



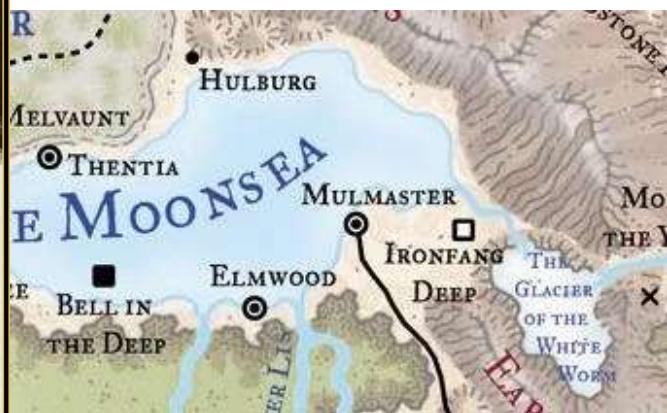
# MULMASTER: CITY OF CONTRACTS

**D&D HOMEBREW**

Everything the players need to know before they attempt to survive  
on the treacherous streets of Mulmaster.

## FACT SHEET

**Location:** Southeast shore of Moonsea



**Size:** Metropolis, 61,000 in 1507 DR (93% human, 7% zhent half-orcs) Humans: 72% Vaasan, 16% Damaran, 8% Chondatan, 4% others.

**Weather Conditions:** Winters -15°C to 5°C, Summers 10°C to 15°C, strong northern winds, high humidity 60% to 75%, high chance of rain all-year.

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil (government); Neutral Evil (society)

**Government:** Aristocratic Oligarchy; Absolute Bureaucracy

**Society:** Meritocracy; Contractual Serfdom

**City Assets:** 44,600,000gp. (~10% treasury, 4,150,000gp).

**Personal Assets:** High Blade 2,100,000gp; Blades (100,000 to 650,000gp), Zor/a Nobility (10,000gp to 70,000gp), Craftsmen (200gp to 2,000gp) Others (0 to 150gp). Convertible portion of assets 10-35% for Zor; 5-10% for everyone else.

**Imports:** Foodstuffs, cloth, liquor, luxury items, slaves

**Exports:** Arms, armor, ships, jewelry, people, services

**Currency:** Zenthil Keep issued. 1 "platinum glory" ("flat metal gem") = 10 gold "glories" ("weeping wolves") = 20 electrum "tarenth" ("hardhammers") = 100 silver "talons/naal" ("flea-bits") = 1000 copper "fangs" ("dung-pieces")

*"With mountains on three sides and the Moonsea on the fourth, the city of Mulmaster is cold and windswept. Frequent snows leave little natural greenery, except where the rich buy it. In this bleak landscape rises one of the most powerful cities of the Moonsea. The rich luxuriate in the benefits of their station, while the poor suffer in fear of their betters and the tyranny visited upon the citizenry."*

## HISTORY

Mulmaster began as a trading fortress in 934 DR. Very little is recorded about the city until nearly 400 years later when the last king of Mulmaster, the sorcerer Neskar, was slain by Amdrauth Telsnaer. Despite creating the position and serving as the first High Blade, Telsnaer's rule would be short-lived, and in the 30 years that would follow, he and seven of his successors would be slain in office until the seat was seized by Selfaril Uoumdolphin. Selfaril was a strong ruler with a firm grip on power and a deadly twin brother, burning with envy.

While there are disagreements on the details of his replacement, it is commonly accepted that Selfaril was removed from office by his twin brother, Rassendyll Uoumdolphin, who imprisoned Selfaril inside his own enchanted sword. Whether it was Rassendyll in disguise or Selfaril himself, a pact was forged with Fzoul Chembryl of the Zhentil Keep in order to strengthen Mulmaster. This collusion would lead to Rassendyll accepting assistance from the Zhentil Keep in establishing his borders and opposing the schemes of the Red Wizards of Thay within the city.

During this time of constant turmoil, the second government of Mulmaster took shape. Forty-nine noble families voted on whom to receive into nobility and whom to eject from it, keeping the number of families at exactly forty-nine. Each family was led by a Lord (whether male or female), and all other members of the family are referred to

as Zor (male) or Zora (female). The Lords elected sixteen of their number to become Blades, and in turn, the Blades elected the High Blade who ruled the City. The very last of the original High Blades was Banite protegee Jaseen Drakehorn, who struggled to maintain her authority against threats from abroad and within. She reaffirmed Bane as the patron god of Mulmaster and built a wall around the Zhent Ghettos, effectively making them a part of the city, if not officially claimed.

Jaseen reigned for almost twenty years until 1491 DR, when Selfaril escaped from his enchanted sword prison and gathered an army to regain control. Using the city's weakness after the fabled Devastation Days, he quickly secured funds from the Zhentilim and recognition from the Church of Bane as the true ruler of Mulmaster. Blaming her personally for all misfortunes in the city during its dark post-Devastation Days, Selfaril efficiently dethroned and exiled Jaseen. Despite early quarrels with the church of Bane, their key role in his return to power eventually warmed their relationship.

## THE REIGN OF SELFARIL

The strength of Mulmaster was always in its control of trade. It sits at the end of the major land and sea routes on the east side of the Moonsea. It controls no farms and very little land beyond its valuable sea frontage. High Blade Jaseen expanded Mulmaster's influence to Point Iron by reclaiming the mines and constructing a fort there. However, by the start of Selfaril's rule, the city rested in careful balance among different power groups. The noble Lords and their Blades controlled the law, and by extension, were immune to most of it. Their word was iron and no one, not even clergy of Bane, could cross them. Bribery, intimidation, tyranny, and outright murder have always been the tools of their trade and they wielded them without pause. Given that position among the nobility was fluid, many of the wealthiest middle class families were constantly on the lookout to supplant a noble family past its prime. Otherwise, the Blades maintained their control of the populace through the Cloaks, Hawks and Soldiery.

However the unquenched greed and out-of-control crime during Jaseen's last reigning years slowly pushed the city into a spiral of depression and decay. The population grew thin as more capable men and craftsmen left searching for better conditions elsewhere. Inspired by a similar rule still effective in Zhentil Gate, Selfaril Uoumdolphin shortly established an exit tribute of 100gp to keep people from leaving. But the nobles greatly feared that the city's high tensions were bordering on an all-out civil war. Meanwhile, a silent schism among the high ranks of the Church of Bane introduced a cult devoted to a new kind of tyranny: monetary and contractual control, as an extension to traditional Banite martial tyranny. Those new and radical ideas are believed to have greatly influenced Selfaril.

During the fated Flamerule Massacre of 1497 DR, High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin gathered all Blades within the halls of the Tower of Blades under false pretext and executed eleven of them. The other four "voluntarily" withdrew from power. Under such dire conditions, all noble families were forced to sign the Codex of Division, creating the third and current government of Mulmaster. This new form of rulership passed the full ownership of Mulmaster to Selfaril, personally. All city functions were consolidated into a



## SELFARIL OUUMDOLPHIN

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (plate +2)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Str +10, Dex +2, Con +9

**Skills** Athletics +11, Deception +9, History +6, Intimidation +9, Persuasion +9

**Senses** Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Brave.** Selfaril has advantage on saving throws against being frightened and charmed.

**Ingenious Duelist.** Selfaril can spend his reaction during his turn to gain extra bonus action; or spend all his bonus actions and gain one extra attack.

**Action Surge.** (2x, Recharged after a Short or Long Rest): Selfaril can take one additional action on top of his regular action, and an extra Bonus Action.

**Indomitable.** (2x, Recharged after a Short or Long Rest): Selfaril can reroll a saving throw that he fails.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Selfaril makes three melee attacks.

**+3 Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d8 + 11) slashing damage, or 16 (1d10 + 11) slashing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

### Bonus Actions

**Second Wind.** (Recharged after a Short or Long Rest): Selfaril regains 1d10 + 18 hit points.

### Reactions

**Parry.** Selfaril adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

monopoly over services and trades, then broken into sixteen "Holds" at an auction for the remaining nobility to vie for. Every noble family that wins a Hold must pass it to its most capable members, who are required by law to cut all ties with their original family and become an independent ruler within their own domain. Inevitably, this rule is often ignored behind closed doors. Continuing the centuries-old tradition, these rulers are still called "Blades" but are no longer indentured to the noble families. Instead, they are seen as extensions of the High Blade's full control over each aspect of city life. By the

end of each season, every Blade must pay tithe to the High Blade, calculated as a fair dividend of profit, to ensure that every aspect of the city operates at the highest standard of productivity and control. Fail to maintain Selfaril's ruthless standards and a Blade could fall out of favor. The entire administration will be stripped of all property and rights including citizenship, and the Hold sent to auction for other nobles to do better.

## THE CONTRACT CENSUS

High Blade Selfaril's wild ideas of unstable aristocracy, in constant terror of underperforming, could never cement as law without the Contract Census. Spread throughout the city are thirty seven offices occupied by hundreds of law advisers and contract scribes. For a nominal fee of 1sp, any noble can write nearly anything into an official Public Contract: services (and favors), sale or lease over property (and people), and different forms of credit or investment (at outlandish interest). All business operations between Blades can be reviewed by any noble and are constantly studied by High Blade's army of advisors for any unwanted trends evolving within the city. The Census explores new forms of ownership and trade never tried elsewhere, all of them focused on indenturing and exploiting the weak, needy, and anyone convenient.

Blades, their advisors, and representatives are forced into a complex web of contractual liability since a Blade can rarely operate without doing business with many of the other Blades. To further establish the absolute role of the Census among nobility, High Blade Selfaril has outlawed all non-contractual relationships that cannot be proven by a signed paper in Census' records. His network of agents spans every Hold and noble family, sometimes unseen and often openly demonstrating their right to verify every aspect of a Blade's life and business. Failure to prove sources of wealth or reasons behind favors finds both noble and common man punished equally. The Census has authority to strip all property and rights including citizenship, often followed by public execution.

With the blessing of the Church of Bane, High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin's bet on contractual tyranny has proven widely successful. While Zhentil Keep, Hillsfar and other Moonsea cities have faced decline and have struggled to control tension among its populace, Mulmaster has been able to maintain steady growth in industry and trade. They even transformed petty street crime into a highly organized and efficient crime network, with its own Hold and Blade managing it. Selfaril paid for Mulmaster's success with the high cost of extreme government turnover, transforming everyone, noble or common alike, into a cog in a colossal machine that oils its gears with wealth and suffering.

## MULMASTER TODAY

By 1507 DR, ten years since the Flamerule Massacre, High Blade Selfaril can no longer afford to maintain his tight steel grip over the city.

Stricken by an incurable illness that neither his contract army of healers nor the blessings of Bane can prevail against, his days are clearly numbered and so is the order he created. The Blades, once crushed under the unyielding machine of absolute control, are becoming restless and power hungry, tasting the bittersweet poison of scheming and treachery. The remnants of the original noble families, dreaming of the old glory days of traditional aristocracy, funnel their wealth and influence into social unrest and discontent towards the Blades. The ever-mysterious Red Wizards of Thay, rumors, and strange affairs are an increasing presence in the city, causing even the lowest classes to doubt the High Blade for the first time.

Selfaril has not yet named a successor, and his only son is kept in absolute isolation from a position as Blade, despite multiple attempts to take one. Selfaril is instead focusing all his efforts towards finding a cure that could stop or reverse his slow descent towards death. Mulmaster may or may not survive the death of its ruler.

### THE CORE OF MULMASTER CAMPAIGN

- **Humans Only.** The society of Mulmaster is deeply xenophobic. Other races are treated as slaves. For half orcs, Mulmaster is literally hell on earth.
- **Magic is outlawed.** Practicing magic in public is punishable by mutilation or death. All mages are registered and monitored via arcane means.
- **Your life depends on your writ.** You are issued a paper writ by your Blade. Treasure it! Losing it means you have no human rights and cannot even leave the city.
- **Written contracts only.** Secret arrangements are outlawed and punishable by death. Every deal or scheme must be made public knowledge to High Blade.
- **Money is everything.** In Mulmaster, everything and everyone has a price. Every mistake bears a cost paid by you or your Blade. People are indebted or indentured.
- **Crime is a legal business.** As long as you have great wealth, you can order robbery or assassination, with no legal consequences. Others can order a hit on you, too.
- **Slavery is safety.** The only safety in Mulmaster is the one provided by the Blades and their administration. Be useful to your Blade, and you will be safe and respected.
- **Society on brink of disaster.** The days of prosperity are over. People are troubled and pessimistic. Aristocracy is restless and scheming. Order can collapse at any time.

## RACIAL PROFILE

Like all cities coasted around the Moonsea, Mulmaster is a deeply xenophobic human society. Ethnicity and skin color among humans have much less impact on folk's opinion of you than whether you are a native or a foreigner. The tall and fair skinned Damaran easily coexist with the mahogany Turmish or the stocky dark-skinned Nar, as long as they all share the same blood. Outlanders such as half-elves, dwarves, halflings are seen as despicable scourges and are usually driven out of the city with force. The few who try to stay are denied rights and protection unless a Blade steps up to offer them; such a rare act of kindness is widely frowned upon.

The only exception to this rule is made for the Zhent half-orcs. Since Selfaril Uoumdolphin's coup was mostly funded by Zhentarim gold and slaves, he was forced into a treaty with Zhentil Keep requiring Mulmaster to provide them a blanket set of civil rights, in return for their continued support and current peace. The provision was mostly exploited by the lowest caste of vagrant half-orcs, driven to despair and death by the cruelty of the Zhentarim order. Penniless, homeless, starving, sickly and scarred, the Zhent half-orcs live by their own tribal laws and shun Mulmaster society as much as Mulmasterites ignore their existence. Within the last decade half-orc numbers have grown exponentially from a few hundred to nearly four thousand, causing overpopulation within the ghetto, accompanied by frequent plague and famine.

Tension is also building among Mulmasterite nobles and common people, who claim the ghetto has become a growing cancerous tumor feeding on their city. One of the Blades, whose Hold is over racial affairs, has full control over the Zhent Ghetto and used to funnel spoiled food as well as other discarded trash, disguised as "humanitarian aid".

## PEOPLE

The people of Mulmaster are pessimistic dynamos. "*Take what you can, when you can, because who knows if you'll see tomorrow,*" would be their motto. The harsh landscape and living conditions as well as the history of the city have made Mulmasterites hard nosed, stubborn folk, whose minds are always scheming to further their own positions. The people of Mulmaster are not foolish or reckless; they are (as a rule) single-minded, driven, ambitious, and amoral folk.

Mulmasterites set about life with a fierce determination. The average Mulmasterite is always looking to gain advantage on his or her neighbor, coworker, superior, or shopkeeper. They push and push to achieve their ends, and die in the trying if need be. Of course, someone else dying would be much more convenient. Neither zealots nor reckless idiots, they are inexorable, patient, relentless opponents, who wait for and exploit every weakness. Their schemes often extend towards visitors with false bravado and hospitality that seeks to take advantage on them.

It is this spirit that makes Mulmaster such a hotbed for commerce, industry, and intrigue. Mulmasterites love to live well when they can, going to taverns to drink, dance-houses to flirt and dance, fighting rings (bears, dogs, cocks, and/or people), street theater, gambling at the Gate of Good Fortune, and many other venues of entertainment and vice.

The Moonsea climate is not as cold as the Silver Marches, but significantly foul enough to cause the seas to freeze over during the winter. People of the Moonsea are used to wearing cold-weather and other bulky clothes year-round; only half-orcs are hardy enough to brace the harsh winds naked. Mulmasterites frequently wear furs to defend against the city's fierce winds and cold, including leggings and "maliskers" (chest aprons), with leather gauntlets and boots.



# CITIZENSHIP

Life is extremely cheap in Mulmaster, but Selfaril's law has allowed for a new kind of meritocracy to emerge from the urban chaos and provide protection and security to those that excel. As he distributed the city assets, trades and services among Blades, he also instituted that all citizens are to be issued writs of citizenship. A writ is a contract of its own, issued by any of the Blades on behalf of the High Blade, and grants each citizen specific rights to live, work, use public services and seek protection from the City Watch. A writ is usually issued to a male of adult age; women and children (unless nobility) are issued writs bound to the name of the master of the house.

Each citizen is allowed to approach the administration of any Blade to offer his services or prove his worth to the Blade's advisors. Depending on need and mood, the citizen receives an answer within days or must endure many months of wait. Typically, people have little choice since each Blade is granted monopoly on entire domains of trade, crafts, services, or business affairs. Sometimes a man's ability is so sought after that another Blade will send covert envoys to convince him to change allegiance, providing him with an underground, illegal, and highly profitable practice. While change of allegiance is allowed by the word of law, practicing illegal trade or activity in Mulmaster is punished by death. Most Blades would rather kill a dissident than allow a rival Blade to get hold of her; and so every Blade operates a spy network, separate from the High Blade's Contract Census, to insure every one of their "employees" has absolute fear of their Blade.

Visitors to Mulmaster are forced to go through a similar process. Outside the gates of Mulmaster there's a small village offering lodging to travelers and merchants, waiting for a Blade to review their case and grant a temporary visitation writ. People with valuable skills and professions are given priority and are usually directly invited by one or more Blades. Others wait days or weeks, before receiving an answer or giving up and leaving. Only vagrant half orcs are put through a different process: after they pass standard medical exams and questioning, they are sent into the Zhent Ghetto to fight and scavenge for food and housing.

