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THE LOST CITADEL
THE
LOST
CITADEL
FIFTH EDITION ROLEPLAYING
IN A WORLD RAVAGED BY DEATH

The Lost Citadel

FIFTH EDITION ROLEPLAYING
IN A WORLD RAVAGED BY DEATH

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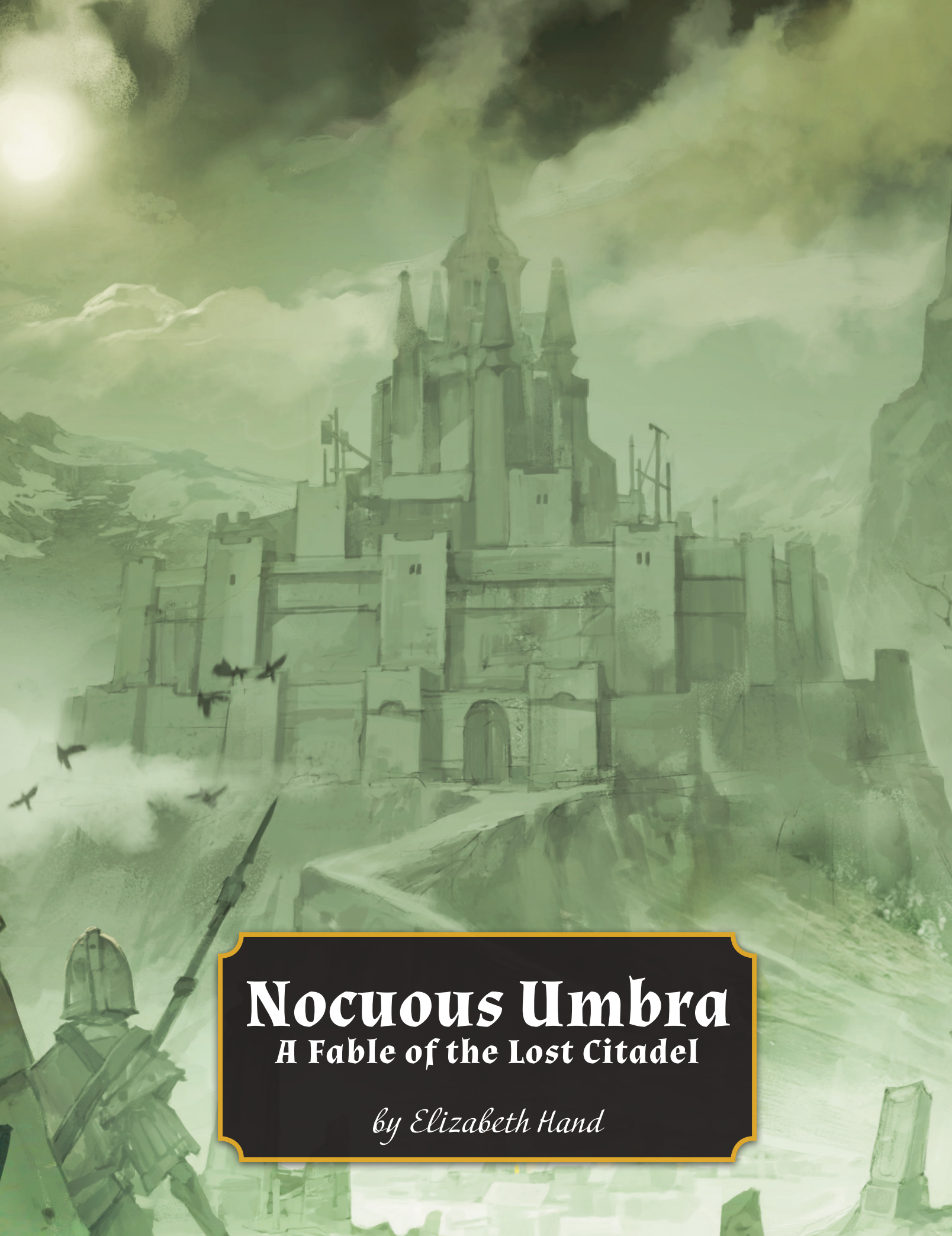


Nocuous Umbra

A Fable of the Lost Citadel

by Elizabeth Hand

STIKER

Kalo died on the third day out. A revnant dropped on him from the limbs of a towering black spruce: a creature that was nothing but skeletal remains, not a shred of tissue or ligament that Rifka could see. It appeared to fall upon Kalo by accident, swift as a spider swinging from its thread, and disarticulated Kalo with the same detached precision.

Rifka had been at the river's edge, filling her gourd canteen. When she heard Kalo's scream she raced to the closest tree and shimmied up it, bolas in hand. She finished off Kalo first, one of the stone weights striking his temple as the rope wound twice round his neck. She knew he was dead by the sound his skull made as it struck the boulder beneath the spruce.

Before the revnant could feast upon him, she downed it with the second bolas. Not as clean a shot. Still, she succeeded in severing its mandible, which rendered it impossible for it to feed on Kalo's corpse, or anyone else's. She lowered herself from the tree she'd climbed, snatching up a large rock as she ran towards the revnant. In less than a minute she'd reduced it to scattered shards of bone like driftwood. She disposed of these within minutes, tossing some into various points of the river, others down the ravine near which she and Kalo had made their camp the night before. The rest she threw as far as she could into the forest.

By then she was panting, from terror and grief as much as exhaustion, and she still had to dispense with Kalo's corpse. She retrieved the obsidian knife he wore, its blade half the length of her forearm; turned him onto his stomach and placed one of her booted feet upon his back; then grabbed each of the bolas' stone weights and pulled the rope between them with as much strength as she could muster, until she felt the muscle fibers of Kalo's neck give way like a rope fraying.

She severed his head from his body, stumbled back to the river bank, and threw it into the water, as though lobbing a larger, heavier bola. She watched it sink beneath the smooth black surface and rise again almost immediately, the blood washed from Kalo's features along with any expression other than what might have been interpreted as mild fatigue. Then the head was gone, borne with the Kolobus' current south, back to the city.

She did the same thing with Kalo's body, first removing his flint, compass stone, and rope, and adding his meager store of food to her own. After his body had disappeared from view she cleaned herself as best she could, then turned and hurried north through the forest, always keeping the river within sight or hearing. She tried not to think of Kalo's head and body reuniting beneath the water, to somehow make their way back to shore in pursuit of her; or, worse, aligning with the revnant's shattered bones to form some new, even more monstrous creature. Such thoughts were children's midnight fancies. They would have earned her a smack across the cheek back in the guild's subterranean training room, with its smells of moist earth and urine, iron and sweat.

Rifka hadn't been a child for many years. Neither had Kalo. In their specialized unit, Foresters only ever ventured outside of the city in pairs, never alone or in groups. If one was killed, the other would continue with the journey, alone. If she died as well, no one would be sent in pursuit. Each Forester trained since birth for their engagement with the world outside of Redoubt. In Rifka's unit, each Forester specialized in a single area of expertise. Most died while employing it.

Rifka and Kalo had studied fungi and related organisms: mushrooms, slime molds, stinkhorns, toadstools, tree corals. Kalo specialized in edible fungi, Rifka in medicinal organisms, including those with hallucinogenic or magical properties. For the last three years, a drought had afflicted Redoubt. There had been no mushrooms – the loss of a considerable food source for much of the city: from Newtown's ghettos, where soups and stews were fortified with fresh or dried earthballs; to the estates of Westside, where cooks prized black trumpets and the first mouse-ears that carpeted the grass after the spring rains; to Thoranxyx, the innermost sanctum of the White Citadel, a place only rumored to exist (though Rifka knew that in fact, it did), with its cult of etiolated priestesses whose silvery eyes could gaze seventeen days into the future and centuries into the past, but only after imbibing a tea made from the cortina of the Nocuous Umbra – the most deadly, delicate, and (perhaps surprising) delicious of all Zileska's fungi.

This was the object, and purpose, of Rifka's quest.

STIKKER

Before the Fall, the Nocuous Umbra mushroom had been uncommon, though not a rarity, in that part of Zileska now occupied by Redoubt. The mushroom favored a colder climate, especially the evergreen forests of the Highlands. For hundreds of years it was sought after by foragers from as far away as Dikilmnii and Ez Zumas, where it was used in ecstatic rituals and, in some cases, formed the basis for entire cosmologies.

After the Fall, it disappeared completely from Redoubt for some years. When foragers began to find it once more, they were dismayed to see its once-silvery fibrils had darkened to an acidic green, its convex cap no longer pale yellow but the blackish green of malachite, with gills striated purple and white above its slender stem. Worse, the mushroom's odor, traditionally said to resemble that of limonoranges, now reeked of carrion, with an underlying hint of burnt lemon peel.

Still, members of various mystical orders continued to gather and make use of it in their arcane gatherings, and the Umbra's effects seemed not as radically altered as its appearance. Over the decades, it became more difficult to find within the walls of the world's last refuge. Hierophants, chefs, and members of the wealthiest families would, covertly, dispatch the Foresters in search of it in the wilderness outside the city. The advent of the years-long drought meant that the Foresters had to journey to even more distant parts of the countryside, with scant hope of success.

Rifka's and Kalo's quest had not been a furtive one. Pir, hierophant of Thoranxyx, had made a formal request to the Foresters.

"In our fore-viewing, we have glimpsed shadows that may portend a second Fall," she had told Rifka and Kalo, her silvery eyes twin mirrors reflecting clouded sky and not the room around them. "We would gaze longer and more closely at these shadows, but all that remains of our store of Nocuous Umbra is this..."

She extended an open palm in which rested a single withered mushroom that, to Rifka's eyes, resembled an infant's severed ear. Rifka stared at it and finally shrugged.

"It's been two years since we've been able to find Nocuous Umbra," she said.

"Three," said Kalo.

Pir only closed her hand around the shriveled fungus. "The Highlands," she said. "Our visions have shown that it grows there." She hesitated. "The Lady of the Hares cultivates it."

At the time, Rifka had barely resisted laughing. Rumors of the Lady of the Hares were another remnant of any Forester's childhood. Now, however, after traveling another four days, always following the river, she found the thought disquieting.

She had never been this far north before, or this far from Redoubt. Since Kalo's death she had encountered only five Dead. Three were Restless that she'd glimpsed from afar and avoided each time by wading into the Kolobus, her eelskin boots and trousers affording some protection from the icy water. The Restless could pursue her there, but in Rifka's experience they usually chose not to if the current was swift. Which, this close to the Highlands, it was. Of the remaining Dead she'd seen, one was a shambling child, nearly as skeletal as the one that had attacked Kalo; she'd dispatched it with her bolas.

The fifth was a Fallen animal – an elk, she thought, though she'd never actually seen an elk – and it frightened her more than the others put together. An emaciated creature so tall she'd mistaken it for a small tree: easily twice her height, it ran towards her with terrifying speed, hooves striking sparks from the stony riverbank, its immense antlers laced with shreds of dried flesh and its lipless jaws displaying broken teeth, each the size of her hand. She'd escaped it by pure luck, leaping across a ravine then halting to make what she thought would be her final stand in Zileska.

But the elk had misjudged where the ravine's edge lay. It had lurched clumsily, then plunged fifty feet. Not to its death, of course – it was already Dead – but its mishap gave Rifka enough time to ford the Kolobus at a narrow point, and she did not see the creature again.

That had been two days earlier. Since then she'd seen no Dead, nor any sign of them. The faint yet pervasive smell of rotting meat which hung over Redoubt and its surrounding countryside had vanished. So had any telltale remnants of the Fallen or their prey – bits of shattered bone, hair snagged on an overhanging branch, prints in the mud alongside the river.

And this, more than anything else, disturbed Rifka, nearly as much as the sight of the snow-capped mountains looming in the northern distance. She had never seen snow before, other than the faint dusting that sometimes accompanied a windstorm battering at the city's walls. Days of travel – weeks perhaps– lay between her and those jagged peaks, but she would not journey so far.

STOKER

Her destination was the Highlands, and that was where she stood now. In front of her stretched a vast expanse of moor and forest, the former covered with knee-high crimson gorse and whiplike thorns that tore at her eelskin boots. After a morning spent fighting off the thorns, she changed course and arrowed eastward, towards a thick woodland of deciduous trees. Back in Redoubt, it had been early autumn, the few trees shedding their leaves in desultory drifts of muddy brown and black.

Here, though, it seemed as though the seasons had begun to run backwards. The cold air carried a green smell – new leaves, soft earth – and as she approached the edge of the forest, she saw slender trees, not much larger than saplings, their white limbs holding pale yellow-green leaves that had just begun to unfurl. Her boots crushed young grass that released an earthy smell, at once familiar and unknown, redolent of oat straw and something that tugged powerfully, frustratingly, at her memory.

She paused just a few feet from the trees, reluctant to continue and trying not to recognize this unease as fear. She had been taught that the Dead didn't venture to the Highlands, and as a girl, had questioned this.

"So why don't we all move there?" she asked.

The other apprentices laughed, but the unit commander had slapped Rifka, calmly and with her customary lack of expression.

"Think before you speak, Rifka: What circumstances might conspire to create a place where there are no Dead? And if there are no Dead, what might that portend for the living?"

Now Rifka shivered, recalling those words. What might that portend for the living? She shifted her bag to her other shoulder, removed the obsidian blade from its wooden sheath, and grasped it tightly. Her bolas would be mostly useless in the forest. So would her speed, and her ability to swim.

She scanned the trees ahead of her, the dance of green and pale yellow and the sky's faded blue. A glint of red caught her gaze: She stepped forward, frowning, and staring at the ground as she ducked beneath slender white branches, her face dusted with sticky pollen. After a moment she stopped and, with a gasp, crouched.

There in the grass grew something she had only ever seen represented in the tapestries in the antechambers where she'd met with the high priestess Pir: a Nocuous Umbra, but of a type that had not been seen since the Fall. Its cap was so large her outstretched palm would not have covered it, a brilliant azure fading to beryl at its edges and speckled with glistening emerald, as though someone had dropped a fistful of tiny gems onto its surface. The pale green stem was as thick around as her thumb, covered with golden threads that, where the stem met the mushroom's cap, thickened to a gossamer veil of fungal tissue. The bottom of the stem was knoblike and flecked with dirt. Rifka grasped this knob and, very gently, pulled it free from the earth. It seemed to resist slightly and she paused, afraid of breaking it.

But then it was as if the mushroom abruptly relinquished its grasp upon the soil. The knob slid as though greased from the earth and Rifka held it up, marveling. If they were indeed the same species, Nocuous Umbra truly was a shadow of this jeweled caprice. Quickly, as though unseen hands might snatch it away, she set it into her bag, straightened, and continued on through the woods.

Two more steps and she came upon another mushroom, smaller than the first but more vibrant. This too she plucked and placed within her eelskin sack, then stood. She took another step and immediately stopped: more mushrooms, growing in a semi-circle of long grass. This time she didn't stoop to pick them but peered through the dappled trees, whistling in astonishment.

The mushrooms were everywhere. Not just scores of them – hundreds, maybe thousands, a brilliant array of azure and emerald against the pale grass and white trees. After a lifetime spent in Redoubt, a city whose colors had been bleached to bone and ash for the better part of a century, she felt dazzled. It was as if the night sky had collapsed onto Zileska, its countless stars irradiated with colors Rifka had nearly forgotten existed.

STIKKER

She stared at them, transfixed. She'd never believed the high priestesses when they spoke of the mushroom's gift – the ability to gaze back and forth in time, memory translated from a means of thought to one of sight. Nor had she for a moment ever thought the mushrooms worth the risk she or other Foresters accepted when they undertook the search for them. She would no more have imagined refusing the assignment than she would imagine becoming a priestess herself. It was not her place in the world to refuse, or to imagine a life other than the one she had been born into.

Yet with this resplendent display within her hands' reach, she suddenly realized that the priestesses might have spoken the truth. And if such wizened, crepuscular specimens of Nocuous Umbra had enabled Pir and her acolytes to See, what visions might these living gems produce?

Rifka opened her bag and grabbed the pouch it contained. Designed for harvesting mushrooms, it was woven of the silk of Paznian spiders, whose webs were strong enough to capture small birds. Within a few minutes the pouch was nearly half full, and Rifka hadn't moved from where she knelt. When a gust of wind stirred the trees overhead, she looked up, dazed, into the maze of green limbs and leaves and sky, and wondered what time it was. Afternoon, but a scrim of pale cloud hid the sun so that she couldn't tell how close it was to nightfall. Her hand closed around the pouch and she staggered to her feet as though drunk, blinking.

For the first time, she saw that the mushrooms did not grow in an entirely random fashion. They followed what appeared to be the remnants of a path that wound through the trees. It resembled a dried-up streambed more than a trail – several inches lower than its surroundings, narrower in some spots, covered in soft grass rather than gravel. Mushrooms sprouted everywhere along its length, all of varying sizes, but all of the Nocuous Umbra.

Rifka began to run along the path, hand outstretched, as though the mushrooms might melt back into the earth. After only a few paces she stopped, feeling stupid. She had no need to hurry. The mushrooms weren't going to disappear.

And once she harvested them, she would have to turn around and begin the dangerous trek back to Redoubt. Any blame she might be assigned for Kalo's death would be assuaged by the sight of the Nocuous Umbra: even after a week, they would be more fresh than any Pir or the other priestesses had tasted in years, decades even. Rifka took a deep breath, carefully placed the half-full pouch back into her bag, and kept walking.

In front of her, the shadows of the white trees grew longer, like giants' fingers grasping at the green carpet of grass. Late afternoon, then. Delicately she dropped another large specimen into her pouch, straightened, and froze.

Something moved at the corner of her vision, a flicker as of a cloud occluding the sun. She shoved the pouch into her larger sack and grasped the obsidian knife, backing against one of the white trees as she tried to locate whatever it was she'd glimpsed. Moments passed and she saw it again a few yards to her right: a gray shape that sprang from the grass as though propelled by a slingshot. She marked where it landed and saw another shape immediately fling itself upward, or perhaps it was the same one?

She stared, and no, it wasn't the same creature – there were two of them, no three, wheeling and leaping among the trees like those vortices that overtook Redoubt during a sandstorm. She watched, entranced, unable to tell if the creatures were engaged in combat or a dance or some arcane ritual that could only be parsed by their own kind.

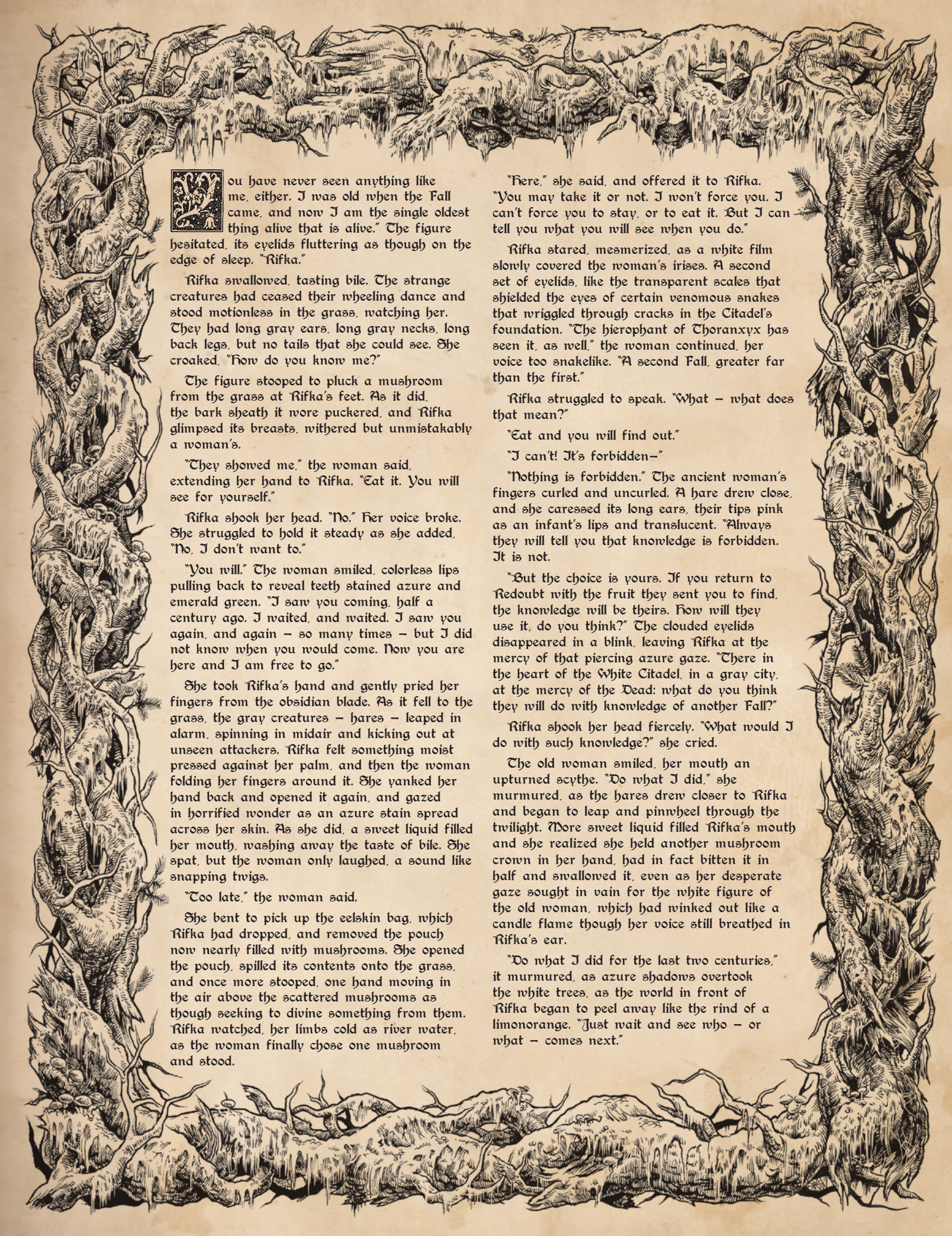
"They are hares," a voice whispered, inches from her ear.

Fear flashed through Rifka: She didn't dare to turn but cast her gaze sideways, the obsidian blade ice between her fingers.

"You have never seen them," the voice went on, a voice like rustling leaves, or one of the Fallen. "People ate them all, half a century ago. They make very good eating. Made. They are called hares."

Here the voice grew almost wistful, as the speaker stepped away and, for the first time, Rifka could see it. An etiolated figure, with bone-white skin and bone-white hair and a sheath made of the woven white bark of the trees that surrounded them. A spectral creature yet not one of the Dead. It exuded no scent of carrion or decay, and while its skin looked as though it would tear if Rifka ran a fingernail across its cheek, it was the flesh of a living thing. Blood moved beneath its surface, the same azure as the mushroom caps that filled Rifka's pouch. Its eyes were that color, too, though their detached expression reminded Rifka of the one the high priestess wore.

STIKKER



"You have never seen anything like me, either. I was old when the Fall came, and now I am the single oldest thing alive that is alive." The figure hesitated, its eyelids fluttering as though on the edge of sleep. "Rifka."

Rifka swallowed, tasting bile. The strange creatures had ceased their wheeling dance and stood motionless in the grass, watching her. They had long gray ears, long gray necks, long back legs, but no tails that she could see. She croaked, "How do you know me?"

The figure stooped to pluck a mushroom from the grass at Rifka's feet. As it did, the bark sheath it wore puckered, and Rifka glimpsed its breasts, withered but unmistakably a woman's.

"They showed me," the woman said, extending her hand to Rifka. "Eat it. You will see for yourself."

Rifka shook her head. "No." Her voice broke. She struggled to hold it steady as she added, "No, I don't want to."

"You will." The woman smiled, colorless lips pulling back to reveal teeth stained azure and emerald green. "I saw you coming, half a century ago. I waited, and waited. I saw you again, and again – so many times – but I did not know when you would come. Now you are here and I am free to go."

She took Rifka's hand and gently pried her fingers from the obsidian blade. As it fell to the grass, the gray creatures – hares – leaped in alarm, spinning in midair and kicking out at unseen attackers. Rifka felt something moist pressed against her palm, and then the woman folding her fingers around it. She yanked her hand back and opened it again, and gazed in horrified wonder as an azure stain spread across her skin. As she did, a sweet liquid filled her mouth, washing away the taste of bile. She spat, but the woman only laughed, a sound like snapping twigs.

"Too late," the woman said.

She bent to pick up the eelskin bag, which Rifka had dropped, and removed the pouch now nearly filled with mushrooms. She opened the pouch, spilled its contents onto the grass, and once more stooped, one hand moving in the air above the scattered mushrooms as though seeking to divine something from them. Rifka watched, her limbs cold as river water, as the woman finally chose one mushroom and stood.

"Here," she said, and offered it to Rifka. "You may take it or not. I won't force you. I can't force you to stay, or to eat it. But I can tell you what you will see when you do."

Rifka stared, mesmerized, as a white film slowly covered the woman's irises. A second set of eyelids, like the transparent scales that shielded the eyes of certain venomous snakes that wriggled through cracks in the Citadel's foundation. "The hierophant of Thoranxyx has seen it, as well," the woman continued, her voice too snakelike. "A second Fall, greater far than the first."

Rifka struggled to speak. "What – what does that mean?"

"Eat and you will find out."

"I can't! It's forbidden–"

"Nothing is forbidden." The ancient woman's fingers curled and uncurled. A hare drew close, and she caressed its long ears, their tips pink as an infant's lips and translucent. "Always they will tell you that knowledge is forbidden. It is not.

"But the choice is yours. If you return to Redoubt with the fruit they sent you to find, the knowledge will be theirs. How will they use it, do you think?" The clouded eyelids disappeared in a blink, leaving Rifka at the mercy of that piercing azure gaze. "There in the heart of the White Citadel, in a gray city, at the mercy of the Dead: what do you think they will do with knowledge of another Fall?"

Rifka shook her head fiercely. "What would I do with such knowledge?" she cried.

The old woman smiled, her mouth an upturned scythe. "Do what I did," she murmured, as the hares drew closer to Rifka and began to leap and pinwheel through the twilight. More sweet liquid filled Rifka's mouth and she realized she held another mushroom crown in her hand, had in fact bitten it in half and swallowed it, even as her desperate gaze sought in vain for the white figure of the old woman, which had winked out like a candle flame though her voice still breathed in Rifka's ear.

"Do what I did for the last two centuries," it murmured, as azure shadows overtook the white trees, as the world in front of Rifka began to peel away like the rind of a limonorange. "Just wait and see who – or what – comes next."

Chapter I

The Ascension of Death

"Look on, for no home is forever." The Reverend Prelate Cassius sermonized proudly from the pulpit as though his position in the Angat Church of Man rendered him safe. "Sin brought damnation to humankind, but all is not lost. Repent and find salvation through absolution."

Kaja scoffed at his folly. No man was truly safe in Redoubt, not even his high holiness.

Light poured from clerestory windows set high in the walls of the Reclaimed Shrine, its exterior gleaming as brightly as the other four towers of the White Citadel. Inside its massive mahogany doors, the ecclesiastical nature of the space had been enhanced with religious statuary and relics, but even the most intricate of idols couldn't mask the solid dwarven sturdiness shouldering the tower's original purpose. Centuries of ancestor worship left an indelible mark on a place. Kaja didn't need her partner's elf-sight to see the darkness lurking beneath the façade.

None of the gathered humans were old enough to remember a world without the Dead, but then, humans were hardly the only ones living in Redoubt. The elves remembered the Fall, as did the dwarves. They remembered a time before the Accord of Last Redoubt, and that memory had made persuading Karzhaddi and his Nightcoats to cooperate with her plans that much easier.

Reverend Prelate Cassius continued his castigation. Kaja kept her head bowed, the shadows of her hood cloaking the runes inked along the slender column of her neck. She eased her way along the back of the hall, where the stench of unwashed bodies mingled with the sticky sweet scent of burning incense. Angat nobles and high-born converts sat in galleries, elevated above commoners and slaves who'd gained admittance to the Reclaimed Shrine through lottery. A supplicant could wait an entire lifetime without ever receiving an invitation, but Kaja was no supplicant. Not anymore.

As she approached the men guarding the passage to the inner sanctum, Kaja conjured the once-familiar posture of an Aspirant, wrists crossed over her heart, palms splayed like wings across her chest. Beneath the robe's starched cloth, a bone corset pressed against her fingers. One guard, eyes hooded like a falcon, appraised her deference with slow deliberation before allowing her admittance. The other guard ignored her entirely, his attention fixed on the promise of holy benediction.

Cathedral bells signaled midday. The ponderous golden tone swung from one rapturous toll to the next, a paean of beauty, so unlike the more familiar discordant clamor that announced a Corpseman's cart. Death cast a dark shadow over all who lived in Redoubt. As a priestess of Amarset, Kaja was more familiar with it than most.

At the end of the hall, a flash of white and gold beckoned. With silent grace, Kaja followed the priest down the stairs to the subterranean passages linking the White Citadel's five towers to one another. Off to one side, a familiar door stood open. Kaja smoothed her robes and stepped inside.

"I always knew you'd come back to me." The Reverend Prelate watched from his place of honor behind an ornately carved desk.

Kaja closed the door and engaged the lock.

"Why are your offices down here, so far from the others?" She pushed her hood back to expose her face and the runes curling down her neck.

The priest gasped and stood up. "What have you done?"

"You never told me, but I found someone who would."

"It was that *creature*." The priest leaned forward, white-knuckled fist pressed against the desk as though he could crush it to rubble. "I *warned* you. That elven whore beguiled the Menhada blood in your veins."

"The elves brought beauty and magic into the world."

"They doomed us all!" His aristocratic mask crumbled under his fury. "The proof is in their madness!"

Kaja shook her head. "The Empire of the Art was the most enlightened age Zileska has ever seen."

She directed her attention to the large tapestry obscuring the office's innermost wall. Strange creatures swam through a blood-red sea. The white towers of Elldimek gleamed against the sober backdrop. The runes on her neck burned. The elf bones beneath her robes clattered in response to her pain, but she remained stoic and intent as the tapestry billowed to reveal a glimpse of the hidden door beyond.

"It can't be!" White-faced, Reverend Prelate Cassius rushed to the tapestry as though he could stop the inevitable.

Kaja leaped forward, armed with a slender hammer crafted of elven bones. With delicate ease, she rapped him on the skull and he slumped to the floor, taking the tapestry with him. The blood-stained door leading to the Chamber of the Lost stood open. Three Nightcoats emerged, along with their red-bearded captain.

The priestess greeted them with a grim smile, and waved them over to her.

"Enlightenment isn't always easy," Kaja said as she crouched down next to her former master. She checked his pulse and pressed a kiss on his forehead. "Don't worry. I have something to show you."

Hearken to the Word of Malath, Servant of the Bone Father

All history is death. This world's many peoples share that singular fate and become one people: the Dead, among whom dwell no peasants or lords, priests or beggars. Death makes brothers and sisters of us all.

Civilization is the science of preventing us from joining that final family. Its rituals comfort us when the ones we love enter Death's house, and its laws punish the act of sending them there. Civilizations make armies to battle over the fragile things of this sunlit world, but we know it is impossible to destroy a soldier. A spear, a blade, a crushing mace—these but change a warrior's allegiance. Once fallen, a mortal joins the Bone Father's army, destined to triumph over all breathing nations.

Sages talk of Ascensions: epochs which change the nature of gods, magic, and mortals. Our Father dwells in *every* Ascension. Therefore, children, I will speak of history through funerals, pyres, and tombs. They tell the stories of every country's sunlit lives, and their efforts to keep the Bone Father from welcoming his children home.

The First Ascension

Creations. Epics. Falls from divinity. Oh, every people has songs of greatness gone, ages of immortality. Finders of fire and seed. All primordial resistance, confusion, and fear of the Bone Father, made into legend. But I assure you, he was always here, to embrace the humble and heroic alike. In time, that mythmaking was spent, like a candle finally sputtering out, and a wider reality asserted itself. This winking out of the light of legends is our First Ascension: the Rise of Man.

From the Eternal Sea

In the South, the Ouazi came from the Eternal Sea—a desert, but the Ouazi claim it was once calm water, roiling with life. They have secret stories about the ancient history of that place, of which I know little: the War of Sun and Moons, the Breaking of the Ships, the Gifts of New Sand.

"The waters retreated so we could find what is precious in ourselves," said the first sultaars. They learned thrift and discipline in the sands and were humbled. Once they weighed their dead down with stones and cast them into plentiful waters, but without a concealing ocean, they saw the reality of death: the withering meat which once spoke and was loved. Now, they lacked the wood to burn corpses. Sand shifted and unburied them. They wandered, and could not build towers to gift the dead to hawks and vultures.

Therefore, the Bone Father blessed them, for he knew that even as the Ouazi grew strong in the desert, they shared the weakness of mortals, the fear of death's kingdom. And he sent forth a silent, hungry people to dispose of the Ouazi fallen. These were the ghûl, who followed the tribes and ate of their dead. At first the Ouazi hated the ghûl, who do not speak as humans do, but the ghûl did not hasten death, and a pack might even protect their tribe if enemies attacked. The ghûl did not practice war or kinslaying. They did not grow sick, and predators disdained their flesh. The Ouazi understood there was something sacred about these scavengers. The cycle of death ended in them, so it was fitting the dead of the tribes should do so as well.

The ghûl followed the Ouazi across the desert, to the shadows of the mountains. Ghûl spread to verdant and arid lands but found no sacred role among other peoples, who drove them away at spearpoint. At the mountains' thresholds, the Ouazi grew dates and olives from ancient seeds they brought across the Eternal Sea, introducing these crops to the North. These farming camps, or *wahaari*, became towns of stone and fire-hardened mud, but the sultaars, lords of the desert sands, would not settle in them. They continued to travel with their beasts and tribes, now moving from one wahaar to the next. Inevitably, the settlements hosted many tribes, who were forced to set aside blood feuds. Thus, the tribes founded their confederation, and selected its first ruling council.

The God of the Mountain

"We were cast down," said the primal Venmir priests, "from cold purity above the clouds to this toxic clay. We must ascend the mountain once more." The Venmir claim they spent the primal times wandering because Miraab, their One God, expelled them from His palace, their true home, situated among the highest, ever-veiled Stormpeaks. Yet they knew not of their exile until their Prophet, Kigorof, took his followers to the threshold of one of these misty summits. (The Venmir do not agree on how many accompanied him, and the old stories say only that "Three hands grasped three hands," so the traditional number is some multiple of three.) He returned with the Word of Miraab, and the One God's command to settle in the mountains. "Build a reflection of my holy citadel, for living in it, your reflections will mirror your true selves, immortal and at my side." In search of the proper place to build their city, the old Venmir encountered the dwarves. "They are not of Miraab, but are of His design, like the mountains themselves. As you honor the mountains, you shall honor them."

Thus spake the Prophet, but his words would be twisted to justify dwarven servitude, and his faith cleansed of its ecstatic practices. This is the fate of all false religions.

"We Come from Nowhere"

The Surinzan have no history of migration, and no origin story. Few Surinzan wondered about such things until the time of Redoubt and deep exposure to other cultures, or at least most found the question foolish. "We are here now. We have never been anywhere else. Before the trees, trees. Before the wolves, wolves. We are likewise," said the old monks.

The Surinzan might be the indigenous human population of Zileska's many forests and woodland wilds. Alternatively, they may have migrated here at the same time as the Angat, but founded no cities. The Surinzan language has loanwords from other tongues, but its root vocabulary and grammar differ from all other languages.

There is no escape from the Bone Father; any such attempt requires an act of deception, and when one lies to oneself, one can always be led astray by better liars. With dwarven wisdom, the Venmir found a suitable site for Venmah, this holy city, but the Venmir had no knowledge of the arts of building. The followers of Miraab did not permit dwarves to assist them in this, for they said the dwarves, being of nature, could not command the works of humanity, which came from the One God.

Venmir envoys went South and West, where the Angat competed among themselves, city against city. The Prophet's followers hired builders and scholars. The ancient Angat honored a Tomb King for each city, for knowing the truth of the Bone Father, they reasoned that those closest to the divine should have the power to bring death. The Venmir led them astray with the temptation of the One God, whose priests could lay claim to all cities. The people of Etror overthrew their Tomb King and appointed senators. They raised an army to conquer other city-states and spread Venmir religion along with it, though not without modifying the faith, and even its god, to serve their culture. False religions are easily transformed.

Out of the Steppes

The Menhada were the last to enter the known regions of Zileska. They brought the art of horsemanship, and an ancient religion which denied death. The Menhada said they were once immortal, that the gods founded their tribes, but after the passing of an age they forgot the secrets of self-cultivation, and their souls were doomed to pass from one body to the next as "riders of ignoble flesh." After carrying them some distance by horse (on its back or on a chariot for nobles, but on a cart or across the ground for commoners) the Menhada burned their dead. They feared that once the body failed, the soul might cling to it, refusing to enter a new birth. Yet they revered long life. The longer one stayed in a single body, they believed, the more attuned one was to their proper place in the world. The old immortals mastered the professions and duties to which they had been born and didn't need to abandon their flesh.

Consequently, the Menhada believed—and still believe, in some instances—every person has their proper profession and duty. They are born to it, and it never changes unless their gods send signs such as famines and other calamities, or comets and other strange variations of nature. Such events sparked wars among the Menhada, and it may be that such a conflict drove them across the steppes, exiled by some victorious tribe. The warrior class were considered the most spiritually advanced, possessing the last incarnations Menhada souls took before pursuing true immortality. This belief was seemingly confirmed by the Antarlus warrior princes. If they survived battle and murderous intrigue, Antarlus nobles lived twice as long as other humans.

The migrating Menhada left the steppes for the forests—for the elven lands. Their culture was unprepared for the elves, who held the Menhada back with magic and war-skill and intimidated them with long lives. It was difficult not only to defeat the elves in battle, but to keep tribes from pre-emptively submitting to the "returned immortals."

The Second Ascension

Zileska was not made for humanity. We arrived late to a land settled by nonhumans, but are kings of the last castle in the world now, and they bow and frown, lest they be exiled to our Bone Father's realm. They underestimated us. If the dwarves had led the Venmir holy men to an icy end, or the elves had burned those first Angat farmsteads, the world would be a much different place—perhaps even one where the present Ascension was delayed, though never prevented. Our Father was always going to claim his due.

Many of these races have an alien conception of death. Our Father waits longer for them to join his family. Perhaps this is why they were arrogant enough to believe they could raise nations that did not honor him. But in the Second Ascension, they knew nothing of the reckoning to come.

Ibaria: Empire of the Art

Before the Menhada came, the elves had little desire to rule Zileska. Venmir stayed in the mountains or joined the Angat in their rude, squabbling city-states. Ouazi roamed the Eternal Sea, a far-off desert the elves found repellent. Surinzan dwelled close to the Meliae, and mighty as they were, the elves had no desire to brave trafficking with beings of magic made flesh. The Menhada incursions showed the elves that humans were ambitious, but hobbled by brief lives and debilitating ignorance.

Elves lived so long, in fact, that they had little understanding of age, of what constituted "natural" death. When they fell to disease, misfortune, or murder, their kin buried them in earthworks by the nearest river or lake. "The bones of the elves are the bones of their kingdoms," said the Menhada, for these earthworks became stone-clad forts and walls, and each river or lake a petty domain. After the Battle of Screaming Ash, when Menhada invaders set their horses on fire and loosed them in elven woodlands, six nations united under the name *Ibaria* ("All-Waters"). At the Battle of Sundered Bronze, Ibaria's combined sorcery crushed the enemy and instilled an almost worshipful awe.

Necessity founded Ibaria. Magic powered its expansion, first by overpowering the Menhada and then by organizing Ibaria under one authority, the *Eldsora*, meaning the "Eternal Art." The Eldsora taught elven arcanists military tactics and assigned them to units defending Ibaria's borders. Loggers, hunters, and merchants who'd grown accustomed to entering elven woods were driven away. Angat cities which had claimed such places sent armies to punish the elves. Their forces returned as corpses animated by vines or transformed into packs of mad wolves, if they came back at all.

Eventually the elves made peaceful contact—in shows of force. Sorcerer-diplomats with Menhada bodyguards negotiated trade agreements with Zileska's other peoples. These sometimes made the elves' new allies little more than tributary clients, guaranteed a trickle of elven wealth in exchange for enormous "gifts" of iron, gemstones, precious metals, and more. But that trickle was enough to lift human merchants to the aristocracy, or turn petty lords into unstoppable tyrants. Beyond raw natural resources, the elves traded the products of their science and magic: fine steel, crystal lenses, powerful potions, and other wonders. By their goods and arcane military force, Ibaria became known as the Empire of the Art.

Ibaria opened its smallest city, Tresari, to treaty-authorized traders. From there, a Menhada vassal, well-connected merchant, or visiting aristocrat might be allowed to visit grander elf nations, but Dammalos, where the elves' king reigned, and Sevoris, where the Eldsora kept its college, remained forbidden. Between them lay the Temple of Twelve Voices, center of the elves' mystery religion. While entering the forbidden cities might be punished by memory-draining magic and a permanent ban from Ibaria, trespassers upon the temple vanished, never to be seen again.

The Menhada Dynasties

After the Battle of Sundered Bronze, the Menhada submitted to Ibarian supremacy and were granted their own territory at the edge of the elven state—a broad vista of rolling grasslands and fertile steppes. The Empire of the Art wanted two things from the Menhada: warriors and horses. Menhada were inclined to revere the elves, but after accepting Ibarian hegemony, their culture divided between those who were enraptured by elven society and sorcery, and those forced to confront the truth: Their overlords owed their long lives to their inhuman natures, not to true enlightenment. Reverent Menhada became *Gihardu*, members of a royal cult devoted religiously to the elves and their way. The new Menhada kingdom didn't have enough land for all its aristocrats, however, so a portion of the warrior caste became *ganto*, landless nobles without manors to provide for them. If they couldn't marry into a landed family, they became soldiers for the elves, an experience that left them less than worshipful of their oft-arrogant masters.

The Angat Republic

Unified under the Angat Church of Man, the Angat city-states became a power to rival the Empire of the Art. The new Angat culture rejected elaborate ceremony, idols, and mysticism. These may have been features of the Venmir religion they adopted, but such pomp and ritual had also been used by the Tomb Kings to enthrall and terrorize the people. The new society attempted to truly separate church and state.

Elected from local landholders by their peers, senators assumed lawgiving power, claiming the right to put enemies to death not in sacrifices, but as cold, administrative acts. They secularized slavery as well. Before the Second Ascension, slaves belonged to the royal cult, and their work was intended to honor the city. Now, work was punishment, and slaves a resource to be bought and sold. Once the Republic tasted slavery as commerce, it cultivated an endless appetite for it. Slaves became necessary for every industry to profitably function. This in turn inspired the militarization of Angat society, to protect owners from their slaves and to force newly conquered tribes into chains. The Republic's body of laws grew to punish a variety of crimes with enslavement, until at its peak, lowborn commoners often spent five to seven years in forced service for minor debts or petty offenses.

The Angat Church of Man devised canon law for its clergy and grounds but made no direct claim on any other form of temporal authority. Nevertheless, its plainly dressed priests assumed moral dominion over the Republic. Marriage between a man and woman, to produce children, became a moral duty, regardless of the feelings of the participants in this "sacrament." Iconoclasm, initially encouraged to rid the cities of the Tomb Kings' cult, expanded to include any depiction of Miraab, the deeds of the Prophet, or the heights of Venmah. With indulgences and threats of excommunication, the Church exerted influence over senator and commoner alike. They provided moral justification for slavery. A slave, they would say, had "wandered outside the Way of Man," and was considered not fully human until his indenture was paid. Therefore, mistreating one was often no great crime, and after death, they were buried in a common pit without rites, unless a priest could be paid to grant postmortem forgiveness.

The Church's burgeoning power didn't make the Angat any more pious, however. The average citizen of the Republic believed in Miraab, but considered the religion a set of cultural obligations, devoid of true spiritual meaning. One said the words and performed ceremonies because they were "properly Angat," not because the One God cared. Therefore, mystical teachings entered dusty libraries, and the Angat forgot about other, older gods, including our Father, who must have grown enraged by the Republic's unhallowed dead.

The Venmiran Guard

In exchange for Angat learning, the Republic demanded military service from a company of skilled Venmir. The ancestors of the blue-robed Venmiran Guard settled in the city-states. A warrior brought their family, who would learn all the necessary trades required to keep an elite soldier equipped. Raising children with such "swordwives" and "shieldmen," the Guard replenished its own numbers, though new families immigrated according to the Republic's needs right up to the eve of the Fall. The pact that created the Guard did not permit its use in offensive warfare, so its soldiers were camped in the cities. If not called to the walls, Guard members protected city elites. They formed two orders, the Praetorian and Palatine, to protect senators and clergy, respectively. Some holy warriors follow the Palatine tradition still, and a few soldiers may know the protective arts of the Praetorian Guard.

Akritopa Province and the Ouazi

In their slave-taking conquests, the Republic stopped at the edge of the Eternal Sea. Its armies had no experience with the desert, and the Church viewed infertile grounds as nigh-unto abominations. The Republic founded Akritopa Province in the bordering mountains and claimed dominion over Ouazi settlements. Republic rule failed repeatedly there, as a train of sultaars destroyed Angat posts, burned crops, and vanished into the desert. The Angat were forced to sue for peace to preserve the olive and date trades, but the ghûl ate well until they did. Fire-blackened olives and dates became the Ouazi mourning meal.

The Dwarven Ellikrall

The Second Ascension saw the founding of the *Ellikrall*, an alliance of dwarven fortresses. Elldimek, our Redoubt, was the greatest of these, but there were others—five at least, though the dwarves, with their strange minds, cannot give us an exact number. Dwarves spoke of "grandmother-towers" and "cousin-forts," and the Ellikrall's people and holdings were both encompassed by its name: "Family of the Saints." They reckon everything by kinship, for their folly is that they believe the living family is immortal. Like the elves, they are ignorant of the ways of the Bone Father, and how he embraces us all into the great dark family after our last breaths. The dwarves' word for death translates literally as "older than one's grandparents." Their deceased are mummified, and spoken to as if alive but in a particularly advanced state of senescence.

Ellikralli citadels prized self-sufficiency, but the dwarves knew that without trade, they would languish in poverty. They grew Angat rice and warmed themselves with the elves' alchemical heat-stones. In return, dwarven precious metals, gemstones, and hammer-forged goods enriched every nation in Zileska. By carefully managing trade with outsiders, each Ellikralli guaranteed its inhabitants food, shelter, and labor. Bound by clan obligations, few dwarves were free to choose their own professions. Alienation from one's family was the closest thing to true death dwarves acknowledged. "Ancestors whisper to us in every memory," they said, "but those who turn their backs on the clan ask to be forgotten, and silent forever."

Venmah

Venmah, the City of the Faith, the Holy Mountain. This, the great work of the Venmir, was the holiest city of the Second Ascension. To the Angat, it was the home of the primordial religion, albeit one "perfected" by the Republic's Angat Church of Man. Yet Venmah was not part of any human nation, but a member of the Ellikrall, called "Mountain of the Adopted Ones" by the dwarves. According to the Old Faith, dwarves were not to worship Miraab, but they were part of Creation, not of a god who separated Himself from it. Therefore, Venmah could only be built with human hands and knowledge. The Old Faith said dwarves didn't need human religion, but the Angat Church told adherents dwarves were inherently unable to know Miraab and would always be lesser for it. That Angat pilgrims proudly proclaimed human supremacy in a city allied with the Ellikrall created tension, though the merchants who accompanied those pilgrims often employed Venmir as intermediaries in trade with the dwarves. At the Second Ascension's apex, the tensions between the Venmir and Angat religions led to an exchange of censures. Each faith demanded the other's submission, on the grounds of having departed from the "true worship of Miraab."

The Meliae Strongholds

Ah, the Meliae! The First Ones; mothers and fathers of the elves; the shape-changers. True immortals, they did not die, though time and injury transformed their souls. And though their bodies could grow taller or shorter, or wear strange forms as their masters willed, they feared spiritual alteration. To them, it was as if a new being stole into their flesh but remembered the same things. They were made of magic, and to magic they owed their existence and allegiance. They feared no god and made no pact with the Father. "Magic is deathless," they taught the elves. "Magic is Will," said the old chants, passed from elves to sages. "To lose one's will is terrible, but magic abides." This is the sin of the Meliae, and of magic itself.

All things belong to the Bone Father.

The Meliae rarely revealed themselves during the First Ascension, but in the Second, as the Empire of the Art and the human nations expanded, the First Ones were forced to defend their territory. Settlers poured into lands they believed were unclaimed. They found neither Meliae strongholds nor land to work, but monsters and plagues. Angat senators were not dissuaded by these reports, and

although Ibarian envoys warned them to avoid the old forests, the Republic planned new expeditions escorted by legions and soldier-sorcerers.

The Surinzan

The First Ones had no need for trade, but thirsted for knowledge, to better understand the varied manifestations of magic. Meliae taught elves magic, and according to legend, whispered the secrets of the mountains to the first dwarves, but because they refused to make the Pact of Death, the ghûl were forever unknowable to them. To understand humanity, the Meliae took animal shapes and spied upon the Surinzan, then later impersonated them, teaching them the arts of civilization and communion.

Surinzan clans did not care about conquest over anyone except each other. In half-barren hills and cold marshes, they battled for their High Throne. The rare invader interested in these harsh homelands discovered a people obsessed with war. In every rough farm, children trained in the ways of the fist and the *sleaghar*, for military prowess often determined rank, from the High King or Queen who conquered all the clans through chains of homage. If a clan was defeated, its members scattered in the four directions, or they became monks, vowing to keep the Surinzan's martial traditions—and defeat any evildoer who seemed likely to reach the High Throne.

Until the Second Ascension, the Meliae were satisfied with limited contact, but after foreign tribes entered the First Ones' territory, they revealed their true selves to the Surinzan and invited envoys to their secret strongholds. Surinzan clan-chiefs went to Spyre, Skrye, and other such forest citadels and returned with news: a pledge to serve the First Ones. "As stag, wolf, and wise stranger, they taught us the ways of fire, of growing things, and of war. We are bound by debt. We are the spears of the First Ones."

Thus, the second wave of Angat explorers found Meliae lands well-guarded. Although the First Ones were forced to reveal their strongholds, they turned away visitors at the points of Surinzan *sleaghars*. Occasionally, one of the Meliae would venture forth with Surinzan attendants to meet humans from other nations. These First Ones sometimes gave outsiders wondrous gifts or taught occult mysteries to a chosen soul. Humans from many cultures grew to respect the Meliae, but only Surinzan were permitted to enter their strongholds and see how they lived—with magic in their veins and their ignorance of death.

The Fall

And then, our Father claimed what was his. Did any other god defy him? Not Miraab. The "One God" didn't protect Venmah or quiet the corpses of the Republic. The Menhada pantheon did not assume new incarnations, legendary immortals come again, to defeat the Bone Father's arisen. Once reawakened, dwarven dead belonged to our Father's Dead, and showed no mercy to their descendants. And magic, assumed by elves and Meliae to be a pure force which bound the world in eternal power, did not escape Father's touch. The Dead returned to them all. Death planted its black seed in magic. They called it the Fall, as if we stumbled from natural grace, but we who know the Bone Father understand that through him, Death reasserted its rightful rule. In the old green years, untamed Life forgot that it owed its bounty to the blackest earth, made of rot and that which our Father breaks apart so that it might be remade.

Yet, we should admit one exception. While the moons honored by the Ouazi did not repel the Dead with their light, the people of the Eternal Sea, in their pact with the ghûl, did not offer the Father many soldiers for his army in Zileska. The ghûl know the Bone Father in flesh and fang, and he did not remove his blessing upon them.

The Omens

Our Father didn't invade the world through stealth and deception. He announced his intentions, but mortal kings, priests, and sages ignored him. They'd spent an age denying and defying him, to the point where the old hymns, the pleas for mercy and the soul's safe travel, were repeated by rote, without a whisper of sincerity. Our predecessors were hunted and enslaved because we gave sacrifices to him when we sensed the rising imbalance. They called us murderers for offering a few to the Father's inevitable embrace before nature grudgingly gave them up. In the Angat Republic, the Church of Man destroyed our icons, even if they only stood, dusty and dishonored, in those "temples of lesser faiths" they tolerated.

But the Father spoke ever-louder. He forbade the moons from rising for three nights, so that the Ouazi would know he was coming. He sent the First Godless Plague, which divine intervention could not cure, to the Menhada and to the Angat. The plague took one in a hundred. Through it, the Father reminded mortals that no matter their gods, he reigned over them in common. To Venmir mystics, he sent the Assassins' Visions, so they saw the living as corpses. The afflicted attacked their fellows with fire and the axe, and were presumed to be mad heretics.

The Bone Father salted magic with his presence, though he did not yet bind it to his service completely. After casting the strongest spells, elves saw trees wither and animals suffer stillbirth. Surinzan monks and other sages of the body, who cultivated magic within themselves, acquired a gaunt pallor, and their thoughts turned to skulls and funeral pyres. The Meliae must have been affected too, but they spoke nothing of it, even to Surinzan guardians.

These were our Father's warnings, but only his old servants, our forefathers in the faith, listened. Thus, he could not restore the balance gently, and thus came the Fall.

The Turning of the Art

Before the Fall, the Father warned mortals through all the avenues of magic—academic, theurgic, and ascetic. His voice did not penetrate their arrogance; they treated the signs as intellectual, technical problems, to be fixed with new incantations, prayers, and meditations. He seized the Art, so long an avenue for pretensions of immortality, and placed his lessons within it.

To priests and healers, he said, "You do not give life. I removed Death, my embrace, and will do so no longer." The most potent of healing magics failed them. Prayers which once restored those closest to death, repairing torn hearts and shattered skulls, became empty pleas. Plagues and poisons ignored the other gods' authority. To the priests of wild places, he said, "Beasts have never forgotten me, but I have given them knowledge of your forgetfulness. The predators you bound will become unbound, and the plants of field and wood will become poisonous to you."

To the thaumaturgists and other sorcerer-scholars, he said, "You cannot transcend me. I am not merely the death of flesh, but of fire and light, of knowledge itself. My will is in your formulae." Therefore, the old magic, made of will and theory, failed unless the practitioner gave the Bone Father his due. At first, they rationalized shedding blood and burning sacrifices where it was once unnecessary. Fools said, "The stars have changed, and the planes have grown more distant, so we must borrow the power of life to reach out to them." They forgot that spells change oneself along with the world, and their hearts hardened to the reality of death and opened the doors of woe.

To the ascetics, the keepers of the "internal cauldron," the meditators and monks, he said, "When you open yourself to that which lies beyond, you drink of my nature. I sit upon the throne of your enlightenment." They grew sickly and strange. They drank blood in their cloisters, and when they attempted to transform themselves in the fashion of their masters, seeking changeless immortality, they withered and died—but they did not fall still. Some say they betrayed the living because they were among the first to know that the Dead rose, but kept their own council.

The Second Godless Plague

Perhaps the Bone Father hoped the Turning of the Art would make his anger obvious, and mortals would renew the balance, but mortal minds deceived themselves. After three years, he was forced to bring the Second Godless Plague, and bless millions with his embrace.

Over the course of a year, a tenth of the Angat perished. Smaller numbers died outside the Republic's cities, as the people were better able to isolate themselves, but it claimed humans from all nations. It was not like other illnesses, for it was every illness. All the fevers and flesh-rot, all the poxes, parasites, and madness-unto-death nature had ever given mortals, melded as one ever-changing sickness, spread through touch and fluids and breath. Once the most severe symptoms arose, death struck within days, and after days or weeks, the afflicted rose up again, Dead in our Father's family. As for those who survived? Perhaps the Father had plans for them, and their descendants, in Redoubt.

Fire's Failure and Unquiet Graves

Did they try to burn the plague-fallen before they rose? Of course. The Angat Republic bound everyone, slave to senator, with the task, and the Republic was organized enough to carry it out. Common folk put bodies in cages or pinned them with rocks. Soldiers guarded workers in search of wood; slaves hauled it under the supervision of senators and priests. This mighty effort left Angat fields fallow and people half-starved as they prepared mighty pyres. They wore masks and gloves, made mountains of plague-dead, lit the fires, and learned these were not the only corpses to be feared.

Attracted by the great fires, the Dead came forth from senatorial mausoleums and slaves' pit graves. The latter were numerous, and so often forgotten when cities expanded. Fleshless fingers and skulls burst through crossroads, and with hands, teeth, and grave-gifted weapons, they set upon the body-burners. In every city, after every attempt, they came, teaching mortals the arisen Dead were not some consequence of the Godless Plague, but our Father's full wrath, delivered by all his unbreathing children. Some say the burned Dead rose with them and the fires consuming them turned green, or even that the ash took the shapes of men and women and suffocated the living. Fanciful tales, but the Bone Father is capable of such miracles.

Ibaria's End and Saratsa's Folly

As the Art Turned, its Empire—Ibaria of the elves—fell to the Father's Reckoning. They blamed the Dead on human fragility and filth, for the Eldsora concealed the ever-greater sacrifices they made to maintain Ibaria's magical defenses, and the corruption creeping into its sages' minds and flesh. What was this momentary hardship compared to the lifespan of an elf? Ibaria closed its borders to all but the Menhada, defending them with enchantments and its legendary *maharbala*: war machines like armored ships of the land, propelled by magic and armed with ballistae, alchemical fire, and fear-curses. These precautions were never completely effective. Unless reduced to ash, the burned Dead walked ever on, ignoring spells of fear and misdirection and the thousand ways nature bars mortals

from a place. They needed no bridges to cross rivers. Poisoned groves and fierce beasts did not dissuade them.

Even so, Ibaria defended itself until, five years after the Turning of the Art, Dammalos fell. Ancient Dammalos was founded on a hundred elven burial mounds: "the bones of the kingdom" upon which rested mighty towers of wood and stone. But in a single night, the mounds shuddered. Walls cracked. Towers fell. Bronze-clad skeletons strode from the wreckage. Our Father claimed the elven dead. Dammalos fell, and when ancients in the Eldsora perished, they returned immediately, newly Dead and leading their mound-born forebears. Refugees reported an even more inconceivable phenomenon: Living elves, workers of magic, walked with them, raving and bearing strange wounds.

After Dammalos, some cities destroyed their own burial mounds, felling defensive walls to reach them, but the disease afflicting the empire's magicians put the enemy in their midst regardless. Lower-status elves fled for the Menhada kingdom, whose *Gihardu* cult welcomed them. Together, they called for a great army made of elves, landholder warriors, and *ganto* to slay the renegade Eldsora and eradicate the Dead. By this time, everyone knew the Dead had risen in every nation. Nevertheless, the Menhada fared better than other peoples. The Godless Plague had not struck them as severely as it had the Angat, and the waves of Dead from the Republic and other lands had been thinned by Ibarian defenses.

Seven years after the Turning of the Art, Queen Saratsa gathered this army to retake the Empire of the Art for the elves. She hoped the Dead and damned could be driven away, the Empire's magic purified, and Ibaria made a place for elves and humans to stand against the Dead.

She never returned. Nor did any warrior from her army, save for deserters who never reached the Ibarian border. The Menhada burned those cowards alive but called the invasion Saratsa's Folly. Yet she must have known the Bone Father could not be conquered. Before riding out, she abdicated the throne in favor of her son Masedav. He led a host of Menhada, with horses, treasures, and elves who didn't join Saratsa, to find refuge in the Stormbreak Mountains.

The Madness of the Meliae

Our Father reserved his great lesson for those self-styled immortals, the Meliae. To them he said, "You, who have your source in the Art, have forgotten this: All things are renewed in me, are balanced in my ashen hand, and have their uttermost source in my design. This is the way of all magic. This is the way of Death." The Meliae suffered the Fall slowly. Our Father revealed his nature within magic gradually, so the First Ones changed by breath and step. The forests around their strongholds twisted and darkened. Dead trees grew white leaves and alien, poisoned fruit. When Surinzan came to them, the Meliae appeared in pallid, clawed forms, and demanded the old and wounded

come to their strongholds. "They cannot carry blades in our service, but we have found a use for them," they said. Surinzan who obeyed the call were never seen again.

Then came the Final Dance, when masters of fist and *sleaghar* from every clan were to display their prowess in Spyre, to honor their overlords. The beings they encountered were not content to watch the proceedings. "We must test you," they said, and in horrific shapes, the Meliae descended upon their own honor guard, killing them with teeth, claws, and jagged bones grown of shape-changing. And those Surinzan who fell rose again, pressed lovingly into our Father's service.

A handful fled to Surinzan lands, and the last High King issued a decree. As the Menhada went to the mountains, so would they, but any clan could elect to stay if it promised to guard the Meliae lands from intruders—and anyone who came forth from the First Ones' strongholds. "Thus, we honor our duty to them, but also our duty to all peoples, for the First Ones must heal themselves or be confined in their sickness." Half the Surinzan stayed, and half went with the High King, though they were ashamed, with some calling him *Kowikor*, the "Running King." It was said that a few Meliae resisted our Father's call and joined the Surinzan who stayed behind for one final battle against the mad ones, and that the Running King's followers, in abandoning them, stained their souls with dishonor.

The Defiling of Venmah and the Last Redoubt

In the eighth year of the Fall, mortals fled for the Stormbreak Mountains, seeking sparsely populated lands free of graves and the Dead they spawned, and the great army of our Father, breathlessly born from Angat necropoli and the thousand cemeteries of the other lowland nations. They also hoped to hide behind dwarven walls, but the Dead rose within Ellikralli fortresses. Not all dwarves were mummified upon their deaths, and some among the poor were mummified improperly. By the eighth year of the Fall, only two cities stood against the dead: Elldimek and Venmah.

Elldimek, our last redoubt, is the holy city of the dwarves. They said their "saints," or ancestors, dwelled here. It is said that perfectly preserved bodies—and entombed riches—still lie in near-airless spaces deep beneath the mountain. During the Fall, far fewer Dead rose in Elldimek and, after the dwarves destroyed them, defense consisted of little more than closing the city's gates and patrolling its walls.

Oh, but I know a secret! We could have gone to Venmah. The sole human city of the dwarven nation, the holy land of two religions, could have served as suitable refuge. It too was well-defended and had disposed of its troublesome corpses. Why didn't we?

The Dead did not arise in Venmah. They were let in.

I was a child. Before I knew the Bone Father I was raised without religion, to sage and jeweler parents who had no use for gods, except for cursing. I came to Venmah with Angat refugees and wandered the Holy Mountain in wonder. And on one such excursion, bored of waiting for my bread ration, I went to the triangular Kigr Gate: Mountain to the Mountain. When I saw masked humans and fallen guards, I hid. With groaning effort, the masked ones heaved it open, and the Dead awaited, a crashing tide of bodies whose breakwater had been removed. I was spared, perhaps by the Bone Father or merely by my hiding place.

It could have been the Angat Church of Man, who feared subordination to the Old Faith, or the followers of our Father, doing his work. He did not spare the masked ones, but he spared me. Thus, Venmah was lost. Thus, we came to Redoubt.

The Age of Redoubt

I was on my father's shoulders the first time I saw a dwarf up close. I looked down on him, his muscular, inhuman proportions seemingly blasted from stone by a thousand thousand years of wind, then girt in steel. My father knew their language, but the dwarf honored us with a word in our own tongue: "No."

I grew up during the Fall, fearfully attentive, so even at six years of age, I knew Elldimek was the last city of the living. The dwarf's answer decreed our death, at the hands of the Bone Father's army or the desperate living. Our group was a collection of homesteaders, lone survivors and families scattered and isolated by the falls, and there were hundreds more like us. Others were the remnants of large, organized bands: the refugees of the Menhada kingdom, the Ouazi tribes, Venmir *Joril* and their vassals, mercenary companies, clans, and entire senatorial households with their guards, administrators, and slaves. The dwarf's "No," was repeated to all the refugees, in their various tongues, by other envoys from Elldimek.

The Silent Siege

The armies camped outside Elldimek's walls were tired, starving, and ill-equipped, but made a formidable war-host all the same. Angat generals met with Menhada horselords in the Ouazi sultaar's tents. My father followed them. He told us they were fools, but undoubtedly used the most graceful diplomatic language once he stood before them. Before he left, he rehearsed his argument with my mother.

Two outcomes would follow from an attack, he said. First, the refugee army might fail to breach Elldimek's walls. "We starve, or the Dead take us—and those of us who join the Dead continue the assault, requiring neither food nor sleep, until the last home of the living falls." The second possibility was the army's success, which would be the start of a protracted war, as the dwarves, who knew their city well, fought from their tunnels for a generation. The Dead would rise in a city the invaders knew almost nothing about.

"Slowly or swiftly, the Dead will come," he said. He rose and looked past us, to his ambitions, and left. He never returned. They probably killed him for his arrogance, severed his head and limbs, and burned them to ash. But they seemed to obey his counsel, or at least the logic of it. Swords stayed in their scabbards, and only the lords of the war-host advanced upon the wall.

I didn't witness the Silent Siege's declaration, but we all knew its strategy when soldiers came for our food. It was a happy day for me. We all feasted, gorged ourselves to the point of sickness, because everything else was destined for the fires. We slaughtered and burned all our livestock, snatching any meat we could before it was gone for good. We only spared horses and dogs when the Menhada promised to defend their horses from these indignities, and the Surinzan, who hold war-hounds sacred, threatened to fall upon their *sleaghars*. The dwarves had already harvested their fields in anticipation of a military siege, so there was nothing there to sustain us. It took three days to destroy our food supply, and winter was kind enough to deprive us of foraging.

Slowly or swiftly, the Dead will come. The truth of it saved us. Unless Elldimek opened its gates, we would starve, to rise as the Dead. We might destroy some—we had all learned to cut and burn bodies, or give them to ghûl who accompanied the Ouazi—but hunger would make us too weak to sustain such discipline. We would die and rise again, thousands of us.

We waited for twelve days before the dwarves of Elldimek let the Venmir in, and five more until the Venmir, unable to tolerate our suffering, bade their hosts to open the gates for the rest of us.

Labor and Death

We, who'd pledged to die as one people, remembered our tribes with the first bowl of rice. It was time to build walls around the fields, find shelter in the citadel, and complete a vast list of other tasks. We portioned these efforts according to the customs of our homelands. Lords ruled again; commoners toiled. In that first decade, the Dead rarely crawled from the south. Perhaps there was another group of survivors to consume their attention. Perhaps the Bone Father wished us to make our city and gather the living in one place. We sought stone and wood everywhere. We cut the forest back miles in every direction, and pulled apart Elldimek's watchtowers and surrounding minor fortresses.

I was thin and weak, unsuited to hauling stone, but I was agile in those days and had a mind for maps, shaped by a childhood as a refugee and my father's training. They grouped me with the Angat, so I was bound to obey some senator's son who called himself "Magister." After years of proving myself worthy under service, my master sent me into the mountain. "Don't tell the dwarves," he said. "They keep loose blocks, pyramids of them in great chambers. These are the tombs of their master masons. Find them."

I found the Bone Father instead.

I'd squeezed myself through a small, square hole, where dwarves had once peered in at their ancestors and left offerings. I passed an empty sarcophagus—the ancestor within had doubtless been burned after rising—and found another such passage, and another still. Tombs within tombs. Eight chambers deep, tunnels ran in every direction. I saw dwarven writing in my torch's light, carved beside glyphs that reminded me of dark gates and horned beasts. I have never seen their like on the surface. I was not afraid; I knew one need only alternate right and left turns, and remember one's last turn, to avoid becoming lost. The greased cloth on my torches burned weakly, but I learned to anticipate junctions by the breezes that inevitably appeared. These came from vertical shafts above me which, I knew, split and narrowed as they pierced the mountaintop, into holes the size of fists which let the cold air in.

I fell in such a place, where the shaft went below. Water pooled there. My torch died as I screamed. My arm had broken, but after some measureless time, I could see. The darkness had turned into something blazing, nearly blinding in its intensity, which fulfilled the function of light but was *not* light. I cannot describe it further. Four dwarves stood in the corners of this square pit, impaled upright upon spikes hewn from the rock.

We are the Denied, they said. *We were child-killing lords. We drowned our enemies in molten silver. We poisoned kings. We are the despised saints. Our children know our names, but must not speak them outside the offering times, when they say words to flatter us, to pin our souls to the depths. They hate us too much to forget us. But now, we remember ourselves. We remember our true Father.*

After that, they whispered a mystery I will tell only my successor, and I climbed up, finding footholds on cursed bones. Left, right, and left again until I came back to sunlight, bearing the knowledge of our true Father.

The Accord

A clever old man in my work gang set my arm, put it in a sling, and gave me a drink of wine—the master's. "He's dead," said my healer. "There was a battle. We won, but not before a dwarf dashed our lord's brains against some convenient cornice."

I'd been gone four days. In that time, the exiled nations had delivered their ultimatum to the dwarves: Cede power or be slaves. Elldimek's dwarf-lords shared their city in inches of stone and grains of rice, giving us just enough to live on, and they disbelieved the threat. The killing required to defeat them would produce countless Dead. But we did not begin a killing war. The Venmir had learned where to find the entrances to the dwarves' underground refuges. Angat priests took those secrets under the trust built by a common god, and Surinzan blocked those passages, so there would be no escape for the old lords of Elldimek. Menhada rioted in the streets, but let Ouazi and ghûl pass between them, not to battle dwarf soldiers, but to enter dwarf homes. We would not fight a war. We would kill children, and the ghûl would feast. No Dead would rise from such a crime.

Some resisted, and here and there men and ghûl carried out the threat until the dwarves were broken, and the Accord of Last Redoubt was signed.

The Order of Things

Over the years, Redoubt—save for the dwarves, none now call it anything else—built its institutions, which grew past fulfilling desperate needs to produce the familiar patterns of a civilization. Many must labor for the few: those well-fed warriors and administrators who coordinate our functions with the stroke of brush or axe. They produced the Crown of Blood to set a standard for servile labor among our combined nations. They bound the Corpsemen to the Undertaking. All such efforts produce dissent, however. Some of it comes from life's bewitchments, which compel us to regard distinctions of nobility and service, tribe and clan, as if they governed every breath. So it was with the Ouazi who built Aurib-Naa in the Outer City, because their sultaar dared marry outside their "House of the Moon." Others hear whispers of the oldest truths: We are equal before the Father, and the present age is his not only his wrath, but his blessing. Across from Aurib-Naa, beyond the southernmost fields, the Jepourah Compound houses mystics who have almost grasped the second of these truths, though full revelation remains clouded by their other eccentric doctrines.

We move among them all, high and low, awaiting the Bone Father's call. Thirty years ago, I thought it had manifested in the Gate Strike. You will not have heard of it, unless you are of the Crown of Blood, or an older slave. The slave laws were new then, and the slavers not so well organized. Hundreds of slaves abandoned their work for the gates of the Outer City. They demanded freedom, or else they'd smash and burn the doors, knock the arches down, and set fire to the fields, to starve the people and call the Dead.

Naturally, we killed most of them. The survivors we set against each other in the slavers' pits to terrorize the rest. Now, of course, the fights are a sport worthy of a betting gentleman's attention. So it goes, but do not despair. The Father will free us.

We could have become a better people. One family in life, a counterpart to the family Father makes for us all in death. We failed because of life's principal disease: hope.

Hope is a lightly poisoned fruit. Its sweetness sustains us, but too much sickens us. It tells us the sun will rise after the dark and spring will banish murderous ice, but it also tells a common soldier he might rise to the rank of a warlord in his tribe and makes a laborer believe his few coins will become many, and buy him a merchant's license, a fine cart, wine, and lovers. This is true for a few who stumble into junctions of will and luck, so we all leave the rich and mighty to their high seats, thinking we too will ramble into that happy crossroads and someday sit beside them. Most of us will not, but we will all greet a day when the sun doesn't rise, and spring fails. That is the Bone Father's promise: All are equally noble in death.

Timeline of the Age of Redoubt

BR refers to Before the Accord of Last Redoubt. AR refers to After the Accord created Redoubt. This date is only formally recorded in Magisterium documents. Individual cultures prefer their own dating methods, and people commonly confuse the settlement of Redoubt with the signing of the Accord. The "Age of Redoubt" thus begins in 27 BR. Despite these issues, the Age of Redoubt is the only era for which most scholars possess a definite timeline. Even seventy years in, past Ascensions have receded into legend, their critical fixed dates known only to a few sages.

28 BR: The Fall. The Dead take Venmah, the last known human city. Survivors flee to Elldimek.

27 BR: The Arrival. Survivors from many nations meet in the Stormbreak Mountains, eventually camping around Elldimek. The dwarves provide food (sometimes as charity, sometimes in exchange for help in the fields), but refuse any mass entry.

27 BR: The Silent Siege. After signs of belligerence from the refugees, the dwarves harvest their fields and supply themselves against a potential siege, but the exiles destroy their own food instead. Rather than allow the starved to rise as the Dead, Elldimek lets the refugees enter. This event is often referred to as the founding of Redoubt, and is occasionally confused with the Accord of Last Redoubt.

26–22 BR: The Great Building. Under dwarven and Venmir direction, refugees build up the Outer City's walls and defenses. To do this quickly, they quarry stone from the northern bulwark around the top of the city, built by dwarves to guard against possible volcanic eruption. Each nation directs its own people. Dwarves control distribution of food and various materials, earning growing animosity from the refugees.

4–3 BR: The Year of Discord. The leaders of the Angat, Ouazi, Menhada, and Surinzan demand equal control of the city's resources. After diplomacy through the Venmir fails, these exile nations deliver an ultimatum, to which the dwarves do not accede.

2 BR: The Accordance Riots. After their ultimatum fails, the Angat, Ouazi, Menhada, and Surinzan organize four days of civil unrest, during which they block dwarves' access to underground refuges and hold the children of the most powerful dwarven clans hostage. They threaten to kill the children and feed their bodies to the ghûl. A taboo against discussing human tactics during the riots lingers; today, younger people believe humans seized power after a general uprising, during which dwarves committed atrocities.

0 AR: The Accord of Last Redoubt. Along with representatives of the surviving peoples of Zileska, the dwarves sign the Accord of Last Redoubt. The dwarven royal family is put to death, the nobles are exiled from their own city, and remaining dwarves are forced into hereditary slavery as punishment for resisting earlier demands. The Accord formally enshrines the Magisterium as the ruling body of Redoubt.

2 AR: A Crown Descends. The Magisterium formally organizes various systems of indentured labor into a comprehensive set of laws, following the Angat model. The Crown of Blood is founded to manage slavery.

3–10 AR: Redoubt Blooms. Most of Redoubt's signature institutions are founded. Watch strongholds are built atop and around the largest city gates. The Magisterium deploys the first Hoodsmen to penetrate closed communities and detect unrest among slaves (among other things). The Census and the Forerunners are established. The Foresters' rights and claim over Veridilith the Ash Farm are formalized.

13 AR: The Year of First Secession. After the young Ouazi sultaar takes a foreigner for a wife, the first of four Ouazi tribes secedes from their culture and from the city and founds a community in the southwest Outer City. They call this place Aurib-Naa, the "House of the Moon God." Over the next 16 years, three more Ouazi tribes secede from Redoubt and join their kinsmen in Aurib-Naa.

14 AR: The Gate Strike. Slaves threaten to destroy the Outer City's gates and burn the fields. In the aftermath, the Crown of Blood organizes the first gladiatorial games, to terrorize the slave population.

27 AR: The Second Secession. The Jepourah faith, first established in the Downs, runs afoul of city regulation after an incident in the Tidewater neighborhood. Like the Ouazi separatists, the community agrees with the city to resettle in the Outer City, building a compound in the shadow of the southeast wall.

35 AR: Domus the Mad. The "Mad Paladin" Domus the Angat leads 500 followers out of the city. They don't return. Foresters refuse to look for them, lest they "encourage anyone else who wants to go astray."

42 AR: Present day.

Chapter II

Characters of The Lost Citadel

The bells rang, a strident call marking the passage of Nkanyezi, one of the newest recruits to Redoubt's Undertaking. Four dwarf slaves eased the Taker's cart through the narrow streets of the Downs, where the slums crushed up against the Inner City walls. Cobbled together from mud, stones, and sturdy pieces of trash, the makeshift buildings leaned against each other in the crowded space.

Nkanyezi led the way, the haft of his sharp-bladed *sleaghar* braced against his shoulder. Although he'd been stripped of the right to wear his martial school's emblem, Nkanyezi clung to his Surinzan heritage and the promise that one day he might resume his elite training. Until that day, he'd been relegated to the collection of corpses, and the Downs proffered more of those than anywhere else in the city.

People from all races mingled in the ceaseless press and flow of traffic, but all cleared the way for the Corspeman's caged cart. Disjointed arms and legs dangled from between bone-enforced planks meant to contain any who might go Restless on the road. With his partner reassigned, Nkanyezi considered swapping the shorter *sleaghar* for the more substantial weight of a bardiche, but settled on the addition of a short-handled axe tucked into his belt. *Dwarf blades are always hungry,* said the red-bearded slave when he'd seen the heavy, carved handle. *That one more than most.* All day, the weapon had been weighing him down, and he was eager to return to the barracks and be rid of it.

The cart turned a corner deep inside the district, where the over-populated shanty town butted up on three sides against the haunted neighborhood of Tidewater. A craggy Venmir man stood waiting. His arms, tanned and leathered, cradled an all-too-familiar bundle. Nkanyezi signaled the dwarves to halt, and he unlocked the wooden cage. A woman ran into the street, shrieking obscenities. She clung to him, pleading for more time, but the man knew his duty to Redoubt. He shrugged off her mourning and gently settled a child's body atop the other corpses in the cage. The girl, fair-skinned as the weeping woman, carried the features of at least two cultures. In old Zileska, a Venmir and Menhada crossbreed would have been as rare as a walking corpse, but after the Fall, anything was possible—especially in the Downs.

As they'd neared that most notorious section of the city, the dwarven axe hung heavy on his belt as though the weight of the weapon had grown ever more ponderous. Nkanyezi looked down the street at the high fence that marked the borders of cordoned-off Tidewater, a plagued neighborhood once inhabited by Jepourah cultists. The cult had picked up stakes and moved to a compound at the edge of the Outer City many years prior, but whether by coincidence, fate, or their own occult practices, a stain lingered. A sense of unease skittered along Nkanyezi's nerves. A murder of crows burst from the trees at the end of the lane.

Behind them, a tattered pack of Restless scaled the fence.

People on the street screamed and scrambled for cover. A few even made it, but then the Dead attacked with a surprising swiftness. For as long as he could remember, Nkanyezi had dreamed of being a light in the darkness, like the exalted paladins of some Second Ascension fairy tale, armed with divine energy. But today, a frightened Corpseman with a *sleaghar* would have to do.

The Restless rushed towards the cart. The Venmir man cursed and pushed the woman into the doubtful safety of their shack. Nkanyezi danced forward to meet the attack.

The Restless men, and they were all men, showed little sign of rot. Their muscled forms and hardened faces hinted at lives spent as mercenaries or brigands. Even in death, they seemed to follow the orders of their leader, a man with sharp and aquiline features that marked him as Angat. Nkanyezi kept his energy coiled, striking at the Dead things' vulnerabilities.

The Venmir man joined the attack, felling Dead under the crushing blows of a makeshift war cudgel. But the Dead do not die as men do. Back to back, Nkanyezi and the Venmir held the line. Behind the Taker, the bells jangled violently, interrupting the sounds of metal and wood thudding into meat. Nkanyezi risked a glance at the cart to see the newly dead girl climbing out of the unlocked cage.

"The axe," shouted the dwarf with the beard as red as rust. He raised his hands.

Nkanyezi shifted the weight of his spear to one hand and, against all laws regarding slaves and blades, tossed the axe with the other. The dwarf caught it with a roar. The living continued the fight against the Dead. With motions as tight and concise as a master of his school, Nkanyezi speared the Restless leader, slicing at tendons and joints until the giant of a man finally fell to the ground. He spun around looking for another target only to discover the Menhada girl tearing her mother apart. The red-bearded dwarf ended the assault with a series of savage strikes. Neither the girl nor her mother moved again.

The dwarf saluted Nkanyezi and then issued a brusque order to his brethren in the beautifully guttural language of the dwarves. They grumbled a shared reply. Together, they began the tedious work of dragging the mutilated corpses over to the cage. The red-bearded dwarf turned away and trotted down the gore-spattered street, nimbly dodging the carnage as he headed into the shadows of Tidewater. The Venmir man collapsed to his knees by the remains of his family.

Nkanyezi attempted to regain his balance even as he was struck with a sudden and violent urge to flee.

"Where are you going?" he shouted after the dwarf.

Behind him, the bells began to ring.

The Races of Redoubt

Welcome to Zileska, a world that has gone through its share of transformation and calamity. Once, Zileska was home to many races, humanoid and otherwise, and many different cultures within those many races. Through two epochs the sages call Ascensions, these races grew, developed, warred, and traded with one another. They bred and interbred, and filled the world with all the blooming splendor of bountiful nature.

And then, a Fall.

The coming of the Fall and the rising of the Dead leveled the playing field in a way that humbled every living thing on the face of Zileska. Where once there was plenty, now there was only want and scarcity. Where once there were many, now there were only few.

Where once there were five, now there are only four.

What's In, What's Out

The world of Zileska is a fantasy setting, but not quite the same as the one presented in the core expression of the Fifth Edition rules. Races common in a campaign using the standard rules simply do not exist in Zileska. The following are the playable races that do appear in **The Lost Citadel**. If a race does not appear on this list, it *does not exist in this setting*.

- Dwarf
- Elf
- Ghûl
- Human (Angat)
- Human (Menhada)
- Human (Ouazi)
- Human (Surinzan)
- Human (Venmir)

The Meliae

A race of the fey said to be distantly related to the elves, the Meliae were beings intrinsically tied to the natural world on both a spiritual and mystical level. They blurred the line between magic and natural talent, and seemed to know almost everything happening in their lands. They didn't live fully within nature as humans do, or even with nature as the elves did. They were *of* nature, as much a part of it as the trees, the rocks, or the soil. The Meliae were everything most cultures aspire to be (or claim to aspire to be): self-sufficient, but willing to trade, and fully capable of defending themselves while staying uninterested in instigating conflict.

Alas, their intrinsic ties to the natural world left them utterly vulnerable when nature itself went mad. The rising of the Dead simply broke the Meliae. The madness that eventually swept through the ranks of the elves was but a shadow of what their woodland brethren suffered. Many Meliae went so utterly insane that they no longer resembled any sentient creature at all. Others killed, widely and indiscriminately. A harrowing number of the Meliae died of their own madness, or of the madness of others.

Those who remained—sick of mind, but not so severely as to have forgotten who and what they were—gathered in a forest stronghold they called the Spyre, ready to stand with their Surinzan neighbors in a last defense against the hordes of the Dead. There they died, torn apart and consumed, awaiting human reinforcements that never came.

Today, the Meliae are gone, nothing more than a memory: footprints left in the world.

The Others

To be clear, there is nothing wrong with any of the Fifth Edition races omitted by necessity for this book: the dragonborn, gnome, halfling, half-elf, half-orc, and tiefling. When playing a standard iteration of the rules, the omitted races make perfect sense for the average campaign, but in this setting as presented, those races just don't exist as options for player characters.

Having said that, a couple of the omitted races are a bit easier to find ways to integrate than the others, assuming a DM is prepared to do whatever work may be required to indulge the request.

- **Half-Elf**: As presented, the four humanoid races can't produce offspring in couplings with each other, so a Zileskan half-elf is about as common as a half-dwarf (which is to say, nonexistent). If the DM wants to make an exception to this rule, the likeliest form that would take is a product of the union between an elf and a human of either the Menhada culture or the Surinzan culture. In this event, such rare offspring would likely have been raised by the human parent's people, having been rejected by the elves of Ibaria.
- **Half-Orc**: Since the orc is essentially just a dark reflection of the elf, it follows that any exception that allowed elves to procreate with humans might similarly allow for unions between orcs and humans. In the case of such an exception, the customary cultural link with humanity would likely be the Venmir, but a young contemporary half-orc might also trace his or her parentage to the Menhada or Surinzan. In no event should the Angat be considered an appropriate match for interracial union.

Conceptually, the remaining omitted races are the most fundamentally oblique to the tone of this setting.

Dwarf

We were warriors once. Now we are weakened by immobility, by the lack of a cause to fight, by indignity and humiliation, and every day we struggle to find things to do, to find worth amid the bitterness of being owned.

— Kealan Patrick Burke, "Down Here With Us"

Humans did not build the city of Redoubt. Dwarves did, and they called it Elldimek.

Its founder was Kolobus VII, called Skygazer, seventh sovereign of his clan and grandson to Kolobus V, the Mountain King, who brought the entirety of the Southern Reaches of the Stormbreak Mountains to heel under a single dwarven lord. Under his father Kolobus VI, called the Bold, this subterranean empire solidified into the mightiest force to be found in all the "Kingdom Below." When the son's time came, the young king knew he had much to live up to, and chose to do something no dwarven lord had ever done:

Take an entire population of his people, en masse, to the *surface*.

The result was Elldimek. The result was the development of dwarven society's first friendly relations with humanity; in this case, a mountainfolk called the Venmir, who proved honorable, humble of heart, and trustworthy in trade. The result was an over-abundance of trust, derived from too narrow an experience with too narrow a seDMent of the species called mankind. The result was betrayal. The result was the death of their culture, their sovereignty, their dignity. The result was slavery.

The result was Redoubt.

Children of Stone

The dwarves are a true mountain race, born to the buried deep and nonnative daughters and sons of the "Kingdom Above." Only since Kolobus the Skygazer have this people trod the surface under open air. Though that's a period of many centuries, and thus an entire age to the likes of humankind, it is but the recent past by the reckoning of creatures who live for four times the spans of their surface cousins.

Dwarves are built accordingly. Short by the reckoning of the other races of Zileska, they're powerfully muscled and strong of grip, capable of maneuvering their native stone with adroit facility. They're master stonemasons, carpenters, and smiths, and two generations of living under the yoke of human drayage have only toughened them beyond even their original evolutionary vantage. Dwarves of Redoubt have almost uniformly dark hair, with notable exceptions falling in lighter shades, and the preponderant skin tone of the race ranges from an olive-tan to swarthy. Facial hair is almost universal among adult men.

A principle characteristic of the race, and equally telling of its subterranean lineage, is that it requires very little air in order to survive. Dwarves still have lungs, but much like a whale's, they function on an entirely different scale, allowing them to survive for extended periods without taking in new oxygen. The average for a healthy dwarf is three to four hours, but stories abound of dwarves being freed from cave-ins and tunnel collapses, discovered alive and well after as long as ten hours without air.

Bloodied but Unbowed

Dwarves are the face of the sad reality that non-humans occupy the lowest rungs of society in Elldimek-cum-Redoubt. Although the Fall began prior to humanity's arrival at their gates, the dwarves have done little else *but* fall in the decades since that fateful year. First their control over their own city fell, then their homes, and then their sovereignty. After that came the inevitable armed uprising against their former invited guests, and when they lost that, too, the price they paid was their freedom.

While it's true that many dwarves remain either slaves or indentured servants to this day, it's also true that life under the Magisterium has given them the opportunity to "game" the very system which formalized and legitimized their dispossession in the first place. Some will always seek to pervert the spirit of a thing, but most citizens of Redoubt—even among the Angat—will honor the terms codified under the Accord or legal contracts, whatever context or circumstance created the need. This has resulted in many dwarves either earning their freedom entirely, or else buying or negotiating their way "down" from slavery to more traditional indenture, which offers its laborers dim hope of eventual freedom.

Due to their status as slaves (or at least former slaves; second-class citizens in either case), most dwarves bear the marks of their defeat and forced servitude. Slaves aren't permitted to carry blades, and this edict is reflected socially in the forbiddance to shave oneself, which means that most male slaves have facial hair of some kind and quantity. Since facial hair is a cultural marker in dwarf society anyway, almost all dwarf men continue to wear their beards long after earning their freedom as a show of solidarity with their near-dead culture and their brethren still in bondage. Most free dwarves elect to remove any other signifiers (e.g., imposed jewelry) that they were once enslaved.

Freeholds and Feuds

While their once-great culture is but a pale shadow of its former glory, dwarves haven't yet lost the essence of who they were as a people. Denied the right to live as they choose in their own Old City in Westside and much of Southside, they have retreated to the periphery of their own world in order to see its last embers preserved. In the clan freeholds of Eastside, Newtown, and the Downs, dwarves find ways to return to the old ways, and in so doing to cling to a dream of a people renewed.

The essential structural core of dwarven life was always the family. Under the old sovereign system, families had ties to other families, with whom they shared ties to a broader clan and its interests. Beyond a nebulous, throne-based loyalty to their people entire, nothing was more important than kin. After millennia of this, certain family-based rivalries and feuds have become ingrained, and although these feuds no longer threaten to tear what remains of the race apart in internecine jostling—be it for control, for a particular claim or monopoly, or just for old-fashioned pride—the dwarves of the post-Fall world have fallen back on these rituals as a sort of familiar racial territory in cold and unfamiliar times.

As a result, dwarves still keep an accounting of family lines and trees and of debts perceived and owed between and amongst themselves. Refusing to let go of such matters entirely is a marker of defiance against the ultimate erasure of everything they ever were. These complicated relations and traditions see less prevalence and attention among certain slave dwarves, who find themselves bound by the more important rules of their *erus* and *eras*. But even in those confined states, they are still kept and nurtured, however quietly.

Members of the race's former upper castes still remain, but the royal family itself was put to death after the revolt and the rest of the high-ranking nobility exiled from the city, never to return on pain of mass execution. Rumors persist of a last remaining descendant, but few dare to believe, and the rumors often contradict each other. Some say this noble heir is being held in the Tower, while others suggest he's hidden somewhere in the city. What's true beyond dispute is that the dwarves are all one people now.

Dwarf Names

Dwarves are a clannish people, and given names among them are complicatedly hereditary, with babes named after historically and often mystically significant figures from a clan's ancestral past. Surnames are less complex, but bound by custom to bonds of loyalty and tradition between intra-clan families.

The Magisterium has banned from Redoubt all names associated with the former noble class.

Male Names: Admir, Behar, Besnik, Cengis, Detmir, Evner, Fisnik, Halim, Hasad, Ihsan, Kemal, Kezim, Mamun, Mesud, Olta, Ottmar, Rasuk, Selik, Serkan, Sinam, Tarek, Ulric, Veli

Female Names: Arba, Basak, Cemal, Drita, Esma, Fulya, Hezan, Kadira, Lemya, Maysuun, Melika, Najila, Nesrin, Ovsanna, Ozlem, Rebya, Sayan, Shaza, Siroun, Tarbula, Yisenya, Zimira, Zulma

Family Names: Abdalyan, Agazaryan, Bedirian, Cherkoyan, Danayan, Durmaz, Ebsuud, Gazanyan, Gulum, Hakoubian, Hovanessian, Kezaz, Khoren, Medzekyan, Minassian, Olmez, Ozimir, Reznyan, Rumi, Saroyan, Sunter, Tervizian, Zildjian

Dwarf Traits

Your dwarf character has the following innate traits.

Ability Score Increase. *Y*our Constitution score increases by 2.

Age. If the woes of fleshly life don't bring them down first, dwarves can live to be over 400 years old. Despite maturing physically at a pace roughly equivalent to humans', they consider their own kind "still young, yet" until well into their forties.

Alignment. As a people, dwarves were once uniformly lawful, believing in each other, in the rule of law, and in the principles of a just and ordered society. Generations of subjugation under the boot of humankind diluted this to a degree, though realities do tend to force dwarves toward lawfulness for other reasons. They were once good people to a similar uniformity, and while this essential nature

The Ignoble Life

Once Angat-led humanity put down the dwarven revolt, the entire concept of dwarven nobility became just another relic of the past. Due to this legacy of cultural upheaval, all dwarves are of equal cultural station in Redoubt. Dwarf characters can never select the Knight or Noble Backgrounds.

has diluted surprisingly little by comparison, dwarves are chilling to behold when they *do* embrace their own evil.

Size. Dwarves run four to five feet tall, with men usually taller than women, and they have stout, muscular bodies for their size. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet. Your speed doesn't suffer when encumbered or when you wear heavy armor.

Darkvision. Dwarves retain the vision they evolved to see in the depths below the surface of the world. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Dwarven Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage.

Powerful Lungs. Dwarves need very little oxygen to survive, and their lungs work on an entirely different scale from a human's. You can go without air for a number of hours equal to your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1). This renders you functionally immune to inhaled poisons and effects, provided you are not tricked or otherwise coerced into inhaling them.

Stonecunning. Whenever you make an Intelligence (History) check pertaining to stonework, you are considered proficient in the History skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Tool Proficiency. You gain proficiency with the artisan's tools of your choice: carpenter's tools, mason's tools, or smith's tools.

Languages. Dwarves speak the Common tongue of Redoubt. They also speak Dwarvish, of course, though certain authorities and housemasters prohibit them from speaking it—a practice which has resulted in secret speech between dwarves, in Dwarvish, becoming a form of soft cultural resistance.

Separated by Status. The dwarves of Elldimek all come from the same basic stock, and thus have no subraces. Some are born to lives of generational slavery, however, whereas others are not.

Indentured Dwarf

Most dwarves in Redoubt are indentured to the servitude of another (almost always a human), if not as actual slaves then as part of a temporary punishment, state agreement, or other carriage of circumstance. Indentured dwarves are born into labor; tough, skilled, and accustomed to hours of back-breaking work.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Constitution or Strength. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Dwarven Durability. When you roll a Hit Die to regain hit points, the minimum number of hit points you regain equals twice your Constitution modifier (minimum of 2).

Dwarven Toughness. Your hit point maximum increases by 1, and it increases by 1 every time you gain a level.

Tool Training. You gain proficiency with an additional set of artisan's tools of your choice: carpenter's tools, cobbler's tools, cook's utensils, leatherworker's tools, mason's tools, potter's tools, or smith's tools.

Second-Class Citizen. Taking any Background other than Slave (see "Backgrounds" later in this chapter) requires DM approval.

Free Dwarf

While most dwarves are still slaves come the present day, enough time has passed since the revolt that some have earned or otherwise acquired their freedom from servitude. The city treats these free dwarves the same as any other citizen, though of course work and life opportunities are no less hard to come by. Free dwarves aren't as tough as their indentured cousins, but are more adaptable and varied in aptitude.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Strength or Wisdom. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Dwarven Fortitude. Pick any ability score. You gain proficiency in saving throws using that ability.

Tool Availability. Add the following options to the list of choices for your Tool Proficiency feature: disguise kit, forgery kit, herbalism kit, gaming set, musical instrument, and thieves' tools.

Elf

Once, when he was just a child, Q'teeb chanced to meet the oldest elf living in Redoubt. He recalls a drawn and sallow face, skin little more than gold-brushed parchment, and stringy hair that looked not just elderly, but somehow molting.

— C.A. Suleiman, "The Sense of Exile"

The elves were once the crowning glory of the civilized world. Their small but magnificent empire of Ibaria was the pinnacle of both magic and the many sciences of earth and nature, powerful and self-sufficient, the envy of all who knew them. For uncounted ages, the elves dwelt in their six great cities, mastering the fundamental forces of the world around them. Even when that world began to change, to grow dangerous and corrupt and rife with the rising dead, none doubted that the elves would weather the storm—least of all the people of Ibaria themselves.

Then magic broke, and the elves broke with it.

Their wonders failed. Their society failed. Their minds failed. Much of the race went mad, slaughtering themselves and others, until those few who had kept (most of) their sanity were forced to purge those who had not. The survivors accompanied the Menhada to Redoubt to dwell within the city's mighty walls—but only as a shattered, pitiful remnant of what they once had been, slowly succumbing to sorrow, to the stirring madness within them all, and now, it appears, to the cruelties of fate itself.

A People of Autumn

The elves were a tall, proud, beautiful folk in their prime, but sorrow, fear, persecution, and inner torment have all taken their toll. They stand around six feet tall on average, yet most now walk with a slump, head and shoulders weighted down by all they have suffered so that they appear shorter than they are. Their skin was once golden, their hair a lustrous dark often falling in magnificent waves or curls; now they have dulled with dirt, filth, a lingering malaise, and the loss of spirit. Their eyes seem to glint, not with the inner fire they once held but with a feverish gleam.

While they are accustomed to discomfort and are no more subject to injury or illness than anyone else, the pallor and gaunt nature of the elves cause them to show the effects of harm more starkly and for longer than others. Bruises blossom darkly against their skin and last for weeks; wounds scar in thick, ropy lines; sickness leaves patchy circles and hollow cheeks, sometimes for months after the pestilence has passed. Many people of Redoubt feel that the elves, already so near to the grave as a race, are too easily marked by the nearness of death. They avoid the elves for superstitious dread that death will be drawn to them in turn.

It is a common sentiment to compare the elves to dry and crackling autumn leaves. Their movements are furtive, skittering, and often as meandering as anything else that blows on the seasonal winds. Many are easily startled; many easily startle others with their sudden, almost insectile bursts of motion. Even an elf who appears functionally sane or friendly still puts others off their ease, for everything about them is sharp and sudden, and their speech and movement come without warning.

Roleplaying Elven Madness

It's important to specify that, while madness has a strong thematic presence in fantasy and horror, playing an elf is *not* an opportunity to make light of real-world mental illness. It is also not an opportunity to disrupt the game by indulging in goofy "RPG madness" such as wandering around slapping people with fish (just for instance). The latter, in addition to being insensitive, is unfair to the other people with you at the table; the former is just being an immature and ugly human being.

You are not playing a particular madness; you are playing a character who has some mental illness among *many other* traits. Don't make him a caricature. Instead, consider simply giving the character a few personality quirks—not unlike those found in the game's backgrounds—that represent and hint at deeper issues without centering or exaggerating them (and without playing them up to the point where they become genuinely disruptive).

Some possible examples:

You suffer mild aural hallucinations, and have occasional conversations with people who aren't present or with inanimate objects.

You are addicted to some drug on a deep level that the substance itself cannot entirely account for, and grow enraged if it is not available on a regular basis.

You are frequently morose. You won't abandon your allies, but you are convinced that every plan will fail and that every adventure will be your last, and you don't hesitate to make that opinion known.

You are often manic. You grow impatient with planning, and occasionally get yourself in trouble by leaping before you look.

You are paranoid, finding it difficult to trust and often seeing ulterior motives or hostility where none (probably) exist.

You are borderline psychotic, resorting to violence where other solutions are possible or even superior.

The Weight of Sorrow

The long life that was once the elves' greatest blessing, allowing them to experience the changing world and work to understand the secrets of nature and magic, is now a racial curse. Their great culture is dead and gone; the magic they loved has turned on them, as has the world itself; and they live now in squalor and helplessness among the lowest of the low. This is all they see, all they have, and all they have to look forward to for all the years to come—unless the walls crumble and the Dead take them first.

It would be enough to drive many to madness even if the fall of magic hadn't already cracked their minds.

A small but significant number of elves are utterly and dangerously insane, but most of those were either purged before reaching Redoubt or are currently locked away in prisons and asylums. Even the remainder, however, are not entirely in their right minds. All elves shoulder the burden of at least potential madness, and they know it. Most find the notion terrifying, although a few are resigned to it or even welcome the thought of an eventual break with reality, seeing it as a relief. Some elves react with hopelessness, letting the world simply blow them this way and that as it will. Others are determined to achieve some goal or victory while they still have the opportunity.

Even more disturbing, over the years a growing number of elves began seeing or dreaming visions of future events; today, nearly the entire race is beset with prophetic insight to a greater or lesser degree. These images are often confused, chaotic, and difficult to interpret, and many elves view them as another curse—insights into a vile future they can do little to change. Most elves keep these visions secret, though rumors of their existence have begun to spread.

Although it is not a hard and fast rule, in general the stronger an elf's visions, the madder that elf is likely to be. Whether the visions cause the madness, the madness causes the visions, or some other factor influences them both, remains unclear.

Scrabbling in the Corners

Like the other nonhuman residents of Redoubt, the elves occupy the lowest rungs of society. Unlike the dwarves and the ghûl, however, elves frequently have difficulty finding work even as laborers or indentured servants, as they make so many people uncomfortable. They mostly eke out livings as crafters of various sorts, message-runners, criminals, or scavengers. The bulk of them live in the Downs, a significant minority in Newtown, and a rare few are lucky enough to live in Eastside.

Even in these districts, however, the majority of elves keep to themselves, dwelling in the most squalid and rundown neighborhoods that are often little more than elf ghettos. They normally live in extended family units, less out of love and affection than because they don't trust anyone else. A portion of the elven population instead lives amongst the Menhada, where they are welcomed—by some—as if they were less fortunate members of the clan. Those elves who have fallen deeper into madness or oracular visions usually find themselves cast out and truly on their own.

In order not to engender even greater mistrust (as well as to avoid the temptations of the Art, which calls to elves

more than it calls to other races), most elves eschew the practice of magical arts, though some do indulge in such activities in secret.

Elf Names

The majority of elves in Redoubt take their names from the Menhada (see **Menhada** on page 47). With their own nation and history gone, they cling to the closest remaining culture. A significant minority also—or instead—go by nicknames. These can be names taken from Ibarian cities or landmarks, shortened versions of older-generation elven names, or terms taken from everyday life and imposed on them by others. Only the rarest few elves still use old elven names, as presented in the core rules.

Nearly all elves of Redoubt have abandoned their family or clan names.

Nicknames: Brynn, Chiv, Dammalos, Darai, Ivy, Lauce, Keyl, Mouse, Nail, Rann, Roach, Scraps, Sevoris, Sky, Tresari, Vala

Elf Traits

Your elf character has the following innate traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

Age. While the sorrows and conditions that weigh on them have somewhat reduced their lifespan from the days of old, elves are still cursed to an exceptionally long life. They reach maturity around 75 or 80 years old, and live to be over 400 if violence, illness, or want don't take them first.

Alignment. Both the loss of their cultural inheritance and their incipient madness inspire elves toward chaos, though they tend to good, neutrality, or evil in equal measure. Only a very rare few have the discipline—or frankly the inclination—to maintain any sort of lawful alignment.

Size. Elves tend to stand between five and a half and six and a half feet in height, with men averaging just a bit taller than women, but they give the impression of being much shorter. They tend to be thin to the point of gaunt. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Woe-Touched. The elves of Redoubt are haunted both by their connection to the old, shattered magics and by their incipient madness. This leaves them more susceptible to spiritual damage (see **Woe**, page 255). You take a –2 penalty to your maximum pneuma points.

Darkvision. Elves still maintain the vision they developed to function beneath the canopies of great trees for so many generations. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Dreams and Visions. This is less an ability of yours than a flavorful way for the DM to involve you in adventures or use you to move the campaign forward. At any time, the DM might tell you of a dream or vision, describing blurred sights and confused knowledge of trouble or events to come. Note, however, that while the gist of the vision is always accurate, specific details might be incorrect; your view of the future is always splintered and difficult to interpret.

Fey Ancestry. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Minor Insight. Although your visions lack detail, they do occasionally warn you of danger. If you are conscious and not surprised, you gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws and a +2 bonus to initiative rolls. In addition, unlike other characters, you may choose to use your inspiration point (if you have one) *after* seeing the result of a roll, rather than deciding beforehand.

Languages. Elves speak the Common tongue of Redoubt. Although Elven is a dying language, elves today still speak and understand it as well; they simply do not use it much.

Separated by Birth. Technically the elves of Redoubt are not divided into subraces; they all come from the same stock. Some, however, have a stronger connection to their prophetic "gift" than others.

Lingering Elf

Among the various terms the elves have given themselves since the fall of their culture, one translates loosely as "lingerers" or "loiterers." They see themselves as remnants in a world no longer theirs. As a so-called lingerer, you represent the "standard" elves of Redoubt. You have learned how to live, even thrive, in a society that offers you nothing but scorn. You are clever, sneaky, and above all, a survivor. You most likely display only the mildest signs of elven madness, and you possess only a modicum of prophetic insight (as defined by the standard racial abilities presented previously).

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Reduced Sleep. Once, the elves didn't require sleep at all, merely a few hours' "trance" every night. Since their connection to magic has been severed, they now sleep as other humanoid creatures, but they still require less of it. They gain the same benefit from 4 hours of sleep that a human does from 8. (Some elves drug themselves in order to sleep longer, however, viewing it as an escape.)

Student of the Streets. You gain proficiency with any two of the following skills: Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth.

Broken Elf

As previously described, greater oracular visions and greater madness usually go hand in hand. A very few of these

"broken" elves dance on the edge, remaining sane enough to function normally—or at least to fake it. You are one of these elves, distracted from the world by flashes of what is to come.

Note that, unlike other elves, you require a full 6–8 hours of sleep. Prophetic dreams do not easily relax their grip on the mind, and lead to restless nights.

Mysterious Knowledge. Although you do not gain an additional ability score increase as most other subraces, you do gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence-based ability checks. This represents bits of knowledge that have come to you through various dreams and visions.

Oracular Insight. On occasion, you gain a sudden glimpse of the future, allowing you to better position yourself to take advantage of circumstances. Immediately after you or any creature within 200 feet that you can see makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, you can choose to spend one usage of Oracular Insight. This allows you to roll a d20; if you prefer your roll, you can substitute it for the roll you just witnessed, giving yourself or an ally a higher roll or an enemy a lower one. (All other modifiers still apply. If the roll you are replacing had advantage or disadvantage, you replace the final roll, after one of the two dice has been chosen.)

Your visions are difficult to interpret, however—either due to their lack of clarity or to your own partial insanity—and not all glimpses of the future show positive results. The first time you use Oracular Insight between long rests, you suffer no ill effects. If you use it a second time, however, the DM also gains a use of Oracular Insight which she can use to the benefit of any NPC—or to the detriment of you or an ally—whenever she chooses. If you use Oracular Insight a third time between long rests, the DM gains *two* more uses. These do not go away until used, but the DM cannot stockpile them; she can have no more than three from any one elven character at any time.

(Multiple uses of Oracular Insight cannot affect each other. You cannot use Oracular Insight on a die roll to which the DM or another elf has already applied Oracular Insight, or vice-versa.)

You can use Oracular Insight up to three times, subject to the prior conditions, and regain spent uses after a long rest.

Augur's Intuition. Starting at 3rd level, you can spend an action to concentrate and gain a general sense of whether a particular course or decision is likely to yield positive or negative results. Although a magical effect, this is not casting a spell per se, and requires no components of any kind. It otherwise functions as the *augury* spell. You can use this ability once per long rest.

Ghûl

I move close. The prey's eyes are open but it sees nothing. I wait, crouched by the carcass. I sing the old songs, but the old howls are too loud for the city, too loud for the present.
I sing them in my head where no one can hear.

— Jess Hartley, "Eater of the Dead"

They are a restless people, prevented by the Dead from wandering as their ancestors did. Yet the ghûl—from the Ouazian *narghûla*; their name for themselves is unpronounceable by other species—maintain the discipline of nomads even within the walls of Redoubt. They own little, prizing reputation over material possessions. Unless hindered by danger, duty, or slavery, they follow their sacred charge wherever it takes them. Other peoples may wonder at the meaning of life and their purposes as individuals, but ghûl are free of such doubts. They live to eat the dead, and thereby purify the world. As such, ghûl feel no squeamishness around corpses and do not shrink from charnel stenches. Any field of corpses is a garden to them as much as it is a place that inspires fear and disgust in outsiders.

This outlook is but one reason why ghûl are an isolated community within Redoubt. They are also separated from others by a matter of language; the ghûl tongue resembles that of coyotes, hyenas, and wolves, and cannot be spoken by outsiders.

Strong and Furred

Ghûl are large, loping, canine-like beings. They have short round or square ears on top of their heads. Their snouts are slightly truncated compared to many canines, and wider to permit complex speech. Childhood play and combat training often scar their snouts, and outsiders who have trouble telling ghûl apart may look to these scars to help identify individuals. Ghûl mouths are filled with bone-cracking, flesh-ripping teeth.

Ghûl have shaggy fur on their backs and the outsides of their arms and legs, but a sparse, finer down on their faces, chests, and the insides of their limbs. Before the Dead rose, ghûl were creatures of the desert and savannah, and their thinner-furred patches helped radiate excess heat. Ghûl fur ranges from a light mustard to deep black. When a ghûl takes on a social role as a blackjaw or redwalker, they dye part of their fur the appropriate color to signal their affiliation. Underneath the fur, ghûl have tough, thick skin, adapted to the bite of sandstorms and assaults from competing scavengers and predators.

That thick, loose hide conceals powerful muscles. Male ghûl typically stand six and a half to seven feet tall and weigh between 230 and 300 pounds. Females are usually around five or six inches shorter and about 40 pounds lighter. The ghûl gait is a long, efficient stride where the upper body leans forward. Ghûl legs terminate in long appendages that can lay flat as human feet or be raised like canine hocks and paws to sprint. Ghûl hands have opposable thumbs and short fingers. Both hands and feet possess blunt, black claws. These are used for digging and traction, not combat. In battle, a ghûl might take a three-point stance, so that he can bite in concert with using a melee weapon.

Silent and Fearless

Ghûl do not turn from death. Dead creatures are their sustenance, and when they feast upon dead flesh, they believe they transform it from impure matter that sickens other creatures to life and power. Given that neither they nor any corpse they substantially feast upon can rise as one of the Dead or be similarly profaned, they have concrete evidence to support their beliefs. Yet despite their affinity for death, ghûl are loath to hasten it in another creature. It is not for their people to end lives, unless self-defense and survival make it necessary. They eat the dead, true, and do not discriminate between intelligent beings and animals when it comes time to take their meals, but it is their duty to eat that which has already fallen. They are scavengers, not predators. Thus, ghûl have never made war after the fashion of other peoples, though they have feasted upon battlefield carrion. Despite their fearsome appearances, they are predisposed to peace. The ghûl language is simple by measures of vocabulary, but contains a great deal of nonverbal nuance, and gains meaning through context. Thus, ghûl speak little, even to each other. Outsiders cannot speak the ghûl language and often have trouble understanding its subtler aspects, so ghûl use and teach a simplified form of the language—akin to shouting and gesturing wildly, by their standards—among non-ghûl. But when it is unnecessary to speak, they do not. Ghûl are notorious for ignoring the social niceties present among other peoples. If a ghûl believes it is necessary to do something, she does it, and sees how the noisy hominids react.

Septs and Initiations

Ghûl organize themselves in extended families, or septs. A sept usually has a small number of mothers and fathers. These pairs (and occasional arrangements with one mother and two or three fathers) have proven themselves the wisest, strongest, or otherwise most useful individuals in the sept, and are permitted and encouraged to produce offspring. Among ghûl, permission from the sept to breed is a mark of high status, conferred by rough consensus. These chosen few have the authority to manage the sept's resources and receive the best food and quarters. Sept-mothers usually give birth to twins, though four, six, or even eight cubs are not unheard of. Giving birth to odd numbers of children is considered inauspicious. Low-status and renegade ghûl either strike out on their own or join with other ghûl to form a new sept. Septs do not like

to share physical territory, but in Redoubt this is often unavoidable. Disputes are resolved through negotiation between sept-mothers and sept-fathers, or nonlethal combat. A ghûl who kills another ghûl becomes pariah.

Ghûl recognize two basic functions among their kind: blackjaws, who perform combative and other strenuous tasks, and redwalkers, who scout ahead for the sept. These roles are roughly delineated, separated by training and inclination. They do not restrict what a ghûl may do at any given time, but define what they are best at.

Due to their innate toughness and how different they are from Redoubt's other denizens, ghûl have long been enslaved, but once it was discovered that ghûl could not rise as Dead themselves and could prevent others from rising, they became even more valuable. Only their ancient relationship with the Ouazi people keeps ghûl from suffering indenture as often as the dwarves do.

Ghûl Names

As cubs, ghûl have child-names based on notable aspects of their appearance or behavior, such as Always-Bites, Bone-Stealer, and Big Eyes. Once a ghûl has been fully weaned, after eating flesh cut and torn by others for a time, he or she is invited to eat of a corpse that has not been prepared or fed upon. The young ghûl reverently takes the first bite. Sept-mothers and sept-fathers inspect it as an oracular aid (the shape suggests creatures, destinies, or the talents of the ghûl), and use it to decide the ghûl's adult name.

Ghûl do not have gendered names. Once the ghûl is initiated as a blackjaw or redwalker, the names "black" (*hra*) and "red" (*sawth*) are appended to this name, but this suffix is only used on solemn occasions. Finally, the prefix *Ghaw* is applied to ghûl who become sept-parents. These syllables are approximations, of course—human and human-like mouths cannot truly pronounce them. Due to this and, frankly, because ghûl are often slaves, most respond to other use-names bestowed upon them by non-ghûl.

Adult Names: Aihur ("Sharp Wounder"), Arugh ("Strong Jaw"), Brehai ("Speech of Bites"), Cururro ("Walks Silent at Noon"), Dahru ("Clever Talker"), Drurr ("Thinker"), Eharr ("Swift to Judge"), Gaohu ("Protector"), Gorhai ("Interceptor of Enemies"), Grush ("Deep"), Hudai ("Keeps Own Counsel"), Kagh ("Brave"), Kairur ("Bold Thinker"), Marrai ("Preventer of Injury"), Murohur ("Will Visit a Distant Place"), Nrugh ("Keeper"), Phrush ("Generous One"), Paihu ("Moon"), Raifu ("Most Intelligent"), Sephur ("Secret Power"), Shrush ("River-Wader"), Wehauru "Old Walker of the Desert"), Yaiph ("Sly")

Use Names: Big-Head, Fangs, Gray-Streak, Growler, Jumper, Lightning-Scar, Long-Jaws, Orange-Eye, Round-Ear, Sharp-Tooth, Sniffer, Starer, Torn-Ear, Yellow-Hair

Ghûl Traits

Your ghûl character has the following inborn traits.

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

Age. Ghûl reach maturity faster than humans. A 10-year-old ghûl is already in middle adolescence, and a 15-year-old is a fully mature adult. Ghûl have strong instincts and quickly learn to imitate their elders and teachers, so this maturity is intellectual as well as physical. On average, ghûl live about 50 years, however, and typically start to slow down in their 40s, so their rapid maturity is matched by an early demise.

Alignment. Many ghûl are neutral regarding good and evil, and nearly all are neutral about law and chaos. They handle the bodies of the deceased and see how the just and unjust alike fall. All become lifeless bodies. All become food.

Size. Ghûl stand six to seven feet tall and have broad, muscular bodies that weigh anywhere between 190 and 300 pounds. Males are usually larger than females.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Ghûl are nocturnal hunters and scavengers, adapted to steal the remains of prey from diurnal species. Consequently, you can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and can see in darkness as if it were dim light. In darkness, you can only see shades of gray, but this is not especially concerning as the ghûl sense of color is muted compared to that of humans.

Corpse Lore. When you make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Nature) check while examining a dead person or animal, you are considered proficient when rolling to discover how long the subject has been dead, the cause of death, any unusual physical marks on the body, or any clues to be found from its positioning. If you already have proficiency in one or both of those skills, you gain an additional bonus to the check equal to half your proficiency bonus for these purposes.

Ghûl Hide. You have tough skin that can sometimes turn aside blows from even sharp weapons. Your AC increases by 1.

Ghûl Jaws. Your canine snout and sharp teeth make your bite effective in combat. It inflicts 1d4 piercing damage and is considered a Light weapon. (Fighting with "two weapons" in the case of using your jaws entails biting and striking with a handheld weapon. Even the most skilled ghûl cannot split their attention to use their bite *and* two handheld weapons.) You are always considered proficient with your jaw as a weapon. Given time, you can eventually gnaw through thick rope, tough leather, and even some woods.

Ghûl Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against poison (damage or the condition), and resistance against poison damage.

Sacrosanct Death. You cannot be reanimated as undead, and your deceased body and parts thereof cannot be utilized for necromancy as a spell's material component or as a target. If one or a group of ghûl devour a substantial amount of a corpse (at least half, by mass), they pass this trait on to the corpse, which also cannot be reanimated or used for other forms of necromancy. You acquire this trait upon eating raw, dead flesh for the first time in a childhood ritual. Very young ghûl, or those who have not been exposed to the ritual, might not possess this ability.

Note that *raise dead* and similar spells that permanently restore authentic life are exceptions to this rule, for both ghûl and the deceased individuals they eat—but these sorts of magic are virtually unheard of in Redoubt.

Scavenger's Feast. Rotting flesh and other forms of putrefaction cannot make you ill; in fact, you find the smell and taste of long-dead flesh sweet and pleasant. You cannot acquire a disease from dead and decayed things or become poisoned from the by-products of natural decay, though you can be affected by poisons introduced to dead flesh from another source. Even diseases that would be transmissible by a living host can no longer affect you if they're present in a dead creature you encounter.

Languages. Ghûl cannot speak other languages, and most non-ghûl cannot speak their language, which consists of a series of growls, barks, and raspy hums. Ghûl throats and vocal cords are made for sounds that can only be replicated by canine-like species. All ghûl understand this Ghûl language and Common.

Ghûl-Friend-Speech. Due to the communication barrier posed by the ghûl language, the species has developed a simplified version of its language that, when combined with gestures, can be readily taught to members of other races. The "ghûl-friend-speech" can be understood by any ghûl and conveys the basics needed for trade and cooperation. With their player's consent, you may designate another character (a past companion or someone who has dealt with ghûl extensively) as having been trained in ghûl-friend-speech. This does not "use up" any of their opportunities to learn languages from other sources. After a month of continuous contact with another character, you may teach them ghûl-friend-speech as well.

Initiation: Driven by an overall sacred mission to consume the flesh of the dead, ghûl culture does not recognize many specialized roles, but every ghûl develops a natural inclination for or, by dint of training, is recognized as belonging to one of the following initiatory societies.

Blackjaw

Blackjaws are stronger ghûl who take up heavy labor, fighting and, when necessary, hunting to turn the living into the dead upon which they feed. Hunting is a food-gathering method of last resort, for it is not in the nature of ghûl to kill prey themselves. As a blackjaw, you have darker fur (either ancestrally or dyed to mark you as a member of the society), more muscle, and powerful jaws, scarred by training.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength increases by an additional 1 point.

Powerful Ghûl Jaws. Your jaws inflict 1d6 damage, not 1d4.

Blackjaw Combat Training. You have learned to use your jaws more effectively in combat. This has two effects:

- Other creatures provoke an opportunity attack from you when they attempt to grapple or strike with an unarmed attack. This opportunity attack must be a bite.
- Whenever you use a one-handed melee weapon but nothing else in your off hand, you gain a +1 bonus to AC,

since you can keep enemies at bay by snapping at them with your jaws. If, for some reason, you cannot currently use your jaws as a weapon, you temporarily lose this benefit.

Redwalker

Before Redoubt, redwalkers were advance scouts who sought out carrion and water, warned their people of danger ahead, and negotiated with anyone they encountered using simple sign language. In Redoubt, redwalkers "speak" for ghûl work gangs and patrol the city's byways for incursions of the Dead. As a redwalker, you tend toward the slender side of ghûl builds. You have reddish fur due to your ancestry, sun-bleaching, or because you dyed it to mark your affiliation.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution increases by an additional 1 point.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency in the Perception skill.

Scent of Life. If you can smell them, you have advantage on Insight checks to determine the emotional states of living beasts, giants, and humanoids. You can smell their fear, anger, friendliness, and more. For instance, you may detect the smell of rage, indicating an intention to attack, despite deceptive friendliness. If the subject's smell is masked or you can't smell anything for your own reasons, you lose this benefit. Furthermore, if you successfully track a living beast, giant, or humanoid using Perception, you may make an Insight check with the same DC as the tracking check to determine the emotions your quarry was feeling when they passed through the area. You do not have advantage on this check, however.

Scent of Death. You have advantage on Perception checks to detect corpses, putrefying flesh, or the undead. This applies to cases where undead attempt to hide from you or conceal their true nature with a disguise. Despite the name, this is a mystical attunement to death and decay, and functions even when you can't smell anything.

