***wThe City of Salt in Wounds***

Campaign Setting Guide

By J.M. Perkins

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*Mayvin ran, his footfalls splashing through the thick red-brown mulch that seemed to cling to every street in this district. He noted the racing of his heart – what fun! What a delight, to feel the thrum of life and vitality. And to imagine, all it took to know this cascade of sensation was being chased by some abominable horror burrowing below the paving stones.*

*One would think that a simple predator would have grown tired by now, dissuaded after its erstwhile meal had burned out five of its eyes and evaded it for so long. So perhaps it was sent by someone? Who exactly? Nearly tripping over the half-rotted skeleton of a barrel, Mayvin decided that was a question for another time.*

*Everyone the sorcerer saw quickly fled into some twisting alleyway or through some doorway that was thereafter audibly barred from within: if not in reaction to the garishly dressed fop sprinting at full tilt, then in response to the distended bulge of earthworks that betrayed the presence of something hungry-huge just below the surface. Mayvin noted his quickening breath, the predatory bulge seeming to gain on him, and thought, ‘I wonder how long I can keep this up…’*

*A quick left brought him face to face with a dead end.*

*“Well, that answers that…” he spoke aloud as he began to weave his protective magics about himself in anticipation of the creature’s jaws bursting up from below.*

## How to Use this Guide

This book is a ‘campaign setting guide’ for the fictional city of Salt in Wounds, primarily designed as an accessory to help you -as a game master- play a role playing game (aka a game of make believe with a light drizzle of rules and randomization mechanics) with your friends. While this version is specifically intended to supplement the 5th Edition rules of the world’s oldest RPG, the descriptions of factions, nonplayer characters, maps, history, competing motivates and monsters work well no matter what ‘rules’ (or lack thereof) you’re playing with. If you’re like the author, you’ll read through this book, take inspiration for the adventures you want to run, and you’ll start improvising and making alterations to *your* ‘Salt in Wounds’ – occasionally skimming or searching out a section for reference. Alternately, you could play with this guidebook as ‘canon’ – the absolute truth to your gameworld and thereby remove much of the need to invent/improvise parts of it as your own. Additionally, you could utilize this book to lift sections, characters, plots to transplant them into other settings, inspire your own fiction or creation and so on. There is no wrong way to play, as long as everyone at the table is enjoying themselves.

The book is broken into self explanatory sections and indexed for ease of navigation.

*For Players*

While not specifically designed with players in mind, you can -as a player- get a lot out of this guide. In general, a well informed\properly motivated player character (or player) would know most of the information held within the book with the exception of everything contained in the ‘secrets’ section. What this means is, if you intend to be a player (rather than a Game Master aka GM) of the Salt in Wounds game you should be fine reading all of the guide (save ‘secrets’ and the appendixes) with two important caveats.

1. When in doubt, check with your GM first.
2. If and when your GM presents information that contradicts what’s presented in this guide, it is your GM (not the arrangement of pixels/ink you’re staring at) that is the final arbiter of what is or is not true about Salt in Wounds.

## On Handling Sensitive Topics & Facilitating Fun at Your Table

Wil Wheaton famously coined Wheaton’s Law, ‘Don’t be a Dick.’ It’s important to keep this in mind when playing a role playing game (technically, it’s important to keep it in mind *always* but this book is aimed at helping you play a more satisfying RPG session rather than live a more satisfying life). This advice is hypothetically sufficient but it’s also vaguely general and perhaps isn’t actionable. Here are some things to keep in mind to avoid ‘being a dick’ when playing an RPG generally, or a game in Salt in Wounds specifically.

RPGs are a fascinating device by which people can explore themes of identity, heroism, violence, and more. They can also be used -like all stories- to explore ideas of sexism, racism, the nature of evil, and any other concept players put their mind to.

Salt in Wounds, in particular, is a morally reprehensible place; a place where slavery, torture, and violence are extremely common. The setting increases the likelihood of (but does not necessitate) these issues coming up in game. Players and GMs can take the in-game perspective of generally ignoring these sensitive subjects in pursuit of other goals & things to explore, or they can bring grappling with (or reveling in) the evil of the city to prime importance within their game, there is no wrong approach. That said, in order to make sure you’re best facilitating the fun of everyone at the table, here’s some concepts to keep in mind.

1. Communicate what you want, get consent from all parties, check in regularly, and return to ‘communicate’ if anything changes. The concept of Salt in Wounds will probably attract a certain ‘type’ of player, but that doesn’t mean everyone will be equally available to explore the same -potentially troubling- things. And even when they *are*…
2. Understand that people can abide variable levels of squick (disturbing sensory details). Even (and especially) if the party agrees to what’s ‘on the table’ (with regards to violence and other potentially offensive topics) understand that there is still nuance to *how* these things are handled. For instance, say the party has captured an enemy, and decided to torture them for information. One way to handle this is for the GM to simply say, ‘Tenie the cleric is tortured…’ and describe the consequences. A different method would be to describe how, ‘Felina the assassin splays out Tenie’s fingers, binds each of them individually. She lets the cool metal of her clamps caress the wrinkled flesh of Tenie’s knuckles, lingering on that moment before she gets to work on the soft pink below his nails and…’

(Just for reference, continuing method two would be a bit much for the *author* if he were at the table, would probably get in the way of his fun.)

It is not immoral to use either fictional/rhetorical device; they both have their uses. What would be improper is to use the setting as a way of dismissing the feelings or concerns of anyone at the table, making arguments along the lines of ‘You can’t be upset I spent fifteen minutes describing sexual violence because that’s just something that happens in quasi-medieval settings.’ If the story the table wants to cocreate does involve torture (or violence, or sex, or discrimination, or \_) then it’s important for everyone to be on the same page generally about how these things will be handled, because it is not about the desires\needs\sensitives of any *one* party, but the desires\needs\sensitivities of everyone at the table.

It is perfectly alright, better than alright, for the table to decide that certain topics are off limits. And even the subjects\themes that are on the table, dealing with them in such a way as to ensure (or at least best facilitate) the fun and enjoyment of everyone at the table is the best way to approach having an enjoyable gaming session.

Responsibilities and Conflict Resolution at the Table

As a player or GM, if someone’s behavior bothers you, tell them: respectfully and with deep care and consideration for them as a person (if possible). If you’re sitting together, do your best to see your fellow players as -if not friends- than at least as collaborators rather than adversaries. A good framework for talking about behavior like this is

*Hey (person’s name) sometimes you (troubling behavior ie ‘nitpick my character’s actions based on their alignment, try to play out my character tactically, make rape jokes, act out these really horrific scenes’) and that makes me feel (emotion) and if you could do (preferred behavior) instead that would really help me out.*

Players, keep in mind your GMs generally act as referees (for rules at least if not for social dynamics at the table) and while you should -when possible- resolve matters yourself, you can also go to them with concerns; the preferred way is to voice your concern and ask them for advice about how they’d like you to handle the situation. This works a bunch of different ways, if they dismiss your concerns without hearing you, then probably you’re at the wrong table. If they feel like the situation would best be handled on their end they’ll also generally mention it at this point without you making them feel obligated.

GMs, you have primary responsibility for the fun and safety of everyone at your table (a responsibility you share with your players). If you notice something going on at the table (a player seems uncomfortable with another player say) you’re probably best in making time to talk with all the parties individually to create space for them to discuss what’s going on (though you can’t *make* anyone talk about anything, and it might literally be nonexistent\unimportant\temporary without any need for action on your part). You are not -ultimately- a relationship counselor, police officer, or ultimately responsible for the behavior of anyone at the table. You are however better positioned to alleviate tensions\facilitate proper flow at the table as you have a number of tools up to and including banning players from play.

In all things, try to keep everyone at the table (and in your life for that matter) viewing one another as collaborators… once they see each other as adversaries very little can be done to create peace.

## Salt in Wounds at a Glance

**History & Basics**

*Problem* Unkillable, regenerating kaiju ‘Tarrasque’ rampaging through the countryside.

*Solution* Several kingdoms launch a combined army, led by 13 heroes equipped with ballistas armed with ‘immoveable harpoons’ to bind beast & slay it.

Army successful, Tarrasque is bound in a high mountain valley but still cannot be killed.

Defenders start disbanding, low on food.

Newly built fortress turns to butchering/eating the Tarrasque for rations.

War with native stone giants end with enslaving the tribe & their labor is used to upgrade the fortress and build the city of Salt in Wounds.

13 Heroes dubbed ‘Binder-Lords’ found the aristocratic houses that control the city, symbol of power is knowledge of command words that can unleash the harpoons holding the beast.

Lots of immigrants fleeing famine make the city one of the most populous in the world.

Alchemists begin experimenting with Tarrasque derived reagents, booming business.

12th Meridian crisis, the Tarrasque’s tail briefly became unstuck and causes destruction of a section of the city (the Tail Stones).

217 AB (After Binding) Present - the City of Salt in Wounds is a weird, evil metropolis built around the perpetual butchery of the Tarrasque.

**Prominent Factions**

*Meridian Houses* Decadent aristocrats who control the city and constantly vie for power.

*God-Butchers* Ceremonial order of knight-butchers who carve up the Tarrasque

*Marrow Miners* New organization that works on Tarrasque founded after 12th Meridian Crisis, rivalry with God-Butchers & rumored ties with organized crime.

*Enders* Extinct faction pledged to kill the beast

*House Militias* ‘Law Enforcement’ broken up into 13 distinct groups (each loyal to a different aristocratic house) in conflict with one another.

*Circle of Release* Druidic insurgency attempting to free the Tarrasque.

*Church of Macinfex* Worships the God of Butchers.

*Church of the Monad* Academics and alchemists who believe in supreme unity of all things.

*Solidia Septermus* Believe wealth is God.

**Districts and Locations**

*Beast Crown* Aristocratic District.

*Sage’s Row* Home to world’s best alchemists.

*The Throat* One of the biggest markets in the world, everything is for sale.

*Tail Stones* Crime ridden slums still in ruins following 12th Meridian Crisis.

*Salzinwuun* Fortress core that holds Tarrasque, inaccessible to the public.

*Heartsblood Marsh* Mutant fungal swamp crafted from twisted druidic magic, processing Tarrasque runoff like it was chemical waste.

**Other Information**

Food is cheap to free, (Clean) Water is Expensive.

Horrifying Drugs, mutations, monsters, crime, torture all common; law enforcement lax.

*Weather* Tropical climate amongst snow covered mountains.

Most ‘normal’ water drinking animals are considered luxuries; axebeaks and other birds/lizards take their place

Ghoulification is legal and ghouls are citizens (eat a prodigious amount of rotting Tarrasque flesh to stay sane).

Paladins, Rangers, and Druids not generally welcome in the city, operate covertly.

## The City of Salt in Wounds: Basics

*The City of Salt in Wounds*

*Lawful Evil Metropolis*

**Navigating Salt in Wounds - Information Every Traveler Needs to Know**

**By Regga Thistlethorn noted Mercenary, Vermin Removal Engineer, and Dignified Fry Cook**

1. **Approaching the City**

For travelers who have not visited the City of Salt in Wounds in person, it is hard to conceive of the scale of the place. It is even harder for outsiders to understand how wholly the economic engine of butchering the bound Tarrasque has transformed the society of the still swelling metropolis.  
Upon approach to the city, the first thing a traveler will note is the sounds of the monster screaming. Its roar echoes for dozens of leagues, and the ground occasionally trembles as the creature at the core of Salt in Wounds thrashes. Most times the God-Butchers and Marrow Miners keep the creature unconscious, but even toiling night and day they can not extract enough of the Tarrasque’s life force to keep the creature down every hour.  
Drawing closer, the traveler will notice the shift in ecology and weather; the deciduous forest with its seasonal snows gives way to a humid, almost tropical zone. The temperature for the surrounding area keeps steady at warm or even hot, sometimes stiflingly so even in the dead of what would otherwise be ‘winter.’ However, the tropical plants here are unique, twisted and changed from ground soaked in red. Travelers should be aware that from this point on, the water is no longer safe to drink – Salt in Wounds is provided with imported water carried into the city at great expense.  
By the time the traveler can see the walls, they will also see the beast’s horns peeking up above even the tallest manor-towers built by the Binder-Lords. The air above the city is blackened with a swarm of stirges and hungry gulls cawing to swoop down for scraps from the never-ending butchery.  
Salt in Wounds’ famous marketplace extends far beyond its gates, and even a mile outside the city the traveler will be assaulted by innumerable merchants hawking their wares. This anarchic bazaar and endless swirls of tents, caravans, and other temporary accommodations that exist beyond the walls is a city unto itself known as the Spillway.

**2. The City & Its People**

Entering through the main gate, visitors must press through the rich market to gain access to the rest of the city. These vendors are only slightly more settled and permanent than those outside and the district complete with shops, lodgings, places of work and all else known as the Throat, which continues almost to the processing core of Salt in Wounds itself: the fortress Salzinwuun around which the rest of city was built. While a large number of merchants are involved in the selling & buying of water and Tarrasque byproducts, nearly anything can be bought or sold in Salt in Wounds: slaves, drugs, all manner of vice – even the rare goods that are technically illegal are generally tolerated if the sellers and buyers can learn to behave themselves and pay off the right House Militia Captains.  
To the north, the section of Salt in Wounds known as the Beast Crown District holds the manor-towers of the Binder-Lords. Most of these hereditary oligarchs can trace their lineage back to the original adventurer heroes who bound the Tarrasque; their authority an ordained & sacred trust emanating from their possession of one of the 13 Command Words that can release one of the immovable harpoons which keep the Tarrasque bound – may their reign never end. It would be wise for travelers to ignore (and certainly never repeat) rumors of the decadent excesses of these aristocrats -though such untruths run rampant throughout the city and the world beyond… falsehoods made more attractive by salacious details like the secret orgies fueled by blood wine where biting, cutting, & feral bloodletting intermingles with the carnal merging of bodies – a cacophony of violence, hunger, and lust that can last for as long as the blood wine continues to flow. Of course, this is a horrendous slander of the good and just rulers of the city that the humble author of this simple tract would never suggest, mostly that it is something that other people say and I merely wish to bring it up in order to better dissuade you -dear traveler- of believing such libel that borders on blasphemy.

The core of town is dedicated to the eternal harvest itself. Scattered about the Tarrasque are hundreds of workers cutting at the beast, clearing the massive charnel sluices of obstructions, operating cranes to move the larger pieces, or extracting small pearl like granules, subtle glands, and tiny excretions of alchemical reagents. Overseeing it all are the God-Butchers, hulking figures with huge adamantine or Tarrasque bone greatswords strapped to their backs, screaming orders with mouths stained red with skin-chaw. Even the Binder-Lords give these workmen respect, and a traveler would do well to follow their lead lest they demonstrate skills they gained carving the Tarrasque can be just as useful in carving up humanoids. Care is needed around Salzinwuun, as bloated ramora fleas -parasites turned predator from long gorging on the Tarrasque- sometimes spill out into the city. These creatures range from ‘merely’ cat sized to something akin to a draft horse, and are far from the most dangerous hazard of the city.

Everywhere is the stink of meat cooking, piss being boiled in huge vats, fat being rendered into its base components. When not drowned out by the calls of the beast, the city is loud with the hungry calls of men and other carrion eaters. These are the sounds and smells of my beloved home, the finest city of the world.

Depending on what section of the city a traveler finds themselves in, roughly 1 in every 10 citizens may be horrifically mutated or disfigured.   
The southeastern section of town is currently referred to as the ‘Tail Stones’ district. This area is still mostly in ruins since the 12th Meridian Crisis 21 years ago, when the beast managed to briefly free its tail: whipping at the earth, stones & machinery behind itself and sending these projectiles hurtling through the air to smash innumerable city blocks like the work of a thousand catapults. While ‘safe’ now, only the desperate and impoverished reside in the Tail Stones (and you would be much better off finding lodgings elsewhere, see the back of this pamphlet for my recommendations for food and lodging).  
There are also other environs, notably Sage’s Row dedicated (primarily) to alchemical research as well as small districts dedicated to particular classes, professions, or even races. Each one of these contains secrets and intrigue well beyond the scope of this slim guide.

## Timeline

~50,000-100 BB (Before Binding) Stone Giants and Orcs make their home in the \_ valley.

117 BB – Tarrasque Reemerges

8 BB – The 13 Heroes Gather

8BB-0BB 13 Heroes gather a pan-national army to bind the Tarrasque

0 AB (After Binding) The Tarrasque is Bound

0 AB Still Unable to kill the Tarrasque, Construction is begun on Fortress Salzinwuun to protect

1 AB – Pan National Army Begins to return home, leaving only a skeleton force to defend/continue researching a permanent end to the Tarrasque

11 AB – 26 AB The Granite Shard War

18 AB The Harvest Officially Begins

27-49 AB Trade & Population Bloom

34 AB God-Butchers Founded

44 AB First documented case of a Tarrasque-Corrupted mutation

48 AB Enders Founded

50 AB Salzinwuun officially renames itself as a Sovereign City with a Charter

59 AB Creation of the Clear Water Accords

67 AB The Wyvren Siege is defeated and the All Consumption Doctrine is Established

71 AB Afridini Begins to Grow the Heartsblood Marsh

77 AB – 206 AB The Artifact Wars Rage

166 AB Afridini merges with the ‘fungal sieve’

223 AB Circle of Release Founded

238 AB Night of Cleavers

256 AB 12th Meridian Crisis

257 AB 12th House Coup

257 AB Marrow Miners Founded.

277 AB Present day.

## Map

# Life in Salt in Wounds

## Relevant Fiction

*Dinnai glared into the black of the tunnel beyond, seeing nothing. He licked his lips and crawled further. He hoped the guide’s information was good, that he had been sold a true map and -even had the dealer been honest- that the quakes hadn’t shifted the passageway enough to twist such instructions to falsehood.*

*Up ahead, he heard drums. That was promising…*

## Races of Salt in Wounds

Salt in Wounds is home to a dizzying array of races, and it’s a common saying within the city that this place is home to every sentient race on the planet… even those that haven’t been born yet. Representatives and even entire communities of the various races come to the city for a dizzying variety of reasons, from economic opportunity, to food security, to various plots and adventures, to the spectacle of pain, to the alchemical wonders, or (most commonly) by the markets. Of particular note are normally 'monstrous' races which have a recognized legal status within the city. Countless thousands have have eked out a place in the human dominated society where they would be completely unable to in any other ‘civilized’ city, and these beings are usually found in the employ of the Marrow Miners.

What follows is a description of the social place and temperament of the most common races.

### *Human*

Humans are the most common race of Salt in Wounds and dominate most power structures. However, given the incredible diversity of the city, it is important to note that they are not the majority, merely the largest *minority*. Notably, humans of dozens upon dozens of ethnicities live and work in the city. Common wisdom holds that human (and demihuman) residents will lose most of their individual 'culture' as they are integrated into Salt in Wounds; a process generally referred to as becoming 'properly salted.' How 'salted' someone is (accent, manner of dress, indifference to Tarrasque noises and movements) is the most important discriminator for class status as most other human racial features (hair, skin, eye color and so on) are usually ignored. The ‘average’ human in the city is dark brown skinned, with slightly curly thick black hair, weighs 220 pounds and stands 6 foot or taller. Still, numerous ethnic enclaves exist within the city (largely populated by more recent waves of émigrés) that hold onto their own values and cultural identity in opposition to those held by the city at large.

### Elf

Currently, there are no 'true' Elves living as long term residents in the city; most find the reality of Salt in Wounds to be extremely distasteful. Occasionally, adventuring Elves can be found within the city. [Note: For Synoma - the larger world of which Salt in Wounds is but one city- there are perhaps only 5,000 true elves remaining (the rate at which elves succumb to suicidal ennui has far outstripped their willingness to breed with other elves for the last dozen centuries). Your world might well handle Elves differently, but suffice it to say they’re not a significant presence in Salt in Wounds beyond adventurers.]

### Half-Elf

Half-Elves (that is, individuals with both human + elven ancestors with noticeable phenotypic features of each) are a significant ethnic minority. Many work as brokers & agents for their immortal (and extremely wealthy) elven progenitors (who by and large refuse to live or even draw close to the city) and 8th House, which was founded by a female Half-Elf named Virtan Berkuyin. The still living Binder-Lady has sired hundreds of Half-Elf (technically 'quarter' elf) offspring in the centuries of her reign (she is almost always pregnant, with usually each pregnancy begun by a different male who caught her eye and usually resulting in the birth to twins, triplets, or even septuplets).

### Dwarf

Dwarves are rare in Salt in Wounds (in large part because of the significant presence of Druegar). However, as a population they tend to be quite well-to-do as many excel as skilled Bonesmiths & prosperous Blood-Merchants. 10th House was founded by a Dwarven sorcerer named Wyrex Ironband who left for an unknown quest in AB 137 after naming his adopted half-orc daughter (Juleaq Ironband) successor over his natural born children.

### Half-Orc

'Half-Orcs' are a major demographic component of the population of Salt in Wounds and the most common racial group after humans. Complicating matters however, the ‘race’ of half-orcs has a varied percentage of Orcine blood as -again- this racial designation is commonly used to describe mixed ancestry individuals who bear both human and orc features. In the early days of the fortress, the human defenders of the Tarrasque hunted down and exterminated the male orcs of the nearby Seven-Talon clan, enslaving the juveniles and claiming the females as 'spoils of victory' (concubines and sex-slaves). From their rapine beginnings, the half-orc children of these unions have become a dominant force in Salt in Wounds (and the city's acceptance of these individuals drives a lot of immigration by non-native Half-Orcs) though this population has come into increasing conflict with the 'true' Orcs immigrants recruited by the Marrow Miners. This is especially ironic given that no ‘true’ division exists, with mixing of the blood produces a gradient of individuals with various human to orc racial features, with different privileges afforded to ‘orc’ ‘mixed’ and ‘human (or passing)’ individuals.

### Gnome

Gnomes are well represented, particularly amongst alchemists. This is largely a result of Tonagree Bumblezaz (an early, prominent gnomish alchemist and first teacher of the famed Bakal Filligreen) sending invitation letters (and offering to help with the resettling) of every one of his thousand and eight cousins in addition to their families. The gnomes of Salt in Wounds are known for a 'playfulness' that runs into overt sadism. Whether this is some effect of the city of a selection bias of the sorts of Gnomes who choose to live in Salt in Wounds is a subject of much barroom speculation.

### Halfling

Halflings served as servants, aides de campe, and slaves of the army that originally bound the Tarrasque; and most of the their descendants fit in a similar caste in the present day. This is so often the case that most simply assume every Halfling they meet is a slave. This is especially troubling for Halfling courtiers of 13th House (the so-called 'people's' house) which was founded by Rexaney Bramblethumb - a teenage Halfling servant who stepped into place to accurately fire the final immoveable harpoon when her master fled.

