

Chapter Six - Legends and Lore: The Perfect Conjunction, pg. 139

The truth of this particular legend is outside the scope of this work, but the GM can do with it whatever suits his campaign. There is indeed an underwater temple of Cyriss reachable by deep tunnels below Blackstone Island. It contains extensive machinery and operations, and it is undergoing expansion. Similar work is underway at the Temple of Concord (also known as the Temple of Harmonic Unity) in Caspia. When the facilities are completed, the benefits of this conjunction may begin to manifest and bring an enormous surge of power each temple could tap.

Any PC Cyriss worshipers should be eager to try to visit this temple, which may require a quest to prove themselves. PCs associated with the druids of the Circle would be handsomely rewarded for arranging this temple's destruction.

CONSPIRACIES, COLLUSIONS, AND CABALS

The complex relationships between the movers and shakers in the city define both its web of intrigue as well as the structure and hierarchy by which the criminal underworld has cemented such a strong hold over large sectors of the city. Below are the more important groups and the relationships between members. Do not try to memorize everything! Refer to these charts once the players begin to interact with members of a cabal.

The High Captains

Descriptions, opinions, and information about the High Captains are found throughout the book; they have a large and inescapable impact on the city. Detailed attribute lists and GM specific information on each High Captain appear later in the chapter.

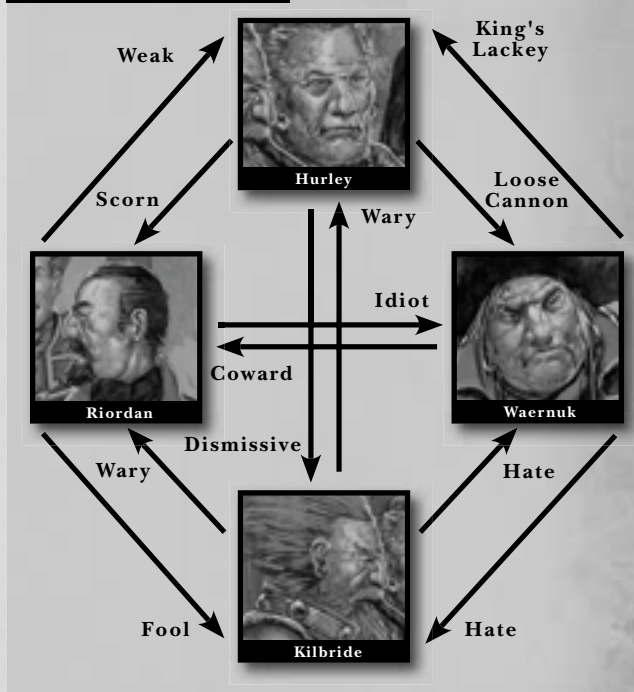
Things are currently unusually tense between the High Captains. They prefer to maintain an equilibrium of tense and watchful détente in order to protect their mutual interests. Struggles over specific turfs, gambling halls, or earning properties are common and do not interfere with this loose accord. In most situations the High Captains are rivals and competitors, not bitter enemies. Bloodshed between minions does not change this arrangement, particularly if the bloodshed takes

place between gang members in the slums or enforcers too greedy to know their limits.

Since Belchor Degrata stepped down and was allowed to retire as a thane under the king's protection in 602 AR, several conflicts threaten to escalate to full-blown gang war. The four High Captains still meet to discuss common interests such as the Four Star Syndicate. There is little they can agree upon now, and the escalation of turf wars seems inevitable. The Twin Islands have seen the brunt of many of these disputes.

The most volatile feud is brewing between Waernuk and Kilbride as each attempts to consolidate control over black markets, smuggling, and the secondary ocean trade. Kilbride feels he needs to move quickly and consolidate his power, working from his almost unassailable fortress manor on Anchor Island. His combination of daring, ruthlessness, and paranoia has served him well. Waernuk's hatred of Kilbride may extend from some of their surface similarities. Waernuk is the "old man" increasingly aware of his impending mortality, yet he sees himself as a pirate at heart. Kilbride is not young but still has considerable vitality, strength, and stamina. There have been assassination attempts on either side of their conflict with several middle tier enforcers and countless lower-end gangsters paying the blood cost.

THE HIGH CAPTAINS



It is worth noting that Waernuk has not reserved his aggression to Kilbride alone. He despises Banek Hurley for rising above him in power on his friendship with the king and would gladly see him slain. Waernuk has made bids for several of Hurley's interests purely out of spite. Kilbride has been a bit more cautious and has tried to keep a low profile until his disputes with Waernuk have settled. The outbreak of open hostilities across the city could bring unwanted attention and prompt the Lord Governor to demand additional support from the throne.

