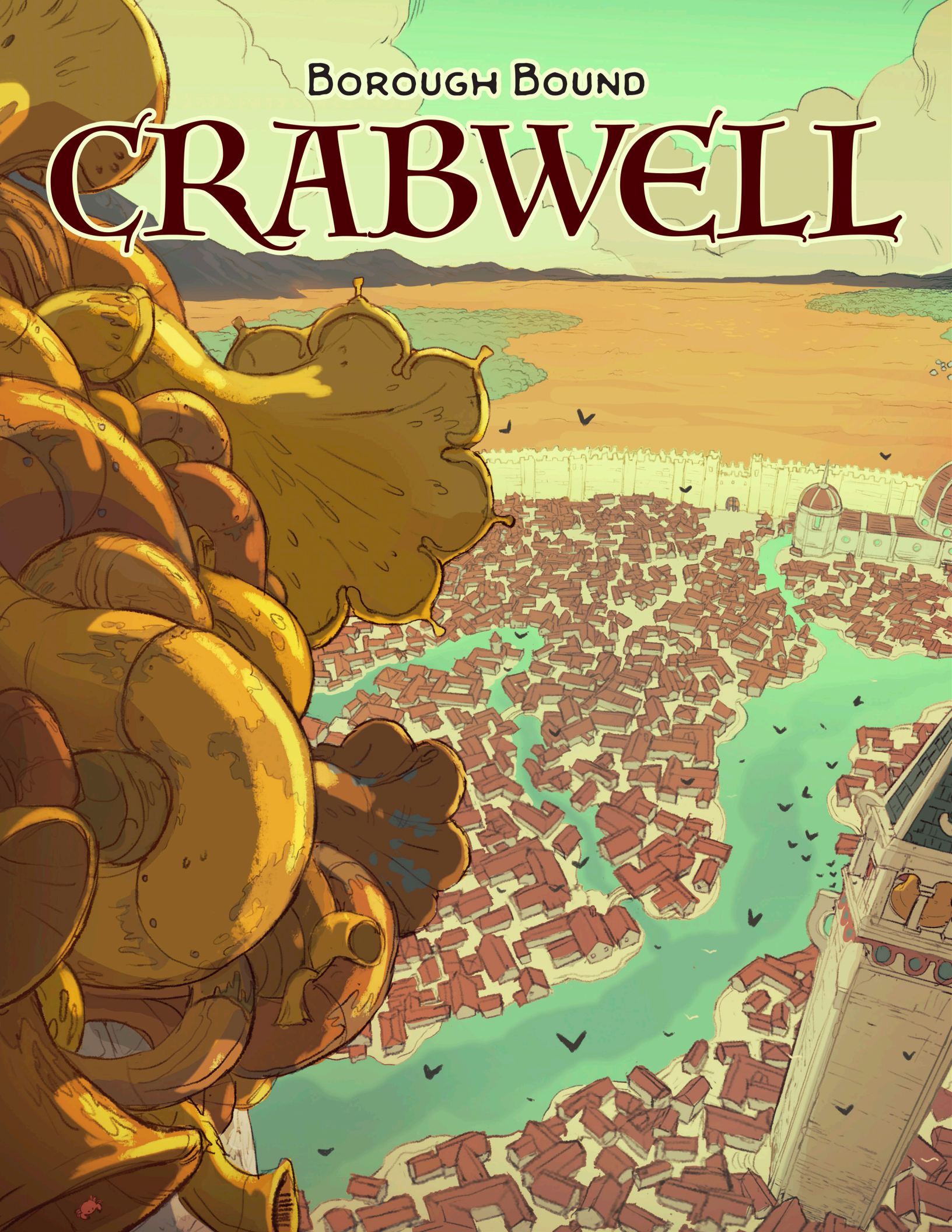


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CRABWELL

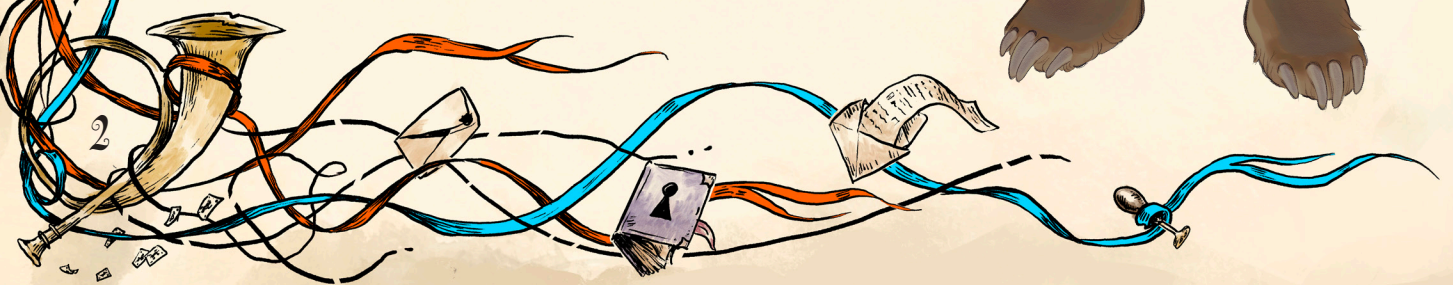


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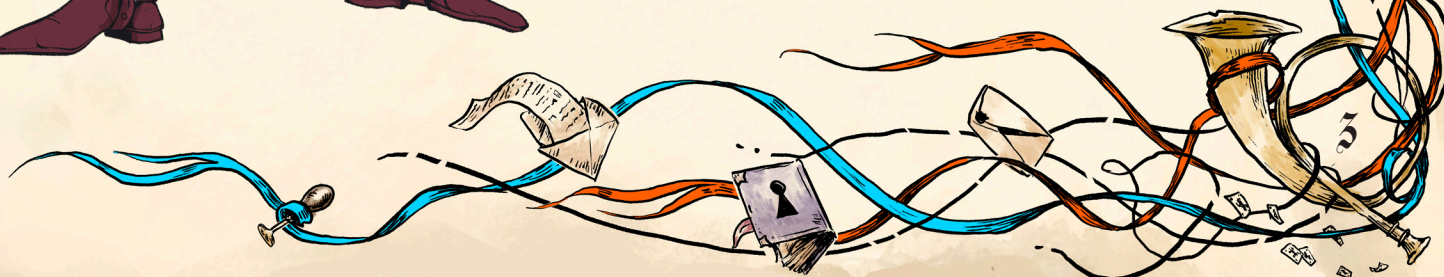
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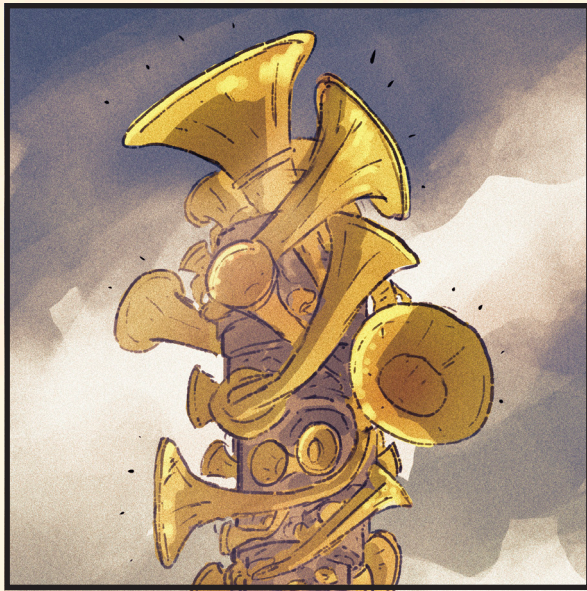
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The Omniphone

CITY OF THE ETERNAL VOICE



At Crabwell's center, an immortal tower stands as a monument to architecture, acoustics, and law. This structure—which has “OMNIPHONE” etched into ancient stone—predates all known records. Every night at sundown, Bellringer Simon Thibald rings Vela's Bell, signaling to all that now is the time for silence and attention. Thereafter, a booming and authoritative voice echoes out from the Omniphone, listing new decrees for all to follow. The voice is audible for hundreds of miles, though it resonates at a moderate volume even when one is standing immediately adjacent to the tower. Scribes furiously jot notes, preparing for their nightly ritual of cross-referencing the new decrees against historical precedent and potential contradictions.

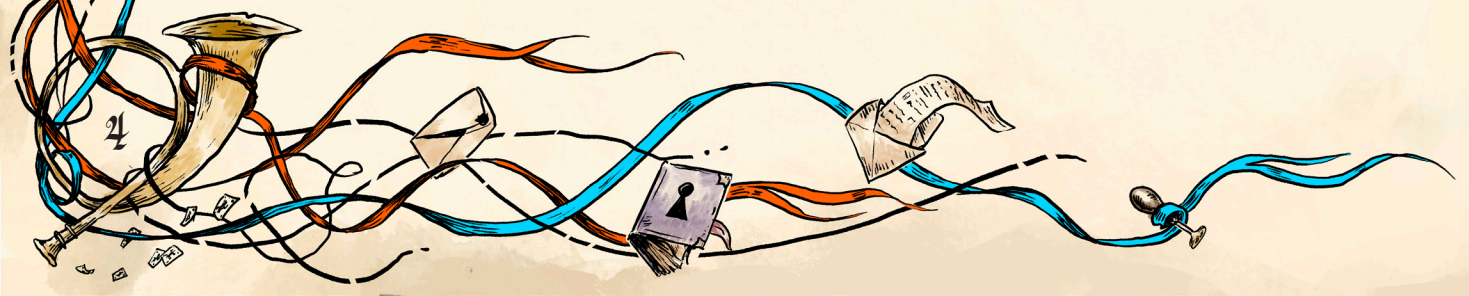
For centuries (millennia?), Crabwell has remained the legal and cultural capital of Naticram. Entac's decrees are followed across the wide continent, and the city has thrived as a beacon of law and moderation, an example for lesser cities to emulate. Those who would rather not follow Entac's enigmatic laws are free to move to the Southern Rim with the ascetics or to meg-

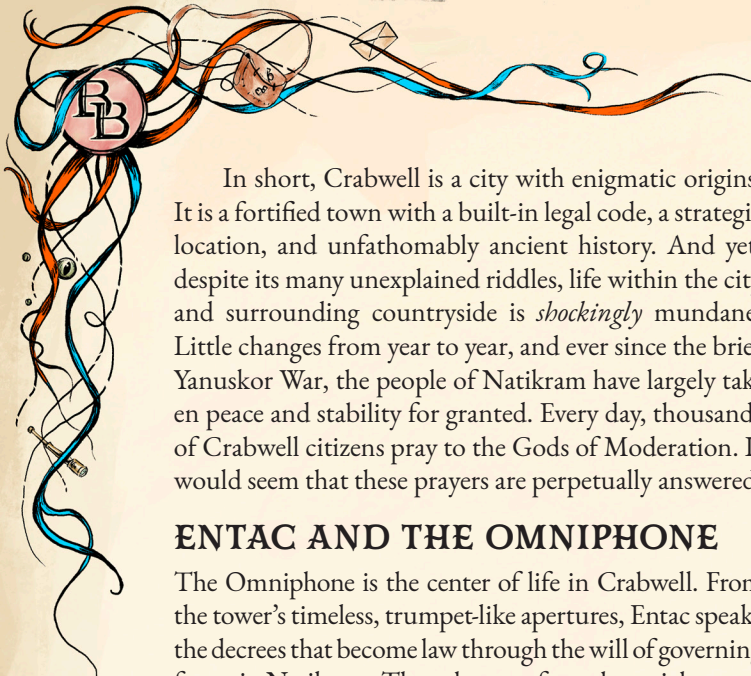
apolis Svarnahelm, the city-state ruled by ex-Crabwell oligarchs. Most, however, are comfortable living in the relative stability of Crabwell and its surrounding environs. Free from excess, free from strife, and free from political gridlock, Entac's decrees have guided the Naticram people throughout the ages.

No one knows who or what Entac is. The timbre of the voice has always remained constant. Whatever it is must presumably be immortal or unchanging, though no one has ever been inside the Omniphone to confirm. Some suspect it's a magic trick, a means for the elite to control and subdue the population. Some prefer to imagine that Entac is a guardian spirit that protects the city. Others secretly believe it's a God, though decree after decree has demanded that worship and deification of either Entac or the Omniphone be punished with death.

Crabwell is an *ancient* city. Even the oldest manuscripts known across the realm of Yanuskor refer to the walled city interchangeably as “the old bastion,” “Entac's dominion,” and—perhaps most inexplicably—just “Crabwell.” The origin of the name is a mystery to all. Although the town lies adjacent to the pleasant Asatti River, one is unlikely to find many crustaceans so far from the delta 50 miles downstream. Some surmise its name is an oblique reference to Goddess Thaela who is often depicted sitting at a well. However, scholars suggest that this aspect of Thaelan imagery can be traced to the name “Crabwell” and not the other way around. Some consider whether the geography of Yanuskor was noticeably different when the city was founded, or whether “crab” refers to the stubbornness or tenacity of its people. All of these hypotheses lack concrete evidence. The city is called Crabwell, and that's just that. In recent years, the Crabwell Tourism Board has been strategically breeding crabs in an attempt to create something of a mascot for capital city.

The walls of the city, though ancient, are not presumed to be as old as the Omniphone itself. Inscribed with detailed stone etchings across their entire perimeter, the walls are considered the more impressive architectural feat. Much like the Omniphone, no one is sure who built this imposing sandstone fortification. No one is even sure why the walls' creators put so much effort into its excessive decoration, nor even what most of the etchings are intended to depict. Crabwell residents appreciate the security the walls provide and accept that the city's many mysteries may forever elude them.





In short, Crabwell is a city with enigmatic origins. It is a fortified town with a built-in legal code, a strategic location, and unfathomably ancient history. And yet, despite its many unexplained riddles, life within the city and surrounding countryside is *shockingly* mundane. Little changes from year to year, and ever since the brief Yanuskor War, the people of Natikram have largely taken peace and stability for granted. Every day, thousands of Crabwell citizens pray to the Gods of Moderation. It would seem that these prayers are perpetually answered.

ENTAC AND THE OMNIPHONE

The Omniphone is the center of life in Crabwell. From the tower's timeless, trumpet-like apertures, Entac speaks the decrees that become law through the will of governing forces in Natikram. Though many fear what might come to pass if Entac's wishes were regularly undermined or disobeyed, the people of Crabwell and most of Natikram are happy to live by the rules that Entac sets. Many have tried to pinpoint a precise logic or reasoning behind his decrees, but no scrivener, bellringer, or philosopher has yet succeeded. In truth, the only constant with regard to Entac's whims is that they seem to be ever-changing.

Structurally, there's not much to the Omniphone. Its walls are decorated with the same quasi-hieroglyphic etchings as the ring wall that protects the city. Toward the roof, the structure billows outward in intertwining horns, likely a necessary component of its impressive acoustic range and consistency. The building has no doors or windows, though architectural critics find that the combination of stark elegance and hyper-detailed stonework make for a pleasing juxtaposition. As no one has ever been inside the Omniphone, it is unknown whether the building contains rooms, additional load-bearing walls, or whether any magical accoutrements aid in amplifying the decrees.

Entac's voice is a rich baritone, leading many to refer to the source of the voice as "he." The precise ways in which one speaks or writes of Entac can be revealing. Those skeptical of Entac's omniscience or benevolence prefer to use the imprecise "it." Conspiracy-prone non-conformists may refer to Entac as "they," an allusion to a supposed cabal that magically controls the voice. Those who think of Entac as a God might write "He," while those who understand Entac to be an immortal though not necessarily of divine origin might opt for the lowercase "he" instead. Though Entac has repeatedly expressed the decree

NONE SHALL REFER TO ME AS A GOD, NOR REVERE ME AS SUCH,

this hasn't fully quelled the notion that Entac should be held on the same pedestal as the triple trinity of Gods exalted in Yanuskor. The most common way to speak, however, is to assume Entac is male and at least "human-adjacent." As such, the lowercase "he" is the accepted form.

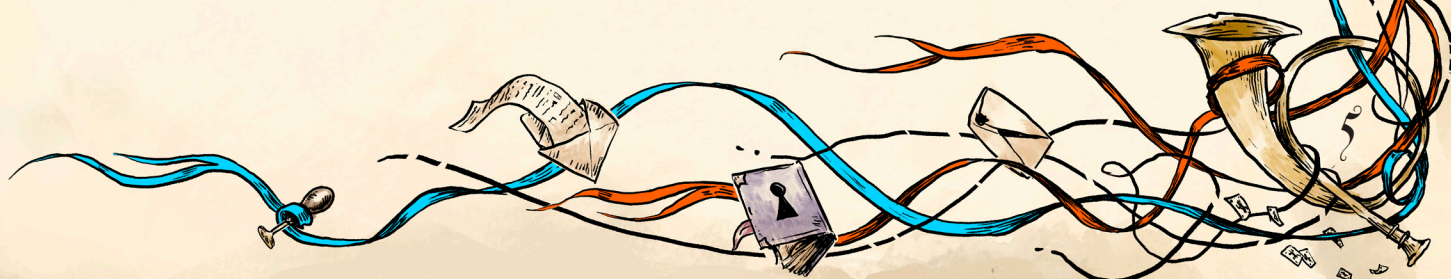
GM Note: Don't worry. Entac's true nature is described later in this chapter, though it may be more fun to devise an alternate identity for the voice or to leave it a mystery if "uncovering the truth about Entac" isn't a goal your players pursue.

The people of Natikram have historically used different strategies to enact Entac's will. According to ancient records, early Crabwell residents lived by his teachings without formal policing, as though he were more of a spiritual guru as opposed to a legal authority. During the Nights of Shadow, the Dreamsand Cults chose their own interpretation of each decree and acted with extreme violence toward anyone who acted even partially against this interpretation. The Nights of Shadow finally ended when the Marginalists took control, leading to the most lenient possible interpretations and policing. During the rule of the Marginalists, society slid into a backspin, and much of Crabwell fell into squalor.

It wasn't until the Bellringer Revolution that the "modern era" of Natikram began. Much as the triple trinity focuses on threes (three orders of three Gods each), Crabwell too is now controlled by a trinity of forces: Entac makes decrees, the scribes archive and interpret his will, and the bellringer determines how best to enact this will with the resources available.

THE DECREES

Each night, Entac provides new decrees. Typically, he announces between three and five, few of which will have much impact on day-to-day life. These decrees might dictate economic policy, guide the morals of Crabwell's people, instruct in the construction of new infrastructure, or reverse the sentiment of prior decrees. Some decrees are extremely vague, while others are exceedingly specific, referencing individual members of the community, precise economic figures,



or exacting specifications about new construction. Often, there seems to be a straightforward logic to the decrees (“y’know, we *do* need a new school after all, so that makes sense”), whereas other decrees may seem arbitrary or altogether counterproductive (“why would we shutter *this* school, just to build a new one right next door?”).

As far as the scribes can ascertain, this has always been the case. Even the most zealous adherents to Entac’s decrees have trouble justifying some of the more outlandish rules. Many choose to believe that in his complete omniscience, even a small or counterintuitive change to Natikram life might inexplicably prevent catastrophe in the future, though this is difficult to prove

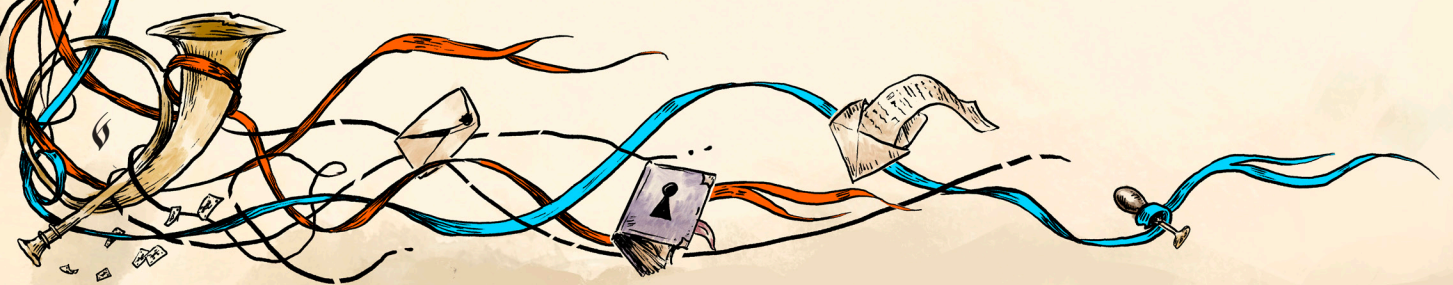
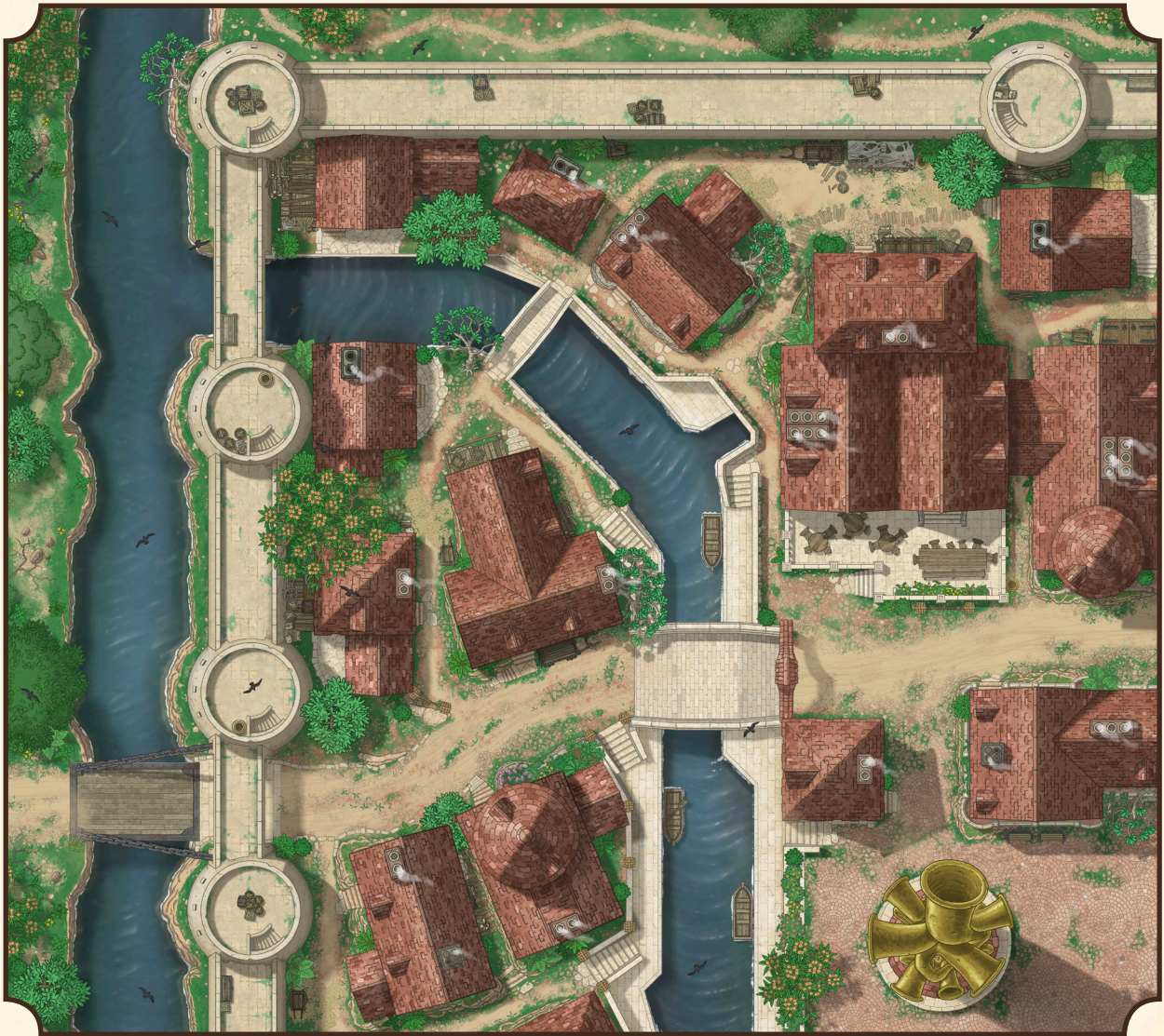
without engaging in endless counterfactuals.

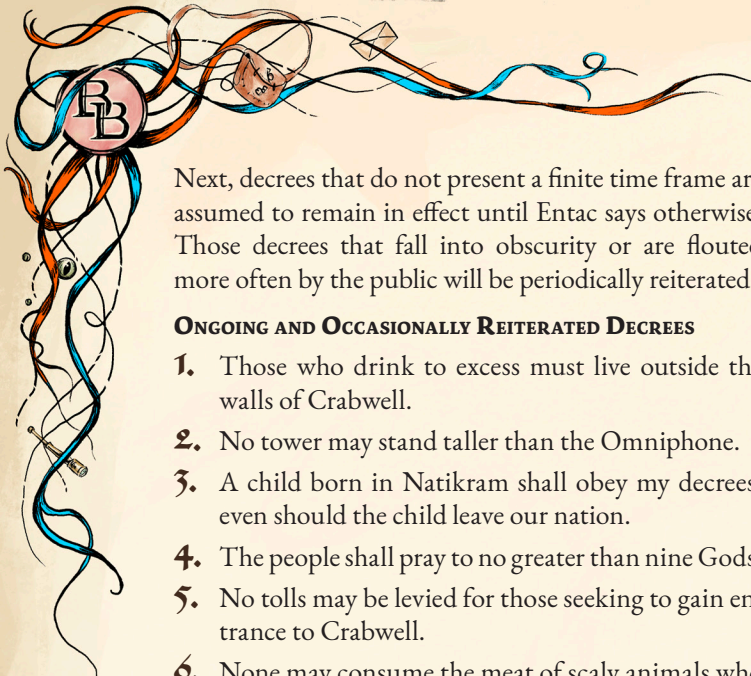
Entac’s decrees, though various and unpredictable, have at least a few common traits. First, all decrees are *commands*. Though statements of facts may be embedded in each decree, there will always be an associated action item. For example, an oft-repeated decree is

YOU SHALL SPEAK OF ME AS ENTAC, FOR THAT IS MY NAME.

