**Grasscloaks**

*This document provides a comprehensive examination of the Grasscloaks, a scattered network of marauders who thrive in the lawless expanse of The Scythes. It explores their origins, structure, methods of survival, territorial influence, and relationships with the broader regions of Halferth. Included within is an analysis of their internal conflicts, predatory tactics, and evolving role as mercenaries for hire. This document is designed to offer clear insight into the Grasscloaks' existence, their tenuous balance of power, and the persistent threat they pose to local populations and political stability.*

**Overview:**The Grasscloaks are a loosely organized network of marauders that operate within the blade-riddled plains of **The Scythes**. Their name is derived from the distinctive cloaks they wear, woven from the sharp-edged grass native to the region, providing both camouflage and brutal utility in combat. These cloaks also serve as effective protection against the razor-sharp blades of **Scythesgrass**, a necessity for survival in their homeland. Existing without centralized leadership or formalized structure, the Grasscloaks thrive on opportunistic raids, ambushes, and theft, exploiting the uncharted nature of **The Scythes** to evade capture and orchestrate sudden attacks on travelers and settlements.

Rather than rumored encampments, it is well known that hidden camps are spread throughout **The Cut**, with one main settlement known as **Crucible**—a brutal hub of violence and barter that makes the wildest frontier towns look tame by comparison. Despite sporadic attempts by the **Constabulary** to quell their presence, the Grasscloaks continue to expand their reach, weaving deeper into the unguarded territories of Halferth's wildlands.

The Grasscloaks are largely comprised of exiles and outcasts, most of whom were driven from **The Heartlands** by the Constabulary. This forced migration into the uninhabited regions of **The Scythes** led to their formation, as survival demanded opportunistic aggression and communal living. While non-humans are rare among their ranks, **Salmans** are often welcomed for their exceptional cooking, **Netterlings** occasionally find their way in for their silksteel weaving, and **H'Rask** are almost universally killed on sight, with few rare exceptions. Their understanding of the hostile terrain of **The Scythes** has allowed them to endure, adapting their methods to the tall, razor-sharp grass that dominates the landscape.

The **Scythes Aviary**, once a thriving outpost, now stands abandoned and overrun by nature. Feral populations of **Terrabirds** dominate the area, some of which have been tamed by skilled Grasscloaks. Rumors persist of **Rhakoscephorus** sightings, though evidence remains sparse.

Their decentralized nature allows them to adapt quickly, and their opportunistic tendencies have cemented their reputation as dangerous marauders. Their raids are calculated and swift, favoring hit-and-run tactics that make full use of the towering grasslands as both cover and weapon.

**Territories of Influence:**The Grasscloaks have carved out a domain within the razor-edged plains of **The Scythes**, leveraging the hostile landscape to their advantage. With its towering blades of grass—some reaching heights of twelve feet or more—the terrain acts as a natural defense against Constabulary patrols and unwanted intruders. The Grasscloaks have become masters of navigating these grasslands, using their woven cloaks for camouflage and protection against the sharp edges of the grass.

The once-thriving **Scythes Aviary** now lies abandoned and overrun by nature, its domesticated birds gone feral in the surrounding grasslands. These feral populations are primarily **Terrabirds**, with occasional sightings of **Rhakoscephorus** and rumors of giant flying birds. Some Grasscloaks have managed to tame these feral Terrabirds for long-distance travel and raids.

Their influence has stretched beyond **The Scythes**, reaching into the **High Circle** with increasing confidence. Raids on isolated homesteads and unguarded merchant paths have grown more frequent. Though the **Hivelands** maintain strong defenses, Grasscloaks continue to test its borders, probing for weaknesses. Their routes are well hidden, allowing them to navigate from **The Scythes** to the **High Circle** with ease, cutting through the **Hivelands** and using the dark forests of **Soothills** as cover. Their travel to **Worms Port** is by long boat journey, while the **Sisterclan Island Strait** remains largely inaccessible due to **Queen's Port** being heavily guarded.