### Ghouls

Despite the more poetically minded chroniclers claiming that the entire city is comprised of ghouls and parasites, literal ghouls comprise only a small percentage of the population of Salt in Wounds. While the statecraft of 5th House has gained them begrudging legal acceptance by the legislators (aka the other meridian houses) they are still largely despised and feared by the general population.  
The primary legal argument that 5th House presented to justify the legalized creation of ghouls is that issues of ghoul attacks/violence is driven by unsated hunger for flesh, which -they argued- would never be a problem in Salt in Wounds. While this isn’t necessarily true, in general by eating twice their own body weight in meat each day (usually spoiling Tarrasque flesh) ghouls are able to function as any other demi-human (though many choose to supplement their diet with meats of all kind, including that of sentient creatures). Ghoul citizens employed by 5th House have now largely replaced Otyughs as the primary disposal mechanisms for the tons upon tons of rotting meat produced by Salt in Wounds weekly.

5th House offers ghoul contracts, legally binding arrangements wherein the alchemist-necromancers of 5th House guarantee that they will resurrect individuals as ghouls. To enter into the contract, the would-be undead must either pay a hefty fee or pledge to serve 5th house tirelessly for 100 years. This resurrection is usually handled by implantation of a small alchemical device filled with specially modified ghoul fever which ‘bursts’ when its owner’s life functions have ended. 5th House deny any rumor that the implant can burst upon non-deadly impact.

While open to individuals of all walks of life, this offer (unsurprisingly) has largely been taken up by the desperate and damned. The ghoul contract is viewed as an insurance policy against a less desirable after-life destination or (perhaps more worryingly) the equivalent of an ethical blank-check to live life however one wishes without supernatural consequence.

The process of ghoulification -as well as the resulting ghouls- have some distinct (though not always predictable) differences with traditional ghouls due to the 5th House ghoul creation process being a marriage of traditional ghoul fever infection and Tarrasque derived alchemy.

### Tiefling

Tieflings make up a significant portion of the city’s population (though, perhaps surprisingly, almost none are born within the city). They suffer (or enjoy) stereotypes which position them as ruthless and cunningly efficient (while not burdened with a squeamish morality). Many guilds and organizations try to enlist tieflings as ‘faces’ or ambassadors of the institution due to these (often untrue) notions and competition in the city exists to hire these sentient creatures for their visage (and the prestige attached to it) alone; regardless of their other qualities. Due to these cultural distortions, a number of the most effective operatives looking to reform the city towards ending cruelty and other ‘good’ causes are tieflings, relying on the biases of the city to cloak their true intentions.

### Dragonborn

Dragonborn are not uncommon in the city, and a famous mercenary company -The Teeth of Srithie- is wholly comprised of the race. So renowned are the Teeth (and otherwise rare the race) citizens commonly assume that any dragonborn encountered is a member of the company and available for immediate hire.

### Grippli

Grippli are a regular sight within the Tail Stones district, almost universally associated with poverty. Most are emigrees from Heartsblood Marsh, either driven out for fear of violence or by wanting something better, greater than anything they could accomplish in the shadow of the fungal sieve. As a population, many of them are slaves and those that are free tend to find themselves in the most servile positions.

*Agogi*

### Orcs

Often employed by Marrow Miners, these are large, green-grey skinned, tusked, powerfully built humanoids with ‘poor impulse control’ (compared to a human standard). As more tribes across the globe lose in their wars to humans and other settled races, Orcs increasingly choose to reside in Salt in Wounds. The distinction between ‘Orc’ and ‘Half-Orc’ is blurry, and often influenced by culture, language, manner and dress over ‘objective’ standards (although, generally, the more ‘human featured’ the individual are deemed ‘half-orcs’ and are afforded greater the privileges).

### Druegar

These so called ‘Deep Dwarves’ experience sensitivity to sunlight and a culture that celebrates oppressive work and brutal hierarchies for their own sake. Since a few hundred emigrated to Salt in Wounds they have massively gained in power and influence, finding the city much to their liking.

### Mites

Considered odd (and unusually spiteful) by other races, these bone-white halfling sized fey breed quickly and generally don’t learn much beyond some simple language and the most pressing skills/concerns to get through the day. They are usually used for the worst and most dangerous jobs as a life as a worker in Salt in Wounds is -for them- preferable to most other lives in the wider world since Mites tend to be predated on by monstrous elements and eliminated by the demi-human races alike.

## The Salt in Wounds Calendar

Salt in Wounds uses a simplified calendar based on seasons rather than month. The annual tracking of the calendar begins with the binding of the Tarrasque, hence the current year is 277 AB (After Binding). While the nature of the city’s unique weather removes most of the markers of traditional seasons the citizenry still count by them. Each season is broken up into 12 seven day weeks for a total of 84 days per season. A date might read ’74 AB – Summer – 37’ for the 37th day of summer, 74 years after the binding of the Tarrasque. One quirk of this calendar is that, since a year on Synoma is 337 days long, a single ‘gone day’ separates one year from the next which is celebrated between last year’s winter and the next year’s spring.

## Festivals of Salt in Wounds

The City of Salt in Wounds features hundreds of celebrations, block parties, and feast days ranging from local neighborhood affairs to events put on by obscure religious sects to bacchanalias that surge through the municipality sweeping up young and old alike. What follows are three of the largest and most significant festivals of the city.

### *Binder’s Glory*

Celebrated 10-13 Fall each year, this festival is held to commemorate the binding of the Tarrasque. Binder’s Glory is the largest celebration in the city. Almost all laborers will take three days off of work to drink, dress in garish costumes, and revel. Binder’s Glory draws wealthy visitors from hundreds of miles away and features a large parade where floats and performers reenact the now near mythical binding of the Tarrasque. It is customary for each of these reenactment to be expected to be ‘bigger and better’ than the year before and no small amount of intrigue goes into this celebrations as the reenactments are used to shape the narrative about the city’s history (and thus plays into the politics of today).

### Gone Day

Celebrated on ‘Gone Day’ Between Winter and Spring, Gone Day is traditionally light hearted affair in the usually dour Salt in Wounds. Numerous minor laws (anti-defamation statutes, trade restrictions, and so on) are temporarily rescinded as citizens are encouraged to act out of character. Gone Day is also a popular time to make overtures of romance, friendship, business, of any other category of offer where one might fear rejection. If such offers are accepted, much the better. If such advances are unwelcome/rebuffed, it is customary for all parties to act as though nothing ever happened as the ‘incident’ happened during a day that ‘doesn’t actually exist.’

### Unity Day

Celebrated in the middle of Winter, the Church of Monad convinced the city fathers decades ago to set aside a single day to officially honor learning, quiet contemplation, and ‘the unifying principle(s) that connect all things.’ However, what was intended to be a somber day of reflection has largely morphed into a cross between a tradeshow and a session of one upmanship between the city’s many alchemists who wished to demonstrate their learning. Unity Day also tends to attract visitors from the all over world who travel to see what the famous Salt in Wounds Alchemists have come up with. At midnight, the city unleashes a stream of fireworks that rivals any display found anywhere in the world.

## Industry, Work and Economy in Salt in Wounds

The Tarrasque is utilized in a number of different ways to feed the populace and grow the economy of Salt in Wounds. And, n recent decades, the city has been developing in ways never anticipated. What follows is an overview and common knowledge of some of the most common Tarrasque derived products, industrial, and trade activity performed by the city.

**Meat**

The most commonly used part of the Tarrasque is the meat; muscle and fat tissue cut out and consumed. Meat comes in many forms the most common of which is stringy basale which is boiled in bulk and practically (or in some cases, literally) given away. As such, it is considered the lowest class foodstuff of Salt in Wounds. From there, there is a range of cuts to satisfy every palate and price range from almost fishy osseous to prime, red flank to all the most rarified plates of pith. But of all cuts, the tongue is most valued which is (officially) served only to high ranking God-Butchers and honored guests following a successful Rite of Mutual-Recognition. However, there are numerous black-marketers which claim to sell tongue for exorbitant prices (and at least one who actually does).  
Salt in Wounds is a huge exporter of heavily salted jerky which can remain edible for months or even years and -depending on region- will be the most common component of long lasting ‘trail rations.’

**Horn & Bone**  
  
Low grade Tarrasque horn & bone can be shaped by specialized bone smiths in nearly any application that would commonly call for steel (as these materials exhibit similar hardness, ability to keep an edge, and other functionalities). As such, armor, weaponry, and tools in Salt in Wounds and the region beyond are commonly made from this material. Such items have the advantage over steel in being relatively inexpensive. They have the disadvantage that -when damaged or suffering from wear- they are impossible to repair and must instead be replaced.  
  
High grade Tarrasque scale or horn has properties similar to adamantine and is extensively used 1) by God-Butchers to cut into the Tarrasque and 2) by bone smiths whose craft tools are made of the substance. Such tools and weaponry must be specially cared for and occasionally ‘fed’ or they cease approximating adamantine and will instead degenerate into ‘low’ grade status (roughly akin in hardness and utility to steel). ‘Feeding’ involves heating the item in question in a forge or open flame and then quenching it in a small quantity of fresh Tarrasque blood mixed with water or tens of gallons of other blood which is absorbed into the item.   
  
**Scale**  
Scale is hard to harvest and even harder to work with, meaning that only a small handful of armorers make use of it (and Tarrasque scale is invariably used for armor). Still, despite this fact Tarrasque Scale Armor has entered the popular imagination of sentient beings the world over as it is known to grant wearers a small fraction of one or more to the Tarrasque’s defensive abilities. Like high grade horn and bone, this material must be carefully maintained and ‘fed’ to maintain its special functions.  
  
**Alchemy & Medicine**  
  
Alchemy derived from Tarrasque extracts is the second most important industry in Salt in Wounds. Such palliatives, aids, weapons, and boons come in a dizzying array and have been known to provide functions as disparate as regeneration, induction of rage, unending capacity for self-indulgence, avoidance of fear, and so on. Of special note are so called ‘blood tokens’ - thin, coin sized wafers made via alchemical distillation that double as a secondary, de facto currency of Salt in Wounds. These tokens are actually comprised primarily of blood which is processed with small, alchemically active amounts of other, rarer reagents. Those skilled in the art (and possessing the proper equipment) can extract one of any number of alchemical functions from these bits, or use a sufficient quantity of specially treated blood tokens in substitution for an otherwise unobtainable reagent.

**Clearing House for Magical Items & Banking**

Beyond its industry derived from the Tarrasque, Salt in Wounds has developed in recent years into a central merchant and banking hub. It’s status as an independent power (with low taxes) and trade surpluses has made it especially attractive to those who wish to trade magical items and devices. The presence of these high value items serves as the collateral for much lending and finance, often used to finance adventuring or merchant expeditions (which then further feed the blooming financial industry). Especially canny, financially minded individuals believe that this industry may well one day supersede Tarrasque derived manufacture and food production as the prime driver of Salt in Wound’s economy (with Salt in Wounds security enshrining it as a the ‘true neutral’ power that will allow even enemy states to conduct business).

### [special] 10 Delicacies of Salt in Wounds

*Five-Roast* Five-Roast is a stirge stuffed in a singing house-lizard stuffed in a hatchet beak stuffed in a juvenile ramora flea stuffed in an axe beak. Before encasing it in the next layer, each animal is cleaned, skinned/plucked, coated in   
an individualized rub meant to complement its unique flavor, wrapped in thin strips of Tarrasque flank. Five-Roasts are then cooked on a spit for no less than 20 hours, the skin crackling and caramelizing. Five-roasts are usually served as part of feast day celebrations.

*Master’s Tongue* This rarefied cut of Tarrasque tongue is only ever served at the celebratory feast when a Journeyman God-Butcher completes their rite of mutual recognition to become a Master God-Butcher; and is usually paired with pickled vegetables and brine soup. Being invited to such a feast is considered recognition of an individual’s ‘elite’ status.

*Sweet Meat Jerky* Tarrasque fat coated with honey & root spice and smoked for days, this chew is favored by workman who often gnaw on the taffy-like confection for hours. Sweet Meat Jerky can hold its sweet flavor for hours upon end, and –supposedly- chewing on the substance can sustain one for days on end making it a favorite of harried workman without time to sit down for a meal and aristocratic dandies trying to watch their figure alike.

*Marsh Stew* Despite the unappetizing name, a hearty soup comprised of half a dozen varieties of mushroom and delicately seasoned has been all the culinary rage of late. The gastronomically adventurous search high and low through the Tail Stones for the best, most authentic street stalls run by Grippli to cook this. Gathering ingredients for the stew has sent many adventurers to the Heartsblood Marsh, not all of whom return.

*Rat Crunch* Rats are not a common pest in Salt in Wounds (due to the general absence of water, singing house lizards seem to better serve that urban ecological niche) but are not wholly unknown and often stow away in caravans. Enterprising trappers obsessively seek to hunt for these creatures as their skeletons are considered an appetizing way to add a pleasant crunchy texture to casseroles of Tarrasque pseudo-liver and imported potato.

*Bladed Bakeup* A bake of Axebeak eggs, Tarrasque bacon, peppers, tomatoes, and (for those who can afford it) pig eye is traditional fare for a late, rest-day breakfast and is colloquially known as an excellent hangover cure.

*Bread* Unadorned bread is considered a delicacy within Salt in Wounds as flour has four times the normal cost (due to Salt in Wound's extreme distance from any fields and an endemic yeast quickly rots stores of the stuff). As such, bread is not a ‘staple’ as it is for the rest of the world. The bakers of Salt in Wounds are rare and tend to be extremely skilled in their craft (so as not to waste flour) and visitors often describe the bread of Salt in Wounds –from light, fluffy blanch bread to heart almost loamy black bread- as ‘perfect.’

*Ambergris* Tarrasque Ambergris is worth its weight in gold (due to its use amongst perfumers and its reputations as being an aphrodisiac). The extremely wealthy eat it basted, sometimes served with eggs or thin slices of imported celery & rice.

*All-Color Pudding* There are very few orchards in Salt in Wounds, and fruit is generally an expensively imported item. Early on, merchants would disguise their (partially) rotten apples, pears, and more by mashing their fruit and boiling it into a pudding. Over time, tastes evolved to the point that this is now the preferred way for citizens to consume this manner of foodstuff; even perfectly preserved fruit is usually mashed and boiled together. The traditional recipe for All-Color Pudding is one part grape to one part apple to one part pear to one part squash liberally seasoned with cloves and tributary leaf.

*Tarrasque Sash* Custom (and common-sense) holds that Tarrasque flesh should be served well-done, but raw or lightly-pickled Tarrasque flesh (called Sash) can be served with vinegar and garlic paste. There are different notions about how to do this while minimizing the risk of being 'corrupted' by the Tarrasque, but Tarrasque Sash is only ever consumed by the extremely decadent or foolhardy.

## Salt in Wounds and Water

When the Tarrasque was first bound, a large, sweet stream -almost a river in its own right- ran nearby the fortress Salzinwuun. Along with several wells the watch dug, the denizens of the fortress and early binders felt that they would always be well supplied with ample water to sustain the men and animals.  
The spreading of the Tarrasque’s essence into the stream, the soil, and the surrounding water tables proved this early optimism unfounded.  
Within months of the Tarrasque’s binding, the water downstream of the beast became fouled for dozens of miles; it looked and tasted of blood and any who drank of it were sickened (or worse). Efforts were made to rely more heavily on the wells until they too were corrupted with the red essence of the perpetually slaughtered Tarrasque. During this time, the volume of the stream’s flow increased; some alchemists theorizing that the spilled blood of the Tarrasque itself continues to regenerate. And so the flow off from Salt in Wounds was renamed the Red River.  
Daily, haulers would travel upstream to fetch water for the men and beasts of burdens. As time passed however, water further and further upriver was corrupted until the men despaired that they would lose Salt in Wounds. However, this crisis happened right around the ascendancy of the nascent city’s economic viability, providing the funds for a massive engineering project; the Clear Water Aqueduct.  
  
**The Clear Water Aqueduct**  
  
Hundreds of miles upstream, far from the corruption of Tarrasque essence, the river was diverted onto a massive aqueduct which carries water safely to the city. Water is drawn off of this vital piece of infrastructure, and carted to market to be sold by the water hauler’s guild. There is worry that eventually, even the distant headwaters that feed the raised aqueduct will become corrupted, as the Tarrasque’s essence slowly creeps uphill, claiming ever more acres to its twisted nature. But at the current rate of ecological change, the city still has several decades before that becomes an issue.  
When allowing the Red River to flow unchecked was deemed to be an environmental crisis of the most devastating kind, the mad Gnome Druid Afrindi Gunterhix diverted the waters as well as imported and modified hundreds of organisms to create Heartsblood Marsh.  
  
  
**Food & Water Prices**  
Food -at least food that can be obtained from the Tarrasque- is significantly less expensive (1/10 Normal Cost) however, due to the cost of water ration costs are identical to what one would find in any other large city.  
  
Water is generally affordable to all but the poorest residents; the increased cost of hydration generally counterbalancing the decreased cost in food to create a cost of living basically in keeping with (or even significantly lower than) other cities. One large exception however is that the keeping of traditional animals (horses, dogs, etc) is seen as prohibitively expensive by all but the wealthiest, and individuals who own, ride, or otherwise use such animals are automatically assumed to be extremely wealthy. Every such animal kept costs the same in upkeep as an average person. Most Salt in Wounds residents favor Axe Beaks (as a replacement mount or draft beast) or hatchet beaks (as replacement for dogs) who -like many other birds of prey- draw their water from the meat they consume.  
  
**Types of Water**

* **Snow Melt** hauled from the local mountains, this is usually seen as a prestige purchase (although sourcing water this way has the added benefit of preventing a complete monopoly capture by the Water Hauler’s guild).
* **Aqueduct** The main source of water for Salt in Wounds. Clear, safe, and affordable (for now) to all but the absolutely poorest residents.
* **Rain** Neither common nor uncommon but always appreciated and directed into thirsty rain barrels.
* **Riverfall** Where the aqueduct terminates on the north west corner of Salt in Wounds, any water not already drawn out of it simply spills into the ancient path of the stream. From here, it meets run off of the Tarrasque’s butchering and soaks up corruption from the very earth itself. The extremely poor and desperate try to draw this water (cost free) before it is irrevocably fouled by the blood of the Tarrasque.

Special: Water Dens

In a city like Salt-in-Wounds, companionship can be as vital as water. Water Dens are billed as social hookah smoking dens, staffed by gorgeous hosts who handle everything from serving drinks, tobacco selection, entertainment, pointed conversation and -of course- water.

The quality of a water den is judged not only by the hosts and menu, but what isn't available as well. Higher end establishments don't offer sex or even touching as part of their services, with some existing simply as a tavern for successful merchants and adventurers that is constantly filled with beautiful people. These back-drop hosts rarely interact with the patrons, simply existing as eye candy in a city filled with mutations and hard people. Foreign travelers with coin will often use these higher end Water Dens as a place to practice local dialects in a place of relative quiet, with specially built walls absorbing outside sound and the rumble of the Tarrasque.

A majority of high-end establishments are under the purview of House Impertabo, with its most famous Water Den known as ‘the Library.’ More information about this location can be found in the ‘Beast Crown District’ section of this book.

## Weather

Salt in Wounds ranges in temperature akin to what one would find in a humid jungle, although it is surrounded by freezing mountains. Salt in Wounds experiences rain occasionally, but is more likely to experience 'slurries' (name for the liquid or partially melted snow or hail that rarely falls on the city).

## The Salt in Wounds Mindset

The culture and common mindset of Salt in Wounds is quite unique to the city. As one of (if not the most) populous cities on the planet, Salt in Wound’s society as a whole is extremely insular and individuals tend to be focused on their own affairs. While traders come from the world over to buy alchemical and magical goods derived from the Tarrasque (and sell to the huge domestic market) the city’s relative isolation ensures that only the most dedicated and skilled visit (although fortunes are made in such ways). Most who travel to the city never leave, and absorbing several waves of emigres (most often in the form of peoples often fleeing famine) has kept Salt in Wounds a polyglot society with individuals at various levels of being ‘salted.’

The masses tend to be extremely industrious though with lives that are regularly punctuated by extreme binges of revelatory or even criminal behavior. The aristocracy meanwhile is largely obsessed with their own pleasures or the greater glory of their house at the expense of the city at large. Uniquely, Salt in Wounds tends to be comparatively under-militarized ever since 3rd House Binder-Lord Huzawai turned back the Wyren Siege by threatening to release the Tarrasque – and the city has been largely unmolested by traditional military forces ever since.

The people of Salt in Wounds think and care little for the outside world. With the exception of some luxury goods (most especially spices, intoxicants, and varieties of food) or as a chance to make their fortunes (either through mercantile or adventuring schemes) most assume that the Tarrasque will provide for any need (and in this they have historically been proven more right than wrong). This makes important projects like securing possible water supplies difficult to organize for and usually means that Salt in Wounds susceptible to price gouging by organizations like the Water Hauler’s Guild.

The people of Salt in Wounds are largely inured to pain, death, and mutilation; legal torture, bar fights that maim or even kill, and industrial maiming of workers are all seen as normal (if not desirable) by the majority. Even as mutation plagues sweep through much of the city, most citizens are smugly proud that even the poorest don’t go hungry in the city.

## Colors, Symbols & Iconography of Salt in Wounds

As a polyglot metropolis, Salt in Wounds is awash with color, symbols, and imagery imported from dozens of ethnicities and cultures. However, certain motifs carry over into the sigils, seals, and other identifying marks of the aristocratic houses, merchant guilds, and those belonging to high profile individuals.  
Imagery featuring the Tarrasque (usually heavily stylized) reigns supreme, and such designs often place special emphasis on the creature’s jaws. Icons of the Tarrasque are usually shown pierced by a harpoon (the placement of which suggestive of Meridian house loyalty or kinship) or wrapped in chain. Images of Axebeaks, ghouls, alchemical glassware, and the oversized swords of God-Butchers are also utilized regularly. The official colors of Salt in Wounds are dark red (for blood), parchment tan (for flesh), and blue-purple (for the notion that every man is a ‘king’ in independent Salt in Wounds.   
The official flag of Salt in Wounds is the bowing head of the Tarrasque bleeding from the contact points where a crown of thirteen harpoons pierce it over a blue-bordered white background. The official motto of Salt in Wounds is ‘Bind the Savage, Honor the Deal, Feed the People.’

### Crime and Punishment

The city of Salt in Wounds tends to have extremely harsh penalties for infractions (although imprisonment or hard labor are almost never used). The most common punishments are fines (even for serious crimes for those who can afford it) followed by flogging, branding, a variable number of points of maiming, execution and truncation.  
Points of maiming follow a regular (cumulative) order and thus the relative disfigurement of an individual often provides information about the severity of their crimes. This maiming is in the following order: the extraction of an eye, the loss of five toes (across both feet), the loss of five fingers (across both hands), the loss of a hand, the loss of an arm, the loss of a foot, the loss of a leg. This order was selected as it was deemed to give the guilty the best chance to continue contributing economically. If a criminal ever reaches eight points of maiming, they are given the choice between truncation (amputation of both legs, both arms, tongue, and gouging of both eyes) or execution. Parts taken by these punishments are usually auctioned to alchemists constructing flesh (or tarrasque flesh) golems. Adventurers, veterans, and even laborers who have lost limbs are usually assumed to be former or current criminals.

