

Vathak Weather

This week expect a cold chill in the air with a high chance of rain. Harvest season is coming to an end, looks to be a hard winter around the corner.

VATHAK TIMES

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Vol. 1 Issue:4 Shadows over Vathak - Octombrie 14th, 2012

Published by Fat Goblin Games: Jason Stoffa and Rick Hershey

FROM THE FRONT LINES

Referring to recent efforts by clerics in Ina'oth and Khrota, came a surprise message delivered late last week. Read aloud by the personal scribes of the High Bishops themselves, the letter both condemns the selfish and cowardly actions of those within Vathak who refuse to take up arms, and praises the faithful duty of the troops fighting the horrors within the field of battle. Messages issuing from the very steps of Heaven's Tower (the great church fortress located in Darmstadt) have become increasingly rare, and many have criticized the Church's lack of transparency during the war as a reason to both question the faith and the High Bishop's true involvement in the conflict. This latest proclamation has lead many to claim that the bishops are acting out of a "concern for the church." Others believe that these statements are nothing more than another call to the faithful to subjugate the already weakened nation of Ina'oth. Within 48 hours of the reading, several dozen documented occurrences of racially motivated violence against both bhriota and romni citizens have been reported.

The powerful contents of the High Bishops message was one of the strongest – and most direct – speeches heard by the people of Vathak, breaking the reign of a seven-month silence. It has also shown the favoring of a more strict control of the smaller churches. Clearly referring to an new renegade druid group called the 'Hands of the Transcendence', the doctrine has also extended the enacted bounty to any one who would abandon their duty to God and King. Listed below is an excerpt from the massive document which took more than six hours to read aloud:

"It has been remarked by some that the fighting spirit possessed by the people of the Grigorian nation has been delivered to a dark and dreadful state. It is true, the sorrows and trials of our bleak years of battle have scared our hearts and noble intended minds. Yet, the horrors which have risen from our great lands have yielded something

greater than bloodshed and slaughter. It is from these trials, these mighty tests of our faith and fortitude, we now sift the souls of our people into an earnest love of faith and country.

It now stands clear to all. Easily recognizable are those who stand to defend our lands. It is evident in their actions. It is through their rejection of those who are undeserving of peace or unfit to rule. Death is their reward, a bounty paid in the blood of those unfaithful to the cause. I place names upon the fearful cowards and disloyal men to the Kings Army. With the refusal to take up arms they have been separated from the purely loyal as chaff from the wheat. I pray those who now fight for our liberation hear my praise, for they alone stand between us and the wave of madness which the dark creatures assault us.

Forever blessed be the men who rally to the call of battle! Honest men and soldiers can now look to one another with their unshaken faith and undiminished efforts, and shoulder to shoulder face their common enemy. To hesitate in supporting our cause now, would be to cruelly dishonor and abandon our soldiers in the field. With time, and many a hard-fought battle, we will carve our way to the heart of this rising shadow – To hesitate now would be to dishonor the graves of those who have fallen in defiance of a growing evil. An evil which threatens to consume us all."



CALL TO SERVE

Only three days have passed since the King last issued a proclamation calling for five thousand more troops, to fill and keep up our armies in the field. In accordance with a doctrine issued by the Grand Church, he is allowing fifty days for the various regions within Vathak to meet its respective quotas by volunteering. Any deficiency will be made up by an enforced draft for one year. Volunteers will be received for either one, three, or lifetime enlistments. The same law issues an enlistment bonus of 100 gp, 300gp, and 1000gp respectively, according to the term of the doctrine. Under this call it is presumed the might of the military will be largely reinforced within the next sixty days.

To whom honor is due...

by *Montgomery Vale*

There are times when a single individual, they being in possession of a brave heart and resolute will, may successfully turn the tide of a battle or conflict and lay quite those who threaten our lands and lives. It is through his precision of action alone that they can bring order out of chaos. Not a single troop, no matter their rank or true participation in the conflicts of the war we now face, cannot point to some instance in which the fortunes of the day were saved by the leadership and skill of some single person. Perhaps it be by chance or skill, but the placement of such individual at the right time, and through his ability to convert the elements of confusion into a power that decides the day.

This degree of excitement has prevailed in all of our leaders at one time or another, each instance raising other men to heights of glory otherwise unattainable to them. Men such as these are sought in abundance and at this critical juncture of the war time efforts we pray for their appearance. In naming such heroes the kingdom would suffer to forget the services of Major General Alnur Westthronc, the High Commander of the Third Troop of Ina'oth, under whose direction the forces were organized for the defense of Moorhaven's western flank and southern lines, and to whose skill and energy we are indebted. The people of such a place evermore so for the continued preservation of their capital.

