

THE BLACK COMPANY

YOU WHO COME AFTER ME, SCRIBBLING THESE Annals, by now realize that I shy off portraying the whole truth about our band of blackguards. You know they are vicious, violent, and ignorant. They are complete barbarians, living out their cruelest fantasies, their behavior tempered only by the presence of a few decent men. I do not often show that side because these men are my brethren, my family, and I was taught young not to speak ill of kin. The old lessons die hardest.

BLACK COMPANY BROTHER

Your character is a Brother of the Black Company, the last of the famous Free Companies of Khatovar. You use the Fighter class table, save where noted below.

Hit Point Die: d10 per Fighter level

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Choose one (Str, Int, Cha) saving throw and one (Con, Dex, Wis) saving throw. You gain proficiency in your chosen saving throws.

Skills: Choose five skill proficiencies and one tool proficiency.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple and Martial weapons.

Armor Training: Light and Medium armors, and Shields. You have Heavy armor proficiency if you are a Sawbones, Bump, Deacon, or Salt.

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 to one ability score and +1 one to another, OR +1 to three ability scores. None of these increases can raise a score above 16 at level 1.

Languages: Common, Khato. For each bonus Intelligence modifier point, you gain fluency in an additional language. You need not select these additional languages at character generation. Note many veteran Brothers know Black Cant, a sign language that allows simple communication most suitable for combat and while on patrol.

Starting Money: You start with 200 gp. You may purchase gear from the PHB at the listed prices. Any leftover funds become your starting money. If you have an applicable tool proficiency, you may use the PHB rules to make appropriate equipment at half the listed market price. For example, a proficiency in smith tools will allow you to make scale mail for 25gp instead of spending 50gp to buy it.

Subclass: At 1st level you gain a Fighter Subclass. You must choose one from the allowable list (see below). At 3rd, 7th and 10th levels, you gain a benefit associated with your chosen subclass.

Trait: Choose one. You may choose a second Trait, but if you do, you must also choose a Quirk.

TRAITS

Choose one Trait. If you wish to choose a second, you must also select a Quirk.

Fast. Your base speed is increased by 15 ft.

Fey-Touched. Choose an ability such as Int, Wis, or Con. You are proficient with saving throws for that ability.

Jumpy. You roll initiative as normal, but your result can never be lower than 10 (unless you choose to accept a lower result). In addition, add your proficiency bonus to weapon damage you deal during the first round of an encounter.

Lingerer. Increase your maximum hit points by +2 at 1st level, and +1 hp each level thereafter.

Lucky. Once per day you may reroll a natural 1 on a D20 Test.

Odd Fellow. Choose two of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, or necrotic. You gain resistance against those two damage types. This also applies to environmental effects (such as excessively hot or cold weather).

Relentless. When you are dropped to 0 hit points, you instead are dropped to 1 hit point. This trait recharges with a Long Rest.

Savage. You roll two extra weapon dice on critical hits.

Skill Monkey. You gain proficiency in two skills, and you gain two languages or tool proficiencies.

QUIRKS

You must select a Quirk if you chose a second Trait.

Bird Bones. You suffer a -1 penalty to AC while wearing Medium or Heavy armor.

Borrowed Time. You suffer a -2 penalty on death checks.

Brittle. Reduce your hit point die to d8.

Not a Killer. When you score a critical hit, make a Luck check. On a failure, the hit becomes a normal hit.

Shiftless. You roll initiative as normal, but your result can never be higher than 10. In addition, any damage you deal on the first round of an encounter is halved.

Slow. Your base speed is reduced by -15 ft. (min 10 ft).

Sponge. Choose two of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, or necrotic. You take +1 damage per die from those damage types.

Star-Crossed. You suffer a -1 penalty to saving throws.

Unfortunate. When making an individual (not a group) Luck check, you suffer a -2 penalty to Luck check rolls.

AVAILABLE FIGHTER SUBCLASSES

You must choose one of the following subclasses at 1st level. At 3rd level, and again at 7th and 10th level, you gain access to a new subclass feature.