Signing. You have proficiency in Intelligence checks to communicate without knowing or using the language of another intelligent creature.

Human

A single, small window was set in a wall near the ceiling. The room was heavy with sharp perfumes that made Drita's eyes water.

I should never have trusted a human.

— Elizabeth Massie, "The Dressmaker"

Although the story of the Second Ascension and its ugly end is largely the story of the elves and their so-called Empire of the Art, that tragic arc would have no context but for the story already told by humanity.

The story of the First Ascension is the story of the rise of mankind. During that age, humans spread out across Zileska, finding the divine and the secrets to building civilizations and making societies flourish. The elves outpaced humanity during their dizzying Second Ascension rise, but in the minds of many, only did so out of jealous competition with what mankind had already accomplished.

Ever-seeking, ever-adaptable humanity carved out kingdoms, unearthed mysteries great and small, and boldly explored those farthest reaches heretofore ignored by the elves, long before those older denizens of the continent ever gave thought to indulging their notions of expansionism and occult hubris. Five mighty human nations arose, and those cultures lived, thrived, and ultimately survived even the Fall.

In the Lost Citadel, when you play a human character, you're playing someone descended from or otherwise raised in one of those five dominant cultures: Angat, Menhada, Ouazi, Surinzan, and Venmir.

Angat

The people of Angat epitomized, in many respects, both the best and the worst humanity had to offer. The Angat excelled in philosophy, law, and politics, but saw interchange with outsiders as neither necessary nor positive. Highly philosophical and book-learned, they were the most politically advanced culture in Zileska, yet casually disparaging of other human cultures (let alone nonhuman races, with whom they never saw anything like regular interaction). These proud and too-often cruel people dwelled mostly in flatlands and plains, with some forest and the occasional mountain, in a region of the continent that was centrally located but more or less distant from all other cultures.

The Angat are tall, strong, and well-learned in the philosophies and sciences. Fair of skin, their hair spans the blonde spectrum from light to dirty to reddish. In a biological curiosity, Angat eyes can be of almost any color, though various shades of blue, green, and gray predominate.

Purpose and Adaptation

Angat society is heavily formalized—from recognizing a speaker in a political gathering to welcoming a guest to the way marriages and funerals are conducted—but each such ritual is respected for its intended philosophical purpose as well as for the fact that it's tradition. This particular marriage of philosophy and purpose is one that lies at the center of the Angat cultural mindset. Before the Fall, many of the known world's greatest philosophers, thinkers, and statesmen hailed from the Plains of Angat, and the Angat themselves were well aware of this rarified position they occupied on the ladder of human civilization. When they arrived in Redoubt, it wasn't long before they figured out a way to take advantage of that role, even in the midst of the end of the world.

The Angat recognize sound ideas when they see them. They have a tradition of incorporating those they like into their own systems and views, and in the process, honing them like weapons of war (which ideas are, after a fashion). From the Venmir, they took their language and their religion, both modified of course to suit the Angat view. From the elves, they took lessons in science, the occult, and the price of hubris. Due to their distance from other cultures and the wealth of resources in their homeland, the Angat were able to avoid many of the wars and conflicts common to nations that share borders. Their ability to advance their systems of education and their studies of philosophy and science beyond

Angat Attitudes

Dwarves: Fine craftsmen and laborers, but be forewarned: Few are truly content with their station.

Elves: They had their time, and look what came of it. Things are now as they must be.

Ghûl: Were it not for the Ouazi, they would all likely be indentured by now. Knowing these inarticulate beasts will not rise to plague us a second time is a blessing from God.

most other cultures is due to these advantages of location, although the Angat prefer to believe they are simply more intelligent than others. They have, therefore, had opportunities to develop methods of labor and training that are efficient (which the Angat again attribute to an innate superiority, rather than cultural good luck).

Their martial tradition follows suit, with each Angat child receiving instruction not merely in specific weapons, but in the weapons most suited to *them*, and also in the broader context and history of combat and its various forms. The Angat War College was the most famed human institution of its kind before the Fall, and those are lessons humanity never forgets.

The Gears of Power

When Angat was its own nation, a handful of the most powerful families held the majority of the political seats. The firstborn (or, in some instances, other close relative) of a senator was usually given first crack at an open political appointment. The senate still had to accept the candidate and vote them in, but the size of the majority required to accept a close relative of one of the families was a lot smaller than that required to accept anyone else. The same was true of other political positions assigned by the senate. Under an Angat system, the gears of power are openly, visibly bent in favor of those deemed most worthy.

Now, in Redoubt, this tradition is used to keep a greater proportion of Angat in power than members of any other ethnicity. Theirs are the minds that conceived the Accord of Last Redoubt and the Magisterium and its system of Hoodsmen, and naturally it is they who benefit the most from the systems they devised. Theirs are the minds that founded and control the Angat Church of Man, now humanity's dominant faith.

The class and cultural attitudes of the Angat, as a whole, are repressive. In the customary Angat view, the noble families are superior to the other Angat. The others are superior to the humans of any other culture, and even they are inherently superior to nonhumans, who are viewed as abnormally intelligent animals. These attitudes have softened some among the Angat since their world became a giant melting pot, but only a little, and only among a portion of the populace. Despite occasional and often notable exceptions, the Angat remain overall a self-obsessed, superior, and tragically xenophobic culture.

Angat Names: Aeron (male), Ankonia (female), Annitas (male), Atropa (female), Auris (female), Jareed (male), Khebe (female), Lucilla (female), Mefody (male), Quillius (male)

Menhada

The Menhada came from the vast steppes behind the elf kingdom of Ibaria. A powerful nation of proud horselords, warriors, and animal breeders, their position in the shadow of the elves did not sit well with them until after the elf civilization reached its zenith—just prior to the Fall, when they became the only human beneficiaries of elven greatness—and their history was marked by conquest and political intrigue. The Menhada had a strong grasp of basic sciences, and thanks to their alliance with the elves, grew to become fairly skilled architects, physicians, and tacticians. While their art is distinctive and pleasing to the eye, it was never the focal point of their culture.

In appearance, they are noticeably similar to elves: large, pale eyes and dark hair, though slightly ruddier of skin. Many appear compelling in a way that borders on the supernatural. They tend overwhelmingly to be tall and wiry—the tallest culture of humans, on average—and once had constitutions that could bear most any hardship and see them through most any endurance trial. They are still an exceptionally hardy people, but decades of living away from the steppes (and, according to rumor, away from the grossest excesses of the elven Art) have softened them some.

The Shadow of Greatness

During the mid-to-late Second Ascension, the Menhada had occasion to serve as a sort of self-renewing mercenary army for the elves, and in those days, some elf households even maintained a private guard of highly trained Menhada. Thus, when the elves began their dizzying rise to magical, financial, and cultural dominance and even higher climes of insular egotism, the Menhada grew restive. The elves saw them as inferior beings, short-lived and simple, usually treating them with a sort of benevolent disregard, and relations between the two cultures were complicated, if relatively stable over time.

The Menhada once had a caste system: warrior, merchant, noble, commoner, and *ganto* (landless nobles). The noble caste most often married into the warrior caste, merchants and commoners could intermarry, and the merchant caste could sometimes marry into the warrior caste. Ganto were often derided, but considered a useful match for families struggling to raise fortunes and elevate breeding. In war, high-caste warriors used chariots and cavalry, with the lower castes serving as infantry. All Menhada children were trained not just in the use of the longsword and the mounted bow, but in their use with either hand.

Among the Menhada existed a subculture of horse- and sheep-breeders, the Piraya. Most of the Piraya were caught in the early waves of the Dead or refused to join the march to Redoubt. It is unknown if the few families remaining within the city are the last of this subculture, or if some still survive somewhere in the harsh steppes their people left behind on the other side of the known world.

Duty and Survival

Masedav Antarlus, the last Menhada king, was strong enough to lead his people to safety, but his power in Redoubt was minimal. He accepted his diminished role and focused on aiding the city and his people through the first forty years of their exile. Per his final wishes, his councilors stored the crown in an unrecorded vault and formed the *Barakal* ("silent council"). This council continues to lead the remaining Menhada in name and in their districts, but the broader culture is slowly being subsumed into the melting pot that is Redoubt. The Barakal is composed of nine individuals: Five hail from the five highest-caste families, one is an Antarlus, and the last three are lower-caste citizens who speak for the commoners. The current Antarlus member is Zalla, Masedav's grand-niece. She is the figurehead of the Menhada (and, by extension, the elves), while her sister, Maseda, effectively runs the Antarlus family and its holdings.

The ancient war- and trade-based culture of the Menhada translated poorly to Redoubt, and their later role as chroniclers of the rise of the elven state even more so. Much of their wealth has vanished over the years, dwindling to a small store of priceless cultural relics held in trust by the Barakal and a few wealthy individuals. Many Menhada are merchants or soldiers now, and it is considered honorable for at least one child from every family to be a part of either the Watch or the Foresters (a particular badge of honor).

Menhada maintain close ties with the remaining elves, although the partnership has changed completely. Elves are no longer the dominating force, and a few have even chosen to intermarry into the Menhada. Although none of these couplings have produced children, the Church finds a way to frown on such rare unions all the same. The elves once referred to these humans as *peyani*, which translated to "children." Nowadays, the only elf who would say such a thing in reference to the Menhada—the only people that ever considered themselves true allies of the elves—is an elf who has lost whatever remained of her mind.

Menhada Names: Amenas (male), Elodi (female), Gwenori (female), Haluk (male), Kalo (male), Lorin (female), Masedev (male), Saratsa (female), Tema (female), Ziru (male)

Menhada Attitudes

Dwarves: A study in contrast with us and a lesson in the same.

Elves: As of old, we still stand at their ready defense, but do so now to safeguard them from extinction and from themselves.

Ghûl: Once, I saw a pack of ghûl eat a horse put down for lame. I wish never to repeat the experience.

Ouazi

Far to the south of the mountain in whose shadow Redoubt sits, lies a vast and mostly barren expanse of arid land. Called the Eternal Sea, this sandscape was once home to two peoples whose faiths and fates remain intertwined, even now that both races have abandoned their desert home—the Ouazi and the ghûl. The Eternal Sea is ringed by mountains, many of which contain active or dormant volcanoes. For this and other reasons, the humans of the region have ever been semi-nomadic tribes, until the Fall. They would build humble but effective dwellings and structures in the shadows of a mountain, and when that area grew too dangerous they would pack up and move to the base of another mountain to start all over. For such a people, adapting to cramped city life in Redoubt has proved an arduous and ongoing process.

As a general rule, the Ouazi are fast, strong, and tough, but not the fastest, the strongest, or the toughest. They have dark hair and brown or hazel eyes, and their skin tone ranges from smooth olive to swarthy brown. It's rare for an Ouazi to stand taller than a few inches over six feet, and most are below six-foot. Weight used to be reliably standard, but the overall range has expanded since their arrival in Redoubt.

Beauty and Tradition

The Ouazi are a confederation of tribes, each one led by a chieftain they call Ilbayt ("ill-BAIT"). But for certain purposes, largely spiritual and political, all are united under a single leader. This priestly head of state is called a *sultaar*, and the current sultaar is a shrewd and controversial elder named Inunwa. Historically, the two most important things to the Ouazi people are beauty and tradition. They prize heartfelt excellence in all things, be it their poetry, their song-making, their millennia-old religious practice revolving around the two moon gods (Aurib and Milijun), or their trade. Bargains are especially sacred among the Ouazi, and while negotiating aggressively is acceptable (and these days, expected), for one to willfully and directly breach a driven bargain is considered an offense worthy of violence.

The Ouazi martial tradition involves little to no armor, but focuses on lethality, movement, and (where necessary) deception. The Ouazi are masters of thrown weapons, especially javelins, daggers, and the signature Ouazi cultural weapon, a short-stringed leather sling they call a *girga*. Its quick-release power stems almost entirely from technique (largely the physics of the relationship between the elbow and wrist action), and at close enough range, its stones can punch a hole through a thick wooden plank. All Ouazi get at least rudimentary training in its use, along with the other cultural signature, the Ouazi longdagger.

Ouazi Attitudes

Dwarves: More like us, and we like they, than either of us cares to ponder long.

Elves: The legendary Big Cats of the Eternal Sea were real, and sometimes they went insane. The result was a threat so dire that all the local tribes had to band together just to face it. You take my point?

Ghûl: They are shadows, of both ourselves and of Milijun, just as we are shadows of Aurib and of them. Few outside the tribes understand our relationship with the Narghûla, and that is just as well.

Bonds of Loyalty

When the Sultaar Inunwa's frst wife, the Sultaara Naiuda, died giving birth to a stillborn son, he surprised his people by taking not just an outsider for his new wife, but one of a different religion than his own, and then proudly declaring to his people that he'd not force her to convert. When he did this, his family's largest rival tribe effectively seceded from Ouazi society. They left the security of the Inner City for the only remaining open land to the southwest (open due to its dusty and largely infertile soil), there to build in the shadow of the outer wall the same sort of dwellings and structures they used to build in the shadows of active volcanoes. These cultural separatists dubbed their enclave Aurib-Naa ("House of the Moon God").

Ouazi culture restricts its men to no more than five wives, and even the sultaar is bound by this custom. When Inunwa took a theird wife who was again of a different culture and religion than that of his own people, an additional entire tribe exiled themselves from the Ouazi and joined their kinsmen in the shadow of the western wall. This happened twice more, with the sultaar reaching out to a different noblewoman of another major non-Ouazi group, and suffering the loss of an additional tribe as a result. He is now one of the most powerful men in Redoubt, thanks to having married into each of humanity's four most dominant churches and families. Most Ouazi tribes remain loyal to him, since they live (comparatively) well inside the walls of the Inner City, but the four tribes who form the basis of the separatists stand firm in their belief of their shepherd's betrayal, and relations between them are strained.

Ouazi Names: Bahara (female), Iqbal (male), Khaigar (male), Jaria (female), Mahir (male), Maloufi (male), Nekba (female), Vakim (male), Wisaal (female), Yula (female)

Surinzan

Far across the Plains of Angat, beyond where the mighty river bends its way south, the tall grasses give way to a vast forest kingdom. All but the farthest reaches of this woodland realm were the domain of two peoples: the region's native race, the Meliae, and their human neighbors, the Surinzan. The latter were a culture fascinated by art, beauty, and spiritualism, but also by intricate forms and the myriad practices of war. Ancient pacts (and common sense) forbade them from making war with their inhuman neighbors, so the Surinzan made up for it by warring effectively enough with each other for centuries, until the Fall.

Adult Surinzan are short by human reckoning, standing anywhere from four and a half feet to as much as six feet in height, and only rarely taller. Their skin ranges in tone from soft brown to a deep dark brown.

Honor and War

While all the territorial warlords were loyal to a single king—elected from amongst those warlords by the nobility—they often competed with one another over borders and resources. Their combat was highly ritualized and yet brutally effective. The same grew to be true of their art, their music, their writing, and the like: beautiful, moving, and highly creative within set limits, but locked within certain traditional parameters and always reflective of the cultural sense of obligation to honor and the perception thereof.

The Surinzan are not a tall people, but they are fast, and their unarmed combat is unrivaled in humanity. Regional traditions gave rise to formal schools, which persist in Redoubt to this day. Not all Surinzan are master combatants, but all have received at least minimal training in one of their people's martial schools. All are similarly familiar with the Surinzan cultural weapon, a short, broad-blade spear called a *sleaghar*.

Surinzan Attitudes

Dwarves: Fair treatment of them curries favor with certain Venmir, and that is their principle benefit beyond the menial exertions to which they bend both back and knee.

Elves: Cousins to the lost Meliae, Redoubt's elves are walking reminders of the shame we leave behind. Naturally, this makes some of us despise them like nothing else alive.

Ghûl: No creature so incapable of speech and higher thought has ever been so fascinating to observe.

Divided We Stand

The Surinzan are a people in the midst of a crisis of conscience—a culture that reveres the traditions of honor in life and in battle, yet whose entire survival is based on an act of mass cowardice. For generations, the Surinzan had been on friendly terms with their neighbors in the forested wilds of Zileska, the Meliae. So, when the Meliae first began to suffer and die under the effects, and then the claws and teeth, of the undead plague, they expected the Surinzan to stand with them. Indeed, the two peoples had previously inked a standing agreement on the matter.

While many Surinzan would have honored the compact, the decision was in the hands of the priests, the hereditary warlords, and their nobility-elected king. And it was they—or at least the majority of them—who chose survival. They ordered their people to retreat to the sanctuary about which they had recently heard, the mountain city that became Redoubt, and their people obeyed.

Today, this has resulted in a cultural split that has come near to dividing the Surinzan into two completely separate populations. The slightly larger, the traditionalists, are loyal to the Surinzan nobility to the point of fanaticism. These Surinzan have accepted the narrative that their actions were right and justified to preserve their culture. Many have slowly altered their view of history, until they now believe (or want to believe) that the Meliae were never allies of theirs, never due any assistance, and that the Surinzan fought long and hard before finally retreating. Any deviation from that narrative is viewed as dishonorable and seditious.

The others are saddled with a great sense of guilt and responsibility, and seek to regain their honor. They do this by serving and protecting others; some by volunteering in Redoubt's security apparatus, others by returning to the arts, to give back to a world they have harmed.

Surinzan Names: Fáerin (male), Hizuna (female), Injira (female), Izuan (male), Kuellan (male), Lalia (female), Máidoc (male), Morrika (female), Rowina (female), Verdirin (male)

Venmir

The Venmir are a once-nomadic people from the mountain regions bordering on the old dwarf kingdom, with whom they engaged in irregular trade and bread-breaking. As a result, they were the first humans to be invited into the city that would become Redoubt. They once existed in extended family groups that ranged across the continent through most of the year, gathering in a handful of semi-permanent trading settlements at seasonal solstices. As a nomadic people who gathered in trade, their language formed a great deal of what became the Common tongue, since it was spoken in trading centers. Given their influence, the Angat have made sure that all official records and addresses in Redoubt are now delivered in the Angat dialect, but the fundaments of the city's street-speech are very much rooted in Venmir.

The Venmir are on average the strongest of humans, with dense musculature adapted for life navigating the high climes of their mountain homes. Many have what they call "farm hands," good for gripping, swinging a lot of weight, and bearing the brunt of many swings. Men tend to stand between five and a half and six and a half feet tall, with women a couple of inches shorter. Due to muscle density, Venmir tend to weigh a little bit more than others might think at first estimation. As a group, the Venmir eschew violence whenever possible, but over time developed a functional martial tradition revolving around tools of daily utility: axes, hammers, staves, and even spades, rakes, and such.

Spiritual Pursuit

During the First Ascension, the wisest elder of the Venmir, a renowned medicine man named Kigorof, disappeared with his family from the customary "circuit" and traveled on a vision-quest to a place high in the Stormbreak Mountains. There he discovered something no human had yet put name or face to: God.

Monotheism was born in those mountains, in the form of a deity the Venmir know as Miraab, at a place of pilgrimage that came to be called the Descending Stair. Soon after, the rest of the prophet's people joined him up in the mountains at the great temple-city of Venmah, dug meticulously over an age into the mountain around the mouth of the Stair. And as the formerly nomadic Venmir settled into the tough but rewarding life of near-ascetic spiritual pursuit, their religious message spread across the known world, eventually resulting in the formation of the Angat Church of Man. More ambitious Venmir embrace the "reformations" and become diligent members of the Chorus, but most cling stubbornly to the old ways.

Legacies and Lineages

Like the dwarves, the Venmir are a shadow of the people they once were; not merely from the loss of Venmah and the cornerstone of their culture, but from the fact that they were

Venmir Attitudes

Dwarves: The Church tells us that the lot of the dwarf in Redoubt was pre-ordained by God. Whether true or false, nothing makes that lot any more fortunate, nor our part in it any more honorable.

Elves: There's an old Venmir saying: "Look not into the face of God, but ever around it, in a halo of sight."

Ghûl: The deepest winters once produced a race of fur-covered beasts who hid in snow banks and burst forth for the kill. They were the menace of our people, and it is hard not to think of them around the ghûl.

the ones who convinced the dwarves to open Redoubt to other nations, leading to the human domination of the city and the subjugation of its founders—an act the Venmir view as the consummate betrayal of the law of hospitality. Some feel they bear responsibility for what befell the dwarves, that their mistake remains a black stain upon their collective soul. The few Venmir who are not burdened in some way by this shared legacy of shame are often just as damaged by their treatment (and the treatment of their priests) at the hands of a Church to which their own faith gave birth.

The Venmir long ago gave up notions of nobility, but they do mark those lineages that can claim descendance from either the Prophet (Kigorof) or that first circle of apostles who ventured on faith with him into the inhospitable climes of a far-off mountain peak. Those of the former lineage are referred to as *Kigr* ("KEEGH") and the men and women of that line never accept cultural or political appointments, only spiritual, for the word of the Prophet flows through their veins. The latter—called *Joril* ("zho-REEL")—are the ones who feel the highest duty to their fellow Venmir, specifically, and will almost always choose to step forward when something needs to be done on their behalf or when the Venmir to be need represented as a group, before another group. For cultural and political reasons, the *Joril* all present an outward seeming of devout and humble faith in their god, and for one of their number to be caught doing something truly debauched or impure is a scandal in the broader Venmir community.

Venmir Names: Birko (male), Cazmir (male), Elzbieta (female), Hannah (female), Jarmir (male), Maesa (female), Nyevan (male), Oona (female), Rifka (female), Roorik (male)

Human Traits

Your human character has the following innate traits.

Ability Score Increase. One ability score of your choice increases by 1.

Age. Humans mature in their teens and can live to nearly a hundred years old, if everything falls just so (which it almost never does in Redoubt).

Alignment. The great gamut of humanity is the gamut of all possible moralities and ethics.

Size. Humanity is known for its wide variety of sizes and shapes. (See individual cultures for specifics.) Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write the Common tongue of Redoubt. In addition, you speak, read, and write the tongue of your chosen culture (Angat, Menhada, Ouazi, Surinzan, or Venmir).

Separated by Culture. The humans of Redoubt are all of the same race (humanity), and thus have no subraces.

Although the melting pot of Redoubt has existed for decades now, humans came from five very different cultures prior to arriving there, and in large part those cultural definitions and divides remain.

Angat

If you select the Angat culture, add the following traits to your character.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Intelligence or Strength. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Adaptable. Choose one ability score. You have proficiency in saving throws using the chosen ability.

Angat Martial Training. Gain one of the following Feats: Great Weapon Master, Lightly Armored, Shield Master, or Weapon Master.

Menhada

If you select the Menhada culture, add the following traits to your character.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Charisma or Constitution. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Fortune's Favor. Gain one of the following Feats: Durable, Lucky, Mobile, or Tough.

Menhada Combat Training. You have proficiency with the longsword and short bow. In addition, you gain a +1 bonus to Initiative when you are not surprised or incapacitated, and you can draw or stow two one-handed weapons when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one.

Ouazi

If you select the Ouazi culture, add the following traits to your character.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Dexterity or Wisdom. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Eternal Seafarers. Gain one of the following Feats: Alert, Resilient, Sharpshooter, or Skulker.

Ouazi Weapon Training. You have proficiency with the Ouazi *girga*, the Ouazi longdagger, and every weapon with the Thrown property when thrown. When using a thrown weapon or a sling, add +10 to the weapon's normal range increment, and +20 to its long range increment.

Surinzan

If you select the Surinzan culture, add the following traits to your character.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Dexterity or Intelligence. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Perceptive. You have proficiency in the Perception skill. In addition, gain one of the following feats: Alert, Charger, Mobile, or Observant.

Surinzan Combat Training. You have proficiency with the *sleaghar*. In addition, you may use your Dexterity modifier, rather than your Strength, when making unarmed attacks.

Venmir

If you select the Venmir culture, add the following traits to your character.

Ability Score Increase. Pick Strength or Wisdom. Your score in that ability increases by 1.

Mountainfolk. You have advantage on all Strength (Athletics) checks made to climb, lift, swim, or carry. In addition, gain one of the following feats: Athlete, Durable, Tavern Brawler, or Tough.

Improvised Weapon Training. You are considered proficient with improvised weapons such as chair legs, bottles, and weaponized tools (spades, pitchforks, etc.).

Classes of The Lost Citadel

The setting of **The Lost Citadel** presents a different sort of fantasy world than that presented in the Fifth Edition core rules, and nowhere is that more obvious, or more significant, than in the selection of available classes and subclasses. Zileska is not only different culturally, but magically. It is not "low-magic," exactly, but certainly *lower*-magic than the standard assumptions of the game.

Thematically, then, only some of the class options in the **PHB** are appropriate for the setting. Some classes and subclasses carry over as-is. Some exist conceptually in **The Lost Citadel**, but are changed sufficiently that we have omitted the versions in the core rules and replaced them with all-new variants. And some—such as most of the primary spellcasting classes—simply do not exist at all, with their place in the world being replaced with new classes that are completely original to Zileska.

What's In, What's Out

The following are the classes and subclasses from the core rules that also appear in **The Lost Citadel**. If a class or subclass does not appear either on this list or as new material elsewhere in this chapter, it *does not exist in this setting*.

- **Barbarian,** Path of the Berserker
- **Fighter,** Battle Master, Champion
- **Rogue,** Assassin, Thief

That certainly appears to be a short list, doesn't it? Keep in mind, however, that even though players are losing the likes of the Totem Warrior, the Eldritch Knight, and the Arcane Trickster, each of the core classes affected also has at least one new subclass presented in this chapter, so it evens out there.

In addition, the monk, paladin, ranger, and warlock *do* exist, albeit in altered form. They're simply represented as brand new class write-ups, with new subclasses to go with them. Plus, we're offering the beguiler, the penitent, and the sage—the latter of which is a particularly broad class—to take the place of the classes we had to omit entirely (bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, and wizard).

So, yes, the class list looks quite different in **The Lost Citadel**, but we think you'll find the options available as robust as ever, and at least as interesting, if not more so. The complete class list is as follows:

- **Barbarian**
- **Beguiler**
- **Fighter**
- **Paladin**
- **Penitent**
- **Ranger**
- **Rogue**
- **Sage**
- **Warlock**
- **Warrior Monk**

Pneuma

Zileska is a dark and broken place, and metaphysical corruption is very nearly ubiquitous in the world. **The Lost Citadel** RPG reckons this phenomenon as a force called *Woe*. Characters can encounter spiritual damage and other consequences of Woe from a variety of sources. (See "Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic** for specifics.)

As such, a new design element is that every character in a **Lost Citadel** game has a pool of *pneuma* points, as well as hit points, to keep track of. For most characters (with some specific race- or class-based exceptions), that pneuma pool is determinedly easily and as follows:

Pneuma Point Total = 20 + proficiency bonus

Barbarian

Fáerín's guards worked in teams as they had trained since they were children—catching their enemies' blades with their shields, then parting long enough to let one of them through, shield left behind, to wield the sleaghar in a mad dance of chaos and control.

— Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

Redoubt is, by its very nature, a closed and isolated society. With the exception of a handful of dwarves and elves, all who live here were born here. In most cases, so were their parents and grandparents. Nobody is newly arrived to civilization from the wilds, from distant and less urban environs; indeed, nobody is newly arrived from *anywhere*. The notions of the fearsome outlander, the outcast, the warrior of the wild—these simply do not exist any longer.

Ah, but rage? Rage is a widely known neighbor to many who dwell in Redoubt. The resentment of deprivation, the anger spawned of constant pain, the fury of struggle against others who would take what little one has... These are as familiar as the streets and byways of the city.

And where that rage is strongest, the barbarian—by class, if not by title—thrives.

The Mean Streets

While a few exceptions exist, the majority of barbarians in Redoubt hail from the most crime-ridden and most impoverished districts. Newtown and other violent corners of the Outer City, as well as a few of the worst neighborhoods of Eastside, are rife with violence. Whether participating in criminal enterprises or defending themselves from the same, many citizens grow up in a state of constant struggle. Streetfighters, brawlers, or just desperate survivors, they learn to channel their fury into a fighting style far less formalized, but no less effective, than those of trained warriors.

Barbarians come from all five human cultures in Redoubt, though they are uncommon among the Ouazi and particularly rare among the Angat. Dwarves and (angry but relatively sane) elves make for frequent barbarians; ghûl far less so, though it is not unheard of.

Class Features

The base barbarian class features are unchanged from the core *PHB* rules, except for skill choices, which have adapted to urban living.

Skills: Choose two from Athletics, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Perception, and Stealth.

Primal Paths

Most barbarians of Redoubt choose one of two primal paths: the berserker and the urban totemist. The majority are berserkers, the mechanics of which are unchanged from the core rules. A significant minority, however, become urban totemists; the beliefs of their own cultures have mixed with those of other, equally downtrodden people, resulting in a sort of "pidgin spirituality" into which the barbarian's rage taps.

Path of the Urban Totemist

Descended from older, established traditions, these totems and the barbarians who tap into their power have changed and evolved in Redoubt, aligning themselves more with urban animals and taking on a more defensive spiritual aspect. Some of these provide similar benefits to more traditional totems, while others are entirely new to the current age. The Urban Totemist replaces the Totem Warrior barbarian path, which does not exist in **Lost Citadel** campaigns.

Spiritual Instinct

You have learned to sense the ebb and flow of energies within Redoubt, and to avoid corrupted areas. At 3rd level, when you adopt this path, you gain the ability to sense areas and objects of spiritual danger—that is, areas or objects that cause spiritual damage (see "Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**). By concentrating for one full minute, you immediately become aware of any creature, area, or object within 30 feet that causes spiritual damage. This does not tell you how much damage might be suffered, nor any other specifics about the target save for its location.

The distance at which you can sense such creatures, areas, or objects increases by 10 feet for every level beyond 3rd.

Urban Totem

When you adopt this path at 3rd level, choose an urban totem and gain its feature. You either acquire or make a physical object, such as an item of clothing or an amulet, that incorporates teeth, bones, claws, or fur or feathers from the totem animal. If you choose, you may also gain a minor physical property reminiscent of the totem. For instance, if you have a crow totem, your hair might come to resemble black feathers, whereas if you've chosen the rat, your eyes might become dark and beady.

Crow. While you are raging and aren't wearing heavy armor, you can use the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on your turn. If you fall, you ignore the first 40 feet when determining falling damage.

Goat. When you hit an opponent with a melee weapon attack while you are raging, you may choose to impose disadvantage on the first attack that target makes before the end of your next turn, *or* choose to gain advantage on the first saving throw that target forces you to make before the end of your next turn. You may use this ability once per round, on your turn.

Hound. While you are raging, your allies gain advantage on melee attack rolls against any hostile creature within 5 feet of you.

Rat. While you are raging and aren't wearing heavy armor, other creatures have disadvantage on opportunity attack rolls against you. You gain a climb speed equal to your current walking speed.

Totemic Aspect

At 6th level, choose a totem and gain a magical benefit associated with that animal. You can choose the same totem you selected at 3rd level or a different one.

Crow. When using any tools with which you are not proficient, you may add half your proficiency bonus to the check. Additionally, dim light doesn't impose disadvantage on your Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Goat. After you take and apply hit point damage from an attack or an effect that forced you to make a saving throw, you may enter rage as a reaction.

Hound. You can move stealthily while traveling at a normal pace, and you can track other creatures while traveling at a fast pace.

Rat. You are immune to ingested poisons and all non-magical diseases, and gain advantage on all saving throws against poison (damage or the condition).

Master of the Streets

At 10th level, choose two skills from the barbarian class list with which you are proficient. When making a check with those skills—or any Intelligence check regarding Redoubt itself (its history, knowledge of the people in power, etc.)—you treat any unmodified roll of 1–9 as though you had rolled a 10.

Totemic Ascendance

When you reach 14th level, you gain a magical benefit based on a totem of your choice. You can choose the same totem you selected previously, or a different one.

Crow. When you are raging, you gain a flying speed equal to your current walking speed. This ability functions only in short bursts. If you end your turn in the air and nothing else is holding you aloft, you fall.

Goat. Whenever you use the Dash action while raging, you may move an additional 10 feet during that Dash, and you may make a melee attack against any target within range as a bonus action once you have completed the Dash.

Hound. When you hit a Large or smaller creature with a melee attack while you are raging, you can use a bonus action to knock it prone.

Rat. When you make a melee weapon attack roll while raging, you may choose to move up to 5 feet before or after you make the attack (but not both), as long as your current walking speed is at least 5 feet. This movement does not count against your normal movement for the round. You can, instead, use this movement to stand up from prone, even if doing so would normally cost you more than 5 feet of movement.

Beguiler

"Such discord," he drawled as he moved into the shop. "There are quieter, more constructive ways to resolve even the most rancorous of disagreements."

— James Lowder, "The Treachery of Bright Yesterdays"

Not everyone has the faith of a paladin, a soldier's skill at arms, or the genius of a sage. Not everyone can drive a piece of steel into the flesh of an enemy—even if that foe is already dead. It might be a question of courage or physical strength, but then, not everyone wants to be a warrior. A showman specializes in distraction, not destruction. A bartender knows what drives people, and has honed those skills instead of learning the arts of war. These two never expected to go war against the Dead, but in this world, no one gets to sit on the sidelines.

In Redoubt, the living are just as dangerous as the Dead. People hungry for supplies or power, and people driven by terror or greed: these can be as deadly as any shambler. Depending on the situation, the right words may prove far more powerful than any sword. Fear and hope are the chief weapons of the beguiler, and these powerful tools can carry them far. In battle a beguiler may not even wield a weapon, for the weapons of the beguiler are the people around them.

Roots of Deception

A beguiler possesses keen social instincts and a flare for drawing attention. A beguiler knows how to get a reaction, to generate an emotional response. Direct violence isn't among the beguiler's preferred tools, but they excel at creating opportunities and getting victims to lower their guard. In many cases these talents are highly cultivated; a beguiler has sharpened their wit and every move is carefully planned. However, a less deliberately manipulative beguiler could simply have an irresistible level of natural charm. A beguiler's distraction could be the work of a clown; the sheer unpredictability of a beguiler's antics might baffle even the Dead, using their own dim cunning against them.

Beguilers in Redoubt

The common image of the beguiler is that of the grifter, the criminal who survives by preying on the credulous. There are many who follow variations of this path, ranging from simple shell games to selling "miracle elixirs" or founding cults. But other beguilers engage in more honest trades: a performer who can draw a powerful reaction from a crowd, an expert negotiator, a successful politician, even a priest who has faith but inspires others with words instead of divine magic. Beguilers are rarely violent by nature; they survive through their wits and diplomacy. But a criminal beguiler may be found working with more violent partners.

Creating a Beguiler

Beguilers excel at taking advantage of others. They are deceivers and manipulators. It's easy to imagine a beguiler as a grifter doing whatever it takes to survive.

The problem with such a character is that no one survives for long in Redoubt on their own, so you need to figure out why you are working with the other player characters. It's fine if they don't *entirely* trust you, but to create a story everyone can enjoy, they need a reason to take a chance. Are you related to one of the other characters? Did one of them save your life, or did you both work together to survive? Do you need them for something specific? Alternately you can be a beguiler from a path that makes you more trustworthy; you're a performer with remarkable charm and a talent for distraction, but you're not a greedy or ruthless person.

Once you have a reason for others to trust you, you have to determine what is important enough for you to place yourself at risk. You're not a warrior, and you prefer to talk your way out of trouble. What will convince you to stand by your allies in the face of terror? Are you protecting someone you care about? Are you serving a higher cause? Are you in this for the profit—or is that what you say rather than admit to any idealism?

Quick Build

You can create a Beguiler quickly via the following suggestions. Charisma should be your highest ability score, and Dexterity your second-highest. Then choose the Charlatan background.

Class Features

You gain the following class features as a beguiler.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per beguiler level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per beguiler level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor

Weapons: Simple weapons

Tools: One type of gaming set; either disguise kit or forgery kit

Saving Throws: Dexterity, Charisma

Skills: Choose three from Acrobatics, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Perception, Perform, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any granted by your background:

- A simple melee weapon
- A sling or 10 darts
- A diplomat's pack or an entertainer's pack
- A disguise kit or forgery kit
- Leather armor and one type of gaming set

Lethal Distraction

In the midst of combat, any distraction can be deadly. This is your specialty: drawing attention at a crucial moment, causing an enemy to lower their guard just long enough for an ally to strike. Even if you do not wield a blade, your words and gestures can turn the tide of battle. When you use the Help action to assist an ally in attacking an enemy within 5 feet of you, you may also create a distraction. If that ally attacks the target before your next turn, their first successful attack deals an extra 1d6 damage.

The amount of extra damage increases as you gain levels in this class, as shown in the Lethal Distraction column of the Beguiler table. You may only create a distraction once per turn.

Expertise

At 1st level, choose two of the following skills that you are already proficient in: Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, or use of a disguise kit. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of these chosen proficiencies.

At 6th level, choose two more skills from this list to gain this benefit.

Thieves' Cant

You may not be a common thief, but beguilers work hand in hand with a wide assortment of shady characters. Whether you've engaged in criminal activity or simply know the streets, as a beguiler you learn the Thieves' Cant used by rogues. This allows you to hide messages in seemingly normal conversation and to use secret signs and signals to convey simple messages.

Bamboozle

You're a master of manipulation, and you know the strings to pull to get an immediate reaction. But while you can confound anyone for a moment, this sort of trickery won't last.

Beginning at 2nd level, when you make a Charisma check targeting an individual who's not hostile to you, you may take advantage on the roll. Regardless of your success or failure, one minute after you use this ability the target realizes that you've attempted to manipulate them. Depending on this situation, this could negate the effect of your original action or result in the target becoming hostile.

Deceptive Defense

At 2nd level, your talent for distracting your enemies helps you evade attacks. When an attacker you can see hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to make a Charisma (Deception) check. If the result of this check is equal to or greater than your opponent's attack roll, the attack misses instead.

The Beguiler

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Lethal Distraction
1st	+2	Lethal Distraction, Expertise, Thieves' Cant	1d6
2nd	+2	Bamboozle, Deceptive Defense	1d6
3rd	+2	Racket	2d6
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	2d6
5th	+3	Distant Deception	3d6
6th	+3	Expertise improvement	3d6
7th	+3	Deadly Deception	3d6
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	4d6
9th	+4	Racket Feature	4d6
10th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	4d6
11th	+4	Deep Insight	5d6
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	5d6
13th	+5	Racket Feature	5d6
14th	+5	Reliable Talent	6d6
15th	+5	Beguiler's Charm	6d6
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	6d6
17th	+6	Racket Feature	7d6
18th	+6	Disarming Charm	7d6
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	7d6
20th	+6	Master Deceiver	8d6

Racket

At 3rd level, you choose the tools you will rely on in your career as a beguiler. Will you use magic to confound your foes? Will you employ pyrotechnics and chemicals? Or will you focus on your physical talents?

You can choose one of the following rackets: the knave, the mountebank, or the siren. Your choice grants you specific features at 3rd, 9th, 13th, and 17th levels.

Ability Score Improvement

At 4th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 16th, and 19th levels, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or two ability scores of your choice by 1 each. As normal, no ability score can be increased above 20 using this feature.

Distant Deception

Beginning at 5th level, you improve your ability to confound your enemies. You may now use Deadly Defense against ranged attacks, provided you can see the attacker and they are within 50 feet of you. This distance increases by 10 feet for each additional level you gain in the beguiler class (60 feet at 6th level, 70 feet at 7th level, and so forth).

Deadly Deception

Beginning at 7th level, when you use Deceptive Defense and successfully avoid an attack, you may pick an opponent within five feet of you who is within range of that attack. The attacker must make a new attack roll against this target. If you avoid a melee attack, you may target the attacker; you can even trick your enemies into hurting themselves!

Deep Insight

Beginning at 11th level, you have advantage on saving throws against illusion spells. When you fail a saving throw against any effect that would cause you to become charmed or frightened, you can use your reaction to make a Wisdom (Insight) check; you may substitute the result for your failed saving throw.

Reliable Talent

As of 14th level, you have mastered your craft. Whenever you make an ability check to which you add your proficiency bonus, you may treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as 10.

Beguiler's Charm

Beginning at 15th level, your ability to beguile becomes almost supernatural. If you speak to someone who can understand you for at least one minute, you may make a Charisma (Persuasion) check opposed by their Wisdom (Insight) check. If you are successful, the target is charmed.

This remains in effect for as long as you remain within sight of the target, and lingers for one hour after you have parted company. It ends immediately if you use this ability on a new target, or if you—or another creature whom the target

recognizes as your ally—attack the target or force it to make a saving throw. Regardless of success or failure of the effect, the victim doesn't realize they've been charmed.

Disarming Charm

As of 18th level, when someone makes a melee attack against you, you may use your reaction to instantly target them with Beguiler's Charm. You must declare this before the success of the attack has been determined; however, if Beguiler's Charm succeeds, the attack automatically fails. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short rest.

Master Deceiver

As of 20th level, you have learned to misdirect attacks with ease. Three times per round, you may use Deceptive Defense *without* expending your reaction. You regain expended uses at the start of your next turn. (You may still expend your reaction to use Deceptive Defense a fourth time in a round, as per normal.) You cannot use this ability if you are surprised.

Rackets

Every beguiler has a racket: a particular technique that they specialize in. The mountebank who peddles false elixirs, the siren who can weave webs with words, the knave who dazzles others with movement. But only a few find unexpected power in this path, a surprising truth behind their own lies.

Knave

You have always had a talent for physical escapades. Whether tumbling across the streets or performing acts of legerdemain, speed and finesse have always been your allies. Now these things aren't just tricks you use to deceive or entertain; they are the tools you use to survive.

Dance of Distraction

Starting at 3rd level, you can use a bonus action in combat to take the Help action or to make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. While this can allow you to take the Help action multiple times on your turn, you can still only use Lethal Distraction once per turn.

Martial Training

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency with two martial weapons of your choice.

Precise Movement

Also at 3rd level, when you use Deceptive Defense, you can make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check instead of a Charisma (Deception) check.

Evasion

Starting at 9th level, you can dodge out of the way of many area effect attacks. When you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw and half damage if you fail.

Combat Reflexes

At 13th level, adrenaline and training help you avoid more attacks. When you are struck by an attack and you have already used your reaction, you regain the ability to take a reaction. You cannot use your reaction to respond to this triggering attack.

Blur of Motion

When you reach 17th level, your physical techniques are flawless. When you successfully evade an attack using Deceptive Defense, you may immediately move up to 15 feet. This movement doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity.

Mountebank

In the wake of the Fall, there's always a market for miracle elixirs and wondrous cures: potions that will heal all ills or ward off the Dead. You never expected your amazing elixirs to *work*. But somehow you've stumbled on a technique, an echo of old-world alchemy, that produces wondrous substances. Unfortunately, these potions do not retain their potency for long, so you can't go into legitimate business. But in a city plagued by the Dead, you can surely find a use for healing salves and blazing elixirs!

Intuitive Alchemy

At 3rd level you gain proficiency with Alchemist's Supplies. As long as you have a set of Alchemist's Supplies, you may produce *elixirs*. You learn two of the following options. Once you use an elixir, you must use a bonus action to reorganize your supplies and swiftly mix reagents before you can use another one.

Blazing Elixir. As an action, choose a target you can see within 30 feet and make a Dexterity-based ranged attack roll. If the attack is successful, you inflict 1d10 fire damage. A flammable object hit by this elixir ignites if it isn't being worn or carried. This damage increases by 1d10 when you reach 9th level (2d10), 13th level (3d10), and 17th level (4d10).

Healing Salve. As an action, you touch a creature and restore 1d8 hit points. Once a creature has benefited from this salve, it cannot benefit from it again—whether from you or another mountebank—until it completes a long rest. This effect increases by 1d8 when you reach 9th level (2d8), 13th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

Smoke Bomb. You may use this elixir as an action or a bonus action. Your movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks until the end of this turn, except from opponents with blindsight, tremorsense, or similar senses that rely neither on sight nor scent.

GREATER ELIXIRS

At 9th level you expand your range of abilities. Choose one of the following greater elixirs. Once you use a greater elixir, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Explosive Burst. Choose a spot you can see within 30 feet. Each creature within 5 feet of that spot must attempt a Dexterity saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier). A target takes 3d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This fire spreads around corners and ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried. At 13th level this damage increases to 5d6.

Miracle Cure. As an action you touch a creature. You can remove one of the following conditions: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned. At 13th level this effect can also be used to remove a disease, one level of exhaustion, or one effect that is reducing the target's ability scores or hit point maximum.

ALCHEMICAL TALENT

At 13th level you gain advantage on any ability check associated with the use of Alchemist's tools.

MASTER MOUNTEBANK

At 17th level you regain use of your greater elixir after a short rest.

Siren

You've always had a gift for charming others with words and gestures, but in this supremely dangerous world, mundane diplomacy isn't always enough. You've unlocked a magical talent that imbues your tricks with supernatural presence. As powerful as this is, magic is not a force to be used lightly, especially given the ever-present threat of Woe. If you're a Siren beguiler, be careful how you exercise your abilities.

SPELLCASTING

At 3rd level you gain the ability to cast a limited number of spells.

Spell Slots. The Siren Spellcasting table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all your expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

Spells Known. You begin with knowledge of three spells. The Spells Known column of the Siren Spellcasting Table shows when you learn more spells. Each new spell must be of a level for which you have spell slots, so when you reach 7th level in this class you can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level.

Whenever you gain a level in this class, you can replace one of the siren spells you know with another spell of your choice from the siren spell list.

Siren Spellcasting

		—Spell Slots per Spell Level—			
Level	Spells Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
3rd	3	2	—	—	—
4th	4	3	—	—	—
5th	4	3	—	—	—
6th	4	3	—	—	—
7th	5	4	2	—	—
8th	5	4	2	—	—
9th	5	4	2	—	—
10th	6	4	3	—	—
11th	6	4	3	—	—
12th	6	4	3	—	—
13th	7	4	3	2	—
14th	7	4	3	2	—
15th	7	4	3	2	—
16th	8	4	3	3	—
17th	8	4	3	3	—
18th	8	4	3	3	—
19th	9	4	3	3	1
20th	9	4	3	3	1

Spellcasting Ability. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your siren spells. You use your Charisma whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Charisma modifier when setting the saving throw for a siren spell you cast: **Spell Save DC** = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

SUBTLE CASTING

At 9th level you learn to conceal your spellcasting from those around you. When you cast a spell from the siren spell list, you can conceal it in your performance or speech. A suspicious creature must make an Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Insight) check opposed by your spell save DC to recognize that you are casting a spell.

FINE MANIPULATION

At 13th level you develop a deft touch with your enchantments. When you cast *charm person*, *command*, *serpent's entrancing stare*, or *suggestion*, the victim doesn't realize that you have manipulated them using magic. Whether the spell succeeds or fails, they interpret their behavior as being a voluntary response to your natural charisma.

IRRESISTIBLE

At 17th level, you can weave your supernatural charm into your mundane actions. Any time you make a Charisma ability check, you can use this ability to treat the d20 roll as a 20. You may choose to invoke this ability after you see the result of your roll. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Fighter

"They called me Tree-Foot because when I was first learning the forms with the sleaghar, I wouldn't really turn myself loose and move with it. I grew roots, all right, just at the wrong time. I didn't leap, I didn't spin, I didn't lunge very well. I didn't bring the chaos to the fight. I just kind of plodded along."

If the truth disappointed, Gwenori didn't show it. "Why? What held you back?"

"What usually holds us back? Fear."

— Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

Even though violence is an eternal trade, and opportunities to sharpen certain war skills abound, fighters have lost much. Old traditions that gave warrior-nobles supremacy are mostly gone. There are no more castles in the wild to command, making good soldiers into hinterland lords. Cavalries find little purpose when every field already lies behind a wall, and every patch of trampled earth might kill crops to feed the multitudes.

The age of kingdoms and long marches to battle is over; the Dead outnumber all armies. But Redoubt is a city of many nations, still struggling for resources, territory, and supremacy. Gangs test their swords against each other. Factions need toughs with knives, and the city always needs skilled, callused hands to raise arms against the Dead. There's plenty of work for fighters.

A City of Cudgels and Blades

Fighters come to their trade from every race, nation, and social class. The national diasporas that make up Redoubt's non-dwarf populace maintain many of their old traditions regarding the martial arts. Surinzan still prefer the long-bladed spear called the *sleaghar*. Ouazi slingers support gangs and guards alike; their legendary accuracy hasn't lessened.

Fighters are necessary to the functions of Redoubt as a state—and to the gangs and conspiracies who fill the city's social ecology. The Foresters are the most prominent military order, but few people witness its operations. They're famed for guarding against the Dead, and sometimes riding out to meet them. The Watch includes its share of fighters too, though fewer than one might expect, since violent law enforcement is only part of its mission. Rare is the squad of Hoodsmen which goes forth without a member capable of fighting in the order's heavy ceremonial armor. On the illicit side of things, the most successful gangs employ trained toughs, and the Nightcoats formally train their enforcers.

Class Features

The fighter's core class features are unchanged from the *PHB* rules. However, proficiency in Animal Handling is usually unavailable to fighters who aren't Foresters. The DM may make exceptions for characters with special backgrounds, such as those who keep traditions from nature-worshiping faiths or grew up as goatherds.

Martial Archetypes

Fighters in Redoubt may freely select either the Battle Master or Champion archetypes from the core rules. The Eldritch Knight, however, does not exist in **The Lost Citadel** campaign setting.

Urban combat and the threat of the Dead also inspire new martial archetypes, designed to deal with them.

Martialist

You study the ways of a martial school, such as one of Redoubt's "Eleven Gardens," an Angat dueling academy, or a secret society of street fighters. The city has many martial schools to choose from, though some favor students from specific cultures, and others teach those being trained as gladiators. You've deeply studied your school's techniques and combined them with the straightforward fighting methods of your class.

Your background, favored weapons, and approach to fighting all depend on your choice of school. Some schools hold public tournaments and reward champions with wealth and prestige. Others demand a blood oath, where you promise to say nothing of their secrets and use them only in grave emergencies. You most likely studied at a school which falls somewhere in between. You probably fought students of rival styles in semi-formal duels, sparred within training halls, and performed monotonous, punishing exercises designed to shape your body and habits to conform with your school's theories. But it was never your destiny to make the school your whole life, like warrior monks do. Your fists and weapons were meant to go beyond its gates, to be used for justice, profit, revenge... whatever your will, fate, and ethics command.

Student Warrior

Starting at 3rd level, you know all three of the Martial Ways taught by a martial school of your choice (see "Martial Schools," later in this chapter), as well as that school's unique techniques.

Martial Skill

Starting at 7th level, at the start of each combat encounter, you gain a number of extra Martial Opportunity Points (MOPs) you may spend on exploits, as per the rules in the "Martial Schools" section, with the following changes:

- You retain these extra points until they are spent or the combat encounter ends.
- You may spend these points on exploits on any successful attack roll—not just those which normally accrue/allow you to spend MOPs.
- These stack with MOPs gained as normal through certain even-numbered attack rolls (again, see "Martial Schools") and other sources.

The Martialist Martial Skill table lists the extra MOPs you gain at 7th level and at higher levels in this archetype. The number before the slash lists how many you gain per combat encounter, while the number after the slash lists how many of these bonus MOPs you may spend on a single attack roll.

Martialist Martial Skill

Level	Bonus MOPs per Encounter/Attack
7th–9th	2/1
10th–14th	3/2
15th–16th	4/2
17th+	5/3

Deflect Weapons

Starting at 10th level, you can use your reaction to deflect or catch the missile when you are hit by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your Dexterity modifier + your fighter level.

If you reduce the damage to 0, you can catch the missile if it is small enough for you to hold in one hand and you have at least one hand free. If you catch a missile in this way, you can spend 1 Martial Opportunity Point to make a ranged attack (range 20 feet/60 feet) with the weapon or piece of ammunition you just caught as part of the same reaction. You make this attack with proficiency regardless of your weapon proficiencies, and this attack inflicts its normal weapon damage.

Starting at 17th level, you can use your reaction to deflect or catch melee weapons as well, lowering their damage and potentially disarming their wielders. This uses the same system as deflecting missiles, except that if you reduce damage to 0, to capture your opponent's melee weapon, you must then succeed in a Strength (Athletics) check opposed by your target's Strength (Athletics) check. You must also have one hand free to capture your opponent's weapon, and the requisite number of hands free to use it.

Way of the Warrior

At 15th level, you learn an additional Martial Way of your choice. Furthermore, pick one Martial Way you know, except the Universal Way. You now add 2/1 to your Martial Skill reserve of MOPs, reserved for exploits using that Martial Way alone.

Martial Surge

Starting at 17th level, when you use the Action Surge ability, add 2/1 to your Martial Skill reserve during the extra actions granted by that ability.

Warder

Don't let them touch you. Even slight contact with the Dead might pass on some disease or curse. Not all of them possess this ability, though many Dead carry the ordinary plagues

Gladiators

Gladiators—or "pit fighters," as the Crown of Blood calls them when they're not trying to impress anyone—are often slaves pressed into combat. The first pit fights were instituted to terrorize rebellious slaves but grew popular enough to attract betting and specialized training. Many fighters earned their training in the pits. Others sell themselves into the arena for a time. It's a risky move because the Crown can ensure unpopular warriors face nearly unbeatable opponents. Successful gladiators go on to become elite bodyguards, work in martial schools, or train the next generation of pit fighters.

that killed them and claws caked with infectious filth from wherever their corpses were left. Then there are the Dead which shed madness-inducing ichor from their gums, or rot living flesh with a touch. These circumstances aside, it's a good idea to keep one's distance for no other reason than the Dead's propensity for traveling in packs and concentrating their numbers on single targets. All it takes is one grab or trip, and a warrior might fall beneath a hill of them.

Warders use long weapons and agility to keep the Dead at bay—training that functions effectively against living enemies as well. They slip from wrestlers and knock enemies off walls with staves and spears. Foresters take advantage of this training, and so do those who favor reach weapons.

Elementary Wards

When you select this archetype at 3rd level, you gain a maneuver called a Ward. A Ward uses a bonus action or reaction to counter and respond to close-contact combat threats. Warding requires awareness of distance and timing as well as sensitivity to an attack's pressure. Thus, a Ward roll is a Wisdom check to which you always add your proficiency bonus.

You learn the following Wards:

Divert. You redirect a moving enemy's momentum. When a Large or smaller creature moves into your reach for the first time on a turn, you may use a reaction to make a Ward roll contested by the target's choice of either a Strength (Athletics) or a Dexterity (Acrobatics) roll. If you succeed, you may move that enemy 5 feet in any direction. If it then continues its movement and leaves one of your allies' reach in the process, it provokes opportunity attacks as normal.

Escape. Struck by an attack, you ride the momentum of the blow to avoid further danger. The attack still hits, but you may use a reaction to make a Ward roll, contested by the successful attack roll. If you succeed, you move 10 feet in the direction of your choice, so long as the path isn't occupied by an object or creature. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Intermediate Wards

At 7th level, you learn the following new applications of the Ward action:

Evade. You turn with your enemy's force and slip out of contact. You may use a reaction to potentially escape a grapple, an unarmed strike, or an attack with natural weapons from a creature of Large size or smaller. Make a contested Ward roll against the attack roll or grapple attempt. If you succeed, the attack or grapple misses and you move 5 feet away from the attacker. If you have nowhere to move, you cannot employ this Ward.

Pass. Ducking, weaving, and sliding, you may use a bonus action at the start of your movement to pass through one or more hostile creatures' spaces as if they were difficult terrain. Attempt a Ward roll with a DC equal to 10 + the highest Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) score among the enemy group. If you succeed, this action does not provoke opportunity attacks. You must still end your movement in an unoccupied space. If you fail the roll, you end your movement adjacent to the first creature you were trying to get by and provoke an opportunity attack from it.

Advanced Wards

At 10th level you learn the most sophisticated Wards this martial archetype teaches.

Redirect. You expertly turn and shift your weight to move your enemy. When you strike a Large or smaller creature with a melee attack, you may use a bonus action to make a Ward roll, contested by your target's choice of either a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) roll. If you succeed, you move your opponent to a location of your choice within your weapon's reach and knock them prone. If the location you move your opponent to is hazardous (such as a pit or open flame), they suffer the effects of that hazard.

Yield. You twist out of the way of a blow's full force. When a creature hits you with a melee attack, you may use your reaction to make a Ward roll contested by that successful attack roll. If you succeed, the attack inflicts half damage, and you have advantage on all saving throws against the attack's secondary effects, if any.

Ward Mastery

At 15th level you gain advantage on either Divert or Escape Ward rolls. Choose which Ward has advantage when you gain this ability.

Warder's Awareness

At 17th level you may use a second Ward per round as an additional bonus action or reaction. This is an exception to the normal limit of only one bonus action or reaction per round.

Paladin, Zileskan

You promised me warrior's service, not love, but that's the paradox, isn't it? The best guardians love their charges. The worst only follow their oaths by rote.

— Malcolm Sheppard, "The in Memory"

Whether axe-wielding Venmir, spear-dancing Surinzan, or noble Angat with an ancestral blade worth more than most houses; whether surly dwarf or half-maddened elf, wishing for the return of a social order long passed; all recognize the necessity of defending this last Redoubt, of preserving the final flickers of civilization, of life itself, from a world wracked and ravaged by death.

From among those come the special few, rare and wondrous indeed, for whom the cause of life is genuinely sacred. They act not merely out of self-interest or even ethics and empathy, but from a deep, driving, almost religious need to stand on the ramparts—metaphorically and sometimes literally—between the living and the Dead.

These are the paladins of **The Lost Citadel**. Whether their oaths are formal, taken on bent knee before civic or religious leaders or thrown defiantly into the faces of the ravenous Dead, or informal, a simple burning inner commitment and need, they are true champions of the living. They draw on sacred magics, lingering from the prior age and focused through the souls of Redoubt, the gods, or the world itself to repel the encroaching darkness for just one more day.

To Light a Candle...

Some seek deliberately to assume the mantle of the paladin, training hard in the way of the warrior and searching out mentors—clergy, sages, religious texts, even those rare other paladins—in hopes of learning to harness the power they offer. Others arise almost spontaneously, their drive and commitment to the cause of life opening them up to abilities and a supernatural essence they never knew existed. Many in Redoubt remain ignorant of the existence of paladins as a specific skill set, recognizing only that, every now and again, someone arises to challenge the minions of death.

The Warrior's Way

Nearly all paladins serve some sort of martial purpose in Redoubt society, and often did so even before their calling. A soldier for the city or one of its militias offers the most literal opportunity to guard the walls, protecting the living from the Dead. Other paladins, however, might serve as agents of a religious order or protectors of a particular neighborhood. Some become vigilantes, as focused on human predators as they are on the Dead, and a few even find their place as mercenaries. Their reasons for standing between people and the forces that would harm them are less important, after all, than the opportunity to make the stand itself.

Creating a Paladin

Perhaps the most vital decision when creating a **Lost Citadel** paladin is determining why and how you committed yourself to the cause. Redoubt is a grim, dangerous community where survival is the priority and most people look out for their own first and foremost. Even the majority of those who are willing to risk themselves defending others do so either to earn a living or out of enlightened self-interest. What caused you to adhere so strongly to the creed of life, to defend everyone against the Dead and even death itself? Did you lose loved ones to undead monsters? Were you horrified at how callously those in power treat the people below? Was it a religious decision or revelation? Was your own life saved in an act of altruism so pure you'd never before realized such a thing existed?

And what sort of paladin are you becoming? Do you strive to be a true hero, a paragon of goodness, eschewing dishonesty and cruelty for fear that your own soul will grow corrupt and turn you into one of the Dead? Or are you more praDMatic, believing that the ends justify the means and that sometimes sacrifices must be made for the greater good of the living as a whole? Would you rather stand by those you defend, guarding and healing, or do you prefer to take the fight to the minions and instruments of death? While good-aligned paladins are still the norm and evil paladins are rare even in Redoubt, those of a more neutral bent are a bit more common than in other settings.

Quick Build

You can create a paladin quickly via the following suggestions. Strength should be your highest ability score, and Charisma your second-highest. Then choose the Soldier background.

Class Features

You gain the following class features as a paladin.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d10 per paladin level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 10 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per paladin level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: All armor and shields

Weapons: Simple and martial weapons

Tools: None

Saving Throws: Wisdom, Charisma

Skills: Choose two from Athletics, Insight, Intimidation, Medicine, Persuasion, and Religion

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any granted by your background:

- A martial weapon and shield or two martial weapons
- A simple melee weapon or five javelins
- An explorer's pack or a priest's pack
- Scale mail and a channeling symbol

Lay on Hands

You have learned to channel your own energy and the force of the life and community around you to heal injuries. You have a pool of power equal to your paladin level x5 that replenishes when you finish a long rest. You can restore a number of hit points up to the number of points in yoour pool.

Spend an action and touch a creature, drawing power from this pool to cure its wounds. Choose how many points you spend from the pool; the creature regains that number of hit points, up to its maximum.

You may, instead, choose to expend 5 points from the healing pool to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison currently affecting it. By spending points separately for each one, you can cure multiple diseases or poisons with a single usage of Lay on Hands.

Undead and constructs are unaffected by Lay on Hands in any way.

Sense Corruption

The foulness of the Dead and other violations of the natural order are offensive to you on a spiritual level, and you can feel them deep in your soul. As an action, you can open your mind and become consciously aware of the presence of such influences. Until the end of your next turn, you know the location of any aberration or fiend within 45 feet of you, and any undead within 75 feet of you, that are not behind total cover. You know the type (aberration, fiend, or undead) of any being you sense with this ability, but not its identity. Within 75 feet, you also sense the presence of any place or object that has been desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell, and any location that causes spiritual damage (see "Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**).

The Paladin

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Holy Smites/Day	Smite Damage
1st	+2	Lay on Hands, Sense Corruption	—	
2nd	+2	Fighting Style, Flame of Civilization, Holy Smite	1	1d8
3rd	+2	Gift of Health, Sacred Oath	1	1d8
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	2	1d8
5th	+3	Extra Attack	3	2d8
6th	+3	Aura of Protection	3	2d8
7th	+3	Sacred Oath Feature	4	2d8
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	4	2d8
9th	+4	Spiritual Defender	5	3d8
10th	+4	Aura of Courage	5	3d8
11th	+4	Improved Holy Smite	5	3d8
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	5	3d8
13th	+5	Spiritual Defender improvement	6	4d8
14th	+5	Restful Touch	6	4d8
15th	+5	Sacred Oath Feature	6	4d8
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	6	4d8
17th	+6	—	7	5d8
18th	+6	Aura improvement	7	5d8
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	7	5d8
20th	+6	Sacred Oath Feature	8	5d8

You can use Sense Corruption a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier +1. You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Fighting Style

You adopt a fighting style as your specialty at 2nd level. Select one of the following options. You cannot choose a Fighting Style more than once, even if you later get to choose another.

Defense

You gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing any armor.

Dueling

When wielding a melee weapon with one hand and no other weapon, you gain +2 to damage rolls with that weapon.

Great Weapon Fighting

When you are wielding a melee weapon with both hands and roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die of that weapon, you can reroll that die. You must use the new result, and the weapon must have the versatile or heavy property for you to gain this benefit.

Protection

When a creature you can see attacks a target other than you that is within 5 feet of you, you can impose disadvantage on that attack by spending your reaction. You must be wielding a shield.

Flame of Civilization

At 2nd level, you gain the ability to shed a comforting light. As an action, your channeling focus sheds bright light to any distance you choose, up to a maximum of 10 feet times your Charisma modifier, and dim light for an equal distance beyond that. You may alter the distance or dismiss the light as a bonus action. Otherwise it lasts for one minute.

Holy Smite

Beginning at 2nd level, when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can choose to channel your power into the strike to deal extra radiant damage in addition to the weapon's normal damage. Your paladin level determines the number of times you can smite and how much extra damage you deal as shown on the Paladin table. You regain expended smites after completing a long rest.

If the target of your Holy Smite is a fiend or undead, add one additional d8 of radiant damage to the amount shown on the table.

Gift of Health

Beginning at 3rd level, your connection to life renders you immune to all disease.

Sacred Oath

Upon reaching 3rd level, you swear the oath that marks you forever as a paladin. For paladins of Redoubt specifically, this may or may not be a formal event. Some do, indeed, swear to serve a church or an organization on behalf of the city, or simply make their oaths to whatever gods or spirits they believe in. Others, however, never actually say the words; their commitment to serving life and civilization against a world of death simply grows strong enough to bind them as thoroughly as any formal vow.

Paladins of **The Lost Citadel** campaign setting choose either the Oath of the Bastion or the Oath of Life, both presented at the end of this section. Your choice grants you specific features at 3rd, 7th, 15th, and 20th levels, including specific Channel Divinity features.

Channel Divinity

Your oath grants you the ability to focus divine energy—whether that of the gods themselves, or simply the souls and the life around you—to manifest certain powerful effects. Each such option granted by your oath explains how to use it.

You choose which of the available options to use each time you activate Channel Divinity. You must then complete a short or long rest to use Channel Divinity again.

Starting at 9th level, you can use Channel Divinity twice between rests, rather than once. At 20th level, you can use it three times between rests.

Ability Score Improvement

At 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th levels, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or two ability scores of your choice by 1 each. As normal, no ability score can be increased above 20 using this feature.

Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn, you can attack twice instead of just once.

Aura of Protection

Beginning at 6th level, whenever you or a friendly creature within 10 feet of you makes a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to that saving throw equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). This ability only functions if you are conscious.

The range of this aura increases to 30 feet at 18th level.

Spiritual Defender

Beginning at 9th level, when you or a creature you can see within 30 feet take spiritual damage from a source of Woe, you can spend your reaction to reduce that damage by half. You must complete a long rest before you can use this ability again.

At 13th level, you regain the use of this ability after a short rest.

Channeling Your Power

Some of your powers, such as Channel Divinity, require the target to make a saving throw. The DC of all such saving throws for paladin class abilities is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

Many of these powers refer to a "channeling focus" that you must hold or present. This is an icon that represents your commitment to serving as a champion of life and civilization. It might be a holy symbol, the emblem of a powerful lord, or even the seal of Redoubt itself. Its precise nature and appearance are up to you, as long as the symbolism is strong.

Aura of Courage

Starting at 10th level, as long as you are conscious, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you cannot be frightened.

The range of this aura increases to 30 feet at 18th level.

Improved Holy Smite

As of 11th level, you constantly channel energy from the divine and the life around you. Any creature you hit with a melee weapon attack takes an extra 1d8 radiant damage. This is in addition to any damage you deal if you choose to expend a use of Holy Smite.

Restful Touch

Beginning at 14th level, you can use an action to touch either a living creature or a dead (but not undead) body. You must present your channeling focus. If the target dies within the next hour, or is already dead, it is guaranteed not to rise as one of the Dead for the next 48 hours. You can use this ability twice, and regain expended uses upon completing a long rest.

Sacred Oaths

Some paladins take a formal oath at 3rd level; for others, this is simply the moment wherein the commitment to standing as life's champion, the inner fire that's always driven them, finally comes into its own. In either case, while you don't officially choose your oath until this moment, give some thought in advance to which you are likely to take and try to portray your paladin accordingly.

Oath of the Bastion

The Oath of the Bastion is a commitment to drive back the darkness, to seek out corruption—particularly the forces of death and undeath—and destroy them utterly. The best way to protect life is to eliminate all the unnatural elements that threaten it. Oath of the Bastion paladins hunt down

the Dead within Redoubt's walls, man the battlements when the tide rises, and sometimes volunteer for Forester expeditions—any opportunity to cull undead numbers.

Tenets of the Bastion

Boiled down, the tenets of the Oath of the Bastion basically amount to "the best defense is a good offense." Paladins of this oath do not wait for the Dead or other unnatural evils to appear; they seek such monstrosities out, the better to ensure they can harm no one else.

Hunt Evil Where it Rises. I will not wait for death to find me or those for whom I fight; I will seek it out.

The Only Victory is Total Victory. Evil that is not obliterated is not beaten. An evil that rises after I have passed is my failure.

Death Itself is my Foe. The Dead and other unnatural creatures of death are always the greater threat. They must be fought above all other evils.

I Am of Life. Though death must be fought at every turn, my crusade must never come at the expense of the living. I will never forget what I am, nor become what I face.

Channel Divinity

You gain the following two Channel Divinity options when you take this oath at 3rd level.

Abjure the Corrupted. As an action, you present your channeling focus and speak a prayer or curse of denunciation, using your Channel Divinity. Choose up to three fiends or undead within 60 feet of you that you can see. Unless it is immune to being frightened, each targeted creature must make a Wisdom saving throw.

If it fails the save, the creature is frightened for one minute or until it takes damage. While frightened, the creature's speed is 0 and it cannot benefit from any bonuses to speed. On a successful save, the creature's speed is instead reduced by half for one minute or until it takes damage. Once you have targeted a specific creature with Abjure the Corrupted, you cannot target that specific creature with the same ability for 24 hours.

Beacon of Inspiration. As a bonus action, you hold your channeling focus aloft and use your Channel Divinity. All friendly creatures within 30 feet of you gain advantage on their next attack roll, as long as that attack is made before the end of your next turn.

Enhanced Smite

Also starting at 3rd level, when you deal extra damage by expending a use of Holy Smite, you add your Charisma modifier (minimum +1) to the radiant damage dealt.

Spiritual Bulwark (Channel Divinity)

At 7th level, you gain a new Channel Divinity option (though this does not grant you any additional uses of Channel Divinity between rests). As an action, you present your channeling focus and offer up a prayer or speech of encouragement, using your Channel Divinity. All friendly creatures within 30 feet of you gain resistance against bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, and necrotic damage until the end of your next turn.

Beacon of Hope

When you reach 15th level, you have become a true light in the darkness, able to turn things around when all seems lost. You can use this power only when you and your allies seem to be facing certain defeat (see sidebar).

As an action, you hold your channeling focus aloft. Until the end of your next turn, you shed bright light to 30 feet, and dim light for an additional 30 feet. All friendly creatures who can see that light, whether they are inside it or not, may immediately make saving throws against any fear effects and gain a bonus to any future saves against fear equal to your Charisma modifier. This bonus lasts for one minute, whether you remain visible to them or not.

All friendly creatures within 60 feet of you heal a number of hit points equal to your paladin level. They may also spend a reaction to immediately take an extra turn in which they can move up to their normal speed and also take one of the following actions: Dash, Disengage, Hide, Attack (one attack only), or Cast a Spell (cantrip only).

If you choose, you may also deal damage to enemies within the burst. Choose one or more enemies and spend one of your remaining Holy Smite uses for each enemy you wish to target. (You cannot spend multiple smites on a single target.) The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, taking full radiant damage as though you had struck it with a melee attack on a failed save, or half that amount on a successful save.

Once you have used Beacon of Hope, you gain a level of exhaustion, and cannot use this power again until you complete a long rest.

Cleansing Reaper

At 20th level, you have become the true scourge of the undead. The range at which you can sense undead with Sense Corruption increases to 200 feet. You roll a critical hit on a 19 or 20 when your target is undead. You become immune to necrotic damage, and friendly creatures within range of your Aura of Protection gain resistance to necrotic damage. You no longer suffer a level of exhaustion after using Beacon of Hope. Finally, no creature killed by you, or within 30 feet of you, can rise as one of the Dead.

Oath of Life

The Oath of Life binds you to those you protect. You stand at their side, putting yourself, body and soul, between them and the forces of death and corruption that have overrun this world. You fight for them, but you also comfort them, and do all you can to keep them free of death's greedy claws. You stand always ready to meet any threat as it comes, to not only stand against the Dead but prevent them from claiming the living as their prize, and to bring solace in their wake.

Tenets of Life

You are sworn to defend, to support, and to nurture life and light, even in the darkest and heaviest of shadows.

Never Cowardly, Never Compromising. Everything I am, everything I do, is for the living. For them, I risk all.

Life Must Be Lived. Survival is not enough. I fight not only for the living, but for civilization, for comfort, for contentment.

Life is Life. There are no acceptable losses. To leave one behind is to abandon all. To lose one is to have lost a world.

Preservation Over Victory. There will always be another opportunity to destroy the foe; but fail them today, and there will never be another chance to save *these* lives.

When All Seems Lost

Both **Lost Citadel** paladin oaths have powers—Beacon of Hope and Beacon of Renewal—that are only accessible in the party's darkest hour, when defeat seems all but certain.

Obviously, there's no hard and fast mechanical line for determining precisely when that point is. Our suggested guideline is that this occurs when:
1) all or all but one of the party are below half their hit point maximum,
2) when at least one of the party has dropped to 0 hit points and half or more of the remainder are below half hit points,
or 3) when non-trivial opponents outnumber the party by five-to-one or more.

But again, these are mere guidelines. The DM might accept that other conditions appear equally as hopeless, at her discretion. The decision should be based as much on what feels epic and dramatic as on mechanical considerations, and players who make an effort to restrict their usage of these powers to when it's dramatically appropriate should be given more leeway than those who look for every excuse to do so.

Channel Divinity

You gain the following two Channel Divinity options when you take this oath at 3rd level.

Deny the Corrupted. As an action, you present your channeling focus and speak a prayer or curse of denial, using your Channel Divinity. Undead and fiends within a 30-foot radius of you must make a Wisdom save, unless they are immune to fear. If they fail, they must use their movement at the start of their turn to move outside the radius, and cannot attempt to move back into the radius until their following turn. Undead and fiends outside the 30-foot radius must make a Wisdom save if they attempt to enter that radius or to make any attack or cast any spell that would affect anyone inside the radius; on a failure, they are unable to do so, and cannot try again until their following turn. Even if they succeed on their saving throw, their speed is reduced by half while they are within the radius.

This effect lasts for one minute, until you fall unconscious, or until you choose to end it. It ends for a specific fiend or undead if that creature succeeds in its save or if it is the target of an attack, a spell, or an effect that forces a saving throw originating from someone within the 30-foot radius (though the speed reduction while inside the radius still applies).

Beacon of Sanctuary. As a bonus action, you hold your channeling focus aloft and use your Channel Divinity. All friendly creatures within 30 feet of you *either* gain advantage on their next saving throw *or* impose

disadvantage on the next attack made against them (whichever comes first), as long as that saving throw or attack occurs before the end of your next turn.

Improved Lay on Hands

Also starting at 3rd level, when you use Lay on Hands to cure hit point damage, you may choose to heal an additional number of hit points equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1); these extra hit points are not subtracted from your Lay on Hands pool. After you use this ability, you must complete a short or long rest before you can do so again. At 7th level, you can use this ability twice between rests, and 20th level you can do so three times between rests.

Spiritual Cleansing (Channel Divinity)

At 7th level, you gain a new Channel Divinity option (though this does not grant you any additional uses of Channel Divinity between rests). This grants you the rare and valuable ability to heal spiritual damage (see "Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**), although not entirely reliably. As a bonus action, you present your channeling focus and offer up a prayer or speech of encouragement, using your Channel Divinity. Once, before the end of your next turn, you may then use your Lay on Hands ability to heal pneuma points instead of hit points. Spend 6 points from your Lay on Hands healing pool, then roll 1d6. The result of the die roll is the number of pneuma points you restore.

Once you have healed a specific individual of spiritual damage, regardless of the amount, you cannot use this ability on that person again until and unless they take additional spiritual damage.

Beacon of Renewal

When you reach 15th level, you have become a source of sanctuary and comfort in the midst of loss. You can use this power only when you and your allies seem to be facing certain defeat (see sidebar).

As an action, you hold your channeling focus aloft. Until the end of your next turn, you shed bright light to 30 feet, and dim light for an additional 30 feet. All friendly creatures who can see that light, whether they are inside it or not, may immediately make saving throws against any fear effects, and gain a bonus to any future saves against fear equal to your Charisma modifier. This bonus lasts for a minute, whether you remain visible to them or not.

All friendly creatures within 60 feet of you heal a number of hit points equal to your paladin level. They may immediately make saving throws against any ongoing effects or conditions affecting them. (If they suffer a condition that worsens with failed saves—such as many petrification effects—a failure on this particular bonus saving throw does *not* count as a failure for purposes of advancing that condition.) They may also spend a reaction to immediately take an extra turn in which they can take the move action and one of the following actions: Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

If you choose, you may provide additional healing to friendly creatures within the burst. Choose one or more allies and spend points from your Lay on Hands pool, divided among the targets as you see fit. You may then heal them of injury (or disease or poison) as though you had taken actions to touch each of them individually.

Once you have used Beacon of Renewal, you gain a level of exhaustion, and cannot use this power again until you complete a long rest.

Guardian of Life

At 20th level, you have become a true champion of life. You can now Lay on Hands as a bonus action rather than an action, and at a range of 30 feet rather than touch. Once per short rest, as a reaction when a friendly creature within your Aura of Protection takes damage, you may transfer the damage to yourself instead. You no longer suffer a level of exhaustion after using Beacon of Renewal. Finally, by spending 50 points from your Lay on Hands healing pool, you may restore life to a humanoid who has been dead for no longer than 10 minutes, as long as it has not risen as an undead. The target returns to life with a single hit point, and you must complete a long rest before you can raise another dead individual with this ability again.

Penitent

"Baba…" Q'teeb sighs.

"Do not 'baba' me, you ungrateful goat. Take the blind, and with it do your duty."

As usual, his father's words are harsh.

As usual, buried somewhere deep inside them, there is love.

— C.A. Suleiman, "The Sense of Exile"

Before a burning brazier resting upon the crypt of his ancestors, a whip-scarred dwarf kneels in meditation. Turning inward, allowing the strength of his people to flow through him, he seeks to purify himself, body and soul, until he can shrug off not merely the troubles of the outside world, but its spiritual corruption.

In an isolated neighborhood, where the sorrows of the modern age lie heavy, where sickness is common and plants will not grow, a young woman makes her way along the street, visiting with the children. Where she passes, the pall lifts from their eyes and they find they can laugh again—and none notice how bowed the woman's own shoulders become, laden by the burden, the Woe, she has taken from them.

Through an uprising of the Dead, an old man walks. Cradled in his arms, a terrified infant wails. Her cries are deafening, and the old man makes no effort to hide, yet his purity—which other mortals will never see—shines so brightly in the eyes of the Dead that they cannot so much as look upon him, let alone approach.

Even in a world as dark as this, in a city as desperate as Redoubt, goodness and selflessness and hope exist to be found. Rare as they are—and they are rare, indeed—none embody this truth so fully as the penitent, who readily subjects herself to ever more pain if it means she might alleviate the suffering of others. And the strength she gains from shouldering their injuries, even their Woe, is more than worth the price.

To Stand Against the Darkness

Penitents fight, but they are not warriors. They perform impossible feats, but they are not spellcasters. The penitent's power comes from the pain and corruption and suffering of the world, but it is not a thing of evil; rather the reverse. For the penitent gains strength from helping others, from lifting their burdens, from taking on their agonies—both physical and spiritual. They are among the purest souls, and in that purity, that selflessness, is power.

The Penitent

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Essentia Points	Features
1st	+2	—	Incorruptible Defense, Shield of Woe
2nd	+2	2 + Wis mod	Burden of Pain, Burden of Woe, Essentia
3rd	+2	3 + Wis mod	Road of Atonement, Spiritual Might, Strength in Suffering
4th	+2	4 + Wis mod	Ability Score Improvement, Purge Woe
5th	+3	5 + Wis mod	Aura of Purity, Extra Attack, Only the Penitent Shall Pass
6th	+3	6 + Wis mod	Purifying Blow, Road of Atonement Feature, Spiritual Strike
7th	+3	7 + Wis mod	Burden of Torment, Shared Pain, Shield of Woe improvement
8th	+3	8 + Wis mod	Ability Score Improvement, Woe-Sighted
9th	+4	9 + Wis mod	Defensive Purity, Delayed Suffering
10th	+4	10 + Wis mod	Touch of Pain
11th	+4	11 + Wis mod	Road of Atonement Feature
12th	+4	12 + Wis mod	Ability Score Improvement, Shared Torment, Burden of Toment improvement
13th	+5	13 + Wis mod	Zone of Sanctity
14th	+5	14 + Wis mod	Incorruptible Body, Shared Pain improvement
15th	+5	15 + Wis mod	Cleanse the Land
16th	+5	16 + Wis mod	Ability Score Improvement, Woe Channeling
17th	+6	17 + Wis mod	Road of Atonement Feature
18th	+6	18 + Wis mod	Cleanse the Soul, Aura of Purity improvement
19th	+6	19 + Wis mod	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	20 + Wis mod	Woe-Breaker

Some penitents, as the name suggests, seek to atone for past sins. These might be transgressions the penitent herself committed, but many seek to right more abstract wrongs. They work to undo the harm caused by their families, their people, even mortal life as a whole. Others simply see the darkness of the modern age and feel, for whatever reason, that it is their responsibility to lift it. Regardless of the specifics, penitents all have this in common: The world has gone wrong, and they must set it right, even if only one person at a time.

Their single greatest gift for doing so is the ability to absorb spiritual wounds from others. Penitents have no greater intellectual understanding of Woe than anyone else, but they possess an instinctive feel for the corruption that coats the world and stains the living. They feel such injuries, and they have learned to draw the pain into themselves—and, in so doing, to strengthen the powers that allow them to fight even greater evils.

A Lonely Quest

A penitent may learn her ways as lone apprentice to a master if she is truly fortunate, but for most, the path is one that must be walked alone even in its earliest steps. No schools, no organizations, no factions exist to teach the way of the penitent. It is a solitary affair, a discovery of the strength that lies within and the will to do something more with it. Few in Redoubt are even aware that people with these particular abilities exist.

To stand alone against a dark world is no easy thing. Penitents are forged in suffering, both their own and others'. Most are good—though a few do, indeed, master these powers for their own sake, aiding the world solely for their own gain—but this does not mean that all are kind. Penitents are constantly suffering, and many lack the patience to deal gently with those they help. For every penitent who is friendly and diplomatic, another is brusque and chastising, even if both act out of mercy, generosity, or love.

Creating a Penitent

Perhaps the most important question to ask when creating a penitent is this: *Why* would you embark on such a difficult road? You have chosen a life of suffering, chosen to take the pain of others unto yourself, chosen to battle the very nature of the world itself in the modern age. Did you commit some great sin, for which nothing less can provide forgiveness? Was the agony of the people around you simply too much to bear? Do you seek to atone for the crimes of your nation, or even for the Fall itself? Or, conversely, did you discover your power first, and only after coming to rely on it realize that other people's pain was the price you had to pay for it?

Now that you have embarked on such a life, what do you intend to do with it? Is it enough to do what you readily can, to alleviate small amount of suffering around you? Or are your goals greater? Do you intend to stand between the Dead and the living, though it cost you your own life?

As implied by their very nature, penitents are almost always good-aligned—if not necessarily "nice"—but some very rare exceptions do exist.

Quick Build

You can create a Penitent quickly via the following suggestions. Wisdom should be your highest ability score, and either Dexterity or Constitution your second-highest. Then choose the Acolyte or Hermit background.

Class Features

You gain the following class features as a penitent.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per penitent level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per penitent level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor

Weapons: Simple weapons

Tools: One type of artisan's tools and one musical instrument

Saving Throws: Wisdom, Charisma

Skills: Choose three from Acrobatics, Athletics, History, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Perception, Performance, and Religion

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any granted by your background:

- A simple melee weapon
- A simple ranged weapon
- A dungeoneer's pack or an explorer's pack
- A set of artisan's tools or a musical instrument
- Leather armor and a holy symbol or other icon of personal belief and significance

Incorruptible Defense

You may choose to *either* substitute your Wisdom modifier for your Dexterity modifier for purposes of determining your armor class, *or* substitute your Wisdom modifier for your Constitution modifier for purposes of determining your hit points. Once you have made this choice, it cannot be altered.

Shield of Woe

When a living creature that you can see within 120 feet of you takes spiritual damage, you may spend your reaction to take that spiritual damage instead. This spiritual damage also serves to recharge an equal number of essentia points, up to your maximum.

Many spiritual attacks state that a specific target, once hit by that attack, is immune to further spiritual damage from that attack for a set period of time. When you use Shield of Woe, the original target is still considered to have been hit by that attack—and thus immune—while you are not.

Burden of Pain

At 2nd level, you can take on the burden of an ally's wounds. As an action, you touch a living creature and roll a number of d6 of your choice, up to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1). The target heals a number of hit points of damage equal to the result, up to its hit point maximum, and you take the same amount of damage, which cannot be reduced or resisted in any way.

Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

At 7th level, you regain the use of this ability after a short rest.

Burden of Woe

Also at 2nd level, you can take on another's spiritual damage. As an action, you touch a living creature. The creature regains a number of pneuma points equal to your Wisdom modifier, and you take the same amount of spiritual damage, which cannot be reduced or resisted in any way. This damage also serves to recharge an equal number of essentia points, up to your maximum.

Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

At 7th level, you regain the use of this ability after a short rest.

Essentia

At 2nd level, your personal strength and purity grant you the ability to transform the corruption of the world around you into power you can manipulate and use. Your access to this power is represented by a number of essentia points. Your penitent level and your Wisdom modifier determine the number of points you have, as shown in the Essentia Points column of the Penitent table.

You can spend these essentia points to fuel various essentia features. You start knowing four such features: Chastising Blow, Inescapable Castigation, Pain is in the Mind, and Spiritual Awareness. You learn more essentia features as you gain levels in this class.

When you spend an essentia point, it is unavailable until you recharge your pool of essentia points. You regain essentia points in two ways.

- If you have fewer than half your maximum number of essentia points when you complete a long rest, you regain a number of essentia points equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1), up to a total of half your maximum points.

- When you take spiritual damage from the use of certain of your own penitent class features, you also regain a number of essentia points equal to the damage taken, up to your essentia maximum. If a class feature grants you essentia points, it says so in the description of that feature. The two most commonly used such features are Shield of Woe and Burden of Woe.

Some of your essentia features require your target to make a saving throw to resist the feature's effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Essentia Save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

Chastising Blow

Immediately after you hit a target with a melee or ranged weapon attack, you may spend 1 essentia point to deal extra damage of the same type as the triggering attack, equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Inescapable Castigation

As a bonus action, you spend 1 essentia point. Until the end of that turn, you may use your Wisdom modifier to make melee or ranged weapon attacks, instead of Strength or Dexterity.

Pain is in the Mind

When you take damage, you may use your reaction to spend 1 essentia point to reduce that damage by an amount equal to your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. (You cannot use this ability to reduce any damage you have chosen to take via the use of your own penitent class features.)

Spiritual Awareness

If you are surprised at the start of combat, you may use your reaction to spend 2 essentia points. This is an exception to the rule that you cannot use reactions when surprised. If you do so, you are not surprised.

Road of Atonement

When you reach 3rd level, you commit yourself to a Road of Atonement, the direction in which you will focus your efforts against corruption and Woe: the Curse-Warden or the Hallowed Martyr, both detailed at the end of the class description. Your road of atonement grants you additional features at 3rd level, and again at 6th, 11th, and 17th level.

Spiritual Might

When you reach 3rd level, you gain a greater ability to withstand Woe. Add 1 + your Wisdom modifier to your current and maximum pneuma point totals.

Strength in Suffering

Also when you reach 3rd level, you can draw on your purity to enhance your physical acumen. Once per turn, when you attempt a Strength-, Dexterity-, or Constitution-based ability check, you may choose to spend either 1 or 3 essentia points. If you spend 1, you gain a +2 bonus to the check. If you spend 3, you instead gain advantage on the check.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Purge Woe

Starting at 4th level, you have the rare ability to cure yourself of some amount of spiritual damage. As an action, spend essentia points up to a number equal to your Wisdom modifier. You heal an equal number of pneuma points, up to your normal maximum.

Once you have used Purge Woe, you cannot do so again until you take further spiritual damage.

Aura of Purity

At 5th level, your mere presence helps to ward off Woe. You and all living creatures within 10 feet of you gain a +2 bonus to Woe saving throws.

At 18th level, the bonus is equal to your Wisdom modifier (if higher than +2) and the range of the aura increases to 30 feet.

Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, as long as you have at least 1 essentia point remaining in your pool, you can attack twice instead of once whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Only the Penitent Shall Pass

Also at 5th level, you can walk without fear through the ranks of the foe. As an action, spend 1 essentia point. Until the end of your next turn, any corrupted creatures—defined, in this instance, as undead, fiends, or any creature capable of dealing spiritual damage—must make a Wisdom (Perception) check against your essentia save DC to notice your presence, even if you pass directly beside them. Even if they notice you, they must then succeed on a Wisdom saving throw to attack you, cast a spell on you, or otherwise take harmful action against you.

You can maintain this effect beyond the first round by spending 1 additional essentia point at the start of each subsequent turn. You must also maintain concentration, as though this were a spell. If you cease spending points, lose concentration, attack, cast a spell, or force a saving throw with any effect other than this one, this effect ends immediately.

You can protect one other person along with you, as long as that individual is of Medium size or smaller and you

maintain physical contact. If you break contact, this effect ends for the other individual. The individual is subject to the same behavioral restrictions you are, and if either of you take an action to break the effect, it ends for both of you.

Once this effect ends, you cannot begin it again within sight of any creature affected by the immediate prior usage of it.

Purifying Blow

At 6th level, you gain the ability to disrupt the essence of corrupted creatures—defined, in this instance, as undead, fiends, or any creature capable of dealing spiritual damage. When you hit such a creature within 30 feet with a weapon attack, you may spend 1 essentia point to disrupt its essence. The creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or suffer the following effects until the end of your next turn.

- Every time the creature takes damage, it takes extra damage of the same type equal to your Wisdom modifier.
- The creature is blinded, deafened, and restrained.
- The creature cannot cast spells (including innate spells) or use any abilities that are innately magical (such as shapechanging, turning invisible, or teleporting, for example).
- The creature deals no spiritual damage, regardless of source.

If the triggering attack was a critical hit, you also regain 4 expended essentia points after spending the 1 point to activate this ability.

Spiritual Strike

From 6th level, as long as you have at least 1 essentia point remaining, any weapon attack you make against a target within 30 feet counts as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Burden of Torment

At 7th level, you gain the ability to take a debilitating effect from an ally onto yourself. As a bonus action, choose a living creature within 30 feet and spend 1 essentia point. Select one of the following conditions currently afflicting the target, and to which you are not immune:

- Blinded
- Charmed
- Deafened
- Exhausted (up to three levels)
- Frightened
- Incapacitated
- Paralyzed
- Poisoned
- Restrained (if from a magical source, as opposed to literal physical restraint)
- Stunned
- Unconscious

The target immediately loses the chosen condition and you gain it instead, subject to all the same rules (saving throws, duration, etc.) as the initial target.

Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

At 12th level, you regain the use of this ability after a short rest.

Shared Pain

At 7th level, you can spread injuries you take to your enemies. When you take damage, you may use your reaction to choose one target you can see within 30 feet and spend up to 3 essentia points. The target must attempt a Constitution saving throw. It takes force damage equal to your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier for each essentia point you spent on a failed save, or half that much on a successful one. You cannot, however, deal more damage than you took from the triggering attack or effect.

At 14th level, you can spend up to 4 essentia points.

Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again until you complete a short rest.

Woe-Sighted

Beginning at 8th level, you gain the ability to see corrupted creatures—defined, in this instance, as undead, fiends, or any creature capable of dealing spiritual damage—even if they are hidden. As a bonus action, spend 2 essentia points. Until the start of your next turn, you can see corrupted

creatures within 120 feet even if you are blind, the area is dark, or the creatures are obscured, hidden, or invisible. This does not allow you to see them through completely solid objects, however.

You can maintain this effect beyond the first round by spending 1 additional essentia point at the start of each subsequent turn. You must also maintain concentration, as though this were a spell. You can maintain the effect in this fashion for up to 1 minute. If you cease spending points or lose concentration, the effect ends.

Defensive Purity

At 9th level, you can use your reaction to spend 2 essentia points to reroll a saving throw. You can choose to do so after you see the result of the first roll, but you must take the result of the reroll.

Delayed Suffering

Also at 9th level, you gain the ability to briefly hold off certain negative effects. When you are afflicted with any of the conditions listed under Burden of Torment—even if you brought them on yourself by using that power—you may use your reaction to spend 1 essentia point. If you do so, you do not begin to suffer the effects of that condition until the end of your next turn. (If you are subject to multiple effects at once, you can only select one of them on which to use this feature.)

Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until you complete a short rest.

Touch of Pain

Starting at 10th level, when you hit an enemy within 30 feet with a weapon attack, you may spend 1 essentia point to deal substantial extra damage, in exchange for taking damage yourself. You force the target to make a Constitution saving throw. It takes 8d8 points of force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. You must then attempt a Constitution saving throw against your own essentia DC. On a failed save, you take half as much damage as the target did, or half that (in other words, one quarter of the initial damage) on a successful one.

The damage increases by an additional d8 every two levels you gain in this class (so 9d8 when you gain 12th level in the penitent class, 10d8 when you gain 14th level, and so on), to a maximum of 13d8.

Once you use this ability, you must complete a short rest before you can do so again.

Shared Torment

At 12th level, you can transfer effects from which you are suffering to another. As an action, spend 4 essentia points and select a creature within 30 feet that you can see, or a creature within melee range that you are aware of but cannot see. Choose one of the conditions listed under Burden of Torment currently afflicting you. The creature must attempt a Constitution save; if it fails, the condition ends on you and the target suffers it instead, subject to the same rules—saving throws, duration, etc. You must, of course, be able to take actions in order to use this ability.

You may use this ability on an affliction that you technically have but aren't yet suffering from, such as one on which you've used your Delayed Suffering ability.

Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

Zone of Sanctity

At 13th level, you can temporarily mitigate the effects of a domain of Woe (see "Domains of Woe," page 256). As a bonus action, you spend 1 to 4 essentia points and temporarily reduce the severity of a domain of Woe in a 30-foot radius around you. The severity of the zone is reduced by the number of essentia points you spend.

You must concentrate on this effect, as if it were a spell, and you can do so for up to a number of minutes equal to your Wisdom *score* (not modifier). Once you have used this ability, you must complete a long rest before you can do so again.

Incorruptible Body

At 14th level, choose two saving throws in which you are not proficient. As long as you have at least 1 essentia point remaining, you are considered proficient with those saving throws.

In addition, as long as you have at least 1 essentia point remaining, you have resistance to necrotic damage and poison damage, and you have advantage on saving throws against poison, disease, petrification, or polymorph effects.

Cleanse the Land

At 15th level, you can attempt to purify a domain of Woe. As an action when you are within a domain of Woe, you may choose to make a Woe saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + the domain's intensity. (If the domain has multiple intensities, due to multiple effects, use the highest.) If you succeed, the domain disappears and you gain a Mark of Woe, determined randomly.

If you fail the save by 5 or less, the domain still disappears, but you take 1d4 points of spiritual damage per level of intensity, in addition to the Mark of Woe. If you fail by more than 5 or roll a natural 1, the domain does not disappear and you do not gain a Mark of Woe, but you take 1d4 points of spiritual damage per level of intensity.

In any case, once you have used Cleanse the Land, you cannot attempt to do so again for one week.

Woe Channeling

Once you've reached 16th level, you can potentially free yourself of a Mark of Woe by channeling it into the land itself. Make a DC 12 Woe saving throw. If you succeed, one of your Marks of Woe (determined randomly, if multiple Marks exist) disappears. If you fail by 5 or less, the Mark still disappears, but the area becomes a permanent domain of Woe. Use the Random Domain table (page 256) to determine what sort and its severity; the domain has a radius of 3d20 + 20 feet, centered on the spot you were standing when activating this power.

If you fail the saving throw by more than 5 or roll a natural 1, the Mark does not disappear and you take 1d4 points of spiritual damage. Whether you succeed or fail, you cannot attempt to use Woe Channeling again for a full week. You can't activate this power if you are already within a domain of Woe.

Note that creating a domain of Woe is a vile act (see "The Well of Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**), even if performed accidentally, so you may suffer further consequences or spiritual damage beyond those described here.

Cleanse the Soul

At 18th level, you can perform one of the greatest acts of self-sacrifice: taking another's Mark of Woe for your own. As an action, you touch a living creature. The creature loses one of its Marks of Woe (determined randomly if it has more than one), and you gain it.

Once you have used Cleanse the Soul, you cannot use it again on that specific creature until it gains a new Mark of Woe.

Woe-Breaker

At 20th level, when you roll for initiative and have no essentia points remaining, you regain 4 essentia points.

In addition, when you complete a long rest, you heal a number of pneuma points equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Roads of Atonement

Despite their rarity and lack of a unifying organization or tradition, penitents in Redoubt all seem to drift toward one of two directions in which to focus their powers, paths that have come to be known, among those few penitents who encounter one another, as Roads of Atonement. Precisely why these two distinct methodologies have come to exist is a matter of some mystery; nonetheless, all penitents known to date belong to one of these Roads.

Curse-Warden

The Curse-Wardens focus on enhancing and strengthening their ability to absorb Woe and turn it into methods of attacking their enemies. In a "fight fire with fire" mentality, they focus on dealing damage and afflictions toward the unnatural and evil threats who would prey upon the innocent of Redoubt.

Weapon Proficiency

When you choose this Road of Atonement, you gain proficiency with two martial weapons of your choice.

Punish the Corrupt

At 3rd level, you gain the ability to castigate those who would corrupt others. Whenever a creature you can see within 30 feet deals spiritual damage to you or to any other creature you can see that is also within 30 feet of you, you may use your reaction and spend 1 essentia point to make an immediate weapon attack against that creature.

Speed of Purity

Also at 3rd level, as long as you have at least 1 essentia point remaining in your pool, you gain a +5 bonus to your base walking speed and a bonus to initiative equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1).

Swift Shield

At 6th level, you gain a second reaction every round which can *only* be used to activate your Shield of Woe ability.

Self-Purification

Also at 6th level, you can use a bonus action to heal your body in exchange for taking spiritual damage. Spend 2 essentia points and lose any number of pneuma points you wish, as long as you do not reduce yourself to 0. You heal an equal number of hit points. Alternatively, you can heal yourself of one ongoing disease or poison effect or one curse that can be eliminated by the *remove curse* spell for a cost of 5 pneuma points per effect.

Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again until you have completed a long rest.

Cursed Smite

Starting at 11th level, when you hit an enemy within 30 feet with a weapon attack, you can immediately choose to spend 4 essentia points—or only 3, if the target is a corrupted creature, as defined under Purifying Blow—to turn the curse of the modern world in on them. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or suffer either one of the effects of *bestow curse*, or the effect of the *slow* spell (your choice). You must concentrate to maintain this effect, as though it were a spell, and the creature may attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, the effect ends. The effect also ends if you use Cursed Smite against a different target.

You may choose to use Cursed Smite on the same attack as Chastising Blow or Touch of Pain, as long as you spend the requisite essentia points for both. Once a target saves against this attack, it is immune to further uses of your Cursed Smite power for 24 hours.

Improved Cursed Smite

As of 17th level, when you use your Cursed Smite ability, all attacks against the target have advantage until the curse ends.

Swift Torment

Also at 17th level, you may use Shared Torment as a bonus action.

Hallowed Martyr

Where the Curse-Warden focuses on the penitent's ability to absorb Woe, the Hallowed Martyr gains further strength from absorbing others' physical injuries, and even from injuring himself. Pain is not merely a burden to be endured, but a source of power, a road to ever-greater feats.

Piercing Focus

When you choose this Road of Atonement, you learn how to spur yourself to greater efforts through pain. As a bonus action, you spend 1 essentia point and injure yourself for any amount of damage you choose, up to a maximum equal to your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. Once before the end of your next turn, you may choose to apply a bonus equal to the amount of damage you dealt yourself to a single attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

You can use this ability twice, and then you must complete a short or long rest before you can do so again.

Purity Through Pain

At 3rd level, you gain the ability tuo transform bodily injury into essentia. As an action, you wound and flagellate yourself for up to 15 points of damage. For every 5 points of damage, you regain 1 expended essentia point. You can regain up to 4 essentia points in this manner (which requires spend at least two actions which don\t have to be consequitive), and then you must complete a long rest before you can do so again.

At 11th level, you may regain up to 6 essentia points in this manner before you must complete a long rest.

Searing Blood

At 6th level, your own pain can impede your enemies. As a bonus action, you spend 1 essentia point and injure yourself for any amount of damage you choose, up to a maximum equal to your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. Once before the end of your next turn, you may fling a handful of the resulting blood onto a chosen creature within 30 feet. This does not require an action of any sort, though you can only do so on your turn. The target must attempt a Dexterity save against your essentia DC to avoid the blood. It takes a penalty equal to the amount of damage you dealt yourself on the next single attack roll, saving throw, or ability check it attempts if it fails the saving throw, or a penalty equal to half that total if it succeeds.

You can use this ability twice, and then you must complete a short or long rest before you can do so again.

Distant Pain

As of 11th level, you may use your Burden of Pain ability at a distance of 30 feet, rather than requiring touch.

The Needs of the Many

Also at 11th level, if you and at least one other creature within 30 feet of you are caught in the same damaging area effect—such as a *flame strike* spell or a breath weapon—you may choose to take full damage regardless of your rolled saving throw, and spend 1 essentia point per creature within range that you wish to protect. The protected creatures take damage as if they succeeded in their saving throw, regardless of their actual roll. Your rolled saving throw still determines how you are affected by any non-damaging elements of the effect, and the protected creatures' actual rolls determine the same for them.

Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

Swift Purification

As of 11th level, if you fail a saving throw, you may use your Piercing Focus ability as a reaction and immediately apply the bonus you gain to the triggering saving throw.

Blessed Effort

At 17th level, you gain the ability to push your body beyond all mortal limits. At any point in the round when it is not your turn, even in the midst of another creature's action, you may immediately spend 4 essentia points and choose to take an extra turn. This is a *complete* turn, including movement, an action, and potentially a bonus action, and you regain your reaction if it was expended. Further, your speed doubles for the duration of this extra turn, and you gain advantage on all attacks, ability checks, and saving throws you make during this turn.

As soon as this turn is over, you gain a level of exhaustion, attacks against you gain advantage until the end of your next turn, and you gain vulnerability to all damage types until the end of your next turn. (If you already have resistance to any damage types, the resistance and vulnerability cancel one another out.)

Once you use this feature, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

Ranger, Zileskan

Each Forester trained since birth for their engagement with the world outside of Redoubt. In Riska's unit, each Forester specialized in a single area of expertise. Most died while employing it.

— *Elizabeth Hand, "Nocuous Umbra"*

Eager to prove herself to both her family and her family's detractors, an Ouazi tribeswoman apprentices herself to the Foresters in a bid to become the most widely honored woman of her name.

An orphaned elf grows to adulthood in the only place he can, and in so doing, comes to feel the same deep connection to his city that his forebears once felt to the fertile fields and forests of far-flung Ibaria.

Under an agreement with the secretive Elldimun, a Venmir prospector scours the Undercity for targeted collections of relics from the Kingdom Below.

The rangers of Redoubt are fearless guides, trackers, and dauntless foes of the aberrant and the undead. Perhaps most significantly, they also comprise the bulk of the respected Foresters organization, and that puts them among the most knowledgeable and practically experienced when it comes to the Dead. Indeed, it is rangers who assembled the first definitive writings on the Dead, now used by city officials.

Rangers aren't as common in Redoubt as, say, fighters and rogues, but what they lack in numbers they make up for in courage and unparalleled competence. Most are driven by a need to see the Dead put to rest, one that often rivals the oath-sworn paladin's commitment to the same, and all are well suited to the grim task of surviving in a world whose natural order has been upset in such a stark and calamitous fashion.

Bound to a Broken Land

As in other settings, the rangers of **The Lost Citadel** are potent enemies of a particular category of foe, but in Zileska's case, that particular category is always the undead. This reflects not merely the reality of daily life since the Fall, moving through a world overrun by the Dead, but also the essential nature of the ranger in Zileska. Rangers have ever been connected to the land here—not merely by activity or vocation, but by forces far deeper and less easy to define.

Even before the Fall, Zileska's sacral kings, be they elf princes or human heirs to manorial lands and titles, were frequently rangers (by class mechanics if not by profession). The notion of a link and responsibility to the land was an accepted part of life in a world where magic and spirits existed. Since the Fall, this connection has only deepened among the rangers and future rangers of the world. They *feel* the imbalance. They *feel* the depth of the wrong that was done to nature's cycle.

To the average ranger, the plague of undeath is the single most unnatural thing ever to befall the world.

Feeling this *wrongness* day in and day out, every hour of every day, is intensely motivating. Rangers are driven, mature, and deadly sober in their discussions of the undead and related topics. Even those who never set foot beyond the

The Ranger

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features
1st	+2	Inspired, Natural Explorer, Student of the Dead
2nd	+2	Expertise, Fighting Style, Nature's Bond
3rd	+2	Primeval Awareness, Ranger Archetype
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement, Hunter's Prey
5th	+3	Extra Attack, Inspire Ally
6th	+3	Natural Explorer and Student of the Dead improvements
7th	+3	Ranger Archetype feature, Pneuma Bulwark, Expertise improvement
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement, Land's Stride
9th	+4	Ward of the Dead
10th	+4	Natural Explorer improvement, Hide in Plain Sight
11th	+4	Ranger Archetype feature, Inspire Party
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	Veil of the Dead
14th	+5	Student of the Dead improvement, Vanish
15th	+5	Ranger Archetype feature, Inspire Self
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	Woe Channeling
18th	+6	Nature Sense
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	Bane of the Dead

city walls are acutely aware of how different life is for the living these days, and simply looking a ranger in the eye is often reminder enough of that. Rangers are survivors, and experts on survival itself. And perhaps most defining of all, rangers are the masters of their own fear.

Fearless is Free

Those rare souls who brave the wilds beyond the walls (or beneath the streets) are respected by the rest of the city for good reason. The danger that waits in such places is almost unfathomable in its menace, especially to the unskilled or unwary, but is the very environment in which rangers dwell and excel. In Redoubt, rangers are perhaps the bravest of the brave, and they behave accordingly.

Fearlessness is a trait common across all spectra of the class, but for some, it's almost a philosophy. The expression "fearless is free" is common among those pledging to become apprentices to the Foresters, and the expression pretty fairly sums up the outlook the typical ranger has on life, the world, and everything. Life is hard in the last city of the living, and to live fearlessly is to be the most alive: to *choose life*.

This doesn't mean that every ranger has a death wish, or a burning desire to throw themselves into the fire for no good reason, but it does mean that simply being who and what they are requires immense, almost incalculable bravery. As a result, they rise ever higher to any challenge. And when they survive doing so, the result can be like unto a spiritual experience.

Creating a Ranger

Spend some time thinking about what set you on the path of the Zileskan ranger. Even if you're an Urban Ranger (see "Ranger Archetypes"), spending most of your time within the confines of Redoubt, some set of circumstances drew you to such a particular and demanding role. If you like, you can work with your DM to establish background details or events that bring your role into some relief.

In **The Lost Citadel**, rangers are attuned to the natural world in a way that, over time, proves itself both potent and fundamental. Did you feel that connection from an early age? Did it come upon you during adolescence, manifesting as an innermost tug that drew you to the ranger's path? Do you consider yourself a servant of nature proper, or is your primary concern the welfare of the world's last bastion of natural life?

Once you have some idea of your background, give some thought to how you ended up with your group. Foresters have their own units, of course, so if you're a member of a Forester unit, that part's straightforward enough. But plenty of rangers aren't Foresters, and even if your character is one, she might not be part of an active Forester unit, or might be on reserve duty for a period of time. Rangers make excellent additions to adventuring companies and mercenary bands, and in this regard, tend to find easy employ among the lot.

Quick Build

You can create a ranger quickly via the following suggestions. First, make Dexterity your highest ability score, followed by Wisdom. (Rangers who focus on great weapons or two-weapon fighting often make Strength higher than Dexterity.) Then choose the Folk Hero or Soldier background.

Class Features

You gain the following class features as a ranger.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d10 per ranger level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 10 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per ranger level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields

Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons

Tools: Herbalism kit

Saving Throws: Strength, Dexterity

Skills: Choose four from Animal Handling, Athletics, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, and Survival

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any granted by your background:

- Leather armor or studded leather armor
- Two short swords (or longswords, if an elf or Menhada) or two simple melee weapons
- An herbalism kit, and either a dungeoneer's pack or an explorer's pack
- A short bow and a quiver of 30 arrows (plus a *girga* and 30 stones, if Ouazi)

Inspired

If you do not already have inspiration, you gain an inspiration point at the conclusion of a long rest.

Natural Explorer

You are especially familiar with one type of environment, and are adept at moving through and surviving such areas. Choose one type of favored terrain: forest, mountain, underground, or urban. When you make an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to your favored terrain, your proficiency bonus is doubled if you are using a skill in which you are proficient. (This doubling does not stack with the doubling granted by your Expertise feature.)

While traveling for an hour or more in your favored environment, you gain the following benefits:

- Difficult terrain doesn't slow your group's travel.
- Your group can't become lost except through magical means.
- Even while engaged in another activity while traveling (foraging, navigating, tracking, etc.), you remain alert to danger.
- If you are traveling alone, you can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- When you forage, you find twice as much food as you normally would.
- While tracking other creatures, you also learn their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

You can choose additional terrain types at 6th and 10th level.

Student of the Dead

From 1st level, you have experience studying, tracking, hunting, and taking on the undead.

You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track undead, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about the undead.

You also have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened by the undead.

Starting at 6th level, you have advantage on saving throws against being paralyzed, petrified, restrained, or slowed by undead.

At 14th level, when an undead you can perceive hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the damage against you.

Expertise

At 2nd level, choose two of your skill proficiencies, or one of your skill proficiencies and your proficiency with herbalism kits. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of these chosen proficiencies.

At 7th level, you may choose two more of your proficiencies (skills or herbalism kit) to gain this benefit.

Fighting Style

At 2nd level, you adopt a particular fighting style as your specialty. Choose one of the following options. You can't take a Fighting Style option more than once, even if you later get to choose again.

Defense

While you are wearing no armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.

Dueling

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

Great Weapon Fighting

When you are wielding a melee weapon with both hands and roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die of that weapon, you can reroll that die. You must use the new result, and the weapon must have the versatile or heavy property for you to gain this benefit.

Ranged

You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls you make with ranged weapons.

Two-Weapon Fighting

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

Nature's Bond

Starting at 2nd level, you have resistance against spiritual/pneuma damage.

Ranger Archetype

At 3rd level, you choose an archetype that you try to embody: Forest Ranger, Undercity Ranger, or Urban Ranger, all detailed at the end of the class description. Your choice grants you features at 3rd level, and again at 7th, 11th, and 15th level.

Primeval Awareness

Starting at 3rd level, when you have inspiration you can use your action to focus your awareness on the region around you. You can sense whether there are any aberrations or undead within 1 mile of you. This feature doesn't reveal the creatures' locations or number.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Hunter's Prey

Also at 4th level, you may choose one of the following features.

Colossus Slayer. Your tenacity can wear down the most potent foes. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum. You can deal this extra damage only once per turn.

Corpse Cleaver. When a Medium or larger undead creature with an Intelligence score of 6 or lower hits or misses you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to attack that creature immediately after its attack, provided you can see the creature and it is within reach of the weapon you are wielding.

Horde Breaker. Once on each of your turns when you make a weapon attack, you can make another attack with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of your weapon.

Extra Attack

Starting at 5th level, you can attack twice instead of once whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Inspire Ally

Beginning at 5th level, when you have inspiration, you can use it to help an ally succeed at something. You grant an ally you can see within 60 feet inspiration on an attack roll, saving throw, or skill check, effectively "wagering" your inspiration on their roll: If the affected roll succeeds, you retain your inspiration. If the affected roll fails despite advantage, you lose your inspiration.

Once you use this feature, you cannot do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

Pneuma Bulwark

Once you reach 7th level, you add your Wisdom modifier to your current and maximum pneuma point totals.

Land's Stride

Starting at 8th level, moving through nonmagical difficult terrain costs you no extra movement. You can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard.

In addition, you have advantage on saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to cause harm or impede movement, such as those created by the *entangle* spell.

Ward of the Dead

Starting at 9th level, you are considered proficient in all saving throws against attacks and effects of the undead, regardless of what ability score they use.

Hide in Plain Sight

Starting at 10th level, you can spend a minute creating camouflage for yourself. You must have access to mud, dirt, leaves, soot, or other naturally occurring materials with which to create your camouflage.

Once camouflaged in this way, you can try to hide by pressing yourself against a surface, such as a tree or wall, that is at least as tall and wide as you are. You gain a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks as long as you stay there without moving or taking actions. Once you move or take an action or reaction, you must camouflage yourself again to gain this benefit.

Inspire Party

Starting at 11th level, when you have inspiration you can spend it to give your allies a boost of momentary confidence. As a free action on your turn, you spend your inspiration; the expenditure doesn't benefit any roll you attempt on your turn, but it does affect the next attack, saving throw, or ability check made by a number of allies of your choice equal to your Wisdom modifier +1 (minimum 1). If a given ally doesn't use the advantage on their next turn, it's lost.

Veil of the Dead

At 13th level, you can spend an action to become imperceptible to undead. This functions as the *invisibility* spell, except that it requires no components and only works on the undead.

Once you've used this feature, you cannot do so again until you complete a short rest.

Vanish

Starting at 14th level, you can use the Hide action as a bonus action on your turn. Also, you can't be tracked by nonmagical means, unless you choose to leave a trail.

Inspire Self

Once you reach 15th level, you can potentially retain your inspiration after you use it. Once per turn when you use your inspiration to give yourself advantage on one of your own rolls, you keep your inspiration if the affected roll is successful. If the roll fails, you lose your inspiration, as normal. You can't use this ability in conjunction with your Inspire Ally or Inspire Party class features.

Woe Channeling

Once you've reached 17th level, you can potentially free yourself of a Mark of Woe (see "Marks of Woe," page 258) by effectively channeling it into the land itself. Make a DC 12 Woe saving throw. If you succeed, one of your Marks of Woe (determined randomly, if multiple Marks exist) disappears. If you fail by 5 or less, the Mark still disappears, but the area becomes a permanent domain of Woe. Use the Random Domain table to determine what sort and its severity; the domain has a radius of 3d20+20 feet, centered on the spot you were standing when activating this power.

If you fail the saving throw by more than 5 or roll a natural 1, the Mark does not disappear and you take 1d4 points of spiritual damage, which is *not* halved by your normal Woe resistance. Whether you succeed or fail, you cannot attempt to use Woe Channeling again for a full week. You can't activate this power if you are already within a domain of Woe.

Note that creating a domain of Woe is a vile act (see "The Well of Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**), even if performed accidentally, so you may suffer further consequences or spiritual damage beyond those described here.

Nature Sense

At 18th level, you gain preternatural senses that help you fight enemies you can't see. When you attack a target you can't see, your inability to see it doesn't impose disadvantage on your attack rolls against it.

In addition, you know the location of any unseen creature within 30 feet of you, provided the creature isn't hidden from you.

Bane of the Dead

At 20th level, you become an implacable foe against the Dead. Add your Wisdom modifier to all attack and damage rolls you make against undead targets, and to your armor class and Constitution saving throws against attacks or effects made by the undead.

Ranger Archetypes

In Redoubt, the ideal of the ranger finds three primary expressions, each derived from a specialty in a chosen venue: the Forest Ranger, the Undercity Ranger, and the Urban Ranger.

Forest Ranger

In Redoubt, the image of the ranger that is the most archetypal is also the one that perhaps faces the most peril. Forest Rangers do what few resident of Zileska's last living city opt to do, and that is to leave the safety of its outer walls. Braving the vast woodlands is deemed madness by most, but it is something that these rangers do as a matter of routine course.

The Foresters organization is comprised mostly of rangers, and of those rangers, all but the rare and notable exception are Forest Rangers by class training.

Expanded Proficiency

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency in Medicine (or another skill from the ranger class list if you are already proficient in Medicine). In addition, you are proficient with carpenter's tools.

Hardy Woodsman

At 3rd level, your hit die increases to a d12. Starting at 3rd level, you roll a d12 instead of a d10 for hit points each time you gain a level in this class.

In addition, gain your choice of one of the following feats: Healer or Skulker.

Woodland Defense

On reaching 7th level, you gain one of the following features of your choice.

Escape the Horde. Opportunity attacks against you are made with disadvantage.

Nature's Repose. When an undead hits you with an attack, you gain a +4 bonus to any saving throw you are required to make as a result of being struck by that attack.

Revivify

Starting at 11th level, you gain a spark of life whenever you lay one of the Dead low. When you reduce an undead to 0 hit points, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier + your ranger level. You can forego these temporary hit points to instead regain your inspiration, if you don't already have it.

Nature's Paragon

Starting at 15th level, you have resistance to necrotic damage and poison damage from all sources, and to psychic damage caused by the undead. Also, you have advantage on saving throws to resist poison and necrotic effects.

In addition, you are immune to disease of all kinds so long as you possess fewer than three Marks of Woe. If you have 3 or more Marks of Woe, you instead gain a +4 bonus on rolls to resist the onset and effects of disease.

Undercity Ranger

Perhaps the rarest expression of the ranger in Redoubt is the one who braves not the wilds beyond the walls, nor the jungle that is the city itself, but the dark and eniDMatic depths of what the dwarves called the "Kingdom Below." These rangers defy city ordnance (or, far more rarely, act expressly on quiet orders from city officials) to explore and traverse the subterranean depths of the Undercity. Some are Prospectors, exploiting fissures to amass riches few dare to seek out, while others simply long for the simultaneous solitude and openness that leaving the confines of the city's teeming streets can offer.

Expanded Proficiency

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency in Medicine (or another skill from the ranger class list if you are already proficient in Medicine). In addition, you are proficient with mason's tools.

Undersense

Starting at 3rd level, your sight and actions aren't hampered by poor light conditions: In a lightly obscured area, the dimness doesn't impose disadvantage on your Wisdom checks that rely on sight. In a heavily obscured area, your attacks do not have disadvantage, though enemies able to perceive you still have advantage on attacks against you.

In addition, you become more effective at making attacks from hiding within your chosen circumstances. Whenever you are indoors or underground and you miss with a ranged attack against an enemy from whom you are hidden, making the attack doesn't reveal your position.

Air Rationing

At 7th level, you gain the ability to ration the air your lungs take in, allowing you to go long periods between required breaths. If your character is not a dwarf, the duration of this effect is 1 hour per point of Constitution modifier (minimum 1), and it only affects you. This ability works similarly for dwarf rangers, except that it affects 1 chosen ally and lasts as long as your own dwarf lungs can last, assuming you don't stray more than 120 feet from your ally for the duration.

Once you use this feature, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest.

Hardy Delver

At 11th level, your hit die increases to a d12. Starting at 11th level, you roll a d12 instead of a d10 for hit points each time you gain a level in this class.

In addition, gain your choice of one of the following feats: Dungeon Delver, Durable, Resilient, or Tough.

Cavernous Strike

Starting at 15th level, you gain the ability to infuse your blows with the power of the Undercity. After you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend your inspiration to both double the damage of the attack and attempt to knock the target prone. The additional damage counts as both physical damage and thunder damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must attempt a Strength saving throw with a difficulty equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (the same ability used to make the triggering attack). On a failed save, you knock the target prone.

Urban Ranger

Most of life in Redoubt takes place, well, in Redoubt. As such, perhaps the most common type of "ranger" is the one that only rarely has cause to leave the confines of the urban jungle that is now his or her world. These urban rangers know the ins and outs of their city like the back of their hand, and the most skilled among them are rivals to the most talented rogues when it comes to navigating its byways, alleys, and myriad dangers.

Expanded Proficiency

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency in History (or another skill from the ranger class list if you are already proficient in History). In addition, you are proficient with thieves' tools.