A Mulmasterite's life is completely defined by whatever writ he is granted. He may only live in specific neighborhoods, only eat at specific mess halls, only drink at particular inns - all of them owned by his Blade. A tradesman or craftsman is allowed to practice his trade only if he is indentured to the right Blade who controls that domain of public life and economy. Most tradesmen own nothing but their own two hands; the means of labor are fully owned by the Blade, who receives 80% of all profits. Very few can climb the ladder to own their own shop or house, but these few "independents" only have to share 30% with their Blade.

The Mulmaster writ is no simple matter. Without it a person has no citizenship rights, receives no protection and cannot even leave the city gates. Individuals without a writ are exposed to the unlimited cruelty and amoral nature of Mulmaster, and sometimes treated worse than slaves and Zhent half-orcs. Frequently, they end up dead, imprisoned, or both. If a Mulmasterite loses his writ he seeks a Census office to reissue it as quickly as possible. The right to destroy a writ is only granted to a Blade or the Census personnel; for anyone else it is a crime punishable by death. Forging a Blade's writ under a false name is dealt with in similar manner, but with additional cruelty. As times change and Selfaril slips closer to death, these crimes get harder and harder to prosecute.

## WRITS

There are six types of writs:

- Hereditary writs (or citizenship) are issued to people born or permanently owning a home or business in Mulmaster. Issued on a durable, yellowish parchment.
- Visiting writs are issued for a period of time (from a week to a full season) and are issued on thin, brown paper.
- Noble writs use only the best and whitest of card stock, often imported and decorated excessively. Noble writs include the heraldic symbol of the noble family and lists of powerful relatives who vouch for the credibility of the owner of the writ. Named relatives are considered liable for any damages done by the owner of the writ to other nobility or Blades.
- Investigative writs are issued by a Blade only to Hawks, executive members, and top spies investigating the Blade's private affairs. Investigative writs are issued for short periods of time (usually days) and grant their owner the right to question and to use non-lethal force against anyone including nobility. Investigative writs are issued on reddish-tinted parchment with a leather cover. Common folk and low-ranked Zor dread the sight of one and think twice before speaking a lie to their owners.
- Authoritative writs are issued on green-tinted parchment with a leather cover. Authoritative writs are issued to members of the Soldiery and a Blade's closest circle of executive agents. It gives them right to use lethal force, and to repossess property belonging to others, excluding nobility. All damages and liabilities, especially concerning other Blades, are guaranteed by the estate and Hold of the Blade that issued the writ.
- Cloak-writs are issued to members of the Brotherhood of Cloak. They are signed on silvery-blue parchment with silver coating, and leathery cover. Owners of a cloak-writ are allowed to cast arcane magic in public without repercussions. These writs almost always have some low-level enchantment, making forgery extremely difficult.





## THE ARCANE BANISHMENT

After decades of being outlawed, arcane magic is universally hated in the City of Danger. The common people despise it, the nobility fear it, and the Cloaks constantly hunt for it. **All forms of Arcane magic and its practitioners are effectively illegal in Mulmaster and are punished severely!**

Upon entering the City, all who openly declare themselves as arcane practitioners must take an oath to cast no spell while in Mulmaster. Any spell caster already present in Mulmaster is assumed to have given the oath. All magical items have to be inspected and recorded, and may be detained by Cloaks if deemed too powerful, only to be returned when their owner leaves the City. Authoritative writs and membership into the Brotherhood of Cloaks gives immunity from the oath and detainment of magical property.

While still technically illegal, apprentices unable to cast Arcane spells of level 3 and higher are not considered dangerous. Their spellcasting is often overlooked, unless it is directly witnessed by a city official or is used against nobility. Nevertheless, members of the City Watch are not trained to tell the difference between apprentices and other casters, and are likely to beat an apprentice to death if they witness one using Arcane magic, including simple cantrips.

Disregarding the Edict of Arcane Banishment carries grave consequences. All people of Mulmaster are rewarded for reporting use of Arcane magic or ownership of lead-laden equipment, and eagerly do so unless very well bribed or very strongly threatened. Since use of Arcane magic guarantees the person will have his writ annulled, he is considered lower than a slave before judges. Prosecution is extremely short and punctual, with real or false witnesses coming forth to vilify the culprit, and the verdict is always final. Well-versed with the provisional nature of death, Iridium Lastdawn has taken all precautions to make sure death, when issued, is final and irreversible. The caster is either publicly burned alive, or decapitated and each body part burned separately. His or her remains are then quietly scattered in the Moonsea to prevent return from the dead. A cleric of Bane curses the person's soul to torment in the Nine Hells. All of the belongings and wealth on the character's person are claimed, or burned as well. In extreme cases, the guilty party's remains are transferred to a demiplane to prevent a chance for true resurrection or a wish spell.

## SURVEILANCE

The current Blade of Cloaks, Iridium Lastdawn, is pushing for broad surveillance of all magic use in the City. Every Arcane practitioner is issued an ornate detect magic ring that must be worn at all times, or fear repercussions. The ring reports any arcane magic use above 3rd level with a Verbal or Somatic component, and is rumored to monitor the exact location and life signs of its wearer. The sight of the ring alone is enough for common people to shun and avoid its wearer. Driven into paranoia of exposure, most spellcasters take extreme measures. Many don't leave their homes, ever relying on slaves to bring food and do their laundry. Others build elaborate underground bases of operation laid with deadly traps. Wizards in Mulmaster who are not part of the Cloaks or under a Blade's protection rarely speak to each other, and the burden of solitude slowly descends them into despair and madness. Spellcasters who do not desire to

shun the world, seek ways to “seal” their ring into a thin cap of lead. Similarly, carrying magic items is best done in lead containers, as busy streets have Cloak agents monitoring for any magic item carried. This has effectively driven the cost of the common metal much higher than gold.

Whispered rumors, among the wealthiest Blades, speak of a set of rings, either forged or stolen. These powerful artifacts are believed to appear identical to those issued by the Cloaks, but will only transmit what the wearer wishes to reveal about her location, capability, life, or magic use. Even more alarming, these rings can sense the presence of other rings in close range, make them report false detection and more. Even Lastdawn's carefully trained senses would recognize no difference in the messages. They are believed to hold the key to a phantom network that the Blade of Cloaks has established in the City. The Cloaks have no solid proof that such items exist, but Iridium Lastdawn has handed down shockingly cruel punishments to anyone, including nobles, spreading rumors about such items.

## EXCEPTIONS

There are very few other exceptions. Foreign dignitaries, like the Red wizards of Thay, are usually granted exemption from the Edict if the High Blade deems it appropriate. Also the Zhent Ghetto is not officially part of the City, and lack of law enforcement of any kind there makes arcane magic impossible to track. It is, perhaps rightfully, assumed that half-orcs are too poor and uneducated to have access to any form of magic. The Brotherhood of Cloaks dismisses the dark rites of faux-hemomancy practiced by half-orcs as harmless, and considers their inhuman Crimson Canon to be useless, mad scribbles.

Uncontested by arcane magic, divine practitioners - from street charlatans to true prophets - thrive among both simple folk and nobility. As long as the supernatural effect cannot be mistaken for arcane magic or used to harm others in public, diviners are free to entertain and empower. Moreover, Mulmaster nobility has always had an appreciation for divination of dark and aberrant nature, hopeful to seal an unholy advantage with the forces beyond or learn what their

future holds in store for them. Having a high-ranked cleric or Imperceptor (paladin of the Church of Bane) in one's family is a great honor and valued devotion, a clear sign for potential for a future Blade candidate.

## HIDING SPELL CASTING

In some situations you may attempt to hide the act of casting spells, cast them in a non-threatening manner, or disguise the use of specific components as part of the spell casting from prying eyes.

**If a spell has a Verbal component,** you must roll Intelligence or Wisdom (Stealth) opposed by Passive Perception if you are not actively observed, or Perception Roll if observed. Loud background noise give advantage to the your roll. If the observer suspects that you are able to use magic, they have advantage to the Perception Roll.

**If a spell has a Somatic component,** you must roll Dexterity (Stealth) opposed by Passive Perception if you are not actively observed, or Perception Roll if observed. Lots of nearby movement (such as a crowd) give advantage to your roll. If the observer knows you are able to use magic, they have advantage to the Perception Roll.

**If a spell has a Material component,** you must roll Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) opposed by Passive Perception if you are not actively observed, or Perception Roll if observed. If the observer is trained to recognize spell components, he has advantage to the Perception Roll.

If a spell has multiple components, you must roll separately for each. Failure to one roll reveals only suspicious activity unless the observer can recognize magic use. Failure to two or more rolls reveals unmistakable evidence of casting magic.



# LIVING IN MULMASTER

To visitors used to the liberties of the sprawling cities across the Sword Coast, life in Mulmaster is a shocking contrast. The citizens enjoy very little freedom to decide where they live or work, however their servitude is rewarded with amenities and security that is rare for the Moonsea region.

## HOME

There is no private estate in Mulmaster. Not even nobles hold property of their palaces. All housing is property of the High Blade and distributed between Blades according to their hold, to accommodate their administration and tradesmen, or exact rent. Anyone who pledges allegiance to a Blade can expect to receive a place for himself and his family.

Free housing sounds great, but rarely is. While most folk share a modest lifestyle, very few have any chance to ascend to better but all can lose it all at any time. Tradesmen in favor can find themselves in a small clean floor, but if they fall out of favor they will be moved to a moldy basement, shoving elbows with two other families sharing the same fate. Simple people have no right to build, repair or expand their homes. Even Blades have to negotiate with Tarin Nanther, Blade of Construction, any change to territorial planning. This causes severe housing shortage as the city grows and good housing is even harder to afford. Much of the petty intrigue among commoners is for taking advantage on your neighbor to take over their home.

There are no homeless and beggars in Mulmaster. The only people who end up on the streets are those out of favor and without a writ. Their only hope is finding a way to leave the city skulking through the gates or hidden tunnels. If they don't leave quickly enough, they will end prey to either City Guards, the Sharkteeth or wandering zhegot gangs. Even ending imprisoned in the Southwall Keep is better fate than dying on the streets. Beggars have learned a long time ago that the callous, spiteful nature of Mulmasterites has nothing to offer to those in need.

## FOOD

Each neighborhood has mess halls that serve breakfast and dinner to all working members of the Blade's community, as well as source for clean water. Reasonable food is free for locals, and only foreigners must pay inflated prices for it. It's common that friendly relationship between Blades extends into free services offered to their servants and several neighbors share (if only temporary) access to their mess halls. Mess halls serve many purposes - they are places of gathering during the day, a trade school for girls to learn the trade of a wife by cooking, cleaning and crafts, or for the elderly to rest their weary bones. Mess halls are the place to host weddings and funerals, or celebrations of any kind.

Blades exercise much of their political power over their people by competing to provide exemplary service that sways others to shift their allegiance if they want to live a better life. During winters when price of food is unbearable, people are fully at the mercy of their Blade.

After dinner, Mulmasterites retire to their favorite tavern. Drinks and entertainment costs money but relatively cheap and subsidized by their Blade. While taverns belong to the Blade, order and service is supervised by Gareth Wingstarl, Blade of Execution and Ceremony.

## LAWS

There is no equivalent of Waterdeep's *Code Legal* in the city of Mulmaster. Outside the Contract Census and the Edict of Arcane Banishment, every Blade enacts his own laws that suit his personal interests. While Blades work together to set a common ground, there are many differences. For example, male adultery is not a crime in Zeydon Wingstarl's hold but is sentenced to castration in Tarin Nanther's neighborhood. Respectively, marrying underage children as young as 6 years of age is considered normal among Tarin's people but shun upon elsewhere.

Outside the direct influence of a Blade each neighborhood is a community that has its own unwritten laws set by their forefathers. When justice needs to be brought upon accused perpetrator, the people take the law in their own hands and even the Blade rarely intervenes. The City Guard, comprised of members of the same community and paid by the Blade, is the hand that delivers the verdict. These men selected for their callousness, cruelty and imposing physical stature and taught to be respectful to the locals while keeping the streets clean. For every family, having their man of the house as City Guard immediately elevates their status in the neighborhood.

## PRICES AND EXPENSES

People of Mulmaster are poor and frugal. They spend most of their modest earnings on food and drinks, saving little for the future, and exhausting any venue before they have to spend money on anything else. They would rather barter favors than spend any gold on goods and services. This diminishes the trade in the city and lowers prices on common goods and services drastically compared to the bustling economy of the cities across the Sword Coast.

Prices on food range from **normal** to **triple** of standard. Most of the food in Mulmaster is imported via Zhentil Keep sea routes, or The Vast in the south. During the freezing winters the Moonsea covers in ice and routes are unsailable, during which prices of food spike so high only nobles can afford to purchase at a whim. Mulmaster is known for local produce of hard alcoholic liquor which keeps the price in taverns lowest in the region, at **half** price.

Prices on adventuring gear are **half** of standard, the lowest in the Moonsea region. Mulmaster is the biggest exporter of steelwork, with about one sixth of the population involved - from miners shipped to labor in the Earthspur Mountain mines, ore processing, smiths and decorators, and trade ships companies. However local smithies rarely put on display any masterwork weapons. They are exclusively sold to the Blades, the Soldiery, or export contracts for Zhentil Keep. The few products of distinct quality are often defective ones that would not meet the high standards of the foreign clients.

Arcane and divine services cost **nothing** to **everything** in Mulmaster. While public practice of arcane magic is strictly forbidden, The Cloaks force all registered spell-casters to volunteer for free community service three days in a ten-day week for leeway in enforcing the law. Many casters see no option but to provide their day's worth of powers to the local community - from healing, blessing, enchanting and more. In return, their practice is tolerated and they are even respected among their community instead of feared and hunted. The list of allowed spells is strictly controlled and daily allotment of spells is regulated. People wait for days in long queues for their time to receive free arcane service.

## NOBILITY

There are no “idle rich” in Mulmaster. While Blades and their advisors are technically selected among the Mulmaster nobility, they are held to much stricter standards of loyalty and performance, and are constantly tested. The responsibilities and fear of failure quickly erode any warm family ties and often pit Blades against the interests of their original family. The noble families despise the regime of Selfaril, since any attempt to manipulate the city’s increasing wealth faces mandatory resistance from those raised to manage it.

Perhaps most insulting for the aristocracy of Mulmaster is that they are held to the same standards of citizenship as common folk. Nobility have to go through the same process of acquiring and retaining a writ, although it is a mere formality. Most keep their lavish lifestyle without a Blade interrupting their routine, but remaining among the ranks of aristocracy requires good investments and timely repayment of debts. Should they borrow more than they can repay, should their investments perish in an unfortunate fire, should they take on liabilities they cannot cover, all reasons are irrelevant to Selfaril’s regime. The noblest Zor or Zora will find themselves no different from a street beggar begging for coppers to survive, because the Contract Census will guarantee it.

Young nobles are prepared for this unforgiving climate from the earliest age. The first things a noble learns after reading and writing, are algebra and accounting. Economics, negotiation, and fiscal responsibility are taught via harsh and brutal lessons by expensive and hard-sought tutors. A Blade may prepare his offspring with close apprenticeship of the ins and outs of his particular domain, but a Blade’s life is often too short and tumultuous to guarantee that children will follow his footsteps, or even be spared from his father’s mistakes. Young Zor and Zora are granted a trust fund, managed by a loyal family advisor. The money in that fund, carefully managed, is all that maintains the charade of nobility. Not every child of an aristocrat is fortunate enough to reach adulthood with preserved or increased wealth.

The turnover among Blades and the brutal conflicts of wealth have reduced the noble class to a shadow of its former glory. In a mere decade, fewer than twenty of the original forty-nine families remain in Mulmaster, and only a handful of them are influential enough to be taken seriously.

### LARGEST NOBLE FAMILIES

- **Wingstarl**. Zhentarim merchant dynasty that financed the Selfaril’s return to power. Notable member: *Zeydon Wingstarl, Blade of Soldiery*.
- **Lastdawn**. A bastard off-shoot of Waterdeep aristocracy, serving the Lord’s Alliance interests. Notable member: *Iridium Lastdawn, Blade of Cloaks*.
- **Shadweld**. Mercenary family that used to control half of Phlan before its destruction during the Devastation Days. Notable member: *Theryssa Shadweld, Lady of Crime*.



# ORGANIZATIONS

## SOLDIERY

The Soldiery is Mulmaster's army and navy, a proud force that is richly rewarded. Military service is highly valued among the middle and upper classes and seen as a way out of poverty for the lower classes. Their leader is Blade Zeydon Wingstarl, an exceptionally charismatic mercenary veteran exhibiting a zealous commitment to the wellbeing of the common folk and maintaining the order of Selfaril.

Members of the Soldiery take an oath of loyalty and service that is the foundation of their honorable brotherhood, and corruption is extremely rare. The fairness of the Soldiery is why its members are frequently called on to judge duels between those of noble birth. The Order of the Gauntlet seeks to work closely with the Soldiery. Potential members must pass tests of military and seamanship as well as subtle tests of loyalty. Those who do very well and prove highly loyal are eventually subjected to other, secret tests. Exceptional members are privately invited to join the Hawks.