The more discreet war between Hurley and Riordan has even greater potential to throw the city into disarray. Though they have kept their conflicts in the shadows, their disputes have grown more serious with each passing month. Banek Hurley has the ear and friendship of the king, but Riordan has the Lord Governor's ear, and most of the city's wealthiest merchants are well disposed toward him. Riordan has also begun to challenge Hurley's influence over the corrupt City Watch. While Hurley has a grip on the watch commander, Riordan has begun to spread his tendrils to the subordinate watch captains and lieutenants.

Riordan's affiliation with the Shroud and other Thamarites in the city is a powerful weapon, albeit one he must draw on cautiously. Were his religious affiliations to become widely known, he would lose support from backers on Bull's Island even if only to avoid dark rumors. Hurley has gained some leverage over the Fraternal Order of Wizardry and has been attempting to find other points of alliance that can bolster his power without relying on King Baird. Hurley has the tightest relationships with the city's mercenaries and has arranged secret contracts with several. This includes a promise to the Sons of Thuria to use the Four Star Syndicate to strengthen the ties between Ceryl and Five Fingers. Hurley has sent several aspiring enforcers to Ceryl to see if he can gain an upper hand on some of the major underworld players there. He has similar friends upriver in Tarna, Point Bourne, and Corvis. If needed he has considerable access to outside "talent" which could be brought to the city on specific tasks.

Secret allies are not exclusive to Kilbride and Hurley. Though it is as yet difficult to tell who is the master and who the servant, Cryxians have been using Waernuk as their main point of contact in the city through their capable agent Asenath Scarrow. If Waernuk called on this source for additional muscle, some would come from the city's numerous Scharde communities and cells of secret worship to Lord Toruk. If time permitted he could try

to drum up additional support from the Cryxian port of Blackwater. Furthermore, Waernuk has his own tentative hold on Lord Governor Doyle by getting the man addicted to Brackbrandy. Scarrow suggested this scheme since Cryx is the only source of the extremely dangerous and addictive poison. The Lord Governor must receive regular draughts of it or will suffer a horrendously slow and painful death. He may even rise from the grave after! Waernuk has not yet parlayed this leverage into specific actions or concessions.

Waernuk knows Cryxian help will come with strings, which is one reason he has yet to rely upon them. He is more likely to go first to his far-flung and more loyal allies sailing the Broken Coast. They include a number of pirate captains who once served under him during his sailing days. If the need were great Waernuk could call in a sizable fleet willing to kill for him; they would sink the ships of his rivals and destroy their piers.

Kilbride is the only other High Captain who has a strong naval force still at his beck and call. Kilbride was a very active privateer until his retirement, and his allies in the privateer community are deeply entrenched.

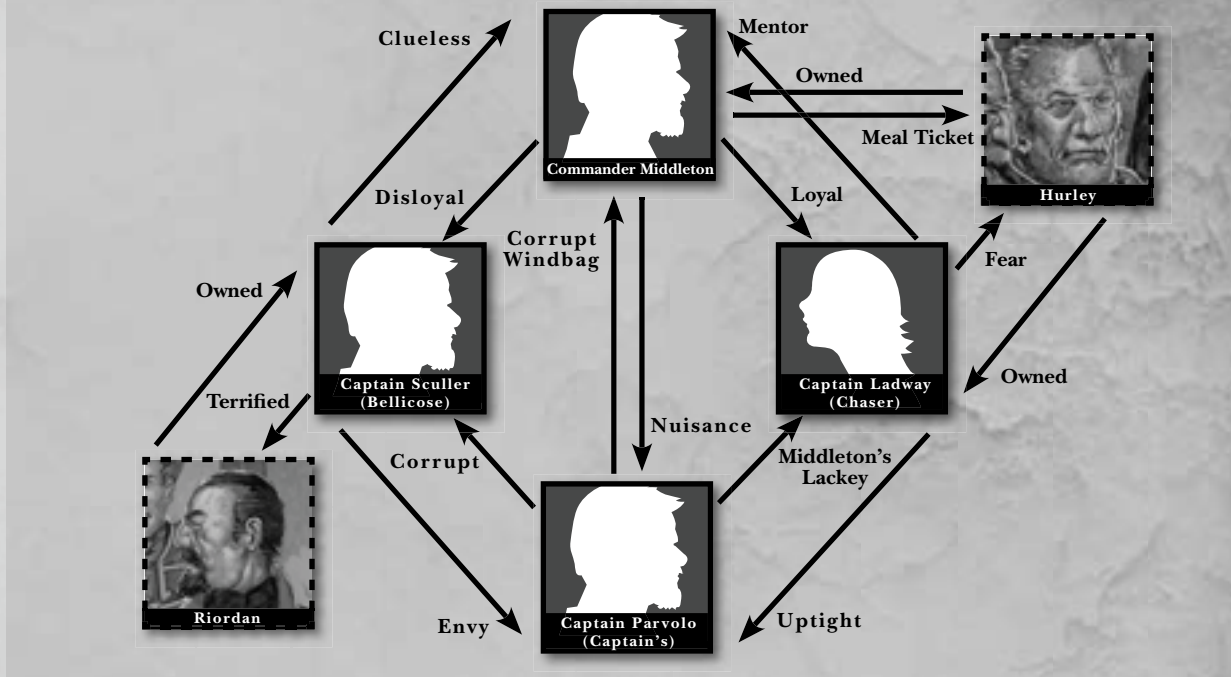
Things could become interesting if another High Captain rose from an unexpected quarter. It would be an event that could shake up all of the carefully laid plans of these men and could prompt them to work together to destroy the upstart. Alternatively, some might even try to gain an ally against their enemies and groom the up-and-comer to replace a rival.

