Shocking Punch (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Weapon**

+23 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 damage plus 1d8 lightning damage.

⊕ **Tempest Bolt (standard; recharge 4, 5, 6) ♦ Lightning**

Ranged 15; +15 vs. Reflex; 5d6 lightning damage and target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

⇒ **Storm Roar (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder**

Close burst 5; +12 vs. Fortitude. *Hit*: 2d10 thunder damage and target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Miss: Half damage and target gets a save to avoid being dazed.

⇒ **Quake Stomp (standard; encounter)**

Close burst 3; +20 vs. Reflex. *Hit*: Target is pushed one square away from the warforged and knocked prone.

Miss: Target is pushed one square away from the warforged and immobilised until the end of their next turn.

⇒ **Charged Rush (minor; daily) ♦ Lightning**

Hyrric warforged can shift 2d6 squares in one direction, inflicting 2d6 lightning damage on any enemies adjacent to this move that fail to save.

Arc Shocks

Any enemy successfully attacking a Hyrric warforged with a melee weapon made of metal suffers 2d6 lightning damage from a coursing shock that channels through the weapon.

Warforged Resolve (minor, only usable while bloodied; encounter)

The Hyrric warforged gains 35 temporary hit points.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 28 (+18)

Dex 12 (+10)

Wis 10 (+9)

Con 25 (+16)

Int 9 (+8)

Cha 10 (+9)

Equipment –

Hyrric Warforged Tactics

Titanic in strength and arcane might, the Hyrric warforged is not subtle in how it defeats its foes. Using *tempest bolt* as it approaches will weaken most targets for the inevitable onslaught of electrical attacks that follow. When actually injured enough to worry about its safety, the Hyrric warforged will commonly use *quake stomp* and *storm roar* to occupy its enemies before using *charged rush* to escape the situation completely.

Hyrric Warforged Lore

A character knows the following information about the Hyrric-pattern warforged with a successful skill check.

Arcana DC 15: It looks similar to common warforged in its outward design, meaning that ongoing effects are all but useless against it. It also courses with arcane electricity, making it immune to lightning damage altogether.

History DC 25: The warforged claim that there were dozens of different versions of their kind after Vulka released them into the world. One of these models was the ‘godforged’; thought to be lost forever when the hidden warforged continent disappeared into the Ocean.

Encounter Groups

The Assembly Secundus, who created and raised the Hyrric-pattern warforged, rarely if at all let the precious members of their artificial family out of the community alone. This, of course, has nothing at all to do with the protection of the godforged – it is to ensure that the curious ‘child’ comes home when it is done destroying its opposition!

Level 19 Encounter (XP 10,700)

- ◆ 1 Hyrric-pattern warforged (level 18 solo soldier)
- ◆ 4 warforged soldiers (level 4 soldier)

Liche Priests of the Black Circle

Where ‘common’ lichens are undead spellcasters that selfishly gave their life forces to further their magical might and live eternally, liche priests are chosen by the Black Circle to join their cult as the eternally damned servants of the Queen of Darkness. The existing liche priests, led by the primordial Baphomes, choose only the most devoted and powerful worshippers of Mortessal to become dread warlocks – let alone the type of follower they look for to undergo the ritual of Dark Becoming.

Liche priests are unfathomably evil beings that manipulate the world’s undying populations like puppets on strings. From within their deep and dark citadels of undeath they control teeming hordes of undead minions, looking through their eyes (or eye sockets) to orchestrate their mistress’s vile plans for Nuera.

Liche Priest *Level 28 Elite Controller*
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 26,000

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception

+20; darkvision, see *invisible*

Necrotic Aura (Necrotic) aura 5; any living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 8 necrotic damage.

HP 400; **Bloodied** 200

Regeneration 10 (if the liche priest takes radiant or fire damage, regeneration functions at half rate on its next turn)

AC 38; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 40

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 15 shadow

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Withering Bolt (standard; at-will)◆Necrotic**

Ranged 22; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 8 necrotic damage

⇒**Necrostatic Blast** (standard; recharge 4, 5, 6)

◆**Necrotic**

Close blast 4; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 8 necrotic damage

⇒**Entropic Pulse** (standard; recharge 5, 6) ◆**Necrotic**

Area burst 2 within 20; +29 vs. Reflex; 5d8 + 8 necrotic damage

⇒ **Breath of Darkness** (standard; encounter)

◆**Shadow**

Close burst 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; Targets are blinded for 1d6 turns.

