We are yer tired, yer poor, yer scrap-heaping masses... er, well, something like that. I 'eard it somewheres, once. You get the point!"

– Hoj, Warlord of Samaria

During the difficult centuries of adaptation following the Abandonment, a day when millennia of scientific advancement and progress were lost practically overnight, humankind has found itself surrounded by the strange, the alien, and the obscene during its struggle to eke out a means of survival in the lands now known as Samaria. Despite their enduring such unfathomable hardships together, those surviving generations of a broken people have stayed true to their deeper natures, further fracturing themselves into societies separated by their personal belief systems and ways of life. So while the steadfast tenants of a more “proper” society that have named themselves the Forsaken plot and plan behind their towering walls, and hold themselves to higher ideals concerning religions and remnants of a structure now barely remembered, and while the hateful tribes of humans known as the Baniss have scattered themselves across the continent to convene in their cultish followings of depravity, thriving at the violent expense of any living things nearby, those humans and their semi-human Brute allies who otherwise remain have become known simply as the Outcasts, a title applied to all manner of cultures and societies thriving within the Eastern Wastes and beyond.

Those most common variety of Outcast you’re likely to encounter during your travels in the wasteland are the groups of Scavengers that survive in both bustling cities and simple caravans, their homes dotting the landscape from far into the Poison Steppe all the way south to the Outer Fringes. Comprised of vagabonds and junkpile-nobles alike, these communities exist as their own little microcosms of self-governed men and women who work hard each and every day to keep themselves alive and free, and fight harder still keep it that way. Having learned to utilize their unique environment of trash heaps and leftovers from long-dead generations to the utmost potential, the savvy Scavengers turn everything from ancient interstellar wreckage and antique processing plants into their homes and tools, and even their weapons and armor, the ghost of days long past carrying them ever forward towards an uncertain future. The distinctions of their individuality serve to unify these people of the wastes, their mutual respect for one another’s differences providing a bond that will see them band together against any common foe that should threaten their way of life.
The counterparts to the unorthodox Scavengers – and consequently a group I should hope you only ever meet on your terms – are those infamous Outcasts who stand in direct opposition to the freedoms of the common man so astutely embraced by their cousins. The Slavers of Chains Barrow, as they have been known since the founding of the Warden's megalopolis of cruelty, are those men and women who find strength not in the combined effort of their struggles for the greater good of all involved, but instead the forced strength in those they’ve enslaved to endure the struggle at the crack of a whip. Banding together the various slaving camps and caravans under a unified banner and single-handedly cementing an incredibly lucrative (if shameful) economic way of life on Samaria, the Warden’s massive stronghold serves as a hub for the entirety of the organized slave trade, positioned optimally for trade with the nearby Outcast city of Trent as well as New Ashkelon itself. While maintained solely by human residents, as the once-enslaved Brutes will not tolerate any form of slaver’s craft, the slavers are less discriminate about their “products” and will keep all manner of native or other-worldly creatures in their pits and cages, so long as it turns a profit.

In the north, distanced from their fellow Outcasts in both lifestyle and environment, the tribes of the Salt Flat Nomads reign supreme in one of the most unforgiving regions of Samaria that mankind dares to inhabit. Proving themselves not only capable of surviving the harsh environment, but actually thriving in it, the “Salties” have organized themselves into a truly tribal culture that roams the land as they please, making little attempt to bring their habitat under their control – as has been mankind’s habit for millennia – but to instead reshape themselves to suit their home. Though they share a heritage and skillset with their cousins among the Scavengers and Slavers, and trade with them often, the Salt Flat Nomads have become much more adept at crafting their tools from the natural elements of their environment. Mastering the multitude of methods necessary to successfully herd the unusual livestock of the salt flats they traverse, they have even developed strategies of war for utilizing the might of their herds against their enemies. Populated with beasts the likes of massive sand crocodiles, ruthless man-sized avian runners, and tauran bulls the size of bulldozers, even the bloodthirsty Skarrd will often reconsider attacking a Salt Flat Nomad caravan that’s on the move.

