

# HackMaster

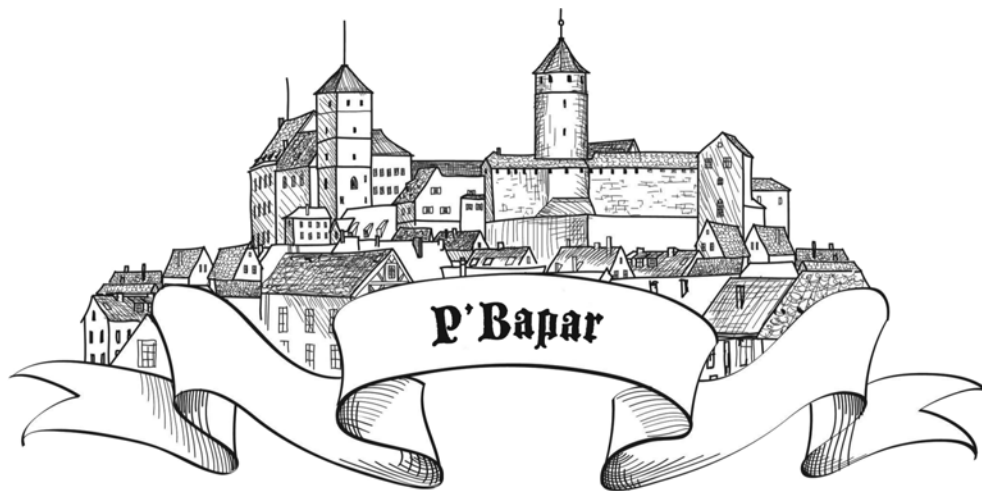
## Kingdoms of Kalamar

*Fantasy Campaign Setting*

### P' BAPAR



PART 4: SOCIETIES, GROUPS,  
GUILDS AND ORGANIZATIONS



## Part 4: Societies, Groups, Guilds and Organizations

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Hundreds of powerful and influential groups, guilds, and organizations can be found within P'Bapar. These factions do their best to recruit and retain followers interested in their agenda. Some organizations are powerful enough to exert their influence throughout the city, though most have limited political or social sway.

The pursuit of a common agenda, ideal or purpose defines these groups. This can be something as simple as establishing a monopoly on a service, or creating an exacting set of standards everyone is expected to follow. Or it can be an expansive and lofty proposition such as controlling the city (or even the entirety of Tellene), and everything in between.

### Guilds

Originally formed to protect tradesmen from excessive taxation on certain goods and services, guilds existed in P'Bapar since long before the Kalamaran Empire arrived. There is strength in numbers, and a band of like-minded workers protesting *en masse* proved to be a deterrent to excessive taxation and governmental control, ensuring guilds would remain a constant presence in the city for centuries to come.

Guilds not only provide a strong bastion from greedy officials, they also offer a myriad of other benefits. Fixed pricing and established acceptable standards helps eliminate competition from independent artisans, while also providing protection for consumers. These regulations also dissuade price-cutting by rival guild members. Guilds restrict the number of members, providing a healthy stable of tradesmen without overloading on supply.

Members also enjoy exclusive access to guild-owned trade secrets for perfecting their craft. Many guilds have

established schools for the benefit of guild members and their families. Hours and work conditions are closely monitored by guilds in hopes of protecting their members.

Nearly every guild in P'Bapar covers funeral expenses for their own. Some guilds also assist participants with loans, provide dowries for poor families, and even help with expenses during times of unexpected tragedy.

Attaining guild membership is an important social step in P'Bapar, especially for apprentices just beginning their trade. Novices can petition to apprentice to a guild journeyman or master. If accepted, the guild assigns the neophyte to a ward that provides food and lodging, wages, and tools during training. Some guilds require apprentices to repay this debt upon completion of their training.

When deemed properly trained by their masters, apprentices graduate to journeymen. Journeymen often benefit from discounted prices for materials and goods and enjoy an elevated social rank. However, these craftsmen are expected to conform to quality standards that have been established by guilds, protect trade secrets, and honor all rituals and customs established by their peers. The craftsman's livelihood and reputation depend on continually meeting, or exceeding, these expectations.

A base standard of workmanship is vital to the continued success of a guild. Members must comply with guild approved techniques to ensure their work remains consistently within the guilds criteria. Those that do not, or cannot, comply are ousted from the guild.

Merchants and grocers guilds function differently than those dedicated to a trade. Merchants also form guilds for mutual protection and the establishment of prices. However, they benefit from the sharing of resources such as porters, horses, storage spaces and wagons. They establish quality standards that farmers and other

providers must meet to ensure the goods they are trading remain consistent.

Only the most powerful guilds possess enough influence to prevent non-guild members from working within the confines of the city, but all guilds do their best to dissuade rogue elements from competing against their members. Unaffiliated craftsmen and tradesmen are referred to as “artisans”; and the guilds typically do whatever they can to recruit them into the fold, assuming their work is of adequate quality. Failing that, a guild disparages the artisan’s reputation, their craftsmanship, or drives them out of business. Artisans are sometimes created by happenstance when a guild has a surplus of craftsmen and not enough consistent demand to recruit new members.

In order to be recognized as a guild, founders must organize a like number of people and author a guild charter which is then submitted and (hopefully) approved by the Commerce Lord. Charters are very important and can be quite lengthy, covering even the smallest details about the operation and organization of the guild.

Individual guilds govern their own members in whatever manner they deem most logical. Some choose rule by committee, while others prefer a single guild master to oversee daily operations. Fees, standard regulation, enforcement of policies, ranks and titles, and so forth vary from organization to organization, each fully detailed in the guild charter.

Guilds pay additional taxes for the right to operate within the city of P’Bapar. This fee is usually evenly distributed among the guild members in the form of yearly membership dues.