[special]Example Crimes and their Punishments   
  
*Smuggling* Fines up to Five Times Value, Branding and/or up to 3 Points Maiming   
*Conspiring to End the Tarrasque's Binding* Truncation or Execution  
*Theft* 1 point maiming  
*Runaway Slave* Branding, Flogging, and 1 Point Maiming  
*Murder* Execution  
*Magical Creation or Unauthorized Import of Water* Fines up to Double the Water's Value and up to 3 Points Maiming  
*Assault* Branding and up to 2 Points Maiming  
*Propagandizing* Special Case: 'propagandizing' is any speech deemed to 'threaten the economic, social, or cultural well-being of the city' and is a charge which can only be brought by a Binder-Lord. After conviction, the accusing Binder-Lord determines punishment which can range from a single copper fine to truncation, depending on recommendation of the Binder-Lord.  
*Unlicensed Ghoulification* Destruction of Ghoul and 1 Point Maiming for the Practitioner (if applicable)  
*Use of a Command Word by any Non Binder-Lord* Truncation  
*Use of Magic or Alchemy to Remedy Court Ordered Maiming* Maiming Equal to what was healed/was proposed to be healed.

### Coins of Salt in Wounds

While awash with foreign money, as a point of pride Salt in Wounds mints their own coinage. The currency of the city features several distinct features. First, these copper, silver, gold and platinum tokens do not sport portraits but instead are pressed with famous phrases, maxims, and laws spouted by the aristocracy: which phrase is selected for placement on this year’s platinum (and -to a lesser degree- other metals) is a source of much competition and political maneuvering by the Binder-Lords.

In addition, the center of each coin features a small conical point on one side with a small hollow that can accommodate another coin’s point on the reverse face. These are referred to as the ‘tip’ and ‘divot’ respectively. This construction makes Salt in Wounds coins easy to stack securely on top of one another (useful for quick counting and pushing stacks of coin back and forth across a table without risk of toppling). Coins are usually kept in neat rows within pouches with reinforced corners. Out of towners can often be identified by how they improperly shove coins into their pockets/bags where they are liable to jut uncomfortably into flesh (or poke out of fabric). However, some especially cautious merchants are known to deliberately keep the tips of their coin stacks pressing into their skin to be aware if there’s a change in weight resulting from a visit by one of Salt in Wound’s notorious pickpockets or as part of a religious practice known as ‘merchant’s penance.’

To ‘know the pain of their stack’ refers to an individual with business acumen or is otherwise good with money.

When discussing transactions or jobs; commerce can be described as ‘tip’ which means ‘above board’ and can be discussed openly, while ‘divot’ dealings are secretive, under the table, and usually of dubious legality (if not wholly black market).

*Slang Terms for the Denominations of Coin*

Copper | Spike

Silver | Scale

Gold | Bone

Platinum | Horn

**Language and Slang**

More or less any resident of Salt in Wounds speaks common, and small enclaves of speakers of every language can be found within city limits.

Salt in Wounds is also proud of its slang

Salt in Wounds Slang

* *By the 13 (Meridians)* Curse akin to taking a god’s name in vain
* *Twelfey* or *Twelfth man* Insult used to denote someone or something as idiotic
* *Bone Sap* A term for success or ease
* *Tip Job* Legitimate Business
* *Divot Job* Criminal (or at least dubiously legal) activity
* *Last Cuts* or *Last Wednesday's Cuts* Term for trash, garbage, shit; exceptionally low quality and undesirable; often used to sexually demean a person.
* *Burke* A hard man or woman well suited to life in Salt in Wounds
* *Scraper/Skav* Slang for a low class person/scavenger, especially used for people who seem to have no regular employment and are most likely criminals.
* *Know the Pain of One’s Stack* used to describe individuals with financial acumen and/or wealthy (generally).

## Salt in Wounds and Morality

Salt in Wounds is an evil place. While the binding of the Tarrasque is perhaps necessary, the city has been built upon its callous torture with no current legitimate efforts to minimize its suffering. The evils of slavery are regarded as commonplace (with regular arguments as to the rightness of owning slaves or how it can even be better for them), and numerous historical and ongoing atrocities (the literal and cultural genocide of the local orcs & stone giants, the dictatorial powers of the Binder-Lords, the economic collusion and abuse by the various merchant organizations) are regularly excused when they are not actively celebrated. More or less everyone in the city is party to this, and while that does not mean that every individual is evil it does tend to engender a general disregard to inflicting pain and suffering. As such, a significant minority (and most of the leadership of the city) can be considered to be evil. Like every population however, the majority should be considered ‘neutral’ that is, primarily motivated by their own self interest though generally unwilling to hurt others in the pursuit of their own ends and -when doing evil- usually do so out of a place of ignorance or cultural inertia rather than special malice. (Though it should be pointed out that this ‘neutral’ percentage is the majority by a smaller margin than can be found elsewhere).

There are how exceptional good individuals; out of town adventurers or travelers, idiosyncratic individuals or families, or even those rare creatures working for one of the secret factions laboring to wholly overturn the horrifying status quo.

Due to its strictly hierarchical and legalistic government the city as a whole can be considered lawful, although chaotic individuals can easily thrive in the city as rampant corruption affords many opportunities to act freely for oneself.

# Districts & Places

Relevant Fiction

## The Fortress Salzinwuun

Even the most strident critics of the Tarrasque’s binding –those who preach endlessly about how the creature must be released or slain- must admit that Salzinwuun is a wonder. The modern day fortress walls are over a hundred feet high, constructed of smooth black granite. The skill and craft of the stone giant builders has left barely an inch of space between the seer-mortared blocks; only the most skilled climbers could hope to find toe or finger holds. A faint discoloration betrays where the east facing wall was repaired following the 12th Meridian crisis.  
Still referred to as a fortress, Salzinwuun dwarfs most of the continent's castles. Where one would normally expect a keep lays the living, howling Tarrasque. Whereas most similar structures have defensive options aimed outward, Salzinwuun has numerous offensive emplacements aimed both in as well as out: arrow slits and parapets to keep the rest of the city and any would be invaders out, massive ballistas (their bolts affixed to massive chains sunk into the foundation) pointed towards the Tarrasque to keep it *in*. First time visitors often confuse the emergency weaponry (of which the wall mounted ballistas are the most prominent) with the weapon-like cutting tools (belly lifts, extraction screws, scalpel-rams) the God-Butchers and Marrow Miners utilize to run their operations.  
Besides the gates, extraction tools, and last ditch weaponry the interior of Salzinwuun also sports numerous first stage processing infrastructure: from house sized vats and kettles for rendering fat and boiling piss and other liquids, to sieves and sifters the size of alleyways for doing rough sorting before exportation to the Process Guild. Salzinwuun also features numerous ‘roof stacks’ (covered, elevated platforms) where large scale exports are held for up to two days while awaiting sale or contracted pickup (usually, anything extracted from the Tarrasque not claimed and transported out the fortress will be dumped into the drain lines to the Red River).  
The largest structure inside Salzinwuun is the God-Butcher’s mess hall, a looming—if simple—building usually filled with the sounds of raucous laughter and filled with endless tables and kitchen facilities to feed workers (though this is off limits to Marrow Miners).

Notable Locations & Gates of Salzinwuun

* *Prime Gate* Prime Gate is set in the west which serves as the main thoroughfare. This is almost always a snarl of traffic as merchants and others seek to move under the double raised portcullis and the looming murder-holes between. God-Butchers man checkpoints just without and within; verifying bills of lading, inspecting cargoes, and doing what they can to facilitate the currents of men and meat.
* *Giant's Gate* Giant’s Gate is almost impossible to spot when closed, but can be found north of the west facing Prime Gate. This exit appears simply as another section of wall, curiously with rail tracks emanating from the fortress. However, when the massive interior cranks are turned with superhuman strength what looks like an ordinary stretch of wall shifts, lifts to allow egress by massive, rune inscribed stone giants hauling huge carts filled with meat, lard, bone, and other ephemera delivered in bulk to various Process Guild contacts. No entry is allowed through Giant’s Gate (the carts are hauled easily through Prime Gate at the end of the day) and anyone attempting to enter here would likely be trampled by exiting giants or their cart. Alternately -should the unwary manage to survive those hazards- they would be slain by well armed God-Butchers who jealously guard this gate.
* *Butcher’s Gate:* Butcher’s Gate is a small entrance (the size of a double-wide door) south of Prime Gate. Butcher’s Gate is utilized by God-Butchers and the extremely well connected (Binder-Lords, the wealthiest Blood Merchants, etc.) to avoid the chaos of Prime Gate and quickly get into and out of Salzinwuun.
* *The Charnel Sluice Grates* The Charnel Sluice Grates are embedded into the south side of Salzinquun are more utilitarian, and are not utilized by sentient beings. Around the Tarrasque deep channels (crossed at regular intervals by bridges) have been dug to direct the flow of excess blood and slurry ground waste out of Salzinwuun through massive steel grates out into the Red River. The grates (and the channels that feed into and out of them) must be regularly cleaned (a common punishment for God-Butchers who have angered their superiors in some way, although something that has in recent years been subcontracted to Marrow Miners). While the defenders of Salzinwuun doubt any would brave the foulness of the outflow to try and gain access, they still diligently patrol this feature.
* *12th Gate* 12th Gate -sometimes referred to as the Gate of the Marrow Miners- is an entrance/exit built into the east facing section of wall that was damaged during the 12th Meridian Crisis. This entrance was constructed when 12th House contracted the Marrow Miners for extraction and binding services. While not as impressive as Prime Gate, 12th Gate is still a heavily utilized entrance and exit, though delays to use it are much more pronounced as the God-Butchers who defend it regularly stop travelers or traffic altogether to conduct (sometimes justified, but often punitive) searches of the Marrow Miners and their haul. God-Butchers claim that all contraband is smuggled via 12th Gate. While this isn’t entirely accurate, numerous criminal elements do make extensive use of the Gate of the Marrow Miners (in addition to making use the Guild of Marrow Miners themselves).
* *The Butcher’s Hall*: Combination office, mess hall, and barracks available for all God-Butchers and their guests (though many choose to reside elsewhere). The meat served here -usually cooked on huge barbeques- is considered the best in the city.
* *Ballistas 1-13* Set into the parapets of Salt in Wounds, these massive ballistas are the rebuilt and maintained siege engines originally used to bind the Tarrasque. While not currently loaded with immoveable harpoons, they still maintain that capacity (should the need arise to again fire an enchanted bolt), though their regular ammunition is capable of causing massive damage and (hopefully) overwhelming the Tarrasque’s ability to regenerate should the need arise.
* *Lord and Lady’s Pagoda* A Raised platform set near the south side wall, this structure was built to entertain visiting Binder-Lords (or other honored gates) so they could ‘inspect’ work while being somewhat isolated from it. A small cadre of servants maintains a supply of delicious potables, perfumed handkerchiefs, and other luxuries to supply for any visitors.

## Tail Stones

Formerly referred to as the Hind Quarter, the Tail Stones District is the area north east of the fortress Salzinwuun, the central core of Salt in Wounds. The Hind Quarter was massively damaged during the 12th Meridian Crisis with thousands killed and many more wounded. The underfunded repair efforts for the homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure in this area is still underway (where it has not been completely abandoned).

By far the poorest district of the city, the Tail Stones is only marginally patrolled by the House Militias, with control largely ceded to half a dozen gangs which pay dues to the Binder-Lords and their militia captains.

While (the still evident) destruction, criminal control, and rampant poverty here keep many with alternatives living elsewhere the Tail Stones is still a bustling hub of cottage industry. Proprietors of these businesses often favor these streets -mean though they may be- for the relative inexpense of setting up shop here; or alternately the lax enforcement, favored by those who find paying a gang protection fee is simpler than paying one of the roaming tax and trade enforcers that are all too common in the rest of the city (but who often decide the risk-reward ratio for attempting to collect in the district reason enough to avoid the area).

At night, the district fills with the smells of cooking from hundreds of homes and street stalls from dozens of immigrant ethnic groups. It is said that for those who know their way around can find better food in the Tail Stones than even the best posh & polished eateries of Beast Crown.

**Notable Locations in the Tail Stones**

* The Guild Hall of the Marrow Miners - This large building is the grandest structure in the Tail Stones. Built several years ago, the hall is seen as a symbol of hope for many of residents of the Tail Stones and is always a bustling hub of activity.
* The Pewter Cup: This lower middle-class ale house is known for its pewter cups – imported at some expense to limit their effectiveness as bludgeoning weapons. Run by \_, this tavern is clean, generally safe, and favored by many Process Guild members.
* The Rachi - Largely (if somewhat miraculously) untouched by the 12th Meridian Crisis, this decades old Gladiatorial Arena is the most popular entertainment destination in the city, regularly attracting visitors from all walks of life. The arena in particular favors recruiting adventurers, whose foreign magics (and bags of magical tricks) make for captivating battles that always draw huge crowds and profitable speculator bets. In these fights, anything goes—save mind effect magic as it’s banned for failing to be ‘showy’ enough to please the crowd. Rumors of the arena staff sabotaging/paying off combatants in order to ‘beat that odds’ are roundly dismissed.
* Gothmork’s Grub Hub – Tavern favored by goblinoids and the desperately poor. Word on the street is, any kind of criminal service can be purchased here for rock bottom prices (for more information see appendix 1).
* Kutu Lampi - This one of a kind business that resembles a spa/public bath but instead provides spawning opportunities to Salt in Wound’s Grippli population. Securing a small fortune’s worth of fresh water, the business provides a place for fertilization, gestation, and ‘the winnowing’ (ritualized family consumption of **most** tadpoles) necessary for the grippli reproductive cycle. Currently, only the wealthiest of the city’s grippli residents can afford the Kutu Lampi’s services, though owner \_ is endlessly scheming on how to secure a larger supply of affordable fresh water even as it’s common for thieves to scheme how to steal or syphon off the impressive (and well fortified) reservoir that sustains the business.

## Sage’s Row

Sage's Row is a series of interlocking streets famed for its preponderance of alchemists and other researchers of the arcane and mundane alike. By city edict, every other building sports tall smoke stacks - venting clouds of colored fog and ash of variable toxicity. Most times, a breeze takes the offending miasma and disperses it ‘harmlessly’... though if the skies are still the offending air will settle onto the avenues. Residents get a sense of what color\kinds of smoke should be avoided (instincts that are usually cross referenced to the active times of the alchemists with reputations for producing the most caustic substances).  
Alchemical innovations pioneered in Sage's Row are exported the world over. Inhabitants are notoriously absent minded to the point that it's joked that the average Sage Rower wouldn't notice that the Tarrasque had escaped and leveled half the city till a week later when they failed to receive one of their regularly scheduled deliveries.

### Notable Locations

#### Testing Field

After a number of 'incidents' that resulted in property damage and death, a barren field was left open for alchemists and other inventors to test new devices, magics, and even mutagenic effects. This testing area is surrounded by high fences and eagerly watched over by 5th House Militia and curious gawkers alike. At least once a day, something brought here explodes or transforms into a rampaging monster. The genius of the Testing Field is that the problem can easily be contained (with perhaps only the creator slain by his hubris instead of injuring valuable buildings).

#### Seconds and Bits

At the boundary between Sage's Row & the Tail Stones, Seconds and Bits is a sprawling emporium that sells junk, castoffs, and the reclaimed 'treasures' of laboratories that burst into flame. A little of everything can be found here at a great price... though no warranties are offered and all is expected to work not quite as advertised.

The Flask of Inspiration

The most famous bar in Sage’s Row, this business is differentiated by its working apothecary. A three story tavern serves alcohol and assorted depressants on the first floor, hallucinogenic (or otherwise unknown concoctions) onthe second, and stimulants from coffee to spiced tea and beyond on the third floor. The selections also increase in potency from the southside (where the door and stairs are) to the northside. The young and foolhardy are known to dare one another to take a drink from each floor, racing from one floor to the next as quickly as possible.

### The Temple of Reason: This Monadist temple, the most prominent in the world, looks and functions roughly akin to a university, with housing for followers and various educational classes available to the public on a sliding scale. Courses in alchemy, astrology, and Aether theory are costly but are often regarded as the most advanced in the known world. It has become the de facto Alchemical teaching facility for the city. Opinions differ whether the best learning can be found here or at the personal instructions of Master Alchemists who have hoarded private knowledge and developed their craft for decades or even centuries. The church sponsors promising minds who otherwise could not afford their advanced teachings, requiring a demonstration of personal research in their field of expertise in a quarterly qualification event.

## The Beast Crown District

The Beast Crown is the posh district located in the northwest corner of the city, bound to the north by the city’s walls, to the south by Salzinwuun, in the south-west by the Throat and the south east by the Tail Stones.

The district is further divided into House ‘neighborhoods’ - each populated by members and those favored by each Meridian House. Each neighborhood is presided over by a Manor-Tower, a looming structure intended by its owners to display the wealth and power of their respective Meridian House. Most of these towers, intentionally or not, also reflect the character of its house in addition to featuring repeated instances of the house number. Even those unfamiliar with the district can fairly easily find their way around.

The streets here are clean and jealously patrolled. While any may freely access the district, individuals who lack an ‘aristocratic bearing’ (or -alternately- fail to produce a token of a Meridian House) face a veritable inquisition by the resident House Militias, a process that will be repeated every few blocks as a traveler passes into a different house neighborhood.

In addition to serving the sprawling Meridian House families, the Beast Crown District is also home to numerous boutique shops, pricey entertainments & diversions (of which the world famous Salt in Wounds Opera is the most prominent) and most of the official administration buildings of Salt in Wounds including the courts, tax & trade offices, House Militia barracks, and more.

### Notable Locations

#### The Chine Hall

Owned and operated by 8th House, this Salt in Wounds opera house is known to attract skilled players from around the globe who perform to the haunting accompaniment of a custom built organ constructed from hollowed out Tarrasque finger bones.

#### The Stage Courts

Constructed in the style of covered amphitheaters, each of the dozens of courts features seating for hundreds (which have been known to overflow during particularly captivating trials). When in session, each of these courts ring a sitting judge who listens to arguments of accuser and accused before passing judgement (for particularly prominent/important cases, a counsel of six judges will be assembled). Such courts process scores of cases a day, with judgement decided and punishment (usually some form of amputation, mutilation, flogging, branding, or even execution) immediately dispatched in front of the excited crowd. Watching trials is a popular pastime of Salt in Wound residents from all walks of life, with most judges relishing their secondary role as entertainers.

The Manor Towers

Each Binder-Lord or Lady has a fabulous manor tower, which serves as residence, office, playground, and even palace of business for the house. More information of the notable Manor Towers of the Binder Lords can be found in the ‘factions’ section.

The Library

The most famous (or infamous) of Salt in Wound’s myriad of Water Dens, this locale is a whisper-enforced property rumored to be controlled by \_ House. At The Library, the masked owner -known only by his title of ‘Precisi’- whispers orders to their lovely attendants. The Library keeps numerous notebooks with many pages of entries recording details of customer birthdays, personal history, relationship status, business trip schedules, children's profiles and more. When a customer comes back from a business trip, The Precisi instructs a host to askhim about the trip. When it’s his birthday, The Precisi celebrates it with him. The customer is treated as part of a noble family. Reservations are placed months in advance, and it is considered a great honor to receive an invitation (and thus skip all the waiting).

The Library contains an expansive arched hall which consists of a reading room, stack room, and a rotunda for lectures. The library isquite large measuring eighty one feet in length by seventy seven feet in width. Oblong alcoves hold wooden cabinets along walls of which the manuscripts are maintained. In addition there are free-standing bookcases in the center as well as a reading desk. There is no evidence as to how many books The Library harbors although it is estimated that it could accommodate 3000 scrolls.

Rumor holds that The Precisi and the rest of the staff of the Library can link up relevant parties (adventurers and scheming merchants say) in serendipitous encounters that result in new bargains/accords being reached to forward the interests of all parties (including presumably the Library itself and its unknown masters).

## The Throat

Home to merchants, shops, and much of the economic activity that sustains Salt in Wounds, the Throat is the name for the (mainly commercial) district extending roughly from the outer portcullis of the fortress Salzinwuun to the main gate of Salt in Wounds proper. (Of course, commerce extends and pushes ever outward into the spillway). The Throat can further be divided into three main sections:

* High Throat - The first segment is High Throat which is located directly outside Salzinwuun; this is where the freshest cuts of meat are supposed to be had. High Throat also serves as home to a number of mid-list merchants.
* Core Throat - Core Throat is where numerous high end merchants resides, jewelers, slavers and a scattering of alchemists & wizards (though many of these can be found in Sage’s Row or clustered around 5th House’s Manor Tower). This section is sandwiched west of High Throat towards the front gate but spreads out further into the city as many of these vendors prefer not to conduct business along the main thoroughfare of the city.
* Low Throat- Finally, Low Throat is the area around the front gates and known to be home to merchants who are infamously aggressive with visitors and travelers. This more chaotic section houses sellers of everything else, and a little of everything.

Merchants are further organized into clusters; multiple blacksmiths opting to work near to one another, or multiple bakers, or coopers. Hence, while giving directions, a citizen might describe their second floor apartment as ‘Brown Building, Confectioner’s Row, Core Throat.’  
   
Supposedly, the name for this section of the city comes from a joke told by one of the first dozen merchants to encamp around Salzinwuun. Between the intermittent roars of the Tarrasque, the constant sounds of work, and the barking of other sellers; the merchant quipped that ‘Success here has less to due with business acumen, and more to do with the strength of one’s throat.’   
**Notable Locations**  
The Well of Scales A rowdy, roaring gambling and vice den, most illicit substances can be bought and consumed here but the main attraction is a rotating assortment of beast-beast or beast-man fights. While all manner of creatures battle here, owner \_’s taste favor reptilian or amphibian combatants and he is known to pay incredible bounties for any that bring in new or exotic creatures that fit the bill (and will offer to pay well for any amphibian or reptilian patron for their ‘participation’ regardless of their interest or prowess). Small fortunes can be made in enthusiastic betting, and \_ has a profitable side-hustle selling monster parts to alchemists (claiming any corpses or ‘loose parts’ as spoils for the ‘house.’

Skorns Ironworks The renowned (if somewhat unique) forge does steady business in the city. Skorn -the dwarven proprietor and his staff- specialize in the sale, repair, and (on occasion) production of metal weapons, armor, and various other implements. While metal is largely replaced by bone, horn, and scale as a production material, Skorn (in addition to half a dozen other, smaller shops) are able to carve out a niche for themselves focusing on customers who -for whatever reason- prefer wielding steel. Various individuals seeking to hire out of town adventurers or mercenaries frequently use the bulletin boards (or in person greetings) around Skorn’s Ironworks as the majority of his customers are out of towners.

