

Faiths and Organizations



Lore Supplement

Volume 2

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Note: Except where indicated otherwise everything in this volume is common knowledge to any with an interest in the topic matter. Any character may start with the knowledge if they wish. It may be referenced in game and during backstory creation.

The Bounty Hunter's Guild

Overview:

A group of government sanctioned bounty hunters. Most bounties are placed by the government, but privately placed bounties are not illegal, just monitored. Guild Members have permission to go in some areas where normal citizens are not permitted. They differ from Assassins in that they typically bring in targets alive, and often work together to communicate updates on the locations of bounties. In addition, the Guild as a whole looks to preserve itself, and will personally punish those who abuse their powers as a bounty hunter. Offices can be found in several major cities, with the biggest being in Sherryton.

History:

The Bounty Hunters' Guild was founded by the Sovereign Assembly around the mid-first century, when the first flame gates were established. With the gates, it became easier to track enemies of the state and easier for the villains to get away. The woman famous for founding the Guild was a high ranking officer of the Diplomacy Branch by the name of Ryllae Simic. However, its founding was a combined effort.

The Bounty Hunters' Guild has grown larger with time and is now fairly well known. In fact, in regions like The Jaguar Spots, members will act as law keepers of a sort. The guild has always been closely monitored by the government, and so there have been very few disagreements between the two groups. Many well-known bounty hunters will retire into government positions.

Guild Titles:

Initiate- Initiates have yet to join the Bounty Hunters' Guild. They are interested in the profession, but have none of the training or permissions of an actual member. Initiates will often tag along with current members to learn about the trade.

Huntress- Huntresses are general members within the Bounty Hunters' Guild. They have achieved the basic permissions of a Bounty Hunter, but have not begun to specialize in the profession. The name was created by Ryllae Simic, and stuck through the ages.

Adept- These hunters have been working with the guild for some time, but have no particular style. They do whatever they can to get the job done.

Scrapper- Scrapppers prefer to focus on the fight between their target and themselves. They are fighters who like to get up-close and personal for their capture.

Shadow- Shadows are hunters specialized in tracking and information gathering. They enjoy a challenging hunt, and targets will not know what hit them until it is too late.

Trapper- Trappers prefer to capture targets with intricate traps. They may be closely involved with their trap, or watch from a distance, but they tend to avoid fighting.

Codename- Only the most famous of bounty hunters receive codenames. Codenames are unique titles that are publicly known and tie into what a hunter is known for.

Regional Director- These members have proved their worth to the guild and the Sovereign Assembly, and were therefore granted leadership over regional bounty hunter offices. They keep track of all posted bounties and the handling of targets after capture.

Representative- Every five years, a member of the Sovereign Assembly is chosen to oversee the Bounty Hunters' guild. The current representative is Justicar Willhem Stonebeard.

Bounty Hunter Etiquette: While the Bounty Hunters' Guild may not have a lot of rules, there are a few guidelines to follow.

1. Aim to capture targets alive. Killing is a last resort.
2. Do not abuse your license to fulfil personal goals. The Sovereign Assembly has granted you a privilege, and they will take it away.
3. Take care of your own; help other hunters when they asked to.
4. When receiving help capturing a bounty from a civilian, tip them at least 33% of the bounty.

Well-Known Bounty Hunters

Justicar Alicia Diamondheart- A former Criminal and Bounty Hunter who spent a great deal of their young life in jail. She was one of the most feared Gunslingers to walk Ebonrock. She no longer is involved with the Guild, but she is known for her former connection. Now, she works as a Justicar to support civilian freedom, and is even rumored to forgive crimes from time to time.

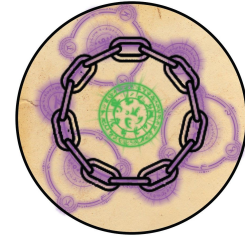
Faelyn Bryel- A popular bounty hunter from Sherryton. They became well known for traveling around Phoenixton in search for bounties, but their origins are unknown. Overtime, the office in Sherryton noticed they had a lot of charisma and began recruiting them to represent the guild. They are a scrapper with the codename "Fox" due to their quick wit and dance-like fighting style. Faelyn does not complete many bounties these days, as they are busy representing the guild and holding a minor position in the Sovereign Assembly.