⇒ **Damning Curse** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Arcane, Necrotic**

Ranged 20; +29 vs. Will; target loses the ability to gain combat advantage over undead enemies and undead attackers have combat advantage over it until the end of the encounter.

⇒ **Hear and Obey!** (standard; recharge 6)

Close burst 15; all inanimate corpses within the area of effect immediately rise as undead allies under the control of the liche priest. All creatures risen in this way return as undead versions of their former creature types, but at half of their normal Bloodied hit point value (round up). Otherwise they are unchanged.



Indestructible

When a liche priest is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and possessions crumble into wisps of shadowy fog, but it is not destroyed. It reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its nearest canoptic jar, unless all six of the liche priest's canoptic jars are also found and destroyed.

Shadow Leap (minor; recharge 4, 5, 6) ♦ Shadow, Teleportation

The liche priest dissolves into darkness and reforms elsewhere. It can shift up to 20 squares from his current position before reforming.

Second Wind (standard; encounter) ♦ Healing

The liche priest spends a healing surge and regains 95 hit points. The liche priest gains a +2 bonus to all defences until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Telepathy 25
Str 18 (+18) **Dex** 14 (+16) **Wis** 26 (+20)
Con 20 (+19) **Int** 26 (+20) **Cha** 19 (+18)

Liche Priest Tactics

The single most important members of Mortessal's following, liche priests are tremendously powerful wielders of necromantic magic and entropic force. They stride fearlessly into the enemy, letting their abilities and their unnatural aura weaken lesser foes while they focus their dark arcana upon those who may prove a minor challenge. Knowing that their canoptic jars are safely tucked away in the nearest necropolis, they have no reason to show pause or mercy to anything that opposes them.

Liche Priest Lore

A character knows the following information about liche priests with a successful Religion skill check.
DC 25: A liche priest's undying energy is bound up in six magic canoptic jars, which are foot-tall onyx containers that hold the mummified organs of the liche priest. If you destroy a liche priest, its spirit returns to its nearest canoptic jar. Its body reforms in 1d10 days at that location unless you also destroy these canoptic jars. Most liche priests keep their canoptic jars in Mortessal's necropolises under the crust of the world, making it extremely difficult to bring final destruction to a liche priest.

DC 30: Mortessal herself holds the actual power behind all of her liche priests, and any that would dare turn away from her would find its canoptic jars suddenly given over to a loyal dread warlock to destroy – earning them the liche priest's position in the Black Circle.

Canoptic Jars

There are six canoptic jars used by the liche priests during the secret and powerful ritual that creates a new liche priest. Each of these jars are roughly a foot tall and ten inches in circumference, inscribed with dozens of arcane glyphs and sealed with wax made from rendered fats. Each of these jars has 30 hit points and resist 15 to all damage. The organs of the original being that are broken down and mystically placed inside the jars are:

- ♦ **Skull** (either the being's natural one or the whispering one if the ritual's recipient is a dread warlock)
- ♦ **Heart**
- ♦ **Liver**
- ♦ **Kidneys**
- ♦ **Pancreas**
- ♦ **Phallus or Uterus**



Encounter Groups

Liche priests keep groups of undead around them at all times, often looking to a subordinate dread warlock to orchestrate their movements while the priest manipulates the larger scheme.

Level 25 Encounter (XP 28,000)

- ◆ 1 liche priest (level 28 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 skull lord (level 10 artillery (leader))
- ◆ 10 skeletons (level 3 soldier)

Level 27 Encounter (XP 46,000)

- ◆ 1 liche priest (level 28 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 dread warlock (level 15 elite artillery (leader))
- ◆ 1 dread wraith (level 25 lurker)
- ◆ 4 lich vestiges (level 26 minions)
- ◆ 4 battle wights (level 9 soldier)



Sancoatyli Cultists

The zealous members of the Sancoatyli hail from several species, but all are religiously and spiritually devoted to the higher cause of defeating Mersmerro's

enemies. Unlike their uninitiated cousins, the rituals and ceremonies that the Mersmerron faith title 'the Calling' charge them with heightened senses, strength and a will to push well beyond the limits of their bodies in order to finish their holy missions.