Herald’s Tavern

An otherwise nondescript slinger of libations, Herald’s Tavern is remarkable for employing several heralds who deliver speeches summarizing news of the day. Different hours of the day have a different focus, from economic news to local politics to the world at large to even fashion and entertainment. In recent months, sensing the ongoing rise of literacy and publications of broadsheets, the Tavern has been experimenting with utilizing puppets and vellum dolls to act out key stories.

The establishment has been regularly frequented by agents of the various Meridian Houses in order to keep close eye for any hint of ‘sedition’ or ‘propaganda.’ They’ve largely been unable to gain access to the invite only ‘backroom’ where politics can be discussed freely and information unfavorable to the Binder-Lords can be exchanged without fear of consequence.

The Unmaimed Man This tavern is denoted by a sign of a smiling man with broken shackles hanging over the door, and is located in the shadow of the Beast Crown District in the Throat District. It is favored by many who work for the Stage Courts and offers a free drink to anyone tried and either been acquitted, found not-guilty, or sentenced to any punishment less than 1 point maiming. Tavern Keeper \_’s ability to keep the peace between accusers, witnesses, victims and criminals (at least while they’re drinking in her bar) is nigh supernatural.

## Locations Outside the City

## The Spillway

Not technically within the walls, the ‘Spillway’ is still considered part of the city by most. This series of tents and other temporary structures is a sprawling, chaotic marketplace serves as a functional extension of the Throat.

### The Feathered Saddle

This stable -located just beyond the city gates, southeast of the spillway- is known as the best seller of axebeaks, hatchetbeaks, and (occasionally) other draft animals with a breeding program and pedigree that stretches back to before binding. The business is now in the seventh generation family hans, though sisters \_ & \_ (the two primary owners) are often at odds about the future of the ranch: business minded \_ pushing for more profit (generally through lowered standards of breeding and training) while \_ believes in ‘upholding the family tradition’ by resisting any proposed change in the way things are handled.

## The Heartsblood Marsh

Located dozens of leagues south of the city, Heartsblood Marsh is a bizarre swamp where the tips of the mushroom forest climb hundreds of feet into the sky, and the air is alternately thick with clouds of spores and buzzing insects. Disease is rampant, and for that reason alone most travelers avoid it. Huge insects roam, forever feasting on the blood rich fungus, one another, and the unwary. Savage grippli ‘rule’ the swamp, many empowered by weird magic. There is rumor of other, worse things at the core of the swamp.

## The Capcaps

Almost everyone has heard about the tunnels and passageways that riddle the earth below the city of Salt in Wounds – the so called ‘Capcaps.’ Unfortunately, much of what is ‘known’ is incorrect, the product of speculation, hearsay, and unsubstantiated rumor liable to get a would be explorer hopelessly lost.

The Capcaps are an odd mix of ever-changing ankheg hunting-tunnels, the ruined vaults and halls of the sepulchral dwergo city of CarDouf, and the mishmash of (more recent) excavations by sentient creatures that connect and build off the other two. These range from meter wide tubes which can only be crawled through to cavernous amphitheaters which seat hundreds. None of these are sewers however (although some sewage and refuse of various kinds does seep into them) as –instead- waste is generally handled by dumping into the Red River.

God-Butchers dig ‘testing wells’ straight down in order to make seasonal forays into these tunnels, specifically with the aim to secure and destroy any underground access to Salzinwuun and to slay or drive out the Ankhegs that dig their way to the prone Tarrasque to feed. Otherwise, the Capcaps are left unpatrolled and –as such- are favored haunts of smugglers, monsters, and other secret forces drawn to the city but unable to operate in the open.

The Laboratory of Dr. Mundacri

Located three dozen north-east of the Tail Stones District, this complex of house, workshops, and more was established by Dr. Mundacri and his staff several years ago. Dr. Mundacri is (possibly was) one of the finest alchemists of this age who left Salt in Wounds to pursue their research outside of the city’s environs (and in a more controlled environment) by setting up shop in a derelict manor and orchard that had been abandoned when the taint of the Tarrasque soured the land. Provided with men and material, the brilliant researcher vivisected dozens of mutated vagrants and hundreds of exotic beasts to divine their secrets. Before their correspondence with some fellows based in Sage’s Row stopped, Mundacri claimed to have mastered controlled mutations, spliced together numerous chimeric creatures in addition to ‘seizing command the fundamental vital force present in the blood of all to create life itself.’ That, however, was several months ago and no one has heard from Mundacri since; not his friends or their (increasingly impatient) financial backers. The laboratory of Dr. Mundacri is comprised of a main house, servant house and guest house, as well as tens of subterranean chambers dug to house experiments, supplies and staff.

### The Camp of the Mammoth Wardens

The Mammoth Wardens are the remaining fraction of the tribe of Stone Giants who escaped enslavement and now eke out an existence amongst the mountains that ring Salt in Wounds, their numbers increased somewhat by the inducted members –mostly ‘small people’ druids and rangers who have ties to the Circle of Release. The camp moves monthly (on moonless nights) and the tents that comprise are continually re-painted to blend into the surrounding environment. In addition, the camp exercises extreme fire discipline (to eliminate or hide any smoke) and makes regular use of hidden caves amongst the crags. It is to this mobile camp that runaway slaves and others fleeing Salt in Wounds often seek, although most die of exposure before ever locating it.

### Shatter Peak Mass Grave

Forty miles east of Salt in Wounds, the binding armies first made battle against the Tarrasque. Adopting a fighting retreat, thousands died in the long valley, a trail of slain stretching leagues until the Tarrasque was finally bound. In the chaos following the battle (where the binders struggled with what to do after failing to find a way to permanently kill the beast) uncountable corpses were left to rot where they lay, or became buried in snow and frost. Clerics and adventurers have managed to cleanse most of the area surrounding the city, but there are vast fields where the dead were never granted proper rest and so the land is haunted with all manner of undead: including many powerful disembodied spirits forever raging at the glut of a wicked city whose very existence mocks their sacrifice. Shatter Peak is claimed to be where the battle began; after the Tarrasque unexpectedly knocked over a mountain top and caused its greatest carnage of the day in the resultant landslide. Witches and necromancers make crude, temporary dwellings all throughout the area; plying their trade with living and sentient dead alike.

### The Pool of All Forms

Fifteen miles south-east of city, in a hidden cave, past an area of stalagmites jutting forth like teeth where a man can scarcely squeeze by, is a perfect pool of what – at first glance- appears to be water. A visitor who stares at the pool can –by focusing on a single image- coax the liquid to float in the air and take any form their so visualize. Any attempt to remove the liquid fails (it grows increasingly heavy when it moves away from its source). Distraction –or the visitor leaving- causes the liquid to sink back into its pool.

### High Rock Altar

Ten miles west of Salt in Wounds –in a secluded plateau that offers an incredible view of the city – is a primitive seeming altar of basalt, teeth and thorns from an unknown plant. This is an altar to Tuska, and –though usually undefended- will be inevitably rebuilt or restored by the local flocks of harpies if destroyed or otherwise defiled. Tuska’s faithful meet here regularly, and use the altar is filled with carefully encoded scrolls Tuska’s devotees sometimes use to send messages back and forth.

### *Verdant Fields*

An extravagance of a Third Meridian house aristocrat, the Verdant Fields are a pastoral manor built into the side of a mountain where the wealthy of Salt in Wounds can live in an imitation of traditional life. Incredibly powerful (and costly) magics that must be continually refreshed keep the local climate for the few acres of farm impossibly pleasant, and all manner of luxury fruits and vegetables are grown here.

## Special: Salt in Wounds & The Wider World

Note: Salt in Wounds is designed to be largely standalone, isolated ‘campaign city’ with the ability to support a whole campaign without Player Characters venturing beyond. Salt in Wounds is also designed to be modular and a GM should be able –with relative ease- to be plunk the metropolis right into their favored game world. A good rule of thumb is to simply select an out of the way valley amidst the mountains –preferably somewhere you can imagine daring heroes trying to lure and ambush the Tarrasque- and Salt in Wounds can easily fit there. The city’s unique features justify it as able to function more or less anywhere with as much (or as little) socio-economic influence on the wider world as you would like (it can even be a semi-legendary ‘bubble city’ widely believed to be a fantasy). However, Salt in Wounds is officially part of Synoma which is a fantasy setting in the midst of a ‘cold war.’ For more information, see appendix \_ Salt in Wounds and Synoma.

# People & Factions

*Toman always enjoyed the feel of cracking a burke’s nose. A lot of places you hit a face and you can break your own knuckles if you ain’t careful. But catching them just right -unsuspecting like- in the snoz, you always got a satisfying \*crunch\* and the give of cartilage as you flatten that bulge below their eyes. And then it’s all blood and blurbing and disorientation; this time was no different. A hit like that, a smack just right, catches them off guard, makes them unsteady on their feet…. Which is doubly ‘portant if they’re properly salted and further persuading is called for. Toman didn’t think this scrap of a bully was the sort, but she hadn’t lasted this long by thinking nobody was nothing short of a killer in waiting.*

*She bent a bit and a smooth motion that happened before the broken nose druegar could react she drew one of her daggers -chastity- and let it sink past the coarse, bushy beard and nip into the soft flesh below his neck pear. Pushing gently, she used his natural inclination not to have his throat slit to drive his back against the filthy walls of the alley and up on his tiptoes in such a way that her body shielded the scene from onlookers; her steady and stable on her feet, him further off balance.*

*“Now my friend,” she whispered. “We’re gonna have a nice, friendly chat about your dealings with 4th House…”*

## 13 Meridian Houses

When the Tarrasque was first subdued, thirteen ‘immovable’ harpoons were sunk deep into its body, each with a long, thick chain running to an iron anchor sunk magically into stones. As the founders built the fortress Salzinwuun they appointed 13 guardians, each a hero in the binding of the Tarrasque. Each of the 13 was personally responsible for ensuring that the harpoon in their charge held fast in addition to making arrangements to deal with unforeseen changes.

In the last two plus centuries, the status of these guardians has changed. Their descendants (or in some cases, the original hero) are now referred to as Binder-Lords or Binder-Ladies, each still responsible for ensuring that their harpoon remains secure and keeping the beast chained with the caveat that each now claims the area around their harpoon as their charge to exploit and utilize as they deem fit. This sections of control and responsibility are generally referred to as ‘meridians’ – hence the Binder-Lords and the houses they lead each ‘own’ one of the thirteen meridians (and each house has become incredibly wealthy due to being paid via the work of the God-Butchers and now Marrow Miners selling to the various Blood Merchants and Process Guild Shops).

Authority is transferred via legal 'possession' of one of the magical command words that can unlock their respective meridian harpoon.

Decisions that impact the whole city are made by the council of Binders, and enforced by the various House Militias. Basic 'publicly understood' knowledge about the houses is written in the following pages, while house ‘secrets’ may be found in the ‘secrets’ sections.

### House of the 1st Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 2nd Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 3rd Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 4th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 5th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 6th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 7th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 8th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 9th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 10th Meridian

**#todo collect, edit, and copy in from binder-lord backer**

### House of the 11th Meridian

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### House of the 12th Meridian

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### House of the 13th Meridian

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## The Enders

The Enders are the rumored group of individuals interested in discovering or inventing a way to permanently kill the Tarrasque. While this was the stated goal of the original heroes that bound the monster, most modern citizens of Salt in Wounds have no interest in the pursuit as it would, effectively, destroy the economy and reason for existing of the city. In addition, the majority of those rare individuals who *would* be interested believe that the lasting death of the Tarrasque is impossible.  
Occasionally, individuals are prosecuted for the crime of being 'Enders' ('conspiring against the sanctity of the Tarrasque's bounty' being the official charge). This has usually been seen as political theater, a baseless charge used to dispose of persons who've angered the powers that be. Most sent to their deaths or truncation in this way claim their innocence right up until the end while some name their co-conspirators (who are then also tried and inevitably found guilty).  
The accepted wisdom of the cynical Salt in Wounds populace is that the 'Enders' don't exist beyond a few isolated madmen.

For more information about the Enders, refer to the ‘secrets’ chapter.

## The Process Guild

The Process Guild is the institutional organization that handles licensing and represents the interests of the various regular butchers, sorters, refiners, etc. who receive raw Tarrasque viscera wholesale (from the God-Butchers and Marrow Miners) and then process it into components for later commercial resale to the other dominant professional associations (the Sage's Council and Blood Merchants). The various members of the Process Guild are the second link in the supply chain which connects the Tarrasque to the citizens and visitors of the city of Salt in Wounds. (The general flow functions something like God-Butchers/Marrow Miners -> Process Guild -> Blood Merchants/Sage's Council -> Everyone else). Raw viscera extracted from the Tarrasque by God-Butchers is usually too large to be suitable for individual resale and/or unsorted (comprised of numerous tissue types, dog-sized 'pseudo-organs' which litter the Tarrasque's flesh, varying cuts of meat, neural ganglion, epidermis and so on) which by needs must be dissected into clearly labeled divisions.  
The employees and owner operators of the various factories and workshops which comprise the Process Guild tend to be working class to lower-middle class. The barriers to licensing are relatively low, which encourages competition and innovation amongst guild members while also generally preventing massive fortunes from being made, puts pressure on the Process Guild members to cut corners and to potentially seek 'extra-legal' options (in contrast to the registered Blood Merchants, who operate in a more oligarchical fashion).  
An extremely common crime is Process Guild shops selling directly to the public at large.

Individuals who are employed under the aegis of the Process Guild (often under terrible working conditions) have an exceedingly high rate of mutations and other health problems (much moreso than the God-Butchers though not to the same degree as the Marrow Miners). The current head of the Process Guild -a Halfling named Rodirique Algiheel- is engaged in a long term project to improve the safety and reduce the criminality of the guild. However, his initiatives to institute enhanced licensing & inspection requirements have been facing institutional resistance and he is constantly on the lookout for special operatives to arrange ‘buys’ and conduct covert inspections.

## The Marrow Miners

The Marrow Miners are the guild with the extraction contract for the 12th Meridian of the Tarrasque. Other than the God-Butchers, they are the only group with the legal authority to work directly on the Tarrasque and there is plenty of mutual antipathy between the two groups (though in recent years God-Butchers have been subcontracting to Marrow Miners for especially dangerous/difficult work at the other Meridian sites).

Founded after the 12th Meridian Crisis, the Marrow Miners have distinguished themselves by taking any sentient creature ‘willing to work’ and paying fair wages. Their recruitment efforts include mites, orcs, and many from the lower classes. The general goodwill this generates amongst most of the city is tempered somewhat by racial and class based antagonism towards many of the Marrow Miners.  
  
Since their founding, the price of much Tarrasque viscera has lowered precipitously (this include reagents and rare cuts which the Marrow Miners hypothetically can't access). The Marrow Miners (in addition to their 12th House Sponsors) are widely suspected to be major players in the organized crime of Salt in Wounds, particularly in relation to smuggling. The guild however dismisses such rumors as God-Butcher lies meant to discredit the organization.

## The House Militias

The House Militias are the primary source of Law & Order within Salt in Wounds. Each Meridian House is charged with ‘Paying, provisioning, and organizing’ no less than 1000 fighting men ‘to enforce the laws of the township and contribute to the general welfare of Salt in Wounds.’ However, interpretation and implementation of this edict varies greatly depending on house. On one end of the spectrum, there are houses who outfit their militia with the bare minimum and then leave these individuals to their own devices: these groupings usually act like traditional city watches you might find in any large city. In the extreme opposite, Sixth House outfits a militia of 7000, armed and trained more for war than policing. Complicating matters further, many Meridians Houses also run House *Guards* who are distinct from House *Militias*; with House Militias having a duty to enforce laws while House Guards do not.  
Despite this, House Militias -while technically serving the city as a whole as opposed to their respective house- still often act as an extension of their house and instrument of its machinations.  
Each Meridian House manages hiring, firing, and promotion within their militia. Meanwhile, House Militias are held to a code of behavior which includes -amongst other things- prohibitions against favoring one house over the law of the city with severe mutilation penalties doled out by the largely independent courts for failure to serve the law.  
These twin influences leads to much secretive conflict, intrigue, sabotage, and checks & balances between the House Militias which is in part an extension of and in part distinct from the power games played amongst the Meridian Houses themselves.  
Typical armament for a House Militiaman is studded leather armor, round shield, hand-axe, and crows-beak.

## The Order of God-Butchers

Even amidst the city as bustling as Salt in Wounds, the God-Butchers are hard to miss.  
Hugely muscled men and women, grown strong from a working life of toil and a diet of some of the freshest, most choice cuts from the ever-providing body of the Tarrasque. Most carry their stylized greatswords nearly everywhere. Contrary to popular opinion, these weapons turned tools are not exclusively adamantine; many nowadays are forged of the Tarrasque’s bones or horns, material that cuts through its armored carapace well. Still, those who dismiss the butchers as dumb brutes wholly underestimate the order; these are hard eyed men and women who must be intelligent enough to understand the beast’s intricate and shifting anatomy, who must deal regularly with crafty merchants, domineering aristocrats, and suspicious laborers all to perform their duties.  
While greatly connected to the economic flows of the city, and perhaps not wholly immune to the influence of the coin, the God-Butchers nonetheless take their sacred charge of keeping the beast bound seriously. And while the recent tragedy of the 12th Meridian Crisis over two decades ago has marred their reputation and the Marrow Miners (with their greatly eased selection criteria) now enjoy a surge in popular support nearly everyone agrees that the God-Butchers have done a remarkable job keeping the Tarrasque bound for the last two hundred fifty years with only minimum of loss of life.  
The chief complaint levied against the order is not that they’ve been corrupted (although, if you know the right God-Butcher any reagent or substance from the beast can be made available tax-free and irrespective of its legal status) but rather that they are too hide-bound to tradition, over reliant on the tactics of the past and notions of the ‘Sacred 13 Meridians.’

**Training and Advancement**

The God-Butchers recruit heavily (irrespective of class and station, ensuring that they are generally well-liked by the public and quietly mocked by the aristocracy) although most recruits are drummed out within several months due to the intense rigors of the training regimen. They also promote based on a more or less functioning meritocracy, with only a minimum amount of nepotism.  
Most members of the God-Butcher Order are not fully fledged ‘Master’ God-Butchers, around 95% of the order’s roster only complete their basic requirements and reach ‘Apprentice’ or ‘Journeyman’ levels. These members, despite their lesser titles, are nonetheless highly esteemed by the community and well compensated. Moreover, for most city residents a God-Butcher is a God-Butcher and there is little distinction based on rank.  
First and foremost, when recruiting and promoting the order is looking for strength, as it takes incredible physical power to break the creature’s armor and cut through its flesh. And while much of the work now is done with cranes, titanic screws and other butchering equipment the size of siege engines; not a day goes by where a working God-Butcher isn’t called upon to draw his blade to sever a vital artery or slice a tendon to keep the creature from wreaking havoc.  
To this end, while a use can always be found the strong, advancement amongst the butchers beyond the ‘apprentice’ level requires the aspirant to be intelligent as well: able to memorize innumerable details of anatomy and theory, understand intimately the meridian diagrams showing how the bindings have been placed and how the beast is held fast.  
The other requirement to reach journeyman rank is that God-Butcher aspirants must also be able to lead and inspire men. Despite what those outside the city may think, not everyone who works on the Tarrasque’s body is in fact a God-Butcher; there are countless machine operators, laborers, porters and more work on or in close proximity to the beast (not to mention the entirely separate organization of the Marrow Miners). Every hour of everyday requires an intricate bustle of working men cutting away into the Tarrasque’s body to keep it sedate and to acquire some cut of meat or reagent for the market. When catastrophe strikes (a collapsing fold of flesh, emergence of ramora flea or other monster, runaway regeneration, etc.) a God-Butcher must be able to quickly assessthe situation and lead those around him either to safety or into danger themselves to prevent a greater danger to Salt in Wounds.

**Status and Culture**

As an organization, the Order of God-Butchers is fairly egalitarian, although relative prestige can usually be determined by their Meridian assignment 1-13 (excepting 12, which is now on assignment to the Marrow Miners), with each Meridian corresponding to what general part of the beast the individual works upon.  
While legally the 13 Binder-Lords each have the duty of keeping their Meridian bind functioning and overseeing the section of the Tarrasque assigned to their house, this -as a practical matter- has been contracted out to the God-Butchers and -recently- Marrow Miners as the Binder-Lords have turned their attentions to the economy of Salt in Wounds, games of political intrigue with respect to their rivals, and the pursuit of their own pleasures.

**The Rite of Mutual-Recognition**

If a God-Butcher has distinguished himself in strength, intellect, and leadership they are invited to take part in the most sacred rite of the order, that of Mutual-Recognition. The difficulty of doing so explains why the number of full fledged ‘Master’ God-Butchers has remained fairly low (and perhaps why the order has remained largely effective and honorable in a city not known for such qualities).  
An hour before the rite begins, all work on the beast stops (with even the Marrow Miners stopping their work). The Tarrasque is allowed to heal, to regain as much consciousness as the God-Butchers dare. Then the aspirant must approach the first Meridian, the creature’s head. As the workers, curious citizens, and their fellow God-Butchers watch, the aspirant must stare into the eye of the Tarrasque for a full minute. In so doing, they are supposed to gain a fuller understanding of the beast they keep bound. Staring into the creature's eye as the beast roars and snaps causes some aspirants to flee; perhaps leaving the order or even the city forever.  
The mindless destruction and hate they see within the beast’s eye can unman even those who have lived in Salt in Wounds their entire life.  
Those who manage to continue to gaze into the creature’s eye will note a change in the beast’s behavior. Gradually, its endless screaming and thrashing slow. Its vision changes, focuses. And, for a moment, it see them; sees this man or woman who would keep it bound, who would cut it and serve up its strength to a hungry city. Then the Tarrasque will cease to roar and take a single moment to inhale through its nostrils, wind whipping past the aspirant towards the Tarrasque’s maw as it truly marks the God-Butcher’s scent. (The accepted wisdom is that the Tarrasque to committing this individual to memory, will recall this smell of the individual. Should the Tarrasque ever gain freedom- the God-Butchers expect that it will hunt all such aspirants and their families, those who resemble the aspirant's smell even unto the seventh generation.)  
In turn, the God-Butcher takes in a long breath through his nose to mark the smell of the beast.  
As the roars, the endless thrashing against its bonds resumes, to achieve master rank the God-Butcher then ventures between its snapping jaws, timing a single strike to sever its tongue and heave the mass of flesh clear.  
The order will then have a huge feast that evening from the tongue, welcoming another full fledged Master God-Butcher into the fold.

