



## Eruth & The Harbinger

*You Barsaivians have a legend that states your Passions send their Harbingers, terrifying ethereal knights, to punish those who transgress too greatly upon what each Passion holds dear. In Vasgothia, we call such beings the Wælcyrge, a word that means "Gatherer of the Slain". Before the Untold Winter, the Wælcyrge are said to have collected the souls of brave Vasgothians who died in battle and delivered them to the Passions. Worthless souls or those who had angered the Passions were also visited by a Wælcyrge, whose sole duty it was to enact revenge upon the unfortunate soul. Legend states that such mortals were permitted to challenge a Wælcyrge to single combat in order to have one last chance to prove themselves worthy. Given how terrible their prowess was said to be, I doubt anyone ever managed to defeat one.*

*-Rohlenrio Thick-Neck*

Long ago, before the Scourge, there was a king of renown Named Eruth The Just. Wise and honourable, Eruth's reputation drew many warriors from across Vasgothia to swear oaths of loyalty to him in his great hall. His victories were many and his exploits were sung wide and far. So great was his power, that lesser kings and queens fell to his ambitions, swearing oaths of *than krig* in return for their lives, pledging their oath-bound to his service. Some say that Eruth was the first Vasgothian to lead a Banner and claim the title of hofyearl. Others say that he was an Empirist warlord in service to Thera, but all agreed that his deeds were great.

All that is, except one. There was one who refused to recognize Eruth's achievements, Queen Logres. Logres had watched Eruth's raiders defeat and conquer all of her neighbours, but she had been preparing for the day they would meet. Logres had secured oaths of her own, from the other tribes who feared Eruth's ambitions. When the time came for them to meet on the battlefield, Eruth expected a swift victory, as he had so many times before. Victory did not come, however. So great was Logres' desire for freedom that she rallied her warriors into a frenzy. They would die before swearing oaths to King Eruth, and so great was their bravery that Eruth's own oath-bound began to admire them. Fearful of rebellion, and jealous of Logres' popularity, Eruth hatched a plan that would seal his fate and blacken his Name for all time.

Under the guise of admiration, Eruth swore a truce with Logres and invited her and her warriors to feast with him in his halls. The feast was a celebration, in honour of the brave queen and her valiant raiders. King Eruth had searched many years for a worthy adversary, and finally he said, he had found her. Queen Logres accepted the invitation, confident that despite his ambition, Eruth was truly as just as his Name suggested. The feast would be her undoing. As the night wore on, Eruth raised his cup in toast to his honourable guests, who each raised their own cups in drunken celebration.

"Deep drink" the king barked, "For you have earned my respect, oh queen of the





Forest and I, King Eruth raise my cup to you and your warriors”.

A silence fell over the hall as the king and his guests took their fill. Wiping the mead from her mouth, Queen Logres stood to offer a toast of her own, but suddenly bent over in pain. Clutching her stomach, she glanced at her cup and then back to Eruth, who’s face had contorted into a grinning mockery. One by one, each of her warriors likewise fell, holding their own stomachs and within a few heart beats each had bled to death from their mouths, their nose, and even their eyes.

Horrified, Eruth’s own men threw their drinks down and drew their swords, so affronted by their king’s betrayal that they sought to slay him. Their wrath was stayed however, when the doors of the hall were suddenly flung open by a terrible and biting wind. It blew through the halls, extinguishing the torches and the hearth so that darkness blanketed all. Footsteps, heavy and ominous, emanated from the open entrance. Slowly, a large and armored stranger strode forth from the night’s cold and in a voice so booming it shook the hall it demanded,

‘Why King Eruth? You whose Name is Just. You whose victories have pleased the Passions. Why would you sink to such treachery?’

Eruth, recognizing that the Passions had sent one of their Harbingers, threw himself at the stranger’s feet, and begged for forgiveness.

“There is but one way you can redeem yourself, craven king. You can pick up your sword and show the Passions that you still possess the courage of a warrior. While you will certainly die by my hand, I will take your spirit to the Passions where your ancestors await”.

But courage fled from Eruth’s heart and he could not bring himself to draw his blade. Instead, he pathetically begged for his life. The Harbinger said nothing more, but raised her own mighty blade and in one stroke beheaded the despicable king in front of his warriors. Picking up the head, she addressed the assembled Vasgothians.

“Know that from this day forth, Eruth is to mean one who has shamed their Name beyond repair. Take his head, and let it rot. Let it be torn apart by the ravens and feasted upon by the worms.”

With these final words, the Harbinger tossed Eruth’s head out of the hall, where it rolled down the steps and towards the feet of the small crowd of Vasgothians that had gathered outside. With the deafening crack of a thunderbolt, the Harbinger unfurled her wings and disappeared into the night’s sky.

To this day, we Vasgothians still say “eruth” as a curse, usually when insulting one who we believe has wronged us in a way that we could never forgive. To call someone “eruth” is to say that they have forsaken their honour and can never again sit at our tables.





## Wælcyrge

Several Barsaivian legends speak of the Harbingers, dire manifestations of the Passions' will, sent to punish those who transgress or otherwise displease them. Vagothia too has its share of sagas and tales that speak of the Passions delivering divine justice on those Namegivers who have earned their wrath. Like the Barsaivian stories, the Vagothian legends speak of gigantic Namegiver-like beings clad in ethereal armour and wielding huge spear who are sent by the Passions to mete out justice, only in Vagothia such creatures are known as the Wælcyrge.

In the times before the Scourge, the Wælcyrge were the Harbingers of the Vagothian Passions and served a similar function to their Barsaivian counterparts.

