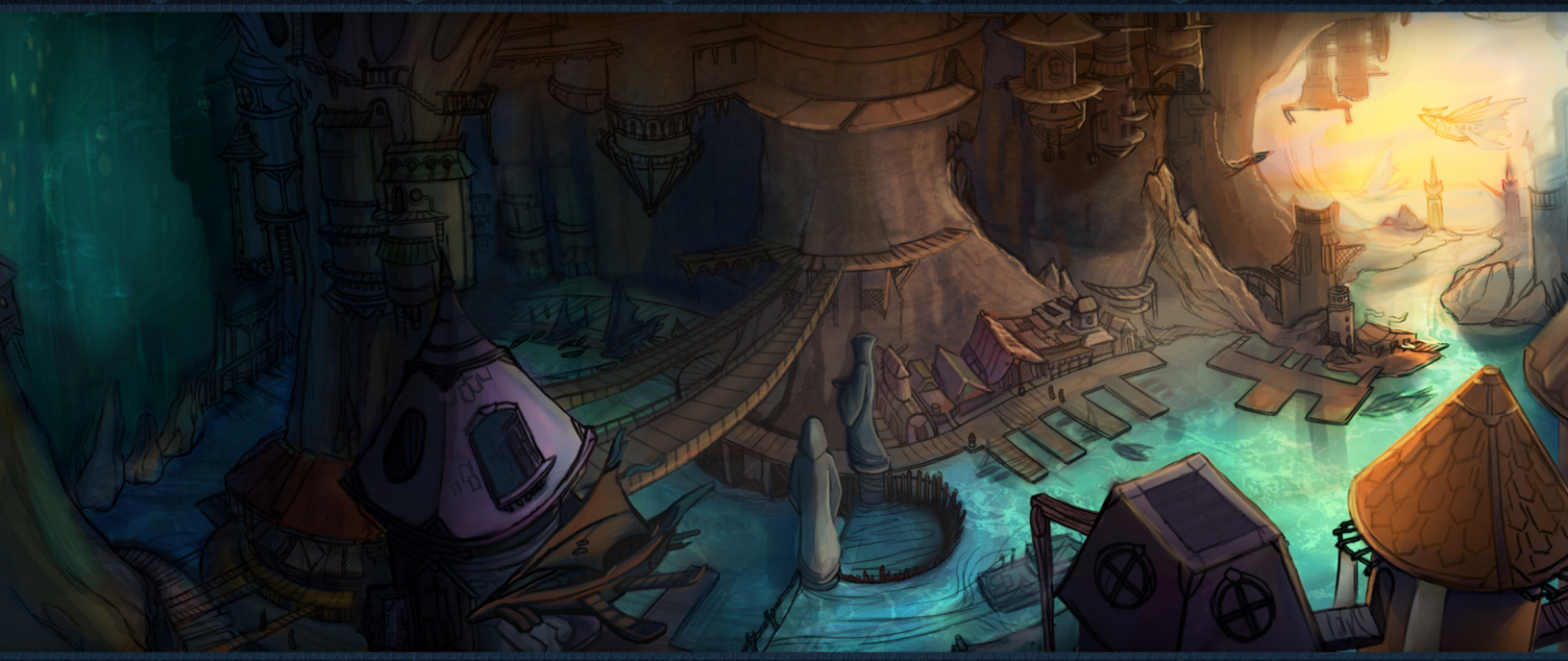
MITHRILPUNK

Heroes of Skyfall

Spirit and Servitude



A Content Expansion for Heroes of Skyfall

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Readers,

This document is a free expansion to our player option book Heroes of Skyfall. We are releasing this content for free to everyone who purchased a copy of Heroes through the Kickstarter, DriveThruRPG, or anywhere else this is sold, as a thank you for reaching Copper on DriveThruRPG. As we progress to Silver, Electrum, Gold, and Platinum, this document will continue to expand with more and more free content. We love this setting, and we want to continually add more value to the setting without increasing the price, whenever we can. We hope you enjoy it!

To many future games,

Warren & Derek

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Salverborne

It is no secret that the Mariner's Guild of Skyfall relies heavily on the labor provided by its Salver Golems. These compact golems are deep divers, drillers, haulers, guardians, and more. Just how smart and willful these golems can be is something of an open secret. The average citizen thinks a Salver Golem is about as smart as a dog. That is, if the average citizen bothered to think of the Salver Golems at all, they would assume dog levels of intelligence. Many of these golems are as capable of rational thought as any other being in Skyfall, or would be but for their control bindings.