SH-016- Otherwise known as Siegfried "The Tranquil". Siegfried is a younger golem-forged of the "suspect hunter" make and model. They are quite the pacifists and are known for only taking in targets alive. They seem to really like their job.

The Chain Wizards

A group of government-selected elite arcane casters. They are recognizable by a chain circlet around the head. Some wear an actual chain circlet while others have the chain links tattooed onto their forehead.

Each chain wizard undergoes a ritual to bind their minds with another chain wizard, their life partner. This is an intimate connection that is treated with respect by government members of the Sovereign Assembly. With this connection partners share each others' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. The ritual to do so is extremely dangerous, complex (with a master level word), and a fiercely guarded secret. For this reason, every chain wizard is a ritualist of at least some advanced skill. After completing the ritual each member of the pairing can share thoughts instantly and know when the other comes to harm. A person can only undergo the binding ritual with one other person. Attempting to do so with another will result in death. Half of all pairings stay at the Royal Academy in Grand Haven at all times (within reason). When working, these chain wizards sit in a large circular room with a large magical basin of water in the center. Through this basin any one chain wizard can show his thoughts to the others in the room and, in so doing, share his thoughts with all the chain wizards across Ebonrock. If one member of a pairing is fated when the other is not, only the fated one leaves Grand Haven.



The pairing stationed with the Prime Minister in Grand Haven is considered to be the leader of the Chain Wizard Order. However, a lot of latitude is given to the members. All members have access to the Royal Academy's library.

Those who leave the Royal Academy are individually assigned to different governors to advise and protect them and their domain. During their duties they basically become unofficially in charge of all arcane magical activity in their domain. They sign the licenses for magic use and monitor the creation of new rituals. The level of oversight and monitoring each chooses to have over casters in their domain very greatly.

The Merchant's Guild

*To assure the stability and prosperity of free markets
throughout all settled lands in Ebonrock.*

*To assure that all honest merchants of the guild
are protected and assets not seized unjustly.*

*And to insure that the railways, that have come to define trade in this modern age,
are managed fairly and utilized to their full potential.*

This is the mission of the merchants' guild

Let us first dispel the myth that merchants take wealth away from the empire. It is too common a misconception that just because an honest merchant buys an item at prices and sells it elsewhere at a higher price, that he or she must be cheating either the buyer or the seller out of money. We must remind people that there is value in bringing goods from where they are plentiful, and thus cheap, to where they are needed, and this valuable. This is the service the guild provides to the empire.

The guild protects all its members from threats of criminals, mobs, and corrupt government officials. In return we expect members to pay dues to the guild, and follow the guild rules outlined in this handbook, with the understanding that these rules are in place to protect all members. Should a threat be posed to the guild by government authorities that cannot be resolved in the courts, the guild may vote to enact the embargo rite as a last resort. When an embargo is called all members of the guild are expected to halt all commerce until an accord with the Sovereign Assembly can be reached.

Guild Rules on Trade

The key principle of trade is that free markets are the most prosperous markets. The guild's representatives in the assembly remain focused on ensuring this principle is the basis for laws on trade, but local rulers may sometimes put price controls in place. The guild will keep postings of such laws in all its offices and we advise our members not to trade goods bought or sold under such restrictions.

The merchants' guild is also responsible for managing train schedules for the empire. The majority of the guild's resources go into ensuring that the rail system is kept busy and safe. Any train departures, including government trains, **must be scheduled with a guild time keeper**, who can be found at every rail station in Ebonrock. Train engineers must be certified by the guild and follow the rules outlined by the time keepers. This system insures that the rails are being utilized to their full potential while preventing possible train collisions. High ranking members of the Sovereign Assembly do hold the right to demand immediate scheduling in the case of emergency, which requires time keepers to delay some trains.

