*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 (not to mention 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 soldiers at his back. “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’s face reddened, and he spat, “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 which is ours alone 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 above 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 Cassandice Trine-wove official Bard of 9th House.