*Notable God-Butchers*

* [Briddu Yattano (Journeyman)](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/briddu-yittano-journeyman-god-butcher.html)
* [Helenie (Ex-Master)](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/helenie-ex-master-god-butcher-and-hero.html)

## Sage’s Council

The Sage’s Council is a relatively new faction that has grown greatly in power and influence over the last three decades since its founding. The Council’s primary stated purpose is to advocate for the interests of academics, ledger-men, wizards, but above all alchemists; anyone who make their living with the aid of pen & paper. The Sage’s Council seeks to facilitate the free exchange of information/discoveries between researchers, contrary to how many alchemists & wizards have traditionally approached their trade (with knowledge being hoarded whenever possible, with primarily information transfer being from teacher to apprentice). They provide support for the various colleges of Salt in Wounds and publish a quarterly journal -Tuntume- which publishes research from members and forwards the organization’s goals (which often features contributions from adventurers who share tale of exotic and otherwise unknown creatures, technologies, or magics). While the Sage’s Council is currently a voluntary association (and thus despised by those who love their independence) the council has been lobbying for legislation to make membership mandatory for any who wish to ply relevant trades within the city (and the organization is famous enough now that most assume that any alchemist *must* be part of the council).

## Blood Merchants

The Blood Merchants are the (licensed) monopoly for any merchant selling directly to the public (as opposed to process guild which can only sell wholesale) with a few exceptions for most foreign sellers (usually, only the native borne can be ‘official’ blood merchants and any foreign merchant has strong limitations on how they can conduct commerce in the city) and also by profession (alchemists, smiths, etc have different licensing boards and different regulations regarding their commercial activity). Technically, every merchant (from humble jerky vendor with a single stall up to lord like seller of thousands of slaves) is a blood merchant if they have paid their licensing fee and submitted to the rules of commerce in the city, but the term is usually used to denote the very wealthy and/or those that sell Tarrasque derived goods (which includes most of the merchants). In addition to providing licenses for retail buyers & sellers within the city, the organization of Blood Merchants advocates for member interests and will even provide legal or other help for members in good standing who have run into trouble.

The Blood Merchants is an incredibly diverse lot and few overarching statements can be made about the group as a whole. Generally however, Blood Merchants advocate for more extraction, lower taxes, higher licensing fees (supposedly to ensure quality but mostly to discourage new competitors), and are generally interested in business as usual to continue unabated.

## Organized Crime Guild

## The Circle of Release (Criminal Faction)

The Circle of Release is a group of adventurers & others operating covertly in the City of Salt in Wounds with the stated goal of ending the Tarrasque’s imprisonment. Their reasons for doing so vary depending on the telling, but the most common reason involves restoring the natural balance upset by the current state of affairs.   
This cabal is primarily comprised of evangelical druids, rangers, and their converts. Almost every other power block in the city denounces and actively opposes the Circle of Release; with the House Militias and God-Butchers hunting down, torturing, and executing any individual suspected of belonging to the circle. In addition to acts of intimidation, terror, and economic sabotage for which the group claims credit, much of the populace believes that the destruction of the 12th Meridian Crisis and resultant Tail Stones is the result of an (un)successful plot by the group. There is also a small but vocal minority in the city that believes that the Circle of Release does not actually exist, but is instead used by the Aristocratic Houses and Guilds to terrify the city and thus increase their power and control.

**Iconography**

**The symbol for the Circle of Release is a stylized Tarrasque maw, bursting through a broken chain. The circle often leaves this as a calling card (applied with magic or mundane paint) to claim credit for its operations. Members are extremely unlikely to carry this symbol on their person, and it is far more common for such a mark to be planted on a nonmember in an attempt to frame them.**

# Religion.

*Yurin Silvenei sat on his rooftop, greeting the morning by sharpening his paring knives and cleaver, going through the ceremonial movements of his faith. Below, beyond, the city stretched out in its leagues… just beginning to shake the dust out of sleep out of the corners of its eyes (not that the city, nor the bounty at its heart, ever truly slept). Merchants hauled out their wares to their stalls -many ritually counting their corners to ask for blessings upon their day.*

*The gates of Salzinwuun opened to allow for the changing of shifts, letting the next crew of God-Butchers who chose to sleep in the city at large rather than their order’s barracks. Only the gods knew what the day would bring: but as the rich copper smell of blood filled Yurin’s nostrils (they must have opened a vein he thought), as somewhere distant the beast rumbled, moaned, as he mused about the dangers he would face on assignment from his church Yurin had a single thought – he loved his city and said aloud the prayer of gratitude for the bounty of god that had delivered so much to so many.*

## The Church of the Monad

The Church of the Monad is a religion favored by many of the intellectuals, alchemists, and monks of Salt in Wounds. While adherents can be found the world over, Salt in Wounds is most definitely the seat of its power, such as it is. Adherents to the Monad believe in, worship, and seek to better understand & commune with the ‘one thing’ - the subtle Aether (aka the Monad) from which all phenomena is but an aspect.  
The church of Monad has never found the acceptance it preaches because of its fantastical, often unpopular views on the mortal and supernal realm. Monadists are dismissed by other religions for their claims that the Aether is responsible for all creation. Their teachings are scorned by the aristocracy, believing the message of a single unifying force are a challenge to their social status. In addition, most lower class individuals feel that the Church’s interests & teachings are too academic and effete to be of much use.  
To those that embrace the church, the followers of Monad find a religion that isn’t faith based, but a collection of virtues, research, and ideals. Sermons are replaced by powerful polemics. Hymns to an immortal deity give way to familial pledges to mortal companions. Though church-wide organized events and celebrations are rare, periodic congregations are held to discuss newly discovered or refuted research- as well as partake in new recreational panaceas.  
  
**Monad**  
  
The One, The Subtle Aether, The All-including  
*Symbol* A single black dot  
*Alignment* True Neutral   
  
*Portfolio* alchemy, truth, unity, the unknown  
*Domains* Knowledge, Community, Protection, Void  
*Favored Weapon* Cestus  
  
*Worshipers and Clergy* The Church of Monad has an eclectic member base, divided into two main branches: hagiocratic (believing Monad is a physical entity) and geniocratic (believing Monad is a physical force). From visionary researchers to the proletarian, followers of Monad come from every walk of life with a common goal of improving self and community. Alchemists, clerics, and wizards of Monad have been known to offer secular guidance to communities as magisters of science and diplomacy. Followers with a martial lean often serve as magisters of the court, but have been found in roles that range from midwife to shepherd.

Given the simplicity of Monad’s symbol, devotees have many ways of brandishing a holy symbol. Clerics receive The Black Bead, a philtrum piercing with a black stud as a holy symbol. Aetherist monks often paint or tattoo a large black dot in the center of their forehead. Those not wishing to display The One’s symbol permanently wear a ring of Monad in lieu of a traditional necklace. Members tithe or barter with their trade skills to receive the benefits of the church, from housing, healing, and access to their comprehensive library.

*Temples and Shrines* The All-including Temple in Sage’s Row is the most famous formal temple of the Church of the Monad, although small Shrines (typified by a single black dot or globe) are located throughout the world, most especially in libraries.   
  
*Holy Texts* Given the heavy academia lean of the church, the title of “holy text” is awarded to research and textbooks that are deemed worthy. The individual branches do not always recognize one side’s certification of scripture. With new discoveries, a thesis once deemed scripture can lose its status as research refutes its claims. This creates a competitive scholarly field the church deems necessary for steady progression. Titles of current holy texts include Continuity and Union between The Cosmos and Man, Introduction to Absolute Space, Anamnesis Vitae, and Macrocosm and Microcosm.  
  
*Dogma* Beyond the furthest star, Monad resides. All interposing space, be it the distance between worlds or the soul and the body, is filled with the presence of The One Thing. Therefore, any alteration to your physical constitution can lead to an alteration of morals. Purification and corruption are equally important to challenge and enact change in institutions of a depraved society. The Subtle Aether is the universal connecting medium, making all beings your brother and sisters with Nature as your common mother. Education is a weapon used to attack the complications of classism, which disrupts the harmony of The All-including.

## Macinfex

*God of Butchers*

Macinfex is the (Demi)God patron of butchers. For the world at large he is a minor figure; often considered to be barely a divinity or dismissed as an upjumped saint; honored only occasionally in an odd window of butcher's row. Salt in Wounds is not like the rest of the world, and here he is *a* if not *the* primary deity; worshiped by many, respected by all. Only the church of Coin Everlasting boasts as much influence in the city and its ranks are almost exclusively comprised of the rich. In Salt in Wounds, worship of Macinfex extends to all classes and all peoples.

**Portfolio**

**Domain**

**Holy Texts**

**Holy Symbols**

The holy symbols of Macinfex are the knife and cleaver.   
**Appearance**  
Macinfex is usually depicted as a thin, smiling, good-natured bearded human figure wearing a blood splattered leather apron.   
**Economy, Society, and Worshipers**  
Macinfex's clergy are very much entwined with the economy of Salt in Wounds; carefully monitoring the selling of meat. Cleric inspectors will survey the merchants, insisting that butchers and sellers throw away (or feed to the ghouls) old, potentially dangerous cuts of Tarrasque, and ensuring that cuts and quality are carefully labeled all as part of their religious observances.  
Devout worshipers of Macinfex are known to be obsessed with taking things apart to better understand their workings; extending an interest in the 'anatomy' of all living (and even some nonliving) things.   
By Macinfex’s cleric devotees, the imprisonment of the Tarrasque is seen as the butcher god’s greatest gift to humanity; abundant, eternal food for all. It is no surprise that his worship is most fervent amidst the God-Butchers; with devotion bordering on religious fundamentalism a practical requirement for aspirants to reach the rank of Master God-Butcher.  
**Magic**  
In Macinfex's temples and churches, accurate prophecy and divination is accomplished through the spilling of the entrails of cattle (although in secret churches, heretical clerics insist the best results are to be obtained by using humanoid 'livestock').  
In addition to traditional magic practiced by clerics everywhere, the faithful of Macinfex have been known to offer healing and regeneration through consecrated cuts of meat and vials of Tarrasque blood. There is surprisingly little antagonism between the Church and the various alchemists of Salt in Wounds, as the religious orthodoxy believes that all efforts to unlock further properties and benefits of their god's great gift should be pursued.  
Many of Macinfex's clergy utilize the Blood Domain.

Septum Soletirmus The Holy Writ of Coin Everlasting.   
One of the most popular religions in Salt in Wounds, the adherents to Septum Soletirmus aka ‘The Favor of Coins’ worship wealth in all its forms (but most especially gold as the eternal, unrotting perfect embodiment of wealth). Richness is next to godliness for this adherents to this sect, and many Binder-Lords and prosperous merchants count themselves as members. All adherents seek to court ‘the favor of coins’ believing that wealth is a sentient being which flows towards its favored.

Several texts are considered ‘holy’ by Septumists (as the faithful are usually referred to), though different adherents favor some books over others (even discounting others as heretical). These vary in the type of activity they praise and their proscriptions about how one should ‘properly’ acquire wealth/attract the favor of coins (with some blessing inherited wealth while others argue that wealth acquired in one's own lifetime via entrepreneurial efforts are best). Most adherents tithe 15% or more to prove -via their generosity- that they are truly wealthy (as most books argue that any money spent this way will be returned 9 fold to the faithful) though other manuals argue that ‘charity’ in all its form is a terrible sin and disrupts the true will of the coin. There is even one tome ‘The Walking Coin’ that argues for theft, fraud, and even murder to acquire wealth (as wealth should flow to the strong, and being able to keep wealth is proof of strength and the favor of coins). While very popular amongst criminals, the book is officially banned in Salt in Wounds (and possession of a copy is a serious offense).

Some scant few clerics and paladins gain power by their devotion of the principles of Septum Soletirmus, and usually use their powers to increase their own wealth (diving the mind of money by watching what sorts of activities generate wealth). They preach a message of personal responsibility and the need to ‘turn away from the wickedness of poverty’ to the lower classes, as well as lavishly praise the wealthy aristocrats and merchants (which make them quite popular in the city).

The holy symbol is a single gold coin with a seven pointed star around it. Septurmists will usually feature this insignia prominently on their person in addition to decking themselves with gold filigree & jewelry (or at least this is the case for those individuals who can afford protection against the city’s many thieves and pickpockets).

## The Cult of Renesec

Renesec is the obscure, largely unknown God of Change who is said to have no fixed appearance, house, or location of worship. His/Her/Its few devotees meditate on their god’s presence in the growth of crops, the aging of a face, the overthrow of a government. Renesec’s most ecstatic worshipers adopt radically different mannerisms, behaviors, and even personalities at an irregular schedule and hence are despised outcasts as individuals who are not able to function in society writ large or even writ as small as an adventuring party. However, Renesec has a thriving cult in Salt in Wounds who seek to understand and grow close to their God as the ‘Lord of Mutation’ whose power and majesty can best be experienced in the endlessly varied twisted forms of Tarrasque-fed mutations.

Every curl of flesh beyond its original form is deemed holy by the cult, and from their simple temple in the Tail Stones (a bizarre converted apartment to which they are forever adhering new layers of bizarre ornamentation cast from powered Tarrasque scale) the church of the Lord of Mutations preaches endlessly as to the need for the city to fully embrace the divine gifts Renesec pours out for his/her/its citizens.

**Portfolio**

**Domain**

**Holy Texts**

**Holy Symbols**

Favored Weapons

Temple and Shrines

The Holy Symbol: Living, mutated flesh (those without any mutations are not accepted as worshipers of Renesec).

While officially tolerated, the cult is largely despised and mocked. Even so, the church’s numbers continue to swell as more and more individuals feel the ‘touch of Renesec’ and the scorn of the city only serves to deepen their bonds to one another and their faith.

The cult provides food, housing, and even water for any so long as they bare the mark of Renesec (any manner of mutation) which the organization’s clerics can induce upon request. Especially with the uptick in mutation rates, especially canny political observers believe the cult could become a major political force in years to come even though in modern day it is dismissed as a refuge for the poor, the desperate, and the mad. Rumors hold that the cult has plans to spread the mutation throughout the city via the application of divine magic or specially crafted alchemy, but nothing has ever been proven.

Notable Members

High Priestess: Quinay Mendij is a woman with a beautiful face jutting out of a bloated, massive, horrendously mutated body (claimed to be the most mutated creature in the world). Three mouths split open her back, looping spikes sprout at seeming random and twine together to form intricate loops, and despite having ten arms and legs she must be carried on a litter by the church’s faithful (who see this duty as a great honor).

# History

*And so it came to pass that Segund, the so called King of Wyverns, set his sights upon Salt in Wounds, believing it to be ripe for conquest. Against his forces, well ordered and armed veterans in their endless rows along with the mercenary general’s ‘pets’ circling above, the scant irregular forces of Salt in Wounds could surely be no match.*

*The residents of the city saw Segund leading his army from leagues and leagues away. As his army grew closer, Salt in Wounds was a frenzy of activity as the powers of the city plotted and argued as to their response. Finally, they agreed to a stratagem.  
When Segund finally drew within view of the distant horns of the Tarrasque, a cluster of women & men stood in his path, dressed in finery and holding the flags for parley.  
Segund, with his most trusted commanders, mounted their Wyverns and flew to the meeting. Upon landing, the the warlord removed his helm to the tinkle of trinkets and trophies from scores of victories that hung below the visor.  
“Hail, I am Segund - King of Wyverns.”  
“Hail, I am Beutex Binder-Lady of the House of the 9th Meridian and I am here to accept your surrender and bear witness to your retreat.”  
The thick laughter of Segund and his honor guard echoed off the mountains.  
“Oh lady, thank you for bringing such mirth to what otherwise threatened to be a fully dull conquest.” He swept his arm back to show the thick ranks of well ordered soldiers behind him. “My forces outnumber yours ten to one, and with five hundred of my veterans I could march over everything your little town could throw at me.”  
Beutex chuckled, said “I had heard you were a brilliant tactician oh King of Wyverns, but I did not know you had a jester’s own gift for comedy. To suggest that 500, or even all 10,000 of your veterans could face the Tarrasque... hahahaha.”  
Segund spat, his face suddenly red, “Do not think you can bluff me. The Tarrasque is not yours to command; it is a bound source of your city’s wealth, and it will be cheap meat for my army after I claim it and the rest of your holdings by right of conquest.”  
Beutex smiled a smile which didn’t reach her eyes, “My dear Segund, I never suggested the Tarrasque was under our direction. But as to its binding,” she gestured to a crimson flag held by her servant, “With a wave of this, with my death, or with even ten forward steps of your army; the beast will be released and I fear your forces will be quite insufficient… veterans and all.”  
Segund snarled, “You wouldn’t. You would all die, and you would be remembered for all time as monsters who released that terror and carnage back on the world.”  
“I would and I will unless you march back down the way you came. The city and the containment of the Tarrasque are ours by sacred trust; any who try to strip us of what the gods have granted will –inevitably- lead to the beast becoming free… even a decade of two makes no difference to the world. Without the providence of the gods you wouldn’t be able to keep our peace. And so we are of one accord; if you are set on trying to seize what is divinely ours then we will release the binding today. In so doing we are not monsters, we merely midwife the inevitable in such a way that YOU or any like you will never see any profit from your transgression. You can lose your army, your life, your all; you can blight the world… or you can march back down the mountain. The choice is yours Segund.”  
Segund shook his head, said “You lie.”   
Stalking back to his Wyvern, he began to bellow orders, “Mount up, command the men to advance and…” before a spear, wielded by Gavene his lieutenant pierced his chest. Segund sputtered, wheezed, and choked on his own blood as the Wyverns screeched. The honor guard bowed to Beutex before mounting up and flying back to the army to command its retreat.   
As Segund breathed his last, the Binder-Lady strode to a place beside him; idly watching the Wyverns and their riders flew back to the columns of soldiers. She spoke then, and Segund’s last thought was uncertainty as to whether the words were really meant for him or not, “Oh bold, conquering man at arms; even if you would chance it your men have families and they know that nowhere is safe from the monster. As long as men remember and fear the beast, the city will never be taken from us by force.”*

The Tale of 9th House Bravery, and the Wisdom of the All Consumption Doctrine, as relayed by \_ official Bard of 9th House.

## History of the Valley Before Binding ~50,000-100 BB (Before Binding)

For thousands of years, tribes of Stone Giants & Orcs made their homes (at least seasonally) in the high mountain valley that would one day be home to the Tarrasque. This valley exists on the borders of two major kingdoms, but due to its relative geographical isolation it was never claimed by a power not claimed.

117 BB – Tarrasque Reemerges

After several centuries of seeming hibernation, the Tarrasque reemerged on the world world stage. For one hundred years, various schemes to slay the beast were attempted (all of which failed) and the nations of men and demi-humans alike resorted to a strategy of attempting to guide the creature away from what they hold dear. It is during this period where a large number of magic items and weapons were embedded in the creature as various failed state and adventurer plots to stop the beast.

8 BB – The 13 Gather

In 8 BB, 13 exceptional individuals -driven by impulses ranging from prophecy, to greed, to the quest for glory, to legitimate selflessness- come together with a plan; they will bind the Tarrasque in place in order to determine the best way to slay it. For the next several years, they travel extensively to determine the best location, develop/acquire the supplies they will need (including enchanting the 13 magical harpoons) and convince the various kingdoms to lend material support for their mission.

0 AB (After Binding) The Tarrasque is Bound

After a tremendous battle (and much loss of life) the Tarrasque is successfully bound. The surviving heroes cheer, bury their dead, and begin devising the most efficient ways to slay the beast (so the various scholars can study the creature in hopes of finding a permanent solution).

0 AB Construction is begun on Salzinwuun

Soon after the Tarrasque is bound, the binding forces begin construction of the fortress Salzinwuun to provide more permanent shelter rather than the tents.

1 AB – The Loss of the Armies

With no end in sight for the slaying of the Tarrasque, most nations recall their forces to deal with domestic matters. The Salzinwuun forces are left with a fraction of the most dedicated (and individually powerful) individuals.

11 AB – 26 AB The Granite Shard War & The Harvest Begins

Around 11 AB, the binders of Salzinwuun came into conflict with the Mammoth Wardens which were (or are) the tribe of indigenous stone giants native to the area in and around Salt in Wounds. The Granite Shard war was (is) a conflict that took place between them and the defenders of the Fortress Salzinwuun.  
Since the binding of the Tarrasque a decade prior to the onset of hostilities, tensions had been rising between the stone giants and the polyglot of adventurers, military forces, and merchants encamped around the beast. The continuing presence of the Tarrasque had scared away most big game (including the titular mammoths on which the giants were especially dependent) and there were several incidents of jumpy humans who attacked giants on sight without provocation (though, no one on either side had ever been killed). And, while the Salzinwuun residents hadn't taken part, a merchant slave caravan had attempted to abduct several juvenile stone giants before being slaughtered by the Mammoth Warden tribe. Both Salzinwwun defenders & the stone giants had sent diplomatic envoys, though without much success in alleviating tensions.  
Meanwhile, a well respected bardic stone giant had a vision of the valley soaked in blood and filled with mutated creatures while humans carried each stone giant to toss in the maw of the Tarrasque. After discussing it for months, the elders decided that they had no choice but to drive off the 'little ones' who had invaded the valley... knowing full well that this would mean loosing the Tarrasque so they could finally be free of it.  
The Granite Shard war opened with a siege-like bombardment of Salzinwuun, with huge stones hurled by the giants; an act which caught the fortress wholly off guard. After much of the wooden fortifications were destroyed, the Mammoth Warden warriors charged in to slay and drive off the defenders. This first battle was especially bloody, with tremendous acts of heroism and brutality and loss on both sides. Still, it had been exceptional individuals who had originally bound the Tarrasque. And while some of these heroes had wandered off in the long, frustrating years following the imprisonment of the monster, the stone giants of the Mammoth Wardens tribe discovered a garrison of martially and magically skilled defenders who proved too much for them.

It was around this time that the Ten Talon tribe of orcs, sensing weakness, stepped up their raids, and their eventual extermination is usually lumped into the campaign of the Granite Shard war (though there is no evidence the two groups coordinated).  
However, as for the Mammoth Wardens, after their first, best push was repulsed and most of their warriors slain; the stone giants knew they had lost the war, even if it took much time for defeat to finally, fully claim them.  
No longer with the force necessary to attempt another direct assault, the Mammoth Wardens shifted their tactics to asymmetric warfare; abandoning their traditional encampments sites in the valley lowlands and drifting up the mountainsides where the 'little people' had problems reaching them. The tribal war council also shifted to targeting vulnerable caravans coming into and out of Salzinwuun, hoping that through prolonged isolation they might sap the morale and fighting strength of Salzinwuun. While Tarrasque flesh had previously been eaten by a good portion of the fort's occupants, the effectiveness of the stone giant caravan raids ensured that meat butchered from the beast became the mainstay of every being garrisoned there in addition to bone and horn becoming the preferred material for the crafting of tools & weapons. For their part, the 'little people' sent countless missions to root out and kill\capture the remaining Mammoth Wardens, believing that by taking hostages they might be able to cow the rest of the tribe into peace. Utilizing the hostages to begin rebuilding the fortress Salzinwuun created the demand & legal framework for the mass enslavement which persists till the present day.  
The Granite Shard War remained actively hostile for years, as the more militant giants were slain while those without the will or capacity to fight were captured and enslaved. When Salzinwuun rangers estimated that there were less than 10 free giants remaining in the nearby mountains, they claimed victory and moved on.