Individual guilds are highlighted in later supplements. Each guild is fully detailed at the location in which the guildhall can be found in the city.

## Independent Organizations

Unlike guilds and churches, independent organizations typically operate free from the rules imposed by charters or religious doctrines. Independent organizations tend to have an overarching, long-term goal for which they strive to attain. These groups have much larger aspirations than local guilds or mercenary companies. In addition, they can often be found working in a variety of other locales on Tellene.

## GOLDEN ALLIANCE

The Golden Alliance maintains a significant presence in all major trade centers on Tellene, and P’Bapar is no

exception. The Archduke has worked tirelessly to ensure that the largest merchants’ guild in existence holds less sway in P’Bapar than elsewhere. E’Dos has made it a point to resist the influences and advances of this guild. The Alliance’s previous attempts at controlling commerce laws and engaging in politics in cities where they operate are worrisome signs for the Archduke.

E’Dos’s defiance has fostered a tense relationship between him and the Alliance. City officials and the Commerce Lord are routinely caught in the middle of this conflict. Guild leaders maintain constant pressure on E’Dos, hoping to exert some control over city trade policies and taxes, but thus far they have been unable to establish a firm foothold within the Archduke’s organization.

Unhappy with past results and in an attempt to bolster relations with the Archduke, the Golden Alliance recently changed leadership. Taofoor Laaria, who holds the title of Jewel within the guild, now leads the Golden Alliance in P’Bapar.

The previous leader, Relamor Falagel now serves as her second. Furious over his demotion (especially to a woman), Relamor continues to schedule private meetings with the Commerce Lord hoping to regain his influence before Taofoor has an opportunity to pursue her agenda.



With the exception of size, the Golden Alliance in P'Bapar is indecipherable from any other merchants' guild, an abnormality not found elsewhere on Tellene. Their inability to establish city-wide policies has neutered the advantages they enjoy in other parts of the world. Still, the Alliance stands ready to pounce on any opportunities to advance their schemes of controlling all trade on Tellene.

Alliance members continue to build trade relationships with local officials, merchants, suppliers and transporters in the event their plans never come to fruition. Because of E'Dos's stance on smuggling, the Alliance has resisted embarking into illegal trading within the city-state; a stance that is slowly waning with each passing year.

#### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Relamor's demotion has been a massive blow to not only his ego, but also his standing within the guild itself. He will go to any length to sabotage his new leader.

His most recent scheme involves using a proxy to pose as Taofoor to hire smugglers, hoping to later expose these false smuggling operations to the Archduke or the Commerce Lord. He's just been waiting for the perfect opportunity in order to inflict the most damage.

### **THE SECRET NETWORK OF THE BLUE SALAMANDER**

Agents for the Secret Network of the Blue Salamander are primarily information gatherers, recruiters and spies. They spend their time recording data for their masters, a band of unusual beings who live hidden in the Netherdeep and are intent on enslaving the world above.



Less than ten people in P'Bapar know that agents working on behalf of the Secret Network of the Blue Salamander are active within the city. Any past attempts at revealing the groups identity and intentions have failed.

Agents remain largely invisible, but they are led by a human wizard who calls himself "The Scrivener." Even his own agents don't know his true identity, but he is the point of contact for those working in P'Bapar.

This group gathers twice yearly in highly clandestine meetings in a secure basement in the North Ward. The Scrivener uses magic to conceal his identity so that he can impart orders and pass along the secret codes to be used until the following gathering. Agents deposit messages and data in secure stashes throughout the city. Any additional orders are relayed in coded messages placed on public postings on walls and boards around P'Bapar in the form of advertisements.

The Scrivener gathers data on a massive number of subjects pertaining to the city-state including: the military, guard patrols, fashion trends, guilds, population numbers, taxation, weather, seasonal crop yields, natural disasters, plagues and sicknesses, crime rates, and so much more. To the naked eye, this information is useless. It is compiled and collected every six months by traveling messengers who relay it to their subterranean overlords.

#### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Porter Naam, a wandering sell-sword, is one of the few people believing in the existence of this group. Several years back in a drunken bout of clarity, Porter accidentally deciphered a coded message on a public posting while urinating against a wall.

His subsequent investigation led him to one of the members of this organization, who Porter scuffled with and eventually killed. Porter discovered a key to breaking the most recent code, reinforcing his discovery and fueling his belief that something mysterious was happening. Unfortunately for him, the code changed shortly afterwards; and he's been unable to replicate his previous efforts at cracking secret messages ever since.

Porter has become something of a drunken, paranoid madman. He wanders the city "investigating" leads in search of salamander agents. Thus far, he's been unable to convince others there is a conspiracy afoot.

Porter distrusts everyone and can be found at various places throughout the city conducting all manner of peculiar activities such as peeking into buildings, breaking and entering, following and spying on random people,

and attempting to eavesdrop on conversations.

He's well-known by the guards, and he's twice killed people he's believed were in league with this group, and he's suspected of the murders – luckily for him, there were no witnesses to either crime.

### THE DISCIPLES OF AVRYNNER

A small group of followers dedicated to the Mind Master make their home in P'Bapar. These devout zealots foster, teach, and practice psionic powers. Members of this organization are secretive, mostly on account of the misunderstanding of psionic powers prevalent throughout Tellene.

The Disciples are led by Rijko, a Dejy woman of incredible power. Rijko, only nineteen years old, exudes wisdom well beyond her years, belying her youth. In fact, most of her followers believe her to be in her middle thirties, a falsehood she no longer attempts to correct. Her dark hair is often unkempt, but she dresses as a Baparan noblewoman to better blend into societal norms.