Streetwise

Starting at 3rd level, the travel time to get yourself (or a group you lead) from one part of the city to another is reduced by half. You must be physically present for a group to avail itself of this feature.

In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to the following checks:

- Wisdom (Perception) checks (or your passive score) to oppose another's Dexterity (Stealth) check
- Wisdom (Insight) checks (or your passive score) to oppose another's Charisma (Deception) check
- Charisma checks to gather information or blend into a crowd

Hardy Citizen

At 7th level, your hit die increases to a d12. Starting at 7th level, you roll a d12 instead of a d10 for hit points each time you gain a level in this class.

In addition, gain your choice of one of the following feats: Lucky, Mobile, or Tough.

Street Fighting

Starting at 11th level, you become more effective at making attacks from hiding within the urban sprawl. Whenever you are outdoors in an urban environment and you miss with a ranged attack against an enemy from whom you are hidden, making the attack doesn't reveal your position.

In addition, you gain one of the following features of your choice.

Volley. You can use your action to make a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 10 feet of a point you can see within your weapon's range. You must have ammunition for each target, and you make a separate attack roll for each target.

Whirlwind Attack. You can use your action to make a melee attack against any number of creatures within 5 feet of you, with a separate attack roll for each target.

Living Zeitgeist

Upon reaching 15th level, you may select your choice of one of the following features.

Evasion. You can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects, such as a *flame strike* spell. When subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, you instead take no damage on a successful saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

Friendly Fire. When a hostile creature misses you with an attack, you can use your reaction to force that creature to repeat the same attack against another creature of your choice within that attack's reach or range (other than itself).

Rogue

There was nothing more dangerous in the slums than to be seen as alone. This was especially true in the small hours of the morning, when most of the people skulking from shadow to shadow did so with ill intent.

— James Lowder, "The Treachery of Bright Yesterdays"

The last of the living world is urban. The last of the living world is corrupt. The last of the living world is a place of poverty and want, of fear, and above all else, of desperation.

No wonder, then, that it is also a place of thieves and burglars, scoundrels and cutthroats. In Redoubt, of all the character classes, none except possibly the fighter are nearly so common as the rogue.

Necessity Knows No Law

While they are more common in Redoubt's poorer districts, rogues come from every neighborhood, every strata, and every culture of society. From Angat to Venmir, elf to dwarf, the needs of survival in the current age produce people with great skill, an eye for the next opportunity, and—quite often—morals that are, at the very least, flexible.

The combination of the rogue's traits and the widespread poverty of Redoubt certainly inclines the class toward criminal activities, and indeed the majority of rogues in the last city fall into that category, but it's not a sure thing. Experts in any and every skill are in demand somewhere in Redoubt, as is the ability to either confront or escape from any threat. Rogues are useful in almost every capacity in every community, and Redoubt has no shortage of people willing to fill any such need.

Class Features

The base rogue class and its features are unchanged from those presented in the *PHB*.

Roguish Archetypes

Two of the core roguish archetypes, the Thief and the Assassin, exist unchanged in Redoubt, and represent the greater proportion of the city's rogues. A significant number, however, instead belong to the new Enforcer archetype, described here. The Arcane Trickster archetype does not exist **The Lost Citadel**.

Enforcer

To survive and thrive in a brutal environment, you have learned to be equally brutal. Most enforcers are members of criminal guilds and gangs, but you might also be part of a mercenary company or hired guards,

or even, rarely, a member of the Watch. Your skills are useful anywhere the knowledge and abilities of the rogue combine well with brute force and overwhelming numbers. You've learned to hit hard, to work in groups, and to wield fear as well as the blade. Many enforcers choose to use reach weapons, to take best advantage of their abilities.

Brute Force

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in martial weapons and in the Intimidate skill. If you are already proficient in the Intimidate skill, you may choose another rogue skill instead.

You also gain the ability to sneak attack with any melee weapon.

Sudden Violence

Starting at 3rd level, if you can reach an opponent with a melee weapon from where you are standing when combat first begins, you gain advantage on your initiative check.

Fearsome

At 9th level, you can use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action ability to make a Charisma (Intimidate) check against a single creature.

Gang Up

Also starting at 9th level, you can use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action to take the Help action, potentially granting an ally advantage on their next attack against an enemy. You must be within melee weapon reach of the enemy to use this ability.

Unexpected Strike

At 13th level, when an enemy within reach of your melee weapon makes an attack against a target other than you, you may spend your reaction *either* to make a melee attack against that enemy, or to take the Dash action.

Once you have used this ability, whether or not the attack hits, you cannot use it again against that same target for 24 hours, as they are now aware of the trick. You may still attempt it against other enemies, however.

Skirmisher

Beginning at 17th level, when you use Unexpected Strike, you can both take the Dash action and make an attack all as part of the same reaction. In addition, this reaction can be triggered not just by an enemy within melee reach, but any enemy near enough that you can close to melee reach by using this Dash.

Sage

The people of the Downs would have been handsomely rewarded if they'd handed her over to the Church, but every one of them knew the chance still remained that they'd all be dead in their beds if they did. Jirhal prized cunning, wisdom, survival. Babi Atropa turned the goddess's darkness into blessings, purgatives, and paralytics made into medicine. Or—for the right price—not.

— Erin M. Evans, "Suicide Seeds"

Twisted into a taut pose, an ascetic channels his bodily energy into a coiled power that strengthens his flesh and his mind.

Droning a sonorous chant, a priest performs the sacrificial rituals that propitiate the few divine forces remaining in the world. Through her concentration and zeal she miraculously purifies a basin of soil that has been befouled by the Dead, leaving it rich and pure once more.

Grinding dried leaves in a bone bowl, a hooded woman concocts a poultice as she mutters secret words of power. She mixes the herbs with water and twists them into a cloth to place on the fevered brow of a wounded scavenger in hopes of breaking his fever... for a price.

Keepers of Secret Knowledge

Knowledge is a vanishing commodity in Redoubt. Only the upper classes have a formal education. Everyone else is on their own, learning what they can from tradition, public spectacles, and whatever they glean from hard experience. This means that the wisdom hoarded by the learned few carries special weight, for these scholars are the only ones with both an eye toward history and an eye toward tomorrow.

In an earlier age, wizards and clerics would wield magic as a bright, burning power. After the Fall, though, magic has become a fickle and dangerous force. Capable of bringing corruption upon the wielder, magic always calls for a price, often more than the wielder anticipates. Such petty powers would hardly seem worth the effort... but in Redoubt, everything has value. A century ago, the magic used by sages would have been considered little more than parlor tricks. Now, it is a mystical asset to survival—but a dangerous one.

Sacrifice is Key

Every sage makes sacrifices for magic. Whether it's sacrifice of the self or sacrifice of other life, the twisted forces of the new age make demands, and they do not make choices easy. A sage learns to make the appropriate sacrifices and to mitigate some of the worst of their effects, whether by immense self-discipline, by calling for the intercession of outside forces, or by careful ritual preparation.

A sage in Redoubt has a reliable profession, albeit a questionable one. Most people fear magic and its price. Still, the desperate seek out sages for ways to deal with crises such as terrible diseases and wounds, curses, or even personal matters like love potions and charms for prosperity.

Because of the costs and the risks of performing magic, sages are rarely generous. Magic has a price, and it will be paid in coin or in blood. A few use their arts for malicious ends, but this is also dangerous as the Magisterium has little patience for people practicing forbidden magics (and nearly any magic is "forbidden" if there is sufficient suspicion of the caster).

The Sage

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	—Spell Slots per Spell Level— 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	+2	Healer's Eye, Lesser Magics, Secret of My Enemy	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Spellcasting, Personal Cauldron (1d4)	2	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Mystical Study	3	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	3	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	Personal Cauldron (2d4)	4	2	—	—	—
6th	+3	Ritual Expertise	4	2	—	—	—
7th	+3	Mystical Secret	4	3	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	4	3	—	—	—
9th	+4	—	4	3	2	—	—
10th	+4	Hurried Magic	4	3	2	—	—
11th	+4	Personal Cauldron (3d4)	4	3	3	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	4	3	3	—	—
13th	+5	—	4	3	3	1	—
14th	+5	Inner Focus	4	3	3	1	—
15th	+5	Mystical Secret	4	3	3	2	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	4	3	3	2	—
17th	+6	Personal Cauldron (4d4)	4	3	3	3	1
18th	+6	Ritual Mastery	4	3	3	3	1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	4	3	3	3	2
20th	+6	Mystical Secret	4	3	3	3	2

Creating a Sage

When you make a sage character, you are basing your survival skills on knowledge and magic. You can't rely on hiding or fighting your way out of problems, so you need to be able to negotiate, trick, and overwhelm with surprising magical talents. While you won't be hurling gouts of flame or transporting yourself miles in an instant, even simple magical skills can be very useful in a city where people aren't prepared for them. Your most significant hurdle will be in managing Woe, which comes with casting spells of all kinds (see "Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**). To manage this, rely heavily on your specialty of ritual casting, which gives you a better chance to avoid garnering Woe.

When you've settled on your sage's approach to knowledge — as a seeker of magical mystery, as an attendant intercessionary, as a healer or diviner, or some other kind of specialist—think about how you received your special knowledge. Did you serve as an apprentice to a priest or witch? Did you glean your knowledge by lurking about in the temple district of the city? Did you discover an ancient illustrated book that showed you how to tap into your inner power?

Quick Build

You can make a sage quickly by following these suggestions. First, Intelligence should be your highest ability score, followed by Wisdom or Constitution.

Second, choose the acolyte, hermit, or sage background.

Class Features

Class Features

As a sage, you gain the following class features.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per sage level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d6 (or 4) + your Constitution modifier per sage level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: None

Weapons: All simple weapons

Tools: None

Saving Throws: Intelligence, Charisma

Skills: Choose two from Arcana, History, Insight, Persuasion, and Religion

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- a club or a dagger
- padded armor
- a holy symbol or an arcane focus or an herbalism kit (if proficient)

Healer's Eye

Sages often have specialized knowledge of human (and dwarven and elven) anatomy. The city calls upon their expertise to aid in treating injury and disease. Scholastic sages who serve as priests or doctors can boast of learning their trade by apprenticeship and consultation with rare and valuable books, while sages who come from the poorer classes learn folk remedies and hard-won knowledge by trial and error.

You gain proficiency in the Medicine skill. Additionally, you gain expertise with that skill: You add double your proficiency bonus when making Wisdom (Medicine) checks. (This doesn't stack with other sources of expertise, such as the rogue class feature.)

In addition, when you spend one full minute treating a creature's wounds, the creature regains one hit point. You can only use this ability on a creature at or below half its maximum hit points. You need the tools from a healer's kit to perform this aid, but doing so doesn't use up materials from the kit.

Lesser Magics

You know a smattering of minor magics. Choose three of the following spells. You can cast those spells, in any combination, up to a total number of times per day equal to your Intelligence modifier plus your proficiency bonus. You regain expended uses after completing a long rest. You must attempt a Woe saving throw when casting these, just as with any other spell, but with a DC of only 7.

Lesser Magics

Dancing Lights
Guidance
Mage Hand
Mending
Minor Illusion
Prestidigitation
Resistance

Secret of My Enemy

Because sages focus on the acquisition of knowledge, they know much that is hidden from others, and learn to quickly read clues and body language to fill in the gaps in their education. By carefully evaluating a target's stance, body type, injuries (if any), breathing patterns, and other subtle cues, you unearth information about the creature in question.

In addition to using a skill such as Arcana or Religion to learn more about a creature, you can use a bonus action to learn one of the following pieces of information about a target that you can see (your choice):

Hit Points. Learn the creature's current hit point total.

Immunities. Learn one of the creature's immunities (if any).

Resistance. Learn one of the creature's resistances (if any).

Senses. Learn all of the creature's senses.

Vulnerability. Learn one of the creature's vulnerabilities (if any).

No roll is required. If the creature has any information of the chosen type, you automatically learn one fact that you don't already know. For example, if you choose to learn the resistances of a creature that is resistant to fire damage and radiant damage, you will randomly learn one or the other of those characteristics; if you use the ability again on a subsequent turn, you will learn the other resistance; and a further use will let you learn that the creature has no other resistances.

This ability only functions on creatures (living or undead), not on constructs or objects.

Spellcasting

Beginning at 2nd level, you can focus your understanding of magical power in various ways to cast spells through intense ceremonies. Casting spells can be time-consuming, but gives you access to a significant amount of magical power—if you can do it without destroying yourself in the process.

As always in ***The Lost Citadel***, casting a spell requires you to make a Woe saving throw (page 255). A successful check means that the spell functions normally. A failed check means that you suffer a Woeful Magical Result (page 257). As a sage, what's most important to remember is that casting spells is risky, and rituals are the best way to mitigate that risk. You should take every chance to cast your beneficial and divinatory magics as rituals when you can.

Spellbook

At 2nd level, you have a spellbook containing four 1st-level sage spells of your choice. Your spellbook is the repository of all the spells you know, both from the sage spell list (which you can cast via spell slots or as rituals) or from other lists (which you can cast only as rituals).

Preparing and Casting Spells

The Sage table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your sage spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

You prepare the list of sage spells that are available for you to cast. To do so, choose a number of sage spells from your spellbook equal to your Intelligence modifier + half your sage level, rounded down (minimum of one spell). The spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

For example, if you're a 6th-level sage, you have four 1st-level and two 2nd-level spell slots. With an Intelligence of 16, your list of prepared spells can include six spells of 1st or 2nd level, in any combination, chosen from your spellbook. If you prepare the 1st-level spell *detect magic*, you can cast it using a 1st-level or a 2nd-level slot. Casting the spell doesn't remove it from your list of prepared spells.

You can change your list of prepared spells when you finish a long rest. Preparing a new list of sage spells requires time spent studying your spellbook and memorizing the incantations and gestures you must make to cast the spells, at least 1 minute per spell level for each spell on your list.

Spellcasting Ability

Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your sage spells. The power of your spells comes from esoteric knowledge and memorization of secret phrases and precise gestures. You use your Intelligence whenever a sage spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a sage spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Your Spellbook

The spells that you add to your spellbook as you gain levels reflect the arcane research you conduct on your own, as well as intellectual breakthroughs you have had about the nature of the multiverse. You might find other spells during your adventures. You could discover a spell recorded on a scroll in an evil witch's hovel, for example, or in a dusty tome in an ancient library.

Copying a Spell Into the Book: When you find a sage spell or a spell with the ritual tag from any class list, of 1st level or higher, you can add it to your spellbook if it is of a spell level you can prepare and if you can spare the time to decipher and copy it.

Copying that spell into your spellbook involves reproducing the basic form of the spell, then deciphering the unique system of notation used by the sage (or other caster) who wrote it. You must practice the spell until you understand the sounds or gestures required, then transcribe it into your spellbook using your own notation.

For each level of the spell, the process takes 2 hours and costs 50 gp. The cost represents material components you expend as you experiment with the spell to master it, as well as the fine inks you need to record it. Once you have spent this time and money, you can prepare the spell just like your other spells if it is a sage spell. If it is a ritual spell that is not on the sage spell list, you cannot prepare it or cast it with sage spell slots, but you can still cast it as a ritual, following all the standard ritual casting rules.

Replacing the Book: You can copy a spell from your own spellbook into another book—for example, if you want to make a backup copy of your spellbook. This is just like copying a new spell into your spellbook, but faster and easier, since you understand your own notation and already know how to cast the spell. You need spend only 1 hour and 10 gp for each level of the copied spell.

If you lose your spellbook, you can use the same procedure to transcribe the spells that you have prepared into a new spellbook. Filling out the remainder of your spellbook requires you to find new spells to do so, as normal. For this reason, sages who can afford it keep backup spellbooks in a safe place.

The Book's Appearance: Your spellbook is a unique compilation of spells, with its own decorative flourishes and margin notes. In Redoubt, spellbooks take on a variety of unique forms: scratched onto thin leather parchment of dubious origin; collected on scraps of papers, notes, and recipes held by a bone clip; inscribed on a folding length of cloth once used as a sash. The materials available dictate the kinds of spellbooks that sages use.

Ritual Casting

You can cast any spell from any class list as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have the spell in your spellbook. You don't need to have the spell prepared. You must still expend all necessary components. (See the ritual casting rules in "Zileska Rituals," **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**).

Learning Spells of 1st Level and Higher

Each time you gain a sage level after 2nd, you can add one sage spell of your choice to your spellbook for free. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots, as shown on the Sage table. On your adventures, you might find other spells that you can add to your spellbook (see "Your Spellbook").

Personal Cauldron

At 2nd level, you gain a measure of resolve against Woe. Your personal cauldron functions like temporary pneuma points, but it only absorbs spiritual damage caused by casting spells (generally from failing your Woe save). If you also have temporary pneuma points from another source, spiritual damage strikes these first, then your personal cauldron, then your normal pneuma points.

Roll 1d4 for the number of points in your personal cauldron. The personal cauldron increases by 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4). Your personal cauldron refreshes after a long rest.

Mystical Study

Your focus of study as a sage determines your approach to knowledge, whether magical or mundane. Your choice affects the kinds of spells that you can use, your additional magical abilities, and your methods.

Sages of **The Lost Citadel** develop their abilities as an Ascetic, a Priest, or a Witch, all defined at the end of this section. Your choice grants you specific features at 3rd, 7th, 15th, and 20th levels.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Ritual Expertise

Starting at 6th level, your ability to perform ritual magic improves. You gain advantage on the Arcana checks necessary to cast a ritual spell.

Hurried Magic

At 10th level, you gain the ability to quickly manifest a spell under desperate circumstances. When you cast a spell that you have prepared, you can change its casting time from 1 action to 1 bonus action. You still can't cast two spells in one round.

Once you've used this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Inner Focus

At 14th level, your level of concentration becomes superlative. You can thread together multiple spells and hold on to the tangled knots of their magic simultaneously.

You can maintain concentration on two spells at the same time, as long as they are both at least one level lower than the maximum spell level you can cast. You cannot cast spells of the maximum level you can cast while you are maintaining this dual concentration, and if something breaks your concentration, it breaks for both spells.

Ritual Mastery

At 18th level, your performance of rituals becomes practiced and sure. You always successfully cast ritual spells, regardless of the results of your Arcana check, though you may still have a Woeful Magic Result. Treat all "spell failure" results as "the spell succeeds but you take spiritual damage" results. (See "Zileska Rituals" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**.)

Mystical Studies

Every sage approaches the mystical in a personal fashion. The general study of mysticism brings with it a range of knowledge and an aptitude for magic, but the particulars of each path lead to different kinds of power. A novice sage dabbles in magic and in study of the world, but eventually specializes in one form of mysticism: personal discipline and development, religious study and community bonding, or occult knowledge and the power of the natural world.

You choose a path of mystical study at 3rd level. This provides you with several new class features, as detailed here.

Ascetic

The ascetic studies strange arts handed down from the Menhada and Surinzan, designed to harness and channel personal energy in startling, supernatural ways. According to Surinzan sages, a nearly infinite wellspring of power rests deep in the body, a coiled fire waiting to be unleashed like a serpent or a whip. Ascetics (or "body sages" as they are sometimes informally known) learn to harness this energy to auDMent themselves personally, and to reshape others.

Bonus Spells

As an ascetic, you add the spells on the ascetic spell list (see "Spell List" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**) to the list of sage spells. In addition, when you reach certain levels as indicated on the table, you may add one ascetic spell of the

indicated level or lower to your spellbook. This is in addition to the one spell you normally add to your spellbook at each sage level.

Note: When casting via a spell slot, an ascetic can *only cast spells on the ascetic spell list with a target of Self*, even if the spell can normally be cast on another target or multiple targets. If cast as a ritual, however, these spells can be targeted as normal.

Sage Level	Level of Bonus Spell Added to Spellbook
2nd	1st
5th	2nd
9th	3rd
13th	4th
17th	5th

In addition, you automatically add the *blade ward* and *true strike* cantrips to the magics you can cast with your Lesser Magics trait. (This does not grant you any additional uses of the ability per day, however.)

Student of Coils

The practice of the ascetic's arts includes study of meditation, exercise, and even special recommendations about diet, behaviors, sexual activity, and contact with other people. By following these disciplines, the ascetic develops immense personal resolve.

When unarmored, the ascetic's Armor Class is 10 + Dexterity modifier + Intelligence modifier. You can use a shield, if you have become proficient with one, and still gain this benefit.

You gain proficiency with one martial weapon of your choice, and with Constitution saving throws.

Coiled Strike

An ascetic learns to channel personal energy into powerful strikes. Instead of relying on precision attacks or overwhelming force against weak points, you draw out the coiled energy deep within your body and launch it through weapons or unarmed blows. As a bonus action, you charge your attacks with magical energy. Until the end of your next turn, all attacks that you make with unarmed strikes, melee weapons, or thrown weapons inflict 1d8 damage, if this is greater than the attack's normal damage. This damage increases by 1d8 at 5th level (to 2d8), 11th level (to 3d8), and 17th level (to 4d8). Additionally, coiled strikes count as magical attacks, and you may add your Intelligence bonus to your attack and damage rolls with coiled strikes, instead of your Strength or Dexterity.

Personal Casting Focus

You may spend a bonus action to assume a power stance (a special pose) as a focus to replace inexpensive material components. You can't do this if you are paralyzed, but you can do so while grappled or entangled.

Circle of Warmth

At 7th level, the ascetic learns to create an inner flux that channels warmth out of his body to other creatures nearby. Living beings not in combat feel this as an invigorating flow—pain slips away, breath stills, even panic and doubt wash away in a moment of calm.

As an action, you can activate a circle of warmth that affects all living creatures within 10 feet of you that do not have total cover from you. (You cannot choose to exclude targets.) When you activate this power, and then every round at the start of your turn, every target in the circle (including you) heals 1 hit point. This can't restore a creature to over half its maximum hit points. Activating and maintaining the circle requires concentration, as though it were a concentration spell. You can maintain the circle with a bonus action each round on your turn, up to a maximum number of rounds equal to your sage level.

Once you've used this ability, you can't use it again until after a long rest.

Body Alteration

At 7th level, you learn to make minor alterations to your own physiology through potent focus and constant practice. As a bonus action, you may grant yourself one of the following benefits:

- Darkvision to 60 feet, or add an additional 60 feet to the range of your existing darkvision if you already have it
- Ability to breathe water and a swim speed equal to your normal walking speed
- Scaly skin that grants a +2 bonus to your Armor Class
- Ability to climb at your normal walking speed and to climb on horizontal surfaces (such as a ceiling) as though they were difficult terrain
- Alter your appearance: You determine how you appear, including such details as facial features, hair color and length, the sound of your voice, height, and weight. Human, elven, and dwarven sages can appear as a member of any of these three races, but they cannot appear as ghûl, nor can ghûl appear as humans, elves, or dwarves. Your statistics do not change, nor do you gain or lose your normal racial abilities. You cannot change size, nor can you alter your appearance to anything other than a bipedal humanoid
- Heal yourself of hit point damage equal to 1d4 plus your Intelligence modifier
- A new saving throw against any ongoing effect that allows a Constitution saving throw

You may maintain a body alteration for up to ten minutes (except for the healing or the extra saving throw, which are instantaneous). This requires concentration, just like a spell.

You may use this ability a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum one). You regain all uses after a long rest. Starting at 15th level, you regain all uses after a short or long rest.

Reservoir of Life

At 15th level, the ascetic develops the ability to burn his own life energy to power his magic. You can voluntarily reduce your maximum hit point total to regain a used spell slot. A spell slot costs 5 hit points from your maximum per spell level. You regain maximum hit points lost from this feature after a long rest, and maximum hit points lost in this way can't be restored in any fashion *except* by rest.

Total Resolve

At 20th level, your meditative discipline is absolute. You are immune to fear. You gain resistance to necrotic damage and advantage on saving throws to resist or end any condition, penalty, or deleterious effect other than direct damage. You will never rise as one of the Dead, no matter how much Woe you accumulate (though excessive Woe can still have deleterious effects for your body and your sanity).

Priest

When the old world Fell, some say that the gods died—but for the dedicated few who never lost faith, they still answer prayers. Infrequently, it's true, and erratically; but the old powers, or at least the magic they infused into the world, remain. Distant, perhaps, but able to aid humanity if the right calls and sacrifices are made.

Bonus Spells

As a priest, you add the spells on the priest spell list (see "Spell List" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**) to the list of sage spells. In addition, when you reach certain levels as indicated on the table, you may add one priest spell of the indicated level or lower to your spellbook. This is in addition to the one spell you normally add to your spellbook at each sage level.

Sage Level	Level of Bonus Spell Added to Spellbook
2nd	1st
5th	2nd
9th	3rd
13th	4th
17th	5th

In addition, you automatically add the *spare the dying* and *thaumaturgy* cantrips to the magics you can cast with your Lesser Magics trait. (This does not grant you any additional uses of the ability per day, however.)

Devotee

Priests are functionaries in religious orders, but in Redoubt that also means they are protectors of the people and slayers of the Dead. You gain proficiency in Light Armor and Shields, with two martial weapons of your choice, and with Wisdom saving throws.

Spellcasting Focus

You can use a holy symbol (see "Equipment") as a spellcasting focus for your sage spells.

Inspiring Words

You can uplift your allies with chosen verses of scripture, or with your own unique and insightful aphorisms. As a bonus action, you may grant an ally within 30 feet who can hear you an inspiration die. This is a d6 that can be added to any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check the ally makes within the next ten minutes. Once used, or if those ten minutes pass, the die is expended. The ally may choose to add the bonus die after seeing the result of the d20, but before the DM announces success or failure on the roll.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (a minimum of once). You regain any expended uses when you finish a long rest. When you reach 5th level in this class, you regain any expended uses when you finish a short or long rest.

Your inspiration die changes when you reach certain levels in this class. The die becomes a d8 at 5th level, a d10 at 10th level, and a d12 at 15th level.

Sacred Weapon

You bind your weapons to you as implements of your sacred calling. As a priest, you are a protector of the community—and that means that you must be ready to fight in order to save the lives of your flock.

Choose two of your weapons with which you are proficient. You bind these weapons to yourself through a special ritual and prayer ceremony that takes an hour of uninterrupted recitation, chanting, and meditation. As a bonus action when wielding one of these bound weapons, you can utter a brief prayer that allows you to use your Intelligence modifier in place of your Strength or Dexterity modifier when making attack and damage rolls with that weapon, and causes your attacks with that weapon to inflict 1d8 damage, if this is greater than the weapon's usual damage dice. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn, and your bound weapons are considered magical for purposes of overcoming damage resistance or immunities during that time. The bonus damage increases by 1d8 at 5th level (to 2d8), 11th level (to 3d8), and 17th level (to 4d8).

If one of your weapons is lost or destroyed, or you wish to bind a different weapon, you can replace a binding by repeating the ritual with a different weapon.

Divine Paean

At 7th level, you gain the ability to call for divine aid. As an action, you can touch an individual and grant that target a blessing that lasts up to 10 minutes or until used. When the target calls upon this blessing, it gains advantage on one attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

You can use this ability a number of times equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier. You regain expended uses after a long rest.

Order of the Faithful

Priests have both moral and social authority to soothe and direct the populace.

At 7th level, you gain the ability to inspire with your words of faith. As a bonus action, you can speak out a passage of scripture and grant every living person within 30 feet who can hear you a new Wisdom saving throw against any ongoing effect that allows such a saving throw.

Once you've used this ability, you can't use it again until you've completed a short or long rest.

Defy the Dead

Though the gods seem reluctant to grant power to fight the undead, the most faithful among the clergy still have some ability to stem the tide. With holy determination, a priest can stave off the Dead for a short time.

At 15th level, you can present your holy symbol and make a stern call to the principles of your faith as your action. Any of the Dead within 30 feet who can see and hear you must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + your Charisma modifier + your Proficiency bonus). Those that fail the saving throw can take no action on their next turn, though they may move normally.

Using this ability consumes one use of your Divine Paean ability.

Immaculate Soul

At 20th level, you gain resistance to the corruption of the world. Any creatures capable of causing spiritual damage and any individuals with more Marks of Woe than you have suffer disadvantage on all attack rolls or spell attacks against you, and you have advantage on saving throws against spells and powers from such creatures.

Witch

Skilled with herbs, potions, extracts, and the products of nature, a witch can heal or harm, curse or cure, at her whim. Most people in Redoubt fear witches, but most also know of at least one witch to seek out when desperate. The witch lives on the fringes, her powers misunderstood but necessary, her arts elegiac but desiderated.

Bonus Spells

As a witch, you add the spells on the witch spell list (see "Spell List" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**) to the list of sage spells. In addition, when you reach certain levels as indicated on the table, you may add one witch spell of the indicated level or lower, to your spellbook. This is in addition to the one spell you normally add to your spellbook at each sage level.

Sage Level	Level of Bonus Spell Added to Spellbook
2nd	1st
5th	2nd
9th	3rd
13th	4th
17th	5th

In addition, you automatically add the *druidcraft* and *message* cantrips to the magics you can cast with your Lesser Magics trait. (This does not grant you any additional uses of the ability per day, however.)

Tool Proficiency

As a student of the natural world, you learn the properties of herbs. You gain proficiency with herbalism kits.

Dubious Dealings

Since your arts are mysterious and dangerous, you learn to manipulate people. Your services come at a cost, and your clients must be prepared to meet it. You gain proficiency in Deception, Insight, or Persuasion (your choice).

Arcane Casting Focus

You can use an arcane casting focus with your spells.

Speech of the Wild

You gain the ability to empathically sense the drives, emotions, and fears of animals (defined mechanically as creatures of the Beast type with an Intelligence of 3 or lower). You "communicate" with the target much as you would with a person; you must speak to it, whisper, cajole, gesture, and so on. While nobody else hears a reply, to you the subject gives answers as clear as a spoken word.

While animals can't give detailed descriptions or follow complicated directions, they can still give you information about the presence of the Dead, about people who have hurt them, about other creatures in the area, or about their general state of health ("I hurt," "I feel sick," "I am scared," and so on).

In addition, any spell with a duration you cast on an animal has its duration doubled. Animals have disadvantage on saving throws against your spells.

Weapons of the Wild

When using a nonmetal weapon (any weapon made of wood, bone, or stone), you can draw upon the primal energy of the natural world that still dwells within the material to grant it deadly power. As a bonus action, you can channel this power through a nonmetal weapon with which you are proficient. Until the end of your next turn, you may use your Intelligence modifier instead of your Strength or Dexterity modifier on attack and damage rolls with that weapon, and the weapon inflicts 1d8 damage, if this is greater than the weapon's usual damage. This increases by 1d8 at 5th level (to 2d8), 11th level (to 3d8), and 17th level (to 4d8). The weapon is also considered magical while this ability is active.

If you use this ability on a weapon that uses ammunition, only the weapon itself need be nonmetal; it still functions if the ammunition is metal.

Curse-working

At 7th level, you gain the ability to inflict curses on people. A curse comes in the form of an invective, whether softly spoken or rudely shouted, at someone you can see or sense. Invoking a curse is a bonus action.

When you work a curse on someone, that individual suffers disadvantage on all ability checks made with one ability that you specify. The curse remains until the start of your next turn.

Starting at 15th level, your curses last for a full minute. A curse doesn't require concentration or any action to maintain, but if you curse a new target, your previous curse ends.

Fecund or Fallow

At 7th level, your understanding of the life cycles of plants and animals—and people—makes you a natural healer. With understanding also comes knowledge of death, of course. You gain the following benefits.

- Whenever you cast a spell that heals damage, your spell heals an additional 1 point of damage per level of the spell slot used
- You gain proficiency in Poisoner's Tools
- At a cost of 50 gp and two days of work, you can create an antitoxin or *potion of healing* (as described under "Equipment" in the *PHB*), or any of the new common potions or elixirs in the "Zileska Magic Items" section of **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**. These potions and elixirs cease to function if not used within one month of creation
- Finally, your Speech of the Wild ability now functions on plants as well as animals

Secret Lore

At 7th level, you gain proficiency in one skill of your choice.

Nature's Ally

At 15th level, you become deeply connected to the natural world. You do not suffer any movement penalty for moving through natural difficult terrain such as mud, scree, or heavy underbrush. You gain resistance to lightning, poison, and thunder damage.

As a bonus action, you can cause an area up to 10 feet on a side, within 60 feet of you, to become ensnared in fog, roots, rubble, mud, or similar material, turning it into difficult terrain and causing the area to become heavily obscured. Any creature that enters the space or ends its turn there suffers 2d8 poison damage. You may create a space of this sort as often as you like, but you may only maintain one such space at a time. Creating a new space causes the old one to dissipate. A hazardous area also dissipates if you die, become unconscious, or move more than 60 feet away.

When you create this area, you may designate up to two creatures within 30 feet of you (including yourself) as unimpeded. For the selected creatures, the area is neither difficult terrain nor obscured, and they do not take damage from entering or ending their turn in the area.

Spirit of the Hedge Witch

At 20th level, you become infused with the lurking power of the natural world and the twisting, labyrinthine secrets of Redoubt. You also become a master at twisting destiny and forging escapes from improbable circumstances.

You become immune to the restrained condition. As a bonus action, you can choose to give a creature within 120 feet of you that you can sense vulnerability to one kind of damage of your choice; this ends if you select another creature, you select a new kind of damage, or the target dies or is destroyed.

You are automatically immune to the effects of your own Nature's Ally ability, and may still designate two additional creatures as unimpeded.

If you die, you can choose to return to life 10 minutes later, as if affected by a *raise dead* spell (unless you have risen as one of the Dead prior to that point). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Warlock, Zileskan

But he knew the truth of this one even before he could prove it, because there was still magic in the world, and more often than not, it was cruel.

— Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

In the twisted passages of the Undercity, driven by a desperate fury at what has become of her people, an old dwarf calls upon the magics of her ancestors so that she might seek revenge.

A Surinzan chronicler, obsessed with atoning for the collective guilt of his people, jumps at the opportunity to master enough magic to make a difference when he finds mystic secrets scribbled in a forgotten tome. It never occurs to him to wonder what hellish force, denied purchase in the mortal world, might be granting that power.

Stricken by grief over lost loved ones and terrified of losing what status she has, the scion of a noble Angat family studies every bit of lore she can get her hands on, determined to draw strength from the only power that matters in the world today: death itself.

The warlocks of Redoubt are occultists, students of the arcane, followers of lost faiths, and cultists of bizarre powers. In a world of such horror and helplessness, the draw of magic, of real personal might, is often stronger than any fear of consequences, or of the dark powers with which one must deal.

Warlocks are rare in Redoubt, perhaps the rarest of all classes save for the penitent, but those who do successfully bargain with strange entities command some of the most potent magics known in this dismal age. Even worse, they gain an instinctive understanding of the corruption that permeates not only magic but the world entire, and grow capable of manipulating it, protecting their own souls at the expense of others.

Pledged, Body and Soul

Like those of other settings, the warlocks of **The Lost Citadel** are defined by the pacts they make with eldritch entities. Some serve as priests of strange, non-divine powers; others are students or servants, acquiring knowledge and magic in exchange for acts of fealty.

The patrons who make themselves available to the eldritch seekers of Zileska, however, are often quite different. The most common—or at least those most commonly spoken of in legends and folklore—remain the fiends. Creatures from the lower planes have always shown an interest in corrupting people, trading power for ever-darker deeds. Iin the current age, when fiends find it far more difficult to access the mortal world, they are even happier to gain new agents.

Other warlocks, however, devote themselves to lingering powers of the prior age. Such remnants might be ancestral spirits, fey or nature spirits weakened and corrupted by the deathly magics of the new world, or even old gods, now largely forgotten and lingering as a mere fraction of what they once were. And a rare few give themselves over to the

The Warlock

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Spells Known	Spell Slots	Slot Level	Invocations Known
1st	+2	Otherworldly Patron, Pact Magic, Wracking Curse	2	1	1st	—
2nd	+2	Eldritch Invocations, Mirror of Woe	3	2	1st	2
3rd	+2	Lesser Magics, Pact Boon	4	2	2nd	2
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	5	2	2nd	2
5th	+3	Improved Mirror of Woe, Wracking Curse improvement	6	2	3rd	3
6th	+3	Otherworldly Patron Feature	7	2	3rd	3
7th	+3	Improved Lesser Magics	8	2	4th	3
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	9	2	4th	4
9th	+4	Breath of Woe, Greater Mirror of Woe	10	2	5th	5
10th	+4	Otherworldly Patron Feature	10	2	5th	5
11th	+4	Vengeful Curse, Wracking Curse improvement	11	3	5th	5
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	11	3	5th	6
13th	+5	Birth the Dead, Patron's Avatar	12	3	5th	6
14th	+5	Otherworldly Patron Feature	12	3	5th	6
15th	+5	Improved Breath of Woe, Purge Corruption	13	3	5th	7
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	13	3	5th	7
17th	+6	Greater Breath of Woe, Wracking Curse improvement	14	4	5th	7
18th	+6	—	14	4	5th	8
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	15	4	5th	8
20th	+6	Eldritch Master	15	4	5th	8

very horror that pervades the world, devoting themselves to the essence of the grave and forging pacts with the great powers of the Dead or even the essence of death itself.

Whatever the source, the warlock gains impressive magic from the bargain. While they, like other spellcasters in Zileska, do not have access to the most potent spells found in the core rules, they do have a wide selection of options, including several that no other class in the setting has. They also, thanks to their horrid ability to transfer spiritual damage to others, are capable of casting such spells with far less risk.

Fear and Suspicion

Most people of Redoubt view all but the most subtle and minor of enchantments with distrust, if not outright terror. They associate more overt magics with the Dead, with the mad elves, with the abuses of the highest and wealthiest castes of society, and with those who have sold their souls to dark powers. Warlocks have the disadvantage of possessing some of the flashiest and most obvious magics, to say nothing of the fact that they actually *have* sold their souls to, or at least interacted with, dark powers.

This doesn't mean that warlocks are necessarily attacked or arrested the instant they cast a spell—though that certainly isn't impossible—but displaying their more overt magics in public does bring scrutiny from the authorities and prejudice from many of the locals.

Creating a Warlock

Give some thought to, and work with the DM to determine, how your character interacts with her patron. Are you an active servant, constantly performing tasks on the patron's behalf, or are you largely free to do as you will, taking time for only occasional favors? Does your patron speak to you in dreams? Through a familiar? Through omens in the natural world, written messages nobody else can read, the constant drone of the city, the voices of animals?

Why did you make the pact? Were you eager for power or simply desperate? Was it a concerted, long-term effort or a single moment of weakness?

How did you make contact? Do you even know for certain who or what you bargained with? It's possible you are aware of the name and nature of your patron, but you might not be. You might simply be bound to the power of death or undeath, with no specific entity as go-between. You might not even have consciously meant to make a pact; you could have finished reading some ancient text or performing some obscure ritual, only to find upon completion that you were bound to a consciousness not your own.

Quick Build

You can create a warlock quickly via the following suggestions. Charisma should be your highest ability score, and Constitution your second-highest. Then choose either the Acolyte, Charlatan, or Sage background.

Class Features

You gain the following class features as a warlock.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per warlock level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per warlock level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor

Weapons: Simple weapons

Tools: None

Saving Throws: Wisdom, Charisma

Skills: Choose two from Arcana, Deception, History, Intimidation, Investigation, Nature, and Religion

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any granted by your background:

- A shortbow and 20 arrows or two martial weapons
- A component pouch or an arcane focus
- An explorer's pack or a dungeoneer's pack
- Leather armor, any simple weapon, and two daggers

Otherworldly Patron

At 1st level, you have struck a bargain with an otherworldly being of your choice: the Fiend, the Grave, or the Remnant, each of which is detailed at the end of this class description. Your choice grants you features at 1st level and again at 6th, 10th, and 14th level.

Pact Magic

Your arcane research and the magic bestowed on you by your patron have given you facility with spells.

Spell Slots

The Warlock table shows how many spell slots you have. The table also shows what the level of those slots is; all of your spell slots are the same level. To cast one of your warlock spells of 1st level or higher, you must expend a spell slot. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a short or long rest.

For example, when you are 5th level, you have two 3rd-level spell slots. To cast the 1st-level spell *bane*, you must spend one of those slots, and you cast it as a 3rd-level spell.

Spells Known of 1st Level and Higher

At 1st level, you know two 1st-level spells of your choice from the warlock spell list.

The Good, the Bad, and the Unholy

It is exceedingly tricky to play a good-aligned warlock in **The Lost Citadel**. There's no hard and fast alignment restriction—such mechanics are contrary to the way alignment is treated in Fifth Edition, and we never want to exclude interesting roleplaying opportunities—but you're going to have to really work to pull it off.

Even leaving aside the fact that the Fiend and the Grave patrons are inherently evil (and some potential Remnant patrons are as well, thanks to the general corruption of nature), many of the warlock's powers in this setting are based around inflicting other people or locations with Woe, and doing so is an innately evil act under almost all circumstances.

You can, of course, simply refrain from using those powers; the fact that you have them doesn't mean you *must* use them. On a mechanical level, however, you'll be making your spellcasting harder on yourself, since you'll suffer as much spiritual damage as anyone else would for using magic. And on a roleplaying level, warlocks may not fully understand Woe—nobody does—but they understand in their gut that they're already more likely to rise as one of the Dead. (See The Dead Rise table, page 260.) They instinctively *want* to rid themselves of as much spiritual damage as possible.

By all means, if you want to attempt to play a good warlock, have at. Be aware that it'll be a challenge—but then, maybe that's part of the fun. If nothing else, it should make for some great character struggles.

The Spells Known column of the Warlock table shows when you learn more warlock spells of your choice of 1st level and higher. A spell you choose must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the table's Slot Level column for your level. When you reach 6th level, for example, you learn a new warlock spell, which can be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the warlock spells you know and replace it with another spell from the warlock spell list, which also must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability

Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your warlock spells, so you use your Charisma whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Charisma modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a warlock spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier

Spellcasting Focus

You can use an arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your warlock spells.

Wracking Curse

You can direct the power of your patron against your enemies. As an action, make a melee or ranged spell attack against a creature within 120 feet. On a hit, the target takes 1d10 damage of two mixed types; the precise damage types depend on your patron.

As you gain levels, you can bestow multiple Wracking Curses with a single action: two curses at 5th level, three at 11th level, and four at 17th level. You can direct the curses at the same target or at different ones. Make a separate spell attack roll for each curse.

Otherworldly Patron	Wracking Curse Damage Types
Fiend	fire and poison
Grave	cold and necrotic
Remnant	psychic and your choice (selected when you gain this power) of lightning or thunder

Eldritch Invocations

In your study of occult lore, you have unearthed eldritch invocations, fraDMents of forbidden knowledge that imbue you with an abiding magical ability.

At 2nd level, you gain two eldritch invocations of your choice. When you gain certain warlock levels, you gain additional invocations of your choice, as shown in the Invocations Known column of the Warlock table.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the invocations you know and replace it with another invocation that you could learn at that level.

The **Lost Citadel** warlock makes use of the invocations presented in the *PHB* except Book of Ancient Secrets, which is redundant with the new Pact of the Tome feature, and Otherworldly Minions, which is superseded by the new Otherworldly Minions invocation presented at the end of this section. Any invocations that alter the use of *eldritch blast* in the core rules apply, instead, to the Wracking Curse ability of the **Lost Citadel** warlock.

Mirror of Woe

At 2nd level, you develop the earliest stages of the warlock's most vile ability: to manipulate and assuage your own spiritual damage by foisting it off onto others. When you take spiritual damage (and after making any relevant saving throws), you may spend a reaction to attempt to transfer that spiritual damage to another living creature within 30 feet.

You do not select the target. Rather, it is chosen randomly from all creatures within range who are *non-hostile* to you; that is, an ally or a neutral party. The target must make a Woe saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Charisma modifier. On a failure, it takes the spiritual damage instead of you. The target is unaware that you are the source of the spiritual damage.

One you have used Mirror of Woe, you cannot do so again until you have completed a long rest.

Lesser Magics

At 3rd level you learn a smattering of minor magics. Choose three of the following spells. You can cast those spells, in any combination, up to a total number per day equal to your Charisma modifier plus your proficiency bonus. You regain expended uses after completing a long rest. You must attempt a Woe saving throw when casting these, just as with any other spell, but with a DC of only 7.

Lesser Magics

- *Blade Ward*
- *Dancing Lights*
- *Mage Hand*
- *Prestidigitation*
- *Resistance*
- *Thaumaturgy*

Pact Boon

At 3rd level, your otherworldly patron bestows a gift upon you for your loyal service. You gain one of the following features of your choice.

Pact of the Blade

You can use your action to create a pact weapon in your empty hand. You can choose the form that this melee weapon takes each time you create it. You are proficient with it while you wield it. This weapon counts as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Your pact weapon disappears if it is more than 5 feet away from you for 1 minute or more. It also disappears if you use this feature again, if you dismiss the weapon (no action required), or if you die.

You can transform one magic weapon into your pact weapon by performing a special ritual while you hold the weapon. You perform the ritual over the course of 1 hour, which can be done during a short rest. You can then dismiss the weapon, shunting it into an extradimensional space, and it appears whenever you create your pact weapon thereafter. You can't affect an artifact or a sentient weapon in this way. The weapon ceases being your pact weapon if you die, if you

perform the 1-hour ritual on a different weapon, or if you use a 1-hour ritual to break your bond to it. The weapon appears at your feet if it is in the extradimensional space when the bond breaks.

Pact of the Chain

You learn the *find familiar* spell and can cast it as a ritual. The spell doesn't count against your number of spells known.

Your familiar is tougher and more cunning than normal. Add 10 to the animal's hit points, increase its AC to 13 if it is lower, increase its attack bonus to +5 if it is lower, and increase its Intelligence to 11. The familiar gains proficiency in Dexterity and Wisdom saving throws and its attack damage becomes 1d4 + Dexterity modifier.

Additionally, when you take the Attack action, you can forgo one of your own attacks to allow your familiar to make one attack of its own.

Pact of the Tome

Your patron gives you a grimoire called a Book of Shadows, in which you can inscribe magic rituals. Choose two 1st-level spells that have the ritual tag from any class spell list (the two needn't be from the same list). The spells appear in the book and don't count against the number of spells you know. With your Book of Shadows in hand, you can cast the chosen spells as rituals. You can't cast the spells except as rituals, unless you've learned them by some other means. You can also cast a warlock spell you know as a ritual if it has the ritual tag.

On your adventures, you can add other ritual spells to your Book of Shadows. When you find such a spell, you can add it to the book if the spell's level is equal to or less than half your warlock level (rounded up) and if you can spare the time to transcribe the spell. For each level of the spell, the transcription process takes 2 hours and costs 50 gp for the rare inks needed to inscribe it.

If you lose your Book of Shadows, you can perform a 1-hour ceremony to receive a replacement from your patron. This ceremony can be performed during a short or long rest, and it destroys the previous book. The book turns to ash when you die.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Improved Mirror of Woe

Starting at 5th level, when you use your Mirror of Woe power, you may now choose the target, rather than determining randomly, and your range is now 40 feet. The target must still must be a non-hostile living being that you can see.

Improved Lesser Magics

At 7th level, you learn two more cantrips you can cast with your Lesser Magics trait, based on your patron. This does not increase the number of cantrips you can cast per day.

Patron	Cantrips
Fiend	*thorn whip, true strike*
Grave	*chill touch, spare the dying*
Remnant	*minor illusion, sacred flame*

Breath of Woe

At 9th level, you gain the ability to transfer existing spiritual damage to others, rather than simply redirecting it as it's dealt. As an action, you force a living creature you can see within 60 feet to attempt a Woe save with a DC equal to 8 + your Charisma modifier. Unlike Mirror of Woe, the target of Breath of Woe can be hostile. If the target fails its save, it takes 1d4+4 points of spiritual damage. On a successful save, the target takes half that spiritual damage. In either case, you heal a number of pneuma points equal to half the damage taken by the target (rounded *up*, not down as usual), up to your maximum pneuma points.

Once you have used Breath of Woe, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

Greater Mirror of Woe

Also beginning at 9th level, you now regain uses of your Mirror of Woe after a short rest as well as a long one.

Vengeful Curse

Starting at 11th level, when an enemy within range of your Wracking Curse targets you with an attack, you may use Wracking Curse on that enemy as a reaction. If your Wracking Curse hits, the enemy has disadvantage on the triggering attack. Once you have used Vengeful Curse, you must complete a short or long rest before you can do so again.

Birth the Dead

At 13th level, you can recover pneuma points by channeling spiritual damage into a corpse. As an action, you touch an intact corpse and recover 2d6 pneuma points. The corpse instantly rises as one of the Dead, with a challenge rating approximately equal to either its CR or level in life or your Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus, whichever is higher. You have no control or influence over this undead creature, and neither you nor your companions gain experience points for defeating it. Letting it go to harm others, however, is considered a vile act (see "The Well of Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**), so you may well immediately lose some or all of the pneuma points you just regained if you fail to clean up your mess.

Once you have used Birth the Dead, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

Patron's Avatar

Also at 13th level, you can spend an action to take on some of the traits of your patron. The precise benefits depend on which sort of patron you have (see the Patron's Avatar table below). Maintaining Patron's Avatar requires concentration, as if it were a spell. It lasts for a number of minutes equal to twice your warlock level, until you lose concentration, or until you dismiss it (no action required). Once you have used Patron's Avatar, you cannot do so again until you've completed a long rest.

Improved Breath of Woe

At 15th level, if the target of your Breath of Woe fails its save and has fewer than 150 hit points, you can choose to stun it. The target may attempt a Constitution saving throw against your standard spellcasting DC at the end of each of its turns. On a success, it is no longer stunned.

Purge Corruption

When you reach 15th level, you can potentially free yourself of a Mark of Woe (see "Marks of Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**) by dispersing the corruption into the world around you. Make a DC 12 Woe saving throw. If you succeed, one of your Marks of Woe (determined randomly) disappears, and the area *becomes a permanent domain of Woe*. Use the Random Domain table (page 256) to determine what sort and its severity; the domain has a radius of 3d20 + 20 feet, centered on the spot you were standing when activating this power.

Patron's Avatar

Patron	Immunities	Resistances	Special Ability
Fiend	fire damage, charmed condition	all damage types except cold and psychic	You gain fly speed of 30 ft.
Grave	poison damage, poisoned condition	all damage types except psychic and radiant	You gain climb speed equal to your walking speed, and you do not need to breathe
Spirit	necrotic damage, grappled and restrained conditions	all damage types except force and psychic	You can pass through solid objects (intangibility), but each foot through an object costs three feet of movement speed and you cannot end your turn inside an object or creature

If you fail the saving throw or roll a natural 1, the Mark does not disappear and you take 1d4 points of spiritual damage. Whether you succeed or fail, you cannot attempt to use Purge Corruption again for a full week. You cannot activate this power if you are already within a domain of Woe.

Greater Breath of Woe

At 17th level, your Breath of Woe becomes even more potent. If the target fails its saving throw and has 100 or fewer hit points, you can cause it to die instantly. In addition, you can now use Breath of Woe twice between long rests, rather than once.

Eldritch Master

At 20th level, you can draw on your inner reserve of mystical power while entreating your patron to regain expended spell slots. You can spend 1 minute entreating your patron for aid to regain all your expended spell slots from your Pact Magic feature. Once you regain spell slots with this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can do so again.

Otherworldly Patrons

While the Fiend patron represents an extraplanar entity, a demon or devil desperate for agency in the mortal world, the others have closer ties to Zileska, occupying a nebulous "between" some call the spirit world. All have unnatural powers and alien natures, and share both with the warlocks who serve them.

The Fiend

In prior ages, denizens of the lower planes had far greater access to the world of Zileska and were intertwined with many of its spells. Today, with the twisting and weakening

Vile Deeds and the Spread of Woe

At first glance, it may seem odd that only a few of the warlock's Woe-related powers can cause the character spiritual damage, when we've made a point of stating that deliberately bestowing Woe upon someone is such an innately evil act. The manipulation of Woe is, however, part of the warlock's core theme in **The Lost Citadel**, and these powers are meaningless if they result in the warlock taking as much spiritual damage as they purge.

Technically, the warlock *does* accrue spiritual damage for performing the vile deed of spreading Woe to others. All such powers, however—unless they specifically state that spiritual damage is a possible result, such as Purge Corruption—mystically negate the spiritual damage gained for committing such a deed, in addition to the stated effects. For all mechanical purposes, therefore, no spiritual damage is suffered and no pneuma points are lost.

of magic, such creatures find it far more difficult to manifest in the mortal realm, and far fewer magics are capable of summoning them. As such, they rely almost exclusively on their cults and mortal servants to manipulate events. And in a world as horrid as this one, people who are willing to devote themselves to dark entities in exchange for power of their own are not nearly as rare as might be hoped.

Expanded Spell List

The Fiend lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Fiend Expanded Spell List

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*command, hellish rebuke*
2nd	*blindness/deafness, heat metal*
3rd	*bestow curse, stinking cloud*
4th	*fire shield, wall of fire*
5th	*flame strike, modify memory*

Dark One's Blessing

Starting at 1st level, when you reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier + your warlock level (minimum of 1).

Dark One's Own Luck

Starting at 6th level, you can call on your patron to alter fate in your favor. When you make an ability check or a saving throw, you can use this feature to add a d10 to your roll. You can do so after seeing the initial roll but before any of the roll's effects occur.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Fiendish Resilience

Starting at 10th level, you can choose one damage type when you finish a short or long rest. You gain resistance to that damage type until you choose a different one with this feature. Damage from magical weapons or silver weapons ignores this resistance.

Hellish Visions

Starting at 14th level, when you hit a creature with an attack, you can use this feature to flood its mind with visions and sensations of a brutal hellscape. The creature must succeed on a Will saving throw against your warlock spellcasting DC or be stunned while its mind struggles to cope with the agonizing and terrifying sensations. It ceases to be stunned at the end of your next turn, if it takes damage, or if it suffers the effects of any spell or power.

Once the creature is no longer stunned, if it is not a fiend, it takes 5d10 psychic damage as it reels from its horrific experience.

A target that successfully saves is immune to your Hellish Visions feature for 24 hours. After you have *successfully* used this feature—that is, after a creature has failed its saving throw against this ability—you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

The Grave

The most potent powers of Zileska's current age, by far, are the powers of death—and you have elected, in all defiance of the natural order, to devote yourself to them. The essence and entities of the unliving seek to spread, to wash over the remaining bastions of the living. This is the pact you have chosen, even if you now work against those aims.

In very rare cases, a Grave pact might entail a bargain with one of the malevolents, exceedingly powerful undead whose very existence remains a secret to Redoubt's population. In most cases, however, the Grave pact is far less personal, binding you to the essence of death and undeath itself, rather than any specific being—or at least, no specific being you know of. Perhaps it's some powerful undead spirit, perhaps the lingering wisps of the (mad?) god of death, or perhaps there is some semblance of sentience to death itself. You do not know, and ultimately, it hardly matters. You have pledged yourself not to any one being, but to the Grave.

Expanded Spell List

The powers of the Grave let you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Grave Expanded Spell List

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*armor of Agathys, ray of sickness*
2nd	*ray of enfeeblement,see invisibility*
3rd	*speak with dead, vampiric touch*
4th	*blight, phantasmal killer*
5th	*antilife shell, contagion*

Deathly Presence

Starting at 1st level, your link to your patron allows you to strike terror into the hearts of the living. As an action, you can cause each living creature within 10 feet of you to make a Wisdom saving throw against your warlock spell DC. Creatures that fail their save are frightened by you until the end of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Resilience of the Grave

At 6th level, you gain two related benefits as you are infused with the powers of death. First, when you suffer a critical hit, you may choose to roll an unmodified d20. On a result of 11 or higher, the critical hit becomes a normal hit.

In addition, when you make a death saving throw while at 0 hit points, you may choose to gain advantage on the roll.

You can use both these abilities, but only once each. You regain spent uses after completing a long rest.

Voice of the Dead

At 10th level, you gain the ability to influence the Dead. As an action, choose one undead creature that you can see within 30 feet that has a challenge rating equal to or less than your warlock level. That undead must succeed on a Will saving throw against your warlock spell DC or be charmed by you for 1 minute, until you lose concentration (as per a spell), or until it takes damage. An undead creature that successfully saves is immune to your Voice of the Dead ability for 24 hours.

You have two uses of this ability, and regain spent uses after a long rest.

Master of the Dead

Starting at 14th level, you gain a third daily use of Voice of the Dead. In addition, when an undead fails its saving throw against your Voice of the Dead feature, the creature is dominated by you (as per *dominate monster*) if its challenge rating is at or below a certain threshold, as shown on the following table. This effect lasts for 1 minute, until you lose concentration (as per a spell), or by any means described in *dominate monster*.

Warlock Level	Dominates Undead of CR...
14th	3 or lower
17th	4 or lower

Finally, you may also now use each version of Resilience of the Grave twice between long rests, rather than only once.

The Remnant

You have sealed your pact with a lingering entity of the old world, a force once greater—and possibly purer—than it is now, but one that still retains both power and purpose. As previously suggested, this might be a spirit of nature or a geographical feature (such as the river or the mountain), of the fey, of a family's or a community's ancestors, or even of a largely forgotten god. It might be twisted and corrupted by the shattering of magic and the world, or it might remain true to what it once was, a final bastion of a fading natural order. It could rely on and communicate with you directly, or it might be nigh oblivious to your existence, despite you drawing power from it.

Expanded Spell List

The Remnant lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Remnant Expanded Spell List

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*false life, speak with animals*
2nd	*augury, spiritual weapon*
3rd	*clairvoyance, spirit guardians*
4th	*black tentacles, divination*
5th	*animate objects, telekinesis*

Spirits' Whispers

Starting at 1st level, your patron allows you to hear the faintest stirrings of the spirits around you, and to gain knowledge from their words. You may choose to gain advantage on any single Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based ability check. You must elect to use this ability before you make the roll. Once you have done so, you cannot do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

In addition, regardless of whether you have expended the above usage or not, you gain a +2 bonus to your Wisdom (Perception) checks (or your passive score) for purposes of opposing another creature's Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Spirits' Warning

At 6th level, you have grown even more adept at sensing the emotions and the words of the spirits of the world around you. You may choose to gain advantage on your initiative roll at the start of combat. You must elect to use this ability before you make the roll. Once you have done so, you cannot do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

In addition, regardless of whether you have expended the above usage or not, you can take reactions as well as move and take a bonus action (if you have one) on your turn, even if you are surprised. You still cannot take normal actions when surprised.

Ever-Shifting World

At 10th level, you can influence the lingering essences of the world to aid you or hamper your foes. You can use this ability in one of two ways.

When you miss with an attack or a target succeeds on a Dexterity save against a spell you cast, you can force that target to make a Strength saving throw with a DC equal to your normal spell DC. If the target fails, you move it 5 feet in any direction, and can repeat the attack or force it to repeat the Dexterity saving throw.

Alternatively, when you are hit with an attack or you fail a Dexterity saving throw against an enemy's effect, you can cause the spirits to move you 5 feet in any direction, and either force the enemy to reroll the attack or allow you to reroll the Dexterity saving throw.

Either usage of this power requires your reaction, and once you have used this power—regardless of which usage you choose—you cannot do so again until you have completed a short or long rest.

Spirit Storm

Starting at 14th level, you can set the spirits of the world to battering and tormenting a foe. Choose a target within 60 feet of you that you can see. The target has disadvantage on all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. Each time it misses with an attack or fails a save or ability check, it takes 1d10 force damage. You must concentrate to maintain this effect, as though it were a spell.

At the end of each of its turns, the target may attempt a Will saving throw against your warlock spell save DC. The effect ends when the target successfully saves, when your concentration is broken, or when the target has taken force damage from this ability a total of six times. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

New Invocations

The following invocations replace the Book of Ancient Secrets and the Otherworldly Minions invocations from the core rules.

Ceremonial Proxy

Prerequisite: Pact of the Tome feature

You can now make use of a mystical proxy to cast rituals for you. You must have a magical creature or autonomous force created or summoned by a spell or magical effect that you cast. Examples include *find familiar*, *unseen servant*, or the Otherworldly Minions invocation. You can direct that creature or entity to cast any ritual in your Book of Shadows, assuming the proxy remains in existence long enough to do so. You must still provide all necessary components, you still make the Arcana check, and you still suffer the effects if the ritual goes wrong (see "Woe" and "Zileska Rituals," both in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**). You must concentrate on your proxy while it is casting the ritual as though maintaining a spell, but if the proxy was created by a spell that requires concentration, you may concentrate on both. This is an exception to the normal concentration rules.

You can engage in any other activity you wish while the proxy is casting the ritual, including casting other spells, so long as they don't require concentration. Alternatively, you can work with the proxy on the ritual, cutting its casting time in half (to a minimum of five minutes). Finally, if you suffer spiritual damage due to the ritual and spell going wrong, the presence of the proxy grants you resistance to that damage.

Otherworldly Minions

Prerequisite: 9th level

Spend a warlock spell slot to summon a creature related to your patron to serve as your ally. If you have the Remnant patron, this ability works exactly as the *conjure elemental* spell. If you have the Fiend patron, the spell summons a fiend of CR 5 or lower, rather than an elemental. If you have the Grave patron, it summons an undead of CR 5 or lower.

Summoned creatures cannot have legendary actions; they cannot themselves summon or conjure any creatures, nor can they concentrate on any spells. In all other respects, this power follows the rules of the *conjure elemental* spell, including the dangers of losing concentration.

Once you have used this invocation, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

Warrior Monk

He was a man carved from knotted oak, immovable but made of the stone-shattering motion of old growth. But he could move fast. I'd seen it.

— Malcolm Sheppard, "He in Memory"

Once, there were monks: masters of distilled, "internal" magic. Magic led by feeling, concentrated in bone and sinew. Some begged gods for magic, and others summoned it from other planes of existence, but monks *were* magic.

Yet they fell. How could they escape the new, dark Ascension, when its seeds were already planted in their blood, bones, and souls? The mightier and more enlightened the monk, the stronger the corruption. Masters turned into monsters. The lucky ones rotted into pools of foul liquid immediately. It was worse for others, where death found structure, crawling along meridians and muscles. They became potent warriors for the Dead, whose strikes could shatter bones or blacken flesh with some heretical version of a revered technique.

These are not Redoubt's warrior monks, the survivors of their orders' great corruption. They have rebuilt the martial arts without the inner power once called "ki." They abjure the magic of the self and embrace the raw reality of mortality, without mystical illusions. They are philosopher-athletes, devoted to the lessons of bludgeon, blade, and fist. The warrior monk is a new class, which has traded the mystical ki tradition for an understanding of other martial arts, as detailed in "Martial Schools," later in this chapter.

The Purified: The First Warrior Monks

The first warrior monks were novices of the old monastic orders. They understood the theories and physical practices of their traditions but had not yet internalized them over years of practice and questing. Despite their lack of experience, each survived the Fall through an act of consummate discipline, which most of their fellows, junior and senior, failed to achieve. Death rose within them, and they expelled it. Some practiced forms of movement to rebalance their internal energies, and sweat a red, cloying mist which took the forms of their fears and sources of shame before evaporating. Others breathed in a strict meter and extinguished conscious thought, before vomiting forth an ash that killed anything it touched. They had many stories, but all achieved one result: They became the Purified, who banished the corruption from their ki and severed themselves from the Fall's toxicity.

Arts of Strife

Despite their paths turning against them, the Purified were unwilling to abandon their traditions completely. The way

Warrior Monk

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Warlore Damage	MOPs per Encounter/Attack	Unarmored Movement	Features
1st	+2	1d4	2/1	—	Unarmored Defense, Warlore, Martial Skill, Martial Ways
2nd	+2	1d4	2/1	+10 ft.	Unarmored Movement, Lesser Tactic
3rd	+2	1d4	3/2	+10 ft.	Deflect Weapons, Martial Secret
4th	+2	1d4	3/2	+10 ft.	Ability Score Improvement, Martial Way, Lesser Tactic
5th	+3	1d6	3/2	+10 ft.	Extra Attack, Focused Discipline
6th	+3	1d6	4/2	+15 ft.	Martial Secret, Lesser Tactic
7th	+3	1d6	4/2	+15 ft.	Evasion, Stillness of Mind
8th	+3	1d6	4/2	+15 ft.	Ability Score Improvement, Lesser Tactic
9th	+4	1d6	5/3	+15 ft.	Martial Way, Unarmored Movement improvement
10th	+4	1d6	5/3	+20 ft.	Purity of Body and Soul, Focused Discipline
11th	+4	1d8	5/3	+20 ft.	Martial Secret
12th	+4	1d8	6/3	+20 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	1d8	6/3	+20 ft.	Greater Tactic
14th	+5	1d8	6/3	+25 ft.	Deflect Weapons improvement, Martial Specialization
15th	+5	1d8	7/4	+25 ft.	Focused Discipline, Greater Tactic
16th	+5	1d8	7/4	+25 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	1d10	7/4	+25 ft.	Greater Tactic, Martial Secret
18th	+6	1d10	8/4	+30 ft.	Master of the Way
19th	+6	1d10	8/4	+30 ft.	Ability Score Improvement, Martial Specialization
20th	+6	1d10	8/4	+30 ft.	Perfect Master

of the monk had always been grounded in the material; students contemplated the meaning of physical action and explored its mystical symbolism. The Purified knew, too, that their fighting methods were also used by other warriors, after a fashion. They studied with soldiers and assassins and developed new theories of movement, learning that, having been cut off from mystical enlightenment, there was still much to learn from the everyday world of blood and sweat. They asked new questions. *What does it mean to confront death, when one can no longer project one's soul beyond its grasp? What does it mean to simply inhabit a mortal body? How can one commit a violent act morally, if the act itself does not refine one's soul?*

The Purified reformulated their martial arts. Instead of using them as a vehicle to transcend their bodies, they sought to understand the normal condition of mortal flesh, which they would evermore share with the common people. Discipline would no longer come from cloistered living, but the same raw effort required of all living beings. Now that their own lives were more limited and fragile, they would practice the fighting arts to protect that frailty—or, in the case of Purified with darker moral frameworks, exploit it.

And they would not only fight the Dead, but teach others to fight them. The new arts could, at least, be taught to virtually anyone. Drawing upon the remains of their traditions and the methods learned from other martial artists, they founded the first of Redoubt's martial schools. The schools and their Martial Ways are now the focus of the Purified and their descendants, the warrior monks. Redoubt's warrior monks are social beings, presiding over martial schools that teach self-defense to a large cross-section of the population.

Creating a Warrior Monk

Your warrior monk is a dedicated martial artist, who has either trained with a martial school (well-known or secret) or under a solitary master. The warrior monk tradition is most common among the Surinzan and Menhada cultures, but others, including nonhumans, may study their ways. Redoubt's warrior monks do not seek some grand enlightenment, and do not seek refuge in monasteries. They teach the arts of violence and physical perfection, and the moral philosophy that follows from questions of right, wrong, and inescapable mortality.

A warrior monk's life is a hard one, filled with training, rivalries with other schools, and the search for meaning in a world that seems to have barred access to transcendental bliss. Your warrior monk probably did not take up this life to escape toil and emotional turbulence, but might have been drawn to this path to manage it. You might have killed someone and wish to learn the meaning of violence, and how to control your body and emotions so that you never make that mistake again. You might love the beauty of martial arts or possess natural talents that suggest you'd excel in

them. Many warrior monks possess the Martial Scholar background (described later in this chapter), but this is not required. You might have begun training as a casual student, gradually increasing your commitment, or becoming a warrior monk may have been part of a radical change in lifestyle—perhaps one that corrects for past sins.

Quick Build

To make a warrior monk quickly, make Dexterity your highest ability score, followed by Wisdom, and choose the martial scholar background. As part of your background, you must select a martial school (as described later in this chapter).

Class Features

As a warrior monk you have the following class features.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per warrior monk level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per monk level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: None

Weapons: Simple weapons, martial melee weapons

Tools: Choose one type of artisan's tools or one musical instrument

Saving Throws: Strength, Dexterity

Skills: Choose two from Acrobatics, Athletics, History, Insight, Religion, and Stealth

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any granted by your background:

- any melee weapon
- dungeoneer's pack or explorer's pack
- 10 darts

Unarmored Defense

Beginning at 1st level, when wearing neither armor nor shield, your AC equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Wisdom modifier.

Warlore

You practice *Warlore*: the deep study of martial arts. While your predecessors meditated on the principles of ki to devise exercises, movements, and strategies, you take the opposite approach. You study fighting and movement techniques and, when they prove effective, contemplate the truths they reveal about your mind, body, and spirit.

You gain the following benefits when you're not wearing armor or using a shield.

- You can use Dexterity instead of Strength to modify attack and damage rolls in melee combat while unarmed or using a one-handed melee weapon you have proficiency with.
- When you hit with an unarmed attack or melee weapon you are proficient in, you roll either your Warlore damage rating or the weapon's base damage rating, whichever is better. If the weapon confers a damage bonus beyond its normal rating due to magic or some other exceptional property, you may add this bonus to Warlore damage. Warlore damage increases by level, as listed in the Warrior Monk table.
- When you use the Attack action with an unarmed strike or melee weapon you're proficient in, you can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action. For example, if you take the Attack action and use a longsword, you can also attack with an unarmed strike as a bonus action, assuming you haven't taken a bonus action that turn.

Martial Skill

During each combat encounter, you gain additional Martial Opportunity Points (MOPs) you may spend on exploits, as per the rules defined under "Martial Schools," with the following changes:

- You retain these extra points until they are spent or the combat encounter ends.
- You may spend these points on exploits on any successful attack roll—not just those which normally allow you to spend MOPs—or on a Lesser or Greater Martial Tactic, once you acquire those.
- These stack with MOPs gained through certain even-numbered attack rolls (see "Martial Schools") and other sources.

The number before the slash lists the number of points you gain per encounter, and the number after indicates how many points from your Martial Skill reserve you may spend at any one time, linked to a single attack roll or Martial Tactic.

Martial Ways

You begin knowing all three of the Martial Ways taught by your martial school, as well as its signature techniques.

At 4th and 9th level, you acquire an additional Martial Way.

Unarmored Movement

Starting at 2nd level, your speed increases by 10 feet while you are not wearing armor or wielding a shield. This bonus increases when you reach higher warrior monk levels, as shown in the Warrior Monk table.

At 9th level, you gain the ability to move up vertical surfaces as difficult terrain, and you gain advantage on Acrobatics checks to cross narrow or unstable surfaces while keeping your balance.

Martial Tactic

You learn your first Lesser Martial Tactic at 2nd level, and acquire other Lesser Martial Tactics at 4th, 6th, and 8th level. You gain Greater Martial Tactics at 13th, 15th, and 17th level. Martial Tactics are exploits on which you may spend MOPs from your Martial Skill pool *before* making an attack roll, so they come into effect whether or not a melee attack hits. (In normal cases, MOPs can only be spent *after* making certain successful attack rolls.)

Lesser Martial Tactics

The following Lesser Martial Tactics are available for selection at 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th level.

Art of Stealth. By spending 1 MOP, you may take the Hide action as a bonus action on this turn.

Defensive Tactic. For 1 MOP you may take the Dodge action as a bonus action on this turn.

Flowing Weapons. By spending 1 MOP you may switch weapons as a bonus action, bringing a weapon to hand and safely stowing another. You may also reroll your initiative, ignoring results that are lower than your current score. Your new initiative comes into effect on the next round. You may choose to use this tactic for the initiative benefit without switching weapons, or while unarmed.

Footwork. By spending 1 MOP you increase your reach by 5 feet until the end of your next turn.

Hawk and Horse Technique. By spending 1 MOP, you may make a grapple or shove attack as a bonus action on this turn.

Shieldlore. By spending 1 MOP at the beginning of the round, you retain the benefits of Warlore and Unarmored Defense while using a shield until the start of your next turn, and are treated as proficient in the use of the shield for the duration.

Stone Horse Stance. By spending 1 MOP, you gain advantage on rolls to resist being grappled or shoved. You spend this MOP to gain this benefit when an opponent attempts a grapple or shove, but before making the contested roll; this does not expend your reaction for the round.

Swift Warlore. By spending 1 MOP, you may make two additional unarmed attacks (as per Warlore) as a bonus action on this turn, rather than one.

Way of the Wind. By spending 1 MOP, you may use the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on your turn.

Greater Martial Tactics

The following Greater Martial Tactics are available for selection at 13th, 15th, and 17th level.

Circle of Awareness. By spending 3 MOPs, you may either make an immediate counterattack as a reaction against any opponent who attempts an opportunity attack against you, or you may attack from hiding without revealing yourself.

Disciple of Steel. By spending 3 MOPs at the start of your turn, you may retain the benefits of Warlore while wearing armor, though you still sacrifice Unarmored Defense. The benefit lasts until the start of your next turn.

Eagle and Elephant Technique. By spending 3 MOPs prior to the attempt, you gain advantage on your next grapple or shove attack.

Inexorable Strike. By spending 3 MOPs on your turn, you may use your Attack action (not a bonus action that allows an attack) to automatically hit with one standard melee attack from a melee weapon you are proficient in. You make only this single attack, even if you would normally be able to make multiple attacks with your Attack action. This Attack does not benefit from Warlore bonus damage or any Strength, Dexterity, or other ability bonuses to damage. Calculate damage solely from the weapon's base damage and any bonuses innate to the item (such as magic). Although you automatically hit, if it is important to know what you would have rolled for various reasons (certain magical weapons, critical hits, gaining MOPs) you are considered to have rolled a natural 11 on the die. You may use this ability only once per turn, regardless of how many MOPs you have available.

Lion's Roar. By spending 3 MOPs when you make a melee attack on your turn, you cause the target of that attack (whether it hits or not) to suffer disadvantage on attack rolls made against any target other than you. This effect lasts until the start of your next turn.

Shatterstrike. By spending 3 MOPs when you successfully hit an inanimate object with a melee attack, you automatically inflict a critical hit and bypass the object's damage threshold. This attack is always considered to have inflicted damage of an appropriate type (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing) to affect the object.

Deflect Weapons

Starting at 3rd level, you can use your reaction to deflect or catch the missile when you are hit by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your Dexterity modifier + your warrior monk level.

If you reduce the damage to 0, you can catch the missile if it is small enough for you to hold in one hand and you have at least one hand free. If you catch a missile in this way, you can spend 1 Martial Opportunity Point to make a ranged attack (range 20 feet/60 feet) with the weapon or piece of ammunition you just caught as part of the same reaction. You make this attack with proficiency regardless of your weapon proficiencies, and the missile inflicts its normal damage or your Warlore damage, whichever is higher.

Starting at 14th level, you can use your reaction to deflect or catch melee weapons as well, lowering their damage and potentially disarming their wielders. This uses the same system as deflecting missiles, except that if you reduce damage to 0, to capture your opponent's melee weapon, you must succeed in a Strength (Athletics) check opposed by your opponent's choice of a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. You must also have one hand free to capture your opponent's weapon, and the requisite number of hands free to use it.

Martial Secrets

At 3rd level, you begin studying a martial secret of your choice: Secret of the Duelist, Secret of Purity and Corruption, or Secret of Steel, each of which is detailed at the end of this class description. Your choice grants you features at 3rd level and again at 6th, 11th, and 17th level.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Focused Discipline

At 5th, 10th, and 15th level, you gain proficiency in one additional saving throw of your choice.

Evasion

At 7th level, your instinctive agility lets you dodge out of the way of certain area effects, such as a *flame strike* spell. When you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

Stillness of Mind

Starting at 7th level, you can use your action to end one effect on yourself that is causing you to be charmed or frightened.

Purity of Body and Soul

At 10th level, you follow in the footsteps of the first warrior monks, who learned to expel physical and spiritual corruption. This makes you immune to disease and poison. In addition, when you would suffer spiritual damage (see "Woe" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**) you may reduce the loss of pneuma points by half, but you suffer double the full damage you would have taken to your hit points instead. This physical damage takes such forms as spontaneous blisters, coughing up blackened blood, and burns and cuts that follow the meridians and bodily energy centers known to certain mystics. You may always choose to suffer poison, disease, or full pneuma damage if you'd prefer.

Martial Specialization

At 14th level you deepen your understanding of one of the Martial Ways. Choose one Martial Way you already know. You gain 2 additional MOPs to spend on exploits from this Way, as long as you spend at least 1 point from another source on that exploit as well. You regain these spent points at the start of your next combat encounter.

At 19th level, select another Martial Way from among those you already know (though not the one you picked at 14th level). You gain the above benefit on that Martial Way as well.

Master of the Way

At 18th level, choose one Martial Way you know, except the Universal Way. You gain 1 extra MOP at the start of each round, which stacks with any others gained and can only be used on exploits from that Martial Way. In addition, any melee attacks you make with a weapon favored by that Martial Way score a critical hit on a 19 or 20.

Perfect Master

At 20th level you gain an additional bonus action per round, which you may use for warrior monk abilities and martial arts exploits which require the use of a bonus action, but not for other purposes.

Martial Secrets

Redoubt's warrior monks don't practice behind locked monastery gates. They master the arts of martial schools, teaching students from many walks of life. Nevertheless, they reserve certain disciplines for their most dedicated disciples—that is, fellow warrior monks, who study these martial secrets in closed societies whose memberships sometimes cut across school lines. Three martial secrets follow, but warrior monks might practice others developed by the DM.

Secret of the Duelist

Many martial artists in Redoubt regularly fight for audiences, to settle grudges, and to determine who their finest oponents are, but a few select warrior monks specifically focus their training on such challenges. They develop a personal variation of their own style, learn opponents' methods through cross-training and observation, and fight hard, as often as possible. They learn the Secret of the Duelist. This is a popular secret path among monks from many schools, particularly the League of Honor. Warrior monks who become gladiators also study this secret.

Fighting Style

At 3rd level, you adopt a particular style of fighting as your specialty. Choose one of the following options. You can't take a Fighting Style option more than once, even if you later get to choose again.

Defense

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

Great Weapon Fighting

When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

Two-Weapon Fighting

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

KNOW YOUR RIVAL

At 6th level, you acquire an additional Martial Way. Furthermore, you learn the signature techniques of another martial school, such as those detailed in the Martial Schools section.

UNCANNY DODGE

Starting at 11th level, when an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against you.

EXPLOIT OPENING

Starting at 17th level, you have mastered the art of exploiting holes in your enemy's defenses. The first time (either since the start of combat or since your last turn) an enemy misses you with a melee attack, you gain 1 MOP that stacks with other MOPs gained normally. You can only use this MOP on an exploit against the attacker who granted it to you, and it vanishes if you make an attack against another target first or if you end your next turn without having made an attack.

Secret of Purity and Corruption

With bravery, yet mindful of the lessons of the Purified, you commence the dangerous study of ki, the body-bound magic of ancient monks. After the Fall, ki, like many other forms of magic, became corrupted. Awakening ki within you exposes it to the world's spiritual foulness, so half of this secret consists of learning to bind and expel it. The first warrior monks learned to sequester and banish corrupt ki, but you have decided to allow it to linger and carefully shape it—and risk being consumed.

INITIATION OF THE BLACK ELIXIR

Starting at 3rd level, your training allows you to harness the dangerous power called ki. You acquire 3 ki points, which you may spend on various abilities. When you spend a ki point, it is unavailable until you finish a short or long rest, at the end of which you draw all your expended ki back into yourself, inviting corruption as it cycles back from an impure world. You must spend at least 30 minutes of the rest meditating to regain your ki points, and must succeed on a DC 10 Woe save or suffer spiritual damage equal to 1d4 + the number of ki points recovered.

Some of your ki abilities require your target to make a saving throw to resist their effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Ki save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

At 3rd level and beyond, you may use the following ki abilities.

Grip of Cinnabar and Ash. When you concentrate, your skin exudes a reddish-black substance which manifests as a dust or liquid: your inner corruption made corporeal through bodily alchemy. When you touch a target, including with an unarmed attack, shove, or grapple, you may spend 1 ki point and use a bonus action to force your target to make a Constitution save. On a failure, the target takes 2d6 poison damage and suffers the poisoned condition until the end of your next turn.

Step of the Wraith. You open your ki to the realm of dead spirits, ignoring the hideous voices within, and your body loses weight and substance. You may spend 1 ki point to do one of the following:

- Gain advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and double your jump distance, until the end of your next turn.
- Use your reaction to reduce the effective height of a fall by five times your warrior monk level in feet.
- Spend your bonus action to gain the ability to move across difficult terrain, liquids, or vertical surfaces at no penalty to your movement, until the start of your next turn.

Soul of the Borderland

Intensifying your study of ki, you learn to resist its corruption. Beginning at 6th level, you gain 2 more ki points and you gain a +2 bonus on Woe saves to avoid spiritual damage from recovering ki. (This does not apply to any other sources of spiritual damage.) You also gain the following abilities.

Stunning Techniques. You can interfere with the functioning of the spirit in an opponent's body. When you hit a living creature with an unarmed attack or a melee weapon attack, you can spend 1 ki point to attempt a stunning strike. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

Ki-Empowered Warlore. Any melee attack for which you could apply Warlore damage (even if you chose not to, because the attack already inflicts more damage) is counted as using a magical weapon for the purpose of overcoming damage resistance or immunity to nonmagical weapons and damage.

Body of Light and Darkness

Starting at 11th level, you gain 2 more ki points. You may also use your reaction to spend 1 point of ki and gain resistance to radiant or necrotic damage until the end of your next turn. Furthermore, if you are inflicted with a condition due to an undead creature's supernatural attacks or spells, you may spend 3 ki points as an action to remove that condition.

The Purified Self

Starting at 17th level, you gain 2 more ki points and you gain advantage on Woe saves to avoid suffering spiritual damage from recovering ki. You have not completely expelled the sinister energies within you, but you've better learned to balance them with benign spiritual energy. You also acquire the following abilities:

Harmony with Death. Your ki sustains you so that you suffer none of the frailty of old age, and you can't be aged magically. In addition, you no longer need food or water. If you exceed your natural lifespan, however, you become one of the Dead, a DM-controlled monstrosity to be destroyed. You can feel this day approaching, and thus could end your own life beforehand—or go out amongst the Dead to perish in a blaze of glory, taking as many of them as possible with you.

Hands of Life and Death. You may channel your ki through a touch. By spending 4 ki points in this manner, you may perform one of the following actions:

- Channeling internal corruption, or the "hand of death," you spend an action to make an unarmed attack against a living target. If you succeed, instead of dealing normal damage, you force the target to make a Constitution save and suffer 10d10 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half this damage on a successful one. This dark act forces you to make a DC 10 Woe save (see "Woe Saving Throws," page 255) or suffer 1d6 spiritual damage.
- Channeling your purified ki, or the "hand of life," you spend an action and may either heal yourself or another living creature that you touch of 10d10 points of damage. This produces a temporary imbalance in your ki, however, which makes you vulnerable to necrotic damage and cancels out your advantage when making a Woe save while recovering ki, until your next long rest.

Secret of Steel

You study armored martial arts: methods that were once the province of knights and tournaments but must now adapt to the urban environment of Redoubt. You know how to don heavy armor, and sense enemies who cannot be seen through the slits of your helm. Your ironclad fists are powerful enough, but when armed with other weapons, you readily find weaknesses in enemies' armor. Monks who practice the Secret of Steel often hail from the Jeweled Cannon school, but it is also practiced within some Angat families.

Lore of the Harness

At 3rd level, you become proficient in all armor and shields. Furthermore, you reduce the armor penalty to accrued Martial Opportunity Points (see "Martial Schools," later in this chapter) by 2, and when wearing armor, gain an additional +1 bonus to your AC. You lose access to Unarmored Defense and Unarmored Movement, but your special training allows you to retain the benefits of Warlore. You also gain the following abilities.

Tower of Iron. You gain advantage on all Strength (Athletics) checks and saving throws to resist shove attacks and any other attempts to move you from your position or knock you prone.

Trust in the Panoply. When wearing medium or heavy armor, you gain resistance to nonmagical slashing damage.

Fell the Armored Foe

Starting at 6th level, you learn techniques to counter armored enemies. Against an opponent wearing medium or heavy armor, you score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20, and you gain advantage to Strength (Athletics) checks to shove them.

Lore of Fire-Forged Defense

Starting at 11th level, if you are wearing medium or heavy armor you may spends 3 MOPs and use a reaction to impose disadvantage on any single melee attack against you.

Slay the Armored Enemy

Starting at 17th level, your attacks seem almost to bypass armor. On each of your turns, you gain advantage on one melee attack against an enemy wearing medium or heavy armor.

Feats

Feats exist and work in games of **The Lost Citadel** just as they do in other Fifth Edition campaigns, with the following two important exceptions:

- **The Ritual Caster feat doesn't exist. It is replaced by the new Ritualist feat.**
- **Feats (from the *PHB* or otherwise) that grant cantrips or spells don't exist.**

The following new feats are original to the setting.

Bastion of Purity

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13 or higher

You possess a purity of soul and strength of mind almost unheard of in this age of the Dead. Add your Wisdom modifier to your starting and maximum number of pneuma points, and as a bonus on all Woe saving throws (see "Woe Saving Throws," page 255). When you die, you have a –2 modifier to the DM's roll on The Dead Rise table.

Ghûl's Mending Tongue

Prerequisite: Ghûl

The resilience that protects most of your people from catching diseases from the corpses that you eat is stronger in you, granting you a limited ability to pass that resilience on to others. With your maw, you consume death and give life. The world is changing, and you with it.

You can spend 10 minutes ministering to a wounded (and willing) living creature other than yourself, during which time you lick up blood and carefully adjust injured flesh back into its proper place. You heal the target for 1d4 points of damage. This amount increases as you gain levels, healing 2d4 at 5th level, 3d4 at 11th level, and 4d4 at 17th level.

Alternatively, if the subject is suffering from an ongoing poison or disease effect, your ministrations can instead grant a bonus to the target's next saving throw against that effect. This bonus is +1 at 1st level, +2 at 5th, +3 at 11th, and +4 at 17th. If you use the ability in this way, it does not also cure damage with the same usage.

Any given creature can only benefit from this ability (regardless of which version you elected to employ) once per day. Once you've used this ability three times, you can't use it again until after a short or long rest.

Herbalist's Touch

In Redoubt, few things are green anymore, so perhaps it's most accurate to say that you have a "yellow thumb." You are able to coax life from plants and even eke a modicum of garden-sustenance from corrupted soil. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain proficiency with herbalism kits, and add your proficiency bonus twice to rolls involving these kits. (This cannot combine with other sources that add your proficiency bonus, such as Expertise.)
- You can support yourself in a poor lifestyle by tending a garden (yours or someone else's).
- When growing plants, you can grow them in corrupted soil or domains of Woe (page 256), as long as at least half of the soil used to pot the plant isn't corrupted. While the plants may be unusual, withered, and twisted, they still produce healthy shoots and seeds.
- As long as you have a source of uncorrupted plants and an herbalism kit, you can make antitoxins or *potions of healing* (as described in the *PHB*) without cost and without the expenditure of spell slots or components. Assuming you are limited to a small personal garden, you have enough supplies to make one *potion of healing* or one antitoxin per month. (Note that these herbal elixirs go bad after six months, so they cannot be stockpiled indefinitely.)

Life Among the Dead

Living so close to the hordes of unlife has let the pall of death seep into you. You gain the following benefits:

- Unintelligent undead are neutral to you and don't attack you unless you attack them first, cast a spell on them, or otherwise force them to make a saving throw, or they are commanded to do so.
- You have advantage on saving throws against all innate supernatural attacks of the undead, such as a wight's Life Drain attack. (This includes the Woe save to resist the spiritual damage caused by most undead; see "Woe Saving Throws," page 255.) This doesn't apply to spells or powers that the creature possesses for reasons other than being undead, such as an undead sage's spells.
- You do suffer one downside to your exposure to the energies of unlife. When you die, the DM adds +1 to the roll on The Dead Rise table.

Martial Arts Training

After training in a martial arts school, you learn its secrets to better prevail in combat. You gain the following benefits:

- You can acquire and use martial opportunity points (MOPs). If you can already do this because of your class, you add +1 MOP to any that you gain with an even-numbered attack roll.
- You can spend these points on universal martial exploits and one other category of martial exploits, called a Martial Way. This Martial Way must be one taught by your martial school and selected when you gain this feat. If you are already trained in a Martial Way through your class, you acquire an additional Martial Way.

See "Martial Schools," later in this chapter, for more.

Mystic Purity

The spark of ancient magic still lingers within you, and struggles against the corruption that burns its way through threads of the arcane. You have resistance to spiritual damage caused by spellcasting (whether ritual or otherwise), and advantage on Woe saves you are forced to make by casting spells. This doesn't affect pneuma damage or Woe saves caused by your other actions, or by any other sources.

Ouazi Girga Eye

While most people consider the *girga* little more than a leather sling, you have learned to place your shots with it exactly where you want them, and your lead bullets can crush heads as easily as a hammer does. You gain the following benefits:

- Double the range increments of any *girga* or sling you wield.
- As a bonus action, you may ignore any Armor Class bonus that your target gains from a shield when you attack with a *girga* or sling before the end of your turn.
- Using a loaded *girga* to make a melee attack doesn't count as using an improvised weapon for you. Treat such attacks as though they were made with a club that has the Finesse property.

Surinzan Sleaghar Dance

You have practiced, honed, and mastered the chaotic spin of the *sleaghar*, the heavy-bladed shortspear favored by the Surinzan people. Even if you do not study one of the martial disciplines, such as Iron Gate or Storm's Eye, you have learned the fundamentals of the dance that makes the *sleaghar* so deadly. You gain the following benefits:

- If you move at least 10 feet on your turn before you make an attack, you add +2 damage to any hit with a *sleaghar*, spear, or trident before the end of that turn.
- When you use a Dodge action while wielding a *sleaghar*, spear, or trident, you may Disengage as a bonus action.
- When you wield a *sleaghar*, spear, or trident, it gains the Finesse property.

Well-Connected

You excel at making useful allies and at managing your connections. (See "Connections," page 159.) You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You may maintain a number of connections equal to 2 + your Charisma modifier (minimum 3), instead of just your Charisma modifier (minimum 1).
- You have advantage on any Charisma check to make or deal with a connection.
- When you fail to perform a favor for a connection in a given month, you may make a Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, opposed by the connection's Wisdom (Insight) check. If you win, you keep the connection instead of losing it.

Ritualist

Prerequisite: Intelligence or Wisdom or Charisma of 13 or higher; see text

As discussed in greater detail in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**, spellcasting in Redoubt—including ritual casting—functions somewhat differently than it does in the core rules. Rituals now require components (in addition to those specified by the individual spell) which are consumed in the casting. They also require an ability check. In exchange, rituals are less likely to impose spiritual damage or other Woe-related effects than normal spellcasting.

Because they are safer than other spells, the practice of casting rituals has become the primary method of magic throughout Redoubt. This is represented by the Ritualist feat, which replaces the Ritual Caster feat from the core rules.

You have learned a number of spells which you can cast as rituals. These spells are recorded in a ritual book or other text—individual parchments or scrolls, for instance—which you must have in hand while casting them.

You acquire a ritual book containing two 1st-level spells of your choice when you select this feat. These spells can come from the spell lists of any class presented in **The Lost Citadel**, or from the "ritual only" list. You need not choose a specific class; rather, you select from these spell lists combined. When attempting to cast a ritual, your Arcana check uses the ability associated with the class on whose list that spell appears. For instance, you would use Intelligence when casting a sage spell, but Charisma when casting a warlock spell. If a spell appears on multiple lists, you can choose which class ability you wish to use. Spells that appear on no class spell list but exist in Zileska as rituals, use Intelligence.

If you later come across a spell in written form, such as a *spell scroll*, you may be able to add that spell to your ritual book. The spell must have the ritual tag and must be of a level no higher than one-quarter your own level (rounded *up*; so, for instance, you could copy a 3rd-level spell beginning at 9th level). Copying a spell into your ritual book is an involved and expensive process, requiring 2 hours and 50 gp per spell level. The cost represents the high-quality inks required for recording the spell, as well as the expenditure of material components as you experiment with and master the spell.

Note that **The Lost Citadel** adds the ritual tag to several spells in the core rules that do not normally carry that tag (see "Spell List" in **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**).

Backgrounds

For most of the denizens of Redoubt, life is omnipresent misery in the face of poverty and violence. Charlatan, Criminal, Soldier, Spy, and Urchin backgrounds are all relatively common. Gladiators (or "pit fighters," as they are often known) are, while not as common, certainly an acknowledged and accepted part of society. Plenty of Acolytes exist, though they're rarer than in other settings—the remaining religious groups can pick and choose who to take under their sheltering wings, which means that such postings are often political—while Folk Heroes and Sages are vanishingly rare. Outlander, Pirate, and Sailor are unavailable as backgrounds in a standard **Lost Citadel** campaign. (Those who work the river boats and barges are more accurately Laborers rather than Sailors).

Because part of the tension of a game in Redoubt springs from the social pressures and lack of resources, player characters should embrace these roots. Knight, Noble, and Guild Merchant backgrounds imply a character who has access to resources and wealth, which means they won't often be found in the desperate situations that afflict most of

Other Details to Consider

*Available standard backgrounds may fit into **The Lost Citadel** milieu in many ways, but here are examples, as well as questions you ought to consider when selecting one of these backgrounds:*

Acolyte: The majority of Acolytes in Redoubt are adherents of the Angat Church of Man, though this is a tendency, not a hard-and-fast rule.

Charlatan: Remember that real magic is largely distrusted now, for good reason. A Charlatan may wind up feared and despised.

Criminal: Consider whether your character is part of the Iron Moon or another illicit organization, and whether you have done time as a slave.

Entertainer: Figure out what sort of entertainment you provide, remembering the limited resources of Redoubt. Expect musical instruments to be small and simple, for instance.

Folk Hero: Forerunners and Foresters are more likely to become Folk Heroes than are most occupations in Redoubt. For an urban Folk Hero, consider replacing Animal Handling with Persuasion.

Gladiator: While a significant minority of pit fighters are free men and women parlaying their skill in combat into a decent living, the majority are slaves who fight because they are given no choice. Obviously, slave-gladiators receive exemptions from the law that a slave can never carry a blade—but only within the arena.

Guild Artisan: Consider how your profession is altered by the structures of life in Redoubt. Do you use any "rendered" materials in your craft?

Guild Merchant: Guild Merchants are often moderately wealthy. If your character fits this norm, consider whether or not you keep slaves. Characters with this background do not require contacts (page 159) to acquire or maintain higher standards of living. (Remember you need DM permission to select this background.)

Hermit: While surviving on one's own outside Redoubt isn't a viable option, and the city is quite crowded, it's still possible to find seclusion. Hermits may be part of isolated communities that have little to do with outsiders, such as certain neighborhoods or the Jepourah, or they may be anchorites, confining themselves to a single room or cell for years at a time.

Knight: Knights in the classic sense do not exist in Redoubt, but minor landowners, and honor-bound warriors in sworn service to a lord, are not unheard of. Characters with this background do not require contacts (page 159) to acquire or maintain higher standards of living. (Remember you need DM permission to select this background.)

Noble: A noble in Redoubt is, in nearly all cases, human. The majority are Angat. Characters with this background do not require contacts (page 159) to acquire or maintain higher standards of living. (Remember you need DM permission to select this background.)

Sage: One's knowledge of Arcana in Redoubt likely centers on the Dead and on the way magic works now, rather than on the old way of things. Only the rarest Sages have more than the tiniest inkling of how things used to function in prior ages.

Soldier: Soldiers in Redoubt might work guarding the city from the Dead, protecting the food supply, or guarding the rich from the poor, among other things.

Spy: There are no foreign nations against whom to engage in espionage, but Spies might be employed between two competing merchants or nobles, used to infiltrate organized crime, and so forth.

Urchin: Urchins are found most frequently in the slums, followed by the more rural-ish farm areas. If your character has been sleeping in cornfields or working as a Forerunner scout, consider different starting equipment, as appropriate. An urchin can, however, come from almost any corner of Redoubt.

the populace. You *must* have specific DM permission to select one of these backgrounds, as it will affect the tenor of the campaign, and many **Lost Citadel** games may disallow them entirely. The heroes (and antiheroes) of Redoubt are people who survive in dire straits with minimal provender at their fingertips.

The new backgrounds provided here offer ways to flesh out your character in a fashion suited to Redoubt's unique and dire society.

Beast-Keeper

Animals might have once been central to your culture in time of out of mind, but now it's harder to find any creature that isn't used for food or milk. Whether it was your upbringing or simply something that needed doing, you found a connection with the remaining beasts of Redoubt. Perhaps you tend the goat herds and work directly with the cheese makers, or you might help breed better, larger rodents. Perhaps you simply work to ensure animals are given the proper respect before death, working as a kind of undertaker and cremator for the local breeding grounds. Or maybe you shovel dung and sell it. It's not always glamorous.

Whatever the case, you have a strong connection to the animals in Redoubt. You might even understand them a bit better than you do people. Even if they end up as food, you want to minimize discomfort and pain. You're also quite good at finding errant animals who wander away, following their tracks and manure. Animals trust you innately, and you look at them as fellow stragglers in this crumbling world.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Vehicles (land)

Equipment: Utility pouch, animal feed, hardened goat cheese

d8	Personality Trait
1	I trust animals more than people; I stay out of the way unless explicitly required.
2	I find joy in my work, but it's all that I know. I hope there's something more.
3	I think I've been given a blessing to communicate with animals. People should recognize that rather than shun me.
4	I am in this for the money.
5	I spend half of my life scraping up animal dung, but it's better than where I started.
6	I am destined for greatness. I just haven't figured out what kind, yet.
7	I am trusted by the elite for my capabilities and it makes me haughty and proud.
8	Living away from humans has made it harder for me to connect with them; leave me to the pens.

d6	Ideal
1	**Herd.** The animals tell me what to do and when to do it. They guide me, and their advice is more sound than most men's. (Chaotic)
2	**Watcher.** I have been entrusted with this job, and I will do it to the best of my capabilities. (Lawful)
3	**Prod.** I enjoy watching animals suffer; it makes me feel alive to know I have control over something. (Evil)
4	**Shepherd.** It is my duty to give these animals the best lives they can have. They trust me to do best by them, and I am a better person for it. (Good)
5	***Social Climber.*** I'll do what I need to get by, but this job is just biding my time until something better comes along. (Neutral)
6	***Justice.*** If I don't speak for the animals, who will? (Any)

Feature: Animal Tracker

You can read the symbols of animals in the city around you. Whether it's bird droppings, rat tracks, or even the telltale signs of insects, you're relied on to track down errant animals and find new ones. You can also eke out a living on things many people turn their noses at, like mealworms and crickets. You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks when tracking beasts and when foraging for food.

Suggested Characteristics

You are most likely a very down-to-earth sort, practical and efficient. You have an understanding and respect for the animals of the world, quite possibly even more than you do for people, and you might be impatient with, or even ignorant of, many social niceties. Animals are straightforward and honest, traits you appreciate.

d6	Bond
1	I am looking for the last of a species rumored to be dead.
2	I need to figure out how to feed more people in Redoubt, not just the rich.
3	A roc told me I had to protect the birds in a dream, and I am awaiting further instruction.
4	I only deserve to work with animals, I've messed up living with humans too badly.
5	My work attests to my family honor, the last vestige of our ancestral heritage.
6	My work is my life and I'd have it no other way.

d6	Flaw
1	I love the taste of meat and often steal from the stores when people aren't looking.
2	Deep down I think animals are better than people.
3	I am terribly selfish and always put my well-being ahead of that of my charges.
4	I like to play people against one another and watch what happens.
5	I put the needs of the animals before the needs of people.
6	I want to free the animals before the Dead get them.

Death Worker

Many in Redoubt work with death and the dead on a regular basis, and all of these develop both thick skins to the horror of the setting and a superstitious mystique in the eyes of the community. You have a background in a death-related profession such as rendering, emergency cremation, or deliverance of funerary and religious rites—or perhaps you are a former member of the Undertaking itself. Very little can horrify or disgust you anymore.

Consider why your character chose to work with the dead and undead. Are you praDMatic about this? Is it a spiritual calling? Have you followed in your parents' or a mentor's footsteps? Were you always the sort of person who handled death and dying well? Were you drawn to this work by a morbid fascination?

Note that this death worker background assumes someone who works with actual bodies. For someone who merely works with post-rendering materials, such as a crafter who makes art or tools with human skin and bone, consider a Guild Artisan or Laborer. These materials are ordinary to citizens of Redoubt, and most can distance themselves from the morbid source of their equipment.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Intimidation

Tool Proficiencies: Any one of the following: Alchemist's kit, cobbler's tools, leatherworker's tools, woodcarver's (bonecarver's) tools, any one gaming set

Equipment: Traveler's clothes (effectively, sturdy work clothes), a dagger or club, your chosen proficient tools, and campaign-appropriate funds (15 gp standard)

Feature: Mystique

Others look at you with a superstitious reverence due to your work. Those who know what you do treat you with wary courtesy, and as if you have slightly more status than you actually do. People don't want to do the work you do, and they're a little frightened that you can. You also more than likely work for the government or a Church and enjoy the relative benefits and authority of official backing, solidifying the respect you are shown. At the DM's discretion, this might grant you an occasional bonus on some Charisma-based ability checks with the common folk.

Due to the same mystique that inspires wary respect in those around you, you must also take care not to frighten people enough to shun you. Overuse of authority could have widespread community consequences.

Suggested Characteristics

Death workers are rarely the sorts of people who fit in well at parties. Their expertise is the dead, not the living, and however lively, the dead are hardly ever good conversationalists. Death workers can face any horror the setting can offer without even blinking, and can take care of practical matters in a crisis like old veterans (which some are), but they might often come across as cold, weird, excessively blunt, or really, really morbid.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I have no sense of what is and isn't morbid, and discuss grotesque things in inappropriate situations.
2	I show almost no emotion in most situations.
3	I am secretly disgusted by my own line of work. I do what I have to, but I hate it.
4	I find the dead easier to deal with than the living. I like simple situations.
5	I feel spiritually uplifted when I help in the death and dying process. I feel connected to the souls I help to their rest.
6	I enjoy that my work makes others a bit afraid of me. Sometimes I revel in it a little.
7	I have almost no sense of smell. This helps me do my work, but I also can't tell when food is rotten, when water is fouled, or when I myself stink.
8	I've always been amused by gross and morbid things, and I think others are stupid for treating my profession any differently than any other line of work.

Variant Feature: Duty Unto Death

You have a limited form of immunity from prosecution in the performance of your duties. Nobody is allowed to stop you from collecting corpses, and you may take necessary actions to safeguard the city while gathering cadavers. This affords you some leeway in making collections when people are unhelpful or resistant, and may shield you from arrest if you must use violence to finish a collection. The DM's discretion applies—guards may not arrest you for beating a man who tried to keep you from collecting his dead wife, but you will still be arrested if you kill someone and claim that you thought there was a corpse in the next room when there clearly wasn't.

d6	Ideal
1	**Violence.** I just like cutting things up. I get in less trouble if they're already dead. I love my job. (Evil)
2	**Practicality.** I want things to run smoothly, with the greatest utility for the largest number of people. (Neutral)
3	**Respect.** Respect for the dead is respect for the living. It is a kindness to all to make sure our dead can know peace when they pass. (Good)
4	**Cleanliness.** The only way to keep the dead from smearing their filth all over everything is to tidy them up before they rise. I dirty my hands to create a cleaner world. (Lawful)
5	**Humor.** Rotters are hilarious. People are hilarious about them. Death itself is kinda funny when you think about it. (Chaotic)
6	**Belonging.** I've always been weird, but in this job no one expects me to be normal. I feel like I've found my niche. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I am a guardian of the last bastion of civilization. I am a part of what stands between the living and the unquiet dead.
2	I follow my family's tradition in my work, and I am proud to uphold my family's values.
3	I care for the dead, and their passage into the next world. My mission is to help them rest.
4	I hate the undead, because they took everything I care about from me. I am driven to prevent their existence however I can.
5	I love my city and its people. I will do anything to keep them safe from unclean death.
6	The undead represent great power. I am driven to understand death and the dead, and the difference between life and unlife.

d6	Flaw
1	No matter what I do or how much I wash, I constantly smell of death.
2	I have almost no patience with the foibles of the living, and I get irritated easily. Why can't they be as easy to get along with as the dead?
3	I must never let anyone learn that I have occasionally used my skills to prepare and hide the bodies of my own victims.
4	I harbor a deep-seated wish to join the dead in their peaceful rest, and it takes all my willpower not to act on my death wish.
5	I'm starting to have trouble viewing the living as real people, as anything more than "corpses in waiting."
6	Having seen so many who have passed beyond joy, and desperate to remind myself that I'm still here, I'm far too eager to overindulge in the vices of the living.

Variant Death Worker: Undertaker

You are a member of the city's most famous and infamous system: the Undertaking itself. The bulk of your waking existence is spent collecting bodies, always alert for any of them to awaken or for any grieving citizen to try to keep you from your appointed rounds. If you are still an active Undertaker, choose the Duty Unto Death feature (see sidebar) instead of the Mystique feature. You also gain proficiency with Vehicles (land) and with any one gaming set, in place of the tool proficiencies standard to the Death Worker background.

Destitute

A sadly large percentage of Redoubt's people live their whole lives on the brink of starvation, homelessness, and utter despair. You have come from the worst living conditions that Redoubt has to offer, in abject poverty. Even the poor look down on your kind. You have experienced firsthand the dregs of society and survived degradations that most can only imagine. All that you have borne would destroy most people, but you are not yet broken.

No one chooses destitution, so how did you come to be here? Were you born to a destitute family? Freed from slavery but never able to pick up the pieces? Were you successful once and lost everything? Did you make a mistake (or several)? Have a run of terrible fortune? Were you the victim of injustice (personal or societal)?

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Sleight of Hand

Tool Proficiencies: Any two from the list of tools; you've picked up a few things doing odd jobs.

Languages: Two of your choice, though you sound low-class to other speakers

Equipment: Nothing but the clothes on your back (common quality).

Feature: Invisible and Resilient

Invisible. As long as you are in a place where a beggar might normally be, passersby tend not to notice you. Thinking about the destitute makes people feel guilty for what they have, so even those offering charity usually look away so quickly they won't always recognize you. This doesn't normally grant a mechanical advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks or the like—although it might on rare occasions, at the DM's prerogative. Rather, it means people are unlikely to recall your presence after the fact, less likely to remember identifying features, and so forth.

Resilient. You've seen the worst life has to offer, and you have the will and resilience to roll with life's punches. You are less likely than others to become ill from spoiled food or dirty water, as your system is accustomed to these contaminants. Similarly, you have learned to sleep nearly anywhere, and are largely immune to others' opinions of you. In mechanical terms, you gain advantage on saving throws against naturally occurring diseases (but not against any imposed by spells, creatures' attacks, or other unnatural sources).

Suggested Characteristics

It is dangerous to romanticize poverty. Pointless suffering hardly ever makes anyone stronger. The poor are not supernaturally empowered to tolerate impoverished conditions. However, as adventurers, player characters are always exceptions to the norm. You are strong even though you have suffered, but even you are not without scars. You might have physical or mental quirks, or be wildly socially inept. You might have a deep distrust of the wealthy (which to you would include almost everyone), or have trouble getting close to people. You might think you deserve your circumstances, or you might be bitter about them. You might be outraged at the plight of other destitute people, or you might believe you are better than they are because you have better tolerated your situation.

d8	Personality Trait
1	My speech impediments make it hard for me to talk to anyone.
2	A history of trauma after trauma has left me understandably paranoid.
3	I am a creative genius fallen on hard times. I am odd, but brilliant.
4	I used to be wealthy, and I am ashamed at the thought of being recognized by my former peers.
5	I suffer from physical tics that make others uncomfortable, through no fault of my own.
6	My mental health is the primary reason for my destitution. I struggle to behave normally most days.
7	I feel angry most of the time. Why do other people deserve so much more than I have? Why is it so hard for them to share?
8	I have a deep compassion for all who suffer. My own pain has taught me true empathy.

d6	Ideal
1	**Luck.** It's all about good luck and bad luck, and knowing how to change your luck. If you don't like the dice you've rolled, you've got to pick them up and shake them if you want to roll again. (Chaotic)
2	**Payback.** Society has done this to me, and everyone is to blame. Anything I do to get back a bit of my own is nothing less than righteous, no matter who I hurt. (Evil)
3	**Equanimity.** This too shall pass. Nothing really matters. I take each moment as it comes and try not to get caught up. (Neutral)
4	**Compassion.** I'm not so worried about myself, but I need to find new ways every day to help those suffering around me. (Good)
5	**Acceptance.** My life is like this for a reason. It isn't my place to question my lot, just to hunker down and weather the storm. (Lawful)
6	**Survival.** I just want to make it through today, every day. I'm not asking a lot. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I want vengeance against those who left me destitute.
2	I must find a way to improve the lot of my fellow poor.
3	I must survive, at all costs. It was my mother's dying request.
4	I am driven to claw my way up out of poverty, no matter what it takes.
5	My child was stolen from me, and I must find him.
6	I was ruined when I was framed for a crime I didn't commit. I must find a way to clear my name.

d6	Flaw
1	My circumstances have taught me to value myself above all others, and it requires effort to risk myself for even my close friends.
2	I see no reason not to take what I want from anyone who has more than I do.
3	Part of me believes the city should fall and the last of us be slaughtered rather than continue to live this way.
4	Seeing others spend money on frivolous things drives me into a murderous rage.
5	Deep down, I believe I deserve my lot in life, and I instinctively yield to anyone who's better off.
6	Since I don't believe life can get any worse, I have no fear of consequences for any action, no matter how criminal or violent.

Herbalist

The city may roil with bodies, sweat, and fear, but amidst the dust and the grime there is still hope for life. As an herbalist you feel an innate connection to the flora, even though much of it has been lost to time. It's not uncommon to see herbalists sifting through dirt and manure, bone tweezers in their hands and eyes squinted, hoping to find hulls or seeds or plant matter.

A role customarily (but not exclusively) held by women, the herbalists arose in the tradition of the root cutting ceremonies, where heirloom grafts and seeds would pass from mother to daughter. Lore says the modern herbalists formed after the home of an Ouazi woman, Tafrara, suffered a terrible fire—one that destroyed her root cuttings and seeds. It is said that after going through the rubble she found a bright green shoot sprouting from beneath a copper pot that had protected it from the flame. This she took as a sign that Redoubt needed preservers of plants for all mothers and daughters.

Thanks to your close work with the House of Mercy and many religious sects, you are both literate and trained in basic science as well as figure drawing. Your knowledge of cross-breeding has, no doubt, given rise to some of the hardier forms of plants in the region. And, of course, it's possible that you're willing to offer information—or cuttings—for the right price and purpose. It just depends on how you view your work within the city.

Skill Proficiency: Nature and either History, Medicine, or Survival

Tool Proficiency: Herbalist's kit

Equipment: Herbalist's kit, ink and paper/parchment

Feature: Touch of the Green

Your encyclopedic knowledge of flora allows you to identify which plants produce potable liquids, to create nourishing foods where others see nothing edible—such as creating a tough but filling jerky from the *tes* root, common to Redoubt and its environs—and even to use common greens to staunch bleeding and speed healing. You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to forage for food and water, and you can get 15 uses out of a standard healer's kit rather than the usual 10.

Suggested Characteristics

In your life as an herbalist, you have learned to look ahead, to see possibility. You likely work with your fellow herbalists to improve window boxes for neighbors, build makeshift greenhouses, experiment with various manure forms, and even contemplate better and less wasteful irrigation technologies. But most importantly, you are devoted to the *Book of Life*: not actually a proper book, but a library of known plants, both living and now gone from the world.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I like plants more than I like people.
2	I have a serious addiction, and this line of work gives me access to the herbs I need.
3	Plants remind me that life is worth living and keep me from the claws of existential dread.
4	Preserving the history of plants helps me get up every morning.
5	I am honestly just happy to be alive and I'll take any job available to me.
6	I have long conversations with the plants in my neighborhood; I believe it helps them grow.
7	I'm only happy when I'm up to my elbows in fertilizer.
8	I am driven to hybridize and experiment on plants as much as possible.

d6	Ideal
1	**Opportunist.** I spread my knowledge to the highest bidder, as well as my goods. An herbalist has to make a living, after all. (Chaotic)
2	**Dealer.** I secretly want to destroy Redoubt from the inside out and provide the most potent drugs to the worst addicts. (Evil)
3	**Holy.** I believe my work is a calling from the gods; it is my duty to be humble and provide for those who need it. (Neutral)
4	***Service.*** I was destined for this work, and people depend on me. My work means that Redoubt can live another day. (Good)
5	**Toil.** I will improve my mind by the labor of my hands. There may not be much joy in what I do, but the journey is worth the pain. (Lawful)
6	***Scholar.*** Everything I do is in search of more knowledge, be it good or evil. Not everyone can tell the difference, but I can. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	My garden is the center of my life; being away from it would drive me mad.
2	I have a deep and abiding need to prove myself, at all costs.
3	I never stop delving into old herbology tomes to unlock answers from the past.
4	My district is the most important part of my life; all my work is to make sure they're fed and prepared in the strife to come.
5	I promised a dying herbalist that I would enter this line of work, whether or not I enjoy it.
6	I hope that my hard work in the dirt will get me noticed so I can rise up the ranks and prove people who doubted me wrong.

d6	Flaw
1	I have no patience for people, and prefer to be left alone with my plants.
2	I am easily distracted by growing things.
3	I believe I'm an expert in herbalism and don't take direction well.
4	I try to be everyone's friend in order to blend in, but deep down I feel like a loner.
5	I'm in love with my own teacher.
6	I feel like nothing I do matters, and eventually, regardless of research and time, the world is going to fall apart.

Laborer

Few think of adventurers as coming from the common labor pool of a city, but in a world this short on options, the spark of adventure can come from even the most unlikely of places. You have been a common laborer in Redoubt, semi-skilled but not well educated, as ordinary as ordinary gets in a post-apocalyptic wasteland of the damned. You may have been a farm hand or a porter, a ditch-digger or a street-sweeper, or any other minimal-training, hard-working position. Redoubt being as poor as it is, you haven't been paid well, and you probably haven't chosen this life, but you may have been grateful to have any job at all until something better came along.

What sorts of work have you done as a laborer in Redoubt? Did you enjoy it? Have you worked in more than one hard-labor field? Have you ever had other opportunities for work? If so, how did you end up in hard labor? Do you appreciate or resent your work? Are you following a family tradition, or are your fortunes higher or lower than those of your forebears?

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: A standard tool set of your choice with a listed price of 1gp or less

Languages: One of your choice, though you sound low-class when you speak it

Equipment: Traveler's clothes (effectively, sturdy work clothes), a tool set in which you are proficient, a belt pouch, and campaign-appropriate funds (10 gp standard)

Feature: Camaraderie

You have worked alongside the common people of the city, shared in their toils, their frustrations, and their moments of rare joy. Ordinary folk talk to you easily and treat you as one of their own, especially in places you have worked before. When you are in difficulty, they listen to you and help as best they can, so long as you maintain a reputation for doing the same. You cannot gain funds or secrets, but under most circumstances you can find a source of rumor, an occasional free (if poor) meal, job offers, or someone willing to hide you (if only briefly) from authorities, criminals, or aristocrats searching for you.

Suggested Characteristics

Though the stereotype of the laborer may be a weak mind and a strong back, you need not confine yourself to this formula. Whether through a simple, plodding worldview or a strong sense of duty, a joy in honest work or just a lack of better options, you are a person who can put in a solid day's toil, and you understand that the easiest way to get something done is just to do it.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I like to quote tidbits of common wisdom, like "Wherever you go, there you are" and "Don't count your chickens before they hatch," and anything else earthy and "common sense."
2	I am familiar and comfortable with everyone I meet, regardless of social class.
3	I think the world works just about right the way it is, and I don't like a lot of social upset or complication.
4	I'm deeply connected to my family and friends. I just love being with people.
5	I carry resentment toward anyone who doesn't put in a full day's hard labor every day, like I do.
6	I have a crude and crass manner, and I struggle to adjust it to situations where it is less welcome.
7	I am secretly a dreamer, with a powerful imagination, a rich and wild inner life, and some unusual hobbies.
8	I enjoy hard work because I enjoy knowing my body is strong and tough. Physical labor is fun to me.

d6	Ideal
1	**Duty.** I work hard because I know my place in the grand scheme of things and I enjoy doing what I'm supposed to do. (Lawful)
2	**Dreams.** I'm going to be somebody, and hard work is the only way to get there. You want to make a change, you've got to do it yourself. (Chaotic)
3	**Dominance.** If you're on top, you tell others what to do. If you're on the bottom, you do it. I want to work my way up the ladder, so I can be the one kicking down at those beneath me. (Evil)
4	**Belonging.** I just want to be normal, and to fit in with my family and friends. (Neutral)
5	**Service.** I like being helpful to other people, even when it's a job. It's uplifting to feel useful. (Good)
6	**Hard Work.** I think we're all happier when we work hard. I just enjoy working up a sweat and then taking pride in my accomplishments. (Any)

d6	Flaw
1	I believe one of the other cultures or races of Redoubt—or maybe several others—are the reason things aren't better for me and mine.
2	I don't really understand more scholarly pursuits, and I don't trust people who engage in them.
3	Having worked so many jobs for so many people, I'm far too credible and quick to trust.
4	On the rare occasions I have access to money or luxuries, I go overboard and expend them all way too quickly; I don't know how to manage good fortune.
5	I believe every problem can be solved with hard work. I assume those who fail to solve their problems are lazy, and I get frustrated and angry if I come across a problem I myself can't work through.
6	Whether or not I like the world the way it is, I don't really believe it can change, and I not only scoff at people who try to improve things, I get angry at them for wasting time and effort.

d6	Bond
1	My family is everything to me. I would do anything to provide for them.
2	My community is everything to me. I just want all my friends and neighbors to be happy.
3	I am compelled to work hard, to prove my self-worth.
4	My home is everything to me. I would do anything to defend it, and to keep it nice.
5	I want to be something more. I want to prove to my parents that I am better than they think I am.
6	My brother is dead, so I have to live life to the fullest for both of us.

Martial Scholar

As a martial scholar, you spent an extended period learning a martial school's arts and philosophy. You most likely also possess the Martial Arts Training feat (page 115) or membership in a character class that teaches martial arts, but this isn't strictly necessary. You may have abandoned the school, been expelled, or failed to develop skill in its methods, despite your best efforts. In Redoubt, developing this background usually requires four years of study in a martial school. Some schools have live-in students, but this old way of training has largely given way to students visiting for classes, and to put some work toward the school's building and common resources. Beyond training, your raw labor and exposure to the school's philosophy color your outlook. Each school offers a variant of this background. The core background is presented here; see "Martial Schools" (page 133) and "Of the Eleven Gardens" (page 143) for example variants.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics and one other, which varies from school to school

Tool Proficiencies: One tool proficiency, which varies from school to school

Equipment: Each school has a uniform based on its originating culture's traditional clothing, modified to allow for comfortable training. You have one of these, along with blunted, modified versions of one of your school's preferred weapons. This is treated as a club or staff depending on its size, except that you may apply modifiers or martial exploits as if it were the true weapon, unless they require a sharp edge or point. You also have a pouch containing 10 gp and a set of the tools you gained proficiency in by taking this background.

Feature: School's Walls

As long as you're in good standing with your martial school, you can find food, shelter, and protection within its walls. Other students will even defend you from anyone who comes to harm you, though you're on your own outside the school, and if your actions bring dishonor upon the school, you might be called to account for it by elder students or the school's master.