Furthermore, decrees will often react to recent events. If an alleged criminal is on trial, Entac will often pass down a ruling and a sentence in one.

INARO THE UNKNOWNABLE IS GUILTY OF ARSON AND DECEIT AND SHALL BE HANGED.





Next, decrees that do not present a finite time frame are assumed to remain in effect until Entac says otherwise. Those decrees that fall into obscurity or are flouted more often by the public will be periodically reiterated.

ONGOING AND OCCASIONALLY REITERATED DECREES

1. Those who drink to excess must live outside the walls of Crabwell.
2. No tower may stand taller than the Omniphone.
3. A child born in Natikram shall obey my decrees, even should the child leave our nation.
4. The people shall pray to no greater than nine Gods.
5. No tolls may be levied for those seeking to gain entrance to Crabwell.
6. None may consume the meat of scaly animals who breathe air.
7. No citizen shall work for greater than 60 hours in a week unless they are farmers.
8. Primacy shall be given to the Gods of Moderation.
9. None shall travel to Svarnahelm.
10. Crabwell shall mint coins of gold, the value of which shall depreciate by two percent each year.

GM Note: Entac's decrees are a convenient way to raise the stakes, add bonus challenges, or enrich the lore of your adventures. Each in-game night, you have the opportunity to fundamentally change the rules of how the party is expected to operate. If they've been spamming a magic weapon, have Entac forbid the use of magic items. If your well-planned economy suddenly breaks, have Entac adjust it. If you need to offer a new plot hook, have Entac put a bounty on someone's head. There are very few limits about what would make sense for Entac to decree, so get creative whenever you need to push the party forward.

Alternatively, if the stress of coming up with new decrees to announce each night becomes grating, your party won't mind if you state "you all listen to Entac's decrees this evening but find them inconsequential to your adventure." Giving the players a respite from new rules to follow will be appreciated.

THE PEOPLES OF CRABWELL

The explored reaches of Yanuskor are far smaller than many other known planes of existence. The world's quaint denizens, however, are largely oblivious to the relatively minuscule size of their accessible territory. Yanuskor is bounded by infinitely towering and impassable mountains on all sides. Though further expanses may lie beyond, permanent, violent storm clouds threaten any party that attempts to cross the peaks.

Natikram's peoples are diverse, and they largely commingle. Though some cities or regions have greater populations of one peoples or another, there are few areas within the realm that are truly homogeneous.¹ Crabwell is no exception. In the city streets, one will find humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, and other members of less populous races: the canine kennelborn, the slow and thoughtful fel'dær, or the scholarly but short-lived chesskæl.

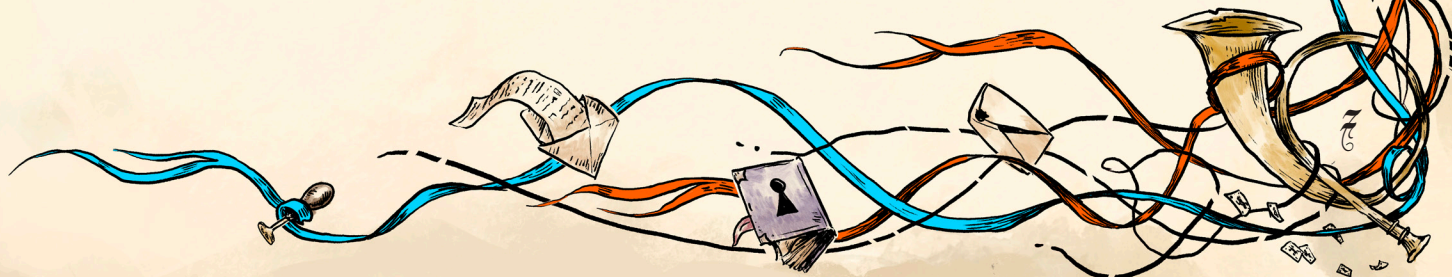
Despite his diverse array of demands, Entac rarely singles out a given race when making a decree. However, the specific diets, lifespans, and cultural heritages of these diverse peoples mean that certain decrees are likely to impact some races more heavily than others. For example, a decree that forbids the consumption of grain outside of feast days will greatly limit the diet of the chesskæl, who are unable to metabolize either meat or legumes. This has occasionally created pockets of dissatisfaction and dissent amongst Crabwell's citizens.

Most humans in Natikram use only given names, with specificity added by clarifying profession. For example, "Thannel" is a common name in Crabwell, but "blacksmith Thannel" would refer to at most one or two citizens. Surnames are typically only used by humans who own land. This practice traces back to an obscure three-hundred-year-old decree that required land deeds to be signed with surnames. Wealthier citizens will often introduce themselves by presenting first and last name, as though their fine dress and soft hands weren't adequate signals of their riches. Nonhumans use a range of different naming schemes.

HAFSWELL PASSAGE

Extending east-west through Crabwell is the great highway of Natikram, a road hundreds of miles long known as Hafswell Passage. Connecting all of the major cities

¹ The reptilian nith of the Kardama Lands to the north are one such exception, but they are almost never seen in Natikram.





Kardama Lands

Nine Follies

▲ Merkfur Outpost

○ Last Respite

▲ Pale Sanctum

○ Rodder's Hole

Loch Foss

○ Svarnahelm

○ Thaelion

Fel'dar Forest

The Severed Prairie

Lake Druha

▲ Lirdath's Mill

The Nascent Shores

Asatti River Delta

Alydyn Creek

○ Vonnedale

▲ Fort of Order

○ Aldyn

○ Crabwell

Hafswell Passage

▲ Mergo's Beacon

Asatti River

Ashen Grove

Blynka's Knuckles

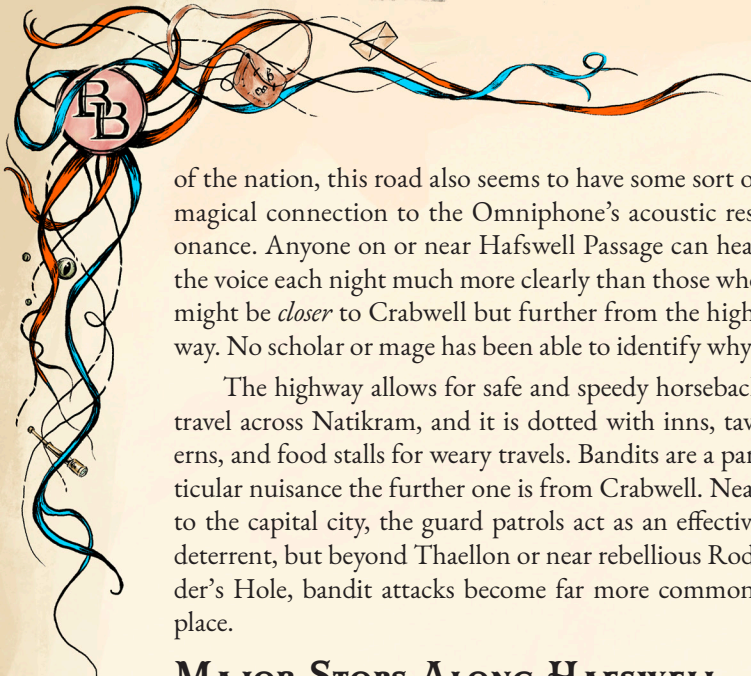
Arkun Woods

Eranosian Caverns

▲ Gell's Monastery

▲ Dewbar

YAYUSKOR



of the nation, this road also seems to have some sort of magical connection to the Omniphone's acoustic resonance. Anyone on or near Hafswell Passage can hear the voice each night much more clearly than those who might be *closer* to Crabwell but further from the highway. No scholar or mage has been able to identify why.

The highway allows for safe and speedy horseback travel across Natikram, and it is dotted with inns, taverns, and food stalls for weary travelers. Bandits are a particular nuisance the further one is from Crabwell. Near to the capital city, the guard patrols act as an effective deterrent, but beyond Thaellon or near rebellious Rodder's Hole, bandit attacks become far more commonplace.

MAJOR STOPS ALONG HAFSWELL PASSAGE WEST

VONNEDALE

Crabwell is surrounded by miles of farmland, but most meat and produce still come from the village of Vonnedale, home to the richest soil and most potent agricultural mages. Elven migrants from Ullha Dore'i make up much of the ruling class, leasing their vast plots of land to sharecroppers. Entac's economic decrees have repeatedly endorsed or validated this predatory practice.

FEL'DÆR FOREST

Hafswell Passage winds its way through Fel'dær Forest, the ancestral home of Yanuskor's fel'dær population. As hunters and loggers from Rodder's Hole disrupt life in the forest, the fel'dær foragers have begun assimilating into urban centers. Travelers on Hafswell Passage are advised to be particularly careful when moving through the woods, as fel'dær woodspeakers will gladly inspire the flora and fauna alike to restrict passage.

RODDER'S HOLE

City Lord Rodder refuses to bow to Entac's will and has built his own town far from the Crabwell Guard. Rodder rules over his town of dissidents with the fervor of a despot. For defensive purposes, the whole town is situated in a man-made crater. As such, it's muddy, squalid, and often devoid of sunlight. For reasons unknown, Entac has decreed little that would stir Crabwell's governing forces to quash this minor rebellion. Violent and lawless, the city's disobedience may portend greater unrest to come.

MAJOR STOPS ALONG HAFSWELL PASSAGE EAST

ALDYN

Sleepy Aldyn benefits greatly from Entac's stabilizing decrees. Idyllic farmsteads and riverside fishing huts dot the landscape surrounding the quaint city center. The grand Cathedral of Arkus is Natikram's largest place of worship, a towering gothic basilica that stands in stark contrast to the charming plaza in which it sits.

THAELLON

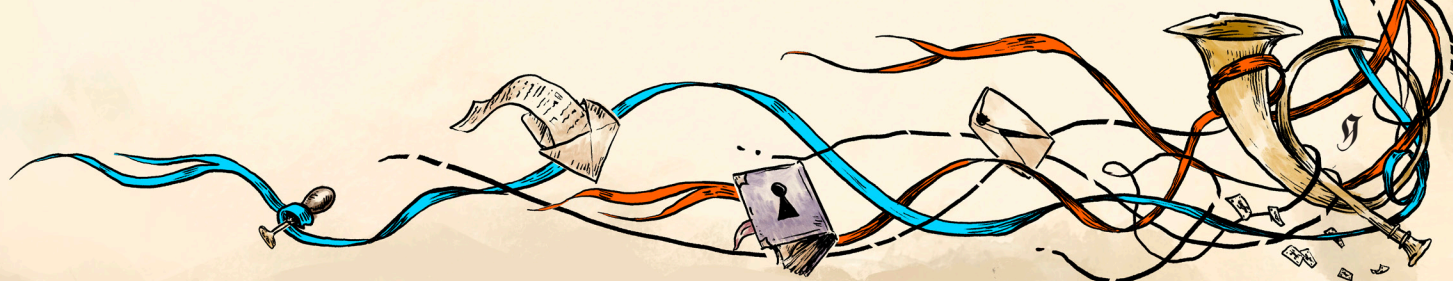
Home to prestigious Velan University, Thaellon is Natikram's hub of magic and research. Many of Natikram's greatest minds spend their formative years in Thaellon, pursuing programs in agriculture, divinity, wizardry, and statecraft. The rabble-rousing Thaellon's Sceptics can trace their origins to heterodox philosophers from the statecraft department, which has also produced the majority of Crabwell's bellringers. Though Natikram is decidedly pre-industrial, artisans in Thaellon are beginning to utilize simple arcane machines to increase their output.

LAST RESPITE

Hundreds of miles from Crabwell, at the far northeastern terminus of Hafswell Passage, travelers will finally arrive at Last Respite. This extensive tavern complex functions as a lawless getaway, a nexus for travelers from across the far-off realms, and the gateway to Natikram's under-explored frontier. Hot spring saunas, minstrel residencies, and endlessly flowing mead make this the perfect home away from home for explorers, traders, and those who simply want to get away.

DECREES ABOUT TRAVEL

1. Those who travel east by horse must bring twice as much feed as they need, and they must provide excess feed to farmers in Aldyn.
2. The gates to Crabwell shall remain closed from dusk till dawn.
3. Faster horses shall pass on the left.
4. Anyone who fords Aldyn Creek shall be hanged.
5. Caravans entering Vonnedale from the east must be inspected for crop-eating pests.
6. Wagons on Hafswell Passage must be no greater than seventeen feet in height. (*note*: it is unlikely this decree affected even a single traveler)



7. Those traveling to Thaellon must wear gloves until the city is within sight.
8. Riverboat hulls must be scrubbed weekly.
9. Those who seek entrance to Rodder's Hole must first sleep in Fel'dær Forest for at least two nights.
10. Highwaymen who rob travelers on Hafswell Passage may be jailed for at most two weeks.



SKEETER ALMINAR: Whenever there is the slightest disruption to trade or travel (a heavy storm, a single bandit raid, the steppebeast migration, etc.), listless twenty-year-old Skeeter Alminar (he/him) is sent east down Hafswell Passage to work at his father's customs checkpoint. *Technically*, this checkpoint isn't accepting tolls for those seeking to enter Crabwell proper, but just to walk the final 5 miles of the journey. Skeeter's father (who has many money-making schemes that take advantage of loopholes in Entac's decrees) gives half of the funds raised from the tolls to the scribes and to the Crabwell Guard to avoid any potential trouble.

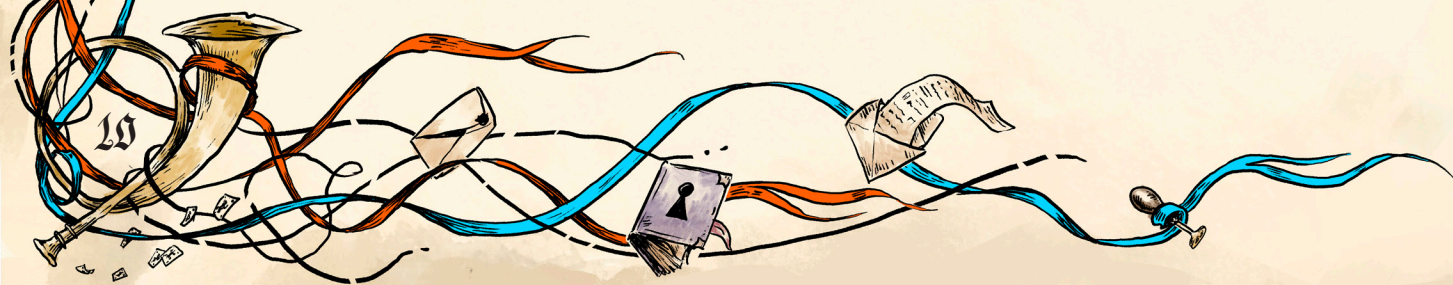
Skeeter is maximally unenthusiased with this line of work. If someone were to walk or trot their horse just a few feet around the checkpoint, Skeeter wouldn't bother requesting that the checkpoint's guards stop them. As such, the checkpoint is barely profitable. If Lord Alminar knew just how lazily Skeeter approached this work, the patriarch would probably try thrusting Skeeter into some other Alminar business venture instead.

THE LIQUID TRUTH

In Crabwell's central square, visitors will likely hear music billowing out from The Liquid Truth at all times of day—so long as Entac hasn't placed limits on public performances. The Liquid Truth is Crabwell's premier entertainment establishment, with multiple stages for theater, music, and pantomime. Bulldog Kennelborn owner Haroun (he/him) has done an extraordinary job establishing the multifunctional tavern as a staple of Crabwell arts and leisure.

Haroun's business masterstroke was to create a tavern that catered to all demographics. Wealthy Crabwell residents attend serial dramas weekly, and those of lesser means enjoy drink specials on feast days. Buskers usher artisans inside for lunch deals, and dedicated "minimal vulgarity" comedies give parents an opportunity to affordably introduce their precocious tykes to the world of theater. With new performances and specials rotating every day, every resident of Crabwell has an incentive to visit the tavern at least once or twice a month, and its central location in the city means no one is ever terribly far from the entertainment hub.

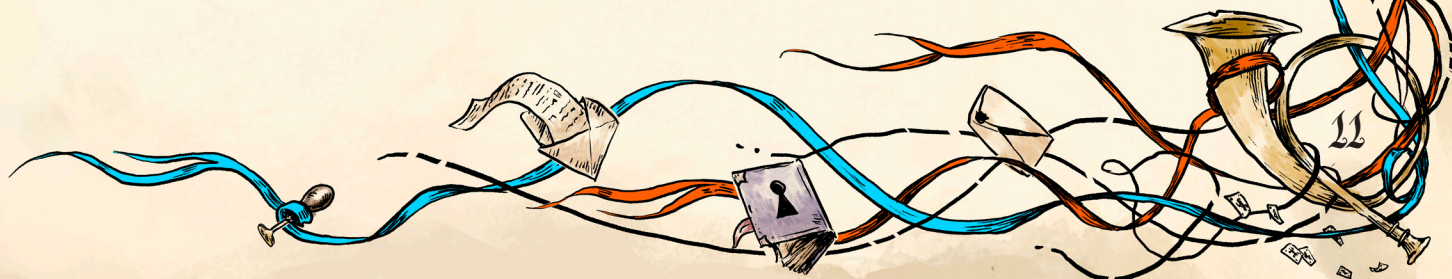
When populating The Liquid Truth with patrons, feel free to roll as many times as needed on the associated table.





d8 **LIQUID TRUTH PATRON** **BIO**

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | JESSIN (HE/HIM) | Jessin is a runner for Bellringer Simon Thibald. When Simon needs someone to tackle a minor task between 1 and 20 miles from Crabwell, he'll send Jessin out on foot to take care of it. New decree impacts loggers in Arkun Woods? Jessin takes care of it. Need to find a missing person last seen on the Asatti River? That's a Jessin task too. Anything that can be accomplished by one person without a horse instantly becomes Jessin's responsibility. When in Crabwell, Jessin will typically eat lunch and have a few drinks at The Liquid Truth, as it is so close to his place of work. If prodded, Jessin may reveal his slate of tasks for the coming day. |
| 2 | DEL'NOR (SHE/HER) | Crabwell residents go absolutely crazy for the hammered dulcimer, and few perform with the showy dexterity of Del'nor. This chesskæl bard is a gifted performer, able to perform virtuosically while singing tales of love and legend. She and her band The D'lights are offered regular residencies at The Liquid Truth, and Del'nor is always probing patrons for tales that she can weave into new songs. |
| 3 | LISSENIA (SHE/HER) | City elf Lissenia is such a master of stealth that it is unlikely one would notice she's doing anything illicit in Crabwell. Lissenia is a member of the Mercantilites, a loose faction of go-betweens who are attempting to alleviate tensions between Natikram and Svarnahelm. By establishing secret business arrangements between the two rival states, the Mercantilites hope to slowly build long-lasting economic bridges. Lissenia is in town to meet crafters who might benefit from Svarnahelm's spark vial technology. These potent arcane batteries are <i>de facto</i> prohibited in Natikram, but Lissenia is peddling them nonetheless. |
| 4 | CARMAC (HE/HIM) | Carmac is an agent with Crabwell's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. This Asatti River Delta native has been tasked with locating new sources of healthy aquatic life for Crabwell's fishermen to reel in. With the rise of Svarnahelm's industry, many of Yanuskor's waterways have become increasingly polluted. It's up to Carmac to explore every bog, tributary, and marshland looking for untainted ecosystems. Plenty of other fishermen stop by The Liquid Truth after a day on the river, so Carmac is always in good company. |
| 5 | CHUCCAN (THEY/THEM) | One might suspect that given their large, calloused hands that fel'dær fine motor skills would be limited, but Crabwell newcomer Chuccan is quite adept with small mechanisms. Chuccan has made quite the name for themself as Crabwell's premier locksmith. Many have asked Chuccan to employ these skills for illicit uses. Chuccan repeatedly turns down these would-be criminals. They are happy just to know that they are providing security for many in town. |
| 6 | YIQO LEATHER-BONE (HE/HIM) | Yiqo is a slapstick jester, a gnome of noteworthy height and particularly unusual flexibility. Yiqo hosts a weekly variety show on The Liquid Truth's mainstage, contorting and pratfalling <i>ad nauseum</i> while introducing each subsequent act. Yiqo isn't particularly well-liked, but tavernkeep Haroun finds the jester too entertaining to let go. Those who decide to engage Yiqo in conversation after an act are often shocked to discover that he's wildly pretentious about his art and is wholly unable to take a joke himself. |
| 7 | WILLA MANDOSS (SHE/HER) | Despite owning her own farm on the outskirts of Crabwell, Willa and her family have found it exceedingly difficult to turn a profit. Without the superior soil of Vonnedale, proper agricultural magic, or a legion of sharecroppers to work her crops, she simply cannot compete with the larger farms. Willa would be happy to farm solely for subsistence, but she has to keep up with property taxes and the money she owes to Blynka's Reserve. Times are tough, and she's taking a break at The Liquid Truth before asking for loan forgiveness from the bank. |
| 8 | EAMON (HE/HIM) | While Crabwell artisans pride themselves on their craftsmanship, their work is nevertheless far more expensive than the mass-produced wares from industrial Svarnahelm. This provides exceptional opportunities for enterprising smugglers who hope to resell Svarnahelm goods to Crabwell citizens. Eamon has found a niche in bulk cookware. Shrewd Eamon will proudly sell you an entire cookware set at a decidedly modest markup. Make no mistake, however. Eamon is wantonly flouting Entac's decree against doing business with Svarnahelm. |



DECREES ABOUT ENTERTAINMENT

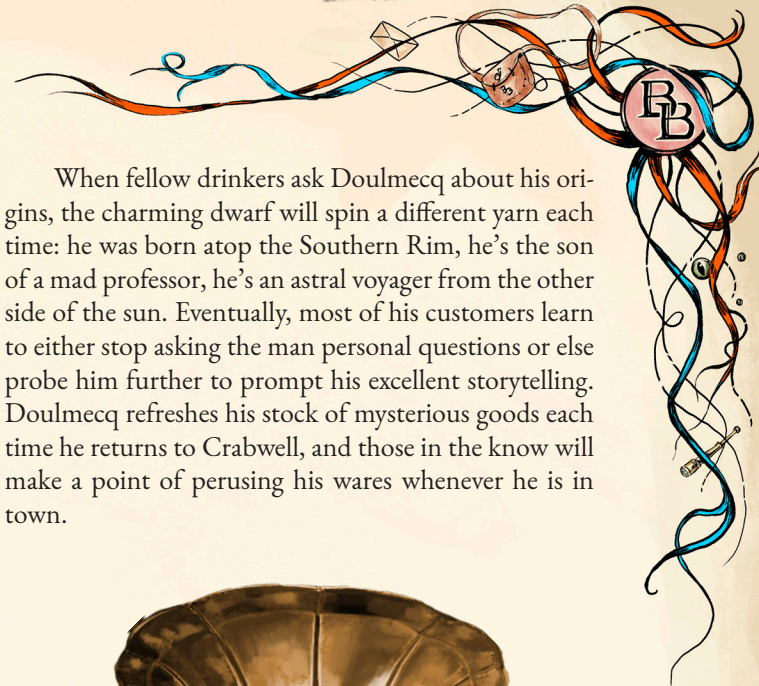
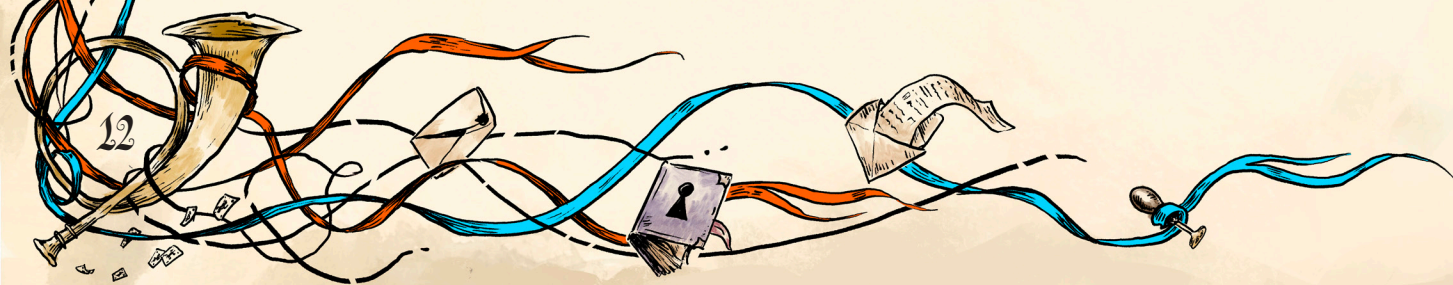
1. All epic poetry shall use dactylic hexameter.
2. The use of siellon berries in the fabrication of paints and dyes shall be prohibited.
3. Theater performers shall pay an additional 3% of their income in taxes to the bellringer.
4. None may reap profit from the performance of purely improvised music.
5. All sporting events shall take place east of Crabwell or west of Vonnedale.
6. Gambling shall be prohibited, except on rivers and lakes.
7. Novelists and memoirists shall be provided with ten pieces of parchment per month.
8. No music shall be performed until the next eclipse.
9. Landowners shall provide housing to troubadours with soiled clothing.
10. The Omniphone shall not be depicted in tapestries, and tapestries that already depict the Omniphone shall be burned.

