



# **Legends of Vasgothia**

## **Daughter of the Forest**

**An Earthdawn Adventure by Nick Lowe**





# Daughter of the Forest

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## The Daughter Of The Forest

*The tribes of the Deep Forest tell a story. It is a story about the death and rebirth of the Passions. As many Vasgothians know, our Passions fought and died fighting the Horrors during the dark and cold days of the Untold Winter. While our Empirist cousins covered in the Theran citadels, the bravest of our ancestors stood side by side with the Ancient Ones. Though both our forebearers and our Passions died, their sacrifice was not in vain. Their deaths not only stripped the Ulks of their astral selves, but it halted their campaign of death and corruption. More importantly, they stopped Nidorcyl from finishing its construction of the Towers. To this day, the continued fertility and bounty of Vasgothia is a testament to the Passions's sacrifice. But life and death are not a linear path. Forests burn, giving space for new life to flourish. Snow melts. Winter must give way to Spring. So too, will our Passions return to us.*

*The wisest among the skallgar believe the time is nigh. The Dread Yearning was only the beginning of Vasgothia's glorious rebirth. We are reborn in the image of our ancestors, but our birth is fragmented. We are incomplete and imperfect without the Ancient Ones to guide us. Their Names remain lost to us, but their sagas are beginning to be told once more. Splinters of their patterns float into our dreams and our nightmares. Idols are unearthed in the forgotten places of the forest. For those with the wisdom to interpret the messages, the signs are clear; the Passions are returning.*

*The legends say that there is one Vasgothian who will serve as the catalyst for this grand renewal. She will be the first among us to hear their song, to feel their power infuse her pattern. She is the Daughter of the Forest. Her coming has been foretold to the skallgar since the end of the Untold Winter. We have prepared for her coming and each tribe is anxious to claim her as their own. She will guide us back to the old ways, she will lend her will to the first of the reborn Passions. Though we do not know from what people she will emerge, we know she will be a child of two worlds. Raised by the Impatient Ones, but with the blood of Vasgothia flowing in her veins.*

*The Ulks too, know of this prophecy. The rebirth of the Passions will see them scorched from Vasgothia forever, and they fear the return of their ancient foes. Their agents also search for the Daughter, seeking to corrupt her and twist her for their own ends. We must not allow this to happen. The Daughter must be found and returned to the forest before our enemies can muster their forces against us.*

*The fate of Vasgothia rests upon her young shoulders and we must all be ready to aid her in her fulfilling her great destiny.*

*- Hadebrand, Skallgar of the Crimson Briars*





## Introduction

*Daughter of the Forest* is a roleplaying adventure set in the province of Vasgothia. Thousands of years ago there existed an age of magic and adventure, the age of Earthdawn. The power of magic flowed freely through the world, and all could draw on that power to perform both wondrous feats and ordinary tasks. But the dawn of magic also brought the Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devoured all in their path. For four centuries, the Vasgothian Namegivers loyal to the Theran Empire sheltered in the imperial-built citadels of the Lowlands, while the barbarians of the Deep Forest fought, and died, alongside their Passions in an effort to stop the invading Horrors. This dark time came to be called the Untold Winter. Now the humans, trolls, leafers, orks, talveni, and all other races of Vasgothia have begun to emerge from the citadels and the Deep Forest, ready to explore what remains of their province and unravel the strange mysteries wrought upon the land by the titanic battle fought between Horrors and Passions.

At the far northern banks of the River Zheikuez there sits the frontier settlement of Haden Town, the last stop before the fearsome Towers. Founded by Theran magicians, Haden Town is a popular destination for many adepts. The city's proximity to the Deep Forest makes it the ideal base of operations for expeditions into the Towers and the surrounding Vasgothian wildlands.

*Daughter of the Forest* takes place in this northwestern territory of the Theran Lowlands, south of the Deep Forest's Western Slog and north of the provincial capital of New Thera. Additionally, *Daughter of the Forest* takes place during the Vasgothian winter – a time dreaded in the province for its connections to the Scourge and the remaining Horrors (*Vasgothia*, p.12). This area of the province is relatively wild compared to the rest of the Lowlands, and the various towns and farmsteads found there are populated with tough farming folk attempting to scratch out a living on the frontiers of the Theran Empire. The closeness of the Deep Forest means that divisions of the Fourth and Sixth Theran Legions are usually wintered throughout the region to deter both Barrite raiders and skulking Half-Horrors.

The adventurers are adepts sheltering out the winter cold in Haden Town. They could be explorers, scholars, or even Theran soldiers. Regardless of their background, they are enlisted by a local strategos stationed near Haden Town to investigate the recent disappearance of a Theran patrol. The adventurers must battle through both hostile Barrites and the endless Vasgothian cold to decide the fate of a young Empirist girl gripped by the Dread Yearning.





## Gamemastering Notes

The events in *Daughter of the Forest* follow a linear format, but ultimately the final decision of the adventure is left open for the player characters to decide. Individual character loyalties will be important in this outcome. If they are Empirist Vasgothians, then they are likely to feel differently about the events of this adventure than if they are Therans or outsiders from Barsaive. The only group not fully suited to this adventure are Barrite characters. The Barrites tribes play an important role in this adventure, that of antagonists. While it is possible to have Barrite characters in the form of rivals of the Amber Talons tribe take part in this adventure, it will take some extra work by the gamemaster to make them fit in. All Barrites, regardless of tribal affiliation, consider the Place of ReNaming and the Dread Yearning to be the sacred will of the vanished Passions and are likely to be sympathetic to the dilemma presented in this adventure. That being said, it is possible that outcast Barrites or members of a tribe who have adopted a foreign Passion could be worked into the player character group (see **Preparing the Adventure** below).

*Daughter of the Forest* is best suited for a group of three to six players using Second, Third or Fourth Circle adepts. The opening meeting with strategos Cassia assumes that they are at least known to the local Therans as explorers and adventurers willing to troubleshoot in exchange for coin. The rewards for working with the Empire need not necessarily be material; a Theran strategos could make for a powerful ally for player characters in their future endeavours. Running *Daughter of the Forest* with more experienced characters is as easy as substituting the encounters with appropriately more challenging ones. Most of the Barrite enemies in this adventure are non-adepts, but a more powerful group could find themselves facing Barrite adepts such as Marauders and the Avowed (see *Vasgothia*, pp. 183 -189). Likewise, the Deep Forest can be a deadly place, as deadly as the gamemaster wishes it to be. There are numerous creatures and Half-Horrors found in Game Information chapter of *Vasgothia* (p.239) that can be used by gamemasters wishing to challenge higher Circle characters.

## Using This Book

Like most of this book, this adventure is meant to be used alongside the *Earthdawn 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Player's Guide* and *Gamemaster's Guide* as well as *Vasgothia*. Within this text is most of the materials you need to run *Daughter of the Forest*. Gamemasters may also find the *Companion* useful, especially the chapter on creature Masks if they plan to create their own forest encounters. Because of the nature of how the opening encounter is framed, the first edition supplements: *Theran Empire* and *Sky Point & Vivane* may also be useful, especially for more information on the Theran hierarchy and its military.

The **Plot Synopsis** in this section summarizes the story background and the most probable course of the adventure. The following chapters describe the situations





and events the characters may face during the adventure. Each chapter contains five sections: **Overview**, **Setting the Stage**, **Themes**, **and Images**, **Behind the Scenes** and **Troubleshooting**.

**Overview** summarizes the material presented in the encounter and provides the chapter's objective.

The next section, **Setting the Stage**, provides a narrative description that the gamemaster can read aloud to the players. The narrative describes the locations involved and what is happening within in. Any special instructions for the gamemaster are displayed in **boldface** type.

**Themes and Images** provides background that the gamemaster can use to set the mood and pacing for the chapter. This section also includes sensory information, such as sounds, sights and smells, that the gamemaster can use to enhance the experience of the encounter for the players.

**Behind the Scenes** is the gamemaster only section and provides gamemasters with the truth of each chapter. This section includes game information and maps for the gamemaster's use with special instructions displayed in **boldface** type.

Finally, **Troubleshooting** suggests ways to keep the chapter focused and advice on keeping the action on track. This section offers advice and options for resolving any issues that may arise during play. This section is completely optional and gamemasters are encouraged to offer their own solutions that best fit their group and play style for any issues they may encounter.

Following these chapters, **Loose Ends** is offered as a way for gamemasters to use the material in *Daughter of the Forest* for both future adventures set in Vastgothia as well as a jumping off point for a campaign. At the very end of this book, you will find information on the cast of **Gamemaster Characters** (GMCs) that appear in *Daughter of the Forest* as well as several **Pre-Generated Adepts** suitable for the adventure. Lastly, there are a few **Player Handouts** that the game master can print out and provide to the players.

## Rewards

Aside from Theran silver and favors, players are of course awarded Legend Points for their adventures. These awards are recommended to follow the guidelines in the *Gamemaster's Guide* (p.119) as appropriate for the average Circle at your table. The events of *Daughter of the Forest* are likely to draw the attention of both the Barrite tribes and the Theran Empire towards the group and as such, future adventures and rewards may become available.

Gamemasters may also wish to introduce thread items to party members during the adventure. These could be unique items looted from Barrite adepts or the creatures of the Deep Forest or rewards from the Theran treasury for exceptional service to the Empire. Perhaps the greatest treasure that game masters could introduce would be one





of the fabled Fruits of the Forest, though the impact of doing so is beyond the scope of this adventure. Several appropriate magical treasures can be found in the **Game Information** chapter of *Vasgothia*.

One last thing for gamemasters to consider is that the outcome of *Daughter of the Forest* is likely to polarize the player's position in the ongoing conflicts between the Empire and the Barrites. Just as the group is expected to make allies throughout the course of the adventure, they are also likely to earn themselves some enemies. Their actions in this adventure will also have an effect on future pre-written adventures.

## Preparing the Adventure

The catalyst for *Daughter of the Forest* is the disappearance of a patrol of Theran soldiers near Prosperity Wells, a large and important farmstead operated by House Gascilium (*Vasgothia*, p.20). Their disappearance causes their commanding strategos to call some local adepts for aid in helping to solve the matter and find out what happened to her missing troops. The **Pre-Generated Adepts** at the end of this book are designed to fit into the frame of this adventure, but groups may wish to create their own. To give other characters an incentive to accept this call, the gamemaster will need to consider just who the player characters are and why they would choose to help the Therans. The easiest way to achieve this is to have the players take the role of Theran soldiers underneath the direct command of strategos Cassia (p.58). In this instance, they are likely to be serving Cassia as her lieutenants or irregular specialists attached to her division. If the gamemaster chooses this option then Cassia naturally draws upon the players as her most experienced soldiers and tasks them with investigating the disappearance of her patrol. To make the adventure more relevant, gamemasters should have the players portray enlisted Empirist Vasgothians. The Place of ReNaming and the Dread Yearning are two of the most terrifying facets of Vasgothia to the Empirist mindset and they are likely to know a little about both. Although this may produce a foregone conclusion to the end of the adventure, game masters should encourage their players to form nuanced opinions on the Dread Yearning. Perhaps they have experienced their own pull towards the Deep Forest, or maybe lost a family member to the Dread Yearning. Additionally, Empirist characters will certainly feel strongly about the growing Separatist Movement and their call for a Vasgothia free of imperial rule. Just because they may be Theran soldiers, does not mean they have to be obedient subjects.

Outside of running a group of Theran soldiers, the next logical option would be to have the players as a group of independent adventurers. They can be non-military Empirists, Theran freemen, or visitors from one of the Empire's other provinces looking for coin. Haden Town is a popular point of call for adventurers in Vasgothia, and many high-ranking Therans and magicians regularly look for adepts to assist them in exploring the nearby Deep Forest. Knowing that there are adepts in town, strategos







Cassia will be keen to enlist some of them in looking for her missing men. The loss of more soldiers from her division is likely to affect her career prospects in the future, and an independent band of hired mercenaries is the perfect option to avoid further losses. Although some players balk at the idea of working for or with the Therans, it is important that the game master ensures not to paint all members of the legions as faceless Theran goons. The Empire is made up of millions of Namegivers who differ vastly in their opinions on Theran rule. Cassia herself is a provincial, hailing from the province of Rugaria. Though she has pursued a military career in the Theran war machine, she is far from the stereotypical slave-flogging Theran Noble.

Lastly, if the gamemaster wishes to have the group play as Barrites, they may want to consider reversing the framing of this encounter entirely. In this scenario, the players are Barrites who have heroically liberated an Empirist girl from her Theran father and assisting her in fulfilling her destiny. *Daughter of the Forest* will run very differently in this scenario, the group will be a small raiding band assaulting Prosperity Wells, killing the Theran guards, and then absconding into the Deep Forest with a group of soldiers hot on their trail. The goal for Barrite characters will be to escort Ceah (p.54) to the Place of ReNaming. In place of the strategos, the gamemaster should assign a suitable Barrite NPC to task the group with liberating Ceah from her family. Both Ceah's mother, Sigeburg (p.57), or her tribe's skullgar, Jogrim (p.59), make excellent substitutes.

## Plot Synopsis

Prosperity Wells is a large thriving farmstead on the southwestern borders of the Deep Forest. The owner of this farm, Kinthos, is a minor noble of House Gascilium. Decades ago, Kinthos fell in love with an Empirist woman, Karaboda Hadyd, and secretly married her, breaking the current marriage ban between Therans and Vasgothians (*Vasgothia*, p.18). The couple also had a child, Ceah, who they raised as a Theran, never revealing her Vasgothian heritage to her. For years, Karaboda was able to hide her identity with the aid of her husband, but unfortunately, she started to succumb to Dread Yearning a few years ago. The Yearning began with a series of vivid nightmares that plagued Karaboda's sleep. Before long she was sleepwalking and would often awaken outside of the farmstead's borders. Powerless to stop the Yearning, and unable to reveal that his wife was Vasgothian, Kinthos had little choice but to allow the forest to claim his love. She vanished from her home one spring night and has not been seen since.

To help maintain his secret, Kinthos dismissed most of his servants and staff, hiring new faces who knew nothing of his past. However, ever since the disappearance of his wife, scandal and rumours have plagued Kinthos' reputation, and many believe he had his wife killed. Growing withdrawn and cold with the loss of his love, Kinthos has become a cruel master. Many of the freeman and slaves who work on his farmstead consider him a morose and grim individual, prone to violent outbursts and fits of rage.





He is especially harsh to his only child, Ceah, and regularly scolds the girl for talking with the farm workers and for venturing beyond the family villa. Many just consider him overprotective of his daughter, but his heavy handling of the girl has had the opposite effect. Ceah developed a rebellious nature, ignoring her father's wishes and taking to riding her horse away from the farm and into the Lowlands. It was during one of these incidences that she encountered a strange peddler who tricked her into eating one of the fabled Fruits of the Forest (Vasgothia, p.244).

Upon returning to her home, Ceah started to experience the strange magic of the fruit. At first she thought it was a simple sickness, but it became quickly apparent that the Dread Yearning had started to afflict her.

Since Karaboda, Kinthos had always worried that the Dread Yearning would one day grip his daughter, and when she complained of nightmares involving the Deep Forest, his overprotectiveness grew so great that he locked her in the family villa. When Barrite raids against his farmstead began to grow in their ferocity, Kinthos grew fearful that they had somehow learned of his daughter's condition and wished to take her away. When he saw that one of the raiders looked strikingly like his former wife, these concerns were confirmed. Kinthos is convinced that Karaboda, under whatever Name she now possesses, has returned to Prosperity Wells to take his daughter away. However, there is more to the story. The Barrites believe Ceah to be the reincarnation of a figure from Vasgothian legend, the Daughter of the Forest. The Daughter, it is prophesied, will help to usher in the rebirth of the Vasgothian Passions. For this reason, the Barrites are fanatical about retrieving her and taking her to the Place of ReNaming.

Desperate to keep the Barrites from encroaching further, but also unwilling to reveal the truth of his marriage, Kinthos requested aid from the Legions, beseeching the military to increase their patrols of the region around his farmstead. Eventually, his pleas grew so loud that strategos Cassia sent a patrol of twenty of her men to Prosperity Wells as a token gesture and to help placate Kinthos's concerns.

When the Theran patrol reached the farmstead, they found themselves overwhelmed by Barrite tribesmen, who swiftly managed to kill half of the soldiers before the rest were able to make it within the settlement's walls. Since then, the survivors have been holed up, repelling Barrite attacks as best they can while hoping that Cassia sends re-enforcements. One of their numbers, an elf Named Diocles, managed to break through the siege with a message, but was cut down by arrow fire as he fled. The remaining soldiers are growing desperate, in addition to the Barrites, the slaves are growing restless, and there is talk of rebellion and aiding the Barrites in breaking through the town's defences. Rumours are also beginning to circulate that Ceah is somehow communicating with the raiders.

The player characters enter this adventure at the request of Cassia, who having heard no word from the patrol she sent out, is looking for competent adepts to investigate the matter and assist Prosperity Wells as best they can. As Kinthos is a





Theran Noble, he could certainly reward adventurers for their help, as well as proving to be a problem for Cassia, should she fail to assist him.

The players must travel from Haden Town to Prosperity Wells, taking them through one of the most isolated and dangerous regions of the Vasgothian frontier. Once they arrive, they must engage the Barrite raiders, who are on the verge of breaching the farmstead and inciting a slave revolt. Amid the chaos, Ceah finally succumbs to the Dread Yearning, opening the main gates and allowing the flood of barbarians inside. In the confusion and panic, few notice that she is lifted upon the horseback by one of the raiders and take away from the farmstead by a small band of Barrites who break away from the main horde.

Once the dust settles, the players learn of Ceah's disappearance and a desperate Kithnos comes clean about his past. He asks that they return his daughter before she is taken to the Place of ReNaming, convinced that the magicians of the Theran Empire can reverse the Dread Yearning. The players must enter the Deep Forest, do battle with both the strange magic and deadly creatures found within and ultimately decide the fate of the young girl.

#### *The Mysterious Peddler*

The identity and motives of the individual who tricked Ceah into eating a Fruit of the Forest remains unknown throughout *Daughter of the Forest*. Though it is clear that the gesture was designed to bring on the Dread Yearning, beyond some vague allusions in Ceah's diary, they are a complete mystery. Future adventures will explore this individual in more depth, but for now they are a side player in the ongoing saga of Vasgothia.





## A Guide To Haden Town

*Daughter of the Forest* mostly takes place in the Theran farmstead of Prosperity Wells and the surrounding Deep Forest. Gamemasters who wish to get straight into the action may skip ahead to the first part of this adventure: **Strategos Stress**. However, some groups may wish to explore Haden Town first, either to buy supplies or to do some research on the Deep Forest. The following chapter is a gazette that expands upon the information on Haden Town from the *Vasgothia* sourcebook and opens up the possibility of more adventures to be had in and around northwestern Vasgothia.