Five Fingers Watch

The basic hierarchy of the City Watch is described in Chapter 5, pg. 116. Rumors of the corruption of this organization are true, particularly at the upper ranks. Watch Commander Darvis Middleton is firmly in High Captain Hurley's pocket although their arrangement is one of mutual gains rather than direct control. Middleton encourages his men to stay out of Hurley's business, and he gives his authorization of the so-called "Emerald Watch" which patrols the Emerald District. In exchange, Hurley keeps the commander comfortable and promises to keep scandal and violence out of the neighborhoods under his protection. This extends indirectly to Watch Captain Sherill Ladway of Chaser Island. She accepts a small regular bribe and is encouraged to keep out of Hurley's way in the North Rivergrav as long as his underlings are discreet.

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FIVE FINGERS WATCH



The commander does not have direct control over Watch Captain Gervis Sculler of Bellicose Island who has come under the sway of High Captain Riordan. When Gervis Sculler was just a lieutenant, Riordan approached and asked him if he would like a promotion and whether he would perform favors in exchange. Gervis eagerly agreed. The next week the former watch captain, a stubborn and bitter older man named Keorge Galway, vanished without a trace. His entire extended family living in the Terraces District and the Whaleneck on Chaser Island also disappeared. No evidence was ever found of those responsible, but word leaked on the street that Captain Galway had refused to cooperate with Riordan. Gervis Sculler was promoted immediately and has never refused any request made to him by the High Captain, even when it brings him into conflict with his commander.

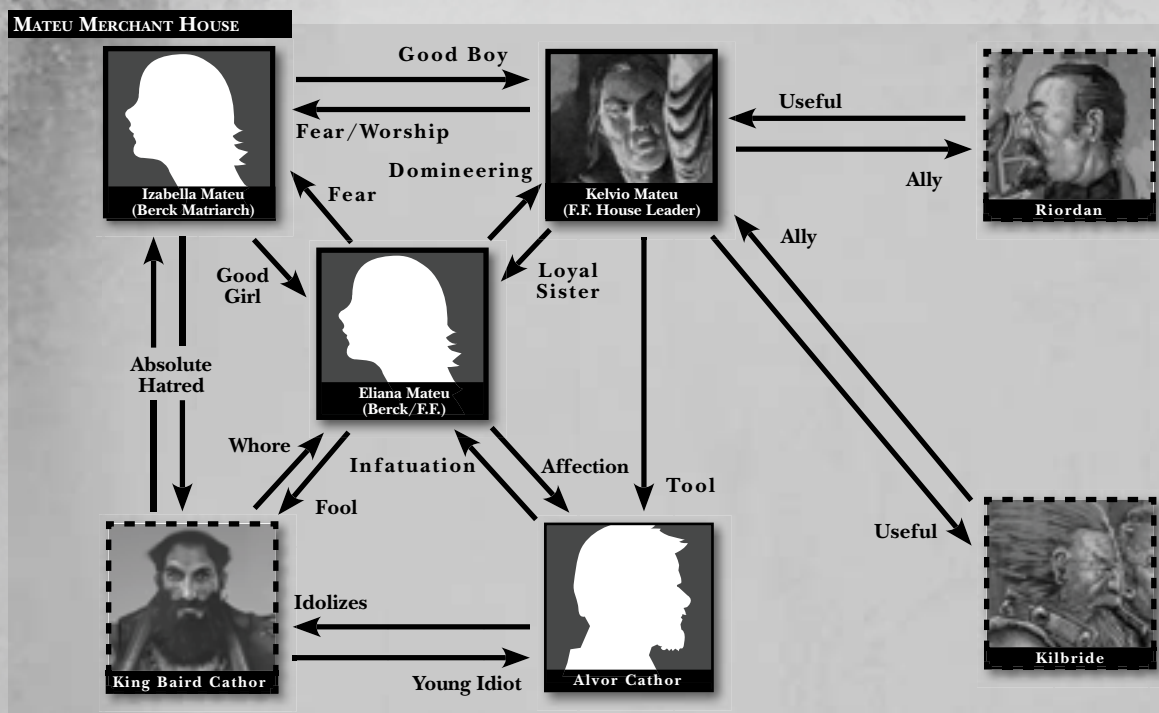
The only uncorrupted one is Watch Captain Nestor Parvolo who runs the day-to-day operations on Captain's Isle. Parvolo was once in the Ordic Army where he served with distinction, and he has proven both competent and impossible to bribe. He also has no particular interest in turning the city on its head. He is a quiet man who seems to prefer to help where he can and to shield competent sergeants and the rare honest lieutenant from retaliation from the commander. Parvolo has evaded attempts at extortion by both Hurley and Kilbride, but he managed to do so