Suggested Characteristics

While ideal student personalities and other characteristics vary from school to school, Redoubt's common culture and the dedication required to study in a martial school cause these traits to cluster. You may pick characteristics that match your martial school, but it's also possible that you don't adhere to its values, suggesting a conflict which may reveal itself later in the campaign.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I keep a rigid schedule, and if I remain faithful to my school, I practice its techniques at the same time each day whenever possible. I have trouble concealing my disapproval of people who lead undisciplined and self-indulgent lifestyles.
2	I keep a small stone, stick, or metal plate and rap it against the parts of my body I would use to strike another person, to keep them conditioned. This is how I fidget.
3	I listen to people who demonstrate skill in preference to people who are popular or creative, and tend to treat them as leaders.
4	I keep my weapons and other gear in excellent repair, and my pack and personal spaces are highly organized. I feel uncomfortable and disdainful of messy people and places.
5	I refuse to eat all but a rigid set of simple foods whenever possible.
6	I will suggest a "friendly contest" of martial skill with anyone with combat training at the drop of a hat.
7	I stay silent in the face of the strongest insults, verbal threats, and other provocations. Only when danger is imminent do I act out.
8	I tend to speak in parables about whatever problems stand in front of the group.

d6	Flaw
1	I'll fight anyone at the drop of a hat to prove my school is the best.
2	I am a collector of martial arts trivia, artifacts, and literature, to the point where it interferes in everyday life.
3	My teachers mean everything to me—so much so that I won't make important decisions without consulting them.
4	My training taught me to get involved when the threat of violence looms. Whether it's to be a bully or protect the innocent, I'll stick my fists where they're not wanted or even needed, such as arrests and brawls between third parties.
5	My personal regimen is strange and off-putting, but I never skip it, so that I can stay fit and graceful.
6	To my great shame, I'm a lazy student. I shirk secondary duties like cleaning up but do my best to look busy.

d6	Ideal
1	**Humility**. I don't brag about myself or promise anything I can't deliver, and I contemplate my flaws to overcome them. (Lawful)
2	**Respect**. I treat other people courteously unless they're rude to me, and even then, I never stoop to their level. (Good)
3	**Integrity.** I don't make promises lightly, but I always do my utmost to keep them, even if it involves great personal sacrifice. (Lawful)
4	**Fidelity.** I put the interests of any group I belong to above my own, and always respond to threats to its safety and reputation. (Lawful)
5	**Self-Improvement.** I put my quest to become more skilled in things, and more the person I want to be, above other considerations, sometimes choosing it over personal bonds. (Chaotic)
6	**Fortitude.** I welcome challenges which test me to my limit, and take a gamble on whether these will leave me stronger or destroy me. (Chaotic)

d6	Bond
1	I spent a great deal of my training doing chores, while it seemed that others were getting more attention. I want to prove to my master that I deserve better training.
2	During a sparring match, I seriously hurt or killed a fellow student or someone from a rival school. It fills me with guilt, and I continue to look out for the person I injured, or the family of the one I killed.
3	I developed a rivalry with a fellow student or someone from another martial school. I must prove my superiority not only in direct conflicts, but in my other actions—and I want them to know I'm the better person as often as possible.
4	A master I favor lost their way, and has either violated the school's code of conduct, stopped training, or committed a crime. I must either redeem them or bring them to justice.
5	I was responsible for caring for one of our school's sacred items—a scroll of techniques, or an old weapon, perhaps. When this was stolen, it became my responsibility to recover it, and punish the thief.
6	They killed my master, and I must seek revenge!

Mystic

The Meliae may be gone, but many curious truth-seekers—mostly but not exclusively elves—have chased after their ways since they fell. In the streets of Redoubt, on the outskirts of the surviving cultures, a few small groups have begun to weave pieces of Meliae history (or at least rumors and tales thereof) together. As a mystic, you seek a oneness with nature, and perhaps hold a deep and abiding hope that through your connection to life you may dash some of the fear that follows you day by day, nipping at your heels like a starving dog.

As a mystic, you also have an understanding of the herbs and fungi the Meliae are thought to have used in their magics and spiritual practices. Legend tells that in the golden past, the Meliae sometimes partook of flora known to entice them to visions and power. While none of those plants remain, through trial and much error—and loss of life—the mystics have cultivated multiple potent herbs, the most famous of which is *ferrerine*.

This mysterious way is not just for the escapism, though some certainly might use it for that purpose. Mystics seek to understand the answers of the past, believing that with research and meditation they can travel back and read the residual spiritual impressions of those who came before them; perhaps even to better understand the Dead. Some mystics, in fact, specialize in meditation around their own deaths, hoping against hope to find clues as to how to prevent their seemingly unavoidable destruction.

Anyone who consumes a dose of green *ferrerine* must attempt a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a success, the individual either fights off the effects of the drug or else slips into a vision-and-dream-filled stupor for 1d4+1 hours. (On rare occasions, at the DM's prerogative, some of these visions might include cryptic hints of future events.) On a failed save, the individual takes 1d6 poison damage and suffers the poisoned condition until he completes a long rest. Elves gain advantage on this saving throw, but cannot choose to fight off the effects; if they succeed, they must enter the vision trance.

Skill Proficiency: Any two of Insight, Medicine, Nature, or Religion

Tool Proficiency: Calligrapher's supplies *or* herbalism kit

Language: Sylvan

Equipment: Small leather pack with *ferrerine*, a stone dagger engraved in Meliae script, a prayer knot necklace

Feature: Mystic Network

The eccentrics have to stick together, right? At least that's the thinking behind the rather ramshackle Mystic Network. If you're in a bind or having a particularly bad vision, look for a small carved sign of the *ferrerine* leaf on a doorway. While this is most often found in elf neighborhoods and tenements, it still means you have safe passage without question. Show your prayer knot necklace or otherwise prove your membership in the network and you can expect modest food and a place to rest for as long as you need.

Green Ferrerine

This artificially cultivated flora is a narrow fungus with a winglike structure on its top, known colloquially as "green dirt." Drying the mushrooms and reducing them to a powder, mixed with a variety of ingredients, creates a potent psychoactive that the followers of Meliae ways consider an almost holy sacrament, and to which many non-mystic elves have become addicted in their efforts to escape their insipient madness. This despite the fact that many herbalists warn against prolonged use of green *ferrerine*, as it may actually cause or aggravate madness.

Suggested Characteristics

Yes, your life's pursuit comes at a price. The tireless work and discipline take their toll on your mind. To make even the smallest advancement, a new discovery from oral tradition or the scraps of written history, requires you to work your mind and your fingers to the bone. Still, you consider it a worthwhile endeavor. Many mystics claim to have dream visions (though this is likely due to a variety of fungal enhancements more than any true spiritual connection) in which they see the future. The rumors of an awakening oracular culture among the elves do nothing to quell the progress of the mystics.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I sometimes forget to focus on the corporeal world, I'm so enthralled with my work.
2	I am faking my way as a mystic, in hopes that a vision might inspire me to actually believe in something.
3	I find this life easier than dealing with the one I was born into.
4	I was inspired to join the mystics because I thought I might be able to get access to tinctures and drugs you can't find elsewhere.
5	I find happiness when I am meditating, searching ancient causeways for hints of spiritual truth.
6	I really just want to learn as much about the Meliae as possible.
7	I had a vision as a child and left everything to join the mystic life.
8	I've always known I was chosen for a different path, and proceed with utmost sincerity and drive.

d6	Ideal
1	**Dealing.** I use the mystic network as a way to deliver forbidden ingredients and test out new fungal reactions on unwitting junkies. (Evil)
2	**Heretical.** I left my previous religious calling to become a mystic and am working to undo the damage of my previous institution. (Neutral)
3	**Called.** Many question why I would choose such a life, but it has shown me the true face of the divine. I strive to give as much of myself as possible before I die. (Good)
4	**Zealot.** The world would be a better place if people just listened to me and followed the way of the mystics instead of the Church and its pomp. My duty is to bring them to understanding. (Lawful)
5	**Madness.** I have had a lot of fungus. I'm not sure if I'm awake, dreaming, or hallucinating. (Chaotic)
6	**Cult.** I just want to belong. The mystics are the perfect mix of madness and togetherness, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Want to join? (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I am a seer. Glimmers of the future come to me in the flames.
2	I have risen through the ranks from poverty to vision. Now I have a purpose in life.
3	I hate the Church and everything it stands for. My goal is to pull down the pillars as much as possible before I head into oblivion.
4	I don't care much for the world out there. All that matters are my personal dreams and portents, and the connections I hold to the old ways.
5	I will someday unearth the wonders of the Meliae and share them with Redoubt.
6	I believe I will find the answer to stopping the Dead in the rambling sermons of mystics around me or, perhaps, in my own.

d6	Flaw
1	I struggle to keep from distractions and am rarely on task.
2	I speak so many languages that I have a hard time getting my point across.
3	I have a tendency to lean toward hedonism when I'm not meditating.
4	I dream of violence every night and struggle every day to keep from my past sins.
5	I have an addiction to *ferrerine.*
6	Because I am convinced I can see or feel the future, I can't say no to a bet and have a notorious gambling problem.

Scout

Though poverty and crime are rampant within Redoubt, at least the city provides a modicum of shelter, food, and water. Only a deranged fool would venture outside the walls, to the lands of the Dead.

Given the current state of the world, deranged fools are not too hard to find.

As a scout you can satisfy your sense of curiosity of what might be out there while doing a service for the city. It's quite possible that some scouts simply have death wishes, but many of them come from families looking to make some extra coin. Scouts generally work part-time, but they use their skills and training within the walls as well, working to help keep the peace when they are needed.

The majority of scouts came up in the Foresters—and many still belong to that organization—but exceptions do exist. Some very rare few private individuals venture out into the wilds, perhaps as hired agents of aristocrats, to aid a Church or archive in acquiring historical relics, or simply in hopes of supplementing a family's supplies. So long as they report any major finds to the city and turn over a portion of whatever they find as tithe—and can prove to the gate guards, upon their return, that they're still alive—the Magisterium permits a few such excursions.

Non-Forester scouts also find frequent work within the city walls, assisting in ridding the farmlands of monstrous vermin or hunting down those who steal from croplands.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Perception

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: Scout's sign (a notch in the left ear), Scout's guide

Feature: Safe Passage

As a scout you have safe passage within the inner and outer walls of the city. The scout's notched ear and uniform mark you, and while you may raise a few eyebrows if you try to get too far into the Inner Walls, you may pass without much question for a limited time before raising suspicion.

Suggested Characteristics

You are almost certainly brave almost to the point of foolhardiness, or at the very least so intensely curious that risk to life and limb seem a small price to pay. You are self-reliant, but also willing to rely on the skills of others—*if* they've proven themselves to your satisfaction. You might enjoy the respect of Redoubters who are awed by your willingness to go beyond the walls, or you may prefer to simply be treated like everyone else.

d8	Personality Trait
1	My general distaste for being around other people makes more than basic conversation difficult.
2	I am more interested in following tracks and seeing new places than actually doing my job.
3	I am something of an addict of wanderlust, but this work as a scout means I can get away with it.
4	My face is disfigured from a childhood trauma and I avoid contact with others if at all possible.
5	I am half deaf, which often impedes that whole "being quiet" bit.
6	Not all of my bloodline made it to Redoubt back during the Fall, and I work as a scout to uncover more about what happened to them.
7	I believe the only way forward for the living is to better understand the Dead. I like to poke at dead and dying things.
8	I want only to help people, and my limited education means I rely on my cunning rather than my knowledge.

d6	Ideal
1	***Crafty.*** So, I've got license to move around a little more than the average citizen of Redoubt. So I might pocket something now and again. So I might be doing business on the side... who can blame me for being resourceful? (Chaotic)
2	***Secretive.*** I want secrets, and I hoard them like gold. The closer I can get to knowing what moves through, or goes in and out of, Redoubt, the more influence I hold over those who live off the blood of others. (Evil)
3	***Status quo.*** It could be worse. I'll take this job if it means fresh air, and I'm good at it. I'm dependable, but not exactly employee of the month. (Neutral)
4	***Duty.*** Redoubt can't just depend on soldiers to keep the peace. I'm the eyes and ears of the city, and I'm willing to die to maintain the peace. (Good)
5	***Family.*** My parents were scouts. I'm a scout. It's how we do things here. Why would I want anything else? (Lawful)
6	***Skulker.*** I hide in plain sight so I can avoid the people who want me dead. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I must find a way to better the city by foraging and learning the ways of the outskirts.
2	I have to push myself to the limits of my capabilities, and the boundaries of the city.
3	I will be the best I can possibly be; I gave up my previous life for this knowledge.
4	I am a never-ending stream of questions, and the outside has answers.
5	I was orphaned at a young age, and working as a scout is the closest to family I've ever felt.
6	I work for penance. My crimes will never be washed away.

d6	Flaw
1	I don't like being around people, and I avoid unnecessary conversation.
2	I never admit I've done something wrong.
3	My ambition alienates others around me.
4	Breaking rules just isn't in my skillset, even if it means loss of life or reputation.
5	I look down upon those who live in Redoubt and don't work to preserve and keep it safe.
6	I am embroiled in rivalry with one of my fellow scouts, and one of us is going to end up dead sooner or later.

Variant Feature: Tide of the Dead

Those who study with the Foresters learn to anticipate the movements of the Dead, not just in battle but in the great masses that shamble from place to place hunting the living. In a pattern that nobody can see but Foresters slowly learn to intuitively feel, the Dead sometimes pull back from Redoubt, only to crash against it once more at a later date. Foresters take advantage of this in-and-out tide to plan their excursions for when the hordes of the Dead are thinnest. Foresters likewise have an intuition for the routes that will allow them to pass between the groups of the Dead and find safest passage (though safety is, of course, relative).

You can determine with some small degree of accuracy whether a particular area will be thick with the Dead or lightly populated. No place outside of Redoubt is ever completely free of the Dead, but you have a knack for picking areas where the concentration is lowest. When the DM rolls for encounters with the Dead outside of the city, the number of Dead in a random encounter is automatically the minimum (as if each die rolled a 1). Of course, this doesn't affect non-random encounters, and depending on how thickly the Dead have clustered, even a minimal random encounter may be more than you can handle!

Variant Scout: Apprentice Forester

The bold few who sign up to serve the city for years on end by traveling outside to find wood, ore, tools, food, and anything else that they can scavenge are called Foresters. The valley below Redoubt holds a dying forest thick with the Dead. To reach any other place beyond, one must cross through this forest—hence the name of this group.

Trained Foresters are hardened men and women who fight with the tenacity of a wolverine and sneak with the footsteps of a cat. Even if your training only encompassed the basics of the Forester's craft, you'd have skills to evade the Dead and break into ruins of the old world that would put the typical sneak-thief to shame.

Apprentice Foresters don't always make the cut. Some wash out, too terrified of what they see outside the city to take up the role. Others survive a brush with the Dead or return as sole survivors from doomed patrols, and decide not to tempt fate again. Some become caught up in personal problems or political maneuverings, or find alternative careers that don't involve constant forays into near-suicide. Thus, many apprentices go on to other careers, but they take their training with them.

Scrapper

You don't belong anywhere, or to anyone. You live hand-to-mouth by eking out scraps, finding use for junk, and looking for places where people have discarded bits of food, usable rubbish, or spoiled materials. You rely on your knowledge of where to find resources that haven't been claimed in the mazelike labyrinth of the city, how to suss out hidden cracks, and where to find valuables that have been lost. You see things in the streets others miss. Parts of a whole. Things that might not be food yet, but could be. Your life is built upon what people leave behind.

As a scavenger you live, or lived, a mean and dire existence, always just one step ahead of starvation, with the occasional boon of locating a lost valuable and selling it or returning it for a reward. Trash heaps are a particularly good place to find things, and so are old, burned-out fires. Or latrines. People are always leaving valuable things behind. Maybe you've fled to corners of the Outer City where you might find a small scrap of unused lumber, a bent nail that went missing during reconstruction, or even something with value that other people simply didn't notice. With an eye for turning these into profit, you made connections with local merchants and suppliers so that you could trade your odds and ends for the bare necessities of survival.

Without ties to the city, you remain mostly unaware of the political goings-on, or at least you have no interest in taking sides. However, you do find quite a great many secrets just lying around. Your power of deduction means you can knit together stories that might have otherwise been best laid to rest...

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' tools and one gaming set or musical instrument

Equipment: One set of ragged clothes, a small rock that can be used to chip away at things, a small loop of thread on a stick that can be used to hook things, a small heirloom (not yours) of sentimental value

Lifestyle: Destitute

Feature: Street Contact

You have a practical business connection (see "Connections" on page 159). This doesn't count against your normal limit of connections. If you lose this connection somehow, you can forge a new one next month. You choose the nature of this connection; typically, this is someone you sold goods to or from whom you made purchases on the rare occasions when you had money or trade items.

Suggested Characteristics

Scrappers are decidedly urban, as their survival traits all come from learning the less-well-known parts of the city and figuring out how to make do with castoffs and rubbish. They share a sense of life on the edge, constantly hungry and looking for the next opportunity, always trying to figure out a way to get their hands on something that can translate into a small meal or a night's shelter. You have probably had a few run-ins with the Watch at night, and you're no stranger to digging through garbage for something to eat. You likely have little formal education and little piety, though exceptions do happen.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I won't bother you if you don't bother me. But be careful if you raise my ire.
2	I had a life once, but I think I've got the better deal now.
3	My mind works in ways most don't understand. Finding diamonds in the rough gives me a reason to live.
4	I find patterns in the world around me, and it brings me joy.
5	My restless mind is only quiet when I'm out looking for answers.
6	I am certain I'm a lost son of a noble; I've just got to find the proof in the detritus.
7	I am trying to escape a crime ring, and I need to stay away from prying eyes.
8	I don't want to have to depend on anyone ever again. Just myself.

d6	Ideal
1	**Toymaker.** Life is bad enough for children in Redoubt; I've committed myself to gifting them slivers of joy in the toys I make from scrap. (Good)
2	**Tinker.** Life could be worse. And if I can make life easier for people like me, that's what I should do. Anything else would be sinful. (Lawful)
3	**Madness.** I take whatever I can find, whether or not it's available for the taking. It's about the design, not the function or legality. (Chaotic)
4	**Ire.** I want to see what happens when the fires start. Will they scatter like roaches? (Evil)
5	**Ease.** If I can make basic functions less stressful for the general populace, we'll all have time to improve the city. (Neutral)
6	**Gearhead.** I could do any number of jobs, but this is my calling. I'm a minor celebrity, and I love it that way. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I am looking for a map that may hold a cache of supplies.
2	The answer to Redoubt's future is written in its detritus.
3	I can bring down the elite by piecing together stories from their garbage.
4	I must build things out of nothing; I can't survive otherwise.
5	I have escaped a life of slavery and am grateful for every day I breathe.
6	All my work is to provide for my little sister, who is ill.

d6	Flaw
1	My desire to find new mechanisms is likely to get me in trouble.
2	I don't get enough sleep, ever. I'm always thinking of new projects.
3	I make inappropriate jokes around people. Even children.
4	I get so nervous speaking to people that I have a hard time expressing myself.
5	When I'm not directly involved in making something, I fall into deep depression.
6	I am so distracted by new ideas, I'm often remote and difficult to reach.

Playing a Slave

Actual slavery is evil, full stop, but consensual "slavery" in-game can make for powerful roleplay. When choosing to play an enslaved character, be sure to discuss in great detail with your DM what sort of roleplay and treatment is and isn't appropriate for your group's play style. A DM wishing to portray the harsh, gritty realism of slave life may otherwise subject your character to treatment you as a player cannot find fun, while a less gritty play style might accidentally lead to inappropriate romanticizing of slavery if both DM and player are not dedicated to a sensitive portrayal.

In addition, whether the DM or another player plays your character's owner, be sure to establish clear boundaries before game begins for what treatment your "master" is permitted to subject you to in-game. Is verbal abuse acceptable? Hit point damage? Being excluded from party activities on your master's orders? Discuss any possible complications you can think of. If you ever feel uncomfortable with your pre-negotiated boundaries (or run across an issue you didn't think of in advance), it's not only okay but encouraged to talk your concerns out with the DM and/or your in-game owner, in order to adjust the established boundaries to something more conductive to everyone's enjoyment of the game.

Finally, slavery can be a painful subject for some players due to personal abuse history or societal heritage. When introducing slavery as a major element to any role-playing game, be sure to check in with everyone in the game ahead of time to learn whether this element is acceptable. Game-play that makes players uncomfortable can ultimately be a good experience ***if and only if*** said discomfort is consensual. Do not non-consensually include play elements that disturb or traumatize your fellow players or DM.

In Redoubt, slaves address male masters/slave-owners as "*erus*" and female masters/owners as "*era*".

Slave

You are owned by another person instead of yourself. You have had no meaningful choices in where you go, what you do, or when you work. You have had no control over your living conditions and no say in what you eat or wear, how often you bathe, or much of anything else to do with your own body. If your master has been law-abiding and honorable, your experience may have been merely disheartening and grueling, with possible upsides like regular meals and guaranteed shelter. If your master has been flouting legal standards, however, you may have been through the most degradingly hellish experience a person possibly can.

Life is terrible enough in Redoubt that slavery is, in fact, something one might choose of one's own will. Did you choose the life of a slave? If so, what drove you to such a painful choice? If not, were you forced illegally into slavery? Were you sentenced to slavery for a crime? If you are a dwarf, were you born a slave? If you were not born a slave, what was your life like before you lost (or sold) your freedom?

This background assumes you remain in servitude. If you've been legally freed (or escaped), choose the Former Slave variant instead.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Insight (although, for certain more skilled and favored slaves, Performance is a reasonable substitute for Athletics).

Tool Proficiencies: Carpenter's or Smith's tools are most common, but a slave can be trained in any one tool set (minus blades, in many cases)

Equipment: Common clothes and a single small item, stolen or gifted from your master. Discuss with the DM what item would be appropriate to your character and the campaign.

Feature: Minimal Upkeep

Slavery in Redoubt has a reputation for providing regular meals and reliable shelter, but not all slaves find this reputation well-deserved. For some slaves, slavery might grant access to a wealthy person's household, place of business, or possessions, but many slaves are not granted such

Variant Feature: Slave Network

As a former slave, you know the places where slaves meet when given the opportunity, the rumors that make their way through slave and former slave circles, and the people most reputed to be kind or cruel. You know about the slave markets and the general value of flesh in trade.

You can use your knowledge of the slave network to track down specific slaves, learn information about the wild stories making the rounds among the slave classes, and gather information about particular slave-owners. While the information from this network is sometimes fanciful and often incomplete, it can point you in the direction of a contact who can aid you. You can use this feature to spend 1d4 hours tracking down leads in order to find someone who has information useful to you, if it would be known to someone among the slave classes. This won't help you find out what the Magisterium is up to or locate a rare magical item or valuable resource, but it could tell you where a few slaves have a hidden bolt-hole, help you find a particular slave merchant, or bring an introduction to a witch who sometimes treats sick slaves if the price is right.

access. Some slaves are given social training beyond their classes of origin, allowing them to become more successful post-slavery than they could have been before it, but such special treatment is rare indeed. For those who chose slavery, one's slave contract might offer some protection against the ills and injustices that plague the free poor, but in practice, many masters find ways to ignore contracts and mistreat slaves anyway. In fact, for many slaves—especially those who did not choose slavery—there is no real benefit to slavery whatsoever. All you can count on is a squalid, poor, or (in very rare cases) modest lifestyle, depending on your owner.

Alternatively, if it fits your backstory and you have an owner willing to grant you more freedom than most slaves, you might instead choose the Slave Network feature of the Former Slave variant.

Suggested Characteristics

Whether timid or assertive, slaves learn to remain silent and keep their thoughts to themselves. Assertive slaves have often learned a slow-burning, patient bitterness toward those in authority, while timid slaves might find themselves grown fearful of making their own decisions and attach themselves quickly to a new leader, even once freed. Proud slaves might bear scars of the beatings they have incurred in moments of defiance. They might struggle to trust others or to feel emotions other than hate and rage. Compliant slaves might labor under burdens of self-hatred or shame for the things they have done without resisting orders. Slavery might look inviting from the outside in a place like Redoubt, but even in the best of cases, it is rarely worth the price of the freedom lost.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I keep my head down and do what I'm told. I learned that the hard way.
2	I miss the pride I used to have in myself. Servitude has killed it, and I feel empty without it.
3	The only thing that keeps me alive is the knowledge that this won't be forever. I will be free.
4	I've forgotten what it's like to make decisions. I'm not sure I remember how.
5	I cope with my life by learning to love my masters. It makes most things easier, but can distance me from other slaves.
6	I believe that I am better than everyone. Better than my masters, who can't function without keeping slaves, and certainly better than those other slaves who accept their servitude.
7	I daydream constantly of the future and freedom. I'm only minimally aware of my present condition.
8	Servitude has made me a compulsive liar. I never let anyone know what I really think, if I can help it.

d6	Ideal
1	**Community.** We slaves can only get through this by pulling together and helping each other. It's all about kindness in the face of cruelty. (Good)
2	**Duty.** I am what I am, and my duty is to my master until I am free. Obedience is righteous. (Lawful)
3	**Rebellion.** I find every way that I possibly can to fight back, to be myself. I will run if I get the chance. (Chaotic)
4	**Hatred.** I want to see others suffer as I have suffered. I lash out wherever I can, whenever I can get away with it. (Evil)
5	**Comfort.** I do whatever it takes to stay as comfortable as I can through this trial. No need to make things worse than they are. (Neutral)
6	**Integrity.** I find ways to remember who I am, so I can still be me once I'm free. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I have to find where they sold my sister, so we can be together again.
2	I must avenge myself on those who sold me into slavery.
3	My father is sick, and I sold myself to pay for his treatment. I just want him to get well.
4	I must have my freedom. Nothing else matters.
5	I have committed a terrible crime. I live now to redeem myself of my wrongs.
6	My family's honor is everything to me. I must restore it at all costs.

d6	Flaw
1	I have spent so long taking orders that I tend to obey any loud or authoritative voice without thinking.
2	I am so resentful of having all my decisions made for me that I refuse to take orders from anyone if I don't absolutely have to, even when they make sense or would be in my best interest.
3	I have given up all hope of things getting better for me. I can't bring myself to act to improve my lot, and I disbelieve anyone who says they can help.
4	I've been hurt too many times to trust anyone, or let anyone get close to me.
5	Even if I were set free tomorrow, I will never be *truly* free until I've killed everyone responsible for my life turning out this way.
6	I have nothing to live for. I take unnecessary risks all the time, because I'd rather be dead than go on like this.

Variant Slave: Former Slave

You once worked for a master, for a business, or even for the city's governing body, doing whatever menial labor and services they demanded. Food was scarce, punishment frequent, and you likely lived in a tiny cell with only a single shabby outfit to your name. If you had some kind of useful skill, chances are you were pressed into service with that, but it bought you no comfort and no better station. The vast majority of slaves in Redoubt perform hard labor until they die, and only those who can handle this—and read the whims of their masters—have a chance to survive.

Somehow, you were manumitted, whether by a generous patron, by a clever scheme that you concocted, or by an unexpected pardon. Freed from your life of bondage, you were forced to find a new way to support yourself in the squalor of a city that had neither pity nor compassion.

Martial Schools

The ways of fist, sword, stick, and more are taught throughout Redoubt, most often within families, through military drills, and in the rough and tumble of street life. For the most part, these methods are encompassed by the abilities granted by character classes and backgrounds, with no additional customs or considerations necessary. But the multicultural streets of the Last City have brought to light deeper traditions: ways of life honed through the metaphors of secret strikes and sacred arms. These are the martial schools, which grant their adepts the ability to take advantage of critical opportunities in the chaos of battle.

Yet it's also the way of Redoubt to reveal and combine the practices of its component cultures. Surinzan opened the first martial schools, though for a time they admitted none but their own. Concentrating on a mix of unarmed combat, spear-play, and philosophy, these schools were intended to keep the Surinzan strong despite the loss of their oathbound purpose. Menhada warriors opened their own schools and soon the two peoples competed for violent work in the city, until opponents of rival styles resorted to rooftop brawls to settle their grudges. Meanwhile, Angat quietly revived schools of defense which they'd long cultivated not just for practical value, but to cement aristocratic alliances. Soon enough, an ad hoc tradition of lethal duels evolved, motivated by pride, competition for resources, and each oponents's desire to improve themselves. Eventually the Hoodsmen put a stop to the worst of it, and Redoubt's martial artists agreed to abide by rough codes of behavior. Duels would be restricted to two participants. Killing was forbidden. Gradually, the schools began to share knowledge and formed a collective martial tradition between them, with each school emphasizing a distinct aspect.

This was not only necessary to keep the peace but to maintain arts which had been crippled by the rise of the Dead and the foulness cast over supernatural energies. Masters had died beneath unholy claws, taking their methods with them. The worst loss of all was of the monks, practitioners of what the Surinzan called *Coiretar*, the "cauldron of thunder," and the Menhada praised as *Jipra*, "soul's power," but which Angat scholars called *ki*.

The monks used their discipline to saturate their bodies with this magical power. When the Dead rose and magic turned against life, it consumed them utterly. Only a few monks, novices exceptionally skilled in the arts of self-purification, expelled their toxic ki. Their masters and grandmasters were too tightly bound to it. These monks died instantly—and many rose soon after as monstrous, swift Dead. They murdered the living with tainted monks' abilities or manifested new and terrible powers. Ancient martial arts died with them, for both the Menhada and Surinzan had long entrusted the monks with the greatest secrets of their traditions.

A handful of novices escaped death and defilement. They founded the modern martial schools, reconstructing their arts and orders in ways that no longer drew upon ki. They became the first warrior monks, and the most dedicated exponents of the modern martial schools.

Note that "martial arts" is an expansive term, extending beyond the schools and their methods. It covers the fundamental drills required to join the fighter character class, or specific expressions of training such as that of the Warders, who learn evasive street fighting techniques. The "battle masters" who train Foresters can be said to be martial artists as well. Every culture and violent profession has its own fighting traditions. In this chapter, however, we use "martial arts" to refer to the specific methods of Redoubt's martial schools: institutions managed by martialist fighters and warrior monks who teach fellow followers of those paths and common people alike.

Martial Schools in Redoubt

Perhaps a dozen stable martial schools exist in Redoubt. Tradition refers to them as the "Eleven Gardens" for two reasons. First, the number 12 is unlucky in in both Surinzan and Menhada culture. Twelve soldiers are the number that traditionally fell a noble chariot in a Menhada epic tragedy, and "those with twelve fingers" is a Surinzan epithet for the shapeshifting Meliae, whose extinction is their culture's dishonor. Second, the martial schools were first established in walled compounds, and in response to inquiries, masters used to claim they were merely gardeners, growing food with their students. Many schools maintain gardens still, to feed members and grow herbs used in their traditions.

There are always other schools: renegade teachers who took a few followers with them from a Garden, back-alley "academies," secret halls, and so forth. They are not well-liked by the establishment, but when they persevere, the Eleven Gardens may admit them. Unpopular schools may be left with a single master, but if they were once prominent, they maintain a place of honor until the last master dies or dishonors their position. One does not have to be born into the school's national culture, but it helps—greatly. Some schools won't train martialists or warrior monks from other cultures; they'd rather keep the apex of the art for their own people.

Beyond cultural requirements, each school judges the moral characters of new students. Schools run by evil masters are easy to get into if you don't look like you'll snitch about what happens behind its gates. Virtuous masters are either highly selective or look at students as "works in progress," able to redeem themselves through training. Some schools are purely concerned with excellence. You must train hard and continually improve or leave in disgrace. All mainstream schools adhere to the Martial Virtues (page136), customs they adopted to reduce competitive strife.

Professional Prerogatives

The martial arts in this section originate from Redoubt's martial schools, but in some cases, they've been adopted by other organizations. These factions may employ a warrior monk or martialist from a school as an outside specialist, but sometimes they incorporate martial schools wholesale. Examples include the following:

The Crown of Blood: The Crown is desperate to employ martial artists as pit fighters and trainers, but all extant martial schools consider this a dishonor. The slavers' guild sometimes offers attractive contracts to Jeweled Canon and League of Honor practitioners, as they're used to fighting in front of crowds and their fighting styles are considered especially pleasing to watch. Both schools expel anyone who shares their secrets with slaves and slavers. The League of Honor's fighters have been known to enter the pit through debt-slavery however, since money flows through their hands unpredictably. Enslaved martial artists usually escape sanction from their masters, and some of them bring fame to their schools.

The Foresters: The Foresters' Serjeantry traditionally includes a master of the Brand Against Damnation martial school. This school is considered a branch of the original school, which receives a token 1 gp a year to employ the branch's master, the Serjeant at Arms. The root school and Forester practitioners maintain a friendly rivalry, including a yearly tournament at the Ash Farm—one of the few occasions where outsiders are let into the fortress.

Once a character joins a school, they may learn its art. For martialists and warrior monks, this training is embedded in their character classes and chosen paths. Other characters may take the Martial Arts Training feat instead.

Each martial school teaches many defensive and offensive strategies, physical training methods, philosophies, and even certain other crafts, such as weapon-crafting and herbal lore. While training means a character has been exposed to various parts of the school's curriculum, the rules govern those elements she can put into action, either because this was the heart of her practical training or because the school specializes in specific methods. The fighting methods themselves are encapsulated by the *Martial Ways* the school teaches and the *exploits* encapsulated by each Way. Other areas of training justify the character's ability to choose them when opportunities to do so arise through character advancement.

Long-time students who have been with a martial school from childhood, or others who have only recently taken up the adventuring life, may also possess a school's martial scholar background. (See "Backgrounds," earlier in this chapter.)

Martial Opportunity Points

A character with martial arts training acquires Martial Opportunity Points (MOPs) when rolling certain numbers on the d20 used in a successful attack roll. These are the *unmodified* numbers that come up on the die face. When a character rolls an even number on the d20 for a successful attack roll, consult the Martial Opportunity Points table. Note that Fighters with the martialist archetype and warrior monks acquire more points for very high and low results than characters with the Martial Arts Training feat.

Martial Opportunity Points

D20 Roll	MOPs (Feat/Fighter or Warrior Monk)
2	3/5
4	3/4
6	3
8	2
10	1
12	1
14	2
16	3
18	3/4
20	3/5

MOPs acquired on a successful attack roll (and again, they are acquired *only* if the attack is successful, regardless of the number on the die) may be spent on martial arts exploits from categories the character knows. *The character must spend MOPs as soon as they are acquired.* They disappear when the

character makes his next attack or at the end of the character's turn, and thus cannot be saved or stacked. Characters can spend MOPs on more than one exploit at a time, applying each of their effects to a single attack.

Unless stated otherwise in a specific exploit, characters gain MOPs only when taking the Attack action, and only on their own turn. (So, for instance, opportunity attacks or other reactions and attacks made with bonus actions do not accrue MOPs.)

Armor and Martial Opportunity Points

While some schools do advocate the use of armor, exploits are easier to apply without it. Light armor imposes a −1 penalty to accumulated MOPs, medium armor imposes a −2 penalty, and heavy armor imposes a −3 penalty. This penalty can drop accumulated MOPs to 0, making exploits impossible to use. The Jeweled Cannon is the only school that trains martial artists to adapt their techniques to armor and does not share its secrets readily. The warrior monks' Secret of Steel (see page 114) also teaches practitioners to use martial arts in armor.

Carrying a shield imposes a −1 penalty to accumulated MOPs. This stacks with other worn armor. In addition, it makes certain Martial Ways impossible (see below).

Martial Ways and Exploits

The following Martial Ways earned their poetic names in the interactions between various schools, who hit upon a common technical language for their methods. Practitioners might use the poetic or common names, though the latter is considered slightly disrespectful and avoided in formal gatherings. Each Way encompasses a weapon or method of attack and may not be used with any others, though the DM may allow some leeway in ambiguous cases.

There may well be other Martial Ways, kept hidden by their practitioners or lost in exile, which might be revived by studying ancient texts. The DM may design and introduce these as they see fit.

You must be able to physically use a weapon to use its Martial Way. In the case of Ways that use unarmed strikes or grappling, you must have one hand free, which carries neither weapon nor shield (this includes shields strapped to the arm). Many exploits can be used multiple times at once, for a greater bonus, greater damage, or the like. Obviously, this works only if you have sufficient MOPs to spend, as each use still costs its full value in points.

Universal

The universal Martial Way is taught by all schools and distills the fundamental skills of combat: attack, defense,

Martial Virtues

The Martial Virtues of Redoubt guide the behavior of martial artists. These are not formal laws, but adhering to them is what ensures the authorities continue to tolerate the schools. Violators are punished based on the severity of the offense, and when schools mete out beatings and even killings as a result, the Watch often looks the other way.

Fraternity: You may not raise a hand against members of your own school in anger or act against their lawful interests, and must render fair aid when requested or obviously needful.

Fidelity: You must obey your school's master and senior disciples in all matters related to the school, or within the boundaries of the training hall.

Honorable Competition: Duels between schools must be one-to-one affairs, and there should be no extreme disparity in ability. All related wagers should be legal and enforceable, and you may not seek revenge if defeated.

Peacekeeping: You must prevent violence in the vicinity of your school, and never initiate a fight.

Tribute: Fees and other forms of compensation for training must be properly defined by the teacher, and promptly paid by the student.

and techniques intended to end fights quickly. The deep training required to use them with multiple weapons and scenarios makes their exploits costlier in terms of MOPs.

Weapon or Method: Any melee attack using a weapon the character is proficient in

Universal Exploits

Following Strike (2 MOPs): You expertly position yourself for the next strike. You gain a +1 to the next attack you make against the same opponent, so long as that attack occurs before the end of your next turn. You may use this exploit up to three times, for a +3 bonus to hit.

Guard (Melee) (2 MOPs): Your attack puts you in a better position to defend yourself. You gain +1 to your AC against the next attack the target you struck aims at you, if it occurs before the start of your next turn. You may use this exploit up to three times, for a +3 bonus to AC.

Skirmish (3 MOPs): You move as you strike, gaining 5 feet of movement that does not count against your movement speed for your turn. You may use this exploit multiple times to move further, to a maximum equal to your current walking movement rate. Penalties for moving across difficult terrain still apply, and you cannot use this ability if you are suffering an effect or condition that prevents you from moving.

Great Blow (3 MOPs): With expert power and placement, you hit hard, inflicting +1d6 damage on the triggering attack. You may use this exploit twice on the same attack, to inflict +2d6 damage.

Knockback (Melee) (4 MOPs): A strong blow and/or aggressive footwork may push your enemy away. You may make an immediate Shove attack as a bonus action. This bonus action does not generate MOPs itself.

Harass (5 MOPs): Your timing and aggression force the recipient of your attack to fight you or suffer. You gain advantage on your next attack against the same target if they move away from you or attack anyone but you before the end of your next turn.

Brilliant Sphere (Grappling)

The way of grappling, or the Brilliant Sphere, gets its name from Menhada epics, where skilled warriors turn aside armies and pin giants with wrestling techniques. Practitioners of the Brilliant Sphere see circular motion in all combat techniques and yield along the curve, harnessing the enemy's own strength. This is not to say that strength is of no consequence. Indeed, grapplers engage in intense exercise to grow stronger themselves, while training to avoid the careless movements that allow opponents to exploit that strength.

Weapon or Method: Grappling attacks

Brilliant Sphere (Grappling) Exploits

Push (1 MOP): Instead of keeping a grip, you blend with the opponent's movement and shove them 5 feet in any direction you choose. You may use this exploit up to five times, to push your opponent up to 25 feet. The opponent may reduce the distance they're pushed by half with their choices of a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus.

Turn (1 MOP): In addition to performing a grapple, you switch places with your opponent. If your opponent is larger than you, you must spend +1 MOP for each difference in size. You cannot use this to force an opponent into a space it can't fit into. For the purpose of switching places, you occupy the area you attacked and your opponent, if occupying a larger area, has the same relative position as before but reversed and including the space you occupied.

Overbear (1 MOP): You slam your opponent prone for 1d3 damage but fall prone yourself, while maintaining your grapple.

Living Shield (2 MOPs): Until the end of your next turn or when the grapple ends, whichever comes first, your opponent counts as a shield, increasing your AC by 2. Attacks that miss you by 1 or 2 strike the opponent instead.

Grappling Strike (2 MOPs): By twisting a limb or hitting while your opponent is vulnerable, you gain an unarmed attack as a bonus action. This attack does not generate MOPs. For +1 MOP, you may use a light weapon to attack instead. For +2 MOPs, you may use any one-handed weapon.

Throw (3 MOPs): Instead of keeping a grip, you hurl your attacker 10 feet away in the direction of your choice. This knocks them prone and inflicts 1d6 damage, unless they succeed at a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus. Collision with a solid surface increases this to 2d6 damage, and other hazards may cause other effects at the DM's discretion.

Disable (4 MOPs): You wrench your opponent's limb or body as part of your grapple, causing them to drop one held item and suffer disadvantage on attack rolls. At the end of each of its turns, the opponent can attempt a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus to end the ongoing disadvantage.

Submit (5 MOPs): Your crushing grip inflicts the Restrained condition (see *PHB*, Appendix A) until the grapple ends.

Courtier's Claw (Light Melee Weapon)

"Like cat's claws—quick and trivial—for the amusement of courtiers." This was the initial Surinzan critique of Angat dueling techniques. Angat duelists appropriated the insult as a badge of pride, and soon all techniques with light weapons became those of the Courtier's Claw. Despite its aristocratic air, its methods are beloved by backaalley knife fighters as well, and even Surinzan study the light blade now.

Weapon or Method: Light slashing or piercing weapons

Courtier's Claw (Light Melee Weapon) Exploits

Dual Expertise (Two Weapons) (1 MOP): You must be wielding two weapons to use this exploit. With this exploit, you are essentially wagering the MOP you spend on it to possibly earn additional MOPs. Spend the MOP to activate this exploit and take your bonus action off-hand attack. Unlike normal bonus action attacks, this attack *can* earn additional MOPs. If the attack hits, regardless of roll, you earn 1 MOP; you also earn any additional MOPs generated by the attack roll, as normal.

Footwork (1 MOP): Unburdened by clumsy weapons, you easily lunge and step into attacks. You may move up to 5 feet before your next attack, and also move 5 feet after the attack so long as doing so returns you to your original starting point. This movement does not count against your movement for the turn and does not draw opportunity attacks, even if you leave a foe's threatened area. The area between you and your opponent must be free of enemies and difficult terrain. You may use this exploit up to three times, with each expenditure allowing you to move 5 extra feet both before and, if returning to your starting point, after the attack.

Feint (1 MOP): Your attack is a ruse intended to make your foe vulnerable to a follow-up. The triggering attack inflicts only half damage, but you gain +1 to attack and damage rolls on your next attack using the same weapon against the same enemy, as long as it occurs before the end of your next turn. You may use this maneuver up to three times on the same follow-up attack, for a total of +3 to attack and damage rolls.

Taunt (2 MOPs): Your strike is exceptionally painful or is accompanied by a gesture of contempt. This disrupts your enemy's concentration and will to fight. Make a Charisma (Intimidation) check opposed by your target's Wisdom (Insight) check as a free action. If you succeed, your foe has disadvantage on their next attack roll if it occurs before the start of your next turn.

Parry (2 MOPs): Your attack flows into a defensive exploit. If your target attacks you before the beginning of your next turn, your AC versus their first attack is equal to your attack roll +1.

Defang (3 MOPs): You slash and jab at the limbs and bodies of incoming attackers, taking advantage of the openings they present. Until the start of your next turn, when an enemy within 5 feet misses you with a melee attack, you automatically inflict damage equal to your Dexterity modifier to that enemy.

Riposte (4 MOPs): Your movements set you up for rapid counterattacks. Until the start of your next turn, if an enemy within 5 feet misses you with a melee attack, you may immediately make a melee attack against that enemy as a reaction.

Strike Between Breaths (5 MOPs): You aim a precise blow during a pause in your enemy's attacks. Your next attack against the same target, if it hits, is automatically a critical hit. If the attack roll actually *is* a critical hit, roll the attack's damage dice three times, not twice. This maneuver exploits a weakness in an active, aware enemy, and cannot be used in conjunction with Sneak Attack or similar abilities.

Deathbreaker (Against Undead)

Before the Fall, few studied the nature of death. The peculiar energies that gathered in corpses and at graves were for priests to study, and only if they were responsible for funeral blessings, when they were obliged to pit their prayers against a barely perceptible aura of corruption. After the Dead rose, certain priests and would-be monks studied this lore and devised techniques to fight this ascendant evil. They knew that the Dead weren't simply suffused with corrupt power, but that it had a structure, like the blood and nerves of living beings. The Deathbreaker Way teaches warriors to target it in combat.

Weapon or Method: Melee attacks against physical/corporeal undead targets

Deathbreaker (Againts Undead) Exploits

Attack Structure (1 MOP): You know the Dead don't feel pain, so you concentrate attacks on load-bearing structures such as bones, withered ligaments, and mummified muscles. The movement speed of the target you just hit drops by 5 feet

until the end of its next turn. You may use this exploit up to five times on your attack, dropping your target's movement by an additional 5 feet each to a maximum of 25 feet.

Skeletal Wrench (1 MOP): You aim for joints and vertebrae, which are brittle and often exposed in Dead bodies, to hinder their attack capabilities. You impose a -1 penalty to Strength-based attacks, checks, and saving throws to the target you just hit. You may use this exploit up to three times on one attack, increasing the penalty by an additional point each, to a maximum of −3. This lasts until the end of your target's next turn.

Strike the Black Seed (1 MOP): The martial schools believe the animating power flowing through the undead has a focus point: a so-called *black seed* which acts as a nexus for their unnatural abilities. By observing your target's actions, you estimate the black seed's location and strike it. When the undead you just hit uses any abilities that force a target to make a saving throw on its next turn, targets gain +1 to their saving throws. You may use this exploit up to three times on one attack, increasing the saving throw bonus by an additional +1 each to a maximum of +3.

Ritual Blow (2 MOPs): You swing your weapon in a mystical pattern and, reciting sacred syllables, drive it deep. Its purified nature disrupts the negative energy coursing through the target. Your target suffers the Poisoned condition for 1 round.

Hew the Shambling Foe (Vs. Intelligence 6 or less) (2 MOPs): Studying the repetitive movements of unintelligent Dead and their pack behavior, you easily bypass their defenses. If your undead target has an Intelligence score of 6 or less, you may use your bonus action to make an immediate extra melee attack against either the same opponent or another undead opponent with an Intelligence of 6 or less in melee range.

Firebrand (Fire) (3 MOPs): If you use a torch or any other weapon that inflicts fire damage, you thrust its purifying flame into a nexus of negative energy on the Dead thing's body. It recoils in fear. It must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw with a DC of 8 + your Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus or suffer the Frightened condition with you as the source of its fear. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns to end the effect. The effect also ends if the flame you used to attack goes out or leaves your possession.

Ichor Wound (4 MOPs): Dead with flesh on their bones contain a tarry or ectoplasm-like substance, which circulates the negative energy animating them. By examining your undead target's anatomy, you can estimate

where its ichor is concentrated, and your blow bleeds it of power. The undead target you just hit must attempt a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus. Your strike inflicts the Stunned condition until the end of your next turn on a failed save, or reduces the target's speed by half and imposes disadvantage on all the target's attacks and checks until the end of your next turn on a successful one.

Dismember (5 MOPs): Your blow strikes weakened flesh at your undead opponent's limbs, weakening them or even ripping them free. Choose one arm or leg, and note the following effects:

- *Arm:* The creature drops any item carried with that arm and loses access to any attacks requiring that arm to inflict. Loss of both arms (assuming a standard two-armed creature) prevents it from making most melee attacks or casting any spells with a somatic component.
- *Leg:* The creature falls prone and can only move at a crawl if it is bipedal, or its speed drops by half if it normally moves on more than two legs. (For undead with many legs, each additional leg targeted halves speed again, and the creature falls prone when half or fewer of its legs remain.)

These effects end when the creature regains its full hit points. Dismemberment may have other effects as well, determined by the DM. These attacks do not affect undead who do not have definable limbs.

Iron Gate (Long Blades)

The Way of the Sword, the Iron Gate gains its name from a poetic term used by the Angat, Surinzan, and Ouazi. The Iron Gate is the sword, a barrier against all violence. For the Surinzan, the "sword" is the long-bladed *sleaghar*, which uses similar techniques and can harness this Way. The Angat consider the Iron Gate somewhat barbaric, used by conquered peoples and discredited warrior cults, but still concede its usefulness in less "civilized" conflicts. Ouazi practitioners follow a tradition established by tribal bodyguards. The Iron Gate is a popular Way, as even in the urban crush of Redoubt, the sword maintains its mystique.

Weapon or Method: All heavy or versatile swords. In addition, the Surinzan *sleaghar*, a spear, or a glaive function with these methods as well.

Iron Gate (Long Blades) Exploits

Winding (1 MOP): You press your weapon against your foe's weapon or method of attack, so they must either attack at a penalty or disengage by letting their guard down. You gain a +1 AC bonus against any melee attacks they make against you before the start of your next turn. If they make no attacks against you before the start of your next turn, you instead gain a +1 bonus to the next attack you make against them, if you make that attack on your next turn. You may apply this exploit up to three times on the same attack, increasing your applicable bonus by +1 each time for a maximum of +3 to AC or your attack roll, depending on your opponent's actions.

Longpoint (1 MOP): You extend your weapon, threatening distant or retreating foes. Your weapon's reach increases by 5 feet for the next attack you make before the end of your next turn.

Wrathblow (1 MOP): You drive your blade in and through the enemy's attack. If their guard falters, you inflict a deep wound. If your opponent misses with their next attack before the start of your next turn, you inflict an additional 1d4 points of damage (with no modifiers). You may use this exploit up to three times on the same attack, increasing the bonus damage to 2d4 (when selected twice) or 3d4 (when selected three times). This is nullified if your enemy moves out of your melee range before making any attacks.

Bind and Press (2 MOPs): Your blade provides the leverage and threat to force the enemy you just hit 5 feet in the direction you choose, as long as the destination is unoccupied and contains neither a location-based hazard, such as a pit or open flame, nor difficult terrain. Once you have moved your foe, you move into their previous location, remaining adjacent to them. You may apply this exploit up to three times to move your enemy and yourself an additional 5 feet each time, for a maximum of 15 feet.

Close Slicing (2 MOPs): Instead of cutting at a distance, you move in close and drag your blade across your enemy's flesh. You gain an immediate bonus action which you must use on a grapple attempt, or it is lost. This action does not generate MOPs.

Halfblade Technique (3 MOPs): You grab your weapon mid-blade to deliver powerful thrusts, as if it were a short spear, though its shortened reach renders you vulnerable to attack. Your next attack inflicts an additional 2d6 damage if it hits, but provokes an opportunity attack from any adjacent foe (including the target).

Guard of the War Goddess (4 MOPs): Recovering from your attack, you take a stance that allows to you turn and intercept any threat. Melee attacks against you suffer disadvantage until the start of your next turn.

Masterstrike (5 MOPs): You position yourself for the perfect follow-up blow. Your next melee attack against the enemy you struck gains advantage, as long as it occurs before the end of your next turn and before you make any other attacks.

Shatterbone (Blunt)

The first weapon beyond tooth, claw, fist, and foot was undoubtedly the humble club. Menhada warriors carry huge maces to demonstrate their strength or as symbols of authority, but do not use them as weapons as often as they once did. Nowadays, blunt instruments are weapons of the common people, and the Shatterbone Way is theirs, its name born of street slang. Those who study it intensely revive techniques forgotten even by more honored, ancient schools, smashing through an enemy's defenses.

Weapon or Method: One-handed or versatile bludgeoning weapons

Shatterbone (Blunt) Exploits

Armor Crush (vs. Foe With Medium or Heavy Armor) (1 MOP): Heavy blows dent your enemy's armor or yank it out of place. You impose a –1 penalty to your armored foe's AC, as well as their Dexterity-based attack rolls, checks, and saving throws. This penalty lasts until they use an action to adjust their armor. You may apply this exploit to an attack up to three times, increasing the penalty by 1 each time to a maximum of –3.

Batter (1 MOP): Your blow crushes flesh and saps energy from your enemy. You impose a –1 penalty to their Strength-based attacks, checks, and saving throws. You may apply this exploit to an attack up to three times increasing the penalty by 1 each time, to a maximum of –3.

Bulwark (1 MOP): Following through, you bring your weapon back, bracing it against your body to absorb damage from incoming blows. Until the start of your next turn, any bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage you take from melee attacks is reduced by 2. You may apply this exploit up to three times, reducing another 2 points of each time to a maximum of 6 points.

Smashdown (2 MOPs): The successful attack you just made also knocks the opponent prone, if it's your size or smaller. You may knock a larger creature prone for +1 MOP per size category larger than yourself.

Dent and Crush (2 MOPs): Your blow batters your enemy's possessions, too. Apply your successful attack roll to a single held or worn item, in addition to your target. Choose an item you can see and reach with your weapon. If the item would have been hit by your attack, roll damage and apply it, or allow the DM to tell you if you destroyed the item.

Bone-Cracking Blow (3 MOPs): Your attack shatters bones and tears sinews. You may target an arm or a leg, and your enemy must make a Constitution save with a DC of 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus, or suffer the following effects:

- *Arm:* Your opponent drops any item held in that hand and may not pick up another until they regain any number of hit points.
- *Leg:* A two-legged opponent falls prone and, after standing up, their movement rate is reduced by half until they regain any number of hit points. An opponent with more than two legs does not fall prone unless this attack or a similar effect strikes at least half of the number of legs they possess.

Merciless Blow (4 MOPs): You strike a vulnerable area hard, leaving your enemy dizzy. The enemy you just struck must attempt a Constitution save with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus. Your strike inflicts the Stunned condition until the end of your next turn on a failed save, or reduces the target's speed by half and imposes disadvantage on all the target's attacks and checks until the end of your next turn on a successful one.

Finishing Blow (5 MOPs): Seizing an opening, you bludgeon your enemy again and again. You may use a bonus action to make another attack on the same target but suffer a –5 penalty to the attack roll. If you succeed at this second attack, it automatically inflicts a critical hit. The second attack does not generate MOPs.

Storm's Eye (Staff, Spear, and Pole Arm)

Storm's Eye: the high art of the Surinzan *sleaghar* and other pole weapons, from halberds to simple staves. The Way has a traditional Surinzan name, which evokes a pole weapon's ability to create a zone of calm for its user within the chaos created by its numerous forms of attack.

Weapon or Method: Quarterstaff, spear, *sleaghar*, any two-handed hafted weapon with reach

Storm's Eye (Staff, Spear, and Pole Arm) Exploits

Harass (1 MOP): In addition to attacking, you swing and prod at an enemy, making it difficult for them to move. Pick one enemy within reach (not necessarily your attack's target). They treat the area within your weapon's reach as difficult terrain until the start of your next turn. You may apply this exploit up to five times, to impose this effect on up to five different enemies.

Hedge (1 MOP): Your attack provides coverage for an ally's attack. The next ally to attack this same target with a melee attack, if they attack before the start of your next turn, gains a +1 bonus to that attack roll. You may apply this exploit up to three times, adding an additional +1 to your ally's attack roll per MOP spent up to a maximum of +3.

Vault (1 MOP): Flowing from your attack, you press your weapon's end into the ground and use it to vault. This allows you to move 5 feet, even through difficult terrain, and this movement does not count against your movement total for your turn. You may apply this exploit up to three times, moving 10 feet for 2 MOPs and 15 feet for 3 MOPs. You cannot apply this exploit if you are currently under an effect that prevents you from moving.

Long Strike (Weapons With Reach Greater Than 5 Feet) (2 MOPs): You focus a follow-up attack on an enemy at the end of your weapon's reach in exchange for becoming vulnerable to other enemies. You gain advantage

on your next melee attack against a non-adjacent enemy within your weapon's reach, but attacks from opponents adjacent to you or from missile weapons have advantage against you until the start of your next turn.

Superior Reach (2 MOPs): Your attack shifts you into an extended, balanced stance, and you easily shuffle forward and backward to threaten an even wider area. Your weapon's reach increases by 5 feet until the end of your next turn. If your weapon already has reach greater than 5 feet, you may apply this exploit twice, increasing your reach by 10 feet for 4 MOPs. You cannot employ this exploit on difficult terrain, or if your movement has been reduced to 0 by an effect or condition.

Pre-emptive Strike (Weapons With Reach Greater Than 5 Feet) (3 MOPs): Your attack positions your weapon to swiftly strike any non-adjacent opponent within your weapon's reach. You may make an immediate extra attack against such a qualifying target, as a bonus action that doesn't generate MOPs.

Set the Weapon (4 MOPs): After attacking, you brace your weapon's end on the ground, enabling a powerful blow against an incoming enemy. You have a −5 penalty to your next attack with this weapon if it occurs before the end of your next turn but, if successful, that attack automatically scores a critical hit.

Encircling Storm (5 MOPs): You follow your attack by spinning your weapon around you to strike anyone in its path. As a bonus action that does not generate MOPs, roll another attack with disadvantage against each and every creature—friend or foe—within your weapon's reach.

Strikehand (Unarmed)

"Strikehand" is a translation of the Surinzan word *dalamha*. *Dalamha* begins as a sport Surinzan children play with open hands until adolescence, when they transition to fists and harder fighting and learn techniques they will eventually transfer to the use of the spear and other weapons. Naturally, every culture has similar methods. For most, unarmed striking is a desperate form of self-defense or a sport, though Angat pursue it as an alternative form of dueling. Despite the name, Strikehand includes kicking, knees, elbows, and even headbutts, depending on the specific teacher and style.

Weapon or Method: Unarmed strikes

Strikehand (Unarmed) Exploits

Circling Blow (1 MOP): Your blow travels in a wide arc, in a spinning kick or forearm, or even a strike with a flip. Reduce your attack roll by 1. Your attack inflicts +1 damage. You may apply this exploit up to three times, to a maximum of +3 damage; the penalty does not increase beyond −1 regardless of number of uses.

Bronze Idol Stance (1 MOP): Your attack places you in position to jam incoming counterattacks, reducing their damage. Before the start of your next turn, you may reduce the damage of one incoming melee attack of your choice by 2. You may apply this exploit up to three times, increasing the damage reduction against the chosen attack by 1 per MOP spent to a maximum of −6 damage.

Warclaw (1 MOP): Your strike threatens your enemy's eyes or another vital area, forcing them to flinch. This reduces their AC by 1 until their next turn. You may apply this exploit up to three times, increasing the AC penalty by 1 per MOP spent to a maximum of −3.

Sticking Hands (2 MOPs): You maintain contact after your attack, snaring your enemy in a tangle of limbs and weapons. Your opponent suffers disadvantage on their next attack, so long as it is made before the start of your next turn, but you also suffer disadvantage on your own next attack.

Sweep (2 MOPs): You force the target you just hit to make a Strength saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice) + your proficiency bonus. On a failure, your attack knocks your opponent prone, provided they're your size or smaller, have no more than two legs, and have a definable standing posture.

Limbs of Stone (3 MOPs): While striking, you assume a posture where your conditioned limbs check approaching blows. Against the next incoming attack, your AC becomes equal to the successful attack roll you just made +2.

Poison Hand (4 MOPs): Your strike attacks an anatomical weakness, sickening your target. You force the target to make a Constitution save, with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice) + your proficiency bonus. On a failure, the target gains the poisoned condition. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make an additional save to end the effect.

No-Shadow Blow (5 MOPs): Your attack is just the first of a combination of quick strikes. Make another attack roll to inflict 1d3 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier damage (your choice) with an unarmed strike against the same enemy you struck. (This damage is fixed; you do this amount even if you would normally inflict more damage with an unarmed strike). If that attack hits, make another attack roll, again for 1d3 + Strength or Dexterity modifier damage, again against the same target. You can continue attacking until you miss, choose to stop, or hit five times. The entire chain is part of your Attack action and does not cost a bonus action or any sort of additional action, but these additional attacks do not generate MOPs.

Woodfell (Axes)

By and large, Woodfell is a stolen Way. While many cultures (particularly the Venmir) fight with cleaving weapons, many of the techniques used in Redoubt's martial schools—and in this school specifically—come from the dwarves. When the Dead first rose, dwarves taught axe fighting to allied militias. They preserved these techniques after the exiled peoples of Zileska took the city for themselves. "Woodfell" replaced the dwarven term *Bruz Mak'Tol* ("Fighting with Wide Steel")

and few masters acknowledge the ultimate origins of these teachings. Nevertheless, it is said the greatest practitioners of the form are still dwarves, who no longer teach outsiders.

Weapon or Method: All axes, as well as halberds and glaives

Woodfell (Axes) Exploits

Broadblade Turn (Weapons That Do Not Have Increased Reach) (1 MOP): You present the flat of your weapon to shield yourself from blows. Your attacks suffer a −1 to damage (including the triggering attack), but you gain +2 to AC, until the start of your next turn. You may spend up to 3 MOPs on this exploit. Bonuses and penalties stack, adding a further +2 to AC but −1 to damage each time.

Hooking Beard (vs. Armor and Shield) (1 MOP): You follow through with your attack to hook the worn armor or shield of an enemy with the bottom, or "beard", of your axe blade. You reduce the AC of the target you just hit by 2 until the start of your next turn, and can move them up to 5 feet to an unoccupied location adjacent to you.

Cleave (after 0 HP) (1 MOP): Your blow cuts right through a fallen foe and carries you to your next enemy. You may use this exploit if your attack drops your enemy to 0 points. You may then immediately attack an adjacent target with your axe, though the attack has disadvantage. This is part of the same Attack action, not a bonus action, and thus does not use up your bonus action allotment for the round. If you drop *that* enemy to 0 hit points as well, you may spend 1 additional MOP to attack a new adjacent foe, with disadvantage, just as you did your last fallen foe. You can continue this until you have spent up to 5 MOPs in a row (if you have that many available), until you run out of MOPs, or until an attack fails to drop a foe to 0 hit points.

Cut Down (vs. Larger) (2 MOPs): You use a hoary dwarven trick and chop at your enemy's low line when they're larger than you. Until the end of your next turn, they are treated as one size category smaller against any threat that pushes, moves, knocks prone, or restrains them. For 4 MOPs, you drop an enemy *two* size categories for the purposes of being pushed, moved, knocked prone, or restrained. This does not affect the enemy's true size or reach.

Haft Felling (vs. Reach) (2 MOPs): You follow your blow up with an attack against anenemy's weapon that has greater than 5-foot reach. You may use a bonus action to attack your enemy's reach weapon and the hands holding it. If you hit, your enemy's weapon loses the reach property as your axe chops through the haft. If your enemy is carrying a magical weapon or one where the haft would be exceptionally durable, the weapon is knocked out of one hand and twisted in the grip of the other instead, and does not regain reach until your opponent uses an action to bring it back to the proper grip.

Split Mail (vs. Armor) (3 MOPs): Your axe crushes and displaces armor as it strikes. You reduce your enemy's AC by 3 (though never lower than their unarmored AC) until they repair their armor. Magical armor requires no more than a minute or two, as its enchantments cause sundered components to lock back into place. Mundane armor must be repaired using smith's tools or leatherworker's tools. The DM may decide this is just a matter of hammering and bending, and does not require a forge or any new material.

Reaper's Turn (vs. Adjacent) (4 MOPs): You smoothly swing your weapon, doubling your strike. Apply the same attack roll to a second target adjacent to the target you just hit. The new target must still be within your weapon's reach.

Dismember (5 MOPs): Like the Deathbreaker exploit, you damage limbs efficiently, though this time you are aided not by your enemy's nature but by your weapon's special suitability for the task. Choose one arm or leg, and note the following effects:

- *Arm:* The creature drops any item carried with that arm and can't attack with it. Loss of both arms (assuming a standard two-armed creature) prevents it from making most melee attacks or casting any spells with a somatic component.
- *Leg:* The creature falls prone and can only move at a crawl if it is bipedal, or its speed drops by half if it normally moves on more than two legs. (For creatures with many legs, each additional leg targeted halves speed again, and the creature falls prone when half or fewer of its legs remain.) Targeting a leg does not hinder incorporeal creatures or those who lack definable limbs, nor does it reduce a creature's flying speed, if any.

If this attack drops your enemy to 0 hit points, you cut the target limb clean off, with effects determined by the DM.

Of the Eleven Gardens

The following martial schools are of the Eleven Gardens, though there are others. Remember as well that, under most circumstances, they do not *literally* number eleven. Schools rise and fall. Invent others at need to make up the remaining members, and remember that they do not include dishonored, secret, or highly exclusive schools. Their descriptions note their respective root cultures, implementations of the Martial Scholar background, the Martial Ways they teach, and their signature techniques.

Signature Techniques

Signature techniques either provide exploits that aren't part of the standard Martial Ways, or provide a package of exploits at a reduced cost in martial opportunity points (MOPs) so that selecting this combination is easier for an adherent of the specific school than for trainees in other schools. To gain access to signature techniques, a character must have trained in the school those techniques belong to and possess the ability to accumulate and use Martial Opportunity Points. Only warrior monks who study the Secret of the Duelist may learn signature techniques from more than one school.

Beggar's Crook

Beggar's Crook is named for the bent staff once used by Ouazi herders. After exile to Redoubt, herders often became beggars, as demand for their trade declined. When they were preyed upon by other exiles, the crook (often shortened for use—or concealment—as a cane) became a weapon and a warning to any who would harass the city's most desperate. Or at least, *some* of the most desperate. Beggar's Crook runs protection rackets and thrashes unauthorized beggars and street performers in its territory, but it also acts as a genuine charity, receiving and redistributing alms. While the school's Begging Masters do not tolerate outright thievery, which would diminish the art and attract the Hoodsmen, it is said a rogue branch teaches their arts to members of the Nightcoats.

Background

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Acrobatics

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set or musical instrument, though the Nightcoats' branch teaches its members to use thieves' tools instead.

Beyond learning to use the art's signature bludgeon, which is a cane stylized to look like a small herder's crook, students learn fluid movement. Masters of all ages are extraordinarily limber and move in a drunk-looking shuffle that "clumsily" gets them out of an attack's way. "Accidental" falls sweep legs; weird twists bend enemies' limbs. The practitioner's crook seems to hit and yank opponents by chance. Traditionally, students never take credit for an enemy's defeat. "He just slipped," they might say.

Martial Ways and Signature Techniques

Martial Ways: Universal, Brilliant Sphere (Grappling), Shatterbone (Blunt)

The school also teaches the following signature techniques:

By Hook and Crook (With Hooked Club) ***(1 MOP):*** When using a cane or other one-handed club with a hooking element, you may freely utilize Brilliant Sphere exploits (assuming you know them), making a standard melee attack when a grapple is called for. You must pay the 1 MOP cost of this exploit in addition to the cost of any exploit from that list.

Tumbledown (3 MOPs): Your attack might render your opponent prone, because you fall atop them—weapon first. This exploit works with any one-handed melee weapon or unarmed attack, but only against opponents of your own size or smaller. You automatically fall prone adjacent to your target, and your target must make a Strength save with a DC equal to 8 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice) + your proficiency bonus. If they fail, they fall prone as well, and you may use a bonus action to make an immediate attack (which cannot gain MOPs) with a weapon or unarmed strike.

Brand Against Damnation

The Brand Against Damnation's name is significant in two ways. First, dedicated students of the school receive a brand on one forearm that says "Suffer Not" in Angat script. This indicates that the student wishes to be beheaded upon receiving a mortal wound, and their body burned so that they do not rise again. Second, the sword of a practitioner is thought of as a torch that burns away corruption, as it is used to slay the Dead and mortal evildoers. The Brand's techniques combine Angat swordplay with secrets learned from Second Ascension funerary texts, which list the places where necrotic energies collect within a corpse.

Background

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Smith's tools

The longsword is this art's primary weapon, though practitioners learn to use many types of long blades in exploits designed to hold the line against multiple opponents. Sweeping strikes that deny space to any enemy are combined with thrusts to vital areas. The school forges its own weapons, and students toughen their bodies by practicing the smith's trade. Prayer and the study of sacred texts follow every practice session. These are based on holy books from the Church of Man, modified over the years to such an extent that the mainline Church might consider them error-ridden, if not blasphemous. In any event, the school does not require members to belong to any faith or culture. Foresters often study this art in a branch of the primary, Angat-controlled martial school.

Martial Ways and Signature Techniques

Martial Ways: Universal, Deathbreaker (Against Undead), Iron Gate (Long Blades)

The school also teaches the following signature techniques:

Firebrand (With Flame) (3 MOPs): You've trained to strike with fire and steel together. If you use two weapons and your secondary weapon inflicts fire damage (because it's a torch, lantern, alchemist's fire, and so on), you gain advantage on your bonus attack with that weapon.

Blaze of the Ophanim (vs. Undead) (4 MOPs): Your blow disrupts the necrotic power within your Dead foe, inflicting the closest thing such a creature will know to true fear. The target gains the Frightened condition with you as the source of its fear. It can attempt a Wisdom save at the end of each of its turns to end the effect; the DC of this save is 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus.

Coilhand

Coilhand is the last traditional Surinzan school among the Eleven Gardens. It stands on the verge of extinction due to its commitment to the old Surinzan ways. Originally sponsored by the ChaKavan clan, Coilhand taught the arts of the fist and *sleaghar* as one method. The body is the spear; the spear is the body. The school's severe training methods and its masters' unwillingness to adapt its methods to the modern concerns of Redoubt, with its street fights and Dead incursions, made it increasingly unpopular among Surinzan. Coilhand has no techniques for restraining a surly drunk—just killing one.

Background

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Medicine

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit

Training in Coilhand is severe. Intense physical conditioning accompanies endless training in short, two-person sets designed to teach each of the art's principles before moving to freestyle fighting. The student initially practices these with large movements and low stances, but eventually learns to contain the same power in shorter, tighter actions. A master is said to be able to crush a skull or dent a steel plate with no more than an inch of movement. The name "Coilhand" refers to this shortened method of power delivery, as forces within the body are imagined to be a coiled snake which extends to strike only as far as it must. Even friendly training involves significant force, and injuries are common, prompting practitioners to learn the healing arts.

Martial Ways and Signature Techniques

Martial Ways: Universal, Storm's Eye (Staff, Spear, and Pole Arm), Strikehand (Unarmed)

The school also teaches the following signature techniques:

Idol of the Spear God (3 MOPs): Your posture and conditioning reduce the damage of the next attack inflicted upon you by 4, if it strikes before your next turn.

Coilhand (5 MOPs): You strike with the concentrated forces of your body, inflicting maximum damage with a melee attack rather than rolling for damage. If this attack was also a critical hit and your attack is not already benefiting from a feature that adds damage dice (such as Sneak Attack or Holy Smite), roll the weapon's damage dice and add that total to the maximized critical damage already dealt.

Jeweled Cannon

The Jeweled Cannon refers to the upper-arm armor spoken of in Menhada myths, worn by enlightened heroes so that enemies would recognize them and challenge them to single combat. In the epics, this is a compassionate act, because it's better for two heroes to duel than for one of them to slay legions of lesser enemies. The art is based on what warlords once taught their children: a way of fighting in armor, on battlefields or in duels. Jeweled Cannon is one of the best-known schools because they often practice in public, holding tournaments where they'll face anyone willing to don a heavy fighting harness. The winner is the one who breaks the most wooden weapons upon the armor of another—unless the combatants have come to settle more serious matters, in which case sharp weapons are used, and warriors aim for seams in armor and eye-slits.

Background

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, History

Tool Proficiencies: Jeweler's tools

Developing the strength and endurance to wear armor is critical to the art; while the school accepts students who aren't proficient in wearing heavy armor, those individuals will never learn to make full use of the art. Thus, few monks practice it. In addition to training in armor, students learn to decorate it with gemstones, fine inscriptions, and elaborate paint. (Forging armor from scratch is considered beneath a knight of the epics, but these heraldic matters are another matter entirely.) Beginners spar with wooden weapons, while adepts hoist the steel and bronze panoply of the art, especially maces and axes.

Martial Ways and Signature Techniques

Martial Ways: Universal, Shatterbone (Blunt), Woodfell (Axes)

This school teaches no signature techniques, but its training methods lessen the difficulty of using Martial Ways in armor, reducing the penalty for wearing armor by 2. Thus, students suffer no penalty for wearing light or medium armor, and only a –1 MOP penalty for wearing heavy armor.

League of Honor

After a generation, dueling between the martial schools transformed from a public nuisance into a tolerated tradition, and then into something resembling a sport. Common people started to bet on their favorite duelists, or at least cheer them on as they fought in public squares. Competitors tolerated it for a cut of the winnings and, eventually, for a fee to guarantee they'd appear. Long the most tolerated form of dueling, unarmed fighting rose to prominence in this environment, and its best students soon chafed at having to share profits with their masters, or train in less lucrative forms of combat. The best competitors founded the League of Honor, a school hated by its traditional counterparts but counted among the Eleven Gardens out of its sheer public popularity. The League organizes competitive matches, looks for tough young people to train, and hires its fighters out as bodyguards—and debt collectors. Much to the chagrin of criminals, the League doesn't tolerate fixed fights, but welch on a bet made before the fighting arena and the competitors may give you a thrashing right after they fight each other.

Background

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Intimidation

Tool Proficiencies: One gaming set

Fighters can be seen running in rows throughout Redoubt. Beyond this "road work," students build their wind with sparring, striking padded posts, drilling techniques, wrestling... and more sparring. Calisthenics produces the requires strength. While the school has turned its back on tradition, it doesn't neglect spiritual development. Masters lead students in standing meditation, designed to unify concentration and correct posture, and "mindful" versions of everyday tasks, where the student thinks of nothing but doing a simple thing well, from sweeping a floor to landing a kick. Unarmed combat is the art's focus, though some students practice with weapons as well so that they can apply their knowledge outside competition to environments where a blade or bludgeon may await them.

Martial Ways and Signature Techniques

Martial Ways: Universal, Brilliant Sphere (Grappling), Strikehand (Unarmed)

The school also teaches the following signature techniques:

Mien of the Warrior (3 MOPs): Your successful unarmed attack reinvigorates you, and you shrug off previous injury and exhaustion. The physical damage is still there, but you hold it at bay with focus and raw willpower. You gain 5 temporary hit points for one minute.

Dragon's Eyes (5 MOPs): Your unarmed attack asserts your dominance over your foe. The enemy you struck gains the Frightened condition with you as the source of its fear. It can attempt a Wisdom save at the end of each of its turns to end the effect; the DC of this save is 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus.

Chapter III

Life in Redoubt

Lilium measured out the tetsgamar leaves, poisonous but necessary if the potion were to relieve the complaints of her suffering client. The young witch set the leaves to smoldering and stretched, bones popping back into place after a long night bent over her worktable. Bags of precious seeds and drying herbs hung from pegs in the walls of her Newtown apartment. She surveyed her domain with a critical eye. Although she'd moved up in the world, the glistening towers of the White Citadel served as a constant reminder that she might climb higher still.

Even in the heat of summer Lilium's hearth-fire burned, a luxury few could afford. She lived each day surrounded by death and disease, but the sweet-scented fire scoured the air in her workroom, leaving her one place where she could escape Redoubt's constant decay.

She frowned as the door to that sanctuary burst open. The scent of wet fur mingled with the minty bite of the smoldering leaves.

"Shut the door," she snapped before repeating the order with two abrupt hand gestures.

The ghûl slave obeyed, his discontent expressed in a whispered string of sounds from the language of his people, a language no human could emulate.

"Behave," she snapped.

The ghûl ambled over to the workbench, where he deposited a basket filled with pink-hooded deadman's bells. Inside the voluptuous bells, crimson spots promised death to the unwary, but the ghûl weren't afraid of death, and neither was Lilium. Death wore many faces in Redoubt. Jirhal, her previous master's dark goddess, was but one of them.

Where Lilium was tall for a human, the beast towered over her by more than a foot. His mottled, russet fur marked him as a Redwalker among his kind, or at least it had until he'd been named outcast for killing his own littermate. The ghûl had lost his sense of smell from repeated blows to his already scarred muzzle, yet the carrion-eater had found Lilium among the oppressive throng in the Downs by some strange sixth sense. Lilium had taken the battered ghûl into her service and named him Ragged Ear. Over the years, his unique attunement to death had served her well. With his aid, and despite the edicts of Magisterium and Church alike, she meant to continue her climb to power.

The gong announced a visitor at her front door. Ragged Ear huffed, shifting back and forth on his haunches, the thick ridge of fur along his spine bristling. He held his head cocked as though listening to something inaudible to human ears.

The gong rang again, but Lilium hesitated.

"What?"

Something wrong, signified the ghûl.

"Something?"

Mistake. His clawed digits traced his indecision in the space between them.

She pointed to the door leading down to the first floor. "There?"

Ragged Ear shook his head. Another chime: a loud, jarring clatter.

"It will have to wait then," she said. "Stay here."

Lilium answered the persistent ringing with head held high. Even without the aid of Jirhal's dark magic, she had a reputation for poisons, for the power to heal or kill as she saw fit. Lilium's services for a few key officials had kept her safe, but she was well aware of her vulnerability.

A red-bearded dwarf with bone rings looped through his ears greeted her with a scowl. "About time."

Lilium clasped her hands together. "What can I do for you today, Captain?"

The dwarf handed her a sealed envelope made from real paper. The linen was smooth and cool against her skin.

She broke the seal and unfolded the paper. A single command had been written in stylized script. "How many?"

"Just one. A very important one." The dwarf watched her with eyes as black as volcanic glass. "I'll have a runner pick up it up. Same as last time."

Lilium nodded and tucked the paper into her sleeve. She bowed low. The dwarf dismissed her with a nod.

When she entered her workroom, she found the ghûl picking through the crushed blooms he'd harvested from the rooftop garden. He questioned her with a sound that approximated her name. She wondered if the trouble the ghûl sensed had anything to do with the captain's unexpected appearance. If something evil was stirring, Lilium wouldn't be surprised to find the Nightcoats involved in it.

"This will have to wait." She set the smoking tetsgamar leaves aside and cleared a space on the table. Sometimes killing a man took more effort than saving one. "We've got work to do."

Life Among the Dead

Just because the world is falling apart doesn't mean that Redoubt lacks the structure and functions of any other high medieval city. Although poised on the edge of extinction, the last outpost of civilization retains many familiar settings, structures, and entertainments for adventures of all stripes. Taverns, fantastic food items, agriculture, and varied pleasures all appear in Redoubt, albeit in ways unique to this world. Because everything is scarce and the outlook for Redoubt is not exactly rosy, the citizens—both high and low—have had to adapt. Even the most well-to-do don't live particularly lavish lives by fantasy standards. They're all one blight away from tightening their belts again, if not far worse.

Yet hope, music, and laugher remain. Mummer shows, acrobats, fire-eaters... As long as you're willing to pay, they're willing to play. At least until the walls finally crumble in.

Note that these sections are intended as a general overview. For a much more detailed look at the economy, services, and goods of the city, see "The Economy of Redoubt," later in this chapter.

Food

There's no avoiding it. Food makes or breaks one's existence in Redoubt. The feasts of yore are diminished to little more than ancient strains of myth and memory. Sweet fruits, magnificent rich meat, and fatty cracklings exist mostly in dreams, and sometimes not even there.

What food you eat has a direct correlation to how much money you have and what status you claim. Many citizens of Redoubt find their way into organizations like the House of Mercy, the military, or organized gangs like the Iron Moon for a regular bowl of grain.

Fruits and Vegetables

Growing food is far and away the most productive way of providing it for most of Redoubt's citizens. Much of the city has been designed to accommodate gardening: window boxes, rooftop gardens, and public grounds within the gates provide a wide variety of plants, fruits, and herbs, to supplement the larger fields outside the inner wall.

Crops grown beyond the city proper consist primarily of olives, which are used for their oil in addition to their fruit, as well as smaller plots of wheat, barley, rice, hemp, amaranth, small lemons, and buckwheat. Due to a large incidence of blight, most other crops are found only in limited supply.

Olive fruits are generally too expensive for general consumption, but the oil is available to the common folk. Wheat, rice, and barley are predominately for the richer folks, as they require more upkeep. Hemp is used for rope, cloth, paper, and—the hemp hearts, anyway—eating, as a lumpy porridge. Buckwheat is the main staple for most; this dark red grain is most frequently mixed with water to make a runny batter and cooked into flat, soft disks. The crepes are easily portable and have a relatively long shelf life. Lemons are typically grown for the aristocrats, but also find their uses in medicinal applications. Amaranth is a common grain, but suffers blights every few years and must be rotated in the crops; hence the phrase, "That was an amaranth year," referring to periods of relative plenty.

Additionally, quite a few native plants grow naturally in the area, but most prove very difficult to process. *Tes* root grows abundantly, but only red *tes* is naturally edible, and it is bitter and fibrous. When it comes to yellow *tes*, which grows just about everywhere, only very skilled herbalists can process the root and extract enough of the natural toxins to make it into an edible jerky. Most often, yellow *tes* is used in clothing, usually as a cheap leather substitute. Once the pulp is ground and dried in the sun for a period of at least two weeks, it becomes strong and pliant.

Useful herbs are rarely found in nature any longer and must be grown within the city. These heritage seeds are maintained by maternal lines in many families, and considered a mark of status and respect. The more sensitive plants require a great deal of care. In many households this duty belongs to the youngest child. Common herbs include chamomile, caraway, rosemary, thyme, oregano, basil, and sage. In more affluent households, herbs may include passionflower, jasmine, or even orchids—the roots of which are also edible.

Protein

Meats, or at least good quality meats, are among the hardest food sources to come by on a regular basis. Milk-producing goats are a symbol of wealth. Male kids are typically castrated young, as only choice stock are bred with the best milk-producing female lines. The predominant goat coloring is a mottled gray, with long hair about their back legs. Other animals of burden are kept until injured or old, and their meat made into long-lasting jerky.

Vermin are a frequent food source in Redoubt, as they are common within the walls of the city, as desperate as the hands that grab them. Small rats, mice, voles, and birds are sometimes found in the streets, though hunting has diminished their numbers considerably. However, there are a good number of large rodent farms, providing specially bred animals for those able to pay for them.

A sizeable portion of the protein eaten by the truly impoverished, then, comes in the form of insects. Crickets, locusts, and scarabs are the most plentiful and can be collected easily. In the cooler months, mealworms and millipedes make their appearance. In most cases, insects are caught, dried, and ground to a fine flour to add to the buckwheat cakes, but few of Redoubt's poor can deny eating them straight from time to time. Some moderately successful families even keep small colonies in their houses. Due to the large population of venomous insects, more than a few deaths a year occur as a result of bites and stings.

Drinking

Water from the Kolobus River and linked wells is often tainted. While potent spirits and the like are considered a waste of resources, some measure of fermentation (or ritual magic) is required to transform the river water into something safely potable. Rye beer is the most popular drink in the city, as the crop is hardier than its counterparts as well as more common. It is a sour beer, the fermentation coming from wild yeast found on *tes* roots, and produces a silty, frothy beverage that is mildly alcoholic, both bitter and tart. Even children drink rye beer, and it is brewed in large vats outside homes and in larger estates. The name is somewhat of a misnomer, however, as it usually only contains a very small amount of rye in proportion to other parts of the mash, which are often made up of discarded fruit scraps (when available) and red *tes* root, which is made almost palatable in the process.

True distillation is practically a rumor, as the idea of wasting viable foodstuffs would be unthinkable for most of the citizens of Redoubt. In particularly good years, though, those with the know-how and black market connections can find small amounts of distilled alcohol. The most well known is a drink called *gmata* by the Ouazi, who claim the recipe from their forefathers. Many have adopted the name, but true *gmata* may as well be made of gold and capable of sprouting feathers since so few have ever seen, let alone tasted it.

Jobs and Guilds

In an overpopulated, mostly poor city, where slavery is legal, it is safe to say that the job market is horrible. Indeed, there are effectively only three broad categories of (legal) work for laborers in Redoubt, each with its own pros and cons.

Government Work

Those who work for the Magisterium or its agents are paid reliably and better than average for their social class. Examples include the Foresters, the Watch, the Forerunners, the farm patrol, and the various accountants, tax collectors, and census-takers. Government workers are usually treated with respect by law enforcement and are more likely to enjoy something close to justice in criminal cases. (Note that "more likely" doesn't remotely mean "guaranteed.")

The downside of such work is that government workers are rarely permitted to join guilds, and even the exceptions, like the Forerunner's Guild, are toothless in determining the treatment of their members at government hands. In addition, government jobs incur the scrutiny of groups like the Census and the Hoodsmen, and government work is notoriously unforgiving. Anyone who makes a mistake of any kind (or is plausibly framed for one) may be dismissed without recourse, no second chances offered.

Guild Work

Guilds are expensive to form and maintain, and therefore only commonly available to artisans of a certain class and their apprentices. Every skilled occupation in Redoubt has its guild or a conglomerate guild (such as the Clothiers' Guild for shoemakers, tailors, weavers and spinners, and any skilled worker whose profession deals primarily in cloth or similar textiles). Guilds pay fees—including bribes—to various officials to protect their members from unscrupulous employers or clients, as well as from government interference. They also advocate for their members, to the point of hiring barristers at need, and they set and maintain living-wage standard prices for their members' services. Some scattered sections of the city are actually controlled outright by this guild or that, the organization serving as a local government as well as a business concern.

The disadvantage of working in a guild-protected field is that guild fees are high and non-negotiable. In neighborhoods and subdistricts where guilds hold power, those who refuse to join are kept from working through brutal and gang-like methods if need be, making each guild somewhat akin to a protection racket, though with net benefits most artisans find to be worth the expense. Poor artisans, regardless of skill, must either move to areas where the guilds are weaker, find a way to beg, borrow, or steal the necessary guild fees, or work in secret, selling only to the black market—a dangerous prospect on many fronts.

Free Labor

By far the worst option for working in Redoubt, but also the most common, "free labor" has close to a double meaning. These workers aren't enslaved, but they may be working for nearly nothing. No one in Redoubt enforces any sort of minimum wage, nor forces any employer to pay promised wages after a workday. Corruption and dishonesty abound, and workers are well-advised to either be paid up front (rarely possible) or to know an employer well before accepting a job, which is not always an option for the starving.

There is, indeed, little upside to being a free laborer in Redoubt, and time spent in such conditions shows why so many in the city willingly indenture themselves. In the Newtown slums, the best legal employers are those who reliably provide room and minimal board to employees, for a living circumstance largely akin to slavery but without a contract or any regulation. A job that pays even a pittance in coin beyond the above is a near miracle, and laborers seek out and protect such positions like the finest treasures. It turns out that when an overcrowded population has nowhere else to go, what the job market will bear is just about anything.

Free labor is quite common among children, and there are no child labor laws in Redoubt. Nearly all children outside the wealthiest classes have jobs of some kind.

Wealth

With the influx of so many cultures over time, money has become a rather challenging—and rarely consistent—exchange. In the early days of the city, different cultures kept to themselves and circulated their own coins for the buying and selling of products. But as the barriers between them came down and trade flowed freely, the issue of consistency became unbearable, resulting in riots and general unrest.

There are two main economies in Redoubt: coinage and bartering. Depending on your background and upbringing, you may have access to one or both of them.

Coinage

About twenty years ago, the Angat nobility worked closely with the Magisterium to collect all the coinage possible and melt it down into three basic metals: gold, silver, and copper. It's important to note, however, that the purity levels of all three reserves are wild and unpredictable, and while the mint allowed for a streamlining of the process, it also opened up new issues. Since those bringing coin to melt were given an extra ration of grain per measure, the result was an uptick in crime. Additionally, others hoarded their native coins to protect against the "destruction of their culture." It is not uncommon for mixed currency to make its way into circulation, and some add the old coins as a symbolic gesture to their transactions.

This inconsistency has led the upper class to devise a method of paper money made from hemp. Hand in hand with the Magisterium, and with the proper approvals in order, the Ouazi and Angat led the change, and now most of higher income levels utilize paper money. The notes themselves portray different phases of the moons, denoting the currency. Coins have all but become extinct among the nobles at this point, and it is considered rather uncouth to pay with anything but bills.

Bartering

As Redoubt is a city in decline with essentially a zero-growth economy, and as a large proportion of the citizens live in poverty, access to any coin is a tremendous challenge.

What's arisen, particularly in the last several decades, is a resurgence of a barter economy among the poor. Even in the most depressed parts of town, labor and items may be traded for equal value among parties and, sometimes, factions. Not surprisingly, there is little parity as scarcities rise and fall with the seasons and events unfolding around them. Still, the average folk have begun to specialize within their own districts. It has come to the notice of some of the larger gangs, factions, and establishments that sometimes, if the case requires it, they may offer barter instead of cash, though this is on a case-by-case basis.

Unfortunately, it has also correlated with a rise in slave labor. Some people fall on hard times, so hard they have nothing left to barter save their lives. It is unfortunately not uncommon to sell oneself into servitude for a fixed term of years to pay off a debt or make good on a trade that went south.

The Value of Money

While precise values fluctuate, for general use (and ease of game play), assume that hemp bills are equivalent to the following buying power:

- Two-Moon note: 10 gp
- Full Moon note: 5 gp
- Gibbous Moon note: 1 gp
- Half Moon note: 5 sp
- Crescent Moon note: 1 sp
- New Moon note: 5 cp

These may seem like relatively low denominations for the wealthy to use, but remember that "wealth" in Redoubt is a very relative term. For much larger transactions, the rich instead use signed and counter-signed promissory notes.

Slavery

Slavery is an accepted part of life in Redoubt, and few question the morality of the practice. There are four types of slavery in Redoubt, and each is governed by a different set of rules. One thing they share in common is that all slaves must have both ears pierced by their masters. Some masters show off their means by decorating their slaves' ears with fine jewels, but most use hoops of bone or wood, or (occasionally) tiny steel studs to mark their property.

Another law common to all legal types of slavery is that no slave may wield a blade under any circumstances. Some people take this to mean that slaves cannot be cooks and should not be allowed to shave their faces. Others interpret the rule less strictly, though it is still the norm for male slaves to wear at least a modicum of facial hair. Many households compromise: Kitchen workers and others who need to use blades use "slave knives," small implements that are chained to a heavy weight or fixed object.

A slave's basic value is typically comparable to a year's pay for the equivalent labor from a free worker, based on the most valuable work the slave can do. This fluctuates the same way other commodities do. Excessively high or low prices can be challenged in court, though a slave doing the challenging (to buy their own freedom, for instance) must have a free citizen as an advocate. The price to purchase a slave's freedom usually begins at double the slave's market value.

Masters are forbidden from permanently injuring or killing their own slaves, unless such harm is a "danger necessarily born of their labors," as the law puts it. If a free individual assaults or kills a slave, the perpetrator pays a fine based on damage to the victim's market value. As with all laws governing slavery, these statutes are irregularly investigated or enforced.

Legal slavery is overseen by the Crown of Blood, effectively a slave-trading guild, who also run pit fighting for the arena. Government oversight of Crown of Blood "justice" tends to be cursory, so in any matter in which a slave's interests conflict with those of the Crown, that slave, regardless of contract, can expect fairness to more or less go right out the window.

"Voluntary" Slavery

A portion of non-dwarf slaves in Redoubt have indentured themselves willingly. This is true in particular among ghûl slaves, whose culture does not look down on slaves as lesser. Self-indenture comes with an indenture contract for either a set number of years or with an agreed upon method for returning one's freedom.

The Nature of Slavery in Gaming

Slavery is endemic to the setting of **The Lost Citadel** not just because it's "historically accurate" or "appropriate," but because it underscores the desperate brutality of Redoubt. Make no mistake, slavery is *always* evil, but it is thus and also an opportunity for players to explore how corrosive and horrible the institution is to a society.

That said, it's not to everyone's taste for gaming. While slavery is fully integrated into Redoubt's society as written, DMs should still make sure that the specific members of their game group don't find it too upsetting or too much of a reminder of the horrors of the real world. One should not begin running games in this setting unless one has complete confidence that doing so will not alienate the players.

Contracts can be difficult to enforce, if one sells oneself to an unscrupulous master, but the understanding for most is that self-indenture is temporary. Any who have seen how the poorest of Redoubt's "free" live can understand the appeal self-indenture might hold. Slaves are mostly guaranteed room and board, because failure to care for a slave results in lost value of the purchase, if nothing else.

Not all self-indenture goes well, and many slaves have been cheated into working longer than expected, forced into more dangerous work than agreed, or sold on the black market to owners who have no respect for their contracts. The authorities make more effort to enforce the law for self-indentured slaves than for any other type, because to allow the system to break down would disrupt the smooth functioning of the city. Redoubt runs in part on "voluntary" slave labor, so the peasants must continue to believe that selling themselves is a worthwhile employment option. To this end, the complaints of the self-indentured are, in some ways, more likely to be heard than those of the free poor.

Punitive Indenture

A common form of punishment in Redoubt, especially for nonviolent crime, is punitive indenture. Redoubt has no space for long-term imprisonment, and too poor a populace for fines to be often viable. Thus, criminals who have not committed transgressions worthy of exile or execution are instead sold into slavery with an involuntary, government-drawn contract. Usually such contracts specify a length of time during which a convict may be enslaved. Rarely, contracts are drawn up for life, and more rarely still are they drawn up for a specific amount of coin by which freedom can be purchased. The latter is often reserved for convicts from wealthy families, as a kind of backhanded fining system combined with a threat of shame upon recidivism.

Although contracts and laws surrounding punitive indenture are similar to those surrounding self-indenture, those who are enslaved after being convicted of a crime tend to enjoy less sympathy in cases of mistreatment, both from officials and the public. Again, there is a threshold past which law enforcement will not tolerate the breakdown of its criminal justice system, and the black market is always frowned upon, but punitively indentured slaves do tend to face more injustice than do the self-indentured.

Slavery by Birth

By Redoubt law, this state of affairs only exists for dwarves. Once enslaved as an entire species, after dwarf slaves gained the right to purchase their own freedom, the law was never changed to allow dwarf slaves' children to go free.

All other legal slaves in the city can rest (somewhat) assured that, regardless of their own circumstances, their children will be free. Slave contracts provide for the well-being of children born to slaves, and while many masters do only the barest minimum that law and contract require and only a few masters care for and educate the children as most contracts imply should be the norm, children of slaves are usually, indeed, born free. Selling children into illegal slavery on the black market does happen, but it is often less trouble for a master to drop a child off at the nearest church orphanage.

Not so for dwarves. Only a dwarf child of free parents is born free. All others must acquire their freedom. While the law does allow for this, in that—even without a contract—all slaves must be permitted to buy themselves if they are able to raise their own value in savings, it is not easy for slaves to save money. It is for this reason that even today, most dwarves in Redoubt are slaves for life. Many dwarves, both bound and free, spend their lives working to free other dwarves. This has become a normative community value in Redoubt's dwarven subculture.

Illegal Slavery

Sometimes, people want slaves without pesky contracts; slaves of whom the legal bookkeepers know nothing; slaves who can be maimed, slain, worked to death, or otherwise misused at will. For these sorts of slaves, one must look to the black market. The Iron Moon, specifically, has perfected the underworld slave-trade into a well-oiled and extremely quiet machine.

Illegal slavery is not tolerated by any level of Redoubt's government, and especially not by the Crown of Blood, as they don't earn their processing fees on illegal sales. When illegal slavery is discovered, it is harshly punished. The problem is, few are willing to listen to a slave who can't produce a contract, and no illegal slave has one. Thus, illegal slavery often goes "unproven," and in turn ignored. It is also not unheard of for officials, even in the Crown of Blood, to take bribes for turning a blind eye to a transaction here or there.

Entertainment

Where there is hope, there is a need for merriment. Or at least, where there is a life of squalid living and lean times never-ending, escape is plenty welcome.

Entertainment comes in a variety of forms, often inspired by the various cultures living within the walls of the city. Many groups or neighborhoods have their own folk singers, bards, performers, and storytellers, but there are a few places of note available to most—or at least those with coin to spend. The following reflects only a few of the most notable.

Taverns

Redoubt boast a great many taverns of varying repute and disrepute, and although their refreshments are limited to mild beers and ales, they offer the opportunity for conversation, gaming, halfway decent meals, and general camaraderie. Depending on the prosperity of the district and the composition of the locals, they may serve as a popular meeting place after work, a social center, or just an escape. Along with those are the "floating" taverns, known for their gambling, occasional illegal spirits, and impressive evasion of the law.

Many taverns are fronts for criminal organizations or prostitution rings, so it's important to tread with caution in seedier areas—and indeed in some of the more affluent ones as well. "Testing the bung" is a term meaning to measure the output of a tavern, to see if their casks are indeed full. If someone in Redoubt asks for a "Scarlet Tavern," they are looking for a brothel. (Not that prostitution is illegal, but many individuals—especially of higher-class or more religious bloodlines—still prefer some measure of discretion.)

The Shattered Spear

Of all the city's taverns, legal or otherwise, few are so well known as the "Spear."

Nestled just inside the Southgate in Southside, the Shattered Spear serves as a general gathering for middle-class citizens of Redoubt looking for better than average fare. The proprietors of the Shattered Spear are members of a single Ouzai family, the Tam'luts, who have run the operation for generations. Inside the Shattered Spear, guests are treated to a wood floor, polished clean every few hours, and a strict code of laws: "Check your weapons. Check yourself. Check your shadow." The Shattered Spear has a more extensive menu than most, including various flavors of beer and the famous *tsul* soup. What *tsul* might actually be has been debated for years. The Tam'luts have never shared the recipe of this spicy, earthy stew.

When it comes to on-site entertainment, the senior Tam'lut assigns a specific time of a specific day of the week to a particular troubadour, performer, or troupe. So long as the performance is popular, the performer retains the slot. When that popularity wanes... Well, competition is fierce for the favor of the Tam'luts and the opportunity to put on a show for the customers of the Spear. Few more generous crowds can be found in Redoubt—the Tam'luts strongly encourage tips—and it is not unheard of to find a performer murdered in a duel for the right to sing or play.

Speculation still surrounds the family—rumors that the Tam'luts serve as spies for Sultaar Inunwa, his eyes upon neighboring Venmir nobles and, more generally, on the ebb and flow of Redoubt itself. Such rumors aside, the Tam'luts remain respected and revered, mostly on account of their savory menu and surprisingly safe environment.

The Gladiatorial Arenas

Both public and private gladiatorial arenas exist throughout Redoubt. People have any number of motivations for entering the ring, but most often they do so to gain coin—either for themselves or, if one of the many slave-gladiators, for their owners. Additionally, some find their way into the ring to settle a dispute or, as in the case of many public fights, to settle debts for their masters. In some parts of the city, gladiators are raised from young children to do honor to their house as slaves. Rumors swirl that some of the elite even breed slaves for this particular pastime.

Private arenas exist all across the city, though access is strictly controlled. Blood feuds or simple entertainment are at the heart of these private matters, the unlucky losers cremated, and never a whisper of them after. However, there are also professional gladiators who simply enjoy the challenge of this grand game. Whether in squalid pits or in gleaming arenas, they seek notoriety (or infamy) through their luck and skill.

The Black Blood Pits

If you're looking for the worst and best, the Black Blood Pits are the place to go. This private arena is almost impossible to find without the seediest of connections, and probably a good amount of beer in the system. The fights are always to the death, or worse, and the stakes are high. Many gamblers in the Black Blood Pits have found themselves cast into the fray when their betting doesn't earn out.

The rumor remains that, to the most discerning crowds, the Black Blood Pits host the Dead from time to time, even in the form of fallen gladiators. Many who have tried to expose this rumor, often emissaries of the Church or curious academics, turn up dead or vanish altogether.

Justice

Justice is the name of the largest public arena in the Old City. Over the years it has had many names, but eventually "Justice" stuck due to its use in settling affairs both personal and municipal. The arena is dug into the ground so that the high seats—saved for upper-class attendees and sponsors—allow for easier evacuation in the case of disaster (including,

as was initially feared, possible uprising over a match's results). The cheaper seats might be closer to the action, but there is a significant risk and frequent loss of life when weapons or fighters go astray.

In contrast to the Black Blood Pits, Justice is a public arena where three kinds of gladiatorial fights occur. The first is the open challenge, in which any two (or more) private citizens who have agreed to abide by the results of a match can seek satisfaction, vengeance, or judgment. Not all such petitioners are granted permission, of course—many are instead directed to the judgment of the Magistrates—but those who are serve as popular "warm ups" prior to a day's main event. Professional pit fighters are forbidden from participating in open challenges, and the parties may call a truce or cry mercy (though the audience is not in favor of the latter, and some who call mercy may find their way to a bad end afterward).

The second level includes the professional matches. These arranged events are between the celebrities of the ring, renowned pit fighters who come from various districts and attract fans of all social backgrounds. This is what most people think of when they hear "gladiatorial combat."

Lastly are Fights of Law, which involve high-standing officials or nobility settling disputes in trial by combat. The upper classes rarely fight themselves, of course, and most often pit their best fighters against one another. Landowners, minor nobles, and others of higher repute frequent these events, which fuel not only the entertainment industry but the gossip mills as well.

Street Performers

Draw even remotely near most of Redoubt's markets or temples and one often finds talented individuals—depending on one's definition of "talented"—looking to make a few coins. Fire-eaters are particularly popular in Southside, and one is most likely to find mummers in the Old City. In Dockside one can find fish charmers and oyster dancers. (Oyster charmers and fish dancers are, by contrast, more likely found in the brothels.) These are all, however, general tendencies, and performers of all stripes—troubadours, jugglers, acrobats, illusionists, and tale-tellers—can be found nearly everywhere throughout the city.

Theater

Multiple theatre troupes operate throughout Redoubt, though most do not last more than a few years before disbanding. The Ouazi sultaar has his own private performers who mostly keep his people's dance and song tradition, as well as "flag" theatre, which includes secondary storytelling through the use of colorful flags during the performance. These were quite political but due to the loss of time and land, much of their import has been forgotten.

The Doubtless are another theater troupe, working primarily in the Old City and the Square, where they find audiences looking for bawdy humor and flashes of skin. The most famous plays performed by the Doubtless include "The Lady and the Fleshmonger," the story of a woman experiencing hard times who falls in love with a self-proclaimed man of status who turns out to be nothing but a pimp. She eventually learns the truth and poisons him, only to be slain by his re-animated corpse.

Located in Southside, the Cup is one of Redoubt's more well known middle-of-the-road theaters. Legend has it that the Cup began as a group of street performers who used cups as props in nearly all of their acts—most likely because they could afford little else—and when they had earned enough money to occupy one of the buildings of Southside, they kept the name. The Cup performs many histories, catering to the diverse population of the district. Here, one can hear music of the Ouazi, listen to poetry of the elves, see dancing of the dwarves, or any combination thereof. Once per week they host traveling singers and performers.

The Undertakers

People are funny about death and the dead, and more so when those dead might rise again. Few in Redoubt would question the necessity of the Undertakers, yet they are not particularly popular. A morbid mystique surrounds them, and among the less educated a web of superstition governs interactions with them. ("Never deal with an Undertaker while barefoot" is a common one, as is "If an Undertaker visits when you have sweets in the home, you must give them all away.")

Undertakers are respected, but despite their benevolent societal role, they are feared. Few parents would encourage a child to marry or become an Undertaker, and some superstitious folk refuse to touch them, eat with them, or live near them. Undertakers have become, to these people, a symbol of the plague of the Dead. In order to avoid pondering their hellish reality, they scapegoat the Undertakers, shunning them as near-supernatural beings.

This same superstition can sometimes cling to renderers or others in the funereal process, but the Undertaking interacts most directly with the newly grieving, and the city's other death rituals can be handled more discreetly. Renderers can choose to simply tell their neighbors they are government workers, but Undertakers are seen.

Rumor also abounds—founded or unfounded—that slipping a bribe to an Undertaker can cause the person you want dead to land in an Undertaking cart, so long as the person isn't important enough for the Watch to be bothered. Whether or not this is true, it adds to the fear and mystery surrounding the Undertakers.

For more on the Undertaker's duties, and the Undertaking as an organization and branch of the city government, see "The Undertaking" later in this chapter.

Rendering

Both to avoid adding to the undead population and to solve what can be solved of Redoubt's constant resource crisis, all corpses, if possible, go through the rendering process. Rendering is a euphemistic term for salvaging every usable bit of a dead body. Skin is harvested for parchment or lightweight leather. Fat is collected for candles and soap. Meat (if it has not already been claimed by the ghûl) is joined by hair and bone marrow for specialized composting, suitable (if handled correctly, and after a significant aging period) even for food crops. Bone itself is harvested as a building material, either as-is or ground for inclusion in bricks. Indeed, after rendering is done, little of the body is left for disposal or cremation (the ashes of which are often returned to rendering for inclusion in compost).

Exceptions are made in cases of terrible disease, death by toxins, or a period of more than a day spent undead or otherwise rotting. Other exceptions are possible for almost any reason, but usually involve the bribery of some official in the rendering process.

Where possible, those overseeing this process include a member of the clergy, so that corpses can be blessed before rendering. At least one Undertaker stands guard in case of a rise mid-rendering. Renderers observe strict ritual forms and teach one another prayers and chants to speak during the process, to minimize the chances for the Dead to rise and to ensure a good afterlife for the departed souls.

Whether any of these rituals serve a genuine purpose or are sheer superstition depends entirely upon whom one asks, and renderers themselves fall into both mindsets. One camp is hardened to the process, simply doing what is needful for the city, praying over the bodies out of courtesy (or for a distraction), if at all. The other camp are true believers who have adopted the rendering process as the only virtuous way to deal with one's dearly departed, assigning to it a mystical

reverence in which they take great pride. True believers tend to start and end their shifts by pausing to pray with the priest on duty, in order to foster a purer spiritual mindset while working.

The Black Market

In a city as crowded as Redoubt, a thriving black market is difficult to maintain in secrecy. Nevertheless, all the city's circumstances make for black market opportunities that more than pay for the risks entailed.

The most popular black market goods in Redoubt are often legally available items that one wishes to acquire in an unregulated manner, particularly slaves or weapons. Some are produced—or kidnapped—secretly, while others are stolen goods, such as medicines and other necessities (or luxuries) that one cannot afford through legal channels.

Many black market products and services, however, are illegal to begin with. These include assassinations and certain forms of prostitution, along with a variety of intoxicants. Intoxicants are variously regulated in Redoubt, with penalties based less on their harmful effects than on their impact on the city's ever-insufficient food supply.

Simple plant or fungus intoxicants, grown in people's own windowsills or on what little private property a citizen might own, aren't normally illegal and incur punishment only if the resulting intoxication disturbs the peace. Such ventures rarely produce enough to satisfy demand, however, so plant and similar intoxicants are more likely to be illegally grown in the middle of other fields out in the Farms—sometimes with a bribe to the farmers and sometimes on the sly in small patches. Since these plants are grown on land that could have been used for food production, the penalties for possession are far more severe, including up to ten years of indenture.

Finally, fermentation-based intoxicants are the most severely punished of all, *if* they are legally considered to be intoxicants. Small beer, cider brewed from rotting fruit, or any other fermentation that might be considered "food preservation" or "water purification" is legal and widespread. However, fermentation of existing foodstuffs for any reason other than preservation or purification is a crime. This includes almost all distilled spirits. In extreme cases, large-scale distillation can be punishable by exile or death. It is flatly not permissible to "ruin" food in order to create a drug of any kind.

Black market activities are most common in the Downs, though the Iron Moon and a few other gangs have means of spreading their services wherever demand is sufficient. They and other criminals use subtle systems of signs, signals, and carefully placed graffiti to spread word of what is available and what is desired.

Fissures

The city proper has its own charms, if you'd call them that, but below the city rest mysteries and darkness, secrets and intrigue, and some of the more adventurous—or desperate—citizens of Redoubt occasionally set out to find them. Entrances to the Undercity, whether natural or man-(or dwarf-)made, are known colloquially as fissures.

The vast majority of fissures are found in the Old City, owing to the close proximity to the dwarven cultures who first inhabited Redoubt. Much of the current city is built directly on the ruins of the dwarven structures, now acting as a combination sewer, catacomb, and labyrinth. It is not uncommon in some areas to find previously unknown fissures when buildings burn down or are demolished, nor is it surprising that some pubs are also rumored to house entrances into the Undercity.

Reports have surfaced over the last few years that new fissures are on the rise. Most of these occur when a careless passerby falls through a sinkhole in a road or a careless expedition goes wrong. Going to the Undercity on purpose is frowned upon, and often carries criminal penalties. Street urchins or those in the most despondent situations "go below" with no one to miss them. And why would they?

That said, journeying to the Undercity and returning is not unheard of. For those seeking answers about Redoubt's past, or perhaps wondering about its future, the Undercity holds a great deal of possibility. These brave souls are called "prospectors." For more, see "The Undercity" in **Chapter IV: The Last City**.

The Economy of Redoubt

The labor market in Redoubt is flush with cheap workers: the entire Eastside district of the city is filled with desperate folk who work dawn to dusk for a loaf of bread or a bowl full of grain. Just as pervasive are those who would cut a purse—or perhaps a throat—for the same. Meanwhile, in the guarded and gilded homes of the aristocrats, the wealthy dine upon fresh food and even rare, succulent meats. Rather than the end of the world bringing everyone together, the pressures of Redoubt heighten class distinctions. So little of the world remains, and so scarce are many resources, that the prestige of affluence is magnified.

A consequence of the great press of humanity (and others) in Redoubt is that hirelings often work for minimal wages, or even just for food. Survivors without families and homes even take up odd jobs that have them sleeping in alleys, caves, and other unwholesome places, as they've no better alternatives.

Conversely, useful tools and food command premium prices. Resources are always stretched thin; even so, many aristocrats hoard useful (and useless) objects rather than putting them into productive hands. The grumbles of uprising are met with the threat of exile from the city's protective walls.

Lifestyle Expenses

In Redoubt, life is cheap, but living is not. Lifestyle expenses (as described in the *PHB*) remain low for the poor—anyone can sleep on a porch and drink runoff water from a ditch—but wealthy and extravagant lifestyles are very costly and, in some cases, unobtainable. Using your downtime to sustain a lifestyle is not reliably effective, simply because so many people are competing with you for survival.

Wretched, Squalid, and Poor Lifestyles. At the bottom of the social spectrum, and accounting for the largest share of the population of Redoubt, are beggars, laborers, trade artisans, messengers, and criminals. These masses of unfortunates struggle simply for the means of continued existence.

There is no additional cost above the normal listed price for these lifestyles. If you live one of these lifestyles, you may not be permitted to enter the Old City, Westside, or Southside districts under most circumstances (though you might manage via disguise, cunning, bribery, or magic, if you are clever). You suffer disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks when interacting with wealthy patrons, nobles, aristocrats, and anyone who lives at the wealthy or higher level of lifestyle.

Modest and Comfortable Lifestyles. Earning a modest or comfortable lifestyle is not easy in Redoubt. Even practitioners of a reliable trade find that business is bad when nobody has the wherewithal to engage in commerce. Acquiring regular supplies of food and shelter is difficult on a temporary basis; if you haven't purchased your own residence outright or established a reliable connection with a farmer or butcher, your supplier one day may have nothing for you the next.

The cost for a modest or comfortable lifestyle is doubled from that presented in the core rules. Each time you attempt to pay for a modest or comfortable lifestyle, if you don't have a pre-existing patron or connection who can provide you with a building to rent or a regular supply of foodstuffs, make a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If you fail, you cannot acquire the goods and shelter and you must choose a lower lifestyle level (poor or below) for that day. See "Connections" on page 159.

Professions that normally provide a modest or comfortable lifestyle do not automatically do so; see "Self-Sufficiency" below.

Wealthy and Aristocratic Lifestyles. Wealthy and aristocratic lifestyles in Redoubt are reserved for the highest social strata. It doesn't matter if you somehow acquired an ancient suit of magical armor from a ruin and auctioned it off to the highest bidder—just having stacks of coins does not provide you with the social capital to move in the circles where entertainment, luxury, and surplus exist.

The core cost for wealthy and aristocratic lifestyles is multiplied by 5. You can't acquire a wealthy or aristocratic lifestyle without special connections and sponsorship. You can acquire sponsorship by performing a favor or extraordinary service for a noble, or via certain Background benefits. Once you gain this favor, you may purchase this lifestyle until such time as you lose favor or your patron loses his or her station. Again, see Connections on page 159.

Professions that normally provide a wealthy lifestyle do not automatically do so. See "Self-Sufficiency" below.

Food, Drink, and Lodging

Just about everything is in short supply in Redoubt. While a well-heeled scavenger or artifact-hunter with deep pockets can afford common food day to day, earning enough money to survive is hard for the less fortunate.

Double the prices listed for individual food, drinks, and lodging (including rations).

For affluent adventurers this is likely trivial, but it underscores that in Redoubt, even the necessities of life come at a premium.

Self-Sufficiency

A lean and skilled hunter can survive in the city by scavenging for scraps and hunting rats and spiders, but this is a squalid existence indeed. Using your skills to eke out a

living in Redoubt still puts you on the edge of starvation.

If you use a skill to perform a profession (as described in the *PHB*), you must make a DC 10 Intelligence (appropriate tool or skill) check. If you fail, you are unable to support yourself, and you must live a wretched lifestyle. If you succeed, you earn enough to live a squalid lifestyle. If you succeed by more than 5, you support yourself in a poor lifestyle.

Similarly, if you use the Survival skill to live by drinking water from gutters and hunting roaches and spiders to eat, you must make a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. If you fail, you live a wretched existence, barely staying out of the weather and keeping hunger in check. If you succeed, you live a squalid existence, huddled behind a broken wall or under a ragged tarp and roasting skinned rats and lizards over a fire pit. If you succeed by more than 5, you earn a poor existence, perhaps hiding in a shelter dugout originally made for pigs and living on leftover organ meats and burned husks of bread.

If you use the Perform skill to earn a lifestyle, make a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check. Failure means that you earn a Squalid lifestyle, doing tricks and shows in the streets for passersby. Success earns you a poor lifestyle as you manage to secure a set of performances near a local eatery or for a set of social events. Success by more than 5 earns you a modest lifestyle as you perform for a wealthy patron, and this gives you a connection that allows you the opportunity to purchase a higher lifestyle via this patron's aid.

Services

While food and lodging are expensive, services are cheap. In general, halve the price of all mundane services. Unskilled labor is always available and people are always desperate for work. Skilled laborers such as clerks, masons, and weavers must compete for scarce resources and patronage, and so work for depressed wages.

Note that this means that the average unskilled laborer subsists on squalid foodstuffs, a loaf of bread, and a mug of ale (or dirty water) for their daily meals, and that in poor families everyone must work.

Coach cab services about the city generally refer to a porter with a cart—essentially, a rickshaw service. Note that porters cannot take you to places where you aren't normally permitted to go; hiring a coach cab to take you to the city center when you're a poor Eastsider just means that you and the runner will both be stopped at the gates of the district (and may get a beating to boot).

Availability of Goods and Services

Even if you have ready coin, there's no guarantee that you can find what you want to purchase in resource-starved Redoubt. Certain goods simply aren't widely available in the city, unless you know who to ask or have a special supplier.

Availability doesn't apply to your starting gear. Anything that you gain from your class or Background is considered part of your backstory. Replacing it if it's lost or destroyed, though, is subject to availability.

The following items from the *PHB* are generally available if you have money or goods for trade:

- Simple weapons
- Light and medium armor
- Shields
- Tools
- Clothing
- Food, drink, and overnight lodging
- Standard ritual components

The following items are in short supply:

- Martial weapons
- Heavy armor
- Alchemical items such as acid, alchemist's fire, or *potions of healing*
- Jewelry
- Drugs
- Contraband
- High-quality ritual components

To purchase an item in short supply, you must spend 1d4 hours scouring the markets and make an Intelligence or Charisma (Insight) check. If another character aids you, you have advantage on this check. The DC of this check depends on the base cost of the item, as shown in the accompanying table.

If the check fails, that item is simply not currently available from any vendor to which that PC has access, and the search cannot be reattempted by that same character for 2d20 days. Even once you have found the item, purchasing it costs 2–4 times (1d3+1) its core/base price.

(*Exception*: While you still have to roll to determine if you can find high-quality ritual components, they cost only their base price if/when you do locate them.)

Purchasing Difficulty

Price*	Availability DC
Up to 10 gp	8
11-50 gp	10
51-100 gp	12
101-250 gp	14
251+ gp	16

*This is the *base* price of the item, before applying the cost modifier described in this section.

Note that magical items are never readily available for general purchase.

Alternatively, if you have a supplier, you can rely on the supplier to provide you with access to items for purchase. You gain a supplier by making a connection (see the following section).

Boom and Bust Cycles (Optional Rule)

Since Redoubt has a coin-and-barter economy with a significant corner carved off for the aristocracy, it is subject to boom-and-bust cycles—mostly bust. To simulate this, the DM can roll 2d6 at the start of each month to see how the economy fares.

2 or lower: Bust. The economy is severely depressed. People hoard what little money and possessions they have. Prices stay low because few people have money to buy, but work is also hard to find. Add 2 to the DC of all checks to earn or purchase a lifestyle. Add 2 to the Boom or Bust roll next month.

3-5: Stagnant. Trade is slow and goods are scarce. There is work to be had but wages are depressed and people have a hard time making ends meet. Add 1 to the DC of all checks to earn or purchase a lifestyle. Add 1 to the Boom or Bust roll next month.

6-9: Slow. The economy of Redoubt struggles along, no easier or tougher than usual. People still suffer and work hard for what little they have, but at least they are able to make ends meet for now. Apply only the usual modifiers to prices and wages.

10-11: Brisk. Trade is strong and people have work. Plague may have thinned the numbers of laborers a bit, or a civic project may be employing unskilled laborers, keeping them flush with food for now. Increase labor prices and earnings by 50% (that is, if you pay for a hireling, you pay 75% of the price listed in the PHB instead of half; you also earn more money from using a profession). Subtract 1 from the Boom or Bust roll next month.

12 or higher: Boom. Redoubt's economy flourishes for a short time. Perhaps good weather has made the month tolerable, or a noble hosted an expensive gala that employed many people for the better part of the month. Double all labor prices and earnings (that is, if you pay for a hireling, you pay the price listed in the PHB instead of half; you also earn more money from using a profession). Subtract 2 from the Boom or Bust roll next month.

Connections

Making connections is essential to any kind of social mobility in Redoubt. If you are one of the unfortunates living hand-to-mouth or looking for odd jobs, you will never escape poverty unless you have a patron who can open doors for you and provide you with opportunities.

You start with no connections unless your Background provides you with one (see "Backgrounds" in **Chapter II: Characters of the Lost Citadel**).

To make a connection, you must be introduced to someone who has influence or resources and is willing to assist you. Typically this means that you either make a *business connection* (by establishing a regular business relationship with someone like a butcher, a farmer, or a craftsman) or a *social connection* (by cementing a friendship with someone of social standing).

You can normally have a number of connections equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

Business Connections

A business connection gives you access to goods with regularity, or to special goods that aren't normally available on the market. You make a business connection by meeting a

dealer (typically during an adventure) and setting up a regular relationship. You must make a purchase from the dealer. Each month that you make a purchase, you may make a Charisma (Persuasion) check. The DC of this check is normally 12, but the DM may choose to raise or lower the DC based on the circumstances under which you met or interacted with the NPC. (If you solved a problem for the contact or saved his life, for instance, the DC is likely lower to begin with, though it may slowly rise to the standard 12 as time goes on.) If you succeed, you gain the dealer as a connection.

When you have a business connection, your supplier can provide you with the items that you need at regular Redoubt prices without rolling to check for availability.

If you don't make a purchase each month from your business connection, the connection is lost. Note that each dealer can only provide you with access to one category of items, depending on who he or she is and what business he or she is in:

- Lodging (extended)
- Martial weapons
- Heavy armor
- Alchemical supplies or ritual components
- Jewelry
- Drugs
- Contraband

Social Connections

Social connections give you the chance to know people of standing in Redoubt: nobles, aristocrats, scholars, and other rarefied members of the elite. Usually, these folk have little use for riff-raff, but you can meet them by doing favors and jobs—whether unsavory or deniable. When you successfully complete a task for a patron, make a Charisma (Persuasion) check as described previously under "Business Connections." The DM may also adjust the difficulty based on your comparative status to the patron; it may be harder to maintain a social connection if interacting with you is likely to damage their own standing, for instance. If you succeed, you gain the patron as a connection.