- Sawbones.** Physician, barber, and torturer.
- Bump.** Defensive anchor and formation fighter.
- Deacon.** Morale officer, chief inspirer.
- Payday.** Frontline damage dealer and shock trooper.
- Salt.** Veteran, the ultimate survivor.
- Scrapper.** Brawler and grappler.
- Slenderman.** Precision killer and opportunist.
- Snake.** Scout, tracker, ambusher.
- Thunk.** Marksman and sniper.

SAVING THROWS

Whenever a subclass feature requires a target to make a saving throw, the DC is equal to $9 + 2 \times$ your proficiency bonus. This supersedes (and replaces) any saving throw DCs in the core rules.

SAWBONES

1st Level. What Comes After. *Torturers are feared the world over. With good reason.* Once per encounter, you may remind enemy combatants that what happens after the fight may be worse than anything that could happen during it. As a Bonus Action, you brandish your weapon (or torture implements) and shout out a few threats. Each enemy within 30 feet of you who can see you must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, that enemy suffers disadvantage on its Morale Check if triggered during the encounter. Non-intelligent enemies (such as beasts) are immune to this ability, as are unbreakable enemies.

3rd Level. Snip & Stitch. *You may not be able to stitch a man as quick as you can slice 'em, but it's damned close.* Once per turn when you make an attack roll with a weapon against an enemy combatant, you may grant hit points equal to your proficiency bonus to an ally within 10 ft. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all uses when you finish a Long Rest.

7th Level. Red Pool. *School is hard.* Your history of surgical mistakes and scalpel-based experiments has resulted in a corpus of blood-soaked knowledge. You have a pool of healing power that replenishes when you finish a Long Rest. With that pool, you can restore a total number of hit points equal to five times your level. As a Bonus Action, you can touch a creature (which could be yourself) and draw power from the pool of healing to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in the pool.

10th Level. Drip. *Slice 'em and dice 'em.* Once on your turn when you deal damage with a weapon attack, you may assign additional damage to the target equal to twice your proficiency bonus.

BUMP

1st Level. Iron Cocoon. *You didn't get dressed up for nothin'.* You gain the Heavy Armor proficiency.

Additionally, whenever you are wearing Heavy armor, you gain damage reduction equal to your proficiency bonus against piercing, slashing, and bludgeoning attacks.

3rd Level. Linebreaker. *You've got no time for close talkers.* Once per turn if you attack a creature within 5 feet of you as part of the Attack Action and hit with a melee weapon, you can immediately bash the target with your Shield if it's equipped, forcing the target to make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, you either push the target 5 feet from you in any direction or cause it to have the Prone condition (your choice).

7th Level. Shieldwall. *Thou – and thou, and thou – shall not pass.* While you are wielding a shield, you and any allies adjacent to you gain a +1 bonus to AC. A creature can benefit from only one Shieldwall bonus at a time. In addition, if you're subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you can take a Reaction to take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw and are holding a Shield.

10th Level. The Anchor. *You're the man around which the world orbits.* Once per encounter on your turn, you may enter a defensive stance (no action required). While in this stance, your speed is halved (round down), attack rolls against you have Disadvantage, and you have advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws. This stance ends if you become incapacitated.

DEACON

1st Level. Deacon's Inspiration. *The Company demands a little more.* During an encounter you can use a Bonus Action to choose one creature other than yourself within 60 feet of you who can hear or see you. That creature gains one Inspiration die, a d6. Before the end of the encounter, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one D20 Test. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Inspiration die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Inspiration die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Deacon's Inspiration die at a time. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and you regain any expended uses when you finish a Long Rest. At level 7, your Deacon's Inspiration die becomes a d8. At level 10, it becomes a d10.

3rd Level. Cutting Words. You're pretty good at hurting people's feelings. Congrats. When a creature that you can see within 60 feet makes a damage roll or succeeds on an ability check or attack roll, you can take a Reaction to expend one use of your Deacon's Inspiration; roll your Deacon's Inspiration die, and subtract the number rolled from the creature's roll, reducing the damage or potentially turning the success into a failure. Non-intelligent enemies (such as beasts) are immune to this feature.

7th Level. Rally. Easy lads, easy. This don't end till I say it does. Whenever you or an ally you can see uses the Second Wind feature, choose a different ally you can see. That ally may expend a Reaction to also use the Second Wind feature, provided they have one available.