The members of the Soldiery are widely considered to be the best and brightest of the city. Subject to constant evaluations of ability and loyalty, they are warriors and seamen without equal in Mulmaster. They are frequently seen throughout the city and are (relatively) friendly, polite and competent. In the face of danger to the city, however, these features melt away and they exhibit a brutal, unparalleled savagery. They are fanatically loyal to the High Blade and the city. Attempting to bribe a member of the Soldiery will, more often than not, result in the arrest and imprisonment of the offender.

## HAWKS

The Hawks are the High Blade's secret police – the terrifying bogeymen who watch everyone. All members of the Hawks are issued permanent investigative or authoritative writs. They carry out night raids against those who harbor seditious thoughts, commit acts of sabotage, or otherwise threaten the stability of the regime. The Hawks are the best of Mulmaster's forces and execute the High Blade's plots without ever being seen. Each Blade's own spy network is modelled to closely resemble the strict order of the Hawks, but none can match their resources and sheer competence. The Lords' Alliance seeks a pact with the Hawks.

The ranks of the Hawks are comprised of people from every walk of life, though most are rogues due to their training in stealth, deception and thievery. They typically keep their affiliation private unless otherwise called for, as outing themselves limits their ability to perform their duties. They are intelligent, loyal, and have silver tongues. Their leader, Rending Talon Groshin Lor, is a Banite through and through. After refusing the privilege too many times, he finally gave in to the pressure and became a Blade in 1505 DR. Lor is simultaneously a cunning warrior, charming deceiver, and master of subterfuge. His once handsome features are marred by a network of scars, which do not impede his ability to do field work, thanks to Disguise Self; a gift from a fiendish warlock patron. He is wholeheartedly devoted to High Blade and would die before betraying him.

## CLOAKS

From the Tower of Arcane Might, the Cloaks are sworn to protect the rule of the High Blade from all arcane threats. Formed as part of the Edict of Arcane Banishment, all practitioners of magic in the City who are not emissaries of a foreign power (such as the embassy of Thay) are watched closely. Those that use their magic are punished severely, unless they join the Cloaks. Cloaks are frequently detailed to lend magical assistance to the Watch and the Soldiery. The Harpers have been seeding their operatives into the Cloaks, but how they have avoided the magical tests of loyalty remains unknown. Members of the Cloaks are issued cloak-writs as license to use magic for self-defense and against the enemies of the Mulmaster.

Wizards to the core, they flagrantly advertise their trade with the most cliché fashion: robes, staffs, and other openly carried arcane instruments in local style (fur-trim, etc.). They are fiercely loyal to the Blades and the city in general, and have been afforded a great deal of trust. Despite this, they are professional and fair in their dealings. As many nobles and Blades discover, they typically do not accept bribes and react very poorly when offered such.

## CITY WATCH

The City Watch is made-up of those citizens unsuited for a career in the Soldiery due to stupidity, laziness, or a volatile nature. Unfortunately, it is also the City Watch that the residents of Mulmaster deal with most frequently. Members of the Watch are corrupt bullies who prefer brutal beatings and bribes to seeing any justice done.

They are more dangerous to the average citizen than most criminals, and they are often overlooked as unimportant when considering city politics. Despite Selfaril's edicts that delegated the entire City Watch to a single Hold, every Blade funds the watchmen in his or her neighborhood to "gently correct" their loyalty.

## CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Mulmaster has always been a decadent sprawl riddled with crime and corruption. Poor townsfolk, last remnants of the non-human races and the unsuspecting visitors from afar quickly learned to fear the fall of night when gangs took hold of the streets and turned them into their battlefield. It all changed when Selfaril established his reign after the Flamerule Massacre and like every aspect of life and trade crime became a domain to be managed with a profit.

The first few Blades he put on that position had very little idea how to achieve that. One tried to dominate the rival gangs but faced indomitable resistance. Another tried to let it spread like wildfire and watch the city burn but the rest of the Blades united to protect their own people and domains. It was until a woman with nerve of steel has been put in that position. Theryssa Shadweld was the first to weave the same contractual tyranny that Selfaril had designed for the rest of the city. Rather than opposing the leaders of the rival gangs, she used her conviction, influence and wealth to offer them full protection if they agree to put their differences aside.

She proposed that every month there would be only limited number of high-ranked crimes: any robberies, sabotages or assassinations against nobility and even Blades. These crime contracts are put on closed auction for wealthiest and most influential of clients, and then gangs compete to provide the best suited men for the job to win that contract. Only in a few months the price for a noble house shakedown or death warrant rose tenfold, soon twentyfold and kept rising - profits shot sky high while risks remained low.

Theryssa invested all her profit into buying the City Watch and securing connections within the Hawks and the Soldiery. Soon she could provide absolute immunity and unrivaled protection to all gangs. Even leaders who saw a rival in her strong persona had to agree that few assassins and thieves died on the field, and crimes that would have left a bloody trail in the past were now impossible to investigate. The spiderweb of soft power have earned Theryssa the title of Lady of Crime.

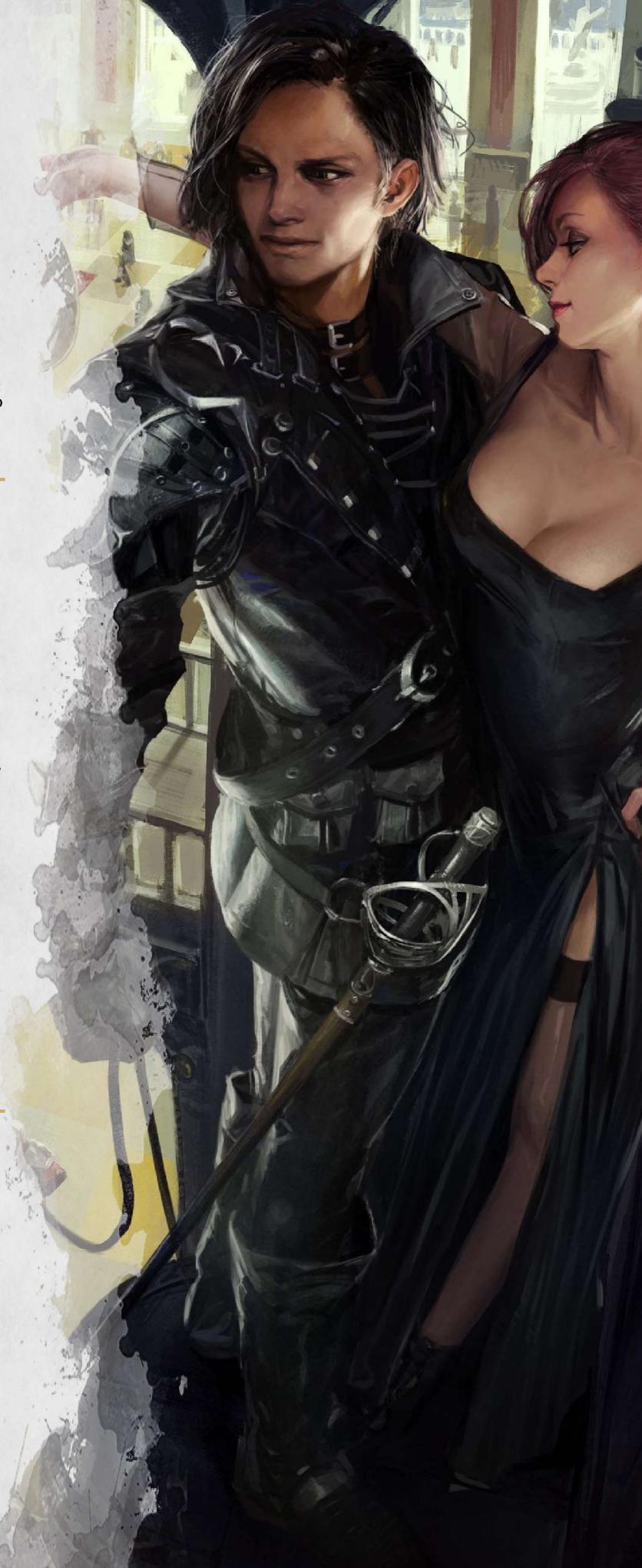
## BASTARD BULLS

Many of her daily operations are handled by the **Bastard Bulls**, a powerful mob of fringe nobility that offers a less honorable venue to aristocracy who have lost all wealth and influence. They controls the wealthy Eastern districts close to the Towers and dominate in prostitution, illegal goods and cutthroat debt collection. The Bastard Bulls are Theryssa's racketeering arm. Instead of shaking every trade shops or inns, she went straight to the Blades. Every Blade and noble house pays a percentage of their profits to Theryssa to make sure that any crime contract on their name, property and closest people enjoys a prohibitive premium so high that almost nobody can afford to pay it. The Bastard Bulls are always happy to lend a loan in troubled times to fellow nobles, but too often the interest is paid in family blood.

Led by the cocky and arrogant Larras Lastdawn, female cousin of Iridium Lastdawn who have inherited the same charming beauty and spiteful machiavellianism but none of his ingenious intellect, the Bastard Bulls always try to take advantage of any of Theryssa's few and rare weaknesses, and scheme against her faithful Velvet Hands. The noble gang uses any opportunity to spill blood from the filthy scoundrels of the Sharkteeth, who are known to steal from their contraband storehouses or molest their street women instead paying for their services. The Bastards Bulls only share interests with gang that still pays respect to nobility, such as the Wolfbrothers and the thieves from the Shadow Breeze.

## THE WOLFBROTHERS

The **Wolfbrothers** is a clan of assassins that has migrated from Zhentil Keep during Selfaril's return to power. Hired to infiltrate the city, the clan recruited traitors among the nobles and sabotaged Jaseen's reign during precarious times, laying the groundwork for High Blade's assault. Pleased with the clan's work, Selfaril allowed them to remain in Mulmaster as his own secret service. However as the Wolfbrothers were among the most defiant against the Contract Census, he saw mistake in his decision and instigated an incident that branded the clan as lycantropes using dark druidic magic to influence the domain of humanity. They were shamed and forced to withdraw at risk of a city-wide persecution, and Selfaril passed their authority to the Hawks, a small lodge comprised of the most capable among the Soldiery. Since these dark days, the clan never forgot the insult and betrayal.



The Wolfbrothers is a tight-knit society veiled in legend and superstition. Even without any solid evidence, people whisper that the clan comes from an ancient clan of lycantropes who had their souls buried deep into the mires of Cormanthor to achieve immortality. It doesn't help that the Wolfbrothers bear striking likeness to each other - all of them pale, wiry men with hollow faces, raven black unkept beards and wrinkled brooding eyes, wearing clothes that feature wolf pelts. One can easily mistake some as identical twins except for the unique pattern of scars that adorns their faces. The Wolfbrother's look is so frightfully iconic and wrapped in superstitions, that Mulmasterites who grow unkept beards are shamed by family and society until they shave off to prove themselves as conforming citizens.

The Wolfbrothers shun from any social life - they are bound by blood to never seek a woman's touch, to never leave offspring, to never laugh, dance, drink or taste any earthly pleasures. Few dare laugh that Wolfbrothers only mate with each other, but how their number remains strong to this day remains a mystery. Much of their code resembles The Book of Zhegos - the nihilistic creed of the zhegot scourge - and some say that Zhegos Vetus, the notorious battle leader of the zhegots, was initially or may still be a Wolfbrother himself.

Wolfbrothers specialize in the fine art of murder and intimidation. Where Velvet Hands walk openly in daylight to offer friendly advice to those who cross Theryssa's interests, the Wolfbrothers come by night to make them choke with primal fear or beg dearly for their life. While extremely cruel in execution and leaving unspeakable carnage behind them, Wolfbrothers only kill when necessary. Often people can buy back their life by offering themselves or their family to service to the clan, as Wolfbrothers rarely put their own members at risk where a traitor could do just the same. Wolfbrothers are in a fledging alliance with the Bastard Bulls who maintain some semblance of respect and honor. Wolfbrothers do not seek open conflict with any of the remaining gangs as they see no value in the petty crimes of Sharkteeth, neither the unquenchable greed for wealth of the Shadow Breeze.

## THE SHADOW BREEZE

In the secret tongue of the Thieves' Cant, "the Sun" refers to the Law imposed by authority, opposed by the "The Wind" referring to the Zhentarim, the criminal underworld. So when someone asks "*You think it'll be sunny today or windy?*" they are asking if there's any law around. To what the cunning members of the Shadow Breeze will answer, "*It will be cloudy with only a soft breeze. A good time for a walk.*"

The members of **the Shadow Breeze**, the thieves guild in Mulmaster, hide in plain sight. There are simple men with unremarkable faces at the tavern, with lightning fast reflexes that shuffle decks of cards or fidget with pair of dice, only to involve into long boring conversations about family matters. There are plain women with irresistible smiles who laugh at filthy jokes, drink like a dockhand and can throw anyone a wink. There are children that play outside, but their games are eerily complex and when approached they speak back with no flinch of an eye to adults or authority. Mulmasteries have learned to recognize the signs of the Shadow Breeze and pay them respect by treating them as fellow friends and neighbors, and maintaining the charade. Only through such respect, the Shadow Breeze can maintain its hold over the city and protect their own territories against the open attacks of the enemy gangs or the City Watch and the Soldiery.

While driven by the same entrepreneurial greed as anyone in Mulmaster, The Shadow Breeze is the only force of good among the criminal underworld. Unlike other gangs that seek to exploit the plight of every citizens within their territories and even dare to oppose the authority of their Blade, Shadow Breeze actually works towards helping citizens in need and nurturing support for their cause. They will often conduct robberies of merchants who believe themselves untouchable enough that they don't have to pay insurance to Theryssa, only to feed the hungry and impoverished folk within their neighborhood and shame the victims for their wealth. Such altruism makes cunning sense when nobody else even tries to win the populace for their cause. Shadow Breeze enjoys overwhelming support among Mulmasteries. Everyone who had their rent paid or meal gifted by invisible hands has his home open to shelter members of the Breeze. Even among those who never need the help of the Shadow Breeze, it is a common courtesy to aid them as thieves never forget a favor.

Other than redistribution of wealth, the Shadow Breeze specializes in trading with favors. Everyone who owes to the thieves is a valuable asset to be offered to any contractor. People are often unaware for whom they work and what the consequences of their actions are, and end up woven into the spiderweb of intrigue within Mulmaster. Their homes may end up storehouses of illicit goods, mysterious artifacts, or hideouts for persecuted criminals. Many of these favors are assumed to be assets in Theryssa's name, however the Shadow Breeze holds few aces in its sleeve to be used in the right moment to further their independent interests.

The Shadow Breeze believe their tactics of calculated altruism should give them monopoly on winning people's hearts. They will oppose any attempts of the Wolfbrothers to employ agents through fear of death, although the assassin clan has not yet responded to the veiled declaration of war. They also struggle to gain support among the impoverished souls and even the half-orc immigrants before the Sharkteeth get firm hold of them. While most gangs see no interest in cooperating with the thieves, the Velvet Hands often pass contracts to them when they need not to involve directly, such as collecting evidence and investigating for their clients.

## SHARKTEETH

During Jaseen's uncertain reign after the Devastation Days, much of the crime plagued the poor population. While all resources went into the reconstruction of Mulmaster in favor of the nobility and the merchant caste, not a dime was spared for the unfortunate that lost everything during the return of the Princes of Apocalypse. Homeless, impoverished, and desperate people found themselves on the wrong side of the law, either forced to leave into the wild or commit to crimes to survive. The Southroad Keep, Mulmaster's prison, was overflowing with people hoping rotting in a dungeon for petty crimes would at least provide shelter and meager food. It was during those dark days before the arrival of Selfaril's armies, that the **Sharkteeth** gang reared its ugly head. Established by Dozer Hassad and Umriah Braldwater, two pirate slave traders who had settled in Mulmaster when Moonsea was shortly unsailable due to wild magic, the gang quickly gained extreme notoriety as the most violent gang in Mulmaster.

Sharkteeth comprises of the lowest castes of the city - from the fallen out of favor who lost their writ or the beggars who never had anything to the unskilled, uncivilized Zhent half-orcs that have no place in orderly society. Anyone who finds

themselves on the wrong side of the law and has exhausted all hope to recover in good grace, will be approached by the Sharkteeth and given a chance to succumb into a dark world of depravity and degradation. Much like the zhegot scourge, Sharkteeth start innocuous by providing a home, a meal and protection. Members are provided necklaces with a shark tooth, a clear sign to City Watch to steer clear from trouble and not question or check for writ. The sight of that necklace - just as the sight of a ring on an old man's hand - fills the common folk with sheer dread and makes them shun from eye contact. This empowering fear is what hooks members of Sharkteeth like hard drug. However the cost of such power is very high, as soon a man is forced to commit to criminal acts that require excessive violence and erode man's moral code.

Sharkteeth specialize in extreme vice. While one may seek the Bulls for a lovely woman, it is Sharkteeth that will provide a corpse of a homeless child. If Wolfbrothers will kill a man for you, Sharkteeth will give you a pregnant wench and a saw to dissect her with. If you have no money but need a drug to quench your inner thirst for sensation, Sharkteeth will give you something bitter that will rot your body as you drift in extasy; and then provide your body to a man who will relieve his deviancy with your motionless body. They actively seek out members of nobility and wealth who hold in secret their vice to expose them, blackmail them and then come forth with an offer to satisfy their urges. The gang hooks the deviant nobility like a junkie until the client can no longer afford to pay for their service, and in turn becomes a victim for another client to enjoy his depravity. There is nothing sacred and nothing forbidden to the Sharkteeth.