When you have a social connection, your patron can help you to climb the social ladder. You become eligible to purchase modest and higher lifestyles, which can let you move out of the destitute Eastside and afford you the right to move about any part of the city. If you have a social connection, you do not have to roll for the opportunity to purchase a lifestyle above poor, though you must still pay the costs as previously described.

For each month in which you call upon your social connection to assist you in maintaining a lifestyle higher than poor, you must perform some favor for the connection. This is, generally speaking, some task: using your special skills (or simply your disposability) to do something that the patron needs. A patron typically won't accept simple money or barter (if they needed money, they wouldn't be rich enough to be a patron). If you refuse to perform the favor, you lose the connection.

Losing Connections

In addition to losing connections by failing to uphold your part of a bargain, you can lose connections to the usual hazards of Redoubt: violence, plague, mischance. You may find yourself in the position of needing to protect your connection, provide healing, deal with crises, arrange trade meetings, and otherwise make sure that your connection remains alive and affluent enough to be of use. If your connection dies, loses their wealth or influence, or otherwise becomes unable to fulfill their duties, they are lost to you for all mechanical purposes; you will have to start fresh to make a new connection.

Claiming a Title

If you win sufficient acclaim, wrest wealth from ancient places, and perform deeds that bring the masses flocking to you as a savior, you just may elevate your station to the lofty heights of the nobility. If you don't like that much hard work, you can always arrange someone else's downfall and then swoop in to save the day.

Claiming a title means becoming an established member of the highest social strata: an aristocrat, noble, head of a guild, and so on. The rule of thumb is that you must be able to exert powerful influence over a portion of Redoubt's economy or society, you must have followers (whether they love you or hate you) who do your bidding, and you must have a station that's recognized by other people of means—either via an official title or because they know you as "the one who really gets things done."

A good estimate is:

- At least 10,000 gold pieces in assets (not necessarily coin, but property, supplies, armaments, and so on)
- An organization or business that reports to you either formally or informally (running the criminal underworld for a district, owning a large butchery and tanning business, or controlling a significant recognized cult or religious organization)
- Recognition by the movers and shakers of the city (by having at least three social connections of high rank, or patronage from the head of a major organization such as the militia)

When you claim such a station, you essentially move into the aristocracy. Even if you just pretend to be a simple baker, if you secretly manage a network of pickpockets, second-story artists, urchins, and cutthroats, you will be able to claim leverage in the city's social structure. The major benefit associated with this is that you no longer need to make a check or call upon social contacts to pursue and maintain a lifestyle above poor. You have enough influence and standing that people make things happen for you.

Of course, once you reach such a station, other people will scheme to steal your wealth and tear you down. If you lose the resources, connections, and titles that give you your position, you may find yourself in the gutters again.

New Weapons and Equipment

The various cultures and necessities of Redoubt have produced a few additional options for armaments and magical rites, beyond those presented in the *PHB*. Properties in *italics* are new to **The Lost Citadel** and are described in this section.

Weapons and Other Equipment

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Martial Melee Weapons				
Face Puncher	2 gp	1d6 bludgeoning	1/4 lb.	Finesse, special
Ouazi longdagger	4 gp	1d4 slashing	1 lb.	*Defensive*, finesse, light, thrown (range 10/30)
Sleaghar	10 gp	1d8 slashing	3 lb.	Versatile (1d10)
Zileskan boar-spear	10 gp	1d10 piercing	6 lb.	Heavy, reach, special, two-handed
Martial Ranged Weapons				
Bolas	1 gp	1 bludgeoning	2 lb.	Special, thrown (30/120)
Caltrops	1 gp	1 piercing	1/8 lb.	Special, thrown (range 20/60)
Ouazi girga	2 sp	1d6 bludgeoning	—	Ammunition (range 30/120), *close*, *deadly*, light
Non-Weapon Equipment				
Ritual Components, standard	5 sp/measure	—	special	special
Ritual Components, high quality	2 gp/measure	—	special	special
Ritual Components, poor quality	2 sp, 5 cp/measure	—	special	special

Bolas. Any Large or smaller creature hit by bolas must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. Whether or not the save is successful, the bolas have wrapped around the creature, reducing walking, climbing, and swimming movement rates by 10 feet until freed. Bolas have no effect on formless creatures or on those of Huge or larger size. A creature can use its action to extricate itself from the bolas. Dealing 3 slashing damage to the bolas (AC 10) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the bolas' rope.

Caltrops. Caltrops are small nails or spines, bent in such a way that a sharp point always faces up when set on a level surface. As an action you can spread a bag of caltrops (15–20) to cover an area 5 feet on a side, or you can throw the entire bag itself at a target within range. Any creature that enters the area, or is hit by your attack (if done as an attack), must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or stop moving this turn and take 1 piercing damage. Taking this damage reduces the creature's walking speed by 10 feet until the creature regains at least 1 hit point. When moving through an area full of caltrops, a creature moving at half speed or slower doesn't need to make the save.

Face Puncher. This fist-load is simply a weighted chunk of metal held in the hand with a loop fitted over the fingers, in order to increase the damage of unarmed strikes. An attack with a fist puncher can be considered either a proper weapon attack or an unarmed strike, as the wielder chooses. The wielder has advantage on contested checks of Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) to conceal this weapon.

Ouazi Girga. The Ouazi are masters of thrown weapons, and none more so than their primary cultural weapon—a hand-made leather sling they call a *girga*. Its quick-release power stems almost entirely from technique (largely the physics of the relationship between the elbow and wrist action), and at close enough range its stones can punch a hole through a thick wooden plank.

Ouazi Longdagger. The Ouazi often fight with two weapons, and one or both of those weapons is often their secondary cultural weapon, the longdagger. As the name suggests, it's similar to a dagger, but with a longer blade that curves back along the forearm when held point down. Its design reduces its effectiveness when thrown, but aids defense in melee and inflicts gaping slashing wounds.

Sleaghar. The traditional weapon of the Surinzan is the *sleaghar*, a short, broad-bladed spear that can be wielded one-handed or two.

Zileskan Boar-spear. The Zileskan boar-spear, boasting short prongs or wings at the base of its lengthy blade, has become very popular in Redoubt. It sees routine use by the Undertaking, which uses it to pin down and immobilize the undead while nearby Takers converge. As a result, it's gradually becoming known as a "Taker's spear." If you hit an opponent

during that opponent's movement—such as with a successful opportunity attack or a successful readied attack—the opponent also loses 5 feet of available movement for that turn. If this reduces the opponent's remaining available movement to 0, its movement this round ends.

Ritual Components. All rituals in **The Lost Citadel** require components, in addition to any components specified by the spell itself. These components consist of various combinations of powdered ores, crushed leaves, special inks, sacred ashes, and the like. In most cases, they aren't all sold together; a caster might have to frequent multiple shops to collect the proper ingredients. The costs above still apply to a total "measure" of components, whether bought piecemeal or in one fell swoop. Different levels of ritual spells require different numbers of measures, as shown in the "New Spells" section of **Chapter V: Zileskan Magic**.

High-quality components are expensive and difficult to come by, but they add a +2 bonus to the Arcana check made to cast a ritual in which they are used.

Low-quality components are cheap and easily attainable, but they impose a –4 penalty to relevant Arcana checks, and cause the caster to treat the roll of a natural 2 on the check as though it were a natural 1. Only the ignorant or desperate use low-quality components, but neither ignorance nor desperation are in short supply in Redoubt.

Mixing different component qualities offers no advantage, as the ritual is always treated as though it used the lowest quality of the components involved, regardless of proportion.

Weapon Properties

The following new weapon properties are found in the weapons of Redoubt.

Close. A close weapon is more effective up close than other ranged weapons. When you make a ranged attack with a close weapon, you do not suffer disadvantage on the attack roll when you are within 5 feet of a hostile creature who can see you and who is not incapacitated.

Deadly. When you roll a natural 1 on a damage die with a deadly weapon, treat the result as a 2 instead.

Defensive. A defensive weapon makes you harder to hit effectively while you are wielding two weapons. As long as at least one of your two weapons has the defensive property, you add +1 to your AC against the first attack that targets you in a round, provided you aren't surprised or immobile. You regain the bonus at the start of your next turn, and do not gain this bonus against subsequent attacks against you until then.

Governing at the World's End: The Magisterium

Magister and magistrate and Hoodsman alike, the notion was that, behind masks, they were beyond the narrow concerns of tribes and races. Behind a mask, there was no such thing as Angat or Surinzan, Menhada or Venmir or Ouazi. When they spoke, it was on behalf of the city as a whole, and not the interests of its tribes.

Only he'd never believed it.

– Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

Redoubt is a cauldron of fears and hatreds and wants, ever on the verge of boiling over. Widespread poverty and misery, with the rich hoarding what they have against the suffering masses; racial tensions, tribal rivalries, and ancient grudges; rampant crime and violence; and of course, looming over all else, the constant terror of the Dead beyond the walls and occasionally rising within. Keeping a lid on that roiling chaos and maintaining even a semblance of peace, of law and order, would indeed seem a daunting, nigh-impossible task.

It is a task that, for good and for ill both, has fallen upon the shoulders of the Magisterium.

A ruling body initially formed by the Angat, the Magisterium was at first a local affair, a means for the humans to deal with their own conflicts and rivalries without involving their dwarven hosts. The less they troubled the king or ran afoul of dwarven law, the better the humans' living conditions would remain in a city not their own.

When the dwarven feudal government fell, when all nations and races signed the Accord of Last Redoubt—some more willingly than others—the Magisterium was formally appointed to fill the new power vacancy. Even today, the Angat hold more of the senior positions than any other culture, and the Magisterium remains barred to the nonhuman races. Elves, dwarves, and ghûl may be subject to the laws and the authority of the Magisterium, but they have no legal say in its inner workings.

While the name properly refers to the formal judiciary that rules the city from the halls of the infamous White Citadel, "Magisterium" has also, in common parlance, come to refer to the entirety of the government and its body of laws. When the average Redoubter speaks of the Magisterium, she's equally likely to be referring to the ruling regime in general as she is the specific organization.

Unseen Judges

Regardless of which specific meaning one intends, the imagery conjured is the same: enigmatic figures in dark robes and masks—of wood or bone or iron—striding through shadowed passageways or sitting in judgment atop a high dais. Voices heard only in whispers, if at all. Sentences handed down through cryptic gestures. It seems a dreadful affair, overly theatrical or operatic; certainly one to inspire nervousness and fear, rather than any sense of trust in the government or the laws by which it operates.

Unfortunate, then, that these images are no urban myths or uneducated fantasies, but literal truth. At nearly every level, the Magisterium functions in absolute secrecy. The identities of its members are closely guarded—even those few that are publicly known or have become open secrets are treated as though they were not, without public acknowledgment of any sort. Draconian laws protect those identities, ruthlessly punishing any who seek to expose, let alone act on, that knowledge.

Official doctrine maintains that the purpose of this secrecy, of the masks and hidden identities, is to ensure that the Magisters and Magistrates speak for the city, for its people, and for justice itself. Without personal identities, there are no personal agendas, no cultural divides. Nobody is Angat, Venmir, Ouazi, Surinzan, or Menhada. They are only human, and they speak only for Redoubt.

Some citizens of Redoubt even believe that.

The practical result, however, is almost the exact opposite. Secrecy leads to a lack of accountability. Officials of the Magisterium often pass laws or make rulings to enhance their own position, or that of their neighborhood or culture.

Local Governments

A great many of Redoubt's neighborhoods or sub-districts have governments unto themselves. A popular civic leader or minor noble might rule a portion of the city as a veritable sovereign, benign or otherwise. A particularly religious enclave might become something of a theocracy; an artisans' guild may run a neighborhood as an extension of its businesses; or a criminal organization could claim ownership of several city blocks. These entities might pass laws, levy taxes, and even form their own militias or gangs to enforce their rule.

The Magisterium has no objection to such situations—it just means that keeping the peace in those areas is that much easier—but only so long as that "government" still follows the rules. They must obey the city's laws. They must pay any taxes due to Redoubt's own government. They must always bow to the authority of the Magistrates and the Hoodsmen. They *absolutely* must not interfere with the Undertaking.

So long as they continue making these and similar concessions, the Magisterium is happy to leave them be. Step out of line on any of them, however, and these miniature kings and queens learn swiftly, and usually violently, just how flimsy their hold on power actually is.

And of course, many people believe that the secrecy itself is a sham. They maintain that, behind closed doors, Magisters and Magistrates drop the masks and any pretense of objectivity, making personal deals and connections as they will.

Thus far, if such corruption *is* rife within the White Citadel's chambers, the Magisterium has managed to keep it from getting so bad that the citizens' disgust and resentment might begin to outweigh their fears and their more immediate, day-to-day concerns. Thus far, the terror they engender and the stability they provide have kept the Magisterium in power and Redoubt from erupting into full anarchy.

Thus far.

Quiet, Not Peace; Order, Not Justice

Regardless of any personal corruption that may or may not infect it, the Magisterium remains a powerful and stable government, and its members truly do concern themselves with ruling well.

Of course, their definition of "ruling well" might vary somewhat from that of the average peasant.

The Magisters and Magistrates are quick to say all the right words. "Justice" is a favorite. They work for justice, provide justice to all the people of Redoubt. "Impartiality" is another, and they continue to insist that their laws, their judgments, and their sentences apply to all, from the powerful and rich to the destitute and helpless. And of course, they assert that the secrecy they maintain at all levels is a tool to ensure that their justice, their impartiality, cannot be subverted.

This, too, is a sham.

The purpose of the Magisterium is not to dispense justice, but to maintain *order*. They enforce the laws not to protect the people whom they govern, but to keep lawlessness from spreading and thus threatening their own positions, or Redoubt itself. These are the people in power, and they desire nothing more than to maintain the status quo—or, if they are to improve it, to do so for their own sakes.

"Justice" plays better for the masses, though.

Sitting in Judgment

While the Magisterium has people in all manner of positions and offices, at its core it's functionally a system of interlinked judiciaries answering to a single administrative body. The latter hands down the laws, the former rules on them, and the dreaded Hoodsmen see that they are enforced. A simple system, in theory; in practice, one that involves hundreds of people and seems always on the verge of collapsing under its own weight, indifference, and corruption.

It is perhaps unsurprising that some of the Magisterium's most brutal punishments are reserved for those who endanger its own members. Attempting to unmask any member of the Magisterium, or otherwise revealing or even threatening to reveal his identity, is a crime subject to either banishment from the Inner City or exile from Redoubt itself into the Dead-haunted wilds beyond. Actual murder of a Magister, Magistrate, or Hoodsman is punished by drawing-and-quartering in the public square.

The Magisters

At the highest echelons of power sit the Magisters themselves, for whom the Magisterium is named. This council of the rich and powerful from among humanity's uppermost classes is the driving force behind Redoubt's system of laws. In common parlance in various parts of the city, Magisters are also referred to as Governors or as the "Low Kings." (They are also known by far less respectful epithets, but only in private.)

In simplest terms, the Magisters are responsible for deciding and writing the law. They set and interpret the rules, and leave it to their underlings to enforce them. They seek to find the perfect balance of statute and regulation to keep Redoubt both safe and running smoothly, all while ensuring that the city's elite retain their power and influence.

Even the precise number of Magisters is a state secret, let alone what cultures they hail from or who they actually are. What is known is that it was the Angat who created the Magisterium, and it remains the Angat who hold the greatest number of seats among the Low Kings. Any time a Magister needs to be replaced, the entire council chooses a candidate—usually, but not always, from among those who have served for a time in a lower position—and votes whether to accept them or not. The Angat vote strategically, always ensuring that they retain a majority, but never to such an extent as to make the other tribes feel their own influence is being taken from them.

All of the Magisters' official business occurs within the White Citadel. The entire body only meets, however, when serious matters demand their attention, such as when one of them calls a gathering to discuss the passing of a new law, or else an alteration to or elimination of an existing statute. In periods of social unrest or a particularly dangerous uprising of the Dead, these meetings might last days, or occur on a regular basis. In quieter times, when things are running smoothly—or as smoothly as they ever do in Redoubt—the Magisters might go months without ever assembling.

That the entire council assembles only rarely, however, doesn't mean that the Magisters don't gather more frequently in smaller numbers. Hoodsmen and Forerunners need Magisterial permission to step beyond their normal purviews and to investigate particularly wealthy nobles or other municipal institutions (such as the Watch). The most influential of the city's elite occasionally bring their problems to the Magisters directly. And while the Magisters never serve on tribunals with Magistrates—it would be considered improper—rumor says that they *do*

Lysacham and Tenzimora

For all the secrecy surrounding the Magisters, the names of several have become public over the years. Certain individuals have maintained power for so long that it eventually becomes obvious to even the casual observer that they have an active hand in the shaping of law and policy. It is still a criminal act to openly acknowledge that fact, but enforcement of this policy is selective. At a party thrown by the rich and powerful, the attendees may speak to a known Magister openly, but let the average citizen on the street curse a Magister by name, and he'd better hope nobody overheard.

Perhaps the two most widely recognized of the known Magisters are a father-and-daughter pair named Lysacham and Tenzimora. The two of them always hold the same positions on every issue and vote together on every decision, to the point where, if only one of the pair is present, the other Magisters normally allow both votes to be cast. Some say that Lysacham, an old statesman whose own father was an original signatory of the Accord, holds complete and dominant control over his daughter, using her as a proxy and an extra vote. Other rumors hold that the reverse is true; that Tenzimora has her aged and mentally slowing father wrapped around her finger and uses him to achieve her own ends. A few whispered tales, always told only after a furtive glance over a shoulder, suggest that the two are incestuous lovers. Woe indeed to the commoner caught spreading *that* particular bit of gossip by the powers that be!

Regardless of which of these are true, if any, Lysacham and Tenzimora are among the richest and most powerful of Redoubt's citizens through their family's holdings and their social connections, even before one takes into account their "secret" membership in the ruling body.

gather in panels of their own to judge the wrongdoings of Magistrates themselves, or of Hoodsmen. Thus, even when their full number haven't assembled in months, the White Citadel is usually home to a handful of Magisters, rotating on a schedule only they know.

Every now and again, a Magister appears in public—usually to make a speech from a balcony of the White Citadel, explaining the need for a new law, reassuring the populace after a disaster, proclaiming some victory (such as the return of a successful Forester expedition), or demanding calm and cooperation during times of trouble. These speeches, always publicized in advance, usually find hundreds upon hundreds of Redoubters in attendance, many of whom are cheering members of the Chorus (described later in this section).

Tribunals and Magistrates

For all the infamy of the Magisters, it is not they who are the face, so to speak, of the government in the eyes of Redoubt's citizens. No, those would be the Magistrates, also known informally as Judges, Arbiters, and—far less respectfully—Benchers (for the judicial bench). Operating in tribunals of five, with one member drawn from each human nation, the Magistrates preside over specific districts or subdistricts, sitting as judge and jury. It is they who decide nearly all legal and social matters, save those of absolutely minimal importance. Every accused criminal, every rabble-rouser, everyone in substantial debt, may one day find themselves standing in a darkened chamber with an array of five expressionless masks staring down from above.

As with the Magisters, the identities of the Judges are hidden things, and even those who are known in their home districts are never directly addressed as such. While Magisters serve for life or until they choose to step down, Magistrates rotate on a system even they themselves do not entirely comprehend; only the Magisters above understand how it works.

Stand Before the Tribunal...

A great many tribunals gather within the White Citadel, but often the Magistrates must hold court out in the city. These trials occur within government or Watch buildings, all secured in advance by secret Hoodsmen. The Magistrates themselves appear only in the presence of more Hoodsmen, fully masked and armed.

Regardless of where they hold court, the scene is roughly the same: darkness, save for lights focused on the accused or the petitioners. Sitting at tables or podiums atop a raised dais, the Arbiters gaze emptily down.

To add to their mystery and their fearsome reputation, the Magistrates do not even speak to the accused, or to those who petition their judgment. Rather, they communicate through an intricate series of hand signals and, on occasion, symbolic items. The gestures range from the simple and easily interpreted—thumbs up, thumbs down, turning their backs on the accused—to ornate signals nearly akin to a full sign language. Hoodsmen are trained in these signals, and one serving as guard and bailiff can translate to the petitioners in court if necessary.

The objects are more straightforward, and are used primarily when passing judgment. A sack of grain indicates a fine or financial restitution; a chain link signifies a sentence of indentured servitude; a dagger, execution; a string or leather strand, cut as the defendant watches, exile; and so forth.

...And Be Judged!

Few rules exist to constrain the judgments of the Magistrates. They must follow and enforce the city's laws and the dictates handed down from above, but they have broad latitude in

how they do so. How great is the burden of proof against a suspected criminal? How equitably must they resolve conflicts? How much weight does the testimony of the poor have against the powerful, or a nonhuman against a human? In those crimes where no specific penalty is mandated by law, how harsh or merciful are the Magistrates when handing down sentence?

These questions have at least as many answers as there are operating tribunals. Find yourself before one of them and all you can do is hope that these men and women truly seek justice, and are willing and able to listen to all sides without bias. The odds are against you, sure, but it's possible.

Even worse, unless a petitioner or defendant has sufficient influence to approach the Magisters directly, the judgment of a tribunal allows for no appeal.

The Long Arm of the Magisterium

The Magisterium does more than write and sit in judgment on the law. While the Watch serve as general law- and peacekeepers, and even at times as a check on the power of the government, the Magisterium has their own enforcement branches. One is formalized, a pseudo-secret police; the other little more than a zealous mob all too happy to rampage in whatever direction a properly masked figure points his finger.

The Hoodsmen

The Hoodsmen—also sometimes known among the populace as White-Eyes (for the White Citadel)—are the official enforcement arm of the Magisterium. Like their masters, they are always hooded and masked when they appear in public. Those of higher rank, or on missions of particular significance, wear masks that are almost box-like and are often attached directly to the iron breastplate-and-pauldrons that are part of many Hoodsmen's uniforms. Their clothes and armor are dark, and they are always heavily and openly armed. While a single Hoodsman might occasionally be encountered alone, they almost always operate in squads.

Or at least, such is the case while in uniform.

But where the masks and secrets of the Magisters and Magistrates are, at least ostensibly, meant to protect them from outside influence and threat, those of the Hoodsmen have an openly more sinister purpose. If a Hoodsman can be anybody beneath his or her mask, then anybody can be a Hoodsman. Your neighbor. Your co-worker. The teamster who drives your wagons, or the barkeep who serves your beer. The drunk at the next table or the young woman selling pies on the corner. Your closest friends.

The eyes of the White Citadel could be anywhere, which means, for all practical purposes, they are *everywhere*.

Officially, the purpose of the Hoodsmen is to serve as a city-wide investigative and peacekeeping body. The Watch

are more numerous, but their awareness tends to be local, limited to a particular district, while the Magisters are in a better position to spot dangers to Redoubt as a whole or to crack down on criminals who operate beyond the bounds of a single district. They also, due to their anonymity, are more likely to unearth conspiracies that the more open members of the Watch cannot.

There's some truth to this, but it would be more accurate to say that the Watch serves the law, while the Hoodsmen serve the lawmakers. It's a subtle difference, but an important one—especially where those lawmakers are more concerned with keeping their own power and the status quo than they are with true justice.

The Hoodsmen—who, like the Magisters, are drawn from the ranks of all five human tribes and tend to operate in their home districts—aren't precisely above the law, but the restrictions on their power and behavior are so loose that, under most circumstances, they might as well be. They are permitted to use any methods, any violence, any intimidation, any deception to do their jobs. Even the Watch isn't permitted to interfere with them in any way, although a Hoodsman investigating the Watch themselves, or even entering a Watch precinct headquarters, requires a special writ from the Magisters. The Hoodsmen are also forbidden from interfering with the Undertaking in any way, and a Taker actually outranks a Hoodsman in any circumstance involving the collection of bodies or putting down an undead uprising. These cases aside, however, the Hoodsmen go where they will.

While the Hoodsmen are technically tasked with taking criminals and enemies of the state alive, it is solely within their individual judgment as to whether an individual is a sufficient threat or is putting up enough resistance to justify a more lethal response. The law doesn't state as much in so many words, but it's common knowledge that the Hoodsmen effectively have the right of summary judgment unless given specific orders to the contrary.

The Chorus

Once, "the Chorus" had a formal meaning. Before the Accord of Last Redoubt, when the Magisterium was purely a lesser governing body, and in the immediate aftermath as the Magisters worked to solidify their control, the Chorus referred to humans who served this new Angat-designed organization in a purely volunteer capacity. Whether as laborers, message-runners, clerks, or simply standard-bearers, they assisted in making the Magisterium a reality.

Today, the Chorus doesn't exist as an organization of any sort, governmental or otherwise. Rather, it is an entirely informal term, applied by the citizenry to those among them who hold and act on a zealous loyalty to the Magisterium and to the city regime. Some become part of the Chorus out of a fanatic nationalism, a devotion to the good of Redoubt—or what they personally view as the good of Redoubt. Others simply hope to be noticed, to curry favor so that they might be elevated from their own positions by the city's elite; or even just to prove their loyalty, to increase their own sense of safety and satiate their paranoid fears of the Hoodsmen.

More than simply supportive of the government, these are the people—humans, almost to the last—who seek to play an active role in advancing the Magisterium's goals, despite never having been asked. These are the people who make great shows of devotion to Redoubt, ostentatiously celebrating every event and supporting every new law. They watch their neighbors for signs of criminal activity they can report to the Watch, or better yet to the Hoodsmen. They hold meetings to share "information" and determine how best to organize their efforts. Those who are able attend every Magisters' speech or listen to every bit of news or even rumor from the White Citadel, hoping for any hint or suggestion on which they can act. Indeed, more than one unnecessary undead panic, and more than one local pogrom against nonhumans, have arisen because the Chorus took a single sentence out of context in a Magister's address.

Or perhaps it wasn't out of context at all. The Magisters are political animals, and doubtless know well how to encourage their followers to act without ever handing down a single edict.

The Foresters

Ona watches them walk away, noticing the nods and respectful distance everyone gives them. Without the Foresters to find and fetch supplies from beyond the wall, the city would've consumed itself by now.
"Down to the bone and into the marrow," Mum was fond of saying.

— Damien Angelica Waters, "Blood and Stone, Ever Binding"

The walls are safe. They mark the limits of civilization. Beyond, the Dead wait. Foresters put the walls behind them. They enter the fallen countryside, stealing its bounty for the good of Redoubt.

The city is not as self-contained as its masters would have people believe. Blights slay crops, and new plants must replace the old. Timber shortages must be addressed. Steel shortages might be cured with the bounties of forgotten smithies and mines. Someone needs to survey the land and record the quantity and movements of the Dead. These needs define Foresters' missions. They spy on the Dead, tracking their numbers, activity, and location in search of patterns to exploit, and possible changes in their population and organization. They find necessary things outside the walls and, if needed, drive work gangs with the sword and whip to drag them home.

Most of these missions involve small groups of Foresters—five to a dozen—unless harvesting requires more hands. In those cases, some of the order's "blockers," along with slaves provided by the Magisterium or hired scouts from outside the organization, perform the required labor.

The first Foresters were selected by lot from mercenaries and scouts eager to earn their bread, or as punishment for those accused of crimes which merited more than the whipping post and urban indenture, but less than the noose. A few volunteered, as well. Despairing Surinzan seeking an honorable end. Ouazi eager to feel pure wind and sunlight coming from all directions. Angat noblesse oblige, or Menhada heroism, or the elves' love of the green lands drove volunteers.

How many of them died to build the body of knowledge Foresters use today? Nobody knows, unless they look upon the Rift Gate—from the outside. The exteriors of the gate and adjacent walls, facing away from the city, carry the names of fallen Foresters. None who confine themselves to the city ever see those names, but they know the Foresters by their tattoos, clothing, and fatalism.

Drink, For You Know the Manner of Your Death

Although nobles bow to them and commoners cheer them on, Foresters don't put on airs, and don't respect much of Redoubt's social order. They are, for the most part, sincerely meritocratic, and benefit from the fact that competence in their order is easy to test. If you're unworthy, you die quickly. (Of course, if you're worthy, you just die a little later.) Foresters are well paid, but hoard little for themselves. They send money to their families or indulge in transitory pleasures: drink, drugs, companions, and gambling. They view asceticism as a form of arrogance. "Your body will be defiled in the end," your comrade might say. "The gods will not know if your flesh was pure, for the Dead will poison it." And you'll buy the next round.

Anyone can join the Foresters except for slaves, though there exists an exception to the exception: Slaves can offer themselves to lifelong contracts, though they forfeit pay equivalent to double their fair value to their owners, who are paid this amount. Free folk may commit to one-year, five-year, or ten-year terms of service. The longer the commitment, the larger the signing bonus. Finally, in a tradition held over from the first days of the order, the Foresters may draft any free citizen of Redoubt, and manumit any slave (after paying double the individual's fair value) and thereupon draft them, for a term of up to five years.

Note that while it is not illegal to pressure a slave to join, if the Foresters learn that a master has done so to earn a quick coin on the double-value proposition, the order often drafts the master and assigns them dangerous work without the customary training. The Crown of Blood thus advises slave-owners against this scam.

Induction begins with a declaration in front of two free citizen witnesses, and a simple ceremony. The recruit hands a small clay urn to an officiating officer. The officer gives the recruit a coin, and they exchange these words:

OFFICER: *Why do you give me this?*

RECRUIT (presenting urn): *I have no need of it. My body belongs to the earth and will never be recovered.*

OFFICER (presenting coin): *It is a worthless coin compared to the sun on your face. You may as well spend it behind these walls. Out there, among sun-gold, moon-silver, and forest-jade, you'll die rich.*

RECRUIT: *But I want to be remembered.*

The OFFICER smashes the urn.

OFFICER: *Your tomb is the world entire, but your name belongs outside these walls. Call your friends to the Forest. Tell them of wild-green fields, fey-glass towers, and pillars of gold.*

RECRUIT: *Tell them a lie?*

OFFICER: *Half a lie. The lands beyond are beautiful and terrible. Welcome.*

After that, a Forester tattoos the order's sign, the current year, and the term length on the back of the recruit's neck. Over time, these have become styled after the fashion of Ouazi calligraphy. Foresters who sign up for multiple terms extend the design and its information down the lines of their spine. This is a badge of honor, and insurance against desertion—a crime punishable by death.

Wages

Foresters receive a bonus based on the agreed-upon term whether they join willingly or not. In the case of slaves who volunteer to join the order (though not those drafted by it), double their market values are deducted to compensate the owner. Foresters offer reduced bonuses for subsequent terms.

Forester Term Bonuses

Term Length	1st	2nd	3rd
1 Year	200 gp	100 gp	50 gp
5 Years	500 gp	200 gp	0 gp
10 Years	1,500 gp	0 gp	0 gp
Life*	2,000 gp	0 gp	0 gp

* Offered to slave volunteers only; compensation to former owners is deducted from this amount.

Half a Forester's bonus is paid immediately and the other half comes at the end of the term, except for ex-slave "lifers," who are immediately paid whatever remains after their former owners are compensated.

In addition, Foresters earn 2 gp per day, with an additional salary top-off of 1 gp per month for every "waking-day's worth" (16 hours) spent at least a league beyond Redoubt's walls during the Forester's lifetime. Those who survive

Forester Ranks

The following positions of authority (or lack thereof) exist within the Foresters.

Blocker: Failed recruits and some poorly behaved Foresters become "blockers." Those with this informal title are remanded to the authority of the Serjeantry for their term of service. Their daily pay is halved, and they forfeit the exit portions of their bonuses. They maintain the Ash Farm and are only sent beyond the city on missions where substantial manual labor is required. If such expeditions do wind up facing the Dead, blockers are likely to die with the enemy in front of them and a captain's blade at their backs.

Recruit: Trainees who have been tattooed but are not yet considered fit for service are called "recruits".

Worker: Graduates are called "workers" on the rare occasions they must be referred to as a rank, collectively, but they're usually called by their individual specialties instead.

Captain: The leader of a mission, appointed by the Commandery. Captains acquire their rank after notable service covering at least twenty waking-days beyond the walls. They don't get a pay bonus, but do enjoy considerable autonomy in planning missions and possess private rooms within the Ash Farm.

Serjeant: The Serjeantry supervise training and the maintenance of the Ash Farm. Serjeants are subject matter experts and administrators who rarely go on missions, and keep the Foresters running as an organization.

Commander: The Commandery is the Foresters' ruling council, consisting of the most experienced (by waking-days on missions) members of each order specialty, along with the Steward, head of the Serjeantry. Save for the Steward, all members of the Commandery continue to lead missions, though no more than one is normally permitted to do so at a time.

several extended missions can become extremely wealthy, as compounded experience translates directly into coin.

Foresters don't have much opportunity to spend their money, since much of their time is occupied in training or traveling beyond Redoubt's walls. Magisterium rulings ban Foresters from purchasing land usage rights that extend beyond a month, borrowing money, owning businesses, or buying most other forms of property beyond possessions for direct personal use. "A Forester should not be looking over her shoulder at land and loans," said one judge. (That this also prevents members of the popular order from ever gaining enough power or status to challenge the existing aristocracy is, of course, sheer happenstance.) Senior Foresters about town dress in finery, their weapons bejeweled, sometimes with a servant hired for the day a few paces behind, laden down with purchases. Few would recognize them in the clothes and kit they sport beyond Redoubt, which is all tough, dun-and-green cloth, and blades blackened against rust and glitter.

The Ash Farm

The fortress of Veridilith stands amidst the tangle of roads leading to the Mountain Gate. It's illegal to show the fort on a map or describe any part of it on a document without a Magisterium seal, according to a law from the early days of the Fall. Certain sages of the time believed some cabal of sorcerers might have been responsible for the Dead as an act of war, and the fort, which dwarves built as one of several holdouts against a successful siege, was assigned the same purpose. Its dwarven name is lost; Veridilith is what elven refugees called it when they were put to work repairing its then-dilapidated grounds. The name only appears on official documents now, since Foresters universally call it the Ash Farm. Its garden terraces are now simulated wild places, filled with flora foreign to the rest of Redoubt. This is where Foresters live, train, compile their knowledge in a dozen small libraries (one large one is considered too vulnerable), stable their horses, and sometimes battle the Dead.

Training

New recruits live on the Ash Farm full-time, while their well-heeled seniors sometimes rent rooms elsewhere at their own expense. They train in a variety of disciplines, beginning with two months of grueling physical conditioning and combat training in simulated wild spaces, kept on fortress grounds. After that, recruits are streamed into various specialties based on the judgment of the Serjeantry, who supervise training and maintenance of the Ash Farm itself. The specialties change according to expert availability and the Commandery's orders, but typically include the following. Training time depends on the specialty. Armsworkers are ready within a week or two; readers may be trained for half a year or more.

Recruits who wash out of training due to injury or incompetence become "blockers": workers within the Ash Farm and, sometimes, a pool of unskilled labor used for lumber hauling and similar efforts out in the wild.

Armsworker: These warriors protect a Forester mission. Armsworkers are the largest, most expendable specialty in the order, and receive the briefest initial training; they're bodies thrown at the Dead so more valuable companions might survive. Armsworkers who survive receive greater attention, including training in the Brand Against Damnation martial school and various fighting styles. The most prominent armsworkers are typically fighters, rangers, and barbarians.

Greenworker: Dozens of valuable plant species won't grow in Redoubt, even in the Outer City, or have been lost and must be replanted from wild stock. Greenworkers study

and gather these, and look for trees that might be quickly harvested and dragged back to the city. Greenworkers study beasts too, through ancient writings which identify creatures that have gone unseen for an age—bears, elk, wolves, and more. Sightings are rare, as the Dead attack large animals too. Rangers and sages are often greenworkers.

Outrider: Outriders use horses in combat and long-distance travel. These are rare skills in Redoubt, maintained through a curriculum developed by Menhada warriors and maintained by their Forester students along with the swift, sturdy line of coursers bred by the Ash Farm. Fighters, paladins, and rangers are the most likely outriders.

Protector: Armsworkers guard the rest of a Forester mission, but specialist protectors guard specific individuals, important outsiders who must come along for one reason or another; Commanders, for instance, or people who have some irreplaceable quality but who are, for one reason or another, required to work outside the city's walls. Fighters, warrior monks, paladins, and rogues are often protectors.

Reader: Readers begin by learning languages, then move on to the history of ruins, artifacts, lost customs, and maps of distant places—all the lore of civilization as it was before the Fall. A skilled reader can tell you that a few errant stones and a weedy depression was once a great estate. They don't come along for pure knowledge's sake, but to identify things to plunder, places to take shelter, and how severely the Dead have defiled a given region. Virtually every prominent reader is a sage, though a significant minority of beguilers and more scholarly-oriented rogues occupy their ranks as well.

Skullworker: Skullworkers study the Dead and lead a mission's response to their presence. If a skullworker is part of a band, they decide the tactics to use. Skullworkers study pre-Fall necromancy, funerary writings, and works left by their predecessors, combining them with their own experience. Most Foresters believe the best skullworkers are paladins, penitents, and warrior monks, who can back their plans with action, but sages and some rogues compensate with their depth of knowledge.

Wayfinder: Scouts and navigators, wayfinders collaborate with readers and greenworkers to identify reliable routes, or in emergencies, cut new ones from the wilderness. Wayfinders work alone or in pairs, ahead of the main body of a mission. It's dangerous work, fit for tough rangers and stealthy rogues. Wayfinders are the best-regarded specialists among the Foresters and it's easiest to rise in rank as one of them, but it's easy to die, too, away from one's companions, when the Dead hear a sigh or snapped twig.

Out of the Farm, Into the Forest

As specialist training intensifies, Foresters bring recruits out through the Mountain Gate, on short jaunts which initially stay within sight of the walls but eventually extend nearly a league away. Some recruits are overwhelmed by fear at this point. If it happens repeatedly, the candidate is labeled a blocker. Sometimes the fear is justified, as the Dead have been known to attack training missions, but most recruits survive the experience.

Graduation takes place back in the Ash Farm. To prove themselves, recruits battle pre-injured Dead within a heavily guarded, walled area set aside for this purpose. The Ash Farm is one of the few places where the Dead are permitted to exist, as targets and objects of study. In the entire history of the Foresters, not one of these subjects has ever broken loose. Critically injured recruits are dispatched by their fellows and fed to ghûl employed by the order. Survivors with the nerve to do what is necessary graduate. Otherwise, they become blockers.

The Census

Census-taking in Redoubt was low-caste work, dangerous duty, harsh punishment. But Anittas spoke for the law, could have banished him from the Inner City, enslaved him on the spot, or expelled him from the Watch, each worse than census taking.

— Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

Redoubt is a closed system, in which resources are limited and life is cheap. Someone has to keep track of the number of people in each district. This helps determine the proper distribution of supplies, and it's a vital source of information about the spread of disease, violence, unrest, and new births.

The heart of the Census is a corps of scholars working out of the Great Library of Redoubt. These sages sift through harvested data and draw useful conclusions, presenting reports and advice to the Magisterium. Their records stretch back to the Accord and paint a picture of life in the last city. But these scholars could do nothing without the census takers, agents tasked to venture into every corner of the city in pursuit of information. This is dangerous and menial work; the census takers are authorized to carry weapons (but not supposed to), and are expected to pry into every shadow. While a central force of census takers is established by the Magisterium, local leaders are expected to provide their own personnel to augment and work alongside that core group.

It is a crime to interfere with the work of a census taker, and they have freedom to enter any dwelling in pursuit of their duties. If faced with or anticipating trouble, census takers can petition Hoodsmen or the Watch for escorts or other assistance. In some ways, census takers are beneath anyone's notice—but this blend of access and anonymity can be a powerful tool.

Organization

At its core, the Census is a strictly defined bureaucracy. The statisticians and lorekeepers who work in the Great Library have delegated roles and ranks, though this is almost invisible to those outside the organization. This deep structure is surrounded by an informal nimbus of census takers. The Census has identified local leaders in each district, and to become a census taker, one must be sponsored by such a leader. Literacy is required, and the conduct of the census taker reflects on the leader—so while it's a menial role, it's one that people take great care in filling.

Census takers appointed by the Magisterium form a permanent backbone and teach the "appointees" the basics of the job. Appointees are always assigned the most dangerous regions, in part because the Census doesn't want to risk its permanent agents, and in part because it's assumed a local census taker knows how to weather the dangers of their own district better than an outsider.

Census takers are permitted to carry weapons, but rarely do so overtly. Every census taker has a badge of office, which serves as both a primary key to free passage and a shield against casual violence. In addition to safe passage, census takers are entitled to question anyone, although such questioning only extends to matters of relevance to the Census. Impersonating an agent of the Census is a serious crime—a fact that has not prevented the appearance of forged badges.

Hidden Motives?

On its surface, the Census is a mundane organization engaged in tedious work. Perhaps because of this, an endless supply of stories suggest that the Census serves a more sinister purpose. Here are just a few of the rumors about the Census, any of which may or may not be true in your own campaign.

- Rather than using appointment to the Census as a punishment, many local leaders assign their most capable agents to this duty. The Census has virtually unlimited access, and this provides a leader with an agent who can go anywhere in Redoubt. If this rumor is correct, it's not that the Census has an overall secret purpose, but rather that there are individual census takers who are pursuing hidden agendas.
- While the core mission of the Census is important, it also serves to conceal an elite force that monitors the population for threats hidden among the living. Doppelgangers, lycanthropes, Dead with the cunning and power to conceal their true nature; it is the task of the Census not simply to keep track of humanity, but to identify and expose the inhuman hiding among them. This is kept secret to avoid the spread of panic. People

already fear the Dead, and the knowledge of monsters hidden among the living would surely cause chaos.

- Throughout what remains of society, a handful of people are touched by divine power or purpose—potential paladins or penitents, or people with mysterious traits who don't know yet know what role they have to play. The Census searches for these people, carefully watching for prophetic signs that identify children who could become the champions of the future. The more common rumor suggests that the secret leaders of the Census will pull these people in when the time is right and set them on their proper path, but a variation suggests the Census seeks to identify these chosen few so it can *eliminate* them.
- The core purpose of the Census is the acquisition of knowledge. The census doesn't just track births, deaths, and population figures; census takers record every detail they uncover in their travels. The leaders of the Census have access to a massive trove of knowledge, from deadly secret to incredibly mundane. It's possible that these are collected purely for scholarly purposes. It is equally possible, however, that the Census uses this knowledge to maintain a web of blackmail, extortion, and worse.

Using the Census

The Census is part of the backdrop of life in Redoubt. The PCs might have a simple encounter with a census taker seeking basic information: how old are the player characters? Where do they live? What is their occupation? Such an encounter can introduce themes to be examined in the evolving story: The census taker is investigating the impact of a spreading plague, for instance, and wants to know if any of the player characters have shown symptoms. Such encounters help establish the concept of the Census as a force that is always gathering information, and that can and will question everyone.

A census taker, someone who knows everyone in a district and always has an interesting piece of gossip to share, makes a useful contact for a PC. Such a character can also be a way to draw player characters to a location: *"I went to count heads in the tenements, and I heard terrible screams!"*

Player characters might be census takers themselves. Census takers aren't supposed to carry weapons while on duty, but if a character can work around this (a beguiler or warrior monk doesn't need to carry a weapon, for instance), being a census taker allows exploration of many different parts of the city, with the legal authority to go with it.

The Church

"The Angat and the Church of Man welcome all," she assured him in return, as befit an Angat matriarch.

— Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

The Angat Church of Man is, as an organization, reliant on a complex hierarchy and a great deal of ritual. While explaining the various and shifting alliances and feuds of the Church in depth would take volumes, these are the basics as understood by the citizens of Redoubt.

The Five Arms

The Church is both old and internally contentious, and it quickly separated itself by focus. This has reduced some internal conflict, and keeps the hierarchies balanced against one another. While some discrepancies and inequalities develop, it has remained remarkably steady over the years.

Each branch maintains a primary focus, though substantial crossover exists between the branches.

The Reason: Political

The Reason is the political arm of the Church, a small council of Angat nobles. The Reason is not hereditary in law but often becomes so in practice, as members raise their children to follow in their footsteps, and so the families associated with the Reason are extremely powerful within the city.

Their insignia is an open book, representing their devotion to knowledge and reasoning. Many claim they should change it to a closed, chained book, for few of them are generous with resources or knowledge until and unless it will bring them power.

The Deep Hand: Service

The opposed arm of the Church to the Reason, the Deep Hand is symbolized by a cupped hand against a green background. They are devoted to service, running clinics and hospitals, repairing houses for those who cannot do so themselves, and preparing food for the hungry. They have almost no political power, but the other branches recognize the benefits they offer and how much stability they bring to the city.

Servants of the Word: Academic

The Servants have entrenched themselves in the Academy (see "The Academy of Voices") over the years, running themselves almost independently of everyone else. They have little interaction with the rest of the Church with the exception of the Hands, who rely on them to educate the masses. The Servants concern themselves only with the acquisition, preservation, and development of knowledge in all its forms.

The Reckoners: Necrology

The warrior-priests of the Reckoners are a mistrusted and disliked branch of the Church, both within and without, but they are indispensable. Many are retired Foresters, well-trained in understanding the patterns and moods of the Dead as well as the signs of their activity. Others are scholars or soldiers, but some still carry enough magic to put a Dead creature to rest. It is here that the Austerity holds the most power, and they are cruel, relentless, and bitter, feared by all around them. (The Austerity is the conservative movement, rigid and hostile to other faiths, that dominates much of the Angat Church of Man. See "The History of the Church," later in this chapter, for more.) They have absolute power in Redoubt, but seldom choose to use it, perhaps biding their time.

Though the Undertaking manages most of the dead and dying of Redoubt, the Reckoners are trained in hunting out those who would keep a Dead relative, those who worship the Dead, and Dead incursions of all sorts. There is no appeal when the Reckoners have branded someone a traitor to the living, and the execution and disposal of such traitors is swift, public, and brutal. Some of them are academics who showed promise in understanding the Dead, others are warriors, hunters, or city guards who showed an inclination for sniffing out trouble.

They can be recognized by their black clothing and the sign of a sword cleaving the ground.

The House of Intercession: Clergy

Second lowest in the Church's hierarchy but largest in terms of numbers, the House is where the rank-and-file priests and clergy owe their allegiance. They perform the bulk of the administrative and daily work of the Church, including basic instruction for the rest of the factions, but seek little power for themselves. Their insignia is a simplified glyph of the Exquisite Memory against a white background.

Ranks and Classes

The basic ranks of the Church are the Aspirant, Curate, Reverend Curate, Prelate, Reverend Prelate, and Pontiff. Each of these ranks exists across the branches, but there are also specialized ranks within particular branches.

Aspirant: The lowest of the low, the Aspirant class is composed of students, workers, and others who are not ordained into the mysteries of God, those outside of affiliation with the five arms, and others considered unready (or unworthy).

Curate: The Curates are fond of saying that they are the backbone of the Church, and they aren't wrong. Curates teach, track, transcribe, listen, assist, console, and nearly any other task that requires more care and experience than an aspirant can manage, but still involves some menial or regular labor. The curates are often less than sympathetic to internal squabbles and a healthy whisper network connects them, trading information, resources, and gossip.

Angat, Other Humans, and... Others

The Angat are known for being xenophobic and prejudiced—not just against other cultures or species, but even toward each other. Classism and familial feuds are rampant within the Angat, and such things infest the Church as well. Angat are favored in promotions and rewards, while other cultures must work twice as hard for half as much. Abuse and nepotism run rampant within the Church, leading to frequent involvement by the Arbiters.

Unfortunately for the Angat, as they have little stomach for serving or holding status beneath others, the Hands are filled with Aspirants and clergy of other cultures. In the Arbiters, too, a slow movement has developed a small but powerful faction of Venmir and Menhada opposed to the current status quo.

Reverend: Reverends are devoted to nurturing and sharing the holy word, and they have the authority to speak for the Church within their overall rank (Curate or Prelate). They preach, they minister, they visit deathbeds (with a terrifying Reckoner behind them, of course), and they teach. Their mission is to spread the word and to bring salvation to the people of Redoubt.

Prelate: The Prelates are the most contentious, paranoid, snappish, and manipulative strata of Church leadership. By canon law, they are not supposed to be "above" the curates, but they have placed themselves as such. The administrators and managers of the Church, they meddle in everything and struggle with each other to rise to greater office.

Pontiff: The rarest of the Church-wide ranks, the Pontiff's role is that of a leader. Each branch of the Church has three Pontiffs, all of whom work together (supposedly) to keep the Church from straying.

Arbiter: The role of the Church in settling civil and political disputes cannot be overstated. Arbiters develop codes and mediate disputes in cases not requiring Magisterium oversight. They do not hold substantial authority within the Church hierarchy, but only the best Curates and Reverends are chosen to become Arbiters, making their role a coveted one.

Bulwark: One of the most specialized roles within the Church, the Bulwarks are powerful warriors trained by the Reckoners in the use of ritual magic, the management of the Dead, and such holy relics as can still be used. There are only ten known Bulwarks in Redoubt: five serve on the walls and five with the Foresters, but rumors suggest that others may exist out of the common eye.

Deathspeaker: A controversial and most unpopular figure, the Deathspeakers are a splinter of the Reckoners. Little

Holy Relics

The Church guards a robust collection of relics, artifacts, and holy objects from most of the surviving religions. There is a great amount of political tension between the Church and those religions whose relics they hold, and leaders of these other faiths make frequent attempts to convince the Church leadership to give up their hoarded relics. They have yet to be successful.

A quiet internal struggle rages for power over the relics. The Austerity, which regards all other religions and faiths as sin, campaigns to destroy all non-Church relics. They claim that the relics contribute to the sinfulness which draws the Dead from the earth, and that destroying them will help reduce the weight of sin from the world. The academics, of course, fight tooth and nail for the preservation of the relics. Their fervor surprised the Austerity at first, winning them valuable ground, but now the Austerity uses this stalking horse to keep the academics focused away from more substantial changes and infringements elsewhere.

The relics, meanwhile, are kept in the Academy of Voices under heavy guard by warrior-curates, who also maintain and study them. The leader of this group is an Angat woman by the name of Janiar Masvin, a young and intense academic who believes that there is much to be learned from other religions. Needless to say, she is not a favorite of the Austerity.

is known about them except that—if urban legend is to be believed—they can speak with the Dead, and that the living have no wish to cross their path.

Storysinger: With the loss of knowledge and the hardscrabble life of Redoubt, many of the stories and teachings of the Church, and the history of the Angat, are being lost. The storysingers are a group of academics who move throughout the city, stopping in squares and common places to share their knowledge through their songs and stories.

Wardens: Wardens are temple-soldiers who guard the primary cathedral of the Church of Man in the Square south of the Old City. On occasion, they travel beyond those church walls to accompany powerful clergy on journeys across Redoubt, but they hold no authority outside the cathedral.

Humbles: The Humbles are members of the Deep Hand who have sworn away all material comfort or possessions in the name of service. Often sinners seeking to atone, haunted soldiers, or those who have been given a second chance in life, they have sworn a vow of silence and service. They can be found in the poorest sections of Redoubt, thin and silent but clean and strong, throwing their weight against the inevitable tide of decay.

The Academy of Voices

Founded by Kallun Hessel, the Academy was originally a humble attempt to collect and preserve the philosophical knowledge and ponderings of a fractured world. The project came to the attention of several nobles who became patrons of the Academy, increasing its scope exponentially. The priests who showed a talent for language and the written word, as well as particularly devout scribes, were chosen for the staff, and the Academy was expanded into a fully-fledged entity in its own right.

The Academy functions independently of the Church itself, but is overseen by a Pontiff. The current Pontiff is Aldwy Edwul, a doddering and erratic old man who is believed to have long outlived his usefulness. The Church, however, is caught between a power-hungry woman, Geflin Agmali, a prelate from within the Church structure, and Aldwy's preferred heir, his goddaughter Mirsia Besyan, a quiet but well-regarded member of the Relics Department. Doddering and erratic as he might be, Aldwy's confidants see his quiet, efficient moves to undermine Geflin and wonder if he is as used-up as he pretends to be.

The Academy owns or curates most of the books within Redoubt, as well as much of the knowledge the world has managed to retain. Most of its resources are devoted to preserving or copying damaged or old books, finding and transcribing history and knowledge from the population of Redoubt, and educating the people as much as possible. The most liberal of the Church branches, they are well aware of the fragile realities of continued human survival, and they have no problem working with other faiths to preserve what little they can.

If Only One Survives: The Hidden Order

The Academy is not only a glorified bevy of scribes. Carefully hidden from the Austerity, a small team works with the Foresters to preserve and further the knowledge and history of the nonhuman races, as well as non-Angat cultures. They are carefully ignored by Aldwy and Mirsia, and known to only a handful of those outside of the order itself. There are no symbols or rituals or gatherings, simply a team of people devoted to all knowledge.

Most dangerously of all, they work with the Foresters to send books and relics *out* of Redoubt, establishing sealed and weatherproof caches across the region. They wait with the slim hope that someday the world will expand out of Redoubt's walls, and that there will be words and relics waiting.

The Crown of Blood

She took my price, my young slavemistress, and we signed a contract in blood. One half of all my earnings for five years. One quarter of all my earnings for five more.
I was desperately poor, but I was freeing my soul, and my daughter's face would never bear the mark of servitude.

– Jaym Gates, "Child of Dust"

They say slavery is a grim necessity, moral in this permanent emergency. Not every culture in Redoubt supported slavery before the Fall, so this ideology, minted in the White Citadel, was necessary to hold a multicultural society together and absolve it of its first crime: the taking of Elldimek and the chaining of its dwarves. But it was never necessary—at least, not for survival's sake. Without slaves, the masters of the White Citadel would have had to beat their crowns into plowshares, so to speak, and that was intolerable. In the decaying fortress-city, slaves maintain an inequitable social order with their cheap labor, and the Crown of Blood maintains slavery.

The Crown is the city's most powerful guild, and a de facto apparatus of the state. Its Magisterium-sanctioned charter commands it to "direct such labors as the people are obligated to perform, according to the ancient customs of their tribes." Every society had its peasants and indentured workers, required to pay dues to some overlord or other. The Crown works on behalf of these chieftains.

The first slaves were dwarves. The second were refugees from common stock, who were indentured under the reasoning that the obligations of their old societies still applied in Redoubt but would be managed by the guild—who were, at that time, a collection of spare noble offspring and dispossessed merchants, eager to maintain an elevated status.

The Red Trade

The first refugee-slaves rebelled in the Gate Strike, and despite its brutal suppression, the Magisterium responded with a revision of the slave laws. Save for the dwarves, who were said to be permanently ruled "by right of conquest," children would no longer share the enslaved status of their parents. Indenture became a punishment for debt and crime. In many cases, this pressed the same families into service, but it created a tenuous hope for liberation within the system. Along with inherited slavery among the dwarves,

debt and penal slavery remain the backbone of unwilling labor. The children of non-dwarf slaves are free but with few prospects, and often inherit debt or conflict with the law themselves. The Crown of Blood processes them all. If one wishes to sell themselves, they need only repeat the terms of their contract aloud and mark the document in the presence of one witness. The Crown solemnizes standard and custom contracts, where the slave forfeits some or all their earnings for a set period.

Factors file the contract—alongside writs of penal slavery, confirmations of indentured status, and all the other records that supposedly control slavery—at the nearest *ludus*. Originally training facilities and arenas for gladiators, ludi now serve as processing and distribution facilities for all slaves, and markets for those interested in purchasing slaves in volume. Buyers bid on lots of five or more, or on single gladiators and other exceptional slaves.

Those seeking one or two slaves purchase them at neighborhood markets for higher prices. These are managed by the guild's Factors and guarded by its Binders. A local market facility is a frame of iron and timber, with rings to secure slaves and a platform to show them off. Auctions take place at noon, if at all. The Crown of Blood prefers to dictate prices, and only resorts to auctions at markets when a slave has some exceptional quality that might spur bidding or to get rid of excess "stock."

Illegal Slavery and the Guild

The guild has the authority to violently suppress illegal slaving rings, though they usually notify the Hoodsmen before a raid. This is a last resort for the Crown of Blood, which prefers to protect its monopoly by collecting protection from the illegal trade. Beyond sending Binders in to thrash the non-compliant, the guild encourages outside slavers to cooperate by forging slave papers. Contracts and writs are easy to forge, especially when a Factor can put the guild's stamp on such documents. Illegal slavers get contracts too: licenses authorizing them to act as procurement agents for the slaves they've already chained and sold, in exchange for a significant fee.

That the guild does this is something of an open secret, but the Watch tolerates it—lacking the resources to do much else—unless the illegally enslaved person's family complains. When wealthier people are illegally enslaved it produces a minor scandal, ending in the managing Factor's own enslavement and damages paid to the victim. When it comes to other people, the guild either provides compensation or convinces the victim to retroactively legalize their own indenture for more money than the payoff. In any case, these complications are rare enough that the guild would rather control illegal slavery than suppress it.

The Ludi, the Pits, and their Lords

One mark of a Crown of Blood member is that they only use the term "ludus" on formal occasions, among outsiders. Otherwise, they're just called the Pits. Save for one in Dockside, the Crown of Blood's ludi are all located in the Inner City. The first two are known as the Old Pits, because they were built upon dwarven ventilation shafts dug into the mountain. The early guild sealed off connections to the Undercity, setting up offices in these shortened tunnels while slaves were consigned to the floor below. The East and West Pits aren't as busy as the three purpose-built New Pits, which are more comfortable for guild members, provide better facilities for the handling of slaves, and include arenas where gladiators train and fight. The most prestigious ludus is the Southern facility in Dockside, or "Dockpit," where the guild meets for a three-day period every autumn.

The first slave combats took place after the Gate Strike, to demoralize and divide the indentured population. This attracted gambling, and soon grew into the guild's most profitable sector. Consequently, the Lanistae, who bought and managed fighters, became the most influential members of the Crown of Blood, and the Lanista title became synonymous with high position.

Ranks in the Crown of Blood

In the Crown, one buys guild status. The guild is a corporate body split into about 100,000 shares. Share prices fluctuate, with a single share usually trading for around 1,000 gp. Outsiders can't buy shares, but might inherit them or receive them as a condition of employment within the guild. Wealthy outsiders often sponsor a guild ally's share purchases with loans, or in exchange for other favors. Major decisions are decided by all guild members, who possess one vote per share, but day-to-day work depends on the member's position. The minimum numbers of shares required to hold a given position are listed in parentheses.

Binders (1 share): Binders move slaves from place to place, perform unskilled labor slaves are unable (or not trusted) to do, act as guards, and mete out punishments. All guild members begin as Binders, either by inheriting a small number of shares or as apprentices to a Factor or Lanista. Membership through an apprenticeship grants one share and an obligation to earn its value through labor, which takes several years, or through monetary compensation. Binders are widely despised by Redoubt's poor, and most wear red masks in public to minimize the stigma. The guild encourages Binders to be cruel and dispassionate. Neither slaves, poor commoners, nor higher-ups in the Crown of Blood have any sympathy for them. Many Binders serve their terms, acquire a few more shares, sell them, and leave the guild to enter another trade, where they never talk about where their money came from.

Factor (100 shares): To qualify for Factor status, a Binder must possess at least 100 shares and pass an exam testing

literacy, memory, and mathematical ability. Failure on this test requires the member to sell themselves back down to 99 or fewer shares. Factors form the guild's administrative backbone. They process the writs, contracts, and ownership papers required for legal slavery, perform sales, and direct Binders. Factors also wear masks, but these are red dominos that don't hide their identities.

Lanista (10,000 shares): The five Lanistae each possess at least 10,000 shares and influence the holders of hundreds more, owned by subordinates and allies. The Lanistae do not appear in public. Instead, each has a Master Proxy: a slave who appears at such functions in their stead. They're the best-kept slaves in Redoubt, treated as virtual aristocrats, but like all slaves, they have pierced ears (with subtle studs) and cannot carry blades. Their dress swords are wooden, though jeweled.

The Forerunners

"First to fight" against the worst this world could offer, human or inhuman.

— Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

Redoubt's Watch are usually busy breaking up fights, chasing criminals, and preventing what catastrophes they can. Redoubt's Hoodsmen are kept busy as well, in both just and unjust pursuits. Neither organization can be relied upon to be swiftly available for every emergency, and in a city like Redoubt, swift response is often the difference between calamity and calm.

While the Inner City enjoys more stations than the Outer, Forerunner Station Houses are positioned throughout Redoubt. In these places, Forerunners train, rest, and wait, on call day and night, to dart directly into the heart of danger the moment the need arises.

Forerunners employ two tiers of civil servants. The first are the Scoutrunners, mostly children, and the second are the most widely trusted and lauded civil servants operating in Redoubt—the city's courageous first responders for everything from riot control to fire to the rising Dead. These are the Forerunners proper. Fit and strong, prepared (in theory) for anything, the Forerunners are first on the scene to fix the city when something breaks.

Forerunner Life

Some portray Forerunner life as easy. Indeed, if one wanders into a Station House when no emergency is in progress, one finds Forerunners napping, playing games, engaging in hobbies, even flirting with admirers. This appearance of laziness is probably why Forerunners have been roped into some non-emergency high-risk duties, such as escorting census-takers to dangerous neighborhoods. However, this "laziness" is because on-duty Forerunners must be prepared at any moment to race toward danger. A Forerunner's job is to wait for the alarm to sound, then to drop everything and dive into action.

In fact, when Forerunners are *not* on-duty, most look far busier than when they are. Since being a Forerunner is so physically taxing, regular exams of both fitness and battle prowess are required to keep the position, and off-duty Forerunners spend their time training with other Forerunners to be in tip-top condition. Those with physical talent might skimp on such activities and thus enjoy a great deal of free time, but the average Forerunner does little except prepare for danger and then wait around to run toward it when called.

In addition to high physical demands, the psychological demands on Forerunners are equally significant. As the first to arrive at scenes of trauma, they witness much that is

Proxies

As a vile business, the slave trade attracts Woe. Binders confine and torture slaves, Factors manage the debasement of hundreds, and Lanistae profit from the whole thing. Many veteran members of the Crown of Blood display the subtle signs of spiritual damage: gray-cast faces, unblinking eyes, the sense that something rots within them, and worse. Ordinary people don't want to be around the worst of this. In addition, most Lanistae and Factors have people—wealthy rivals and poor victims—who would love to pay them back in blood. Thus, wealthy Factors employ Proxies: slaves who represent them in social situations and casual business dealings. Proxies can't enter into contracts on behalf of their masters, but can negotiate them, relay commands (which Binders find galling, since they're being ordered around by slaves), and transport documents. This requires considerable trust, so Proxies are well treated, with better material conditions than most of Redoubt's free citizens.

A Proxy's last duty is to ensure their master dies well. Guild members often perish with enough spiritual corruption to rise again, and while the people of Redoubt don't understand Woe or what causes the dead to rise, simple observation has shown them that it happens a lot to people in their business. If a Proxy's master dies, it's the slave's job to ensure the body is dealt with properly by ghûl or pyre. (Many ranking members of the Crown of Blood don't want to be collected by the Undertaking; they feel that having their body rendered and possibly used by those whom they lorded over in life is "beneath them.") In the case of seldom-seen senior Factors and Lanistae, rumors always float around that one or the other has been disposed of early, and their Proxy has neglected to inform the guild. Such an offense would be punished with the most hideous tortures—unless of course, the Proxy had a knack for making the Crown of Blood money, in which case, questions might never be asked.

nightmarish and haunting. As all their active duties are dangerous, they face death on a more regular basis than nearly anyone else in the city, and the life expectancy of Forerunners is among the lowest of Redoubt's gainfully employed. Since Forerunner deaths are often violent, or even occur at the hands of the Dead, many Forerunners rise after death, and the hope for a clean, restful demise is largely denied to them.

To counter these stresses, and to encourage sufficient candidates to keep the city safe, Forerunners enjoy many benefits. On top of the popularity of their position and the prospects for respect and romance among their social peers, Forerunners are compensated handsomely. Even the poorest can sign up to be Forerunners—so long as they can pass the physical exams—yet every Station House eats almost as well as the wealthiest in Redoubt. Forerunners are never allowed to starve, and they have a better supply of meat and eggs than the city's poorest could otherwise dream of.

On top of their own food, Forerunners are provided with enough spare grain to feed two other people (or to trade as they see fit). All are given free Station House lodging if they wish it, and while Forerunners are encouraged to supply their own equipment, they may borrow armor and arms from the Station Houses at need. Forerunners injured in the line of duty are fed and cared for by the city until they are either able to work again or forced to retire.

Finally, if a Forerunner is killed in the line of duty, is maimed beyond the ability to continue forerunning, or retires after a period of ten or more years, that Forerunner or her heir is entitled to ten years of daily grain for three people. Forerunners also care for the funerary needs of other Forerunners, putting down companions who rise and pooling funds within the Forerunners' Guild for any other requirements.

Scoutrunners

The Scoutrunners' only job is to pay attention to the world around them and to run to the nearest Station House at any sign of emergency, with whatever information they have. Though most neighborhoods have gongs (or bits of loud-when-banged scrap) that can be sounded to alert Forerunners to emergencies, it is helpful if Forerunners can determine in advance the exact nature and location of the emergency and what equipment they need to bring.

In addition to providing information, Scoutrunners guide Forerunners to difficult-to-locate emergencies, and serve as message-runners and criers for water brigades and other emergencies requiring community response.

A Scoutrunner's job is easier and less dangerous than a Forerunner's. Scoutrunners are paid in simple daily rations only with few additional benefits, though they are served meat or eggs once a week and bone broth daily. Scoutrunners who raise a false alarm are dismissed, no second chances—unless the officers of the local Station

House agree that the circumstances led to a reasonable (if false) conclusion of emergency—while those who provide particularly useful information about a true emergency are sometimes rewarded with extra grain or (rarely) coin.

Scoutrunners are treated as younger siblings by the Forerunners of their local Station House, and it is not uncommon for Scoutrunners to enjoy combat training at a young age, making Scoutrunning a Forerunner internship of sorts. Retired Forerunners who can still run quickly (such as those who have lost an arm, for example) sometimes continue to work as Scoutrunners, just because they believe in the Forerunners' mission.

Scoutrunners who die in the line of duty are treated as equal brethren by full Forerunners. Though they don't enjoy the government benefits of grain for their heirs, they are put down by Forerunners if they rise, and their local stations pool resources for any funerary needs.

Water Brigades

Forerunners have many duties, all vying for chief importance, but fire response is among the most important, most well-known, and certainly most common. A city as crowded as Redoubt is at constant risk from fire, so to prevent massive-scale tragedies, early Forerunners took charge of organizing neighborhood water brigades.

Every Forerunner Station House contains a map of its region, with water sources clearly marked and plans for how to get that water to any foreseeable fire. Forerunner stations also keep wagons that are essentially small rain cisterns on wheels, allowing them to arrive with at least a little water to get the fire-fighting started. Once a year, near the start of the dry season, off-duty Forerunners conduct a training day for neighborhood fire volunteers. In many neighborhoods this "Forerunner Day" has become a miniature holiday, with games, music, and trade.

With the help of these semi-trained local volunteers and the Scoutrunners facilitating communication, Forerunners are able to quickly contain nearly all inner-city blazes, though this does require additional shifts during the hottest times of year. In the outer city, one's danger from fire depends on how close one is to the nearest Station House, which can be quite far in the case of some Newtown residents. All the most fire-prone crops, however, are planted in a rotation that keeps them close to Station Houses, with their own nearby rain cisterns as well.

Station Houses

Forerunner Station Houses are small and cramped, like most of Redoubt. Usually two stories high, they boast optional barracks-like housing at the top and basements or yards equipped as training areas. The ground floor is where on-duty Forerunners pass most of their time until needed, and where the Forerunners' famously enviable food is prepared. The station's fire map is kept on display, and in some stations the map itself is a work of art. Stations may additionally post commendations local Forerunners have won.

In the Outer City, most stations have a small stable attached, housing two fast horses and a strong mule: the former to speed response times and the latter to haul water or sand for fire emergencies. All station houses have a large bell or gong to alert folk to emergencies that require community participation, and keep a posted list of smaller alarm gong locations in the neighborhood.

The House of Mercy

"She needs more help than we can give her," Rowina said, then called over to Maidóc: "Where's the nearest House of Mercy?"

– Brian Bodge, "The Sport of Crows"

In a city defined by pestilence, there still remain a few souls dedicated to the arts of healing. Over the years, Alliances grow among such virtous souls, networks form, and power converges. Such is the story of the House of Mercy.

While it is rumored that the House of Mercy began with a Venmir vision, a hope to coalesce around their monotheistic leanings, it has since lost all sense of cohesion in terms of race, creed, and religion. To "call the House" (the common parlance for joining the organization) requires nothing but dedication to healing and help.

The House of Mercy itself is represented by a High Clement who represents the House's interests in public. Traditionally, this role goes to the eldest or most experienced female healer in the organization. Historically, Surinzan who seek penance for ills wrought on the Meliae during the undead plague have proven particularly well suited to the position. Many High Clements of note have worked to soothe both the spiritual and physical ailments of Redoubt.

House of Mercy Hierarchy

Beneath the High Clement are a counsel of Graces, high-ranked and seasoned healers of a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, each assigned to a specific district and House. Some Houses have multiple Graces, depending on their population and popularity. Due to the many customs and civilizations living within Redoubt, and resistance to certain methods of treatment, touch, or simply barriers of language, the Graces each oversee different kinds of healing within the city. These include Southside Graces, those that live near the First House of Mercy itself, and Newtown Graces. Contrary to common belief, it is considered a higher honor to be sent to Newtown than to remain in Southside, as it allows the Graces more opportunity to self-govern in times of crisis and need without the eyes of the larger facility looking over one's shoulder. While each Grace has specialties of approach to healing depending on their

education, they are cross-trained in a variety of disciplines.

Below the Graces are the Worries, those who live, learn, and heal within the confines of the Houses of Mercy. When an individual requires long-term care the Graces cannot provide them at home, they are admitted to one of these two facilities for observation and treatment. There, Worries provide diagnosis, care, and general oversight. Within the Worries there exist three tiers: First Worries deal primarily with pregnancy and the care of children; Second Worries provide the majority of other health-related treatment; and Last Worries are concerned with palliative care.

In addition to their other duties, Second Worries tend to the diseases of the mind, those that do not manifest with boils or gashes or breaks. Skilled surgeons, they are trained to relieve pressure from the brains of those affected by terrors and, in less severe cases, to offer less invasive approaches to mental trauma. Given the daily existence for those living in Redoubt, however, the Second Worries must prioritize the very worst and most bothersome cases.

Worries are relatively easy to recognize within the walls of the House, as they are not allowed to show any hair on their bodies and wear plain pale shifts at all times. All worries must adhere to a strict grooming ritual, consuming a concoction of tinctures that stunts the growth of hair, as the House believes hair only encourages the spread of pestilence. Additionally, Worries must take a vow of celibacy.

The Last Worries are somewhat of a shadowy sub-organization, rarely glimpsed by the outside world until the hour of death. They are the only Worries allowed to leave the confines of their facilities and are known to work closely to help usher the sick into the realms of death, working with the Church and other factions as needed to ensure the passing is as clean as possible. Last Worries travel completely covered in dark garments.

Finally, there are acolytes to the House of Mercy. Generally speaking, they are layfolk with exceptional skill and knowledge in the realm of the healing arts, tasked with aiding the House to help prevent outbreaks of plague or any of the many diseases known to run rampant in Redoubt.

Holy Relics

While the House of Mercy fulfills its purpose primarily through mundane healing arts or, at most, minor magical charms, rumors maintain they have a collection of holy relics known to heal the sick housed within their walls. This has never been confirmed by anyone from within, or with access to, the various Houses themselves, but has been referred to in older texts as a kind of reliquary. Most in Redoubt consider this nonsense, but some citizens who find their way through the halls of certain Houses claim to have seen miracles they cannot ascribe to any known medical practice.

The Last Worries are reputedly the keepers of one Mirror of Stairs, said to be in Newtown House: a relic that displays a long stairway to the viewer, populated with ancestors in their line.

Herb Network

Considering herbs and agriculture are often difficult to come by in Redoubt, the process of acquiring healing herbs and tinctures is a considerable task for the House. The High Clement herself is generally central to these discussions, working closely on the growing, protecting, gathering, and selling of said ingredients. The House of Mercy has developed a seed bank in addition to its efforts in cultivation, in hopes of maintaining the purity of the lines of herbs and roots used in their medicine. It is referred to as the "Future Garden."

The High Clement, however, does not entrust all herb growth to the farmers and has, in the last few decades, committed every window in every House of Mercy to window boxes overflowing with healing herbs: chamomile, feverfew, lavender, mint, sage, marigold, and many other hardier plants are maintained primarily by Second Worries.

Rumors persist, however, that the House of Mercy deals in some plants known for more nefarious side-effects, including nightshades and hallucinogenic mushrooms. Whether or not these rumors are true, there is no avoiding the fact that the House is well entwined in the comings and goings of any potentially useful plant products in Redoubt, and given the wealth of their own gardens, trade is the most likely source of their income.

Political Involvement

The High Clement herself is known as both politician and peacemaker, often called upon in times of distress by Magistrates and merchant-princes alike. When high-ranking members of Redoubt fall ill, it is often the High Clement who treats them in their homes, her retinue of Graces at her side. In many cases, she tends to the elite on a regular basis, taking note of their general health and mental status.

Critics allege that the House of Mercy is nothing more than a shadow network dressed as a place of healing. While the House is not known for taking stances in political matters—they traditionally maintain a neutral presence within Redoubt—they have, on occasion, risen to support local leaders or aristocratic factions if they deemed the cause grave enough. Thus, despite the good they do, the House has developed its share of naysayers and enemies. Indeed, a few particularly paranoid conspiracy theorists accuse them of orchestrating sickness, solely so they can gain further influence and acclaim by then treating and curing the disease.

Charity

Many residents of Redoubt are most familiar with the House of Mercy due to its charity work. Twice a year, the House sends out small clinics to particularly impoverished neighborhoods to give suggestions on how to live stronger, healthier lives. They pay particular attention to the children, many of whom seem to find their way into the House itself as Worries.

The Iron Moon

The Nightcoats are gaining in strength. They whisper, build their existence atop a castle of secrets.

– Kealan Patrick Burke, "Down Here With Us"

For all that the threat of the Dead is ever-present, always on the minds of Redoubters, a constant pressure that shapes government, procedure, and daily life, the truth is that most citizens of the city who experience real violence suffer at the hands of the living.

Crime runs rampant in Redoubt, from the filthiest alleyway to the highest halls of power. Only some of those criminals are evil people, of course; many are simply desperate. The end result, however, is the same.

Where there are criminals, especially after multiple generations in an overcrowded, impoverished city, there will eventually be gangs. Where there are gangs, there will eventually be guilds and other organizations as the clever and the ambitious consolidate their power.

And in Redoubt, there are no criminal operations, no thieves' guilds, greater than the Iron Moon.

Precious little is known for certain about the Iron Moon outside its own ranks. Even the name is only one of several attributed to this most powerful and most ubiquitous of secret orders. On the streets of Redoubt's poorer districts, even more frequently whispered than "Iron Moon" is the dreaded sobriquet of Nightcoats.

Whatever they're called, however, their reach is both broad and deep. The Iron Moon is an ever-present force in the city's criminal underworld. Most stolen goods, most illicit bets, and most assassinations profit them at one stage or another.

And gods help anyone who stands in their way.

Reputation and Perception

Interestingly enough, despite their brutal nature, the Nightcoats are viewed not with terror but with appreciation in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods. Rumors on the street paint the Iron Moon as an altruistic champion of the downtrodden, victimizing the rich in order to help the impoverished and to give back a little of the suffering they feel. These rumors, of course, were started and are cultivated by the Nightcoats themselves.

Indeed, the organization does, on occasion, take steps to aid the sick and the poor. They donate money to apothecaries and herbalists, provide food, even clean up and repair homes and churches, all in those lowest of neighborhoods.

It's a front, every last bit of it. By throwing a few coins around—and it only takes a *very* few to impress the city's most downtrodden—the Iron Moon cultivates the goodwill of a significant portion of Redoubt. They can rely on the poor for information, for hiding places, and for voices to speak out on their behalf. It muddies the waters and makes the authorities that much less likely to take any coordinated action against them.

The truth is, there is no altruism, no moral ambiguity to the Iron Moon whatsoever. Most of its members and all of its leadership are criminals, out for profit, and that's that. (A very few starry-eyed youths join up under these false beliefs, hoping to do good; either their illusions and altruism don't last long, or *they* don't.) Cultivating a false reputation among the most impoverished is simply more profitable, in the long run, than trying to take them for what little they have. Most citizens of Redoubt know this truth for what it is, regardless of the claims of their poorer neighbors, and feel for the Iron Moon the revulsion—and the fear—the organization truly warrants.

Methods and Operations

The Nightcoats' operations are far larger and more widespread than the size of the organization would suggest, because the guild tends to finance, orchestrate, and support the activities of other criminals rather than conducting their affairs directly. This isn't a hard and fast rule; many members of the Iron Moon do indeed operate their own protection schemes, commit their own burglaries, and so forth. They use their many connections to smuggle goods between districts, to avoid taxation, and they lend money at usurious rates. These represent only a portion of Nightcoat interests, however.

Across the entire city, the Iron Moon pulls the strings of other criminal entities. Independent fences offer the organization a cut of all goods bought and sold in exchange for legal support if they're ever caught. Local gangs earn extra income by carrying out the Nightcoats' dirty work. Illegal slave traders and bloodsport arenas, initially funded by the Iron Moon, send a percentage of every sale and every bet up the line.

And of course, countless community leaders and local politicians, as well as several Magisters, earn a fair chunk of side income by steering the Watch and the Hoodsmen away from Iron Moon interests, and even proposing laws that open up new opportunities for the guild.

Discipline in the Ranks

People make mistakes, and circumstances sometimes twist in ways that nobody could reasonably predict. The Iron Moon, as an organization, isn't so draconian—or so wasteful—that they make a habit of slitting the throats of their own people or members of their "vassal" gangs for the slightest infraction. (Some individual crew captains might be that bloodthirsty, but such leaders rarely last long before making a fatal mistake of their own.)

Reasonable errors—a failed assignment, lost goods, drawing small amounts of attention, and so forth—tend to be penalized monetarily. Fines due to one's superior are common, as are requirements to participate in an operation without receiving a cut of the proceeds.

More serious infractions, such as attacking other Nightcoats or blowing an important job, or else simply repeated minor offenses, might incur more substantial penalties. Loss of fingers or toes, or the death of an associate, are messages even the most oblivious or willful rarely ignore.

And then, of course, for the most severe transgressions—betrayal of the organization, a coup (or at least a failed coup) against one's superior, drawing down or cooperating with the law, and so forth—there's the final sanction.

Just how the Iron Moon carries out the elimination of one of its own depends on whether they feel a message is required. If the objective is simply to remove the problem individual, a quiet assassination is the easiest way to go.

If, on the other hand, the Nightcoats feel the need to make a spectacle of it—to display the costs of betrayal, or because the deceased-to-be is someone of importance—they engage an element of ritual or theater. The condemned receives a single black nail delivered to, or hammered into the doorframe of, his home. Everyone in the Iron Moon knows that this is a summons; the individual must present himself, with the nail, to his district Overseer—or to the council of Overseers, if he himself is one of them—within six hours. There, the Overseers pronounce the death sentence directly, with agents ready to instantly carry it out.

So why not run or hide when one receives the nail? Very simply, in addition to the fact that the condemned are watched by hidden spies from before the moment the nail is delivered, failure to report within the allotted time results in the execution of the fugitive's entire family.

The Iron Moon does not play games with its punishments.

Of course, the Nightcoats tailor their strategies and methods to each separate district or other portion of the city. In the poorer areas of the Outer City, for instance, they operate far more openly. More of their members commit crimes directly, rather than through intermediaries. The gangs they employ are far more violent. They engage in brutal robberies, shakedowns, and "protection"-style extortion. Indeed, the Iron Moon effectively rules a few Outer City neighborhoods outright, functioning as tyrannical feudal lords who victimize the populace, but also protect them from outside threats.

In wealthier and more powerful areas, such as much of the Inner City, their activities are more subtle. They engage in relatively little violent crime, and what bloodshed they do orchestrate is contained and usually performed by intermediaries. Here, they are far more concerned with bribing and blackmailing nobles, politicians, and community leaders; moneylending schemes; and similar, "quieter" crimes that allow them to manipulate the levers of power and the flow of wealth.

Iron Moon Hierarchy

Any organization as sprawling and secretive as the Iron Moon, let alone one founded and steeped in criminal activities, requires a strong hand and a rigid structure to keep it functioning. *Too* strong a centralized leadership, however, and it would become too unadaptable, unable to compensate for the trends and quirks of a given district.

Thus, the Nightcoats operate in a strict hierarchy of command, yet with a strong degree of flexibility and freedom at each level. So long as a given officer provides profit to the ranks above without drawing too much trouble or attention, she has the leeway to operate as she sees fit. Should her methods fail, however... Well, she knew the risks when she joined the organization, didn't she?

The Intendant

While the Iron Moon's operations are run by a council of Overseers (see the following section), even these powerful individuals answer to a higher authority. And oddly enough, they aren't entirely certain who that is.

Karzhaddi, an old, wiry, weatherworn and leathery dwarf, holds the official title of Intendant and is widely known as the face of the Iron Moon. He is older than the organization itself and served as one of its founders, and when he speaks, even the Overseers listen. He often sits in on their meetings as first among equals. At other times he can be found throughout the city, visiting individual Overseers or lower officers and passing along instructions.

All of this is known; Karzhaddi is infamous not merely throughout the Iron Moon but beyond. His is a name to bring fear to nearly any citizen of Redoubt.

No, the mystery is that nobody is entirely certain where the instructions passed along by the Intendent come from.

Karzhaddi claims to be the chief lieutenant and mouthpiece for the true leader of the Nightcoats, someone the dwarf refers to as the "Director" or simply "the boss." He has, at some points, implied that this Director is also a founding member of the Iron Moon. At others, he's suggested the Director is a relatively recent appointment, one in a long line of leaders. He has suggested the Director is both male and female; human and dwarf; one who keeps his distance from the Nightcoats and one who masquerades as a lower-ranking member. The first time he was ever challenged on these inconsistencies, Karzhaddi claimed them to be a deliberate effort at keeping the Director's identity secret.

Every subsequent time he's been challenged on the topic, he or his bodyguards have beaten the questioner nearly to death.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the true identity of the Director is a common topic of rumor, urban myth, and speculation among the Nightcoats. One of the most common theories is that there's no Director at all, that Karzhaddi is in fact the supreme leader of the organization, using a mythical superior to take some of the heat off his own activities and decisions. A few individuals with more curiosity than wisdom have attempted to follow the Intendent in order to prove this theory, or to learn who he's hiding.

These efforts have never ended well.

Karzhaddi almost never appears in public without his "Slabs." These are massive bodyguards—all broad-shouldered and well over six feet tall—clad in black leather and hide armor, hooded and masked. The Slabs almost appear to be twisted reflections of the Hoodsmen. It's a comparison that holds true in deed as well as in appearance, for they often serve as Karzhaddi's personal enforcers as much as his guards.

The Overseers

The bulk of the decision-making in the Iron Moon's upper ranks, and of the policies that moderate how everyone else performs their duties, come from the Overseers. Each Overseer commands Nightcoat operations in a particular district of the city. (Note that, despite the name, an Iron Moon district doesn't necessarily correspond precisely to an official district of Redoubt. Many city districts, such as Old Town or Eastside, are divided between multiple Overseers.)

Each Overseer makes the rules for his or her own territory, albeit with an eye toward more general policies decided on by the council or handed down by Karzhaddi. Because of this, even neighboring territories might operate with a decidedly different feel. One portion of Newtown, for instance, might be substantially more violent than another; one territory might focus more on robbery and smuggling, while another might be more inclined to protection, illegal slave and goods trading, and the like. The Nightcoats and their minions in one area might prefer bribing or blackmailing anyone who gets in their way, resorting to murder only when all else fails, while those in another might shed blood at the first sign of opposition.

When Overseers need to work out differences between them, share profit and threat reports, or just generally make policy, they assemble as a council. While the locations of these meetings are technically supposed to rotate between each and every territory, they most often occur in the wealthier and nicer parts of town. This has created something of a rivalry between Inner City and Outer City Overseers. Those of the Inner City feel obliged to spend money on hosting and security more often, which they feel in turn should grant them more say in the councils. Thus far, this has remained at the level of angry words, the Intendent having forbidden it from blossoming into anything larger, but it remains a source of tension.

Captains and Crews

Beneath the Overseers are any number of Captains. It is they who determine how best to carry out the Overseers' orders, commanding the actual street-level criminals. They typically have one foot in each side of the "business," committing crimes and choosing targets but also keeping records and accounts. They are, essentially, the Iron Moon's field marshals.

Each Captain leads a crew of Nightcoats ranging in number from less than half a dozen to several score, depending on the individual's influence and seniority and the preferences of the Overseer. Many Captains establish a further ranking system in their crew, ensuring a chain of command, but this isn't formalized across the Iron Moon. These crews are the footsoldiers of the Iron Moon, running operations, collecting debts, and basically acting as the actual criminals of the "criminal organization."

Vassals

Like feudal lords, the Nightcoats prefer that their "lessers" do much of the dirty work for them. Much of the time, they'll use a local gang to beat up a rival, burn down an informant's house, or shake down a row of shopkeepers for protection; hire an assassin rather than sending one of their own; or take a cut of independent burglars' and fences' profits rather than steal goods themselves.

These "proxy" criminals might refer to themselves as Nightcoats and brag that they're part of the Iron Moon, but they're the equivalent of day laborers at best, disposable tools at worst. Other than the bragging rights and extra bit of intimidation they earn working for the Iron Moon, they hold no real power, and they certainly have no say within the organization itself.

The Militia

The house beyond tempted us, but Vakim said the Dead might lie where their living selves once breathed. Anywhere with a bed or hearth was dangerous now. We made a battle line in front of the horses and wall, waiting for the enemy to come forth.

– Malcolm Sheppard, "Be in Memory"

In theory, the city can call up every able-bodied adult to fight, should the need arise—Dead within the walls, factional warfare, or a magical disaster. Most of Redoubt's children learn the rudiments of combat, as survival could rely on the skills of anyone at any time. Thus, every citizen is potentially part of the militia.

It would be impractical for everyone to serve as militia all the time, of course. Tradesmen and -women must still go about their business; the work necessary to survival must carry on. Except for a small core of professional soldiers who devote their careers to the militia, service only comes on occasion or at desperate need, with the sporadic scheduled drill.

Every Available Adult

Militia membership is not quite mandatory—the elderly, the crippled, and the underage are not pressed into service—but once old enough to competently use a weapon, one must make a concerted effort to avoid duty. A neighborhood militia organizer keeps an eye on local families and makes occasional rounds to visit any resident who could be called up. Those who opt out for reasons of health or desperate need still receive visits to ask if they've reconsidered, and to ensure that their excuses are legitimate.

Because militia groups work locally and engage every member of the community, working as a militia organizer is a good way to build a network. It's not a glamorous job or even one that can offer financial support, but it can introduce the organizer to everyone in the neighborhood.

Wealthy families tend to avoid militia service by the promise of vaguely-defined "support" that varies between bribery and political intimidation. The poor masses, conversely, find themselves regularly pressed into service. Anyone age fourteen or over who is reasonably physically fit and mentally sound spends four days every month in drills, training, or handling bureaucracy to keep the militia functional.

Militia Organization

Militia groups tend to be organized by neighborhoods or similar portions of the city. This naturally means that the resources available to a local militia depend upon the wealth of the neighborhood in which its members reside. Wealthy neighborhoods loan or donate materials to the local militia for their own protection (in addition to hiring private security); poor neighborhoods must make do with whatever they can provide from their own stores.

Each neighborhood has a militia officer whose job includes rounding up recruits for training, connecting with adjacent militia groups, coordinating with the Watch, and collecting donations. Militia officers are typically humans—dwarves are rarely trusted in command of troops, even irregulars, and elves are rarely trusted at all—and usually age thirty or above, as the militia prefers that the people who fill this office possess some degree of experience. The local militia officer may be corrupt or upstanding, hidebound or creative; militia organization is as much a patronage affair as one based on expertise. The only real requirement is that the officer be able to conduct the regular training scenarios and keep any illegal activities on a low enough profile to avoid drawing down the Watch.

Individuals in a neighborhood have their names recorded in a registry by the militia officer (or an associated scribe, in more affluent neighborhoods) along with any relevant specialties. The officer and any designated runners keep this list in case of call-ups and local emergencies.

Militia officers send their reports and receive their direction from an attaché to the Magisterium. In theory, the Accords guarantee each neighborhood its own ability to organize its local militia. In practice, militia officers often perform their militia business as directed by the Magisterium, either to curry favor or avoid political repercussions.

Militia Story Hooks

The characters are called up for militia service, but the militia officer actually has something else in mind—perhaps keeping them busy so that they can't interfere in a criminal activity, or using their special talents to perform some illicit tasks.

A local neighborhood has grown disgusted with the excesses of a corrupt militia officer, and they offer to pay the characters to remove him. Killing the officer would draw the attention of the Watch. Perhaps the characters can frame the officer for a crime, leaving him to the Watch or the Hoodsmen, or arrange events such that the Magisterium will remove the offending officer.

While called up to help put out a fire, the characters find themselves inside a mysterious building in their neighborhood, one that they've never entered before. They discover nefarious activities going on: a slave ring, an underground fighting ring, contraband storage, or the like. They can step in and clean up the mess (or perhaps profit from it), but the fire is still raging!

The militia officers of two adjacent neighborhoods are feuding, and the characters, residents of one of the neighborhoods, find themselves used as pawns to thwart and frustrate their neighbor.

A local witch demands an exemption from militia service, but her skills are critical to some of the militia's operations. The witch threatens to put a horrible curse on the militia officer if forced into service. The officer demands that the characters intercede and solve the problem, either by threat or by making a deal.

Unsurprisingly, the most professional militias are those in Angat neighborhoods, where militia service is seen as an honorable duty and the last bastion of true military practice in the world—and, more importantly (since the Angat are hardly the only culture with a proud martial tradition), where the equipment and lodgings made available to long-term militia members are superior to all others.

Calling Out the Militia

In theory, the entire militia can be raised to defend the city should a massive threat arise. Since the militias are irregular and do not have significant standards of ability, though, this is far less effective than a standing, professional army would be. The militia also assists in cases of natural disasters, the most common being fires; in such instances, the local militia officer dispatches runners to roust up available aid, usually at the behest of the Forerunners already on scene.

The militia performs major call-ups by co-opting the city bells (in temples and civic spaces) and ringing a distinctive slow triple gong. This signal sends every registered militia member to meet at the bell tower itself, where the local officer waits. At this time, the officer provides direction and disburses supplies as needed and available.

When the militia is called up for an extended period of time, it becomes the officer's job to coordinate food and sleeping shifts for everyone on duty. Militia work doesn't pay, save for food and quarters—service is for the survival of the city, and most neighborhoods lack the resources for their militias to offer coin. In the event of an emergency call-up, it's not uncommon for the militia to rely on scavenging in any area that isn't under private guard.

Interactions with Other Groups

In most parts of the city, the militia is considered a necessary evil. Nobody likes spending a few days every month drilling and practicing emergency exercises, especially when all they're likely to get for it is a few half-stale loaves of bread or buckwheat cakes. Many militia officers thrive on a certain amount of corruption, taking food, money, or favors in exchange for service waivers. Conversely, a militia officer accepting graft can be convinced to harass a local with constant demands for trivial call-ups, be it for running messages, extra drills, temporary security measures, or anything else to keep someone occupied.

The Watch interacts most frequently with the militia. While the Watch turns a blind eye to minor corruption in the militia's structure, they will sweep in and arrest a militia officer who's found abusing his authority. The Watch also frequently finds itself dealing with local neighborhood issues that sometimes cross paths with the militia, such as severe cult or gang activity.

The Magisterium directs the militia in broad strokes, receiving weekly reports and sending back targeted requests for the militia's matters of import. Militia officers learn to take heed of these reports, as addressing the Magisterium's concerns prevents them from exerting uncomfortable political pressure. A militia officer who doesn't respond to the Magisterium's concerns may receive an uncomfortable visit from the Hoodsmen.

The militia also has a direct connection to the Census, as it's from Census records that the militia draws its registry. This does mean that people who fall off the Census—itinerants who move about the city frequently—sometimes manage to evade militia work, but this is a small benefit in comparison to the hardships of that lifestyle.

In desperation, the Foresters may call upon the militia for assistance, especially if they suspect the city is about to face an incursion or uprising of the Dead. Usually the Foresters consider the militia to be of limited expertise and incapable of mounting a serious response at the level of the Foresters' skill, so they are unlikely to call for militia aid unless the situation is desperate.

The Undertaking

Khulechtan's wagon was but one of three or four that would pass through this district throughout the day and night. The Undertaking never stopped, never slowed.

It wouldn't dare.

– Ari Marmell, "Requiem, in Bells"

The fear and the threat of the risen Dead are ever present throughout Redoubt. From the wealthiest boulevard to the meanest alleyway, the most influential aristocrat to the scrabbling peasant, it is perhaps the one terror they all share. Without rhyme or reason understood by mortals, any corpse, any recently passed friend or loved one, might rise to feast on living flesh.

It would seem an impossible obstacle for a society to overcome, especially one so tightly crammed together, overcrowded districts hemmed in by towering walls and the horrors beyond. Such a community, with multiple deaths every day, should certainly face constant outbreaks of the undead and should swiftly be overrun and obliterated.

And so would Redoubt be, were it not for the institution devoted solely to preventing such a horrid fate from ever coming to pass.

As universal as the fear of the Dead may be, equally as ubiquitous are the slow but implacable steps, the creaking wheels, and the unmistakable cacophonous bells of the Undertaking.

Nonhuman Takers?

While the Undertaking makes use of both paid laborers and slaves of all races, the Corpsemen themselves are all human. Being a Taker is an important position, if not a glamorous or well-paid one, and that means it has traditionally belonged to the humans since the signing of the Accord.

In recent days, a number of free dwarves have petitioned the city to allow them to undergo the training and become Takers. Many Takers are in favor of this, seeing the hardy dwarves as valuable comrades in the ongoing effort. Other officials, however, mistrust the dwarves' motives, fearing that they seek only to free their enslaved brethren or to deliberately sabotage the Undertaking in vengeance for the loss of their home and power seventy years ago. And of course, some simply dislike the notion of a nonhuman ever holding authority over a human, however circumstantial—and at times, the Takers do outrank almost everyone else.

Thus far, these latter fears and bigotries are shared by much of the Magisterium, and so it seems Redoubt will see no dwarven Takers any time soon. Despite this fact, however, the efforts continue.

A Never-Ending Cycle

The Undertaking is a city-run organization—a part of the government structure, but independent of the Magisterium or the Watch—and it exists for one specific purpose: the collection and disposal of the dead.

It's a narrow mission but a vital one, and within their niche, the Takers are absolute law. In matters that impact the success of the Undertaking, matters involving the dead, the orders of a Taker—or Corpseman, as they are also known—supersede those of the Watch or even the dreaded Hoodsmen. While they might have to answer to their superiors or even a Magistrates' tribunal if they abuse their authority with government officials or the wealthy and powerful, for all practical purposes, the Takers are above the law while carrying out their assigned tasks.

Thus do the Takers and their collection teams follow the same assigned routes, day after day, working in shifts. Every neighborhood, every street, every house can expect to receive a visit from the wagon and to hear the hideous song of the bells three or four times each day.

Collection

The bells are the first sign of the Takers' approach. Every citizen of Redoubt, from the highest to the lowest, knows that horrid, ear-grinding sound. The Undertaking's chimes are specially designed to create a cacophony so jarring as to be nearly painful, one that cannot be lost amidst the noises of the city and could never be mistaken for music or any naturally occurring sound.

Slowly a massive cart rumbles into view. No mere platform of planks, this, but a massive cage on wheels. Iron being rare and precious, the bars are usually crafted of reinforced wood and bone, though a few metal cages do operate in richer or more danger-prone sub-districts. Unless one happens to witness the early start of a Taker's rounds, that cage already contains at least a few fresh corpses, and more arrive as the cart rolls and the bells cry out. Everyone knows to bring their recently deceased when they hear that sound, and they know the repercussions of failure to comply.

Sometimes those carts are hauled by mules, sometimes by goats, and sometimes by dwarven laborers—whether paid or enslaved depends on the individual dwarf. Many Takers are also accompanied by a ghûl who, like the dwarves, may or may not be a slave of the Undertaking itself. These ghûl assist in rooting out the presence of any dead bodies that might otherwise lie undiscovered, or that a grieving family might refuse to turn over.

If assisted by dwarves or a ghûl, a single Taker might accompany the cart, leading the collection team. When the cage is hauled only by animals with no ghûl present, the Corpsemen more often work in pairs.

In either case, a Taker usually stands clad in armor of leathers, boiled and thick. Their weapons are large and bladed: pole-axes, wide-limbed boar-spears, and the like,

Slaves of the System

Between the multiple scores of collection teams operating at all times of day and night and the operations of the disposal stations scattered throughout the city, the Undertaking requires an enormous and constant amount of labor. As such, in addition to the hundreds of unskilled workers it employs along with its Takers, the Undertaking relies heavily on the city's slave population. In fact, while nobody has formally compared, it's possible that the Undertaking makes use of more slaves than any other official institution in Redoubt.

While most of the Undertaking's slaves are dwarves, plenty of ghûl find themselves pressed into service; though some ghûl work for the Takers as actual paid servants, they so far remain a minority. Human and elven slaves also fill a number of physical or menial positions, though rarely if ever on the actual collection teams.

Fortunately for all concerned, those who set policy for the Undertaking understand that, to keep the collection going, it is vital that everyone be willing and able to work together. As such, Takers are instructed to treat these slaves well. They are worked hard, yes, but they have access to comfortable quarters, decent food, and substantial freedom and luxury—at least as compared to most other slaves. It's hardly a *good* life, and of course some individual Takers are crueler than others, but it's preferable to most of the other possibilities.

weapons designed for dismemberment, and for holding the foe at bay. All this, of course, is preparation in case one or more of the bodies should rise before the cage reaches an Undertaking disposal station.

Many Takers practice extra precautions, such as stabbing a spear through the major joints of a corpse right after it's thrown in the cart. Time doesn't allow for anything more thorough, but this can at least slow or weaken a corpse if it should indeed rise. That tiny advantage might make the difference between an undead breaking free of the cage or not; whether or not the Taker and his team can destroy one before it harms anyone.

As mentioned before, the Corpsemen are authorized to collect every dead body on their route by any means necessary. While everyone knows both the legal and potentially supernatural consequences of failure to cooperate with the Undertaking, grief can drive people to unwise actions. If the Takers become aware that someone is hiding or otherwise refusing to turn over a body, most of them make at least some effort to reason with the bereaved before resorting to more drastic measures. If that fails, however, the blades of the Corpsemen are not for the dead alone. *Nothing* must interfere with their collections.

Disposal

After making their appointed rounds and before returning to headquarters, where slaves and other workers clean and repair the wagon for the next shift, each collection team stops at one of the Undertaking's disposal stations. Scattered throughout the city, several to a district, these are essentially massive rendering operations.

Multiple workers form what is nearly an assembly line, processing each body as it's unloaded. A corpse is first stripped of clothes and other accoutrements. Unless it's already quite short, the hair is clipped next. Then the body is dumped into a vat of near-boiling water, where fats and tissues slowly separate from bone.

In resource-starved Redoubt, nearly all these parts are then repurposed. Hair is woven into string. Bones are used in the construction of tools and weapons. Fatty liquids are collected for use as tallow, wax, and soap. During times of particular hardship, flesh and proteins are included in animal feed, but since this can potentially spread disease, they're normally used solely as fertilizer for crops.

All of this, however, is of secondary benefit. The primary purpose of the Undertaking remains the collection of the dead, and ensuring that they cannot rise again. As such, not all corpses make it to these disposal stations.

If a collection team is unduly delayed in its rounds (such as by weather) or if the stations are backlogged due to excessive death (such as during a plague), Takers might decide they cannot afford to take the time for standard disposal. At various spots throughout the city, smaller "emergency" stations—small crematoriums, essentially—exist to handle such situations. Bodies destroyed here are reduced to ash and bits of bone, no longer of any use to anyone but at least unable to add to the ranks of the Dead.

Uprisings

For obvious reasons, the Corpsemen often find themselves on the front lines of potential undead uprisings within the walls of Redoubt. Under such situations, Takers are authorized to effectively draft anyone and everyone capable into helping put down the newly risen Dead before they can spread into a true outbreak. Takers present at the start of such an uprising remain in command, even once the Watch and the Forerunners (or even the Hoodsmen) have joined the effort, until and unless the Dead spread beyond the immediate area. Only at that point, when the city government becomes involved, does command normally pass to officers of the Militia.

The Organization

The Takers and other members of the organization are very matter-of-fact regarding the job they do. They have little use for pomp and circumstance, little patience for the pageantry and self-adulation of many other government institutions. This, combined with the fact that they are not a military organization (despite having much in common with them), lends itself to a relatively simple and straightforward hierarchy.

The Knight-Captain

After the signing of the Accord of Last Redoubt, the first leader of the newly formalized Undertaking was granted a knighthood, elevating her to the aristocracy and making it clear in no uncertain terms just how important the organization and the effort were to the people of the city. Today, although it no longer comes with a parcel of property or actual social status—indeed, the very notions of knighthood and other doorways into nobility carry far less weight than they once did—the title of "Knight-Captain" remains attached to the Undertaking's highest official.

The Knight-Captain technically leads the Undertaking, but the system is largely self-driving. Except under crisis conditions, few decisions or dictates are ever really required of the person in charge. Some Takers even see it as largely an honorary position, a reward for a lifetime of service. District Commanders and the Knight-Captain himself would laugh at this notion, for they understand that, in addition to taking charge in an emergency, the position comes with another, far more onerous responsibility:

Politics.

It's the Knight-Captain who serves as the Undertaking's voice to the Magisterium, who must secure funding, and who must fight off efforts at moving the organization further under Magisterial control. It's a balancing act, keeping the Undertaking relatively independent and out of various political games and maneuvers while still remaining able to function as a governmental institution. Were it not for the importance of their efforts, an urgency universally recognized across all ranks and strata of society, the Undertaking would doubtless have been turned into another political game piece long ago.

Only someone who worked the streets as a Taker and rose through the various command-level ranks is eligible for the position of Knight-Captain. The Undertaking's current leader is an old Ouazi who has served the organization since childhood, when he earned a few extra coins as a runner and messenger before formally joining. Knight-Captain Heshbayar is a strong, determined man, but his hair has long grayed and his body has begun to feel its age. He likely has only a few more years before he will have to step down and hope for a worthwhile successor.

Commanders

Between the Knight-Captain and the Takers are two levels of officer.

District Commanders are precisely what they sound like. Each commands the Undertaking in a specific district of Redoubt, coordinating the various shifts, dealing with matters of supply and funding, handling high-level interactions with the community, and effectively serving as the Knight-Captain's field marshals.

Beneath them, directly overseeing the collection teams and other Takers, are the Shift Commanders. Each Shift Commander orchestrates and supervises all the Undertaking personnel who fan out from a specific headquarters at a specific time. They determine the most efficient routes, coordinate team assignments, and handle any issues that come up during the course of daily operations.

Takers

While the various command-rank personnel are also technically Takers, in standard usage "Taker" refers to the actual field operatives of the Undertaking. It is they who lead the collection teams, set out to investigate matters relating to the gathering of the dead, and often stand on the front lines against uprisings.

Takers have no ranks to differentiate one from the other. In most cases, when conflict arises between them, they take the matter to a Shift Commander. If a matter of urgency arises where a chain of command *must* be established immediately, authority defaults to whichever Taker has seniority.

Laborers

The manual laborers who work for the Takers—hauling wagons, operating disposal stations, running messages, and so forth—aren't technically members of the Undertaking at all. They are employed (or enslaved) by the organization, but they hold no rank or position, and even the youngest and most inexperienced Taker technically outranks them.

Any given disposal station or other group of laborers likely has its own system of ranks, with bosses or supervisors overseeing the work, but again, these positions hold no meaning in the Undertaking at large.

The Watch

"You're 'Little Goat,' aren't you?"
The street thug blinked. "We met?"
"No," Khulechtan told him. "But I've worked enough with the Watch to have learned a bit about the gang leaders and other criminals in my neighborhoods."

– Ari Marmell, "Requiem, In Bells"

The common people of Redoubt, scrabbling for what little security they can find, garner no succor from the distant Magisterium or their fearsome Hoodsmen. The militia service is often corrupt and inefficient, called out only in desperation. For the squalid and starving, the only hope of any justice is the Watch.

In a city as cramped and resource-starved as Redoubt, the Watch are always overtaxed. The close quarters and constant hunger mean tempers are short, theft is rampant, and violence is common. The Watch is tasked with responding to crimes, investigating them, turning over the criminals for punishment, and keeping people safe from an enemy much smarter and more cunning than the Dead: each other.

While the members of the Watch are as susceptible as anyone to graft or fear, many of its members still maintain a high standard. Watchmen and watchwomen enter the service fully aware that they will be constantly overworked, faced with terrible crimes and horrible deprivation but they steel themselves to face these perils and keep some semblance of order in their city. There's no room for Watch recruits who seek power, an excuse to do violence, or a chance for revenge against ancestral enemies. The situation in Redoubt is too desperate to permit such abuses, and the officers in charge of the Watch drum out such behavior wherever it's found. Besides, corruption in the Watch causes unrest; unrest draws the eye of the Magisterium, and *nobody* wants that. For its own preservation, then, as much any ethical motivation, the Watch makes every effort to control its own.

To many of the dispossessed in Redoubt, the Watch represents the only face that might listen to their cries. The Watch may not fill bellies like a church courting worshippers, or offer hard coin for dubious deeds like a criminal syndicate, but it offers the hope of justice to the poorest and most desperate, regardless of station.

Watch Organization

The Watch has a semi-military structure much like the Foresters, though it was never meant to serve as an army. Rather, ranks serve to delineate Watch members with experience, and indicate who has the skills necessary to lead difficult investigations. In theory, any free citizen can join, but in practice it's easier for the well-connected and harder for the non-human. No nonhuman has reached the rank of Watch captain, and no more than a dozen dwarves and elves have ever become investigators.

Prospects

An individual who wishes to join the Watch is a *prospect*, and undergoes several interviews with Watch officers to ascertain their motivations, their useful experience, and their own goals. There's no such thing as privacy for a prospect; Watch officers interview family and associates, shadow the prospect to observe his lifestyle, and develop a profile of the prospect's personality and history. The amount of investigation depends upon how much the prospect seems connected to dubious or problematic elements—a prospect related to an infamous criminal receives a more thorough investigation than the child of the neighborhood baker.

The Watch not only looks for evidence of prior crimes and criminal connections, but digs into the prospect's stated reasons for joining. Motivations that could prove a problem later—authoritarianism, racism, sadism—are dug up, documented, and tested. Problem prospects wash out, and a mark is placed in their records in case they attempt to join again later. While many people look to the Watch as a career opportunity, only about half make it through this stage as too many have infirmities, fears, or personality issues. (Prospects often carry any number of unflattering nicknames from both Watch operatives and their other associates; "probs," "switches," and "flatfoots" are all common.)

Recruits

Those who make it through the investigative phase become *recruits*. A recruit learns by accompanying a more senior Watch operative on her rounds and duties. Recruits handle dirty and difficult work, including moving or guarding bodies until the Undertaking can collect them, intervening to separate people in brawls, digging through trash for evidence, carrying weapons or tools needed for an investigation, and hauling evidence back to a Watch gatehouse. Still, veterans know that a recruit today will be an investigator tomorrow. Truly dangerous jobs like crawling into a tunnel that might hold one of the Dead or rescuing a victim from a burning building while an attacker is still inside are too risky for recruits. The Watch generally has a surfeit of recruits, though, so when manpower is needed, recruits can be called up *en masse* to handle crowd control, aid the militia in firefighting, or canvas an area in search of

a suspect. A recruit's life isn't glamorous, and it doesn't pay well—another part of the process of separating out serious candidates from the chaff.

A recruit typically spends a year working alongside a more senior Watch operative, often in a small team. During this time the recruit learns the craft of the Watch and also develops a network of connections. These serve as the basic tools for the recruit to graduate to full Watch status. If the recruit doesn't commit any major offenses, remains stable in the face of danger and horror, and takes orders well, then they'll move up to a level of some autonomy. It is possible for a recruit to show some promise but need polish and find their tenure as a recruit extended by another year, but any recruit who doesn't move up after three years washes out.

Operatives

A recruit who's moved up becomes an *operative* (or "opper"), the lowest autonomous rank in the Watch. Oppers receive assignments from a Watch captain and patrol their home neighborhood, pursue investigations of crimes, and make reports back to the Watch about their findings. Oppers carry cudgels (for crowd control) and daggers (in case of desperate defense). Depending upon the number of Watch available, oppers may work alone, in pairs, or with a group of recruits—usually no more than three at a time, unless a specific investigation requires a large amount of police power.

Watch Insignia

Members of the Watch bear an insignia, both to show their position and to prevent cowardice: Failure to wear one's Watch badge is a reprimand on the first offense and expulsion from service on the second, so civilians can always spot a Watch member when they need help. Upon graduating, a prospect who becomes a recruit gains a scorched wooden circle as a badge, typically worn below the collar. A recruit trades this for a bronze circle upon becoming an opper, and replaces this with a billon (bronze-silver alloy) circle at the investigator level. Watch Captains wear a silver circle.

In addition, a Watch member gains a small wooden bead, worn on a cord, for each full year of service. After five years of service, five beads are replaced with one bead painted yellow. This cord is usually carried in a pouch, but it can be worn attached to an epaulet when a Watch opper wants people to know exactly how veteran they are. Thus, a Watchman with a tarnished bronze badge and a cord with five yellow beads is a twenty-five year veteran operative (and probably not a good person to have as an enemy).

Watch members on duty—not including prospects—are issued a thin leather jacket for protection from elements and filth, but anyone above the recruit rank is not required to wear this apparel so long as they wear the insignia visibly.

The rank of Watch operative is a career role. Many oppers never move up in the organization. An opper earns a small stipend, enough to live in a cramped home and support a small family in humble fashion. Veteran oppers earn small bonuses for five years, ten years, and twenty years of service, and every ten years after that until retirement or death. An opper who retires with an untarnished record draws a modest pension. Some oppers choose to leave early and pursue other ambitions; the Watch doesn't like to lose experience, but unlike the Foresters, doesn't pressure people to sign long-term contracts.

Investigators

Moving up from the operative rank requires dedication and a keen mind. Above operatives are *investigators*, who have shown the ability to handle complex or difficult cases, displayed sound independent judgment, and proved largely incorruptible. An investigator can call upon operatives and recruits to help with a case, and also handles cases that cross neighborhoods. Investigators might interface directly with the Magisterium if a case involves important political figures or a large business. The typical investigator is smart, determined, and committed to taking on cunning criminals, cold cases, delicate or politically sensitive crimes, and threats to civic safety at large.

Investigators draw a reasonable salary that affords a home with some personal space and the means to support a family or to afford a better-than-average lifestyle, though nothing approaching that of a wealthy businessman or noble.

Watch Captains

There are seven Watch Captains: one for each of the six gatehouses, and one for external cases (such as criminals who flee the city or crimes that involve Foresters). A Watch Captain is a former investigator with strong organizational skills and the ability to maneuver the political waters of the Magisterium. Watch Captains rarely appear in the field; at this level they spend their careers filing reports, handling connections between cases, delegating tasks, and protecting their Watch operatives from interference by nobles and politicians. Watch Captains sometimes appear on the scene for a particularly brutal or wide-ranging crime, such as a mass murder or a magical incident that injures dozens of people, but their skills tend to be more managerial than investigative.

Watch Captains draw a comfortable salary that affords them a separate residence and the means to pursue a hobby or a lifestyle with some degree of luxury, though a Watch Captain is unlikely to reach the point of "wealthy" without accepting bribery or patronage. Watch Captains who play well with the Magisterium sometimes find themselves "incentivized" with special offers to encourage their district's Watch toward specific goals, such as pursing a crime of interest to one of the well-connected or prioritizing a particular case over others.

Watch Captains usually serve until retirement or death. A Watch Captain can appoint a successor, though if the Magisterium chooses to meddle this might be overruled.

The Watch and the Magisterium

Relations between the Watch and the Magisterium are tense. By decree, the Watch retains the ability to handle its own police business, and the Magisterium is forbidden to directly interfere in the progress of cases (not that they don't *try*). Watch Captains must juggle the demands of the Magisterium, which can choose to starve a gatehouse of resources if they are displeased, but to date the Watch Captains have remained remarkably stubborn. The Magisterium knows that without the Watch, the incidence of crime would quickly render parts of the city ungovernable. The two sides need each other, even if they don't like each other.

In theory, the Watch could even arrest members of the nobility or the Magisterium, but in practice this would precipitate a civic crisis. Watch Captains thus avoid antagonizing the Magisterium when possible.

The Watch and Slaves

By law, slaves have very limited rights. Effectively, they're property more than they are people. A slave's testimony is of limited value—it's assumed that a slave will lie to his own advantage—so they can't serve as reliable witnesses. Similarly, it can be hard to prosecute a crime against a slave, as they can legally be beaten or deprived of their possessions by their masters without recourse.

Nevertheless, sometimes the Watch has no choice; sometimes a slave is the only witness to a crime. Sometimes a slave is robbed, and the master or the Watch is more interested in recovering the stolen goods than in punishing the slave for losing them. Sometimes a slave might justifiably kill someone in self defense.

The Watch investigates crimes involving slaves, but this doesn't mean they're treated well. If the Watch suspects that slaves are in danger of "disappearing," they may be arrested and kept at a gatehouse, protesting masters notwithstanding. This isn't a free cot and meal: Slaves in the custody of the Watch are often put to supervised menial civic work like cleaning or construction. Once the case is resolved, the slave is returned to his owner.

Relying on the Watch to manumit a slave as part of some case is a false hope. Even if the Watch determines that some odd crime has left a slave unowned and the master deceased or without a legal claim, the slave is still property, and the Watch either finds the next legitimate owner or simply resells the slave. That said, should the Watch determine that someone has been kept in slavery illegally, the arrest and conviction of their master does usually lead to the slave's freedom.

The Watch and the People

Suppressing violence and dissent does carry a certain iron quality. Watch operatives have to crack down on mobs, unrest, and petty crime. This doesn't win many friends, and it's only the fact that the Watch makes sure that its operatives police their own neighborhoods and make connections with their neighbors that prevents the entire system from becoming a brutally oppressive police presence.

Since Watch operatives work in and police the areas where they live, they routinely deal with their own neighbors and family. This means that personal relationships matter. People might not trust the Watch as an abstract organization, but they trust *their* opper and *their* recruits.

The Watch thus seesaws back and forth between the resentment of people who are trying to eke out a living and who feel unjustly persecuted when the Watch cracks down on petty crimes, and the trust of those who rely on their

local Watch to protect them, to fairly investigate crime, and most importantly, to remain impartial in the face of the Magisterium, the influential, and the powerful.

The Watch Gatehouses

The Watch conducts its investigations out of the gatehouses, a set of fortified structures built around the gates of the city. Three gatehouses stand along inner walls at the entrances to the three main districts, and are thus called Eastgate, Westgate, and Southgate. The others are located along the outer walls at each entrance to the city, and thus commonly known as Riftgate, Rivergate, and Mountaingate. In each case, the gatehouse controls access to and from a district, which means that the Watch can control the comings and goings of people along the main roads—a necessary component of searching for fleeing criminals.

Each gatehouse stores records and material, and serves as a central precinct for the Watch. A commoner looking for Watch assistance can always go to a gatehouse and speak with an operative on duty to report a crime. The gatehouses are also heavily fortified, with portcullises, shuttered windows, second- and third-story arrow slits, crenellated walls, and heavy reinforced wooden doors. Assaulting a gatehouse is a suicide mission, and in an emergency the Watch can close off the gates to isolate a part of the city.

Gatehouse supplies lean toward record-keeping and incarceration (usually only while a criminal awaits trial, as few crimes are punished with jail time). If needed, a gatehouse could close down and enter a siege standing, and would have enough supplies inside to last for a month or two.

The Inner City gatehouses together make up a political bloc. The Watch Captains know that if they choose to shut all of their gates, they can isolate the city, strangle trade, stop labor movement, bring travel to a halt, and other assorted headaches. For this reason, Watch Captains and operatives who work in these gatehouses enjoy some level of prestige. Their gatehouses are largely safe and serve as bastions that control the ebb and flow of humanity inside the walls.

The gatehouses at the outer walls are considered more remote postings, where either the desperate or the Dead gather on the other side of the wall. These locations, removed from the business at the heart of the city, are less influential but also less political and less burdened by case-load. A Watch operative who works in one of the outer gatehouses is likely to work fewer cases but deal with more desperate people.

Watch Story Hooks

Aside from the obvious hook of players' characters as members of the Watch, some other potential Watch stories include:

A friend of the players asks for a favor in getting a relative through the Watch probationary period. The prospect has many problems, including cowardice, decadent habits, and an aversion to hard work. How can the players straighten out the candidate so that he doesn't wash out?

A Watch operative starts shadowing the characters and seems to have an interest in them, but when confronted, says that she is just keeping an eye on her assigned neighborhood. She follows them to another neighborhood, though, and if the players go to a gatehouse, they're brushed off and told to forget about it. What does she actually want from them?

A Watch investigator offers to sponsor the group as prospects. If the characters can make it through the various trials and tasks, they can become Watch recruits—but this investigator means to use them for a case that has become too big and too dangerous, as pawns in a game against a corrupt watchman.

The Watch brutally suppresses a riot in the characters' home neighborhood, and several people are injured or killed. Neighborhood tensions run high, and a criminal cartel uses this opportunity to influence local business owners. If they aren't stopped, the criminals might start extorting people, but the locals won't trust the Watch. If the characters take matters into their own hands, the Watch may frown on their vigilantism. Can trust be re-established, or do the characters conduct their own justice and then become fugitives?

Religion

The Faith

I don't know how much cousin told you about our upbringing in the faith, but I was taught where the old shrines and pilgrims' paths are, on the assumption that when the Dead go away I'll lead my people back to the Lands of the Righteous.

– Malcolm Sheppard, "Be in Memory"

Before the First Ascension, all was darkness and chaos, or so says the Angat Church of Man. In that time of strife and tribulation, mankind lived in a perpetual darkness, striving after only the most base desires and lost in a mire of ignorance and evil. And for uncountable ages after the coming of the light, humanity worshiped a thousand little gods—the spirits of nature, the sun and the moon and the stars, their own forebears.

There is a great deal of debate as to the source of this change, but there is one undeniable fact: mankind drifted from ancestor worship, moon worship, and seeking out spirit-gods to find themselves at the altar of the One God. What began as a relative anomaly quickly took fire over a few decades, establishing a monotheistic church and changing the fabric of religious practice forever among the Venmir.

In the Beginning

Kigorof, a renowned Venmir elder, is credited with planting the seeds of the Faith itself. History says he followed a vision-quest to the Stormbreak Mountains, taking his closest apprentices and converts, a party of roughly a dozen. These witnesses, along with Kigorof, experienced the very beginnings of the Faith, what eventually became the dominant religion of Man.