Sancoatyli Swamp Elf *Level 3 Skirmisher*
Medium fey humanoid XP 150

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision
Group Awareness aura 5; non-elf allies in the aura gain a +1 racial bonus to Perception checks.

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21; see also *righteous fury*

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14

Speed 6; see also *wild step*

⊕ **Blessed Trident (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage

⇒ **Jab and Slash (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon**

The swamp elf makes a blessed trident and short sword attack against the same target. If both attacks hit, the swamp elf deals an additional 3 damage.

Righteous Fury

The swamp elf makes a melee basic attack with a +3 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage on a hit.

Combat Advantage

A swamp elf that has combat advantage deals an extra 1d6 damage on its attacks.

Wild Step

The swamp elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Str 16 (+4) | Dex 18 (+5) | Wis 14 (+4) |
| Con 14 (+3) | Int 11 (+1) | Cha 11 (+1) |

Equipment bone breastplate, coral shield, blessed trident, short sword

Swamp Elf Tactics

Used as harassment troops until the lizardfolk or targs can get into melee combat, swamp elves that have dedicated themselves to the Sancoatyli understand their role and gleefully charge into superior foes if need be. They are a tool for the forces of Mersmerro to utilize, and they know it.

Appendix of Enemies

Sancoatyli Cult Warrior *Level 5 Brute*
Medium natural human XP 200

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35; see also *righteous fury*

AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 16

Speed 7

⊕ **Blessed Trident (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.

Righteous Fury

The cult warrior makes a melee basic attack with a +4 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage on a hit.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)

Equipment bone breastplate, coral shield, blessed trident [+1]

Cult Warrior Tactics

Not as tough or strong as their scaly comrades, the human members of the Sancoatyli attack in packs and overwhelm their foes with stabbing thrusts while pushing themselves forward to make use of their *righteous fury* should they eventually fall.

Sancoatyli Troglodyte Fanatic *Level 7 Soldier*
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 300

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

Troglodyte Stench aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a –2 penalty to attack rolls.

HP 82; **Bloodied** 41; see also *righteous fury*

AC 23; Fortitude 22, Reflex 19, Will 20

Speed 5

⊕ **Blessed Trident (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the troglodyte fanatic's next turn.

⊕ **Claw (standard; at-will)**

+11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage

⇒ **Bite (minor 1/round; at-will)**

Requires combat advantage; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 damage, and until the end of the troglodyte fanatic's next turn, healing on the target restores only half the total amount.

Righteous Fury

The troglodyte fanatic makes any melee basic attack with a +6 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d8 damage on a hit.

Warpaint

The troglodyte fanatic has been blessed by the high priestess with enchanted warpaint, allowing it to ignore opportunity attacks from creatures with a lower Strength score than it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Draconic
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 7 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+2)

Equipment bone breastplate, blessed trident

Troglodyte Fanatic Tactics

Considered some of the most prized members of the Sancoatyli units, troglodyte fanatics use their *warpaint* to bully their way into the centre of a combat, putting their terrible stench to work on their enemies. Forgoing the shield in order to get *claw* attacks in whenever possible, the Sancoatyli trog is amongst the most deadly fighters in the cult.

Sancoatyli Blackscale Crusader *Level 8 Elite Brute*
Large natural humanoid (reptile) XP 700

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +10

Inspiring Presence aura 5; Sancoatyli allies in the aura gain a +1 racial bonus to attack and damage rolls.

HP 92; **Bloodied** 46; see also *righteous fury*

AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 17, Will 15

Speed 8 (swamp walk)

⊕ **Blessed Heavy Trident (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d12 + 8 damage, and the target must save or be immobilised.

⇒ **Bite (minor 1/round; at-will)**

Requires combat advantage; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 5 damage.