10th Level. Bark Orders. Get your shit together. When an ally you can see is about to make a D20 Test, you can grant the roll advantage. You must declare this use before your ally makes his roll. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses when you finish a Long Rest.

PAYDAY

1st Level. Fury. I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who attempt to destroy my Brothers. As long as you are not wearing Heavy Armor, as a Bonus Action, you may enter a Fury which lasts until the end of the encounter or until you are incapacitated. You may enter a Fury a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all uses with a Long Rest. While Fury is active, you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. When you make a weapon attack using Strength and deal damage to the target, you gain a bonus to damage equal to your proficiency bonus.

3rd Level. Reckless Attacker. Get busy killing or get busy dying. When you make your first attack roll on your turn, you can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives you Advantage on attack rolls using Strength until the start of your next turn, but attack rolls against you have Advantage during that time.

7th Level. Bloodsport. Red is the new red. Whenever an enemy suffers a critical hit made by you, you can immediately make a single melee attack against that enemy, using a Bonus Action. In addition, whenever an enemy suffers a critical hit made by your ally, you can take a Reaction to immediately make a single melee attack against that enemy.

10th Level. Kingpin. You come in like Katy Perry's wrecking ball. When you take the Attack action with a melee weapon with the Heavy or Versatile property, you may activate the Push or Topple mastery property in addition to a different mastery property you're using with that weapon.

SALT

1st Level. Been here, done this. You've survived so many scraps you can write the script beforehand. At the start of an encounter, roll two d20s and record the

numbers rolled. During the encounter, you can replace any d20 Test made by you or a creature that you can see with one of these rolls. You must choose to do so before the roll, and you can replace a roll in this way only once per turn.

3rd Level. Survivor. You've been left for dead before. It didn't take. You add your proficiency bonus to death checks. In addition, at the start of an encounter, you gain a pool of hit points equal to twice your proficiency bonus. You may assign damage you take to this pool. Whenever you land a critical hit with a weapon, or after you take damage from a critical hit, you refresh your pool.

7th Level. Hard Road. You move like a man who's done this too long to die stupid. Your Luck score for a session may never be less than 14, regardless of what you roll. In addition, you gain a pool of Hard Road points equal to your Luck score for the session. You may use these points as chips (+1 bonus to d20 Test) and to adjust Luck checks (your own or your fellow PCs). You do not lose these points when you roll a natural 1.

10th Level. Last Brother Standing. Every company needs a man too stubborn to die. You do not fall unconscious when dying, and may act normally when at 0 hp, until you fail your first death check. This ability resets with a Long Rest.

SCRAPPER

1st Level. Jab. They didn't see that coming. You can make an Unarmed Strike as a Bonus Action. Your Unarmed Strikes deal 1d6 points + your Strength modifier bludgeoning damage. This damage increases at 5th level (d8) and again at 11th level (d10). You may choose to treat your Unarmed Strike as a finesse weapon (i.e., using your Dexterity instead of your Strength for attack and damage rolls).

3rd Level. Jab and Grab. Get over here. When you hit a Large or smaller creature with two or more Unarmed Strikes during your turn, you may knock that creature Prone and Grapple it.

7th Level. Hugs. Love hurts. If you start your turn in a grapple, all enemies in the grapple take your Unarmed Strike damage.

10th Level. Human Shield. Friends close, enemies closer. Once per round, when an enemy targets you with a melee or ranged attack, you may position a creature you are grappling into the line of fire. Your attacker rolls with disadvantage and, on a miss, the attack hits one of your grappled foes (your choice).

SLENDERMAN

1st Level. Stabber. Everything's got time to bleed. Once per turn, you can deal extra damage equal to twice your proficiency bonus if you are using a finesse weapon. At 7th level, you may do this up to twice per turn.

3rd Level. Slippery Little Bitch. Toodles! On your turn, you can take a Bonus Action to use both Dash and Disengage.

7th Level. Uncanny Dodge. *You've figured out it's nice being where the steel ain't.* When an attacker that you can see hits you with a weapon attack, you can take a Reaction to halve the attack's damage against you (round down).

10th Level. Evasion. *Not today, bitches.* 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.