* **The Scythes:** Primary domain, providing natural protection and hidden strongholds for ambushes and survival.
* **Scythes Aviary:** Once a thriving outpost, now reclaimed by nature. Feral **Terrabirds** roam freely, with rumors of **Rhakoscephorus**.
* **Hidden Encampments:** Secretive camps scattered throughout the grasslands; nearly impossible to find without insider knowledge.
* **High Circle Incursions:** Frequent raids on isolated homesteads and unguarded paths.
* **Hivelands Resistance:** Encounters with strong defenses, though Grasscloaks continue to probe for weaknesses.
* **The Parcels:** Fractured Constabulary presence has led to increased raids on isolated settlements.

**Origins and Structure:**The Grasscloaks emerged as a consequence of growing unrest in **The Heartlands**, where escalating conflict with the **Constabulary** led to mass exiles. Faced with nowhere else to go, these outcasts took refuge in **The Scythes**, a vast stretch of **Scythesgrass**—also known as **Cutgrass** or simply **The Cut**—too treacherous for typical settlement. Over time, the exiled adapted to the harsh environment, weaving cloaks from the razor-edged grasses for protection and camouflage, solidifying their identity as the Grasscloaks.

Lacking any central leadership, the Grasscloaks operate in scattered tribal-style villages, bound more by necessity than loyalty. Leadership is fluid and based on displays of power and resourcefulness; those who can command respect often lead, but alliances shift as quickly as the winds that sweep through **The Scythes**. The largest and most infamous of these settlements is **Crucible**, a brutal outpost where barter and violence go hand in hand, serving as the closest thing the Grasscloaks have to a centralized hub.

Despite their fractured structure, the Grasscloaks occasionally unite for larger raids or defensive efforts. Temporary pacts are struck when common goals arise, often to raid vulnerable settlements or resist Constabulary incursions. Their ranks are predominantly human, with rare appearances of other sapient races, though these non-human members are often treated with suspicion and bigotry, sometimes slain on sight.

* **Anarchic Beginnings:** Formed from exiles fleeing **The Heartlands**, driven out by Constabulary enforcement.
* **Scattered Tribal Villages:** Independent, loosely affiliated encampments hidden in the bladed grasslands. The largest of these is **Crucible**, a lawless hub of trade and brutality.
* **Fluid Leadership:** Power is earned through strength and resourcefulness; leaders rise and fall rapidly.
* **Occasional Unity:** Large-scale raids or defensive operations bring scattered groups together.
* **Rare Non-Human Presence:** Mostly human, though **Salmans** are welcomed for their cooking, **Netterlings** for their silksteel, and **H'Rask** are almost always killed on sight save for rare exceptions.
* **Rumored Warlords:** Occasionally, charismatic individuals emerge who manage to unify Grasscloaks into temporary factions, banding them together for larger raids or territorial grabs. These groups are short-lived, typically disbanding violently as rivalries and betrayals set in.

**Practices and Tactics:** The Grasscloaks rely on a brutal yet effective array of survival tactics and predatory methods to sustain their existence within **The Scythes** and beyond. Their combat style is rooted in ambush, misdirection, and ruthless efficiency, leveraging the natural landscape to execute swift and devastating strikes.