⇒ **Tail Slap (standard; at-will)**

+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Righteous Fury

The blackscale crusader makes any melee attack with a +8 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d8 damage on a hit.

Blessing of Mersmerro (standard; encounter)

◆ Healing

The blackscale crusader has been given a personal blessing from the high priestess and may spend a healing surge and regain 40 hit points. The blackscale crusader gains a +2 bonus to all defences until the start of its next turn.

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Alignment Evil | Languages Common, Draconic | |
| Str 23 (+10) | Dex 16 (+7) | Wis 14 (+6) |
| Con 17 (+7) | Int 8 (+3) | Cha 10 (+4) |

Equipment bone breastplate, coral helm, blessed heavy trident

Blackscale Crusader Tactics

The unit leaders and fanatical spearhead of the Sancoatyli crusading forces, blackscale crusaders always lead from the front of the pack, daring their allies to try and do better than they can. They are selfless and devoted to the cause, and they long for a chance to use their *righteous fury* in Mersmerro's name.

Sancoatyli Cultist Lore

A character knows the following information about the Sancoatyli cultists with a successful Religion skill check.

DC 20: The Sancoatyli never surrender and never ask for mercy – nor give it. They are zealous and bloodthirsty. Do not let even the elves and human cult members too close, or they will try to take them with you into death.

Encounter Groups

The Sancoatyli move in small to medium numbers when on individual missions, but sometimes travel in larger groups of Mersmerron faithful to enact their crusade's Calling.

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,200)

- ◆ 1 Sancoatyli troglodyte fanatic (level 7 soldier)
- ◆ 2 Sancoatyli swamp elves (level 3 skirmisher)
- ◆ 3 Sancoatyli cult warriors (level 5 brute)

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,100)

- ◆ 1 Sancoatyli blackscale crusader (level 8 elite brute)
- ◆ 2 Sancoatyli troglodyte fanatics (level 7 soldier)
- ◆ 4 Sancoatyli cult warriors (level 5 brute)

Level 14 Encounter (XP 4,100)

- ◆ 1 Sancoatyli blackscale crusader (level 8 elite brute)
- ◆ 2 Sancoatyli troglodyte fanatics (level 7 soldier)
- ◆ 4 Sancoatyli cult warriors (level 5 brute)
- ◆ 2 feymire crocodiles (level 10 elite soldier)

Twilight Blade (shadar-kai)

The elite assassins of the Twilight Society, these especially-trained shadar-kai are not the most common members of their order, but they are the most feared. Twilight blades are not called upon except in special circumstances, and only members of the Black Circle can force their hand into any matter. They do 'practice' their arts on the mortal world from time to time in order to make their stewards and distraction forces out of their kills, but generally they keep to themselves and practice their shadow magic.

When a twilight blade is given a direct order from the Black Circle, which must be written on the inside of a skull with the bloody ichor of a dread warlock, that blade and all of his personal assets are set upon the job. Unleashing his undead minions and servants to occupy security personnel, a twilight blade can often slip in, kill his target, and get back out again before the last of his expendable creations have fallen. Many targets of the Twilight Society are found cold and dead in their beds when the captain of their guard comes to tell them about their victory over the ghouls and zombies at the gates!

It should be noted that no one can be targeted by more than one twilight blade at a time, but could be the goal of the Twilight Society for a long time if the Black Circle continues to send contracts to them.



Appendix of Enemies

Shadar-kai Twilight Blade *Level 10 Solo Lurker*
Medium shadow humanoid XP 2,500

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +8;
darkvision/see *invisible**

Aura of Gloom aura 5; targets within aura must pass a save in order to spend a healing surge for any reason. Failing this save means the action is wasted.

HP 112; **Bloodied** 56

AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 24, Will 19

Speed 7; see also *shadow jaunt*

Stealth +15

⊕ **Scythe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage

⇒ **Twin Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon**

The shadar-kai twilight blade makes two scythe attacks at a single target.

⇒ **Deathblow (standard; daily) ♦ Shadow, Weapon**

The shadar-kai twilight blade makes a single scythe attack. If it hits and causes damage, the target must immediately save or be instantly reduced to 0 hit points.