SNAKE

1st Level. Ambusher. *Oh, snap!* You roll initiative with advantage and add your proficiency bonus to initiative rolls. Additionally, during the first round of combat, your attack rolls against creatures that have not yet acted have Advantage, your speed is increased by +20 ft., all weapon damage you deal is maximized, and your critical hit range is increased by +1.

3rd Level. Slayer. *Ah, the heady smell of fresh blood.* When you hit a creature with a weapon, the weapon deals an extra 1d8 damage to the target if it's missing any of its hit points. You can deal this extra damage only once per turn.

7th Level. Prey. *Your body, your choice.* When you hit a creature with an attack, you may mark it as your prey. Thereafter, your prey takes 1d4 damage each time you hit it with a weapon attack. You cannot mark new prey until your current prey is dead or the encounter is over (whichever occurs first).

10th Level. Low Profile. *Always been a bit of an introvert.* You've learned to move with the terrain, staying beneath lines of sight. Ranged and thrown weapon attacks against you are made with disadvantage.

THUNK

1st Level. Aim Small, Miss Small. *Simply put, you never miss.* Ranged and thrown weapons gain the Graze weapon mastery property when wielded by you (in addition to whatever weapon mastery property the weapon normally has).

3rd Level. Steady Aim. *A naked clown popping up from the floor in front of you might distract you. Might.* Being within 5 feet of an enemy doesn't impose Disadvantage on your attack rolls with ranged weapons.

7th Level. Drawing a Bead. *Won't happen again.* Whenever you miss a target with a ranged attack, you have Advantage on the next attack you make against that target, provided you make that attack before the end of your next turn.

10th Level. Killing Calm. *You've always kept your head when others are losing theirs.* Once per encounter on your turn, you may enter a marksman's stance (no action required). While in this stance, your speed is halved and you have Advantage on ranged attack rolls. If you take damage, make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw; on a failure, the stance ends. This stance also ends if you become incapacitated.

THE BLACK BANNER



HERE WEREN'T ENOUGH OF US LEFT TO MAKE A good street gang. Last of the Free Companies of Khatovar. Four centuries of brotherhood and tradition reduced to this. A band on the run. The great deeds of our forebrethren deserved better of their successors. But...then we saw the banner.

That wicked and lovely bitch-queen of death. It was not over. Not yet.

Wondrous item (Company relic), uncommon to legendary (scales with level)

Description. The Banner is more than cloth and pole. It is the Company's soul given color and shape. When raised, it steadies men's hearts and binds them to purpose. When it falls, the line falters.

Using the Banner. When a Brother plants the Banner, its magic flares to life, filling the air with a faint shimmer visible only to other Brothers. Its magic cannot be dispelled.

Action. Planting or hoisting the Banner is a free action that must be done on your turn. The Banner must be set firmly into the ground or another stable surface.

Aura Radius. While upright, the Banner emits a 10-foot radius aura. At 10th level, this radius increases to 20 feet.

Aura Effect. The aura's effect depends on the type of aura chosen when it is first planted. Only one aura may be active per encounter. The aura persists until the banner is moved, destroyed, or the encounter ends. If the banner is knocked prone, its effect is suppressed until it is once again planted. If the aura is lost, it cannot be reactivated during the same encounter.

Durability. The banner is an object, not a creature, for spell targeting and conditions. The banner has 30 hit points +4 hp per banner level. The banner's AC is equal to 15 + the party's proficiency bonus. It is immune to psychic and poison damage and has resistance to piercing damage. If it is forced to make a saving throw or ability check (e.g., a enemy attempts to knock the banner prone), the banner uses the saving throw of the character that planted it.

Restoration. The banner regains all hit points after a Short or Long Rest.

Replacement. If a banner has been destroyed, any Brother can create a new one. Creating a banner requires one day of work and costs 50 gp in materials per banner level.

Advancing in Level. The banner levels with the party. At 2nd level, three aura effects first become available. At 5th level and again at 8th level an additional aura effect becomes available.

BANNER AURAS

2nd Level. Aura of Discipline. While within the aura, Brothers gain +1 bonus to saving throws and ability checks, and have advantage on saving throws against being frightened. At 9th level, this bonus increases to +2 and Brothers are immune to being frightened.