### History of Haden Town

Haden Town was established in the year 1455 TH, five years after the Empire returned to Vasgothia at the end of the Scourge. At first, the town consisted of little more than a temporary legion fort and a staff of magicians and adepts hired by House Gascilium. The sole purpose of this expedition and settlement was to study the mysterious Towers that had appeared during the Scourge. As rumours of the treasures and magic found in the Towers became public, the town attracted scores of adventurers from all over Vasgothia who wished to explore them. At first, the local Gascilium administration refused to allow outsiders into the Towers, and the legions were used to cut off access to the Zheikuez and Shadefell Rivers. This did little to stop determined treasure hunters, who circumvented the legions blockades by venturing into the Western Slog of the Deep Forest and simply going around them. This is nothing to say of the Barrites who saw the new settlement as a worthy target for their raids. The cost in maintaining and defending the settlement grew too much for the Gascili, who were more focused on establishing the hundreds of farmsteads that were needed to feed the Empire.

In a notable example of Gascilium enterprising overgovernor Pularva Grotuun (*Vasgothia*, p.37) decided to sell the lands around the Towers to the highest bidder. However, with the purchase came the expectation that whoever owned the land would be financially responsible for its upkeep and maintenance. This naturally included the many headaches of ambitious adventurers, roaming barbarians, and drooling Half-Horrors. Initially, both Houses Krand and Jotyn showed an interest in purchasing the land, but both were swiftly outbid by House Narlanth. It is rumoured that the Narlanthi either had dirt on the other bidders or otherwise intimidated them into backing off. Regardless, House Narlanth took over responsibility for the fort, ReNaming it "Haden's Town" after the first undergovernor dispatched to the fort, Haden Narlanth.

House Narlanth's first task was to help clear the astral corruption around the settlement. This task was facilitated by Haden's knowledge of Nethermancy, as well as his contacts among the Heavenherd. Those few Horrors and Half-Horrors that could be found in proximity to the settlement were hunted down and slayed. The results of this





extermination have been mixed, due in part to the fluctuating nature of astral taint in the Deep Forest (*Vasgothia*, p.117). Some, such as House Krand, accused Haden of resorting to powerful blood magic to help in the endeavour, though this was not given much credence by the Vasgothian Conclave. Most of the astral space today in and around Haden Town is considered Open, thanks to Haden's efforts, though it is not uncommon for this to change suddenly without warning.

Once the astral space was relatively cleared, House Narlanth was ready to explore the Towers. Rather than gatekeep and restrict access to the Towers, as the Gascili had done before him, Haden opened up the area, going to so far as to invite adepts and magicians to investigate and explore the Towers. Naturally, the Narlanthi were only too happy to purchase the hundreds of trinkets and items that made their way out of the Towers. Adepts who made it out were encouraged to write down their accounts and to provide maps of their explorations. In time, House Narlanth started to fund expeditions into the Towers, offering large rewards for anything that could be extracted. This vast body of accumulated knowledge was instrumental in Haden's own research, and he quickly amassed a personal library filled to the brim with lore.

The Narlanthi monopoly on the Towers soon began to greatly concern their chief rivals, House Krand, who partitioned the Grand Conclave in Great Thera to allow them access to the library. Sensing an opportunity to clip the wings of both Narlanth and Krand, First Governor Kanidris Zanzan dispatched Zophia of House Navarim to claim ownership of Haden's library. At the same time, Haden was "promoted" as a *lavernae* and forced to leave Vasgothia to join the Grand Conclave. Rumours persisted that Haden was amassing too much power and wished to usurp Vasgothia's government. Once he was back in Great Thera he was accused of consorting with dragons and the Barrite tribes. Whatever the truth behind the rumours, Haden Narlanth was arrested and exiled to a small island in the Selestrean Basin in 1461 TH. His exact whereabouts have never been disclosed to the public.

Haden Town has flourished ever since. Though it has yet to reach the lofty heights of the other Lowlands settlements, it has transformed from a simple legion fort into a booming frontier town. Thousands of Namegivers make their home within Haden Town's walls. Most of them are either related to the hundreds of merchants who conduct their business in town, or they are former adventurers who have decided to settle down. Due to Haden Town's distance from the capital, it is also an attractive place for those who wish to escape the notice of the ruling Therans. Due to House Narlanth's open policy, wanted criminals, escaped slaves, displaced Barrites, and dubious cults can all be found making their home there. In general, undergovernor Ostios Narthanth cares little for an individual's background and past misdeeds. This is not to say that he tolerates crime within his town, just that he is willing to turn a blind eye to such things, providing they do not interfere with his research or the general public peace.





## Haden Town's Districts

Haden Town is divided into several residential and commercial districts that collectively make up the settlement. **Soldier's March** is found in the north of the settlement and represents the original fort that the rest of the town was constructed around. Despite its Name, Soldier's March is open to all, not just legionaries, though it is common to see many Theran soldiers in the district. Soldier's March is home to a largely Empirist population, but due to the multicultural makeup of the Theran Legions, there are also citizens from many corners of the Empire's provinces.

To the south there lays the **Overshadow**, or simply the 'shadow', a district that is home to a sizeable Barrite population. The Overshadow was established by displaced Namegivers from various Deep Forest tribes. The nature of Barrite culture means that it is common for smaller tribes to fall prey to larger ones, and the survivors are often evicted from their former territory, Over the years, these exiles of the Western Slog have made their way to Haden Town and set down roots. The district itself is surprisingly well ordered; old tribal rivalries mean that the Barrites are keen to clearly set out the boundaries of their properties. Still, outbreaks of violence are common, and the district has a strong military presence to help maintain the peace. That being said, due to their status as exiles and their shared culture, the residents of Barrite Town come together several times a year to celebrate auspicious occasions and to hold festivals to the dead Passions. A few times a year, the local yearls also pool their resources together and arrange expeditions into the Towers in search of treasure and old tribal artefacts. There have been calls to have the Barrites of Overshadow recognised as Theran citizens and granted Empirist status. Overgovernor Enzwintz has yet to respond.

On the northwest side of town, there is the **Heights**. So called because of its elevated position on a several small hills. The Heights is a largely residential district for both Empirists and Theran Freemen, with a handful of nobles residing in the more luxurious buildings. The Heights also serves as the artisan quarter of Haden Town, many blacksmiths and jewellers have their workshops here and enjoy patronage from the small noble population.

Lastly there is the **Mud Market** which serves as a small commercial district and encompasses the town square and surrounding businesses. The Mud Market gets its Name from the local practice of recovering various bric-a-brac from the River Zheikuez whenever it floods during Vasgothia's relentless rainfalls. The rising waters of the river often cause minor artefacts to wash up with the riverbed sludge. These trinkets are quickly gathered by various Haden Town merchants and sold in the small tent stalls of the town square. It is rare, though not unheard of, for magical treasures to occasionally turn up in the Mud Market, though most objects are mundane in nature. The local Narlanthi rulers have several agents who prowl the market looking for anything of true value.





## Notable Locations

The following locations may be of interest to visitors in Haden Town. The town proximity to the Towers and the Deep Forest makes it an important stop off point and watering hole for many adepts and explorers.

### The Haden Town Walls

The walls of Haden Town are constructed from limestone hewed from the Caralk Midrise. Standing 40 feet high and 15 feet thick, they give Haden Town an imposing fortress-like appearance. There are large twin watch towers stationed at each of Haden Town's four gates and smaller watch towers positioned at regular intervals. The need for such a defensive structure is obvious, Haden Town's proximity to the Towers makes attacks from Horrors and Half-Horrors an all-too-common occurrence. Not to mention the hostile Barrite tribes that make their home in the Western Slog. The walls of Haden Town were built gradually. At first they only encompassed the original Theran fort that is now known as Soldier's March. As the town grew and attracted settlers, the old walls were deconstructed and expanded upon to encompass the new districts that were growing around the old fort. The 6<sup>th</sup> Legion barracks can be found spread throughout the interior of Haden Town's walls. This allows patrols of soldiers to seemingly appear from nowhere, as the walls have dozens of openings that lead to the various mess halls, training rooms, and interrogation chambers maintained by the legion. The current commander of Haden Town's military is Freyan Tanaris, a human Warrior and Nethermancer adept. Though she is a minor noble of House Zanjan, Freyan prefers to drink in the company of the common solidary and is a frequent customer of the Stumbling Strategos (see below).

#### *The North Gate*

Of particular note when discussing Haden Town's walls is the notorious north gate. The ramparts above the portcullis feature the mummified remains of an unknown Half-Horror displayed from them. This creature, which was responsible for dozens of deaths in the early years of Haden Town's founding, was finally slain by a group of adept's known as The Four Bold Blades after its rampage of death and destruction. The creature itself is a bizarre amalgamation of reptilian, Namegiver, and insectoid features. It's multiple heads and huge leathery wings suggest some kind of connection to Nidorcyl (*Vasgothia*, p.13), though this is pure conjecture. Many Haden Towners consider the thing to be cursed and there are scores of rumours circulating around the horrifying remains. The ruling Therans place no stock in the gossip, but the local Empirists and Barrites have taken it upon themselves to try and remove the thing on several occasions, sometimes with violent results. So far, their efforts have been in vain, and the disgusting trophy remains in place.





### *Adventure Hook: Spawn of Nidorcyl*

The Haden Towners awaken one morning to find the remains above the North Gate gone and the nearby watch brutally murdered. At first, local radicals are blamed for removing the beast and citizens of the Overshadow are accused of inciting unrest. However, the following night, a twisted and broken body of a legionary is found in the Mud Market. The corpse is partially devoured. It does not take long for rumours to spread that the previously thought dead Horror has somehow reanimated and begun to avenge itself upon Haden Town. The characters are hired by Freyan Tanaris to help solve the matter. Gamemasters can choose from one of two possible options for this adventure (or create their own).

#### *Option 1*

The Horror's corpse was stolen by angry Haden Town citizens from the Overshadow who wished to see the thing removed from the town. The body found in the Mud Markets was the result of an Avowed Adept (*Vasgothia*, p.189) who thought the soldier was getting too close to discovering the truth. The body of the Horror has been burned to ashes by the Barrites of the Overshadow. The characters must choose to either hunt down Avowed murderer, or resolve the matter in another way.

#### *Option 2*

The Children of the Towers (p.53) used magic to reanimate the Half-Horror. The cult believe that the creature can be used to be used to help summon Nidorcyl back to Vasgothia once it has regained its full strength by feasting on Namegiver blood. The creature lairs on the island of Nidorcyl's Eye (p.21) during the day, taking flight once the sun sets and descending upon the hapless citizens of Haden Town.

## **Ostios's Tower**

Easily spotted from any part of Haden Town, Ostios's Tower is a strange sandstone structure that juts out from the surrounding villas in the Heights. The tower, along with the accompanying estate, is the personal residence of Ostios Narlanth, Haden Town's undergovernor (*Vasgothia*, p.65). The tower itself is a craggy, windowless spire. It looks less purposefully constructed and more, organic in nature, as if the whole thing had been grown out of the ground. Fitting, as it is well known that Ostios commanded a powerful earth spirit to create the tower for him shortly after he took residence in Haden Town, some fifteen years ago. It roughly resembles the design of the Western Kingdoms, though it is lacking in the telltale beauty and sophistication of the elven designs. Little is known about what goes in the tower, many speculate that Ostios engages in all manner of experimentation and magical research inside. Coupled with the fact that few Haden Towners have ever seen their governor, only gives rise to the most







outrageous kinds of rumours.

### **Drinking Establishments**

As mentioned above, the framing for this adventure is that the player characters are currently sat drinking in a Haden Town tavern. If the gamemaster wishes to expand upon this and allow the group a little time to roleplay before the adventure starts proper, they may wish to use one of the example taverns below, or create one themselves. There are five popular taverns in Haden Town that see to the needs of the endless streams of merchants and adventurers that come to the town.

### **Towersview**

Found directly facing the Towers across where the lower Zheikuez meets the Shadefell River, Towersview is the oldest and largest tavern in Haden Town and is run by an Empirist human man Named Rhus Ghenfyl (*Vasgothia*, p. 65). Rhus is particularly interested in the Towers, and offers adepts free board, providing they give him first refusal on magical items found in the Towers. Rhus's grandmother, Brunhild Ghenfyl, was among the earliest explorer's of the Towers and originally established the tavern using the treasures she found within. Towersview is infamous in Haden Town, not just for its unusual height (a haphazardly stacked ten-story building) but for the rumour that Brunhild used bricks and stones gathered from around the Towers to help build the tavern. This has given the tavern a reputation for being haunted and a site of unusual happenings. It is not uncommon for the hallways of the tavern to appear to lengthen or shrink and for doors to lead to dead ends or other rooms entirely. Most of these stories are attributed to the effects of the strong mead that is sold in the bar, but there is no doubting that there is often a sense of unease reported by those wandering the tavern alone at night.

#### *The Truth About Towersview*

Though Haden Town is full of untruthful rumours and gossip, the story of Brunhild using materials from the Towers to build her tavern is true. Brunhild was a questor of Upandal, and used her powers to help construct the foundation of the tavern. However, she became obsessed with the Towers after spending so long exploring them, and her tavern was built in their likeness as an homage. It is likely that she was Horror Marked or otherwise corrupted by the Towers and her use of them to build her tavern creates all manner of strange magical effects that linger today. Gamemasters should feel free to attribute all manner of supernatural activity to the tavern. Wandering ghosts, strange noises and smells, odd sights viewed in astral space, whatever they feel is appropriate.





### **The Stumbling Strategos**

A popular establishment found in the Soldier's March, this tavern is run by a retired ork woman named Eruun. The tavern is in fact named after its owner. Despite her rank of strategos, Eruun spent most of her time in the Theran legions getting drunk with the common soldiery. This gave her the nickname of "The Stumbling Strategos". Once she retired, she opened the tavern and set it up as a place for her old friends to drink. Eruun is greatly loved by her patrons and can often be found getting drunk with them at a table, rather than serving at the bar.

### **The Grumble Inn**

A small, cheap inn found in the Mud Markets, the Grumble Inn is owned and operated by a leafer named Sosl the Sour. Despite the spiky nature of the owner, many come to the inn for sheer novelty of the place. The sign having from the tavern's outside features a beautiful portrait of its leafer owner. Despite the expert artistry of the painting, its subject looks extremely annoyed that they are having their likeness taken. The interior is decorated with ivy, moss, and other plant life, and is somewhat humid and dank. Because Sosl the Sour doesn't really like talking to people, the bar is a self-serving, meaning that there are no ques. Customers simply help themselves and pay once finished by putting their coin in a nearby bowl. Food can be ordered, but this usually results in a string of insults and grumbles from the barkeep. Many locals enjoy seeing out of towners get offended by Sosl, and there is usually a couple chuckling whenever a newbie gets the 'special service'.

### **The Bear & Troll**

A large tavern run and operated by a Bear Strider named Angella, a Warrior who once served in a Bear Strider Company but grew tired of being a Theran Mercenary. She collected what wealth she had and opened the tavern. The main attraction is her bear, Gunther. Gunthur is a docile and friendly bear and loves the attention that he gets from the clientele. The tavern itself is home and homely, there is always a roaring fire, and the smells of roasted meat, herbs, and fine ales can be smelt wafting all around the Overshadow district.

### **The Golden Sun**

A higher-end establishment and a popular destination in the Heights, the Theran Sunburst painted onto this tavern's sign clearly marks it as a place for the more discerning residents of the town. Unlike the other taverns, there are bouncers placed outside (usually orks, trolls, or humans). The bouncers themselves are there to make sure that no "riffraff" makes their way inside, and they also confiscate weapons. Many of the tavern girls here are slaves, owned by the barkeep Polibio, an Obsidiman Theran Freeman. The inside is luxurious, well-lit, and clean. The tavern is home to fine





delicacies and wines imported from the Selestrean basin and well suited to the Theran palate.

### **Mercantile Stores**

Haden Town throngs with Namegivers of all kinds hawking their wares . Most of the larger and successful businesses are patronaged by House Argenti, but there are independent Empirist traders for those who don't wish to deal with Therans.

### **The Bloodworks**

A well renowned blood charm emporium found on Soldier's March, the Bloodworks is popular with adepts and legion soldiers. The mistress of the Bloodworks, a dwarf Named Tauch Kyzan, is a specialist in crafting offensive blood charms and has grown rich from her many commissions for the 4th and 6th legions.

### **Gahren's Curiosities**

Explorers looking for reliable maps of the Deep Forest are often pointed towards this store on Sage Lane in the Overshadow. Gahren, an Empirist and retired Scout adept, spent his youth adventuring in Vasgothia and has acquired all manner of strange relics. In addition to his maps of the Deep Forest, he also sells common magical goods. He used to have a small collection of common thread items, but has sold most of these to various adventurers over the years.

### **Avespa's Greenwrights**

Standing out amongst the simple stone and wooden establishments of the Mud Markets, this store is a specialist in all things gloamoak (*Vasgothia*, p.224). From cartwheels to armor, Avespa, an elf Weaponsmith and questor of Jaspre, can craft almost anything from the special wood. The store is impossible to miss, covered as it is in tangled crawling ivy. Avespa is also a skilled botanist and sells all manner of potions and healing aids.

### **Thunderhammer Forge**

Run by twin dwarven brothers, Alarich and Marbol, Thunderhammer is the best regarded forge in the Heights. Alarich prefers form to function, while his brother is the opposite, favouring practicality over aesthetics. Both are Weaponsmith adepts of Journeyman Tier and can provide a number of services for adventurers. The Thunderhammer Forge has a standing contract with the legions to keep their arms and armor in tiptop condition. They also sell blood charms, weapons & armor, and a few common thread items to the general population.

### **The Haden Town Library**

One of the grandest structures in the Heights, the Haden Town Library throngs with activity from the dozens of clerks and scholar who work within. Being so close to the Haden Town library makes it likely that players may wish to do some research on





the Deep Forest before leaving. The area of the forest closest to Prosperity Wells is known to explorers as the Western Slog and it is known for its many dangers. Access to the Haden Town library can be costly and is restricted by social class. Research can also be time consuming however and it is advised that the group does not spend too long in the library before travelling to Prosperity Wells (no more than a day).

As mentioned in *Vasgothia* (p. 66), citizens are restricted in their access to the library based on their social standing in the Theran Empire. Player characters may decide to access the library in order to research the nearby Deep Forest around Prosperity Wells. The game master should feel free to reward them with information such as who the local tribes are (as well as their attitudes towards Therans), the most common kind of creatures and Half-Horrors that may infest the area, and any important locations.

## **Beyond Haden Town**

Most people who come to Haden Town have interests that extend beyond the settlement itself. Naturally, many Namegivers use it as a base of operations for exploring the Towers and the nearby region known as the Western Slog (*Vasgothia*, p.143).