Last, but certainly in no way least, you’ll find the newest of the Outcast communities sitting just south of New Ashkelon, residing in a city founded upon the grand ideals of Law and Justice and Freedom, named by its Brute founders as the city of Freeton. Clustering themselves into a series of Brute-only districts when living as residents of the bigger cities such as Trent or Fringe Town and tired of being ostracized for their differences by even the friendliest of their fellow Outcasts, it was finally by the profound will of a single Brute named Remington Books with his every aim to better the lives of his people, that a town of their very own was founded. Freeton is now a bustling mining town, with the Brutes of Freeton having developed a livelihood of more than just the typical labor and security contracts of yesteryear, where plenitudes of valuable scrap and machinery are mined from an ancient industrial facility around which the city itself has been built. Having developed their own laws and a powerfully effective justice department of Brute Marshals based on the democratic desires of their populace, the Brute Court of Freeton has quickly established itself as one of the most formidable bands of Outcasts across all of Samaria.

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“Life out here is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Except some of the pieces have been stolen, some you have carved out of someone else's junk, and most of the border pieces are covered in blood.”

– Warlord Hoj

“How ya holdin’ up, big man?” Hoj grunted in a half-whisper over his shoulder.

“I really hate these drugs,” the enormous Titan Brute sighed, his chest pressed against the chains holding him to the slab of a table, “they make Mongo really swimmy.”

“Wish I had yer problems,” Hoj cough-laughed, “all I have is this damned wire cutting in my wrists an’ ankles.”

The two Outcast legends had been held in this old warehouse just outside of Trent for roughly a month, although Hoj had lost count after twenty days. Jon Woe, the new leader of the Heretics and self-proclaimed “Scorpion Saint”, had not been around for eleven days. He left the management of his captives in the hands of a sordid little grafter named Moniqa. She was making sure they did not die of thirst or hunger, and administered a heavy dose of equis tranquilizers to Mongo three times daily. If he was a normal man or even a normal Brute, his heart would have stopped weeks ago. Exactly why they were being allowed to live at all seemed strange to a pragmatist like Hoj, but he was glad for his captors’ mistake.

“You two! Quiet down over there!” a wooden-masked Bane bellowed from his seat at the lamp-lit table a few dozen feet away, the muffled conversation between friends apparently interrupting his nightly routine of rubbing musk oil into the haft of his double-ended mace.

“Or you’ll what?” Hoj spat.

“Don’t make me come over there and shut you up!” The heretic shot up out of his chair, but had yet to take a step.

“Don’t make me laugh, traitor,” Hoj stamped a foot, wincing from the wire slicing into his ankle when he did so, “Woe would have yer head on a spike if you put a hurtin’ on us. You ain’t gonna do nuthin’ to no one!”

“He can’t,” they knew Moniqa’s purr anywhere. It was an equal cross between seductive and bone-chillingly horrifying, “but I could tear you apart and sew you back together and Saint Woe would never see so much as a single stitch…”

“Time for Mongo’s medicine?” he let out a long and lightly-drooling sigh, tilting his head so he could look somewhat in her direction.

“Don’t be a baby about it this time,” the Grafter’s mechanical hand clicked loudly, cycling through several tool settings. The last revolved a large syringe into view

and she jabbed its thick needle into the glass jar sitting on a shelf next to Mongo. Gears and springs whirred to life, drawing the syrupy blue gel into an unseen cylinder. “This won’t take but a moment.” She took her first step toward her musclebound patient, but a loud noise banging against the shuttered steel gate of the warehouse gave her pause. “You,” she pointed the dripping needle at the Bane, “go find out what in the hells that is.”

“As if the Scorpion willed it,” the masked warrior bowed; the pomp and circumstance of their cult suddenly in place of his loose temper a moment before. He quick-stepped over to the heavy metal doors, during which there was another loud bang against it from the outside. The Bane tightened his grip on his well-oiled mace and started cycling the chain around, the steel shutters clanking loudly upward.

As soon as the layers of metal folded up to the point of the Bane’s waist, a familiar sound to both captives blasted in from outside – the thwick-thwap firing of a scavenging warrior’s grapple gun. “What the—?!” A braided cord of gutline tipped with a bent metal hook plunged itself into the folds of the Bane’s clothing, a spurt of crimson splattering the floor from behind his thigh-meat. The line went immediately taught at the sound of a mechanical ratchet grinding to life outside, and the Bane slammed face-first into the half-open shutter. A flower of red blossomed out from behind his wooden mask, the impact shattering his nose inside of it, and he crumpled backwards as his legs were drawn under the door with tremendous force.

“Brothers! To arms!” Moniqa yelled, shifting her arm into a clamping claw that flexed in the air expectantly, “We are under attack!”