2nd Level. Aura of Valor. Brothers within the aura gain +1 bonus to attack rolls if they are below half their normal hit point maximum. At 9th level, this bonus increases to +2.

2nd Level. Aura of Resolve. If a Brother starts or ends his turn within the aura, that Brother gains temporary hit points equal to his proficiency bonus if they are below half their hit point maximum. Temporary hit points granted by this aura do not stack. At 9th level, this bonus increases to twice a Brother's proficiency bonus. A Brother cannot receive this benefit more than once per round.

5th Level. Aura of Defiance. Once per round, whenever a Brother within the aura scores a critical hit, he may choose a different Brother within the aura. The chosen Brother may immediately take a Reaction to make a weapon attack with advantage.

8th Level. Aura of Brotherhood. When a Brother within the aura would be reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, another conscious Brother within the aura can use their reaction to move up to half their speed toward that ally, ending adjacent to them. The fallen Brother instead remains at 1 hit point. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. A Brother can benefit from this aura only once per short or Long Rest.

MORALE

As a PC, you do not need to worry about Morale. You stay in the fight until you choose to do otherwise. Many of your enemies, however, will need to contend with morale.

Morale checks are most commonly triggered whenever:

1. An enemy leader is killed, or
2. Half or more of the enemy force is killed.

When triggered, checks are not made until the next Lair Action (Initiative 20). It can take a little time for enemies to appreciate their plight.

A Morale check is a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the enemy gains the frightened condition until the end of its next Long Rest and either flees or surrenders. On a success, the enemy continues to fight and does not make Morale Checks the remainder of the encounter.

The DM determines whether enemies make Morale Checks as a group, multiple groups, or individually. Unusually powerful, brave, or foolish enemies may be unbreakable.

The DM may adjust the Morale Check DC based on the circumstances.

The Morale Check DC may increase when:

1. The party has a reputation of being even-handed and fair to those who surrender, perhaps allowing them to depart the battlefield after giving up certain assurances or giving away certain items.
2. The party kills an enemy commander within the first few rounds of combat, or multiple enemy combatants are dropped during the same round.
3. An enemy leader is killed in a particularly gruesome or dramatic fashion (e.g., a critical hit), or several enemies are killed on the same turn (e.g., an area of effect attack).

The Morale Check DC may decrease when:

1. The party is known to execute or torture vanquished foes, or leave them so destitute as death in battle might be preferred.
2. The enemy seems to be holding their own, such as when three or more PCs have also been dropped.
3. Enemies are more afraid of their leader and what he might do to them than they are of the party.

THE COMMISSARY

A handful of multi-colored and well-patched canvas tents. Makeshift shelves. Trunks older than dirt. Hooks and hangars and pegs. Trophy stands and tattered pennants. This is the Commissary of the Black Company, and it goes where the Company goes. A veritable museum of stuff taken from dead men. Smells of loss, smells of victory.

Magic Weapons, Armors, and Shields. Each of these item types has an assigned durability, measured in Durability Points (DP). When Durability reaches 0, the item loses any magical properties and becomes a normal item of its kind. There is no known method to repair or increase an item's durability.

Weapon: A weapon loses 1 DP each time its wielder rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll. The base DP of a magical weapon is 4.

Armor & Shield: A suit of armor or a shield loses 1 DP each time its owner suffers a critical hit. If the owner has both a magical suit of armor and a magical shield, the player makes a Luck check to determine which item loses 1 DP. The base DC of armor and shields is 2.

Wondrous Items. A magic item that is not a weapon, armor, or shield is a wondrous item. A wondrous item does not have durability, but uniformly has an assigned number of charges, or uses. When the number of charges reaches 0, the item loses any magical properties and becomes a normal item of its kind. Consumable wondrous items (e.g., potions) have 1 charge.

COMPANY LEADERSHIP



HE BLACK COMPANY NUMBERS ABOUT THREE hundred fighting men at full strength, though at times in its history it's fielded ten times that number. At the top stand the **Captain** and his **Lieutenant**, with six seasoned **Sergeants** beneath them, each sergeant commanding a **Fist** of roughly fifty

Brothers. Every Fist is further divided into five **Fingers**, each ten men strong. Each Finger is further broken into two **Knuckles** of five men apiece.