Some legends tell of the Wælcyrge aiding warriors in their times of need or carrying off the souls of those slain in battle to feast with the Passions in their great halls. However, as with so much in Vagothia the tales of the Wælcyrge have changed since the Scourge ended. Driven mad by the loss of their creators, the Wælcyrge now wander Vagothia sowing chaos and destruction. Some say that they seek out adepts to test in battle, a half-remembered shred of their former purpose driving them. Others say that they have sworn loyalty to the Horrors and seek to corrupt the hearts and souls of all Namegivers they cross.





Few Vasgothians have ever encountered a Wælcyrge and lived to tell the tale, most simply believe them to be little more than a myth, a remnant of Vasgothia's distant and murky past. Most accounts of Wælcyrge have centred around the Tower of the Passions, but a few scant stories have claimed that they also haunt the Northern Reaches of the Deep Forest. Some scholars believe that the destruction of the Wælcyrge is one of the necessary steps needed in order to bring about the rebirth of the dead Passions, but so far there have been no confirmed victories against these powerful entities.

Like Harbingers, each Wælcyrge resembles a ten-foot tall Namegiver clad in ethereal armour and wielding a huge spear. All Wælcyrge encountered so far appear as a tall and well-muscled female Namegivers sporting huge raven wings on their backs.

Each Wælcyrge is a unique individual, game masters are encouraged to design their Wælcyrge as they see fit, including altering the appearance mentioned above. Every Wælcyrge is a Named being, and unlike the Vasgothian Passions they have somehow managed to maintain their Name and can be researched accordingly.

Game masters interested in a campaign focused on returning the dead Passions to life may wish to use the Wælcyrge as a powerful patron rather than an antagonist. Although most Wælcyrge encountered appear to be insane and bent on destruction, there is nothing stopping game masters from introducing a sane Wælcyrge looking for heroes to help her resurrect her lost masters.

## **Kara, Wælcyrge of the Horned judge**

**Challenge:** Master (Thirteenth Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 15	<b>Initiative:</b>	20	<b>Unconsciousness:</b>	134
<b>STR:</b> 22	<b>Physical Defense:</b>	21	<b>Death Rating:</b>	155
<b>TOU:</b> 22	<b>Mystic Defense:</b>	20	<b>Wound Threshold:</b>	30
<b>PER:</b> 12	<b>Social Defense:</b>	18	<b>Knockdown:</b>	28
<b>WIL:</b> 15	<b>Physical Armor:</b>	18	<b>Recovery Tests:</b>	6
<b>CHA:</b> 12	<b>Mystic Armor:</b>	18	<b>Karma:</b>	10 (30)

**Movement:** 16 (Flying 22)

**Actions:** 4; Spear: 22 (30), Unarmed 22 (25)

### **Powers:**

*Battle Bellow (14):* As the talent, *Player's Guide*, p.130.

*Devotions (22) (Questors):* (Choose one) Desolate (p.160), Grave Commands (p.166), Silence Influence (p.182), Submit (p.183), Torment (p.185).

*Dive (18):* As the creature power, *Game Master's Guide*, p.251.

*Fireblood (24):* As the talent, *Player's Guide*, p.146

*Hardened Armor:* As the creature power, *Game Master's Guide*, p.251.





*Immune to Fear*

*Karma:* The wælcyrge may spend a Karma point on any action.

*Precise Strike:* The wælcyrge inflicts an additional point of damage for each additional success on an Attack test (+3 instead of +2).

*Swooping Attack:* The wælcyrge may split her movement (*Player's Guide* p.386) and not suffer any penalty, and she does not take strain.

### **Special Maneuvers:**

*Armor Cutter (Wælcyrge):* The wælcyrge may spend additional success to reduce the target's Physical Armor by 1 per success. This may not destroy thread armor.

*Clip the Wing (Opponent)*

*Grab and Take-off (Wælcyrge, Unarmed)*

*Power Dive (Wælcyrge):* Following an attack using Dive, the wælcyrge may spend an additional success on an Attack test to cause a Knockdown test against the target. The Difficulty Number is the Attack test result.

*Pry Loose (Opponent, Close Combat)*

*Wing Buffet (Wælcyrge):* The wælcyrge can spend two additional successes on an Attack test to cause the target to make a Knockdown test with the Attack test result as the difficulty.

### **Adventure Hook**

While out taking care of other matters, the group suddenly encounters an ork man Named Anginn. Anginn is frantic, bumping into the characters, knocking himself on to the ground before throwing himself at their feet. Sobbing, he claims that a terrifying "woman with wings" has been haunting his nightmares for several days. At first he thought that it was simply a case of bad dreams, but he goes onto explain that he saw her this morning, and she threatened to kill him. Characters with an appropriate skill such as Vasgothia Lore can work out that Anginn is describing a Wælcyrge, one of the supposed Harbingers of the dead Passions. He begs them for protection, which they are free to ignore. By sunset that day, the Harbinger will have caught up with Anginn. She will accuse him of a great crime – killing his wife, harming his neighbours – whatever the game master feels is appropriate. Whether the Harbinger is telling the truth is up for the game master to decide. Most Wælcyrge are Horror corrupted after all. The Harbinger will offer a deal with the group in exchange for Anginn's life. If they refuse, she kills him, leaving his headless body on the ground. If they accept, she will fight them for three rounds before accepting that they have proved their worth. She then departs in a flash of lightning. As for Anginn, he may very well be responsible for the crime the Harbinger has accused him of. His fate will then be at the hands of the characters.

Lastly, if the group ignore Anginn from the start and go about their business, the game master should ensure that they later hear about his strange death.