Known as the Prophet, Kigorof identified the being or force at the mountain peak as *Miraab*. The name translates roughly into "essence of earth and sky," a reference to the all-encompassing power of the deity. The name itself has become shrouded in high ceremony and worship, but this comes at a high cost given the current state of Redoubt. Those in the Faith are often persecuted or blamed for interference with teaching or breaking the dominant ecclesiastical law, given its lack of rigid structure and political heft compared to the Church.

Followers

Unlike the Church, which is stoic, conservative, and focused on rigid codes of law and promises of a life eternal, the Faith is rooted in humanism, focusing on compassion, humility, charity, and perseverance. It seeks not to amass wealth or create political structures, but rather to encourage its followers to look within and find answers through mindful understanding.

The Prophet quickly brought many tribes to his side. So moved were they by his approach to a life of humility and service that they eventually built the temple-city of Venmah. The city was a marvel both above and below ground, complete with the holy Descending Stair—where the Prophet first conducted his subterranean pilgrimage—at the center. Venmah swiftly became both a cultural and religious center for the Venmir.

When Venmah fell before the Dead, some Venmir were steadfast, believing that Miraab would intervene. However, the vast majority of Venmir accepted their fate and moved on, all while repeating the mantra of the Prophet—inscribed into the very walls of the stair—which says, "Look on, for no home is forever."

Since the Fall

For the Church, the followers of the Faith provide significant frustration. As their concerns revolve primarily around the here and now, it is rare to convince them to action. With a deep, cultural understanding of both the fleetingness of time and the inevitability of suffering, they preach ceaselessly on embracing God's "nowness" and letting go of desires in order to find the true flame within.

Practice has changed somewhat since the Fall, and while a good amount of pageantry remains in the worship of Miraab, new currents in the Faith preach that "every street is a sanctuary," and work on bringing their message to the people through deeds rather than mere preaching.

The Faith and the Fall

On the subject of the Fall and the Dead, the followers of Miraab are strangely silent. Some suspect it is due to their accepting nature, their belief that what happens is meant to be and that struggle against it is rather useless. Other scholars, however, tie it more to a deep-seated hope that the Prophet will again return, and through his intervention, the Dead will cease to be and a new world will rise.

When it comes to the Dead, those in the Faith focus instead on how to improve life in the here and now. Due to their culture of giving and charity, this is most often turned toward safeguarding the destitute from attack and intervening during death to ensure the proper removal and respectful treatment of bodies, even for families who may be too grief-stricken to consider, or unable to afford, such things.

Most frequently, the followers of the Faith—who often smudge ash over their lips as a reminder of the powerful name of their deity—practice charity to the weakest and most despondent of Redoubt. They are known to work closely with the House of Mercy, identifying those needing medical attention and tending gardens even in the seediest of neighborhoods. It is not uncommon to see the devoted passing out food and what clothes they can find to the poor, or advocating on their behalf to the White Citadel for better access to water, medicine, and protection.

The Angat Church of Man

The arrogant Angat Church of Man fielded intolerance and fear, demeaning all gods but its own in the name of defense against the Dead.

– Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

Redoubt, bustling in the cool spring morning, pauses as the first bell chimes. Each district has its own bell, each subtly different in tone—bronze and silver and copper and wood—and together they sing across the city. The devout touch their lips and hearts with the knuckles of their first two fingers, murmuring familiar litanies. At this hour, the worshipers promise honor and faithfulness to God, adherence to Their rules, and dignity and honor in all earthly interactions. Those not faithful to this god, those not human or not welcome in their Church, stand silently, waiting to go about their day again.

The bells will ring four more times this day and every other day, and for each toll, the prayers are different—a constant reminder that in a city on the brink of extinction, God is listening.

The History of the Church

Long before the world was ruled by the Dead, the Venmir prophet, Kigorof, came forth from the Stormbreak Mountains with a vision. He spoke of a god, joyful and wild, who wished for a people faithful to Them. At first, it's said that only thirteen followers joined Kigorof, but as the years passed, the Venmir became followers of Miraab.

Miraab's worship spread across the world, and finally came to the Angat. A sober and practical culture, the Angat admired the efficiency of this monotheism, and began to follow it in their own ways. The ecstatic abandon of the Venmir practice gave way to an academic, thoughtful new form, and the religion found itself in schism.

The Angat, before they fled to Redoubt, built a new form of the religion based on ritual, practice, and thoughtful interaction with their faith. Often considered rigid and performative, many Angat found deep comfort in the rituals. Thought, care, and habit were rewarded, and the priestly ranks swelled, empowering the Church. Though more radical elements tried to move the Church toward being a political and social powerhouse, while the world was good, the Church was content.

When the Dead came, the radical elements of the Church found themselves with a most wonderful opportunity. Austerity preachers blamed the Dead on the decadence and heathenism of the rest of the world, and the lack of zeal within the Church. As the Angat took over the rule of Redoubt, the Austerity took greater control. In the modern day, the academic and reverent remnants of the early Angat Church have almost vanished and the Austerity controls the income, political connections, and direction of the Church.

The Church maintains a stranglehold on daily life in Redoubt. Its priests—once clad in golden yellow and sky blue, now wearing the unbleached, uncolored robes of the Austerity—are a common sight within every strata of the city, providing cohesion and struggling to maintain order.

The Church Hierarchy

The Church is broken into a rigid, five-branch hierarchy: Political, Service, Academic, Necrology, and Clergy. The political arm is the most active and powerful, but is in constant struggle with the Necrology arm, which is the most heavily controlled by the Austerity. The Academic and Service branches stay quietly behind the scenes, preserving much of the original religion and struggling to educate and care for the population of Redoubt. The Clergy finds itself spending as much time mediating between the various branches as it spends ministering, and as such, finds its own influence diminishing consistently.

Each branch has its own internal hierarchy, leading to a confusing, constantly negotiated state. Various branches wrangle over how the ranks actually line up, leading to the formation of offices of church leadership entirely devoted to these inter-sectional squabbles. See "The Church" on page 172 for more institutional details.

The Church and the City

The Church is one of the most powerful political forces within Redoubt. While the city maintains a civilian government and an independent military force, the majority of the council and city leadership, particularly among the Angat, is also devoted to the Church in some form or another.

Growth and Practices of the Church

The old religion that would become the Church of Man, in its translation from the original Venmir Faith, was ecstatic in a way only the Angat would find thrilling: a deep, quiet joy developed through the use of ritual and contemplation. The early adherents of the Church did not observe festivals or sacred time periods, but created time within each day to express their internal reverence. Most chose to do so privately, and the churches themselves were only gathering places for those who wished to speak together to further their wisdom, and to provide aid for the unfortunate.

As the religion spread and became more politically powerful, beliefs formalized. Public displays of piety became popular

The Church and the Fall

The Church regards the Dead as a punishment for decadence and lack of piety. The Austerity movement had found little foothold in the Church until the Dead began to rise. Fueled by the panic and a desperate need for answers, thousands turned to the priests of the Austerity, and their power boomed overnight. Recognizing a potential coup, the leadership quickly adopted the Austerity and hobbled their rise through their own clever politicking.

The Church still holds that the Dead can be stopped with proper, widespread atonement. Their funerary ranks oversee the disposal of the dead, as well as working to prevent the rise of the Dead within the city.

for the wealthier classes, while the lower classes flocked to the Church for its educational resources, on behalf of their children, and for the sense of community the priests fostered. The Church became the central location for the pooling of resources, information, and support. The founding of the Academy of Voices heightened the acquisition and formalization of knowledge, as well as leading to the formation of a new hierarchy within the Church.

With the transition to Redoubt, formality and show became an integral part of these beliefs, a desperate struggle against the relentless terror and hopelessness of daily life. Because of resource starvation, the rituals are not based on food or the show of physical goods, but on time, memory, and effort.

Service

The most common expression of devotion is in service. Those who have enough are encouraged to give to those who have less, and those who have nothing are encouraged to give time and talent. This brings communities together and promotes loyalty within the ranks. It also offers a sense of cohesion that can be exploited in times of stress to reduce damage and loss.

Those who cannot serve with resources or physical exertion devote their minds to the Church and their fellow man. Those with education or knowledge pass their skills on to apprentices and students, while others memorize passages on every subject from the origins of the faith to the best way to preserve leather. In Redoubt, nothing is wasted, not even memories.

The most common service is tithing. Those who are well-to-do by community standards or who have ties to the Foresters tithe portions of their supplies, money, and the labor of their servants to the Church, which has established a robust and carefully monitored bank of these goods and resources. The middle classes also donate what resources they can (or, if they wish to obtain more power and standing within the Church, they live ostentatiously below their means and donate more than it appears they comfortably can), but many are also involved in more hands-on service. Some offer medical care to the poor, while others cook and distribute food or teach valuable skills. A few maintain positions for orphans or offer services like scribing, funerary processes, or animal care.

Within the poorer classes, the service is most resented, as it often involves effort and resources they do not have, keeping them permanently in a subclass under the wealthy. Many of them offer their services directly to the Church, aiding in everything from laundry to manual repairs.

The benefit of this system is in the pooling of resources, the strengthening of community ties, and the self-policing of these networks. It is much easier to tell when someone may be hiding a dying relative when the grandfather who's always in the front row at services is suddenly gone, or to keep the Angat bloodlines "pure" by enforcing societal expectation on families. There are many who resent the forced connection and oversight imposed by the rigorous service expectations, but fear of being excluded or rejected in a time of need keeps most Church members compliant.

The Church of Exquisite Memory

The Church maintains satellite chapels in each neighborhood, but they keep their administration, the Academy of Voices, and the main temple within the Church of Exquisite Memory.

Originally built as a palace by the dwarves, Exquisite Memory is breathtakingly constructed with the most incredible skill that people could manage. Towering columns of fluted white stone are thin enough that the sun glows through them at sunset, and the interior is bright, open, and airy.

Unfortunately, the lack of materials and the unpredictability of magic, combined with the wear of time, have left their mark on the building, and though she is beautiful, she is beginning to show her age.

(Many of the common folk believe, incorrectly, that the Reclaimed Shrine of the White Citadel is the administrative heart of the Church. This is a misunderstanding, based on the fact that the Reclaimed Shrine is where government officials worship and the spot from which important city-wide ceremonies are led.)

Tribes of Two Moons

Soon enough, the moon that his people personify as Aurib, the Beautiful One, will rise to fullness and cast his pale eye over all he surveys.

– C.A. Suleiman, "The Sense of Exile"

The desert tribes of Redoubt, the Ouazi and the ghûl, have always looked to the night sky for inspiration and guidance.

The darkness above Redoubt has two moons, moving and changing across the dark in a dance as old as the earth itself. For the early Ouazi, this sky dance symbolized a divine revelation of the holy truth—two heavenly bodies, linked yet unique, in an eternal orbit. This formed the very foundation of their religion, the oldest known to humankind.

For the sentient races of the Eternal Sea, the two moons represent two sibling gods: Aurib, the Moon God, known to the Ouazi as "the Beautiful One," and Milijun, the Moon Goddess, known as "the Black Veil." Aurib, while smaller, is smoother and brighter than his larger, more shadowy sister. Milijun shows her magic on rare eclipses or other celestial events, and her history is replete with occult import due to her more unpredictable appearance.

Aurib

The Ouazi focus most of their veneration on Aurib, and he plays a central role in their daily lives. Aurib gives strength and guidance to his followers, many of whom feel that simply getting through their daily lives would be too great a burden to bear without his inspiration. Their mythology tells that Aurib visited two refugees fleeing the desert, dying of thirst. A man appeared to them, his face hidden by a white veil, and offered them a silver dipper full of cold, fresh water. They partook of the water, but when they went to thank the man all they saw was the waning Aurib rising in the distance, a trickle of starlight flowing from the crescent as though it were a dipper. To "drink from Aurib's dipper" is common parlance for getting a second wind or fighting against overwhelming odds. Aurib's primary symbol is the black falcon, but secondary symbols include a forked olive branch and a silver dipper or bowl.

Milijun

While not as common in the day-to-day worship of the Ouazi, Milijun is nonetheless an essential counterpoint to her brother. She is considered the mother of the ghûl, as well as the keeper of the balance between life and death. For many, Milijun represents the unknowable, as well as divine judgment. Not many Ouazi offer her overt rites or ceremonies, but she is always in their thoughts, a constant reminder that for light to shine there must be darkness. Some among the Ouazi have interpreted this as a literal call to work to understand the ghûl.

When a woman is widowed, she may choose to become one of Milijun's "maidens." As a maiden, she abandons her old profession and eschews remarriage, giving her life to worship and preparation for death, whereupon she will enter the retinue of the goddess. She must do works of great charity and tend to the births and deaths of her people.

Milijun's primary symbol is the white-backed vulture; other symbols include black cloth, a snuffed out candle, and a pregnant figure with a skull head.

For the ghûl, little is known in terms of practice. It is generally accepted that they revere Milijun as the mother of their race and owe their strengths (and weaknesses) to her. It is not uncommon to find small holes filled with a collection of sacrificial items—food scraps, embroidery, herbs, and sometimes weapons—given to Milijun on her brightest nights.

Rituals and Practices

While it might appear to outsiders that venerations of the two siblings represent separate belief systems, this is a misinterpretation that couldn't be farther from the truth. The Ouazi may take more inspiration from Aurib, might offer him the bulk of their prayers, but this in no way means they ignore or rebuke Milijun. Both are essential to the natural order, interconnected and woven together in oral tradition.

When it comes to worship, the practice is daily and revolves around the sun's position in the sky as well as the positions of the two moons. During midday, followers are expected to pause their daily labors and meditate on Aurib's Promise—that he will ensure the sun's rising day after day, even when he does not show his face. For many, this practice has been integrated with the use of sun pendants: small, circular wooden, bone, or clay circles that allow the wearer to detect the approximate phase of the sun outside, like a little sundial. In the case of an eclipse, prayers are made to Milijun in hopes she will darken the sky no more and allow light to return.

During lunar alignments, which occur several times a year, a few more complicated days of worship occur. When Aurib eclipses Milijun, followers must light lanterns outside their doorways indicating that they do not wish ill of Milijun. They recite long histories and prayers on those nights, usually performed by the elder of the house.

Festivals

Moon festivals are the most common form of Ouazi public worship, and these take place predictably throughout the year. The third full cycle of Aurib sees the largest and most ornate of these celebrations, as it commemorates his victory over the "Great Jackal," an obscure figure of Ouazi myth. In this tale, Aurib is tricked by the Great Jackal into searching the stars for his sister, who is in fact not missing but merely napping (representing the new moon). The Great Jackal plans to eat Aurib while he searches in the dark of the

firmament but does not realize that the moon god has grown and changed during his quest. The Great Jackal swallows Aurib, and immediately falls ill. Over the course of three weeks, the Great Jackal roams the desert searching for water or blood to slake his thirst and soothe his aching belly. One night he hears Aurib singing from deep inside of him, and the god bursts forth from the Great Jackal's stomach in full splendor, slicing him through with his longdagger.

In contrast, the ghûl celebrate this night differently. They do not appear outside during day or night, and it is said to be a favorite time for initiation into clans. The Great Jackal is not viewed as an evil figure from mythology, but rather as a misunderstood mother figure looking to give Aurib new life. But Aurib was impatient and burst forth too soon, killing the Great Jackal and failing to receive some of its blessings.

During Aurib's Birthnight, as they call it—for he was "reborn" from the belly of the Great Jackal—the Ouazi sing songs all night long, dance until their feet bleed, and perform a series of ceremonies which include ritual piercing, blessings, and often marriages. It is considered a very good omen to be wed upon Aurib's Birthnight. This is one of the only times in the year the Ouazi seek out meat in large quantities, and children play act in the street, slaying the Great Jackal in elaborate costumes and masks.

The year's last new moon of Milijun is also a time of ritual. Her maidens wind in procession through the city—or at least those neighborhoods in which they are permitted and are reasonably safe—followed by the first children of all participating families. They walk together to the river and light lanterns, setting them on the water to shine the way for Milijun to find her way home and return to them the next night. She winks at them, then, rising first thing in the morning as they await her return.

This celebration is considerably more subdued, and is reserved for the more religious among the Ouazi. Believers are forbidden to speak during the night, even if they are not participating in the walk to the river, for fear that it would confuse Milijun and she would not find her way back. It is said that the ghûl celebrate in the same manner, albeit in secret.

The Two Moons and the Fall

The worshipers of the moons are, as a people, unsure what to make of the Fall. Given her place as the keeper of the balance between life and death, the blurring of those lines would seem to be the work—or at least the responsibility—of Milijun. Yet in none of the various beliefs or branches of the faith is the goddess seen as the sort who would punish the world in such a fashion. Surely even if she were greatly offended, her vengeance would be less overwhelming, and would include some means for the errant mortals to make amends!

Some wonder if Milijun went briefly mad, and is now unable to repair the damage she inflicted. Others suggest that perhaps the Fall is the belated vengeance of the Great Jackal, a dying curse only now coming to fruition. And many more assume that the cause comes from a source outside the lunar siblings, from the gods of other peoples or a curse for which the former dwellers of the desert are not responsible.

Whatever the case, while they pray for an end to the threat of the Dead—just as most people of all faiths do in Redoubt—few of the followers of the moons actually anticipate their gods being able to do anything about it, and most go about their lives with a grim resignation.

Cults of Idolatry

Some say the Watch captain belonged to the *Barakal*, the so-called 'Silent Council,' and still performed arcane Lagran rituals in the names of Hafod and Jirhal."

– Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

The Church commands Redoubt's devotion with an iron fist, exerting what control and stability it can in an increasingly fractured and stressed city. However, the many cultures, species, and heritages of Redoubt refuse to be contained by one Church.

The Cults of Idolatry are a mix of sanctioned and unsanctioned splinter religions and beliefs. Some of them offer services to the city, adding to the health and survival of the poorer classes or preserving the splinters of knowledge of the lost world. Others have darker purposes, though those may not be fully realized yet. Their rivalries and secret aims provide an element of danger, a resource for quests, and a ready supply of allies and enemies for any campaign.

Hafod, the Father of Heroes

Portrayed as a towering pale man with muscular arms, a shaved head, and many, many scars, Hafod is the god of "Hold my mead and watch this!" His followers are known for their intense dedication to valor, their short lifespans, and their tendency to die in ways that don't leave enough of a corpse to rise as one of the Dead. His priests preach of the Blessing of Valor (what those more fond of living refer to as the Fall), exhorting his followers to become glorious warriors in their god's image.

Hafod's followers, however, are the bulwark against the Dead. As such, while the city and the Angat have an uneasy, condescending view of Hafodis, they recognize their usefulness and tolerate their quirks with only derision and mild penalties, instead of a full crackdown from law enforcement.

Recently, a growing number of women and slaves have joined Hafod's temples, signing their lives over to service of the god. Due to the nature of this service and a legal loophole where Hafodis are concerned, even slaves and married women may find freedom in his temple for the easy price of unwavering loyalty at any cost.

Hafodis are easily recognizable by their stained white garb—bloodstains are regarded as a mark of valor—their many scars, and their loud natures. They are universally disliked, but as long as they throw their bodies into the breach, few people advertise that dislike for fear that Hafod will withdraw his strength from the city.

Hafod's temple is a simple affair, built for people prone to destroying things. Many of the city's guards, law enforcement officers, and soldiers train at the temple's daily classes and offer occasional sacrifices to Hafod for strength and protection.

Jirhal, the Obsidian Queen

Jirhal is most often portrayed as a shadow with fiery eyes, a vial of poison, and a curved talon-knife. Once the goddess of history, strategy, and deadly skill, she was brought to Redoubt by a small cult of elves and Menhada. She quickly gained favor in the new, cramped world as a goddess of subtle death and the darkest of arts: assassination, poisoning, and black magic.

Over time, Jirhal has developed two aspects, splitting her followers into camps. The first is reminiscent of her earlier self, an older woman with a lined face, a tome in one hand, and a knife in the other. The alternate aspect is younger, clad in a mix of black robes and blackened armor, bearing an assassin's magical poison and a garotte. The two sects exist in uneasy alliance and are strongly frowned upon by the Angat, who regard them as an unsavory thorn in their heel. However, like Hafod, Jirhal is immensely useful in maintaining balance in the quaking city. It is not unheard of for officials in the Church of Man to not only make deals with her followers, but even to make their own hidden sacrifices to her.

Jirhal's followers are scattered throughout Redoubt's ranks, for she turns away none who would bring curiosity, courage, and a willingness to learn to her service. Her single temple is the city's largest privately owned library (which, to be fair, isn't saying much), and heavily guarded from the superstitious who would destroy the sacred lore and knowledge collected within. Her priestesses have no love

for the Dead, nor for the other religions, and their suspicion and reach within the city prevent countless tragedies and stabilize Redoubt's society far more than most people would ever suspect.

The Obsidian Crown

The Obsidian Crown is an ultra-secret sect devoted to Jirhal, a cult within a cult, intent upon finding a way to end the threat of the Dead through whatever means necessary. Many are leaders of the city or highly placed in the Angat Church, and a strong cadre of nobles and wealthy old families are also involved. They do not meet, but communicate through messages in an intricate code and fund the research of mad alchemists and magicians. So far, most of those experiments have ended so horribly that the Obsidian Crown also now employs a few crooked Foresters to kill the results of their experiments if they get away, but they will not be swayed from their course.

Amarset the Relentless

Amarset is the god of death and all that comes with it. Hated, feared, blamed for the things outside the walls, he is not loved in Redoubt, but he is still worshiped in fear and loathing. Portrayed alternately as a grasping, decayed abomination with a sword or a perfectly serene and preserved but clearly mummified corpse, Amarset's presence throughout the city is an endless reminder of the horrors that besiege civilization. While many have made peace with that presence, a vocal minority consistently lobbies for the removal of all images, mentions, and icons of Amarset and his worship.

For now, however, Amarset's priestesses find good work in handling the dead and dying. They are among the most skilled in resigning a corpse to final death, and most have the knowledge necessary to put down the Dead as well. Their acolytes train rigorously in handling the dead and recognizing the signs of incursion. The priestesses' knowledge of medicine and of the Dead have brought them a secondary role as plague doctors and healers, furthering the education and understanding of sanitation, waste management, and health within the city.

Some of Amarset's priestesses partner with Bilquir's servants to handle outbreaks of pestilence, as well as studying what causes the Dead to rise. However, some of his priestesses suspect a dark secret hidden within Bilquir's shrouded shrine, and work tirelessly to foil the Scions of the Plague, for all that they have yet to uncover the full extent, or even the name, of that conspiracy.

Bilquir, the Pestilent Father

Bilquir is a minor deity in Redoubt, though he once had many followers and was regarded as a benevolent, protective figure. In a city living under constant terror of outbreaks and plagues, he is venerated in the desperate hope that he will take pity upon a dying world and hold back his contagions. Generally his priests regard his powers as a gift to wipe out the weak, promoting a stronger breeding stock, but are aware that expressing such notions would lead to a significantly shortened tenure within the city and a quick invitation to experiment with their dogma outside of Redoubt. As a result, they confine their beliefs to the written word, and work on understanding plague and contagion. They are slowly stumbling upon the idea of inoculations through careful study and partnership with Amarset's priestesses, and although they may have released a few small plagues in the process of this study, they promise that the end result will be worth the bodies, which are useful for their studies anyways. In Redoubt, where every mouth is a burden, there are seldom arguments with this logic.

Scions of the Plague

The Scions are a shadow sect similar to the Obsidian Crown, but working at direct odds to them. Believing that the age of humanity is over, the Scions use Bilquis' gifts to bring about an age of the Dead. Engineering dreadful viruses and maladies, they are, so far, stymied by Amarset's agents, though they have recently found a powerful sponsor who may drive their plan forward.

Moti, Vadan, and Shairya: Whispering Echoes

The last surviving spirits of elven worship, the Echoes were once powerful deities, inhabiting incredible temples and shrines throughout the empire of Ibaria. Now, as their flock withers and corrupts, they have become little more than echoes at the edge of hearing. A few of their priests remain devout, and they have even gained the worship of a few sporadic humans, but they are very nearly gone.

As the spirit of fecundity and rebirth, the role of Moti, the Giver, is in particular danger of disappearing. Many humans believe that a corruption of the concept of rebirth might be behind the animating force of the Dead, and so his worship is not only highly discouraged but actively suppressed.

Vadan, the Lark, is the least endangered of the trio, and is in fact enjoying a minor resurgence as a noble fad. One of the few bright and good things in Redoubt, his sigil—a yellow bird on the wing—is cropping up around the city, a splash of hope against the relentless horror of existence.

Shairya, the Seeress, still finds some success with those who work the fields and with elves who cling tenaciously to their dying heritage—or who find themselves unwilling oracles of fragmentary futures—but she is little more than a casual prayer on a farmer's lips, or else a curse whenever the crops freeze.

The few priests of the Whispering Echoes safeguard the remaining books and relics of the Menhada religion, which are endangered by a greedy Church and by the clutches of collectors.

Ancestor Worship

Elzbieta doubted the ancestors of the dwarves would be raining good luck down upon her, not when they'd so obviously abandoned their own people.

— James Lowder, "The Treachery of Bright Yesterdays"

In an age when the living are threatened by the Dead, it may seem strange that a religion effectively worshipping the dead is gaining adherents. But it is, in fact, the very horror of the Dead that drives this new resurgence of an ancient practice.

Ancestor worship revolves around the *Blessed Dead*, spirits that have passed on to the afterlife and who watch and guide the living. The critical point here is *passed on*. The spirit and body are bound together. The rituals performed for the dead—whether formal cremation or full mummification—ensure that the spirit makes the transition to the afterlife. It's possible for a spirit to ascend without these rituals, and humans who have adopted this faith generally assume that their ancestors succeeded. However, the dwarves believe that without proper guidance, a spirit can fail to find the path to the next world and be doomed to linger between life and death.

Ancestor worship began as a dwarven tradition, a practice older than any human civilization. Its basic principles are simple:

- Death is not the end. The spirit persists beyond the body. The afterlife isn't some delicate fantasy; spirits don't celebrate in some earthly vision of paradise. But they survive, and if treated with honor, they thrive.
- After death, your spirit joins with your ancestors. As such, you must honor them in your life, so they will welcome you after death. Flesh is temporary, but the spirit is forever. Show humility and respect for the Blessed Dead, for they will be your guides and your companions through eternity.
- The spirits of your ancestors are always with you. If you honor them and learn to listen, they will guide you. What you view as instinct and intuition are their voices, and you must learn how to hear them. However, as new people come to this faith, new sects arise, and some now believe that the Blessed Dead are not mere advisors but can actively intervene on behalf of their descendants.

The dwarves have practiced this tradition since before recorded history. Yet even as mankind snatched Redoubt from the dwarves, many members of other cultures have been drawn to this faith for a variety of reasons.

The first is one of shared experience. Obvious as it may sound, everyone has ancestors. In a city where multiple cultures are stirred together, many people place value on their past and their families as a way of maintaining their identity. In their ancestors they see the memory of a golden time, an age before the Fall; in honoring the ancestors they push back against the horror of the present.

For others, the turn to ancestor worship is an angry rejection of prior beliefs. How can one have faith in a benevolent god when the world is beset by horror? The Angat Church of Man maintains that the Fall is punishment, but belief in the ancestors separates the Fall from faith. The ancestors aren't responsible for the Fall, but they can guide one through it, and they'll be there to welcome the faithful after death. The Blessed Dead aren't the cause of this age of terror, but rather a source of solace from it.

And this touches on the final driving force of the faith: the general horror of the Dead, the fear that those a person loves can rise and turn on them. The faith has a strict set of practices for disposal of the dead. On a practical level, following these traditions ensures that a corpse will not rise—and while the city itself takes steps to dispose of corpses, this allows the deceased's loved ones to oversee the process themselves. On a spiritual level, these rituals ensure that the spirit survives to become one of the Blessed Dead, for it is believed that those who rise as the Dead are forever lost, their spirits tainted and destroyed. This path provides both an immediate sense of security and a long-term source of comfort: Instead of fearing that your father's corpse will rise and try to kill you, you can imagine that he is at peace and that you will be reunited in the hereafter.

Adherents

The deep levels of the Undercity still hold the tombs of the dwarven honored dead. While dwarven culture has been crushed in the wake of the Accords, most dwarves hold to this religion. However low their current status, they take comfort in their history and the knowledge that they will one day join the Blessed Dead.

Ancestor Worship and the Fall

The dwarves believe their faith *matters*. Funerary rites ensure that the spirit successfully becomes one of the Blessed Dead, and continued devotion to the ancestors sustains them. If a spirit is untended or forgotten, it can become a damned or hungry spirit—either lost on the edge of life and death, or demented and filled with hate for those who've forgotten it. As such, many among the dwarves lay the blame for the Fall on humanity's failure to care for their own dead. Humans never showed the proper respect for their own ancestors, and this in turn filled the ether with lost and hungry ghosts. With each new death, these cursed spirits rush to the fresh corpse. They seek to devour the spirit, seize the body, and use it to take vengeance on all the living. This is why the dwarves believe that if a corpse rises, the spirit has been consumed and lost.

The human sects have their own variations of this concept. The Surinzan speak of a Legion of Shadows, a dark reflection of the Court of the Ancestors. The Menhada maintain that when the body dies, the spirit must fight through all the evils of the world. Both agree that whatever the darkness is, the Fall reflects the growth and spread of its power. All one can do is to guide the spirits in their battle. All agree that if a corpse rises as one of the Dead, the original spirit has been lost.

Since the Accord, many humans have adopted this faith, but few human-focused sects acknowledge this fact. Neither the Surinzan nor Menhada paths address the dwarves in any way, and many modern adherents don't even realize that their faith began with the dwarves. One might expect most dwarves to be angry about this—another piece of dwarven culture stolen by the despoiling humans! And indeed, many dwarves seize on this as one more injury demanding vengeance. However, the more devout dwarves typically welcome the spread of their faith. These faithful assert that *all* spirits deserve guidance through the transition. When human spirits join the Blessed Dead, it doesn't harm the dwarven ancestors. On the contrary, many believe it is the number of damned and restless human spirits that led to the Fall; reducing the number of these lost spirits might be the first step in healing the world. In a handful of sects, Angat converts and dwarves worship together, and many of the humans working to admit dwarves into the Undertaking are followers of this faith.

Those humans who have turned to ancestor worship have, by and large, simply absorbed it and assimilated it as a logical extension of their own culture. This is most prominent among the Surinzan, who already had a strong tradition of reverence for their noble families. While Surinzan adherents honor their own direct ancestors, they also believe that the spirits of the nobility guide and rule over all. Thus, a Surinzan adherent makes offerings to the nobles of the culture as a whole, as well as to their own kin. The Surinzan tradition also maintains that the actions of descendants reflect upon the spirits of the ancestors, that dishonorable behavior besmirches the ancestors and can harm their standing in the afterlife. So it is the duty of the living to both respect the memory of the dead and to maintain their honor through personal virtue.

Ancestor worship has also found a following among the Menhada. In some cases this has supplanted the Cults of Idolatry; in other communities the two traditions have blended together, and people respect the gods while also honoring their kin. Strangely, it has also gained some support among the Angat. It's rare for an Angat to abandon the Church, but those who do often embrace devotion to their forebears.

Practices

Exact practices vary from sect to sect. The core tradition shared by all is that the living show reverence to the ancestors by remembering them, and by honoring them with word and action. Any follower of this faith should know their ancestors for at least two generations. A dwarf may be able to trace their ancestors back a dozen generations, while a Surinzan adherent, as previously described, also honors the nobles of their people.

Part of remembering and honoring the ancestors is to conduct oneself in a way that reflects their values and actions. This is not a loud faith; deeds matter more than words, and one honors one's ancestor by following their example. Most adherents believe that the Blessed Dead help the living through spiritual guidance, and the faithful must *listen* for this; again, what others see as instinct or intuition, they view as the voices of the ancestors.

Beyond this, the most obvious traditions tie to the handling of the dead. Since the spirit is lost if a corpse rises as one of the Dead, it is vital to ensure this doesn't happen. The dwarves developed techniques of embalming and mummification, and these rituals have proved effective: Any corpse preserved in this way will not rise as one of the Dead. However, the process is long and complicated, involves many rare substances that are hard to acquire in the current age, and requires a safe place to keep the embalmed bodies. A few nobles maintain their own secret crypts, and stories claim that the Elldimun may help a dwarf find a place for their beloved dead in the Undercity, but for the most part the faithful turn to fire as a way to cleanse the dead. If a priest is available, he performs rituals to help guide the spirit to what lies beyond. If no priest is available, however, the most important step is for someone to give a eulogy that reminds all who can hear of the deeds of the dead and secures them a place in living memory.

While followers of this path are most concerned with their own kin, it is always a loss when a spirit becomes one of the Dead. Many adherents are willing to at least attempt to offer a eulogy for anyone who dies. Quite a few members of the Undertaking are followers of this faith, who see their work as a sacred calling.

Schismatics

Me? I am Gihardu, here to tell you that death will come seeking you, creeping up on you, and that all you love will be lost.

– Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

While the Cults of Idolatry, for the most part, stay within acceptable boundaries of the Church's expectations, the Schismatics have no such interests. The dark, rebellious, separatist, and dangerous elements of Redoubt's religious culture, the Schismatics threaten the city's stability, undermine the Church's authority, and generally cause the Church no end of frustration. Those schisms that only wish to live in peace, honoring ancient gods and ways of life, are lumped in too often with those who seek chaos.

The Schismatics, like the Cults of Idolatry, offer many plot hooks, allies, and quests for the player to explore, and bring to light the stranger elements of a city striving to homogenize itself to survive.

Aurib-Naa, House of the Moon God

An enclave of Ouazi purists, the Aurib-Naa is a compound of sorts, forming a commune beneath the western wall. The compound developed after the sultaar of the Ouazi betrayed his faith by taking wives from the major churches of Redoubt, leading four tribes to split away and form their own tradition.

The people of Aurib-Naa are known for the instruments they make, as well as for their reclusiveness; they speak to outsiders only when necessary. As a sect, they long for a return to their native homeland, and they go to great lengths to maintain the traditional Ouazi customs, lifestyle, and beliefs. They are largely nocturnal, preferring to live and work in the darkness as an honor to Aurib, the Beautiful One.

One adaptation they've made is to name speakers, or Sun-Talkers, who manage their affairs and interests with the city at large. Most Sun-Talkers are women, who are seen as less likely to be swayed by the pressures of the outside world. They are identified by the heavy yellow embroidery on their head scarves, and can often be seen in the city, where they have gained a reputation as canny and determined.

Rites for the people of Aurib-Naa are simple, ancient, and as necessary to the Ouazi as breathing, a last comfort in a world gone to ruin.

The Elldimun

The Elldimun aren't so much a schism as they are a pocket of pure principle, a sort of time capsule for aspects of the original dwarven culture that was all but erased when their race's revolt was put down.

These dwarves live fully beneath Redoubt, and by some arrangement with the city, are left to their own devices, provided that they don't surface and start causing trouble.

The name Elldimun translates to "saint's warders" in the dwarf tongue, and every one of its members is a gifted ancestral speaker that the surface world has come to call an "ashen priest."

Collectively, the ashen priests are the closest thing Redoubt has to a true urban legend: spoken of in whispers, largely feared and misunderstood, and a living relic of the past.

Little else is known about the Elldimun, and only a few citizens of Redoubt can genuinely claim to have met a member of this secretive cult.

Jirhal's priestesses maintain a close relationship with the Elldimun, however, and are possibly responsible for the city's tolerance of them.

The Gihardu and Lisanurists

A splinter of Menhada traditionalists, the Gihardu were once a small but powerful religious force which worshiped the elven gods. The increasing madness of the elves has turned public favor away from the Gihardu, and their religion is rapidly failing.

The Lisanurists are a newer schism, formed when a prophet proclaimed that the elves were the earthly incarnations of gods and should be worshipped in their own right. Although the Lisanurists are neither popular nor powerful, they maintain a small temple to the elves somewhere in the Outer City, and have done a great deal of work in preserving elven culture and history.

Temple of the Ancients

Perhaps more of a shrine, the "temple" is built of simple stone and carved lovingly with traditional elven symbols and intricate murals of elven history. This place contains the single largest collection of known elven history, literature, music, and lore. Many of the elves who have not gone mad work and live within the temple, doing their best to preserve the dregs of their lost culture. The temple also maintains a rigorous and educated staff who specialize in the decaying bodies and minds of the elves, offering refuge and support for elves who can no longer care for themselves.

Slowly but surely, the elven population of Redoubt is trickling away from the rest of the city and establishing an Elven Quarter around the temple, a place where they can drift gently into the past or begin to build a new, different identity for themselves.

The Jepourah

The most hated and distrusted of the schisms, the Jepourah essentially believe that the Dead are a natural progression of

The Jepourah Aesthetic

Members of the Jepourah Schism have a distinctive appearance. Their religious doctrine pushes them to a specific mode of dress, yes, but it is also the case that, by law, they must wear an identifying symbol while abroad in Redoubt. This is phrased as a courtesy, but everyone knows it's because the Magisterium considers them a threat and requires this mark so the Watch can track their movements.

In personal garb, the Jepourah Schismatics favor bleached linen or wool, an off-white quite distinct from the dirty surroundings of Redoubt, often closed with a blue cord or leather belt. They typically wear gloves—calfskin if they can get it—and favor high-collared coats over their tunics. All of these underscore the Jepourah obsession with purity. Physical cleanliness is a reflection of spiritual purity; their clothes protect them from a corrupted world, and show no stains of disease or blood.

Even when not so garbed, Jepourah outside the compound are legally obligated to wear a leather badge tooled with a pair of interlocking knots. This iconography has religious symbolism to the Jepourah, who see it as a link between the world of spirit and the world of flesh. In their faith, the corruption of one lead to the death of the other. The Jepourah frequently emblazon this symbol on their possessions and their buildings as well, making them easy to identify at a glance. Jepourah outside of the compound—a rare occurrence, but they do need to trade—can thus be immediately spotted, and usually given a wide berth.

Of course, this means it's equally easy for people to frame them for various misdeeds by leaving "clues" bearing Jepourah symbols or clothing styles. (Keep these elements in mind while describing the Jepourah Compound, as described in Chapter IV: The Last City.)

the world, a part of the long-term divine plan. They are loud and persistent advocates against the city's "mishandling" of cadavers, and only their connections to some powerful politicians keep them from being tossed over the city walls to see how they like the Dead up close. Recently, the Jepourah have become even more reclusive, perhaps understanding that the city is enough of a powder keg that nobody would mourn (or investigate) a few dead Jepourah.

Also recently, some of the Jepourah leadership have begun working with the Scions of the Plague to bring about the triumph of the Dead. Although these efforts have gone unremarked so far, the Scions are treading dangerous paths, as the Jepourah are not known for their subtlety.

The compound in which they dwell is a small, walled-off area to the far southeast of the Outer City. The houses within are constructed well enough, but the Jepourah have burned most of their bridges in Redoubt, and their quality of life is

degrading quickly. Since they believe that to rise as one of the Dead is as sacred as anything else in this world, city guards regularly patrol the area around the compound to ensure that uprisings of the Dead within do not spread, and many in Redoubt have reason to hope that the Jepourah "problem" will more or less solve itself soon enough.

Church of the Bone Father

There are many in Redoubt who believe things unsanctioned by the Church, but perhaps none are so distrusted and despised as the faithful of the Church of the Bone Father. Poorly understood, these apostates actually worship a twisted aspect of Amarset. They regard the remains of the elves as sacred, believing that the Bone Father collects these broken souls to his side to someday reincarnate them, pure and cleansed of the evils that have befallen them. Rumor would have it that they do not always wait for elves to expire naturally, considering their lives nothing but unending pain and suffering and regarding themselves as merciful saviors shuttling the elves into the afterlife to be reborn.

It is said that their sect makes their hidden shrines or even homes beneath the city, a dangerous and uncertain life prone to a quick ending when the Dead find a way inside. Some claim that they have built a great cathedral from the bones of the elves, but none who have gone looking have found it—at least, none who have ever returned.

Chapter IV

The Last City

Bowed under the burden of pulling a Taker's cart, Rabten's last walk through Redoubt passed in a blur of color and noise. It hadn't been his responsibility to help the dwarves drag the heavy load to the rendering yard where bodies were dismantled and repurposed night and day, but he'd done so anyway. Earlier that morning, Rabten was certain he'd never feel a deeper grief than the moment his daughter died in his arms. He'd been wrong. The girl went Restless, risen from the bed of flesh and bone in the Corpseman's cart to savagely murder her own mother. His only consolation was that neither could do any further harm: he chopped them to pieces himself before placing their dismembered bodies in the cart.

Unlike the slaves around him, Rabten lived most of his life with some measure of dignity. Seventy years earlier, Rabten's forefathers had abused the bond between the Venmir and the dwarves, encouraging their allies to open the gates of their shining city as the last asylum against the Dead. In return, humans had turned against their dwarven allies, enslaving the race for generations to come. Rabten knew he was *Kigr*, a direct descendent of the Prophet Kigorof, yet he had distanced himself from the sacred responsibility to right his people's great wrong. For that selfishness, his wife and child had paid the ultimate price.

Once in the wagon yard, Rabten waited on the sidelines while the cart was unloaded and the corpses prepared for rendering. The thought of his wife's slender bones being transformed into awls, beads, glue, and gods-knew-what-else left him hollow with despair. He was as aware as any of the grim necessities of survival in Redoubt, yet it took all of his self-control to keep from destroying the workers who dared to touch her.

"It is not an easy thing we do," said the Corpseman who walked the road at Rabten's side.

The slender Surinzan man stood with him, watching the slaves sort through dismembered body parts. He looked like an ordinary Taker in his boiled leathers, but he carried himself with a coiled precision that hinted at formal martial training. The man held the haft of his *sleaghar* with a casual ease. Even beneath the blood still staining the sharp blade, its elegant lines and finely honed steel hinted at a status far above that of a common Corpseman.

Rabten gripped the handle of his makeshift warhammer even tighter as the Dead mercenaries he and the Surinzan had destroyed were fed into the rendering pits. Ash floated in the air, the fine dust settling on Rabten's bare arms. A righteous fire burned behind his ribs.

"Where will you go?" asked the Corpseman.

Rabten barked a sharp laugh.

For a long moment, the Surinzan studied him as though he could see something no one else could. "Come with me," he finally said.

Rabten followed the Surinzan out of the yard and up the steep steps leading to the top of the wall surrounding Redoubt. A heavily armed guard let them pass without question, another hint that the Corpseman was more than he appeared.

Together, they walked along the perimeter and crossed the pedestrian bridge where the outer wall met the inner defensive wall, originally constructed to protect the dwarf city of Elldimek. But Elldimek was no more. There was only Redoubt.

The Surinzan warrior drew Rabten's attention to the White Citadel. "What do you see?"

Even from this distance, the keep and its surrounding towers dominated the Old City. The foundations were rooted deep in the bedrock at the base of the mountain, which protected the citadel from the north. The simple elegance of the original dwarven structure made Rabten think of the slaves involved in the Undertaking. That proud race had been undone by their hospitality, and the Venmir were behind it all.

From where they stood, Rabten could see the delineation between old and new as the White Citadel's streamlined glory steadily gave way to more rudimentary structures further down the hill. The buildings became progressively more ramshackle and run-down where they met the wall that separated the Inner and Outer Cities. High above the squalor, Rabten noticed the ghettos of Eastside, nearly as dilapidated as the worst neighborhoods in the Downs.

"Pain and suffering," Rabten said. "I see pain and suffering."

His companion walked across the stones to the side facing out. Rabten took one last look at the city spread out before him, and then turned to follow.

"And here?" the warrior-turned-Taker asked. "What do you see here?"

Far below the battlement, milling around aimlessly at the base of the outer wall, the Dead roamed. Outrage consumed him at the sight. At his back, he sensed ancient magic simmering in the presence of the last living souls in Zileska. Despite their differences, the people inhabiting Redoubt had made a stand, but they were losing. *Life* was losing. Rabten opened himself to the strange threads of power that tugged at the righteousness seeded in his soul. It was too late to save his wife and daughter, but that didn't mean he couldn't fight for others.

"Evil," Rabten said. "I see evil, and I will hunt it wherever it rises."

"The only victory is total victory," the Surinzan warrior replied grimly.

"I have work to do." Rabten shouldered his warhammer. He nodded at his companion. "The rest will have to wait."

The Inner City

On the path home, as the land rose away from the river, if Maesa looked back she could see the shining Old City, the home of Redoubt's wealthy and noble.
Another world, she thought, only a short walk away.

– Erin M. Evans, "Suicide Seeds"

Built around the blueprint of the original dwarven city of Elldimek, the Inner City comprises the areas most suitable for human habitation, and it is here that most of Redoubt's residents dwell in their varying levels of comfort. Outside the wealthiest neighborhoods of the Old City, people live fairly cramped lives, dwelling shoulder to shoulder with all that remains of the other sentient races of Zileska, but as the best of life to be found in Redoubt is found in the Inner City, most are content to eke out their lives here.

In addition to the Old City, located to the north and highest up the mountainside, the Inner City also includes the Square, the area they call Dockside, and the districts of Westside, Southside, and Eastside.

The Old City

Before the Fall, before the humans took the city for their own, before Redoubt, was Elldimek. Far smaller than what Redoubt would eventually become, Elldimek existed almost as much within the mountain as alongside it. As with all major dwarven enclaves, it was sturdy, solid, walled, and well protected.

Not that it did the dwarves much good, in the end, for they willingly invited their conquerors in through the gates.

Today, most of the original Elldimek forms the district known as the Old City, Redoubt's seat of power. Not only do the various branches of city government operate from within, but the vast majority of the city's wealthy and influential make their homes here as well. The Old City is far and away the cleanest, safest, and most opulent of Redoubt's districts (all on a purely relative scale, of course). It is also, servants and slaves aside, the most human-centric.

It's ironic, then, how the inhabitants of the Old City have come to almost fetishize dwarven construction. So many of the buildings here date back to the time of Elldimek, which means the foundation of the district was dwarven already. Structures here tend to be broader, more squared, and less unnecessarily ornate than those elsewhere in the Inner City. Carved patterns and images were the dwarves' favored methods of adornment and decoration during their heyday.

Initially, when the humans came to dominance, they made efforts to erase or supplant the obvious dwarven influences. They weren't fool enough to tear down perfectly useful buildings, but they chipped away at the existing decoration, added new wings and floors in human (particularly Angat) styles, whitewashed and painted, and of course built newer structures to their own preferences.

As Redoubt grew, however, so did the prestige of dwelling in the Old City and of having an older home. Thus, faux-dwarven construction and décor came into vogue. Today's Old City has recognizable layers, from the oldest genuine dwarven architecture with defaced decoration, through Angat and other human cultural styles, to architecture and decoration that mimic the older techniques without any true understanding of their meaning.

The Wall

Most of the Old City is remains separated from the rest of Redoubt by the original defensive walls constructed around Elldimek. While not as high or as thick as those surrounding Redoubt itself, they still make for a formidable bastion. The Old City could stand for quite some time even if the rest of the city were to fall, so the walls certainly provide an extra degree of protection against the violent crime that, though far less common than in the Outer City, still occurs within the neighboring districts.

While numerous small pedestrian gates connect the Old City with the rest of the Inner City, the only *major* passage—large enough for crowds, or for wagons of freight—is the Northgate. (So named, despite being on the south side of the district, because it's to the north of most of Redoubt.) Heavily guarded and closed at night save under special circumstances, the Northgate has become a symbol, for good or ill, of the barrier between the city's wealthy and the rest of its citizenry.

Manors of Wealth and Taste

The Old City is home to the richest, most influential, and eldest families of Redoubt. Everyone knows it, but that doesn't lessen the desire of many of the wealthy to flaunt their position. Unfortunately for their ambitions, the one thing the Old City cannot provide is *space*. It is constrained by its walls, by the heavy edifices of the dwarves, and by the mountain itself. Building upward is sometimes possible, and indeed quite a few Old City structures are taller than they need be. But materials are in short supply, construction is expensive, and buildings with small bases can only go so high. It is perhaps ironic that, of all the city's wealthy, only those who made their money by farming, and who dwell as far from the Old City as one can get, truly have the room to expand.

Some citizens of the Old City have sufficient room for full-sized freestanding homes, but most dwell in rows of apartments or townhomes built on large terraces, rising

higher and higher in stairsteps. Each terrace also includes a narrow strip of garden or greenery, as both a sign of prosperity and a bit of extra food production.

Since house size isn't an easy option, the Old City has found new methods of opulent display. These include expensive paints or whitewashes, colorful adornments and artistic decorations (including the aforementioned fake dwarven carvings), and luxuries such as actual glass windows, metal bars and gates, and finery for not just their own persons but for their servants.

In this atmosphere, it was near inevitable that one's specific location within the Old City would also become a point of pride, with different neighborhoods fighting to be considered the most prestigious. The following are a few Old City residential areas, but this is by no means a comprehensive list.

Five Shadows

It is unsurprising that one of the Old City neighborhoods with a claim to being the most prestigious is the one nearest the White Citadel. Named for the shadows of the quintuple towers that fall over its streets every afternoon and evening, Five Shadows basks in the reflected glory of the citadel. The homes here are nearly all terraced apartments, with tenement pressed against tenement, but the luxuries on display readily counteract the lack of space. The people of Five Shadows claim that they have more Magisters living among their number than any other neighborhood, but while that's certainly possible, there's no way to prove such a thing.

Northslope

Built at the far edge of the Old City, where the earth begins to gently rise and old roads lead to barred caves in the

Patrician Guilds

Over the years, several private organizations have sprouted throughout the Old City to serve as gathering spots and sources of entertainment for the wealthy and powerful. Despite the use of the term "guild," meant to give these groups a sense of weight and importance, they are essentially fraternities and social clubs. All provide food, drink, and company at all hours. Some offer libraries, others gaming and gambling, and a few even include private arenas. Most of these "guilds" have small symbols, secret handshakes, or code words for identifying fellow members.

Many of these Patrician Guilds have specific membership requirements: Applicants must be of a specific culture (Angat, Venmir, etc.) or a specific religion, or have served professionally and long-term in a local militia, or so forth. All, however, require wealth and membership in Redoubt's aristocracy. Many powerful social and political alliances have been formed or cemented by membership in these fraternities.

Currently the most prestigious of these Patrician Guilds include:

The Society of Kings, which includes a number of the oldest noble families and requires members to be able to trace their lineage back to one of the signers of the Accord of Last Redoubt.

The Historian's Guild, which requires members prove knowledgeable in at least one area of historical interest and is said to possess a surprisingly large library—or else to offer broad access to the Great Library through unofficial channels.

The Spirit-Keepers, originally a gathering for high-society men and women to judge and discuss the quality of the wines and liquors created with the limited resources of the new city of Redoubt. While they still do serve that purpose, the guild has since become an overt human-supremacist movement.

mountainside, the Northslope neighborhood is, as the name implies, the absolute northernmost point in Redoubt. Possibly because it was where their own community shifted from underground to open earth, the dwarves left unusually broad lanes and empty spaces between their structures here—not dramatically so, but more than elsewhere in Elldimek. Today, this allows the homes in Northslope to spread out a bit, resulting in larger living quarters than elsewhere in the Old City. Although it's a bit distant from the White Citadel as compared to others, and some people are made nervous by the neighboring caves, that extra space is more than attractive enough to make Northslope a coveted place to live.

Woodside

The houses and terraced townhomes of Woodside are no nicer than average—average for the Old City, that is—and they are certainly no bigger. The neighborhood isn't too far from the White Citadel, but neither is it particularly close. No, what makes Woodside one of the most sought-after places to live for the elite of Redoubt is the view. Trees and similar greens are rare within the walls, and Woodside happens to be built next to the single largest thriving copse within the walls. Just that little touch of nature, of life and beauty grown rather than built by the hands of humanity, is greatly appealing to the soul in this world of death.

Open Graves of the Past

Ask those who dwell here, and they'll usually tell you no downsides exist to living in the Old City. Ask them when they're behind closed doors, when they're unwell, or when they're drunk, and they just might admit that there's *one*.

Since the Old City encompasses most of what was originally Elldimek, of all Redoubt's districts it has far and away the greatest number of entrances to the Undercity. (See "The Undercity," later in this chapter.) While that provides convenient sewage access, allowing them to keep the streets relatively clean, it also makes the citizens feel more than a little vulnerable.

As such, it's something most prefer not to think about. Whether in fear of possible horrors lurking below or merely distaste at the thought of old dwarven catacombs and newer rivulets of waste, the rich and powerful would rather ignore the whole idea. Known entrances are sealed and often guarded, but every so often someone stumbles into a previously undiscovered passage. On even rarer occasions, they never stumble back out.

This, incidentally, is a primary reason why so little of the dwarven construction within the mountain caves is in use, despite Redoubt's crowded conditions: too many entrances to the Undercity to be cataloged and closed off. Easier to simply bar the caves entirely.

Old City Militia Headquarters

The Old City, as would be expected of the richest district, boasts the best-equipped and best-fed of all Redoubt's militias. Perhaps equally unsurprisingly, said militia is almost entirely made up of Angat—so much so that it's referred to in common parlance as the "Angat Militia" at least as often as the "Old City Militia."

These Old City soldiers—both full-time professionals and the usual four-days-a-month civilians—are quartered in one of two separate headquarters, each located against the south wall on opposite sides of the district. Each is a squat barracks with conical towers and spikes jutting from broad, overhanging eaves. Old City and Angat banners flap from the brickwork.

The western headquarters stands near the largest pedestrian gate to Westside, and is the less prestigious but far more comfortable of the two stations. The eastern fort overlooks a similar pedestrian gate, but this one leads to Eastside, which—while still a far wealthier and nicer place than any within the Outer City—is the poorest and most crime-ridden district of the Inner City. As such, the barracks here house a population of soldiers perhaps half again as large as that of the western headquarters, making conditions more cramped and less comfortable. Further, the soldiers here find themselves called to action to aid the Watch or otherwise keep the undesirables nearby from coming north more often than their brethren across the district.

The Stables

Horses are a rarity in Redoubt. The space and resources required to house and train them are better served elsewhere, maintaining other, smaller animals more suited to the crowded city's needs. A small population of trained work- and warhorses still exists, however, for military purposes and expeditions into the wild. The Stables (with a capital S) are where those horses, and the men and women who care for them, dwell. More than simple stalls, this is a broad complex with tracks and obstacle courses where horses and riders train to function as one.

The White Citadel

Not far from the Northgate, atop a raised motte and ringed with defensive walls, stands the beating heart of Redoubt, the home of the Magisterium and the government, and the city's greatest and most dreadful prison.

Once, this was the palace of dwarven royalty. Built in the earliest days of Elldimek, it was even then a bit unusual; almost, some would say today, fated to be home to humans rather than to dwarves. The citadel complex itself is composed of a tall central keep and four towers, each located off of a different corner of the keep, and all five structures of the citadel are connected both above and below ground.

Regardless of its aesthetics, the citadel stands as sturdy as any other dwarven edifice, scarcely less stable, less permanent, than the mountain that rises beyond. While the human leadership has drastically redecorated much of the interior and added new outbuildings to the bailey, they have wisely left the structure of the Dunjon and its towers largely untouched.

The castle itself, those new buildings, and the outer walls gleam in the sun, cleaned and whitewashed as often as money and resources permit so that the edifice constantly stands out from the lesser buildings surrounding it. It is meant to be a sign of power, a guarantee that Redoubt's leadership still stands, but to many in the city, it's just another show of arrogant extravagance on the part of the Magisterium.

The grounds of the White Citadel keep "public hours," usually from mid-morning to mid-afternoon, during which citizens of Redoubt are allowed through the gates to meet with administrators or to gather beneath the balconies of the Tower of Audience and the Reclaimed Shrine, to hear speeches from the Magisters or, more commonly, to hear sermons courtesy of the Angat Church of Man. Of course, only "proper" citizens—the loyal or the powerful—are granted this opportunity, and even they are politely but firmly guided away from restricted areas and escorted from the premises when their time is up.

The Gatehouse

Essentially a long hall built around and out from the main gate, the Gatehouse is the first building through which all visitors to the White Citadel must pass. Guides and guards stand at attention within, while others keep watch through arrow slits and murder holes. It is here that the guards determine each and every visitor's business, and turn aside those they deem "unsuited" to continue.

The Administrators' Hall

Two of the freestanding structures within the bailey are built so near the inner keep that they almost appear to be part of it, wings jutting out to either side. The first of these is the squat but sprawling Administrator's Hall. Here, government officials who aren't directly part of the Magisterium go about their business. The day-to-day logistics of the city are planned and executed within, including but not limited to orchestrating food shipments from the farms, tax collections, repair and construction, and the gathering of news and current events. The Undertaking is also run from within this building, as this is where the organization's Knight-Captain has his office.

The Hall of Judgment

The second of the two keep-adjacent structures is the Hall of Judgment, a taller, swept-roof affair almost more cathedral than anything else. Within its many courtrooms, the Magistrates hold most of the city's important tribunals.

(Magistrates do, of course, convene their tribunals elsewhere in the city as well, but normally over less important or highly localized issues.) An array of offices, meeting rooms, archives, and sleeping chambers run behind and between those larger courtrooms, allowing the tribunals access to all the resources and errand-runners they require to function.

Just outside the Hall of Judgment stands a small scaffold and platform, stained dark with years of blood and other fluids despite all efforts to keep it clean. This is reserved specifically for executions the Magistrates wish to oversee themselves but for which they do not necessarily require a public spectacle. The latter occur in the Colonnade, as described later in this chapter.

Sentinels' Hall

A small fort built in the old Angat style—broad eaves with spikes to prevent climbing and allowing for overlapping fields of archers against attackers, conical watchtowers, and so forth, all similar to the Angat militia headquarters—stands alone in the midst of the White Citadel courtyard. This is the Sentinels' Hall, the heart of White Citadel security. Members of both the Watch and the Angat Militia work and live here in shifts, a position of great honor as they protect the members of government and the Magisterium itself.

The Watch also does some city-wide record keeping and logistics planning in some of the building's offices, a central repository for intelligence gathered and problems faced by the many precincts throughout Redoubt.

The Chapel

While the bulk of religious service and ritual within the White Citadel is performed in and around the Reclaimed Shrine, those practices belong exclusively to the Angat Church of Man. The Chapel is a small, freestanding temple where practitioners of other faiths can offer prayers and observations without leaving the citadel grounds. The building is divided into multiple sections, each devoted to a different religion: a plain and even shabby sanctuary for the Faith, only grudgingly permitted by the Angat of the Magisterium; a few small shrines/trophy rooms for Hafod and Jirhal; and a glass-ceilinged observatory for worship of the Two Moons.

The very existence of the Chapel is somewhat controversial, and was one of the few concessions essentially forced on the Angat by the other human tribes during the expansion of the White Citadel into the heart of Redoubt's government. Even now, excessive visits to the Chapel by members of the Magisterium or other White Citadel staff draw suspicion and disapproval.

The Barracks

Not all who live on the grounds are people of influence or authority. Hired servants, message couriers, and slaves are all essential for the capitol's daily operations. They live here, in this building of dormitories, small kitchens, and other such necessities. These are far and away the meanest quarters within the White Citadel's walls, but certainly superior to what servants and slaves might expect elsewhere in Redoubt.

The Stores

An enormous structure containing long rooms of supplies, tools, grains, barrels of mild beers and ales, and other essentials, the Stores exist so that the White Citadel can survive under siege even if the entirety of Redoubt has fallen. Multiple terraces of gardens rise both alongside the building and within its open courtyard, and it also contains a deep well. It's said that, relying on the Stores alone, the White Citadel could function at full capacity for nearly a year—a fact that many people of Redoubt resent, feeling the resources within would be better used to feed, clothe, and supply people *now* rather than standing unused on the off chance the rich might need them later.

The Pyre

The Pyre is a freestanding crematorium, tucked away in a corner of the bailey far from the main gate, capable of reducing multiple bodies to ash in a matter of minutes. In theory, the Pyre exists in case the White Citadel is ever besieged or otherwise required to function without access to the resources of Redoubt proper. The powers that be, however, also just find themselves far more comfortable if they aren't required to wait for the services of the Undertaking, no matter how standardized and efficient those services may be. This way, when someone dies within the Citadel the corpse can be dealt with immediately, eliminating even the tiniest risk of one of the Dead rising within its walls.

The Dunjon

While some people treat "the Dunjon" as an alternate title for the entirety of the White Citadel, in truth the name refers specifically to the main keep. It was here, in this castle, that the dwarven royalty ruled over Elldimek, and it is within that the highest powers of Redoubt's current government operate.

Of all the structures of the White Citadel complex, none are so well known, so infamous as the Dunjon. It has picked up a great many informal names throughout the years: The Last Sight. The Last Call. The Cage. The Needle. Whatever one chooses to call it, the reputation is the same: Those who go in almost never again emerge, at least not as free men and women.

For this is Prisoners' Tower, the most secure gaol in Redoubt. Those charged with crimes of particular import or severity are brought here to await the judgment, and then the sentencing, of the tribunal. After that, most who leave do so on their way to the wall, to the gallows, or to a lifetime of indentured servitude.

The Magisters' Tower

The northeast tower of the White Citadel contains the meeting chambers and private quarters of the Magisters, as well as a small barracks of Hoodsmen and particularly important and trusted servants. It's the most securely guarded of the citadel towers, beyond even the security of the Prisoners' Tower.

The Tower of Audience

This, the southeast tower, is one of two that is sometimes opened to the public. All meetings between common folk (albeit wealthy common folk) and Magisters occur within its various sitting rooms, and it also boasts a few guest suites for rich or noble visitors who have multi-day business with the Magisters or the tribunals. Magisters who wish to make speeches or declarations to the crowds do so from the balconies of the Tower of Audience.

The Reclaimed Shrine

During its earliest days, the southwest tower contained a series of niches and catafalques where royal dwarven dead would briefly rest, receiving the veneration of their relatives, before being moved to the catacombs below. It contained shrines of old relics as well, where the dwarves could pray to their ancestors without having to descend into said catacombs.

Today, of course, all that is gone, replaced with great symbols of and sanctuaries devoted to the singular God of the Angat Church. The Reclaimed Shrine—a name that many dwarves find bitterly offensive, due to its implications—has thus become the center of worship for the White Citadel. While the Church of Man in the Square is the true heart of the Angat religion, many of the faithful travel here on occasion to pray among the most influential and powerful of their fellow adherents, and this is the second of the two towers, after the Tower of Audience, to allow public access. On festival days, priests conduct sermons from the balconies overlooking large crowds gathered in the bailey below.

The Archival Tower

Also known simply as the Archive, the northwest tower of the White Citadel contains the second-largest repository of books, scrolls, and other written works in all Redoubt, behind the Great Library. Of course, "second-largest" is still tiny, as so much was lost during the Fall and subsequent panic.

The tomes and records here are deliberately kept separate from the Great Library, unavailable to the citizenry at large—or to anyone lacking governmental permission from the highest level. Officially, the Archive serves as protected storage for holy treatises, dark rituals, and other dangerous works that the Magisterium or the Angat Church of Man

wish to keep out of public hands. Unofficially, the Archive also holds more mundane writings, everything from history to religion to cookbooks to fiction, that the highest-ranking members of government or Church wish to be kept for their own use.

Old City Adventure Hooks

Someone has poisoned the horses at the Stables. Most have recovered, but neither the Watch nor the Hoodsmen have been able to uncover a suspect or a motive. The Foresters have pooled their resources to hire independent investigators, without political ties or agendas, to take another look. Neither the Watch nor the Hoodsmen are happy about this turn of events, but they haven't taken any steps to halt the independent review—so far.

In what is supposed to be the safest part of Redoubt, people are disappearing off the streets. A few traces of rock dust and dried sewage suggest that someone or something from—or at least traveling through—the Undercity is responsible. Yet none of the known entrances have been breached, and despite intensive searching, no undiscovered entrances have turned up.

The priest of a faith other than the Angat Church of Man has learned that a copy of a holy text—one thought long destroyed—still exists within the vaults of the Archival Tower. She needs a group of people to perform the impossible: to commit a heist within the Dunjon of the White Citadel itself! (Preferably, at least one of the PCs also belongs to this religion, but if not, choose the religion of one of their long-term NPC friends or allies.)

Adventure Hooks in the Square

An ally of the adventurers has been strung up in chains in the Colonnade. They will be left hanging for two days before a grisly execution. Is there a way to outwit the Hoodsmen and rescue this tortured innocent?

A rival band of adventurers takes offense at the actions of the player characters, and challenges them to combat in the Grand Stage. There's an opportunity to make a profit on this battle, if it's promoted well. But are the PCs prepared to face their rivals in such a contest?

A patron of the Grand Stage offers a fortune to adventurers willing to capture select beasts, monsters, or even undead intact and smuggle them into the arena for use in the secret pits beneath it.

A sage needs a priceless elven scroll to complete a ritual. She knows it's within the vaults of the Great Library, but the librarians deny they have it. The PCs must determine why the librarians are lying—or, if they're not, how the scroll disappeared from the depths of the last library.

Only such powerful individuals—or, occasionally, those who make sufficiently large donations—have access. The contents of the Archival Tower remain locked away, protected from potential siege or undead uprising, ostensibly so that the last survivors of the human race can start again with all the knowledge of the ages before them.

The Square

If the White Citadel is the heart of Redoubt, the Square is its voice. The plaza draws people from across the city, coming in search of guidance, news, or entertainment. Located around the Square are structures like the Great Library of Redoubt, which holds the last remnants of knowledge in this dying world—or at least the last remnants the public can access—and the Cathedral of Man, which shows everyone the proper path to follow. It also hosts the spectacles of the Grand Stage, which offer a distraction from bleak reality. And on the northern edge of the Square, behind its outer wall, the White Citadel casts its shadow over all. In the Colonnade below, criers share the pronouncements of the Magisters, and gruesome executions remind everyone of the power of the Magisterium.

The Square lies on the southern edge of the Old City, stretching south from the White Citadel. Safely ensconced in the walls of the Inner City, this plaza is the largest public gathering place in Redoubt. Whether one comes in search of news, forgotten knowledge, spiritual guidance, or an entertaining distraction from the horrors of the Fall, the Square has something to offer.

The Colonnade

Along the Square, twenty massive pillars support a vast pavilion. It's here that people come to hear the news of the day, and a battalion of heralds relay recent events and the pronouncements of the Magisterium. But the Colonnade also serves a more sinister purpose. A raised scaffold holds blood-crusted implements of justice. A public execution is a spectacle and a message, and the Hoodsmen have a wide array of options. Stone blocks for the simple severing of a hand or a head; a stake for immolation; a gallows for hanging. These are tools for quick and simple deaths, but not all executions are simple or quick. Should someone unmask a Hoodsman or reveal the identity of a Magister, more agonizing punishments await. Spikes allow for slow impalement, while a web of chains hold those awaiting death stretched in agony until they are disemboweled and dismembered.

A family of ghûl—slaves of the White Citadel—tend to the Colonnade, doing their best to keep the scaffold clean. These same ghûl play a vital role in the executions, for after a criminal is dispatched, the remains are turned over to these eaters of the dead for efficient disposal.

The Cathedral of Man

Angat churches are found in every district and within the White Citadel itself, but the Cathedral of Man overshadows

them all. The Angat Church of Man forbids representative depictions of God, and there are no gilded statues or elaborate portraits of Miraab to be found. What defines the Cathedral is its *size*. It is a massive building, with thick walls and high ceilings—a place for the faithful to gather and a final shelter for them, should the Dead penetrate the walls of the Inner City.

These twin functions are reflected by the staff of the Cathedral. The Angat faith is stoic and rigidly organized. Services lack the ecstatic energy or celebratory spirit of the Venmir high ceremonies, but an endless procession of services occur throughout the day as priests acknowledge the blessings of each hour and instruct the faithful in their path. Choral services take place at dawn and dusk, offering thanks to God for the gift of the sun and calling for protection through the night. While these services cater to hundreds of people, one of the faithful can always seek the personal guidance of a Curate or a Reverend Curate. The Angat faith maintains that the Fall was punishment for the wickedness of the world, and priests are always prepared to lift the burden of sin from a parishioner and direct them on the path of virtue. While this service is a gift to all who show faith, it is expected that the supplicant will make some sort of offering to the Church as a sign of their contrition.

While the priests care for the spirits of the faithful, the Wardens protect their flesh. The Cathedral is a fortress, and the Wardens are soldiers who stand ever ready to hold its walls against the Dead, or any other threat that could arise. The Wardens have no authority beyond the Cathedral, but within its walls they are a constant presence. They question any curious tourist who wanders into the nave. Some even challenge the faithful, posing simple questions of doctrine to confirm the true status of a worshiper. Nonhumans are always intercepted, and must provide an excellent explanation before they're allowed to pass beyond the nave.

Using the Library

A player character with ties to the Census automatically has access to the Great Library. A character with the sage background likewise has access to the Library, which is reflected by their Research ability. This likely means that the character donated a text in the past; consider what this might have been. If a character can spend an hour in the Library researching a subject, they have advantage on one Arcana, History, or Religion check.

Beyond having access to the library, a player character could play a more active role. The proctors are charged to seek out any scrap of information that may remain unfound in Redoubt; a player proctor might also be assigned a specific topic to research, being dispatched to speak with Venmir ascetics or to seek dwarven lore in the Undercity. The Great Library might serve as a patron for dangerous expeditions beyond the city, seeking to recover lore from ruined cities and lost lands.

While some may find it bleak, the Cathedral is a symbol of the strength of the Church. Between its fortress walls, its devoted Wardens, and the endless litanies of the priests, it embodies the strict faith of the Angat Church. This is not a place of fantasy or wonder: It is a disciplined stronghold, where the proper path is laid out with absolute clarity.

The Grand Stage

These are dark days, and people need a release, a chance to revel in the moment and to forget the horrors lurking in the shadows. This is the purpose of the Grand Stage, the greatest arena of Redoubt. This vast coliseum can hold thousands. The grandest spectacles make use of its entire field, but often the Stage has multiple events unfolding at once. A typical night might see a Surinzan opera on the western field while convicts battle to the east. Occasionally two events collide, which always makes for a memorable night.

Much to the dismay of the local artists, bloodsport draws the greatest numbers to the Grand Stage. Convicts whose crimes aren't sufficient to warrant immediate execution are pitted against one another in gladiatorial matches. The desperate can sell themselves to the Stage as a way to pay off their debts. While these matches provide the foundation for the bloody entertainment at the Stage, anyone can apply to settle their disputes on the sand. When tensions on the streets reach a boiling point, rival gangs may face one another in the Grand Stage, selling tickets to their battles as opposed to risking the wrath of the Hoodsmen or the lives of innocents. Business rivals, feuding Menhada, Angat whose grievances cannot be settled by law alone... all these and more can be found battling at the Stage. While such battles needn't be to be to the death, many are. And the indentured ghûl stand ready to dispose of the fallen.

While bloodsport always draws a crowd, the Grand Stage also hosts cultural events. Foresters display the equestrian skills of the Menhada. Surinzan artists perform traditional and original works. These events are reminders of the world that's been lost, allowing people to cling to their shattered cultures.

While the vast field is open to anyone who can pay the modest gate fee, there are endless rumors of hidden chambers below the field where the wealthy can indulge in more exotic entertainments of cruel or even monstrous nature.

The Great Library of Redoubt

This simple building is the greatest library in the world. Most sages are thrilled by the notion of a vast repository of knowledge, filled with all the secrets of history—or at least all the *surviving* secrets of history. There's only one problem: the reason it's the greatest library is that it is, for all practical purposes where the bulk of the citizenry is concerned, the *only* library. In the chaos of the Fall, the first priority was personal survival; when fleeing from a horde of rotters, few people put parchment ahead of their own skin.

There were always exceptions, scholars who believed that survival alone was meaningless if the things that defined culture were lost. In the wake of the Accords, these savants came together to petition the Magisterium. Humanity had its Redoubt; now it needed a vault of knowledge, a fortress for its written treasures. These discussions accompanied the foundation of the Census. The city needed a repository of history and law, and where better for such a place than in the shadow of the White Citadel? And with the exception of tomes kept in the Archival Tower, works dubbed too dangerous or too heretical—or, in some cases, simply too enticing to someone with the power to hoard them—the new government agreed.

The Great Library has grown from these humble roots. Its proctors have combed the city for every scrap of knowledge. Almost all secrets of the Second Ascension have been lost, but the proctors have recovered the scrolls of Gihardu scholars and a few elven texts that came to Redoubt in Menhada saddlebags. The Library holds Sunrizan poetry, endless accounts of Angat law, and the accounts of Venmir visionaries. It's the greatest collection of knowledge in Redoubt, but it is by no means comprehensive; a great many gaps wait to be filled, and most will likely wait forever.

The knowledge in the Great Library is a treasure only greedily and reluctantly shared. Access to the Library can be bought, but the most common price is knowledge. Anyone who brings a new text to the curators is added to the list of privileged users. (Of course, anyone willing and able to donate a sufficient sum is also so privileged.) Even then, however, those who wish to peruse the Library are paired with a curator; no outsider may roam freely through the stacks, for fear of theft or vandalism.

Aside from its value as a repository of information, the Great Library is the seat of the Census and holds the records of past generations. It also maintains the laws of all of the cultures of Redoubt, and experts from the Library are available to serve as advisors or mediators in disputes. Those curators with an interest in art often work with the Grand Stage to recreate classic forms of entertainment, lest they be forgotten.

Westside

Trees in Redoubt were rare and protected. This was remarkable, real wealth among so many worthless tenements in a blighted canton.

– Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "forerunner"

Not Old, not New, Westside marks the fringes of affluence, the borderland between the wants and the needs, the in-between of the Old City's relative wealth and the new city's incredible desperation.

Not quite the (relative) wealth and comfort of the Old City, but many steps above the bulk of Redoubt with some

genuinely well-to-do neighborhoods, Westside boasts many desirable properties and is keenly guarded by its inhabitants. It is, in its way, more highly regarded by the common folk than even the Old City, because it is *attainable*.

The streets here are still narrow, but cobbled with clean stones and cleaned weekly by a cadre of servant children. Most of the buildings still house multiple families, but windows, balconies, and rooftop gardens make the air clean and sweet and the lifestyle comfortable.

In the very center of Westside, a number of single-family houses and small mansions cluster around a park. While mostly stocked with edible plants—for even in Westside, every grain of food counts—this park also contains ponds, tended paths, and flowers.

The population of Westside is almost entirely human, with heavy concentrations of Menhada and Angat but representatives of other cultures as well. Few citizens of other races dwell within the district, and most of those are servants, slaves, or guards.

Westside also holds disproportionate political power, for although its citizens are not as well-to-do as those of the Old City, they boast greater numbers, and many have connections throughout the rest of the city. As a result, taxes are low in Westside, and even some Old City residents wistfully eye the local crafters and markets.

Interestingly, although elves are almost completely absent in Westside—they are considered far too unpredictable and disturbed for the population to tolerate—the elven influence is apparent in the district's architecture, clothing, and food. It is a mark of wealth to own elven artifacts, and many downtrodden elves make a little money by selling off family heirlooms or personal memorabilia.

Many Westside Menhada also donate generously to the Temple of the Ancients, soothing themselves that they are contributing to the survival of the elven race, even as they slowly copy, mutate, and steal the last dwindling bits of elven culture.

Population

The population of Westside is divided roughly equally between Angat, Menhada, and then every other human culture combined. Perhaps a quarter of its inhabitants are upper class, with the rest composed primarily of middle- and upper-middle-class residents. The people here tend toward more skilled trades, including government, education, engineering, and the preservation of lore.

It is also one of the slowest-growing regions of Redoubt, as the people here are all too aware of the fragile survival of their city. Most women have one or two children, and many work with the Church to take in orphans young enough that the Westsiders can raise them with little memory of their early life. Older children are instead taken in and raised as servants. Quite a few are cared for well enough, but as always, many people elect to treat their servants with cruelty.

Westside is also home to a growing abolitionist movement, perhaps the largest in Redoubt, driven by several Menhada women who are appalled at the treatment of nonhuman slaves. While the notion has gained little popular support in a city that believes itself reliant on slavery as an institution, the women are canny and beginning to find allies.

There is a growing interracial marriage trend in Westside, and the population is slowly homogenizing.

Culture

The culture of Westside is mostly Angat, although the rising percentage of Menhada residents has shifted the district far from the repressive, stagnant cultures of the Inner City. Due to the Menhada military tradition, a certain practicality and functionality saves Westside from becoming too cliquish and creates a strong bond with the Menhada of other areas.

However, most of the Menhada live in the fringes of the area, while the Angat cluster near the center, and there is a subtle but distinct hatred between many of the residents, as well as a clear tendency toward social standoffishness.

The Menhada of Westside work hard, and find their pleasure in feats of strength and wit. Men and women alike participate in sporting events and Westside sponsors and organizes much of the official sport throughout the city, from horse trials to wrestling and even games of wit and strategy. Much of their wealth comes from these events, and much of that gold is used to help sustain and shore up the poorer parts of the city.

Closer to the center, the Angat watch their uncouth neighbors with curled lip but deign to appear at many of these events, and the Menhada make no secret of their glee at the Angat propensity for gambling addiction.

The Angat of the quarter cling to their exquisitely ordered, repressive culture, and the others take a subtle pleasure in disrupting that lifestyle in artful ways that annoy but aren't sufficiently provocative to inspire actual vengeance.

Locations

Westside is not the brightest or most unique district in Redoubt, but it offers plenty of options for adventurers to explore and utilize. Be careful, though. In Redoubt, the more innocent the façade, the darker its secrets.

The Heights

The district's richest neighborhood, the Heights are the loose conglomeration of estates and single-family houses near the center of Westside. The citizens here are a mere step beneath Old City status but are generally aware that they have ascended as far as they will be allowed, whether

because of some sordid family secret, a less-than-noble past, or simple descent from the wrong bloodline.

The residents of the Heights tend to copy the reclusiveness and snobbery of those of the Old City. They are keenly aware, however, that they live without the walls of that richer district, and that their fortunes rise and fall with those below them. Most give in some degree to charities or donate their own time, elevating the quality of life for the lower classes by a little. However, the inhabitants of the Heights own more slaves per capita than any other part of Redoubt, and it is rumored that unrest is brewing.

The Heights are also where those who no longer wish the intense scrutiny and expectation of the Old City may find their refuge. Many of Redoubt's less savory nobles live here, as well as those who rely on livestock or agriculture for their fortunes.

Most estates in the Heights employ personal household guards, which are also required by city law to respond alongside the militia in emergencies.

BRIGHT HOPE

One of the very wealthiest people in Westside lives in its most modest compound. Although merely owning land is a sign of obscene wealth in this cramped city, little else sets Aldwy Hassifarnos' estate apart from the neighborhood. He prefers it this way.

One of the rare noblemen who served a full term on the wall, Aldwy is the wealthiest, most notable, and possibly longest-lived follower of Hafod in recent history—though that last is not, perhaps, the highest of bars. Aldwy's wealth primarily comes from his frugal lifestyle, but he has made a notable fortune through the black market, sending agents into the deadly world outside Redoubt to hunt down knowledge, artifacts, and memories of a better time.

MOON'S SILENCE

Moon's Silence is the wealthiest estate in the Heights, though not the largest. Owned by an Angat widow, Graith Orosos, Moon's Silence is a refuge and fortress. The widow's husband died at the hands of a rival over thirty years ago, and rose as one of the Dead. Gossip says that Graith drove the sword through his neck herself. Whatever the cause, she retreated to a run-down estate outside the Old City, left her role as a Magister, and closed herself off from her former life.

Graith is an intensely private woman, running most of her affairs through her assistants. She maintains an active knowledge of the city's affairs and power plays, and uses this in her role as one of the leaders of the Obsidian Crown (see "Cults of Idolatry" in **Chapter III: Life in Redoubt**).

Once per year, on the anniversary of her husband's final death, she throws open the doors of her estate and hosts a funeral party. Graith hires elven performers, and ancient books are brought from the temples. Attendees are utterly silent in the main rooms, masked and dressed in funeral garb, passing through rooms lit only by the light of the full moon. The Church frowns upon this, but the political and social import of the event cannot be denied, and so even priests attend the strange and silent affair.

JARMITH'S

A relic of a lost era, Jarmith's was once a dwarven forge and training camp that has remained relatively unchanged and unharmed. One of the few dwarf-owned establishments left in Redoubt, Jarmith's is run by the original founder's grandson—also named Jarmith—and is under the protection of Aldwy Hassifarnos, the powerful noble. Many private soldiers train here, bankrolled by their employers, and noble scions wishing to make their fortunes in ventures outside the walls also train among the warriors.

Jarmith follows Hafod, a rarity in the more well-heeled strata of society, and maintains a small shrine to the god in his gym.

Sunshine

Built when the dwarves could still source stone from outside the city, the Sunshine neighborhood is constructed of a peculiar golden-yellow marble from a mine near the Morgalu Rift. The stone has faded a little over the years, but still radiates a gentle glow under the morning and evening sun.

This is the most open and egalitarian neighborhood of the city, the huge buildings home to moderately well-to-do families and young couples, while the streets are filled with stalls, forming one of the main trade districts of Redoubt. Because of the lack of living room within Redoubt, business, trade, and entertainment largely take place outside, as does much of the cooking. Due to the desperate nature of supplies, many buildings and groups share resources, stretching bits of flavorings and meat scraps across amazingly large applications. Sunshine, therefore, sparkles not only in color but in scent, sound, and the feel of a city that is still alive.

The people here may not have the riches or free time of their wealthier neighbors, but if anywhere in the city gives hope of the human spirit and will to overcome impossible odds, the Sunshine neighborhood hints that, perhaps, civilization still has a future.

THE STEWPOT

The brainchild of a small group of old women, the Stewpot is an area devoted to trading, cooking, and sharing food. They utilize every palatable morsel, throwing vegetable scraps, bones, scales, and any other edible waste they can find into a giant pot. The stew simmers until evening, when the broth is strained and distributed to those who contributed to the pot during the day. During lean seasons, when those elsewhere in Redoubt do not have enough even to survive, those in Sunshine and their more well-to-do-neighbors contribute more than just scraps to many more pots and the women of the Stewpot go through the poor districts of Redoubt, feeding children, untouchable by even the most hardened criminals.

Vadan's Throat

In many of Redoubt's neighborhoods, simple entertainments are used to pacify and bolster the lower classes. In the Sunshine District, however, a greater amount of leisure time has given the arts a chance to flourish.

Vadan's Throat is the ultimate expression of the Westside's fight against the final darkness. Held on what was once a towering fountain in the central plaza, the Throat hosts storytellers, singers, teachers, and politicians. Every evening, weather permitting, nearby streets become silent as the people of Westside pile into the plaza to sit in the dark and listen to the night's entertainment.

During the day, classes are held here by the priestesses of Jirhal, and the priests of the Church preach and postulate on the nature of the Dead and the duty of the citizens to bolster the Church's ranks and coffers. By night, the stories of lost wonders and hoped-for futures ring through the streets in proud defiance of an almost-certain future.

The Pear Grove

The large garden in the center of Westside, the Pear Grove is owned collectively by the people of the district and maintained by tithes of money, seeds, and servants. The garden serves dual purposes, providing both food and a refuge from the world. Additionally, several Menhada and Angat citizens have formed a Preservation Council, and spend their days scouring the city for seeds and saplings of traditional plants that are in danger of dying out. (See "The Preservation Council," page 218.)

The Grove is divided into five sections, each subtly different in design and form. The first is a formal garden, preserving many of the techniques and plants of the Angat culture, from living, fruit-bearing tree fences to bonsai. Another is largely untamed, filled with grains and wild herbs and studded with trees bearing apricots and figs, a memorial to the steppes the Menhada once roamed. A third is the realm of the Preservationists, and is off-limits unless accompanied by one of their members. The other two are more general, but stuffed full of food-bearing plants, crops, and trees.

The Grove provides much of the vegetal food required by Westside.

The House of Hopeful Memory

Jirhal's largest temple stands on the outskirts of Westside: a sleek, older building constructed by the dwarves when Redoubt first began expanding. Over the years, as the city became more crowded and desperate, the temple has changed from an airy, elegant space to a cramped refuge where priestesses sleep in shifts and clean daily to keep as much grace in their temple as possible.

The House is a refuge for knowledge. The priestesses teach classes nightly, clustering children and adults around them and passing down what education they have in every subject from basic math to complex astronomy. They teach orally, preserving what little paper and light they have for more delicate tasks.

The roof of the temple is dedicated to deadly and healing plants of all forms, and acolytes are taught not only how to cause harm, but how to heal, preserve, and restore through the use of alchemy and herbalism.

The Green Hands

The path of the Forester is not one given to long life or good health. While few find their final rest within the walls, those who are no longer able to serve due to injury or age often turn to public service in another form.

The Green Hands take responsibility for the care and preservation of the forests and gardens of Redoubt, from guarding valuable seed stores to tending the gardens and orchards with their own hands. Many of them work alongside their children and spouses, raising new stewards of the natural world. The Foresters they served with and trained bring them the seeds and plants they find in the wilds, often risking their lives for a few fruits or nuts. From these small treasures, the Green Hands create new strains of food for the people.

Although no nature gods survived the Fall, some small, ancestral spirits have become popular among the Green Hands. Tiny shrines to unnamed spirits of harvest, regrowth, and the field can be found tucked into remote corners and nooks, bringing a breath of hope to a city too often only thinking of dead things.

The Green Hands offer their services to commoners as well, showing them how to use waste cleanly to fertilize food, how to preserve seeds, and how to grow plants during the winter. They are a hugely stabilizing force within the city, and often know more of the state of the populace and Redoubt's health than even its stewards.

The Green Hands are marked by their green gloves and hoods, and their skill with the city's food brings them honor and comfortable lives—or as comfortable as can be found within the walls.

Masedav's Seat

The largest indoor sporting venue in Redoubt, Masedav's Seat is a Menhada holding on the very edge of Westside. The location is leased by the city for training its guards and Hoodsmen, as well as being used for private training by Menhada within and near Westside.

The building is four stories high, with the first two floors devoted to spectacle and the others to private training and practice rooms. The ground level is used for larger group

demonstrations, and is covered in sand with tiered seats around the walls. The second is smaller, with private boxes and rooms where many of the top performers live while training.

The Seat is run by a pair of siblings and their spouses. Marskai Karani manages the fighters, spending a great deal of time training sword fighters, while her husband Basvan, an Angat minor noble and retired Forester, trains Foresters in archery. Marskai's brother, Hasedav Karani, and his husband Arkang manage the business affairs of the Seat, and deal with the political machinations necessary to make it successful.

The Antarlus Estate

One of the few Menhada families to live within the Heights, Zalla and Maseda Antarlus hold a modest estate as the nominal seat of local Menhada affairs. Maseda spends a great deal of time within the fences of the property, managing the estate and their not inconsiderable interests throughout the city. The Antarlus family breeds most of the horses used by the Foresters, leasing them to private owners or the city. They also own a number of forges throughout Redoubt, specializing in refurbishing and rebuilding armor and weapons with the scant resources available.

The estate itself is built around a square, solid house. The prize stallions and mares are kept here in stables annexed to the house itself, protected and bred with the utmost care to prevent inbreeding or injury. A large yard surrounds the house, where the horses are exercised regularly, and is planted with high-yield foods—oats, dates, figs, and more. The estate is a subtle fortress, the walls high and wide and a deep cistern hidden beneath the house. It is not the richest estate in Redoubt, but it is one of the most likely to survive disaster or rebellion.

The Preservation Council

The Preservation Council was started by a retired Forester, Marsiao Gi. Forcibly retired from the ranks of the Foresters due to an infected leg wound, Marsiao turned her attention to the protection of a different element of life. Having spent her career searching for resources, she began researching and collecting seeds and grafts from across the city. Working with a few of her neighbors in Westside, as well as the Green Hands, she created a catalog of the foods and plants available in Redoubt, as well as ancestral plants. Though much of the catalog is based only on memories, she has done a remarkable job of discovering rare, disappearing strains.

The Antarlus Siblings

Zalla Zorani-Antarlus is a stern, dignified woman, tall and heavy-set with a thick head of nearly-white hair. Although she is only middle-aged, her face is lined with care, and her speech is slow, considered, and grave. Zalla carries the weight of a people on her shoulders, and it shows. She dresses simply, spends most of her time traversing the city to speak to her countrymen, and is respected even by the Angat.

She has never married, preferring to spend her time with her people.

Maseda Zorani-Antarlus is as stern and reserved as her sister, but where Zalla is ice, Maseda is the heart of a volcano. Her rich, resonant voice carries well, and her bearing draws attention. She runs the affairs of the Zorani family and much of the Antarlus clan business as well.

Maseda's hair is black, curly, and wild, dressed with silver charms handed down through her family. She dresses as befits her status as a family head and clan-leader, in simple but well-made clothes. Her unusually dark eyes are direct and challenging, and many a politician and merchant have found themselves skewered by that gaze.

Maseda's husband, a Menhada Forester, is still active and frequently far from the city. Their three children have just entered their teens. The two oldest, a boy and a girl, have gone into training with the Foresters, while the youngest son follows his mother like a shadow, soaking up everything she can teach him.

Her successor, Klimar Joriu, took the work a step beyond that and began breeding programs, offering small incentives from his own coffers to people who would take on the care of certain genetic lines, keeping them pure from cross-breeding. He also selectively bred new crops for the harsh conditions of Redoubt, plants with high yields, great hardiness, and strong seedlines.

The Preservation Council is now an officially documented organization supported by the city's resources. The board is usually composed of five people, as well as a subcouncil of representatives from the Foresters, Green Hands, and elven and dwarven researchers. It focuses on finding seeds and sprouts outside the city, searching for old stores and groves abandoned by refugees, and creating as much resilience and diversity within the city's foodstores as possible.

Westside Adventure Hooks

An elven woman has come forward claiming knowledge of a cache of elven seeds, lore, and enchanted items hidden on their last desperate flight. She states that the elves surrounded their cache with magic, protecting it from the elements and discovery, and that the knowledge of this place has been passed down from her mother and aunt, who are now dead. Many parties would be interested in the things hidden there, but she has come to the Preservation Society in the hope that these will be used for the good of the city. She offers to go with the Society to recover the objects. The Society reaches out to its contacts, searching for a party willing and able to venture into the wilds for this desperately needed store of items.

Graith Osoros has announced the date of her yearly Funeral Party, promising the usual mix of culture and grief for bygone days and memorials of lost loved ones. This year, however, someone with an eye either on her fortune or on her contacts has sent a note promising that her darkest secrets will be unmasked and her fortune shattered if she does not call off the party. Graith is determined to continue her tradition, and has asked for aid in discovering who wishes her harm. Her wealth, her power, and her store of artifacts promise great reward for what is surely a simple mission...

The Dead have never besieged the city for so long as they are now. Rumors fly that they will never withdraw, that nothing will ever bring relief. Small conflicts spring up in the poorer regions, and even in the Old City, the inhabitants are showing strain. Sensing both profit and a chance to head off trouble before it becomes widespread, the owners of Masedav's Seat announce their greatest show yet—three days of games, contests, and demonstrations, hosted and paid for by Westside. Their aim is to show the city that it is still well-defended, while distracting them from the stink of the Dead surrounding their city.

Sensing opportunity in the Masedav's Seat, a small group of radicals plans to release a controlled epidemic of the Dead into the lower city, clearing the population density and leaving plenty of looting opportunities. Word of this plot has made its way to the Foresters, who reach out to those in Westside who know where such radicals might strike.

Southside

They escorted ghûl slaves within the Inner City as they did errands for their masters, and, more crucially, when they procured the carcasses of freshly dead beasts and brought them to the Southside park where they chanted and fed upon lost life that was destined for the earth again.

– Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

As the most diverse district within the walls of the Inner City, Southside is home to well-to-do merchants, people about town, good quality food (as good as it gets in Redoubt, anyway), and the best wares that non-aristocrats might be able to afford. Trained artisans, respected members of society, and visionaries are all welcome here, leading to a boisterous, lively, and constantly shifting district.

It is rare to see true mansions or estate homes in Southside, such as the dual homesteads of the Amitola and Pazi families. Residents prefer either townhouse cooperatives, stacked apartments or, in the case of the district's free dwarves, squat half-homes made of native stone. These are the oldest buildings in Southside, ringed by the remains of the original walls in the southwest.

One of the most visually remarkable details of Southside is the incorporation of red brick in the cobblestones and many of the buildings themselves. Lore says that the entire Southside of old was red-bricked on the interior and brown-bricked without. Over the centuries, with subsequent destruction and erosion, most of the brown bricks collapsed or were worn away. The older structures are still partially red brick, and the cobblestones are inlaid with red brick accents. The Amitola mansion is also built almost entirely of red brick, rumored to have been obtained illegally after a temple fire around the time of the Fall.

The location of the red clay used in making these bricks is now lost to time, but it most certainly did not come from Redoubt itself. In order to preserve what little heritage remains, the community leaders of Southside impose a significant fine on anyone found tampering with red bricks or making counterfeits. Rumors persist that some hidden fissures in Southside may be discovered by following hidden red brick puzzles laid into the cobblestones.

Because of this unique feature of the district, "crossing the red" is a common phrase used to refer to those lucky few who manage to improve their fortunes sufficiently to move from the Outer City to the Inner.

Population

About one-third of Southside's citizens are Venmir—largely merchant-class folks, but also including some low-ranking nobles. The most famous of these families are the Amitola and the Pazi, who are at constant odds with one another. The Amitola mansion occupies a large tract of land on the district's east end, and the Pazi tower marks the westernmost edge of Southside.

Over the last two decades or so, however, Southside has seen a steady influx of other humans and even occasional other races. While some of the older merchant families are reluctant to do business with these "newcomers," the district as a whole has become fairly well integrated, making Southside the most obviously diverse portion of the Inner City.

There are more Menhada by density in the northern quadrant of Southside, who are of the merchant caste and, therefore, better suited to living in the area. Some Menhada of the royal caste also live in the northern quadrant, but only by necessity.

Dwarves are not uncommon along the Southside wall, near Red Market Square. Officially, very few elves live in Southside. Unofficially, however, the Pazi family is known for a rather eclectic taste in slaves, and many a rumor suggests that elves and ghûl labor behind the walls of their estate.

Culture

Commerce moves Southside, the very blood that runs through the streets like red brick. It isn't too far off to say, then, that commerce is culture. Though many established families and merchant guilds hold power within the district, it's not uncommon, when compared to other districts, for lesser folks to find their way up through the rungs of society. Southside places a minimal emphasis on nobility—though some would argue that the founding families act like surrogate nobility—and focuses instead on financial and mercantile contributions to Southside itself. For many residents, the long dream is to have a building or a street dedicated in the name of one's family or business.

Due to this deep focus on trade, fashion and customs follow wherever the money leads. Southside is perilously trendy, with everything from the cock of one's hat to the color of one's lapel indicating a different status or attention to current preferences.

Generally speaking, it's frowned upon to display too many cultural embellishments in clothing. There is no hard and fast rule, but the general consensus is that living in Southside and doing business there make you a part of Southside first, and your original culture or tradition second. (That some of the original Venmir merchant families espouse this philosophy while frowning upon newcomers to the district is a hypocrisy left unvoiced by those who know what's good for them.)

Most Southsiders are proud of their mixed heritage, and it's reflected in the music, fashion, and food to be found there. While food is no more plentiful here than anywhere else in Redoubt, the culinary practices of Southside are rather more creative, mixing the recipes and ingredients of the city's cultures in ways not found in any other district. No

place is better known for their food than Lee's Lyre, one of the centrally located restaurants in the perimeter of Red Market Square. One might say that they err on the side of the outrageous, so it may be best to avoid for the weak of stomach.

For entertainment, it's best to head to the Cup for theatre, to the Shattered Spear for good cheer and drink, and to the Wilted Rose for... more peculiar tastes.

Crime

This thirst for new experiences and trendy flavors tends to invite some more unsavory dealings as well. Southside is generally accepted to be the main conduit through which contraband flows from the poor districts to the richer and vice versa—and not just because it has the most easy access points. Rumors fly that one of the founding families actually sanctions the illegal trades, but no formal charges have ever been leveled.

In order to protect both its reputation and its commerce, the district imposes some of the most severe penalties for thievery. Branding, scarification, maiming, and even dismemberment have all been levied as sentences for stealing. Not all Southsiders approve of such harsh practices, and in recent years they have become far less common in favor of prolonged periods—sometimes ludicrously long—of indentured servitude.

Locations

Southside has the most broad offerings of any district within Redoubt. While its reputation has become significantly more martial in the recent decades, it remains stable, predictable, and almost clean and orderly. Only a few areas are truly dangerous, such as the Ditch and Rumside, and plenty of places offer information, a good night's sleep, a hot meal, and maybe even a job. All are welcome, providing they have the coin and don't grope the merchandise.

Red Market Square

The center of life in Southside is Red Market Square, ringed in red brick and surrounded by guild halls of every shape and design. The most prominent are the clothiers, the blacksmiths, the stonemasons, and the curriers (who deal mostly in non-leather goods, but occasionally leather as it is available, and at a high price). At each corner is a tavern—the Lost Wail, Emmit Blue's, North Daw, and the Ruined Eye. Every other day, the bazaar takes place within the square itself. On off days the square fills with guild members going about business, bartering for space within the square, and engaged in other general dealings. In times of (relative) plenty, food stands line the square even on non-market days.

The Glass Temple

At the north side of Red Market Square is the Glass Temple, named for the large leaded glass window, still (mostly) intact, that faces the square. The Glass Temple may once have been a central church for the Venmir, but now it serves as dual shrine to both the Angat Church of Man and to its parent faith, practiced in two separate and distinct inner sanctuaries. Its basement level, under heavy lock and key, is rumored to include an entrance to the Undercity near the old crypts.

Oaur's Pagoda

Dating back to the early days of the dwarves' emergence from the mountain, the pagoda is a small garden marking the final wishes of a dwarf named Oaur, who was fascinated to the point of obsession with the greenery the upper world had to offer. Today, Oaur's Pagoda serves as a central meeting place and community garden for the inhabitants of Southside. The grounds are tended by the Green Hands (see their sidebar in the "Westside" entry), with a few herbalists in residence in the nearby apartments. Oral tradition claims Oaur herself died and was buried here, promising to rise again as a tree. If any tree did grow here once, however, it is long gone. The pagoda stands on its own, half-entwined with wisteria vines as thick as a human's forearm.

The Ditch

The area known as the Ditch is comprised of the remains of two old streets, White Sand and Oracle Street, and the ruin of an old irrigation ditch that collapsed and took most of those two streets with it. No further instability has shown itself in years, suggesting that the place is more or less stable, though a confirmed fissure to the Undercity can be found toward the east side of Oracle Street.

If one is too poor for Southside but has managed not to be fobbed off on the Outer City, he may well find himself living in the Ditch. It's out of the way enough that most citizens don't mind that the land is crawling with "unsavory types." Most who dwell here eke out an impoverished living finding odd jobs in neighboring areas, foraging the mushrooms that sprout near the Ditch's center, or through scavenging. As long as they don't cross over past south White Sand Street for any purpose other than labor—at which point they're considered pests—the people here are viewed as charity cases, and a few of Southside's more fortunate individuals or organizations offer them occasional scraps or loose coin. The Glass Temple is one such benefactor, often providing a thin gruel for the Ditchers.

Rumside

While Southside does its best to maintain a decent reputation, ever reaching toward more ambitious goals, everyone is aware of the district's underbelly. Rumside, the area surrounding a crossroads of four major streets just south and east of Pazi Tower, officially has no distinction or presence on any city map. Unofficially, it's the Pazi-run and -sanctioned red lantern district, gambling hall, and auction house, as well as the home of several notorious taverns. For years the Amitolas have tried to connect the Pazi family to Rumside, but while "everyone knows" of their involvement, it's never been proven in any concrete manner. The Pazis cover their tracks well and publicly denounce any connections, instead blaming a local gang known as the Pickers. The Pickers have an uneasy alliance with the merchants of Southside, and sometimes work as protection when things get ugly—and, of course, deny any connection whatsoever to the Pazis.

Rumside isn't solely a hive of debauchery, though. The area has attracted a large number of tinkerers, engineers, metalworkers, artists, musicians, and scholars. It's an affordable alternative to the ever more pricey portions of Southside, but still offering access to possible patrons. The area also houses a small training ring for pit fighters and an art gallery with pre-Fall artifacts and sculpture (though whether these are genuine or forgeries is an open debate).

The Wilted Rose is the most popular tavern in Rumside, despite offering no food. It primarily serves teas and tisanes, some of which are known to provide hallucinogenic effects, and for this reason is popular among mystics and religious scholars. Its second story is also a brothel.

The Helmun

Often abbreviated "Hel" by those who don't live there—that is, non-dwarves—the Helmun is comprised of a series of tightly built homes connected to one another by a second story above ground but separated into individual alcoves below. From the street level, Hel looks like a stone longhouse, chimneys reaching up like reeds in the marsh. Runes marked on the outside of the longhouse, typically in a red capstone, spell out the family name of those living inside. Belowground, a family may have multiple rooms, far more than many richer aboveground dwellings, but these are observed only by dwarves. Non-dwarves are sometimes invited to the longhouse level, which is an endless common area that connects the broad crescent of the Helmun all along Coal Street.

While they may not appear to be as well off as many non-dwarves in the district, the dwarves are an essential part of Southside's success. They provide the bulk of the workforce that builds the stalls, takes them down, and stores them, as well as providing maintenance and, of course, offering their own wares. Southside boasts some of the best weapons makers and craftspeople in all of Redoubt, nearly all of whom are dwarves.

Family Feuds

The oldest human creation in Southside is no building or market or street; it is the feud between the Pazi and Amitola families. If you are born Amitola, you are taught to loathe the Pazi; if you are born Pazi, your sole goal in life is to bring

down the Amitola. This longstanding competition has caused its share of bloodshed, but has also given rise to the success of Southside. Efforts at gaining the favor of one family or overtaking people loyal to the other have led to some of the district's most profitable businesses, best crafts, and most significant advances.

The Origin of the Feud

Ama Amitola, the matriarch of that family, arrived in Redoubt as a refugee from a prominent Menhada bloodline. Her husband had died during the exodus from the Dead, but she brought her six children safely to Redoubt. She quickly befriended a local dwarven family and set up shop in Southside. Amitola was a weaver, and this became her family's hallmark. She was able to build relationships with local royal families, particularly among the Venmir, and set herself up as a magnate of sorts. While the family is known for their craft, it is far more known for its influence and trust in royal circles. Ama's tireless work connecting her family with nobility in Redoubt meant that she lived almost as well as they did, and functioned for a time as a kind of representative in Southside.

About five years after the Amitola family arrived, Tsula Pazi and her four sons came into the picture. They came from a much larger city than the Amitolas, and were trained as masons. Because so much of the city needed repairs, the Pazi family rose quickly through the ranks, making connections all across Southside and pulling attention—and favors and patronage—from the Amitola family.

What followed were many small-scale arguments and grievances filed against one another, from accusations of petty theft to slander. While the Amitola family was close to the Venmir nobility, the Pazis courted the Angat. And so royal feuds became their feuds, and their ever expanding webs of influence, secrecy, and (according to rumor) espionage all became more complicated.

The courts heard case after case involving these two families, and it caused quite a sensation in the district. Some say that the most Southsider pastime is to sit back and watch the houses argue it out. It wasn't until Ama Amitola was in her declining years, however, that the feud turned dark and sinister. It began with the building of Amitola manse.

The Ancestral Homes

In order to reclaim her family's hold on Southside, the aging Ama Amitola began work on the Amitola manse—supposedly by having one of her granddaughters, Inola Amitola, seduce one of the young Pazi boys, Atohi, and steal some of his architectural plans. When the treachery was revealed, Inola was poisoned at her own soiree, and the families descended into war.

The Amitola home is referred to these days as "The Manse," but its proper name is Inola's Rest. A memorial for her stands on the grounds, and many hold that she did not steal the plans from Atohi Pazi, but that they were given her out of genuine love, and that the more widely accepted tale is a Pazi scheme to ruin the Amitola name. The Manse is one of Redoubt's largest properties outside of the Old City: a sprawling, three-level mansion comprised of a central cloister and multiple sub-buildings. Everything the Amitola clan needs is within, including a small temple, a stable, gardens, and a blacksmith. The Amitolas are known for their large religious celebrations, culture festivals, and outreach to the poor.

After the death of Inola Amitola and the shaming of Atohi Pazi, the Pazi family took a few years to lay low. They all but disappeared from political life, focusing on their work rebuilding Southside. But when they emerged, they did so in style. They had been planning, it seemed, their own structure: Pazi Tower. Where the Manse is sprawling

Southside Adventure Hooks

A chain of thefts have occurred in Red Market Square, and the rumor persists that it's something to do with the lowlifes in Rumside. Southside's guilds and businesses offer a handsome reward for anyone with information pertaining to the thefts and definitive proof (read: living, not dead). News sweeps through Southside, and accusations and rumors rise to a fever pitch—all while, despite the added attention and extra security, the thefts continue.

A collapse at the Helmun has revealed not only a new fissure, but the remains of an ancient dwarven temple full of priceless artifacts. The dwarves, sensing trouble, reach out to the Pickers to hold down the area while they rush to catalogue and preserve what is left of their history. This ruffles a number of feathers, and tensions rise as rumors fly that there's something more down in the collapse, something that doesn't belong to the dwarves at all and may be worth a great deal more than a few old relics of a dying race.

The Pazi family has been going through a lot of servants as of late. While they've always had a taste for the exotic—hiring addled elves and, if the rumors are true, a ghûl or two—their recent messengers and errand-runners have all been mundane human hires or dwarven slaves. The merchants, especially those who provide the family materials for their building and supplies, are concerned that this signals the family's decline. They plant a series of spies inside the Tower to find out the truth of what's going on.

It's time for the Amitolas' yearly remembrance of Inola, a celebration of love and light, as they say. It's also the perfect time for a heist. So the Amitolas reach out across the city to hire as many hands as they can to ensure that the day's festivities go as smoothly as possible, knowing that the Pazis might be up to something. Whatever happens, there are going to be a whole lot of people at that party...

and elegant, the Tower is tall, powerful, and visible from almost any spot in Southside. Made of interlocking black and white brick and always draped with flags and the sigil of the house—a wounded dragon—the tower is an architectural marvel. It is also a genuine fortress, as capable of withstanding siege as any built by the city.

The Feud Today

Where the Amitolas are known for elegance, style, and a conservative, intellectual approach to their business, the Pazis are extravagant, boisterous, garish, and fickle. Though it's not uncommon to see the two families facing off in the square or threatening a duel, the rivalry has been relatively quiet for the last decade or so while other pressing matters seeped into the world of Redoubt.

That said, nearly all who live in Southside are, if not allied with, then at least generally inclined toward one of the two families. There's just no way around it. Between the families' many relatives and even more numerous business contacts, a neutral party almost always has a hard time getting what customers want in a timely manner. Showing the wrong colors in the wrong place raises a lot of eyebrows. The only place it's safe to be undeclared, or to approach someone of the other side, is in that mightiest of leveling fields: the market.

Eastside

Through the endless din of Eastside, poorest and most crowded district of Redoubt's Inner City, through a hundred conversations and the cries of children and the bleating of goats, those bells cut.

— Ari Marmell, "Requiem, in Bells"

Of all the districts of the Inner City, Eastside is the most packed, the most squalid, and the most varied. This area developed late in the takeover of Redoubt, resulting in a mishmash of many cultures. A few blocks, primarily those nearest the gates, are highly affluent, with their own inner walls and private guards for the wealthy. Most of Eastside consists of tenements and hovels, however, and wide stretches are packed with poor and desperate folk.

Because of its broad swath of population, Eastside is a riot of different architectural designs, colors, and styles. In the poorest neighborhoods, tents, shanties, and lean-tos stand packed against one another, with people in rags clutching at their few possessions. In the slightly more affluent areas, squat buildings adorned with various cultural motifs are the norm. Among the small enclaves and compounds, painted stone walls dominate, often covered with murals or geometric designs that fit the vision of their owners—when they aren't splashed over with graffiti, of course.

Where many common folk long for a secure residence in the wealthier Westside, Eastside is where labor meets luxury. Even the roughest parts of Eastside lack the perils of life among the criminals, destitute, and deranged in the Outer City. For this reason, most Eastside neighborhoods have a strong internal character and a mentality of taking care of their own—neighbors trade with each other, support each other, and share their skills, but keep a wary eye on outsiders or visitors who might upend their precarious existence. In the few affluent neighborhoods, travelers passing through are watched and, occasionally, warned to be on their way. In either case, the locals band together in small groups for mutual survival.

Population

While Eastside boasts a thoroughly mixed citizenry, Ouazi and Surinzan make up a majority, along with a (relatively) large population of ghûl. The presence of the Ouazi sultaar to the south of the district ensures a strong presence of Ouazi neighborhoods expanding outward from his enclave. Ghûl live in small packs among the alleys at the fringes of these areas, amid a zone of low-income neighborhoods that give way to a riot of packed Surinzan multigenerational homes and their infamous fighting schools. A wide range of other humans, along with a smattering of dwarves and elves, live beyond this cluster in a hodgepodge without a strong identifiable center. Each group or neighborhood forms its own local identity, whether driven by an important business, a respected resident, or a local gang.

Eastside is the most crowded of the Inner districts, as it's the last available place for those on the bottom rung of the social ladder before they're pushed outside the walls. During the day, the streets are packed with crowds, even more so than other parts of the city. At night, stairwells and gutters become the sleeping chambers of those who would rather be homeless here than risk the Outer City. Aside from the carefully guarded gardens that the affluent keep behind their walls, the only unoccupied spaces in Eastside are muddy patches of ground that haven't yet become foundations for hovels.

Because of the wealth divide, it's possible to barter all kinds of work in Eastside. One can hire day laborers at a cheap rate from in front of a brickmaker's shop, then meet at a cramped restaurant to discuss criminal affairs, and cap the evening with dinner at a wealthy patron's estate-house. This makes Eastside an ideal place to hire out if one's looking to do a job—especially of the less-savory or violent sort—and also a good place to make modest connections for local business networks. If one wants to get one's foot on the bottom rung of the property ladder, this is the place to start.

Culture

The collection of people inhabiting Eastside results in about one-third of it showing a distinctly Ouazi character, another quarter or so the influence of Surinzan culture, and the remainder a mix of various human societal influences, with the occasional splash of dwarven or even elven art.

Eastside's cultural flourishes tend to be open-air: While the middle class in Westside and the rich in the nobles' quarter often hide their art, their wealth, and their relics of heritage behind estate or townhouse walls, Eastside sees this all in the open. Its most common form is that of simple street art, created to delineate a neighborhood or show that a particular family maintains their cultural traditions. Most Eastsiders don't have the money necessary to keep a pristine family shrine or a beautiful piece of statuary, so instead they create art from castoffs and scavenged components. Thus, many homes and businesses fly banners, display painted murals, and exhibit tiny tokens or statuettes crudely carved from leftover rocks. Compared to other districts, this can make much of Eastside seem more colorful, with more of a carnival atmosphere. Locals navigate by famous works of art, and directions often reference places by style rather than by name: "The Surinzan restaurant with the pair of crossed sticks that look like spears" or "The little Menhada vegetable seller who always has those chalk drawings on the cobblestones in front of his shop."

Eastside is also a festive place, or at least many of its subsections are. Perhaps to take their minds off their misery, people often gather their neighborhoods together for celebrations of important holidays, cultural events, or whatever significant opportunity has permitted the excuse—a wedding, a business deal, a lost child or sibling returning home. Folks gather and chip in for a crowded venue, occupying a whole block and doing their best to share their little largess with one another as a reminder that they've survived another day.

The Watch tends to be laissez-faire about bureaucratic crimes and minor issues in Eastside. Local neighborhoods are left to sort out their own arguments so long as nobody's seriously injured or killed. While it's technically illegal to run a food shop without a license or to sell cultural artifacts, such infractions only come up when the Watch needs to put pressure on someone as part of a larger investigation (or political intimidation). Usually the Watch busies itself with handling violent crimes in the slums and patrolling the more affluent areas to encourage transients to move along. Since local Watch operatives often live in the areas that they patrol, they frequently collaborate with locals to solve problems before escalation occurs, and many local Watch officers spend their time dealing with clashes between neighborhoods or unruly visitors from other parts of the city.

Locations

Navigating Eastside is a nightmare for visitors. Tracking the cultural décor is perhaps the best way to tell where one's headed: in the center and the south, it's mostly Ouazi; in the strip north of that, Surinzan; and everything else in the northernmost portions of the district is a mixture of varied influences. The further north one goes, the poorer the district tends to become, with the commensurate shift from cramped homes to hovels to muddy tents and half-shelters. The lone exception is anything directly lining the walls, because those areas are regularly patrolled in case the Dead manage to find a way through.

The simplest sign of affluence is the state of the streets: cobblestones equal wealth, mud equals poverty. Any place with a wall, or adjacent to the Inner Wall, is prime real estate. New construction is more common here than in other parts of the city, though even in a newly built home, multi-generational families, multi-family arrangements, and sublets are all common. "New" doesn't necessarily mean the inhabitants are rich.

The Sultaar's Compound

The Ouazi leader, the Sultaar Inunwa, resides in a walled multi-building estate to the south of Eastside. Technically it's a purely Ouazi enclave; in practical terms, most Eastsiders consider it the southern border of their district. Heavy mortared stone walls barricade the compound, which has two gates of its own—a main gate for visitors and occasions when the sultaar might choose to go out, and a side gate for deliveries. The sultaar's home is a fortified three-story villa with a scrubby rock garden in back and four outbuildings for various uses: a storage room, a guest house, a gardener's house, and a barracks for the grounds' guards. (The sultaar's personal guard live in rooms within the manor house.) Over fifty people reside in the compound, including the sultaar, his four wives, dozens of guards, and various

staff, servants, and groundskeepers. This is all miniscule compared to his pre-Fall standards, but the concentration of wealth here is absurd when contrasted with the people stacked in tents and hovels outside his walls.

Visitors to the sultaar require an invitation or a signed letter of introduction from the Magisterium; otherwise, the guards let nobody past the gate. On *very rare* occasions the sultaar's wives hire new serving staff. Such interviews happen in the courtyard just inside of the main gate, but are carefully watched by guards. Deliveries and shipments arrive at the side gate and are taken in by servants; nobody enters unless their specialized skills are required (such as to assemble and tune a large musical instrument). Rumor whispers that sometimes the sultaar calls for a priest or witch to deal with ailments or horoscopes for his wives, but these sorts of meetings are kept very much under wraps. Anyone hoping to break in or assault the compound had best be ready for stiff resistance. Not that this stops local boys from climbing onto the wall at night and hoping to catch a glimpse of one of the wives...

The Stockyard

Many of the Ouazi goatherds dwell in Aurib-Naa (see page 240), but the herding culture remains strong among that people. All along the southern range of Eastside, the Ouazi people still keep goats. Those trapped in tiny homes and tents tie up their goats in small communal herds, with a goatherd or two to watch over them and prevent theft, but the goats aren't permitted to wander far. In contrast to this, the stockyard is a stinking pit, a rump beneath a hillock in which weedy grass rises, with enough room to pack a hundred goats. Here they form a mixed-up herd, watched from a rickety tower that overlooks the fencing, with each owner's tag pinned to a goat's ear. The poorest Ouazi may not even own a whole goat; a single pin could indicate ownership by a group or a family. The goats graze and jostle and bleat, and the stench is pungent.

The stockyard is just large enough to let the goats roam in a small circle, pushing and shoving against one another, hopping onto ruined tree stumps or bits of protruding rock, and scavenging for whatever grass they can find.

A sluice of water runs through the yard, clear when it enters, befouled when it leaves. Many "traditional" Ouazi disdain the stockyard because of the high chance for a single epidemic to wipe out all of the goats, but it does offer more security than having a goat behind one's tent, where it can be stolen, and more convenience than leading one's goat on a rope everywhere one travels in town.

The stockyard is ostensibly overseen in common, but a slim majority of the herd belongs to the sultaar. Other goat-owners pitch in to pay for taxes, security, feed, and water. Since every goat has a pinned ear, trading ownership is as simple as trading the matching pin token, and stockyard tokens form a sort of alternative currency for the Ouazi of Eastside. Of course, that carries its own risks, since it's easier to steal a pin token than to steal a whole goat.

Heb'taqi, the Herdsman

Heb'taqi is an Ouazi man of incredible age. Rumor holds that he has been around since before the Fall. He is wiry and walks slowly, with slender, twig-like limbs, a potbelly, and a few wisps of white hair. He is also almost completely blind, with milky cataract-clouded eyes. Still, he knows more about caring for goats than any other six Ouazi combined, and he can distinguish every goat in the stockyard by touch and by smell. When someone needs their goat fetched, he's the one who plunges into the herd to catch it, and he has a strange ululating cry that seems to put the goats at ease so he can simply walk up and collar them.

Heb'taqi is a surprisingly jovial man who likes an occasional sip of wine—when he can get it—or bitter barleywater. He has an amazing facility for recognizing voices, and never releases a goat to someone's custody without confirmation from the ledger-keeper. During the day he can sometimes be found among the flock, helping the young to find their mothers, checking for signs of injury or disease, and clearing blockages in the sluice. At night he can likewise be found sleeping among the goats.

The House of Disputes

This squat building may once have been a storeroom or foundry, but now it is a central gathering for the local Surinzan to meet and settle affairs. In other districts, Surinzan have personal shrines or training schools for practice with *sleaghar* and unarmed combat. Here, the neighborhood contributes to the upkeep of one building to handle all such matters together.

The House of Disputes has no special architecture or markings save for a painting on the front doors depicting a pair of crossed *sleaghar*. Inside, the floor is polished wood, swept daily, and the walls are adorned with wooden logs that serve as fighting dummies. A design for a circular fighting ring is engraved in the floor. At any given time of day, a host of Surinzan train here and trade techniques. Residents of Eastside know better than to come here looking for trouble; even the Watch only comes, in force, if they plan to make an arrest. Outsiders can watch as long as they remain polite, but only by invitation.

Beyond the outer training room is a single door marked by an irregular smear of blood. The back room is smaller than the front, just large enough to hold one small challenge ring. Locals settle honor disputes here, and young students perform their training tests and rites of passage. Outsiders are forbidden from this room, which generally holds no more than three people at a time: two combatants and one arbitrator.

The back room contains four *sleaghar* of fine quality, with steel blades and hardwood hafts. One was stolen once, a few years ago. The students of the House tracked down the thief after he'd tried unsuccessfully to sell the weapon to three different smiths. The smears of blood on the back door are his. The body was never found and the Watch gave up its investigation after three months with neither witnesses nor clues.

The Frugal Circle

Merchants of modest means gather every day to hawk their wares in what is the largest open-air market of Eastside. The eastern portion of the circle borders a stone-and-wood building that may have once been a stable, but now serves as a set of stalls for various vendors. The outside ring boasts two dozen different merchants of various sorts, hawking everything from low-quality weapons to tools, game boards and pieces, scraps of cloth, herbs, withered fruits, and more. Nearly any common good can be had here, though the quality is usually low, and finding something of use can take hours.

The Watch keeps a pair of operatives here, usually with two recruits, to keep an eye out for theft or troublemakers. Watch officers consider this a plum posting, because the merchants often ply the Watchmen and women with small treats or snacks, and there's usually just enough action to stave off boredom without threatening any serious harm.

The makeup of the Circle changes from day to day, but disputes are rare, simply because a merchant who causes too much trouble may be banned. If nobody is willing to allow the offender to set up shop next door, a troublemaker can be shunned completely out of the market.

Araza's Chandlery

People tend to give this particular establishment a wide berth, and an odd smell wafts from its chimney, though the neighboring shops—a rope-maker and a dyer—inexplicably manage to do a brisk business and never seem to complain. Araza herself is a portly, middle-aged human woman of mixed lineage and no particular interest in her heritage, who sells a wide range of candles, lamps, and lamp oil. (Her wicks are purchased from the rope-maker next door.)