without offending either of them. It is something of a small miracle.

Each of the High Captains has bribed watch lieutenants in the Governor's District to keep abreast of the goings-on in the city courts and serve as middlemen to get bribes into the right pockets of judges who are hearing specific cases. The bribes might urge a speedy trial and severe verdict or get a case dismissed or bartered to a lesser punishment. One of the men facilitating such transactions is Lieutenant Ander Larksworth (male Midlunder Ftr5/Enf1) who has a sumptuous upper level residence in the Masian District on Captain's Isle. Ander is a lackey of Commander Middleton, but sometimes he receives orders directly from one of Hurley's enforcers or low captains. Though his tentative loyalty is to Hurley, his real love is coin, and he has facilitated transactions for the other High Captains from time to time.

Mateu Merchant House

This powerful family hopes to leverage some of its connections against the Cathors holding the throne. The matriarch of the clan, Izabella Mateu, rarely if ever visits Five Fingers but is in regular communication with her son Castellan Kelvio Mateu who runs house business in the city. Were he to require assets, manpower, or specialized assistance, it could be provided to him very quickly from



Berck. They have a standing contract with the Red Shields mercenary company to provide bodyguard and escort duty for house interests.

There are two primary goals of the Mateus in Five Fingers: one financial and the other political. Financially they are attempting to gain a better foothold in the city by buying significant merchant or trading ventures. Because of interference from the crown, and thus indirectly from High Captain Banek Hurley, and competition with the Mercarian League, they usually try to do so indirectly through at least one or several layers of intermediaries. No one knows the full extent of the holdings of the Mateus because of such arrangements. They certainly own far more than most people realize, but they have traditionally had difficulty gaining ground in Five Fingers.

Politically they keep an eye on King Baird's interests, movements, or interactions. They are trying to undermine Baird by seducing and manipulating lesser members of his family, most importantly King Baird's grandson Alvor. Kelvio's younger sister Eliana Mateu is the lynchpin in this scheme, and she comes to Five Fingers often to spend time with Alvor. The Mateus are eager to marry their houses together with this pairing. Though Eliana is undeniably beautiful, she is fourteen years older than Alvor, so he may balk at marriage. It is not entirely clear whether Eliana is as cold-hearted as she appears; she may

have acquired a genuine interest and affection for the youth. Regardless, she is loyal to her house and will obey the commands of the matriarch.