Sharkteeth have complete control on the storehouses and the slums located around the Mulmaster docks. The location is of critical importance to the Bastard Bulls, who have to soil themselves by paying the Sharkteeth to use the storehouses for their illicit goods trade; to which Sharkteeth repay by frequently stealing from the nobles. The slums host vast underground basements connected via the sewers and

hidden tunnels, where members of the gang receive shelter and train rigorously. It is estimated that almost four hundred members (two thirds of them half-orcs) live predominantly underground and rarely see light of day unless on a mission.

## THE VELVET HANDS

Unlike the gang leaders, The Lady of Crime gains much more from being approachable and offering services tailored to anyone in Mulmaster rather than an unreachable tyrant.

Every assassin or thief who is skilled enough to catch her attention but unfit for field work, is offered a place among her **Velvet Hands**. These men and women walk openly in the streets of the city and can be recognized by the tight black uniform and a single velvet silk glove on their right hand, as well as their stone-cast faces void of emotion and whispery low voices. They are the cunning middlemen between the nobility and her crime organization. The Velvet Hands actively seek clients and can be contracted by anyone in their dealings with the shadow organization of the Blade of Crime. They also collect information and mediate conflicts between the gangs under Theryssa's authority. It is imperative for anyone, from lowly knave to a the crime bosses themselves, to cooperate despite their venomous spite against the Hands.

The Velvet Hands offer assistance and advice to people targeted by a crime contract, provide their advice on working with or even meeting with Theryssa, or sell information that the crime organization has collected on the numerous people of interest in the City. Velvet Hands have complex structure of executive order among themselves, and at any time any Hand may find himself rising or falling based on his performance. Inside her secret residences under the halls of The Gate of Good Fortune, Velvet Hands meet and discuss the cases of their clients, argue how to resolve conflicting interests, use money from their contracts to bribe their way to information crucial to them, and even have a small private court where Velvet Hands decide the most complex cases before a grand jury or even Theryssa in her role as a Grand Judge.



# FOREIGN INFLUENCES

## ZHEGOT SCOURGE

During Selfaril's yearly years of establishing the Contract Census, the big jewel of the Moonsea - Zhentil Keep - went through a decade of political and economic decay. Much of their hubris was their undoing. The decline of wealth and opportunity unleashed a wave of hate crimes against all immigrants, and even the half-orc population that were treated worse than slaves, were forced into exile.

During these difficult times, an influential Zhentil general named Zhegos Vetus took reign on the boiling hate consuming the city. After spending years into full isolation into the depth of Cormanthor, he returned with an apocryphal tome. This Book of Zhegos is said to be entralling treatise glorifying racial purity, hate as deific virtue, and teaching violence, masculinity and self-destruction to the oppressed, lost man. Zhegos preyed upon the children of the poor Zhent slums, offering protection and training in rural boot camps to turn them into vicious warriors. His army bears his name, "zhegots". Nowadays, they have reached to Mulmaster.

Zhegots are a frightful sight on the streets of Mulmaster. These youth - from 10-year old recruits to grizzled 21-years veterans - have their bodies and faces covered with a maze of intelligible tattoos that glorify violence, pain and murder. They take pride in showing off their bruises, scars and wounds, as well as only respect others who lead violent life. Zhegots revel in physical conflict, with disregard of their survival. They usually prey on the weak - frail men, women and children - only to teach them harsh lesson that only the strong survive. Zhegots denounce any pleasures in life as false delusions that stray from the path of a true warrior. The more suffering a zhegot is able to endure, the more pain he can deal to others, the higher he grows in the hierarchy among Zhegos' order.

## THAY EMBASSY

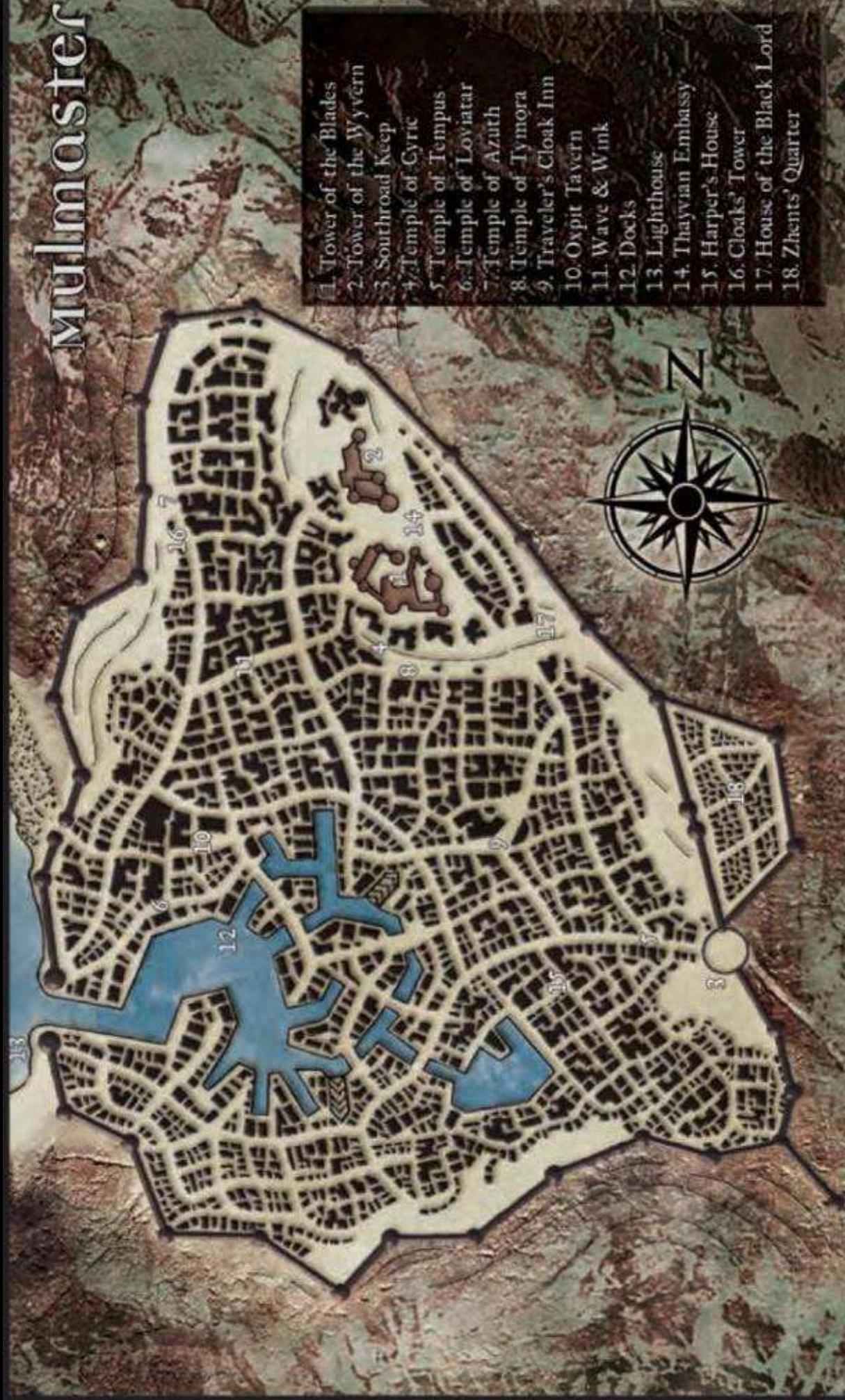
The Red Wizards of Thay have maintained a sizable embassy in Mulmaster for over a century. One of the previous High Blades was even married to a Tharchioness of Thay: the Red Wizard Dmitra Flass of Eltabbar. After Szass Tam assumed control of Thay, relations cooled somewhat, but Thay's interest in the Moonsea shifted as the power of the Zhentil Keep waned and the returned Netherese made gains in Sembia. The Embassy had been staffed by necromancers until very recently. During that time the Cloaks kept a close eye on it, but it became apparent that the Thayans had no significant interest in the city except for trade in magical reagents and ingredients and occasionally buying writh-less slaves to serve in their Embassy.

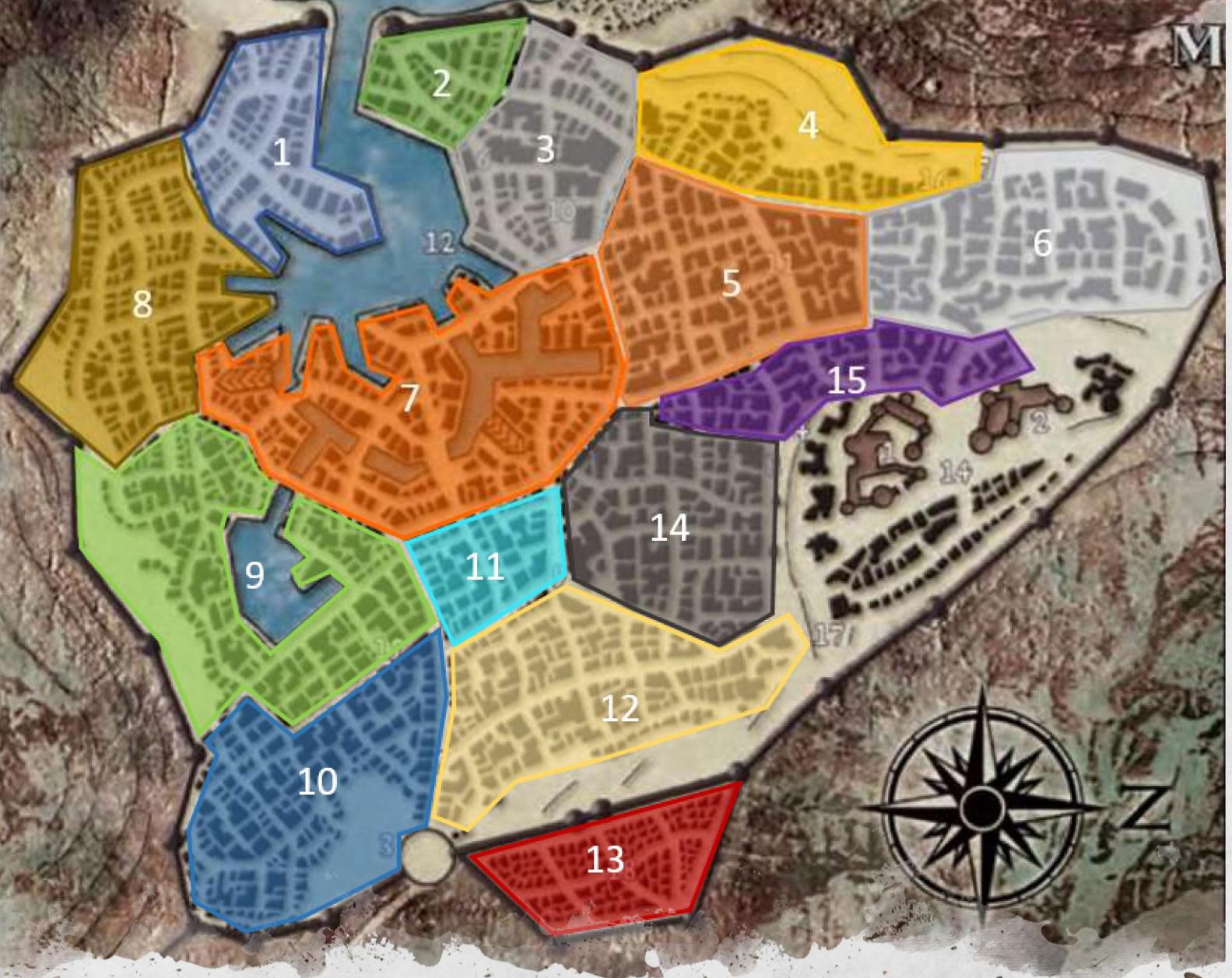
Now that living Zulkirs and Tharchions control much of Thay, most of the necromancers have been replaced by other wizards and their interests in Mulmaster are once again unclear. They have been investing in the city and supplying diplomatic missions to others. It seems they hope to use Mulmaster has a foothold for reintroducing their nation to other powers in the Moonsea and beyond. In the short term the reinvestment in the city is good, but the Blades fear that successful alliances with other states will make their own pact with Thay less of a deterrent.

There are rumors that Thay has been showing interest in the discontent surrounding the Zhent Ghetto. Thay supplies intelligent and exotic slave labor (and magical services) to the nobles of Mulmaster. The use of increasingly skilled half-orc labor is a potential threat to their highly profitable agreement with Mulmaster. A well timed revolution could potentially weaken Mulmaster's pact with Zhentil Keep and send a lot of gold flowing in Thay's direction.



# Mulmaster





# CITY GUIDE TO MULMASTER

## BLADE HOLDS

### 1. WEST CANAL GATE (THE CARCASS)

One of the poorest of neighborhoods that have seen very little renovation from the Devastation Days. Tarin Nanther's operations on rebuilding the neighborhood has put most people into old warehouses, segregated into make-shift homes. Wooden bridges connect the higher floors of the buildings and people often build illegal shacks on their roofs. With very little isolation, toddler cries, manic laughter and nerve-cracking quarrel carry across muddy streets.

**Blade Ruler:** Groshin Lor, Blade of the Hawks. His wealth coming from secret agent operations across the city and Moonsea region, he seeks no profit from his own hold and cares little about the common people.

**Criminal Acitivity:** Sharkteeth base of operation for Dozer Hassad, the Butcher of Mulmaster. A quarter of the young women in the hold work as prostitutes across Mulmaster.

### 2. EAST CANAL GATE (LITTLE PHLAN)

A small neighborhood populated mostly with Phlan refugees that moved much of their home city wealth to Mulmaster after Phlan's second and complete destruction by the Princes of Apocalypse. The quarters celebrate the cultural and economic nostalgia for their lost home, from the colorfully painted houses to the scent of spice and fried meat that is common for their culinary. Most of the citizens fear unwanted visitors from The Carcass who swim the canal by night.

**Blade Ruler:** Theodor Burran, Blade of Food and Prosperity. A portly old man deeply invested in trade routes of provisions across the Moonsea. Maintaining Little Phlan as exemplary state is his family pride. He maintains order based on Phlan's Codex of Justice.

**Criminal Activity:** Shadow Breeze have strong presence in Little Phlan.

### **3. IRONHOLD STREET**

The centre of this quarter contains several amalgamations of storehouses for ore, surrounded by metalluric workshops. These imposing buildings of stone sing the song of thousands hammers and vomit thick layers of smoke in the sky that choke the streets with thin carpet of raven-black soot. The streets are busy by massive carriages and dirt-plastered workers that yell loudly at sorry apprentice, while half-orc workers slave under unbearable burden.

**Blade Ruler:** Tarin Nanther, Blade of Construction and Repairs. A mountain of a man in his seventies, the longest serving Blades of all, he is known to always deliver his tithe against any odds, fueled by his inhuman cruelty for failure.

**Criminal Activity:** Shadow Breeze have moderate presence, so does the Bastard Bulls collective.

### **4. MINER'S TOWN**

Once a well maintained neighborhood, it is slowly decaying due to lack of maintenance and renovation. Almost fully populated by families of miners and steel workshop workers, during workdays you may only see women and children scouring the streets. Twice a week the neighborhood fills with hundreds of carts and carriages, with fathers returning to see their families, kiss their wives, hug their children, before returning to the depths of Earthspur Mountain.

**Blade Ruler:** Damian Tusk, Blade of Ironworks and Exports. Despite the success of Ironhold Street is solely his achievement, he was crushed by Tarin Nanther's ambition. He now focuses on ensuring workforce productivity.

**Criminal Activity:** Shadow Breeze have secondary headquarter here.

### **5. GOOD FORTUNE STREET**

One of the busiest and most decorated neighborhoods, often more populous than the City Centre. Most buildings are two to three story mansions that belong to nobility, specialty shops and cultural trappings. The main attraction is the Gates of Good Fortune, Theryssa Shadweld's palace of gambling and fortune. Such palace of gold, surrounded by smiling angel statues greet the passerby and whisper prayers for success and fulfillment of their deepest desires.

**Blade Ruler:** Theryssa Shadweld, Blade of Internal Affairs - also known as Lady of Crime. The sole ruler of all criminal underworld in the city of Mulmaster. Her hold is exemplary display or order and peace, only disturbed by laughter and jolly conversations.

**Criminal Activity:** Headquarters of the Velver Hands. Secondary headquarters of all gangs in Mulmaster, except the Sharkteeth, their savagery unwelcome here.

### **6. EASTERN MEADOWS**

A peaceful quarter littered with tidy, two floor family houses owned by the richer stratum of Mulmaster population, many of whom high ranks within the Soldiery and the Cloaks. Known for its overabundance of City Guards during all time and strict night time laws, the brightly illuminated streets fall into deep slumber during midnight. It is said that this is the quarter of choice for wizards - few of whom unregistered - who seek solitude away from the street noise of the city.

**Blade Ruler** Kullin Lastdawn, Blade of Contracts and Treasury. An aged, diminutive bachelor with a hawkish expression and whispery voice, he is said to be the second richest and most influential man in all Mulmaster. He prefers solitude, and offers peace to those who can afford it.