## **The Third Division's Camp**

The third division of the 4<sup>th</sup> Legion are currently wintering outside of Haden Town to help bolster the town's city watch. It is common practice for the Therans to station extra troops outside of their main Lowlands settlements during the winter due to increased Barrite raids. Despite the Therans best efforts at unification, rivalries between soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Legions exist. This can take the form of light-hearted bantering all the way up to fight fights. Strategos Cassia is keen to keep her men out of trouble, so she mostly confines them to the camp. To keep moral up, she does allow small detachments into Haden Town to drink when off duty, though she always sends one of her lieutenants with them to maintain order. More information on the Third Division's camp appears in **Strategos Stress**.

## **The Towers**

The Towers loom across northern Vasgothia, casting their shadows long and deep upon the province. Laying across the lower Zheikuez and Shadefell Rivers, access to the Towers is surprisingly unrestricted. Two groups offer their services to adventurers seeking to cross the rivers. On the Zheikuez, a small Carinci sponsored barge takes adepts back and forth three times a day (morning, midday, and in the evening, before the sun sets). The Carinci barges are operated by manipulating several huge chains and gears installed beneath the waters of the Zheikuez and Shadefell. The barges are designed so that one returns to Haden Town at the same time the other makes its way to the Towers. Passage either way costs 5 silver per person and livestock, up to a maximum of 12 passengers. The barges are run by a non-adept t'skrang woman with silver scales Named U'lani. It is commonly believed that U'lani is a spy for the





Therans, and reports everything she sees and hears back to Ostios Narlanth.

The other method of travel is a Bedlam Ferry (*Vasgothia*, p.144) operated by a woman Named Aurora. Unlike most of the other 'hags' that operate the Bedlam Ferries, Aurora does not appear as an old crone, but a young human woman. The cost of using Aurora's Ferry is different for each group. Sometimes she charges silver, sometimes she asks for a personal item from a passenger. A common price is to bring something magical back to her from the Towers. Those who have taken this offer and later refused to pay it have been found drowned in the Shadefell River, their bloated bodies covered in strange runic cuts. Still, Aurora's Ferry is an option for those groups who are looking to get to the Towers without the local Theran administration knowing about what they're up to.

### **Nidorcyl's Eye**

At the confluence where the rolling waters of the rivers Zheikuez and Shadefell meet, there can be found a small craggy island. This is commonly referred to by the locals as "Nidorcyl's Eye" due to the strange pattern it makes when viewed from an airship. The island is obscured by mist on most days, and the waters around it are fierce and wild. Legend has it that one of the earliest treasure hunters to explore the Towers, Sigeward Varghen, hid his many treasures on the island to keep them out of Theran hands. The island is the source of many rumours, from Horrors to strange cults,





to restless spirits. Few Namegivers are willing to travel to the island, and fewer are willing to ferry a group to its shores. This is for the best, as the rumours of cult activity are true. A secret society known as the Children of the Towers makes their home beneath the islands' many caves. The Children's goal is to summon Nidorcyl so that he can finish his work on the Towers. The cult has an agreement with Aurora, who ferries members back and forth from the island.

## Magical Treasures

The Towers are renowned for their many treasures. Most are mundane in nature, gold coins, silver cups, jade masks, and so forth. While these items may be considered little more than "trinkets" to a more serious treasure hunter, their cultural value is priceless to those attempting to uncover Vasgothia's murky past. Some of the more powerful magical treasures unearthed within appear to have a strange connection to the magic of the Towers. Some are even pattern items relating to some facet of the Towers or Nidorcyl.

While *Daughter of the Forest* is focused upon retrieving Ceah Gascilium, gamemasters may like to extend or build upon the scenario by including an adventure in Haden Town or inside the Towers. The following are an example of the strange kinds of magical treasures that can be found inside. Each can serve as a catalyst for further adventures in Vasgothia.

### Anthousa's Wailing Mask

A disturbing item with a dark, shadowy past, Anthousa's Wailing Mask is a cracked porcelain mask depicting a wailing Namegiver face. It is rumoured to have been found in the Tower of Horrors, though its design is clearly Rugarian in origin. Old legends state that it was created and worn by the famous playwright and actor, Anthousa Ippuli. Anthousa was a Theran noble who staged plays and shows in the now ruined Bukara Amphitheatre. At some point during the early days of the Scourge, Anthousa was corrupted by a Horror known as Puppeteer. The Horror used Anthousa to stage plays of a more tragic nature that were designed to sap the hope and will from their audiences. With each new play, the mask grew in power, as did the Horror, and it started to take on a growing grim countenance. Eventually, one of Anthousa's students, Korinthia Medari, realised what was happening, and reported the playwright to the ruling Theran governor. Anthousa was chased out of Bukara, but later drowned when attempting the swim across the River of Brilliances. Both the playwright and her mask were thought to





have been lost to the murky depths. How it later surfaced in the Towers is unknown.

**Maximum Threads:** 2      **Mystic Defense:** 12

**Legend Point Tier:** Warden

**Thread Rank One**

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn the Name of the mask.

*Effect:* The wearer gains +1 rank to Frighten.

**Thread Rank Two**

*Effect:* The wearer gains +1 to Social Defense.

**Thread Rank Three**

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn the Name of the Horror that corrupted Anthousa

*Effect:* The wearer gains +1 rank to Emotion Song.

**Thread Rank Four**

*Effect:* The wearer gains +2 to Social Defense.

**Thread Rank Five**

*Deed:* The owner must perform in a play or performance whilst wearing the mask to an audience of at least twenty Namegivers.

*Effect:* The wearer gains the **Dramaturge** ability. As a Free action for 2 Strain, the wearer gains a +3 bonus on the next action they perform that target's an opponent's Social Defense (Conversation, Entertainer, Frighten, etc.). If the action is successful, the wearer steals a point of Karma for each success achieved on the action. If the target does not have Karma, they instead suffer 2 Strain damage per success. This ability may only be used once per day.

**Thread Rank Six**

**Effect:** The wearer gains +3 to Social Defense.

**Thread Rank Seven**

*Deed:* The wearer must use the mask to act or otherwise perform in a play before a Theran governor.

*Effect:* The wearer gains the **Rugarian Tragedy** ability. As a Free action for 2 Strain, the wearer may increase their Attack and Damage step by +3 against any opponent who has been affected in the last 24 hours by a use of one of the wearer's talents that target's Social Defense. Additionally, the wearer may spend a point of Karma as Free action once per turn to cancel out the opponent's use of a Karma point on one of





their own tests.

### **Thread Rank Eight**

*Effect:* The wearer may use the **Dramaturge** ability twice per day.

### **Eye of the Flame Serpent**

The Eye of the Flame Serpent is a small smooth sphere around one inch in diameter. Its green-yellow surface has an unusual lustre to it, and it glitters even in complete darkness. However, the most striking feature of the eye becomes apparent once a thread has been woven to it. Once activated with magic, a large reptilian split pupil appears on the eye's surface. The pupil almost appears alive, dilating and constricting in response to light and darkness.



The Eye was first discovered by Ulfran Joryale during his research into the Vasgothian Idols (*Vasgothia*, p.96). Ulfran theorized that it was somehow connected to the dragon part of Nidorcyl's True Pattern and that it must have been one of a pair. The eye was stolen from Ulfran's workshop and its current whereabouts are unknown. Some have speculated that it was returned to the Towers by agents of Burrhide. Others that it was thrown into the waters of the Zheikueez.

**Maximum Threads:** 2      **Mystic Defense:** 16

**Legend Point Tier:** Master

#### **Thread Rank One**

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn the item's Name.

*Effect:* The owner gains +1 rank to Astral Sight.

#### **Thread Rank Two**

*Effect:* The owner gains +1 to Mystic Armor.

#### **Thread Rank Three**

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn the Name of the Thief that stole the eye from Ulfran.

*Effect:* The owner gains +1 rank to Steel Thought.

#### **Thread Rank Four**

*Effect:* The owner gains +2 to Mystic Armor.







### **Thread Rank Five**

*Deed:* The owner must replace one of their own eyes with the Eye of the Flame Serpent. This requires the complete removal of the eye in question. The owner does not have to perform the procedure themselves, but they must be conscious throughout the process. If the owner already had an eye missing, they may simply slot the Eye into the empty socket. The owner can see out of the eye normally. This costs 1 Blood Magic Damage.

*Effect:* The owner gains the **Fire Walk With Me** ability. As a Free action the owner gains +2 to Mystic and Physical Defense against tests that have fire as a component (Dragon Breath, Fire Spear, Flame Arrow, a weapon imbued with Flameweapon, etc).

### **Thread Rank Six**

*Effect:* The owner gains a +3 bonus to all tests related to fire magic (Fireblood, Fire Spear, summoning fire spirits, etc.).

### **Thread Rank Seven**

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn the Name of the dragon that forms a part of Nidorcyl's true pattern (Nithogard)

*Effect:* The owner gains the **Dragon Sight** ability. As a Free action for 1 Strain, the owner gains either the Low-Light Vision or Heat Sight Racial Ability for the next 10 minutes. Switching from one form of sight to the other requires an additional 1 Strain. The owner gains +2 ranks to Astral Sight.

### **Thread Rank Eight**

*Effect:* The owner gains a +6 bonus to all tests related to fire magic (Fireblood, Fire Spear, summoning fire spirits, etc.).

### **Thread Rank Nine**

*Deed:* The owner must travel to the Towers and enter the chamber from which the Eye was originally retrieved from, slaying whatever they find inside.

*Effect:* The owner gains the **Dragon Aura** ability. As a Free action for 3 Strain, the owner surrounds themselves in a nimbus of elemental fire. All hostile beings within 4 yards of the owner suffer damage equal to the owner's Threadweaving Rank. Physical Armor protects against this damage. When using Dragon Aura, the owner's Fire Walk With Me bonus is doubled.





### Thread Rank Ten

*Effect:* The eye becomes an Enhanced Matrix of rank equal to the current thread rank.

### Foebreaker

The Foebreaker is an expertly crafted war spear. The shaft is 5 feet in length and inlaid with intricate orichalcum Vasgothian runes. The blade is an elegant, winged shape of an unknown dull grey metal. Once a Thread is woven, the blade shimmers with a range of colors, from cold steel to brilliant burning orange. Legend states that the Foe Breaker is but one of many treasures crafted by the forgotten Vasgothian Passions, which sometimes causes it the known as "The Spear of the Passions". According to Vasgothian legend, every spring a mysterious longhouse appears somewhere in the Deep Forest. Dwelling within is said to be the Vasgothian Passion of craftsmanship, who forges a special Thread Item for a chosen Namegiver. The Passion only 'lives' until the following winter, aging rapidly as the snow approaches until they disappear from the world once more.

Without a thread woven, the Foe Breaker is a standard war spear (*Vasgothia*, p.228).



**Maximum Threads:** 2      **Mystic Defense:** 16  
**Legend Point Tier:** Master

#### Thread Rank One

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn the Name of the spear.

*Effect:* The owner gains +1 rank to Melee Weapons.

#### Thread Rank Two

*Effect:* The spear is Damage Step 9.

#### Thread Rank Three

*Key Knowledge:* The owner must learn which of the Idols is said to have forged





the spear (Shining Wright).

*Effect:* The owner gains +1 rank to Steel Thought.

#### **Thread Rank Four**

*Effect:* The owner gains the **Rage of the Ancients** ability. As a Free action for 1 Strain, the owner gains a +3 bonus to their next Attack test with the spear.

#### **Thread Rank Five**

*Key Knowledge:* The adept must learn what material the spear's blade is forged from (meteoric iron).

*Effect:* The owner gains +2 rank to Melee Weapons.

#### **Thread Rank Six**

*Effect:* The spear is Damage Step 10.

#### **Thread Rank Seven**

*Deed:* The adept must recite the legend of the spear to an audience of at least twenty Namegivers.

*Effect:* The owner gains the **Fury of the Thunder Passion** ability. As a Simple action for 3 Strain, the owner thrusts the spear upwards as the sky above swiftly darkens with ominous black clouds. A brilliant bolt of blue lightning strikes the spear's tip, energizing both the weapon and the adept. The adept's next attack with the Foebreaker gain the *lightning* keyword, and ignores physical armor. This ability may only be used once per day and only when the owner is beneath an open sky.

#### **Thread Rank Eight**

*Effect:* The owner gains +2 rank to Steel Thought.

The spear is Damage Step 11.

#### **Thread Rank Nine**

*Deed:* The owner must slay a Horror or Half-Horror with the Foebreaker.

*Effect:* The owner may use the **Fury of the Thunder Passion** ability twice per day,





## Strategos Stress

*In this encounter, the strategos of the local division of the 4<sup>th</sup> Legion hires the characters to investigate the disappearance of a patrol she sent to Prosperity Wells ten days ago. Before departing the legion camp, the characters can request equipment from the division quartermaster, ask questions and do research in Haden Town. The following assumes that the players are free agents and travelling adventurers. Should the gamemaster wish to instead have the characters be members of the Theran legion, a separate section is offered below.*

### Setting the Stage

A division of the Theran legion is currently wintering in a camp outside of Haden Town. It is common for Vasgothia's two legions to form up in this manner during winter at all the major settlements of the Lowlands. Both New Thera and New Prosperity enjoy the protection of two full cohorts of legionaries during the colder months. Through either fate or fortune, the characters find themselves in Haden Town at the same time. As they enjoy the comforts of civilization, a Theran soldier approaches them. Looking them up and down, the grizzled ork clears his throat, offers a legion salute, and speaks:

*"My name is legionary Bragi, Third Division, Seventh Cohort of the Fourth Legion. It has come to strategos Cassia's attention that you are adepts available for hire. If this is true then my commander has requested your presence at the camp outside of town. She promises that you are under no compulsion to do so, and no misfortune will befall you if you decline, but she has instructed me to inform you that it would be well worth your time."*

With that, he offers to pay for whatever drinks, food, and board the group are currently enjoying, pulling out a large purse of silver and settling with the barkeep on their behalf. He also reaches into his leather satchel and produces what he calls "a writ of pass" sealed with the strategos's personal insignia of a coiled cobra. He seems to have little time for any questions, explaining that he is expected back at camp and only repeats that the strategos will "see them right" should they accept her offer.

### Approaching the Camp

The camp is found to the east of town, not too far from the rushing grey waters of the River Shadefell. Roughly 100 troops are stationed in the makeshift tent town, which is strictly organized into neat rows with a wooden wall complete with watchtowers erected around the encampment. As the characters make their way towards the main gate, two legionaries, one a young human boy, the other a middle-aged troll woman, both wearing chainmail and carrying spears and footman's shields step forward to meet them.





*"Halt citizens" the boy calls out, in voice that barely sounds like it has broken.*

*"Only Theran military are permitted to enter the camp".*

*The troll woman rolls her eyes before adding,*

*"State your business or move along citizens".*

The players only need show their writ of pass to gain entry to the camp. Upon doing so, the gamemaster can read out the following to the players or otherwise ad-lib the camp's description:

*Showing the guards the writ of pass, both nod and step aside, permitting you to enter the camp. The rows and rows of weather-beaten tents sprawls out before you. There are numerous Theran soldiers milling about the encampment, many are in full armor and appear to be casually patrolling the camp in groups of three. Many more are out of their armor and instead huddling around cooking pots or playing games of dice. As you progress down what looks like the main road, the distinctive clanging of hammer on anvil can heard. Looking towards the source of the rhythmic beating, you see a large, muscled human woman working on what looks like a spearhead. She looks up briefly as you walk past, offering a shallow nod before going back to her work.*

*At the centre of the camp, directly in front of you, there sits the strategos's personal tent. Much larger than the rest, its distinctive red color makes it stand out against the hordes of its lesser mud-soaked neighbours. Again, two legionnaires, both ork men, stand guard at the tent's entrance. Upon showing them your writ of pass, the older of the two bids you follow him into the tent. Once inside, he stops and salutes a finely dressed elf woman who appears to be looking over a large map of Vasgothia unfurled upon a central desk.*

*"Commander. These are the adepts you requested" the ork soldier says.*

*The elf looks up from the desk and eyes each of you before dismissing the soldier. She stands up to her full height and gestures towards several chairs in front of her. She looks younger than you expected, and her jewellery and dress mark her as distinctly un-Vasgothian. Regardless, you sense an open friendliness, despite her stern exterior.*

### **Meeting the Strategos**

The strategos walks over to another table, upon which there sits a silver decanter and goblets.

*"Would you like some Thoracic brandy to warm you? I had it imported from Barsaive. It's not as nice as Rugarian grape-liquor, but it does the job."*





She pours out the strong-smelling amber liquid and passes a goblet to each of you, before raising her own and gulping down in its entirety.

*“No doubt you’re curious as to why I asked to see you, so allow me to get to the point. A week ago, I sent a patrol of my division to the farmstead of Prosperity Wells – a Gascilium farmstead on the borders of the Deep Forest. The owner, a noble Named Kinthos has been pestering me to send troops to help deter Barrite raiders. I had expected them back by now, but as of yet, I have heard no word from my men. I am beginning to suspect the worst, and for political reasons, I cannot send more of my men without permission from my superior officer, who, as you can imagine, will not look kindly upon me sending a patrol to what could very well be their doom. Instead, I am looking for competent adepts to travel to Prosperity Wells, assist Kinthos in whatever way you can, and learn the fate of my men. If you accept, I will pay each of you 300 silver pieces each – 150 now and the rest upon successful completion of the mission. Additionally, I will be in your debt. This is potentially a sensitive matter. A displeased Gascilium Noble can cause all manner of trouble for my division, such is House politics, and if the matter can be solved by independent adventurers such as yourselves, then all the better”.*

## **Themes and Images**

Despite her rank and luxurious surroundings, Cassia is sincere in her concern for her men. Play up this anxiety whenever she answers questions about the patrol. Feel free to flesh them out with names and races. Most of the patrol were non-adept soldiers and she genuinely feels responsible for their disappearance. This concern can be emphasized by her reluctance to barter or squabble over the player’s payment. She is willing to up her offer to as much as 600 silver pieces – though she is unable to go higher. Make it clear that even though she is only a strategos, she has some connections back in New Thera and is willing to introduce the group to influential individuals in the future.

## **Behind the Scenes**

Cassia is concerned about how the missing patrol will look to her superior officer, polemarch Marius Carinci, a Theran noble. Keenly aware that she is a provincial, Cassia understands that losing nearly a fifth of her men on the whim of a Gascilium landowner could certainly spoil her chances at promotion, or better yet, an assignment back in her homeland of Rugaria. Secretly, she despises the chilly Vagothian winters and endless barbarian hordes and longs for a change of province.

## **Questioning Cassia**

Cassia expects and encourages the player characters to ask her questions about the missing patrol, the Gascilium farmstead and its owner. She also expects that they will ask to requisition equipment from the division to best prepare for the mission.