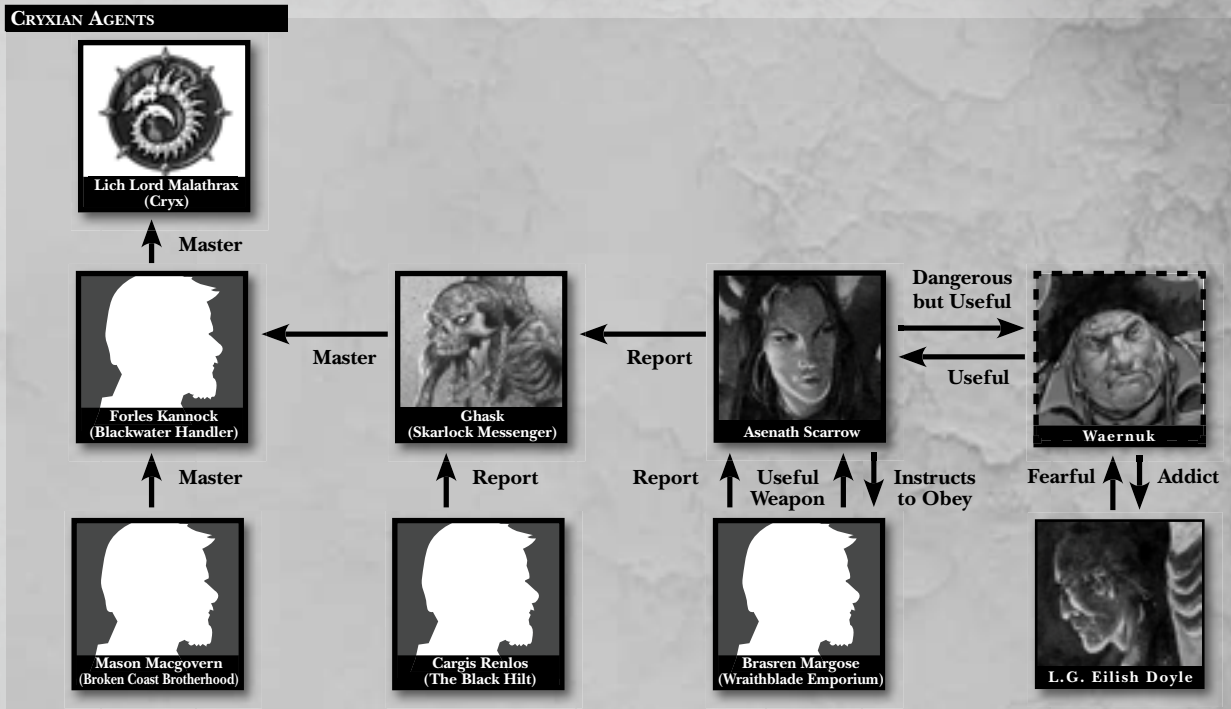
High Captains Riordan and Kilbride are most sympathetic to Mateu interests. The Mateus desire very much for Hurley to lose his dominance in the city, and Riordan would make an excellent replacement. The effort is aided by figures in the shadows, as both House Mateu and High Captain Riordan are affiliated with Tamarite Septs. The mysterious Council of Ten has backed the Mateus for centuries and continues to be on friendly terms with this family. The Shroud has also occasionally boasted devotees from among the Mateu family line.

Kilbride's relationship with the Mateus is based on his background as a privateer; he conducted brutal raids against Mercarian shipping and was rewarded by Mateu bounties. Though there is little direct contact, Kilbride is friendly with Kelvio Mateu and favorably disposed toward their house.

Cryxian Agents

The Cryxian Empire once boasted more liberty in Five Fingers, but the tightening of access to the city by the Ordic Navy and agents of the crown has made things difficult. Where once they were allowed to smuggle goods and individuals at will into the city, they must now be

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discreet. The city remains important to Cryx as one of the few mainland ports accepting their commerce (albeit not openly). The exchange of information is just as important particularly since Cryx has hatched long-term engagements on the mainland.

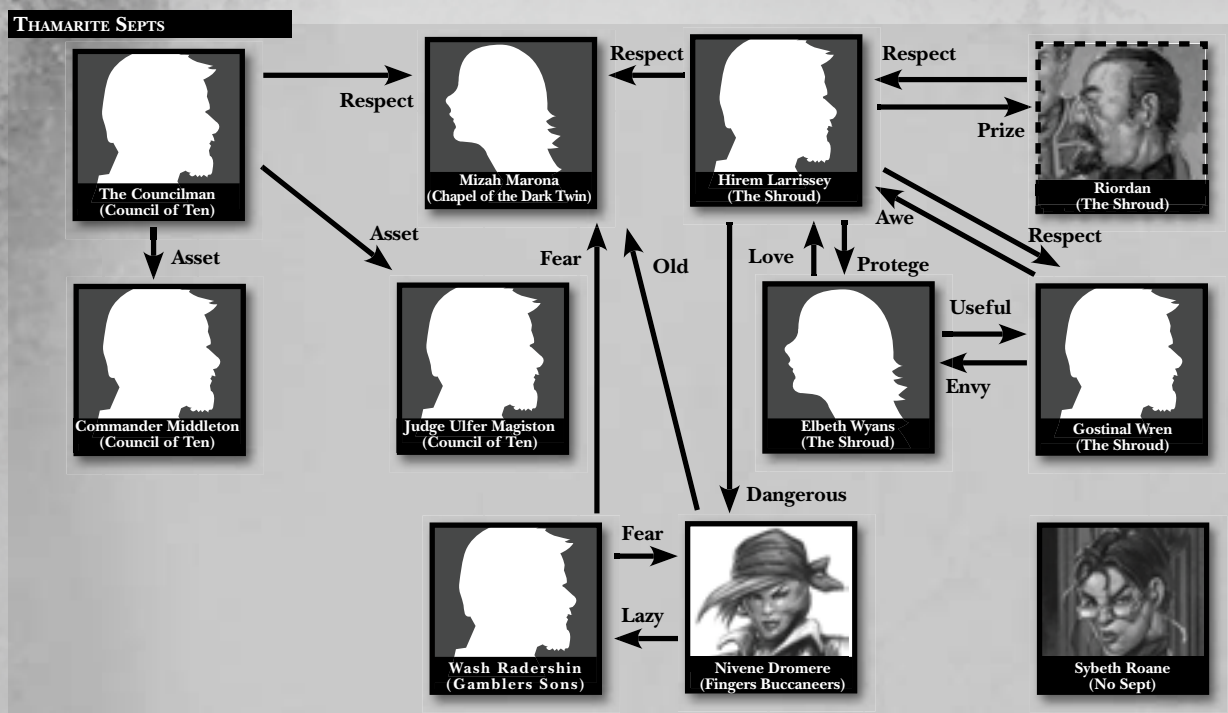
The primary Cryxian agent in Five Fingers is Asenath Scarrow who was groomed specifically for the position by her handlers in Blackwater. Scarrow is reserved for the most subtle upper level dealings in the city. Other individuals who serve Cryx and are subordinate to Scarrow include Cargis Renlos of the Black Hilt on East Wake Isle and Brasren Margose (male Scharde Rog7/Exp2) who runs a small safe house and black market for the Wraithblade Emporium (see IKWG, pg. 76) near a private pier in Captain's Prow on Captain's Isle. Margose's operations are protected by a couple dozen well-armed and dangerous thugs including three ogrun and two trollkin born on Blackrock Island. This small gang has the protection of High Captain Waernuk, whose men steer clear, and can be called upon by Scarrow when she needs their services. They murder at her request and ensure the bodies are put to better uses.