DOULMECQ AND THE WAND OF TACTICS

Every other full moon, a mysterious dwarf with a braided forked beard makes his way to the Liquid Truth without fail. Doulmecq (he/him) is a purveyor of unusual wares, a traveler, a tinkerer, a supposedly wealthy vagabond. Doulmecq likes to take stock of the tavern's patrons before honing in on the most compelling visitors he spies. He will approach, ask them to pay for his drink, and if they oblige, Doumecq will reveal what he has for sale today.

On this particular evening, Doulmecq is selling *the wand of tactics*, a gnarled wooden sprig affixed with an eerily familiar brass horn. The dwarf claims that this wand employs the same magic as the Omniphone. Should its owner use the wand as an amplifier, any number of companions within range will be able to hear the owner telepathically. Wise patrons might object to Doulmecq's claim; after all, that is not how the Omniphone works at all. Entac's voice isn't *telepathic*. Everyone hears it. It's a *real acoustic sound*, right? Doulmecq chuckles. So many understand so little.

When fellow drinkers ask Doulmecq about his origins, the charming dwarf will spin a different yarn each time: he was born atop the Southern Rim, he's the son of a mad professor, he's an astral voyager from the other side of the sun. Eventually, most of his customers learn to either stop asking the man personal questions or else probe him further to prompt his excellent storytelling. Doulmecq refreshes his stock of mysterious goods each time he returns to Crabwell, and those in the know will make a point of perusing his wares whenever he is in town.





THAELLON'S SKEPTICS

In The Liquid Truth's secret back room, gamblers, nonconformists, and—weirdly—wealthy college students play endless games of chankla, a game of strategy and chance played on stacked boards. Gambling is restricted by Omniphone decree frequently enough that most establishments that offer games of chance do so clandestinely.

However, the back room serves a second purpose beyond just high-stakes gaming: it is Crabwell's central meeting place for Thaellon's Skeptics, an organization of revolutionaries who seek to disprove Entac's omniscience and benevolence, undermine his decrees, and overthrow traditional power structures in Crabwell.

The history of Crabwell is littered with similar dissident organizations, though typically their aims are more utilitarian. Businessmen don't like following Entac's ever-changing decrees, and so they decide to rebel. A group of zealots praise a new pantheon of Gods and thus disregard Entac's strict religious mandates. Even bandits who flout reasonable laws prohibiting theft, arson, or ransoms are in a sense "revolutionaries" who undermine Entac's will. Thaellon's Skeptics, however, are far more philosophical and erudite in their defiance. The organization's leadership is perennially dominated by students from Velan University who lack a knack for populist rhetoric.

Each member of Thaellon's Skeptics is likely to have their own nuanced beliefs about who or what Entac is. Surprisingly, the order is not particularly concerned with revealing the exact nature of Entac. Instead, the Skeptics prioritize a few more basic tenets:

1. Either Entac is not omniscient, he is not benevolent, or he is neither.
2. Therefore, disobeying Entac's decrees is a moral imperative.
3. Rethinking society begins with renouncing Entac.

In theory, many Crabwell citizens might be sympathetic to these views. A performer who loses their income to an unexpected decree would have plenty of reason to be upset with Entac and would likely doubt Entac's omniscience or benevolence. However, Thaellon's Skeptics use rather unorthodox means to promote their ideology: civil disobedience combined with rhyming couplets. Their mantra is the decidedly un-catchy "His voice is loud forsooth / His words all shroud the

truth," a refrain they repeat whenever they disregard some innocuous or trivial decree. The pithy couplets do little to inspire support from onlookers.

The greatest shortcoming for the Skeptics is their unwillingness to take risks. Most members of their order are university students with promising lives ahead of them. To defy one of the more serious decrees could come with a more grievous punishment: a stint in the Hedral Prison, loss of land or title, or even hanging. Despite their noble intentions, the Skeptics find it difficult to justify risking their stable lifestyles to promote a broadly unpopular agenda.

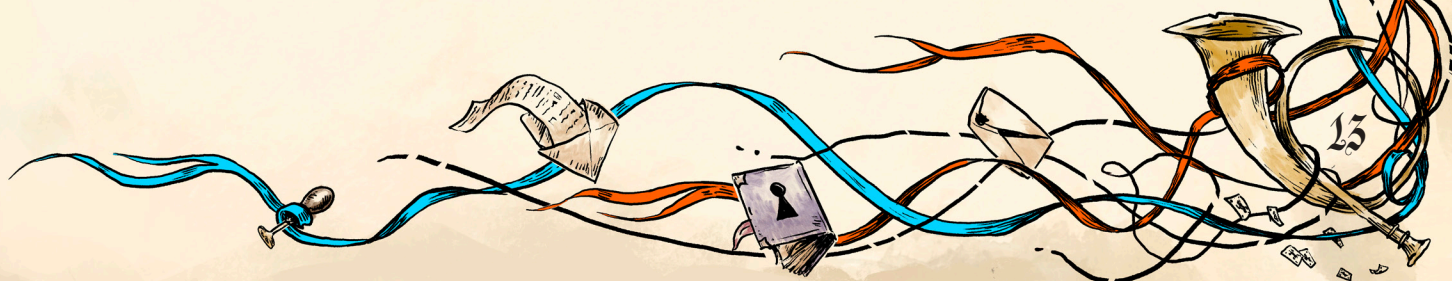
While publicly denouncing the foolish delinquency, Crabwell's elites secretly support Thaellon's Skeptics. Such inept rebellion only serves to cement Entac's authority. Instead of actively undermining the power structures of Naticram, Thaellon's Skeptics minor defiances and embarrassing couplets make disobedience appear infantile. A cabal of aristocrats who have repeatedly benefited from Entac's decrees has even secretly funded the activities of the Skeptics.

VELMIE DARTIN

One of the boldest members of Thaellon's Skeptics is Velan University statecraft student Velmie Dartin (she/her). Velmie is the half-elven daughter of Vonnedale's wealthiest landowner, Lord Nensier Dartin. Despite her incredible means, Velmie has taken an interest in revolutionary politics and hopes to use her degree in statecraft to somehow—somehow!—thrust Naticram into a period of glorious and radical progress.

Velmie's political views are noble, and no one can fault her enthusiasm. Velmie has seen the way her father takes advantage of his sharecroppers and was aghast when she realized that every one of his abusive business practices has been affirmed and reaffirmed as legal by Entac. Would a benevolent ruler allow such wanton injustice to continue unchecked?

Despite her naivety, Velmie has stumbled on a profound truth that shapes the very nature of Naticram society: if Entac's decrees are *truly* random, the net effect will be to reinforce the hegemony of those already in power. On average, a political system with *no* ideological underpinning will never fundamentally undermine existing hierarchies. The unpredictable whims of Entac may occasionally swing far in one direction or another, but in the long run, Crabwell's elites will find that little threatens their continued accumulation of wealth.



Unlike other Skeptics, Velmie is willing to get her hands dirty. In addition to the common defiances (staying out past curfew, buying goods from Svarnahelm, dressing immodestly), Velmie freed a man from a public hanging, armed union strikers, and even attempted to enter the Omniphone with ropes and pitons. Were it not for Velmie's father's connections, the Crabwell Guard would have shot her on sight for any of the three transgressions. As it were, she was escorted to her father's Crabwell manor on each occasion and let go with a slap on the wrist.

If the party of adventurers appeals to Velmie's bold political ideals, she will gladly take them into the fold. The party will be expected to follow the guidelines of the Skeptics (including sharing the awkward rhymes after each act of rebellion), but so long as they share an interest in shining a light on Entac's fallibility, they will be welcomed with open arms.



PLOT HOOK: VALIDATE THE SKEPTICS

Discovering the true identity of Entac is not necessarily the end goal of Thaellon's Skeptics. Their primary aim is for the people of Natikram to just ignore the rambling voice. However, were Entac's nature revealed, it could serve to justify the Skeptics' doubts. Anything short of a God sitting at the base of the tower would be a crippling blow to Entac's staunchest supporters.

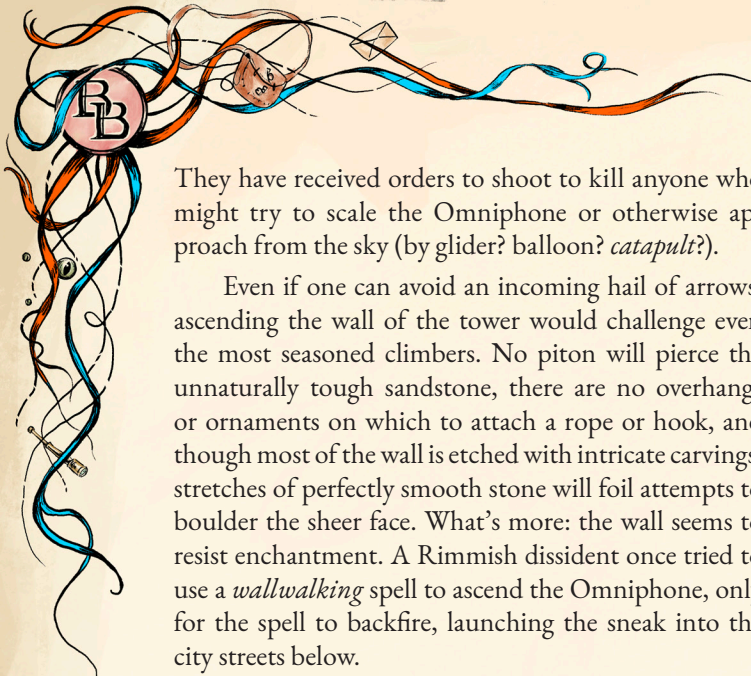
If scrivener archives are to be believed, no one has ever been inside the Omniphone. Its construction predates recorded history, and there is no evidence that anyone has entered it by any means throughout any of the manuscripts and histories they've collected. As such, no one knows what the Omniphone contains. Some theorize that the building is empty and that the tower structure is simply a means to support the massive horns that amplify Entac's voice into the skies of Natikram. Others (notably many of Thaellon's Skeptics) surmise that the rich and powerful have secret access to the interior via underground tunnels. Some think a race of magical beings live inside, others imagine that teleportation circles allow all-powerful mages to enter, and yet more think one of the Gods—Vela perhaps—has created a demiplanar home for Themself within.

Discovering the truth of Entac will require that someone actually *enter* the Omniphone. Doing so will not be easy. The building's windowless facade provides no means of obvious ingress, and the sandstone from which the walls are constructed has a toughness uncommon to similar sedimentary construction materials. Entering will require an adventurer to commit to one of the following strategies:

- ◆ Descend into the horns from above
- ◆ Destroy a portion of the wall
- ◆ Tunnel from below

DESCENDING FROM ABOVE

The only known openings into the Omniphone are the eponymous horn themselves. If one were to reach the tower's peak and slide down one of the metallic amplifiers, one would pass into the interior of the tower. The Crabwell Guard is well-prepared for this possibility. At all times, archers are stationed throughout the central plaza, atop the Scriveners' Tower and the Great Belltower, and in strategic camouflaged outposts on various rooftops.



They have received orders to shoot to kill anyone who might try to scale the Omniphone or otherwise approach from the sky (by glider? balloon? *catapult?*).

Even if one can avoid an incoming hail of arrows, ascending the wall of the tower would challenge even the most seasoned climbers. No piton will pierce the unnaturally tough sandstone, there are no overhangs or ornaments on which to attach a rope or hook, and though most of the wall is etched with intricate carvings, stretches of perfectly smooth stone will foil attempts to boulder the sheer face. What's more: the wall seems to resist enchantment. A Rimmish dissident once tried to use a *wallwalking* spell to ascend the Omniphone, only for the spell to backfire, launching the sneak into the city streets below.

Should one overcome these obstacles, arriving at the tower's zenith will grant an adventurer a glimpse into the bells of the structure's twisted horns—a view seen by no madman who has ever lived to tell about it. With light shining brightly off of the inexplicably polished metal, it will be nigh impossible to see into these shiny brass apertures. The only choice is to leap in, riding the gently sloping metal down into the bowels of the building. One of the tubes must provide safe passage into the building below, right?

BREAKING THE STONE

Crabwell stonemasons lament that there is no known source of the extra-durable sandstone from which the Omniphone's walls are constructed. These hardened, load-bearing walls defy the known limits of architectural stonework. Perhaps the hyper-compressed silicate was fortified through lost magical arts, or perhaps it was quarried in a distant land of harder rocks and bolder stonecutters. Regardless, the Omniphone's walls will not crumble from any terrestrial battering ram or siege weapon. No, the walls will only fall to tools or spells of otherworldly strength.

Conveniently, if adventurers do feel like testing the strength of the walls, it is unlikely anyone will bother them. Previous bellringers had instructed the Crabwell Guard to disarm and interrogate anyone who attempted to chip away at the walls, but practical Simon Thibald has informed his patrolmen not to bother. After all, in the millennia since the Omniphone's construction, no one has tarnished even a single etching. The Crabwell Guard need not worry about any would-be trespassers attempting to crack the stone.

Nevertheless, the stone is not truly impervious. Enchanted blades, fragmentation spells, and liquefaction elixirs each might be able to succeed where traditional mauls and rams fail. Even a small crack in the walls would allow those in the central plaza to peer into the ground floor, though the Crabwell Guard (under specific decree from Entac) has strict orders to kill anyone able to pierce the outer wall.

Note: If the stone is so hardy as to resist the strongest of tools, how did the ancients produce such meticulous etchings in its facade? Scholars disagree but generally fall into two camps. Some suggest that the stone was once much more brittle and only hardened through the influence of Entac's magic. Others suspect that the first to walk the lands of Yanuskor possessed technology that surpasses even that of distant Svarnahelm.

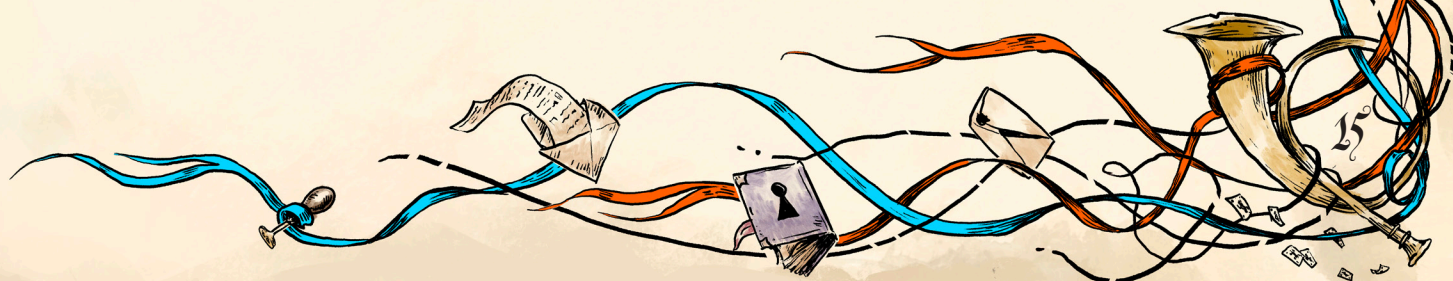
TUNNELING FROM BENEATH

Like many of the great cities of Yanuskor, the residents of Crabwell keep their dead interred in underground catacombs. While residents may not often consider it, many of Crabwell's buildings are built atop winding tunnels of innumerable decaying corpses. Entac has decreed on numerous occasions that it is forbidden to excavate any closer to the central plaza, but the notion that someone might extend such a tunnel underneath the Omniphone is not wholly unreasonable. Clerics of Thaella, Vela, and Arkus wander the catacombs occasionally, providing blessings or interring new bodies, but generally speaking, these deathly halls are free from prying eyes. If an adventurer were to accurately track the regular travels of these clerics, they could evade their attention and command free reign over the catacombs. They could then attempt to dig a discreet tunnel to the theoretical basement of the Omniphone.

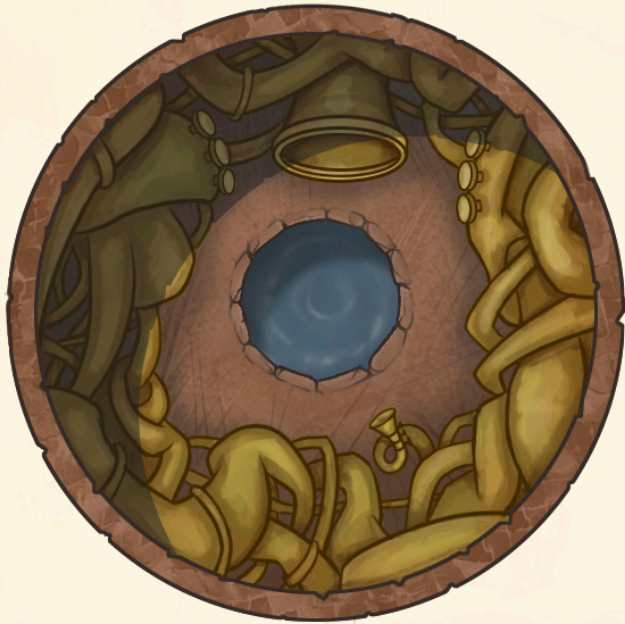
Were they to try, they'd strike water.

INSIDE THE OMNIPHONE

The interior of the Omniphone consists of but a solitary vertical shaft: the singular mouthpiece of the various horn twists so as to be accessible by the one and only Entac, who sits in his eternal prison, dimly lit only by the sunlight that refracts through his epic embouchure. In the morning, Entac dips his withered talons



into Crabwell's namesake, a bottomless pool of divine water from which he receives his decrees from an immortal crustacean. At sunset, Entac rises and assumes the voice of his God, the lord of equilibrium, the deity whom Entac once mocked. In Draymin's voice, Entac shares the words of balance, the laws that shall keep Naticram stable and ever neutral.



The interior walls of the Omniphone are smooth, eroded from millennia of caustic breaths of sulfuric anguish. There is no furniture, nor art, nor personal effects. Here, in the center of Naticram civilization, there is only a punished man, the blessed waters of a self-exiled God, and the mouthpiece of a nation.

ENTAC: THE FOOL WHO MOCKED A GOD

Yanuskor wasn't always a realm of nine Gods, discrete nations, and numerous distinct races. In the days of the first light, there were only the humans and the nith. There was one God, and he walked amongst his creations. Draymin was the God of balance, creator of Yanuskor and all it held. Draymin sought to keep the lands in equilibrium, and he frequently interceded, tweaking the nuances of physics, altering the biology of his humble servants, and reshaping the skies and the mud. Yanuskor was an experiment, and the only acceptable outcome was a perfectly ticking clock, a top that would spin in place for eons.

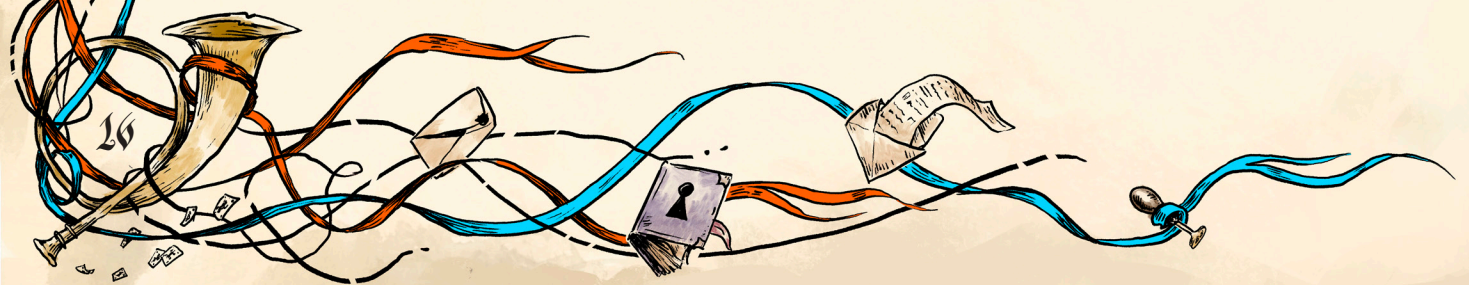
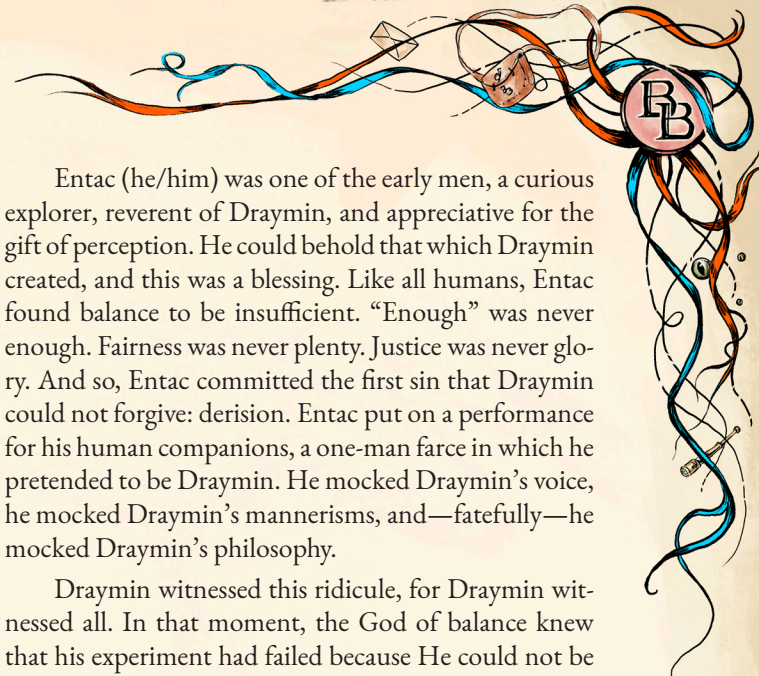
Entac (he/him) was one of the early men, a curious explorer, reverent of Draymin, and appreciative for the gift of perception. He could behold that which Draymin created, and this was a blessing. Like all humans, Entac found balance to be insufficient. "Enough" was never enough. Fairness was never plenty. Justice was never glory. And so, Entac committed the first sin that Draymin could not forgive: derision. Entac put on a performance for his human companions, a one-man farce in which he pretended to be Draymin. He mocked Draymin's voice, he mocked Draymin's mannerisms, and—fatefully—he mocked Draymin's philosophy.

Draymin witnessed this ridicule, for Draymin witnessed all. In that moment, the God of balance knew that his experiment had failed because He could not be an impartial observer. He had to act from behind the scenes. And so, He punished mankind, cursing them to forget his influence. He created new Gods, nine lords to rule in balance over all things. He commanded the nith to dig a well, build a tower, and trap Entac inside for all eternity. He reshaped Entac into the hideous monstrosity that he is now, and He passed judgment.

YOUR SENTENCE SHALL BE COMMENSURATE WITH YOUR CRIME. YOU HAVE MOCKED AN ETERNAL, AND SO NOW YOU MUST BEAR HIS VOICE FOR AN ETERNITY. I SHALL GIVE MY COMMANDS FOR THIS WORLD FROM BEYOND THE VEIL. YOU SHALL USE MY VOICE, AND YOU SHALL GUIDE THE PEOPLE IN THE PERPETUATION OF MY CREATION. I AM SORRY.

Cursed with immortality, a never-ending task, and a disgusting new form, Entac sat as his prison rose around him. He would never leave this place. He would seek death one hundred million times, but Draymin would provide no such respite.

Each day at noon, Entac's only friend, the undying crab that serves Draymin, rises from the well and delivers a scroll with Draymin's decrees for the day. It is this scroll containing Draymin's wishes that have dictated the entirety of Naticram's legal code for thousands of years. Entac then waits until sunset and proclaims Draymin's wishes for all of Naticram to hear. The speaker is Entac, but the voice is Draymin's. The logic of the decrees is that which Draymin believes will bring balance to Naticram. Entac is merely a puppet, but he is the most influential puppet in all the world.





AFTERMATH

If the party is able to enter the Omniphone, they will meet a being who predates every other creature in Yanuskor, an accursed man who predates the triple trinity of Gods themselves. Entac seeks death above all else, but Draymin may not be so generous even after the party enters the prison. The cursed man will share everything, and while it may be difficult for the party to believe or even understand, it should be exceedingly clear that Entac is not lying. His story is strange and ancient, but he tells the truth.

Should the party make it clear that they hope to reveal the nature of Entac, the Omniphone, and the God

of balance to the world, Draymin will not intercede. When He left Yanuskor, he vowed to never directly interfere with his creation again.² He will, however, allow Entac to die before Entac is able to reveal all his secrets to the people of Natikram. The threat of Entac divulging the truth will suffice to grant the tortured man his wish of death.

The truth of Crabwell and its history is so bizarre and unexpected that the party may find that they are not able to convince anyone of what they say. Tales of “the days of first light” or “the fool who mocked a God” may fall on deaf ears. The party will be dismissed as lunatics or charlatans, and the powers of Crabwell will do everything necessary to maintain order and stability. Nevertheless, if Entac dies with the permission of Draymin, the decrees will cease, and society will be altered forever.

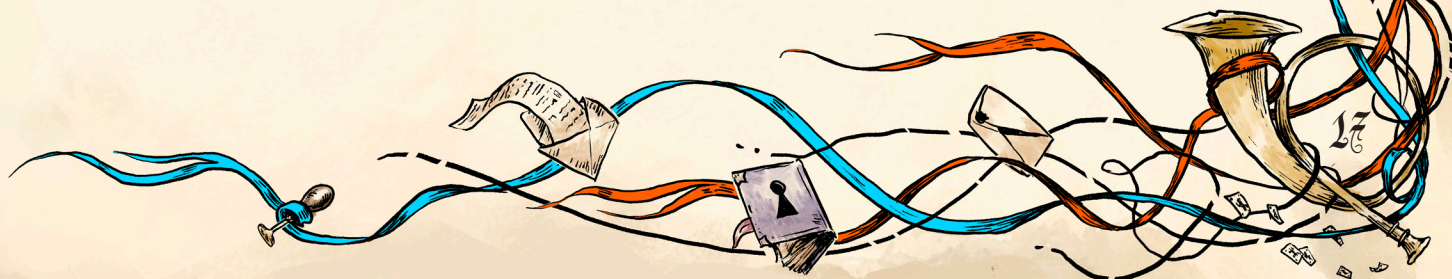
People in positions of power will fear the worst, robbed of their veil of legitimacy and of the equalizing laws that keep them enriched. They may attempt a bold power grab during the structural upheaval that is sure to follow.