### **The Missing Patrol**

The patrol consisted of 25 experienced and trained legionaries, mostly Empirist Vasgothians. While there was only one adept among them, they were skilled and had prior experience with battling Barrite raiders. The commander of the patrol, lieutenant Kavaz, is an ork Warrior adept who had seen battle in some of the Empire's most deadly provinces, including war-torn Marac. Cassia will speak fondly about her lieutenant and makes it clear that she trusts him completely. She harbours no suspicions that Kavaz and his men had abandoned their duty and deserted the legion. The patrol themselves consisted of fifteen members of the heavy infantry (including Kavaz) and ten members of the light infantry. They had all travelled on foot, as is typical of legionaries.

### **Prosperity Wells**

Like many farmsteads, Prosperity Wells is a Gascilium owned facility. It produces both grain and meat for the Empire and is known for its proximity to the Western Slog of the Deep Forest (*Vasgothia*, p.143). Size wise, the farmstead occupies 325 acres, mostly fields, grazing lands, and small clusters of homes dotted around a central fortified villa that houses Kinthos, his servants, and his slaves. Most of the hamlets around Prosperity Wells are made up of Theran freemen and slaves. The guards are largely freemen, some of them are retired legionaries. The farmstead is three days travel to the northeast of Haden Town. Cassia is unaware and uninterested in the daily operation and fine points about the farmstead, so a detailed list of what the farm produces, how many Namegivers live there etc. is not known to her.

### **Kinthos Gascilium**

The most unusual thing about Kinthos is that he chooses to live on his farmstead, as opposed to hiring an overseer like most Theran Nobles. Cassia can guess that there must be a reason why Kinthos chooses to live out on the Vasgothian frontier as opposed to an estate in New Thera or New Prosperity. Regarding Kinthos's reputation, Cassia is not interested in the idle gossip that circulates around him, but she too will comment on the unusual circumstances of his living arrangements.

If the players do not question Cassia about Kinthos directly, the gamemaster can call for a **Theran Lore** or similar Skill (6) **Test** once it becomes known that the noble does in fact live at his farmstead. Successes reveal the following information:

*1 Success:*

Kinthos is a member of the Vasgothian Conclave, making it very odd that he would choose to live away from the capital. The Conclave is supposed to meet once per month.

*2 Successes:*

Kinthos's wife, now vanished, was not a noble, but a freeman. It is unusual for nobles to marry freemen, but not unheard of.





### *3 Successes:*

Many believe that Kinthos was in some way responsible for his wife's disappearance and there are numerous salacious rumours about his cruelty in the years since she vanished.

## **Requisition**

It is possible that the player characters may ask Cassia for additional equipment for the journey ahead. After all, the Theran legions have access to healing aids, blood charms, and even common magical equipment for when the need arises. Unfortunately, the division quartermaster is a measly t'skrang called T'gosi, who many suspect of being a questor of Dis. As the quarter master, T'gosi is ultimately responsible for keeping the division's purse strings firmly tightened, as, like Cassia, he also answers to polemarch Marius. If the characters are already members of the legion, then this encounter is more likely, as they will be aware that "special missions" usually permit them to requisition additional gear. If the characters are not Theran soldiers, then Cassia will bring up the idea of requisition to the group.

### **Negotiating with T'gosi**

T'gosi can be found at his office in a large tent serving as the division's supply. Grey and joyless, he has no time for greedy adepts looking to 'steal' his equipment. The rumours about him are also true, he is indeed a questor of Dis and takes great delight in the bureaucracy and paperwork involved in his job. If the players are Theran, T'gosi's **Attitude** begins at **Neutral**, otherwise it is **Unfriendly**. The requisition of equipment is regarded as a **Small Favor** for Theran characters and a **Large Favor** for anyone else. This means that non-Theran characters must raise is **Attitude** to at least **Neutral** before he will even consider granting their request. Fortunately, T'gosi is vulnerable to bribery, in particular he has a taste for frost wine. Should the group manage to secure him a bottle, they gain a +2 Bonus to their **Interaction Tests**. (See **Interaction Tests**, *Game Master's Guide*, p.142). If the characters score the required number of successes, then T'gosi will grant each of them a single piece of equipment from the list below. Every success past those required will permit them to select another item each. T'gosi has a **Social Defense** of 9 and will expect any unused items to be returned to him once the mission is completed

**Healing Aids:** *Booster Potion, Salve of Closure, Halt Illness Potion, Kelia's Antidote, Kelix's Poullice.*

**Blood Charms:** *Absorb Blow, Frost Guard.*

**Common Magical Item:** *Fire Starter, Heat Stone, Pure Water Pot, Warm Cloak.*







**Optional Rule:** If the characters score a **Rule of One** (see *Player's Guide*, p.35) the T'gosi's **Attitude** will turn **Hostile**. While he will not take immediate action against the character that has offended him, he will certainly make their life difficult in the future, even going so far as to use his questor powers against them (see *Questors* p.141).

#### *You're In The Army Now*

As mentioned above, if player characters are already members of the division, then the set up for the adventure will play out a little differently. As adepts, it is likely that the players will either be lieutenants or specialists in the legion and as such they will already be known to strategos Cassia. The characters will no doubt already be aware that a patrol was sent away from the division and has yet to return, so they may hazard a guess as to why Cassia has called them to their tent. As Theran soldiers, they have little choice but to accept her request for aid, after all, it is more likely to take the form of an order. Playing as Theran soldiers means that there is no reward given, other than proving oneself a loyal servant of Thera. Rather than offer the group 300 silvers, she will instead give them a purse of 1000 silvers to secure any bribes that they may need to make in their mission. Theran characters are also more likely to requisition equipment from T'gosi, the division's quartermaster.





## Better Late Than Never

*In this encounter, the characters come upon the corpse of a Theran messenger, sent in desperation from Prosperity Wells in the hopes of reaching the division encampment.*

### Setting the Stage

This encounter should take place once the players are suitably distant from civilization, perhaps on the second night of their journey. As the characters make camp for the night and set their watches, the gamemaster should decide on the best time for them to make **Perception / Awareness Tests (6)**. If they succeed, then the gamemaster can read the following to them:

*As the embers of the fire begin to dim and lose their battle against the terrible Vasgothian cold, you hear the distinct sound of a beast padding slowly from the dark and towards your camp. You ready yourself for whatever terror the night has brought with it, but as the creature draws near, you see the distinct outline of a horse enter the glow of your camp, a rider slumped in its saddle. The unfortunate Namegiver, an elf man, is dead, a short spear still lodged in his left shoulder and several arrows sticking out of his back.*

### Themes and Images

Play up the suspense of the encounter. As the group is a little over a day away from the Deep Forest, it is possible that all manner of creature could have wandered out of the wilderness and to their camp. The horse's padding could be mistaken for a predator, especially in the dimming glow of the campfire. As the beast makes its way into full view, describe its bulk and the smell of rotting flesh – coming from the dead rider – convince them that something truly horrid is about to reveal itself.

### Behind the Scenes

The dead Namegiver is Diocles, a legionary of the heavy infantry. This fact is more evident if the group are Theran characters, but for those that aren't a **Theran Lore (5) Test** will reveal this information. Diocles still bears the standard equipment of the heavy infantry, with the exception that his spear and shield are missing. He does however carry something uncommon, a **Theran Scroll Case** (see below) used to store sensitive information. Each case is trapped, containing a kernel of True Fire that will immolate its contents unless the four seals that protect it are opened in the correct order. Usually, a Theran strategos will carry a special key that can open the scroll cases safely, but devoid of this option, the players must instead attempt to disarm it.





## Theran Scroll Case

**Detection:** 7

**Disarm:** 8

**Initiative:** 14 / 2D12

**Trigger:** Opening the case

**Effect:** The contents in the case are completely reduced to ash as the True Fire activates, filling the container with flame. Anyone holding the case who did not beat the trap's Initiative takes Step 10 / 2D8 *Fire* damage, which is reduced by physical armor.

If the players are successful in disarming the trap, then hand them the **Letter from Prosperity Wells** (see **Player Handouts**, p.64). If unsuccessful, then they can only guess as to what the scroll contained, but it is obvious that it must have been a message of high importance.

## Additional Encounters

The sense of relief that the players feel from the reveal that the creature entering the camp was not a threat provides the perfect time to throw something dangerous at them. Perhaps a predator such as an Ember Wolf (*Vasgothia*, p.268) has been following the scent of the horse and its dead rider and is waiting for the perfect chance to pounce. Just ensure that any creature you throw at them is a balanced challenge.

## Troubleshooting

The issue this encounter raises is that the players will turn back and bring the message to Cassia. Doing so will cost them several days' worth of time. This will have a dramatic effect upon the adventure. By this time, the Barrites will have overrun Prosperity Wells, freeing its slaves, killing as many Therans as possible, and burning everything they can to the ground. If the players do this, then have them encounter a band of badly wounded refugees from Prosperity Wells on their way back. These unfortunate souls will speak of the wholesale massacre and destruction of their home. It is unlikely that Kinthos will be with them – he would represent too tempting a prize for the Barrites to ignore. One of the survivors should be able to communicate that Kinthos's daughter, Ceah, both aided the Barrites and left with them – meaning that the group can still proceed with the adventure by skipping ahead to the *Hunting Barbarians* chapter.

The other issue is that the players will potentially miss out on reading the message contained within the scroll. While not essential for progressing further in the adventure, it certainly gives them more of an idea about what they are up against. If game masters do not wish to deprive their group of this information, simply remove the trap placed on the scroll, perhaps have it be a simple puzzle to unlock that requires an appropriate skill that they can keep attempting as they travel.





## Raid on Prosperity Wells

*In this encounter, the group arrives at their destination, just in time to repel an attack by Barrite raiders. After a desperate and bloody battle, they are welcomed as heroes, but find themselves embroiled in a conspiracy of blood and magic.*

### Setting the Stage

Due to relative flatness of the Lowlands, it should be apparent that trouble is on the horizon. Smoke emanating across the plains is a giveaway that an attack is taking place and should spur the players to act. On the morning of this encounter, read the following to the players:

*As you break camp for the morning, the chilling Vasgothian wind carries upon it the distinctive smell of smoke. Sure enough, as you press onwards towards your destination, you can see grey plumbs spiralling their way into the clouds. Rounding over a gentle hill, you can see the town of Prosperity Wells before you. Many of the town's buildings and sections of its wall are bathed in the orange glow of fire. All around the front gates, armed guards fight desperately against a dozens of barbarians mounted on horseback. The clash of steel mixes with battle cries of the Barrites and the screams of the dying.*

### Themes and Images

The full savagery of the Barrites is on display for the group to witness. The Barrites are covered in thick furs, animal head helmets and war paint. They are ferocious combatants, hell-bent on the destruction of as many Theran lives as possible. In the light of the morning sun, they appear more beast than Namegiver, and mercilessly cut down anyone attempting to bar them entry. The billowing smoke from the burning buildings obscures just how many there truly are.

### Behind the Scenes

The attacking tribesmen all hail from the Amber Talons tribe, who make their home in the Western Slog of the Deep Forest. They have been attacking the farmstead nightly ever since the first patrol reached Prosperity Wells, slowly dwindling its guards and resources. They are here on the command of their *yearl*, to capture Kinthos's daughter, Ceah, and see that she makes her way to the Place of ReNaming. Of course, the raiders are not content with this one duty, and relish the chance to kill the Therans and take a much plunder as they can. This attack marks the last effort they are making to do as much destruction as they can. Unknown to the group and Kinthos at this time is that Ceah, under the influence of the Dread Yearning, has opened the main front gate for the attackers and subsequently been taken away on horseback by a group of the Barrites.





## Repelling the Barrites

While the Barrites have enjoyed success in fighting non-adept guards and Theran soldiers, they have yet to meet their match. Most of the Barrites are themselves non-adepts and are relying upon their numbers and hit and run tactics to prevail. As adepts, the players have an easier time of fighting them off. A strong display of strength, particularly involving magic, is all that is needed to see the raiders off. Once the group has killed five or so Barrites, have one their number blow a horn to signal a retreat. After all, they have what they came for. Alternatively, the gamemaster can include several adepts among their number. Karaboda (p. 57), and Jogrim (p.59) are both adepts and are taking part in the raid. Though it is better for the narrative that they are alive in the adventure's final chapter, the gamemaster is the final arbiter on this matter.

**Statistics** for the Barrite raiders can be found in the **Game Information** chapter below.

## Troubleshooting

It is unlikely that the non-adept Barrites will beat the players. The outcomes of combat rolls however rarely obey the whims of gamemasters. As mentioned above, the main goal of the Barrites is to secure Ceah and make good their escape, which they are already in the process of when the group arrive. Should it look like the players are losing, then have the Barrites sound the horn and retreat anyway. This can lead to some dramatic moments, as Barrites about to *coup d'état* defeated players suddenly halt and leave. This can give players a score to settle with individual tribesmen who have bested them once before.

It should not be made clear that a detachment of riders has made off with Ceah. If players argue that they should have seen a group of the Barrites heading off towards the Deep Forest, simply remind them of the absolute carnage and chaos that was on display as they arrived at the town. The thick smoke from burning buildings is more than enough to obscure a smaller band of the raiders making good their escape.

It is possible that once the horn is blown to signal the raiders' retreat, that bloodthirsty players may wish to pursue. The raiders are on horseback, so if the players are not mounted then the point is moot. They may of course take a few pot shots with missiles and thrown weapons, but by and large the fight is over. If the group can make pursuit, then the Barrites will likewise fire arrows and throw spears at them as they give chase. Eventually, the raiders are going to reach the Deep Forest, where they have knowledge of the land and a strong home advantage. Pursuit into the gloom of the forest is not advised, at least not yet.

Lastly, there are quite possibly injured Namegivers in need of care, players chasing after the Barrites may be asked by some of the farm guard to help tend to the wounded or put out the many fires that are engulfing the town.





## Prosperity Wells

The Gascilium farmstead is fairly typical for its kind. There are dozens of smaller hamlets dotted around the main compound. These are the homes of the hundreds of farmers and slaves that work the fields and tend to the livestock. The main compound is home to Kinthos and his family, as well as more trusted servants. Below is a map of the farmstead and a description of the main locations within.

### Important Locations

#### 1. Front Gate & Walls

The walls around the main compound are constructed from stone and stand around thirty feet high and ten foot wide. There is a small gatehouse next to the entrance which is usually manned by Kratiis Fray's (p.60) cronies. Dozens of other guards patrol the walls looking for trouble, which is usually servants slacking off from their duties. A few of the guards are retired legionaries, but most are just bullies, more accustomed to berating slaves than fighting Barrites.

#### 2. Servant's Quarters

This series of small homes serve as the residences for the trusted servants and guards who are permitted to live at Prosperity Wells. Most are Vasgothian Empirists or Theran freemen. There are a few small businesses here such as a blacksmith and artisans. The vast majority of servants however save their wages and send them to their families.

#### 3. Livestock

Several of the farms around Prosperity Wells are dedicated to raising cattle and other animals. The livestock inside the compound are the personal property of Kinthos and are there to mostly provide his household with milk, cheese, and meat. These animals are tempting targets for the Barrites, and several can be seen making off with pigs and chickens during the raid.

#### 4. Slave Quarters

Smaller and more cramped than the servant quarters, each building is "home" to around six or so slaves who are forced to share their accommodation. The slave quarter is guarded by Kratiis Fray's goons, especially at night. Hugard does not live here, instead having the privilege of living in Kinthos's villa. He can usually be found here during the day as he oversees the slave's duties and acts as a liaison between them and his master. With the Barrite raid in full force, the slaves have decided to try and escape. Many have been killed by the guards and Hugard is desperately trying to get a hold of the situation. During the chaos, many will escape, either fleeing into the Deep Forest or south into the Lowlands. The rounding up of these slaves is low on Kinthos's priorities.





## 5. Granary

These large buildings are simply used to store the various grains and other goods that Kinthos takes from the surrounding farmers part payment for working his lands. These building are well ventilated to help keep out mould and other parasites. Like the temple, this is an obvious target for the Barrites, and there are dozens of servants desperately trying to put the fires around them out.

## 6. Temple of Jaspre

To the right-hand side of the villa, there is a dedicated space for the Passion Jaspre. The temple grounds are covered in a wild, beautiful garden. During the summer it teems with insects, birds, and colourful flowers. In the depths of winder only ferns and evergreens can be seen. There is a small building towards the back of the building that displays a statuette of Jaspre, depicted as an elven woman with satyr-like deer legs and small horns on her head. Kinthos is not a pious man by any means, but being the owner of a farmstead behoves one to at least pay lip service to the Passion of growth and care of the land. Offerings are made at the temple at least once per week. During the raid, Jogrim will order several Barrites to try and destroy the statuette and surrounding grounds.

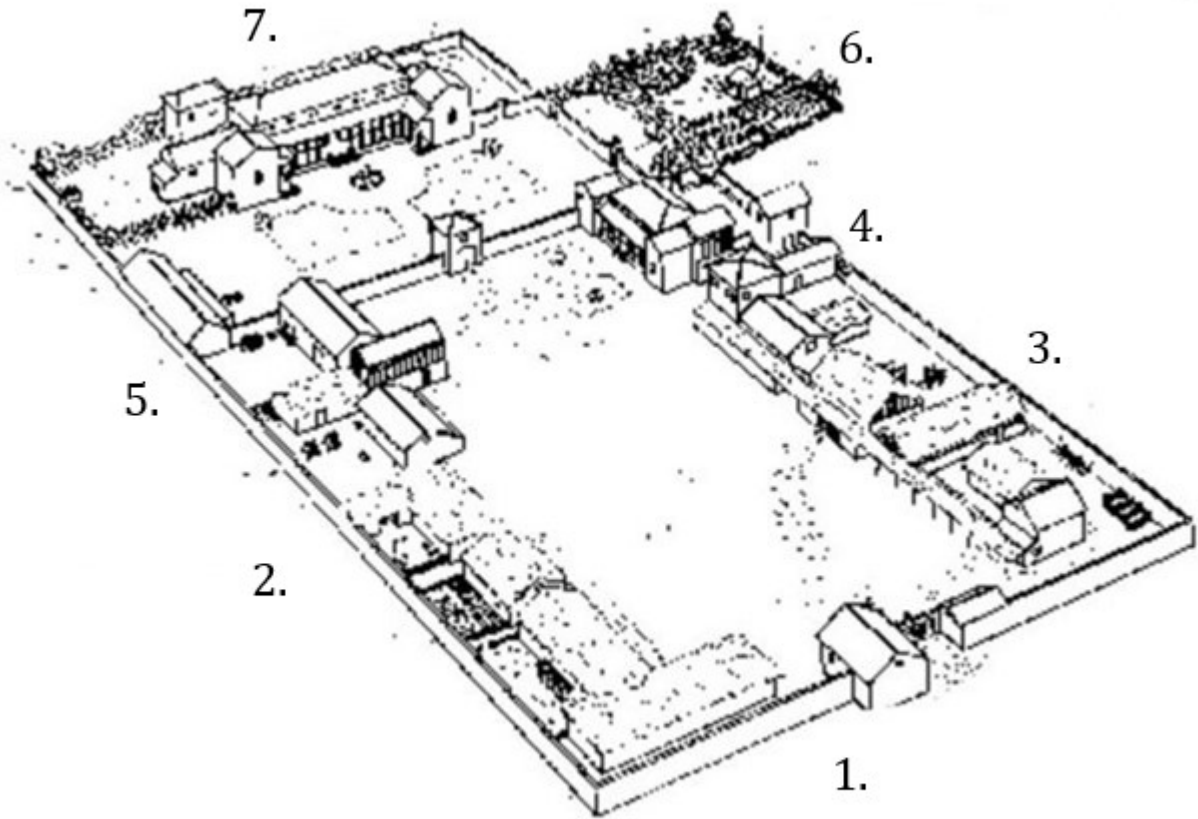
## 7. Kinthos's Villa

This large Theran villa has its own wall and gatehouse that keeps it separated from the rest of the compound. Kratiis typically guards this entrance personally, though his duties oftern mean he is away. Beyond the gate there is a wide garden decorated with marble statues and fountains. The villa itself is also made from marble and has luxuries such as heated floors and a bathhouse. Kinthos rarely leaves his residence and only allows his most trusted servants and slaves into the villa, this includes both Kratiis and Hugard (p.60). There are numerous bedrooms, audience chambers, vaults, and all manner of secondary locations in the villa. The vast majority cannot be accessed by the player characters. The gamemaster is free to add whichever features they feel appropriate for the adventure.