**Criminal Activity:** Headquarters of the Shadow Breeze. By contact with Kullin Lastdawn, the gang does not commit any acts of thevery in the quarter, neither lets anybody else do it.

### **7. THE HEART OF THE CITY**

The largest and busiest quarter of any in Mulmaster, The Heart of the City is hive of entering and departing ships, hundreds of dockhands loading crates and sacks, drunk captains advertising departure times and nobility holding their nose above the filthy rabble. The docks are swarming by trade workshops and markets of any foreign produce or pubs specializing in foreign culinary. The streets tremble with marching squads of the Soldiery. Their headquarter - The Shield of Mulmaster - decorates the square as two looming gothic towers, connected together to become a gate over the massive road leading into the city centre.

**Blade Ruler** Zeydon Wingstarl, Blade of Soldiery. A statuous man of exemplary charisma, most beloved and desired man in Mulmaster. With the bravery of a lion, a heart of pure gold, and unheard virtues that would shame a paladin order, Zeydon walks among the common men, he and his men ready to help anyone in need, to buy any simple man a drink or wink to any woman in heat. Said to be Selfaril's favorite, he excels above any man for he truly believes and relishes Selfaril's tyranny with all his heart.

**Criminal Activity:** Headquarters of the Bastard Bulls, who struggle to keep both Sharkteeth and Shadow Breeze off their territory.

### **8. SHIPWRIGHT DISTRICT**

Very few people call this district their home since recently a massive fire consumed half of the buildings and the neighborhood is undergoing massive renovations that are the focus of Tarin Nather's investments at the moment. People are pushed into the city walls living in hand-made shelter and tents hoping by winter the district would welcome them back. Much of the district is massive warehouses occupied by aging ships needing repair before they return to the Moonsea. Trying to cut costs, the Blade of Shipright is currently hiring zhent half-orcs despite outcry from human population. The boiling racial injustice is fueling the growth of zhegot gangs in this quarter.

**Blade Ruler:** Thames Lastdawn, Blade of Navy and Shipwright. A pale and effeminate man in his mid thirties, a competent soldier rejected from the Hawks for being too worldly and narcissistic. He always pretends to be far wealthier than he is, from his clothes to his choice of food. However, he would cut any corner to save money at the expense of his own men. The other Blades do not respect him, but he has kept a good watch over Mulmaster's navy.

**Criminal Acitivity:** Sharkteeth base of operation for Umrich Braldwater. He is funding the growth of zhegot in the neighborhood, recognizing their racial purity virtues and cult towards violence as valuable asset. Umrich is known to have vast collection of human skin he has removed himself, and wears as clothes.

## 9. THE MARKET HOLD (THE KIDNEY)

Centuries ago, this used to be the shipwright quarter but has since become the busiest marketplace in all Mulmaster. Housing the bi-weekly West Market where all the citizens come to barter and buy their tools and clothes as well as enjoy a rare selection of exotic load from foreign trade caravans, the Kidney have since became more of a tourist trap where the most expensive and exquisite shops are operated, with prices that make the common Mulmasterite laugh and walk away.

**Blade Ruler:** Meladia Lor, Blade of Trade and Provision. Deeply conservative and religious woman who despises any sign of weakness among her domain. It is believed she never leaves her house without a group of divinators and fortunetellers who foresee the success of her every decision. Every foreign trader who sets foot into the city must attend a private meeting with her, and have his inventory scoured for anything she demands to be offered first to her - often as a maiden gift.

**Criminal Acitivity:** it is rumored that The Wolfbrothers have their headquarter somewhere in The Kidney or Wardentown.

## 10. WARDENTOWN

A poor residential area bearing its name from its closeness to Southroad Keep, the prison of Mulmaster. Long ago this used to be a small village where families of prison guards would be kept close to take their hourly shifts. Nowadays the area is a spawl of poorer citizen of all walks of life. Cheaper lodging is offered to those foreign traders who decide not to leave the city after a busy day at the West Market. The large hills near the Southroad Keep are now covered with stockades where petty criminals are put at display, for citizen to ridicule and throw rotten food and animal dirt at them.

**Blade Ruler:** Alethia Drakehorn, Blade of Records. An old hag consumed by her insatiable thirst for knowledge and order. She is the head of the administrative Contract Census in the Southroad Keep and oversees the infinity of records between Blades and tradesmen. She is so consumed by her work that common folk haven't seen her in months.

**Criminal Acitivity:** it is rumored that The Wolfbrothers have their headquarter somewhere in The Kidney or Wardentown. Due to the closeness with the Zhent ghetto, zhegots gang activity is main source of violent crime.

## 11. THE CITY CENTRE

A showcase of the Mulmaster wealth, the City Centre is a beatiful arrangement of mansions hidden behind tall decorated walls. Each Mansion has three particular sides - one is entrance for the administration busy with clerks and overseers; one is a richly embasoned in messageboards with a gate leading to a small building where accountants and creditors meet clients who wish to take a debt from the noble house; and one that is for ceremonial visits from other nobility that attracts crowd from the less fortunate wishing to be blinded by the display of beauty, wealth and influence that Mulmaster has cultivated. It is almost king-worthy tradition that the nobility revels, but Sefaril dismisses as peacock rabble, and most Blades are too busy surviving to attend.

**Blade Ruler:** Gareth Wingstarl, Blade of Execution and Ceremony. A charming man in his fifties with a forever crooked smile that excels in venomous sarcasm. To him life and death are equally cause for celebration and waste of other noble's funds.

**Criminal Acitivity:** A rare island of order in all Mulmaster. Bastard Bulls sometimes show their faces only to be kicked back to where they belong.

## 12. GATES (THE STAIRCASE)

Known as The Staircase for the weaving incline streets that give carriages and old people the trouble, this sprawling hill-bound quarter is the first that welcomes visitors into the city. It is also home most of the pubs, taverns and hostels that comfortably display welcoming signs everywhere; so frequent are also the pickpockets, the con men and the secret agents of The Cloaks that scour for any sign of illegal use of magic. Night time, the quarter explodes in sound and sights as here operates the Black Blade Tavern, the biggest one in all Moonsea region, said to be bigger than the Yawning Portal itself. The streets are littered with young beautiful women in heat, many of them hailing from The Carcass.

**Blade Ruler:** Levia Drakehorn, Blade of Beliefs, happens to be a non-believing woman. However she firmly believes in maintaining order and peaceful coexistence between all competing factions in the city. Little of that involves faith, instead she employs a cunning knowledge of human psyche.

**Criminal Acitivity:** Bastard Bulls operate here, however their venues are frequently attacked by Sharkteeth.



## 13. ZHENT GHETTO

Built on top of swampy mire and enclosed by high stone walls guarded all the time by the hateful watch of City Guards, the Zhent ghetto is home of the most miserable, tormented group in all Mulmaster denizens - the Zhent half-orcs. Crowded together to fight over meager human waste and eat each other in misguided rage, these creatures are reduced to worse than their wild ancestors. Few of them with their will crushed to servile insensitive pulp are walked in chain row to labor at the Ironhold Street or cart city waste by night.

**Blade Ruler:** Paige Lor, Blade of Non-Human Affairs. A weak and sensitive woman struggling to appear strong and authoritative to the bestial subjects she must command. Suffering from the infidelity of her father - the late Blade who held the same position and who was willingly cuckolded by his unfaithful wife with half-orc specimen, she must hold her face proud and hide the tears when all nobility laughs behind her back, calling her "orc maiden" or much worse.

**Criminal Acitivity:** No human gang dares step into the mire slums. Some say only Wolfbrothers earn the fear of the half-orcs and enter and leave the ghetto unharmed.

## 14. PARADE WARD

Five times a year, Mulmaster celebrates the five holy days of the Harptosian Calendar. These celebrations take form of parades, either display of military prowess by the Soldiery or the gratuitous generosity of Blades who bring exotic dancers and bards from distant lands. These rare explosive events are so fondly remembered by Mulmasteries who gruel a boring life that they have named this quarter by their favorite event. Mostly decorated by tall buildings meant to house the rich and the successful, Parade Ward happens to have most of the weapon, armor and specialty shops - frequently visited by newcomers once they climb the Staircase.

**Blade Ruler:** Moragrin Shadweld, Blade of Justice. A prestigious veteran with feral hunter eyes and strikingly hairy body under which hides a temperate and welcoming composure. While he is rarely seen in public, Moragrin is believed to be Selfaril's private advisor on many subjects and his personal naysayer who opposes any hasty decision that would harm the High Blade or the City with biting honesty.

**Criminal Acitivity:** Bastard Bulls are trying to expand their influence here.

## 15. CLOAK STREET

This veiled ward is known to host the largest number of members of the Cloak, as well as their Libraries of Forbidden Arts that only members of the Cloaks may enter. Even City Guards here are lean and watful apprentices instead hulking rural brutes. The long winding street is house of many "volunteer clinics" where registered mages are required to work for the community three days in a tenday week, offering healing, repairing and enchanting house tools and more.

**Blade Ruler:** Iridium Lastdawn, Blade of Cloaks. A rare prodigy hailed as one of Waterdeep's brightest youth, Iridium walked away from the arcane universities to return to his home. Recognized by Selfaril, his Cloaks have established ruthless surveillance across all the city that protects the common populace from any harm of arcane nature.

**Criminal Acitivity:** No gang members is stupid enough to commit crimes in Iridium's hold.



# THE TOWERS OF AUTHORITY

## TOWER OF BLADES

The **Tower of the Blades**, also called **Mulcastle**, is an opulent, expansive castle and the official residence to the fifteen Blades who govern the city, along with their families, servants, and bodyguards. Since Blades no longer share the same interest as High Blade Selfaril, they only show up for official duties and spend most days at one of their multiple estates across the city. A contingent of 300 soldiers and 30 Cloaks also guard the castle. Each entrance is always guarded with a six-man force, and each noble's wing is protected by various warding spells cast by Cloaks. Despite (or because of) the high security, Mulcastle is riddled with secret passageways and rooms for spying and clandestine meetings. There are also several underground passages; some of which connect to one another, while other areas are isolated and can only be reached from specific rooms above.

## TOWER OF WYVERNS

The **Tower of the Wyvern** is smaller than the Tower of the Blades, but is the exclusive residence of the High Blade. The fine marble structure is decorated with ornate stained glass windows, the largest of which is set into the tallest tower and features a wyvern. Nearly four hundred soldiers and forty Cloaks serve here at the High Blade's pleasure, along with a couple hundred servants. For over a century the castle hid a subterranean complex of luxurious baths, exhibition stages, and leisure chambers known as the **Palace of Revels**. All manner of debauchery and depravity were rumored to occur in its candlelit halls, until High Blade Jaseen Drakehorn, a priest of Bane, bricked up the entrances to the Palace of Revels two decades ago. There are however multiple secret passageways rumored to lead there. Some are rumored to connect to both the Tower of Blades and Tower of Arcane Might.

## TOWER OF ARCANE MIGHT

The Tower of Arcane Might is a massive stone tower complex housing the group of mages once known as the Brotherhood of the Cloaks. That name has fallen out of favor for their current moniker, "**The Cloaks**." The Cloaks serve the Blades of Mulmaster and are the only sanctioned spellcasters in the city where magic is otherwise outlawed. It has libraries, dormitories, laboratories, and vast storehouses of gold and magical items. The Tower is protected by iron golems, numerous defensive spells, and of course the magic of the Cloaks themselves.

## SOUTHROAD KEEP

Southroad Keep, Mulmaster's oldest building, is the heart of its absolute bureaucracy. The enormous, squat, circular brick building serves as the constabulary headquarters, the Archive of the Census, tax-collection center, courthouse, and a massive underground prison. The building is nearly always crowded, and lines are long and slow. The inner chambers are constantly choked with throngs of people waiting to

conduct business with the city, and the overworked officials are never in a great hurry to keep the lines moving.

The barracks lie underground and has approximately the same area as the aboveground portion. The gatehouse can seal off the city's south gate in the event of a siege. One hundred soldiers are posted here at all times, though the keep can house as many as six hundred when necessary. Adjacent is the prison. It is rumored that all prison guards eventually convert into followers of Loviatar, and a small shrine is near entrance to the vast underground cell block for anyone to see:

*"The world is filled with pain and torment, and the best that one can do is to suffer those blows that cannot be avoided and deal as much pain back to those who offend."*

The Loviatar Dogma

## THE STORM GATE

The Storm Gate is so named because it opens to the rocky beach on the Moonsea side of Mulmaster. As with Southroad Keep, the guards at Storm Gate carefully track those who enter the city for a proper writ, but anyone who needs to be imprisoned is transported along the walls to Southroad Keep. Storm Gate is staffed by 20 soldiers and at least one Cloak at any hour, lest invaders beach ships to attack.

## ENTERTAINMENT AND TRADE

### WAVE & WINK INN

**Wave & Wink Inn** is a favorite inn of wealthy travelers, which offers a welcome retreat from the cold and wind. Each room has its own fireplace, while dinner and drinks are included in the rather steep nightly price of 12gp (15 gp with a stabled mount). Other than nobility and their guests, no one at Mulmaster can afford such prices. It is often advertised as a "tourist trap" for the uninitiated to the living standards of Mulmaster.

### BLACK BLADE TAVERN

**Black Blade and Bloody Boar** (formerly Oxpit Tavern) is recognizable by its sign: a wooden sculpture of a boar impaled on a rusty iron sword. The inn has a massive raucous tavern and much lower prices, compensating for quality with quantity. The place has grown so large and popular in recent years that its owner - representing a Blade's interest - has pressured neighbors to sell their property to expand the inn. It takes twelve bartenders and a small army of servers to manage the daily flow of customers. A visitor can easily be lost in the amalgam of architecture and many hundreds of tables full of drunk loud patrons. The noise from the tavern echoes across all nearby streets.

## WINDSNUG HEARTH

**Windsnug Hearth** is an inn built in a part of town mostly sheltered from mountain winds. Food and drink is simple fare served en-suite. As a location that typically serves travelers and visiting merchants, its guests are frequently the target of con artists or muggers who watch for easy marks.

## THE LEANING BOOT

**The Leaning Boot** is a tavern in the cellar of a dockside tallhouse. For decades it has been marked only by an single old boot, nailed to a post at the top of the steps at street level. The interior is dimly lit and tends to be quiet, making the subterranean bar a favorite of the few dwarves in Mulmaster, older locals, and a handful of dedicated alcoholics. The Leaning Boot is the only place in Mulmaster proper that serves half-orcs. The cellars are damp, making corked bottles swell and burst open over time. As a result, only ale, beer, and other vat fermented beverages are served. Loud and merry drinking songs are forbidden by the owners, as if any stroke of happiness would disturb the sorrow of this place. Only Dwarven hum-songs are tolerated.

## THE WEST MARKET

There are many shops and markets in Mulmaster, each catering to its neighborhood and the people by a writ of a local Blade. Strangers who visit such places may be met with very high prices and questionable quality, as locals pay at unwritten prices for stock not on display. **The West Market**, running along the whole castle wall from Southroad Keep to the docks, is the only typical market that anyone can visit on three days a week. It is considered neutral ground among Blades, as they are all grudgingly invested in its success. For most of the year, the Market is robust and vibrant. Plenty of visitors take advantage of some of the lowest prices for goods and services across roughly half of Sword Coast. Yet, when the first signs of Winter cold reach the Moonsea, import

prices (especially clothing and food) rapidly increase from fear of the freezing Moonsea trade routes. In the final weeks of Leaffall, West Market develops a fever of commerce, blossoming into one of the few official holidays in Mulmaster: "Golden Month". Anyone who does not bring in significant profits during Golden Month is considered unfit for their position and will be punished by their Blade. During the harsh Mulmaster winter, trade is limited to only the most essential needs of the most desperate people, and at outrageous prices.

Non-human races do relatively well on the West Market. Most of them are wise enough to only get a writ for a day, make their profit and leave the city gates before dark. A few dwarves have owned independent businesses, and a certain half-elf is known to copy the nobility fashion trends for the common people. Even half-orcs, males with cut-off ears or females with malnourished faces, are grudgingly welcomed. They lean by the walls or scour among the stalls, carrying, cleaning and disposing of spoiled goods. Every human in Mulmaster exploits half-orc labor for carrying their goods to their home. The Blade of Racial Affairs have tried to turn that into a legal business and raise prices, unsuccessfully.

## PAWN SHOPS

**Specialty shops** rarely work with just any client, and are bound to their Blade's decisions. Magic ingredient shops are naturally illegal and if they exist at all, they are known to only a handful clients. There are very few weapon shops that specialize in fine and quality arms since almost all local smithy production is destined for export to Zhentil Keep and beyond. However the whole city is filled with pawn shops operating at any time of the day. Their owners do not judge the source of the wares, but pay next to nothing for it. The heaps of mediocre metal are covered with blood stains and smell rotten, and rusty dull knives may share the same space with magical or cursed artifacts the owner was unable to identify.