Scarrow's most crucial endeavors involve her ongoing indirect manipulations of High Captain Waernuk, maintaining her position among the city's upper class, and a long-term project involving Castellan Lionor

Cathor, the king's distant cousin. Some of her work with Lionor has already come to pass when he used his control of Cathor-owned trading companies to aid Cryx in smuggling considerable supplies and even troops onto the mainland before the outbreak of war in late 604 AR. Scarrow is concerned that hints of her scheme have begun to surface, and she now considers Lionor a liability which may need to be removed. She has been instructed to keep him alive and in-check, possibly for some deeper scheme against Ord's king. Scarrow was also behind the introduction of Brackbrandy to the Lord Governor via High Captain Waernuk. She has used this substance and a similarly addictive and illegal liquor called Black Wreath Whiskey to cement ties to other nobles of unique usefulness.

Though Scarrow is extremely clever, she is playing a dangerous game that could blow up at any time. The gravest threats to her operations are King Baird's agent Bastian Lattimore, High Captain Banek Hurley, and the various Tamarite septs that have a strong hatred of Cryx.

Scarrow is in contact with Cryx through an intermediary who comes to the city with a number of different merchant and smuggling ships generally under the protection of crews outfitted by the Wraithblade Emporium. Waiting in a shielded vault in its hold is a skarlock named Ghask that brings orders and takes



her reports to Blackwater. Ghask serves a powerful necromancer and smuggling lord named Forles Kannock (male Scharde Nec12/Rog3). Kannock is not subordinate to Lord Craethan Morvaen who rules Blackwater, but he reports ultimately to Lich Lord Malathrax, the enigmatic power charged with gathering information for Cryx from the mainland for Lord Toruk. They say Malathrax has eyes across the mainland, and corpses of those deemed to have known important facts in life are shipped at great expense to him for personal inspection. Forles Kannock has his own diverse intelligence network including agents among the mainland Cryxian armies. He has planted other hidden agents in Five Fingers to ensure Asenath Scarrow's loyalty.

Another element in the Cryxian equation is the mysterious Broken Coast Brotherhood. Though affiliated with Cryx and based in Blackwater, it likes to consider itself an independent organization. The subordinates of the lich lords have a special arrangement with the Brotherhood maintained so long as there is mutual benefit. The Brotherhood is left to its own devices and allowed considerable liberty. Cryx has informants within patiently awaiting any significant discoveries or occult finds. Were the Brotherhood to get their hands on something interesting, it would be promptly stolen. The Brotherhood is useful for getting to places other Cryxians could not. The primary local agent of the Brotherhood is

Masonn MacGovern (male Thurian Rog6/Spy3) who has a secret hideaway and hidden pier below Doleth Island in one of its many forgotten coves.

Thamarite Septs

There is no single organization regulating or controlling the varied Thamarite septs in the city. However, both the Shroud and the Council of Ten are very actively involved in intrigue and plots. The Shroud has carved a place of particular importance among the city's Thamarites to earn at least the grudging respect of rival septs even if they are not "obeyed" by other circles.