Rijko gathers with seventeen other members on a monthly basis at the Ducal Library to study the scrolls and books housed there. Practicing their abilities is forbidden in the library, but no place contains more information on the subject. All matters of psionic use are limited to more intimate gatherings at private locations.

Rijko preaches peace, love and life; but not all the disciples agree with her philosophy. Some members of the group believe their powers should be used to dominate those without psionic abilities. Heated arguments over the abuse of power occur regularly during meetings.

Despite their disagreements, all members of this society know that openly revealing their powers would subject them to various levels of hostility and discrimination. As such, they are mostly a toothless group that hopes to one day foster enough of a following to become a political power and help eliminate the discrimination against them.

#### Adventures and Interactions:

▶ Rijko has many enemies. She is aware of most of them, but one who has eluded her is Oosa Kaalaathree, a half-elven, half-Svimohzish woman with budding psionic powers who recently joined the Disciples.

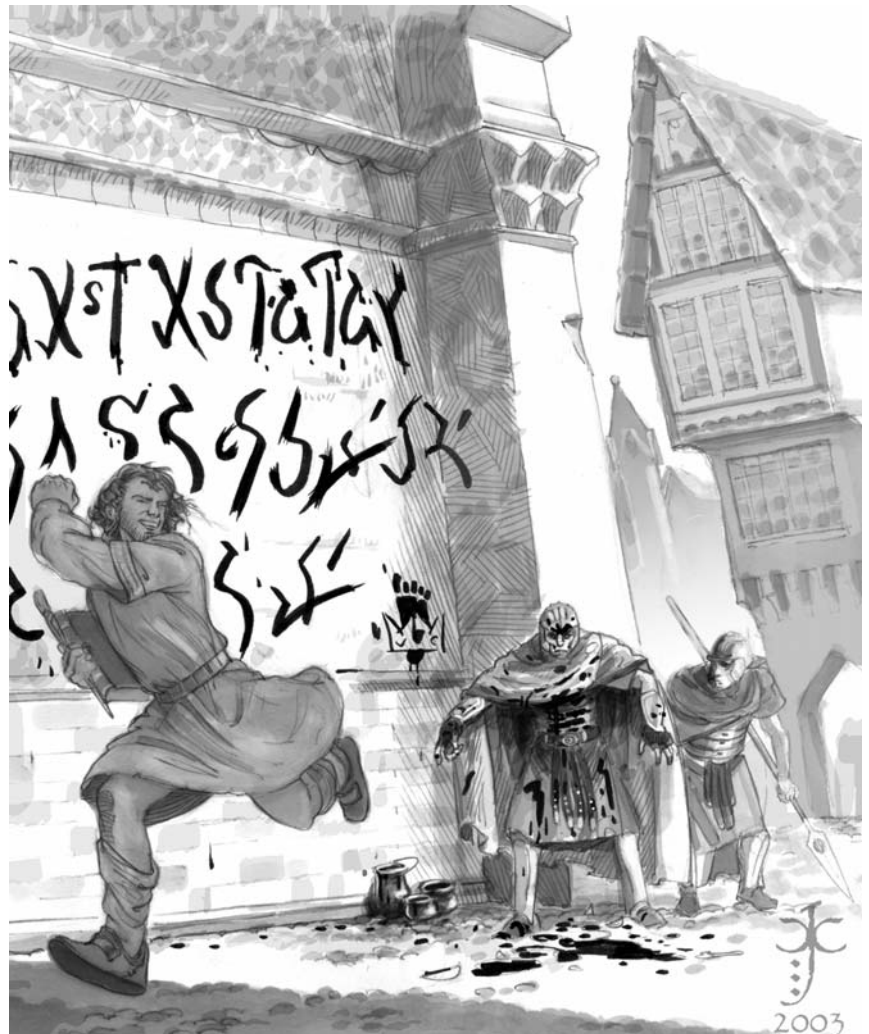
Oosa firmly believes in using her power to subjugate others. She joined the group to learn from her peers, expand control over her powers, and foster relationships with like-minded psionists. Once she believes she's learned enough, she plans to overthrow Rijko and assume control of the group.

### THE BLACKFOOT SOCIETY

Members of this group are bent on the downfall of all monarchies. They are not associated with the churches and actively recruit those who are opposed to organized religion.

It has only been in recent years that the Blackfoot Society has turned their attention towards P'Bapar. Originally founded in Eldor, the Blackfoot Society once peacefully preached protesting all class systems, and in particular, monarchies. The group broke in twain; and a rival sect formed in Kalamar, adopting a more hostile approach to dealing with separation of societal classes.

Trapped between two rival factions of the same organizations, P'Bapar was largely ignored. Without assistance from the stronger leaders on either side, those



who opposed the Baparan royalty had few men, limited resources and no assistance from a home base. What support they had was from grass roots efforts and limited in effectiveness.

That changed just under a decade ago with the arrival of Maninter Dout, a revolutionary from the south. Upon first arriving in P'Bapar, Maninter had the good fortune to encounter a small band of formerly reformed thugs bent on becoming fledgling members of the Blackfoot Society. It didn't take much for Maninter to become the de facto leader of the group.

Since then, the band has grown in number; and the presence of the Blackfoot Society within the city-state has become large enough for others to take note of them. Currently a mere nuisance, most of their activities are limited to infrequent protests of government sponsored activities such as fairs and festivals. Still, their numbers grow on a continual basis.

During the day, Maninter and his "prophets" peacefully protest the monarchy and other authorities on street corners throughout the city. Most believe them to be homeless beggars, and they earn a few coins for their sermons. At night they prowl the wealthier neighborhoods in the city causing mischief and harm while hoping to disrupt the social order in more aggressive and violent ways.

The poor and the downtrodden are often drawn to this group, believing that their lot in life is caused entirely by an unfair class system designed to keep them in line.

#### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Maninter uses the group to recruit others to his cause, but he doesn't really care about the Blackfoot Society or their idealistic view of the world.

In every way Maninter is an anarchist who wishes to see the affluent destroyed and chaos reign. He encourages (and partakes in) any activity that would cause harm to those with an elevated social status. This includes: random attacks on affluent citizens, home invasions, robberies, and even more violent crimes. His agenda is his own and has no affiliation with the actual Blackfoot Society as a whole, though he keeps this a secret.

## **Mercenary Groups**

It is impossible to count the number of mercenary companies operating within the city-state. While work is plentiful, most of these swords-for-hire ply their trade protecting caravans traveling through the Coniper Gap. Few last longer than a year, either by disbanding,

giving-up the trade, or dying off. The attrition rate is so great that constant demand for mercenaries outweighs the supply, driving up prices. Safer alternatives are available, but none pay as well as protecting cargo heading into or out of Brandobia.

In recent years some mercenary companies have become quite large, forcing E'Dos to impose a limit of four-hundred men maximum per company. E'Dos enacted this initiative to dissuade a monopoly on mercenary companies, while also capping the size of groups that could serve as private armies and threaten the monarchy. Like guilds, many companies require regular dues and fees; and each operates in a unique fashion.

Several prominent mercenary companies are highlighted here.

### **THE CRIMSON LEGION**

Members of the Crimson Legion are easily spotted as they don bright blood red tabards or armor painted a similar color. More ostentatious members of the legion wear crimson colored feathers, scarves, or other assorted plumage.

Despite their garish insignia, the Crimson Legion is best known for their creative and aggressive combat tactics and their ability to fight in adverse weather conditions. Their leader, Maldon "Bloodletter" Brendil, is a master tactician known for using weather and terrain to his advantage.

The legion earns most of their income protecting caravans passing through the Coniper Gap. Their willingness to traverse the pass in the deathly winter months set them apart from their peers, but their effectiveness in repelling bandits enables them to charge higher rates than other companies.

When times are lean or work is difficult to find, the Crimson Legion discards their colorful signifiers and makes forays into the Coniper Gap to raid caravans. Not one to remain idle, Maldon willingly murders other mercenary companies and merchants in order to rob them for his own gain. Maldon never takes prisoners or leaves anyone alive who might betray him or later uncover his secret.

The Crimson Legion numbers forty-six of various races and backgrounds. Maldon accepts anyone who shows skill with a blade and can follow his orders without question.

#### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ The Crimson Legion has a fearsome reputation among rival mercenary companies operating around

P'Bapar. Though unsubstantiated, none will work with Maldon on account of the rumors that he moonlights as a brigand and is responsible for wiping out several caravans and their guards.

Recently, these rumors have cost Maldon several jobs; and some of his competitors have used this knowledge to sway potential clients to hire them instead. Maldon has begun to investigate which companies have spoken ill of him so that he can extract his revenge.

▶ Because of Maldon's extra-curricular activities, it is impossible to leave the Crimson Legion on good terms. Membership is for life, one way or another.

### COMPANY OF THE SERRATED SWORD

Comprised primarily of non-humans, the Company of the Serrated Sword is one of the most resilient and long-standing mercenary groups in P'Bapar. Despite their longevity, this group often struggles to earn reliable and steady income because of their penchant for hiring mostly non-humans. They rely on a stable group of patrons who are sympathetic to the discrimination they endure.

Azzak Stirnog, a half-hobgoblin warrior, leads this rag-tag company. Because of the strict laws forbidding humanoids from making residence within the city, Azzak lives outside the city walls. He bases his group in a large building on the south side of the city near the road. Azzak is gruff and arrogant but a highly effective warrior who is

organized and utilizes his people well. Because of his unstable financial situation, he's also fairly resourceful.

The Company of the Serrated Sword is comprised of roughly fifty-five sell-swords. Unlike other mercenary companies, Azzak does not require regular attendance or even dues from his members. His group fluctuates in size throughout the year as mercenaries come and go.

Members wear a green dyed tabard with a white serrated sword set across a shield. Each mercenary is required to provide their own gear. They primarily work as caravan guards or protect places of importance for a variety of non-human patrons.

### Adventures and Interactions:

▶ Despite his success as a leader, Azzak is a poor mathematician and accountant. He relies on a half-elven employee named Ura'thre Willowood to handle all finances. Ura'thre is actually a member of the Sons of Silence, and she has been stealing money from Azzak for several years. Some recent personal debts have forced her to increase her efforts. The lack of funds has become a cause of concern for Azzak, though he hasn't yet suspected theft.

▶ Despite preconceptions, the company has a reputation as a fairly effective fighting force. Their human competitors have taken umbrage at being second-best to a band of mongrels. Many take any opportunity to disparage the company to potential customers.



## THE FEARLESS CROWS

Members of the Fearless Crows all have one trait in common; they are all anointed followers of the Overlord. The group is led by Randolin Trolensen, a devout cleric of the Oppressor and a man committed to personally enslaving the world, one individual at a time.

Comprised of religious followers, fanatics, and zealots loyal to Randolin and the Oppressor, this group takes whatever mercenary work they can find, knowing they can use their ulterior agenda to garner extra coins.

Fearless Crows dress in brown colored tabards adorned with a symbol of a crow resting on a mailed fist. More devout members sport tattoos, decorate their shields, or wear a small metal pin depicting a mailed fist. Each carries at least a club and scourge, though some prefer other weapons, including nets and mancatchers. All members of this organization carry at least one pair of shackles with them at all times.

In combat, most of the mercenaries prefer to use a club to render their victims unconscious so that they can be captured and sold off into slavery at a later date. Those who cannot be captured are killed.