“In the name of the Court Most Superior, of the Independent Town of Freeton,” a voice that Hoj was not too proud to be glad to hear boomed around the warehouse, “we have come for the liberation of our brother and his friend!” Two sets of oversized, thick-fingered hands tucked under the shutter and yanked it upwards. With the groan of bending metal and the chain wrenching up into its gears, the door was ripped open like the rind of a nutmelon to reveal a charging throng of Brutes, scavenging Wasteland Warriors, and a sight for Hoj’s sore eyes.

“In the eyes of Justice, you have all been found...” Judge Remington Books levelled his gigantic pistol at the wounded Bane and his head disappeared in a cloud of red mist, skull, and wooden splinters. “Guilty.”

Judge Books and his cadre charged into the warehouse, his steel-toed boot splashing unceremoniously in the Bane’s scattered brains. From the wings of the warehouse, tucked away behind leather curtains or plywood doors, other servants of the new Scorpion Saint came streaming in to
meet their enemy. Answering Moniqa’s call to arms without hesitation, some of them were still tightening the straps on their masks as they emerged. One traitorous Firestorm let the flint on her striker shower the ground as her flamethrower bloomed alight. The two sides hit each other like a blacksmith’s hammer against an anvil; or rather more like two hammers pealing against each other.

“Get us outta here!” Hoj rocked back and forth in his chair. “Get those chains off of our brother!” Books jabbed a finger at Mongo. “All priority!”

“Understood!” The two Marshalls, Books’ right-hand Brutes, knocked aside the heretics they were fighting and charged headlong at the table where the titan was tethered. The look in their eyes was pure drive; everything else was secondary. Nothing was going to stop or distract them from unshackling Mongo.

“You can’t have him!” Moniqa screeched, shoving aside the chair Hoj was in to make some fighting room to deal with the incoming Brutes. “Hey hey hey!” Hoj shouted as he tipped over, landing hard on the floor, “Yea, sure… everybody loves Mongo, but what about good ole Hoj?”

Ignoring his pleas for assistance, Moniqa lashed out with her combat claw at the first Marshall to get in range, filling its metal fingers with a clump of black leather jacket. Taking advantage of the near miss, the second Brute officer smashed the back of her legs with his stout length of metal-studded baton, folding her legs like a rusty hinge. Freed from her grip, the first Marshall took a half step back and lowered his heavy-barreled hand cannon.

“Summary execution…” he smirked, but the fwoosh of liquid flame melted it immediately off her skull, replacing it with a blackened, charred scream of agony. “For the Scorpion!” the rebel Firestorm cheered, spewing even more flaming death upon the collapsing Brute. “Die in His name!”

“You first,” growled one of the Wastelanders as he smashed her with a club made of corrugated aluminum sheeting wrapped and riveted to a bundle of broken tool handles. The impact would have been enough to splinter bone, but it caught the Firestorm a little too high and instead ripped open the fuel hose leading to her deadly weapon. “Aw hells—” he had barely enough time to grit his teeth before the resulting fireball ripped through both of them.

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“No, no,” Mongo slurred at the two scavengers rushing over, hurriedly sawing and tin-snipping away at the heavy chains holding him down, “get Hoj first. I’m all doped up, he can help you…”

“Not a chance, big guy. Unh!” one Warrior grunted, a metal link giving way. “The Judge says we…”

“…we get you first.” The other finished the thought. “Nice to know the priorities here,” Hoj sighed, tilting his head to halfway see them sideways from his position on the floor. Then he looked back to see Moniqa taking advantage of the chaos to get her claws into the other Marshall’s lower leg, the metal edges slicing to the bone. The Brute toppled backwards, and the Grafter swiveled her angry eyes directly at Hoj. Her arms and legs bent at impossible angles to lift her into an animalistic crouch, and everything in her half-masked scowl spoke of murderous intent. “You’ve ruined everything!” she cackled, surging forward like a sick spider scrambling across its web toward a trapped fly – in this case, Hoj tied to a toppled chair.

“Get me up, get me up!” the Scavenger Warlord shouted, straining painfully against his bonds to no avail. He gave her his best charming smile despite knowing it would not work, “Jonny Woe wouldn’t want this… you can’t kill us, remember?”

“Better to ask forgiveness,” Moniqa’s claw snapped just inches away from his face, “than permission!”