27-49 AB Trade & Population Bloom

Now harvesting the Tarrasque for food and later raw materials, the period directly after the Granite Shard war was marked by a massive increase in commerce as various merchants mastered trade routes. Also at this time, the population of Salzinwuun massively increased as various craft people and refugees immigrated to the location from promises of ready work and a limitless food supply. Many scholars who had persisted to find a permanent death for the Tarrasque despair and leave, or else turn their attention to making use of the beast as an exciting field. Canny observers notice at this point the weather and valley has begun to change.

44 AB First documented case of a Tarrasque-Fed mutation

48 AB Enders Founded by several scholars who believed that the binders at large had forgotten their original mission and that the only way forward was to further research a permanent solution in opposition. Persecution and changes in the law eventually drive the Enders underground.

50 AB Salzinwuun officially renames itself a Sovereign City with a Charter

To commemorate 50 years of binding, the fortress Salzinwuun rededicates itself as a city. A central charter lays out the basic political structure (with political authority residing in the ‘Binder-Lords and Ladies’ all the original 13, their descendants or inheritors.

59 AB Creation of the Clear Water Accords

With groundwater increasingly poisoned, the city creates the ‘Water Accords’ officially forming the Water Haulers guild. In the years to come, this will set precedent for establishing the other professional associations that will grow in power in the city from the God-Butchers (which is the formalization of an existing order who had already begun to establish their own traditions and history), the Blood Merchants, the Process Guild, Sage’s Council and finally the Marrow Miners.

67 AB The Wyvren Siege is defeated and the All Consumption Doctrine is Established

In 67 AB, a human mercenary warlord named Segund the Wyvern King (so called for his command of two dozen of the creatures) set his eyes to conquer the then booming town of Salt in Wounds. Leading an army of 10,000 (bolstered by the aforementioned Wyverns and other magical support), the brilliant logician managed to scale the steep track to Salt in Wounds with only a minimal loss of life. Before him, he faced hastily conscripted forces of around 2000 militia, mercenaries, and irregulars and so –confident of an easy victory- the general was already plotting how to best leverage this conquest for further gains.

He was turned back by \_, who threatened to release the Tarrasque. When Segund failed to heed her warning, he was slain by his own men who didn’t wish to risk the beast being free again to wreak havoc.

And so the ‘Wyvern Siege’ was lifted before it even began, and what would come to be called the ‘All Consumption’ was established where any military threat to sovereignty of the Binder-Lords would be met by an unbinding of the Tarrasque. Scholars also argue that this encounter was the earliest (non)battle of the ongoing series of conflicts which would come to be known as the Synoma’s ‘Artifact Wars’ wherein conventional military forces were blunted or made irrelevant by the deployment of epic magic, dangerous creatures, artifacts, and (ultimately) adventurers.

71 AB Afridini Begins to Grow the Heartsblood Marsh

77 AB – 206 AB The Artifact Wars Rage – Salt in Wounds, geographically isolated and able to maintain its independence- grows massively in power (by dealing as a broker/banker/neutral power for warring states) and population (absorbing several refugee waves).

166 AB Afridini -nearing the end of his natural life- merges with the ‘fungal sieve’ to continue shepherding the growth and development of the Heartsblood Marsh (and thus check the further spread of the corruption of the Tarrasque.

223 AB Circle of Release Founded – The Circle of Release was founded by Errya, a half-elven druid deeply concerned that the imprisonment of the Tarrasque was fouling the ecology not only of the local environment but also that of the entire planet. As evidence, he pointed to the explosion in the population of magical mega-fauna (with the resultant death & food web disruption) in addition to the increase and severity of the so-called ‘savagekind’ wars (the interrelated incursions, skirmishes and wars waged by the technologically/magically inferior but quick breeding goblinoid and orcine races). Finally, Errya noted to the prevalence of disease, [mutation](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/07/tarrasque-fed-mutations.html), and violent crime within the city as proof that -destructive though it may be- allowing the Tarrasque to range and roam where it will is the preferred option for all.

In his day, Errya was largely dismissed as a kook; no more than a diversion for the poor and desperate with no chance of effecting large scale change. However, as his number of converts began to swell rumors circulated that he'd even managed to bring several influential merchants in addition to one of the Binder-Lords around to his way of thinking. Finally, the [God-Butchers](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-order-of-god-butchers.html) -who believe it is their holy duty to continually slaughter the Tarrasque until the end of time- deemed it time to act.

238 AB Night of Cleavers – On the Night of Cleavers 39 years ago the God-Butchers (acting unilaterally) slew Errya, the dozens of rangers and druids that lived with him in the circle's commune in addition to hundreds of men, women, and children with acknowledged or suspected ties to the Circle of Release. Those killed in the purge included some well connected cousins of the aristocratic [Meridian Houses](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-13-meridian-houses.html), suggesting to canny observers that the God-Butchers were not controlled by the Binder-Lords to the degree that is commonly assumed.

With nearly all the organization dead, it fell to Grovask of Ironwood -a half-orc caravan guard turned apprentice druid- to resurrect the organization.

256 AB 12th Meridian Crisis – The 12th Meridian Crisis is the name of the largest scale disaster to befall Salt in Wounds thus far. For reasons that are still unclear, several years ago the Tarrasque was able to free its tail and it took several hours for the God-Butchers to regain control and containment of the creature. In its thrashing and flailing, approximately 2500 people lost their lives from being struck by debris or the monster directly. In addition, numerous pieces of God-Butcher equipment was destroyed, and house sized boulders were flung into the Hind Quarter smashing homes and businesses. While this was happening, a large scale panic gripped the city, and -fearing that the end had finally come- swarms of people tried to flee. In addition to the thousands or so who lost their lives to the direct actions of the Tarrasque, an additional 4000 or so were trampled and killed in the madcap attempts to evacuate Salt in Wounds.   
Were it not for the actions of (then) Master [God-Butcher](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-order-of-god-butchers.html) [Helenie](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/helenie-ex-master-god-butcher-and-hero.html) in illegally using her knowledge of the 12th Meridian Harpoon [command word](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/the-title-of-binder-lord-and-13.html), the Tarrasque very likely would have freed itself.  
Eventually, the Tarrasque was brought back under control but with numerous lasting consequences.

The [God-Butchers](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-order-of-god-butchers.html) suffered a massive setback in public perception and internal shock, with as many as 20% of its ranks leaving the organization (although much of this was influenced by the post-crisis treatment of Helenie). The Hind Quarter was transformed into what is now commonly referred to [Tail Stones](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/12/the-tail-stones-district.html), an area of the city yet to be fully rebuilt and practically given over to lawlessness and grinding poverty.

257 AB 12th House Coup & the Creation of the Marrow Miners Following the 12th Meridian Crisis, Autoxia Marcellun (then [Binder-Lord of 12th House](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-13-meridian-houses.html)) was usurped by Tolviko Marcellun; then a lesser cousin of 12th House.   
Moreover, the newly confirmed Binder-Lord of 12th House Tolviko shocked the city several months after the crisis by granting the extraction contract for the 12th Meridian to the newly created Marrow Miners; an organization led by former God-Butchers and staffed largely by the so-called ‘monstrous’ races.  
As no official answer has ever been offered as to how the Tarrasque was able to free itself, numerous theories abound (see [Circle of Release](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/the-circle-of-release-common-knowledge.html)). The most widely accepted theory is that Autoxia had lost the favor of the God’s and so his charge was ‘unloosed.’

277 AB Present day.

# Secrets + Intrigue

Secrets

Note: The following information is generally unknown to Player Characters and the population of Salt in Wounds at large.

## Mammoth Wardens (Secret Faction)

The stone giants of Salt in Wounds seldom speak and seem extremely obedient, leading many citizens to conclude that they are 'simple creatures' and natural born slaves. What limited numbers escape (to join their freeborn tribesmen outside the city walls) are considered aberrations. And indeed, a minority of giants gave up long ago on any dreams of slavery’s end -at least on a racial level- and labor to improve their lot as slaves or (more rarely) winning their freedom and making their own place in the economy.

However, the vast majority of stone giants consider themselves full members of the Mammoth Warden clan, loyal to hidden elders many (born in captivity) have never met. Some covert communication has been established between giants within and without the city, and giants work together to forward their plans. The leaders on both sides of the wall have never accepted that the Granite Shard war was over, but instead have decided to unleash their most terrible weapon to finally win the conflict: patience. They await their opportunity to win freedom for all (including the Tarrasque) and destroy Salt in Wounds so they can finally reclaim the valley that is theirs by birthright… a goal they move ever closer to realizing as they ‘fade into the background’ with greater power & access coupled with ever diminishing supervision.  
The Circle of Release has made contact with the hidden, moving village of free Mammoth Wardens, and is currently negotiating an alliance as the aims of the groups seem to dovetail nicely.

## Secrets of the Tarrasque

The Tarrasque, since its imprisonment, has been growing larger and stronger, something known to a small number of highly placed individuals. Knowledgeable Binder-Lords and Blood Merchants see this as a positive development allowing them to increase their harvest, but keep word of this suppressed lest it panic the populace.

Eating a diet too high in Tarrasque meat, drinking ‘red water’ (water tainted by the Tarrasque’s viscera), and other utilizations of Tarrasque harvest leads to [side effects](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/07/tarrasque-fed-mutations.html): some slow, some fast, some beneficial, and some not. This is general knowledge, though not commonly discussed. The ancient alchemist Zandon Ras is employed in a long term project of experimentation to understand all the permutations of effects, supported secretly by one of the Binder-Lords who hopes to raise an army of mutants and expand their influence outwards.

Secrets of the Heartsblood Marsh

Most don’t wonder about the origins of the Heartsblood Marsh, assuming that -like mutations- it is an emergent property of the harvest of the Tarrasque. Few know that it is the artificial creation of Afrindi Gunterhix, a mad gnomish druid who crafted the artificial ecosystem, and still guides its development after his ‘death’ forty years ago and his merging with the fungal sieve where he spun his body into endless knots of fungus.

What remains of his druidic impulse to stop the Tarrasque’s corruption wars with his baser fungal nature; he suppresses the urge to spore and spread and claim ever more for his insatiable need to grow. Most grippli of Heartsblood Marsh worship Afrindi, while their high priests (in addition to half a dozen adventurers and investigators) are infested with his spores and transformed into servitors through which he can most directly pursue his goals.

The Fungal Sieve is now a castle sized knot of fungus, greedily sucking in the outflowing red river to grow ever larger. The sieve is riddled with tubules large enough for a human sized creature to crawl through (or a child sized creature to walk through). It is also full of room size bladders and empty organs, in which a variety of strange creatures seek shelter (including the spore infectees). These are used by the sieve to force air, water, and other important matter throughout its body. Hostile creatures attempting to move throughout these tubules will most likely have to face crushing, grappling damage alternated with washes of digestive enzymes or water (in addition to housed creatures and parasites) as the sieve attempts to kill any intruders.  
Near its core are its filter-grinders – thick, web-like strands of fungus coated with alternating rows of bony growths. Blood tainted water and food is shot through this area and matter is digested or sorted and squeezed out to the rest of the sieve’s body. These filter-grinders can also be reached more easily by following the stream’s path directly into the core of the sieve; but the fast rushing flow of water over innumerable rapids make such entry perilous.  
Above the filter-grinders looms the face of Afrindi, thick strands of fungus rooted into his eyes and translating the olfactory senses of the sieve into something approaching vision.  
The sieve is slowly crawling upstream towards Salt in Wounds at the rate of about a tenth of a mile a day.

## 5th House Secrets

Binder-Lady Kuolemita & her consort Merrin of 5th House are both deeply in love, completely loyal & honest with one another (if no one else), and non-monogamous by prior agreement. They have elected to have Merrin assume the role of drunken fool and Kuolemita that of the role of long suffering wife in order to 'play both sides,' imply a division & weakness where none exists, and otherwise create maneuverability to advance their political aims. They both often weave elaborate (and utterly false) tales about their own mistreatment by their spouse, sometimes hinting that they intend to leave the marriage. This is usually done with the intent to entrap the unwary, greedy, and romantic in their schemes.

Besides continuing to grow the influence and wealth of 5th House, Kuolemita & Merrin are most interested in securing their own power beyond any contest. Hence, one of their primary goals is to eliminate Dofen: who is the former 5th House Binder-Lord, Kuolemita's grandfather, and powerful wizard currently dead/in hibernation as he transforms himself into a lich. Their current plan is to enlist a group of adventurers to destroy Dofen’s body/phylactery, and -once that has been accomplished- to condemn these actions and slay the adventurers to pacify the Dofen loyalist faction within their own household.

Myrida, the Enders, and the Marrow Miners

In order to understand the Marrow Miners, it is important to first understand the character and motivations of Mirayda of the Five Cask Clan as her philosophy and goals shape everything about the organization.

The Marrow Miners were founded two decades ago by Mirayda of the Five Cask Clan, a female dwarf and former journeywoman God-Butcher who failed (spectacularly) during the Rite of Mutual Recognition. When she faced off against the Tarrasque and saw the spark of destruction there, Mirayda flew into a berserk rage, stabbing at its eye over and over again trying to end its life in contradiction of all sense and all her training as a God-Butcher. She had to be restrained by half a dozen other God-Butchers. Before any could debrief her, she launched into a tirade about how the beast must be slain –permanently- and that all of the God-Butchers’ considerable resources should be reassigned to discovering, inventing or otherwise implementing a plan to end the threat of the beast once and for all.

None of the Master God-Butchers would listen to her plea, each speaking of the importance of the Tarrasque to the city, assuring her that they had matters well in hand, and commenting that the original founders (in addition to two centuries of harvest) had already proven that it would be impossible to kill the monster. Facing this response, Mirayda resigned from her position as journeywoman God-Butcher and began a quest to discover some manner to finally end the threat of the Tarrasque once and for all.

She spent decades travelling to libraries all around the world, to any civilization that had come into contact with the Tarrasque, searching for some clue as to how it might ultimately be slain. Unfortunately, she found only confusion and frustration for years; nearly every account of the creature was –at best- wildly speculative or –at worst- a virtual font of misinformation.

Mirayda despaired when she realized that the best information about the beast was available in the God-Butcher archives (to which she no longer had access).

Still, she managed to discover some early correspondence from the first generation of God-Butchers complete with what appeared to be detailed anatomical records. With a flash of inspiration, Mirayda realized that the Tarrasque has changed massively since its imprisonment began. At this point, she knew her answers couldn’t be found in the past but that they would need to be invented through directly working on the Tarrasque as it exists today.

During the long journey back to Salt in Wounds, Mirayda agonized over how she’d once again rejoin the God-Butchers after her disgrace and while attempting to keep her aims and motivations secret. She arrived home during the [12th](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/the-12th-meridian-crisis.html) Meridian Crisis and so was provided a different path.

Mirayda threw herself into Tail Stones relief efforts, reintroducing herself to much of the city (most especially its poor). When Tolviko Marcellun staged his coup and seized control of 12th House, Mirayda approached the young Binder-Lord with an offer worthy of his brashness: she would found a new organization that would take over the 12th Meridian extraction contract from the God-Butchers who had were re-contracted every year as a matter of course, an outcome so expected that many had forgotten that this was a privilege that could be changed. In exchange for this unprecedented move- the ‘Marrow Miners’ would pay fees far in excess of any usually paid by the God-Butchers in addition to providing smuggled reagents which had previously been unavailable to 12th House.

Tolviko took the deal, and Mirayda of the Five Cask Clan founded the Marrow Miners.

In the two decades since, the Marrow Miners have grown immensely. While none of the other Meridian Houses have defected from the ancestral God-Butcher contracts, Mirayda continues to petition and her argument (and the wealth she generates for 12th House) grows more convincing every day. In addition to petitioning Binder-Lords for other Meridian contracts, she’s also had some success taking on ‘subcontracting’ duties for various God-Butcher operations, most usually by being willing to throw her workers into especially dirty and dangerous roles. Despite only having the contract for a single meridian the Marrow Miners are already roughly a quarter of the size of the God-Butchers (in terms of individuals employed, if not by wealth, production or influence). Mirayda has ignored assumptions about the racial hatred of dwarves to actively recruit [Orcs, Mites, and other monstrous races](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2016/05/races-of-salt-in-wounds.html) (who die by the hundreds in the pursuit of extraction). Employing advanced ‘strip mining’ like techniques (in addition to having much lower standards for employees than the heavily ritualized God-Butchers) the Marrow Miners have managed to exceed all expectations as to their potential, regularly cutting down to tailbone.

Unbeknownst to most, the Marrow Miners possess advanced techniques to temporarily overwhelm the Tarrasque’s regenerative abilities and are able to quickly cut deep tunnels into the beast. With these secret (and extremely temporary) channels (usually dug at night when God-Butcher activity is lessened) the Marrow Miners: 1) Gain access to rare glandular & organ cuts and 2) Produce more accurate information regarding the Tarrasque’s shifting physiology... information that Mirayda believes will one day allow her to finally slay the beast.

Mirayda is one of five individuals who suspect that the Tarrasque is pregnant and will give live birth within the next year; an event she is actively anticipating as she hopes the capture a young ‘Tarrasquelet’ and experiment on it to gain a better understanding of its progenitor.

The Marrow Miners (and their 12th House sponsors) regularly deal with the various gangs, criminal organizations, and corrupt Blood-Merchants; selling off their illegally harvested Tarrasque viscera. Mirayda and her trusted lieutenants are also huge importers of rare & custom poisons which they test in bulk against the Tarrasque, always searching for any that will improve their efforts at ever greater extraction or prove promising in taking the Tarrasque’s life (although if Tolviko Marcellum, or most of the organization knew that was Mirayda’s ultimate goal they would expose her, see her tried by the [stage-courts](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/12/the-beast-crown-district.html) and reorganize the leadership of the Marrow Miners).

Mirayda meets secretly (and in disguise) with a dozen like minded individuals to discuss what she’s learned and is the current unofficial leader of (nearly extinct) and almost wholly disorganized faction of [Enders](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2016/03/the-enders-public-knowledge.html).

## Secrets of the CapCaps

Other than the exploratory ‘wells’ dug by the God-Butchers into the Capcaps, entrances to the Capcaps can be found in the basements of gang headquarters, in nearby cave systems, and other secret sites throughout the city. Once the Capcaps have been entered, there is a path to almost anywhere in the city although even the well traveled ‘guides’ know every little about the total shifting geography and usually stick to their five or six favorite ‘routes’ to navigate the maze like environs.

Derro have colonized the deepest parts of Cardouf –the cavernous royal tombs- where they conduct alchemical experiments on captured humans and demi-humans. Most notably, they have recently begun to transform ordinary humans into worm-like Alchemical Oblates which are capable of producing high quality imitations of controlled or otherwise unavailable Tarrasque extracts.

A cabal of Blood-Merchants has sent down engineers protected by mercenaries to assess the feasibility of opening up and retrofitting the Capcaps to make it suitable for housing of the poor who don’t mind (or will be forced to accept) underground lodgings. The engineers have set up shop in the former feast hall of Cardouf, though it has been weeks and following the collapse of some tunnels after a Tarrasquequake they no longer know how to find their back to their exploratory well that could lead them to the surface. Growing increasingly paranoid these groups of scouts assume everyone they encounter are dangerous criminals sent to rob them, or rival operative seeking to undermine their claim.

There is an entrance to the underdark in Cardouf, which is currently controlled by the Derro. Several underdark factions suspect this and have been drafting plans to seize this point of access (and the unknown area above it).

## Tuska & the Quest for Divinity

There are places throughout the planes where torture beyond mortal comprehension takes place. Devils & demons have their hells and stranger, more twisted creatures have odd pits where cruelties are inflicted eternally. And, there are pockets on the mortal plane where incredible evil and torment exist: the labyrinthine dungeons of a mad king perhaps, or upon the sacrificial altars of a heartless summoner. But pain on the mortal plane is always limited by the lifespan of and resiliency of the creature suffering. However, the hundreds of years of torturing the (immortal, regenerating) Tarrasque has created something new.

Something unique.

Something dangerous.

The agony of the Tarrasque has created Tuska.

Tuska is the sentient, disembodied, psychic distillation of the Tarrasque’s pain. When Tuska first achieved consciousness, they were barely stronger than a half-formed mortal ghost; able -with great effort- to move small objects or whisper suggestions. In the decades since, as the Tarrasque’s agonies have ever increased Tuska's power until the being has grown in stature until they are akin a demigod, able to grant powers to witches and warlocks who claim them as patron.  
It is important to note that Tuska is *not* the Tarrasque: Tuska is a new spiritual being that uses the agony of the Tarrasque as a food source. But while the city at large may feast upon the Tarrasque’s flesh, Tuska (and -to a lesser degree- their servants) feed upon the Tarrasque’s agony.

Tuska is served as a patron by a tribe of harpies and a dozen or so witches & warlocks in the city of Salt in Wounds. Through skillful political manipulation, assassination, and magical rites performed with the assistance of their subservient witches, Tuska has blocked or thwarted any change in procedure that would lessen the Tarrasque’s pain (and the Tarrasque harvest of today is more excruciating for the creature than it’s ever been).

At present time, Tuska is drawing together the final elements for a decades old plan to ascend to true godhood; a deification that will first require the Tarrasque to briefly be freed so it can experience its own bestial equivalent to hope and freedom before Tuska cinches tight the final, eternal celise that will extend its agonies into time without end.

Tuska’s notable allies include the Coven of Three, comprised of the powerful witches Fina a harpy who takes multiple shapes, including a beautiful woman and a rag washer, Funa a horrendously mutated enforcer who leads a group of fierce assassins and regularly contracts out mercenaries currently often pregnant with a ‘tarrasqueling’ which -after birth- is ritually slaughtered as part of worship for Tuska, and Fex aka \_ a powerful nobleman who nonetheless wields incredible influence he dresses as a woman during rites in order to confuse/disguise identity and is most powerful of all the witches. Fex specifically was drawn to Tuska not because of a fetishization of pain, but rather curiosity ambition as to what it would be like to in on the ground floor of the birth of a new god. Since his affiliation with Tuska began, house fortunes have suffered somewhat but only a little, risk that fourth house might break from their orbit.

The Command Words & Releasing the Tarrasque

Each of the 13 immoveable harpoons that have been sunk into the Tarrasque, binding it in place, is controlled by a command word. Knowledge of each of these command words is a closely guarded secret, not only due to the practical dangers of someone unbinding the Tarrasque (as the [Circle of Release](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/the-circle-of-release.html) intends to do) but also due to the fact the knowledge of a command word is woven into the formal notions of power within the City of Salt in Wounds.  
  