One of the best-kept secrets in the city is the identity of the leader of the Shroud, Prolocutor Hirem Larrissey (male Thurian Clr13), known publicly as the Chairman of the Bellicose Trade Board (pg. 47). The only individuals who know his identity are High Captain Riordan and Cantor Mizah Marona, the powerful Radiz priestess who currently oversees the Chapel of the Dark Twin. Hirem is highly placed in the local business community and runs one of the largest sugar and spirits exporting concerns in Five Fingers. He has capable subordinates to free himself for his darker practices as a devotee of Scion Delesle. Even among the faithful, he stays cowed and aloof.

Hirem allows the necromancer Gostinal Wren and a subordinate priestess Prelector Elbeth Wyans

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to serve as the apparent leaders of the sept. Hirem meets regularly with High Captain Riordan and the two work closely together. It was Hirem who helped Riordan embrace his dark impulses and fostered his fascination in death magic. Riordan ensures the sept is well supplied with corpses as well as information regarding rival groups.

Hirem is in regular contact with members of the Council of Ten, and several of his subordinates including Elbeth Wyans are actually members of both septs. Hirem has vowed that he will unearth and recover the remains of Scion Bolis during his lifetime, and it remains his most important work. He has recently found evidence to suggest that significant clues and possibly even unrecognized relics of Bolis may be in the possession (likely unwittingly) of High Captain Hurley. Hirem has encouraged Riordan to escalate hostilities with Hurley in the hopes that their struggles will provide ongoing distractions for him to penetrate Hurley's holdings and search for clues. Acquiring the complete remains of Bolis would be an enormous coup for the sept and provide them with unholy blessings of tremendous scope and power.

The exact membership of the Council of Ten and the identity of "the Councilman" will not be detailed here, but this mysterious group can serve any of the needs of

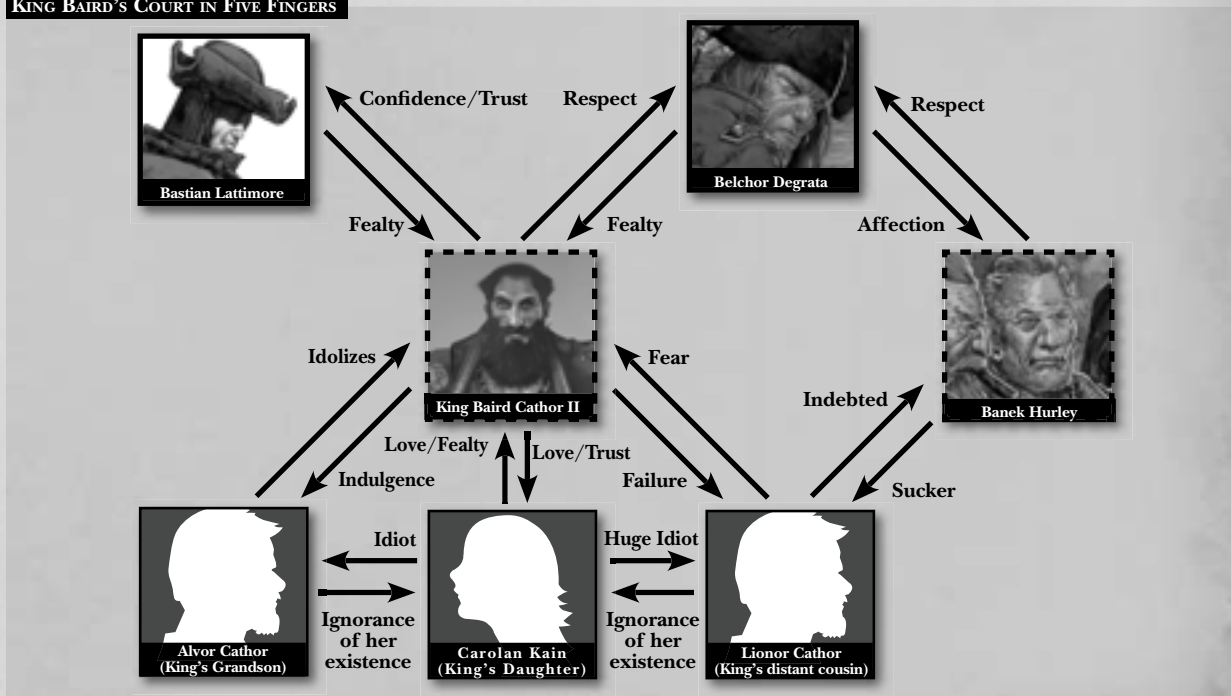
the GM because literally any well-respected member of the community might in fact be a secret member. This could include such notables as High Magus Terpswell of the Fraternal Order, corrupted priests of Morrow, or even the Lord Governor. As noted in Chapter 6, Watch Commander Middleton and Judge Ulfer Magiston are members of this sept. Neither are priests; they are only influential worshippers.