“No where I come from,” Judge Books punctuated his sentence with the falling of his enormous hammer, the Gavel, into the Grafter’s lower back. With how she was arching her spine, it only added to the blow crushing her flat. “In Freeton, that would be a dereliction of duty.” In the same motion of lifting his weapon off her quivering body, the Brute Chieflain pushed her over to face up at him. Her eyes were bulging, perhaps in surprise of her rapidly arriving demise, and she coughed up a splatter of bilious blood through the grating in her mask.

“H…e…h…” the shine in her eyes began to fade, “he won’t let you… get away with this.”

With a grunt of help from one of his saviors, Hoj’s bondage was undone and he shakily rose to his feet. “Well,” Hoj limped over rubbing his aching wrists and spat on the ground next to his captor, “that’s good.” He looked around. His muscles were on fire from disuse and exhaustion, but adrenaline filled his veins and Hoj hefted a length of heavy chain that once bound Mongo, and limped over until he leaned over Moniqa’s defeated pose. “Because we’re comin’ for him next!”

The Grafter’s face became unrecognizable as Hoj swung the chain back and forth onto her upper body with the fury only a months’ worth of torture, mistreatment, and captivity can sow within a man. The wet, meaty impacts were audible again and again, despite the other sounds of the Freeton crew finishing off the remaining heretics.

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“Hurry it up with that converter box, we can’t jus’ stand aroun’ in this scrap all da- …Ay! What’s the shiny bit o’er there!? Give it ‘ere!”

– Alec, Wasteland Warrior

Filling the abundant spaces of harsh desert, craggy wastelands, and just about every dense scrapheap you’re sure to find in the death-friendly lands of Samaria, there still survives – thrives, even! – a hardy people of ne’er-do-wells and altruistic bleeding hearts alike. Constructing their homes from the cast off refuse of their ancestors, who so kindly left behind their pre-fab structures and powered vehicles when abandoning Attr, these Outcasts have managed to build an entire way of life centered around the skillful re-use of scrap left to rot. Choosing to live by their own rules, these “Outcasts” forge their own destinies outside of the towering, sheltering walls of their Forsaken cousins by sheer determination and willpower, and have become a substantial power in their own right.
within the politics of modern Samaria despite the fractured nature of their leadership and lack of military structure. Utilizing unorthodox tactics and surprisingly inventive devices repurposed for war, the Outcasts organized into the various gangs of wasteland Scavengers have proven themselves time and time again to be competent and adaptable adversaries, providing a harsh lesson for those foolish enough to underestimate their ragtag appearance. Since securing their foothold in the lands surrounding New Ashkelon, small towns appearing around newly discovered dig sites – jokingly referred to as a "rust rush" – is common, with many settlements maintaining themselves primarily as mobile caravans ready to move on to the next big haul.

Like any creatures battling for survival, though, many of these Scavengers have found strength in numbers to be necessary when faced with the likes of the horrific Skarrd or C.O.R.E. monstrosities that also call the wastelands home. Several larger towns have risen out the trading posts they once were to become bustling barter towns rife with any vice a self-respecting (or disrespecting, if we're being honest…) man or woman could ever want, ensuring the dusty streets of Fringe Town or Trent are always filled with a raucous vibrancy found nowhere else in Samaria. Scavenger society exists primarily through systems of barter and free trade, keeping the streets filled with shouting vendors and customers aplenty, but only the largest towns having any form of law system in place (and often only then to manage the disruptive drunks frequenting Happy's taverns or enforce the rules of engagement for a fair duel and holding back the cheering crowd). Having no voted officials or seated rulers to speak of, the Scavengers operate in an ever-changing fashion, combining their efforts politically only when necessary to maintain their independence from the strict structures of Forsaken society.

As you can likely imagine in a society as free-form and roughly hewn as the one the Outcasts have created, there is no shortage of heroic – or at least characterful – personas to be found leading the myriad of government-like systems and/or the bands of intrepid warriors into combat at any given time, and for any number of reasons. Ranging from the most famous and respected leaders, such as the pride-filled, self-titled “Warlord of Samaria” Høj himself, down to the greenest Warchief out leading her first caravan of scrap hunters, there is always room among the Outcasts for an individual to pull themselves up from the most modest of origins to the lofty heights of notoriety and renown. As with all things in life for the Scavengers, though, competition is fierce for an aspiring Warchief, and that notoriety is too often earned at the end of a bloody path. Information is truly an aspiring Warchief’s most valuable resource, such as the locations for valuable scrap necessary for repairing equipment, perhaps an understanding of battle techniques and weapon proficiencies for exotic weaponry, or even simply where to sell their loot for considerable sums of gelt, and it is the wisest of the Scavenger leaders who have learned when to hold or share that information with their peers.