**Command Word Possessors**  
  
In theory, each [Binder-Lord or Lady](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-13-meridian-houses.html) is the 'possessor' of the command word that corresponds to their house's meridian. As possessor, they are the only individual legally entitled to ever 'use' the command word and it is in this quality that their formal authority rests. None save the respective Binder-Lord 'possessor' may ever use the command word to unmoor or remoor their respective harpoon under penalty of truncation. The last individual to do so (and suffer the penalty) was Ex-Master God-Butcher [Helenie](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/11/helenie-ex-master-god-butcher-and-hero.html).  
  
**Command Word Confirmers and Safeguards**  
  
However, each meridian command word also features a minimum of four others ([Master God-Butchers](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/04/the-order-of-god-butchers.html), well connected merchants, and other Binder-Lords) who act as 'confirmers;’; individuals who are aware of the command word, but are charged with using that knowledge to 'check' the knowledge of a Binder-Lord or teach it to a new Binder-Lord (and so are integral to managing Meridian House succession). Binder-Lord and Ladies usually pass on their command words to their successors well before they themselves step down as part of the process of establishing their heir apparent. Most commonly, this honor is bestowed upon the first born of either sex, but sometimes it is granted to a different relative or -even more rarely- an unrelated individual who has been adopted into the Meridian House, usually as the result of some great service.  
  
While uncommon, coups are possible. The first step of which is to discover the respective meridian command word. After this, the original Binder-Lord or Lady has to be deposed, and then the would be successor needs approval from 3 out of the 4 confirmers (a ‘confirmation’). Any individual who is able to gain a (secret) command word, overthrow a Binder-Lord or Lady, and politically secure a confirmation quorum is generally accepted as possessing all the necessary skills to excel as one of the new oligarchs of Salt in Wounds.  
  
Extensive use of memory magic (like [Modify Memory](http://www.d20pfsrd.com/magic/all-spells/m/modify-memory)) or compulsion magic (like [Geas](http://www.pathfinder-srd.nl/wiki/Geas_(Lesser)_(Spell))) is used to prevent 'leaks' and limit knowledge or use of command words.  
  
**Other Sources for Command Words**  
  
In addition to residing in the minds of their respective confirmers and possessors, command words can be found in the following places:

1. The command words are magically woven into the immovable harpoons themselves. In addition, they also are embedded into and act as the command words for a number of 'secondary' magical items unique to a few of the Meridian houses (crowns, scepters, weapons, etc). There is a rumor that an otherwise unremarkable halfling wizard named Patrega Thatchthumb operating in the [Throat bazaar](http://www.saltinwoundssetting.com/2015/12/the-throat.html) has created a device that can extract a magical command word from the item it controls.
2. Command words are sometimes possessed by disgraced or otherwise replaced confirmers or possessors. Some of these individuals are vagrants in distant cities, some are prisoners, some of these individuals are half-insane hermits living in the wildlands. Many of these individuals have had their memories magically altered, or are under a compulsion to reveal their command word(s) only under very specific circumstances. Learning the identity, whereabouts, and communication conditions of such individuals represents a massive magical or academic undertaking.
3. In the rarest of cases, command words are written down (generally only for volatile Meridian Houses which have experienced succession crisis or by Binder-Lords who wish to flaunt security conventions). Such instances are under heavy guard, usually secreted in a vault complete with magical and mundane countermeasures to oppose would be thieves.
4. Certain command words can be obtained (for an exorbitant fee) from one of the half dozen information brokers operating within the city.

**Releasing the Tarrasque**  
  
While sometimes their ritualized political use obscures this fact; the harpoon command words are the true keys that could unlock the destruction of Salt in Wounds and the reshaping of the world. All major factions and power blocks have an incredible interest in controlling knowledge of the command words. Only the Master God-Butchers (in their role as confirmers and only collectively as a group) possess all 13. In addition to this, they also control physical access to each of the harpoons (save the 12th, which is currently controlled by the Marrow Miners) and could therefore release the Tarrasque immediately, with little trouble if they so desired.

The Thirteen Command Words are as follows.

## Secrets of the Circle of Release

Since seizing the reigns of power and reforming the Circle of Release, Grovask -a half-orc who regularly works as a merchant guard- has led the group to the ascendancy of its power and to within a stone's throw of accomplishing its goal. The fact that she has done so while facing violent opposition from nearly every other influential faction in the city is a testament to the half-orc's unrepentant ruthlessness and strategic brilliance.

Where -under founder’s Errya leadership- the circle attracted the poor, the malcontents, theorists and academics; the modern circle's recruiting efforts are nearly entirely focused on those with the magical or martial capacity necessary for direct, covert action. Hard edged rangers, druids capable of channeling the naked ferocity of nature, and even sympathetic rogues, fighters, and wizards of the green faith now comprise the various rings of the Circle of Release.

The Circle of Release is organized as half a dozen semi-independent rings (or cells), all with only tentative communication with and knowledge of the membership and activities of the other rings. When possible, these rings carry out missions of intimidation or sabotage aimed at making the continued butchery of the Tarrasque untenable. Large scale coordination is utilized on efforts to discover/steal the command words that release the magical, 'immovable' harpoons that bind the Tarrasque.

To date, Grovask has learned 9 of the harpoon command words. When the group has gathered all 13, Grovask will enact her plan to overwhelm/confound the God-Butchers and House Militias long enough to unmoor all the meridian harpoons and finally unleash the Tarrasque.

## Alchemist War

The Alchemist War is an unspoken conflict -now entering its second decade- between alchemists and others, loosely aligned into two camps: those ‘allied’ or under the direction of 5th House (which seeks to establish an effective monopoly upon the alchemist trade in Salt in Wounds) and the independents who resist these machinations and who are unofficially led by Bakal Fillagreen. The primary mechanism for the ‘war’ is 5th House using its position as supplier of the vast majority of alchemical reagents to fix prices and direct supply towards its favored/subservient alchemists, theft, blackmail, sabotage, framing various individuals for crimes, extortion, and threats. So far, the independents have focused their efforts on securing independent sources for the reagents they need (beyond the limited quantities they have access to by working with other meridian houses & smugglers) and the development of alchemical oblates is a huge push. Anonymously employed criminals are the major forces employed in this war (as both sides prefer not to get their hands dirty) with adventurers regularly employed for offense or defense or the collection of some vital piece.

The ‘war’ has yet to feature (confirmed) assassinations (though both sides suspect the other’s involvement in several suspicious accidental deaths). In preparation of the war going ‘hot’ Bakal Fillagreen has been producing and storing Tarrasque Flesh golems at scale -loyal to him and his associates- in anticipation of needing martial forces to resist

## Secrets of the Oni

Oni are quite common in and around Salt in Wounds. While spirits' origins are unknown to most, but are in fact due to the schemes of Gurilda; a now deceased oni prince who travelled the world disguised as a merchant. When Gurilda happened upon Salt in Wounds a century after its founding, he decided that -due to the multiplicity of its sins- Salt in Wounds would be a perfect place for formless, wandering Oni spirits to physically embody. Aiming to become king of such beings, Gurilda performed an intricate ritual to create a magical anchor to attract and bind other Oni. His personal plans for glory were foiled when he was slain by a group of adventurers, but his magic (as well as the inherent the evil of the city) has nonetheless led to the incredible numbers of Oni (bound to no master) to incarnate in and around Salt in Wounds. It is suggested that if Gurilda's essence could ever be reconstituted into physical form, all the Oni would be compelled to follow his commands; or the commands of the one who controlled Gurilda.

# Monsters & Hazards

The city of Salt in in Wounds is host to many monsters and hazards beyond the rampant crime, corruption, and political infighting. Some are found all over the world, while some are virtually unknown beyond the city’s limits, but all are twisted, made unique by the city’s influence.

### Animated Objects

Animated Objects, used as inexpensive sentries and guards, are a common hazard to thieves or 'explorers' in Salt in Wounds. Alternately, magical instructions placed to guide these objects tend to decay with time or were inexpertly applied in the first place; leading to more than one incident of an unwarranted attack about town.

### Ankheg

Ankhegs are a native apex predator to the region around Salt in Wounds, although they are now far more common than ever before binding. They emerge at seeming random from the ground outside the city, and sometimes even within the walls themselves. Thousands have been glimpsed feasting below the bound Tarrasque, growing bloated and huge as they dig into the monster's belly. God-Butchers and Marrow Miners purge them once a season, but they always return. Most often, the terrifying individual ankhegs encountered as hazards are the weakest specimens of the city’s population, pushed out by stronger ankhegs that continue to eat their fill of Tarrasque flesh as they grow ever larger.

### Axe-Beak

These dangerous, large birds are native to the steppes around Salt in Wounds and work as the primary beast of burden/mount for the city; meat being cheaper than the feed required for horses. Feral (and aggressive) axe-beaks can still be found in the surrounding area, and occasionally even domesticated axe-beaks can present a hazard to individuals inside the city walls.

### Ghouls & Ghasts While Ghouls and Ghasts can be citizens of Salt in Wounds (with the same ethical responsibilities of any other humanoid) it is not unheard of for individuals to revert to a bestial, mindless state and attack on sight.

### Harpy

Numerous flocks of harpies roost in the mountains around Salt in Wounds, harassing travelers and traders. Uniquely, these harpies include a large number of witches, many of whom have forged a pact with a local tulpa (see secrets for more information). These harpy witches (and the flocks they lead) are used as assassins and operatives to further hidden schemes.

### Otyugh

Before the legalization of ghouls in Salt in Wounds, hundreds of imported otyughs were used to help dispose of the masses of rotting meat. After 5th House and its sanctioned undead picked up the contract for waste disposal, the otyughs -many mutated and made more terrible by their constant diet of Tarrasque flesh- were slated to be executed. The unexpectedly intelligent creatures, led by their emergent sorcerer/blood-shaman leader, were able to anticipate this crisis and stage a mass escape whereupon they fled to CapCaps in addition to Heartsblood Marsh where they’ve thrived.

### Oni

While not historically present to the area, shortly after its founding the city of Salt in Wounds and surrounding lands have become populated with numerous Oni of various types. Some haunt the wilderness and slums, preying on the weak. Some operate in secret, disguising their true nature in service of larger plans. And some few operate openly in the city, accepted as citizens that can keep a bargain, hiring out their labor or selling magic.

### Stirge

Millions of stirges feed upon the bound Tarrasque. Even with dedicated purge efforts swarms of these creatures represent a serious hazard in Salt in Wounds. Most of the time, they are content to grow fat and bloated drinking the tremendous beast's blood, but sometimes multiple swarms are disturbed and take flight, darkening the sky in their incredible, locust-like numbers. During these so called 'black-sun days' residents bar their doors and windows against the stirges until they can burned out of the air in mass; the unlucky or unwary individuals that are caught outdoors are often discovered later as nothing more than desiccated husks.

### Yeti

These primates reside in the nearby mountains though they have recently been spreading down into the lowlands; finding good hunting in the sanguine, fecund, and flesh choked environs around Salt in Wounds. Those that no longer live amidst the snow continually rub their fur in the viscera of their kills, to better blend in with the red tinted landscape. Such creatures are generally referred to as blood yetis.

Unique Monsters

Goblin Wormtongue

Goblin Wormtongues are goblins transformed by their exposure to Worm Brew, now colonized by parasites. They are able to command loyalty from other goblins, are tied to the bugs, and have been awakened to mystical power by the Worm Brew and their communion with the worms.

Most serve Gothmork (see appendix \_) but some few have left the Grub House to found their own organizations, a few isolated individuals having left Salt in Wounds all together.

Where their tongue would normally be is instead a tangle of worms. When a Goblin Wormtongue speaks, it is actually a chorus of small mouthed worm voices speaking in unison with the goblin host (this is especially apparent when a Goblin Wormtongue casts a spell).

Goblin Wormtongue

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 14 (4d6)

**Speed** 30ft

**Str** 8 (-1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Con** 10 (+0) **Int** 12 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** ½ (100 xp)

***Nimble escape***: the goblin can take the Disengage or Hide actions as a bonus action on each of its turns.

***Inspirational Figure***: all goblinoid allies within 50 feet of the Goblin Wormtongue who can hear its voice gain a +2 bonus to hit and damage with all attacks.

***Innate Spellcasting***: the Gobin Wormtongue’s spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components.

At will: friends, minor illusion

Three times per day each: command

Once per day each: hideous laughter, charm person

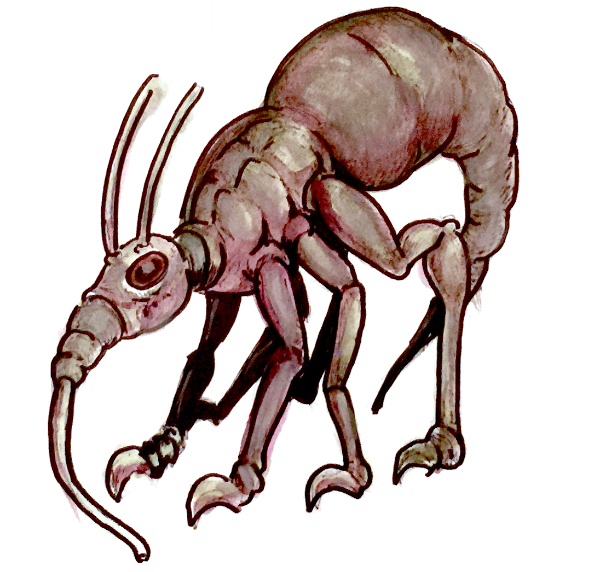
**Actions**

***Dagger***: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage make a Constitution save DC 10 or take an additional 7 (2d6) poison damage.

***Sling****: Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 hit, range 30/120 ft, one target. Hit: 4 (d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

Ramora Fleas (Lesser)

The parasites are common throughout Salt in Wounds, bloodsucking creatures like huge ticks or fleas.

*Ramora Flea (Lesser)*

(Note,: not final art)

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d6+8)

**Speed** 30ft

**Str** 14 (+2) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Con** 15 (+2) **Int** 2 (-4) **Wis** 11 (+0) **Cha** 4 (-3)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** Blindsight 10 ft, Darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 10

**Languages** None

**Challenge** ½ (100 xp)

***Standing Leap***. The parasite’s long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

**Actions**

***Blood sucking***: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage and if the target is a medium or smaller creature, the creature is grappled (escape DC 12). While the creature is grappled, the parasite doesn’t attack. Instead, at the start of each of the parasite’s turns, the target loses 5 (1d6+2) hit points due to blood loss.

Worm Savant

The impossible, even paradoxical existence of Worm Savants imbues them with sentience and magical power. Fat, green, arm-sized grubs with smooth, vaguely humanoid faces that issue a constant stream of unintelligible whispers, these creatures communicate in riddles and puzzles, and seek only power and the advancement of themselves and their Worm Mother. If they lack a Worm Mother, they will seek allies to help them grow a new Worm Mother. 

(Note,: not final art)

Worm Savant

*Small monstrosity, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d6+8)

**Speed** 20 ft

**Str** 6 (-2) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Con** 12 (+1) **Int** 16 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+2) **Cha** 8 (-1)

**Skills** Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +4

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 13

**Languages** telepathic commutation 120 ft

**Challenge** ½ (100 xp)

***Innate Spellcasting***: the Worm Savant’s spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components.

At will: Mage Hand, Message, Prestidigitation, Poison Spray

Once per day each: Fog Cloud, Ray of Sickness, Tasha’s Hideous Laughter

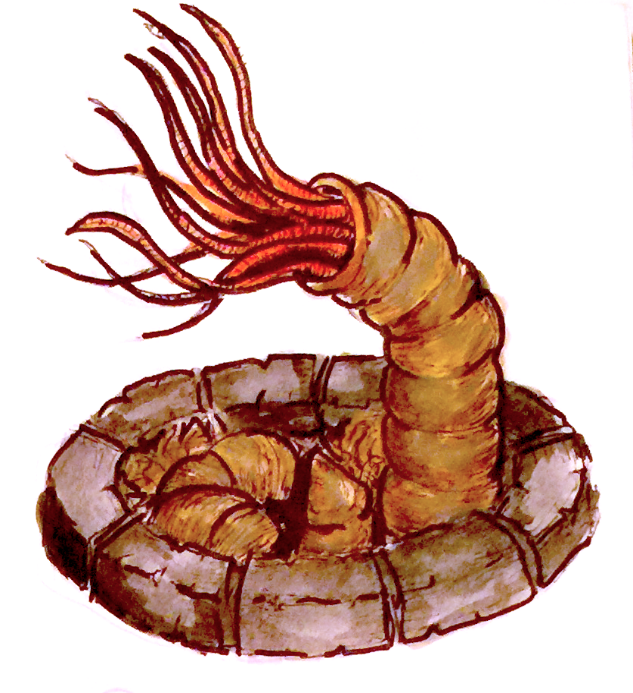
**Actions**

***Poison Sting***: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d3+1) piercing damage and target must make a Constitution save (DC 11) or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the creature fails its save by 5 or more, the creature is also paralyzed. The creature can make a saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending its paralyzed status on a successful saving throw.

The Worm Mother

Huge, blind, and largely mindless, the Worm Mother seeks only food and the creation of more giant worms. It lives on offal, and is worshiped by the Worm Savants and its cult of goblin servants. It can be calmed by trained tenders, but if not controlled, it will leave its feeding pit to seek living food.

Worm Mothers are prized for the unique ability that, though they are mindless when slain they will sometimes telepathically issue a single true prophecy. For this reason, they are sometimes grown by occultists looking to predict the future (though, they often escape measures designed to control them, creating another worm cult to tend to them out of their erstwhile captors).



(Note,: not final art)

The Worm Mother

*Huge monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 95 (10d12+30)

**Speed** 40 ft

**Str** 20 (+5) **Dex** 8 (-1) **Con** 17 (+3) **Int** 2 (-4) **Wis** 11 (+0) **Cha** 6 (-3)

**Senses** Blindsense 30 ft, Tremorsense 60 ft, passive Perception 10

**Languages** None

**Challenge** 3 (700 xp)

**Actions**

***Paralyzing Tentacles***: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d4+5) bludgeoning damage, target is grappled (escape DC 17), and target must make a Constitution save (DC 15) or be poisoned for 1 hour. While it is poisoned, the creature is also paralyzed. The creature can make a saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending its paralyzed status on a successful saving throw.

***Devouring maw***: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one grappled target. Hit: 13 (3d6+5) slashing damage.

Special

Death Throes: Sometimes upon death, Worm Mothers telepathically issue a single true prophecy for all sentient beings within 300 feet to mentally ‘hear.’

Note: It is up to DMs whether Worm Mothers will issue this sort of prophecy and they are free to use this ability

KOLO BIRD CR 1/8

This dark-feathered bird has a red undertail and intense yellow eyes, and its hooked beak is congealed with gore.

Kolo birds are micropredators, using their incredibly sharp beaks to create nesting cavities and grievous wounds. Although they do not typically hunt, kolo bird flocks knows as “wakes” seek out wounded creatures detected with their keen carrion sense, preferring to deliver a swift coup de grace rather than drawn out conflicts.

**Bloody Beak**. A kolo bird attacks by pecking with it's spearhead-shaped beak, the inward curve cutting out bloody ribbons from their victim.

Tiny beast, unaligned

**AC** 13 (natural armor)  
**HP** 14 (3d4+6)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

**Str 7**, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7  
**Skills** Survival +6

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** -  
**Challenge** 1/8

**Blood Frenzy.** The kolo bird has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Keen Carrion Smell** The kolo bird has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and tracking checks that rely on smell against creatures who are missing at least half (50% or fewer) of their hit points and the undead.

Actions

Bloody Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 3 (1d4+2) piercing damage. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1 piercing damage due to blood loss for each time you've wounded it, and it can then make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success.

VARIANT: WATCHER (DIRE KOLO BIRD) CR 1

Mottled and sporting minor vestigial mutations, watchers are kolo birds that have mutated due to a steady diet of Tarrasque. They are larger, hardier and more resistant to virulent damage than their smaller cousins. Warlocks on the Path of the Chain can select a watcher as one of their familiar options (PHB pg. 107)

Small beast, unaligned

**AC** 14 (natural armor)  
**HP** 19 (3d6+9)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

**Str 9**, **Dex** 13, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7  
**Skills** Survival +6

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** -  
**Challenge** 1

**Blood Frenzy.** The watcher has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Keen Carrion Smell** The watcher has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and tracking checks that rely on smell against creatures who are missing at least half (50% or fewer) of their hit points and the undead.

Actions

Bloody Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1d4 piercing damage due to blood loss for each time you've wounded it, and it can then make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success.

# Appendix 1: Intro Adventure - **Gothmork’s Grub House**

## Introduction

Gothmork’s Grub House is perhaps the worst eatery in the Tail Stones. Run by a goblin named Gothmork and staffed by a crew of scruffy goblin cooks, servers, and servants, the Grub House serves lousy food and worse ale in dirty and crowded conditions to anyone desperate enough to come in for a meal and a terrible drink.

The regular customers here are goblins, half-orcs, criminals, and the abject poor. In addition, this is often used as a place for criminals to meet up where they know no one cares what they are doing and no one is likely to call on the law to interfere.

The Grub House sells two regular items: a huge bowl of grub stew for 1 copper piece and a giant tankard (about a half liter) of ale for 1 copper piece. No one asks about the source of the food, and the food and drink are both blandly unpleasant.

Both are made from the bodies of grubs that Gothmork has been growing in his basement for years, grubs grown from parasites harvested from the skin and feces of the Tarrasque.

The House Stew: Worm Stew

Worm Stew is bland, filling, rich, and tastes vaguely like a mix of chicken, onions, porridge, and a pinch of dirt. It would be generous to say that it isn’t unpleasant to eat. It doesn’t, however, taste good by any stretch of the imagination. Worm Stew is a filling meal, though, and works as food. It is not at all dangerous to eat.

The House Ale: Worm Brew

Worm Brew is a strong alcoholic beverage with mild hallucinogenic properties to goblinoids that lead to delusions of grandeur and feelings of divine inspiration. To non-goblinoids, Worm Brew is an ingested poison. An hour after drinking Worm Brew, a non-goblinoid creature must make a Constitution saving throw, DC 12. If the creature imbibed only one ale, the save is made with advantage. If the creature imbibed more than two, the save is made at disadvantage. If the creature fails its save, it becomes poisoned for one hour. While poisoned, the creature becomes euphoric and highly suggestible: any creature using social skills on a creature poisoned by Worm Brew will have advantage on their rolls against the poisoned creature.