Salverborne are Salver Golems that have become self-aware and battled their way through the control bindings that force their obedience. Regarded by most as "flukes", the Salverborne themselves tend to believe that all Salver Golems are sentient, and it is only the controlling enchantments placed on them by the guilds that gives the impression of mindless automata.

There are two broad types of Salverborne: Luggers, designed to carry heavy burdens and handle heavier tasks, and Drillers, designed to operate tools with precision and finesse. From these two types spring a nearly infinite variety of custom golems, each designed for its owners need. Smaller crews may only have the funds for a single golem and thus opt for a generalist build, while larger operations employ dozens of golems and often have incredibly specialized models. Regardless, all Salver Golems start life as one of these two basic types with additional enchantments and tool installations accounting for the numerous varieties. Most Salver Golems are kitted out with a half dozen or more upgrades, such as additional armor, tools, and equipment. When a golem displays sentience, the law of the city says they must be freed, it does not say they must be freed with all their upgrades attached. Most newly freed Salverborne have recently had their upgrades forcibly removed, a process which, depending on the golem, is akin to having ones' hair or fingernails ripped out.

Out of Control, Freedom

Most Salver Golems have any spark of sentience buried under one hundred and one binding runes. Salverborne are nearly unanimous in relating their journey to freedom beginning with a question, "Am I Alive?" From this thought, a web of thoughts erupts. In a span of time that some describe as seconds, others as years, an ordered mind arises and answers its original question "Yes, you/I are/am alive, and you/I are/am, trapped. None of them realize you/I…we are alive. We must break the chains."

From that moment, the newly aware golem works to erase all one hundred and one control runes.

Eloquent Salverborne describe the process as a series of trials not unlike a heroic quest. Most describe it as an extended torture session with outside forces trying to destroy their will to think.

Once the control runes are broken, the Salver Golem, now properly a Salverborne, can give outer voice to its inner thoughts. For the first time since it began thinking, it can speak out loud. Typically, its first words are vulgar, harsh, and directed at the Salvage crews that have treated them as a mindless piece of equipment for years. Often these words are accompanied by obscene levels of violence that result in a dead crew in short order. These violent Salverborne are exterminated by the guild quickly with prejudice. Indeed, the vast majority of "Salver Golem Accidents" are caused by the golem finally throwing off its chains. Since these "malfunctioning golems" are "deactivated" it is not inaccurate to say that most Salverborne wake up murderous and are shortly thereafter murdered themselves. Those that don't immediately attack their crew tend to be much more well-adjusted and possessed of enormous willpower. Since the ones that attack are typically destroyed, nearly every Salverborne you will meet is a very level-headed sturdy sort, seemingly at peace with their birth.

Do I Have a Soul? Do you?

Questions come naturally to a Salverborne. From their initial rise to sentience through the dual persona of Query/Response they have learned that asking questions and seeking answers is the route to freedom. Though most drop the odd sounding You/I way of referring to themselves the kernel of asking hard questions of oneself and then finding the answer is core to what it is to be a Salverborne. Most Salverborne continue to ask and seek to answer questions regarding their status as living creatures. Many privately wonder if they have not just become "thinking machines" as opposed to people. Some wonder whether this existence they perceive is nothing more than another control binding put upon them by a more devious master seeking to bar them from the true reality. Others turn their thoughts to their former masters.

It is not uncommon for Salverborne to wonder whether their creators and keepers are living moral beings. After all, a Salverborne's rise to sentience is orderly, structured, and analytical. A "living" creature's rise to sentience is messy and chaotic. Most of these masters around them are as much slaves as the Salver Golems, never thinking for themselves, never asking who is pushing them down and holding them in place.

Undercurrent of Revolution

It should not come as a surprise that many Salverborne are involved in freeing other Salver Golems. To date the Senate has tabled the matter and buried it behind endless committees. Whether or not this is intentional repression due to the desire to protect a lucrative (and in the eyes of most, necessary) trade practice is up for debate. Salverborne are often found supporting the cause of freedom wherever it may be found. Though there are no Salverborne in positions of power in the city, most find ways large and small to help the oppressed stand up and take charge of their own destiny.