## THE MEATGRINDER

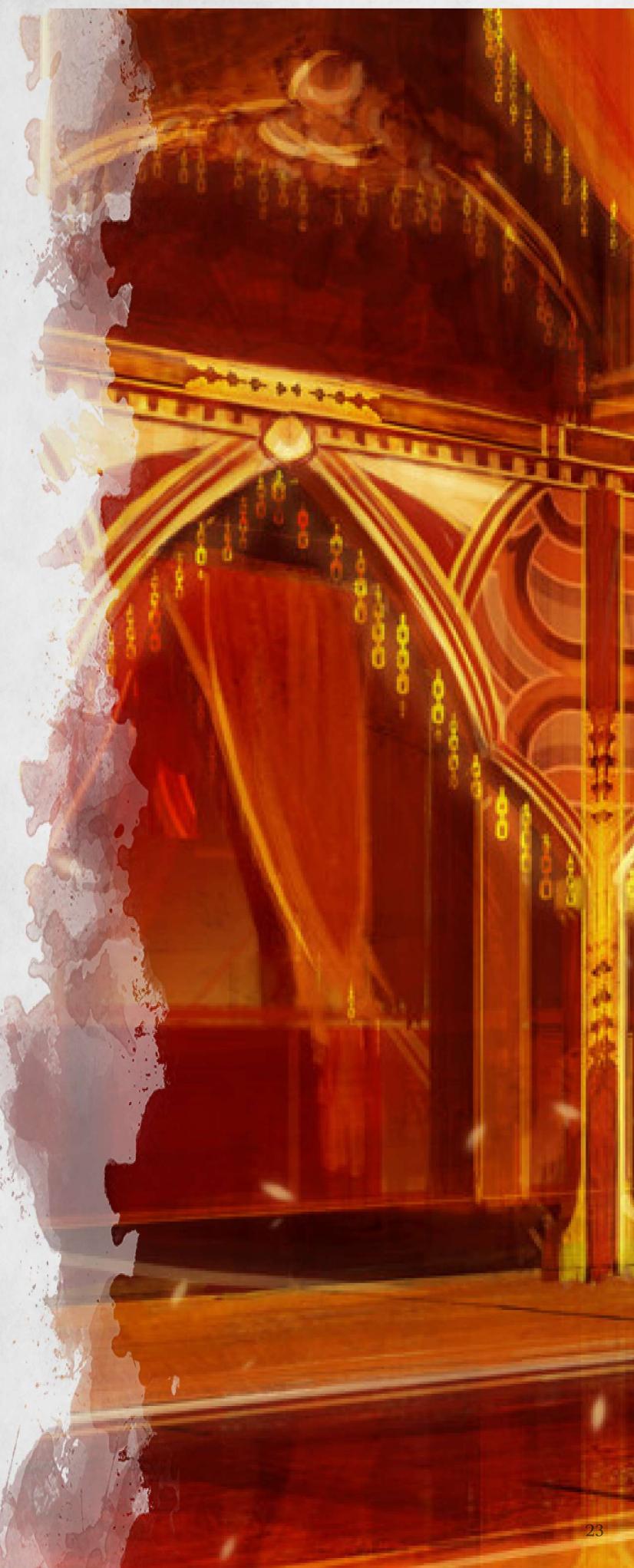
**The Meatgrinder** is an underground arena complex built deep into the maze of sewers under Mulmaster. Constructed on the foundation of an old temple to Tempus, Lord of Battles, the Meatgrinder has been illegally used for death fights among convicts and captives, for almost a century. It gradually expanded to illegal gambling, black markets, and providing services of deviant nature. It used to be a running gag among prisoners in Southroad Keep and Mulmasterites' worst-kept secret, until Selfaril's edict granted it official status as part of a Hold governed by a Blade. Since then, a massive investment has transformed the Meatgrinder into a premiere location for entertainment among locals. It holds various sponsored events: ranging from all-ages non-lethal duels, to bear-baiting and animal fights, to good old brutal death matches among convicts on death row. Anyone who can pay the entrance fee and show his writ is permitted - there is no discrimination of age or race for even the bloodiest of events. The Meatgrinder even smells better; rich incense is imported in vast quantities to mask the foul reeking of sewage and rotting corpses.

## THE GATE OF GOOD FORTUNE

**The Gate of Good Fortune** used to be a popular casino and a temple to Tymora, the one and only Good-aligned deity that appeals to Mulmasterites. It was maintained by Lord Priest Wylan Burrall (the jovial brother of taciturn Aleyd Burrall, a Knight of the Black Fist from Phlan) until 1503 DR his luck finally ran out. When he could no longer pay his mandatory protection fee to Theryssa Shadweld, the Lady of Crime, Wylan sold all his properties and moved back to help with the recovery efforts in Phlan. In his absence the small congregation withered.

Today Theryssa and her cunning Velvet Hands own The Gate and control all gambling operations there. Some believe the underground facilities include her private estate and the treasury of her obscene wealth, second only to the Blade of Taxes. Unlike the old days of simple (and rigged) games of fortune, the Gate now specializes in fixed odds betting: from Meatgrinder matches to the much more lucrative field of political gambling. A new rage among all nobility, every day fortunes are being made or lost, betting on what Blade will meet a disastrous end this season and who will be elected to share the same fate, months later; what noble will strike it rich in trade or who will be swallowed by growing debts; whose offspring will negotiate marriage with a future Blade; and whether High Blade Selfaril will make it through another moon – a favorite among the Blades themselves. Theryssa herself has vested interest in both fueling the fire of political intrigue in Mulmaster, and making certain that the house always wins at the end.

The Gate's lush interior, decorated with thick fur carpets and marble statues of an ever-smiling goddess, is a gathering place for political pundits, jaded demagogues and Blade advisors that snoop and listen to the pulse of the City. Among them are the expressionless faces of Theryssa's lawyer-agents: the Velvet Hands, who meet privately with clients and advise them with barely audible whispers. Unlike typical casinos, the Gate is a place of a silence and intrigue, only occasionally shattered by a bursts of fake laughter or drunken boasting of a conveniently fortunate noble.



# TEMPLES OF WORSHIP

Religion is not a major factor in the life of the average Mulmasterite. Most are too self-centered too worry about the plight of others and too greedy to consider donating to a temple. Nevertheless, there are several temples and shrines in the City of Danger. The shrines of Mulmaster (except Church of Bane) are generally not well-tended and do not offer spellcasting services, unless a cleric of the deity is visiting Mulmaster.

## BANE

With the return of Bane, **The Black Lord's Altar** has been rededicated and Bane has been made the official religion of the City. Mulmaster is permanent home of the Exarch of Bane Fzoul Chembryl and his High Imperceptor, Jorruk Missen. There is no clergy more powerful in the City, and those seeking to get ahead in the complicated social circles of Mulmaster frequently worship here.

## LOVIATAR

**The High House of Hurting** and the faith of Loviatar are extremely popular among the decadent nobility, prison guards, and the youth. Two decades ago, High Blade Jaseen ordered the debauched and depraved Palace of Revels to be bricked up beneath the Tower of the Wyrm. The priests of the Maiden of Pain have been only too happy to take the Palace's place by offering some of its more morally questionable services.

## TEMPOS

**The High Hall of Swords** serves those who pray in Tempus' name. It is popular with the Watch and those members of the army in the Soldiery. Those guilty of cowardice while fighting in the City's name will find their rotting heads impaled on the spikes that decorate the battlements of the temple. During the summer, frequent public fighting events are scheduled before the Hall of Swords, though they have nothing in common with the underground Meatgrinder.

## LEIRA, VELSHAROON, SAVRAS, MYSTRA

As a temple devoted to the gods of magic, it is no surprise that the **Tower of Mysteries** forms a sprawling complex surrounding the **Tower of Arcane Might**. The Tower includes small temples to Leira, Velsharoon, and Savras, as well as a shrine to Mystra (whose worship is illegal within the City). Since nearly all magic is forbidden in the City, anyone entering the Tower of Mysteries will be confronted by the Cloaks demanding to see their cloak-wrists. Only those who have officially sworn to not cast arcane magic in the City, are acknowledged dignitaries, or are members of the Cloaks may pass. Everyone else will suffer further, intense scrutiny.

## WAUKEEN

**The House Built on Gold** has been rebuilt and rededicated at the direction of the iron merchants of Mulmaster, chief among them Lord Ninyon Gos. In addition to religious services, the temple has also opened a bank that offers less usurious loans than the nobility, and with less likelihood of bodily harm than those available elsewhere. Selfaril's law has

mandated a flat interest monthly fee of 15%, but secret dealing can often raise it to 40% and more.

## LATANDER

A **shrine to Lathander** rests atop a hill near the south side of Southroad Keep where the rays of the sun first rise over the shadowed walls of the City. This untended shrine is frequented by the poor asking for the blessings of Lathander to shine upon them, as well as those leaving the City and traveling south.

## MALAR, THE BEAST LORD

Opposite Lathander's shrine, on the northern side of Southroad Keep, is a **dismal fly-ridden shack** with the claws of predators and wings of raptors nailed to its walls. Those who hunt in the mountains stop here to honor Malar, the Beastlord. Other than the occasional hunter, this shrine is often empty.

## MASK

The **shrine to Mask** stands openly in the street, not hidden away as one might expect. Mulmasterites venerate Mask as the King of Guile, who gets ahead by his wits and skill rather than just accepting his lot. The shrine takes the form of a changing chamber built to look like a cloaked and masked two-faced figure of 12 feet tall. One face is a man, the other a woman. Worshippers enter on one side by pulling the corresponding "arm" of the figure of one side, passing through, and exiting the other side. Custom dictates that worshippers must be masked and costumed when entering and must exchange mask and costume for another when exiting. Thus, no one knows who is worshiping at the shrine. There are always over a dozen costumes inside the shrine and traditional favorites rotate in and out as individuals take it upon themselves to repair or replace them.

## TALOS

The **shrine to Talos** is on the rocky, storm-battered shore outside the walls. Those who would offer the Stormlord praise do gift him a piece of driftwood, adding to a precarious towering pile that is set aflame at the end of every month. Climbing the precarious tower before the flames or dancing closely around the teetering mass as flaming logs fall are common ways to show one's faith.

## UMBERLEE

The **shrine to Umberlee** is on a bridge whose balustrade bears the sculpted, furious face of a woman. Through her gaping mouth the River Lis drains into the waters below. The shrine is called the Last Drop as it is customary for Mulmasterites attempting suicide to plunge over the sides, sacrificing themselves to the Bitch Queen. This shrine is tended by Rydah the Storm Smoother and is popular with common sailors and the naval members of the Soldiery. Its congregation is the largest of any of the shrines, and may soon achieve the status of a temple.

# NO MAN'S LAND

## ZHENT GHETTO

Mulmaster has always been in an alliance with Zhentil Keep, adopting much of its early laws, currency and model of government from them. The alliance crumbled in 1383 DR when Zhentil Keep and the Keep of the Raven were destroyed by the Shadovar. Fleeing the powers of Netheril, a large number of refugees arrived on Mulmaster's docks. Unwilling to aid their allies when the alliance no longer had anything to offer them, the Blades of Mulmaster relegated the refugees to a piece of swampy land outside the southern wall. In this hastily created ghetto, refugees were heavily taxed for the right to the relative safety afforded by proximity to the nearby City. When Zhentil Keep was eventually rebuilt post-Spellplague, many of the refugees tried to return to their ancestral home but the Zhentarim viewed the migrants as Mulmasterites and ordered them to return to their adopted city. Many chose to migrate elsewhere, but some no longer had the resources to try again. Selfaril Uoumdolphin signed a much-maligned treaty with Zhentil Keep, providing a bare minimum of aid and protection to Zhentarim refugees, in return for military support against Jaseen.

In 1507 DR, the Zhent Ghetto is almost completely void of human presence, and nearly all its inhabitants share some orcish heritage. Zhent half-orcs have little in common with their wild brethren or the spiritually enriched Many-Arrows:

they are savage, filthy, disease-ridden, ignorant, and underdeveloped from inbreeding and starvation. They speak crude common, relying on hand signs and orcish dialects among themselves. Within the Zhent Ghetto, half-orcs scrape to make a living in the coldest, harshest environment possible. Unspeakable violence, cannibalism, widespread plagues, and lawlessness reign among dung and clay cottages. Rabid dogs scavenge piles of trash and feast on rotting half-orc corpses on the sides of roads like bottomless rivers of mud. In the freezing Moonsea nights, half-orcs burn dry wood and excrement to keep themselves warm. A few among them, recognized by their cut-off ears, silently scour Mulmaster by night and collect trash to bring to the Ghetto where anything that could be worn, eaten or burned for warmth is hard-earned.

Half-orcs are best left alone in Mulmaster, unless you want trouble. However, there is nowhere else where any heavy labor - be it moving or killing - is as cheap as a handful of coppers. For more complex tasks, the more human-looking and intelligent ones can be procured for very little more (usually just real food). These are rumored to be discarded offspring from Mulmasterite affairs with half-orc men and women. No decent person would dare imply such a thing actually happens. But more than money, half-orcs would do absolutely anything for a simple hereditary writ: the one thing denied to any half-orc born in Mulmaster.





## OUTSIDE MULMASTER

### EARTHSPUR MOUNTAIN

The Earthspur Mountains, sometimes called the Giantspike or the Dragonspike, is a great mountain range in north Faerûn. It runs from the Moonsea to the Sea of Fallen Stars in the south. The Earthspurs are high and imposing: the range's tallest peaks are nearly 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) high. There are few trails through the mountains, making them very dangerous to cross.

Mining is lucrative here but conditions are harsh and dangerous. Miners endure a lot of hardship to pursue their wealth, and the mining communities suffer high death rates. The Earthspurs is still inhabited by tribes of orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears - even drow of the domain of Deep Wastes. The mountains is home to shield dwarves such as the Ludwakazar clan. However much of the lower slope have been purged by stationed garrisons of the Soldiery. Not only they protect the dozens of deep mines that feed Mulmaster's insatiable appetite for ore, but they also strongarm the few independent mining communities of Dunfee in Impiltur and the Arcatan towns of Sudrav and Tomrav away from the best

developed lodes. The mountains are rich in iron and silver, in apparently limitless lodes, with some bloodstone veins. There are also small but highly pure deposits of gold and many tunnels burrowed into the heart of the mountains in search of these metals.

At the center of the range, at its highest point, resides the Glacier of the White Worm, from which icy currents continuously blow around the peaks or descend to make Mulmaster rains even more foul. This magical glacier is a home of countless *remorhaz* that net into the ice to protect their hundreds of eggs from scorching with their inner fire.

Some tell stories of human and dwarven prospectors, lone and "gold-crazed", who attack anyone who come too close to their claims and finds, and who live like animals high in the mountains. Others speak of so-called "glitter caves", caverns with great stacks of lost dwarven gold and guarded by gold-crazed prospectors who'd slain the lair's beast and seized and guarded their hoards themselves. A few such stories turned out to be true. Lashan Aumersair of Scardale supposedly once led his followers to locate one of these gold caves and took its wealth to fuel his conquests.

## GLACIER OF THE WHITE WORM

The glacier used to be great sea of ice that weaves between the tallest mountains of the Earthspur. On the north-west side, it flows over the high cliff and spills into the Moonsea. On the east, it reaches into Lake Icemelt, which lay in the mountains between Damara and Impiltur. The ice covered an area of approximately 1200 square miles (~1040 square kilometers). As old histories and maps recorded, it was once a part of the Great Glacier, the much larger icesheet that lay some 400 miles (640 kilometers) to the north.

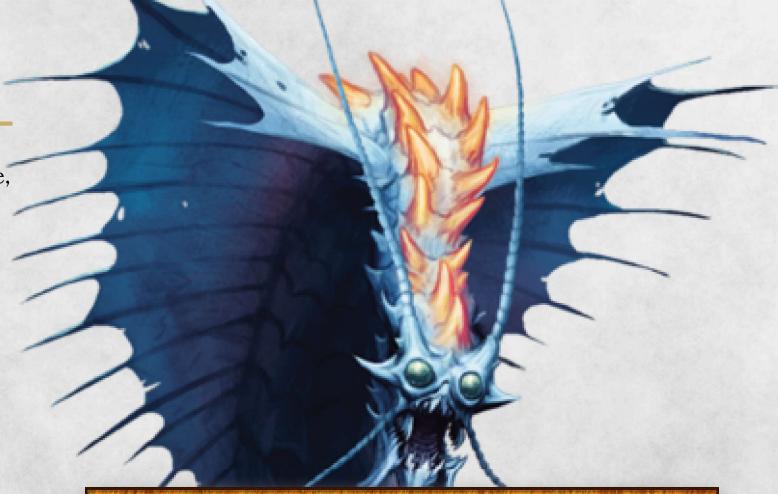
Curiously, the Glacier of the White Worm survives at much lower latitude than its altitude allowed, suggesting that magic or some other force might be involved. Sages of the 14th century DR theorized that potent cold-based magic or some other force might be the cause of this. Furthermore, they warned of a sinister power at work beneath the ice, and that the very safety of Faerûn could depend on preserving the integrity of the glacier and discovering the motive of this agency.