Ambifious Leader (General)

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Leadership

Benefit: When a character selects this feat, he selects either the cohort option or the follower option. Any followers or cohorts gained through this feat are cumulative with those gained for Leadership, this feat, or other feats that grant followers or cohorts.

If you select the cohort option, you gain two cohorts. One has a maximum level as determined by your Leadership score. The second cohort has a maximum level two experience levels lower.

If you select the follower option, you gain 1½ times the number of followers specified by your Leadership score.

Special: A character may gain this feat multiple times, and the effects are cumulative.

The Gregorian Engineer Corps

A correspondent of the Vathak Times, in the Army of the Fifth Standing of the Kings Throne, writes :

“ The Gregorian Engineer Department, though not attracting so much attention perhaps as other branches of the King's service, is truly deserving of credit as any. The best graduates from the Gunsmith Academies, the best talent of artillery, wherever it can be obtained in Vathak, is employed in the Engineer Department.

“In the present campaign against the evil spawn of the unnamed horrors they have, with each shell assembled and new gun manufactured, done a prodigious amount of work. All these defenses are of course located as they direct, and constructed under their supervision. They build roads and bridges, lay the foundations of the massive guns and cannons in which they employ, and draw up the positions and movements of our troops.

“ Wherever we go, a number of engineers are in the advance, who get the topography, roads—all the materials for a complete and accurate map of the country. The draftsman soon have this produced on special papers, ready for the cartographer, who by the transfer process, as it is called, can supply every general officer in the army with a copy in the course of but a single day.

“ Everything is done systematically and speedily. It is seldom that delays are caused by any fault of theirs. Their discipline, drill and commitment to the battle exceeds to notion of excellent.”

Hospital Report for the Week Ending Octoborie 16th

No. of beds	671
Admitted during the week	110
Returned to active duty	81
Discharged due to injury	20
Deserted	17
Deceased	28

Sweet Meat Murderer

A string of murders and disappearances have taken place in the Moorhavan region of Vathak since early last year, the latest victims involving six city children in the city of Taurvania. Authorities have stressed that there's no evidence yet of a link to any cultist group in the "Sweet Meat Murderer" killings, but Stroven Hitmain, chief captain of the Taurvania City Guard, told Vathak Times that he fears a serial killer might be behind them, and that "maximum resources" would be used to find the perpetrator. Authorities are still trying to establish whether just one person is behind the killings. A traveling Moorhaven butcher who used his covered wagon as a traveling torture chamber has escaped capture and eluded Taurvania officials for more than a week's time. The escaped madman Berathin Deian, a vindarian male butcher, came under heavy scrutiny last week after the disappearance of five children. The children were last seen taking cooked sausages from the traveling butcher hours before they each failed to arrive home that evening. Now under suspicion for the murder and disappearance of more than 135 individuals, Deian was among the first to be questioned by authorities in the disappearances. Evidence found in a secret compartment of his mobile butchers wagon leave little question as to his involvement in the murders.

"There's this compartment that's hidden completely from view other than between the seats," said Stroven Hitmain, chief captain of the Taurvania City Guard. The dungeon-like hidden compartment was described as a nightmarish torture chamber by one of the witnesses present at the time of discovery. The interior of the traveling wagon was equipped with bloodstained handcuffs attached to the ceiling, large serrated saw-like blades, bottles of acid and

even an assortment of "specimens" which enabled Deian to incapacitate his victims so that he could torture them before killing them. Judges of The One True God believe Deian may have put as many as 135 other victims through the cycle of "kidnap, torture, and kill," but an official statement by local officials have said they do not know how many innocents he may have hurt, since he traveled so much.

"That was the problem with him," Stroven said. "He was on Vathak's roads for most of the year. Tracking down each of his victims will be a huge task.

A string of murders involving the same weapon have raised concerns that a serial killer may be on the loose in a Paris suburb, as France is still reeling from a wave of terror-related shooting in its south.

Dark Torturer (General)

You know how to use various implements to extract delicious pain from captives. Your methods are purely evil and bring about a morbid sense of achievement and power.

Prerequisites: Non-good alignment, intimidate skill

Benefit: Using a selected weapon in which you are proficient with , you may use your intimidate skill to extract pain and an unnatural sense of power from an unwilling captive. For every hour you spend working on a captive, he sustains 1d10 points of damage and you gain a +1 to your weapon damage rolls for a number of hours equal to 1/4 the victim's hit dice (minimum 1 hour). After each hour of torture you must make an Intimidate skill check with a +4 bonus to the roll. The victim must then make a Will saving throw (DC equal to your Intimidate skill check) or lapse into a terror induced unconscious. For every hour of torture beyond the first, the victim sustains a -2 circumstance penalty to his save.