## Map of Prosperity Wells







## Gone Girl

*In this encounter, the players finally meet Kinthos Gascilium, the master of Prosperity Wells. They also learn that several members of the patrol have been taken hostage by the Barrites, along with Kinthos' only daughter, Ceah.*

### Setting the Stage

Once the chaos of battle has subsided, the players will be welcomed into the farmstead by the surviving guardsmen. Kinthos is also present, ordering his various servants to tackle the fires and rounding up any slaves who may have tried to escape in the confusion. Once the players have chased off the raiders and tended to the wounded, read the following to them:

*With the raiders defeated, a small cheer erupts from the surviving guards. Unfortunately, none of the Theran patrol appears to have survived the conflict. Making your way towards the main gate, you are greeted by an elven man with long golden hair. His expensive clothing clearly marks him as a Theran Noble. To his side you can see an imposing troll man wearing plate armor and carrying a large sword. As you draw closer, the troll takes a step forward, blocking your view of the elf.*

*"Please Kratiis, can you not see these brave Namegivers are our saviours? Let them pass" the elven man says.*

*The noble then approaches you.*

*"I am Kinthos Gascilium, master of Prosperity Wells. I thank you for your timely rescue. Did the strategos send you?"*

Upon hearing the details of the player's arrival, Kinthos will bid them to come with him to his personnel residence, a large villa at the rear of the farmstead. Kratiis will not take his eyes off the players, going so far as the challenge any that chooses to match his gaze for longer than a few seconds.

### Themes and Images

Like most areas of Theran Vasgothia, there is a distinct and stark difference between the squalor that provincials live in, and the opulent splendour enjoyed by the Theran nobles. Play up with difference. Discuss the blood and filth and mud that surrounds the front gates. Describe the simple, tattered clothing of the servants and the slaves, as well as their malnourished bodies. In contrast, once the players are in the villa they are treated to the fruits of Theran civilization. Elemental heated floors, fine food and drink brought by slaves and lavish surroundings. Kinthos, like most nobles, either does not care about this disparity or is simply unaware of the contrast.





## Behind the Scenes

Kinthos is truly grateful for the player's intervention and wishes to reward them. His flattery and pampering of them however is a guise, for he is no rush to see them leave just yet. He will explain that he expects the raiders to return and is already discussing permitting the group to board in the guest rooms of his villa.

As the conversation progresses, an elderly ork man, clearly a slave, enters the rooms and briefly whispers something into Kinthos' ear. Players may make an appropriate test such as **Perception /Awareness (6)** or a skill such as **Lip Reading**. If successful, they hear the following brief exchange.

*"My master, Ceah is gone. Some of the other slaves saw her leave with the raiders".*

With that, the ork waits for orders, but Kinthos simply nods and dismisses him. His demeanour briefly changes before he composes himself and smiles.

*"I'm afraid I have some troubling news my friends. It appears as if the raiders took some of the survivors off with them. No doubt you have heard the awful things that Barrites do to their captives, they are not above sacrificing Namegivers to their dark Passions. Though you have only just arrived, I would ask that you give chase to the barbarians and try to bring their prisoners back alive".*

Kinthos will modify the above speech to suit the identity of the players. If they are independent adventurers, he will explain that some of his servants have been taken and he wishes them returned. If they are Theran soldiers, then the captives will be the few survivors of the patrol. Neither of these are a lie, as the Barrites will have taken a couple of prisoners from both groups. Kinthos is prepared to reward players handsomely if they agree, too handsomely in fact. He is prepared to pay each of them 1,000 silver pieces each and in addition he will reward them with a thread item from his personal vaults. If the players are Theran soldiers, then Kinthos can leverage his position as a noble and a member of the Vasgothian Conclave. He can order them if he must, though he would rather not.

Naturally, if the players heard what the slave whispered in his ear, then they are free to broach him on the topic. Kinthos is exceptionally guarded about the matter involving his Vasgothian wife and his half-Vasgothian child. With a successful Interaction Test however, they can convince him to reveal the truth about the matter. This will prompt Kinthos to show them some pages from **Ceah's Diary** that detail her struggle with the Dread Yearning, as well as the mysterious individual who gave her a supposed Fruit of the Passions. (see **Player Handouts**, p.64). Kinthos believes that the secret to helping his daughter lays with the Heavenherd, and he is hoping to take her to a magician of that order who may be able to reverse the Dread Yearning.





Kinthos' **Attitude** towards the players is **Friendly**. Convincing him to talk about his daughter or wife is classed as a **Large Favor** and requires **3 successes on an appropriate Talent / Skill test**. Kinthos' Social Defense is 8.

If the test fails, Kinthos is unwilling to talk about family matters, conceding only that his daughter is among those captured. If the players seem unwilling to now work for them, Kinthos will up his reward. This can take the form of more silver, a promotion pushed through the Vagothian Conclave, revenge upon an enemy, whatever it takes. It is still possible to glean the truth however by talking with servants and slaves on the farmstead, see (**Additional Encounters** below) but Kinthos refuses to budge on the matter. If pressed, his Attitude will shift towards **Neutral** and eventually **Unfriendly**, though he will not show it. He is a noble after all and used to guarding his emotions. He is likely however to seek some form of petty revenge upon them once the task is over.

### **Additional Encounters**

Kinthos is not the only Namegiver at Prosperity Wells who knows about Ceah and her mother. If the players wish to talk to the various servants of the farmstead about the matter, they can. The most obvious choice is the elderly ork who brought Kinthos the news of his missing daughter. This slave is Named Hugard (p.60) and is one of the longest serving slaves at the farmstead. While Kinthos sold or dismissed most of his household to better keep his secret, he is fond of Hugard and kept him on. Hugard is loyal to Kinthos but lacks courage. He is also accustomed to telling his superiors whatever they want to hear. A bribe of more than 10 silvers is enough to loosen his tongue, as is the threat of violence. Once suitably convinced, Hugard will explain that Ceah's mother was a Vagothian Empirist Named Karaboda and the two secretly married. Kinthos has kept this secret for fear of reprisal over the marriage ban. A few years after Ceah's birth, Karaboda began to experience vivid nightmares and sleep walking. At first, nobody knew what was happening because nobody knew that she was Vagothian. Eventually she vanished from the farmstead all together, claimed by the Dread Yearning. Kinthos quickly sold most of his slaves and dismissed his servants, buying and hiring new ones who did not know about his family. Hugard can also provide the players with **Ceah's Diary**.

If confronted about this information, Kinthos will finally admit all that has transpired, asking that the players track down the Barrites and recover his daughter.

### **Troubleshooting**

The biggest issue that could arise is if the players decided that they have fulfilled their duty to Cassia. After all, they have travelled to Prosperity Wells and learned the fate of the missing patrol. If the fate of the captured Namegivers and the potential rewards offered by Kinthos are not enough to convince them to pursue the Barrites then there is little the gamemaster can do. If the players are Theran soldiers, then they are





honor bound to free their missing comrades, as well as follow the orders of a Theran noble. If they are independent outsiders however, or not particularly inclined to help Therans then they are under no such compulsion to continue.

If the players decide to return to Cassia, she will be outraged that they have permitted some of her men to be taken captive by the Barrites. She will consider them to have broken her initial agreement. She will still pay them however, but they have now earned the enmity of a Theran officer and will certainly have to tread lightly in Vasgothia, as Cassia will now use any excuse to pursue a vendetta against them.

Additionally, if the players decided to stay at Prosperity Wells for the night, have another Barrite raid take place. Only this time, the raiders will attempt to take one of the players as hostage, or perhaps Kinthos himself. Rescuing a Theran noble from the clutches of the Barrites is a story worthy of song and would certainly boost the players' reputations in Vasgothia.

Another matter to consider is that it is possible that the players may never learn more about Ceah. She is mentioned in the letter from Kavaz, so the gamemaster can prompt them about this if needed. Many of the servants and farmhands will be gossiping about Ceah and her recent strange behaviour, so the players may pick on this as they make their way around the farmstead.





## Hunting Barbarians

*In this encounter, the players are in pursuit of the Barrites who have taken Ceah, and other survivors taken captive from Prosperity Wells. The raiders have a few hours head start on the players, but they know the Deep Forest well and able to move swiftly once inside. The players however have more to contend with than barbarians, the Deep Forest is unwelcoming, and they must first fight their way through the forest's strange magic and stranger beasts.*

### Setting the Stage

The Deep Forest represents all that is strange and wild about Vasgothia. It is not simply a large woodland, but a magical locus of ancient power. The forest thrums with magic, it is seeped into every tree, every stone, twig, and mushroom. The Deep Forest dominates the northern skyline of the province, a dark, tangled mass of death and magic. Once the players pick up the trail left by the Barrites, read out the following as they approach the Deep Forest:

*Before you lies the Deep Forest, a colossal, feral place of ancient magic and untold secrets. From a distance, the forest still appears impenetrable, a tangled mass of trees, vines, and briars. Even in winter, the forest is teeming with life, no doubt feeding upon the pulsing magic found within, as well as the corpses of those foolish enough to enter. Numerous footprints and hoofmarks pressed into the mud and snow lead directly into the bramble and the waiting darkness.*

### Themes and Images

As mentioned above, the Deep Forest is not simply a forest. Gamemasters should familiarize themselves with the Deep Forest chapter in *Vasgothia* for an example of how the forest feels to interlopers. The canopy makes the forest feel like it's perpetually cloaked in the darkness of night, forcing the players to break out their torches and light quartz to see. Sound can grow distorted in the forest, voices can take on a hollow echo-like quality, not to mention the strange effects of the astral corruption that ebbs and flows throughout the forest's regions. Players who use **Astral Sight** in the Deep Forest will see, hear, and taste all manner of strangeness, a phenomenon that only occurs within the forest.

### Behind the Scenes

This region of the Deep Forest is known to scholars as the Western Slog, and it is one of the densest, darkest, and least well-mapped areas of the whole forest. Swamps and marshes are not uncommon in this region, along with all manner of parasites and diseases. Despite the inhospitable appearance of the forest, several Barrite tribes make their home here, the largest being the Shield Breakers in the west of the region





(*Vasgothia*, p.109). The tribe that the players are looking for however are the Amber Talons, a lesser independent tribe who have several small villages dotted through the precious few **Safe** regions of the Western Slog. The players will need to track the Barrites through the area using an appropriate **Talent** or **Skill**. This will slow them down however, giving their quarry even more distance. The base difficulty to spot the tracks with **Perception / Awareness** is (5). Because of the darkness of the forest, a subsequent **Tracking** test can be a higher difficulty as determined by the gamemaster.

Gamemasters should give the players a good day of struggling and scrambling through the Deep Forest in pursuit of the Barrites, longer if they lose sight of the tracks. Each time the players lose their quarry, the gamemaster should prepare an encounter, either with a forest creature, some fauna or something even stranger.

Eventually, assuming they survive what the forest has to throw at them, they will come across the village where the Barrites have taken their captives.

### **Optional Rule: Forest Madness**

The gamemaster has numerous encounters at their disposal in the Deep Forest. At their discretion they may choose to inflict Forest Madness upon them. This phenomenon is a magical affliction and a bugbear for any Namegivers who do not make their home in the Deep Forest.

### **New Affliction**

#### **Forest Madness**

**Type:** Curse                      **Effect Step:** 12  
**Onset Time:** 1-3hours        **Interval:** 1/day  
**Duration:** 1-3 hours

Most Namegivers not native to the Deep Forest are likely to experience Forest Madness once they enter it. It usually takes several hours before the Forest Magic takes hold and once it does its effects likewise linger for a similar time. Once a game master decides that Forest Madness will affect a character, they roll the afflictions Effect Step against the target's Willpower Step. A single success causes an hour-long duration of Forest Madness with each extra success adding an hour up to the maximum duration of three hours. When afflicted with Forest Madness, a character suffers a -2 Step penalty to all other Willpower based tests and if they engage in physical combat, they must make the **Aggressive Attack** option. Spell casters may still choose to cast spells, but they suffer a -2 Step Penalty to their Threadweaving and Spellcasting tests due to the distracting effects of this affliction. Generally speaking, anyone affected with Forest Madness experiences a short temper and a strong fight or flight instinct. Although they will not attack friends, they will feel a compulsion to defend themselves if they





encounter strangers, regardless of their intentions. Namegivers who have lived in the Deep Forest their whole lives (such as Barrite) are immune to the effects of Forest Madness.

### **Additional Encounters**

In addition to the numerous beasts that haunt the Western Slog, one of the most unusual locales is the Eyes of the Birch (see *Vasgothia*, p.145). If players become lost in the forest, gamemasters can have them wander into this area where they will have to contend with the Avowed who have sworn a vow to the Maw of the Beast (see *Vasgothia* p.189). Other encounters may include less hostile Namegivers such as lone leafers and talveni. It is possible that they may be able to point the players in the right direction of the Barrite village or give them more information about the local Deep Forest.

Stranger encounters can include coming across a clearing of weathered standing stones, carved into the likeness of Vasgothia's Passions. Making camp near the stones causes the characters to experience nightmares of the battle between the Passions and the Horrors. The group could fall into one of the many openings in Earthswallower's Pattern and be confronted by her talveni guards. They characters could wander into the lair of a half-Horror or construct such as Snow Hag, or a Dreozzi or a magical creature like a Huldrath.

### **Troubleshooting**

The possibility of getting lost in the Deep Forest is very real. The characters could lose the Barrite's tracks and become waylaid. Being lost in the Deep Forest is exceptionally dangerous, and many of the creatures that live there are bound to take advantage from such an event. The gamemaster should give the players an opportunity to pick up the Barrite's tracks, perhaps making a test each hour until they find them. When they do, gamemasters are encouraged to make it a dramatic moment, perhaps the group find a dead Barrite, killed by some forest beast or one of their wounded captives has managed to escape and can point the group back in right direction.

If the gamemaster wishes to use the rules for fatigue, starvation, and exposure they can certainly make the characters' lives miserable. If the group decides to make a forced march they can suffer from **Fatigue** or perhaps **Starvation** if they run out of rations (see *Game Master's Guide*, p. 192 - 195) . The **Wilderness Survival Talent** or **Skill** is certainly useful in the Deep Forest for finding food or shelter, though a **Rule of One** could lead to some unwanted side effects.





## The Daughter of the Forest

*In this encounter, the players have the opportunity to attack the Barrites in their village. While only a small settlement, the village is well defended. Fortunately, the Barrites are celebrating their successful raids against the Therans with a feast, providing the characters with the perfect chance to attack.*

### Setting the Stage

The Barrite village has managed to thrive in some of the most hostile regions of the Deep Forest, this should speak volumes about their survival skills. The characters will hear or perhaps smell the village before they see it, perhaps a waft of roasting meat is carried on the wind or the sounds of merriment echoing from the main hall.

As the players approach the village, the gamemaster should read out the following passage to them:

*As you continue to struggle your way through the Deep Forest, you suddenly see a clearing below you in a shallow valley. You can make out torches and as your eyes adjust, you can see the outline of a walled village. A large main gate, flanked with armed barbarians can be seen, as well as a guard tower in which you can see another Barrite with a bow. The village is small, only consisting of a few homes, a small area where some curious standing stones can be seen and a large central longhouse. You can see several Barrites milling around in the centre of the village, some are carrying slaughtered animals and barrels of ale into the central longhouse. From out of the dark, you can see a small procession of more Barrites, a dozen or so approaching the main gate. After a few words with the front guard, they are welcomed into the village.*

### Themes and Images

The village occupies a rare clearing, but it is obvious that the forest is attempting to reclaim in. The walls of the village are beginning to look as if they are interwoven with the trees, and vines and brambles are creeping up the main gate and the homes within. Despite being a settlement, the village appears no less feral than the forest that surrounds it.

### Behind the Scenes

The Amber Talons are celebrating their success against Prosperity Wells, but the upcoming feast is being held in honor the Passions. Ceah is being held within one of the smaller homes. The tribe have invited kinsmen from some of the other local villages, who will accompany the honour guard to take Ceah to the Place of ReNaming the following day.

Ceah is slipping in and out of consciousness, her body occasionally experiencing heavy sweating and small fits of nightmares. Jogrim will give her a specially brewed tea







in order to help with the symptoms, but can do little more. Throughout the evening, he will check upon her, as will her mother, bringing her food and drink. Though she looks like a prisoner, she is not. If she fails to make it to the Place of ReNaming, she will depattern and die. The feast is designed to please the Passions and bring success upon the ritual that will take place in the Place of ReNaming, culminating with the sacrifice of a captured Theran.

How and when the players decide to make their attack is up to them. Their best course of action will be to locate Ceah and sneak into the camp. However, once they see the girl, it is clear that she is not well. It is difficult to diagnose her condition, but characters with the **Patterncraft Talent** can make a test (7) and if successful they will understand that there is substantial stress upon her Pattern. This stress can also be seen with a successful **Astral Sight** test, which reveals that parts of her Pattern appear to be collapsing in on themselves. The effects of the Dread Yearning are clearly taking their toll upon the girl. Unfortunately, this affliction is one of the least understood mysteries in Vasgothia and thoroughly beyond the characters' ability to resolve. While Kinthos will have made mention of "knowing a magician" who can help, there has so far been no known cure discovered for the Dread Yearning.