In Death I Still Serve (immediate interrupt; when brought to 0 hit points)

The death contract that all twilight blades have with Mortessal goes into effect, instantly causing the shadar-kai twilight blade to rise from the grave the following turn in order to make one final *deathblow* attack, if possible. This is in addition to any other *deathblow* attacks it may have performed that day.

Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation

The shadar-kai twilight blade teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+8)

Con 14 (+7) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+5)

Equipment shadowgarb hide, twin scythes, *skull mask of vision**

crippling enemies until he can get to the target and use its *deathblow* ability to finish the job. Even when outnumbered or outclassed the twilight blade remains nearby the target, just in case he has to call upon his *in death I still serve* final ability.

Shadar-kai Twilight Blade Lore

A character knows the following information about shadar-kai twilight blades with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: The deadly assassins of the secret Twilight Society have been the cause for many mysterious killings in the courts and noble families of Rardarri. They are minions of Mortessal, that is known, and they have never been known to travel without some of her Risen legion with them.

Religion DC 25: So deep is the twilight blade's devotion to his contract and his faith in the Queen of Darkness, even killing one does not end its deadly efficiency – they are known to stave off death long enough to bury their blades in their target, taking the poor soul to the grave with them!



Shadar-kai Twilight Blade Tactics

Knowing that a target is easiest to kill when distracted, twilight blades unleash their undead allies several rounds before they choose to engage the enemy. Normally this means that all combatants are looking one way as the twilight blade uses his *stealth* skill to sneak up from the other side, slashing throats and

Encounter Groups

Shadar-kai twilight blades travel with small hordes of lesser undead in order to use them as distractions and worrying tactics, allowing them to pick and choose their targets more effectively.

Level 14 Encounter (XP 4,200)

- ◆ 1 shadar-kai twilight blade (level 10 solo lurker)
- ◆ 3 horde ghouls (level 13 minion)
- ◆ 4 zombies (level 2 brute)
- ◆ 4 skeletons (level 3 soldier)

Xuchot Illithids of the Enclave

Chroniclers of history-in-motion for all of Nuera, these brain-eating beings follow one of the longest unchanged traditions in the world. Seeing the world of mortal beings as something they are not truly a part of due to their collective consciousness deep below Sandy Launch, the illithids enjoy a certain moral ambiguity that keeps them alienated from the rest of the world. If they do not understand *how* to feel like a human or elf, they certainly cannot *care* what happens to them.

Although not even they know when they came to Nuera from the Far Realm, the Xuchot Enclave are one of the oldest societies in existence. They have supremely powerful psionic capabilities that were enhanced throughout the millennia of the Creation, and it is through these powers that they investigate and make note of the world. Occasionally they will appear to divulge their wisdom to mortal beings of power or worth, but because of the existence of their lesser ‘mind flayer’ cousins that do stalk the catacombs of Nuera – they are sadly never welcomed.

Xuchot Illithids *Level 25 Elite Controller*
Medium aberrant humanoid XP 14,000

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +20
Psychic Static (Psychic) aura 15; while the Xuchot illithid is not bloodied, enemies in the aura take a –2 penalty to Will defence.

HP 380; **Bloodied** 190

AC 31; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 38; see also *interpose thrall*

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7

Action Points 1

⊕ **Tentacles (standard; at-will)**

+23 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

⇒ **Bore into Brain (standard; at-will)** ◆ *see text*

Grabbed or stunned target only; +22 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 5 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). If this ability reduces the target to 0 hit points or fewer, the Xuchot illithid can devour its brain, turn it into a thrall (see below), or add a psychic imprint upon them (see below):

Devour Brain (Healing): The Xuchot illithid devours the target’s brain. The target is killed instantly, and the Xuchot illithid regains 20 hit points.

Create Thrall (Charm): The target is dominated (no save) and regains enough hit points to restore it to its bloodied value. As a thrall, the target is immune to the *mind blast* and *thought knife* powers of mind flayers and Xuchot illithids and gains a +5 bonus to its Will defence while within 10 squares of the controlling Xuchot illithid. The target is no longer dominated and no longer a thrall once the controlling illithid dies.