A Knuckle is the smallest fighting element, a handful of Brothers who live, march, tent, and bleed together. The words Devil and Thin are used to signify a unit that is slightly larger or smaller than the norm (e.g., a Devil's Knuckle of seven men, or a Thin Finger of forty men). At the start of the campaign, the Company's leadership consists of the following men.

The Captain. The Old Man. Prior to being elected Captain some sixteen years previously, he was Sergeant Broom. Named such because of the size and width of his now-white moustache. A Company man through and through. He does his best to sign good contracts for good money that keeps good men from dying. Has a sentimental streak and gets emotional at times during the monthly Readings from the Annals.

The Lieutenant. Ten years a Company man and plucked directly from the ranks by the Old Man himself. The LT's a quiet sort, fiercely loyal to the Captain. Must have been a soldier of some ability prior to joining; he's demonstrated his masterly skill at siegework and logistics hundreds of times. For the rare all-Company scraps, the Captain often hands command to the Lieutenant; there's no higher mark of esteem to be had.

Sergeant Pepper. A veteran, like all the sergeants, Pepper has a mixed reputation. He tends to volunteer his Fist for the toughest jobs. Says if he doesn't do, someone else will, and that'd weigh on him heavy. There's no doubt been some tight squeezes with his Fist in the thick of it. Hence the name Pepper – burns going in, worse coming out.

Sergeant Mercy. A killer. Some say he was born wearing the Black. In the rare times the Company needs an executioner or flogger, Mercy's the call. No recruits are allowed to join up without Mercy's nod. Likes all the things some of the more decent Brothers get queasy about – rape, pillage, and plunder. Yet if you're in a pinch, Mercy's the guy you want to come knocking to get you out. His record is Zero; he's never left a man behind, alive or dead.

Sergeant Bigby. Carries around a belly that no hundred-mile march has yet been able to conquer. Getting late in his years but shuts down a tavern with the best of them. Camp rumor suggests he's asked the Captain to retire over ten times. Fact he's still here shows you what the Old Man thought of that idea.

Sergeant Barns. Everything about him is big. His head, his beard, his eyes, his voice, and his hands. Outside of Mercy, who enjoys the wet work, Barns most often leads from the front. He's as good to his boys as he is bad to the enemy. There's no gray space for Barns; what the Captain says is the right of it, and anyone else can burn.

Sergeant Longneck. Men can't figure out how he got picked for Sergeant, but the LT saw something in him and Longneck's never let the outfit down. While everyone knows not to play cards with him (or he'll look at your hand), he's a jovial sort with a booming laugh. Outside of coins enough with which to grab a meal or a woman, he tends to give his share to his men.

Sergeant Shepherd. The newest sergeant, Shepherd's been in place only three years. The Captain tends to give him the new recruits, and Shepherd's one of the best teachers and trainers in the Company. Soft-spoken, patient, and kind – he seems more a school teacher than he does a warrior. But the man can swing a sword, and no one doubts his courage after he nearly singlehandedly held the Bridge of Curuno.

The Wizards. Lima Bean, Tadpole, and Pixie. Each tight with one another. Not one of them is more than a couple inches over five feet tall. Yet on the battlefield each is worth a Fist, maybe two. Lima's a wisp of a man who catches, trains, and keeps songbirds; he had nine of them for pets at one time. Tadpole is built like one – short, slender at the top, wide at the bottom. He's terrified of deep water. Sometimes folks need to drug him or tie him down just to get him across a bridge. Pixie looks like a freckled fifteen-year-old boy, his orange hair shooting up in natural spikes and cowlicks to all directions. If the Captain is the heart and the Lieutenant is the brains, the three Wizards are the muscle. They make three hundred men fight like three thousand – and then bitch about the smell afterward.

The Annalist. Croaker's his name now, but it used to be Gravel on account of his voice. Each month the Annalist chooses journal entries and reads them to the Company. Gravel went five months running and didn't read a word that wasn't written by his original namesake. He's good with the quill but he's even better with stitches; he's the Company's best physician. Just like his hero the first Croaker.

The Quartermaster. Not a man in the outfit doesn't bitch about Gramps and his prices at the Commissary. Tightfisted as an aging whore and ornery as a wasp-bit mule. He counts coppers like each could be the difference between life and death. While there's milk in his eyes and he can only hear by placing a horn to his "good" ear, few doubt there's not a better man to manage Commissary and pay chest north of fabled Khatovar.