Randolin refuses to work for anyone who doesn't agree with or appreciate his religious affiliations. As expected, work is somewhat difficult to find. They work primarily with slavers who wish to see their wares safely protected or transported, but desperate merchants have been known to hire the group to protect cargo passing through the gap.

When times are tough and work is difficult to find, Randolin will organize his men and venture out into the wilds hoping to capture and enslave any sort of humanoid that crosses his path. These victims are then sold at auction through one of many slaver contacts Randolin maintains in P'Bapar. This additional income helps support the group during lean times.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Randolin is in a love with Gira "Willow" Pateris (see location H7 – in the High Ward) after encountering her in the market and speaking to her. He's aggressively pursued the girl, but his advances have been refuted time and time again.

Randolin has grown desperate and begun to envision taking more drastic actions to earn her hand. Despite his occupation and religious beliefs, Randolin doesn't condone forcing Gira into a relationship – creating a vexing situation he's been unable to solve.

## THE FIERY HARPIES

The Fiery Harpies are a mercenary company that gained a small measure of fame within the last decade. The group is comprised of fifty-two men ranging in age from fifteen to sixty. They operate in one to three groups protecting merchants traveling around the city-state.

The company is headed up by Selinor Rematar, a hard man of middle years who lost his right eye to an errant arrow some time ago. Selinor is a serious man when it comes to business; but around his men, he is loose, humorous and playful. He revels in battle and thoroughly enjoys drinking, and his job affords him plenty of opportunity to do both.

Selinor's men tend to be like-minded individuals. They love fighting and combat and rarely attempt to negotiate with or bypass bandits and brigands when they are encountered. At night around the camp fires, the group drinks and regales one another with crude jokes and tall tales.

Each member of the company dons a dark purple tabard bearing a white silhouette of a harpy. This symbol is often emblazoned on shields and banners carried by the mercenaries. Each man wields a morning star, spear or longsword and shield. Selinor doesn't abide poorly equipped men, and he supplies each with a set of ringmail and a medium shield which they are required to pay for from their wages.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Selinor's company became famous twelve years ago when his men were ambushed by a large band of orcs high in the Legasa Peaks. They held the mountain pass against insurmountable numbers while a runner retreated for aid.

By the time help arrived, the company was down to twelve men who held a chokepoint against nearly forty orcs. All told, the mercenaries killed ten orcs for each of their fallen. The merchant and his goods remained unharmed, and the tales Selinor brought back to P'Bapar proved priceless to his enduring success.

▶ Selinor used his story to his advantage, and he has no difficulty recruiting men or finding work. In truth, he's become lax in his diligence, happy to live-off his previous fame. His men are far less effective than he believes and consist of untested but boisterous men who revel in easy jobs.



## THE HELL RAIDERS

Numbering only thirty members, the Hell Raiders work primarily in a protective capacity as private guards. The majority of their income derives from guarding places of importance that house valuable items, including their highest profile client, the guild of apothecaries.

Hell Raiders carry the reputation of extremely loyal soldiers who abstain from the use of magical equipment, spells, and devices – largely at the behest of their leader, Galinon Faseri. Galinon is a self-professed technologist who believes that one day manmade machines will triumph over magic. He abhors the use of items imbued with arcane power but understands the importance of magic in the world at large. In a twist of irony, most of the group's profits are generated protecting places that hold vast quantities of magic.

Prospective employers bank on Galinon's well-established reputation and hold the leader personally responsible should his men violate their contract terms and meddle with objects or places they are sworn to protect. Thus far, none of his men has ever been caught interfering with the objects they ward. This dependability has earned Galinon several long-term and highly profitable contracts.

Hell Raiders typically wear leather or studded leather armor and carry whatever weapon with which they are

most proficient. Over their armor, they wear a black tabard with a ball of fire emblazoned on the front. Weapons and armor are the personal property of the individual. As a result, Galinon doesn't require any conformity for weapon use as long as his men are effective as a force.

### Adventures and Interactions:

▶ Galinon recently learned that his teenaged son has an aptitude for the magical arts. This discovery has caused much consternation as the child displays enough ability to earn several offers of apprenticeship. All have been refused by Galinon. A rift has formed between father and son. The boy has contemplated running away or apprenticing himself to a wizard in a party of traveling adventurers.

Despite his denials, Galinon would consider it a personal insult if the boy were to run-off with a disreputable band of adventurers. He would go to great lengths to retrieve his son.

## RENMAR'S SHIELDS

Comprised of three-hundred men, Renmar's Shields are one of the largest mercenary companies in P'Bapar. This company is named after their leaders, a group of triplets named Hovamar, Balda, and Mipar Renmar. They've been mercenaries their entire life, inheriting the company



from their father.

Aside from their size, Renmar's Shields are best-known for their coordinated fighting tactics. The trio of leaders run their company like a small army. They institute military-style tactics, requiring each mercenary to conform to their methods for fighting.

Most of these tactics were learned in the Kalamaran legions by the triplet's father and uncles and passed down over the years. They employ Kalamaran shield walls, archers, and even mounted reserves.

Each mercenary is assigned to one group of infantry, artillery or support based on their skillset. One brother leads each faction, and they drill their men to work in coordinated efforts.

Renmar's Shields train in a large compound a mile south of the city. Much of their work occurs along the Baparan/Korak border. Their primary source of income is derived from serving as private armies for wealthy citizens traveling abroad or as guards for rare or expensive cargo heading east. They take whatever work they can get but dislike any job that requires them to send fewer than fifty men.

## **SOLDIERS OF SCORN**

The Soldiers of Scorn are a somewhat unique band of mercenaries. They are employed as hired muscle for a Reanaarian slaver named Raizix "the Razor" Vuria. They serve as house guards, keeping slaves in-line and preventing idealists and would-be heroes from attempting rescue attempts.