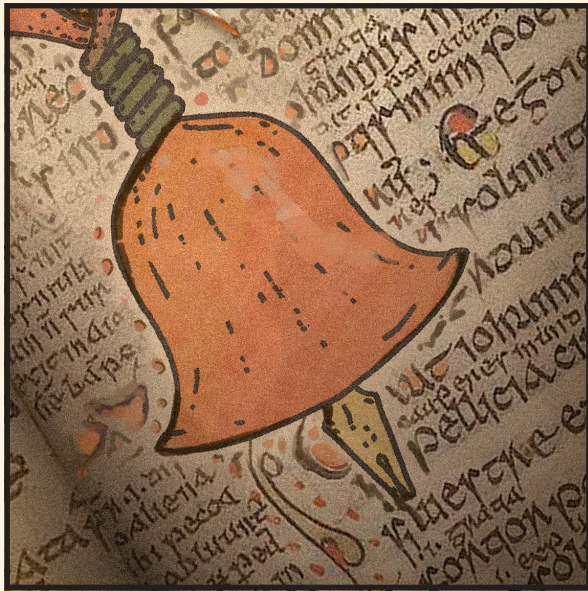
Thaellon’s Skeptics will vie for power as well, attempting to establish some form of anarchic society in the absence of Entac’s authority. Though they may be backed with sound theory, they are unlikely to command the manpower or political will to succeed.

Without Entac’s continued decrees, the scribes, the bellringer, and the Crabwell Guard will have trouble maintaining a sense of order. It is *possible* that society may remain stable long enough for a new form of government to arise in Entac’s wake, but it is also *extremely* likely there will be staggering unrest in the meantime.

Ultimately, a party of adventurers who uncover the truth will be unlikely to benefit directly from their actions. As imperfect as Entac’s authority may be, a sudden power vacuum will serve no one but strongmen and bullies. However, should one of the adventurers offer to take Entac’s place, Draymin may allow the tenuous peace to continue. The Godly servant crab will deliver decrees directly from Draymin to Entac’s replacement, so long as they accept the corresponding curse. The sacrifice of this generous martyr will be nearly unfathomable. It may be worth it to ensure that the stability of Natikram will remain unthreatened.

² There is, of course, an incredible hypocrisy on display here. Draymin vowed not to “interfere” with Yanuskor, but still delivers daily instructions for the people of Natikram to follow. Even the Gods are prone to self-delusions of their superior principles.





The Scriveners

TO COMPREHEND, COMPILE,
AND ADJUDICATE



Though Entac's decrees comprise the entirety of Naticram's legal underpinnings, society would nonetheless fall into disarray if there were no agreed-upon means of interpreting and compiling these decrees. This is not mere conjecture: in eras long past, Crabwell's residents experimented with alternative forms of governance. During transitions of power, confusion over legal precedent led to periods of anarchy and strife.

In Crabwell's modern era, the scriveners are tasked with recording and compiling Entac's decrees, advising the bellringer, adjudicating legal disagreements, and explaining the ramifications of new decrees to the populace. The scriveners, therefore, make up one-third of the governing trinity, alongside the bellringer and Entac himself. While they have limited power to act in most meaningful ways, the executive actions of the bellringer's are bounded almost entirely by the rules set forth by the scriveners.

From generation to generation, the level of dogmatism in scrivener ruling changes drastically. The order supposedly acts with incredible restraint, relying on

precedent and research above all else. In practice, whenever the scriveners can exercise judicial discretion, they will do so to advance their own philosophical ideals. As such, whoever holds the position of archscrivener wields incredible power over the people of Naticram. This lead adjudicator will seize on any ambiguities in Entac's decrees, reshaping his words to create a legal code that suits their ideology... or their ulterior motives.

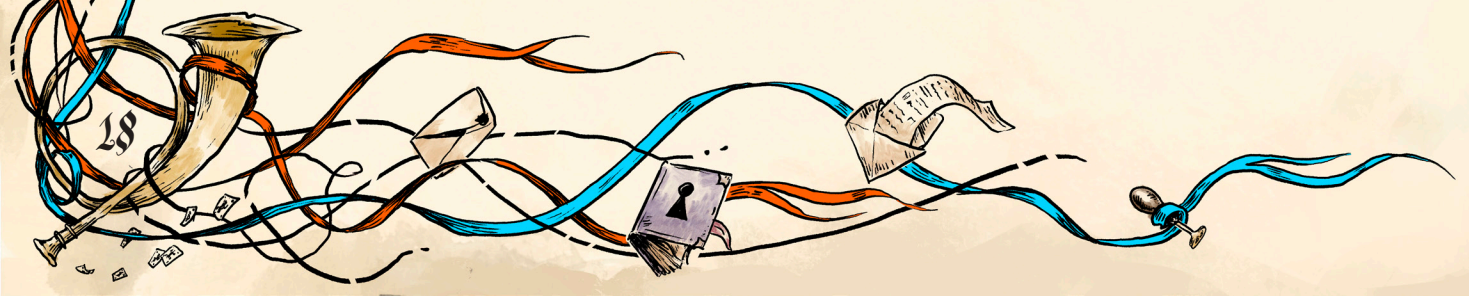
While many consider the scriveners bookish and insular, the order is in fact worldly and diverse by design. When considering the consequences of Entac's decrees, they will frequently seek out experts from across Naticram. If they have to make a snap judgment on a given evening after a particularly unexpected decree, the scriveners will often amend their prior rulings to better suit a greater understanding informed by interviews and further research. Of course, these probing inquiries only serve to make Naticram a better place if it suits the desires of those with the power to shape the law.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

It may seem at first that the scriveners are dangerously powerful in what otherwise seems like a fair and balanced society. While there is some truth to this, there are a few major checks on their power.

First and foremost is Entac himself. Any given scrivener or aide is subject to Entac's whims. It is not uncommon for the nightly decrees to chastise or disbar a given scrivener, or even to correct the record regarding his own intentions. If Entac repeats a seemingly innocuous decree after a controversial ruling from the scriveners, this is typically seen as a rebuke of their legal interpretation. As the scriveners are specifically tasked with abiding by Entac's words, they will not disobey when instructed to dismiss one of their own or to reconsider their judgment.

When devising the rules for the trinity government, the original leaders of the Bellringer Revolution also decided to bequeath the bellringer with some ability to oppose a seemingly corrupt order of scriveners. Following a rebuke by Entac, the bellringer can call for a referendum on the current archscrivener. If a supermajority of Crabwell citizens votes in favor of removing the archscrivener, the scriveners will instead appoint a replacement with the bellringer overseeing the selection process. As with all government action, this can of course be overruled through a decree from Entac.





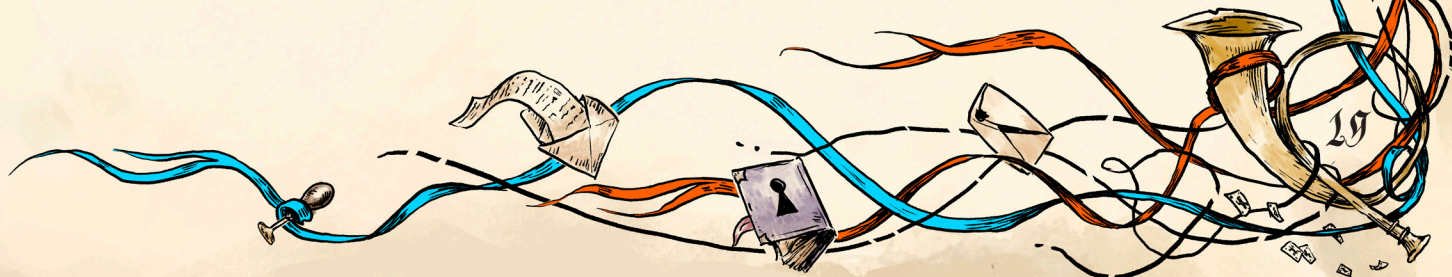
THE SCRIVENERS' TOWER

A modern counterpart to the timeless Omniphone, the Scriveners' Tower is the headquarters for all scrivener activity. Far stouter than the other two towers in the central plaza, the Scriveners' Tower is nonetheless orders of magnitude more frantic and crowded. The tower serves many purposes for the great legal minds of Crabwell. It houses the archives of past decrees, scrolls of legal interpretations, and journals of judicial philosophy. It also holds dormitories and schools for the children who are raised from a young age to become scriveners. While most members of the order will move to a comfortable home outside the tower after coming of age, the archscrivener's quarters fill the top floors of the tower. Other floors have dedicated office space, kitchens, and study rooms. The primary staircase elegantly winds its way around the outer edge of the tower, but interior ladders, sloped floors, and sliding walls create a complex maze of—perhaps metaphorically apt—labyrinthine architecture.

The scriveners are extremely factional, prone to forming ideological cliques. This is partially the result of the unique social interests of the idiosyncratic sages, but it also serves a crucial function for the order: at any given time, the most prominent “school” of scriveners is able to appoint the next archscrivener. As such, a school that gains favor amongst the younger cohort of scriveners in training positions itself to expand its reach and influence in the coming years.

GM Note: Scrivener schools represent more than just abstract legal philosophies. When designing scrivener NPCs, consider how their academic beliefs are actually manifestations of their worldviews. Does the dictarian NPC think they always know best? Is the Rimmish Abstainer a slacker, or do they just reject the hustle and bustle of modern life? Is the Skeptic idealist or contrarian? There are many types of scholars, and just because the minutiae of their work may be dry, that doesn't mean their internal conflicts are inconsequential.

d8	SCRIVENER SCHOOL	DESCRIPTION
1	NEO-MARGINALISTS	In favor of the most lenient possible interpretation of Entac's decrees. Essentially anti-Entac, in that they think the scriveners should allow the people of Natikram to live their lives with as few rules as possible.
2	DICTIONARIANS	Similar to the Neo-Marginalists, the Dictarians largely disregard Entac's perceived will. However, they wield intricate legal arguments to try to wrest increasing political power for the scriveners.
3	NEW ANTI-MAGISTERALISTS	A school that stands in opposition to a body of scriveners that have held no sway for decades. The NAM are contrarian rabble-rousers with no sound philosophical purpose.
4	VELAN REFORMISTS	Pure academics who try to predict future decrees by analyzing patterns found in existing records. The Velan Reformists don't use divination as their predecessors had, but instead rigorous study.
5	RIMMISH ABSTAINERS	In favor of interpreting Entac's decrees in whatever way will encourage more serene and ascetic lifestyles for the citizens of Natikram. Abstainers are often reprimanded directly by Entac.
6	PRO-BELL PLURALISTS	Honoring Entac's perceived wishes while also bequeathing as much power to the bellringer as possible. They believe the bellringer should not be hamstrung by dense legal code and should instead be free to act with greater freedom and autonomy.
7	VOCALISTS	Empathetic scholars who try to suss out Entac's decrees by analyzing the minute changes in tone during decrees. For example, Vocalists believe an “authoritative timbre” indicates Entac demands strict and literal adherence to a decree.
8	THAELLON'S SKEPTICS	Within the scriveners, there are those who secretly wish to undermine Entac. Many young scriveners in training explore this ideology before ultimately abandoning it as counter-productive, but some continue to sabotage the aims of their order even while serving among them.





YARGL: Like many scriveners, Yargl (they/they) was not an orphan per se, but was bequeathed to the order at a young age by parents who could not afford to provide a proper education for their gifted child. The chesskæl value knowledge above all else, and thus Yargl's parents decided the best life for the child was one where they could learn with the greatest legal minds of Crabwell.

Yargl is a Pro-Bell Pluralist. They have seen Bellingranger Simon Thibald's efforts to augment Crabwell's public education hampered repeatedly by illegitimate scrivener rulings. They suspect the archscrivener is deliberately undermining the city's schools so that more parents send their children to learn among the scriveners. Yargl will have none of that. Yes, their education with the scriveners was excellent, but young Crabwell citizens of limited means should have other options to study beyond a lifetime commitment to the judicial order.

ZAPHEA: Thirteen-year-old half-elf Zaphea (he/him) first arrived at the Scriveners' Tower in a basket at the front door in the middle of the night. No note, no identification, just a crying baby whose former guardians entrusted him to the sages. As he has aged in the care of the scriveners, Zaphea has begun to notice some latent magical abilities: sparks crackle out from his fingers as he flips pages, and his hair stands on end when facing due north. Sometimes, when alone in his dorm, he experiments with these abilities, repelling pebbles with his mind or creating orbs of steam between his hands.

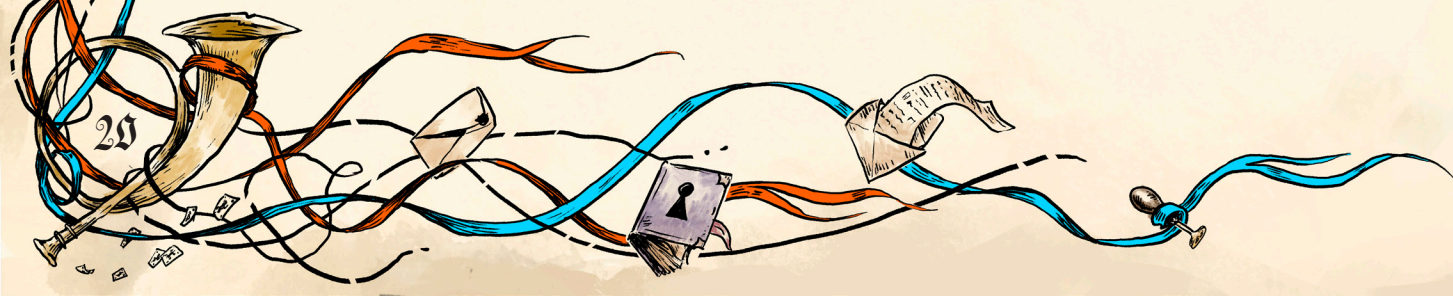
Zaphea has heard of others like him—that ex-scrivener Alzudrion could perform strange magic without studying wizardry—but he's afraid of what this might mean for his future with the order. He loves his work, but he fears he will be conscripted to the new army Simon is outfitting, or that he might need to find tutors elsewhere to hone his craft. Is it possible to develop this latent magic in the hallowed halls of the Scriveners' Tower? Or is the call to adventure greater than the need for proper scholarship?

CLARIFICATUM

Each morning, the scriveners publish *Clarificatum*, a document that outlines changes to Natikram's legal code, either derived from Entac's most recent decrees, or from gradual changes in approach to legal thought. Ten copies of the documents are published, the most important of which is posted in the central square for any and all citizens to study and copy. One is provided to the bellringer, one each is sent to Vonedale, Aldyn, and Thaellon, one is sent to Blynka's Reserve for commercial regulation and then vault storage, one is provided to the Crabwell Guard, and finally three are archived in the Scriveners' Tower's basement.

Clarificatum is a monumentally significant document for life in Crabwell and surrounding Natikram. Entac's overlapping decrees might imply surprising consequences or contractions, and *Clarificatum* is how businessmen, travelers, and everyday laborers are able to know how the scriveners will be adjudicating these laws. In short: *Clarificatum* is how the scriveners transform the scant few words of Entac into a comprehensive and comprehensible legal code.

PELLENA DOOLAN: With decades of service to the scriveners, ardent Velan Reformist Pellena (she/her) has finally had a breakthrough regarding Entac's decrees. It is now so obvious to her: there is an intrinsic balance to how Entac forms laws. Any time he favors one group or ideology, he will make an equal and opposite decree some time later. He *specifically* does not pick favorites, but fluctuates in what *must* be a predictable fashion. She has yet to formalize all of her findings, and she is beginning to fear that Entac will request for her to cease such lines of inquiry if they would serve to undermine his authority. In the meantime, however, Pellena is the editor of *Clarificatum*. Archscrivener Sevriel has the final word on interpretation, but Pellena is the one who finalizes the actual document.





ARCHSCRIVENER SEVRIEL AVANA

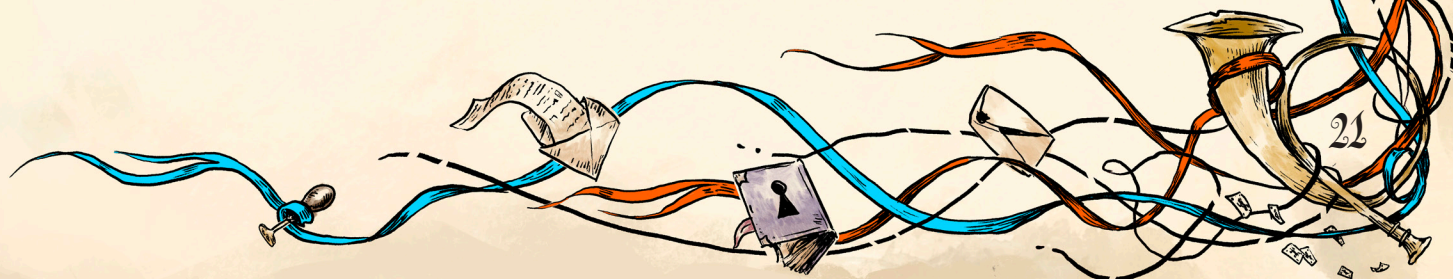
It took decades of coalition building for the Dictarians to place city elf Sevriel Avana (she/her) in the highest seat of scrivener power. The school made concessions, they wooed allies, but most of all, they convinced the youngest scribes in training to support the logic behind a more powerful scrivener order. Now, Dictarianism is the most prominent school of thought for scribes. They are confident that Natikram will be a healthier nation if the scribes use their legal prowess to twist Entac's words into whichever laws most suit their wise and beneficent leader. That's where Sevriel comes in.


Sevriel is not a recluse, but she is also not a public-facing official like her political ally Simon Thibald. She leads by subtly skewing interpretations of Entac's decrees into proper laws that support her aims. She wants business leaders to act with autonomy. She wants trade to flourish through Natikram and abroad. She has no patience for overt racial discrimination, but sees no problem with laws that impact some species and cultures more than others. Beyond these simple precepts, Sevriel has a laundry list of more specific demands that an inexperienced scrivener might have trouble parsing.

Despite her claims, Sevriel is not in Crabwell to advance Natikram's interests. She grew up in Svarnahelm, the hyper-industrialized megacity that has flourished independent of Entac's decrees. Her brother Drelok runs Thabfar Inc., a wildly successful corporation that controls Svarnahelm's pneumatic post, as well as the city's far-reaching communications network and espionage agency. Sevriel's *primary* goal as archscrivener—a position that she has sought for decades—is to facilitate a new alliance between Natikram and Svarnahelm. She deftly aids the work of the Mercantilites, a faction of traders seeking to build commercial bridges between the long-severed nations.

Sevriel does all of this in secret. Her inner circle is aware of her lofty aims, but even they are unaware of her true parentage. And while Sevriel does have ambitious goals for Natikram's foreign relations, it would be misguided to assume that these aims are altruistic. Her family's industry stands to profit fabulously if laws restricting business between the two nations were lifted. Thabfar Inc. is already one of Svarnahelm's commercial powerhouses, and Sevriel's work with the scribes may eventually allow the company to more than double its consumer base.

Throughout all of this, Sevriel has remained calm and collected. She does not think of herself as a puppet of a foreign state, but merely a legal mind slowly coaxing out a new international accord. She *does* think that improved relations between the long-embittered nations will be good for all of the people of Yanuskor, and if that enriches her family in the process, all the better.





LIDINA couriers traveling to Crabwell are instructed not to interfere with Sevriel's work or to reveal her true parentage. True, she is secretly a Ghabfar, but it would be imprudent to tip our hand until we have a formal strategy. We will find another way to interfere with Drelok's disruptive postal outfit.

N.B. It is not clear why Sevriel chose to assume a fake last name but kept her given name. A quirk of the Januskor elves? How important can that name be if it means risking her facade?

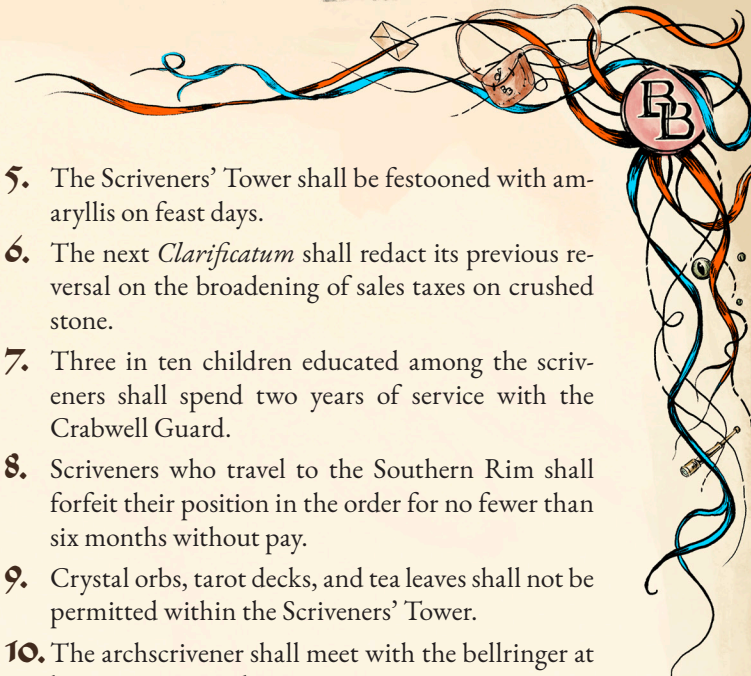
-Logician Gheeró Pe Ronès

PARASCRIVENER QUALEN PALLABAR: Technically speaking, Qualen (he/him) is not a scrivener. This assiduous gnome was educated in the tower, but he had always aspired to be the order's lead parascrivener, a legal aide who works directly with the most senior members of the order. After Sevriel was appointed archscrivener, she poached him as her own one-man consul.

Anyone wishing to speak with Sevriel must go through Qualen first. As Sevriel's workload has grown, her public appearances have dwindled precipitously. Now, most of her research and rulings are passed down to Qualen, who then delivers her opinions to the rest of the scribes. Needless to say, this is both inefficient and suspicious. Why won't Sevriel join the rest of the scribes for debates and study sessions on the lower floors? And can she really trust Qualen to deliver her opinions faithfully? Qualen is well-liked, but his unofficial title as "voice of the archscrivener" has raised quite a few eyebrows.

DECREES ABOUT THE SCRIVENERS

1. Szen-Szen Oleyoloi has been dismissed illegitimately from the scribes and shall be reinstated.
2. Curtains and blinds throughout the Scribes' Tower shall be left open from sunrise to sunset.
3. When adjudicating laws in the streets, the scribes shall wear blue pins to indicate their position. Civilians wearing blue pins shall be fined 10% of their yearly income per offense.
4. The scribes shall not have authority to punish a crime with imprisonment in the Hedral Prison unless specified by my command.

- 
5. The Scribes' Tower shall be festooned with amaryllis on feast days.
 6. The next *Clarificatum* shall redact its previous reversal on the broadening of sales taxes on crushed stone.
 7. Three in ten children educated among the scribes shall spend two years of service with the Crabwell Guard.
 8. Scribes who travel to the Southern Rim shall forfeit their position in the order for no fewer than six months without pay.
 9. Crystal orbs, tarot decks, and tea leaves shall not be permitted within the Scribes' Tower.
 10. The archscrivener shall meet with the bellringer at least once per week.

THE GALLOWS

When designing the trinity government, the leaders of the Bellringer Revolution decided that it would be prudent for the scribes themselves to oversee executions. Entac had already made repeated decrees explaining that none shall be executed unless he were to specifically demand it. As such, there was little room for interpretation when it came to executions. To demonstrate the seriousness with which the scribes take their work, would be responsible for fulfilling this gravest of duties.

In almost all cases, Entac requests that those that are to be executed are specifically hanged. To assist in these periodic sanctioned executions, a permanent gallows was constructed in the central square. Under different archscribes (and therefore different fundamental scrivener philosophies), this gallows has assumed notably distinct metaphorical significances to the people of Crabwell. Under a lenient and passive archscrivener, it is a symbol of their obedience to Entac, and a promise that they will fulfill their ultimate duty nonetheless. In times of Dictarian rule, it is a symbol instead of crushing authority, a reminder to the people that the Scribes will kill with judicial impunity. Of course, regardless of who rules, the gallows are only ever used when called for by Entac. In the eyes of the public, however, the gallows can imply a great many meanings.

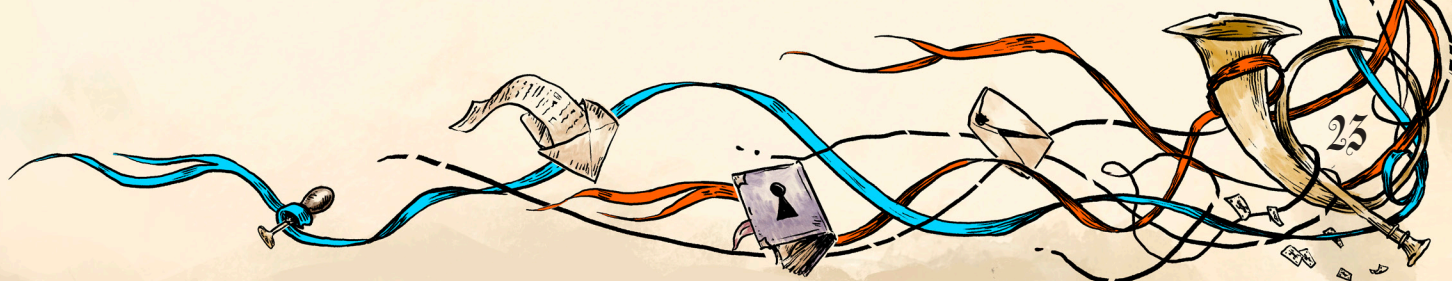


THE HEDRAL PRISON

When zealous believers or fearful dissidents of Entac wish to point out the seemingly alien nature of his knowledge, they often point to the Hedral Prison. Entac oversaw the construction of this strange prison facility over the course of three years, providing short but extremely clear guidelines among his typical decrees each evening. Piece by piece, Entac “designed” the Hedral Prison, explaining throughout the process how to forge the necessary structural components, how many workers would be needed, and where to refortify the weak points in the frame. The engineering and architectural logic exceeds the grasp of Natikram’s top experts to this day; it could not have been built without Entac’s guidance. The prison’s intricate facade stands

in stark contrast to the equally impressive but obviously ancient designs of the Omniphone and the city’s outer wall.