Reasons the PCs might get involved

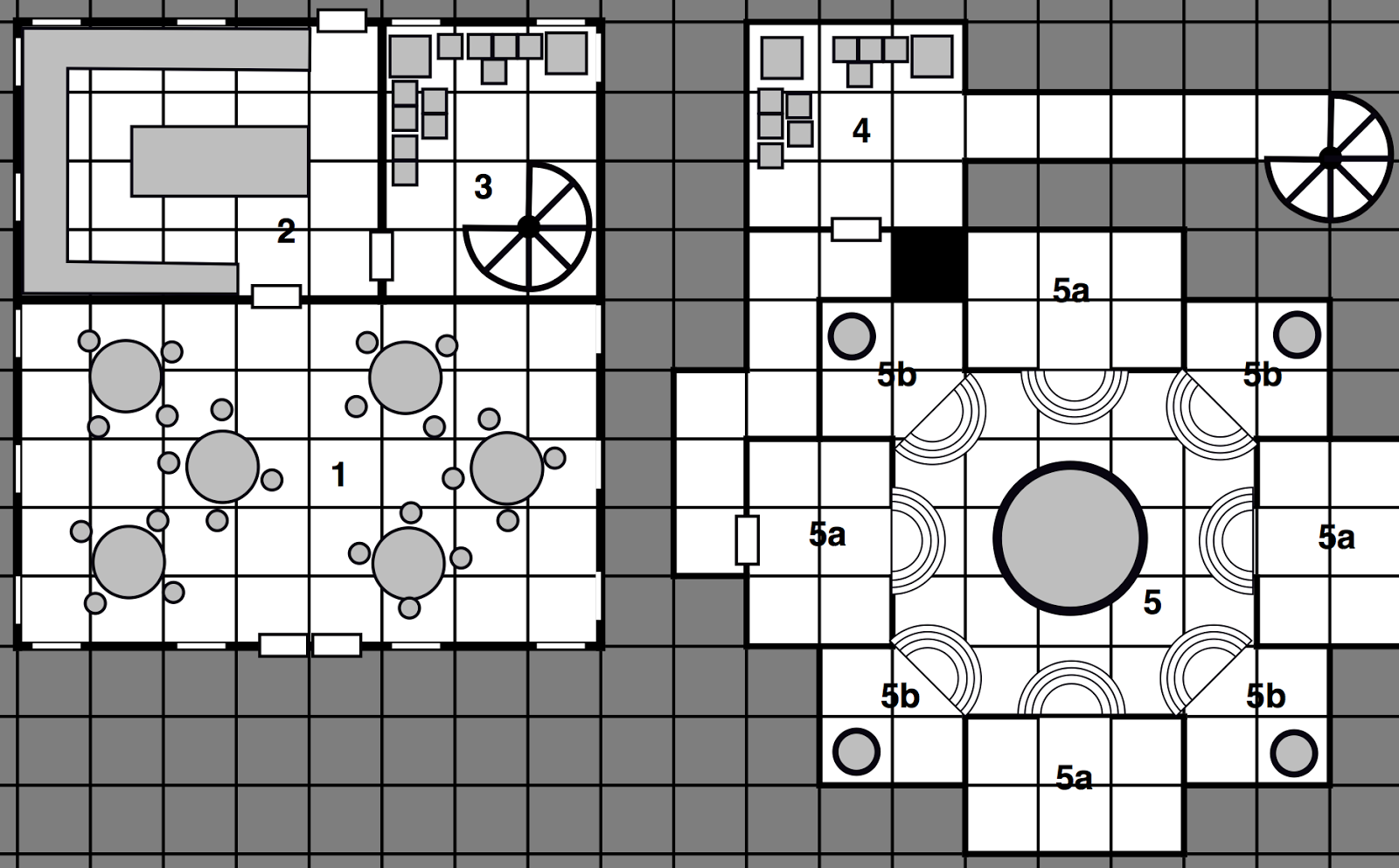
Gothmork’s Grub House is a low-level threat, a minor criminal conspiracy and a background threat that lurks around the edges of the campaign. This could be used to introduce investigation, intrigue, and a sense of danger as a background story arc as the player-characters begin to explore the city and make more sense of its players and its intrigues.

* The Grub House is the center of criminal activity led by Gothmork. Gorthmork not only hosts criminal meetings in the Grub House, he also acts as a fence for stolen goods. But more importantly, Gothmork gets minor crime lords drunk on the Worm Brew to turn them into loyal agents. This means that the Grub House can be a place where characters can meet criminal contacts, learn rumors, hire henchmen, or spy on criminal activities. In the process, they can overhear criminal dealings by Gothmork and see his supernatural hold on others and fanatical loyalty from the goblin employees.
* The player characters could be hired to find a young man or woman from a poor family who has suddenly fallen into low-level criminal behavior after frequenting the Grub House and drinking the Worm Brew. The influence of the Brew made the missing person susceptible to influence and led them to becoming a criminal working for one of Gothmork’s enterprises. The player-characters need to find the missing person, uncover the conspiracy, and free the person from the influence of the brew.
* The player-characters can find a growing gang war among the lower-levels of crime in the Throat. Several small-time hoods seem to be consolidating operations, leading more powerful criminals to ask the player characters to investigate. The investigation reveals strangely compliant and compulsive behavior among the criminals the player-characters encounter, and the investigation leads the player-characters to Gothmork’s Grub House and a goblin conspiracy.

Background

Gothmork was a simple goblin who had escaped from his tribe due to his strong sense of self-preservation. He wanted independence, wealth, and the kind of ease he saw among the human merchants his people often raided and harassed. He came to Salt in Wounds seeking his fortune, but started out as a beggar. He worked his way to thievery, smuggling, and dealing in various forms of Tarrasque derived narcotics. After several run-ins with the House Militias, Gothmork figured there had to be an easier way to get rich. His idea was to start a business. Figuring everyone needed to eat, Gothmork decided to start a restaurant— even though he had no cooking skills.

But Gothmork was cheap, a real copper-piece-pincher, unwilling to let go of any wealth if possible. He looked at ways to find free food: trying to catch cats, trying to steal supplies, even seeing if he could raise his own food. But eventually, he turned to thinking about the Tarrasque. Harvesting the flesh of the beast was out of the question— it was hard and dangerous work. But maybe, the Tarrasque could provide. Watching the creature, Gothmork noted its skin was covered with parasites, and there were worms that seemed to grow from rotting heaps of meat cast off by the various Process Guild render shops.

Gothmork began to harvest the parasites and worms and became fascinated with the potential of free resources. First, he realized he had an affinity for training the lesser ramora fleas whose eggs he bartered from the Marrow Miners – raising a small number as useful pets, guarding his humble hovel and helping him eliminate rivals. Second, he learned that the worms he had collected could be grown in vats of offal. Some grew into meaty grubs that he could make into steaks and stews that he and other goblins found delicious and humans found oddly palatable. Others were smaller, and with time and experimentation, he found he could pull them, ferment them, and brew them into a milky liquor that pleased his palate and got him drunk. In addition, when he was drunk, he saw visions of the ascendancy of goblins under the rule of a great Worm Mother, serving her to rise from the gutters to drive out humankind, seize control of the Tarrasque, and drive all other races to submission. 

(Note, not final art)

Once he discovered the Worm Brew, his experiments expanded. He fed the Brew to the types of grubs he used to make the Brew, and they began to change, becoming arm-sized worms with humanoid faces and intellect. The began speaking to him, whispering to him about his visions and their ascendancy. They taught him the ways of magic and how to choose one of the grubs in his vat, feed it and nurture it into their Worm Mother. They also helped him to gather a following of goblins to serve as a loyal cult serving the Worm Mother under the influence of the Worm Brew to breed worms, feed her, and prepare for the Goblin Ascendancy.

The Tavern and Basement

Gothmork’s Grub House is a nondescript, dirty, one-story building. Dirty, dingy, but crowded, the tavern itself is not particularly notable, but the basement below the tavern is heavily excavated to hide Gothmork’s “farming”, preparation, and cult activity.

***1. The Dining Room***

Crowded whenever the Grub House is open, the dining room is filled with goblinoids, criminals, and paupers. Goblins serve the tables. They are quick, surly, and try to clear out tables as quickly as possible.

Gothmork is often here during business hours, circulating among the regulars and visitors, and taking the chance to make criminal and business deals.

Gothmork is a Goblin Wormtongue.

***2. The Kitchen***

A team of goblin cooks work in the hot kitchens, making the stew and dishing out meals. The prep area and the pots are disgusting as the goblins break down worms into the soup.

***3. The Storeroom***

Filled with boxes of potatoes and onions, barrels of water, and worm brew, and salt, the storeroom isn’t particularly exciting. But a spiral staircase descends downward into the basements.

***4. Basement***

This appears to be further storage, including yeast, salt, and water barrels. But some of the boxes also include cultic robes, boxes of hooked goads and leather armor, and other gear for the cultists. The basement is regularly watched by a Goblin Wormtender and a lesser remora flea.

***5. The Worm Chamber***

The worm chamber is home to the Worm Mother, tended by a bevy of Goblin Womtenders. The room is the complicated, but roughly hewn in the style of architecture used by goblins, with a crudely arched ceiling. Short, circular steps descend to the central chamber, in the center of which is a large pool filled with murky liquid. This pool is home to The Worm Mother.

The Worm Mother is tended by three Goblin Wormtenders led by a Goblin Wormtongue.

***A. Wormtenders***

Each landing holds wormtenders watching over the scene— One Goblin Wormtender and a Tarrasque Parasite. Challenging the first Goblin Wormtender will spark a call out to the others in the room, and spur a large-scale fight.

***B. Fermenting Pools***

The fermenting pools are filled with a thick, yeasty brew, filled with chopped up worms, on top of which floats a large mat of lichen, yeast, and bacteria. A large wooden spoon hangs over the large stone pools. Two goblins work in over each pool, supervised by a Worm Savant.

Appendix: Salt in Wounds, the Wider World, and Synoma

In the following pages, the basics of the world of Synoma -as well as Salt in Wounds place in it- is outlined. If you’re interested in Synoma, look out for the Synoma Campaign Setting due to be published by Pangolin Press.

[/synoma]

*Synoma: The Fantasy Cold War*

In the seventh age of Synoma, new kingdoms rose; built upon the ruins of empires of old, the nations of men and others that rose after the fall of the ancients quickly realized that power was not measured by numbers in your armies, but by the amount of magic you dug up from the ground or developed within your own people. Massive research and exploration efforts began in earnest three hundred years ago and every (easily locatable) ruin or dungeon was secured by a state and plumbed for its . Very rapidly, five great powers emerged; each with their own specialties and unique artifacts upon which their empires were founded. Nearly as quickly, however, they reached a stalemate as they each possessed magics capable of utterly obliterating their enemies (and possibly themselves). With open war too costly to conceive of (or at least that’s the hope of ordinary citizens) conflict has transferred to proxy wars fought over and on satellite states & spheres of influence, the relentless crusades to push back monstrous, demonic, or undead forces, and finally the so called ‘great game’ of adventurers.

Magic items are extremely rare and high level magic is virtually nonexistent. Only those most rare savant-like individuals are capable enacting high level magical workings/creation of magical items. The primary ‘resource’ the various states compete over is high level wizards, clerics, sorcerers, and magic item creators. Abundant alchemical goods have replaced most low level magic items, and these are often derived from the special properties of magical creatures (most especially, Salt in Wound’s Tarrasque).

*The Great Game: The Role of Adventurers in the Geopolitics of Synoma*

Most adventurers in Synoma are usually loyalists pledged to one of the five great powers, although occasionally they are mercenaries happy to take the pay of whoever offers the most coin. More paranoid states control their adventurers via leveraging threats to their loved ones, rune-bound exploding slave collars to enforce compliance, and/or mind affecting magic. The five great powers have have identified ‘22 Paths to Power’ (what serves as character classes in other settings) and rigorously screen their population for any individuals who show aptitude for one of the paths (there is also regular abduction/recruitment of exceptional citizens of other empires). Such individuals are then conscripted (or at least ‘strongly encouraged’) to pursue developing their class abilities whereupon they are incorporated into the traditional armies or sent to join state sponsored adventurer agencies. These agencies are utilized for intrigue, covert dungeon delves (often behind enemy lines), or SWAT like fast response to emergent/quick moving threats for which the army is ill-equipped to handle.

Most adventurers in Synoma cap out at level 6; to push past is to generally become something more/less than human and in so doing wind up in the crosshairs of the other powers. If adventurers reach this point, they figure greatly into politics & plots of the greater world and have their enemies begin to develop exhaustive dossiers on their strengths & weaknesses in addition to facing regular assassination/recruitment efforts. As such, ‘min-maxing’ is something states regularly do for their squads of adventurers, as they attempt to put together the most effective and versatile teams of weirdos who regularly face down threats ‘far above their level.’ However, even as they arm themselves to take down demigods, adventurers must regularly move throughout the paranoid world of Synoma without attracting notice. Some rare adventurers manage to keep their abilities secret and become independent operators; but these are the exception rather than the rule.

Adventurers are amongst the only segment of the population with regular knowledge of magical items, and the incredible value of these items make them especially tempting targets.

Adventurers in Synoma function as something between secret agents, special forces, and an armored tank division/living WMDs – with their sponsor states ready to disavow or betray them following a failure or even if they seem to have grown too powerful, This is of particular import as one of the current ‘big five’ powers was founded by a group of adventurers who recovered and artifact that put them on equal footing with the other empires and allowed them to carve out a kingdom of their own.

*Salt in Wounds in Synoma*

The City of Salt in Wounds is one of a handful of ‘impossible’ cities in Synoma; that is, cities that can only exist because of some supernatural quality that supports their otherwise untenable existence. Because of its isolation, self-sufficiency, and due to the established policy of the Binder-Lords that they will release the Tarrasque if their rule is threatened by an outside force Salt in Wounds has managed to maintain its independence. As such, it often serves as a meeting place of rival factions and powers, a base to scheme & launch plots + intrigues, and one of the central location wherein an interested party can find neutral, mercenary adventurers.

Another unique feature is that, due to the incredible value of its alchemical exports in a world largely void of magic, Salt in Wounds runs a huge trade deficit with most of its regular trade partners. Hence, large quantities of magic items flow into the city to pay for all the alchemical goods + Tarrasque derived wondrous items flowing \*out\* of the city. Salt in Wounds is one of the few places in the world where magical items can often be procured… though higher end magical items can usually only be obtained by providing ‘favors’ or going into ‘debt’ with one of its aristocratic or merchant powers.

# Appendix 3: Random Encounters

### D6 Encounters for Sage's Row

1. The party encounters a half-elven street peddler named  
   Tianti Tani who offers a variety of odd looking, jury-rigged magical items of dubious utility.
2. A Tarrasque Flesh Golem has gone berserk and is attacking at random. Depending on party level, a low powered wizard is already engaging the construct with hastily summoned monsters and aiding magic (though he will probably lose without the party’s intercession).
3. A stooped man heavily laden with magical supplies trudges down the street as a cherubim hovers above him raining down curses and the occasional blow. Any attempt to speak to the man or the apparent angel causes the cherubim to respond ‘pike off, mind your own thrice-damned business.’
4. A street cryer calls out, ‘Anyone looking for work? Anyone looking for work?’ If queried, she reveals her employers are looking for anyone interested in being the subject of (perfectly safe!) medical experimentation. The deal is, if any PC is willing to wear an Alchemist Testing Apparatus (set to 'experiment' mode - see monsters and page \_) for a month they will be paid 2000 gold pieces.
5. An alchemist’s shop has a series of exhaust pipes emanating puffs of odd colored smoke. A giggling trio of teens inhale some of the vapors and if the party shows any interest the teens invite them over in order to partake. Upon inhalation, there is a 50% chance that the PC will be sickened for 24 hours. There is a 50% chance that the vapors will produce an intense euphoria and vivid hallucinations that amidst nonsensical imagery contain portentous truths about the party’s upcoming adventures. Up to three ‘turns with the vapors can be taken before the shopkeeper comes out to chase away the assembled by threatening to summon the militia.
6. A small procession of individuals move past a shrine to Macinfex: God of Butchers. Each genuflect with a bow and a pantomime of sharpening knives before taking a small piece of raw meat (held in a bowl in the statue’s hands) into their mouths. Any PC who imitates gains a blessing on a single attack or ability check made in the next 24 hours. *+4 in Pathfinder, Advantage in 5e. This blessing must be selected for use before dice are rolled.*

### D6 Encounters for the Throat Merchant District

The Throat is the commercial district comprised of everything from bazaar-like clusters of brightly colored tents, to raised auction blocks, to looming guild halls built of polished Tarrasque bone. The following is a selection of random encounters for a party travelling through this zone.

1. The party is confused for a group of exotic slaves (with one of the PCs assumed to be the owner) by Quine Calafax, a foppish gnome slave monger. Quine makes ludicrous offers to buy the individual party members & if told one is not a slave, he simply moves onto bargaining over one of the others. He mentions that due to the PC race/distinguishing feature that they would 'complete his collection.'
2. An overladen hand cart has tipped over, and casks filled with water have spilled out into the street. Various people are darting in and out, absconding with the barrels while a woman bellows for help to 'stop the thieves.'
3. On a roll of 3, Roll again. While otherwise engaged (with the results of the second roll), the party is attempted to be pickpocketed. *Use the* [*burglar stats for Pathfinder*](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd/mastery/nPCGallery/criminalsI.html#burglar) *for the pickpocket |* [*5e use Spy Stats*](http://www.5esrd.com/gamemastering/monsters-foes/npc/npc-spy).
4. One of the party is mistaken for 'Brown Sutto' by a gang of 4 thugs, who insist that they 'pay their debt' (500gp) before 'something bad happens.' They will back down if the party calls for authorities, but will follow them in the days to come (looking for an opportunity to strike when the party is either isolated or vulnerable). *Use 4 thugs* [*Pathfinder Stats*](https://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd/gameMasteryGuide/npcs/criminalsI.html) *|* [*5e Stats*](http://www.5esrd.com/gamemastering/monsters-foes/npc/npc-thug)
5. Recognizing the party as adventurers (or having heard of their exploits) a grippli bard named Xuzay offers to spend a week comprising an epic poem praising the party (for the nominal fee of 100gp). If they turn her down, she instead immediately produces a dirty sing-song limerick mocking one or more of the party members, which the party will hear randomly for months to come. *See this list for inspiration - find a good spot to replace 'once was a \_' with one of the PC's names/class/descriptions.*
6. An axebeak has bucked its rider and is viciously attacking the man, perhaps mortally tearing at him with its wicked beak. A crowd has gathered to laugh at the proceedings. [*Pathfinder stats for Axebeak*](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd/bestiary3/axeBeak.html) *|* [*5e Stats for Axebeak*](http://www.5esrd.com/gamemastering/monsters-foes/monsters-alphabetical/monsters-a/animals/animal-axe-beak)

D6 Random Encounters for the Tail Stones

1. Stegen Oarlock -cleric of the god of wine- has been miraculously producing 'wine' (actually, clean water with only a hint of grape) out of thin air to freely provide for the thirsty poor who can't afford to purchase their own. He is currently being harassed by House Militiamen, who are demanding that he pay a fine for unauthorized distribution of water. Stegen however is refusing and a crowd of sympathetic rowdies is gathering.
2. A blood-fat Ankheg has burst out of the ground and people are fleeing in terror. Depending on the party's level, a badly equipped group of local shopkeepers may be engaging the creature (though they risk being overwhelmed without help from the party).
3. A Fifth House courtier named Haren Harenson is handing out pamphlets and answering questions about the benefits of indentured ghoulification. If any of the party seems interested, he will speak at length about the procedure saying whatever they want to hear (highly motivated by the possibility of a potential commission).
4. A market stall reads 'Regga Thistlethorn: Extermination + Security Services & Best Street Chow This Side of the Beast!' Hanging over its counters are various roast carcasses of dog sized lizards, young axe-beaks, and some unidentifiable species of giant insect. The stall is manned by a cheerful, thoroughly scarred & dagger laden Halfling, currently cracking the shell of some squirming thing into a wok filled with delicious smelling stir fry. Regga is knowledgeable about the various threats one can face in Salt in Wounds and is happy to chat with customers.
5. In the center of a cheering crowd hastily placing bets, a female human apprentice God-Butcher and a male Half-Orc Marrow Miner are about the have a bare knuckled brawl. The winner (determine with a coin flip) will call out the crowd (including the party) that none is tough enough to face their fists. Stats
6. Outside a Process Guild render shop, a dwarf dumps a heap of rotting meat into the street which is immediately set upon by a trio of ghouls dressed in tatters. One of the ghouls breaks from its gorging to hiss and point to one of the party members before returning to glut its hunger.

### D6 Encounters for the Beast Crown District

The Beast Crown District is the wealthiest corner of the city in addition to being home to the aristocratic Binder-Lords, various high end vendors, and the Stage-Courts. What follows is a list of random encounters for a party traveling through this zone.

1. A wounded man in full-plate stands over the stilled corpse of a ghoul, brandishing his glowing sword towards a cadre of 5th House Militiamen. Whether the man is a paladin who couldn't resist cutting down an 'undead monster' that was taunting him or an 'innocent' warrior who was defending himself is up to the GM (but the militia believes it to be the former).
2. A trio of bored looking, fashionably androgynous 7th House courtiers speak clearly about their sexual appraisal of one or more of the PCs. *Change to a 'who would win in a fight' style conversation if your group prefers to avoid issues of sexuality in game.*
3. A cursing half-orc commands a scantily-clad, sobbing woman to hold still while he holds a syringe full of green liquid next to her arm. He asks 'Do you want to get paid or not?' to which the woman responds, 'Yes, yes I'm sorry.' Around them are multiple figures that look like hyper-realistic statues but close inspection reveals to be paralyzed humanoids in various poses. When the half-orc (and artist named Vinkelheim) spots the party, he requests their help 'holding this damn fool model still so he can settle the pose.' If the party assists, he gives them a dose of sculptor's paralytic poison as thanks. Pathfinder use [Azure Lily Pollen with Application via syringe only](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd/ultimateEquipment/gear/poisons.html#poisons) | [5e Use Crawler Mucus with Application via Syringe Only](http://www.5esrd.com/gamemastering/poisons)
4. A half-elven cleric decked with gold chains stands behind a lectern preaching that wealth is godliness. He curses at any PC carrying less than 2000 gold, blesses and refers to 'gods favored' to anyone carrying more than that. *Pathfinder this blessing grants a single one time, +4 sacred bonus to any check involving the exchange of money | 5e this blessing provides a single one time use advantage on a check involving the exchange of currency.*
5. At the sentencing platform for the stage courts, a hard-eyed man gazes out at the crowd. A sign around his neck reads 'Crime - Burglary | Punishment - Vivisection.' In response to a suave auctioneer shouting from the criminal's right; various alchemists, anatomists & ghouls dressed in finery bid for his body parts with particular interest in procuring his eyes.
6. A quartet of House Militiamen featuring 3rd House Livery demand to see the PCs ‘district passes’ (which don’t exist). When the PCs fail to produce them, the Militia demands 5gp per PC in ‘fines.’