Psychic Imprint (Psychic): The Xuchot illithid leaves the victim with 1 hit point but dazed and immobilised for 1d4 turns while the psychic imprint settles. After this time the victim is always considered to give combat advantage to all Xuchot illithids, and counts as ‘imprinted’ for the purposes of other illithid powers. It should be noted that *all* Xuchot illithids are considered to be automatically imprinted to each other.



Appendix of Enemies

⇒ **Mind Blast** (standard; recharge 4, 5, 6) ♦ **Psychic**

Close blast 5; mind flayers, Xuchot illithids and thralls are immune; +23 vs. Will; 3d8 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is not dazed.

⇒ **Thought Knife** (standard; recharge 5, 6) ♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; mind flayers, Xuchot illithids and thralls are immune; +23 vs. Will; 5d8 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is immobilised (save ends).

⇒ **Fight or Flight** (standard; recharge 6) ♦ **Fear, Psychic**

Close burst 10; +20 vs. Will; mind flayers, Xuchot illithids and thralls are immune; targets that are hit must immediately save. Failure means the target is overwhelmed by fear and must flee the illithid at full speed for 1d6 turns. Success means the target is filled with the need to defend himself, and must charge (or move quickly toward to get into charge range) the illithid instead. *Miss*: No effect.

Through Another's Mind (minor; at-will)

Ranged 100; Any Xuchot illithid can 'see' through thoughts of any target in range counted as being *imprinted*. This gives the illithid access to all forms of perception the target can call upon, and allows the Xuchot illithid to use *mind blast*, *thought knife* and *fight or flight* from the imprinted target's location as if it was standing in that square.

Psychoportation (immediate interrupt, when attacked; recharge 5, 6) ♦ **Teleportation**

The Xuchot illithid teleports up to 20 squares, or within 2 squares of an imprinted target within 1 mile.

Interpose Thrall (immediate interrupt; when targeted by a melee attack; at-will)

The Xuchot illithid redirects the attack to an adjacent thrall.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common,
Deep Speech, Telepathy 20

Str 12 (+13) **Dex** 14 (+14) **Wis** 24 (+19)

Con 20 (+17) **Int** 24 (+19) **Cha** 22 (+18)



Xuchot Illithid Tactics

There are not many mortal minds that can hope to stand against the psychic might of the Xuchot Enclave when it focuses its will upon them. Battle with these ancient illithids is much the same. They are not immortal or ageless, but they pass on their unique abilities from one spawning to the next through a strange telepathic linkage. Although they would much rather send their expendable thralls into combat, when an illithid is forced to personal battle they will wait until an enemy is nearly beaten by thralls and *mind blasts* to teleport behind them and get their wicked boring tentacles into them. Once the illithid is in your mind, you can only pray that it chooses to eat your brain...else you are in for a lifetime of puppetry.

Xuchot Illithid Lore

A character knows the following information about Xuchot illithids with a successful History skill check.

DC 20: There have been mind flayers on the world of Nuera for as long as any historian can recall in his logs and texts, and some have shown to not be as evil and depraved as others might be. Perhaps not all mind flayers are terrible abominations, after all.

DC 35: Strange and stoic mind flayers have appeared in public places two or three times over recorded history to impart some riddle or clue to the leaders of Nuera. Their presence was always met by mistrust and often violence, but soon after each of these visits – something horrible occurred to the kingdom, nation or culture they came forward to speak with.

DC 40: There is a single placard hanging in the annals of the Dardarrian Museum of Lore that shows a group of tentacle-faced beings watching the symbolic Creation of the word by the gods. Perhaps the illithids are old and powerful enough to remember the era of gods?

Encounter Groups

The Xuchot Enclave rarely interacts with the mortal world directly. They favour sending teams of thralls and imprinted allies instead, but when they do have to come to the surface they never do so without some of their most sturdy warrior-thralls in tow.

Level 23 Encounter (XP 19,800)

- ◆ 1 Xuchot illithid (level 25 elite controller)
- ◆ 5 drow warriors; thralls (level 11 lurker)
- ◆ 2 umber hulks; thralls (level 12 elite soldier)



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