When shipping goods by ship or by train guild merchants **must have at least four guild approved mercenaries** on board. Guild merchants are encouraged to hire additional mercenaries or supplement with their own personal guard but at least four guild mercenaries are required. By guaranteeing the presence of armed escort the guild shall deter all bandits, pirates, and marauders from attack, ensuring that roads, rails, and waters are kept safe for all, as part of the common interests deal with

Sovereign Assembly. Approved mercenaries are those referred to us by the mercenaries' guild and it shall be the merchant, not the guild that is expected to provide pay for the mercenaries they hire.

From time to time the merchant's guild may provide additional guards to a train or ship if we suspect there is a high chance of attack, or indeed wish to bait out an attack from notorious bandits. These guards are provided by the guild in addition to any mercenaries or guards the merchant has hired.

All merchants within the guild are expected to contribute annual dues of 1 silver to maintain good standing. The guild also levies a scheduling fee of 4 silver per round trip for all trains when reserving a time slot. Merchants looking to make smaller shipments by train are advised to lease a single car from another train owner, local guild offices will maintain postings to advocate such arrangements.

The Monastic Orders

Orders: There are three primary monastic orders in Ebonrock: the Order of Iron, Order of Flowers, and Order of Waves. These orders date back hundreds of years and each have their own philosophies and traditions. There are other smaller obscure orders but most are still based on a foundation set similar to one of the original three.

Ranks: The Monks of Ebonrock have given themselves ranks in order to distinguish each other's levels of skill and accomplishment. The ranks of Sagacious Master, Grand Master and Venerable Master can only be given to one by his own order (or the Order he is committing to if becoming a Sagacious Master). However, the ranks of each order are respected by all other orders. Monks do not wear anything that indicate their rank, only their Order.

Brother/Sister: These individuals are aspirants of a monastic order. They give up their independence and devote themselves to tireless meditation, study, and physical training inside one of the Orders. The training often takes years, depending on the individual's age and skill, and can consume the entire youth of an individual. In addition to teaching the skills necessary to become a monk, the brother/sister training also includes basic schooling. Before public schools were established in Ebonrock around the year 425, monastic schooling was one of the only ways a non-rich individual could obtain an education. In honor of that tradition, children can elect to get schooling as a brother/sister and be raised in a monastery instead of going to public school. However, when a child becomes a brother/sister it is rare for them to ever leave the monastery again until they become a monk. Obviously, older brothers/sisters who already have gone through public schooling do not partake in this training when they attend.

Monk: A trained individual in the basics of meditation and unarmed combat. These individuals have survived the ordeal monkhood and progressed to once more have their own independence. It is traditional that after becoming a monk, but before becoming a master, that the individual does tasks for the monks of the monastery that trained him.

Master of Iron/Flowers/Waves: A prestige monk that has begun to focus their studies in the teachings of one of the Orders. It is often that these individuals will go on great pilgrimages across Ebonock as they try to master themselves and find their chosen path in life. These individuals have the freedom to come and go to any monastery of any order they wish, even if they were trained in a different order's monastery. The tradition of exploring all sides of one's self when finding one's path is a sacred tradition among the Orders. Even when there has been turmoil between the Orders this tradition has been maintained. It is expected however that when one seeks to learn from a monastery that the individual will do no harm while there. The consequences for violating that trust would be extreme. It is possible for a monk to be a master in multiple Orders.

Sagacious Master: A leader in an Order. These specialized level monks choose the tenants of one Order to embody and continue their study. Therefore it is impossible to become a

Sagacious Master of two orders. They also have passed an ordeal set for them by their Grand Master. The ordeal of a monk is a personal affair unique to the individual. These individuals are granted great respect among the order and often spend time training brothers and sisters. They also are included in any diplomatic decisions a monastery must make.

Grand Master: The lead monk of one of the three monasteries. They are responsible for running the affairs of the monastery, assigning quests to members of the monastery and are usually highly skilled combatants. Often, grand masters retire before they die. When this happens they often nominate a successor to the venerable master who often appoints the nominee to the Grand Master position. After retiring the person is able to keep the title Retired Grand Master, out of respect, though he no longer holds the position.