If the characters are discovered at any point, the Barrites will attempt to kill them. If they cannot defeat them, they will change their attitude and attempt to explain what is happening to Ceah and why she must be taken to the Place of ReNaming. Among the Barrites at the feast is Kinthos' former wife, Karaboda, now known as Sigeburg. She has come to accompany her daughter to the Place of ReNaming along with Jogrim. It is possible that once the fighting breaks out, either Jogrim or Sigeburg will attempt to reason with the characters. It is ultimately up to the players if they choose to take Ceah back to her father or allow her mother to keep her.

## Additional Encounters

As mentioned above, the Barrites are planning to sacrifice a captured Theran soldier once the feast is over. Sometime before the feast, the captive will be brought forward from one of the village homes and bound to one of the standing stones. Upon his head a crown-like decoration of stag horns and flowers is placed. Upon his body, various runic symbols have been painted in blue woad. Characters with **Read & Write Vasgothian** can make a test (6) to decipher the runes. Success reveals that the various runes spell out the simple phrase "*Through Flames, the cries of this one are offered*"

The Barrites plan to burn the soldier alive at dawn, providing plenty of time for the group to rescue him. Should they be successful they will have an ally in any upcoming fight. The soldier's Name is Timeous, a human freeman.





## Troubleshooting

There is little troubleshooting to address in this encounter, either the players will rescue Ceah and return her to Kinthos, or they will decide to let her go to the Place of ReNaming. Once the fighting starts, the Barrites will be intent on killing the players, but as the fight draws out, they will seek to converse with the characters in the hope of ending the bloodshed. The Barrites are prepared to hand over any other captives if the group agrees to let them keep Ceah. If the characters manage to sneak into the camp and steal Ceah away without alerting anyone then they must take her back to Prosperity Wells. In her condition, they will be forced to carry and drag the girl back through the Deep Forest. This encounter now means the tables are turned upon the characters, as a Barrite raiding party will quickly be assembled to hunt them down and re-capture Ceah. This can lead to a desperate struggle as the group is forced to return to the safety of Theran controlled lands with pack of barbarians hot on their heels. During this time, Ceah may also demonstrate some her questor powers.

## The Barrite Village

This Amber Talons village is a relatively small affair, home to around 30 Namegivers (mostly dwarves, humans, orks, and trolls). There are more Barrites here than usual due to the celebration taking place. Below is a map of the village and a description of the main locations within.

## Important Locations

### 1. The Main Gate

This is the sole entrance to the village, and it is guarded day and night by three tribesmen. The thick oaken doors are open during the celebration, but they will be closed once all the visiting Barrites have arrived. The surrounding walls are a simple wooden palisade with plenty of openings for characters to try and squeeze through.

### 2. Village Homes

These simple thatch and wooden buildings are the homes of the Barrites who live in the village. Most of the villagers are either in the longhouse, or milling around outside. Ceah is being held in one of these houses under guard of two Barrites. The gamemaster is free to decide which building she is currently being held in.

### 3. The Standing Stones

A curious place consisting of three weathered stones that barely depict images of the vanished Passions. It is clearly a religious space and there are offerings dotted all around. This is also where the Theran hostage, Timeous, will be brought out and tied up as the celebration progresses.





#### 4. The Longhouse

This is the central social structure of the village and where Sigeburg lives. It is currently the centre of activity in the village and where the feast will be held. The main room has a long feasting table organised around several large fire pits. The scent of food and ale can be smelt drifting on the wind around the longhouse, making it an inviting place, despite the number of Barrites inside.

#### 5. Watchtower

This sole watchtower gives a 360° view of the village and the surrounding forest. Two Barrites are usually stationed in the tower, one of them is an Archer or Scout adept.

### Map of the Barrite Village





## Loose Ends

The characters' decision at the end of *Daughter of the Forest* will largely determine what loose ends remain. If they agreed to let the Barrites take her to the Place of ReNaming, she will undergo the ritual of ReNaming that takes place below and emerge as a Barrite Named Fenja. She remembers little, if nothing, of her previous life and joins her mother's tribe. Her questor devotions will increase, and she is likely to develop several more magical abilities. The characters will have earned the friendship of the Amber Talons tribe, not only have they proven themselves brave in battle, but also that they respect the magical will of the Deep Forest. For performing such an act of kindness, Jogrim (if he is alive) will bestow upon the characters one of their most treasured possessions, a Rune Tattoo (see *Vasgothia*, p.232), but only if they are Vasgothian. Kinthos may be willing to accept that his daughter is lost to the forest, but he is unlikely to understand why the characters have decided to allow her to be ReNamed. He will be furious with them, not only refusing to reward them, but vowing that he will use his full political powers to make life in Vasgothia difficult for them.

If the characters stole Ceah from the Amber Talons and managed to return her to her father, they will be handsomely rewarded with 1,000 silvers, and also a thread item. Kinthos will remember the characters as Namegivers who can be trusted and may very well call upon them in the future or recommend them to his fellow nobles as reliable trouble-shooters. Ceah's fate however is more complicated. There is no known cure for the Dread Yearning, and even the magicians of Thera will find it impossible to save the girl with Blood magic. Without the ReNaming ritual performed in the Deep Forest, she will eventually depattern completely and die. However, it is possible that she will escape again, only this time there are no adepts to reclaim her. In this scenario, she makes it to the Place of ReNaming by herself (see **Future Adventures** below).

Gamemasters are of course free to ignore or alter any of these events as they see fit. It is possible that in your game there is a cure for the Dread Yearning, and Ceah can be freed from the malady. However, this would require truly powerful magic, such as dragon magic or the blood magic of the Heavenherd, to reverse the process. Other powerful individuals, such as Sulivia, may know of a way to stop the Dread Yearning. The repercussions on this however must be carefully considered. Any magician, even a powerful one, would be putting their life in jeopardy if it became known that they had developed such a cure. There is more to fear in Vasgothia than Barrites, a cure for the Dread Yearning may very well earn the interest of the great dragon Burrhide or the Vasgothian Overgovernor.





## Future Adventures

Though the gamemaster is free to do as they please during the events of *Daughter of the Forest*, future pre-written adventures will assume that Ceah is alive and ReNamed. The gamemaster is free to keep this information from the players until they next meet her as Fenja. Her role in Vasgothia will only increase as she learns more about the Passion from which she draws her devotions and magic. If the players did return her to Kinthos, he will place his daughter in the care of a Heavenherd acquaintance who will do their best to cure her of the Dread Yearning. However, she will manage to escape, this time with the aid of agents of the great dragon Burrhide (*Vasgothia*, p.136). For whatever reason, Amber Queen is invested in ensuring that Ceah fulfils her destiny. The dragon's motivations and her role in the larger story of Vasgothia will also be revealed in future adventures. Upon returning to Haden Town, the group most likely have silver and Legend Points to spend. There are numerous adventures that can be had in and around Haden Town and the Towers. Below is one such example.

### The Children of the Towers

This Living Legend Cult are focused upon returning Nidorcyl to the world so that the beast can resume its work on the Towers. Vehemently anti-Theran, they have managed to secrete themselves into the Separatist Movement as well as some of the more hostile Barrite tribes. In their quest to summon Nidorcyl, there is no act too vile or barbaric for them to commit. They regularly kidnap Therans, as well as adepts who have returned from the Towers. They also assassinate any who get too close to discovering their activities. The Children have cells throughout Vasgothia, the group lairing on Nidorcyl's Eye is but one. There are also groups hiding out in the Passions' Walk of New Thera as well as the ruins of Messianar. Involving the Children is as simple as introducing a murder mystery to the group where the victim was somehow connected to an item or research relating to the Towers. The cult themselves are mostly non-adepts, but there are certainly at least Nethermancers among their leadership and Thief adepts serving as assassins. Additionally, they have attracted several talveni and even Half-Horrors to their cause. Few know who, if anyone, actually leads the cult and coordinates its activities. There are rumours of three main branches, each dedicated to one of the Towers (The Tower of the Dragons, Tower of the Passions, and Tower of the Horrors) and lead by a 'Head' of Nidorcyl. Some say these Heads are powerful adepts or even Snow Hags (*Vasgothia*, p.285). The truth is likely to remain a mystery, at least until the Children are ready to play their hand.





## Cast of Characters

This section provides information about the different gamemaster characters specific to this adventure. For more information on the Barrite tribes, refer to *Vasgothia*, p. 73.

### *Ceah Gascilium, The Daughter of the Forest*

Ceah is the daughter of Kinthos and Karaboda Gascilium. Though her mother is an ork, she is, like her father, an elf. Ceah is in her late teens and approaching maturity for her race. Being an adventurous soul, Ceah would often abscond from her father's farmstead and explore the outside world. Though her father thought this was simply teenage rebellion, Ceah was in truth searching for her mother. During one of these sojourns she was approached by a wizened crone who tricked her

into consuming a Fruit of the Passions. The hag told Ceah that the fruit's magic would lead her to her mother. Upon eating the fruit and returning home, she started to feel strange. At first she would wonder around the farmstead in a trance both day and night, Kinthos thought this was a simple case of daydreaming or sleepwalking. Then came the nightmares about the Deep Forest. Kinthos recognized that the Dread Yearning had started to spread its tendrils into his daughter, their grip tightening with each passing day. Understanding the signs, he tried his best to keep her confined to the farmstead until he could find a Theran magician willing to help. However, Ceah always manages to escape her confinement. All the poor girl can think about now is wandering off into the Deep Forest to be united with her mother.





### Elf Rank Two Questor of Unknown Vasgothian Passion

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>Init:</b> 6	<b>Uncon:</b> 23
<b>STR:</b> 4	<b>PhyDef:</b> 8	<b>Death:</b> 28
<b>TOU:</b> 4	<b>MysDef:</b> 8	<b>Wound:</b> 7
<b>PER:</b> 6	<b>SocDef:</b> 11	<b>Knockdown:</b> 4
<b>WIL:</b> 5	<b>PhyArm:</b> 2	<b>Recovery:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 8	<b>MysArm:</b> 2	<b>Devotion Points:</b> 20

**Movement:** 14

**Devotions:** Durability 5 (1), Questor (2): 10, Winter Embers (2): 10

**Devotion Ability:** Ceah may spend a Devotion Point on a Recovery test.

**Skills:** Animal Handling (1): 9, Entertainer (3): 11, First Impression (1): 9, Knowledge: Farming (1): 7, Knowledge: Theran Politics (1): 7, Read & Write Language (Theran) (5): 11, Speak Language (Theran) (3): 9, Speak Language (Vasgothian) (2): 8

**Equipment:** Padded cloth

**Notes:** Low-Light Vision

### New Devotion

#### Winter Embers

**Step:** Rank +CHA

**Action:** Standard

**Strain:** 1+ (Special )

**Devotion Use:** Yes

The questor calls upon their Passion to banish away the winter cold from their allies within rank x 2 yards. The questor spends 1 Strain per ally, up to rank allies and makes a Winter Embers (6) test. Success grants the targets gain immunity to the effects of environmental cold. Against attacks and abilities that have the *Cold* keyword, the targets gains +2 Physical Armor per success. Adepts gain +1 to Physical Armor per success. The effects last for rank hours.

#### *Ceah's Magic*

Due to the effect of consuming a Fruit of the Forest, Ceah has developed a few Devotions and abilities that are related to an as yet unNamed Vasgothian Passion. Ceah isn't fully aware that this has happened to her and subconsciously communicates with her patron via her dreams and nightmares. This Passion and their nature will be explored in future adventures.





*Kinthos Gascilium*

*Master of Prosperity Wells*

Though he appears charismatic on the outside, the lord of Prosperity Wells is a lonesome and dark man. There may have once been joy in his life, but the Dread Yearning has stripped him of this. His lost love, Karaboda, is now a Barrite, bereft of the memories of their once happy marriage. Now his only daughter, Ceah is suffering from the same malady. Kinthos is convinced that the magic of Vasgothia is determined to take everything he has, but he refuses to back down without a fight. Kinthos can be an arrogant and cruel man. Most of his servants and slaves fear his wrath and do their best to stay out of his way. As a member of the Vasgothian Conclave, he is highly influential in the Empire, yet he shuns the company of other Therans. This has less to do with his personal beliefs and more to do with avoiding any possible blackmail should his peers find out that he broke the marriage ban between Therans and Vasgothians.



**Elf Third Circle Wizard**

<b>DEX:</b> 5	<b>Init:</b> 5	<b>Uncon:</b> 27
<b>STR:</b> 4	<b>PhyDef:</b> 7	<b>Death:</b> 34
<b>TOU:</b> 4	<b>MysDef:</b> 10	<b>Wound:</b> 7
<b>PER:</b> 7	<b>SocDef:</b> 10	<b>Knockdown:</b> 4
<b>WIL:</b> 8	<b>PhyArm:</b>	<b>Recovery:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 8	<b>MysArm:</b> 4	<b>Karma Points:</b> 12

**Movement:** 14

**Talents:** Standard Matrix x2 (3), Dispel Magic (3): 11, Patterncraft (3): 10, Research (3): 10, Spellcasting (4): 11, Thread Weaving (4): 11, Conversation (3): 1, Astral Sight (3): 10, Etiquette (4): 12, Tenacious Weave (3): 11, Item History (3): 10.

**Skills:** Knowledge: Vasgothia Lore (2): 9, Knowledge: Theran Politics (1): 7, Poetry (3): 11, Read & Write Language (Theran) (5): 11, Speak Language (Theran) (3): 9, Speak Language (Vasgothian) (2): 8

**Notes:** Low-Light Vision. All Wizard spells of Circles 1-3.







*Sigeburg*

*ReNamed Barrite, Ork Warrior*

A timid girl who once worked at a merchant stall in New Thera, Karaboda emerged from the Place of ReNaming two years ago as a fearsome Warrior adept Named Sigeburg. She remembers almost nothing of her life with Kinthos, except that she had a child with him. When the skallgar of her tribe informed her that her daughter, Ceah, was succumbing to the Dread Yearning, she volunteered herself to take part in the raids against her former husband's estate.



**Ork Third Circle Warrior**

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>Init:</b> 8	<b>Uncon:</b> 57
<b>STR:</b> 8	<b>PhyDef:</b> 11	<b>Death:</b> 67
<b>TOU:</b> 7	<b>MysDef:</b> 6	<b>Wound:</b> 11
<b>PER:</b> 5	<b>SocDef:</b> 5	<b>Knockdown:</b> 16
<b>WIL:</b> 4	<b>PhyArm:</b> 5	<b>Recovery:</b> 3
<b>CHA:</b> 4	<b>MysArm:</b> 1	<b>Karma:</b> 15

**Movement:** 12

**Talents:** Avoid Blow (3): 9, Melee Weapons (4): 10, Thread Weaving (3): 8, Tiger Spring (4), Wood Skin (4) 11, Shield Bash (3): 11, Wound Balance (3): 11, Unarmed Combat (3): 9, Air Dance (3): 9, Fireblood (4): 11

**Skills:** Rune Carving (2): 6, Deep Forest Lore (3): 8

**Equipment:** Hide armor (PA 5, MA1 Init Pen -1) Raid Spear (Dam 15), Short Sword (Dam 12), Footman's Shield (PD +2, Init Pen -1)

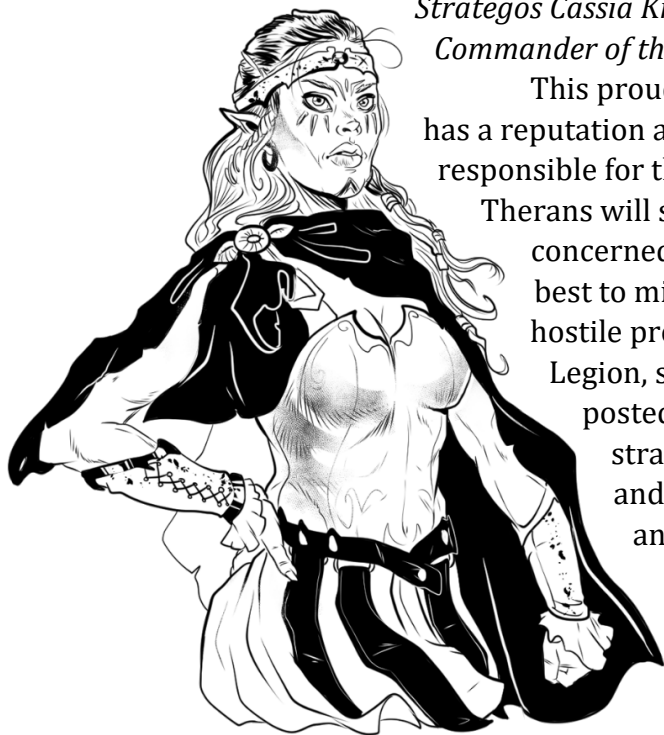
**Notes:** Gahad, Low-Light Vision





*Strategos Cassia Krossana Zanja*  
*Commander of the Third Division*

This proud Rugarian elf cuts an imposing figure, and she has a reputation as a capable commander. Despite this, she feels responsible for the loss of her men and worries that the ruling Therans will see her as incompetent. She is genuinely concerned only with the safety of her men, and tries her best to minimize the risks that come with soldiering in a hostile province. In spite of her long service in the 4<sup>th</sup> Legion, she is growing weary Vasgothia and longs to be posted back to her home city of Bukara. In reality, the strange magic of the province greatly unnerves her and at this point she would be happy to re-locate to any other province, even Marac.



**Elf Fifth Circle Swordmaster**

**DEX: 6      STR: 7      TOU: 8**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 4      CHA: 6**

*Quartermaster T'gosi Oppi Carinci*  
*Petulant Penny Pincher*

T'gosi is a petty and measly individual from a minor and unimportant branch of House Carinci. He takes his position as quartermaster far too seriously and enjoys the power it brings over the common soldiery far too much. Most of the legionaries that know T'gosi despise him, and he is seldom a welcome sight when he makes his round of camp inspections. His attention to detail borders on the obsessive, and he has been known to discipline soldiers over the most minor of infractions. It is something of an open secret that the grey little t'skrang is a questor of Dis, and so most of the soldiery keep their opinions about him to themselves.



**T'skrang Rank Four Questor of Dis**

**DEX: 4      STR: 5      TOU: 6**  
**PER: 5      WIL: 8      CHA: 7**





*Jogrim Athra*

*Iron Spear Skallgar*

The skallgar of the Iron Spear tribe has one concern, taking Ceah to the Place of ReNaming. Prior to the girl's onset of Dread Yearning, he experienced a series of dreams that he believed came from the vanished Passions. In these visions, Jogrim saw Ceah and gained a sense that she needed his help. More importantly however, he believes her to be the fabled Daughter of the Forest from Vasgothian legend. Jogrim became convinced that Ceah's ReNaming would be the first step in restoring the Vasgothian Passions and their Names. Approaching his yearl with the information, Jogrim set about helping to organize the raids against Prosperity Wells.