Entac had never designed a building through exacting and minute specifications before, and he hasn’t since. Rarely has Entac prioritized anything the way he gave precedence to this construction. Though it is impossible to definitively judge Entac’s intentions, it would seem as though the Hedral Prison is exceedingly important in his vision for Natikram. Unfortunately Entac has done little to expand on the purpose of the Hedral Prison, beyond occasionally passing down sentences for individual crimes. For example, Entac has often reiterated the punishment for medical malpractice is one year spent in the Hedral Prison.



Why did Entac design this prison? Though geometrically complex, it does not seem to be significantly more secure than a traditional dungeon. And while it is large, the space could have been more effectively utilized with a moderately tall tower. The design is *interesting*, but scholars fail to see the greater purpose that Entac must have had for the prison. Was it designed for someone or something in particular?

Unlike the gallows, the Hedral Prison is solely the responsibility of the Crabwell Guard. Scriveners will sentence criminal offenders to spend time in the Hedral Prison, but a member of the Crabwell Guard will always be the ones to escort the prisoner or act as wardens within.

THE PRE-MEMORIAL

Adjacent to the Hedral Prison stands one of the oldest monuments in Crabwell, a sandstone obelisk hewn from the same anomalous stone of the Omniphone and the outer walls. For centuries, similar obelisks made from fieldstone have been used to commemorate fallen heroes: beloved priests, scholars, and community leaders. As such, many ascribe a funereal function to this enigmatic obelisk, whose construction was supposedly requested by Entac millennia ago. It has been dubbed the “Pre-Memorial” by Crabwell residents, who use the small plaza surrounding the obelisk as a meeting place.

Entac occasionally makes strange requests, so the presence of a sandstone obelisk in the northeast corner of town wouldn’t normally be reason for worry. Of particular concern, however, is the date etched in the obelisk: the 17th of Lunenfell, 7473. Two weeks from today. There’s a *memorial* in town commemorating a day that *soon approaches*.

Is it an omen? A warning? A prank? According to the oldest scrivener records, Entac has never *once* mentioned the obelisk but second-hand accounts from the Dreamsand Cults during the Nights of Shadow indicate that the obelisk was in fact “commissioned” by Entac. If Entac is omniscient as many say, this might spell doom. Many in town are preparing for the worst.



The Fearmonger

Crabwell residents have spread tales of “the fearmonger” since long before the Belling-er Revolution. According to legend, this shapeshifting terror rises up from the catacombs to torment the citizens of Crabwell during times of great upheaval. Scrivener documents indicate that references to the fearmonger reached their peak during the rule of the Marginalists, the last true dark age for Naticram society.

As the date etched on the pre-memorial draws ever nearer, the Crabwell Guard has begun receiving complaints about a terrifying creature stalking northeastern Crabwell yet again. With reports spiking anew, many fear that an era of woe draws close at hand. Troublingly, reports of what this supposedly horrific creature actually *looks like* contradict one another without fail. There is no doubt that this wicked being exists, but each who lives to write of it describes some unique monstrosity. How do you confront a creature when you can’t even be sure what form it will take?



DECREES ABOUT CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. None shall build permanent dwellings within 10 feet of the Asatti River. Those who already own riverside homes may stay but shall forfeit the right to vote for bellringer.
2. The use of aggregates in construction shall be forbidden for six months.
3. The people of Aldyn shall construct nine identical bridges across Aldyn Creek. They shall be spaced 600 feet apart.
4. Members of the Carpenters' Guild who own land shall be stripped of their deeds. Carpenters who renounce the Carpenters' Guild shall be provided with an immediate stipend of 12 gold pieces.
5. A marble slab with dimensions of 3 feet by 12 feet by 27 feet shall be erected upright atop the dome of the Hedral Prison.
6. The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife shall provide the Carpenters' Guild with 50 river fish per week for use in construction adhesives.
7. South-facing windows shall be no larger than 3 feet by 3 feet, excepting those in newly built churches. The use of stained glass shall be reserved for churches dedicated to Thaella.
8. Walls shall be built throughout the catacombs such that each crypt is bisected.
9. Interlocking roads shall be paved connecting the farms of outer-Crabwell. Each shall be lined with sunberry bushes.
10. For every baby born during the month of Lunenfell, a new sconce shall be added to the central square.

PLOT HOOK: AVOID PUNISHMENT

Adventurers operating out of Crabwell need to be exceedingly careful to avoid falling afoul of the law. The shifting nature of Natikram's legal code will necessitate constant vigilance to ensure that the party isn't inadvertently defying some new decree. Even if they pay attention to the words of Entac, a new *Clarificatum* might elucidate a law that had previously not been enforced. As such, unless the party is meticulously examining *Clarificatum* each day, they may break a law even when acting with appropriate caution.

Scriveners roam the streets of Crabwell alongside members of the guard in order to inspect businesses, investigate supposed crimes, and pass judgment. Most

crimes never get adjudicated in drawn out proceedings in the Scriveners' Tower. More often, a scrivener will be called to the site of a crime and pass judgment on the spot. From there, punishment will be decided based on precedent. If there is no precedent, the scriveners will consult the archscrivener to make a ruling. With thousands of years of precedent collected, there is rarely a need for the archscrivener to get involved.

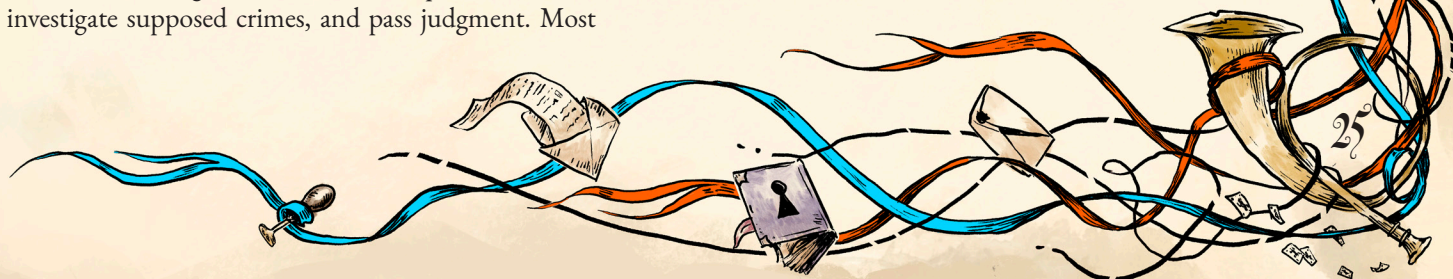
There is no formal process in place for overturning a scrivener's ruling. These so-called "street judges" are just as valid in the eyes of the trinity government as the scriveners who study texts in their tower. Their rulings are final, and their punishments can be severe.

AVOIDING EXECUTION

If an adventurer breaks a law for which the punishment is death, they will have until the following morning to get their affairs in order, though they will be accompanied by a member of the Crabwell Guard until the execution.

Crimes punishable by execution are defined extremely precisely: murders committed with intention, destruction of property whose erection was decreed by Entac, defrauding the church, and tax evasion in excess of 100 gold pieces. Proving innocence is rare. Scriveners may be nuanced legal scholars, but they have surprisingly little patience when investigating the actual events of a crime. On the flipside, the Crabwell Guard is often interested in sussing out the truth, but they do not hire detectives. The ranks of the Crabwell Guard are filled primarily with brutes. Anyone with a more analytical mind will have likely already been recruited into the Natikram Armed Forces or found employment in a more creative profession.

There will be a narrow window before the execution during which the accused may be able to win public support. An impassioned plea or a coherent logical argument may be enough to dissuade the scriveners from going through with the hanging. Short of that, scriveners lack combat capabilities, and executions are typically only overseen by a few members of the Crabwell Guard. Escape is *possible*, though it will require daring, coordination, and likely improvisation. That said, the scriveners are clearly not doing everything in their power to prevent potential escapes. It's almost as if the scriveners would rather *not* execute anyone if given the chance...





AVOIDING PRISON SENTENCES

An adventurer accused of breaking a law for which the punishment is prison time will have no opportunity to make proper arrangements. They will be escorted to the Hedral Prison as quickly as possible, processed rapidly, and then placed in a cell. Prison sentences are usually determined based on prior decrees, but Arch-scrivener Sevriel Avana has gradually created a culture of judicial discretion regarding sentencing guidelines.

The Hedral Prison is not the most oppressive containment facility ever designed, but it is one of the strangest. Its curious design seems almost tailor-built to elude a proper mapping. Was this its purpose all along?

Escaping from the facility will require an adventurer to break out of their cell, find their way to an exit, and either avoid detection or take out every guard along the way. No easy feat!

Far easier instead is to call in favors from those educated in the law. Graduates of the school of statecraft at Velan University may be able to prove innocence or else shorten prison time through rhetoric alone. One of the side effects of Sevriel's increased discretion is her ability to shorten and lengthen sentences when additional arguments are heard after an initial judgment is passed.

PERSONALIZED DECREES

Complicating matters further, the party may be found guilty of crimes they did not know they committed. Even if the party breaks no laws, Entac may make an exception for them, sentencing them with a personalized decree. When doing so, Entac will always give a reason, but it may be vague. This usually occurs when a citizen has committed an act that is technically legal but which offends Entac nonetheless. Often, the punishments seem commensurate with the crime, but there are some notable outliers.

A party or individual whom Entac singles out will have trouble avoiding punishment. Typically, the scriveners and the Crabwell Guard act with haste whenever Entac sees fit to punish someone specifically. As such, the only way for such individuals to avoid punishment is to flee Naticram altogether. Even then, the Crabwell Guard will occasionally pay bounty hunters to find these individuals and return them to Crabwell to pay for their crimes.

On rare occasions, however, Entac himself will reverse one of his decisions. It is typically obvious why this happens: an individual clears their name, rights a wrong, or repents in some other way. Superstition holds that a guilty citizen will be able to clear their name by 1) apologizing to nine people, 2) visiting churches of Thaella, Vela, and Arkus, and 3) making a sizable donation to the bellringer. Of course, sending money to the bellringer will often result in the authorities finding the perpetrator anyway.

DECREES THAT PUNISH INDIVIDUALS

1. Noth Tarkno shall serve eight years in the Hedral Prison for physical abuse of his sharecroppers.
2. All six chesskæl responsible for the theft of archival copies of *Clarificatum* from Blynka's Reserve shall be hanged.



The Bellringer

GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

All the laws in the world will do little good for society without dedicated civil servants enacting their mandates. The trinity government thus requires one final puzzle piece to properly function: the bellringer. Though often conceived of metonymically as but a single politician, the bellringer himself is in fact responsible for any number of subordinates: the Crabwell Guard, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Engineering Corps, and countless other smaller initiatives.

Visitors to Crabwell often mistake the meaning of the bellringer's iconic duty. He tolls the bell not to command Entac to speak, but instead to hush the busy citizens. The bellringer's job is not seen as sacred but simply reverent: Entac guides the people of Natikram, and thus his decrees are worthy of silence and respect.

The citizens of Crabwell elect the bellringer democratically. The leaders of the Bellringer Revolution had originally intended for all the people of Natikram to have a say, however, true to his unpredictable nature, Entac forbade this. Repeatedly, he has decreed

ONLY THE RESIDENTS OF CRABWELL MAY HAVE A SAY IN WHO BECOMES BELLRINGER.

As such, many wealthy individuals from across Natikram make sure that they maintain a residence somewhere within Crabwell's city limits. So long as they own property in the city, they can vote to uphold their interests.

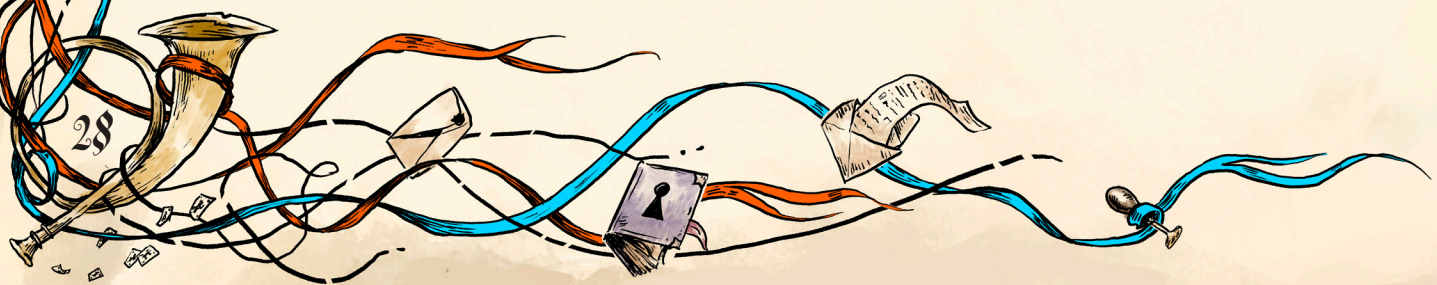
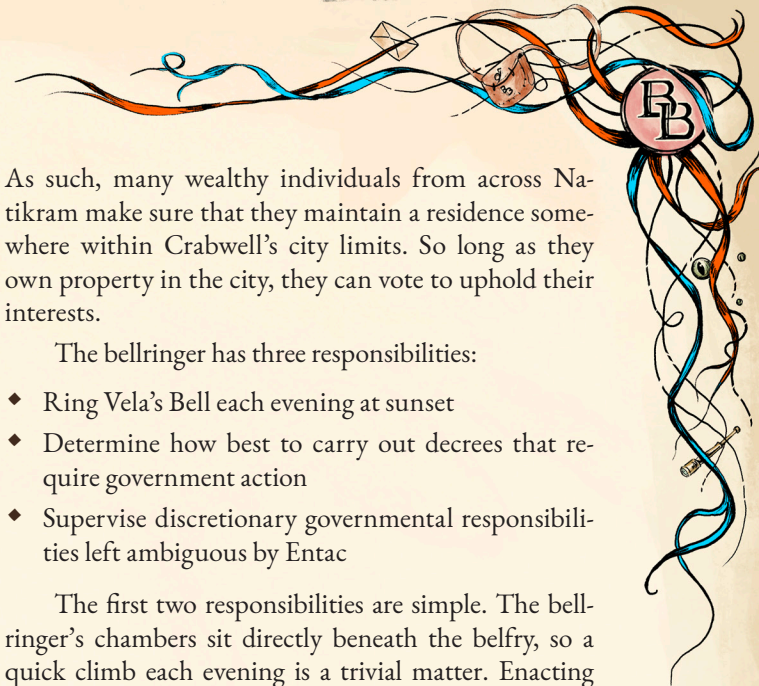
The bellringer has three responsibilities:

- ◆ Ring Vela's Bell each evening at sunset
- ◆ Determine how best to carry out decrees that require government action
- ◆ Supervise discretionary governmental responsibilities left ambiguous by Entac

The first two responsibilities are simple. The bellringer's chambers sit directly beneath the belfry, so a quick climb each evening is a trivial matter. Enacting Entac's will is also typically straightforward, as the scribes provide guidance for how best to honor the voice's wishes. The third responsibility, however, encompasses a huge gray area. So long as an action isn't expressly forbidden by scribe interpretations of Entac's decrees, the bellringer has free rein to use taxpayer funding however he sees fit. The bellringer decides whether Crabwell needs a new school, if Thaelon requires the aid of the Crabwell Guard, or if commercial regulation needs tweaking. The only direct limits on their powers are the people's votes, the scribes' laws, and Entac's decrees. Thus, the bellringer has an incredible amount of freedom to govern the way they see fit, provided they're knowledgeable enough to avoid angering the citizens or the scribes.

THE GREAT BELLTOWER

The Great Belltower rises imperiously from Crabwell's central plaza. The elegant construction serves as the homebase for the bellringer and a balancing focal point for visitors traveling to the city of three towers. The Great Belltower is far sparser than the Scribes' Tower. Whereas the scribes have filled every inch of their hub with offices, dormitories, archives, and byzantine corridors, the Great Belltower is comparatively empty. The imposing double doors that face the busy plaza suggest elite grandeur within, but through the double doors sits a single hand-cranked lift. This creaky apparatus was initially designed to connect many floors filled with the bellringer's subordinates, but generations of civil servants have found it far easier to maintain headquarters in smaller buildings dotted throughout the city.



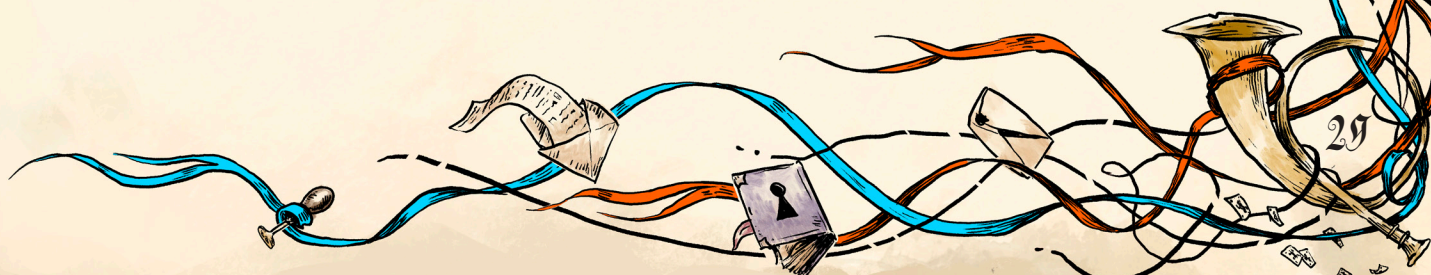


Riding the lift to its peak, one finds oneself in the bellringer's office, a cozy workspace with the best views in Naticram. Gazing to the south reveals the turbulent yet beautiful Southern Rim of mountains, while views to the north present a look toward the Asatti River Delta. To the east and west one finds perfect vantage points from which to monitor Hafswell Passage. Any window provides a breathtaking view of the city below.

The bellringer's office tends to change hands roughly once a decade. Some tenures are shorter or longer, depending on the popularity of the bellringer's actions. Each prior bellringer has left their stamp on the office: thoughtful Yennia Baethie adorned the window boxes with neverwilt dahlias (flowers from the elven city of Ullha Dore'i that bloom year round), bullish Mars-

den Kohl commissioned the intricate ceiling map of Naticram, and—most consequentially—populist favorite scholar Aenaren installed the speaking tubes that allow the bellringer to converse directly with the archscriver. This last innovation has greatly increased the efficiency of the bellringer. Now, the leader under the belfry can cross-reference official decree without even leaving his office.

Lift Attendant Niatrix: It is *hard* work operating the Great Belltower's lift. The 10-foot diameter platform is designed to carry up to 5 people at once (including the operator), and requires the use of a manual crank to operate. As such, most prior lift attendants have been ex-farmers accustomed to strenuous labor. Niatrix (she/her) is quite the exception. A recent fel'dær refugee, this





BELLRINGER SIMON THIBALD


For the past three years, Simon Thibald (he/him) has served as Crabwell's bellringer. Young for a bellringer, Simon ran for the position after just two years overseeing the Engineering Corps. Simon comes from a landed family, but growing up near his family's tin mine outside of Dewbar is hardly the aristocratic upbringing most would suspect for a would-be bellringer. Like most bellringers, Simon received his degree from Velan University, where he studied statecraft with a particular emphasis on the political history of Crabwell. Simon is acutely aware that a careful bellringer can both lead Naticram into prosperity and mitigate many of Entac's more "enigmatic" (that is: counterproductive) decrees.

Simon approaches his responsibilities with the utmost tact and reverence. When he can serve the people of Crabwell with well-spent taxes, he will. He is no miser, but he also has little interest in vanity projects. Simon would much rather dedicate his efforts to a new bridge, publicly-funded apprenticeships, or a careful reduction in Crabwell's bloated bureaucracy.

Unfortunately for Simon, he often finds his plans stymied by archscrivener Sevriel Avana. Supposedly his political ally, Sevriel has repeatedly altered scrivener interpretations of various laws in ways that can only be interpreted as deliberate roadblocks for Simon's objectives. Regardless of the slander his detractors might spew, Simon desperately wants to make Crabwell and surrounding Naticram peaceful and prosperous for decades to come. Why does Sevriel constantly undermine him so?

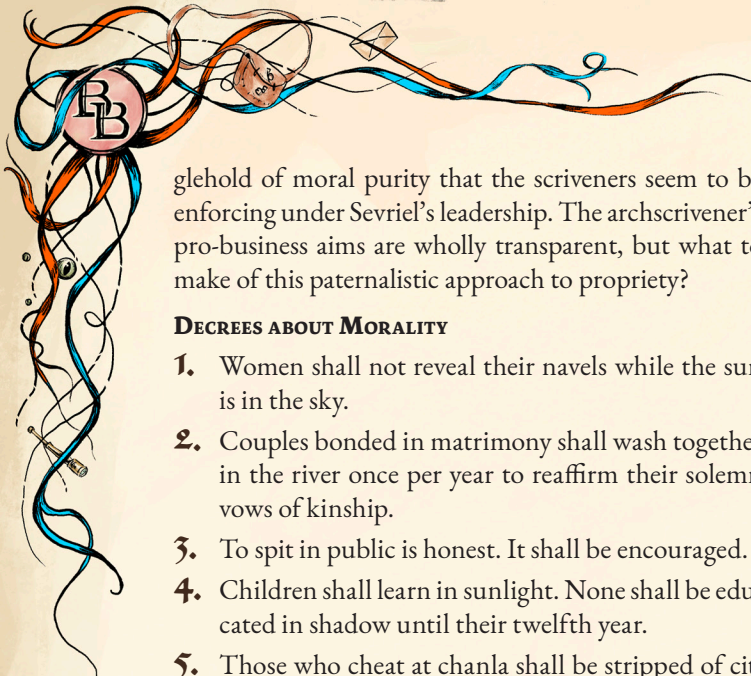
Simon spends his days in his belltower office, directing the various agencies and individuals under his command. He also makes time for his family: wife Berana, and teenage daughters Freyn and Mabel. As much as Simon understands the weight of his position, he is not willing to forgo a life of his own. This has endeared Simon to a wide swath of sympathetic voters, although just as many see his "happy family and realistic work/life balance" as a cynical ploy to engender goodwill.

Previous bellringers have used their position to impose their own moral views on the citizens of Crabwell. As far as Simon is concerned, the people already have religion. It is not the trinity government's duty to enforce the ideals of moderation beyond what Entac requires. Secretly, Simon would be relieved if Entac shifted into a less puritanical phase of decrees; he laments the stran-



woodspeaker—a form of druidic mystic—is able to subtly coax the wood and the chains of the aging lift mechanism to ease the burden of its manipulation. Make no mistake: Niatrix's raw strength exceeds that of all but the strongest members of the Crabwell Guard. Still, why work harder when you can work smarter? Niatrix expends almost no energy while operating the lift, and she happily chats with Simon or whichever guests happen to be visiting the Belltower. If the party of adventurers has a meeting with Simon, Niatrix will almost certainly tell them of the troubles back in her home woods.

Bellringer Simon Thibald hired Niatrix on the spot when he learned of her gift for magically manipulating antiquated mechanical constructions. It's possible he simply wanted her nearby to ensure she wasn't using her power for more nefarious purposes. After all, even Niatrix is unsure of the extent of her abilities. Could she crack a lock with her druidry? Open a vault? Hijack a ballista?



glehold of moral purity that the scribes seem to be enforcing under Sevril's leadership. The archscribe's pro-business aims are wholly transparent, but what to make of this paternalistic approach to propriety?

DECREES ABOUT MORALITY

1. Women shall not reveal their navels while the sun is in the sky.
2. Couples bonded in matrimony shall wash together in the river once per year to reaffirm their solemn vows of kinship.
3. To spit in public is honest. It shall be encouraged.
4. Children shall learn in sunlight. None shall be educated in shadow until their twelfth year.
5. Those who cheat at chanla shall be stripped of citizenship.
6. When entering a brothel, a patron shall touch the floor as a show of respect.
7. A child who is born out of wedlock is a child of both parents nonetheless. The child shall be raised by both parents barring an injunction from the scribes.
8. Winking shall be forbidden when in public spaces, unless executed with both eyes. (*note: scribes struggled to interpret this as as meaning anything other than "winking = not okay, blinking = okay"*)
9. Usury is no sin, and moneylenders shall not be punished.
10. None shall be reprimanded for the scars of their upbringing, nor praised for the boons of a childhood of plenty.

THE CRABWELL GUARD

All of Entac's decrees and the scribes' rulings would be for naught if there were no one to enforce them. The Crabwell Guard are the constabulary force for Crabwell, the ardent upholders of law and order across the city. Due to the surplus of scribes roaming the streets to adjudicate laws on the fly, most members of the Crabwell Guard have a decidedly limited grasp on the nation's ever changing laws. As such, the force consists primarily of brutes whose responsibilities are to detain a criminal whenever the scribes demand it.