The odd smell comes from Araza's personal formula. Since beeswax is a rare and valuable commodity, she makes her candles from tallow—rendered fat, typically sheep. Araza also uses human fat for some of her candles, all purchased legally from the nearest corpse-disposal and rendering stations. While she only visibly trades with legitimate representatives

Eastside Adventure Hooks

A local criminal has a daring plan to commit a heist on the home of the sultaar. The employer engages the PCs to break in and swipe an heirloom chalice in one of the sultaar's outbuildings. The details are left to the players to sort out, perhaps by pretending to be visiting dignitaries, sneaking in under cover of night, or arranging somehow for one of the servants to fall ill so that someone can gain access as a temporary replacement. Of course, the PCs are just a diversion, and the crook's actual plan is to get inside the outbuildings and raid them for the valuable metal gardening tools.

Coram and Tellurius finally decide to tie the knot, and in celebration of the happy occasion, the entire neighborhood holds a festival. The two men supply a generous helping of beer and ale at their wedding party, and their patrons bring a wide range of gifts for the popular couple. During the party, a neighbor goes into the cellar to fetch a fresh keg of ale and discovers a body—which quickly stirs. After the players deal with the restless Dead, they discover several more bodies in the cellar! The cold has preserved them from rotting, so they're faster and more agile than most withered Dead. But who put them there? And why? If the matter isn't settled quickly, a corrupt Watch investigator might just arrest the grooms and try to confiscate their establishment.

Kepaya hires the party for a special job: She needs hide of a particular kind that she can't get in Redoubt. She sends the PCs forth with promises of a good payday if they'll bring back the hide of a particularly tough creature, perhaps a giant hyena or even a basilisk. If the party proves itself upon completing several jobs, she may open up about her side business helping to liberate dwarves. She worries that as she gets older she won't be able to keep it up, and she wants people she can trust to start helping. While it's just a job for pay at first, she eventually hires the PCs to help with liberating dwarves from some especially cruel masters, in order to try to sway their hearts to her cause.

Heb'taqi the herdsman has fallen ill with a bad fever. If he dies, the stockyard could be in disarray for weeks, as people would have to search out their own goats and new employees would have to be trained to care for the herd. The local Ouazi collective offers a small purse if someone can find a witch or priest who can heal him—or, failing that, someone with great skill with animals who's willing and able to oversee the herd. In all likelihood the characters' work takes up too much time for them to take such a settled job, but maybe they can trade favors and find someone to do the work in exchange for some considerations. That, of course, means meeting with a lot of Ouazi and doing many favors for them to gain the information and connections they'll need to find a likely candidate.

of the Undertaking, the occasional ugly rumor suggests that she takes possession of other corpses in the dead of night, in exchange for small sums of cash. If the Watch has ever taken these rumors seriously enough to investigate, however, they have never managed to connect Araza to any actionable wrongdoing.

The Green Bauble

Glass is reasonably common in Redoubt, since sand and grit are plentiful. The Green Bauble is a glassblower's shop where trade is in green glass objects of all kinds, from window panes to glass knives to drinking glasses. It has the dubious distinction of being the second most expensive spot in the Circle—the most expensive belonging to whoever is vending weapons on that day—as glass is harder to craft than simple pottery. The owner, Mondav, is a Menhada man with an even disposition, muscular arms, and a great many burn scars.

Mondav makes custom pieces to order, usually with a two to three day wait, though if the customer's lucky and business is slow he might make something on the spot. He also pays small wages for firewood used to stoke his glass furnace, which keeps a trickle of urchins coming through his shop to trade sticks for coin or for glass marbles.

Notably, Mondav owns several high-quality tools, such as metal pipes used to blow air through glass and hold it in the furnace. This alone makes him one of the wealthiest men in Eastside. Mondav is looking for apprentices to take on his trade, but his biggest hurdle is finding people he can trust. He might be inclined to do so if someone can establish a supply of potash for him, necessary for making glass that isn't green.

Kepaya's Tannery

Kepaya is a rarity: a free dwarf made good. Her tannery doesn't have any actual signage, nor is it marked in any specific way, though like all tanneries it has a distinctive smell. Kepaya purchases hides of many kinds, primarily goat hides from local Ouazi, and painstakingly scrapes and tans them. Having run the tannery for ten years, she occupies a spot at the far northern end of the Circle, and in spite of the dirty business and the stench, the other shopkeepers leave her be—partly because she's respected for her determination, and partly because too many rely on her leather products.

Kepaya works long hours and haggles hard over every scrap of leather. Her diligence has thus far paid off, as she has managed to hang on to her business and eke out a small profit.

Few people know that Kepaya turns her profits around into helping to manumit enslaved dwarves. Working through proxies, she helps to buy freedom for her people, or arrange for special teams to liberate slaves through a variety of means, up to and including causing fatal accidents for their owners.

The Bright Hour

This old three-story now serves as a popular meeting and drinking spot. Built from dwarven stone, this structure once served as a guard post before the Accords. Now it's a cramped tavern with small round tables outside and a tiny cellar for storing a few kegs of what watery ales and beers are legal. Patrons eat on the first floor, travelers rent space to sleep on the second, and the proprietors live on the third. The Bright Hour serves as a somewhat cheerful bulwark against the gloom of Redoubt, although the owners don't take credit and don't tolerate disruptive drunkards.

Coram and Tellurius, the Angat proprietors, run an orderly shop. They bring in all the tables and chairs after midnight, clean each day, and refuse to sell spoiled food. The gentlemen don't talk about their family history, but instead concentrate on providing a neutral meeting place in one of the better neighborhoods. They have been in business together for eight years, ever since Coram first proposed the idea to Tellurius.

Coram and Tellurius are both in their mid-thirties and are handsome, well-groomed men who wouldn't look out of place in Westside. Coram is a dreamer, often bustling about with wild ideas and an infectious enthusiasm. Tellurius is more withdrawn, but pragmatic and intelligent. The two are an inseparable couple, and also considered a good source of information for their neighborhood.

The Bright Hour also serves as a common spot for militia members to meet after completing a day's training. It's not unusual to see groups of a dozen exhausted part-timers putting back a pint here after working all day on drills or civil service.

The Slums

More dangerous than any other part of the Inner City, the slums of Eastside have a well-deserved reputation for crime. Outlaw gangs rule here, among half-ruined buildings and grimy lean-tos. Everyone here is lean and hungry, on the edge of subsistence, without the security of a safe place to run a business, plant a garden, or even spend the night.

The slums are a warren of the sick, the elderly, and the disabled, along with their relatives and the occasional visitor hiding out in the worst parts of town to avoid notice. Travelers in the slum had best be prepared to either fight for the right to cross various bits of sodden ground, or pay every few blocks for safe passage.

Though the slums have little in the way of markets or tradespeople to recommend them, there's always human labor. Those with hale bodies eagerly take work hauling, carrying, moving, or stacking, with little complaint. Gang members with violent histories don't hesitate to take on tasks that involve fighting or threatening, as long as they believe they won't be caught.

The Watch only enters the slums in great numbers and at great need. If visitors run afoul of trouble, they're on their own.

Building a Random Neighborhood

When your players' characters are wandering Eastside looking for contacts or hunting down clues as part of an adventure, they'll likely pass through many small neighborhoods, each with its own local character. Roll on or choose from the following tables to make up a neighborhood when the team crosses into unknown territory.

Primary Cultural Influence (d6)

1–2	Ouazi
3	Surinzan
4–5	Mixed human (pick two or three)
6	Nonhuman (elf, dwarf, or ghûl)

Artistic Motifs (d6)

1	Painted murals
2	Colored banners/flags
3	Chalk street art
4	Carvings on buildings
5	Decorative floral gardening
6	Roll twice

Neighborhood Leader (d6)

1	Strongman/strongwoman
2	Charismatic/religious figure
3	Affluent business owner
4	Neighborhood group/association
5	Neighborhood gang
6	Struggle between two power blocs (roll twice)

Poverty Level (d6)

1	Extreme poverty
2–3	Subsistence
4	Modest
5	Affluent
6	Private enclave

Local Business (d6)

1	None
2	Criminal enterprise
3	Small animal husbandry (rats, spiders, pigeons, lizards, etc.)
4	Handcrafts (textiles, art pieces, simple tools)
5	Food production (brewery, butcher, cheesemaker, etc.)
6	Tooled crafts (smithing, masonry, leatherworking, etc.)

Dockside

As soon as his group crossed over to the Outer City's stink and clamor, Faerin dispatched a scout to go ahead of them, as they waited along the crowded docks of the west bank of the Kolobus for the rest of the guard to catch up.

– Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

Dockside is a unique region, crossing the Inner and Outer City, old and new construction, as it hugs the Kolobus River. The fastest-growing neighborhood in Redoubt, it has yet to be assigned a district authority. In the beginning, this was because its expansion surprised the Magisterium. Now, ironically, the area is too important to be peacefully assigned a proper administration. Anyone selected to manage it would become the enemy of every excluded power bloc. Redoubt lets Dockside take care of itself. It sends Watch patrols and enforces vital laws, but to take anyone to court or enforce a contract, you must either go elsewhere, or convince locals you've been unfairly treated and they should back you up with boycotts and beatings by the river.

Upriver, Downriver

In Dockside, social status depends on how far upriver you live. A handful of new, large estates, built from disassembled dwarven stonework, look over the river and up at Southgate. These were built for newly wealthy merchants: former Southside workers who, after decades of hard work and no small amount of luck, made their fortunes. These small mansions are gaudily painted; they and their owners are hated by the aristocracy and working people alike.

Further downriver, apartments, inns, and businesses of all kinds ignore any sensible urban planning. The dwarves built a few communal barracks here before the Fall, which have been expanded into apartment blocks. These are often adjacent to their inhabitants' workplaces, most of which involve the river in some capacity.

The further downriver you go, the worse the water gets. While laws against polluting the Kolobus date to the earliest days after the Fall, illegal dumping and unavoidable runoff befoul it. Dockside's water already suffers by virtue of being south of the Inner City, and as these laws are poorly enforced in the neighborhood itself, it only gets worse further downstream. Water diverted to crops doesn't need to be particularly clean, and anyone can take a chance with a sip from the river, but more cautious residents mix it with alcohol or buy it boiled. Disease-free water typically costs 1 cp to meet the needs of one person for one day.

Fishing is constant, with people scattered all along the banks, often arguing or even fighting over a choice spot. Fish caught farther north—and therefore subject to less garbage and filth—are prized, not only considered healthier to eat but able to fetch a higher price at market. Even the fish caught far south are edible, though, and only vaguely likely to carry something contagious or sickening.

Of course, the fish in the river may well come from beyond the walls. (Grates in those walls allow the Kolobus to pass while keeping out anything even close to human size.) Thus far, nobody has ever encountered a Dead fish, but the fear of such is enough to keep most anglers wary, constantly examining their catch. For all that, fish is a regular diet for the inhabitants not only of Dockside, but many of the adjacent neighborhoods in other districts as well.

The Farmers' Market

Dockside is where the fields meet the city, so Redoubt's Farmers' Market can be found here. It stands on the west side of the river, across from the so-called Bread Field, which grows high-quality wheat (a rare crop) for the Inner City's bakers. Farmers bring their crops here for distribution throughout the city. The Watch has a strong presence here; food distribution is not an area where the city's inclined to cut Dockside its customary slack. Farmers pay their fosters—a tax out of their crops—and sell whatever remains. The primary customers are local workers and servants from the Old City.

A significant amount of cash changes hands, so the Iron Moon is conspicuously present, sharing territory and "informal authority" with the water-seller families (see page 233). In exchange for protection dues, the Nightcoats guard the Market from thieves. The Iron Moon is uncommonly generous with its terms, because its bosses aren't stupid enough to hinder food distribution. The Watch wouldn't tolerate it, and besides, food riots and starvation may drive short-term profits for some, but in the end, everyone loses.

The Meat Authority

From its nondescript one-story building in the middle of Dockside, the Meat Authority prospers. It doesn't have much political clout, but by controlling the rarest foodstuffs in the city, it enjoys wealth and petty influence in the aristocracy.

The Authority has three functions. First, it trains butchers. While there's little demand for the trade due to the rarity of high-quality meat, those few professionals who do succeed are paid extremely well. The Authority trains five apprentices at a time, graduating no more than one or two a year.

Second, the Meat Authority controls the trade in any meat other than vermin and small working animals, such as cats or dogs. Livestock is an inefficient use of resources, so its scale is curtailed. The Authority allows farmers to raise small numbers of ducks and chickens but keeps its own cattle and pigs, which are slaughtered for exorbitant prices.

Third, the Authority shuts down the illegal meat trade. It's against the law for private individuals to keep pigs, cattle, or fowl without proper permissions and registration. The eating

of horseflesh is also illegal without special permits, which sometimes irks the Venmir, who regard it as a traditional foodstuff for their nobles. On more than one occasion, Authority agents have uncovered cannibal rings—and undead who rose from these attempts to harvest human flesh.

The Rafting Guild

Despite poverty's tendency to flow downriver in Dockside, the Rafting Guild (also called the Rafters) defies this with its docks, warehouses, and guild house at the south end of the neighborhood. The Guild doesn't have a monopoly on river transport, and it doesn't want one. It just does the best job of it, with superior boats and barges. As lumber is hard to come by, even a small raft represents a significant investment. The Rafters have an unassailable advantage, acquired by forebears who stockpiled logs they found sunken in the Kolobus, and paid Foresters for portions of the first tree harvests after the Fall.

Although lumber distribution is tightly regulated, the guild continues to stockpile it. Shipping now represents little more than half the Rafting Guild's income. The rest comes from lumber sales and carpentry of all kinds. "Rafters" raise wood-framed buildings, patch carts, and construct additions to dwarven stone buildings throughout the city. The fact that the guild dominates river transport goes hand in hand with the lumber and carpentry trades, since it costs nothing for the guild to move its own people and supplies across town.

The guild's expanded business has generated resentment among carpenters, woodworkers, and teamsters, all of whom possess their own guilds which have been unable to enforce their monopolies. The Magisterium asserts the Rafters may do business which "naturally extends" from river transport, and should be permitted latitude for giving up their own monopoly. It's only a matter of time until some offended guildmaster steps outside the law for relief.

The Southern Ludus

North of the Bread Field and Farmers' Market, the Southern Ludus (which Crown of Blood members call "the Dockpit") looms. The huge domed building is a testament to the slavers' wealth, as it's newly made of repurposed dwarven stone. The Crown of Blood's wealthiest (and by guild rules, most influential) Lanista guildmaster maintains offices here. The Lanista's Proxy (a slave who represents the Lanista; see "The Crown of Blood" in **Chapter III: Life in Redoubt**) handles day-to-day business, as his master is too wealthy to set foot in Dockside except on special occasions or for the guild's annual general meetings. These occur across three days in midsummer, when the guild votes on major policy matters and holds its largest auction to balance out its stock. The general meeting also produces the city's greatest gladiatorial games. The whole affair intensifies business throughout Dockside. Slave traders and customers assemble in numbers. Gamblers bet on the games. Bodyguards pursue their pleasures when they're not protecting Crown of Blood officials. Since slavers are despised by exactly the sort of people who live in Dockside, the Watch can be found alongside such sellswords, just in case anti-slavery partisans cause trouble.

The Outer City

Redoubt's Outer City is a contradiction, showcasing both the deepest depths of squalor and the most lush remnants of outside life as it once was. Beyond the Newtown slums stretch the open farms that keep Redoubt alive despite the death surrounding it. From extremes of rural beauty to urban filth, the Outer City showcases Redoubt's greatest prides and shames.

Newtown West

And when an Ouazí living in the Inner City is banished from it, that person can simply move to Newtown or Aurib-Naa. But when someone already living in Newtown is banished, there is no option left save…

– C.A. Suleiman, "The Sense of Exile"

Of primary concern to the residents of Newtown West—or simply "Newtown," as most call it—is that their home is not the Downs. The impoverished, lower-class Newtown inhabitants cling to what little pride they can drum up in their circumstances, and that often amounts to an obsessive preoccupation with how much better they are than those condemned to a life in Newtown East.

While meager and simple, crafted from the worst of slowly collapsing materials, Newtown West homes tend to be ferociously clean and meticulously decorated (with worn, patched, and cheaply homemade décor). Families are fiercely insular, with strict social mores and unshakable loyalties.

The Wall and the Farms

Unlike the city inside the inner wall, wherein the oldest structures are frequently the nicest, building materials in Newtown West are often the wood and brick left over from the demolition of wealthier establishments. Thus, older buildings are most likely to be rotting or crumbling. In Newtown, the most recently built homes are the most conducive to semi-comfortable living, and these are found furthest from the inner wall and Inner City.

When emerging from the Inner City, therefore, the first part of Newtown West that one sees is the shabbiest—still proud and clean, as the residents pull together to put forward as brave a front as possible, but dilapidated and sagging. Here the most destitute of Redoubt's neat and proper poor struggle to raise their heads beneath the weight of their neighbors' judgment. Those who fail to pass muster are sometimes run out of the neighborhood, left with nowhere to turn but the Downs.

The nicest part of Newtown West is everything with convenient access to the river. Although residences here remain tiny and simply built, they tend toward good repair and are "cozy" rather than "cramped," at least by overpopulated Redoubt standards. The air near the farms is the best in all of Redoubt, so outer Newtown West residents are often healthier and more vigorous than residents of other parts of Newtown, despite their poverty. Even wearing patched garments stitched from castoff fabrics, these least-poor-of-the-destitute almost appear to come from somewhere other than the slums.

Outer Newtown homes often house farm workers, many of whom have picked up the skills to grow miniature gardens on rooftops or in windowsills to supplement the family's nutrition. Between healthier meals, healthy air, and ready access to water, the outer neighborhoods of Newtown West convince themselves that they are superior not just to other poor folks, but to any other residents of Redoubt—in moral character as judged by the gods, if not in wealth or power.

The Neighborhoods

Newtown neighborhoods can be remarkably different from one another, despite the fact that all are poor, cramped, and under-policed. The Newtown slums are where the diverse unwanted of the world's last city must live crammed in side by side, and many deal with the challenges involved by huddling together with their own kind. This forms a patchwork city-within-the-city, each patch thinly stitched together at the edges by the comings and goings of laborers, water-sellers, and those merchants who find themselves forced to do business in Newtown. Here are a few of the largest and most noteworthy Newtown West neighborhoods.

Dwarf Hill

Dwarves are among the most likely to find themselves pushed into the slums of Redoubt. Dwarf Hill, a clustered warren of brick and stone in Newtown West, has the highest proportion of free dwarf inhabitants in the city. They are scrupulously polite to their neighbors in surrounding regions, but they discourage non-dwarves from spending much time in Dwarf Hill, and are said to have their own system of governance and law enforcement within. Justice is indeed swift and merciless there, but no Dwarf Hill dwarf speaks to outsiders about the leaders of the Dwarf Hill neighborhood.

Rumor has it that free laborers in Dwarf Hill contribute to a communal pool, and that every time they accumulate sufficient funds, they buy and free a dwarf slave. Some rumors attribute this to altruism and the dwarven penchant for freeing their brethren. Others, however, claim that those "freed" only find themselves indebted to a far-reaching criminal organization, trading one form of slavery for another.

Similar rumors suggest that Dwarf Hill boasts substantial connections to the Undercity, and that their leaders have ties to the Elldimun (see "The Schismatics" in **Chapter III: Life in Redoubt**).

Water-Sellers

The biggest difference between Newtown West (Newtown) and Newtown East (the Downs) is access to water from the Kolobus river. The west bank of the river is simply easier to traverse than the east, and thus Newtown West residents—though they only have access to the flow that has already traveled through the Inner City—do have plenty of water for cooking, washing, crafting, and keeping tiny gardens. However, not everyone can spend all day carting water back and forth, and strict water usage rules exist to ensure that the water that reaches the farms south of Newtown is sufficiently clean and plentiful for the city's food production.

Over time, this combination of necessities has given rise to the water-sellers: a handful of semi-licensed individuals who draw water from the northernmost Outer City reaches of the river, and hire workers to transport it throughout Newtown. The water-sellers are not skilled or educated folk, but with so much control over the Newtown water supply, they have grown into a miniature oligarchy of unofficial governance. Water-seller families hold little power in the rest of the city, but within Newtown West, the heads of these families serve as something between gang lords and a city council. They tend to be almost as wealthy as an average Inner City merchant, though less socially graceful.

Bluehawk: The Bluehawk family makes much of their Venmir lineage, though little evidence of this shows in their appearance. They are typical mixed-heritage humans of low-birth Redoubt origin, with a family tradition of aping (or inventing) "ancient Venmir" cultural traditions. The Bluehawks have a longstanding feud with the Selarans. The current Bluehawk matriarch is River Bluehawk, who does divination work on the side. (Whether her "divinations" are the real deal or purely cold reading and con artistry depends on who one listens to.)

Grovest: The Grovests are the most gang-like of the water-seller families, valuing brute strength and intimidation. Though they keep their Newtown West operations generally above-board, they are rumored to have dealings with the Iron Moon and the black market. Their current matriarch is Tarella Grovest, a giant woman of improbable strength and rumored temper.

Morel: The Morels are the newest water-seller family, descended from a farmer who made a fortune from private land before the city confiscated it for public food production. The Morels lost everything fighting the confiscation, save for just enough to buy their way into the Newtown West water-selling trade. The current patriarch, Daven Morel, is a bitter man who fancies himself educated because he has read a few books. He tries to pretend that he is an aristocrat, despite much evidence to the contrary.

Selaran: The Selarans describe themselves as a bloodline of mystics native to this land since before even the dwarves arrived. They claim a spiritual connection to water and to the Kolobus river in specific. In fact, their familial appearance is somewhat Menhadan, and as poor commoners, they possess no documentation of ancestry or origins. The current matriarch, Veli Selaran, is a shrewd and unpretentious businesswoman, with little time for her family's stories. The Selarans have a longstanding rivalry with the Bluehawks.

Vaareyn: Though they never speak of it, the Vaareyn family appear to be mostly Ouazi in heritage, and rumors of disgrace within what remains of Ouazi culture cling to the family in persistent whispers. Though outwardly more civilized than the Grovests, the Vaareyns are said to have more extensive black market connections than any other water-seller family. The current patriarch is Pol Vaareyn, a man of many connections that stretch even beyond the borders of Newtown.

The Lots

On the south side of Newtown West, a series of steep cliffs and gravel slides separate the Newtown slums from the farmlands. In some places, these have been carved into pathways so laborers can hike to the fields below, but in others, especially where the cliffs are steepest, the dividing line between Newtown and the farms has been taken over by industry of a sort. The Lots is one of these miniature manufacturing areas and the best known, because the Lots is where all the most dangerous, toxic, and foul-smelling crafts ply their trades. Here are the tanners and slaughterhouses, the lower-class alchemists and copper or bronze smelters, and the dung-collectors and compost pits, among others.

Wind patterns in the city are such that the fumes and stench don't spread too far into surrounding neighborhoods or the farms below, but the Lots themselves are a miserable location to be employed or enslaved, and the nearest residences to the Lots suffer the worst squalor and criminal activity of all Newtown West, in part because neither official nor unofficial law enforcement want to come near the place. Businesses operating in the Lots tend to employ (or purchase) a number of security personnel.

Nobtown

No one remembers why this neighborhood is called Nobtown, whether the name was always ironic or whether it has some forgotten history or pun to explain it, but the

appellation has certainly become ironic over time. Located in the north of Newtown West, hugging the inner wall and not far from Milijun's Dune, is a shabby, crumbling neighborhood known primarily as the territory of the Grovest family. (See the "Water-Sellers" sidebar.)

While most Newtown West neighborhoods are controlled to some extent by one water-seller family or other, usually one doesn't notice "family" influence unless one steps out of line. Not so in Nobtown, where everyone pays rent to the Grovests, and the rent demanded may include all manner of interesting trade.

Required services might be as exotic as a smuggling run between Newtown West and the Downs, taking a shift in the family's illegal brothels, or in extreme cases taking the fall for a Grovest family crime. Because of such bullying and extortion, an air of furtive anxiety hovers about the Nobtown residents, and an unusually high turnover rate affects one's neighbors. Those who can help it don't stay here long, and for those who can't go elsewhere, it's a shorter than usual drop from here to the Downs or to punitive indenture. For that reason, other than residents with inside connections to the Grovests themselves, there is little sense of community in Nobtown, perhaps less so than anywhere else in Newtown West.

Riverfront

The Riverfront neighborhood isn't really that close to the river at all. It is, however, closer to the river and to the farms than most of Newtown, and is certainly the newest and nicest neighborhood in the district. Each of the major water-seller families owns a block or two here, and all run their businesses from this region. Riverfront is always clean and crime-free, and those who dare behave otherwise hear from the water-seller families with due swiftness. While tensions always boil beneath the surface here, in Riverfront everyone plays nice or faces dire consequences.

Mud Magisterium

Everyone knows better than to mention the "Mud Magisterium" in front of actual nobility or law enforcement, as it is the term most Newtowners use for both the crude government of Newtown West and for whatever vaguely prettied-up "Riverfront" warehouse (also known colloquially

Newtown Adventure Hooks

A hothead from a water-seller family has overstepped legal bounds in a way that the authorities cannot ignore. The player characters are hired to wade into Newtown West and punish the brat enough to make a warning and an example of him, but *without* triggering a full-scale response from the united water-seller families.

An unsafe tannery has collapsed, trapping the workers inside and damaging a neighboring slaughterhouse such that frightened animals are released into the streets. Before the trapped workers can be rescued, an outbreak of the Dead erupts and threatens to spread throughout the Lots neighborhood. The tannery proprietors (or a water-seller family) hire the party to clean up before city officials take notice.

Dwarven laborers are disappearing throughout Newtown West and the farms, and the Dwarf Hill neighborhood has grown cagier than usual, even belligerent toward outsiders. Rumor spreads of occult forces at work, and a noble family from the Inner City claims several of their slaves ran off with a long-sealed treasure chest from before the world's fall. The family doesn't want to talk about what might have been inside the chest, but they grow nervous if the goings on in Dwarf Hill are mentioned.

as the Newtown Courthouse) said "government" unofficially conducts its current business from.

The Mud Magisterium consists of the heads of the most powerful water-seller families, their appointed assistants, and any muscle they've hired. The family heads serve as a rough city council and supreme court for maintaining order in Newtown West.

It is worth noting that the Mud Magisterium's existence is technically against the actual Magisterium's laws and edicts, as their power over the entire district goes beyond the sorts of "neighborhood fiefdoms" the Magisterium is normally inclined to tolerate. While the effort and resources it would take to break the water-sellers' hold on Newtown West aren't worth the gain, the eyes of the White Citadel are constantly on the lookout for anyone to step too far out of line. The Mud Magisterium is therefore, strictly speaking, an organized crime syndicate (though they always speak of themselves as upstanding merchants), and thus must operate with discretion and appropriate bribes. The precise location of the "Newtown Courthouse" changes from time to time. The Mud Magisterium's "justice" is wildly unfair, and brutal toward anyone who upsets the appearance of downtrodden propriety to which Newtown West doggedly clings.

Newtown's pseudo-government enjoys varying popularity with local inhabitants. Some see them as a necessity, or "at least better than those Hoodsmen," while others would like to see them all arrested and jailed for abuses of power. Thus far, the Mud Magisterium has maintained its careful balancing act with (and lavish bribes and favors toward) the real authorities. They also make no attempt to exert influence within the Dwarf Hill neighborhood—at least not overtly.

The Downs

Even Haluk's offer of slavery wasn't the worst of it. Elzbieta had seen men and women in the Downs so fraught that they accepted far darker fates in the hopes of keeping themselves or their families alive for a few days more.

– James Lowder, "The Treachery of Bright Yesterdays"

It sits huddled where the Inner City wall meets the outer wall of Redoubt, like a pile of dirt and refuse swept carelessly into the corner. It is the newest of the city's proper districts, and far and away the most miserable: poor, crime-ridden, overcrowded, and filthy. In Redoubt's records and Magisterium dictates, it is Newtown East, but to everyone in the city, it is and always will be the Downs.

In a city already overcrowded, the Downs are packed even more tightly. In a culture of widespread poverty, the neighborhoods and people of the Downs are the poorest. And in an environment riddled with crime, the Downs are the most heavily victimized. The Watch is practically nonexistent. Several of the neighborhoods here are literally ruled as mini-fiefdoms by local criminal gangs or by the Iron Moon. The district is the worst of the worst; dreary, miserable, even nightmarish. To many of the inhabitants of the Inner City, the Downs are little better than the Dead-ridden world outside the walls, and banishment to Newtown East means being sentenced to a literal living hell.

And yet, even here, people find a way. For every citizen beaten down by the relentless poverty and want, there's another who takes pride in her work, in cooperating with her neighbors to grow a little extra food or weave a few extra blankets for those who need them, in the friendships and daily rituals of her neighborhood. There is joy and beauty to be found even in the Downs—if one has the patience and the fortitude to dig for it.

Empty Promises

If there is any single universal truth of the rich and powerful, it is this: They will fight tooth and nail, with a viciousness unmatched even by most who have known only poverty, to *remain* rich and powerful. Luxury becomes necessity; privileges become rights.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the neighborhood that has become known as Empty Promises, a portion of the Downs that is all the darker for the shine it boasted, oh so briefly, before it became tarnished.

It was here that the earliest of the wealthy who were banished to the Outer City first gathered. Using what funds and resources they were able to bring with them—far less than they were accustomed to, but a fortune in the Downs—they determined to build for themselves a facsimile of what they lost. They paid to take over entire tenements, kicking former occupants onto the streets; to link smaller structures into larger ones; and even to construct entire new homes, echoes of the manors they once possessed.

Through both legal merchants and smugglers, they acquired everything from fancy clothing to quality furniture, paints for their homes and artwork for their chambers, fresh foods and fine wines. And, of course, men and women of skill to guard it all. For a brief time, this one portion of Newtown East shone gaudily bright.

And then they were (metaphorically) eaten alive.

These foolish aristocrats had known they were painting themselves as targets—that's why they hired protection—but they never dreamed to what extent the people around them, driven by need and want and sheer resentment, would react. Houses weren't just burgled, but burnt down. Shipments of goods were hijacked. The rich were robbed, beaten by mobs, and occasionally even lynched. Sometimes the guards simply proved insufficient; at other times, the wealthy found themselves abandoned by mercenaries who realized they could get far less dangerous and better paying work back north.

But above all else, the money simply ran out. None of the banished aristocrats had access to families or businesses left behind, and keeping themselves both safe and well stocked in the Downs proved far more costly than they had ever expected.

Today, the neighborhood now known as Empty Promises stands as a testament to either the foolishness of the rich or to the savagery and depravity of the district, depending on who's speaking. It's still one of the nicer areas of the Downs, with slightly larger living quarters, slightly nicer construction, and occasional luxuries for sale if one doesn't care to ask where they came from or how many times

The Downs Adventure Hooks

A group of children, spurred on by the dares of friends and youthful indiscretion, have disappeared into the fenced-off portion of Tidewater. The local Watch aren't willing to break protocol and allow anyone to go in after them—not that many have volunteered to try.

A small group of smugglers has found a new route—perhaps a narrow breach in the wall or a small offshoot of an Undercity passage—for passing stolen or illegal goods from the Inner City to the Downs. So far, they've been hiring themselves out to the Bent Nail and other local gangs, as well as the Iron Moon, but many of the locals want exclusive access. A gang war is brewing in the Downs, and a lot of innocent people may be caught in the middle. Meanwhile, the rich of the Inner City want the Watch to shut down this new operation, lest items stolen from them become lost forever in the Downs. The Watch intends to do just that, but many of them don't see a lot of difference between the criminals they hunt and the other downtrodden folks of the Downs.

A killer is stalking the streets of the Downs, striking with swift, precise violence. Already ten people have fallen to the murderer's blade, with no sign of how or why particular targets are chosen. Each victim has been not only slain but mutilated at the major joints and left in public view, suggesting that the killer doesn't wish for them to rise as undead. All efforts at finding this killer have failed. A single witness, who saw one of the murders from across the road in a darkened alley, suggests that the killer is elven, with his or her face hidden behind a mask of browned and cracking leaves. Recently, the deaths have expanded beyond the borders of the Downs, and while outside attention might draw more people and resources to hunt for this serial murderer, the people of the district are almost as afraid of a sudden influx of the authorities as they are the criminal him- or herself.

they've been stolen. But "nice for the Downs" is a low bar to hurdle, and poverty and crime run as rampant here as anywhere else. Most of the aristocrats who were part of the initial attempt to gentrify the neighborhood have since died, and the bulk of those who survive—or their offspring—make a concerted effort to blend in. If they retain any opulence at all, they hide their luxuries behind walls as rundown and filthy as anyone else's, hoping to avoid the attentions of those who would, for spite or simply for sheer need, take from them the last vestiges of their former lives.

Kingdom of the Nail

The neighborhood once named Niall's Bend has become the epitome of all the terrible truths and stereotypes of the Downs. It has become its own fiefdom in nearly all respects that matter, ruled by one of the most brutal of the city's independent criminal gangs. The people dwelling within what is now known as the Kingdom of the Nail pay tithes and taxes, pay homage—however unwillingly—to their criminal sovereigns, and generally live a subdued, fearful existence. Those who live on neighboring streets have come to accept the occasional organized robberies and raids as an unavoidable fact of life, and some have taken to simply paying off the "Kingdom's" forces on a regular basis as a form of protection.

And yet, for those who are willing to follow the laws and accede to the occasional violent whims of the ruling gang, the Kingdom of the Nail actually proves a safer neighborhood than many other regions of the downs. Random street crime is relatively uncommon, here; while the Watch rarely sets foot within the Kingdom's boundaries, the gang's own patrols—not merely on the street but flitting from shadow to shadow in alleys and on rooftops—ensure that nobody else causes trouble for "their" people.

The Bent Nail

The gang called the Bent Nail are the unchallenged masters of the neighborhood, running it as their own miniature province. It was they, in naming themselves, who first made the verbal play on "Niall," changing it to "Nail," and it was because of their takeover that the neighborhood itself followed the new naming convention.

The Bent Nail are unaffiliated with the Iron Moon, and are said to be among the largest of Redoubt's gangs who can make that claim. They are swift to resort to violence to achieve their ends, and are equally comfortable using a squad of brutal leg-breakers in broad daylight or a night-clad assassin, as the situation warrants.

The current leaders of the Bent Nail, and the de facto rulers of the Kingdom of the Nail, are "King" Ualkr of the Venmir and "Queen" Anaxsti of the Menhada. Ualkr is well respected and feared as a brutal warrior and tactician and serves as the face and voice of the Bent Nail, but it's an open secret that his intelligent and far-thinking wife is the true brains of the current operation.

Potter's Row

Just another rundown, decrepit neighborhood in the Downs, Potter's Row stands out among all the others for only two closely-related reasons, beyond the fact that it does indeed host members of the Potters' Guild. First, it boasts the highest dwarf population of anywhere in Newtown East. Second, it is the birthplace and home territory of the criminal gang known as Potter's Field.

Potter's Field

Potter's Field is an all-dwarf gang, one that has been in operation since the founding of the Downs. (One might even argue that they've been active longer, for while Potter's Field didn't formally exist prior to that point, several of their founders were engaged in criminal enterprises long

before Redoubt expanded beyond the Inner City.) Although an independent entity, Potter's Field does maintain some contacts with the Iron Moon, though it's suspected that they do so in order to keep the Iron Moon out of their territory. Rumors further suggest that the gang's dwarven founders and Karzhaddi, the Intendant of the Iron Moon, once ran together, but the truth of said rumors is anyone's guess.

The members of Potter's Field celebrate their dwarven identity by incorporating ancient dwarven culture and traditions into their organization's own practices. Or rather, they incorporate their own understanding of those cultures and traditions. Disputes are settled in formal trials-by-combat, as they believe their ancestors once did. Fragments of dwarven lore, their context lost to history, function as passwords and code phrases, and the Potters recite broken segments of old dwarven funerary rites over the bodies of their dead. It's worth one's life to point out to the members of Potter's Field when their understanding of the old ways is flawed and incomplete. If one can carefully broach the topic without causing insult, however, the gang is often willing to provide information or riches—even to the point of breaking a contract with someone else, the only time they're willing to do so—in exchange for relics or information of significance to dwarven history.

Saltyard

The Saltyard neighborhood is the home of Saltyard Precinct, the only full-sized and fully staffed Watch precinct in the entirety of the Downs. It is from here that the vastly insufficient Watch patrols work to protect what sections of Newtown East they're even willing to enter.

A good portion of the Saltyard Watch is assigned not to random patrols at all, but to standing guard over Tidewater, and in fact Saltyard was chosen as the site for the precinct precisely because it has easy access to that neighboring area.

Captain Ioltzu, the Angat commander of Saltyard Precinct, is a bitter, resentful man who would rather have just about any other station, and is far more interested in getting out or in flexing his muscles than in solving genuine problems.

Tidewater

Given the misery, the want, and the many dangers of the district, it would seem difficult to select a single "worst" neighborhood of the Downs—and yet, if asked, the vast majority of people would answer Tidewater without hesitation. The neighborhood isn't feared for those who live here, for indeed no one does, but rather for what happened here years ago.

It was here in Tidewater that the dreaded Jepourah Schism was born, here where that peculiar cult developed and grew, and here where their dark beliefs and unholy practices first spread. By the time the sect was too large and their practices too widespread to remain here, by the time they were moved to their walled compound far to the south, it was too late to save what remained of the neighborhood. Those who had not already fled soon did so, chased away by abnormal numbers of the Dead, strange hauntings, mysterious disappearances, and soul-scarring nightmares.

Today, the part of Tidewater that gave birth to the Jepourah is fully off limits—no small thing, given the crowded conditions of the city in general and the district in particular. Keeping anyone from entering this tainted neighborhood is one of the few duties the Watch takes seriously in the Downs. Streets have been fenced off and regular patrols guard those entryways, though it's not too difficult for determined individuals to avoid those guards with a modicum of effort. A few dare try, enticed by rumors of treasures left behind by the Jepourah or to be unearthed from the many entries to the Undercity said to lie hidden within. Most who make the attempt find nothing; those are the lucky ones. Some never return at all.

Tidewater entire boasts several virulent domains of Woe (page 256), resulting not only in more frequent undead but in a number of even stranger horrors, from spectral hauntings to entities drawn through where the barriers between worlds have cracked open.

The Farms

He passes through many tracts of farmland, each one regulated to ensure steady food production for the city's hundreds of thousands of souls, with the wind in his hair and the sound of clopping hooves comforting him from somewhere down below.

– C.A. Suleiman, "The Sense of Exile"

These are the world's last crops. Here the food of all remaining civilization is grown. The farms are the life, the breath, the very beating heart of Redoubt. Fields of green, gold, and rich dark brown stretch for miles across the all-too-small expanse between Redoubt's inner and outer walls, on either side of the Kolobus River that is Redoubt's arterial blood. The farms are the treasure that allows Redoubt to survive the endless siege of the dead. They are the fuel that feeds the final, guttering spark of hope in the world.

With that in mind, the farms are among the most tightly regulated areas of Redoubt. Free and open as they appear at first glance, with healthy crops rustling in the breeze, on closer inspection one sees that guards patrol the fields constantly, protecting the city's food staples like grains and long-lasting root crops. Farm patrol is one of the most prestigious of low-wage labor positions in Redoubt, despite the fact that the work invites constant close scrutiny from law enforcement and that—with plenty of other folk clamoring for the position—workers are likely to be dismissed for even the smallest of infractions.

Little of the land in the Farms is privately owned, and even that portion is generally pressured by the government to allow exclusively staple food crops to be grown on the land. Much of the farmland in Redoubt, however, is privately *farmed*, and a farmer able to hang on to farming rights over many years can grow as wealthy as an inner city merchant on food crops alone. This is rare, however, as hanging on to said planting rights is a difficult and highly competitive process, and simple bad luck—such as having a bad year or being targeted by vandalism—can cause the land's owners to choose a different farmer next year. In those rare cases of private land ownership, one's land may be confiscated by the city if one farms it too well (making it appear to be an especially high-yield plot), or if evidence surfaces that one is farming poorly. Holding on to land can be a delicate balance of farming "just well enough."

While most of Redoubt's farms consist of wide-open fields or neatly tended orchards, with rare tiny flocks grazing under close observation, a few regions do stand out as different from the rest.

The Livery Collective

Just outside the Southgate near the inner wall lies the Livery Collective, the largest gathering of horses in Redoubt. The Livery Collective was founded by early Menhada immigrants to Redoubt, and has remained within Menhada families ever since. Here is where riding animals and beasts of burden can be hired by the day, usually by those who need to venture into the farms for business or other duties. (These horses tend to be neither as powerful nor nearly as well trained as the smaller population kept and bred for the Foresters, and few if any will ever see the wilds outside the city.)

Those borrowing an animal can pay in coin, weights of grain, or hours of labor, such as mucking out stalls and distributing feed. On average, one hour's labor hires a beast for up to four hours. All animals in the collective are available to all comers, though the strongest working beasts must be reserved for months in advance during planting and harvest season. Riding reservations are rarely accepted, and all riding animals are first-come-first-served, though the nicest riding horses are somewhat more expensive to hire.

The Livery Collective does not sell its healthy, able horses, save in rare circumstances when many mares foal at once and the collective runs out of space. In such an instance, the collective sells only to buyers whom they believe are willing and able to give the animal proper care and training. (They prefer to sell to the Foresters, but few of their horses make the cut.) With such a small population of surviving horses in the city, those running the collective are loath to allow any to leave the breeding pool. Only elderly or sickly animals are generally allowed to go to slaughter.

Milijun's Dune

In the far north of the farmland region, nestled between the river and the western outer wall, lies one of Redoubt's strangest "everyday norms." Milijun's Dune is a sizeable "park" of sorts, centered around a large and gently rolling hill, and it belongs entirely to the ghûl. Here they gather as their complex traditions decree they should to engage in the ancient rite of their people: the eating of the dead.

To those who first enter the area, Milijun's Dune seems like a pretty little park, with neatly raked sand and even a few of the city's rare non-food plants. The plants, however, exist in part to diminish the stench of death that wafts from the simple structures in the rear of the area.

It is to these structures that the meat of occasional corpses who perished by famine, accident, or disease is brought and deposited for ritual consumption and disposal.

Due to their various duties in the city—for many ghûl are slaves—rites are held periodically throughout the day and night most every day of the year. Because they come at different times of day, the gatherings are rarely large, but the park is also rarely empty of visiting ghûl. Indeed, the ghûl visit so often that the meat brought to them never has time to rot; another reason the stench rarely seeps out of the area.

Ghûl do not lightly welcome non-ghûl visitors to Milijun's Dune, and few non-ghûl have ever seen the rituals they perform here.

The Kolobus River

Snaking its way through the farms, the Kolobus river travels all the way through Redoubt, from the ancient stones of the Old City to the River Gate in the southernmost outer wall, and beyond. Named for the dwarf king who brought his people to the surface, the Kolobus is fast-moving throughout its flow and lends its own strength to keeping itself as clean as could be expected for a river in the midst of a large city.

Such a swift, narrow, and—in some places—shallow flow, however, does increase the dangers of both drawing water and river transport. Thus, all along the banks, the folk of Redoubt have constructed what ramps, docks, and water wheels they can afford in order to balance maximum river usage with minimum sullying of the water supply.

Construction near the river is regulated with extreme care and precision, both to avoid bank erosion and flow obstruction and to keep from contaminating the river. All construction within 500 paces of the banks must go through a lengthy and expensive permit process, and flocks can never be grazed within the same distance from the water.

Stalwart Mill

Near the southern quarter of the Kolobus' journey through Redoubt lies the largest of the city's grain mills, a massive river-powered structure that connects to a water-gathering wheel below it, to aid in irrigation throughout the farms. This is the final major water-harvesting point before the river leaves Redoubt. It's also, in transportation to and from the mill, one of the points at which the grain supply is most vulnerable to tampering or theft. Thus, the Stalwart Mill has become the single most heavily guarded location in the farms, complete with fully armed militia patrolling at all hours.

South of the Stalwart Mill, the river is less carefully guarded. A certain amount of controlled garbage-dumping is even permitted, so long as it doesn't impede the flow or threaten the water supply for the final stretches of farmland. This rule can be inconvenient for the Jepourah compound and for Aurib-Naa, but both communities can gather drinking water from the Mill, and the flow south of the Mill is still clean enough that it can be purified for bathing and most crafts. Truly toxic pollutants can only legally be disposed of at the southern River Gate or outside the walls of the city.

The Farms Adventure Hooks

One of the fields has died overnight. None of the guards saw anything amiss. It's not too late in the year to replant, but before the farmers can take that step, they need to be sure this won't happen again. Farming expertise is yielding no answers, and the farmers suspect foul play, perhaps of a terrifying mystical variety.

A band of adolescents have teamed up to run away from home. They've managed to sneak their way through the Mountain Gate into the woods outside. While most are calling for them to be abandoned to their fate, one has powerful parents willing to do anything to get their child back. Besides, these are little more than children. If any remain alive to be rescued, perhaps they don't deserve to die for their mistake.

The Outer Wall

The outer wall is the final (sometimes only) bulwark between the last bastion of civilization in a dying world and total annihilation. Stout and strong, high and straight, the outer wall is a constant priority for the government of Redoubt. It is patrolled at all times by militia and often by Foresters, and is often being repaired or strengthened where needed. Formed primarily of massive granite blocks, any stout stone is used as needed and available when strengthening or repair are necessary.

The Mountain Gate

The view out the Mountain Gate is a near-pristine expanse of evergreen forest rising up into rolling hills. Occasional signs of former human settlement are visible, and dwarven as well if one knows where to look, but all are dwindling in their abandonment, as nature wastes no time in swallowing up the past. Trees and hills make for poor visibility, and the Dead can lurk anywhere at any time. But those same trees and hills do make for good hunting, so the Foresters brave the Mountain Gate more often than any other city exit.

Trees that grow close to the wall, endangering the city's security, are harvested for lumber.

The River Gate

The River Gate is the least pleasant of the three outer gates. The garbage chute at the River Gate is the only place along the Kolobus river where toxic or foul garbage may be legally dumped, as well as an accumulation point of all the lesser soil and detritus dumped upstream, resulting in a permanent dreadful stench. Adding an aura of sorrow, a recent practice has sprung up of sending tiny memorial boats out of the city in honor of departed loved ones. Except by special permit, these may be placed in the water only south of the Stalwart Mill. On some days these little reminders of loss gather at the River Gate in eddying armadas of grief: tiny flakes of junk wood, woven twigs, or

bundled leaves, decorated with whatever the impoverished bereaved can spare to say goodbye.

For all that, the River Gate is one of the safest exits from the city because excursions can ride the river for most of their journey, hardly setting foot in the Dead-haunted forests outside save to haul back a carcass from a successful hunt. Because of the ability to retreat to the river at need, the forest outside the River Gate is the preferred harvesting area for what lumber the city cannot do without.

The Rift Gate

The Rift Gate faces the northwest edge of the great Morgalu Rift, offering an eagle-eye view of surrounding regions as far as the distant horizon. Although considered safer than the Mountain Gate and more pleasant than the River Gate, the Rift Gate is rarely opened, and is most likely to be used for scouting expeditions or other defense-related ventures.

Veridilith, the Ash Farm

Known popularly as the Ash Farm, the headquarters of the Foresters is squat, rounded, and boasts an array of garden terraces inside, forming a massive, multi-layered courtyard. Originally meant to supply food to besieged defenders, these now serve as practice and training grounds for the Foresters to prepare for their forays outside the city. Not only have they been seeded with various plants and trees to mimic wilderness terrain, but each can be sealed off from the rest of Veridilith with heavy gates so that Foresters in training can be genuinely isolated—or even occasionally pitted against captured undead subjects. (For more on Veridilith, see "The Ash Farm" in the "Foresters" entry of **Chapter III: Life in Redoubt**).

Aurib-Naa

Once upon a time, the proud Ouazi ruled the Eternal Sea, a high desert well south of the Stormbreak Mountains. In those days, the Ouazi were semi-nomadic, and if a tribe disagreed with its neighbors—on any point, political, spiritual, or otherwise—the people could pick up and move to another locale, and revisit the issue once heads had cooled.

That freedom is no more, and the remaining Ouazi are, like everyone else, confined within the walls of Redoubt. Nevertheless, the Ouazi cultural instinct when disagreements grow heated is to pick up and move. Thus it was that when the Ouazi spiritual leader, Sultaar Inunwa, made a series of political and cultural adaptations to their new circumstances—involving the taking of four non-Ouazi wives—four of the Ouazi tribal leaders took their tribes and moved away as far as circumstances would permit. In this case, that was the edge of the Outer City, beyond the Farms, nestled in the shadow of the western wall.

Here they formed the camp known as Aurib-Naa, which translates literally as "House of the Moon God." Here stand the last of the world's traditional Ouazi semi-permanent structures, erected in defiance of what these four tribes deem at best to be the sultaar's shallow posturing for political gain, and at worst his deep blasphemy.

In Aurib-Naa, Ouazi tradition is law. No compromises with Redoubt's other cultures are permitted, save where city statute demands it. Clothing is as traditionally made as the fallen world's resources allow, and the same can be said for food, tools, furniture, and housing. Only the Ouazi language is spoken, with rare exception, and outsiders are barred from entry without special permission. White veils are common adornments for men and women both, and much of "daily" life is in fact performed at night in honor of the moons. Perhaps more so than they ever were on the Eternal Sea, the tribes of Aurib-Naa are insular, old-fashioned, and often rigidly purist.

Leadership

In addition to the Sun-Speakers, who are the compound's religious leaders, and the four tribes' chieftains—the *Ilbayt*—Aurib-Naa is governed by the wardens. Each of the four tribes has a warden appointed by the *Ilbayt*, and these wardens together keep law and order within the village, somewhat like sheriffs. In most cases, the warden also serves as judge, though the *Ilbayt* can always veto a warden's sentence.

Each warden is responsible for his own tribe's sub-territory within the village, and also for his own tribe's criminals. In cases where one tribe's mischief-makers cause difficulties on another tribe's turf, the warden for the neighborhood polices the crime and turns the criminals back over to their tribe of origin for punishment. This puts sentencing wardens in a delicate political position within the tribe, as they must cater to the wishes of their own people and *Ilbayt* without offending the tribes who were wronged.

It is said, therefore, that part of a warden's purpose is to be a scapegoat for inter-tribal disagreements, so that when a warden makes a difficult choice in the name of justice, the *Ilbayt* can avoid the consequences by replacing him with someone else. After all, these four Ouazi tribes have nowhere left to move. They have already picked up and left their own people as far as the remaining world will permit. The next time a disagreement occurs, they must find a way to compromise, or die.

Thus far, the *Ilbayt* have kept the village running well and have worked amicably with one another, but when this generation's chieftains are replaced by the next, it remains to be seen how the village of Aurib-Naa will fare.

The Lift Gate

Aurib-Naa has petitioned the city for the right to police their own stretch of the outer wall, and the city has granted their request, grateful to accept any aid they can get. While the three outer wall gates have gatehouses with stairs up to the top of the wall, Aurib-Naa has no gate and no stairs. Instead, the people of Aurib-Naa have built what they call a "lift gate."

The lift gate is a raftlike wooden platform with simple rails and a shedlike roof, connected to a clever system of ropes, pulleys, wheels, and muscle-powered winches. Guards leaving or reporting for duty stand on the platform, while all able-bodied village men (and occasionally some of the broader women) take assigned shifts on the winch-cranks at specified times of day. Usually the cranks need be turned only at the changing of the guard, but if trouble arises that the regular guard compliment can't handle, the crank-turners finish out their shifts sore indeed, cranking load after load of warriors up onto the wall.

Simple as it is, the lift gate is kept in excellent repair. Each shift's four assigned crank-turners also double as guards to make sure that only those who are authorized are allowed up onto the wall. There is no way to get down outside the city, other than free climbing the wall. To leave the city, then, one must generally make use of one of the three proper gates.

The Wall

The area atop the wall, above Aurib-Naa, looks out over the vast forest that lies to the west. While the same can be said of the Mountain Gate, the visibility is better at the Aurib-Naa portion of the wall, sometimes providing valuable intelligence to the city. This lends itself nicely to Ouazi tradition, which has always prized good eyesight in their hunting and fighting techniques.

Down below, other than the area around the lift gate, the wall has become a kind of inner sanctum for the Aurib-Naa community, and outsiders are rarely permitted to walk its length. Whenever possible, the Ouazi of Aurib-Naa even perform their own safety inspections and repairs for their stretch of wall, in order to avoid allowing outsiders near it.

This is due to the fact that the wall in this place has become a kind of holy gallery, where residents post what few works of art, craft, or poetry they have the luxury to create. Sacred story cloths are woven in the old ways, shields or plates painted, and words inscribed in wood or pottery, sharing the culture's grief and sorrow at the dying world and the loss of their home, and also their spiritual insights and rare few joys.

Those visiting the wall sit in silent prayer or meditation, often touching one another's arms or backs in camaraderie, reverently accepting the messages their fellows have to share. Visiting or contributing to the wall is particularly common among families who have recently lost a loved one.

Creative works offered to the wall are usually taken down after a month or so, to be replaced with new offerings. Sometimes a piece stays up longer or is removed sooner, at the request of one of the *Ilbayt*.

The Fire

While every home has a cook fire and every neighborhood a small communal watch fire, Aurib-Naa maintains one large community fire near the center of the village surrounded by three-walled tents, all facing inward. To conserve fuel, the community fire has been built into a structure somewhat akin to a kiln or high-efficiency stove, but the result is the same. It is a place of warmth and light around which Aurib-Naa villagers may always gather.

The community fire is another place in Aurib-Naa where outsiders are rarely permitted. This is where village ceremonies are held on holy days, and where the *Ilbayt* come to address the concerns of the tribal elders. When Aurib-Naa faces a major decision of any sort, all of the *Ilbayt* come to hear the opinions of the community before making their final rulings.

While many rain-cisterns are scattered throughout the village, and though the village has some ability to transport water (albeit sometimes-questionable water this far south of the main city) from the Kolobus River, Aurib-Naa's largest cistern stands near the community fire, to be used exclusively for communal crop irrigation and emergencies.

Respected members of the village take turns tending the fire and keeping watch over the water all the time, which also means that someone is always awake near the fire, no matter the hour. In accordance with ancient Ouazi tradition, this fire-tender is also available to offer advice and comfort for those who cannot sleep, as well as to tell occasional tales, which is why only respected community members are assigned the task.

Aurib-Naa Adventure Hooks

A criminal of Ouazi heritage has slipped away from the authorities and is suspected to have fled across the farms to take shelter in Aurib-Naa. The wardens of Aurib-Naa assert that no such person has requested shelter in the village. For diplomatic reasons, the player characters are asked to investigate the matter and quietly track down the criminal.

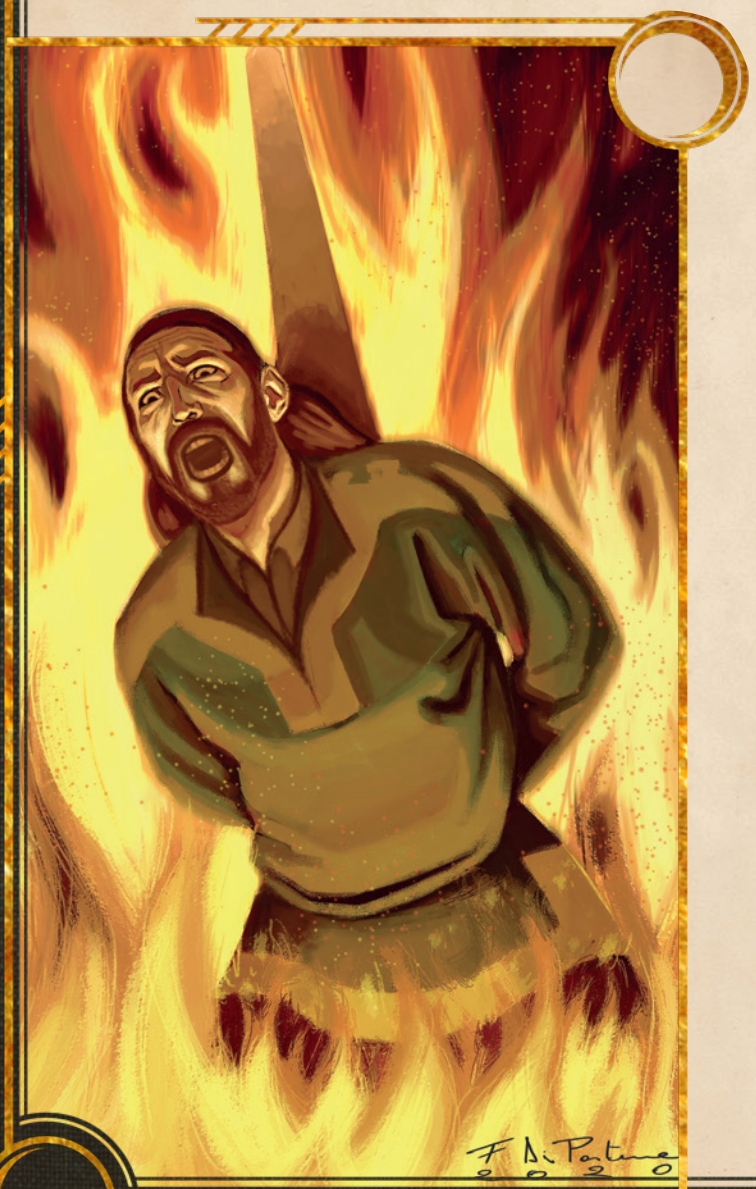
A series of murders has taken place within Aurib-Naa, and after much internal effort, the wardens have all admitted failure in solving the case. Reluctantly and warily, the *Ilbayt* have requested outside help in this matter, but no one in the village is happy to have outsiders investigating their traditional village. The player characters must tread carefully to catch the killer and save the innocent villagers of Aurib-Naa.

After a difficult battle with risen Dead in the southern farms, the party is brought into Aurib-Naa and nursed back to health by passing Ouazi. Just when the party feels well enough to leave, they learn of a terrible plot to sabotage the outer wall. Despite being outsiders, they must find a way to convince the Ouazi of the threat in time to save the city.

The Jepourah Compound

The Jepourah compound is one of two semi-autonomous enclaves within Redoubt's area of control. Formed of religious exiles from the Tidewater neighborhood in the Downs, the compound is a walled section southeast of the city proper, in the shadow of the southeastern outer wall. As a matter of policy, the Magisterium leaves them alone to self-govern so long as they provide the same consideration to the rest of the city. This is a necessary compromise given the fanaticism of the Jepourah Schism, which believes that the rising of the Dead and the fall of civilization are divine decree, a progression of the natural order, and that Redoubt's efforts to stem that tide, to dispose of bodies before they can rise, is heresy.

The compound's walls are haphazard and covered in a variety of spikes and jagged edges, all the better to dissuade people from approaching or attempting to breach it. The Jepourah have no desire to be torn apart by the Dead before they themselves have perished—for good or only temporarily—and they have no love for the living outside, either.



From the outside it's hard to tell what goes on within. Rising columns of smoke signal that the usual business of sustenance occurs: cooking, smelting, warmth on cold days. Cloaked traders pass through the two wrought iron gates, carrying trinkets, artwork, or surplus food in exchange for building materials, tools, or relics from outside. Craftsmen repair the walls, which are patrolled by archers. Nobody who is not of the Jepourah enters.

Population

The Jepourah Schism counts perhaps a few thousand people in its number—too many for the city to justify moving against en masse, but not enough to take control of anything more than their small independent neighborhood. All Jepourah are human; the particulars of their religion are humanocentric, and nonhumans are always considered outsiders. The Jepourah do not necessarily have animosity to such groups, but they consider them "not children of the gods of humankind" and, thus, excluded from the congregation and ancillary to the coming (un)natural order.

The compound's population remains reasonably static. Occasional converts trickle in and they do have marriages, families, and children, while the old and the infirm die off; to date their population has been stable. Given that small uprisings occur with relative frequency within the compound, however, that stability is almost certainly temporary.

Culture

The overwhelming characteristic of Jepourah culture is, of course, their religious dogma: As a point of faith, the Jepourah believe that the world has fallen into its present disarray because of divine writ. The end has come, the Dead sent by angry gods, and the age of humans is over. The more "reasonable" among the Jepourah believe that small numbers of humans may survive by making penance, cleansing themselves of evil, and supplicating the gods for forgiveness. The radicals believe that the end is foreordained and that it is only a matter of time until everyone joins the ranks of the Dead. In either case, the world no longer belongs purely to the living, and to take steps to prevent someone from rising—even if only to immediately be put down—is anathema. Nature must take its course, whatever the cost.

The Jepourah do accept converts, but they are notoriously wary, as the Magisterium has in the past tried to plant spies in their ranks. Jepourah converts often find themselves subjected to grueling loyalty tests, some of which end in death. Still, converts can come from any human culture, so long as they believe and are ready to join the exhausting work necessary to support the compound.

Locations

Since outsiders never enter the compound, general knowledge comes only from the traders that the Jepourah send out and from what the Watch and the Foresters can see from atop the outer wall. The compound hosts at its center a peaked stone temple, surrounded by a variety of buildings arrayed in concentric circles. To outside appearances, this seems like a functional community of its own, with a smithy, several gardens, a small stand of carefully tended trees, a carpenter, a grazing parcel for sheep and rabbits, and tanners and furriers. Their traders most often carry artworks made by Jepourah crafters, selling musical instruments or decorative statues and tokens to the outside world.

Perhaps most importantly, the Jepourah have their own cemetery, and they dispose of their own dead. Those familiar with the geography of the city know that their central temple is built over a fissure leading to an old mausoleum and an isolated stretch of catacombs. Rumors hold that the Jepourah conduct some of their rites underground and out of sight.

The Fortress-Temple

The heart of the Jepourah compound is the fortress-temple, a stone building two stories high fitted with defensible windows, arrow slits, a slate roof, and—according to rumor—an internal well or cistern. The temple is both a physical and spiritual location to the Jepourah, serving not only as a community heart and a meeting place, but as the home of the cult's leaders. Edicts are handed out inside at communal meetings, then passed by word of mouth from the leadership to other Jepourah. Built to be defensible to the last, the temple is also the place to which the Jepourah would retreat if their compound were ever invaded.

The Undercity

A brief sloping passage carried Khulechtan downward, through shattered stone and tunneled earth, into a series of underground chambers that might once have been an off shoot of the ancient dwarven catacombs.

– Ari Marmell, "Requiem, in Bells"

The dwarves were not born beneath the open sky. The city of Elldimek, erected by King Kolobus the Skygazer, which forms the foundation of Redoubt, was the first dwarven city built upon the surface. Dwarven civilization was forged deep underground, in an abyssal realm the dwarves call the Kingdom Below. No one knows the fate of this deep realm, but given the lack of any communication or envoys from the depths, most dwarves assume it was consumed in the Fall.

Elldimek touches the world above, and the Kingdom Below—whatever remains of it—lies in the deep reaches of the world. *The Undercity* refers to all that lies between, a blend of dwarven works and natural caverns. It is a place of mystery, opportunity, and terrible danger. Stories abound of dwarven treasures, ranging from gold and jewels to caches of practical supplies that are hard to come by on the surface. Many dream of finding riches in the Undercity, but those who delve into the depths rarely return.

Venturing Below

The Magisterium has forbidden any organized private exploration of the Undercity. In part, such restrictions are about control and maintaining the status quo. Beyond this, however, many of the Magisters are afraid of the Undercity. It is established fact that the dwarves of Elldimek interred their

Undercity Adventure Hooks

A fissure has opened up in the neighborhood where one or more of the player characters live. It's hidden—in a cellar or an isolated courtyard—and the Magisterium doesn't know of it. A young child has already gone exploring; they could be the child of a friend, loved one, or even one of the player characters. Can the player characters find the child? And once they do, will they report the fissure to the Magisterium or explore the tunnels further?

When humans turned on the dwarves, a group of dwarves took refuge in a hidden chamber in the Foundation. They died there, and their bodies have remained sealed in this refuge ever since. Now a fissure has opened up tiny cracks—not wide enough for even a small creature to get through, but large enough for a wave of grisly remnants to plague the neighborhood. Can the player characters find another way into this ghastly refuge? This chamber may hold treasures that these refugees took in their flight, but it may also hold more powerful Dead empowered by their bitter deaths.

A dwarf—either a PC or an NPC ally of the party—has visions that call them to the catacombs. An honored ancestor has a task that must be completed, with the promise of a great boon or artifact in exchange for this service. This could be exactly what it appears to be, or it could be a greater revnant seeking release from its prison in the catacombs.

Going Down?

Paths to the Undercity can be found throughout the Old City (and, less frequently, in other districts), but most portals created by the architects of Elldimek have been sealed. Opening such a portal requires the use of thieves' tools, or a simple Strength check to force them; the difficulty of such efforts tends to range from 15 to 25 depending on the portal and how well secured it is.

honored ancestors in deep catacombs. Who knows if some vile legion of the Dead masses somewhere in the depths, waiting for some fool to open a gate? Even setting aside the terrible but known threat of the Dead, what if a prospector unleashes a dwarven curse, some mystical revenge for human treachery? What if an unknown plague or monsters long forgotten rise from below? As far as the Magisterium is concerned, any prospector who delves into the Undercity is placing Redoubt at risk, and the Hoodsmen work to apprehend any would-be adventurers caught tampering with the entrances to the Undercity.

If someone believes they have sufficient justification, however, they may submit a formal request at the White Citadel, seeking official dispensation to enter the Undercity. Such requests are usually denied, and the suspicious eyes of the Hoodsmen turn toward those who make such requests more than once.

Fortunately for would-be explorers—and perhaps unfortunately for Redoubt, if government fears prove true—means of accessing the Undercity other than the dwarven portals do exist, waiting to be found by the truly dedicated. Elldimek was built into a volcanic mountain. The original design was perfectly safe, but in the aftermath of the Fall, natural forces have become unpredictable. Fissures, natural paths leading to the depths, exist throughout the city, and new ones might open up at any time, making them difficult to keep cataloged and sealed. Traveling this way has its own dangers; aside from the perilous descent, fissures are often filled with poisonous vapors and other natural (or, on occasion, supernatural) hazards. Exploring the Undercity is illegal no matter how one gets there, but a hidden fissure can present an irresistible opportunity.

The Foundation

The upper levels of the Undercity are the roots of Elldimek, passages of earth and stone carved by dwarven engineers. This is the foundation of the ancient city, and its chambers serve practical functions. Here may be found a prison complex—a literal dungeon with cells and a garrison—as well as many storerooms, chambers for curing and smoking food, furnaces, and the like. If it may be found in a human's basement, it can be found in the Foundation.

This is only the tip of the Undercity, and over the decades it's been explored by criminals, prospectors, and the Magisterium itself. As explorers delve into it, they may feel that they are delving into history, but accompanied by a definite sense that they are hardly the first to uncover it. Anything portable with significant value has been claimed. It's possible new delvers may discover ancient secrets—a concealed chamber revealed by a recent fissure, a hidden passage that's been sealed since the Accord—but the entire place generally gives the sense that *others have been here before.*

This is a source of threats both living and dead. Illicit prospectors have no love for rival explorers. Criminals occasionally use the Undercity as a base of operations. Adventurers might clash with either, and both can also be sources of undead threats. A prospector dies in a rockfall. Two criminals murder one another in a bloody disagreement. There's no Undertaking to collect these bodies, no ghûl to consume them, no one to see what they become. These creatures can be found lurking in the depths, or they might prey on the city above until some brave soul tracks them to their lairs in the Undercity.

The Catacombs

Beneath the practical levels of the Foundation lie the catacombs, which, according to rumor, contain the tombs of the Blessed Dead. The further down one goes, the fewer people have been here. This is the home of the Elldimun,

The Sewers

Redoubt isn't precisely known for its comforts or luxuries, but the city does provide a degree of civil service to its citizens, or at least to many of its neighborhoods. One such service is the existence of a simple but functional sewer system. It prevents many of the lower neighborhoods and those near the banks of the Kolobus from flooding during rainy seasons, and it channels a great deal of the city's waste toward the southern reaches of that river.

It's also one of the few reasons the Magisterium ever allows anyone into the Undercity. The sewer tunnels must be maintained, repaired and kept free of blockages and of creatures that might emerge from within to feast on more than refuse and filth.

In what was perhaps a greater insult to the dwarves even than turning on them in the first place, the sewers were built using pre-existing dwarven construction—and not just tunnels and chambers in the Foundation, but passageways throughout the catacombs as well. The resting places of hundreds if not thousands of dwarven dead were destroyed to make room for the sewers, or in some cases simply incorporated directly into the system. Little wonder, then, that the Elldimun who remain hold little affection for those who dwell above them.

The Dangers of the Deep

As explorers delve into the Undercity, consider the following threats.

Dark for Dark Business. The Undercity was built by a people who relied on darkvision. It's not lit with luminous fungi or mystical torches; it's just plain *dark*. This darkness is no hindrance to the Dead, but human explorers must bring light sources with them. Using light telegraphs the presence of a group of explorers; it's difficult to sneak up on someone when you're carrying the only source of light in the area.

Traps. The catacombs and the Kingdom Below are protected by deadly traps built by cunning engineers. The dwarves didn't lay traps in the Foundation, as it was a functioning part of Elldimek. However, more recent residents may set traps of their own, such as simple snares or alarms. Beyond this, volcanic activity has created many regions of instability. In some passages, an incautious footstep can trigger a rockfall. This can't be solved with thieves' tools; explorers must either use Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Wisdom (Survival) to carefully navigate the dangerous area, or use engineering skills and tools to reinforce the region.

The Dead. A gloomwraith might manipulate the city above from a lair in the Foundation, while a grim aggregate crawls through the depths and consumes prospectors to fuel its growth. The rituals the Elldimun use to tend their honored dead keep the embalmed dwarves from rising, but that still leaves many different ways to bring the Dead into the Undercity. Foolish explorers who get themselves killed, Elldimun caught in a sudden collapse, criminals who brought their feuds into the Undercity—any of these can produce fresh corpses for the Dead. Beyond this you have the chance of a forgotten tomb in the Catacombs, or *dishonored* dead, such as an ancient dwarf whose heinous practices resulted in their corpse being sealed away and eventually becoming a greater revnant waiting to be released. And gods only know what might slowly climb and clamber its way up from the Kingdom Below.

Bad Air. The Foundation lies close to the surface and the air is reasonably fresh, though volcanic gas can flood small areas near a fissure. But as one ventures deeper into the tunnels, the oxygen flow gets worse. Dwarves are adapted to survive in the depths, but humans have trouble. In an area of poor oxygen, an explorer must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw every two hours; on a failed save, the victim suffers a level of exhaustion. A creature with Powerful Lungs (such as a dwarf) or the Air Rationing ability adds the amount of time they can hold their breath to the interval between checks. So a 1st level dwarf ranger with 14 Constitution—who can hold their breath for four hours thanks to their powerful lungs—only has to make a saving throw once every six hours. This saving throw difficulty and interval are base values, but the interval could be reduced and the difficulty increased in an area with particularly bad air.

Disease. Whether it's a curse laid by the angry spirits of the honored dead or a dwarven virus to which humans have no resistance rising up from the Kingdom Below, the Undercity is an easy way to introduce diseases. Cackle fever, sewer plague, and sight rot could all be found here, not to mention any new diseases the DM might devise.

a sect of devout dwarves who tend to the crypts. The Elldimun are a legend on the streets. No one knows exactly what they do in the catacombs, but countless stories tell of them. Some say the Magisterium supports the Elldimun because only their rituals prevent the Blessed Dead from *rising*. Others say that the Elldimun have access to ancient dwarven artifacts and that the Magisterium doesn't have the power to pry them from the depths. Whatever the truth, there's a reason the area hasn't been explored: The Elldimun maintain deadly traps, mystical and ordinary, that can kill the unwary prospector.

At this level, it is possible to find true treasures of the past, provided an explorer has no scruples about literally robbing graves. But deadly traps and Elldimun guardians await, not to mention the possibility that the honored dead themselves may have some power to punish intruders. While the Elldimun actively patrol the catacombs, it is still possible that explorers could find a sealed tomb that's only just been opened by a fissure—or that they could force their way into a section of the catacombs that the Elldimun of ages past intentionally sealed to contain Dead or disease.

The Kingdom Below

The region below the catacombs is likely a mystery even to the Elldimun. Natural caverns may hold subterranean monsters never seen on the surface, beasts even more fearsome than the Dead. Somewhere far below lies the first realm of the dwarves. Could some remnant of this empire still survive, or is it now under the dominion of the Dead? The Kingdom Below undoubtedly holds wonders and treasures. But contact with the kingdom could bring a horde of dwarven soldiers to the surface seeking to free their indentured kinfolk—or an army of dwarven Dead pouring into the heart of Redoubt.

Beyond the City

So, as the sky swirled with the first tiny snowflakes of winter, and the winds peppered the plains and forests with ice, the River Gate of the Outer City closed behind them and the whole of the fallen world lay ahead.

— Brian Hodge, "The Sport of Crows"

The world outside Redoubt is painfully, deceptively beautiful. The roads and cities are gone, and pristine wilderness stretches endlessly in all directions. The undead care nothing for trees and flowers. Insects, birds, and tiny mammals have always been prey, have always adapted quickly to new dangers, and thus live their lives now much as they always did. They buzz and sing and flit about as if the world were still wonderful.

To most Redoubters, the simple beauties of nature have become a haunting reminder of what now, through the rose-tinted lens of memory, seems a paradise lost. To others, those mired most deeply in the despair of their circumstances, birdsong and blossoms offer a dangerous temptation, a siren-song illusion of a world that no longer exists.

Because the Dead are always lurking, always waiting. Under the surface of swaying leaves and buzzing bees can be found constant evidence of the terrible truth. Animals larger than rabbits are far rarer than once they were, and natural predator populations have suffered the worst. Even some of the tiny creatures have disappeared, having failed to adapt to the fallen world. Any animal behaving strangely may already have gone Restless, questing for living flesh to feast upon.

Most of the undead were once humanoid, but not all.

Beyond the city lies death, rotting and putrid, dogged and insatiable, ever patient, ever present. The beauty of nature is no more than a facade. In reality, every blooming flower is a funeral arrangement for a dying world.

The Forest

Beyond the Mountain Gate, much of the land outside the city is forested, with only a few crumbling hillside ruins visible between the branches. The weather near Redoubt follows a four-season pattern, and the plants behave typically for such conditions, producing berries in late spring, for example, or tree fruit in summer. Here and there one can find the remains of former orchards or vineyards, untended but still fruitful. The natural forest produces many resources, such as wood, fibers for textiles, and all manner of wild-growing food, not to mention the small animals that can be trapped or hunted for the pot. Ponds and streams dot the forest as well, and while some have become diseased or worse, others remain nigh-untouched by the fall of the world and are full of wholesome food to be caught.

It is easy to see why the forest is a constant temptation to brave or foolish Redoubt citizens. However, the Dead are aware, if only due to some low instinct, that the largest supply of living flesh exists within Redoubt's walls. Though they ebb and flow, rise and fall like a tide, the sheer concentration of undead is frequently highest in the forests immediately surrounding the city.

Here the Dead have plenty of cover to lie in wait or even, at times, to lay simple traps and ambushes for the living. Should an excursion party from Redoubt spend too long outside, yet more Dead are often drawn closer by sound or smell or some supernatural sense. It's not unheard of for the Dead to mass together between the trees in eerily patient swarms, waiting for the next time the Redoubt gates dare to open.

All that said, for a party of stealth and subtlety on a sufficiently brief or mobile expedition, a trip to the great forest of the outside world can bring home impressive profits, and long-term benefits for Redoubt.

The Rift

The Morgalu Rift scores the earth, a prehistoric wound up to three miles across at its widest that begins some distance southeast of Redoubt and runs for about ten leagues southward. Roughly eight miles from the city, the Kolobus River, Redoubt's lifeblood, pours over the edge of the Rift in a tall, slender waterfall, into the deep and broad Lake Kolobus below. From there, the river continues southward, passing underground and beyond the Morgalu Rift until it resurfaces near the ruins of Andira.

The Northern Cliffs

The Rift is among the many natural geographic features that make possible Redoubt's ongoing defense of the last dregs of civilization. Located as close as they are to the city, the shorter cliffs of the Rift's northern edge offer Redoubt solid natural defense on three levels.

First, while Redoubt's mountain perch ensures that it enjoys the high-ground advantage against most threats, on the eastern side of the city this advantage is extended, allowing the nearby cliffs to serve almost as an additional defensive bastion. The wilderness outside the Rift Gate is patrolled more carefully and kept freer of the Dead in order to take full advantage of the northern Rift cliffs as a kind of outpost.

Second, the need for the Dead to approach either up the cliffs or along the wall from the north makes threats on Redoubt's east side more predictable, and thus more easily countered with alarms, traps, pitfalls, and other devices. Such inventions make the east side defensible by a smaller force, freeing up personnel for other activities.

And finally, the height of the Rift cliffs and the relative dearth of trees in the grassland between the Rift and the city make for excellent visibility, allowing an eagle-eye view for miles to the east. This allows the city's experts to make better weather predictions, observe animal movements—and infer the movements of the Dead that inspire them. Lookouts patrol between Redoubt and the Rift on a daily basis, and there is talk of building a lookout tower on the cliff edge, if the city can ever free up sufficient resources to do so.

Inside the Rift

Getting down inside the Morgalu Rift is no easy task. Although the dwarves carved steps into the rock face centuries ago (and the humans once built a similar pathway to the south, near Andira), the way is narrow, unmaintained, and fast becoming more of a death trap than a staircase. Many in Redoubt believe the remains of the path are nothing more than a security threat, and should be destroyed. In practice, however, it is so difficult to traverse that even the Dead rarely bother with it, and when they do, they are easy to pick off and send tumbling back down to the Rift floor.

As such, expeditions into the Rift are rare, and must be undertaken with climbing equipment at the ready. The Rift bottom, once reached, is largely dry in the north near Redoubt, with sparse plant life clinging to clefts in the rocks where there is enough light to sustain them, and little growth in the deeper patches where the sun never shines. One might expect the Dead to spend little time there, as the few insects and small mammals that make this their home are of little interest. However, many Dead do find themselves in the area, lured by the temptation of Redoubt itself and then unable to scale the cliffs to reach their prize. Lacking both biological needs and the intelligence to do much else, they simply wait at the bottom of the cliffs for those foolish enough to climb down.

South of the city, once the canyon widens enough to allow sunlight to reach the bottom and especially once the Kolobus pours down to provide irrigation, the canyon floor becomes more hospitable. It's also less attractive to the Dead, who find bunnies less appealing than a city full of humanoids.

Rumors persist that a band of Redoubt exiles have made a defensible home in the southeastern cliffs of the Morgalu Rift. No such defensible location has ever been confirmed by Redoubt scouting parties, however, and these tales are likely wishful thinking on the part of discontents, or perhaps exaggerations of some hermit's short-term success.

Nevertheless, since the Rift floor is not heavily treed and is otherwise perfectly livable in the south, it cannot be dismissed as a location that Redoubt refugees might attempt to make survivable, however briefly. Of course, if enough exiles in succession were to make such an attempt, it might simply turn the southern Rift into a hunting ground for the cleverer, more patient undead.

Lake Kolobus

Because of the height of the Morgalu Falls, Lake Kolobus has been carved deep into the Rift floor. The edges are rocky, with no beach to speak of, and a lip of wading depth on the east side of the pool drops off swiftly to a dark and deadly basin beneath. The lake is easily deep enough for cliff-diving from the top of the Rift, and has been used as a traditional test of courage in the region for centuries out of mind. Such diving is regularly deadly, however, as it is easy to lose one's sense of direction underwater with the churning of the falls so nearby.Swimmers who accidentally swim downward or who are trapped underwater by the constant pressure of the falls are likely to drown.

Before the fall of the world, legend once claimed that a god or spirit of Lake Kolobus judged the souls of those who jumped, and made certain that those who were strong, brave, and honorable resurfaced, while only cowards, weaklings, and traitors drowned. Due to cultural and political changes in the region, legends in the last generations before the Fall said that the guardian of the pool had been slain, and that the leap from the clifftops had become merely symbolic (and foolish). Thus, the practice waned.

Ever since the curse that has broken the rule of death, the new legend is that the deceased former guardian of Lake Kolobus has risen with the rest of the Dead, and lies in wait to feast upon all those who dare venture into its lair. No evidence exists to support this legend, but if there ever *was* a real Guardian of the Pool, its reanimation as an undead monstrosity is far too plausible these days to be ignored.

To this day, the spikes driven into the cliff beside the falls to aid successful divers in climbing back to the top remain firmly in place as one of the safest paths down to the bottom of the Rift. As for the shallower edges of Lake Kolobus, the fish have largely escaped the taint of the world around them—despite the frequent pollution of the Kolobus River as it leaves Redoubt—and are perfectly harmless and plentiful.

Adventure Hooks Beyond the City

A lookout has spotted a strange gathering of the Dead a mile or so beyond the Morgalu Rift. A party of skilled warriors must be sent to scout this gathering—without being spotted by the Dead!—to determine if this unusual behavior poses a threat to the city.

A hawk has arrived at the city with a message tied to its leg. The message claims the creature was sent by another fortress of survivors, and gives coordinates for a rendezvous. The place is very distant, and no one knows of a defensible structure in that area. A handful of wilderness-savvy warriors are sent to investigate. Was this truly sent by a lost colony? Is it a trick by a surviving group of exiles, or even—though the possibility is likely unknown to the people of Redoubt—one of the sentient Dead? If so, to what end?

The player characters are framed for a crime they did not commit and exiled from Redoubt. In their struggle to survive, they discover not only a terrible threat to the city, but also the perfect solution for protecting it. Can they survive long enough to get the message back to Redoubt? Will anyone listen if they do? Do they still want to save the community that exiled them?

The Mountain

To the north of the city, and in another sense also beneath and all around it, lies a slumbering volcano called Elldim. While the dwarves who built Elldimek had advanced and clever safeguards in place to protect their city in case of volcanic eruption, most of these safeguards have now been dismantled as building materials for the outer defensive walls. Mount Elldim is therefore itself another constant, looming threat over the city of Redoubt. If it were ever to erupt again, the last stronghold of civilization would undoubtedly fall.

Fortunately, old Elldim has not stirred in centuries, and short-lived, shorter-planning humans have decided this means it is no longer a threat. So long as the southernmost peak of the Stormbreak Mountains chooses not to prove them wrong, the last known city in the world survives.

Threat or no, Mount Elldim also helps keep the city safe.

The mountain forms a natural bulwark, such that Elldimek—now Redoubt—has always been among the most defensible sites in all Zileska. Steep rock walls abound, especially north of the city, and Redoubt citizens almost always enjoy a high-ground advantage in defending their home.

The northernmost sections of the city are built into the mountain itself, such that the city's northern "wall" benefits from natural rock. This makes it almost unassailable and impenetrable on that side, though in very rare cases some undead monstrosity equipped with supernatural climbing ability has indeed proven able to penetrate the city from the north. As such, two guard posts have been built where the outer Redoubt wall meets the mountain, with one guard in each post instructed at all times to keep watch up the mountain face, just in case.

Of course, the majority of threats that might enter Redoubt from the north come *up* from beneath the city, within the heart of the mountain itself.

Chapter V

Zileskan Magic

Istustaya scuttled across the dusty street, slipping from shadow to shadow as she stalked the young Ouazi. She followed as he left the market, wending this way and that in the maze of streets leading to the Southside district. She'd taken this same route before. The boy was a creature of habit, and even if he didn't know it, his superstitious fervor might save his life.

She smiled when the boy ducked into the familiar dead-end alley. An elf in Southside didn't draw too much attention, but she wanted to keep her identity veiled in case her plans went awry. Istustaya scurried beneath the edge of the porch opposite the alleyway, and waited. Before long, the boy dashed back into view. He clambered up the stairs, raining dust on Istustaya's lusterless hair, but he never once saw her. Not when she'd bumped into him at the marketplace earlier in the week. Not during the times she'd shadowed him on the streets. Not even when she left the temporary hiding spot to skulk down the alleyway he'd just abandoned.

Hemmed in by buildings on either side, the alley offered a cool reprieve from the mid-day heat. It seemed impossible that she and her people had ever thrived under the brightness of the sun, a brightness reflected in the magic of lost Ibaria. Although she'd been just a child at the time, she remembered the white heat of ensorcelled objects so commonplace before the Fall. The world had been an enchanted place back then. But when magic itself sickened, her people fell along with it. Even now, madness threatened the few who yet lingered.

The darkness of the alley comforted her. Shape separated from shadow as her vision shifted to accommodate the low light. Her pale, scarred fingers trailed the roughened wall as she searched for the boy's cache. After a few moments, Istustaya found an unsecured stone, which she pried loose with a bone dagger. She removed a wrapped parcel from the hiding place. With delicate care, she peeled back the layers of worn cloth to reveal a filigree ring jointed to cover an entire finger from hand to fingertip. The ring ended in a nib sharp enough to draw blood. No longer just a pretty, spent thing from the past, it cast a soft azure glow in the shadows. Now that a rare few had come to understand, to partially master, what magics remained in Zileska's new age, relics crafted during the Empire of the Art were dead no longer.Istustaya rewrapped the package and tucked it into her sleeve.

She returned the way she came, no longer caring if her presence drew attention. People shied away from her beetling progress as though she carried the plague in the hem of her skirt. Those who dared to look her in the eye stopped in horror to let her pass. Istustaya ignored them all.

When she reached the relative safety of her rooms, she found Kaja waiting for her.

"Out hunting again?" The priestess gave Istustaya a long, lingering look.

A shiver ran down Istustaya's spine. Whereas the elves had been diminished and broken by the loss of magic during the Fall, the Menhada remained bright-eyed and proud despite the demands of survival.

"I recovered another artifact." Istustaya pulled the bundle from her sleeve.

"A group of men went Restless near Tidewater yesterday." Kaja pushed back the hood of her cloak. "I don't suppose you know anything about that."

"There was no other way." Istustaya jittered to the side. Her fingers wove nervous figures in the air as she shifted back and forth. In response, her skirt rustled like a ladybird's wings unfolding. "No one died today."

"Yet," Kaja sighed. "No one died today, yet."

As a priestess of Amarset, Kaja dealt in death, but she'd demanded restraint from her lover and acolyte. The visions that haunted Istustaya centered on those elven artifacts. It wasn't madness that drove her to do the things she did. She had rejected that notion early on. Shoulders hunched, Istustaya darted across the room. She knelt at Kaja's feet and bowed her head.

"You need to be more careful." The priestess ran her fingers through her lover's locks, pressing the elf's head into her lap. "What would I do without you?"

Istustaya pressed her palms flat against the unyielding contours of the bone corset beneath Kaja's robes. Elven bones, all of them. Istustaya shuddered as desire battled fear at the priestess' touch.

"It won't happen again," Istustaya said, though the visions had been more frequent and vivid than ever. This new magic seeping through the world was deeper, a dark and wild tide as restless as the Dead who roamed the lands beyond Redoubt's walls. It hungered for the old relics. It hungered for her. And she was helpless to fight it. "I promise."

The Nature of Magic

The Second Ascension was marked by the rise and fall of the elves, whose entire society revolved around its increasingly bold manipulation of what it called the Art (and what we might call arcane magic). A number of factors contributed to the violent end of the Ascension, but chief among them was this type of magic being pushed—largely by the elves, but not exclusively (after all, mankind desperately wanted to be like them for a good long while)—to its ecosystemic breaking point.

The manner in which magic behaves, and thus its reliability in the hands of would-be manipulators of it, shifts from Ascension to Ascension. For example, during the First Ascension when mankind was spreading out and discovering both its faith and itself, magic had an entirely different tenor and tone, even to the extent of following different cosmic principles. During the Second Ascension, magic took on a brighter aspect—vibrant, but burning hot—driven by the will and terrible hubris of the elves who emerged from its shadows to tie a rein around its flaming neck.

Ever since the Fall, magic in Zileska has taken on a new and very dangerous aspect.

Other Worlds

Zileska lacks the (relatively) easy contact with other planes common to some settings. In most cases, spells that allow contact with beings from other worlds—such as *divination* or *commune*—have been replaced with spells that provide contact with essences and entities beyond the mortal, but still tied to Zileska. This includes ancestral spirits and spirits of nature that still linger despite the corruption of the world. Similarly, most conjuration spells give temporary physical form to elemental, fey, or other entities drawn from the mortal world or the spirit realm, rather than from entirely separate worlds. Exceptions do exist, but they are rare and tend to be short-lived at best.

Spells

While it's certainly possible to cast spells in Zileska, possible for a magician or a priest to chant, gesture, and conjure magical power and unleash it in the blink of an eye, it's dangerous—not just for the targets of such spells, but for the caster and sometimes for others nearby. Gone are the days when magic was hot-blooded and full of flash. Now, wise magicians use caution, care, preparation, and subtlety. Yet desperation still calls at times for magic in the moment. The price exacted in such a case is spiritual ("The Curse of Magic", page 257). The spell may be gone in an instant, but the residue of the injury that it places on the wielder can last years or a lifetime—or even beyond.

Even so, a few survivors in Redoubt still practice magical arts. They've had to relearn the manipulation of arcane energy, and accidents thin their numbers. Powers that were once the province of mighty magicians are now too dangerous to channel and may destroy any mortal foolish enough to try; spells once considered petty are now the subject of weighty debate to determine whether their use is worth their cost.

Magical Items

Magic items are a rare and, save in their weakest form, nearly unknown commodity in Redoubt. The magic swords and enchanted wands of earlier ages still exist—those that haven't been destroyed—but the majority lie outside the walls, somewhere in the midst of the teeming Dead. The few such historical relics left in Redoubt almost all reside in the grasp of the Magisterium and its favored pawns, or wait in deep vaults and crypts where they have lain undisturbed for years. When the average soldier is lucky to have leather armor and a metal sword, the dream of magical arms and armor is usually a distant one.

Most magical items are remnants from ages when magic was easier to use and more reliable. Fueled by enchantments designed to last centuries or more, they retain their essential powers. The change in magic has altered some of them, so it's always dangerous to make assumptions, but enough items keep their inherent qualities that it's usually not too risky to pick up and use an ensorcelled sword or straightforward wondrous device.

Items that duplicate spells of higher than 5th level or possess powers of a comparable strength should never be introduced randomly. These are so rare in the modern age as to be nearly the equivalent of artifacts: They can alter an entire campaign, and should only be placed deliberately, if at all.

Uncontrolled Power

When a mortal calls upon magic, the result is a spark. When the world itself does, the result can be a conflagration. These incidents can be divided into roughly two categories.

Backlashes

Cosmically speaking, it might be fair to say that the magic of the Second Ascension was supposed to have "died" when the era did. While it certainly did come to an explosive head, the result wasn't a disintegration of everything magical that existed at the time. Most things magical either backfired onto their users or just petered out, as if they had been stripped of their batteries.

Today, when someone tries to use a Second Ascension magical item or spell, there's a chance that it fails to work as once intended; often this is just a weakening or echoing of the full effect (like using old batteries, to carry the metaphor). In these cases, there's also a chance that the attempted usage causes a backlash. When this happens, some utterly unexpected and often seemingly unrelated effect occurs as a result. This effect is usually localized to the usage of the magic, but sometimes it isn't.

Growing Pains

The world has quietly entered its Third Ascension, although the citizens of Redoubt still feel like they're living inside the Fall. What manner of epoch the new age will turn out to be remains to be seen. If the Dead have their way, it will be a thousand-year gravedance. For now, magic is unpredictable in this world, which is, for all intents and purposes, born anew from the ashes of the old. This sense of primordial rebirth carries all the usual trappings of wild, pre-civilization life, but transposed to the medium of magic and its place in the natural order. Sometimes these strange events—growing pains, if you will—manifest as either subtly paranormal or outright supernatural effects. In the majority of cases, this is something internalized by those capable of wielding magic (i.e., the four sentient races), whether that internalization takes the form of a strange curse, a gift, or even sudden wounds. Consider a family curse, passed down through blood, that was thought ended centuries before the Fall but suddenly returns now with no apparent explanation. These are the growing pains of Third Ascension magic.

The Price of Magic

Ever since the Fall, magic has followed the rest of the world into a post-apocalyptic dark age. Yes, this means that there's far less magic available for manipulation in the first place, and there was none whatsoever during the period of the Fall itself, but it also takes on the term's more sinister meaning. Magic is darker than it's ever been. Much darker.

These days, magic that is not mostly or entirely ceremonial tends to involve either sacrifice or a pact. Whichever one it happens to be, the point is that there's always a price for magic these days.

Sacrifice

Some magical methods and sources left over from the old world still have the power to execute their purposes because most or all of the power required to make them work comes from a sacrifice that can be made in the moment, at any point in time. For example, if a (foolish) citizen of Redoubt were to come across a Second Ascension scroll bearing a charm that performs a certain magical effect in exchange for the loss of one of his hands, that charm might still go off since the price has been paid. Even these sorts of timeless "pay as you go" effects don't always work at total efficiency anymore, and even when they do, sometimes there's a backlash anyway (see "Woe"). Contemporary would-be users of magic have taken the hint and tend to centralize all their attempts at working real magic around this same principle.

Pacts

Outside of forbidden relics and costly sacrifices, the only reliable way to evoke overtly supernatural effects in Redoubt is to make a soul connection, or "pact," that allows for it. If one carries the customary look of a "sorcerer" or "priest" here, one almost certainly has the claw of something external to her hooked into her soul. In some cases, this is ceremonial—a priest learning "divine magic" is basically making a soul-pact with her god or spirit-idol. In others, it's a living communion between the warlock and some other force. We call these sorts of arrangements "pacts," of course, but other, less conventional arrangements might qualify, up to and including a pact made without the full awareness of the human being on this side of the connection. These instances are rare, but can occur when someone, for example, finds and reads the wrong text. By the time she's finished, it's too late to undo whatever "understanding" was reached through her digestion and assimilation of the forbidden words.

Whatever the source or nature of one's magic, the system for dealing with its effects is called Woe.

Woe

The Dead infest the world, crashing like waves against the walls of Redoubt. The Undertaking prowls the city, collecting and destroying the corpses of the high-born and destitute alike. No one, not even the wisest sage or most learned priest, knows for certain why the dead don't stay that way—but even worse, no one knows *which* bodies will rise.

Oh, some few have noticed traces of a pattern. Those who die at the teeth and claws of the Dead, who perish due to magic, or whose behavior was unduly corrupt seem a bit more likely to rise than others. But these are bare tendencies, not hard and fast rules, and they merely hint at a greater meaning. Others, through careful study or use of their own magics, have learned to detect particularly potent examples of spiritual corruption, cursed locations or wounds to a person's essence rather than their flesh or their mind. But these, too, are only pieces of an unseen whole.

This spiritual corruption, and how it affects the people of Redoubt, are core facets of **The Lost Citadel**. While the people of Zileska have no understanding of how it works, as a DM, you must.

Players who do not intend to DM a campaign, but simply to play in one, should not read any further in this section. The new spells and magic items that follow this section are another story, of course.

Basic Mechanics

For purposes of measuring Woe's impact on a character (or, when it matters, an NPC), **The Lost Citadel** makes use of a system reminiscent of, but not quite the same as, damage and hit points. This system uses the following terms and traits.

- **Pneuma Points:** A pool of points, possessed by all living beings, that determines how much damage they can take from sources of Woe before gaining a permanent Mark of Woe. Most PCs (and other living humanoids) have a starting and maximum number of pneuma points equal to 20 + their proficiency bonus. Some class or racial traits might add additional modifiers or penalties.
- **Spiritual Damage:** Damage that affects pneuma points rather than hit points
- **Mark of Woe:** A permanent spiritual blemish that makes a being more likely to rise as one of the Dead after it dies. Some Marks of Woe impose additional effects or penalties as well.
- **Woe Saving Throw:** Some sources of spiritual damage allow a saving throw to avoid or reduce that damage. A Woe saving throw is more similar to a death save than to a standard saving throw. It is not associated with any ability score, and never adds an ability modifier or a proficiency bonus. Instead, it is a simple roll of 1d20 against a set difficulty (often, but not always, 10). Woe affects all people more or less equally, regardless of personal strength or prowess; gaining levels or improving abilities offers no additional protection from its effects. A natural 1 on a Woe saving throw is always a failure. Some spells, magic items, and class features offer bonuses on Woe saving throws.

Some Woe saves are made to avoid spiritual damage entirely, but if a save is to *reduce* damage—usually in the form of a saving throw to take half damage—the minimum damage dealt is 1, not 0, unless specifically stated otherwise.

Ghûl never rise as undead, but they can still suffer other effects of Woe.

Despite their similarities, the Woe system and the standard damage system *do not* influence one another. Traits that grant resistance, immunity, or vulnerability to hit point damage never affect spiritual damage, or vice-versa; temporary hit points do not translate to temporary pneuma points; and so forth. Pneuma points and spiritual damage are affected or mitigated only by features or magics that specifically spell out such effects.

Recovering Pneuma Points

Pneuma points do not heal naturally over time or during a rest, nor do spells that restore hit points have any effect on pneuma points. Pneuma points can be recovered only under the following conditions:

- Upon falling to 0 pneuma points and gaining a Mark of Woe, a character immediately returns to her normal maximum number of pneuma points.
- Certain magics and class features unique to **The Lost Citadel** can restore pneuma points.
- If a PC is below her maximum pneuma points when she gains a level, she regains 1d6 points of pneuma.

A World of Woe

Zileska is a dark, broken place, and the metaphysical corruption that is Woe is very nearly ubiquitous. Characters can encounter spiritual damage and other consequences of Woe from a variety of sources.

Monsters of Woe

Undead and many other unnatural beings (such as certain fiends and aberrations) cause spiritual as well as physical damage, as do some particularly dark spells. For creatures unique to **The Lost Citadel**, these details are given in their stat blocks. If you are using undead—or, at your discretion, other entities of a corrupt nature—from the core rules or other sources, you'll need to add an element of spiritual damage to their attacks. You can vary this a bit as you

The Mystery of Woe

The existence of Woe, let alone how it works, is meant to be a mystery to all people of Zileska, yet it involves mechanics that impact the PCs. So how to go about maintaining that mystery?

The easiest solution is simply to ask your gaming group not to act on this knowledge, to remember that while the player may know her character has just lost 7 pneuma points or gained a Mark of Woe, the *character* knows only that something briefly feels wrong or sickly. And of course, if they haven't read this section, they won't necessarily know what it means to lose pneuma points, even if they know they have done so. While this is the simplest solution, however, it's also the least effective thematically; no matter how much the players might pretend otherwise, they'll eventually develop a pretty good understanding of what's happening.

If you're willing to do the work, you might decide to handle the mechanics of Woe yourself. You, rather than the players, would keep track of each PC's pneuma points, spiritual injuries, and Marks of Woe, only describing what the PCs feel when they take such damage. This is a lot of extra work, so we can't recommend it for all groups, and it requires substantial trust between DM and players. If you're up to it, though, it can heighten the tenor of an entire campaign.

The middle-ground solution is to allow the players to track their own pneuma damage, but for you to track how many Marks of Woe, and which ones, their characters acquire.

Whatever method you choose, make sure it's one that's going to work for your group. Enhancing the mood and feel of a campaign is a worthy endeavor, but not at the expense of players' ability to enjoy the game.

choose, but in most instances, you can simply add the following trait to the creature's stat block:

Woeful. When this creature causes damage to a living target with an attack or an effect that forces a saving throw, that target must also make a DC XX Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d6 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular creature's Woeful trait for 24 hours.

The DC to resist this Woe damage, represented by the XX, can vary by creature. In most cases, the DC is a flat 10, but more powerful or more corrupt creatures might, at your discretion, deal spiritual damage that's harder to resist. These harder DCs are equal to 8 + one of the creature's ability modifiers of your choice. (Charisma is most common, but you might instead select Constitution for a physically tougher creature, or Intelligence for a spellcasting monster, just for instance.)

And of course, you can always alter the DC by a small amount up or down from this base, as appropriate for the specific monster.

Some rare creatures also carry an aura of Woe, affecting the entire area around them. This is treated as though that area were a domain of Woe, as described in the following section.

Domains of Woe

Certain portions of Redoubt—or, on rarer occasions, specific objects—are themselves corrupted with Woe. This might be as small as a single room of a house or as large as several city blocks. It might have been the site of substantial violence, the location of a malevolent magical ritual, a spot where multiple Dead rose—or there might be no recognizable cause at all. Many such areas feel vaguely "wrong"; animals grow nervous or refuse to enter, plants are small and sickly, people feel a general sense of unease or fear, and so forth. Others, however, offer no indication of their nature until their true effects are felt.

In general, these "domains" fall into four broad categories, each with four possible levels of severity; note that a single area might possess the traits of one, several, or—in truly foul areas—even all of these. Choose the traits and their severity as best fit your designs for the adventure, or roll 1d% on the Random Domain table if you wish to determine the type and details of a domain randomly.

Woe-Touched

The DCs of all Woe saving throws increase by +1 to +4, depending on the severity of the domain.

Roll 1d10 to determine the domain's severity:
1–4 = +1 | 5–7 = +2 | 8–9 = +3 | 10 = +4.

Random Domain

Roll	Domain Type
01–30	Woe-Touched
31–55	Woe-Haunted
56–80	Woe-Infected
81–95	Woe-Tainted
96–00	Roll twice, combining both results (reroll duplicates)

Woe-Haunted

Creatures slain in this area are more likely than normal to rise as undead. Depending on the strength of Woe in the region, add anywhere from +1 to +4 to rolls on The Dead Rise table (page 260). (Note that this is *in addition* to the normal +1 modifier for dying within a domain of Woe, as described later.)

Roll 1d10 to determine the domain's severity:
1–4 = +1 | 5–7 = +2 | 8–9 = +3 | 10 = +4.

Woe-Infected

The first time a living creature takes physical damage in this area, it suffers spiritual damage as well. This is normally 1d6 points of spiritual damage, or half that amount on a successful Woe saving throw. The saving throw DC ranges from 9 to 12. Once a particular character or creature has taken this spiritual damage, he does not suffer it again due to this particular domain until he leaves and reenters the area, or for 24 hours, whichever comes first.

Roll 1d10 to determine the domain's severity (that is, its Woe save DC):
1–4 = DC 9 | 5–7 = DC 10 | 8–9 = DC 11 | 10 = DC 12.

Woe-Tainted

After spending a set amount of time in this area—usually several minutes to several hours, depending on the severity of the regional corruption—every living creature takes 1d6 points of spiritual damage, or half that amount on a successful Woe saving throw. The saving throw DC ranges from 9 to 12. If the creature still does not leave and spends that same amount of time in the area again, it suffers the damage again, and again, indefinitely.

Roll 1d10 to determine the domain's severity (that is, its Woe save DC):
1–4 = DC 9 | 5–7 = DC 10 | 8–9 = DC 11 | 10 = DC 12.

Roll another 1d10 to determine the length of the domain's cycle and the frequency of spiritual damage:
1–4 = 24 hours | 5–7 = 6 hours;
8–9 = 1 hour | 10 = 1d6+4 minutes.

The Curse of Magic

Magic and Woe are intrinsically linked, for it was the shattering of magic that, in part, created the corruption that now infuses the world. As such, the practitioners of magic are among those who most frequently suffer Woe's effects.

Whenever a character casts a spell using a spell slot or any point expenditure system, or through the use of a magic item, he must make a Woe saving throw with a base difficulty equal to 7 + the spell level. When casting a ritual spell, the character must make this same saving throw *if* he fails the ritual casting skill check by 5 or less, or if he rolls a 1. (See "Zileska Rituals," page 261.) On a successful save, the caster suffers no ill effects, but on a failure, the character rolls 1d% and consults the Woeful Magic Results table to determine the consequences. Note that, in addition to any results indicated on the table, any extant undead within roughly 300 feet instantly become aware of the caster's presence and—if mindless—are drawn in his direction.

Woeful Magical Results

Roll	Result
01–10	The spell fails entirely.
11–40	The caster takes 1d6 spiritual damage.
41–50	The caster and all living creatures within 1d4 x 10 feet take 1d6 spiritual damage (creatures other than the caster may attempt a Woe save at the same DC to take only half damage).
51–60	The caster radiates an aura of 1d6 x 10 feet that functions as a domain of Woe[1, 2] for 2d10 hours.
61–90	1d4+1 undead, each with a CR roughly equal to the spell's level, arise a number of feet distant from the caster equal to 2d10 x 20.
91–95	An area centered on the spot where the spell was cast becomes a permanent domain of Woe.[1, 3]
96–00	Roll twice, combining both results (rerolling duplicates).

[1] Roll on the Random Domain table to determine type and details.

[2] Note that, in the case of a Woe-Tainted domain, the caster himself takes the spiritual damage only once regardless of the duration of the cycle.

[3] The general radius of the new domain is 1d6 x 10 feet (though it may, at the DM's discretion, instead correspond to the shape and size of a room, building, crossroads, or other location in which the spell was cast).

The Inevitability of Woe

Even a cursory readthrough of this section reveals that it's remarkably easy to accumulate Woe. This is deliberate. It's instinctive, and perhaps understandable, for players to fall into the trap of assuming that any negative consequence is something to be avoided at all costs, and certainly they'll want to minimize Woe where possible.

But Woe is an intrinsic element of a **The Lost Citadel** campaign, and it's fully expected that PCs *will* accumulate it. Many behaviors and most uses of magic cause spiritual damage, and a character who refuses to risk losing pneuma points is one who may not be able to access all her class abilities or to fight at her best when it truly matters.

Think of Woe as something to be managed, not escaped. The relative difficulty of avoiding it or curing it is a feature, not a bug. It's how characters deal with it, and how they react to the very real risk of rising as a plague on their own city should they die, that make for an interesting story.

The Well of Woe

Woe is the corruption of nature. Woe is the corruption of magic. But perhaps most insidiously, Woe is the corruption of the soul. Actions taken and choices made can cause spiritual damage and other Woeful consequences as readily as the foulest of spells or the most hideous of the Dead.

Any time a character takes one of these specific actions, she must immediately attempt a Woe saving throw, with a DC determined by the severity of the deed. The character takes an amount of damage determined by the severity of the deed on a failed save, or half that damage on a success.

Note that the following lists are a baseline; you can add to or modify them to better suit your own view of the campaign and the moral impact of the Woe system. Whether you alter the lists or not, however, and as much as we recommend keeping the mystery of Woe, consider discussing your view of of this particular aspect of the system with the group ahead of time. Everyone's ideas of what's moral and what's "justified" are a bit different. As DM, your definition goes, but be sure that your players have a reasonable idea of what your lines and interpretations are. One mature conversation in advance can avoid game-halting arguments down the line.

Lesser Deeds

These are minor acts of cruelty or violence, enough to create ripples in the character's spiritual essence but not too damaging to the soul.

The DC of the Woe save brought about by a lesser deed is 9, and failure on that save causes 1d4 spiritual damage (or half on a successful save).

- Unnecessary cruelty to people or animals (e.g., severe bullying, mild physical abuse, or minor physical violence without justification)
- Depraved indifference (e.g., watching serious harm or death befall an innocent without interfering)
- Cannibalism (defined as eating members of any sentient humanoid race, not merely your own; this is a separate deed from any possible violence you might have committed to kill the person in the first place). Unlike other races, ghûl do not risk spiritual damage or Woe from this act.
- Dropping to 0 hit points for more than one round (Coming so near to death leaves a spiritual scar.)

Moderate Deeds

Moderate deeds are actions that cause substantial amounts of harm or suffering without cause. These are no casual cruelties, but deliberate acts of selfishness or violence.

The DC of the Woe save brought about by a moderate deed is 11, and failure on that save causes 1d4+2 spiritual damage (or half on a successful save).

- Wanton killing of animals without purpose, such as hunting for fun or in bloodsports. This does not include hunting for food and materials or in self-defense.
- Actions that indirectly cause harm to multiple people, such as political corruption or profiteering of essential goods.
- Assault or instigation of violence without genuine need, such as beating someone during a robbery or starting a street fight. Simple brawling and the like do not qualify unless the violence becomes especially brutal.

Vile Deeds

These are true horrors, crimes or violations that cause irreparable harm and leave an indelible stain on the soul.

The DC of the Woe save brought about by a vile deed is 13, and failure on that save causes 1d4+6 spiritual damage (or half on a successful save).

- Murder of another sentient living being. This is death without just cause; killing when in combat or in self-defense is not considered a vile deed.
- Deliberate torture of a living being
- Deliberate use of curses or other magic to damage someone's soul (such as purposefully using magic to deal spiritual damage to another)
- Creating a domain of Woe, even by accident

Marks of Woe

Eventually, the soul breaks, just a little bit, under the weight of accumulated Woe. This happens when a character's pneuma points drop to 0. As previously discussed, the character then recovers pneuma, but also gains a Mark of Woe.

Marks of Woe are permanent stains on the spirit, touches of supernatural corruption on an individual's essence. Only the rarest and most powerful of magics can erase a Mark of Woe once it's acquired.

The primary result of Marks of Woe is that they increase the odds that a character becomes one of the undead after she dies. (See The Dead Rise table.) Some Marks cause additional effects as well. These rarely manifest physically, but instead make the character that much more unnatural, that much more at odds with the world around her.

Whenever a character gains a Mark of Woe, roll 1d% on the following table to determine which Mark she gains. Only some Marks can be acquired more than once. If a roll would impose a Mark on a character that she already has and that Mark doesn't specify that it can be gained multiple times, the character gains another Whisper of Death Mark instead.

Marks of Woe

Roll	Result
01–60	Whisper of Death[1]
61–65	Blemished Essence[1]
66–70	Essence of the Dead
71–75	Foe of the Wild
76–80	Nature's Bane
81–85	Shroud of Unease
86–90	Spiritual Exhaustion
91–95	Spread of Corruption
96–00	Touch of the Grave[1]

[1] This Mark can be acquired more than once.

Whisper of Death

Other than counting as one additional Mark of Woe for purposes of determining if a character rises as one of the Dead, Whisper of Death has no effect.

Blemished Essence

In a horrid spiral of inevitability, the corruption already inflicted upon your soul makes you vulnerable to further Woe. Your maximum pneuma point total decreases by 2.

You can acquire this Mark twice, for a total of –4 to your maximum pneuma points, but no more.

Essence of the Dead

The corruption within you grants you certain traits in common with the dreaded Dead. You are considered to be undead for purposes of spells such as *dispel evil and good* and *protection from evil and good*. In addition, holy ground of any sort counts as difficult terrain for you.

Foe of the Wild

Animals instinctively sense the corruption in your soul. Untrained beasts of Intelligence 3 or lower are innately terrified of you if they are normally prey animals, and innately hostile if they are normally predators. (On occasion, at the DM's prerogative, an animal might react in the opposite manner.) All skill checks to alter that behavior toward you have disadvantage. If an animal is specifically trained to obey or serve—such as a warhorse or a hunting hound—it still has a fearful or hostile starting attitude, but skill checks to alter that attitude do not suffer disadvantage.

Nature's Bane

You become anathema to the living world around you. Non-magical plants (but not monsters of the plant type) die if you spend more than half an hour within 15 feet of them.

Shroud of Unease

Other people instinctively sense something off about you, even if they're not consciously aware of it. You gain a +1 bonus to Charisma (Intimidate) checks, but a –2 penalty to Charisma (Persuade) checks.

Spiritual Exhaustion

The touch of Woe on your soul occasionally interferes with your body's natural rhythms. Whenever you complete a long rest, roll 1d4. If the result is a 1, you do not regain spent Hit Dice from that rest.

Spread of Corruption

The rot in your soul has spread into your body, where it impedes beneficial magics. Any time you are the subject of a spell that heals a random number of hit points—that is, any healing spell that includes a die roll—those dice must be rolled twice, and you heal a number of hit points equal to the lesser of the two totals.

Touch of the Grave

The powers of the Dead are magnified against you due to the corruption within you. You have a –1 penalty to saving throws against any source of necrotic damage and any spell or effect caused by an undead creature. (This does not, however, affect Woe saves.)

You can acquire this Mark twice, for a total penalty of –2, but no more.

The Dead Rise

This, then, is the greatest impact Woe has on the world, and the primary reason it exists as a mechanic in **The Lost Citadel**: It determines whether a given individual rises as one of the Dead after dying. This system is intended primarily for PCs, and for major NPCs where you'd rather leave the results to chance. In most other cases, you should simply decide, based on the needs of the story, who rises and when. Animals rise only if they are actually slain by the Dead, and even then only on occasion, without pattern.

(If and when it matters, assume that any NPC living in Redoubt who's an adolescent or older has at least two Marks of Woe as a general baseline.)

Remember that ghûl can never rise as undead, but they can still suffer other effects imposed by Marks of Woe.

As soon as a PC (or chosen NPC) dies, you—not the player—should *immediately roll 1d10* and apply the following modifiers (as well as any other relevant modifiers from other sources):

The Dead Rise

Factor	Modifier to d10 Roll
For *each* Mark of Woe afflicting the character	+1
The character was slain by one of the Dead	+3
The character died within a domain of Woe	+1
The character died as a direct result of magic (such as damage or a failed save from a spell or supernatural power)	+1
The character had any levels of the warlock class	+1
The character had any levels of the Secret of Purity and Corruption warrior monk subclass	+1
The character had any levels of the ranger class	–1
The character had any levels of the penitent class	–3

If the modified result is *10 or higher*, the character rises. (Regardless of modifiers, however, a roll of natural 1 always means the character does *not* rise.) If the character rises, he or she may come back as any type of corporeal—that is, solid and non-spiritual/ghostly—undead you choose, but as a general rule, something with a Challenge Rating close to the character's level is most appropriate.

Of course, the undead do not awaken on a set schedule. To determine how long it takes the character to rise, roll 1d% on the Moment of Peace table.

Moment of Peace

Roll	Length of Time Before Rising
01–03	1d% rounds
04–09	1d% minutes
10–95	1d% hours
96–00	Roll twice and add the results to determine the total interval.

Wielding Magic

Spellcasting in Zileska

As mentioned in the opening to this chapter, magic has taken on a darker aspect ever since the Fall. Grasping the threads of magic often leaves a feeling like welts on the hands, and sometimes, it even leaves marks. Magical spells in Zileska use the following additional rules:

- **Casting a spell** causes the caster to risk accumulation of Woe. The caster must make a Woe saving throw (DC = 7 + the spell's level; see "Woe Saving Throws," page 255). Failure means a Woeful mishap, as shown on the Woeful Magical Results table (page 257).
- **Casting a ritual** requires costly components, but is safer. The caster makes an Arcana skill check to complete the ritual without problems; if successful, the spell works without requiring a Woe saving throw. A complete description of this process, and its risks, can be found in "Zileska Rituals," below.

Certain classes have the ability to mitigate the Woe of spellcasting to some degree, but using spells is always a tactical decision: The magician must decide whether channeling magical power is worth the possible cost.

Zileska Rituals

Ritual magic has become far and away the most common form of magic practiced in Redoubt, and a far greater proportion of people learn ritual magic only (via the Ritualist feat) than have levels in any of the spellcasting classes. It affords a means to sidestep the accumulation of Woe, or at the very least, a second chance at avoiding it. To stave off the accumulation of Woe, ritual casting relies on precise, detailed steps in a time-consuming process that helps the caster to channel magical energy carefully and slowly, so that a backfire is less likely.

Casting a spell as a ritual uses the following special rules:

- Except where specified here, the process follows all the standard rules for casting spells with the Ritual tag as rituals. Note that many spells that do not have the Ritual tag in the *PHB* have had that tag added in **The Lost Citadel**.
- The casting time for the ritual is 10 minutes or twice the spell's normal casting time, whichever is longer.
- *All* rituals in Zileska require components—herbs, inks, powdered ores, and so forth—in addition to whatever components may be listed in the spell description. These are consumed during casting. (If the ritual fails, half these components are consumed.) Specific quantities of these components, counted in "measures," are given on the Ritual Component Requirements table, and component costs are given in "New Weapons and Equipment" (page 161).
- Casting a spell by ritual requires an Arcana check using the caster's casting ability modifier. The DC is shown on the accompanying table. Success on this check means that the spell is cast as normal, with no Woe saving throw required. Failure by less than 5 means that the spell is still cast, but the caster must make a Woe saving throw or suffer a Woe mishap, as described previously under "The Price of Magic." Failure by 5 or more means that the spell simply fails. A natural 1 means that the spell fails *and* the caster must make a Woe saving throw; this is always the case, even if a 1 on this check would normally be high enough to meet or exceed the DC.
- When casting a spell that has a target, such as *detect thoughts*, the target must be present during the entire casting of the spell. If the target succeeds on a saving throw against the spell—or the spell otherwise fails, such as an insufficiently high *dispel magic* roll—that target is immune to further ritual castings of the same spell by that particular caster for the next 24 hours (though slot-based casting of the same spell still functions as normal).

Ritual Casting Check Difficulty

Ritual Spell Level	Arcana DC
1st	12
2nd	13
3rd	15
4th	16
5th	18
6th*	19
7th*	21
8th*	22
9th*	24

* Spells above 5th level do not normally exist in The Lost Citadel campaigns. These DCs are included for extraordinary circumstances, such as someone using a powerful magic item to cast a ritual from an earlier age.

Ritual Component Requirements

Spell Level	Measures Required
1st	5
2nd	25
3rd	50
4th	250
5th	500
6th*	2,500
7th*	5,000
8th*	25,000
9th*	50,000

* Spells of this level do not normally exist in The Lost Citadel campaigns, but are included here in case the DM wishes to include particularly rare and powerful magics from a prior age.

Spell List

This section presents the spell lists for the spellcasting classes existing in **The Lost Citadel**. It also has a list for spells that exist as rituals, but do not appear on any specific class list. (Remember that, in Zileska, ritual casters can select their rituals from outside their class list.) If a spell from the core rules does not appear on any of these lists, it does not exist in the modern age of Zilesa—or in a **Lost Citadel** campaign—unless the GM deliberately chooses to introduce a prior-age source of magic.

Spells in **bold** are original to **The Lost Citadel**, and defined later in this chapter.

Beguiler, Siren

1st Level
Charm Person
Color Spray
Command
Disguise Self
Serpent's Stare
Silent Image
Sleep

2nd Level
Blur
Calm Emotions
Enthrall
Invisibility
Mirror Image
Suggestion

3rd Level
Fear
Hypnotic Pattern
Lost Memory
Major Image
Mob Rage

4th Level
Confusion
Greater Invisibility
Phantasmal Killer

Sage

1st Level
Blacksmith's Benediction
Charm Person
Comprehend Languages
Cure Wounds
Detect Evil and Good
Detect Magic
Detect Poison and Disease
Disguise Self
Fog Cloud
Identify
Illusory Script
Inflict Wounds
Magic Circle Against Vermin
Muffled Step
Panacea
Protection From Good and Evil
Rot and Ruin
Silent Image
Slaver's Mark
Sleep
Unseen Servant

2nd Level
Augury
Blindness/Deafness
Bone Meal
Blur
Calm Emotions
Cleansing Touch
Darkness
Detect Thoughts
Improvised Shelter
Knock
Lesser Restoration
Locate Object
See Invisibility
Silence
Sleep of the Dead
Winter Bloom

3rd Level
Clairvoyance
Counterspell
Dispel Magic
Hypnotic Pattern
Ingrained Image
Magic Circle
Major Image
Nondetection
Protection From Energy
Remove Curse
Sending
Slow
Tongues
Torrent of Living Arcana

4th Level
Confusion
Hallucinatory Terrain
Locate Creature
Spirit Guide
Stone Shape

5th Level
Dream
Greater Restoration
Legend Lore
Mislead
Modify Memory
Scrying
Seeming
Sudden Putrefaction

Sage, Ascetic

1st Level
Disguise Self
Expeditious Retreat
False Life
Heroism
Jump
Pilgrim's Feast
Wrathful Smite

2nd Level
Alter Self
Barkskin
Darkvision
Enhance Ability
Enlarge/Reduce
Invisibility
Protection From Poison
Spider Climb

3rd Level
Haste
Gaseous Form
Vampiric Touch
Water Breathing
Water Walk

4th Level
Freedom of Movement
Greater Invisibility
Polymorph
Staggering Smite
Stoneskin

5th Level
Woebegone

Sage, Priest

1st Level
Bless

Additional Ritual Spells

The following spells have the Ritual tag in **The Lost Citadel**, even though they do not in the core rules:

Alter Self
*Antipathy/Sympathy**
Arcane Lock
Clairvoyance
Continual Flame
Darkness
Darkvision
Detect Thoughts
Disguise Self
Dispel Magic
Dream
Enhance Ability
*Etherealness**
Fabricate
*Find the Path**
Geas
Glyph of Warding
*Guards and Wards**
Hallow
Magic Jar
Modify Memory

*These spells do not normally exist in **The Lost Citadel** campaigns, but are included for DMs who wish to include higher-level magics from prior ages.