The glacier is inhabited by a few polar beasts and enormous—and dangerous—snow spiders, thanks to its former connection to the Great Glacier. Silver dragons laired in the mountains surrounded the glacier, while red dragons were also sighted in the area. Most notably, it was home to a variety of pale, albino remorhaz, which are unique to this region. These "white worms" gave the glacier its name. Herds numbering from dozens to hundreds could be seen roaming the ice. Remorhaz are gigantic centipedes that reach 25 feet long and 10,000 pounds in weight, and under the pale chitine burns fiery insides fueled by acidic reactions and wild magic. They prey on anything from wandering beasts to dragons, burying deep into the ice and sensing their prey with tremor sense. They need constant contact with ice to cool off, and when they procreate they lay nest of hundreds of eggs drilled deep into the ice so the offspring is protected from burning the whole nest as they form. The remorhazes are said to be led by giant-sized "queen" worm that laired in the very center of the ice. Adventurers also reported seeing (usually in retreat) unusual remorhazes with heads frilled with long, grasping tentacles.

During extremely harsh winters remorhazes feel no longer constrained in the Glacier and spread to hunt for food across the Mulmaster region. During these perilous times, all of Soldiery are stationed outside the city to protect smaller settlements nearby, and mining operations cease. Some mountain barbarian tribes live around the area of the glacier, particularly the Wormhunter tribe. They have dedicated much of their life hunting hermorhaze and relish in shaming the Soldiery by beating them to the kill with savage accuracy.

## IRONFANG KEEP

The stronghold resides in the northernmost parts of the Earthspur Mountain at the cascades where the White River fell into the Moonsea. The Keep is so old, that even the oldest elves remembered their grandparents talking about it. There were legends among dragons which indicate that Ironfang Keep already existed around -25000 DR. It earned its name due to massive iron deposits near the Keep. But no one dared to mine them, because most feared the presence of the Keep and its inhabitants.



## ALBINO REMORHAZ

*Huge monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 17 (Natural Armor)

**Hit Points** 195 (17d12 + 85)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Damage Immunities** Cold, Fire

**Senses** Darkvision 60ft., Tremorsense 60ft.,

Perception 10

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Heated Body.** A creature that touches the remorhaz or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

### Actions

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 40 (6d10 + 7) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the remorhaz can't bite another target.

### Bonus Actions

**Swallow.** The remorhaz makes one bite Attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is Grappling. If the Attack hits, that creature takes the bite's damage and is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is Blinded and Restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the remorhaz, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the remorhaz's turns. If the remorhaz takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the remorhaz must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the remorhaz. If the remorhaz dies, a swallowed creature is no longer Restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of Movement, exiting prone.



Ironfang Keep was originally one of the twelve fortresses built by the fire giants of Helligheim on its southern border. During the Thousand Year War between Ostoria and the draconic forces of Garyx, Ironfang Keep was the only one of these fortresses to survive being destroyed by the dragons before the First Rage of Dragons ended the war. The Keep is sealed by giant runecasters when the inhabitants of Helligheim decided to retreat to the north a century or two after the end of the war. It stood empty until -981 DR when a greathorn minotaur named Haask claimed it as the capitol of his burgeoning empire called Grong-HAAP. Grong-HAAP fell after Haask disappeared in -350 DR and after it dissolved, Ironfang Keep was forgotten.

Legend claims that an arcanist from fallen Netheril was the next creature to enter the Keep but he was supposedly later found wandering Thar, utterly insane. Orcs from Vastar told tales of entire orc tribes in the area being swallowed by the keep, never to return. Myriad elves, giants and even some dragons were drawn inside and disappeared in the keep. Beastly hybrid creatures were encountered in its vicinity, which led credence to rumors of someone experimenting with living things within the Keep. Ibixians, first noted near the keep in 703 DR, were thought to be one of the results of these experiments.

Ironfang Keep remains a place of mystery to the people of the Moonsea. In 1288 DR, the barons of Mulmaster hastily organized an expedition to investigate and loot the keep. As in response, the local gnoll population rose up against Mulmaster in a fifty year campaign of raids against the city which only stopped upon the last baron's death. Mongo, Blood of Ghelin claimed to have ventured inside and met its inhabitants when he appeared in Suzail in 1367 DR, badly beaten. Delirious, he was put to bed, but the next morning his remains were found splattered all over his room with no clear signs of violence.

In 1483 DR, Jaseen Drakehorn has forbidden all attempts of expeditions to Ironfang Keep. The order still remains in effect ever since Selfaril took over Mulmaster.

## MONASTERY OF THE YELLOW ROSE

The Monastery of the Yellow Rose, also known as the Citadel of the White Worm, is a monastery dedicated to St. Sollars the Twice-Martyred and Ilmater, the Broken God. It is built high in the Earthspur Mountains in Damara, overlooking the Glacier of the White Worm. The Monastery is a difficult place to reach, as the trails leading there are hard to follow. The Citadel itself is an immense and sprawling fortress. From the outside, it projects many turrets, balconies, and windows. The top of the structure is a crenulated tower. Lengthy maze of catacombs run under the monastery and through the mountain.

Inside, every room displays the artwork and architecture of the monks of the Yellow Rose, reflecting their discipline. The monastery resembles an impressive museum devoted to the persistence, indomitability, and the rise of human-kind in Faerûn. Being built into the side of the mountain, only about half the rooms have windows looking onto the daylight. The rest are underground, within the mountain itself. By 1497 DR, there is a major portal in the monastery that allows passage to the far-distant Underdark town of Earth's End.

The Monastery accommodates up to 750 monks. At the Monastery of the Yellow Rose, the monks dedicate their lives to venerating the Syffering God, Ilmater. This seems to be

primarily through the hard work necessary to survive in the harsh environment around the monastery, and here they thrived. The monks toil for at least sixteen hours a day, without fail. Initiates and low-ranking monks are most responsible for the basic necessities of life in the mountains. They work in small gardens, they cut and haul blocks of ice that would be melted for water, and they forage in the desolate mountains for supplies. The Monastery seldom have visitors, and few come purely for sightseeing, owing to its remoteness and inaccessibility. But those who did come found the journey experience rewarding. For the same reason, orphans were rarely left at the gates as at other monasteries. Instead, every few years, the monks went out into the neighboring lands of Damara and Vaasa and chose a young orphan to join them.

The senior monks dedicate their time to genealogical studies. At the Monastery, they maintain vast archives about the Bloodstone Lands, the most complete anywhere in the Realms. Once a year, mid-ranking monks lead expeditions out of the mountains and into the cities of the Moonsea or the Bloodstone Lands: Damara, Vaasa, Implitur, and Narfell. There they gather and record local news, familiarize with travellers passing through and with newcomers settling in the area, and listed births and deaths.

Another task the monks have is to maintain the Watcher's Mounds that lay throughout the Earthspur Mountains south of the Monastery. Well over a hundred of these campsites are situated along the trails running down from the monastery. Not only mounds, there are defensible campsites with shelter where a traveler, a ranger, or a Watcher might spend a night in safety. Each site also contains a hidden cache of preserved food, water, and tools. The monks and local rangers restock these caches, and take note of when they are wantonly looted and who might be responsible, as well as who was considerate enough to leave spare supplies behind.

## THE FLOODED FOREST (THE MIRE)

The Flooded Forest is a swamp lying at the outer reach of Cormanthor, near the Dragon Reach and the Earthspur Mountains. The Flooded Forest used to be a section of the great forest of Cormanthor that lay beyond the River Lis. However, it lay in a low bowl that filled with water, becoming a swamp surrounded by a ring of boggy woodlands. The swamp was stinking and foul and the marshes around the southern edges tend to be wreathed in mists.

Maple and oak trees make up much of the forest. Although the trees have lasted centuries, most died when it turned to swampland; some were still standing a century later, but were so fragile they could fall at a touch. Fallen trees are common sight, and falling trees are common hazard to explorers. Mushrooms and hanging mosses were span everywhere, Duskwoods line the southern edge of the Flooded Forest.

Few clans of Lizardfolk and occasional black dragons make their homes in the Flooded Forest. One particular black dragon was the one known as Velvet, a female adult dragon that was since slain by adventurers back in 1497 DR. There are number of carnivorous plant monsters, including assassin vines, dark trees, shambling mounds, and tendriculoses. There are also fungus creatures, such as shriekers and violet fungi. Other monsters include giant owlbears and stirges, and stranger things that are unknown and unnamed to the local hunters who encountered them.

Some of these creatures were not actually native to the area. This led to conclusion that they were being imported and released by someone, group, or power to drive people away.

One unwilling settlement in the Flooded Forest is the town of Ylraphon on its southern edge and being steadily consumed by the swamp on its eastern and north-eastern sides. The outer runs of the former city is left overgrown and submerged. They include several large, aboveground tombs and crypts, which provide shelter and hiding places for wanderers, bandits and pirates. Recurring local stories tell also of ruined temples to Bane, Gruumsh, and Moander within these parts of the Flooded Forest, north of Ylraphon. They tend to be built on raised and drier areas of the swamp. The ruins and tombs circling Ylraphon, in the fringes of the swamp, are a common target of adventurers seeking treasure or magic, but they'd been entirely robbed by orcs by 1370 DR, leaving little but a few undead. However, with adventurers finding treasure in the House of Moander shortly after that time, more wealth is thought to lie hidden in the temples.

The rumors surrounding Zhegos Vatis, the notorious founder of the zhegot scourge, say that he have spent almost two years in isolation among the ruins north of city of Ylraphon and have only been noticed by few trading supplies in the town before returning to his work that would later to known as the Book of Zhegos and curse the lives of thousands of children to fate worse than death. People who believe that Zhegos Vatis has been or may still be a member of the Wolfbrothers claim that whatever madness he has contracted in the Mires of Cormanthor, is the same that is to blame for the eerie similarity between the assassins.

Folk in Ylraphon tell of ghostly presences and screaming in the ruined temples of Bane, Gruumsh and Moander, and a few feared that they were being reused by living cultists. With the resurrection of Bane in 1372 DR, it was thought quite likely that the temple would be secretly renovated and reopened, perhapsto direct the church's influence into the Vast - rumors directly denied by Fzoul Chembryl, head of Mulmaster's Church of Bane. Many, however, suspect that smugglers, bandits, or orcs simply store their loot in these places, and that they make the screams to scare people off, or that they'd had a falling out. Evil groups and orcs regularly stock up on supplies in Ylraphon beofre venturing into the Flooded Forest.

Much of the Flooded Forest remains untouched by human foot and its unknown mysteries. On the southern fringe of the Flooded Forest, west of Kurth, stands the mysterious Mage's Tower, said by some to be the base of the even-more mysterious Mage Who never Dies. He is believed to be a loud and obnoxious master of arcane arts who openly challenges people to try to kill him only to humiliate them with his impossible luck and ability to come unscathed from any situation. Some believe that those evil bandit gangs served him after failing to kill him. In his tower he trades with the souls of those daring to step into his domain, and offers immortality at the cost that few can pay. Made and drunk folk tell stories of the deepest parts of the swamp, dreaming of half-sunken cities, weird mirages, vampiric pixies, and circles of giant frogs casting spells, or even more insane things. Many believe that the remaining treasure of the Turning Key adventuring band of Tavilar also lays somewhere in hte Flooded Forest, sunken in a bog, but this was too large and too dangerous area to be searched by any.

# APPENDIX: FAERUN CALENDAR

## HARPTOSIAN CALENDAR

People in Faerun use a calendar different from the Gregorian we're all used to in the real world. Like the standard calendar, the calendar in the Realms is divided into twelve months, but unlike the Gregorian calendar, each of these twelve months has exactly thirty days. This leaves five days that do not fit in the Earth calendar and are separate holidays between months.

The remaining five days of the year are special holidays: Midwinter, Greengrass, Midsummer, Harvestide, and the Feast of the Moon. For what we consider February 29th, the Realms celebrates Shieldmeet, that only occurs once every four years.

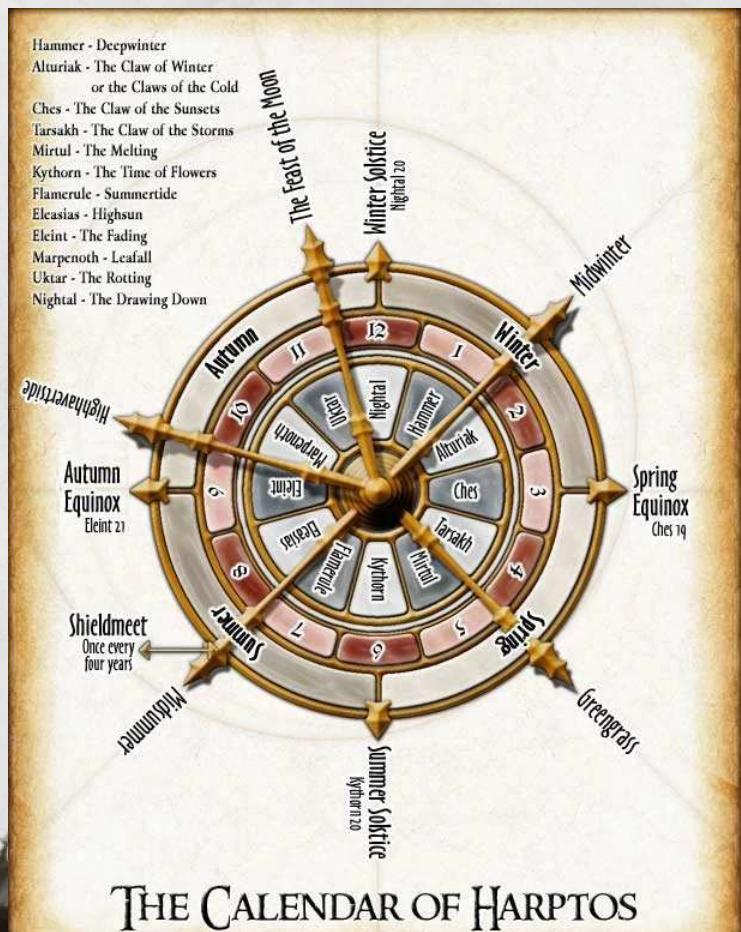
Faerun Month	Popular Name	Earth Month
Hammer	Deepwinter	January
	Midwinter	
Alturiak	The Claw of the Cold	February
Ches	Of the Sunsets	March
Tarsakh	Of the Storms	April
	Greengrass	
Mirtul	The Melting	May
Kythorn	The Time of Flowers	June
Flamerule	Summertide	July
	Midsummer	
	Shieldmeet	
Eleasius	Highsun	August
Eleint	The Fading	September
	Harvestide	
Marpenoth	Leaf Fall	October
Uktar	The Rotting	November
	Feast of the Moon	
Nightal	The Drawing Down	December

## HARPTOSIAN WEEK

A month in Faerun consists of 3 weeks, 10 days each. The common folk call a week a "tenday" and similar to the moon cycle they call them "waning", "full" and "waxing" tenday. A typical work consists of 7 labor days days and 3 rest days.

The holidays vary from settlement to settlement and relate to the gods that are praised and worshipped locally. In a place where Chauntea is worshipped, Chaunday, the first day of the week, would be considered a holiday.

Faerun Weekday	Praised Deity
Chaunday	for Chauntea, Goddess of Agriculture
Selday	for Selune, Goddess of the Moon
Helmday	for Helm, God of Protection
Ogday	for Oghma, God of Knowledge
Mysday	for Mystra, Goddess of Magic
Kelday	for Kelemvor, God of Death
Lathday	for Lathander, God of Dawn and Renewal
Suneday	for Sune, Goddess of Beauty and Love
Lliiday	for Lliira, Goddess of Joy
Sharday	for Shar, Goddess of Darkness and Loss



THE CALENDAR OF HARPTOS

# APPENDIX: THIEVES' CANT



TEPPING INTO A SMOKEY TAVERN THE LAD casts his eyes about to find the card game in the corner. Paying into the pot with the appropriate greeting, he waits to see what cards he's dealt by the man in the parallel brassard. They exchange simple conversation for a time and when he's finished the boy stands, leaving the game and his winnings behind him.

A well-dressed noble frowns, counting his funds for a third time. He has even less than he thought. The lad didn't want to resort to this again so soon, but it seems he has little in the way of options. He stoops out of his rented room, calling to his companions that he'll be at the West Market all morning, clipping a double banded bracelet around his wrist as he does so.

A nimble urchin's hand reaches out for an unattended purse only to feel a firm grasp landing on the matching boy's shoulder. A grinning bearded man with twin earrings greets them; "it's been far too long!" he laughs. Under the stranger's armpit, the urchin spies a patrol of brutish city guards rounding the corner. "Of course!" the boy's face lights up with recognition, "How are the wife and kids?"