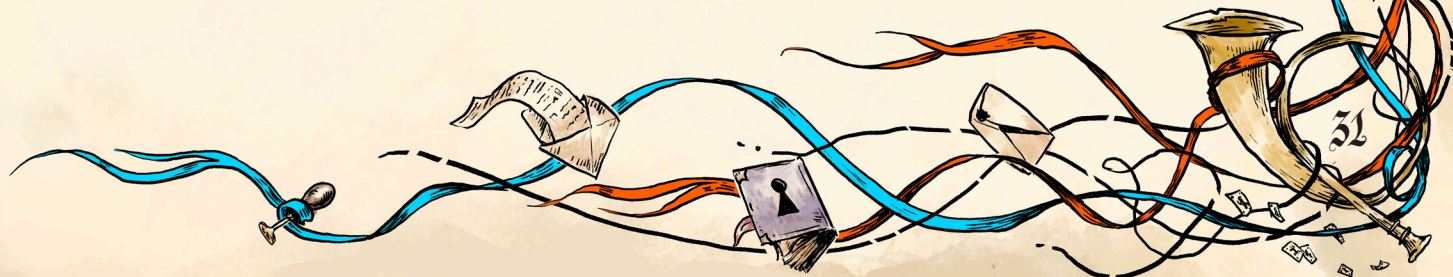
The merit of the Crabwell Guard lies more in their strength and flexibility than their legal authority. As they report directly to Simon, the Guard may be called

on to take care of any number of tasks: putting out fires, aiding the Engineering Corps, or even transporting cargo. In fact, under Simon's rule, the Guard's law enforcement responsibilities have gradually dwindled as they've been put to work bolstering supply lines throughout Natikram, aiding in construction projects, and generally providing their labor wherever the government demands it.

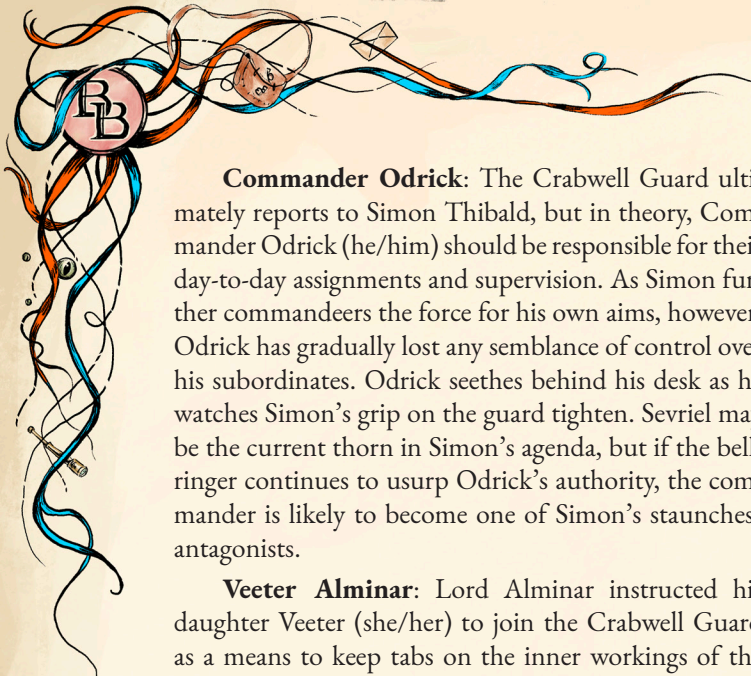
When it comes to law enforcement, the Crabwell Guard primarily acts as a deterrent. They do not "investigate," as most assume that particularly heinous crimes will be solved automatically through Entac's decrees. They don't need to pass judgment (that falls to the scribes), they don't need to fight in a war (the nascent NAF is the standing army), and they barely need to protect Crabwell (the walls are virtually impenetrable). One noteworthy responsibility for the Crabwell Guard is to act as wardens in the Hedral Prison, but even this notable jail complex has never approached full capacity. Mostly, the Guard stands watch on the walls, patrols the streets, or lends their labor for Simon's various projects.

GM Note: The Crabwell Guard is meant to be a useful counterbalance to the hyper-ordered society enforced by Entac and the scribes. Yes, there are laws for everything, but the folks actually in charge of enforcing those laws aren't ultimately very threatening. If that doesn't suit your aims for the city (for example: you *want* Crabwell to be a labyrinth of legal challenges with severe punishments for infractions), feel free to reimagine them as competent and diligent.

As for Entac's ability to solve criminal cases for them, it's important to note that Entac decidedly *does not* punish every wrongdoer by name. In keeping with Draymin's commitment to balance and equilibrium, Entac will only ever make decrees regarding roughly half of all egregious crimes. You shouldn't reveal this to your players, but it might be useful if some of the wiser NPCs in town have deduced the incompleteness of Entac's sentencing. After all, even one unsolved crime should make it clear that Entac isn't committed to passing judgment on every criminal infraction.







Commander Odrick: The Crabwell Guard ultimately reports to Simon Thibald, but in theory, Commander Odrick (he/him) should be responsible for their day-to-day assignments and supervision. As Simon further commandeers the force for his own aims, however, Odrick has gradually lost any semblance of control over his subordinates. Odrick seethes behind his desk as he watches Simon's grip on the guard tighten. Sevriel may be the current thorn in Simon's agenda, but if the bellringer continues to usurp Odrick's authority, the commander is likely to become one of Simon's staunchest antagonists.

Veeter Alminar: Lord Alminar instructed his daughter Veeter (she/her) to join the Crabwell Guard as a means to keep tabs on the inner workings of the patrol force. Veeter's father is always engaged in semi-illicit business operations, and he figured having a family member on the force was a good safeguard. Easily distracted Veeter couldn't care less about law enforcement and has been a total nonfactor during street patrols. Her incompetence prompted Commander Odrick to give her a desk job where she is unlikely to cause problems. Of course, most of the "desk work" that a normal guard force might take care of is handled by the scribes. As such, Veeter mostly sits around in the backroom and chews the mild hallucinogen stunkleaf while drawing cartoons in the margins of her reports.

THE ASATTI RIVER AND CANAL

Though the earliest days of Crabwell are undocumented, scholars are confident that the first to settle the city did so because of its proximity to the Asatti River. The river provides food, acts as a gateway to the vibrant Delta and Lake Druha beyond, powers mills, and—quite simply—transforms the countryside from a drab plain into an idyllic landscape. The uninformed argue that Crabwell is the center of Natikram life because of Entac; the truly wise understand that the Asatti River is the lifeblood of the city.

Unlike the muddy waters of Aldyn Creek, frigid and lifeless Loch Foss, or the tainted agricultural runoff near Vonedale, the Asatti River is pure and filled with life. Fed by snowmelt from the Southern Rim and filtered by antibacterial sediment, the river provides the perfect environment for migratory fish, thirsty game, and strolling lovers. Myth claims that the waters of Goddess Thaella's well are the very same waters that feed the Asatti.

The river is a *constant* target of Entac's decrees. Some days, travel is banned. Some days fishing is banned. A feast of river fish is requested, only to be canceled at the very last minute. Art of the river is banned, songs about the river are banned, everything but thinking about the river gets banned. Then, all of a sudden, all artists must only focus on the river. It is unclear why Entac is so aggressively fickle toward the river, though the citizens often lament that they can't be allowed to just enjoy the purest pleasure their city can offer without consulting a never-ending list of contradictory decrees.

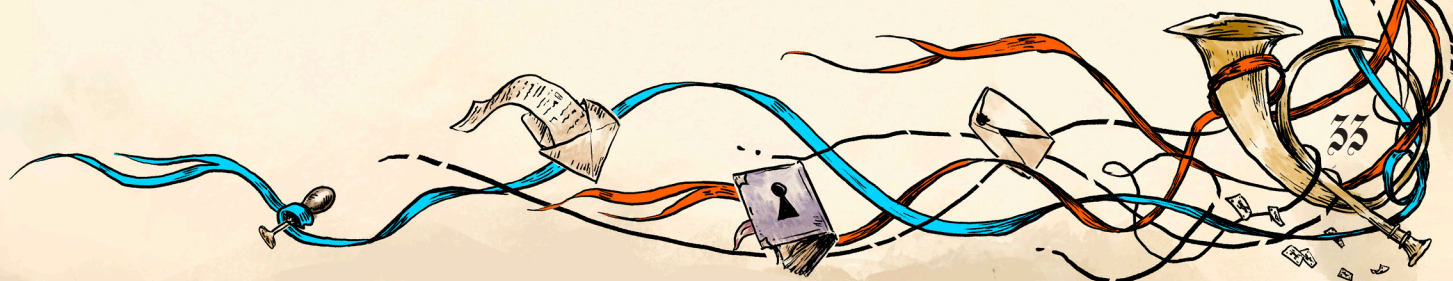
Long before such projects would have been properly documented, early residents of Crabwell dug a canal to bring the waters of the Asatti River straight through the city. This canal helps the farmers outside the city to irrigate their crops, eases seasonal flooding, and allows for water taxis to transport travelers through the city. The canal necessarily muddies water flowing downstream, meaning those who want to appreciate the purity of the Asatti must spend time in Crabwell or further south.

BLYNKA'S RESERVE

One of Entac's most frequently recurring decrees is the need for Crabwell to mint its own coins and to meticulously control the value of its currency. As if that weren't hard enough to accomplish, Entac has also repeatedly forbidden the government from handling that task directly. As such, the central bank of Crabwell is an independent enterprise, with the bellringer assuming only a supervisory role among the bank's board of directors.

Despite the primacy given to the three Gods of Moderation in Natikram, the founders of Blynka's Reserve decided to name their bank after the Goddess of mountains, storms, and—appropriately—gold. Devout residents take umbrage with such a fundamental service bearing the name of one of the Gods of Excess, a God often depicted as a savage and greedy hag, but this nomenclature should come as no surprise to any adventurer who has ever met a banker. Blynka's Reserve adheres to all of Entac's economic decrees, but it also creates staggering wealth for its founders and investors. Blynka herself would be proud.

Blynka's Reserve mints Crabwell's coinage in an ultra-secure location outside of the city. Their branch within the city walls is instead dedicated to their investment wing and their highly guarded vaults. Invest-



ment opportunities abound in Natikram: new resource gathering expeditions, arcane industries operating out of Thaellon, and speculative manufacturing fueled by rumors of a coming war. Daring entrepreneurs rely on Blynka's Reserve to fund their operations, and the bank is happy to make diverse yet risky investments.

Separately, the bank reaps an impressive passive income by renting out their vaults. These metal chambers are safeguarded with interlocking arcane wards and rotating sentries that put the Crabwell Guard to shame. There's good money in guarding incredible wealth, and so Blynka's Reserve is able to pay for powerful security.

It is a closely-guarded secret that the branch of Blynka's Reserve in Crabwell is owned and operated by the very same corporate board as the bank of the same name in Svarnahelm. This would seem to breach Entac's laws against doing business with Svarnahelm, but no decree has ever demanded the bank's dissolution or divestment. The ramifications of this dual allegiance are potentially far-reaching... is Svarnahelm pulling strings toward some nefarious end? If the average Crabwell citizen were aware just how much control a Svarnahelm company has over the city's economy, it could inspire panic.

THE PUBLIC STABLES

One of Simon's proudest achievements is the construction of the city's public stables, a large infrastructure project that Sevriel was simply unable to stonewall. The logic behind the stables is quite simple: the city of Crabwell fares better when it is not beset by hundreds of travelers' horses. Droppings alone had become a massive nuisance for the city, and since the streets are eminently walkable, clogging every alley and passageway with horses hardly seemed necessary.

Simon wanted to encourage traders and tourists alike to stop in Crabwell, so he could not simply outlaw horses. His solution for this dilemma was public stables. Any traveler can leave their horse at the stables, pay a surprisingly modest fee (which then gets funneled back into bellringer operations), and then pick up their steed when they leave the city. Horses unaccounted for after one week become the property of the bellringer. Furthermore, horse-dealers can rent space in the stables to use as a sort of showroom for their stock.

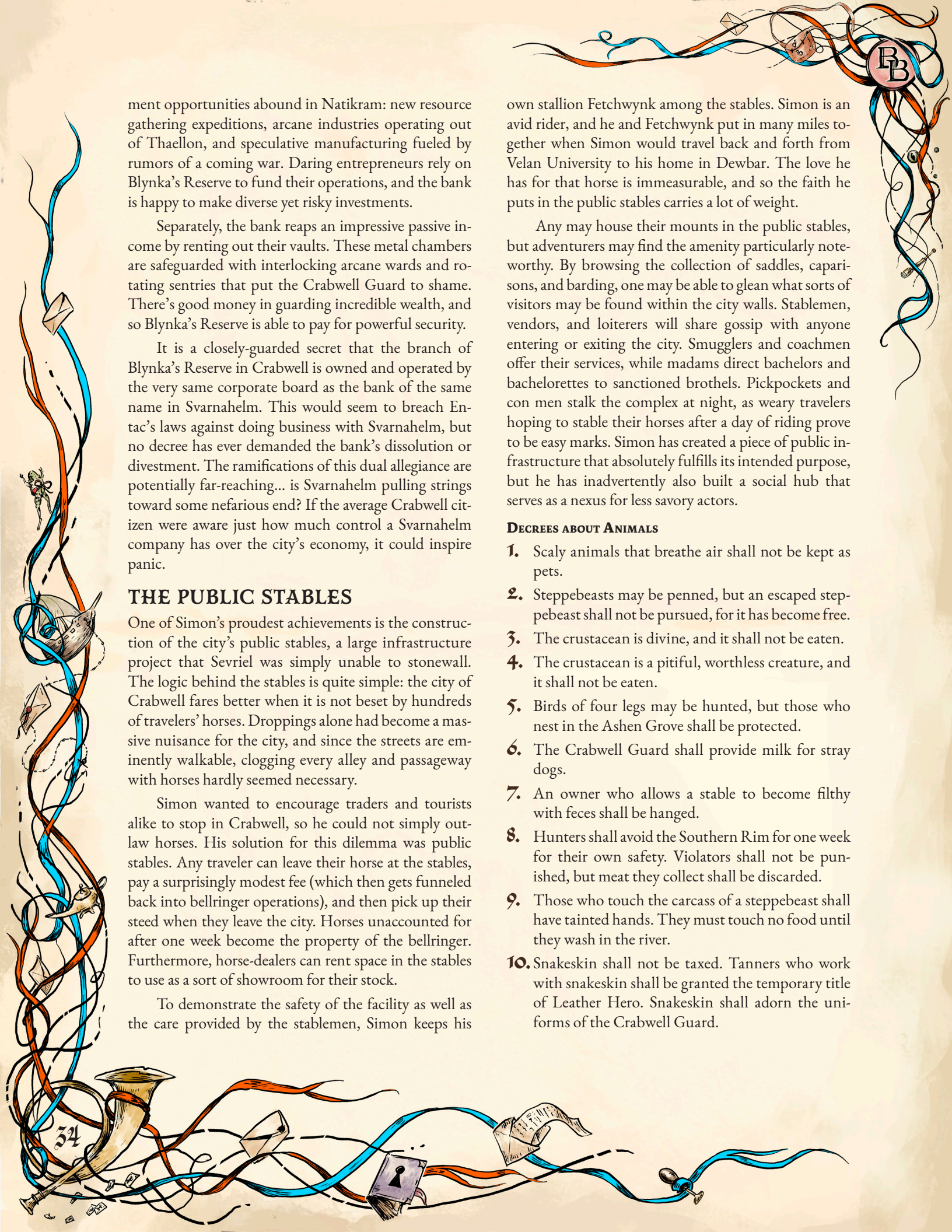
To demonstrate the safety of the facility as well as the care provided by the stablemen, Simon keeps his

own stallion Fetchwynk among the stables. Simon is an avid rider, and he and Fetchwynk put in many miles together when Simon would travel back and forth from Velan University to his home in Dewbar. The love he has for that horse is immeasurable, and so the faith he puts in the public stables carries a lot of weight.

Any may house their mounts in the public stables, but adventurers may find the amenity particularly noteworthy. By browsing the collection of saddles, caparisons, and barding, one may be able to glean what sorts of visitors may be found within the city walls. Stablemen, vendors, and loiterers will share gossip with anyone entering or exiting the city. Smugglers and coachmen offer their services, while madams direct bachelors and bachelorettes to sanctioned brothels. Pickpockets and con men stalk the complex at night, as weary travelers hoping to stable their horses after a day of riding prove to be easy marks. Simon has created a piece of public infrastructure that absolutely fulfills its intended purpose, but he has inadvertently also built a social hub that serves as a nexus for less savory actors.

DECREES ABOUT ANIMALS

1. Scaly animals that breathe air shall not be kept as pets.
2. Steppebeasts may be penned, but an escaped steppebeast shall not be pursued, for it has become free.
3. The crustacean is divine, and it shall not be eaten.
4. The crustacean is a pitiful, worthless creature, and it shall not be eaten.
5. Birds of four legs may be hunted, but those who nest in the Ashen Grove shall be protected.
6. The Crabwell Guard shall provide milk for stray dogs.
7. An owner who allows a stable to become filthy with feces shall be hanged.
8. Hunters shall avoid the Southern Rim for one week for their own safety. Violators shall not be punished, but meat they collect shall be discarded.
9. Those who touch the carcass of a steppebeast shall have tainted hands. They must touch no food until they wash in the river.
10. Snakeskin shall not be taxed. Tanners who work with snakeskin shall be granted the temporary title of Leather Hero. Snakeskin shall adorn the uniforms of the Crabwell Guard.





PLOT HOOK: WORK FOR SIMON

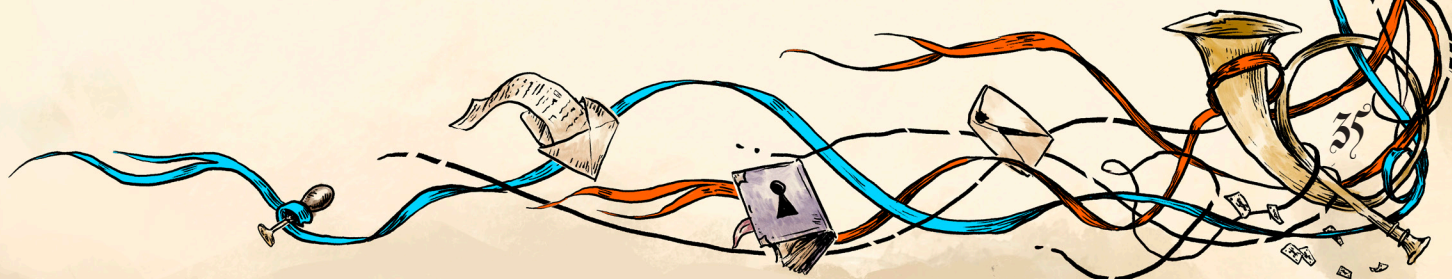
Bellringer Simon Thibald is the consummate “quest giver.” He has access to plentiful resources, remarkable flexibility with how he can dispense those resources, and a genuine desire to improve his city. Despite his vast network of long-term civil servants on whom he relies, the inflexibility of the dedicated government agencies and the limited imagination of the Crabwell Guard necessitates that he outsource many of his tasks. Thus, Simon will regularly employ “runners,” deputized agents who are paid handsomely to tackle odd jobs on behalf of the trinity government.

Before Simon hires the party as runners, the adventurers will first have to be introduced to the bellringer’s office. If the party’s prior deeds have already gained notoriety throughout Crabwell, Simon may seek them out directly. Otherwise, consider the following avenues through which the adventurers might come to know the young bellringer.

1. Simon has a number of freelance runners already in his employ. Due to the nature of their work, it is possible that the party will meet one of these runners outside of Crabwell before even making it into the city proper. Simon offers **referral bonuses to his runners**, so if the party seems capable, these freelancers may submit a recommendation to their employer.
2. When arriving in Crabwell, the party is likely to stop by the public stables, either to house their mounts or to pick up some rumors before heading into town. Simon **regularly checks in on the stables**, both to monitor the attentiveness with which the stablemen care for the stowed horses and to visit his steed Fetchwynk.
3. Almost all travelers end up in some **minor spat with the scribes or the Crabwell Guard** while visiting the city. It is hard enough for a resident to keep track of the overlapping laws, and another thing entirely for out-of-towners to follow each unexpected decree. Luckily, Simon has instructed street judges and patrolmen alike to notify him if any particularly noteworthy voyagers find their way into Crabwell.

4. In stark contrast to insular Sevriel, Simon tries his best to maintain a normal life while serving as Crabwell’s highest elected official. Each morning, he walks his children to school. At lunch, he will often eat in the central plaza or pop into The Liquid Truth for a siellon berry tea. He never misses a feast day, he supervises executions, and he and his old college friends will often fish on weekends. Simon is—quite simply—**a man that travelers are likely to come across** during their normal day-to-day activities.
5. The **Mercantilites are always on the lookout** for potential allies in Crabwell. This clandestine guild of capitalist idealists want to elevate pro-business radicals into any position of power that they can. If they believe the party will better advance their aims of unity with Svarnahelm through secret business arrangements, one of their members who has Simon’s ear will make an introduction.
6. The ultimate matchmaker is Entac himself. It is rare, but occasionally Entac will **make a decree demanding that two parties meet**. These meetings are always tense. When government officials are involved, there is always a concern that something grand is expected, but Entac rarely specifies what exactly the meeting is intended to accomplish. Nevertheless, if a decree stipulates that the bellringer and the party ought to convene, the adventurers should expect to find Crabwell Guard escorts knocking on their door within the hour.

Once Simon and the party have made introductions, he will request a short interview in his office. Primarily, he wants to determine that the party has no troublesome allegiances (e.g. to Svarnahelm or City Lord Rodder) and that they are capable of thinking for themselves. Simon believes that the best runners are those that do not need to be micromanaged. Assuming the adventurers don’t make fools of themselves, Simon will hire them on the spot. There are always tasks to be done on behalf of Crabwell that fall squarely in the realm of “freelance gigs,” the types of tasks better left to career travelers with street smarts in spades and a knack for improvisation.



- 1. Investigate Gell's Monastery:** The Great Belltower's windows provide more than just scenic views; they also serve as strategic vantage points overlooking the city and surrounding countryside. Simon is alarmed by what appears to be a growing fire near Gell's Monastery. As the commune is a day's hike up treacherous mountain paths, a team of runners is better suited to investigate than anyone else in Simon's employ.

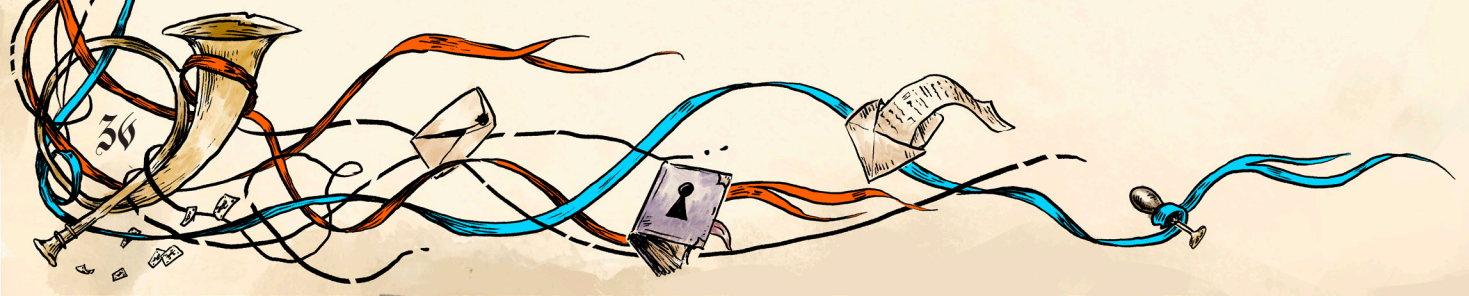
While the growing blaze is likely the result of carelessness—Gell's loopy followers are always a bit inattentive when meditating—it is also possible that this is the result of arson. Perhaps the neighboring orcish bands decided to finally conquer the peaceful monastery, or maybe religious moderate extremists (i.e. those who abhor *both* excess and abstinence) set off the fire to disrupt religious practices. Regardless, the monks may not be able to extinguish the flames without help, and runners will have to determine whether the fire was ignited by malicious agents.

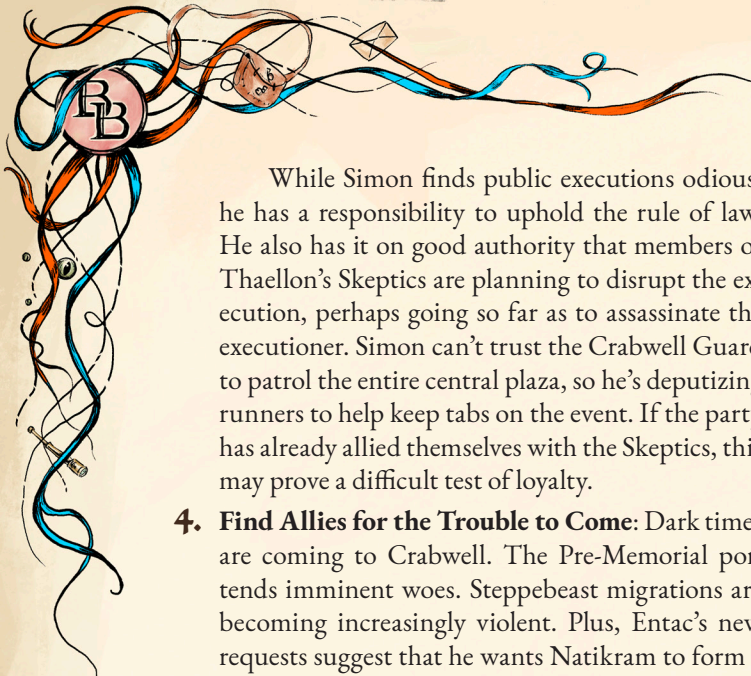
- 2. Escort the Cartographers:** The tunnels underneath Crabwell are *extensive*. Centuries of dead are buried right beneath the city streets, and no soul has yet to comprehensively map out the winding tunnels. Now that the public stables are up and running, Simon's next goal is to properly document and archive the full extent of the catacomb complex. Unfortunately, the cartographers Simon has sent on preliminary expeditions have all failed: some fell gravely ill from the miasma, others became hopelessly lost before giving up, and one has disappeared entirely.