Fighting alongside these capable Warchiefs, or sometimes even leading bands of warriors themselves, are the skilled elite among the Scavengers, set apart from their fellows by their unique and valuable skillsets. Though gangs of warriors are common, those who have learned to do more with their hands or their minds typically become guns-for-hire, lending their services to the highest bidder. The stealthy, not-quite-bounty-hunting warriors known most commonly as Manhunters can be easily found in roadside taverns, ready to put their tracking skills to use for a heavy stack of gelt. Others find themselves with followers whether they’ve encouraged the notion or not, such as the famed Pit Fighters, having already earned esteem from their fellow Scavengers for their bouts in the ring. Traveling from town to town in search of greater competition, a capable Pit Fighter is always welcomed among any traveling crew. Some have even earned names for themselves and are sought out for their incredible martial abilities rather than leadership traits, such as the widely revered Oz, Pit Champion, when a Warchief knows they will be facing a significant threat. Many Brutes still make themselves available to the various factions of Scavengers as well, despite the recent formation of a proper Brute society at the town of Freeton, adding their strength of arms to the forces of their Scavenger neighbors.

The common men and women of the Scavengers are where the heart of their society finds its purpose, with nearly every member of their society falling into a battlefield role when the need arises. In the wastelands of Samaria only the strongest survive, leaving no place for anyone willing to let their fellows fight in their place. Approximately 8 in 10 Scavengers who survive to adulthood become the all-encompassing “Wasteland Warriors” and fill any number of battlefield roles, their average ability to work scrap into useful weaponry and armor at a moment’s notice being their most remarkable trait. Those rare few who excel at the art of scavenging become known simply as “Fixers”, managing the repairs to both the machines and muscles of their peers in a seemingly endless queue. Even the children of the Outcasts – running around in unruly gangs as dirty as they are deadly – are put to use on the battlefield as infiltrating “Scouts”, sent to gather intelligence and distract the enemy with the aid of their surrogate guardian/handler, the “Bully”.

The true power of the Outcast Scavengers is the sum of their differences, their unity held together by bonds of the freedom they fight for with their lives. Should you ever be foolish enough to threaten a Scavenger, beware: They all will answer.
"Saints'. Ha! Ain't nothin saintly 'bout 'em… 'Cept mebbe the pay.”

Most men, upon learning their name appears on one of the Prevailers’ “Most Wanted” lists, would do everything within their power to hide their identity and keep a safe distance from the towering walls of New Ashkelon. But then there are the rare few men, such as Hoj (the self-titled “Warlord of Samaria”) who are the kind of headstrong vagabonds that instead look eagerly to see how highly sought after they’ve become. Considered by some on the Prevailer Council to be the only man capable of uniting the Outcasts, the cocky warlord’s reputation among both friends and enemies is well earned. Hoj's notoriety and influence among the Outcasts is unmatched, and still yet grows with each of his victories, inspiring glory hungry warriors to seek out the warlord and fight by his side.

Hoj grew up unremarkably in the wild hills of Talen, and drafted himself into his small town's militia at the early age of 12. His aptitude for battle and ability to weather a punch were noted by his superiors, but Hoj himself did not yet strive for greatness. It took seeing the legendary Saint Mark in action against a particularly nasty group of raiders some years later, during an incident many of the more devout residents of Samaria would describe as fate, before inspiration struck and Hoj set off on the path to meet his destiny. Determined to make a name for himself across all of Samaria like the scandalous Saint Mark, Hoj left his small hometown militia to become a mercenary of the wastelands, learning everything he could from the many warriors and commanders he contracted with during those years.

It wasn’t until Hoj successfully organized a ragtag group of miners against a Skarrd hunting party, led by none other than the infamous Jon Woe, that Hoj found his true calling as a commander of his fellow Outcasts. Cleverly utilizing the miners’ familiarity with the surrounding terrain and Woe’s own overconfidence as tools against the Skarrd, Hoj only lost a handful of warriors that day as they routed the Skarrd warband, earning him the admiration of Outcasts far and wide… and a life-long nemesis in Woe.