In addition to protecting Raizix's home, this group also patrols the outer realms of the city-state in search of victims to enslave for their employer. They have no qualms about capturing anyone they stumble across, though they are careful to limit their activity to isolated areas so as to not draw unwanted attention.

While slavery is legal, capturing free citizens and forcing them into indentured servitude is not. In order to avoid any legal complications, the Soldiers of Scorn don't openly wear any heraldry or other identifying marks when performing their nefarious tasks. They also don't try to capture anyone within the city limits, preferring to enslave solitary folks in the wilds.

## **SONS OF DRASKA**

Originally hailing from the Byth Mountains, the Sons of Draska is a company of dwarven mercenaries who now live and work in P'Bapar. Membership is exclusive to

dwarves, with favoritism given to those hailing from the Byth Mountains. Currently there are forty members in the company.

Blim "Seven-Toes" is the leader of the Sons of Draska. A stodgy, bald dwarf with a massive beard, Blim is no longer the warrior he once was. Old age, nagging injuries, and a few extra pounds have taken their toll on Blim; and he's relegated himself to mostly counting coins and negotiating contracts.

A racist at heart, Blim has no love for anyone but his fellow dwarves. He only drinks in dwarven establishments and buys gear produced by dwarves (if possible). The need for gainful employment prevents Blim from vocalizing his opinions in mixed company, but he can be coerced to speak his mind when plied with several rounds of ale.

The Sons of Draska's primary employer is the Archduchy of P'Bapar. The Commerce Lord routinely hires the company to clear-out mountain valleys from bands of humanoids and other dangerous creatures in order to gain access to valuable mining locations in the nearby Legasa Peaks. This sometimes puts the company in conflict with local authorities who might wish to secure the mining rights for themselves.

When not in the employ of the Archduke, the company works as a private army-for-hire. Blim believes caravan work is too risky for the pay involved; but in desperate times, he has agreed to offer protection for groups passing through the Coniper Pass, especially those led by dwarves.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Blim is a wanted man in Draska. He's never told anyone this secret, though several of his men know from their experiences in the old country. When he drinks too much, he becomes morose, knowing he'll never again visit his homeland. Blim has never confessed to any crimes, but there are rumors he committed a violent act over an argument about a woman. His men are far too loyal to their leader to ever consider turning him in for the reward.

## **Crime and the Underworld**

In a city the size of P'Bapar, crime is an unavoidable daily occurrence. Most of the crimes committed within the city are non-violent in nature. Con games, burglary, minor larceny and smuggling are easily the most common. The Archduke's vigorous prosecution of smugglers keeps smuggling from running rampant, but the desire to avoid hefty tariffs ensures it will never go away.

Violent crimes are less common, though fistfights and minor assaults happen from time-to-time. Industrial sabotage between guilds and merchants results in some property and life loss every year. The larger merchant houses keep squabbles civil, stopping just short of violence in most instances. When industrial sabotage occurs, foreigners are always found to be at fault (regardless of the truth of the matter).

P'Bapar is home to several organized groups of criminals or thieves' guilds. The largest and most influential group is a band of racketeers known as the Horsemen, but they are far from the only ones.

In addition to organized crime, gangs are common. Most gangs are comprised of young, hard men living on the streets or squatting in vacant buildings. They partake in violent smash and grab robberies, vandalism, and general (mostly harmless) mayhem. On rare occasions, a gang will rise above the others, becoming a point of interest to the thieves' guilds, the city watch or both.

Gangs rarely remain in power for long, largely on account of their disorganization and the number of enemies they quickly compile. Still, at least one gang (the Devil Dogs) has remained a nuisance for a number of years.

Outside of the city, smugglers, bandits, and brigands patrol the roads searching for easy prey. For most, their primary motivation is to steal anything of value without harming anyone. The implications of murder are far more serious than the crime of theft.

Like inner-city gangs, it isn't uncommon for a particularly powerful bandit to rise to power. Smart and well organized bands can survive in the hills and mountains of P'Bapar for years raiding caravans.

Several organized criminal bodies are listed here, but this is by no means an exhaustive list.

## **THE BLACK CIRCUS**

The Black Circus is a band of thieves who ply their trade throughout the city performing various sideshows. Their group includes musicians, singers, jugglers, acrobats, magicians, poets and storytellers, and daredevils.

Led by Ascor Bannartart, a half-elven troubadour, this group takes its daily performances seriously; and in fact, they abstain from fleecing those who come to watch their shows.

At night, the group moves into the city to pick pockets, commit larceny, and rob and burgle the local communities. Unlike some less-reputable guilds, the

Black Circus makes a concerted effort to refrain from committing violence. They also focus their efforts on the more affluent residents of the city if possible.

Ascor is a romantic at heart, and his crew tends to follow his lead. Women and children are usually left alone unless their wealth is obvious and easily procured without intimidation or violence.

Con games are another area in which this guild excels. Several members of the organization will run street games while in disguise. These games are usually entertaining and designed to disarm the crowd through the use of humor while skimming coins from crooked games. Ongoing con-games that attract a crowd are a good place for other members to practice their thievery skills.

There are sixty-seven members of the Black Circus. They reside in a large house in the Lower Ward which is connected to an underground chamber where the group can practice both thievery and street performances without interference or observation.

In order to protect their identity, members wear masks, make-up, or veils when committing crimes.

### **Adventures and Interactions:**

▶ Some of the social elite have romanticized their encounters with the Black Circus. They tell tales of being flattered or wooed during their robberies, of handsome con-men who stole the rings from their fingers while kissing their hands, and other such fantasies. Ascor does nothing to disused these rumors, and in fact makes it a point to foster this activity on his nightly capers.