* **Ambush and Opportunism:** Grasscloaks strike suddenly from hidden positions, exploiting the towering **Scythesgrass** to overwhelm travelers, merchants, and rival gangs. Their cloaks blend seamlessly with the terrain, granting them near invisibility, and in the dense foliage of **High Circle**, their ambushes are even more unpredictable.
* **Edge-Grass Camouflage:** Woven from razor-sharp **Scythesgrass**, their cloaks provide both protection and a vicious edge in close combat. The bladed fibers make grappling with a Grasscloak a dangerous affair.
* **Pack Tactics:** Grasscloaks attack in tightly coordinated groups, cutting off escape routes and surrounding their targets with ruthless efficiency before disappearing back into the grass.
* **Resource Acquisition:** Theft remains their primary means of survival. Raids on caravans and isolated settlements are routine, with supplies, weapons, and captives taken as spoils. For food, they hunt the fauna of **The Scythes**, gather edible plants, and harvest the rough, tasteless grain of **Scythesgrass**. Farming attempts are swiftly plundered or destroyed.
* **Opportunistic Alliances:** While normally fractured, Grasscloaks sometimes band together for major raids or defense against Constabulary purges. These alliances are temporary and purely driven by necessity.
* **Fascination with Fire:** Outside of **The Scythes**, Grasscloaks are known for using fire as a calling card. In the High Circle and The Parcels, arson is a common signature of their attacks. Within their homeland, fire is treated with extreme caution, reserved only for essential use.
* **Firestomping:** In the flammable grasslands of **The Scythes**, fire is an existential threat. Grasscloaks have developed a ritualized response called **Firestomping**, where entire groups work together to stamp out flames, either by flattening the grass around the fire or rolling across it. This is one of the few moments of near-universal cooperation among Grasscloaks.
* **Tribal Infighting:** Conflict is a constant. Grasscloak bands frequently clash over territory and resources, often resolving disputes through raw violence. Intimidation is the first course of action; bloodshed follows if it fails.

The Grasscloaks' reliance on mobility and surprise has made them difficult to pin down, with Constabulary forces often discovering camps long after they have been abandoned. Their knowledge of **The Scythes** and its many hidden paths allows them to strike hard and vanish without a trace, blending back into the landscape that birthed them. It is not uncommon for the **Constabulary** to attempt to flush them out by setting fires at the borderlands of **The Scythes**, though this rarely ends in success.

**Relationship with Halferth:**The Grasscloaks maintain a complex and often violent relationship with the broader regions of Halferth. While their stronghold remains **The Scythes**, their influence stretches into surrounding territories, spreading fear and distrust among rural communities, settlements, and travelers alike.

Their primary conflict is with the **Constabulary**, who have waged an ongoing campaign to disrupt Grasscloak operations. However, the sheer vastness of **The Scythes**, combined with the Grasscloaks' intimate knowledge of its terrain, makes effective policing nearly impossible. Raids are carried out with impunity, and Constabulary efforts are frequently met with ambushes and well-laid traps. Attempts to establish checkpoints or garrisons often end in catastrophic losses for law enforcement, forcing many patrols to abandon their posts or face slaughter.

* **Rural Communities:** Villages and isolated farmsteads on the outskirts of **The Scythes** live in constant fear of Grasscloak raids. Some have resorted to paying tributes or negotiating under-the-table deals for protection, preferring bribery to bloodshed.
* **The High Circle:** Recent incursions into **The High Circle** have transformed the Grasscloaks into a whispered terror among merchants and travelers. Their swift, unpredictable attacks on trade routes have prompted stricter Constabulary patrols, though most attempts to secure these roads end in failure.
* **The Parcels:** In the chaotic streets of **The Parcels**, rumors swirl of secret deals with certain Grasscloak factions, offering "protection" in exchange for coin or favors. Constabulary presence is thin, with law enforced more by local powers than by official decree.
* **The Hivelands:** Constabulary control is strongest here, and Grasscloak raids are rare but exceptionally vicious when they do occur. Assaults are calculated and tend to target isolated outposts, probing defenses for weaknesses.
* **Mercenary Contracts:** Despite their chaotic nature, Grasscloaks can be bought—for the right price. If one can survive the contact and prove the reward is greater than the risk of robbery, a Grasscloak band can be hired for dangerous tasks, executed with brutal efficiency. However, such contracts are perilous, often ending in betrayal or internal squabbling.

The Grasscloaks’ ability to vanish back into **The Scythes** makes retaliation by the Constabulary a costly endeavor. Despite ongoing efforts, the marauders remain a persistent threat, deeply woven into the undercurrents of Halferth’s more isolated communities. For many, the sight of a grass-woven cloak is enough to drive them indoors and bolt their doors.