**Human**

**Fourth Circle Shaman**

**DEX:** 5  
5

**Init:**  
**Uncon:**

28

**STR:** 5

**PhyDef:** 8

**Death:** 34

**TOU:** 6

**MysDef:** 10

**Wound:** 9

**PER:** 7

**SocDef:** 8

**Knockdown:** 14

**WIL:** 7

**PhyArm:** 6

**Recovery:** 3

**CHA:** 6

**MysArm:** 7

**Karma:** 20

**Movement:** 12

**Talents:** Standard Matrix (4), Standard Matrix (4), Patterncraft (4): 11, Thread Weaving (5): 12, Spellcasting (7):14 Wilderness Survival (4):11, Avoid Blow (4): 9, Astral Sight (5): 12, Tracking (4): 11, Spirit Talk (5): 12, Standard Matrix (4), Danger Sense (4): 9  
**Skills:** Read & Write Language (Vasgothian) (4): 11, Read & Write Language (Theran) (3): 10, Speak Language (Vasgothian, Barrite) (5): 12, Speak Language (Theran): 12, Tattooing (6): 12, Theran Lore (3): 10, Deep Forest Lore (7): 14





**Equipment:** Thread blood pebble (PA 6, MA 4, Init Pen 0), thread staff (Standard Matrix 4, +2 Spellcasting, +1 PD)

**Notes:** Spells (*Invoke Crow Tear*, *Ferocity*, *Invoke Shark Rend*), Versatility

*Kratiis Fray*

*Looming Bodyguard,*

This sinister and taciturn troll is Kinthos' bodyguard and chief bully of Prosperity Wells. Little is known about him other than he once lived in the Barsaivian city of Vivane before the outbreak of the Second Theran War there. Kratiis speaks little of his past and when not barking orders at the farmhands he drinks himself into a stupor at his home. Those who know their Barsaivian lore suspect that he was once a slave master operating in Vrontok, though in reality he was himself a slave, forced to fight in the Vivane arena. His time there has taught him that only the strong have a right to their freedom.



**Troll Fourth Circle Sky Raider**

**DEX: 6      STR: 7      TOU: 7**  
**PER: 4      WIL: 4      CHA: 5**

*Hugard*

*Farmstead Slave*

Hugard is Kinthos' oldest and most trusted slave. The ork is a former Barrite who once laboured in the mines around the Midrise until he was bought by Kinthos some years ago. Hugard is completely conditioned to serve his Theran master, whatever fire once burned in his breast is long since died. The Barrite raid on Prosperity Wells would have been the perfect chance for him to escape and return to the Deep Forest, but even then, he chose





to stay at Kinthos' side.

### Ork Non-Adept

**DEX:** 4      **STR:** 5      **TOU:** 6  
**PER:** 5      **WIL:** 4      **CHA:** 4

## Barrite Raiders

The various Barrites encountered in *Daughter of the Forest* are non-adepts. Most wear little to no armor and are equipped with whatever weapons they have at hand, usually stolen from defeated Therans. What the Barrites have to their advantage are their numbers. In most encounters they will outnumber the player characters three or four to one. While easy for even Novice adepts to defeat, a large enough force of them can certainly overpower unprepared adepts. Listed below are some sample Barrite raiders, if the gamemaster wishes to up the challenge of the adventure, then they should consider making some of the Barrites adepts with Warriors, Swordmasters, Archers, Marauders, and Scouts being the most common.



### Heavy Raider

The 'heavy' raiders are the shock troops of the Barrite raiding force, using their two-handed weapons to smash through enemy ranks. Though they wear little armor, they possess the best weaponry available to their tribe. Most of them are trolls, humans or orks.

### Troll Raider

**Challenge:** Novice (Second Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 5	<b>Init:</b> 5	<b>Uncon:</b> 32
<b>STR:</b> 8	<b>PhyDef:</b> 6	<b>Death:</b> 43
<b>TOU:</b> 7	<b>MysDef:</b> 5	<b>Wound:</b> 11





<b>PER:</b> 4	<b>SocDef:</b> 5	<b>Knockdown:</b>	16
<b>WIL:</b> 5	<b>PhyArm:</b> 2	<b>Recovery:</b>	3
<b>CHA:</b> 5	<b>MysArm:</b> 2	<b>Karma:</b>	N/A

**Movement:** 14

**Actions:** 1; Troll Two Handed Sword: 10 (17)

**Powers:**

*Battle Shout (9, Simple):* As the talent, *Player's Guide*, p.131.

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Overrun (Troll Raider, Close Combat):* The Raider may spend an additional success from an Attack test to force an opponent with a lower Strength Step to make a Knockdown test against a DN equal to the Attack test result.

**Loot:** Troll two handed sword, padded furs 2D6 in "hacksilver"

**Notes:** The Troll Raider has the racial ability of Heat Sight.

### Ork Raider

**Challenge:** Novice (Second Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>Init:</b> 6	<b>Uncon:</b>	26
<b>STR:</b> 6	<b>PhyDef:</b> 9	<b>Death:</b>	32
<b>TOU:</b> 6	<b>MysDef:</b> 6	<b>Wound:</b>	10
<b>PER:</b> 5	<b>SocDef:</b> 5	<b>Knockdown:</b>	15
<b>WIL:</b> 4	<b>PhyArm:</b> 2	<b>Recovery:</b>	3
<b>CHA:</b> 4	<b>MysArm:</b> 2	<b>Karma:</b>	N/A

**Movement:** 12

**Actions:** 1; Broadsword: 11 (10)

**Powers:**

*Avoid Blow (9, Free):* As the talent, *Player's Guide*, p.129.

**Special Maneuvers:**

*Overrun (Ork Raider, Close Combat):* The Raider may spend an additional success from an Attack test to force an opponent with a lower Strength Step to make a Knockdown test against a DN equal to the Attack test result.

**Loot:** Broadsword, padded furs, buckler, 2D6 in "hacksilver"

**Notes:** The Ork Raider has the racial ability of Low Light Vision.

### Light Raider

The light raiders are skirmishers of the raiding party and support the heavy raiders with throwing and missile weapons. Most wear no armor at all, relying upon their reflexes and the will of the Passions to protect them. Most of the light raiders are humans, dwarves, and elves.





## Elf Raider

**Challenge:** Novice (Second Circle)

<b>DEX:</b> 8	<b>Init:</b> 8	<b>Uncon:</b> 20
<b>STR:</b> 5	<b>PhyDef:</b> 11	<b>Death:</b> 25
<b>TOU:</b> 5	<b>MysDef:</b> 8	<b>Wound:</b> 8
<b>PER:</b> 6	<b>SocDef:</b> 9	<b>Knockdown:</b> 13
<b>WIL:</b> 5	<b>PhyArm:</b> 0	<b>Recovery:</b> 2
<b>CHA:</b> 7	<b>MysArm:</b> 2	<b>Karma:</b> N/A

**Movement:** 14



**Actions:** 1; Longbow: 12 (9)

### **Powers:**

*Ambush (2):* As the Creature Power, *Game Master's Guide*, p.250.

*Avoid Blow (11, Free):* As the talent, *Player's Guide*, p.129.

### **Special Maneuvers:**

*Called Shot (Elf Raider, Ranged Combat}*

**Loot:** Longbow, dagger, throwing club, 2D6 in "hacksilver"

**Notes:** The Elf Raider has the racial ability of Low Light Vision.





## Player Handouts

### Letter from Kavaz

**From:** Lieutenant Kavaz, Third Division, Seventh Cohort of the Fourth Legion.

*Commander, it is my regret to inform you that the situation at Prosperity Wells has grown beyond my capacity to resolve. The local barbarians number far more than originally anticipated and we have experienced heavy losses.*

*I am therefore requesting immediate reinforcements from the 3rd Division to assist in a counterattack. In the meantime, my men are preparing themselves for the next assault. We have had some assistance from the freemen who work at the farmstead, several of which are retired legion veterans. They are old however, and not at their best. I have included some notes from my personal journey in order to bring you up to speed on the matter, I hope they are of use. May Floranus deliver this message to you swiftly and safely.*

#### **62nd Week / 5th Day, 1077 TE**

*We arrived at Prosperity Wells this evening. The journey was relatively uneventful. We spotted some riders, most likely local Barrantes, on the horizon around midday, but the endless snow made it impossible to discern any details. The master of the farmstead, Kinthos Gascilium, was welcoming enough, but demanding. He insisted that a night-time raid was imminent and immediately had my men setting up fortifications and patrols. A lot of the farmhands have returned to the cities for Winter, but there are still a large number of servants and slaves. Several of the freemen are veterans and were eager to help us. Together with my patrol we number just under 40 men, more than enough to see off a barbarian raid.*

*Kinthos was correct. They came in the early hours, just before dawn. Before we had time to react, some of the barbarians had breached the front gate. We managed to beat back the horde, but we have suffered heavy losses, roughly one third. The Barrantes have taken some of the survivors captive, Passions know why. After the attack, I heard some of the servants talking about a girl Named Ceah, apparently, she was seen by the front gate a few hours before the attack. I pressed them for information, and they explained that she is Kinthos's daughter. I will question him once we have collected the dead.*

#### **63rd Week / 1st Day, 1077TE**

*I confronted Kinthos about his daughter. However, he is reluctant to discuss anything about his family. He dismissed any claims that she was out of the home before the attack. I saw him having several slaves flogged later in the day, among them the Namegivers I had spoken to about Ceah. The second attack came earlier this evening. Once the sun vanished, a few riders approached the front gate, among them an ork woman and a human man.*







*The man, clearly some repulsive primitive magician, demanded that all we hand over "All those with Vasgothian blood". Naturally we refused. The attack came a few hours later, only this time their magician was on hand to assist. The ork woman was there too. A formidable fighter, she killed four of my best men.*

### **63rd Week / 2nd Day, 1077 TE**

*With the morning sun, there came yet more death. Another third of my men gone. Only a handful has survived, many with injuries. We have slain dozens of Barrites, but the barbarians keep coming, an endless horde determined to destroy us. Kinthos has raised concerns that the slaves may be planning a revolt, as a precautionary matter he has moved them into one of the large warehouses and has them under guard. I cannot spare even one of my men to watch over the slaves, but Kinthos will not take no for an answer. I asked him once again about his daughter, and her mother, but he would not discuss either. I have heard several rumours from the farmhands that his wife disappeared a few years ago. Some say he killed her after finding out she had a secret lover, but I place little stock in the gossip of slaves. Still, I find Kinthos deceptive, I will try to find Ceah and ask her about her recent whereabouts. The girl is strange however, most of the time she is wandering around the farmstead, having seemingly escaped her father's watchful eye. He keeps her locked up somewhere in the villa, but she always manages to find a way out. One of my men, a Vasgothian Named Gunnar, said that the girl had the gaze of one who had succumbed to the Dread Yearning. As a native Marcan, I do not fully understand what he means, but I trust his knowledge of his homeland.*

*The situation is growing more desperate. I fear that we will not be able to live out this siege. I will send out my fastest rider, Diocles, to deliver a letter to the strategos. I can only hope that we will live long enough to see reinforcements arrive.*





## Ceah's Diary

### 58<sup>th</sup> Week / 3<sup>rd</sup> Day, 1077 TE

*I am so tired of this place. Why am I forced to live out here, far from the towns and cities of the Lowlands. I know father hates the frontier as much as I do, and yet he insists on living out here. I keep asking him to take me to New Thera, or New Prosperity. We have family there, but we never visit them. I am so tired of him refusing to let me leave the farm. Riding out into the wilds is all I have, and now he wants to take it away from me! I wish mother was here. He tells me that she died of sickness, but I think he's lying. She probably left, just like I want to leave. Sometimes I dream about her. I see her on the edge of the Deep Forest. Maybe that's why I like roaming beyond the farm so much. Part of me knows she's out there somewhere. Maybe, Passions willing, I will find her.*

### 58<sup>th</sup> Week / 7<sup>th</sup> Day, 1077 TE

*I found someone today, another wanderer out near the forest. She looked like some kind of peddler, she had a large cart with her, filled with boxes and chests. Curious, I approached her. She was friendly enough, but there was something strange about her. Her skin was pale, and her eyes were like ice. She looked like a human, but not like any I have seen before. I asked for her Name, but she just smiled. Instead, she reached into her cart and produced a brilliant golden apple and gestured for me to take it. I hesitated, but there was something about it, something... alluring. "Take a bite" she said to me, "and you will find what you're looking for". I took it, it was as light as a feather. I asked her how much, but she only smiled once more, before packing up her cart and leaving me. I placed the apple in my pack and rode back home.*

### 59<sup>th</sup> Week / 3<sup>rd</sup> Day, 1077 TE

*I can't stop thinking about the apple and the strange woman who gave it to me. I've ridden out to the spot where I found her, but I have not seen her again. I've been dreaming about mother again too. She's calling to me from the forest. Each time I awake, I'm holding the golden apple in my hands, even though I know that I put it in a box under my bed. I don't think I can resist for much longer. I'm going to take a bite.*

### 59<sup>th</sup> Week / 5<sup>th</sup> Day, 1077 TE

*I woke up near the forest again. Like last time, I had been dreaming about it. Dreaming that I was scrambling through the briars and the brambles scaping at my skin. Dreaming that mother was calling to me again. I knew that father would send Kratiis to find me, so I simply sat down on the forest's edge and waited. It's strange, I grew up hearing stories about how dangerous the Deep Forest is. How it is filled with Horrors and barbarians, but as I sat there waiting, all I felt was peace. The feeling of being embraced in my mother's arms. Sure enough, Kratiis found me and took me home. Father scolded me as usual and*





*forbid me to leave the farm. He acts as if I have a choice in the matter.*

**60<sup>th</sup> Week / 2<sup>nd</sup> Day, 1077 TE**

*The dreams are turning into nightmares. I still dream of mother, only this time I find myself wondering dark caverns deep beneath the earth. I dreamt that I was trapped in amber, like a fossilised fly. Conscious of all around me, and yet unable to move. I tried to scream, but my mouth remained sealed. Then, I saw a figure approach my crystalised prison, at first I thought it was mother, but I realised I was looking at myself. As my other self reached out to the amber, I could feel one of my arms come free. I reached for my twin and our hands connected. Slowly, I pulled her into the amber, at the same time pulling myself out. As we switched places, I felt a deep sadness lift from my soul. I could breathe again. See again. I felt rejuvenated and reborn. I awoke once more on the forest borders.*

*(Undated)*

*I'm having trouble remembering Names and faces. Today, father told me to find Hugard for him, but I could not recall who that was. Father looked concerned. Sometimes, I find myself standing in a place, with no memory of how I got there. Am I daydreaming or sleepwalking? I can't tell the difference anymore. I no longer know if I'm awake, or if I'm simply dreaming that I'm awake.*

*(Undated)*

*Mother is coming for me. She visited me in my dreams. She told me I'm special, that I have a great destiny to fulfil. She called me the "Daughter of the Forest". I don't know what that means, but I know I want to be with her.*





## Pre-Generated Adepts

The following characters are designed to be used alongside the *Daughter of the Forest* adventure. They are all Third Circle, but they can be re-tooled as the gamemaster sees fit. By increasing their Circle and providing them with thread items (which they do not come equipped with by default) they will be capable of taking on more deadly encounters. Gamemasters may also wish to create some Barrite adept GMCs to make sure that higher Circle characters have a reasonable challenge. Another option is to make the trip through the Deep Forest more deadly by using higher challenge creatures like Firbruid and Huldraths. Just be aware that higher Circle combat can take longer to resolve, and this could mean expanding the duration of the adventure.



Each of these pre-generated characters has an affiliation (Barrite, Bear Strider, Empirist, or Independent). A Barrite affiliation means the character is on trading terms with Thera, but by and large does not see themselves as an imperial citizen. Bear Striders are nominally allied to Thera, though the relationship may be strained. Empirist characters are Theran citizens and though they may have their own grievances with the Empire, they see themselves as Theran. Lastly, an independent affiliation means the character is either uninterested or uninvolved with Vasgothian and Theran politics and instead has a strong cultural or Namegiver based identity.

When it comes to adding thread items, the Pre-Generated Adepts booklet that comes with the *Earthdawn Game Master's Screen* is an excellent resource for providing Circle appropriate magical equipment. Each pre-generated character comes with either a Healing Aid or a Blood Charm item. Players should not feel constrained by this choice and can swap around these items if they and the gamemaster agree.





## Hallthora of the Blackpaws

*Third Circle Troll Marauder*

**Affiliation:** Bear Strider

**Personality Traits:** Brave, Friendly, Rash, Disobedient (Hidden)

Hallthora is a young troll from the Blackpaw Company of Bear Striders. The daughter of the Blackpaw's chieftain, Vaskir Stormspeaker, she grew up with enormous expectations placed on her shoulders. Though her father wished her to follow in his footsteps and join the 6<sup>th</sup> Legion as an irregular, she had little appetite for following orders. Though work as an irregular provides an opportunity to visit other Theran lands, she had no desire to die far away from home in some distant province. When she punched a visiting Theran recruiter in the jaw, she knew it was time to leave her company behind. Her growing weariness of the constant proxy wars fought between the Theran Houses of the Midrise caused her to seek a life of adventure in the Lowlands. Her fortunes have been varied since she left her company. Life as sell-sword can be a mixed blessing. Though she enjoys the freedom of mercenary work, she also likes having food in her belly and a warm bed to sleep in, neither of which her lifestyle guarantees. She has also had to learn to keep her rebellious side hidden as most employees are wary of hiring "wild cards", especially for more sensitive work.

Hallthora has always felt the call of the adept's way, though she felt little kinship for the Disciplines practiced by her father. Instead, she was drawn to a Discipline of action, one that would allow her to express her freedom and improve her combat prowess. Eventually she saved up enough silver to seek out a trainer in the Marauder Discipline. She eventually found an old Barrite ork, Ulfhetan, of the Iron Spear tribe in the Barbarian Market outside of New Thera. After pestering him for several days, he eventually accepted her as a student, once she had proved she was strong and brave enough to learn the Discipline's magic. Ulfhetan taught her to harness the inner storm that raged inside her. To hone her instincts and to listen to them when reason was not enough.

As a Marauder, Hallthora has an instinctual need to be part of something greater. Her time with Ulfhetan has given her an admiration for the Barrite tribes; their sense of honor and community. She has tried to join several mercenary companies over the past few years, but none of them really had what she was looking for; companionship.