## **BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE**

Brotherhood of the Blade is a band of brigands living in the wilds in the Earldom of Tovanar. Comprised of former soldiers, adventurers, escaped slaves and other less-than-moral men and women, the Brotherhood has one goal in mind, to rob as many caravans as possible while avoiding the hangman's noose.

Despite operating outside the city, the Blades (as they call themselves) regularly visit P'Bapar in search of information on caravan activity and to resupply. At times, they even hire on as personal guards, acting as protection for the very caravans they plan to eventually betray and ambush. When working undercover, the Blades will don brightly colored clothing or tassels on their weapons so that they may be easily located by their comrades during the coming chaos.

Saterus Moneta, a rather large and charismatic Kalamaran, leads this band of thieves and robbers. A



noble, but misguided, man, Saterus sees nothing wrong with his actions. He believes that stealing goods from merchants who rob customers (with high prices) is absolutely his divine right. “Might makes right” he likes to say. Saterus’s morality seems to end there as he professes no desire to redistribute or share his wealth with anyone other than his men.

In total, there are twenty-five men and women serving under Saterus. They live in an isolated camp in the wilds high above the pass. Unlike other less-organized groups, Saterus carefully select his targets to not only maximize his profits, but also minimize losses. He won’t rob an unknown caravan and is somewhat paranoid about welcoming newcomers to his band.

E’Dos has an outstanding reward of 500 silver coins for the capture of Saterus. Should an overzealous adventurer slay the bandit, they are entitled to only half the reward, assuming they can confirm they killed the right man and the attacks cease – a difficult thing to prove because of the number of attacks on caravans traveling through the Coniper Pass.

## THE DEVIL DOGS

“Massive” Marcy is the leader of the Devil Dogs, a right she’s earned through years of personal challenges. Marcy, a rotund human woman with a bit of orc blood in her, befits her name. She stands well over six-feet in height

and carries an excess of fat and muscle upon her already large frame.

Marcy rose from the lower ranks and achieved the position of leadership by rite of personal combat. She leads a band of thirty young warriors who survive by stealing and robbing businesses and people in the South Ward.

They limit their activity to the South Ward for fear of crossing the Horsemen. Several years prior, they overstepped their bounds; and the Horsemen were forced to butcher half the band in rebuttal. It was this lesson that enabled Marcy to eventually challenge the old leadership and assume control of the gang.

There is nothing subtle about the Devil Dogs tactics. They intimidate and assault anyone they think they can bully for money or fun. Every several weeks, the city-watch attempts to quell the group, resulting in several arrests but little else.

### Adventures and Interactions:

▶ Anyone traveling through the South Ward has an opportunity to encounter the Devil Dogs. They prefer to shake down visitors or anyone who appears to flaunt their wealth over locals. Like many gangs, they are big on intimidation but quick to bolt at the sight of steel. To assuage this fear, they rarely approach armed groups without less than double the number of gang members.

## THE HORSEMEN

For many years, the Sons of Silence were the most prolific group of organized criminals operating within P'Bapar. That was before Feranis "the Horsman" Gul'tar arrived in P'Bapar.

Feranis, banished from operating within Bet Kalamar by more powerful criminal organizations, traveled west and settled in P'Bapar. Known for his love of horses, Feranis intended to give-up the life of crime and retire to a ranch in the foothills of the mountains where he could breed and raise his beloved equines.

Old habits were hard to quell; and within a year of his arrival, "The Horseman" was a well-known figure among the world of Baparan organized crime.

Feranis started simply, but his criminal enterprise grew at a sizeable rate. He purchased several businesses to serve as cover for fencing smuggled goods into and out of the city. Almost by accident, the whole of the organization became known as "the Horsemen" in his honor.

Today the Horsemen control a sizable smuggling operation. They have their hands in dozens of smaller racketeering schemes, as well offering "protection" to businesses throughout the Lower Ward. The Horsemen prefer to appear as legitimate businessmen and everyday citizens.



As a group, they abstain from simple muggings, robberies, burglaries, and pickpocketing. They prefer to partake in large scale schemes that focus on moving sizable quantities of heavily taxed goods into the city without the knowledge of the local authorities to earn a larger profit.

Even after all these years, Feranis still maintains leadership of the group. Well into his late seventies, Feranis allows his four sons to handle the day-to-day operations, though he is the final arbiter on all major decisions. The organization itself spans a dozen businesses in the lower ward, as well as a stable of smugglers, con-men, fences, and forgers. All told, there are nearly one-hundred people either on the payroll, in the employ of, or associated with the Horsemen.

### Adventures and Interactions:

▶ Feranis's departure from Kalamar is shrouded in a cloud of secrecy. It is well-known that he once was held in high esteem among the criminals in Bet-Kalamar. The fact that he was banished as opposed to being killed speaks volumes for his past achievements and friends.

▶ Feranis's love of horses has never waned. He owns a large stable south of the city where he breeds some of the finest horse flesh in P'Bapar. There's much demand for stud services and foals; but Feranis rarely sells his horses, leading some to seek less-honest ways to acquire his prime stock.

### "RED" GURTHAY'S GANG

"Red" Gurthay, a half-elf thug, runs several brothels and gambling houses with crooked odds throughout the city. In recent months, "Red" has added assassination to the long list of crimes he is wanted for after murdering a baron for a substantial sum of money. His notoriety has forced E'Dos into offering a 1,000 silver piece reward for his capture, a feat no one has yet been able to accomplish.

Protecting Gurthay is his band of employees and armed hooligans. "Red" employs dozens of people and owns several legitimate businesses which serve as fronts – though most are held in an intermediary's name. As such, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of men at his beck and call.

In addition to the revenue generated from brothels and gambling, Gurthay extorts money from businesses for the privilege of leaving their establishments alone. Some pay, others refuse feeling the money is better spent on private guards, mercenaries, dogs, and other deterrents. Gurthay handles each of these situations differently. There seems

to be little rhyme or reason to drawing his ire, and retribution fluctuates from minor annoyances to outright hostility.