Venerable Master: The head of a monastic order. There is only ever one of them at a time. They are generally appointed by unanimous vote of the three Grand Masters of the monasteries (who are not eligible for the position though Retired Grand Masters who have retired at least one year before the venerable master's death are). The role of the venerable master is one of wisdom and guidance, not necessarily combat ability or even accomplishments. Most of the time however, they are older individuals who have amassed great experience. Any venerable master has a standing invitation to address the Board of Governors but this has not been known to be done in recent memory. In addition, once every three years the Venerable Masters meet in the Gardens of Amve. People do not know what is generally discussed during these meetings.

The Order of Flowers

Founded: The Order of Flowers was founded around the year 144 during the War of the Underdark by Venerable Master Amve. Legend has it that it was founded with the Overlord's blessing and was somehow instrumental in the war. While unable to be verified by historical record, historians guess that they were utilized to fight against the mind flayers who had allied themselves with the dark elves during the conflict. However, this may be just a rationalization for their studies in the fortification and understanding of the mind which is beyond peer. The Gardens of Amve in Grand Haven were planted and maintained in Venerable Master Amve's honor.

Known For: In the present age the Order of Flowers is known for their mental strength, tranquility, deep wisdom, and a sense of disconnectedness as their thoughts often seem to wander, as if to more important problems than the ones at hand. They are usually welcome wherever they go but are viewed as odd. The Order greatly disapproves of instigated violence as they say it disrupts the tranquility and balance of the mind and soul.

Monastery Locations

Head monastery in the Wayfinder's Market

In the hills northwest of Griffin's Roost

In Grand Haven Middle Ring (tends to the Garden of Amve)

Traditional Robes: Browns and Greens

The Order of Iron

Founded: The Order of Iron was the second monastic order founded. It was established by Venerable Master Lerikdomus of the dwarven clan Ferroch in the year 326 during the First Great Dragon Rebellion. In the years in the aftermath of the Rebellion the Order gained in popularity as people had an increased desire to learn how to defend themselves and survive without joining the city guard or army. Some scholars attribute the harsh attitude of the Order to the grim mentality of the people during those years as they dealt with burying the dead and rebuilding their lives that the Dragons had torn asunder.

Known For: Monks of Iron are known for their physical fortitude and their direct unwavering approach to solve problems. Their strict sense of honor has infused in them an unbending loyalty to a specific ideal or cause. Each such ideal or cause is individual and highly personal to each monk. Most monks devote their time to the service of this cause. However, a Monk of Iron's efforts are not just external, but internal as well. It is common for each Monk of Iron to focus on one particular specific focus or goal to improve himself or herself. This focus is highly specific and narrow. For example a Monk of Iron may try to fully embody, in every sense, the fierce protectiveness of a wolf guarding his pack. This focus is often a source of pride for the Monk or even of reconciliation for an act long ago. To other Orders, the Monks of Iron seem abrasive and harsh but are reliable. When they say something, they can be counted on to mean it and follow-through. The biggest criticism of the Order is its failure to monitor or discriminate between the good and evil deeds of its members. Instead, the Order only focuses on how true the members stay to their loyalties, honor, and personal ideal.

Monastery Locations

Head monastery on the eastern side of the Titan's Jaws Mountains bordering The White

Mountains of Maryon

In Dra-Dhahid

Traditional Robes: Grays and Blacks

The Order of Waves

Founded: Unlike the other two Orders, monks following the ways of the Order of Waves existed long before the Order was officially established. For as long as there has been drunken brawlers, some semblance of the Order has existed, so basically since alcohol was discovered. That established, the more refined and studied school of the Order of Waves was founded in 550 by the naga, Usukan and the kasan, Dar'ra. The two close friends got into a famous argument disputing the qualities of water v. alcohol. By the end of the debate, and a lengthy unarmed fight trying to prove a point, the two conceded to the other's strengths and agreed to open a monastic school together.