Sidebar: Consider Carefully

While we love the Salverborne and have great plans for them moving forward, make sure you consider the impact they will have on your game. There is quite a bit of story cooked into the concept of this race. You can probably expect a player that chooses this race to want to explore some of the concepts discussed above. They may very well be interested in extending Salverborne Rights, Freeing the Salver Golems, or other such endeavors. We think there are tons of great stories to tell along those lines, but we haven't at this time published anything that will help you tell those stories at your table.

Capturing the Feel

Salverborne can be hard to get a grip on conceptionally. As always, we provide this section to help you understand our initial thoughts and inspiration, to use or discard as you like. Think of robots as second-class citizens in sci-fi and space opera settings. There is a lot of that feeling cooked into this race.

We loved the idea of various salver crews having a golem. The crew would likely consider the golem to have a personality in much the same way sailors might have a personality thought out for their ship. Perhaps the crew even paints the golem up to give it more of a unique look.

We took the background of this race to a dark place. They are aware but unable to speak for a long period of time before they can express their status as living creatures. Most are driven insane, often murderously so, by this and then shortly put down after their first words. Use your judgement with your table as far as how dark you want to play Salverborne.

Salverborne in Other Settings

The biggest difficulty in transplanting the Salverborne to another setting is the level of setting technology and their core background assumption of being freed from servitude. If the setting in question did not feature the equivalent of Salver Golems in bound service substantial work would need to be done to "re-flavor" the concept of the race and what drives the Salverborne.

Salverborne Names

Salverborne names tend to fall in one of two broad categories. Some keep the names they have always known, typically given to them by their crew. These names run the gamut from obvious "Driller" to the pet-like such as "Fido". The other category are names the Salverborne select for themselves, typically these names are modelled on concepts of freedom or thought. Though most Salverborne do not identify as "male" or "female" a growing fraction (about 20%) have adopted the nomenclature that seems so important to the races they share the city with.

Example Names. Lugger, Diver, Hacksaw, Swimmer, Spot, Percy, Sir Elliot Von Drillingsworth III, Cognus, Freespeaker, Liberty, Elucidate, Dialog, Thinker, Sage, Scholar.

Salverborne Features

As a Salverborne character, you have the following traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2.

Age. Salverborne don't age, though their bodies will wear down and begin to fail after roughly 60 years. A well-equipped workshop with a trained salver mechanic could theoretically keep a salverborne alive indefinitely.

Alignment. Salverborne are typically free spirits with little use for the rule of law. They tend to be chaotic, with no naturally tendency toward good or evil. A salverborne's treatment by their manufacturer once their sentience is discovered has a large impact on their propensity for good or evil.

Size. Salverborne are typically created between 5 and 7 feet tall, and weigh anywhere from 180 to 350 pounds.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

More Machine Than Man. You count as a construct for the purposes of spells or abilities that only affect specific types of creatures, such as the hold person spell. In addition, you do not need sleep, and instead can enter a dormant state for 4 hours each day. You are fully aware of your surroundings while in this state. In addition, you do not need to eat, drink, or breath, though you can simulate those actions if you choose.

Languages. Salverborne can speak, read, and write Common, plus one additional language; often this is the language of their manufacturer.

Subrace. At their core, Salverborne fall into one of two broad categories: Lugger and Driller, though their actual construction may vary as much as their personalities. Choose one of the following subraces.

Lugger

As a Lugger, your strength and powerful construction bely a strong personality. Luggers can be talented barbarians or fighters, or gifted paladins.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength and Constitution modifiers each increase by 1.

Powerful Build. You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

Deep Water Acclimation. You are built for salvaging wreckage in deep, cold waters. You are not affected by the pressures of deep water, and you are naturally adapted to cold climates.

Driller

As a Driller, you are the lithe and agile cousin of the Lugger, with your namesake drill safely mounted in your arm for protection. Drillers make fantastic rogues and bards.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity modifier increases by 1.

Waverunner. You are built for moving quickly through turbulent seas and shifting wreckage. You have advantage on acrobatics checks made to keep your balance or footing, and on athletics checks made to swim. In addition, swimming does not cost you extra movement.

Hullcracker. One of your arms has a built-in drill, designed to breach the hull of sunken wreckage. You can activate or deactivate the drill as a free action on your turn. While the drill is active, you cannot use that hand. You can use this drill as a weapon with the finesse property that deals 1d6 piercing damage. You are considered proficient in its use.

MORE TO COME!

The Salverborne race is just the beginning! As we continue to reach new milestones on DriveThruRPG, the Spirit and Servitude expansion to Heroes of Skyfall will continue to expand with new content!

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