Sir Timothy Charles's Emporium

Sir Timothy Charles has just arrived to the shores of Vathak from distant lands, the No.1 importer and exporter of exotic goods, premium artifacts, and amazing wares is now located in the city of Hunstanvania, the Colonies!!! Stop by for all the latest fashion, arms, periodicals, and curiosities from lands afar! **This weeks sales are:**

Vellum of Tracing

This finely crafted vellum is so thin as to be almost transparent, and it comes in 1-foot square sheets. Scholars, Students, and troops alike use this paper to copy maps and other important documents.

When placed over a map, book, or other writing, a sheet of this paper allows the user to trace the image with great precision. The time required for tracing varies, but it usually takes 1 minute for a simple image, 10 minutes for an image of moderate complexity, and 1 hour for a complicated drawing.

Tracing Vellum grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Linguistics checks made to reproduce text, maps, or pictures.

The price of Vellum of Tracing reflects the difficulty inherent in creating such thin, fine sheets.

Price 10 gp; Weight -

Berathin Deian

BERATHIN DEAIN

XP 1,200

Male human ranger (urban ranger) 5 CN Medium humanoid
Init +6; Senses Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 44 (5d10+10)

Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 Bone Saw +9 (2d4+4/19–20 plus poison), or
Butchers Axe (Masterwork Handaxe) +7/+2 (1d6+3/+3
plus poison)

Special Attacks favored enemy (Vindari (Humans) +4,
Romni (humans) +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +3)

1st—Long Strider, Pass without Trace

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 21

Feats Combat Reflexes, Double Slice, Step Up, Two-
Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus(Bone Saw)

Skills Climb +8, Disable Device +9, Heal +5, Knowledge
(dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception
+11 Sense Motive +2, Stealth +12 Survival +11, Swim +5

Languages Common

SQ favored community (Moorhaven +2), track +2,
trapfinding, wild empathy +5

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, giant wasp
poison (2), Black Adler poison (4);

Other Gear +1 chain shirt, +1 Bone Saw, master work
butchers axe(treat as throwing axes) (3), grappling hook,
manacles (good quality), silk rope, thieves' tools

Berathin Deian was born as a seemingly normal child in Arkos. Berathin's father, Garath Deian, was both a butcher and a handy man holding several jobs as a carpenter and tanner. He was a stern man who enjoyed too much of the drink. A frequent abuser of alcohol and other illicit substances throughout his childhood, he became extremely violent towards Berathin and his mother. Garath Deian died from a heart attack late into Berathin's childhood, forcing the youth to take over the work to support his mother. His mother, Allith, was forced to become a dominant parent and was extremely religious. Until his mothers death seven

years later, each day for Berathin consisted of twelve hour days spent locked into the basement of the small butchers shop, his hand stained with the blood and gore of each piece of meat he carved with his butchers axe. After his mothers death, the young man continued to maintain the shop until it was destroyed in one of the many bhriota raids of Arkos. Watching the shop burn to the ground, he summoned up the shattered remains of his meager wealth, he purchased a covered wagon and struck out onto the roads of Vathak's eastern coast as a mobile tanner and butcher for hire.

At the age of 29, Berathin Deian started his life alone and on the roads in search of work. In his solitude, Berathin began to withdraw from society and reality. Only dealing with the occasional person in need of an animal butchered or skin tanned, he began to drift farther away from reality. At his lowest point, Berathin was left penniless and starving and was desperate for work. Two years ago, the simple butcher was hired by a well paying cult and his life took a bizarre twist. The job was to butcher the remains of three victims of the cult's ritual sacrifice, each of the bodies to be made into a pasted meat to be salted and stored for consumption later. No questions were asked about the assignment prior to accepting the job, and Berathin excelled in his work. While the meat from the bodies were used to fulfill his steadily increasing orders from the various clients, he was given the skin and bones of the victims to do with as he pleased.

Berathin would experiment with these remains, constructing objects from the skin and bones and storing the unusable organs in large clay jars, salting them and sealing them with wax for later meals. He also became fascinated with the oiled skins which he kept as blankets in his wagon. His work with the cult came to an abrupt end when the ring of evil doers were brought to justice by a group of inquisitors during a raid. Berathin fled from the city, keeping his foul collection and dark obsession with the dead a closely guarded secret.



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