Hallthora's history as a Bear Strider has taught her that the Barrites of the Deep Forest are a dangerous enemy of the Theran Empire. She has little doubt that this largely true, the actions of Jhogar Bloodreaver are testament enough to this. But she is loath to judge the actions of the Barrites without first considering the circumstances. Should danger arise, however, she does not hesitate to meet it head on with her great ax.





### Attributes

**DEX:** 15 (6)

**STR:** 19 (8)

**TOU:** 16 (7)

**PER:** 9 (4)

**WIL:** 11 (5)

**CHA:** 16 (6)

**Initiative:** 5 / D8

**Physical Defense:** 10

**Mystic Defense:** 6

**Social Defense:** 9

**Physical Armor:** 5

**Mystic Armor:** 2

**Unconscious Rating:** 53

**Death Rating:** 63

**Wound Threshold:** 10

**Recovery Tests:** 3

**Recovery Dice:** \*D12

**Carrying Capacity:** 235

**Maximum Karma:** 9

**Movement:** 14

**Racial Abilities:** Heat Sight

**Karma On:** Recovery Tests



### Talents: *First Circle:*

Acrobatic Defense (3): 9,

Battle Shout (3): 9, Fireblood (3): 10, Melee Weapons (3): 9, Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving) (2): 6, Wilderness Survival (2): 6. *Second Circle:* Air Speaking (3): 9, Great Leap (3): 11. *Third Circle:* Avoid Blow (2): 8, Wound Balance (2): 10.

**Skills:** Craftsman (leather worker) (1): 5, First Impression (2): 8, Knowledge: Barrite Tribes (1): 5, Knowledge: Wild Animals (1): 5, Read & Write Language: Theran (1): 5, Speak Language: Caralk (Midrise) (1): 5, Speak Language: Theran (Bear Strider) (1): 5, Stealthy Stride (3): 9, Surprise Strike (3): 11.

**Equipment:** Hardened leather armor (PA: 5, Initiative: -1), forged troll great ax (Damage STR +10 / 18: D12+D10+D8. With Surprise Strike: 21: D20+2D8), Healing Potion. 150 silver.





## Alfwynn Wolfsister

*Third Circle Elf Warrior*

**Affiliation:** Barrite

**Personality Traits:** Brave, Calm, Curious, Arrogant (Hidden)

Alfwynn is a Warrior adept hailing from a small Barrite tribe known as the Ash Walkers. Her tribe has managed to maintain their independence since the end of the Untold Winder, siding with neither the Therans nor one of the great tribal Banners. The tribe takes its Name from a unique custom where they mix the ashes of their dead ancestors into their warpaint. They believe that this grants them special protection, as they feel the spirits of their ancestors watch over them in battle.

Alfwynn, like many Ash Walkers, grew up hearing the songs and sagas of her people. She would often sit for hours entranced by the tribe's Troubadour as he spun stories of ancient battles and unnameable Horrors in the glow of the longhouse's firepits. Though she greatly enjoyed and did her best to memorize these stories, she never felt a particular strong pull to the Troubadour Discipline. Instead, she chose to follow the family tradition of training as a Warrior adept. Tradition and family are important to all Barrites, but the Ash Walkers take them even more seriously. The Ash Walker's skallgar believed that Alfwynn was the reincarnation of a pre-Scourge hero who was himself a skilled practitioner of the Warrior Discipline. Though she has tried her best to remain humble, the swiftness with which she took to the Discipline and the illustriousness of her so-called "previous life" has caused a spark of pride to slowly grow into hubris. She does her best to hide this from others, but when she stands covered in blood and surrounded by dead enemies, she finds it difficult to remain meek.

Alfwynn's curious nature and love of battle has seen her clash with Theran patrols on a number of occasions. These instances have given her a broad understanding of how the Therans take to the battlefield. Secretly, she hopes that her tribe will eventually ally themselves with the Banner of the Crow. She has heard many stories about Hayulaen and his exploits and admires the old Warrior greatly. She has done her best to follow in his footsteps, learning the Theran language and taking part in raids against imperial farmsteads. Part of her plan to gain the Hofyearl's notice is to engage in battle with adepts allied to Jhogar Bloodreaver's Banner of the Wolf. She hopes that eventually, word of her battle prowess will reach Hayulaen's ears, and he will ask her to join the ranks of his Oathsworn.

For now, she explores the Lowlands. Her knowledge of Theran allows her to pass for an Empirist, though she is careful where she spends her ill-gotten hacksilver. Alfwynn sees herself as a scout in enemy territory, learning everything she can about the Therans, as well as Jhogar's ongoing rebellion. She takes work wherever she can, including from Therans. All the better for increasing her knowledge of how the Empire conducts itself and treats its subjects.





**Attributes**

**DEX:** 16 (7)  
**STR:** 16 (7)  
**TOU:** 16 (7)  
**PER:** 11 (5)  
**WIL:** 11 (5)  
**CHA:** 11 (5)

**Initiative:** 11 / D10+D8

**Physical Defense:** 10

**Mystic Defense:** 7

**Social Defense:** 7

**Physical Armor:** 5

**Mystic Armor:** 3

**Unconscious Rating:** 53

**Death Rating:** 63

**Wound Threshold:** 10

**Blood Magic Damage:** 2

**Recovery Tests:** 3

**Recovery Dice:** D12

**Carrying Capacity:** 175

**Maximum Karma:** 12

**Movement:** 14

**Racial Abilities:** Low-Light

**Karma On:** Recovery Tests



**Talents:** *First Circle:* Avoid

Blow(3): 10,

Fireblood(3):10 ,Melee Weapons (3): 10, Thread Weaving (War Weaving) (2): 7, Tiger Spring (3), Woodskin (2): 9 . *Second Circle:* Unarmed Combat (3): 10, Wound Balance (3): 10 . *Third Circle:* Air Dance (2): 9 , Anticipate Blow (2):7 .

**Skills:** Entertainer (storytelling) (1): 6, Awareness (2): 7, Knowledge: Deep Forest (1): 6, Knowledge: Theran Military Tactics (1): 6, Read & Write Language: Vasgothian (Barrite) (1): 6, Speak Language: Vasgothian (Barrite) (1): 6, Speak Language: Theran (1): 6, Tracking (3): 8, Wilderness Survival (3): 8.

**Equipment:** Hide armor (PA: 5, MA: 1. Initiative: -1), forged bearded ax (Damage STR +7 / 14: 2D12), Absorb Blow Blood Charm. 150 silver (Hacksilver).







## Askos Fjolki

*Third Circle Elf Wizard*

**Affiliation:** Empirist

**Personality Traits:** Focused, Honest, Patient, Callous (Hidden)

Askos Fjolki is an Empirist from an old Vasgothian bloodline. His family have lived in the High Town district of the Bodilla Quarter since before the Untold Winter, and several of his ancestors had the distinction of administrating the city during the Empire's long absence from Vasgothia. Unfortunately, the Fjolki have fallen on hard times of late. Many of their holdings were confiscated or co-opted by the returning Therans and the family vaults have slowly dried up over the last few decades. Askos has tried his best to reclaim his family's prestige and honor, despite the many setbacks that have come his way. From a young age, he knew he was destined to be a Wizard. He would often spend his childhood days squirreled away in the family library, thumbing through ancient mouldy texts and maps. His parents encouraged him to learn as much as he could and would buy new books for him when they have the money. Sadly, both of Askos's parents succumbed to the Dread Yearning when he was a youth. First his father, and then a few months later his mother. Askos has always suspected that his mother may have faked her own Dread Yearning as an excuse to join her husband in the Deep Forest.

Left alone in the family's empty mansion, Askos desperately sought for a way to reverse the Dread Yearning, learning all he could about Vasgothia's legends. He soon grew to believe that only the Therans possessed the magical knowhow to cure the Yearning. He became determined to learn the Discipline of Wizard, but he was convinced that only a Theran tutor would suffice. Eventually, he sold his family home and used the silver to join New Thera's magician guild, the Consortium of Magical Fellows, as an apprentice. His drive for knowledge and his grim determination led him to the attention of Graxis Narlanth, a skilled Wizard and senior member of the Vasgothian Conclave. Graxis was an attentive, but cruel master. Askos always felt like his mentor looked at him more of an experiment than an apprentice. The young elf came to believe that Graxis was trying to shape him into something that he was not. His studies not only included magic, but also the intricacies of Theran politics and society. Every time Askos would bring up his Vasgothian heritage or talk of the Dread Yearning or the Deep Forest, Graxis would scold him for bringing up "trivial provincial nonsense". Eventually, Askos decided to part ways with his mentor. Having learned his Discipline, he decided it was better for him to branch out and explore all that Vasgothia had to offer. He later learned that his mentor had left Vasgothia and returned to Great Thera due to a terrible scandal coming to light.





### Attributes

**DEX:** 13 (6)  
**STR:** 10 (5)  
**TOU:** 8 (4)  
**PER:** 19 (8)  
**WIL:** 19 (8)  
**CHA:** 11 (5)

**Initiative:** 6 / D10

**Physical Defense:** 8

**Mystic Defense:** 12

**Social Defense:** 7

**Physical Armor:** 4

**Mystic Armor:** 3

**Unconscious Rating:** 24

**Death Rating:** 32

**Wound Threshold:** 6

**Blood Magic Damage:** 3

**Recovery Tests:** 2

**Recovery Dice:** D6

**Carrying Capacity:** 80

**Maximum Karma:** 12

**Movement:** 14

**Racial Abilities:** Low-Light

**Karma On:** Knowledge Tests,

Tests to recall information.



**Talents:** *First Circle:* Standard Matrix (3), Standard Matrix (3), Awareness (2): 10, Dispel Magic (3):11, Patterncraft (3): 11, Research (2): 10, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (3): 11, Spellcasting (3): 11. *Second Circle:* Arcane Mutterings (3): 8, Astral Sight (3): 11. *Third Circle:* Etiquette (2): 7, Tenacious Weave (2):10.

**Skills:** Craftsman (tailor) (1): 9, Diplomacy (3): 8, Knowledge: Vasgothian Legends (2): 10, Knowledge: Theran Politics (2): 10, Read & Write Language: Theran (1): 9, Read & Write Language: Vasgothian (Empirist) (1): 9, Speak Language: Vasgothian (Empirist) (1): 9, Speak Language: Theran (1): 9, Taunt (3): 8.

**Equipment:** Padded leather (PA: 4), Desperate Spell Blood Charm, quarterstaff (Damage STR+4). 200 Silver.

**Spells:** All 1<sup>st</sup> Circle Wizard spells, plus four 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle Wizard spells and three 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle Wizard spells of the players choice.





## Sosl the Spider

*Third Circle Leaffer Thief*

**Affiliation:** None

**Personality Traits:** Cutthroat (Hidden), Greedy (Hidden), Loyal (Hidden), Peevish (Hidden)

This one erupted from a pod left behind by the Sosl who came before. Nurtured by the soil of the Deep Forest, as the Always and Ever Present One sung sweet lullabies of the ancient times. When the time was right, this one fell to the forest floor and searched for subsistence. Feasting upon the flesh of grubs, centipedes, and spiders, this one grew strong. As time passed, the songs of the Ancient Ones sung the melody of the Thief Discipline to Sosl and so a Thief this one became. As the magic of the forest infused this one with the knowledge of magic, so too did the secrets of language make themselves known. In order to practice magic, this one decided to stalk a nearby Barrite village. At first, this one took only the things that would not be missed. Scraps of food and clothing. Cooking utensils and small tools. The more it took, the better it became at taking, until one day, the tribe's skallgar discovered it. The Barrites were not kind. They chased this one with fire and axe. Chased it to the edge of the forest.

Rather than return to the Deep Forest, Sosl decided to explore the Theran Lowlands and the many strange sights therein. As it wandered around the cities, it was oblivious to the many looks and gasps it elicited from the fleshy ones. Occasionally, the strange ones would come to Sosl seeking answers to the mysteries of the Deep Forest, but they soon grew tired of hearing *"This one knows the answer, but is not telling"*. Friends were difficult to make for Sosl, for many viewed this one has little more than a curiosity. The Lowlands, however, were perfect for practicing this one's chosen Discipline. So many pockets to pick, stores to rob, and drunken fleshy ones to take advantage of. Sosl spent time in New Thera, and later New Prosperity, always looking for new trinkets to take. Sometimes this one would be found and have to flee from the Therans. Other times, fleshy ones would pay Sosl silver to take things from other fleshy ones. The endless conflicts of the Therans was an opportunity for this one to learn more about the fleshy ones and their strange ways.

Recently, this one has travelled to the city called Haden Town. Sosl heard rumours that the Therans were trying to unravel the mysteries of the Towers. The idea would be troubling to this one, if it weren't so hilarious. Haden Town is new territory for Sosl, a chance to steal new things and perhaps even to make friends.





### Attributes

**DEX:** 19 (8)

**STR:** 13 (6)

**TOU:** 16 (7)

**PER:** 12 (5)

**WIL:** 9 (4)

**CHA:** 9 (4)

**Initiative:** 6 / D10

**Physical Defense:** 12

**Mystic Defense:** 7

**Social Defense:** 6

**Physical Armor:** 6

**Mystic Armor:** 1

**Unconscious Rating:** 47

**Death Rating:** 57

**Wound Threshold:** 13

**Blood Magic:** 2

**Recovery Tests:** 3

**Recovery Dice:** D12

**Carrying Capacity:** 125

**Maximum Karma:** 15

**Movement:** 12

**Racial Abilities:** Fire Aversion, Increased Wound Threshold, Plant Biology, Weapon Size Restrictions, Wood Affinity

**Karma On:** Initiative and deception-based Charisma Tests

**Talents:** *First Circle:* Danger Sense (3): 11, Awareness (3):8, Lockpicking (3): 11, Picking Pockets (2): 10, Stealthy Stride (3): 11, Threadweaving (Thief Weaving) (3): 8, Avoid Blow (3): 11. *Second Circle:* Disarm Trap (3): 8, Surprise Strike (3): 9. *Third Circle:* Haggle (2): 6, Melee Weapons (2):10.

**Skills:** Craftsman (Amber) (1): 6, Knowledge: Deep Forest (2): 7, Knowledge: Alchemy & Potions (2): 7, Mimic Voice (2): 6, Read & Write Language: Theran (1): 6, Read & Write Language: Vasgothian (Empirist) (1): 6, Speak Language: Vasgothian (Empirist) (1): 6, Speak Language: Sosl'ree (1): 6, Taunt (4): 8.

**Equipment:** Gloamoak trim wood (PA: 6), Desperate Blow Blood Charm, forged gloamoak war club (Damage STR+7). 50 silver, pet spider.





## Fredrik “Ermin” Reinhart

*Third Circle Dwarf Troubadour*

**Affiliation:** Empirist

**Personality Traits:** Friendly, Inquisitive, Determined, Stubborn (Hidden)

Since a young age, Ermin has always been fascinated by the mythology and legends of his native land. While the other children were playing with wooden swords and pretending to be Barrites fighting Theran soldiers, Ermin was greedily devouring stories about the dead Passions, ancient Vasgothian heroes, and the Erminsosl. The latter of which earned him the nickname, “Ermin”, which he wears with pride. As soon as he could, he gathered up what silver he could find and left his native city of New Prosperity and travelled north towards Haden Town and its famed library. His thirst for knowledge, and his attention to detail earned him a place among the library scholars. For several years, Ermin assisted adventurers looking for information about the Deep Forest and Towers. He would often quiz his clientele on their adventures beyond the Lowlands, and hastily jot down any new information they may have discovered. Eventually, his curiosity regarding Vasgothia’s mysteries grew to such feverish heights that he decided to leave Haden Town and seek out apprenticeship in the Adept’s Way. With a letter of sponsorship from Zophia Navarim (*Vasgothia*, p.66) he set out east towards New Thera in search of a mentor.

Ermin’s hunt did not take him long, navigating the various bars and taverns of the Agathon Quarter brought him to the attention of human Named Tinos, a minor scion of the Ippuli Noble House. Tinos, while not what one would call “friendly” was certainly generous with his time and agreed to show Ermin the Way of the Troubadour, a Discipline that the dwarf instantly felt a connection towards. The relationship between Tinos and Ermin was a strange one. Tinos would often had Ermin running all manner of errands that made little sense to the dwarf. Delivering packages, listening in on conversations, and fetching messages from shadowy types in the dead of the night along Passion’s Walk. Ermin developed all manner of skills from his time with Tinos, and not all of them savoury. Regardless, after a few short years, Ermin was fully initiated into his Discipline and ready to set out. Tinos made it clear that he would always be on hand to help his disciple, but he unfortunately disappeared mysteriously one night, never to be seen again. While Ermin cannot say honestly that he misses his mentor, he certainly worries that he may be somehow linked to their disappearance. The Ippuli have a dark reputation after all, and their many criminal connections are a source of much gossip in Vasgothia. With that in mind, Ermin decided it was time to leave the comforts of the Lowlands and explore the “real” Vasgothia, reasoning that it was much better to die with a sword in his hand against a Barrite or Half-Horror, than to vanish into the night to Passions-knows what fate. He returned to Haden Town to plan his next adventure.





### Attributes

**DEX:** 13 (6)

**STR:** 10 (5)

**TOU:** 12 (5)

**PER:** 16 (7)

**WIL:** 13 (6)

**CHA:** 17 (7)

**Initiative:** 6 / D10

**Physical Defense:** 8

**Mystic Defense:** 9

**Social Defense:** 11

**Physical Armor:** 5

**Mystic Armor:** 2

**Unconscious Rating:** 39

**Death Rating:** 47

**Wound Threshold:** 8

**Blood Magic:**

**Recovery Tests:** 2

**Recovery Dice:** D8

**Carrying Capacity:** 110

**Maximum Karma:** 12

**Movement:** 10

**Racial Abilities:** Heat Sight,  
Strong Back

**Karma On:** Interaction Tests  
and gain / recall information  
Tests.



**Talents:** *First Circle:* Entertainer (3): 10, Emotion Song (3): 10, First Impression (3): 10, Heartening Laugh (2): 9, Item History (3): 10, Threadweaving (Story Weaving) (3): 10, Melee Weapons (3): 9. *Second Circle:* Etiquette (3): 10, Winning Smile (3): 10. *Third Circle:* Empathic Sense (2): 7, Avoid Blow (2): 8.

**Skills:** Disarm Trap (1): 7, Knowledge: Legends & Heroes (2): 9, Knowledge: Vasgothian History (2): 9, , Mapmaking (1): 8, Read & Write Language: Theran (2): 9, Read & Write Language: Vasgothian (Empirist) (2): 9, Speak Language: Vasgothian (Empirist) (2): 9, Speak Language: Theran (2): 9, Stealthy Stride (2): 8, Streetwise (2): 9.

**Equipment:** Forged broadsword (Damage STR+7), hardened leather armor (PA: 5), healing potion.





Coming Next...

# Forbidden Fruit