Simon wants the runners to accompany a cartographer to ensure one is able to finally finish the job. If they can help to clear out some of the threats below or even locate the missing cartographer, all the better! The bellringer will warn the party of the potential danger, but Simon can do little more than hypothesize what further risks linger below. If the party is not in the mood for escort missions, they can also attempt to map out the catacombs themselves, but visualizing and depicting the winding network of tunnels will challenge even the most gifted artists.



- 3. Secure the Execution:** By Entac's orders, Inaro the Unknowable will be hanged tomorrow morning. This result was expected. Inaro is a "stage magician," a fraudulent mage who pretends to perform wild spells, but is in fact just using mundane skills to trick the audience. This deceitful practice is in and of itself unlawful, but more damning was the fire he ignited while performing at an inn outside Crabwell. The ensuing blaze killed three, including a wealthy elven farmer.





While Simon finds public executions odious, he has a responsibility to uphold the rule of law. He also has it on good authority that members of Thaellon's Skeptics are planning to disrupt the execution, perhaps going so far as to assassinate the executioner. Simon can't trust the Crabwell Guard to patrol the entire central plaza, so he's deputizing runners to help keep tabs on the event. If the party has already allied themselves with the Skeptics, this may prove a difficult test of loyalty.

4. **Find Allies for the Trouble to Come:** Dark times are coming to Crabwell. The Pre-Memorial portends imminent woes. Steppebeast migrations are becoming increasingly violent. Plus, Entac's new requests suggest that he wants Natikram to form a standing army. It is unclear what woes stand before Natikram, but Simon fears that war, environmental cataclysm, or social upheaval may be in the nation's future. The bellringer has already begun to establish the Natikram Armed Forces, but he fears the hodgepodge assemblage of soldiers and mages may not be enough.

Simon needs seasoned travelers to begin scouring Yanuskor in search of new allies for the great nation. In times of peace and plenty, it is easy to forgo the effort of forging meaningful diplomatic relationships, but fears over the future leave Simon uneasy. He will suggest initiating negotiations with the following groups:

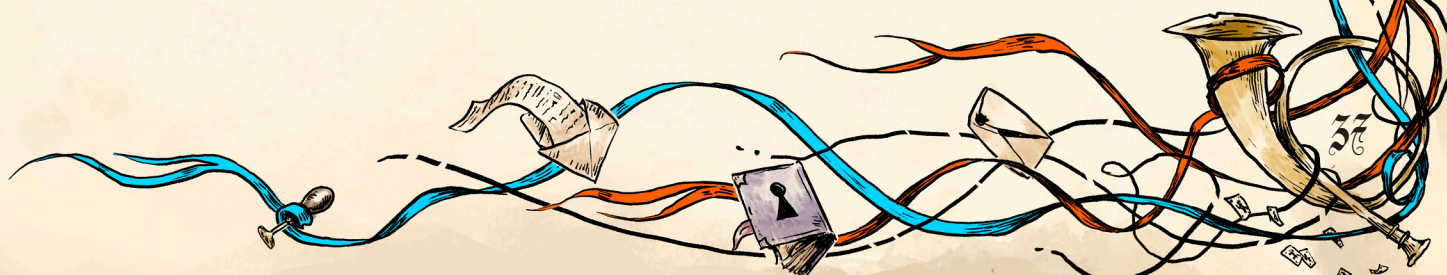
- ◆ **The Voices of Stethel:** A troupe of wandering bards with mysterious illusory abilities. Although they hail from Svarnahelm, they swear no allegiance. Their deep knowledge of lore and tricky magic could be invaluable.
- ◆ **The Fel'dær:** Their home is technically in Natikram, but they've never been full citizens. Winning them over will likely require Crabwell to intervene in City Lord Rodder's methodical destruction of the woods.
- ◆ **Greymir's Knights:** In the Pale Sanctum, far beyond Thaellon, an order of mystical warriors train in the foothills of the Outer Rim. They were driven from Natikram long ago for their commitment to a false God, a lord of balance and equilibrium.

- ◆ **Velan Students of Wizardry:** Should the worst come to pass, Natikram will need all the help it can get. That may mean recruiting current students from Velan University. Though few of the wizarding scholars are instructed in warfare, their spells may find other uses in Simon's employ.

- ◆ **The Nith:** In the unexplored Kardama Lands, a race of nomadic reptilian humanoids rule over unwelcoming terrain. It is unclear what sort of calamity sundered their homeland, but they've mastered it nonetheless. The nith are famously xenophobic, but their expertise may be exactly what Natikram needs.

GM Note: Traveling the world and recruiting allies for Natikram is a great and flexible basis on which to structure an entire campaign. Regardless of the nature of the inevitable threat (a war with Svarnahelm? an arcane disaster? a demon invasion?), the fundamental rhythm of *1. go to a new place, 2. do some quests for a faction leader, 3. win the faction's trust, 4. repeat* is perfect for a lengthier tabletop adventure. The "world tour" offers players an opportunity to see every part of the realm they inhabit, engage with various different factions and dungeon formats, and feel as though they've really had a part in something meaningful beyond just "go to x, kill y."

Should the party succeed in their tasks, Simon will reward them however he can. As would be expected, he can provide gold, horses, titles, and parcels of land, but he can also offer more nuanced boons: the aid of the Crabwell Guard, connections at the University, magical trinkets stored in vaults at Blynka's Reserve, and continued work. Perhaps most usefully, Simon can offer the help of his best friend Dak, a goblin tinkerer who lives in Outer Crabwell (described in the next chapter). The one thing Simon cannot do is offer amnesty. Past crimes may only be forgiven by the scribes and helping Simon in his plans may be counterproductive when trying to appease Sevriel and her scholars.





The Trouble to Come

OUR CATHEDRAL OF THAELLA, GODDESS AT THE WELL



Crabwell and its surrounding hamlets are littered with churches and shrines dedicated to the Gods of Moderation. Tall halls with ornate carvings create evolving shadow puppets on the walls of churches dedicated to

Arkus, and glorious geometries venerate the inscrutable Vela. The largest place of worship within Crabwell's walls is Our Cathedral of Thaella, Goddess at the Well, a grand basilica with soothing water features fed by the Asatti Canal.

While Crabwell citizens worship Vela and Arkus in kind, Thaella is favored by most. This enigmatic deity is most commonly depicted as a shapeshifting woman sitting at a well, mysteriously warping between child, grandmother, maiden, and baby, ceaselessly escaping a definitive age. Thaella is the Goddess of the past and future, shepherding the souls who will be born and

those who have already passed. She guides her followers from the traumas that were through the trials that are to come. Thaella is not explicitly benevolent; instead, scripture describes her as outside the understanding of human morality. She knows of all that was and will be, and believers hope that they will be blessed with some trace blessings in the form of warnings and omens.

The cathedral itself is criss-crossed with carved rivulets of pure Asatti water. Visitors must take off their shoes and walk through the waters and across the cool stone. Beneath the dome, water cascades into the canal below, and the Daughters of Thaella sit on the rim of their well, presenting sermons and giving blessings.

PREMONITIONS FROM THE DAUGHTERS

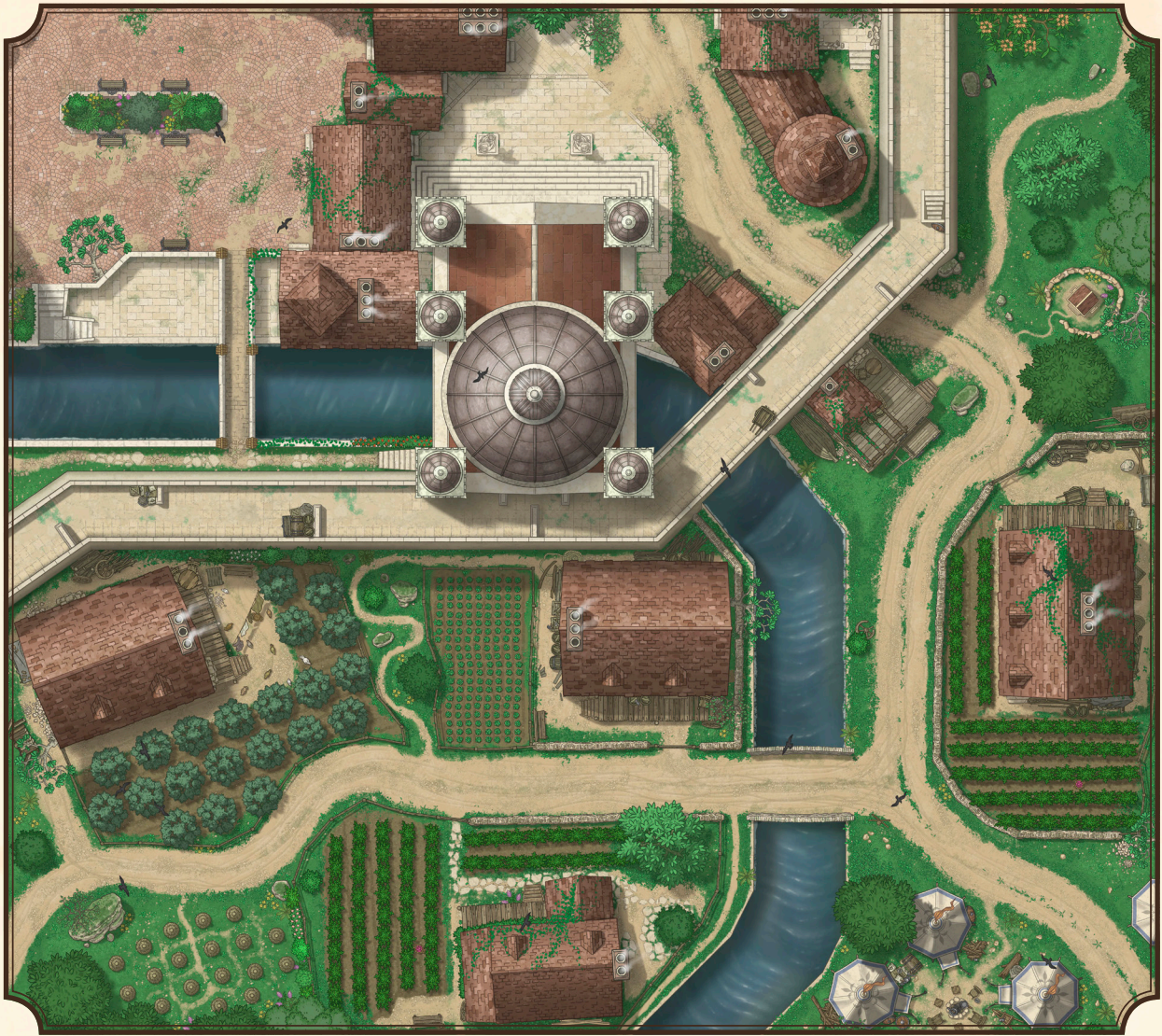
A scant few Daughters of Thaella have been revered as prophets, once-in-a-generation holy women who receive visions from Thaella. Accounts of these visions are frustratingly vague, and it is not clear that the followers of Thaella have used the knowledge gleaned for any great impact. Non-believers suggest that most of these supposed prophets could have merely benefited from coincidence and luck: a Daughter who proclaims "a storm comes" will *occasionally* be right through no particular gift of her own. Nevertheless, foresight is seen as the highest form of saintliness among the Daughters.

Despite the rarity of these visions, nearly all of the Daughters of Thaella have recently been having the same recurring dream: a bloom of shadow erupting outside of Crabwell, bathing the countryside in darkness and despair. Even the most casual of believers fear what this could mean. The typically sedate Daughters have begun begging Bellringer Simon Thibald to investigate their visions, fearing that total annihilation is soon to befall the city. Simon has added these claims to his list of troubling omens with which he must contend.

ENTAC AND RELIGION

Entac is surprisingly tight-lipped with regard to the actual practice of religion in Natikram. He will happily make proclamations declaring some action moral or immoral, but when it comes to Gods and worship, he typically just reiterates that 1) he is not a God, 2) he should not be deified, and 3) residents of Crabwell should give primacy to the Gods of Moderation. The ways in which the practitioners actually celebrate their Gods have been left suspiciously open-ended.





OUTER CRABWELL

Beyond the walls of the city, farms and small villages dot the rolling hills for miles and miles. Visitors may notice that the inner city itself has surprisingly few homes. Most who work within the walls live in small farm houses within a short radius of the gates to the city. With healthy soil fed by the Asatti River and Canal plus lengthy harvesting seasons, fields near the ancient city provide abundant siellon berries, millet, and olives. When combined with agricultural imports from Vonnedale and plentiful river fish, the diets of Crabwell citizens are among the healthiest in Yanuskor.

The city limits of Crabwell extend roughly 4 miles out from the city walls in all directions. As such, farmers, fishermen, and craftworkers living in the adjacent farmland are all able to attend feast days, vote for Bellringer, and call on the Crabwell Guard in times of trouble. Of course, proximity to the city also means that they are more likely to be held accountable to Entac's decrees. Farmers in Dewbar, Vonnedale, or Aldyn will have a much easier time tending to their crops and animals knowing that unexpected agricultural laws will likely remain unenforced so far from the Omniphone.



DAK

In a minuscule house just outside the southeastern gate, a seven-inch tall goblin lives a peaceful life free from subjugation. Goblins, orcs, and the other “monstrous races” of Crabwell are never dismissed as lesser creature by Entac, but that doesn’t keep the humans, elves, and halflings who live in Natikram from discriminating against their kind. Dak (he/him) grew up far from civilization, on the slopes of the Blynka’s Knuckles. After showing an early proclivity toward magic, Dak was encouraged to leave his home. Among his kind, practice of witchcraft is seen as sacrilege, and Dak’s innate gifts rendered him “unfit for goblin society.”

Nevertheless, Dak persevered. Always the ambitious sort, he decided that he would pursue a proper education, making his way to Velan University in Thaellon. On his very first day wandering the city, he met a bright-eyed freshman named Simon Thibald. Having grown up near many amicable goblins in his home of Dewbar, Simon knew two things: 1) Dak was almost certainly not a threat, and 2) the university would absolutely never allow Dak to attend classes. In his very first act of defiance against the school, Simon decided to help Dak out any way he could.

At first, Dak wore heavy robes and snuck around Simon’s dormitory, attempting to evade detection. Eventually, however, Dak started poring over Simon’s textbooks, thereby mastering a modified size-reduction spell he could cast upon himself. Each morning, Dak would shrink himself down to one-eighth his size, hide in Simon’s pocket, and attend classes in secret. Dak quickly befriended all of Simon’s other university friends, and the little goblin mage became a mainstay of the soon-to-be bellringer’s social circle. The shrinking spell had a side effect, however. Each time it was cast, there was a small chance it would misfire, sealing its effects permanently. Toward the end of their time at university, Dak became forever stuck as Yanuskor’s tiniest goblin.

Luckily, this presented an opportunity. Simon moved to Crabwell after graduation and brought Dak with him. The city would never accept a goblin, of course, but a seven-inch tall goblin would be easier to hide. Simon’s buddies from the school of agriculture built Dak a miniature home disguised as an apiary and hid it surreptitiously in the bellringer’s personal fields. For years, Dak lived in secret, but Simon has recently unveiled Dak’s new house—a *proper* house—and has assured the small goblin that the city’s residents will treat him with respect. Time will tell whether Simon is correct.

In his tiny abode, Dak can experiment with chemical reagents, drink thimbles of mead to his heart’s content, and act as an advisor to the bellringer. To this day, Simon and Dak remain best of friends.

GM Note: Dak is an ideal sidekick character for parties in need of an extra helping hand. If the party aids Simon in a quest or two, he will introduce them to the tiny goblin. Dak is happy in his hidden home but will also willingly join any party that promises to take him on an adventure. Dak can fulfill any magical role as needed: if the party needs a healer, consider giving him some tiny syringes he can administer as needed. Otherwise, remember that Dak is a scholar! He can provide useful lore dumps if the party needs guidance in a new locale. Plus, he can just hide in someone’s pocket until he’s relevant to the story.



SVARNAHELM AND THE YANUSKOR WAR

Every person who has ever lived in Crabwell or surrounding Natikram has become incensed by one decree or another. Maybe their weekly purchases were made drastically more expensive by a new tax, or maybe their sporting league was suddenly disbanded. Decrees are often unexpected, and for every innocuous new law to follow, there is one that wholly upends someone's way of life.

For Crabwell's ultra-wealthy, this eventually became unacceptable. It's not clear which decree was the final straw, but after a string of supposedly "anti-business rulings," a league of commercial leaders from around the city decided they would no longer be following Entac's decrees. The Crabwell Guard attempted to detain those who flouted the more easily policed decrees, but these magnates paid off anyone attempting to stop them. The league realized that maintaining their hyper-aggressive business practices in Crabwell would be unsustainable, and that they would need to travel somewhere else, somewhere unfettered by the draconian mandates of a mysterious tower. They hired hundreds of mercenaries to help them annex a large island in the center of Lake Druha from which they could act freely from Entac's tyranny, and they founded the free state of Svarnahelm.

There was little violence throughout this whole affair. This small group of wealthy overlords paid for soldiers to help them rid an island of its indigenous people. Some members of the Crabwell Guard and local militias launched small offenses (as ordered by Entac). Svarnahelm and their growing city of expatriates and paid soldiers had the strategic upperhand. The eponymous island on which they built their new state was highly defensible, and the disorganized Natikram forces were ill-prepared for repeated assaults.

Eventually, Entac called for an end to the war, thus ceasing the inept attacks and drawing a close to the hostilities. Entac demanded a total ban on travel to Svarnahelm, though this quickly became one of his most frequently defied decrees. Svarnahelm grew and flourished over the next 400 years and now fills the entire island on which it sits. It is one massive metropolis governed not by a tower, but by the companies who own it. Tens of thousands of corporate underlings, praying to the Gods of Excess live in gleaming spires glowing with spark vial light.

While magic and technology proliferate in Svarnahelm, life in Natikram's capital remains stable and unvaried. Some point to the drastic commercial success as evidence of Svarnahelm's supremacy and the failures of following Entac's rule. The obvious counter to this is that while the island's rich live like Gods atop arcane spires, the common people struggle in crowded squalor. Life for the average Crabwell citizen may not be as vibrant or exciting as for those in Svarnahelm, but it's dramatically safer and more predictable.

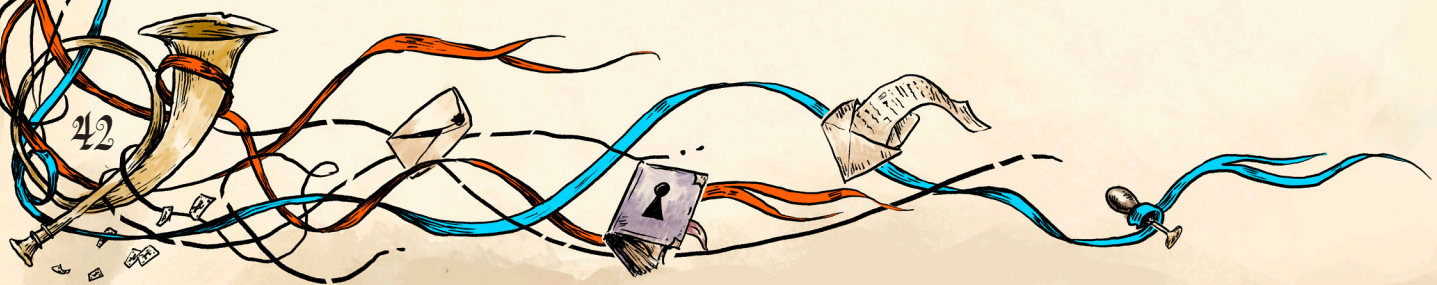
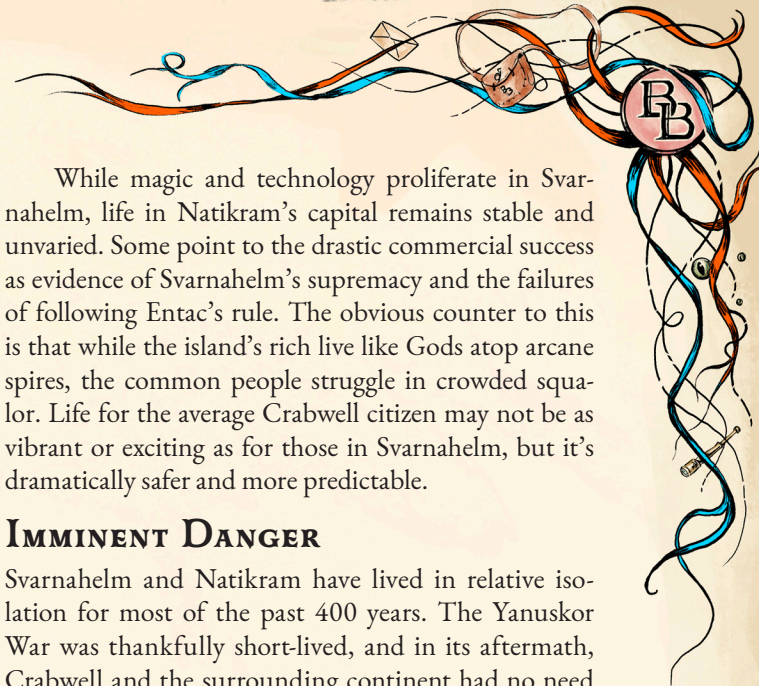
IMMINENT DANGER

Svarnahelm and Natikram have lived in relative isolation for most of the past 400 years. The Yanuskor War was thankfully short-lived, and in its aftermath, Crabwell and the surrounding continent had no need for a standing army. That all changed, however, when Entac decreed

CRABWELL SHALL ESTABLISH A FORCE TO PROTECT ITSELF.

No one can be positive why Entac has determined that now is the time to establish a defensive force. For decades following the Yanuskor War, one Natikram city or another would slowly build up a dedicated militia, only for Entac to curb or disband each one after another. After enough failed attempts at properly arming themselves, the people of Natikram understood that organized military forces would always be discouraged by Entac. Most assumed that the supposedly omniscient Entac simply did not want the people of Natikram wasting effort and resources on defense when he knew that there was no threat. What other justification could there be? Unless Entac was actively trying to undermine the people, why would he dismantle any attempt to prepare for potential invasions?

This newest decree was a surprise. If the assumption is that "Entac doesn't want us to have a military because he knows there is no threat," then a sudden reversal of that decree would seem to imply that war is imminent. The premonitions from the Daughters of Thaela and the imminent date inscribed on the pre-memorial only strengthen fears that dark times loom on the horizon.



The Order of Six

The Heroes of the NAF



Kamra

Goddess Thaella's Chosen Daughter



Drivot

The Superhuman Warrior



Mergo

Our Protection Against Evil



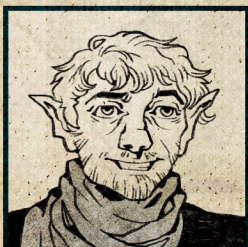
Alzudrion

Black Sheep of the Scriveners



Lorn

The Quiet Woodspeaker



Gell

The Thunderous Recluse

THE ORDER OF SIX

Low-level magic is common in Yanuskor. The division of labor in Crabwell is so great because agriculture is bolstered through wizardry. Divine healers have enhanced lifespans for most citizens, and arcane architects are able to build huge structures that resist the elements. However, offensive magic (both innate and studied) has always been a rarity throughout Natikram. Hunters with miraculously perfect aim serve an obvious purpose in a society at peace, but the same cannot be said of wizards casting storms of lightning bolts or supercharged duelists with otherworldly combat prowess.

The presumed threat to Crabwell will have magic on their side. Whether the combined forces of Svarnahelm decide to besiege the city with arcane engines, or some alien incursion from beyond the planes threatens the fabric of reality, Crabwell and the rest of Natikram will need to be prepared to fight fire with fire. As such, Bellringer Simon Thibald began a search, seeking out magical fighters with the necessary capabilities to lead an army to protect Natikram. The search took Simon to all corners of his peaceful nation. Eventually, he and the Crabwell Guard chose six powerful heroes to lead and train the nascent Natikram Armed Forces (NAF). Simon dubbed these leaders the Order of Six, and he has done everything in his power to promote the Order as the heroes of Natikram. With rising anxieties about threats to Natikram, the people need champions in which to place their faith. The Order of Six are those heroes.

Secrets of the Order: The heroes of Natikram are touted as the nation's greatest warriors and magical minds. While there is some truth to this statement, the sextet's reputation belies troubled internal politics and mysterious origins. While each member of the Order is held up as a paragon of wisdom and power, their individual secrets threaten to undermine the entire NAF.



KAMRA, THAELLA'S HOLY WARRIOR

The Order has no leader, and yet Kamra (she/her) is the clear favorite in the eyes of the people. Kamra is a holy knight, a champion of Goddess Thaella. She wears gleaming white plate and rides an albino steppebeast while running drills with her ill-equipped soldiers. Before joining the Order of Six, Kamra was a wandering priestess who healed villagers with little access to expensive poultices or arcane apothecaries. Some perceive her travels as self-interested—was she really just visiting village after village to bask in their adoration?—while others extol her humility. In truth, few know Kamra well enough to determine whether she's a slave to her ego, or whether she's as selfless as her followers claim.

During Simon's oft-requested Order Parades, Kamra leads the pack astride her steppbeast Nashwa. Adoring fans sprinkle themselves with thimbles of "holy water" (sold, of course, by the Church of Thaella) and bow at her feet. In battle, Kamra will lead the charge, before retreating to command from the rear, healing the injured with her life-giving breath. For now, Kamra is training the cavalry and recruiting apprentice healers to join her.