Command
Healing Word
Pilgrim's Feast
Purify Food and Drink
Sanctuary
Shield of Faith

2nd Level
Aid
Hold Person
Magic Weapon
Moonbeam
Prayer of Healing
Warding Bond
Warding Rune Against the Dead

3rd Level
Aura of Vitality
Beacon of Hope
Mass Healing Word
Mob Rage
Spirit Guardians

4th Level
Aura of Purity
Banishment
Death Ward
Guardian of Faith

5th Level
Circle of Power
Dispel Evil and Good
Hold Monster
Mass Cure Wounds
Walls of Redoubt

Sage, Witch

1st Level
Animal Friendship
Bane
Create or Destroy Water
Dissonant Whispers
Entangle
Fertile or Fallow
Goodberry

2nd Level
Animal Messenger
Beast Sense
Curse of Rotting Flesh
Gust of Wind
Locate Animals or Plants
Pass Without Trace
River of Blood
Suggestion

3rd Level
Bestow Curse
Conjure Animals
Distant Grasp
Fear
Jointwrack
Speak With Dead
Wind Wall

4th Level
Arcane Eye
Blight
Control Water
Curse of Discarded Dreams
Dominate Beast
Phantasmal Killer

5th Level
Awaken
Contagion
Geas
Insect Plague
Tree Stride

Warlock

1st Level
Bane
Charm Person
Comprehend Languages
Expeditious Retreat
Hex
Illusory Script
Protection From Evil and Good
Silent Image
Unseen Servant

2nd Level
Crown of Madness
Curse of Rotting Flesh
Darkness
Enthrall
Hold Person
Invisibility
Mirror Image
Ray of Enfeeblement
Shatter
Sleep of the Dead
Spider Climb
Suggestion

3rd Level
Counterspell
Curse of Death's Awakening
Dispel Magic
Distant Grasp
Fear
Gaseous Form
Hypnotic Pattern
Jointwrack
Magic Circle
Major Image
Mob Rage
Remove Curse
Tongues
Water Walk

4th Level
Banishment
Curse of Discarded Dreams
Faithful Hound
Hallucinatory Terrain
Locate Creature
Phantasmal Killer

5th Level
Curse of Woe
Dispel Evil and Good
Dream
Hold Monster
Passwall
Scrying
Seeming

Non-Class-Specific Ritual Spells

These can be cast by any ritual casters in Zileska, but in most cases only if and when they locate such spells for transcription into their spellbooks.

1st Level
Find Familiar

2nd Level
Arcane Lock

3rd Level
Glyph Of Warding
Meld Into Stone

4th Level
Fabricate

5th Level
Commune With Nature
Hallow
Spirit Communion

New Spells

Many of the explosive, dynamic spells of earlier ages are gone; the magic simply doesn't work anymore, or has been lost. As the world changes, new kinds of magic become possible. Magicians in Zileska constantly seek out new spells in hopes that they will find a way to stave off the bleak despair of the end of the world.

Blacksmith's Benediction

1st-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a drop of oil)
Duration: 1 day

You rub a small amount of oil over an item. The oil seeps into the item and smooths over wear, enhances its properties, and otherwise makes the item temporarily a quality version of itself, almost renewed.

While *blacksmith's benediction* cannot repair a broken item, it allows improvised or damaged tools to function at full effectiveness for the duration. In resource-starved Redoubt, this means that you may use partial tool sets, worn-out tools, or improvised tools and still gain your proficiency bonus.

Bone Meal

2nd-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (garlic salts, diced onion or shredded mint leaves)
Duration: Instant

You sprinkle a small handful of precious spices over a collection of bones. The spell carries off the taint of the Dead from the bones, making them fit for consumption. *Bone meal* does not make the bones easier or tastier to consume, but prevents any lingering Woe, poison, or disease from taking hold. Ground-up bones treated with this magic can be turned into a paste or a gruel that serves as a bland but nutritious meal.

You can purify up to ten servings of ground-up bones with one casting of this spell. *Bone meal* functions on any kind of inanimate bone, but it does not mitigate Woe gained from the act of cannibalism, so this spell is best reserved for use on animal bones. You can't use this spell on the Dead until after they are destroyed and rendered inanimate.

Cleansing Touch

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Instant

A living creature you touch regains 1d4+1 pneuma points. Once a specific target benefits from this use of *cleansing touch*, it cannot benefit from another casting of *cleansing touch*—whether from you or from a different caster—until it has taken further spiritual damage.

Alternatively, an undead creature you touch via a melee spell attack takes 3d6 damage that cannot be lessened by any immunity or resistance. Once a specific target takes damage from this use of *cleansing touch*, it is immune to any further uses of *cleansing touch* by you, but not by other casters, for 24 hours.

If you are an ascetic, you heal an additional 2 pneuma points when you cast this spell on yourself, but not on others.

If you are a priest, you heal an additional 2 pneuma points when you cast this spell on others, but not yourself.

If you are a witch, you gain a +1 bonus on your attack roll when casting *cleansing touch* on an undead target.

Curse of Death's Awakening

3rd-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 day

You inflict a curse on a living creature within range that you can see. The target must attempt a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, the target automatically rises as one of the Dead, without a roll on The Dead Rise table (page 260), if it dies during the duration of the curse. In addition, the target rises more quickly than average; when the DM rolls on the Moment of Peace table, she treats a result of hours as minutes, and a result of minutes as rounds.

Greater restoration ends the curse. *Lesser restoration* and *remove curse* require the caster to make a roll against the curse, as per the rules for *dispel magic*, to see if he can break the curse. A creature suffering from *curse of death's awakening* can only attempt to break that curse with *lesser restoration* or *remove curse* once each per day, regardless of who casts the spell in question.

If the target succeeds on its initial saving throw, it instead takes 2d4 points of spiritual damage.

Note that casting this spell constitutes a vile deed (see "The Well of Woe," earlier in this chapter), and causes spiritual damage to the caster accordingly.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you extend the duration of the curse. The duration increases to one week when cast with a 4th-level slot, and one month when cast with a 5th-level slot.

Curse of Discarded Dreams

4th-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 month

You inflict a curse on a living creature within range that you can see. The target must attempt a Constitution saving throw. If the target succeeds on this saving throw, it gains one level of exhaustion, which can be removed as normal.

If it fails, the target must attempt a Constitution saving throw every time it completes a rest for the duration of the curse. On a failure, the target gains no benefit from that rest. A creature that can't finish a long rest suffers a level of exhaustion. Success on one of these saves does not break the curse; it merely indicates that one particular rest was successful.

Greater restoration ends the curse. *Lesser restoration* and *remove curse* require the caster to make a roll against the curse, as per the rules for *dispel magic*, to see if he can break the curse. A creature suffering from *curse of discarded dreams* can only attempt to break that curse with *lesser restoration* or *remove curse* once each per day, regardless of who casts the spell in question.

Curse of Rotting Flesh

2nd-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 day

You inflict a curse on a living creature within range that you can see. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or its skin suffers from cracking, oozing, and gray pallor. While the affliction is purely cosmetic and does not impede functionality, it does give the subject the appearance of one of the Dead. While affected by this curse, the subject suffers disadvantage on all Charisma-based checks and saving throws, and the people of Redoubt are almost certain to respond violently to the target's presence.

The curse can be broken by *remove curse*, the *restoration* spells, or similar magics.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you extend the duration of the curse. The duration increases to one week when cast with a 3rd-level slot, one month when cast with a 4th-level slot, and one year when cast with a 5th-level slot.

Curse of Woe

5th-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instant

You inflict a curse on a living creature within range that you can see. The target must attempt a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, the target immediately gains a random Mark of Woe (page 258). On a success, the target instead takes 2d4 spiritual damage.

If you know the name of the target and speak it during the casting of the curse, you may select the Mark that the target suffers.

Note that casting this spell constitutes a vile deed (see "The Well of Woe," earlier in this chapter), and causes spiritual damage to the caster accordingly.

Fertile or Fallow

1st-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 5 minutes
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (flowering or seeding branch or fruit)
Duration: One lunar month

For the duration of the spell, the target either becomes extremely fertile or completely infertile. An unwilling target gains a Constitution saving throw to resist the effect. Note that this spell cannot produce fertility where compatibility is impossible, such as in a pairing of a human and an elf, but otherwise—if cast to increase fertility—all but guarantees pregnancy, seeding, or budding at the next opportunity.

You can use this spell on animals or plants as well as people, and in fact its most common usage is to increase food production.

Distant Grasp

3rd-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (an arcane connection, as defined in the spell description, which the spell consumes)
Duration: 1 hour, or until expended

You perform an incantation that creates a connection between you and a named living creature, allowing you to subsequently cast a curse of 3rd level or lower upon the target without being in its presence. You must cast the subsequent curse after casting this spell and before its duration expires. Once you have cast a single curse on the target, this spell ends. The *distant grasp* changes the subsequent curse's range to 1 mile.

To use *distant grasp*, you must know the name of the target, and you must have some piece of the target's body to use as an arcane connection (hair, fingernails, and blood are common choices). You may use this spell to increase the range of any of the following spells (assuming you cast *distant grasp* at a sufficiently high level): *bestow curse*, *contagion*, *hex*, and any of the new spells in this chapter beginning with "*curse of...*"

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you may use it to cast a *curse* spell of that same level or lower.

Ingrained Image

3rd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You fix an image in your mind of the area surrounding you when you cast the spell, up to a 20-foot-radius sphere. As long as you maintain concentration, you keep this magical image in your head. At any time, you may examine that image in your mind's eye as if you were examining the actual location. Because the spell creates the image, it contains places that you couldn't sense at the time of casting, such as items inside of containers, the interiors of drawers or even books, or secret passages behind the walls. You can perform Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks on the area as though you were actually still there. This mental search requires as much time and focus as it would take to examine the area physically. While you review the mental image, you remain aware of your surroundings, and you can freely switch between investigating the image and acting in the physical world.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th-level, you increase the size of the area to a 35-foot radius and you can retain the image for up to 8 hours. Using a 5th-level slot, you increase the radius to 50 feet and you can retain the image for up to 24 hours. Concentration is still required.

Improvised Shelter

2nd-level evocation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a scrap of cloth)
Duration: 8 hours

A 10-foot-radius area around you becomes more hospitable and useful as a space for shelter. The area remains stationary for the duration and the spell ends if you leave its area. The spell fails if it includes a creature too large to fit in the radius, or so many creatures that some are only partially within the radius.

The area does not prevent the passage of creatures or spells, but the atmosphere inside the area is comfortable and dry regardless of the weather outside. The spell also smooths rough terrain, keeps out airborne diseases, and lessens rain or snowfall in the area, eliminating light precipitation and reducing heavy precipitation to light precipitation. Additionally, you can alter the ambient noise level of any mundane noise that comes from outside, dampening normal conversation and work to the sound of whispers, and shouts or screams to the level of conversation. This does not protect against magical noise or sonic attacks.

Though the area inside of an *improvised shelter* does not protect you from attack, it allows you to rest comfortably in areas that would otherwise be too wet, cold, hot, rocky, or dirty. This can potentially allow you to take a long rest while you are in adverse conditions.

Jointwrack

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of milk or yogurt)
Duration: 1 minute

Choose a creature that you can see within range. The target must attempt a Constitution saving throw. On a success, it takes 1d10 necrotic damage and its speed is halved until the end of its next turn. On a failed save, the creature suffers the following effects:

- The target takes 1d10 necrotic damage at the start of its turn every round.
- Its speed is halved.
- It suffers disadvantage on all attack rolls and on Dexterity-based ability checks and saving throws.
- Attacks against it have advantage.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends.

Constructs and creatures without joints (such as oozes or spectral creatures) are unaffected by this spell.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 3rd. The creatures must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

Lost Memory

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 bonus action
Range: 30 feet
Components: S
Duration: Instant

With a simple gesture, you cloud the memories of an interaction that you had with one target creature. One creature within range that you can see must attempt an Intelligence saving throw. If you are fighting the creature,

it has advantage on the saving throw. If it fails, it forgets salient details of its interaction with you, including your name, your appearance, your race, and the nature of your interaction, once you leave its sight. (For the purposes of this spell, an "interaction" is a period in which the creature becomes aware of your presence until the time when it is no longer aware of your presence, typically a period of time from when it first sees you to when you leave its line of sight.) The target knows that it was doing *something* with someone else, but can't remember precisely what. The target doesn't lose memories of any other people present.

Lost memory can cloud an interaction lasting up to 10 minutes. If the amount of time that you spent interacting with the creature was longer than this, the spell fails.

A *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell cast on the target restores the creature's true memory.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a higher-level spell slot, you increase the length of the interaction the spell can cloud by 10 minutes per level above 3rd.

Magic Circle Against Vermin

1st-level abjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 10 feet
Components: V, S, M (a sprinkling of arsenic)
Duration: 1 hour

You create a 10-foot-radius, 20-foot-tall cylinder of magical energy centered on a point on the ground that you can see within range. The circle affects simple verminous creatures such as rats, bats, mice, lice, fleas, ticks, snakes, and leeches—any beast of CR 1/4 or less—in the following ways:

- The creature can't willingly enter the cylinder by nonmagical means. If the creature tries to use teleportation or interplanar travel to do so, it must first succeed on a Charisma saving throw.
- The creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets within the cylinder.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the duration increases by 1 hour for each slot level above 1st.

Mob Rage

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of blood or a small flame)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You inflame a group of people within range to become an angry mob. They must number at least a dozen, and they must all be within a 30-foot radius of the spell's target point at the time of casting. You must shout out a target for the mob's rage, such as "That merchant is cheating us on food prices!" or "The guards are letting that nobleman get away with murder!" The people in the crowd become enraged and immediately take action—shouting, throwing rocks, overturning tables, vandalizing businesses, starting fistfights, and so on. The mob's rage is initially directed at the target you specified, but may change and move as circumstances shift.

Mob rage affects only living humanoids of Intelligence 3 or higher, who are not immune to Charm effects, and who have a CR lower than 1. Each subject may make a Wisdom saving throw to resist the effects. (For the sake of simplicity, and with the DM's permission, you may assume that half of all qualifying targets within an area fail the save, rather than rolling for each.) Those who succeed react normally, likely fleeing from the mob.

Casting this spell qualifies as a moderate evil deed (see "The Well of Woe," earlier in this chapter), and may cause spiritual damage to the caster accordingly.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the radius of effect increases by 10 feet for each slot level above 3rd.

Muffled Step

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a puff of cotton)
Duration: 1 hour

Your footsteps and those of your allies within range become muffled and quiet. For the duration, you and any creatures you choose within 30 feet of you gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to move silently.

Panacea

1st-level enchantment (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 8 hours

You grab hold of the threads of pain and suffering in a creature and draw them out on thorny wisps of magical energy. The subject feels a very momentary sharp, unlocalized pain, then remaining pain floods away.

Priests and witches typically rely upon this spell to make someone comfortable while suffering from illness or severe injury. It also serves as a midwifing spell, to aid in tolerating labor pains.

A character under the effects of *panacea* gains advantage on all saving throws against penalties and conditions that result from pain, nausea, or sickness.

Pilgrim's Feast

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a crumb)
Duration: 1 week

You suppress hunger in the subject for the duration. Not only does the target not suffer hunger pangs, but they doesn't need to eat or drink for the duration of the spell. If the subject eats or drinks anything—including magic potions or other consumables—the spell ends immediately. Once the spell ends, the subject suffers one level of exhaustion.

If the subject does not wait at least a full week before receiving the benefits of this spell a second time, she gains a level of exhaustion immediately upon casting that cannot be removed by any means until she spends at least a full week eating normally. If the spell is cast a *third* time without waiting at least a week, she gains an additional level of exhaustion, and so forth.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can affect two additional targets per spell level.

River of Blood

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You strike the ground and a slight crack opens, from which a thin trickle of blood issues forth. Though it is barely more than a small stream, this steady flow continues as long as you concentrate, running down and across the ground as a crimson fluid. This stream creates one gallon per minute.

The blood carries all of the nutrients common to humanoid blood, and as such is nourishing to soil and—if cast with regularity—allows plants to grow in earth where they normally could not. It is not suitable for drinking by humans, elves, or dwarves, though ghûl and carnivorous or carrion-eating animals can drink it without harm. *Purify food and drink* renders it safe for humanoid consumption.

When cast within a domain of Woe (page 256), the blood expands the domain if it flows beyond the domain's existing borders.

When the spell ends, the spring stops, but any blood that flowed forth remains. It can be collected like any liquid.

Rot and Ruin

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

The natural state of decay takes hold on a corpse that you touch. If the corpse is inanimate, it rots and turns to nothing but dust and a stain in a single round. If you touch an undead creature (via a melee spell attack), the spell inflicts 1d6 acid damage at the start of the target's turn each round you maintain concentration. One of the Dead destroyed by this spell is wholly consumed and leaves nothing behind.

Serpent's Stare

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You meet the gaze of a living creature and cause it to halt in place, fixed by your stare. The target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or else it cannot take any actions or move on its turn, nor can it take reactions. While you concentrate on this spell, you cannot take actions on your turn, though you can still move or take bonus actions and reactions. The entranced creature may attempt a new saving throw at the end of its turn every round, as well as any time it takes damage or is forced to make a saving throw from an effect other than this spell. The spell ends if the target succeeds in one of these saves, if you cease concentrating, if you take an action, or if you move beyond the spell's range or outside of the target's vision.

At Higher Levels. If you use a 2nd or higher level spell slot, this spell can affect undead creatures as well.

Slaver's Mark

1st-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: S
Duration: 1 month

You touch a creature and leave behind an ugly, raw scar that looks like a healed-over brand. As long as the brand remains, you can use an action to sense the location of the creature up to 25 miles away, so long as the creature is still on the same plane as you. You don't necessarily know the route to reach the creature, only its direction and distance relative to you.

An unwilling target gains a Constitution saving throw to resist the effects of this spell, but slaves who resist may be threatened with torture or death, so resistance is uncommon. When the spell ends, or if it is resisted, the brand vanishes completely.

Sleep of the Dead

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: S
Duration: Concentration, up to 8 hours

You cause yourself to enter a cataleptic state in which the Dead can't tell you from a regular, inanimate corpse. You remain aware of your surroundings, but the spell only lasts as long as you don't move or make any noise. If you choose to do so, you immediately break the spell.

Undead with an Intelligence of 7 or higher may attempt a Wisdom saving throw to see through the spell. Less intelligent undead are affected automatically.

You can sleep while under the effects of this spell without losing concentration upon it.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can affect one creature in addition to yourself for each spell level above 2nd.

Spirit Communion

5th-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (incense, holy ashes, food and drink, and grave dirt, all together worth at least 25 gp, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute, but see spell description

You summon a roiling mass of spirits, which occupy a space roughly 10 feet on a side within 30 feet of you. These can either be the essences of long-dead humanoids or a few of the lingering spirits of nature. The phantoms understand you regardless of what language you speak. You ask the spirits up to three questions that can be answered with a yes or no. You must ask your questions before the spell ends. After a moment of disturbing hissing, whispering, and other sounds as the spirits writhe about one another in consultation, you receive a correct answer for each question.

While the spirits have access to much ancient knowledge and can see the flow of time and possible futures, they are not omniscient, so you might receive "unclear" as an answer if a question pertains to information that lies beyond the spirits' knowledge. In a case where a one-word answer could be misleading or contrary to the spirits' interests, the DM might offer a short phrase as an answer instead.

Once the spell ends—because your questions have been answered, you lose concentration, or the duration expires, whichever comes first—you must attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to convince the spirits to return to the netherworld. You make a single check for the entire mass of spirits, and a natural 1 on this check is *always* a failure. On a success, the phantoms disappear, but on a

failure, they remain beyond the spell's duration and become hostile to you and to all living things. You do not gain XP for defeating these spirits, which burst into a group of 2–5 (1d4+1) wraiths.

Even if the spirits do not attack you, leaving them to harm others is considered a vile deed (see "The Well of Woe" earlier in this chapter).

If you cast the spell two or more times before finishing your next long rest, there is a cumulative 25 percent chance for each casting after the first that the spirits immediately break free of the spell and turn hostile (as if you'd failed the Charisma check at the spell's end), before you can even ask your questions.

Spirit Guide

4th-level necromancy (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 20 feet
Components: V, S, M (incense, holy ashes, food and drink, and grave dirt, all together worth at least 25 gp, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute, but see spell description

You summon a roiling mass of spirits, which occupy a space roughly 10 feet on a side within 30 feet of you. These can either be the essences of long-dead humanoids or a few of the lingering spirits of nature. The phantoms understand you regardless of what language you speak. You ask the spirits a single question concerning a specific goal, event, or activity to occur within 7 days. After a moment of writhing and whispered discussion, the spirits—who can see the currents of time and possible futures—offer a truthful reply. The reply might be a short phrase, a cryptic rhyme, or the like.

The spell doesn't take into account any possible circumstances that might change the outcome, such as the casting of additional spells or the loss or gain of a companion.

Once the spell ends—because your question has been answered, you lose concentration, or the duration expires, whichever comes first—you must attempt a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to convince the spirits to return to the netherworld. You make a single check for the entire mass of spirits, and a natural 1 on this check is *always* a failure. On a success, the phantoms disappear, but on a failure, they remain beyond the spell's duration and become hostile to you and to all living things. You do not gain XP for defeating these spirits, which burst into a group of 2–4 (1d3+1) wraiths.

Even if the spirits do not attack you, leaving them to harm others is considered a vile deed (see "The Well of Woe," earlier in this chapter).

If you cast the spell two or more times before finishing your next long rest, there is a cumulative 25 percent chance for each casting after the first that the spirits immediately break free of the spell and turn hostile (as if you'd failed the Charisma check at the spell's end), before you can even ask your question.

Sudden Putrefaction

5th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You cause the decomposition of an undead target to suddenly and greatly accelerate from the inside. The corpse's innards liquefy and gasses bloat its frame. One corporeal undead creature within range that you can see must attempt a Constitution saving throw. It takes 5d8+20 acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

An undead destroyed by this spell explodes violently as putrefying gases burst its body apart. All creatures adjacent to the destroyed undead must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6+1 points of acid damage.

Torrent of Living Arcana

3rd-level enchantment (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You draw forth arcane power that floods into a willing living creature that you touch. This wellspring causes the target to become a torrent of raw energy, like the floods of magic that once existed in earlier ages. The magic can barely be contained; it burns with the *need* to be set loose and used. This has the following benefits:

- The target gains advantage on Arcana checks to cast a ritual, if the entire ritual is completed during the duration of this effect.
- Add 1 to the DC to save against any spell cast by the target.
- Any melee attack that hits the target causes the attacker to suffer 1d6 radiant damage.

Elves in particular find the effects of this spell exhilarating, even addictive, as it briefly returns to them a sensation of the magic that once permeated the world.

Walls of Redoubt

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 10 minutes

You inscribe potent sigils on a section of wall up to 30 square feet, be it wooden or stone. The wall affected

by the spell takes on a semblance of animation, able to twist, bend, and shake of its own volition. While it is not intelligent, it responds to you and your allies favorably, and to your enemies unfavorably. The wall gains the following characteristics:

- Any enemy attempting to climb or break through the wall, or any portal in it, suffers disadvantage on relevant ability checks. You and your allies gain advantage.
- The wall doesn't provide cover for your enemies.
- The wall gains resistance to damage from attacks by your enemies.
- You don't need to spend an action to open or shut any portal, window, opening, door, or gate within the wall. You can freely cause any such portal to open or shut on your turn. You don't have to be adjacent to the portal; it opens or closes magically.
- You can cause any portal along the wall that has a lock to lock or unlock on your turn, without using an action. You don't have to be adjacent to the portal; it locks or unlocks magically.
- Enemies that move to a spot adjacent to the wall or start their turn there suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage as the wall buckles and attempts to batter and crush them. A successful Dexterity saving throw halves the damage.
- All terrain adjacent to the affected section of wall, to a distance of 30 feet, counts as difficult terrain for your foes. Pre-existing difficult terrain in that same area doesn't hinder you. This doesn't affect other magic that alters terrain, such as an *entangle* spell.

You must remain within 300 feet of the enchanted area for the spell to continue to function.

Warding Rune Against the Dead

2nd-level abjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Touch
Components: S
Duration: 1 day or until triggered

You scribe a complicated rune on a surface, whether by drawing with ashes, carving with a knife, or tracing with blood. This rune has no special visual qualities, though a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows someone to recognize its actual power.

When an undead creature approaches within 10 feet of the rune, it begins to glow with an awful, blood-red light. This provides dim illumination for 10 feet around the rune. An undead creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw to enter the illuminated area. An undead that does enter the area or starts its turn there takes 4d6 radiant damage.

If the rune is defaced or the surface it is on is destroyed or moved from its original spot, the spell immediately ends.

Because the rune barricades a small spherical area, it is most frequently used to bar passage by the Dead in narrow hallways or through doors or windows.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage inflicted in the rune's light increases by 1d6 per spell level.

Winter Bloom

2nd-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of ashes)
Duration: Instant

You caress the empty stalk of a plant and whisper a few sibilant words, encouraging it to suddenly bloom. You can affect any single plant (a single stalk of grain, a flower, a vine of beans or squashes, a fruiting ground plant, and so on). The plant immediately blossoms, sprouting flowers, fruit, beans, roots, or leaves, as appropriate. A single plant generates enough matter to feed up to five people for one meal. The seeds, if any, can also be replanted.

This effect is a tremendous shock to the plant's system. The plant must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. If it fails, the plant dies shortly after sprouting; the harvest is edible but the plant is a total loss. (A typical plant has a Constitution modifier anywhere from −1 for a small, weather-sensitive plant to +4 for a large, hardy tree.)

This spell has no effect on a plant that is already in bloom, even if its fruits have been harvested; typically, a plant can't benefit from this spell more than once per month, and is already in natural bloom during spring and summer. This spell also doesn't affect creatures of the plant type, animated plants, or undead plants.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the plant produces enough to feed another three people per spell level.

Woebegone

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a clean white piece of cloth)
Duration: 1 hour

You focus all of your will and self-discipline into a single perfect moment that finds the uncorrupted center of your soul. For the duration of the spell, the effects of all Marks of Woe on you are suppressed—including the increased chance of you rising as one of the Dead, should you die during the spell's duration. You also gain advantage on Woe saving throws and resistance to spiritual damage. When the spell ends, all of your Marks of Woe resume their normal effects.

Zileska Magic Items

They buried you with weapons, enchanted with the high Art but corrupted now, magic as mad as they became."

– Malcolm Sheppard, "He in Memory"

In this new age of twisted magic, making magical items is a rare art across the desolate lands of Zileska. Any user of magic who hopes to enchant items must learn to do so by hard trial and error. The old ways don't work right; magicians who try to call upon pre-Fall magic find that it fails, sometimes with spectacularly Woeful results. New methods require experimentation and sacrifice.

A few sages have teased out the means to brew specialty potions that can perform useful functions or tiny talismans with but a single and relatively minor purpose, but that is largely the limit of new enchanting in Redoubt.

New Potions

Potions and elixirs are the most common forms of magic items left, and even they are rare and expensive. Potions can fetch a high price on the black market; the Hoodsmen and the Watch usually suspect potions of being contraband, and unless swiftly convinced otherwise, may confiscate them when found.

Sages—most commonly witches—sometimes learn to brew potions and elixirs by concentrating the essential properties from the herbs that they grow in tiny garden plots. While the desperate folk of the city cling to hope that magic potions can ease their torment, the cost is always high, and charlatans selling false panaceas are always a risk.

While most of the new potions described here are "common" according to game systems, this merely informs their relative value and rarity compared to other magic items. Like all things magical in Redoubt, even "common" items are quite unusual.

Elixir of the Dwarven Shaper

Potion, uncommon

Pouring out this elixir on a facing of rock or stone up to 5 feet by 5 feet causes it to become as malleable as soft clay for one minute.

Elixir of Fire Block

Potion, common

Hurled onto a fire, this elixir immediately creates a cold cloud that extinguishes the flames and then rapidly dissipates. One elixir affects one creature of Large or smaller size, or a square 10 feet on a side.

Elixir of the Pyre

Potion, common

Poured out on a still-warm dead body, this elixir rapidly soaks into the flesh and then, on the next round, causes the body to burst into flames. The body quickly burns to ashes in 1d4+2 rounds, leaving only an oily residue and a black scorch mark behind.

Potion of Animal Placidity

Potion, common

Domesticated animals find this potion desirable and readily consume it. For the next hour, the animal does not exhibit any particular fear of the Dead (or of anyone with the "Foe of the Wild" Mark of Woe). While a wounded animal may still try to flee, the affected animal doesn't automatically run from the Dead and can be coaxed into fighting them. Redoubt's Watch sometimes uses these potions to entice trained dogs or horses into combat against the Dead.

Potion of Deathless Steps

Potion, uncommon

For one minute after drinking this potion, you are invisible to the Dead unless you attack them, cast a spell on them, or otherwise force them to attempt a saving throw or opposed ability check.

Potion of Fertility/ Potion of Fallowness

Potion, common

Drunk by a creature, this elixir makes the creature particularly fertile or infertile, as specified by the creator of the elixir, for one lunar month. Alternatively, it can be poured upon a plot of ground to render it especially fertile for plants, or completely barren and fatal to plant life. One potion is sufficient to affect one creature or plant, or a patch of earth up to 10 feet on a side.

Potion of Satiation

Potion, common

Drinking this potion provides the nutrients for a living humanoid creature for three days. While it is salty and unpleasant, and does nothing to quiet an empty stomach, it will prevent starvation and dehydration.

Potion of Visions

Potion, common

To most imbibers, this potion is simply a hallucinatory drug that gives pleasant dreamlike visions—a very expensive escape from Redoubt, for a time. Immediately upon drinking the potion, the imbiber falls into a trancelike state for one

minute. During this trance, the imbiber experiences strange visions and sees distant places and unknown futures. If the imbiber is an elf, these visions carry prophetic power, and the elf can guide them to try to glean limited knowledge about the near future (similar to the results of the *augury* spell, but up to one day into the future). After awakening from the trance, the imbiber gains a level of exhaustion.

Time spent in a vision trance does not match to the passage of real time. A drinker in the throes of visions might seem to experience hours or even days of time, only to snap awake a mere minute after first taking the potion. To portray such an experience, the DM might choose to run an "adventure" in the dream-state, with other players participating as dreamlike versions of their characters (or as other people entirely).

New Weapons

The craft of making weapons is, of course, a pursuit most fervently embraced by the Magisterium and the Foresters. The Watch, the Hoodsmen, and the various mercantile interests are always looking for ways to charm weapons to make them more effective against the Dead—and against their living enemies, though people rarely say so publicly.

The powerful magical weapons of earlier ages are hard to find, but a few new kinds of magical weapons have sprung up, usually in the hands of cultists, priests, and students of the esoteric.

Bullet of Crushing Impact

Ammunition, uncommon

Like other *girga* bullets, these are small beads, designed to smash through flesh with great force when propelled by a *girga* or a common sling. Wielded with a *girga*, these bullets have an unnerving tendency to find vital spots to crush, especially in the head. A *girga bullet of crushing impact* allows the wielder to inflict sneak attack damage even without advantage or otherwise meeting the usual conditions for a sneak attack. The *girga* wielder must already have the sneak attack ability; this bullet doesn't grant that ability, but makes it usable under any circumstance. After the bullet hits once, the enchantment fades.

Ritual *Sleaghar*

Sleaghar, rare (requires attunement)

Enchanted *sleaghar* predate the Fall, but most share a set of specific abilities as part of their hereditary purpose. All have a broad, leaf-like head and a series of yellow painted grooves that run down from below the blade to half the length of the hilt. A ritual *sleaghar* grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it, and never tarnishes. In addition, when the wielder gains Martial Opportunity Points (see page 134) while wielding a *sleaghar*, she may immediately gain an additional 2 points on top of those gained via the die roll. As always, these points must be spent immediately or they are lost. The wielder can use this ability once per day; the weapon recharges at dusk.

Rest-Bringer

Any melee weapon, legendary (requires attunement)

These mythical weapons, supposedly crafted immediately after the Fall, are now highly coveted by those who know of them. Even the most extravagant tales suggest only a handful of these weapons exist, and indeed there may be only one.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When you hit an undead with this weapon, the undead takes an extra 2d6 damage of the weapon's type and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet in any direction you choose.

Once per day, as an action, you call upon the weapon's power to surround yourself in an aura out to 30 feet. The aura is considered difficult terrain for all undead (even if they are flying), and undead within the aura have disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that do not target you. As long as you remain conscious, the aura lasts for 1 minute, until you deactivate it (no action required), or until the weapon leaves your hand. This ability recharges at noon.

Undead can instinctively feel the presence of this weapon, and are drawn to destroy its wielder. While the weapon is on your person, undead have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to locate you, and cannot be surprised if they can see you (regardless of distance) or if you are within 120 feet even if they cannot see you. If you are protected by magic that forces an enemy to make a check or saving throw before attacking or approaching you—such as the *sanctuary* spell or the paladin's Deny the Corrupted ability—they also have advantage on that check or save.

Silver Boline of the Witch

Dagger, uncommon

Witches commonly keep small herbal gardens in which to grow the materials needed for some of their spells and poultices. A *silver boline of the witch* has a curved short blade, a small hole in the blade just above the hilt, a hook on the back end of the hilt, and a small spool of cord about the handle. This boline functions as a set of herbalist's tool in addition to serving as a weapon, and grants a +1 bonus to checks made when using it as herbalist's tools. It has all the properties of silver when used as a weapon against creatures vulnerable to that material.

New Wondrous Items

The few wondrous items within the last city tend to carry small charms designed to improve the quality of everyday life. Most such devices are found in the hands of priests, who use them to perform religious functions, to aid people in distress, and to reinforce their ritual orthodoxy.

Bead of Thorned Magic

Wondrous item, common

These odd objects are sometimes found looking like cysts in corpses. When a spellcaster suffers a Woeful mishap, a *bead of thorned magic* absorbs the outflow of magical energy that would normally alert the Dead, preventing them from becoming automatically aware of, and drawn toward, the source. Doing so causes the *bead* to lose its power and crumble into white powder.

Censer of Supplication

Wondrous item, uncommon

When a drop of blessed oil is put in this censer, it becomes capable of burning for up to an hour. It emits a light, ground-hugging smoke in a 10-foot radius during that time. This smoke, while clearly noticeable, is too light to serve as concealment. Anyone who prays or meditates within that smoke for one minute gains a +2 bonus to Constitution saving throws for concentration for the next hour. A creature can only gain this benefit once per 24 hours, even from multiple *censers*.

Census Manual

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A *census manual* is a heavy tome with a metal hasp and lock and thick, dry pages. The lock opens automatically when commanded by the attuned owner of the manual, or shuts when commanded likewise, with a simple word. ("Open" or "shut" will do; no special magical phrase is required.) The *census manual* can hold up to 10,000 pages of information, even though it appears to be a ponderous tome of about 500 pages. Each page can hold a brief summary of biographical information about one creature, or roughly 500 words on any other topic. When the attuned owner touches the manual and speaks a name, the manual flips automatically to the page with that creature's information.

Obviously, the Census uses these manuals for keeping information in the city, and a stolen manual could contain valuable secrets about any number of people. The Census has been known to pay a reward for their return in the rare case that a *manual* is lost or stolen.

Clever Noose

Wondrous item, rare

This 25-foot length of rope is fashioned into a noose at one end with a cunning knot that can't be untwisted; cutting the rope or knot causes it to lose its magic. A *clever noose* always fits easily and correctly over the head of any creature of Huge size or smaller. Using a bonus action, you can throw the noose end as a ranged weapon attack up to 20 feet to land the loop around a creature's neck. This does no damage but allows you to use your action to grapple or shove the creature with the noose. This uses the usual rules for grappling or shoving, but grants you a +2 bonus to the relevant ability checks. If you successfully cause a creature to fall off an edge or over a projection while the *noose* is fixed around its neck, it hangs and suffers 2d6+2 damage per round until it's released, until you drop the *noose* or move more than 25 feet from the target, or until the target manages to escape from the *noose*. Even the Dead suffer damage from the *clever noose*, as it cuts into their necks and eventually causes the head to separate from the body.

Concealing Hood

Wondrous item, common

These nondescript hoods can subtly alter their features to appear to be made of different materials, and they hide the shape of the head and faces, as well as muffling the voice. Any attempt to discern the identity of someone wearing

one of these hoods, or to determine their emotional state or honesty—such as via Wisdom (Insight) checks—suffers disadvantage.

Forester's Cloak

Wondrous item, uncommon

A *Forester's cloak* is usually a dull brown, green, or gray color, with water stains and occasionally a tattered edge. Rumor holds that their magic was different before the Fall, but whatever the truth, they are still useful, most often found in the hands of veteran Foresters. While wearing a *Forester's cloak*, you gain the following benefits:

- When not moving, you gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to avoid detection.
- The cloak protects you from inclement weather and temperature rangings from −30 degrees to 110 degrees Fahrenheit, in hail, snow, or strong wind. This allows you to avoid exhaustion and sleep comfortably in a range of environments.
- You gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against fire or cold damage.

Incense of Beautification

Wondrous item, uncommon

Burning this small block (1 inch on a side) of incense causes a pleasantly scented light smoke to fill a 10-foot by 10-foot space. Over the course of 10 rounds, everything in this space becomes clean, vibrant, and colorful. Plants unwilt, faded paint becomes like new, and stains of dirt or blood fade away into nothing. Even creatures find their sweat and stains removed. The area can subsequently become dirty again later.

Nobles use these blocks for house cleaning when they can get them, and priests occasionally acquire one for their shrines (or, in rare cases, for emergency use with disaster refugees).

Lancet of Last Hope

Wondrous item, rare

A *lancet of last hope* is a small surgical knife with a slightly curved handle and a tiny image of a lily engraved on the side. Used by a proficient individual, this functions as healer's tools. In addition, once per day, the *lancet* can be used to make a surgical repair on an injured individual, which heals 1d6 points of damage, or an increasing amount if the user is higher level (up to 2d6 at 5th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 17th level). The user suffers damage equal to half the amount of damage healed, which cannot be resisted or prevented in any way.

Rod of Woe

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This rod usually looks like a mummified animal claw with one talon outstretched, stitched onto the end of a smooth but blackened wooden handle. When you point it at a creature while using a spell or ability that causes pneuma damage, the target takes a −2 penalty to saves (including Woe saves) to resist that damage, and your attack causes two additional points of pneuma damage.

This item is considered an illegal item in Redoubt, and the Watch will arrest anyone visibly carrying one. Typically the item is destroyed in such cases.

Watchman's Sigil

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

According to legend, only seven of these sigils exist, each gifted to one of the Watch captains. They grant magical prowess in the work of investigation, so they are supposedly loaned to veteran Watch members who need an extra edge for a difficult case. Typically they look like a usual Watch insignia: a metal disk, slightly tarnished. The metal is of an indecipherable alloy, green and weathered, but the sigil is still a perfect, unbent circle.

While carrying an attuned *Watchman's sigil*, you have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Intelligence (Investigation) checks. In addition, once per week, you may pose a single question by musing out loud while rubbing the circle between finger and thumb. You then gain insight into the answer, as if you had cast a *divination* spell.

Wicker Creel of the Light Step

Wondrous item, uncommon

These enchanted baskets come in a variety of sizes, ranging from a small basket a foot in diameter to a basket that could carry a person, two feet across and seven feet tall. Woven from simple reeds, these baskets appear nondescript, though they often have whimsical pictures painted on them. Anything placed inside of the basket does not increase the basket's weight, and no sense of the contents emerges from the basket—a creature or item in the basket can't be seen, heard, or smelled from outside, unless the lid is taken off and the contents directly observed. The wicker is not watertight, though the basket will float. Usually, porters use these for carrying heavy loads across the city, though enterprising sorts have found all manner of uses from smuggling people to delivery of offensively pungent cargo.

Chapter VI

The Dead

Kaja ran her thumb across a freshly scoured breastbone as she watched the installation of the Bone Church's newest addition. Located in a dead-end node accessed through the subterranean labyrinth beneath Redoubt's foundations, the chamber had been fortified over the decades with the bones of elves. Whether or not they truly contained fragments of Second Ascension magic was inconsequential as far as Kaja was concerned. She would have continued the practice for aesthetics alone.

Pieced together with elegant precision, femurs alternated with collections of smaller bones to create a zig-zag pattern on the walls. Columns of stacked skulls stretched to a curved ceiling plated with pelvic bones. Constructed from dismantled skeletons, a gruesome chandelier kept the crypt illuminated with precious oil lamps. Even though she still grappled with regret over the death of her elf lover, Kaja found comfort in the fact that Istustaya's bones would add to the protective magic keeping the Bone Church hidden from all who would deny Amarset's power. She'd loved Istustaya, but the elf's madness had become a liability. And as a priestess of the Bone Father, her duty was clear.

Pressed up against the cavern's longest wall, a series of makeshift cages crowded the aisle. Down in the apse, her architect-priest worked to integrate Istustaya's bones into the altar's sculpted pedestal. To Kaja's amusement, he kept his gaze averted from the wooden structures and their contents. Four of the seven interconnected cages were empty. The center one housed a holy man huddled in a far corner, his once-white robes soiled with his own waste, but the real prizes were in the two cages farthest from the altar. Kaja had chosen those occupants for their roles in Redoubt. The woman was a magistrate, the man a Forester, but those positions didn't matter anymore. The living had no power over the Dead.

One of Kaja's priests ushered a dwarf captain of the Nightcoats into the ossuary.

"You're late," she said, tapping the curved sternum against her palm. Its elegant length would be a perfect addition to the bones she wore as armor beneath the loose folds of her dress. Just as Istustaya would protect the church after death, so would she protect the priestess who'd loved her.

"I'm here now," the captain replied.

She waited for an expression of her due respect, but the red-headed little brute just stared at her. Kaja preferred clean-shaven men; their intent was far easier to read. The captain's beard shielded him as much as the bones protected her. And as much as she hated to admit it, she needed the dwarves. She needed their eyes and ears, needed access to their secret ways. And most of all, she needed their combined strength. Most of the dwarves who survived the Fall had been pressed into slavery, and now they moved unnoticed through the households of the wealthiest and most powerful residents of Redoubt. Without their help, it would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, for Kaja to carry out her unsanctioned experiments.

"Do you have it or not?"

The dwarf tossed the neatly tied pouch of poison to her. She snapped it out of the air and tucked it away.

"And the subject?"

"What about that one?" The captain nodded towards the prelate, who now drew strange symbols on the floor with his own shit.

Kaja shrugged. "He went mad."

The dwarf crossed his arms. "You're afraid he won't turn."

The living prisoner looked up. The Restless Forester screamed, a surprising sound from a creature with half its jaw torn away.

Kaja walked over to the cages and pulled a handle, opening the doors that linked the two empty pens.

"Oh, he'll turn," she said.

The priestess opened the next two, transforming the five pens into one long enclosure, and rattled the elf breastbone along the wooden slats as though ringing a dinner bell. The undead magistrate watched her approach with uncanny intent.

"This one is different," Kaja said as she tapped on the slats keeping the Dead woman contained. "She's no mere rotter like the other one. This one has cunning."

"This madness needs to end." The captain pulled the axe from the broad strap across his back. "You should destroy them all."

"Not yet," Kaja said as she released the door between the living and the Dead. "Not yet."

The Nature of Undeath

Amarset, the divine aspect of death, turned his face from the people and let the Angat and their one god eclipse honor with wealth and power.

– Janet Morris & Chris Morris, "Forerunner"

Seventy years ago, during the period sages have dubbed the Fall, the world broke.

Armies of the dead clawed their way from graves, tombs, and burial pits, bringing death and dark rebirth to all those caught in their path. Worse, even those who died separate from the attacks of the Dead—from disease, suicide, or other mundane misfortune—likewise returned to menace the living, with the same virulent tenacity of those who'd fallen under the claws and teeth of the Dead themselves.

Today, some seven decades later, this necrotic environment remains, although the Fall is long since over (see "The Night Ascension" sidebar). Everyone knows that if someone dies, there's a good chance that person will rise as one of the Dead. Animals can go Restless, too, but rarely do, as this requires the direct malice of the undead to force it; animals who die by other means do not rise.

But people? Well, undeath loves them best of all, and welcomes them with open arms.

A World of Evil

Whether one calls them "revnant" or "Fallen" or "Restless," the Dead of **The Lost Citadel** are all technically undead. Within that umbrella category, though, is a wide variety of forms to discover.

Some are fresh corpses, almost mistakable for living beings (however briefly). Others are little more than skeletons, strung together with fraying tendons and leathery strips of flesh. Most fall somewhere in between—the traditional ragged, rotting, often wound-riddled, shambling corpse. Others still, blessedly rare and terrible, barely resemble people at all anymore, and looking upon one of them is like gazing into the face of a horror elemental, if such a thing could exist.

This, then, is one of the most important traits to keep in mind about the undead of Redoubt: *They vary*. Some are slow and stumbling; some are impossibly, supernaturally fast and agile. Some are surprisingly weak, dangerous only in numbers or to the unprepared; others display the strength of many men.

Some variation applies to their level of sentience as well, albeit to a much lesser extent. Almost none of the Fallen are intelligent in any meaningful way, but some differences do exist. Some are *completely* mindless; they know absolutely nothing but "advance and consume," unaware of outside stimuli unless the stimuli provide a target or an obstacle. Most have roughly the sentience of a small predatory animal. They're capable of basic decision making and can recognize obvious threats. Some can form very basic plans and prove cunning enough to use tricks such as playing dead, or to use/improvise simple tools and weapons. And some have just enough sentience to be actively cruel and malevolent. All the undead are driven to kill and to consume by their nature, but these latter types enjoy causing fear and agony before the end.

Even worse for the poor folks of Redoubt, many of the undead have blatantly supernatural traits as well—that is, beyond the supernatural trait of being a walking cannibal corpse in the first place. As with physical prowess and intelligence, there seems to be no pattern, no rhyme or reason, as to which possess such traits and which don't or why a given Dead possesses any particular trait.

The Dead You Know

For all their fluid chaos, the Dead do share *some* traits in common. They all seek to consume and to kill. They do not *need* to feed, and when they do, it does not *need* to be sentient. Yet still they are driven to consume, and the humanoid races are still their primary focus. That level of violence, of malice, of hunger appears to be an instinctive part of even the least of the Dead. If they cannot consume—if, for instance, the jaw has been destroyed—they will still kill.

They are, by virtue of being dead, unnatural things, often nearly impossible to stop for good. The only viable option, if utter destruction (such as rendering or cremation) isn't viable, is to do so much damage that the creature literally cannot pose a threat. Dismemberment, crippling of all four limbs and the head, and similar methods work if performed thoroughly. Traditional methods—including beheading—are not so reliable. They might inconvenience the revnant, but they do not necessarily destroy it or stop it.

Certain kinds of undead have always existed in Zileska, among them the traditional ghosts and specters, but they were rare even before the Fall and this rarity remains true today. Spiritual undead are not of the Dead per se. Since the Fall, all corporeal undead except for unique exceptions fit the guidelines discussed herein, which means that the more sentient of traditional corporeal undead are either not found in **Lost Citadel** games or are reduced in intelligence.

The Four Orders

Very few people use specific names for specific types of undead. You will rarely hear "wight" or "dread eremite" spoken. To most, they are all simply "the Dead," and the Dead encompass a variety of powers and traits. More well educated Redoubters divide the Dead into the general

categories described below. Only a very select few, the most highly informed and specialized, break things down any further.

Rotters: The most basic of the Dead, rotters may have distinctiveness from one to another, but have no real personal identity or agency beyond their drives; they're essentially just undead shock troops. In Zileska most of the Fallen are classic reanimated corpses, returned with malice on their minds but not with any particular or significant supernatural powers to apply to their dark drives. Almost all animal Dead are rotters, but the rare example that qualifies as something else is always a *greater revnant*.

Revnants: Once you get above nameless shock troops, you arrive at the undead version of the classic infernal orders. These beings, ranked into houses like their infernal counterparts, appear by type in multitudinal numbers, even though each iteration may have a unique story, appearance, or concept hook. These Dead, also called "lesser revnants," can have unique traits, powers, and abilities.

Greater Revnants: Also called "Speakers," these are the Dead that other, lesser Dead either serve outright or otherwise orbit like dark satellites, drawn to the gravity of the greater star. Like other Dead, they begin as people, but quickly become something far different and horrifying. In a continuation of the infernal metaphor, greater revnants are like the greater devils of the Dead. They are absolute nightmares.

Malevolents: Although greater revnants can have complex drives and expressions, the people of Redoubt haven't seen any Dead truly capable of serious strategy or long-term/big-picture thinking... until now. That's where Malevolents come in. These are the undead generals calling the real shots in **The Lost Citadel**. In our infernal metaphor, they are the named Dukes of Hell, each one running an entire level.

Lost Citadel Monsters

As a setting, Zileska had its own unique character and composition before the Fall. Some monsters were staples of that lost fantasy landscape, while others were rare, if not unheard of entirely. After the Fall, this unique landscape grew even weirder.

The following monsters from the core manual are workable as-is, or as undead versions of themselves. (Obviously, many of them exist only out in the wilds, not in Redoubt proper.) Note that fiends, as a creature type, are part of the setting but forbidden from taking material shape in Zileska save under the rarest of circumstances, and thus don't appear in this list. The same holds true of most aberrations, which can exist as unique magical "accidents" but not as entire identifiable species.

Ankheg	Ghost (rare)	Ogre [2, 3, 4]
Blight [1]	Goblin [2, 3, 4]	Oni
Bugbear [2, 3, 4]	Golem (rare)	Quaggoth [2, 3, 4]
Centaur (rare) [2, 3, 4]	Griffin (rare)	Roc
Crawling Claw [3, 4]	Grimlock [2, 3, 4]	Roper
Cyclops (rare)	Hag	Shambling Mound
Death Knight [4, 5]	Harpy	Skeleton [3, 4, 6]
Elemental	Hobgoblin [2, 3, 4]	Specter (rare)
Ettercap	Hydra	Troll
Ettin [2, 3, 4]	Jackalwere	Wight [3, 4, 6]
Fomorian (rare)	Kuo-toa (rare)	Wraith (rare)
Fungi	Lich [4, 5]	Yeti [2, 3, 4]
Gargoyle	Lizardfolk [2, 3, 4]	Zombie [4, 6]
Ghoul [3, 4, 6]	Lycanthrope	
Minotaur [2, 3, 4]	Mummy [3, 4, 6]	

[1] The blight's origin in **The Lost Citadel** differs from the one presented in the core rules; as vampires do not exist in this setting, the blights' creator, Gulthias, cannot and did not either.

[2] For the most part, these creatures now exist only as undead versions of their former selves. That said, the DM is certainly welcome to have exploring PCs run into a last, isolated group of living survivors.

[3] Reduce Intelligence to 3 if undead.

[4] As an undead, this creature gains the "Woeful" trait.

[5] While these do not exist as creature types, you might use these statistics to represent a single, unique "malevolent" undead.

[6] Ghouls (which are known as "lesser ghasts" in ***The Lost Citadel***, when they are called any specific name at all), skeletons, and zombies are considered types of rotters; ghasts, mummies, and wights are considered revnants.

Some DMs may prefer to draw up new and unique expressions of certain classic monsters made Dead, and they're welcome to do so, but as a shorthand, one can simply add the Woeful trait and standard undead resistances and immunities (poison, disease, etc.) to the statistics block of whatever creature is being rendered as one of the Dead.

If you *do* want to differentiate your undead further—whether from the core rules or even elsewhere in this chapter—consider giving them a smattering of new/additional abilities and traits. Some possible examples include:

- Climb speeds and the spider climb ability.
- Acidic vomit attacks.
- Disease-causing claws or bites.
- Auras that cause cold, necrotic, or spiritual damage.
- Undead Fortitude (as described under "zombies" in the *MM*).

Again, though, even if you make no other alterations, Woeful should be added to any undead from the core rules that appear in a **Lost Citadel** campaign, unless you've chosen to give them some other means of causing spiritual damage instead.

Woeful. When this creature causes damage to a living target with an attack or an effect that forces a saving throw, that target must also make a DC XX Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d6 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular creature's Woeful trait for 24 hours.

The DC to resist this Woe damage, represented by the XX, can vary by creature. In most cases, the DC is a flat 10, but more powerful or more corrupt creatures might, at your discretion, deal spiritual damage that's harder to resist. These harder DCs are equal to 8 + one of the creature's ability modifiers of your choice. (Charisma is most common, but you might instead select Constitution for a physically tougher creature, or Intelligence for a spellcasting monster, for instance.)

And of course, you can always alter the DC by a small amount up or down from this base, as appropriate for the specific monster.

The Night Ascension

The previous age, the Second Ascension, came to a dark and bloody end in a period the world's remaining people refer to as the Fall. Magic sputtered, nature sickened and turned upon itself, and the Dead woke.

Today, some seventy-odd years later, the plague of undeath remains: Any living thing that dies can potentially rise as one of the Dead. Because of this harsh fact of daily life, most residents of Redoubt assume that they're still living *inside* the Fall, that the Fall goes on.

In reality, the Fall itself ended almost as quickly as it began, which means that as a separate earthly cycle, it's been over for many years. Redoubt's wisest sages and scholars have arrived at this conclusion by now, but what remains to be seen, and what they debate hotly, is exactly what kind of age has just *begun*.

Most of those same minds feel confident referring to it as the Third Ascension, but dissenting voices among them point out that nothing can be taken for granted with the world the way it is now, and that this new age might turn out to be something altogether worse for the living than even was the Fall.

Talk of a "Night Ascension" now swirls in those darkened halls of inquiry and thought. Rumors of a "thousand-year grave-dance" flit from parlor to parlor, leaving only chills in their passing. When those men and women of letters now gather to face the issue, they do so wrapped only in rags insufficient to cut the cold.

Ashborn

An ashborn appears to be freshly and severely burned. Fire flows through its veins and can be seen through the skin, and its eyes are hollow sockets filled with flame.

Born of Magic. Magic and Woe are closely linked. Channeling arcane forces carries the risk of corruption, and even those who simply have the misfortune to be slain by arcane magic may rise again infused with mystic fire.

Drawn to Magic. An ashborn is born from the touch of magic and hungers to slay those who wield this power. It can sense spellcasters from up to a thousand feet, and pursues them with an animal cunning. In combat, it focuses its attacks on spellcasters, even if this leaves it vulnerable to melee attackers.

Undead Nature. An ashborn doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Ashborn

Medium undead (revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 98 (15d8+30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	7 (–2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Insight +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but cannot speak
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Burning Blood. When an ashborn is damaged by a melee attack, the attacker takes 4 (1d8) points of fire damage.

Inner Flame. When an ashborn reaches 0 hit points it explodes in a blast of arcane fire. All creatures within 15 feet of the ashborn must attempt a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage and 3 (1d6) spiritual damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much of each type of damage on a successful one. A creature killed by this attack adds +4 to its roll on The Dead Rise table (see page 260), instead of the usual +3 for being slain by one of the Dead.

Magic Resistance. The ashborn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The ashborn makes two attacks, one with its claws and one with either its Blazing Aura or Fiery Bolt.

Searing Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d6) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage. The target must make a DC 10 Woe save or suffer 1 point of spiritual damage.

Blazing Aura. All creatures within 5 feet of the ashborn take 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Fiery Bolt. The ashborn chooses a point within 60 feet that it can see. All creatures within a 5-foot radius of that point must attempt a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half that damage on a successful one.

Dank Crawler

Dank crawlers form from the corpses of drowning victims, and always appear to have just dragged themselves from the depths regardless of how long they've actually been free of the water. They mindlessly seek to slay any sentient living thing they encounter.

Disgusting. Crossing paths with a dank crawler is a sickening experience. In addition to their moist, blued, water-bloated flesh, they stink of stagnation and rot, and the water that drips from them is oily and discolored. Their flesh and clothes crawl with maggots and mosquito larvae. Viscous, pitch-like fluid dribbles from their mouths, noses, ears, and eyes, as well as any open wounds; it also oozes out beneath their fingernails.

Corrosive. The cold, slimy fluids oozing from a dank crawler erode anything they touch, as if it had been worn down by years of erosion and rot. The dank crawler's maggots and mosquito larvae are immune to these effects, and treat the corrosive fluids as ordinary stagnant mud.

Wet. A dank crawler is always wet, as if channeling fluids from some endless reservoir. It cannot be dried out by any means until it is destroyed. Flames that come near it sizzle and sputter uselessly, and it can't catch fire or burn. Causing its fluids to sizzle changes but does not abate the dank crawler's nauseating stench.

Undead Nature. A dank crawler doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Dank Crawler

Medium undead (revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 128 (17d8+51)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (–4)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)

Saving Throws Wis +2
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Sickening. Any living creature with a sense of smell that moves to or starts its turn within 30 feet of the dank crawler must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution save or be poisoned. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also incapacitated until the end of its next turn. The creature may attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns to end the poisoned condition. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to this effect from any dank crawler for 24 hours.

Splash Damage. Anyone touching a dank crawler with bare skin feels the slimy cold of its fluid and its wriggling, burrowing maggots, taking 1d6 acid and piercing damage with each touch (or for each round contact is maintained). In addition, every time a dank crawler takes damage from any source, all living creatures adjacent to the dank crawler must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be splashed with corrosive fluid and fast-burrowing maggots, taking 1d6 points of acid and piercing damage.

Woeful. When a dank crawler causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must also attempt a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular dank crawler for 24 hours.

Actions

Bite. *Melee* Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8+5) acid and piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4+5) acid and piercing damage.

Projectile Vomit (recharge 5–6). The dank crawler vomits a torrent of vile fluid in a 20-foot cone. Each living creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid and poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Dread Eremite

A dread eremite is a corpse permeated by the pure force of Woe. Its flesh is rotting and sloughing from the bone, and where it has fallen away a figure of shadow can be seen. As the dread eremite takes damage, more of this dark force is revealed until it appears as little more than a skeleton held together by shadows.

A Deadly Curiosity. A dread eremite begins as a brilliant archivist, sage, or researcher consumed by a burning question: *What is the nature of the Fall?* Through study, the dread eremite learns the various paths that lead to Woe and embraces them, until his life dribbles away and he becomes a conduit for this power. He—it—comes to *understand* Woe in a way no living creature can know.

Agent of the Fall. The dread eremite views the Fall as a grand plan that must be seen through to its conclusion. It has no loyalty to any other creature, living or Dead. A dwarf dread eremite might take some pleasure in destroying humanity; an elf dread eremite may believe that the world must end with the Second Ascension. But mostly, a dread eremite sees a beauty in the Fall, and wishes to be present when the world finally ends. With this in mind, a dread eremite seeks to bring down Redoubt, but *how* it goes about this process varies by individual. A dread eremite isn't a charismatic being—it will not start a cult or lead a movement—but it can use its influence over the Dead to cause shamblers to act strategically, driving events in a particular direction. It can use its knowledge of the Fall to create powerful domains of Woe. Whatever its plans, a dread eremite will not rest until the world belongs to the Dead.

Undead Nature. A dread eremite doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Dread Eremite

Medium undead (greater revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 208 (32d8+64)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +9, Wis +9, Cha +8
Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Perception +9, Religion +9
Damage Immunities poison, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Consuming Aura. Any creature that starts its turn within 15 feet of a dread eremite suffers 5 points of necrotic damage for each Mark of Woe it possesses. If the creature has no Marks of Woe, it suffers 2 points of spiritual damage. The area within a 1,000-foot radius of the dread eremite is a domain of Woe: All Woe saving throws in this region have a +2 DC, and any time a creature takes spiritual damage, it takes an equal amount of necrotic damage.

Magic Resistance. A dread eremite has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Voice of the Fall. A dread eremite is aware of the presence of rotters and revnants within one mile and can provide general directions to these creatures. It can assume direct control of a rotter or revnant within range and use the senses of this creature; this requires concentration.

Actions

Multiattack. The dread eremite can use its Touch of Woe and make an attack with an Entropic Bolt.

Entropic Bolt. *Melee spell attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target takes 11 (2d6+4) necrotic damage and half that amount of spiritual damage. If the target has a Mark of Woe, they must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of the dread eremite's next turn. If the target has more than one Mark of Woe, it has disadvantage on this saving throw.

Touch of Woe. *Melee spell attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6+4) necrotic damage plus an additional 10 points of necrotic damage for each Mark of Woe the target possesses. If the target has no Marks of Woe, it suffers 3 points of spiritual damage. The target must make a DC 10 Woe save or suffer 1 point of spiritual damage.

Reactions

Woe Rising. When a dread eremite is struck by an attack or fails at a saving throw, it may use its reaction to avoid the attack or succeed at the saving throw. This is only possible if the source of the attack or effect is an individual with a Mark of Woe.

Legendary Actions

A dread eremite can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dread eremite regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Entropic Bolt. The dread eremite uses its Entropic Bolt attack.

Vessel of Woe (Costs 2 actions). The dread eremite regains 5 hit points for every creature within 20 feet that possesses a Mark of Woe.

Forlorn Child

A sweet little child is weeping in the streets. Surely you can spare a moment to help?

Only the corpses of the young can become forlorn children. Most were themselves killed by other forlorn children, but any child who rises as undead might spontaneously become one of these horrid creatures.

Beautiful and Sad. Forlorn children appear to be living creatures in most respects. Their bodies look healthy and supple, showing no sign of whatever illness or injury killed them. Only one thing reveals a forlorn child's lack of life: Forlorn children are always found weeping, with their little hands over their closed, tear-streaked eyes. They wait until someone approaches, perhaps to comfort them, and once their kindly prey has touched them, they look up and open their eyes.

The eyes of a forlorn child are dark pits into an unknown void; empty, gaping holes in a child's tear-streaked face. As soon as those eyes are revealed, the forlorn child springs to attack.

Disease Vectors. A forlorn child carries illness of a type that hits hardest on little children. Most adolescents and adults can shake off the disease like a bad flu or a mild pox, but infected children usually die within a week of the bite, in terrible pain and often rising as forlorn children themselves within mere seconds of death. When a forlorn child ravages a community's children, many parents fall victim a week later, when their own children rise.

Vicious. Forlorn children possess only an animal intelligence, responding not at all to language, nor to familiar faces and voices. When not luring in prey with their childlike weeping, they are savage and quick, wily and cruel. They use their small size to great advantage, ducking under obstacles and hiding to stalk victims, or squeezing through tight spaces to flee from threats. Despite a lifelike sense of self-preservation, however, forlorn children never wait more than a few hours before resuming their weeping "bait" demeanor in order to attack a new victim.

Undead Nature. A forlorn child doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Forlorn Child

Small undead (revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 26 (4d6+12)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6
Skills Deception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages none
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Disease. A forlorn child's bite carries disease. On any successful bite attack, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution save or become infected. On a successful save, the target is immune to the disease of that particular forlorn child for 24 hours.

Every time an infected character finishes a long rest, the character's hit point maximum is reduced by 1 hit point for each day of the disease. That is, 1 hit point after the first long rest, another 2 hit points after the second (for a total of 3), 3 hit points after the third (for a total of 6), and so forth. In addition, so long as the infection remains, the character suffers one level of exhaustion. This loss of maximum hit points, and this level of exhaustion, cannot be cured by any means while the character still has the disease. Once the disease is cured—through magic or successful saving throws—both the level of exhaustion and the reduction in maximum hit points can be removed with a long rest.

Infected characters may make an additional saving throw each day, after the prior effects are applied, to shake off the disease and heal naturally. Pre-adolescent children suffer disadvantage on this saving throw.

Woeful. When a forlorn child causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must also attempt a DC 13 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Pre-adolescent children have disadvantage on this saving throw and take double spiritual damage from attacks by a forlorn child. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular forlorn child for 24 hours.

Actions

Bite. : +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 2 (1d4) slashing damage, plus disease.

Gloomwraith

When certain immensely powerful undead (e.g., the Prince of Tears) place their mark on a mortal, that undead forms a connection to that creature and can then feed on their suffering. The longer the mortal resists, the stronger the bond becomes. Eventually the victim hears whispers offering a release from pain. This offer is a death sentence, and those who accept it become gloomwraiths—vessels for a fragment of that Malevolent's power.

Cloaked in Cold Flesh. The corpse that houses a gloomwraith is preserved by the spirit within. Its skin is pallid and cold, but a casual observer could mistake it for a living creature. An active DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine or Perception) check discovers its true nature.

When the gloomwraith exercises its full power, this pretense of life falls away. Wisps of shadow extend from the gloomwraith's skin, forming the outline of a misty elven figure. This shadowy aura is semi-tangible and shields the gloomwraith from physical attacks.

Puppet of the Prince. A gloomwraith is the hand of the Prince of Tears (or some other Malevolent). If the Malevolent has no immediate agenda, the gloomwraith defaults to going on a murderous rampage. But if there is work that can be done to further the Malevolent's plans, a gloomwraith can act as a subtle agent. It might lead a cult, or sow fear and despair as a demagogue or doomsayer. The gloomwraith retains the memories of its former life and can pose as the mortal it once was, but it possesses an uncanny talent for manipulating peoples' fears. Such a puppet might conceal its appearance with a mask and heavy clothing; such steps prevent a physical examination from revealing its true nature.

Undead Nature. A gloomwraith doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Gloomwraith

Medium undead (greater revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 135 (18d8+54)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Intelligence +7, Wisdom +8, Charisma +8
Skills Deception +8, Intimidate +8, Insight +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +8; any relevant skills it possessed in life
Damage Immunities poison
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Elvish and any languages it knew in life
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Embodiment of Despair. Any non-undead creature that moves to or begins its turn within 60 feet of the gloomwraith must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom check or become frightened. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A creature has disadvantage on these saving throws if it has more than one Mark of Woe. Once a target has made a successful save against this effect or the fear has been removed through magical means, it is immune to this power for the next 24 hours. The gloomwraith can activate or deactivate this aura on its turn without spending an action of any sort.

Lingering Spirit. When a gloomwraith reaches 0 hit points, its physical body is destroyed but the shadowy spirit remains. Its speed drops to zero, it regains 20 hit points, and it gains immunity to slashing, piercing, bludgeoning, fire, cold, and lightning damage. It cannot make slam attacks, but can continue to use Crushing Despair. It loses one hit point every minute until it is destroyed.

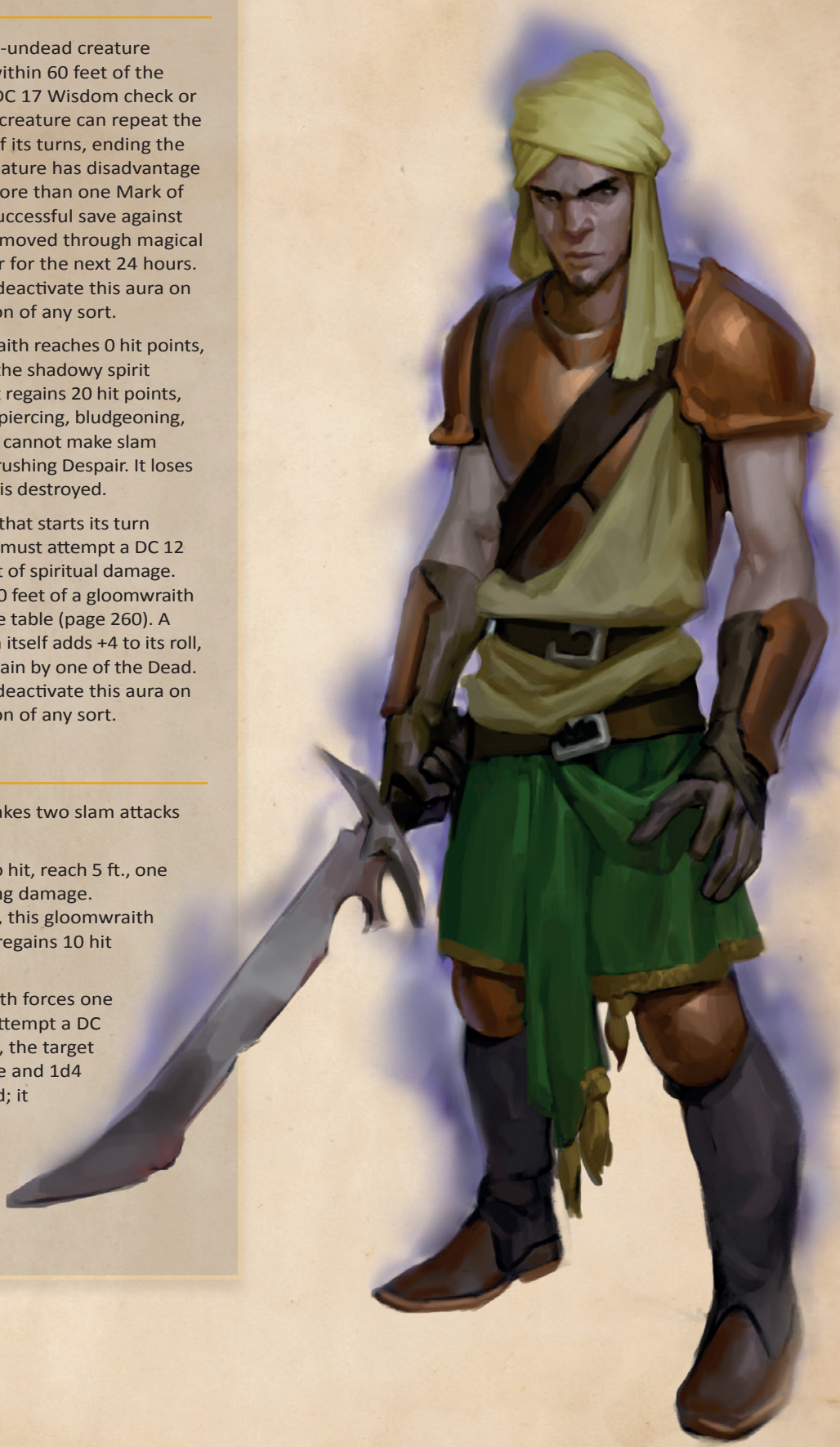
Woe-haunted Aura. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the gloomwraith must attempt a DC 12 Woe saving throw or suffer 1 point of spiritual damage. Any creature that dies within 2,000 feet of a gloomwraith adds +2 to its roll on The Dead Rise table (page 260). A creature killed by the gloomwraith itself adds +4 to its roll, instead of the usual +3 for being slain by one of the Dead. The gloomwraith can activate or deactivate this aura on its turn without spending an action of any sort.

Actions

Multiattack. The gloomwraith makes two slam attacks and uses Crushing Despair.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d8+3) bludgeoning damage. *Special*: If the target is frightened, this gloomwraith has advantage on the attack and regains 10 hit points if the attack hits.

Crushing Despair. The gloomwraith forces one living creature within 60 feet to attempt a DC 17 Wisdom save. On a failed save, the target takes 31 (5d10+4) psychic damage and 1d4 spiritual damage and is frightened; it takes half as much damage and is not frightened on a successful one. A creature with more than one Mark of Woe has disadvantage on this saving throw.



Grim Aggregate

Some particularly noxious Dead demonstrate the ability to incorporate other dead or animal remains into their bodies to repair or strengthen themselves, becoming grim aggregates. Grim aggregates incorporate any combination of humanoid and non-humanoid body parts. Some have extra limbs or two or more heads of different creature types, and any grim aggregate can manifest mouths on any parts of its body.

Many configurations of grim aggregate are possible, and every grim aggregate is unique.

Ever-Shifting. A grim aggregate's body is constantly shifting. It constantly rots and regenerates in patches all over its body, clearly decayed and obviously dead but never losing its physical integrity or becoming skeletal. Its overall shape is equally protean, bulging and writhing grotesquely as body parts form, merge together, and are reabsorbed. Its individual parts always return to a recognizable state—such as arms, talons, tails, or heads—but may appear amorphous and fluid in the midst of the change.

A grim aggregate is accompanied by a chorus of slithering, popping, rattling, and bubbling noises, which correspond to its shapeshifting, rotting, and healing at any given moment.

Adaptable. Grim aggregates can alter their body structures quickly. If a limb is removed, for example, the grim aggregate immediately shifts its bones and flesh to grow a new limb or to replace it with something else. Grim aggregates, therefore, cannot be disabled unless they are destroyed.

Ever-growing. A grim aggregate grows over time as it incorporates other undead or corpses. It can take weeks to reach Large size or mere minutes, as supplies allow. There is no known upper limit for how large a grim aggregate can become, but Large and Huge are the most common sizes.

Hunters. Grim aggregates retain some of their former intelligence, utilizing bestial cunning in hunting their prey. They gleefully slay any living creatures they encounter, but prefer sapient prey, and particularly prefer prey that was known to one of their heads in life. Because of this, those who find themselves pursued by a grim aggregate often see one of their lost loved ones' faces peering out at them from within the depths of this horror.

Undead Nature. A grim aggregate doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Grim Aggregate Attacks

Result	Attack Type*
1	Bite
2	Claw
3	Club
4	Hoof
5	Rock
6	Tail slap

Grim Aggregate (Large)

Large undead (greater revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 189 (18d10+90)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Wis +5
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages all languages spoken in life by its component bodies
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Regeneration. The grim aggregate regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the grim aggregate takes fire damage, this ability doesn't function at the start of its next turn.

Woeful. When a grim aggregate causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must also attempt a DC 13 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed saving throw, or half (minimum 1) as much on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular grim aggregate for 24 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The grim aggregate makes four attacks, determined randomly from the following options (see accompanying table). Roll 1d6 for each melee attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8+5) slashing damage.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d4+5) bludgeoning damage.

Hoof. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet.

Rock. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6+5) bludgeoning damage.

Tail slap. *Melee attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8+5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

* You can, of course, modify descriptions to suit. For instance, if you've described a grim aggregate as being made up entirely of humanoid parts, a claw attack might instead become a rusty dagger; a hoof becomes a gauntleted fist; and a tail slap, a powerful leg sweep.

Grim Aggregate (huge)

Huge undead (greater revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 237 (19d12+114)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	8 (-1)	22 (+6)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Wis +5
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages all languages spoken in life by its component bodies
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Regeneration. The grim aggregate regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the grim aggregate takes fire damage, this ability doesn't function at the start of its next turn.

Woeful. When a grim aggregate causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must also attempt a DC 13 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular grim aggregate for 24 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The grim aggregate makes four attacks, determined randomly from the following options (see table on page 287). Roll 1d6 for each melee attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (4d6+6) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d12+6) slashing damage.

Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (4d4+6) bludgeoning damage.

Hoof. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (4d6+6) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet.

Rock. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10+6) bludgeoning damage.

Tail slap. Melee attack: +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 26 (3d12+6) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Grisly Remnants

Any fragment of a corpse can potentially serve as a vessel for Woe, and on occasion even dismemberment isn't enough to prevent the Dead from rising. Such grisly remnants are mercifully rare. However, this very rarity means that people all too often overlook the threat.

Lurking Carnage. Grisly remnants are driven by brutal instinct. They often lie dormant until a victim comes within striking range, but once they rise they strike at the nearest target and fight until destroyed.

Lingering Within. While grisly remnants can be found on their own, they are often encountered in conjunction with other undead. Shamblers are easily dismembered, and in a pack of shamblers the first severed limbs might rise as grisly remnants. A vile maw or other more powerful undead creature could spawn viscera from its corpse shortly after it is slain. Victory over the Dead is never simple or clean.

Undead Nature. A grisly remnant doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Vile Limb

Small undead (rotter), neutral evil

A vile limb can be any piece of a body large enough to pose a threat. Typically this is an arm or a leg, but a vile limb could be a severed hand or even a rolling head. A vile limb moves by using its muscles and the constantly cracking bones within the limb, resulting in a serpentine length of muscle with shards of bone protruding through its skin.

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 27 (6d6+6)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4
Saving Throws Dexterity +4
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this range), passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Woeful. When a vile limb causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must make a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minumum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular vile limb for 24 hours.

Actions

Swift Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Viscera

Small undead (rotter), neutral evil

A viscera is a serpentine length of intestine dripping with vile acids. It coils around a victim, constricting and burning its prey. Once it's wrapped around a victim, it's very difficult to remove the creature and commensurately difficult to hurt it without also harming its victim.

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 44 (8d6+16)
Speed 15 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +3
Saving Throws Dexterity +4, Wisdom +1
Damage Resistances bludgeoning
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison, acid
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this range), passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Deadly Grip. When a viscera makes a successful attack, it wraps around its victim and begins to burn them. The viscera occupies the same space as the victim, and if the victim moves, the viscera moves with it. Any damage done to the viscera by anyone other than its victim is evenly split between the viscera and its victim. If an attack deals slashing damage, the attacker may attempt a DC 13 Dexterity check after the attack hits but before damage is rolled; if this check is successful, the viscera takes the full damage and the victim is unharmed. The victim of Deadly Grip can use its action to attempt to escape from the viscera. This requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If successful, the viscera is moved to an adjacent space of the victim's choice.

Woeful. When a viscera causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must make a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular viscera for 24 hours.

Actions

Entangle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage; the viscera moves into the target's space and wraps around the target. See Deadly Grip.

Burn. The viscera targets a creature on which it is maintaining Deadly Grip. The target must attempt a DC 13 Constitution save taking 1d4+4 points of acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Misery Mob

When certain very powerful undead or places of Woe fix their power on a mortal, the victim is driven to the depths of despair. Should the victim submit to this misery and take their own life, their corpse becomes a vessel for the power of that Malevolent. Those who stumble upon the corpse are swept up in blinding despair, a horror that overwhelms all reason and transforms innocents into a moaning mob. The victims lose all sense of self and awareness of their surroundings. Driven by the cursed corpse, the mob roams wildly, venting its terror and rage by tearing apart anyone unfortunate enough to cross its path.

Innocents Bound. A misery mob is made up of tormented people, sobbing and howling in rage and pain. They are oblivious to their surroundings and generally lash out at anyone within range. Adventurers dealing with the mob are constantly confronted with the fact that these people *aren't dead*; they are victims caught up by dark magic. They might include a mother and child, an old man, perhaps even someone the adventurers know. The misery mob isn't the most dangerous manifestation of the Dead; what makes it horrifying is that it pits the defenders of Redoubt against innocent people.

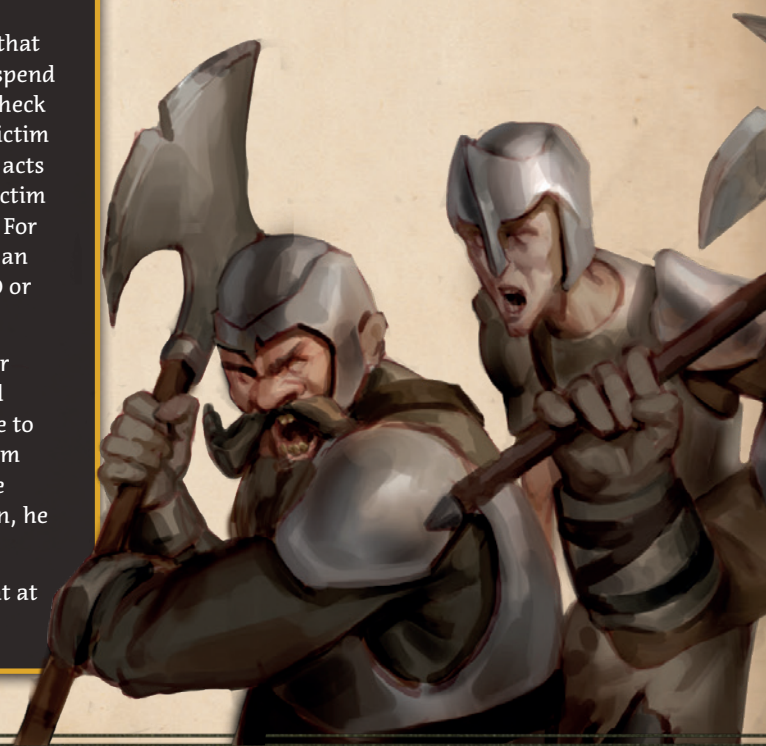
The Core Corpse. While the members of the misery mob are alive, the mob is driven by the undead creature at its heart. This core corpse hangs in the center of the mob as if suspended from a hook—body limp, feet a few inches from the ground. While it's possible to target the corpse directly, it is mystically linked to its victims. Members of the mob throw themselves in front of attacks targeting the core corpse, and even if the blow strikes true, a living member of the mob usually suffers the damage.

Freeing the Innocent

Any given victim can be saved by severing the mystic link between that individual and the mob. This can be done in a few ways. A PC may spend an action to attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to convince a victim to break free of the mob. If the PC knows the victim personally, she gains advantage on this check. The victim, if freed, acts just before the misery mob; if, at the start of the mob's turn, the victim is still within 15 feet of the mob, he is reabsorbed into the monster. For every five points by which the PC's Charisma check exceeds the DC, an additional victim breaks free; so, two victims if the check equals 20 or higher, three if it equals 25 or higher, and so forth.

Alternatively, a victim can be forcibly removed from the mob, either through physical force or through spells targeted at that individual rather than at the mob entire. While the mob as a whole is immune to grappling and charm, a PC can grapple a single victim and pull them away, or charm a specific victim and order them away. Again, if the victim is still within 15 feet of the mob at the start of the mob's turn, he is reabsorbed into the monster.

For each victim successfully freed—that is, more than 15 feet distant at the start of the mob's turn—the mob itself loses 5 hit points.



Living and Undead. The core corpse is an undead creature and doesn't need to eat, drink, or sleep. But the people in the mob are still alive. The power that animates the mob will drive them through exhaustion, starvation, and even mystical sleep, but they will eventually drop dead—at which point the mob leaves them behind, assimilating new innocents to replace them. The victims are linked to the core corpse; if the corpse is turned the living victims move with it, and even if it's targeted with an attack that only affects undead, the mystic link spreads the damage through the mob.

Misery Mob

Medium–Huge Undead (revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 90 (special; see Variable Size)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, restrained, stunned; Special: While the mob as a whole is immune to these effects, individual members can be charmed, grappled, or restrained; see sidebar.
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but cannot speak
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Channel of Woe. The core corpse is a powerful channel for Woe. Any time a creature begins its turn enveloped by the mob, it must make a DC 10 Woe saving throw or suffer one point of spiritual damage.

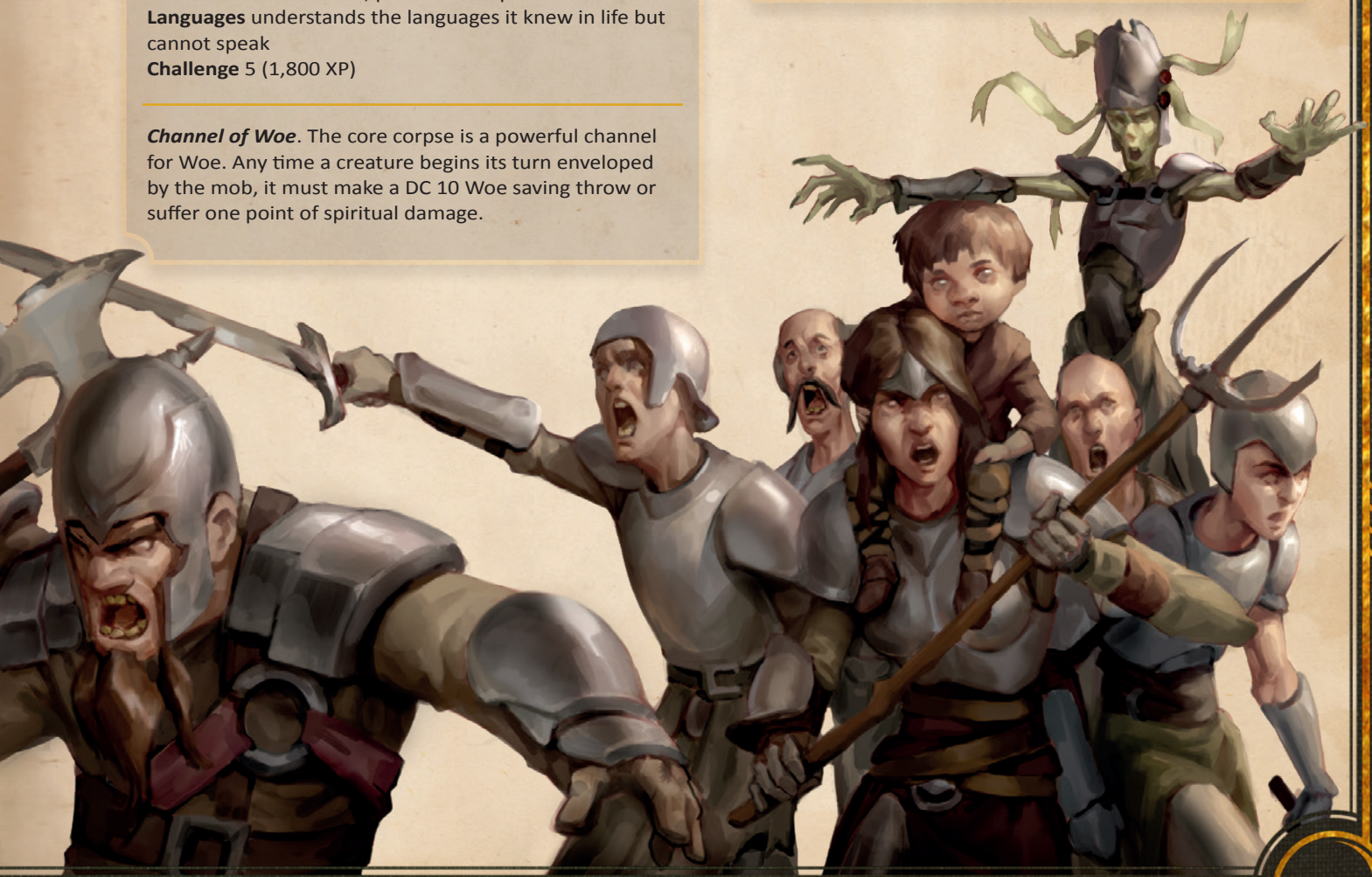
Enveloping Swarm. A misery mob swarms over its victims, overwhelming and enveloping them. The misery mob can move through or occupy squares containing other creatures. This doesn't draw attacks of opportunity.

Variable Size. The core corpse has 5 hit points. Every 5 hit points above that represents an innocent person caught up in the mob. This also affects the size of the mob; for every ten hit points in the mob (round up), it takes up one contiguous square. So when the mob has 30 hit points, it consists of the corpse and five innocents, and it takes up 3 adjacent squares. The mob isn't limited to a particular formation; whenever it moves, it can shift its shape.

Actions

Rampage. All creatures within the misery mob's space suffer 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage and 1 point of spiritual damage.

Consume. Any living humanoid with 5 or fewer hit points currently enveloped by the mob must attempt a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw. Failure means that the mob regains 5 hit points and the creature is consumed and added to its victims, becoming a part of the mob until freed (see sidebar) or slain. The mob cannot exceed 90 hit points in this way, and only consumes enough creatures to reach 90 hit points.



The Prince of Tears

Medium undead (Malevolent), neutral evil

The Dead cannot be questioned. They consume and they kill, but there is no driving intelligence to their actions. The living yearn for an explanation, for some *reason* for their suffering. People draw on their nightmares and waking fears to paint pictures of the malevolent forces that might be directing the Dead.

One of these tales tells of the Prince of Tears, an elven lord active at the end of the Second Ascension. Despite his long life, the Prince feared death. He unearthed a ritual that let him prolong his own existence by feeding on the suffering of others. According to this story, the Prince inflicted horrors upon his own people so that he could draw on their misery and pain. For his efforts, he has awakened into this new age. As a Malevolent, he still feeds on the pain of the living, but has grown wise in a way the living never could. The last city is the feast hall of the Prince of Tears, and he intends to savor his meal.

Truth in Legend. This is a story people tell, a way to explain the horror that has consumed the world. It's fiction, or so most believe; a metaphor, a parable. Yet it is grounded in truth. The Prince of Tears is a mighty spirit, its lifeless eye turned to Redoubt. It marks victims and draws strength from their suffering. But what is the true story of the Prince of Tears? These are but a few possibilities. Use whichever best fits your campaign, or draw inspiration to create your own.

- The Prince is an inhuman lieutenant and harbinger of an even greater Malevolent, the force that truly drives the Dead. It despises humans—the children of the new age—and preys exclusively on humanity.
- The Prince of Tears has no direct connection to the rising of the Dead; it is merely an opportunist, drawn back to the world by intense misery. It is the spirit of an ancient elf lord, and the suffering of elves gives it the greatest joy. It is elves that it chooses for its Mark, and elven artifacts that will be linked to its eventual return.
- The Prince isn't responsible for the Dead; it was created because of them. The Prince of Tears is a pure manifestation of peoples' fear and despair. Its appearance and actions shift to reflect the stories people tell of it. If all the people of Redoubt stopped being afraid, even for a moment, the Prince would be destroyed.

Shadow of Fear. At the start of a campaign, the Prince of Tears is a disembodied force; it observes Redoubt but cannot long or easily manifest in the world. At your discretion, it may be able to influence the actions of the Dead. It uses the Mark of Tears to torment specific individuals; it draws strength from the suffering of these chosen victims, and when they die they may rise as misery mobs or gloomwraiths. Ultimately, it seeks to manifest fully in the physical world, but what does that require? Time is surely a major factor; the longer people are suffering and afraid, the stronger the Prince becomes. He can create gloomwraiths when a strong-willed person succumbs to his torment, and it could be that he needs a specific number of gloomwraiths in the world before he can return. But his return could be tied to other factors. Perhaps there are elven artifacts hidden in vaults below Redoubt—things that must be gathered together or destroyed. Maybe a ritual must be performed at a particular time by a hundred willing mortals, requiring a gloomwraith to establish a cult that sees the Prince as their only hope against the Dead—a spirit that will take away their fears.

Whatever the case, the champions of Redoubt experience the growing power of the Prince of Tears over time. They encounter a tormented soul with the Mark of Tears who later dies. An ally or loved one is marked and spawns a misery mob after taking their own life. Then one of the heroes is himself marked. Can he resist? He encounters a gloomwraith, showing the fate that awaits should he succumb. This is a story that should evolve over the course of many levels, building towards the ultimate encounter with the physical incarnation of the Prince.

While the gloomwraith and the misery mob are specifically vessels for the Prince of Tears, it might potentially act through any undead creature. A creature serving as a vessel for the Prince gains +10 hit points and the Woeful Aura ability.

Woeful Aura: Any enemy that starts its turn within 15 feet of this creature suffers 1 point of spiritual damage. Any Mark of Woe gained by a creature within this aura is automatically a Mark of Tears.

Defeating the Prince. If and when the Prince finally manifests, it cannot be defeated through mundane means. There is *some* key to its destruction, and it can only be reduced to 0 hit points by a character or attack that meets this condition. The nature of this weakness should be tied to the story the campaign has developed around the Prince, but here are a few possibilities.

The Prince of Tears can only be slain...

- *... by someone wielding the ancient Elven sword that killed it once before.*
- *... if someone speaks its true name as they strike the killing blow.*
- *... by someone bearing the Mark of Tears, someone who has suffered the deepest tragedy and found a path back from despair.*
- *... if no one within sight feels the slightest fear.*

Keeper of Secrets. When adventurers finally face the Prince of Tears, highlight the fact that it *knows* them. It has followed—and possibly orchestrated—their failures and losses over the course of their careers. When it uses abilities like Crushing Despair and Feed on Fears, it should *talk* about the tragedies its victims have endured or the things they fear.

Undead Nature. The Prince of Tears doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

The Prince of Tears

Medium undead (Malevolent), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 270 (36d8+108)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Intelligence +10, Wisdom +11, Charisma +13
Skills Deception +13, Intimidate +13, Insight +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +13
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Elvish, telepathy 500 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the Prince of Tears fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Embodiment of Despair. Upon encountering the Prince of Tears, any non-undead creature within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom check or become frightened. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A creature has disadvantage on all of these saving throws if it has more than one Mark of Woe. Once a target has made a successful save against this effect or the fear has been removed through magical means, it is immune to this power for the next 24 hours.

Fated Death. The Prince of Tears can only be permanently destroyed by one specific method, as described under Defeating the Prince. If the Prince is reduced to 0 hit points under any other circumstances, it reforms in 1d10 days. At that time, one undead within 10 miles of where the Prince died abruptly transforms into the Prince reborn.

Master of Fear. The Prince of Tears' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.
At will: *darkness*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *phantasmal force*, *phantasmal killer* (5d10 psychic damage)
1/day: *counterspell*, *feeblemind*

Turn Resistance. The Prince of Tears has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Woe-haunted Aura. Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the Prince of Tears suffers 2 points of spiritual damage. If that creature has one or more Whisper of Death marks, one of those marks transforms into a Mark

of Tears. Any Mark of Woe gained by any creature within a mile of the Prince of Tears is automatically a Mark of Tears rather than any other type, and any creature that dies within a mile of the Prince adds +2 to its roll on The Dead Rise table (page 260). In addition, a creature slain by the Prince personally adds +4 instead of the usual +3 for being slain by one of the Dead.

Actions

Multiattack. The Prince of Tears makes one Consume Life attack and uses Crushing Despair.

Consume Life. Melee Spell Attack: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 32 (6d8+6) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Crushing Despair. The Prince of Tears forces a target within 60 feet to attempt a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target takes 39 (6d10+6) psychic damage and 1d4 spiritual damage and is frightened. It takes half as much damage and is not frightened on a successful one.

Reactions

Misfortune. When an enemy makes a successful attack roll targeting the Prince of Tears, the Prince can use its reaction to turn that success into a failure. If there is another enemy within range of the attack and within 10 feet of the Prince, it can choose to force a new attack roll against this new target.

Legendary Actions

The Prince of Tears can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the following options. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Prince of Tears regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Feed on Fear. The Prince of Tears regains 5 hit points for each creature within 20 feet that is frightened or carries the Mark of Tears.

Sow Fear. The Prince casts *fear* or *phantasmal killer*. These effects require concentration, just like normal spells.

Crushing Despair (Costs 2 actions). The Prince of Tears uses its Crushing Despair attack.

The Mark of Tears

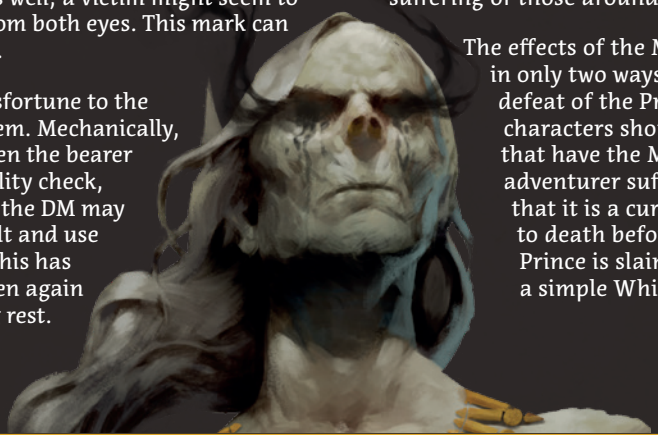
Pity those who fall under the gaze of the Prince of Tears, for their days will be filled with misery and despair until they choose to end their own suffering.

The Mark of Tears is a Mark of Woe (see page 258). It can be acquired at any time a player character would normally acquire a Mark of Woe, either at the DM's discretion or added to the random table. This is especially relevant if this mark is the result of an encounter with a gloomwraith or a misery mob, but it is also reasonable to target someone who has suffered extreme loss or tragedy with this mark, as their misery draws the attention of the Prince. The mark has a physical manifestation: a tear-shaped scar or tattoo that appears near an eye. The effects of the mark increase over time, and this physical manifestation may evolve as well; a victim might seem to have bloody tears flowing from both eyes. This mark can be acquired more than once.

The Mark of Tears draws misfortune to the bearer and those around them. Mechanically, this has a simple effect: When the bearer has just succeeded at an ability check, saving throw, or attack roll, the DM may force them to reroll the result and use the new roll. Initially, once this has happened, it does not happen again until the bearer takes a long rest.

If the bearer has acquired this Mark more than once, the DM can force another reroll prior to a long rest if the first one succeeded in spite of the reroll. For each additional Mark of Tears, the DM can force an additional reroll before a long rest, until she either runs out of marks or the reroll finally turns a success into a failure.

In addition to this concrete effect, the bearer is a general vector for misfortune. People the bearer cares about fall ill or suffer injuries. The party stumbles into bad situations that could have been avoided. As time goes by the victim begins having dreams or hearing whispers: nightmares emphasizing that they are bringing pain to those around them, focusing on their failures and losses, urging them to end this suffering and the suffering of those around them.



The effects of the Mark of Tears can be mitigated in only two ways: death or the ultimate defeat of the Prince of Tears. Ideally, player characters should encounter other people that have the Mark of Tears before any adventurer suffers it. You want them to *know* that it is a curse that hounds its victims to death before you place it on a PC. If the Prince is slain, each Mark of Tears becomes a simple Whisper of Death mark instead.

Shambler

The people of Redoubt live with a simple truth. When someone dies, they may rise again with one goal: to slay those who still live. Most rise as shamblers. These lumbering corpses cannot be reasoned with and have no memory of their former lives, but they do have inhuman strength and endless hunger, and will not stop until they are torn apart.

Relentless Killers. Shamblers are the simplest of the Dead. They instinctively form packs, joining with others of their kind. But they aren't cunning hunters; they rely on brute force and numbers to overwhelm their enemies. A shambler generally attacks the nearest living target, though they prioritize victims grappled by clinging shamblers.

Lost Lives. A shambler is a deadly threat that must be destroyed before it kills others. But it is also the corpse of an innocent person, someone who had a life and a story brought to a sudden end. A clinger might be a child seen playing in the street days before. A pack of shamblers might have been the denizens of a favorite tavern. Battling shamblers is visceral and personal. These aren't faceless beasts the defenders of Redoubt are hacking apart; just days or hours ago, they were innocent people living normal lives.

Dismemberment. Shamblers feel no pain. They fight until their bodies are shattered or torn apart. Much of the time, "damage" is metaphorical; hit points reflect a creature's ability to evade an attack. Not so for shamblers. Every hit is palpable. Bones are shattered. Organs are punctured. Defeating a shambler is a brutal, ugly business. In addition, if an attack deals a significant amount of physical damage it can sever a limb. The threshold varies based on the type of shambler (see individual stat blocks), but if a single attack inflicts the dismemberment value, roll on the following table to see what has been lost.

1d20	Result	Effect
1–9	Leg	Reduce the shambler's speed by 10 ft.
10–18	Arm	The shambler has disadvantage on attacks.
19–20	Head	Double the damage inflicted by this attack.

Dismemberment isn't clean or absolute. A shambler loses enough of the affected limb to make it useless. When an arm is dismembered by slashing damage, it could be neatly severed at the shoulder. But if it's dismembered by bludgeoning damage, perhaps the forearm has been completely shattered. If a shambler survives the dismemberment of its head, then some part of it is still intact; it's just an especially gruesome sight.

Undead Nature. A shambler doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Shambler

Medium undead (rotter), neutral evil

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 53 (7d8+21)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Wisdom +1
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but cannot speak
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Dismemberment. A shambler suffers dismemberment from any physical attack that deals 9 or more points of damage.

Woeful. When a shambler causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must make a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular shambler for 24 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The shambler makes two unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage.

Clinging Shambler

Small undead (rotter), neutral evil

These small shamblers typically rise from the bodies of children. Lack of mass and muscle reduce the strength of these creatures. When a clinging shambler attacks, it latches onto one of its victim's limbs, digging in with teeth and nails—becoming a literal dead weight that hinders a victim and leaves them vulnerable to other shamblers. Clinging shamblers can adhere to any surfaces, and might lie in wait on a ceiling or wall.

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 20 (3d6+9)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Stealth +4
Saving Throws Dexterity +4, Wisdom +1
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but cannot speak
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Dismemberment. A clinging shambler suffers dismemberment from any physical attack that deals 8 or more points of damage.

Unnatural Speed. A clinging shambler can dash as a bonus action.

Woeful. When a clinging shambler causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must make a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular clinging shambler for 24 hours.

Actions

Clinging Strike. Melee attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 13; if the clinging shambler has lost an arm, the victim has advantage on the escape check).

Relentless Grasp. The clinging shambler targets a creature it has grappled. It maintains the grapple and inflicts 5 points of piercing damage as it digs in with its teeth and nails. Both the shambler and its victim are restrained until the start of the shambler's next turn.

Crawling Shambler

Medium undead (rotter), neutral evil

A crawling shambler possesss tremendous upper body strength, but cannot use its legs or stand upright. A crawler might have severe lower body injuries, or even be severed at the waist. A crawling shambler typically hides in plain sight, playing dead until someone moves close enough for an attack.

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 85 (10d8+40)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Skills Deception +3, Stealth +1
Saving Throws Wisdom +1
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but cannot speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Close to the Ground. An attack roll made against a crawling shambler has advantage if the attacker is within 5 feet of the shambler. Otherwise it has disadvantage. A crawling shambler suffers no ill effects or penalties from being prone.

Dismemberment. A crawling shambler suffers dismemberment from any physical attack that deals 12 or more points of damage. It suffers no ill effects from losing a leg.

Woeful. When a crawling shambler causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must make a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d6 spiritual damage on a failed save, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular crawling shambler for 24 hours.

Actions

Death Grip. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The shambler can have only one target grappled at a time.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. If the crawling shambler has a target grappled, it maintains the grapple. *Hit*: 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

Tormented Stalker

Spawned on occasion by those who die in great physical or emotional pain, the tormented stalker appears at first glance like any other risen undead. It becomes quickly apparent, however, that these Fallen are different from the average rotter.

Skillful. Although slower, dumber, and less adroit than they were in life, tormented stalkers retain the skills they had before death, and sometimes other abilities as well. They are smarter, faster, and more cunning than ordinary shamblers. Tormented stalkers can come with any skill set, but they are slightly more common among the remains of low- to mid-level characters.

Obsessed. Unlike most of the Dead, a tormented stalker does not attack the living randomly. It defends itself brutally if attacked, but otherwise ignores potential prey in pursuit of its one driving goal.

A tormented stalker cares only for feasting upon the last person to cause it pain, whether of heart or of body. Sometimes this leads to it pursuing—perhaps even justly—its own murderer. Other times, this might lead to a vendetta against the healer who tried to save it, a former lover, the Magistrate who sentenced it to die, or similar obsessions. Tormented stalkers are not interested in justice. If their actions happen to lead, in some cases, to just ends, this is coincidental to the stalker's near-mindless drive for vengeance. Tormented stalkers cannot be reasoned with or otherwise appeased, and they unflinchingly slay any who fight to defend the objects of their obsession.

Sadly, even completing its quest for vengeance won't lay a tormented stalker to rest. It simply turns its ire to the next-most recent person who harmed it in life. And the next. And the next...

Undead Nature. A tormented stalker doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Tormented Stalker

Medium undead (revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d8+40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (-1)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	16 (-3)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +2, Perception +5, Survival +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing
Damage Immunities cold, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but does not speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Poisonous Torment. An aura of suffering surrounds the tormented stalker, infusing its melee attacks with supernatural toxicity. Any time a tormented stalker deals melee damage in combat, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or take an additional 17 (5d6) poison damage.

Scent of the Quarry. Through supernatural means, a tormented stalker always knows the direction in which its quarry lies, so long as it and its quarry are on the same plane.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the tormented stalker to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the tormented stalker drops to 1 hit point instead.

Woeful. When a tormented stalker causes damage to a living target with an attack, that target must also attempt a DC 10 Woe saving throw. The target takes 1d4 spiritual damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much (minimum 1) on a successful saving throw. Once a specific target has taken spiritual damage due to this trait, it is immune to further spiritual damage from this particular tormented stalker for 24 hours.

Actions

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10+2) if used with two hands, plus poisonous torment.

Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 3 bludgeoning damage, plus poisonous torment.

Vile Maw

A vile maw is a corpse, seemingly still alive when viewed from a distance, that is infused with dark power and an all-consuming hunger.

Death's Territory. A vile maw may rise where many people have died, and begins its existence by devouring the corpses around it. Highly territorial, a vile maw won't venture far from the place of its death and rebirth. But anyone who enters its domain—a particular building, a maze of alleys, a rooftop—will be hunted down and consumed. While the vile maw destroys the bodies of its victims, the pieces it leaves behind are often tainted by its evil; the charnel pit of a vile maw is often filled with grisly remnants (page 289).

A False Life. A vile maw is sustained by the life force of its victims. This power heals obvious injuries and gives it the appearance of a healthy, living being. This appearance is belied by its clothing; a vile maw pays no attention to its clothes, and they are typically torn and stained with gore. Any semblance of humanity is lost when the vile maw engages its prey. Its mouth unhinges and stretches to an impossible width, revealing multiple rows of teeth. It moves with superhuman speed and agility, fighting until it is torn apart.

Dismemberment. The power that sustains a vile maw keeps it fighting until it is completely broken or torn apart. Every successful attack represents palpable damage, but its unnatural vitality and the energy it draws from its *vile bond* allow it to survive horrific injuries. However, if a single attack inflicts *12 or more points of physical damage* (bludgeoning, slashing, or piercing) it can sever a limb. If this occurs, roll on the following table to see what has been lost.

1d20	Result	Effect
1–9	Leg	Reduce the vile maw's speed by 10 ft.
10–18	Arm	If a vile maw loses both arms, it cannot make a claw attack.
19–20	Head	Double the damage inflicted by this attack.

A crippling injury to the head removes a portion of it, but the vile maw's massive mouth remains. Severing limbs can actually work against attackers. At the DM's discretion, limbs removed from a vile maw might immediately animate as grisly remnants.

Undead Nature. While a vile maw is driven by an endless hunger, it doesn't actually require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Vile Maw

Medium undead (revnant), neutral evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but cannot speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Dismemberment. A vile maw suffers dismemberment from any physical attack that deals 12 or more points of damage. This damage is calculated before damage is divided by Vile Bond.

Hideous Appetite. A vile maw regains all lost hit points after consuming the corpse of a creature it has killed. This takes approximately five minutes.

Vile Bond. When a vile maw bites a living creature, one of its teeth comes loose and burrows into the wound. When the vile maw is injured, all damage dealt by the attack is divided equally among the vile maw and the creatures it has infected with this Vile Bond; for instance, if the vile maw is struck for 12 points of damage and has a Vile Bond to two people, the vile maw only suffers four points of damage and it passes four points to each of its victims. Regardless of the original type of damage, the damage inflicted on victims of the vile bond is necrotic.

The victim of a vile bond may attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the bond is broken. Any creature can use its action to make a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check on the victim of a Vile Bond. If this check is successful, the tooth is removed from the wound and the bond is broken.

Actions

Multiattack. A vile maw makes two attacks, one with its claws and one with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage and 2 spiritual damage, and the target is afflicted with Vile Bond.

Claws. *Melee Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d4+4) slashing damage.

The Lost Citadel

CHARACTER NAME

CLASS & LEVEL | BACKGROUND | PLAYER NAME

RACE | ALIGNMENT | EXPERIENCE POINTS

STRENGTH

DEXTERITY

CONSTITUTION

INTELLIGENCE

WISDOM

CHARISMA

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

- ○ ____ Strength
- ○ ____ Dexterity
- ○ ____ Constitution
- ○ ____ Intelligence
- ○ ____ Wisdom
- ○ ____ Charisma

SAVING THROWS

- ○ ____ Acrobatics (Dex)
- ○ ____ Animal Handling (Wis)
- ○ ____ Arcana (Int)
- ○ ____ Athletics (Str)
- ○ ____ Deception (Cha)
- ○ ____ History (Int)
- ○ ____ Insight (Wis)
- ○ ____ Intimidation (Cha)
- ○ ____ Investigation (Int)
- ○ ____ Medicine (Wis)
- ○ ____ Nature (Int)
- ○ ____ Perception (Wis)
- ○ ____ Performance (Cha)
- ○ ____ Persuasion (Cha)
- ○ ____ Religion (Int)
- ○ ____ Sleight of Hand (Dex)
- ○ ____ Stealth (Dex)
- ○ ____ Survival (Wis)

SKILLS

ARMOR CLASS

INITIATIVE

SPEED

Hit Point Maximum _____

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total _____

HIT DICE

SUCCESSES ○○○

FAILURES ○○○

DEATH SAVES

NAME	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE/TYPE

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

Pneuma Point Maximum _____

(20 + Proficiency Bonus + Modifiers)

CURRENT PNEUMA POINTS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

FEATURES & TRAITS

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

PERSONALITY TRAITS

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

NM

CM

GM

FM

TM

EQUIPMENT

MARKS OF WOE

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THE LOST CITADEL

SPELLCASTING ABILITY

SPELL SAVE DC

SPELL ATTACK BONUS

SPELLCASTING CLASS

0 LESSER MAGICS

SPELLS KNOWN

SLOTS TOTAL

SLOTS EXPENDED

1

PREPARED | SPELL NAME

2

3

4

5

BASE WOE SAVE

Roll 1d20 (DC 10)

SPELLCASTING SAVE: DC 7 + spell level

RITUAL CASTING: no woe save if arcana check successful; as spell if failed

Ritual Level	Arcana DC
1st	12
2nd	13
3rd	15
4th	16
5th	18

ADDITIONAL RITUALS: See p. 260 for Core spells given the ritual tag

WOE MISHAP TABLE

ROLL	RESULT
1-10	Spell fails
11-40	Caster takes d6 spiritual damage
41-50	Caster + all living beings within d4 x 10 feet take d6 spiritual damage (others can save at the same DC for half damage)
51-60	Caster radiates d6 x 10-foot aura that functions as Domain of Woe for 2d10 hours
61-90	1d4+1 undead with CR equal to spell level rise 2d10 x 20 feet from caster
91-95	Area centered where spell was cast becomes Domain of Woe
96-100	Roll twice, combining results

ADDITIONAL TRAITS & TREASURES

SPELLS KNOWN

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- The game text following the Dwarf Traits header on page 36, continuing into the entirety of page 37. The game text following the Elf Traits header on page 40, continuing into the entirely of page 41.
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- The game text of page 56.
- The game text of pp. 57—61
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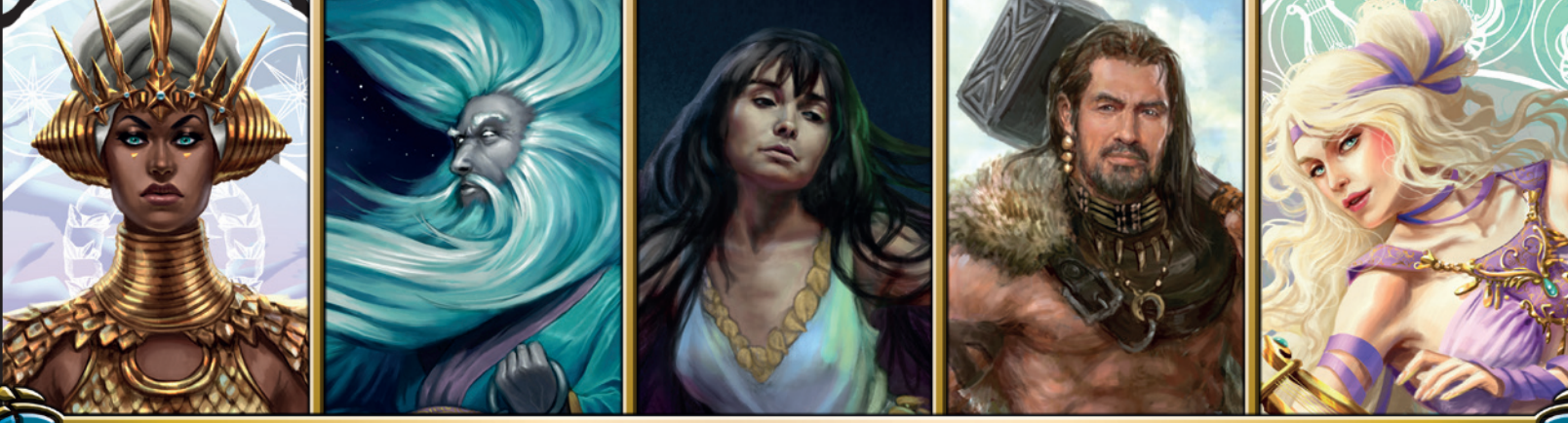

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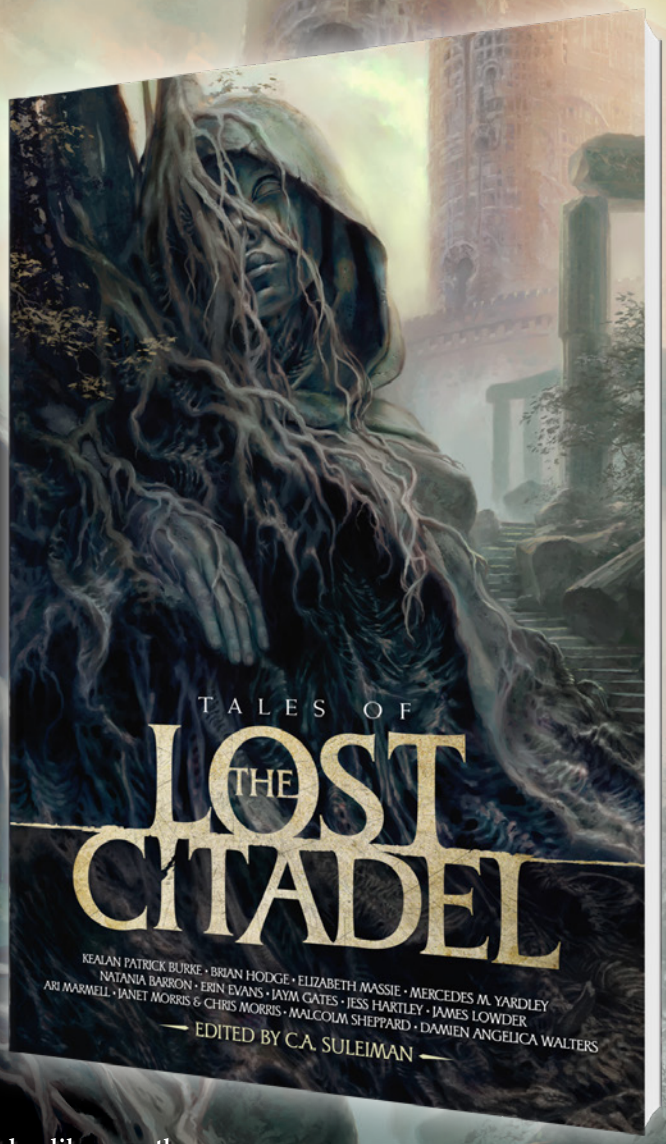

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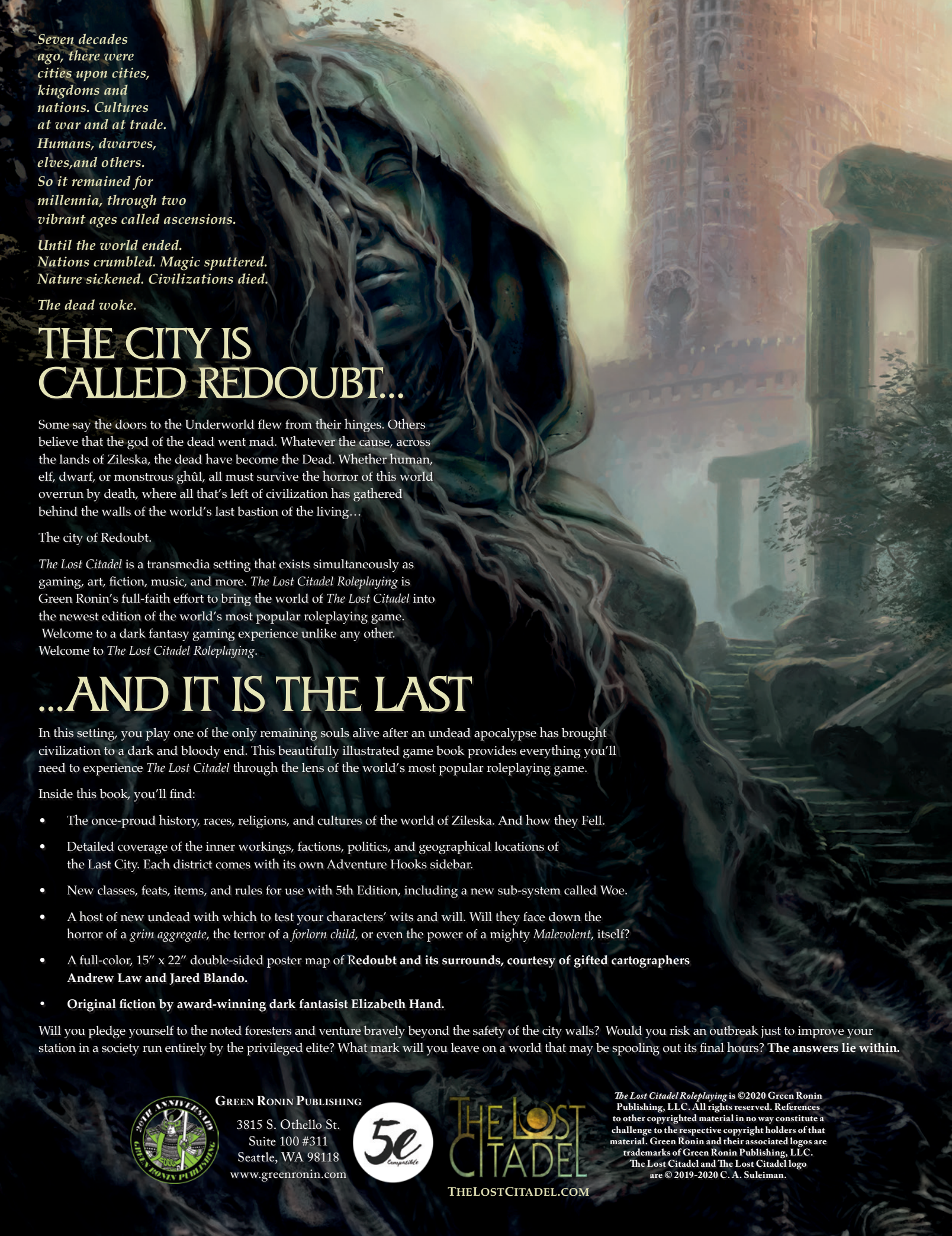

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