OUR BROTHERS



E ALL HAVE OUR PASTS. I SUSPECT WE KEEP THEM nebulous not because we are hiding from our yesterdays but because we think we will cut more romantic figures if we roll our eyes and dispense delicate hints about beautiful women forever beyond our reaches. Those men whose stories I have uprooted are running from the law, not a tragic love affair.

Aftermath – Tends to arrive late.

All Good – His only opinion on any subject.

Assface – Has a pronounced cleft chin.

Atlas – Body covered with crisscrossing scars.

Awkward – When talking, inexplicably pauses mid-sentence before continuing.

Barnacle – Clings to whoever's buying.

Beaver - Slaps his palm on his thigh for emphasis after each sentence.

Bedfellow – Shivers uncontrollably.

Bellows – Never talks above a whisper.

Blank Page – Expressionless, eyes empty.

Blue Moon – Sober once in a blue moon.

Breakwind – Self-explanatory.

Briars – Prickly and easy to agitate.

Brover – Has an odd lisp, pronounces "th" as "v"

Buttons – Collects buttons, sews them on his jerkin.

Chompers – No front teeth.

Cream - Face looks like a moonscape from childhood acne scars.

Creeps – He's creepy.

Dancer – One foot is a wooden prosthetic.

Dickin Mouth – Garbles whatever he says.

Diddler – Missing two fingers on one hand and three on the other.

Doghouse – Sleeps outside. Always.

Donkey – Earned name in a brothel, won't tell how.

Doubts – Has never heard an order he didn't second guess.

Drains – Lingering, open stomach wound.

Driftwood – Several large brown, boils on his face.

Duck – Huge scar across his forehead.

Elf – Lost both his ears to torture.

Fishhook – One cheek was torn off in a scrap.

Fitz – Constantly pinches his nose when talking.

Five Knots – Elaborate boot-tying ritual.

Focus – One eye stares up, one stares down.

Goat – Got caught in the act with one.

Gonna Eat That - Asks nearby Brothers at mess if they are going to finish their meal

Greenwood – Broken arm healed crooked.

Half Ass – Never fully completes a job.

High Five – Can't raise either arm above his chest.

High Step – Wears out his boots from shuffling.

His Majesty – Claims to be of royal blood.

Holy Roller – Prays before every meal, but never before battle.

Jane – Small, slight, and very plain-looking.

Jerks – Developed an unfortunate tic from previous scrap.

Judge – Offers a "final" ruling on every topic that comes his way.

Leftovers – Most of his food ends up in his beard.

Leroy – Never enters a tavern without starting shit.

Letters – Illiterate, and thinks "Asshole" spells Letters

Locks – Bald.

Manners – Farts, burps, and spits snot by the minute.

Midwife – His penis doesn't work so he uses his hands.

Mustache – Upper lip stained from pipe smoke.

North Star – Gets lost going from the tent to the latrine.

Oops – Got a piercing in his private parts, which no longer function.

Queer Doug – Slept with a man he thought was a woman.

Raincheck – He'll pay you back later.

Riverbank Bob – Smells...moist.

Short Straw – May just be the luckiest Brother in the Company.

Singer – Always monotone.

Slick – Hair and beard wild, long, and knotted.

Smudge – Got run over by siege tower.

Snotdick – Suffers from a chronic STD.

Snowman – Lost his nose in combat, wears a long wooden prosthetic.

Soap – You'd like him to use some.

Square Deal – Notorious cheat at dice.

Squirts – Hasn't been a scrap wherein he hasn't shit himself.

Stovepipe – Short and round.

Succubus - Claims he slept with a demon and his lovemaking killed her.

Thirtycount – Knocked out three times in the same fight.

Toadkiller – Has a phobia for frogs and toads.

Ugh – Unfortunate case of halitosis.

Uni – Lost a testicle in a previous scrap.

Whiteman – Can't dance worth a damn.

Whore – Walks bowlegged.

Wishbone – Threads small bones in his beard "for luck."

Wishlist – An unmitigated dreamer

Wiz – Wears a pointed, green hat.