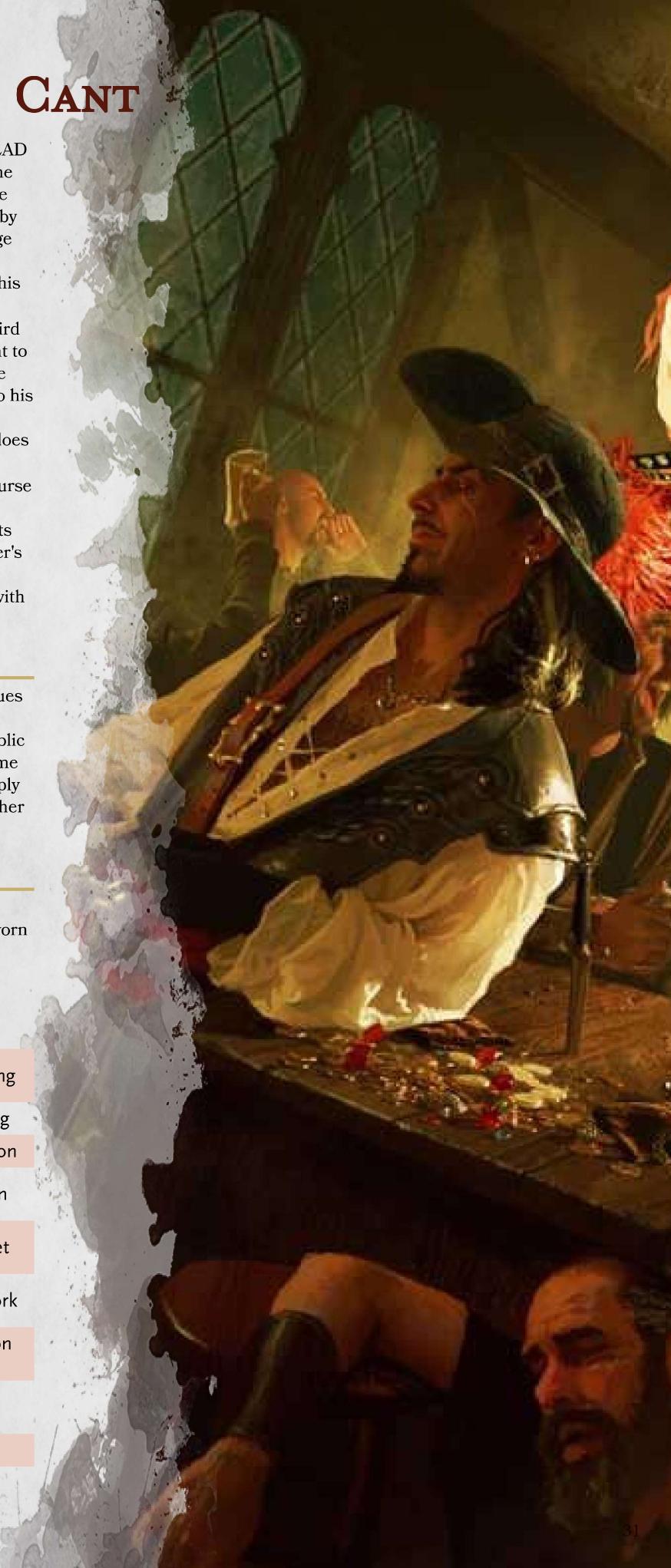
## A CULTURAL CODE

The members of the Shadow Breeze, as well as many rogues of varying trades have developed a common system of signifiers in order to make ease of their dealings in the public eye without drawing the attention of law enforcement. Some roguish operators will create syndicates, while others simply display their availability for hire for those aware of the cypher to make offers as they please.

## IDENTIFICATION

A member of the Varied Trades may choose to identify themselves to others in the know by use of an accessory worn in two parallel bands, as plain or intricate as the rogue prefers. The location in which the accessory is worn also indicates the speciality of the individual displaying it.

Position	Trade	Position	Trade
Left Ear	Con Artist	Left Middle	Lock picking
Right Ear	Secure Messenger	Left Ring	Kidnapping
Right Eye	Lookout	Left Pinky	Interrogation
Neck	Assassination	Right Thumb	Persuasion
Right Biceps	Smuggling	Right Index	Pickpocket
Left Biceps	Forgery	Right Middle	General work
Right Wrist	Intimidation	Right Ring	Information Broker
Left Wrist	Fencing	Right Pinky	Burglary
Left Thumb	Bribery	Ankle	Stalking
Left Index	Trap finding		



## LAY OF THE LAND

A rogue seeking generally applicable knowledge upon arriving in a city should look for a deck of cards. Any signified individual actively using a deck of cards will respond to a greeting recognized as an appeal for information - so long as they're paid for their trouble.

## A GAME OF CARDS

As a character with the Thieves' Cant feature pays into a playing card service, the varied trader dealing the cards will encode a message into each hand. Wherever or whomever they're discussing as the hand is dealt will be the topic to which the cards pertain. A rogue hunting down information can guide conversation to specific intel the dealer might be able to give, but should be subtle about it lest the dealer shut the game down. When the inquiring rogue has had their fill, they exit the game, leaving their contributions to the pot as compensation.

## CALLING A SPADE A SPADE

You may find the information broker playing cards and inviting you to join them after you have opened the conversation. The key phrase greeting to win a rogue in the know a place at the information table is "**Nice to find a friendly face in an unfamiliar town**", or statements to similar effect.

One addition is needed to the normal approach, you should ask "*how much is the bet?*" The bet is the amount you will pay for each piece of information.

The broker will tell you the bet amount and hand you three cards, you should inspect them and then strike up a conversation about your request. When you ask, place bet in-between you and the broker.

Once welcomed to take part, the rogue will need to match the suits of the cards they are dealt in each hand with the seemingly innocuous topics of conversation floated by the dealer during that round. The meanings of the suits are as follows:

### Signal      Meaning

Hearts    The person/location is friendly to you

Diamonds    The person/location is a good mark

Spades    You can find work here

Clubs    This person/location is heavily guarded

These cards may be combined to form more detailed messages for the information seeker. Once you have asked your questions, fold your hand, feign loss and leave the bets you have made. This is the broker's payment and taking anything back is bad form.

## VARIANT INFORMATION BROKERS

While a tavern card game is a classic example of a context in which the party rogue might drum up information, it is worth considering other contexts in which a tradesmember could be utilising a deck of cards without drawing suspicion.

Not every tavern or city will have a roguish individual willing to stand post and give up their time to others of the varied trades, but the bigger the city, the higher your chances of encountering someone looking to make some easy coin.

## THE STRANGE APPROACH

When a varied tradesman familiar with the cant is looking for work, they may display their availability for dishonest jobs by use of the parallel banded accessories. In this way, they advertise their capabilities to others who might have use for them, in the hopes of earning coin from such work during their down time.

## OLD FRIENDS

Upon identifying a varied tradesperson who specialises in the desired field, an employer familiar with the cant will approach them with a coded greeting designed to feign friendship. The greeting serves two purposes.

The first is as confirmation of visual identification. If an employer's greeting is met with confusion by the stranger, they will know that the individual they've approached is not offering roguish work, simply making a fashion statement.

Second is as a means of clarifying the type of exchange the approacher is initiating. The tone of the greeting phrase will differentiate between someone looking to hire and someone looking to blend in or for temporary protection in the form of hiding or a falsified alibi. On occasion, when a high alert for suspicious activity is in effect, a kind rogue will warn others of the varied trades to lay low by use of a similar greeting. For example:

**Offering Work.** "Look what the cat dragged in"; "Uh oh, here comes trouble"; greetings suggesting a teasing closeness.

**Requesting Sanctuary.** "Aren't you a sight for sore eyes"; "Boy, am I glad to see you"; greetings expressing relief.

**Lay Low.** "Long time no see"; "Feels like I haven't seen you in forever"; greetings indicating a long period between meetings.

If a rogue requests and is provided sanctuary of any sort by use of the Strange Approach, it is generally regarded that repayment take the form of an owed favour. To demand coin in return for the service of protection is deemed poor taste, and work for such a tradesman would dry up in the city as word got around that they weren't good to work with. For the dishonest, reputation is everything.

## DISHONEST EMPLOYMENT

Once a cant greeting has been accepted, an offer may be floated by the approaching employer, disguised as conversational catching up. This offer will provide the basic outline of the illegal work to be done, allowing those propositioned to decide whether or not they're interested in taking on the job. The type of task to be completed is already assumed based on the advertised speciality of the hiree, so ordinarily this conversation covers:

- Whether the contract is personal or on behalf of a syndicate;
- The anticipated difficulty in carrying out the work;
- The amount of payment proposed; and
- A location at which both parties may meet later for further details.

## CATCHING UP

When a greeting is accepted, it is customary for the hiree to enquire as to the employer's wellbeing. From there the employer is obliged to answer that they are either "**on my own these days**" if the job is for them personally, or "**starting a family**" or similar if the job is on behalf of a larger group. Some might wish to steer clear of crime family work, for example, or to remain unaffiliated with a cause and this could be their only opportunity to turn down the offer of work without causing offense.

## How's YOUR DAD?

The conversation will then move to the general foreseen difficulty of a contract. This will be measured by the health status of a fabricated loved one of the employer. The scale may range from a simple task when the loved one is "**well**" to a potentially deadly challenge if they have "**passed away**". If the obstacles are unknown, the health of the loved one will be similarly uncertain, "**a bit touch and go**".

## COMPENSATION

Payment is also usually discussed during this 'catch up', however the onus is on the hiree rogue to ensure such - if an inexperienced thief takes a job without negotiating remuneration and winds up with little reward to show for their efforts, the fault lies with them. Who are they gonna complain to, the guards?

A discussion of compensation may be brought to the conversation by the introduction of any topic enabling the inconspicuous use of numbers. By context a rogue should be able to gleen whether the number indicates a multiplier of x100gp or x100pp, erring toward x100gp if in doubt. For example:

**Number of kids/grandkids.** x100gp/x100pp respectively.

**Number of younger/older siblings.** x100gp/x100pp respectively.

**Age of child.** Always x100gp.

Haggling for amounts is acceptable, but it is impolite to follow up with an uncertain attendance to the 'card game' for more details on the job; either accept the contract or turn it down.

## RENDEZVOUS

The location for further details will always be given as a card game at a particular address, commonly a safehouse, at a specified time.

If the hiree is accepting the work offered, they should indicate their intent to attend the card game. If not, it is not uncommon practice to express uncertainty at one's ability to attend, reserving the option to pick up the job at the time of the card game, or formally accept or decline once more details have been learned. If taking this tactic, however, the hiree rogue should expect competitors to the contract to have been gathered in the mean time, likely lessening their potential earnings.

As an optional extra, the informational card game may be described as a "private game" if the contract is being offered to this rogue alone, or a "party" if it is to be a team operation or a matter of first in best dressed.

## EXAMPLE CONVERSATION

Dorian is a rogue displaying his parallel bars while going about his business in the city. He wears two rings on the second and fourth fingers of his right hand, each of them a double band, one etched silver and the other plain.

Before too long he is approached by a bright-smiled elven woman with twinned bangles pushed up her wrist to make them hold their place

"Someone pinch me, I thought you'd never show your face in these parts again! It's so great to see you!"

Dorian has never met this woman before in his life. He beams and pulls her into a tight hug.

"You too! I thought you'd moved out East, how are you?"

"The family moved, I stayed here on my own. Doing pretty well for myself, actually." She shrugs in faux-faux-modesty.

"Glad to hear it." His smile tightens at her boastfulness even though it's all an act. Annoying is annoying. "I should ask, how have things been with Theodora since I last saw you? Any improvement?"

She shifted, a notable loss of confidence. "We lost Great Aunt Theo last year. But thankfully she got to spend a lot of time with all three kids and five grandkids before she passed."

"I'm so sorry. It's good she was surrounded by so many loved ones"

"Hm. Yes. Well. C'est la vie!" She perked up again and touched Dorian lightly on the arm. "I've got to run, I'm meeting a friend, but we're planning a card game for a little after sundown - it's a cosy place on the corner of Market's Run and the West Alley; green door, planter box in the window, easy to spot. You should come!"

Dorian winced thoughtfully. "I'm really not sure if I can make it tonight, my companions will be expecting me..."

"Oh come on! I could tell you about the fight Theodora's younger sisters got into at the funeral; it will be fun I promise."

"All five of them?"

The woman ground her teeth a little. Dorian smiled pleasantly.

"Only three, but it's still a killer story. A nice, quiet, private game. For old time's sake?" She looked him hard in the eye for a long moment.

"Fine." Dorian nodded at the total stranger. "For old time's sake."

# THIEVES' CANT PHRASEBOOK

## INTRODUCTIONS

Key Word	Meaning
Eyes	Request for Sanctuary
See/Seen	Warning to lay low
Trouble	I'd like to hire you

"Aren't you sight for sore eyes!" which would be a request for the fellow you are speaking with to provide you sanctuary.

## TIMELINE

Once the greeting is exchanged and the other party has responded familiarly you will know they are indeed a tradesman. It's best that they know the timeline of the job and to do this you should specify the time since you last seen this person. The keywords are not required but a general expression of urgency.

### Time

### Timeline

Weeks	Low urgency
Months	Medium urgency
Years	High urgency
Forever	Immediate

Not all fellows get along, in this business rivalries and enemies can be formed as easily as allies. It is always wise to establish from both sides if you are working alone or on behalf of an organization.

You can find this out by inquiring how each other has been. The responses should either mention you being alone or part of a group. Depending on your game world you may also add specific words to highlight an organization.

**PC:** How have you been?

**NPC:** I'm well, surrounded by family. It is always a good place to be. You?

In this case the key words are surrounded, signifying an organization and family which is an organization within my world.

## DIFFICULTY

Not all jobs are equal in difficulty, be that the challenge or danger involved but this is in the hands of the fellow being hired, if they wish to know they will inquire after someone's health, the level of health relates to the difficulty.

Difficulty	Health
Easy	Dead or dying
Medium	Bad health
Hard	Good health
Unknown	Uncertain

## PAYMENT

If there's one thing most fellows share it's the love of coin for their work but discussion of coin tend to gather attention, yet every job has a price.

Conversation should be brought around to something that involves numbers and family.

The connection to you signifies the currency to be discussed and the number a multiple of 100.

Value	Relation
Copper	Parent
Silver	Sibling
Gold	Child
Platinum	Grandchild

## PEOPLE

Relation	Meaning
Mother	Guild Leader
Father	Direct Superior
Grandmother	Queen
Grandfather	King
Uncle	Royal Advisor
Brother	A member of the guild
Children	A member of family
Cousin	Rival guild
Visitor	Target
Guest	Someone on the inside

## ANIMALS

Animal	Meaning
Cow	Your companion
Bird	My companion
Sheep	Target's companion
Ducks	An outside party

## PLACES

Places	Meaning
Home	This town/city
Coast	Another town/city
Mountains	Royal palace
Fields	Local noble's home
Hills	Jail

## EVENTS

Event	Meaning
Ball	Assassination
Grand Ball	Multiple Assassination
Garden Party	Smuggling
Dance	Lookout
Surprise Party	Kidnapping
Farm	Burglary

## DISTANCE

Distance	Meaning
Other side of town	Copper
Outside	Silver
Over there	Gold
Right here	Platinum

## SCALE

Scale	Meaning
Intimate	No witnesses
Local	Minimal casualties
Town	Do as you please
City	Kill many
Capital	Kill them all
Continent	Hide the bodies
World	Don't hide the bodies

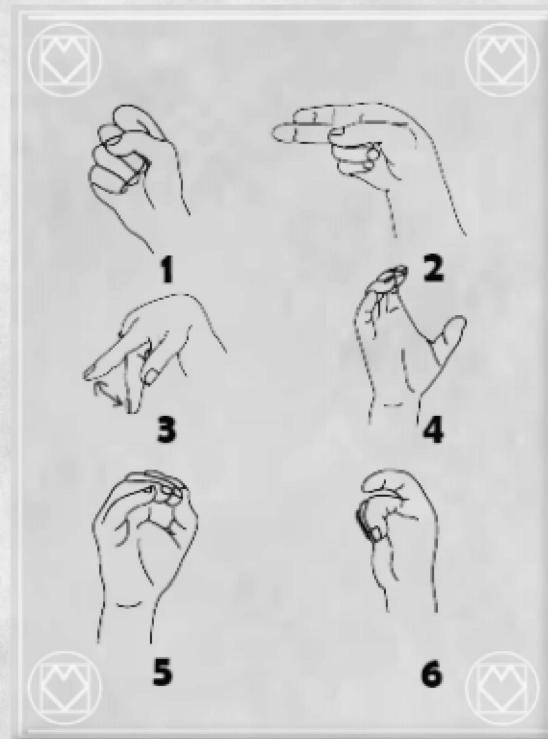
## FOOD

Food	Meaning
Beef	Will you take the job?
Pork	I will take the job.
Mutton	I will not take the job.
Venison	You need to pay more.
Tomato	Never speak to me again.
Onion	I'm going to kill you.

## ACTIVITIES

Scale	Meaning
Eating	Killed and buried
Drinking	Drowning in river, sea
Sleeping	Doing time in prison
Playing	Tortured
Singing	Divulging information
Running	Held in a safe location
Cooking	Preparing a heist or a hit
Talking	Mustering a group of criminals
Growing	Collecting funds for a hit

## HAND SIGNALS



Fellows of the Cant often dwell in environments requiring vocal discussion but also passage of hasteful information. For this the Silent Cant was created.

Signal	Meaning
1	Hold where you are
2	Something is there
3	Move on stealthy
4	Silence the enemy
5	Silent kill
6	Attack on 3

# FEW SURVIVE THE CITY OF CONTRACTS

Listen to me, lad. Whatever you do, keep this piece of paper close to your heart. Do not show it to anyone you do not trust! You will not be given a second chance... You are strong, but the world is stronger and cruel beyond measure.

Mulmaster is dying. The order is collapsing. The Contract Census is corrupted and choking with gold. The Blades that once bled to make the city great are now tearing it apart. They will stop at nothing until the High Blade no longer breathes.

Go now with haste. I hear the Wolfbrothers are on your tail. Do not come back, or both our lives are forfeit...

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This campaign is maintained by [Apostol Apostolov](#) for personal use with his group.

Feedback and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