Now, even the venerable Saints of the Forsaken would admit a grudging respect for Hoj, the widely-recognized Warlord of Samaria, and view him as the powerful threat he truly is to the Forsaken way of life. Always learning, the warlord has grander plans still yet, and his network of scouts and spies rivals that of the Prevailer Council itself. Lately they’ve spent many dangerous nights in New Ashkelon, acquiring last every scrap of information they can on the mysterious Esh, while Hoj has been away working with his old friend, Mongo.
MONGO, BRUTE TITAN

“Of course I saw ‘im... how could I miss ‘im!? He’s the size of mah house!”

Heroes across Samaria come in all shapes and sizes, especially among the Outcasts. None are bigger or more physically imposing, however, than Mongo, the legendary Titan Brute. An unprecedented giant among his fellow Brutes, Mongo is a simple man with few words, but a heart of pure gold that beats for the well-being of his people.

Within the society of the Brutes, a tradition has been passed down through each generation, established during the first days of their freedom. Continued even today in their home of Freeton, even if only for the tradition itself more than for their need of it, a mighty protector is chosen to become their Keeper, nominating this lone warrior to serve as the champion of his people. Mongo’s unusual and outstanding size as a boy set him easily on the path to becoming a prime candidate for Keeper training, and though the gigantic boy yearned for it with all of his heart, it would require more than just his strong set of arms to win him the title. It is required that a Keeper must truly be the best among the Brutes, equally strong in both body and mind, capable of balancing the responsibilities that rest upon his shoulders.

OZ, THE PIT CHAMPION

“No more arenas for me... just the world.”

An all-too-common tale throughout the unforgiving societies of Samaria, Ozymandius Augustus Drake was born into slavery. Bred deliberately for his size by a group of particularly twisted Forsaken slavers, Oz’s sole education during his formative years was in violence. Raised in the uncivilized fighting pits of New Ashkelon itself, his training saw a much broader depth than his typical Outcast gladiatorial counterparts; able to afford a staggering bench of opponents for their spectacles (many of which a typical Outcast would never even encounter during a full lifetime of fighting), his Forsaken owners would force Oz to battle men, women, captive Dragyri and Skarrd, CORE monstrosities, and maybe even the rare Brood creature during an especially profitable year. And though he earned many scars and injuries during those years, ultimately Oz proved unbeatable against anything his owners could throw at him, even when success seemed all but impossible.

In time, the unstoppable gladiator’s reputation managed to reach even the smallest of Outcast gangs in the wastelands, resulting in the Warden of Chains Barrow using his powerful wealth in an unprecedented purchase of Oz for the opening of his grand ‘Colosseum’. Serving as the main event of the spectacle, the Warden was determined to break the calm and quiet pit fighter, and saved all of his most dangerous foes to battle Oz and his small retinue of Pit Fighters. Oz fought unceasingly for nearly an entire day, expertly ordering his fellow Pit Fighters in maneuvers allowing them to handle everything the Warden could throw at them. According to first-hand accounts, Oz had performed so well that in the end, as he stood grinning and gore-covered as the lone survivor amongst the myriad corpses and chittering mechanisms of a broken Skarrd Abomination, the Warden was forced to award the un-killable champion his freedom to keep the spectators from rioting in their adulation for the magnificent gladiator.

Now a roaming warrior of the wastes, Oz the Pit Champion never stays in one place for long, trading his skills in battle for food and shelter as he passes through. A master of all common arena weapons and even capable of utilizing just his own powerful physique with murderous intent, Oz’s skillful combat abilities are welcome in any gang lucky enough earn his allegiance. Most recently, the rumors have been cycling that Oz has been oddly vocal about seeking a true Dragyri warrior to challenge. So far, there have been none so foolish as to take up the Pit Champion on his offer.
Happy Hour

“People always ask what Happy’s Special Reserve tastes like. I’d tell ‘em… but I can never remember it the next day!”