Gurthay and his men operate out of a disreputable gambling house in the South Ward. Bribes and threats have gone a long way toward establishing an attitude of indifference to his actions with the local authorities. Most of the guards assigned to the South Ward turn a blind eye to the brothel in exchange for free services, favors or money. The recent increase in the reward on his head has complicated matters, but thus far no one has been brave enough to try and claim it.

“Red” maintains several safe houses, secret storehouses and a hidden chamber in the under city. Few, if any, know of all of his bolt-holes and hideouts.

#### Adventures and Interactions:

▶ Gurthay’s influence has waned in recent years. He isn’t disciplined enough to consistently win fights against the Horsemen, and he’s too unstable for them to offer him a position. The two groups remain constant enemies. The one advantage “Red” has is that the Horsemen have yet to take much of an interest in brothels or gambling in the city.

### THE SONS OF SILENCE

The Sons of Silence specialize in burglary; particularly gems, jewelry, and other precious art objects. Sil Highhand, a gnomish thief-mage, oversees this guild. Sil’s background and rise to prominence is something of a mystery among the Baparan underworld.

For several decades, Sil commanded another group of thieves known as the Stray Cats. The group vanished, presumably wiped out in a turf war with the Sons of Silence – though many suspect the two groups consolidated their power and joined forces. Few know exactly how Sil rose to power within his new organization, though most believe he used magic to bolster his rapid ascent. One day he was in charge, and anyone questioning that simply disappeared.

Sil is wanted for more crimes than he can remember committing. He has abolished the habit of committing burglary on a regular basis, though on rare occasions he ventures forth to rob something of value in order to ensure his skills remain sharp.

Six lieutenants report to Sil, and each oversees one ward of the city. These leaders recruit, train, and plan jobs in the ward in which they work, free from direct oversight. Strict rules are in place to punish those who

would trespass on another’s territory, and the lieutenants are careful to respect these borders.

Organization beyond this point is entirely up to each lieutenant. The only requirements are that a monthly quota of money or goods is tithed to Sil. Failure to meet quota comes with dire consequences. Fifty percent of the take of each job goes directly to the guild. Lieutenants take another 25%, leaving the remainder for the thief. Anyone caught skimming is subsequently punished in a brutal and public fashion.



Kinura Ragatar rules over the North Ward. The fiery lieutenant has finally reached her middling years and discovered both her good looks and dexterity have begun to wane. She was once the most feared cat burglar in P’Bapar, audacious enough to rob outside of her jurisdiction and charismatic enough to get away with it. The lithe brunette is imaginative and daring and demands the same from her thieves. In addition to burglary, her thieves operate several cons, scams, and pickpocket operations in the North Ward in between larger jobs. On the side, she sells information about heavily-laden caravans heading into the Coniper Gap to Saterus Moneta, the leader of the Brotherhood of the Blade. Kinura receives a cut for each successful caravan sacked.

Dolm Lelten operates the South Ward. The aging thief is as much a philosopher and existentialist as he is a criminal. He offers little in the way of instruction for his thieves. Queries and requests for help are often answered with cryptic responses and smug grins. Dolm believes his charges should learn the way he did, through trial and error. High demands, little assistance, and the presence of several other organized criminal operations in his ward means that Dolm often falls short of his required monthly tithe. Luckily for him, he is incredibly wealthy (from a life of crime, an inheritance and several successful business ventures); and he often supplements his payments with his own money. Of course, he keeps detailed records of such transgressions; and on particularly good months, he takes back some of what he is owed (with interest).

Naerum Gazee, a slick half-elf, half-Renaarian con man, operates the Lower Ward. The ambitious and handsome young thief continues to ply his trade throughout the city, and his monthly take is always higher than any other thief in his ward. Not quite the burglar the others are, he is an expert at picking pockets and does his best to teach these skills to anyone interested. Naerum has a secret love affair with Kinura and often asks for her help in training his thieves to become better burglars. Several times a year, he allows Kinura the privilege of accompanying his men on difficult or lucrative robberies. The loot from these raids is typically withheld from quota by the lieutenants.

Lanorin Doreta operates in the Green Ward. A lifelong criminal, Lanorin is a wanted fugitive with a massive price on his head. Paranoid, he rarely leaves his guildhall during the daylight hours. The elderly burglar is a specialist at picking locks and he trains his followers to do the same. Lanorin has a thief's sense of honor that most others don't possess. He doesn't believe in con games and feels that burglary is the purest way to judge a thief.

Ranselita Crindar is the lieutenant in charge of the Outer Ward. She routinely works as a beggar near the gates on both ends of the city, scouting for incoming merchants with heavy loads that she can set her ladies on. Ranselita's pride and joy is a group of five women she calls "the Coven". These girls are incredibly skilled and have pulled some nearly impossible jobs in the short time in which they have been operating together. In fact, only ten thieves in total work for Ranselita; and she is extremely picky about new recruits. Her wards specialize in plucking goods from laden wagons and people waiting to enter the city.

Sir Fonamar Fapeki watches over of the High Ward. His thieves pose as laborers, gardeners, servants, cooks, pages, and guards who live and work on the premises of his large estate. At night, they prowl the High Ward searching for profitable job opportunities that they can later exploit. Rules for Fonamar and his men are slightly different than the others, as high profile jobs in this ward tend to attract a lot of unwanted attention. Fonamar has no set monthly quota to meet; his jobs involve unusual planning and care with the social elite as his primary targets. Only the best thieves are assigned to work for Fonamar. Any thief showing unusual promise is a potential target for Fonamar, who purchases them from the other lieutenants.