Secret about Kamra: This holy warrior is fated to be reborn. Kamra and the Order of Six will make terrible mistakes that will doom many. Unhappy with this result, Goddess Thaella will resurrect Kamra over and over until the champion in white can right her wrongs.



MERGO, MASTER OF WARDS

Surprisingly, city elf Mergo (she/her) is the only member of the Order to attend premier wizardry school Velan University. Simon had suspected that many of his former classmates would be ideal fits for the Order, but he was quickly reminded that academy-trained wizards typically focus on more practical applications for their magic: construction, alchemy, research, etc. Mergo, however, studied wards. No one is sure exactly *why* Mergo dedicated her research to practicing spells that shield, repel, or counter. Had she foreseen the violence to come? Or was she trying to protect herself? Perhaps she just found that she had a knack for the defensive arts?

Mergo is aloof, inscrutable, and seemingly never fully present. She has largely passed off her instructive responsibilities to her former professors who have now joined in expanded instruction of so-called “shield mages.” Meanwhile, Mergo is perfecting more powerful wards, spells that will hopefully render the NAF obsolete altogether. If she can become powerful enough, there may not need to be a great battle. If Mergo is to be believed, her newest spells could simply shield all the citizens of Crabwell in an impenetrable force field.

Secret about Mergo: Despite her expertise, Mergo has grown tired of wards. She has realized that it is far easier to deceive the enemy than to protect her allies. She studies in secret so that no one can know that her expertise of illusory magic is her true strength.

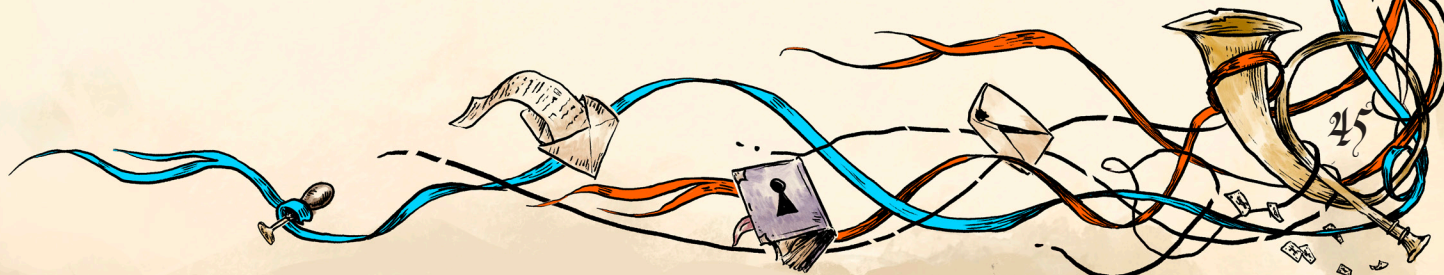


DRIVOT, INVULNERABLE DUELIST

When Simon first sought leaders for the Natikram Armed Forces, he expected to recruit a band of studied tacticians with a command over battle magic. He certainly never expected to find anyone like Drivot (he/him), a stalwart brute who supercharges his combat abilities with enchanted hyperfocus. Drivot’s battle trance is truly a thing to behold. Bathed in an aura of violent energy, Drivot strikes his maul with such force that nearby soldiers must be careful to avoid hearing loss.

Drivot leads combat training for the NAF. He is an uncompromising teacher with little patience for recruits unwilling to give maximal effort. Some view him as cruel, but most understand that he is doing what he must to protect Natikram. Ultimately, Drivot himself understands that much will be expected of him on the battlefield. Will he be able to carve through enemy forces as everyone hopes?

Secret about Drivot: Drivot will betray the Order. He is in league with City Lord Rodder to undermine the NAF. If he is not stopped, thousands will perish.





ALZUDRION, SPURNED SHADOW MAGE

Alzudrion's mother believed she had birthed a demon. With ebony skin, colorless eyes, and untrimmable crystalline fingernails, Alzudrion (he/him) was immediately feared and reviled. Only through the charity of Entac was the shadow baby given a chance at life. The evening of his birth, Entac decreed

THE SCRIVENERS SHALL RAISE ALZUDRION AS THEIR OWN.

In the care of the diligent scholars, Alzudrion perfected his shadow magic. He was resentful of the society that feared him, but this indignation only strengthened his resolve to become a master of his dark gifts. He can distort light and shadow, hurl destructive orbs of dark matter, and summon inky creatures to do his bidding.

Despite his powers, Alzudrion is still seen by many as a dangerous aberration and an ill omen that is sure to bring ruin onto Naticram. In the face of such prejudice, Alzudrion is exceedingly practical. He stays out of the public eye, plans tactics with Drivot in secret, and trains stealthy scouts to use light and shadow to their benefit.

Secret about Alzudrion: Simon included Alzudrion in the Order because there were fears that the shadow mage would become archscrivener if he remained in Crabwell. Even his inclusion among the elite heroes was an act of fear and prejudice.



LORN, WARLOCK OF THE WILDS

Softspoken Lorn (he/him) is a fel'dær woodspeaker, a sort of nature mystic who can coax the wilds into aiding him. Lorn grew up in the backwaters of the Asatti River Delta, a strange landscape with one of the most diverse ecosystems in Yanuskor. As a child, he discovered Reggie, a rare blue lobster, in the brackish waters of his home. Soon after raising Reggie as his pet, Lorn began to hone his woodspeaking. Lorn suspects Reggie is the source of his gift, and so the two are never apart.

Lorn is prepared to call on his woodland allies if it means protecting Naticram from the unfettered industrialism that plagues Svarnahelm. Lorn is the only member of the Order who is well-liked by every other member. Even temperamental Drivot considers Lorn a close friend. As such, Lorn has taken on more of a managerial role in the NAF. He has not been able to recruit other woodspeakers to the cause, so for the time being, it would seem as though Lorn will be alone in the use of his wild magic.

Secret about Lorn: Reggie is in fact an angel, a subject of the God Nirutsuka. He was sent to Lorn to help the woodspeaker act as an agent of peace, a subtle guide who enhances Lorn's magic and helps to calm potential agitators.



GELL, ENCHANTING ASCETIC

Dismissed as a mountain witch by some and a dangerous charlatan by others, chesskæl Gell (he/him) has perhaps the most immediately useful magic for an army: the ability to conjure blasts of fire, claps of thunder, and swirling vortexes of torrential wind. In theory, Gell could fight off an entire army by himself. The only rub is that Gell can only summon these forces when he's particularly incensed, a rare occurrence for this solemn and sedate anchorite. Some have doubted whether Gell actually has any powers at all, as only Simon, Lorn, and a few of Gell's mountainside followers can claim to have seen his abilities. If the tales are true, however, the magnitude of Gell's magic may exceed that of all his peers combined.

Gell has guided many of the recruits in prayer, meditation, and focus. This has proven to be quite useful for the tense and overworked soldiers, yet not all of Gell's peers see it this way. Drivot in particular thinks Gell's mindfulness exercises are a complete waste of time. If anything is bound to render Gell enraged enough to actually rouse his magic, it might be this conflict with Drivot.

Secret about Gell: Over the past few months, Gell and Lorn have become romantically intimate. While not strictly prohibited, this is likely to cause further conflict. Gell the ascetic also faces inner turmoil regarding the affair.

PLOT HOOK: PREVENT THE DRIVOT'S DAY MASSACRE

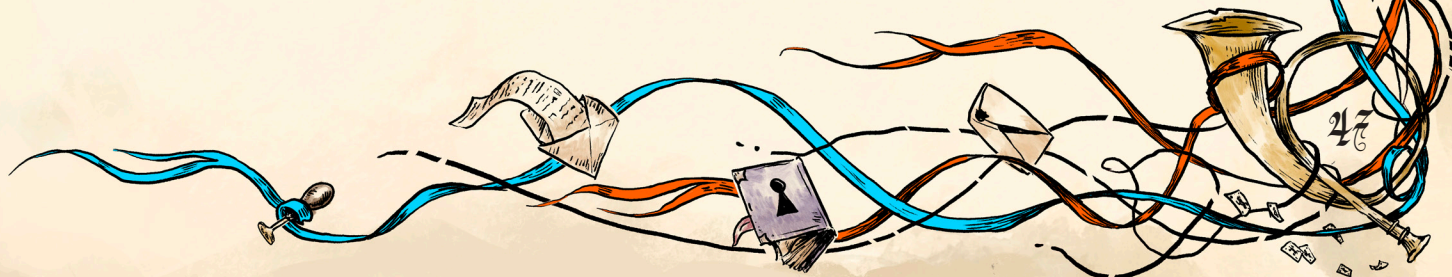
The Pre-Memorial, the premonitions from the Daughters of Thaella, and Entac's decree/warning all point toward one thing: imminent dangers threaten the nation of Natikram. The wheels of fate have already begun to turn, and without direct intervention, a terrible tragedy will befall Crabwell on the 17th of Lunenfell, 7473. When the adventurers arrive in Crabwell, they will have less than two weeks to unravel the thread, discover the nature of the danger, and do whatever they can to prevent it.

GM Note: This plot hook is necessarily a complicated web of overlapping omens and motivations, and its progression will largely depend on the degree to which the players pursue other leads while in Crabwell. If you want Drivot's Day to be the major climax of a Crabwell arc, it is wise to sow the seeds early and often, peppering in hints about fears for the future, and nudging the players to investigate the Order of Six, City Lord Rodder, the Daughters of Thaellon, and Entac himself.

DRIVOT'S DAY

If the players do not intercede, Drivot the Invulnerable Duelist will betray the Order of Six. Wielding an arcane maul gifted to him by the rebellious City Lord Roder, Drivot will lay waste to the war camps outside of Crabwell, massacring soldiers, quartermasters, mages, and anyone else in the vicinity. The destruction will be the direct result of Entac's order to request for Natikram to defend itself, and thousands of innocents will die.

In the aftermath of the massacre, Entac will permanently forbid Natikram from ever establishing a standing army. Mages will be persecuted, and the use of magic for any tasks other than agriculture will be strictly regulated. Simon Thibald's reputation will be tarnished, with the bellringer accepting much of the blame. Azludrion will flee from society, Gell will return to his monastery with Lorn at his side, and Mergo will establish her own school for runaway mages. Kamra will die in the tragedy, and her death will fuel a schism among Daughters of Thaella. Those who trust in Entac will



say Natikram didn't do enough to prepare, while those skeptical of his actions will blame him for the tragedy. Most importantly: City Lord Rodder will use the chaos as an opening to seize more land, expanding his grip on western Natikram.

In short: this one military tragedy will propel Natikram into a period of unrest. If the party is unable to stop Drivot's Day, there will certainly be ample opportunities for new adventure, but the future of Yanuskor will bend toward darkness.

MOTIVATIONS OF GODS AND MEN

DRAYMIN: Central to this tragedy is Entac's decree and the goals of his master, the God of balance. Draymin has come to believe that Crabwell's incredible stability under the trinity government is paradoxically out of step with the equilibrium He seeks. Draymin's conception of a world at balance includes periods of radical change and growth. This is one of the reasons he allows the Skeptics and City Lord Rodder to continue their simultaneous revolutions unfettered by restrictive decrees.

In order for there to be balance, Draymin has decided to yet again intercede and shake the very foundation of Natikram. Or rather, he had always planned for something large to happen soon (hence the date on the Pre-Memorial) and has decided now what that event will be. Draymin's only act in this tragedy was to issue the decree ordering the creation of a defense force. As it turns out, that is all he needed to do.

Though not truly omniscient, Draymin is able to foresee the chain of events that will transpire. By requesting that Natikram protect itself, Entac will ensure that Simon will gather a force of soldiers and powerful heroes. At least one of those magical warriors will thirst for more than mere guard duty. City Lord Rodder will take notice and use the opportunity to sow chaos. All Draymin had to do was provide the catalyst via Entac's decrees.

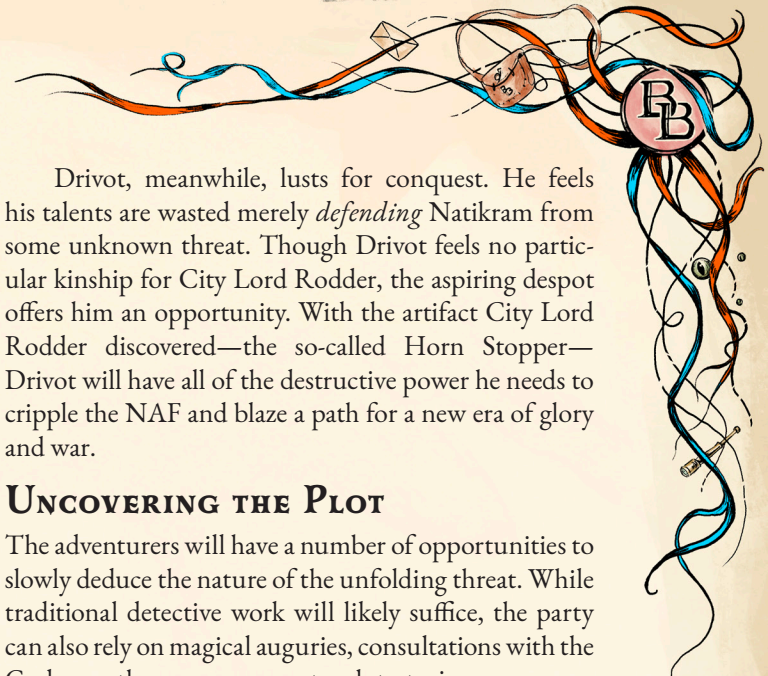
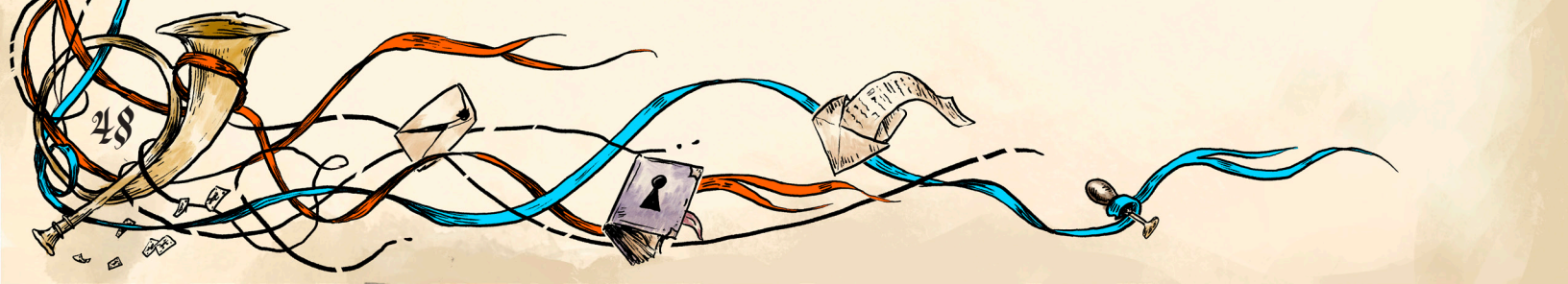
DRIVOT AND CITY LORD RODDER: From the squalid pit over which he rules, City Lord Rodder plots and plans. It was *surprisingly easy* for this tyrant to gain a political foothold so far from Crabwell, but his ambitions are greater than the crater he currently dominates. A blow to Natikram's centralized fighting force will provide the opening he needs to grow his budding rebellion.

Drivot, meanwhile, lusts for conquest. He feels his talents are wasted merely *defending* Natikram from some unknown threat. Though Drivot feels no particular kinship for City Lord Rodder, the aspiring despot offers him an opportunity. With the artifact City Lord Rodder discovered—the so-called Horn Stopper—Drivot will have all of the destructive power he needs to cripple the NAF and blaze a path for a new era of glory and war.


UNCOVERING THE PLOT

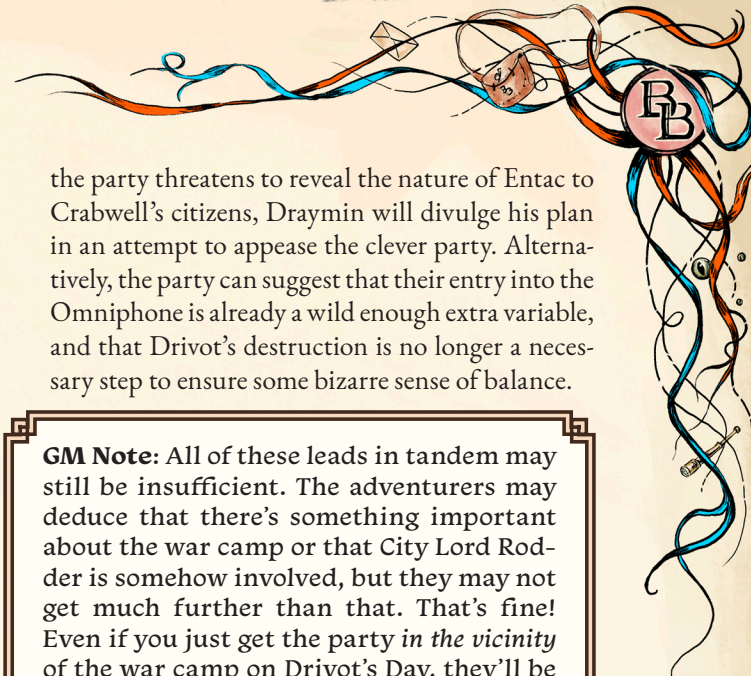
The adventurers will have a number of opportunities to slowly deduce the nature of the unfolding threat. While traditional detective work will likely suffice, the party can also rely on magical auguries, consultations with the Gods, or other more supernatural strategies.

- 1. The Daughters of Thaela**, with their terrifying premonitions, will likely be the first lead the party will pursue. These priestesses attempt to emulate their Goddess, and thus speak circuitously. The necessary nuggets of information they can provide are quite simple, but prompting the priestesses to clearly express the important details will be a challenge. Crucially, each of the prophetic dreams focuses on a black plume of destruction that arises *just outside* of Crabwell. If the party thoroughly probes the priestesses, the party will likely be able to determine that the visions point toward the war camp beyond the city walls. At the very least, this should push the adventurers toward investigating the soldiers and the Order.
- 2.** As the source of much of this panic stems from Entac's request for Natikram to defend itself, **the scribes** may prove to be useful guides. When interrogating the scribes, consider how the philosophy of each might color interpretations of the decree. A Pro-Bell Purist might revel in how conveniently the decree bequeaths power to Simon, whereas a Neo-Maginalist would probably scoff at the unnecessary distraction. Regardless, finding someone who has a great knowledge of the *history* of Entac will reveal that similar ominous decrees have preceded extraordinarily turbulent times in Natikram's history. Perhaps that is no accident... Could Entac actually be seeking out the disaster that most assume he is trying to prevent?





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3. City Lord Rodder has one incredibly powerful ally in Crabwell: **Archscivener Sevriell Avana**. The conniving elf sees Rodder's nascent rebellion as a potential opportunity to expand Svarnahelm's trade networks. If Rodder expands his territory, the corporations of Svarnahelm will have an easier time making inroads with Natikram consumers. Sevriell was so impressed with Rodder's plan that she chose to help; she was the one who procured the Horn Stopper for Drivot. This spark vial-infused superweapon was fabricated by engineers who work closely with her brother in Svarnahelm.
 4. **Folks around the war camp** will have plenty to say about the Order of Six. The war mages are the heroes of the realm, and gossip spreads quickly. Many of these rumors might inspire further investigations, but just as many will be red herrings. Lorn and Gell are dating! That's interesting, but not terribly useful. Mergo is studying illusions! Again, probably not relevant to the investigation. The necessary tidbits will all concern Drivot. Quartermaster Donovan will remark on the fact that the duelist has returned his previously favored maul to the camp's armory. Drivot's honor guard will lament that he has become increasingly violent. Even the other members of the Order may mention that Drivot has spent time discussing plans with mysteriously uniformed men at his command tent.
 5. As the primary opponents to Entac's rule within Crabwell, **Thaellon's Skeptics** will be prime suspects for anyone investigating the ominous decree. In fact, the Skeptics were approached by emissaries of Rodder. The City Lord had hoped to bring the rebellious college students into his schemes, but they refused to abet such wanton violence even in the name of revolution. For the time being, the Skeptics are keeping their mouths shut, but they may be convinced to reveal the plans that Rodder presented.
 6. Of course, **Draymin** is the mastermind behind the tragedy. His decrees led to both the creation of the Pre-Memorial and the Natikram Armed Forces. Should the party make their way into the Omniphone, they may be able to inquire with Entac or even the God of equilibrium Himself. Strangely, Draymin will be fairly easily manipulated. The God has no desire to alter his relationship with Entac, the Omniphone, or Natikram as a whole. If



the party threatens to reveal the nature of Entac to Crabwell's citizens, Draymin will divulge his plan in an attempt to appease the clever party. Alternatively, the party can suggest that their entry into the Omniphone is already a wild enough extra variable, and that Drivot's destruction is no longer a necessary step to ensure some bizarre sense of balance.

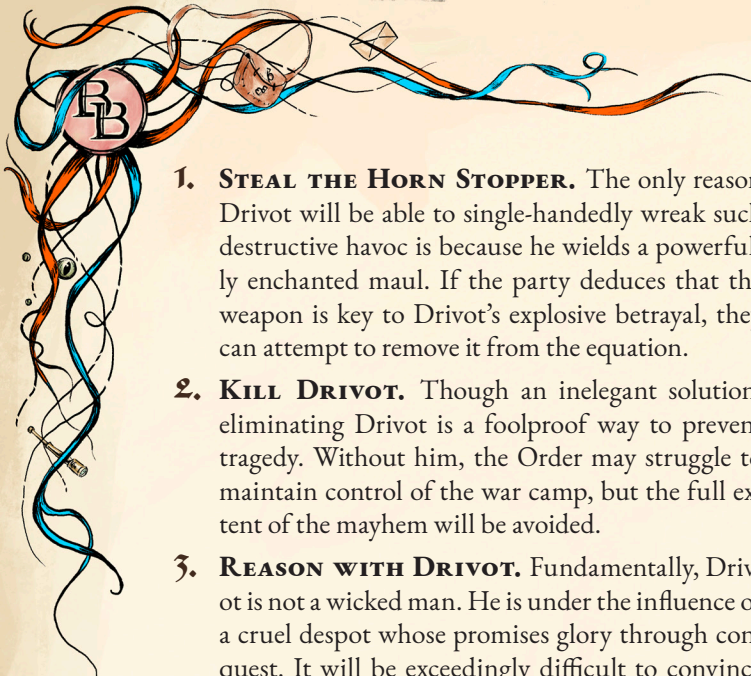
GM Note: All of these leads in tandem may still be insufficient. The adventurers may deduce that there's something important about the war camp or that City Lord Rodder is somehow involved, but they may not get much further than that. That's fine! Even if you just get the party *in the vicinity* of the war camp on Drivot's Day, they'll be able to take part in the climax that follows. If you'd like to point them further in that direction, you can always drop in additional bread crumbs.

Maybe Drivot has allies in Crabwell who are less covert with their plans. Maybe City Lord Rodder contacts the party directly to get them involved. Maybe Sevriell or Drivot haven't been so discreet with some of their scheming. If the mystery is too obtuse, there are always more hints you can provide.

Alternatively, let the party flounder! It's totally acceptable to either leave them guessing and present the Drivot's Day Massacre as a largely unavoidable consequence, or else challenge them with an incomplete picture.

SEVER THE THREADS OF FATE

Depending on how much the party discovers about Drivot's Day, they will either have plenty of opportunities to try to prevent the tragedy, or they may be forced to improvise on the day. Of course, if they discover the entire plot, they may use the information to their advantage, gaining favor with Simon, or perhaps even siding with Rodder. Once they've put together the conspiracy, it's up to the party to decide how to alter the course of history.

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1. **STEAL THE HORN STOPPER.** The only reason Drivot will be able to single-handedly wreak such destructive havoc is because he wields a powerfully enchanted maul. If the party deduces that the weapon is key to Drivot's explosive betrayal, they can attempt to remove it from the equation.
 2. **KILL DRIVOT.** Though an inelegant solution, eliminating Drivot is a foolproof way to prevent tragedy. Without him, the Order may struggle to maintain control of the war camp, but the full extent of the mayhem will be avoided.
 3. **REASON WITH DRIVOT.** Fundamentally, Drivot is not a wicked man. He is under the influence of a cruel despot whose promises glory through conquest. It will be exceedingly difficult to convince Drivot *not* to follow City Lord Rodder's order, but it is possible.
 4. **BLACKMAIL SEVRIEL.** If the party discovers Sevriels involvement, she will fold immediately. After all, if word gets out that she aided a revolution or that she has ties to Svarnahelm's league of corporate oligarchs, her career will be finished. If threatened with such consequences, she'll do everything in her power to stop Drivot.
 5. **WARN THE ORDER.** Rodder's plan depends upon catching the war camp by surprise. Even with a powerful artifact, Drivot will not be able to defeat the whole army single-handedly.
 6. **CREATE A DISTRACTION.** The plan only works if everyone—the soldiers and the rest of the members of the Order alike—is in the war camp. If there's a reason to split everyone up, or if some event draws the NAF away from the camp, Drivot will likely cancel or delay his explosive betrayal.
 7. **QUASH THE REBELLION.** Rodder is only interested in striking a blow to Naticram's soldiers if it means he will be able to use the ensuing chaos to expand his territory. If his methodical insurgency suffers a strategic blow, he may call off the attack.
 8. **IMPROVISE ON THE DAY.** The worst effects of Drivot's Day won't take place immediately. The wounded can be healed, Drivot's power can be stopped, and the worst consequences can potentially be avoided. Even if the party totally fails to predict the catastrophe, there's much they can do to lessen the suffering and fight back against the supercharged fighter.