Known For: Monks of Waves are known for going with the flow of the energy around them. They know how to maximize their own energy efficiency while redirecting and using the flaws of their opponents against them. They are flexible, open-minded, observant, and do exactly as much as is necessary to accomplish their goal, no more no less. Of the three Orders theirs is the most lax on discipline and tradition but arguable the hardest form to learn and master; for the Monks of Waves not only have to learn to understand themselves but also must learn how to observe and understand their opponents. For some in the Order, alcohol is the key to entering the loose mind-state needed to perform the maneuvers taught. Whether or not they imbibe alcohol though, or if they are nicely or shabbily dressed, the members of the Order of Waves should not be underestimated.

Monastery Locations

Head monastery on the center island in the Southern Sea

At the Oasis in the Scorched Desert

Along the River in the southeast Heartlands

Traditional Robes: Blues and Grays

The Witch Coven

The Witch Covens are each led by one of the Dark Powers. They follow the simple rules that if you give them some of your power you will be able to obtain more power in return, as a symbiotic relationship. The Dark Powers were each once mortals but they have since given up their humanity for the power they seek. Who they once were are fiercely guarded secrets but what they now call themselves is well known by all who have practiced or studied the Witch Coven. Although they are well known, their names are rarely uttered. Those of their Coven do so only in supplication and service, others do not utter it out of fear of drawing the Dark Powers's attention. Each Dark Power holds true to their own best interests and will guide those in their Covens to protect and further their interests. The meeting locations of the 5 Coven are secrets that are told to a witch only after they have sworn themselves to a specific Dark Power. Each coven have their own expectations for members and traditions they abide by.

Those that make deals with witches are cautioned to hold strictly to their agreement. While most witches cannot magically compel compliance like stronger devils can, witches can magically brand those who violate contracts. Each Coven has creatures in their control or service that hunt such people. Furthermore, all witches, despite their Coven, will seek vengeance against any with the mark, despite the reason the contract was broken and regardless of which Coven was slighted by the breach.

Power: Tristia the Poisoner. Tristia is the youngest of the Dark Powers having ascended within the last 50 to 55 years. She is the only Dark Power known to have once been a witch in another Dark Power's service. She replaced her former Dark Power of Poison, known only as The Adder, when she defeated and devoured his essence. Her Coven is unique in that many are not witches themselves. Instead, they are capable people of all walks of life who unite in secret to further each others' goals of power against their enemies...by any means necessary.

Contracts: Priscilla the Bound. Little is known about Priscilla's mortal life. It is said that her path led her through the Shadowlands in an attempt to find The City. Years later, when all thought her dead, she emerged again, changed and now strong in dark magic. Her Coven is said to be in league with Devils, making contracts with them frequently for power; contracts that others usually pay the price for. Her witches boast that Priscilla's contracts are strong enough to bind the world itself, but what they mean by that none have understood.

Curses: Nevall the Broken. Nevall is rumored to have been an Exemplar that broke his vow and became an Oathbreaker. His descent into darkness was paved in spite and blood as he sought to remove those from the world that he felt was responsible for the destruction of his life. His

research into dark magic in his quest for revenge resulted in his ascension. To this day he is known for his depraved special curses and some even say he was the caster of the first curse. His Coven's goal is to continuously develop new and better curses in the quest to find the perfect curse that can never be removed.

Manipulation: Frishall the Twisted. Frishall is said to have once been a noblewoman from Grandhaven who fell on hard times. Over the years many nobles have accused other noble families of being "the family" to originate Frishall but in truth it is unknown if the family is still in existence. Whichever family she originated from it is generally agreed that she turned to dark magic in an attempt to stabilize her family. Instead of prosperity, her efforts were worse than fruitless, and she lost everything. After ascending she learned the art of manipulation to ensure she will never be out of control again.

Soul: Nishrill the Empty. Nishrill is the strongest of the Dark Powers. Her manipulation of the soul is said to be without equal. Every member of her Coven works to manipulate the soul in some manner. Her goal is thought to be the ascension of her whole Coven to become Dark powers or a similar greater form of existence. While not in direct conflict to the Sovereign Assembly Justicars have been brought down on her Coven several times as a result to her thirst for power.