Sybeth Roane is an example of an influential independent Thamarite. She is a woman of tremendous arcane knowledge and skill who is allowed considerable liberty among the septs without being a member. She has ongoing contact with the Shroud and has friends with the Infernal Archive in Ceryl. As she spends almost as much time in Ceryl as Five Fingers, she serves as an informal liaison between certain Thamarites when they need to communicate with one another. (More about Sybeth in Narrators below.)

King Baird's Court in Five Fingers

When King Baird is in the city, he sets up his "court" at the Laden Galleon in the Rivergrav on Captain's Isle where he has his own private suite of rooms. The timeline in this book represents a relatively long hiatus between

KING BAIRD'S COURT IN FIVE FINGERS



visits of the king (hence Lattimore's need to send a written report in Chapter 5), but he could arrive at any time.

When in the city King Baird travels incognito. One of his favorite guises is the fictitious Castellan Govetti Klonoverre from an obscure valley in the northeastern Tordoro grav. In this guise he feigns being a half-blind, hard of hearing, and enthusiastic but unskilled gambler. His disguise is quite convincing and difficult to penetrate even for those trained in such matters, but he is always accompanied by bodyguards and escorts even if he seems to be alone.

The king's top agent in the city is the narrator of Chapter 5 Bastian Lattimore, a man who has his work cut out for him with the ever-changing city intrigues. Though Lattimore's presence has become known to a few figures in the underworld such as Sybeth Roane, the Thamarite narrator of Chapter 6, he has managed to keep a low profile. His meetings with the king are handled with utmost discretion in a controlled environment like the Laden Galleon.

Lattimore's discovery of Asenath Scarrow could well unravel the delicate balance that keeps the city from falling into chaos. His encrypted report on this discovery was intercepted by Sybeth Roane and could spread to others in the Thamarite cults. Neither group has any regard for the national interests of Ord or the preservation of the peace between the High Captains. Indeed, both groups would benefit from added hostilities and bloodshed. Such conflict could provide distractions to let them operate more freely.

Another significant member of Baird's court is Lord Governor Eilish Doyle. The Lord Governor's loyalties have been slightly compromised by both High Captain Riordan and High Captain Waernuk, but he still considers himself a faithful and loyal servant of the crown. King Baird does not have much direct contact with the Lord Governor.

King Baird is shrewd at deploying his offspring as political assets. One of his most reliable contacts in the city is his illegitimate daughter Carolan Kain, one of the three proprietors of the Laden Galleon. She claims to be a Thurian from her mother, but she bears a strong resemblance to King Baird's eldest daughter Carlutia. That Carolan is the king's daughter is a somewhat open secret among Galleon regulars. The king has not had the same success with his grandson Alvor however. He is caught up in the machinations of the Mateus (see above). The king has been reluctant to interfere directly with his grandson, for he recognizes the inevitable rebelliousness of youth, but he will not long abide his son's future heir being made a fool or manipulated by his enemies.

The king is more likely to be upset when he learns of Lattimore's recent discoveries about his cousin Lionor. The most upsetting aspect of this story will be that Lionor Cathor was indebted to Banek Hurley without that so-called 'friend' informing him of the situation. On the recommendation of Lattimore, King Baird will want to deploy more agents to investigate the city. Such an act presents a convenient excuse for players in an intrigue or supernatural themed campaign. Lattimore feels out of his depth with the cults lurking behind the scenes. Finding skilled investigators to brave the horrors lurking below the islands might provide the edge he needs to retain control.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

This section provides additional information on major characters, including "GM Only" facts and secrets. Feel free to switch things up and make adjustments to preserve surprises.

BROTHERHOOD OF BEGGARS

Secrecy: Open (Gather Information DC 14); **Organization:** Loose; **Enforcement:** Lax; **Size:** Mob (650+ members); **Location:** Various but largest concentration on Hospice Island/Chesake; **Operations:** Begging; **Alignment:** N; **Cash Limit:** 100 gp; **Member Assets:** 10 gp; **Membership Requirements:** Membership Approval (gather information, bluff, rogue abilities); **Leaders:** Pascal Rosado (male Tordoran Rog5).

Notes: Pascal Rosado seems the shabbiest and least powerful of all of Hurley's gang leaders, but appearances are deceptive. Beneath his foul smell and ill-tailored garments is the man who knows almost as much about the city's plots as Hurley himself. His loose 'gang' hardly comprises every beggar in the city, but he tries his best to make friends with most of those with actual talent at street hustling. Some of these beggars are not as destitute as they appear. This group is often discounted and ignored because his peers are ignorant of just how vital a role it plays in Hurley's intelligence gathering efforts.

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