- Lucky

Hap Helmsworth is, without a doubt, one of the most beloved figures in the Samarian wastelands. A traveling brewer, Hap’s libations are regarded as a treasure among the Outcasts. Showing a knack for technology at a young age, his gang’s Fixer took Hap on as his apprentice, eager for the help. Conquering all the Fixer could throw his way like some sort of junk heap savant and quickly growing bored, it wasn’t until his teenage years that Hap found the inspiration that would earn him his fame. Tasting some rare liquor from New Ashkelon that his gang had acquired in a trade, Hap found himself with an obsession for concocting similarly tasty brews, rather than settling alongside his fellows for the typical wasteshine rotgut available to the Outcasts. Determined to find the right formula but unwilling to become dependent on materials from within New Ashkelon, Hap knew his real challenge would be creating something worthwhile from only those components found in the wastelands.

Leaving home often on trips of discovery, Hap traveled the wastes to visit and learn from every Fixer and brewer he could, quickly making a name for himself with his good-natured attitude and excellent spirits. Unfortunately, as his reputation grew, word of his accomplishments also fell upon the ears of the ruthless Slavers of Chains Barrow. While away on one of his travels, the Slavers arrived looking to take Happy’s secrets home to the Warden. Happy returned home to find every last member of his gang slaughtered or captured into slavery, and his workshop completely destroyed. Calling in favors from some of the new friends Hap had made during his travels, together they hunted down the band of Slavers before they reached the safety of Chains Barrow. Hap will never speak of it now, but it is rumored that in the company of some now-famous Bounty Hunters and their utilization of his booze as a source of effective low-grade explosives, no Slavers escaped on that day.

Even now, Happy still finds himself on the road more often than not, always searching for ever-better ingredients to create new recipes and making new friends along the way. Having set-up taverns and saloons in Trent, Freeton, Talen, and shockingly even Chains Barrow (business is business, after all), Happy is welcome among nearly all of the Outcasts, turning the junk of their land into liquid gold.

Fixer

“Where’s the hydrospanner? … Oh, nevermind. That ain’t a real thing anyway.”

The Outcasts have been a loose-knit society of scavengers since their first years in the Samarian wastelands, thriving on collecting the leavings and junk of others and creating new tools, equipment, or weapons for themselves. Though plenty of hidden caches of untouched riches and machinery left behind during the Abandonment have yet to be found, more often than not the Outcasts find themselves using (or re-using) the busted remnants of the past to create their tools and weaponry. Because of these less-than-stellar materials that the Outcast craftsmen have at their disposal, faulty and patchwork hardware in need of constant repair is simply a fact of life. Wasteland Warriors using more complicated weaponry must always be prepared for a potential weapon malfunction in the heat of battle, which is why many among the Outcasts stick to simple clubs or knives. For some, however, the lure of an exotic or magnificently complicated weapon is hard to shake. Luckily at least one member of every gang will have a knack for machinery, earning them the role of the gang’s Fixer.

Easily the most popular and treasured member in any Outcasts gang, the Fixer is constantly backlogged with stacks of snagged zip guns, armor in need of repair, and all manner of mechanical devices to fix. Even a moderately successful gang keeps a steady stream of work to ensure there will never be enough time to repair it all, and the varied technologies and materials any scavenger band might be putting to use will keep even the wisest Fixer in a constant cycle of learning how to fix and care for new things.

Outside of the day-to-day life of crafting and repairing at camp, it is not uncommon for a Fixer to see regular battle, as any savvy Warchief rarely heads off to battle without a one by his side. Typically seen wielding a stout, oversized wrench capable of dealing serious damage in a pinch and a reliable slug gun, a Fixer can hold his own in a fight almost as well as any other Wasteland Warriors. It’s rare that a Fixer needs to fend for himself, though; treasured for his ability to perform quick field repairs and prevent dangerous weapon malfunctions or for his rudimentary field medicine skills, there is never a shortage of capable warriors fighting by the Fixer’s side.
MANHUNTER

“Yeah, I’ve tracked my share of ‘bounty hunters’. Usually drag their carcasses back to town after only one night in them hills.”

Among the many Wasteland Warriors fighting for the Outcasts, few have greater aspirations than finding their next big score of salvage or even simply filling their bellies. Like in any culture, however, there are always those select few who will strive for greatness and become masters of their craft. Known commonly among the Outcasts as Manhunters, it is these few who rise above their peers to mature into something more than simple battlefield combatants or common scavengers to become ferocious trackers and nigh-unstoppable survivalists.

The Outcasts in general tend to be masters of their environment by necessity, but the Manhunters specialize in it; utilizing their years of experience to greater advantage than their fellows, they are relentless trackers, capable of subsisting off the ravaged lands for indeterminate lengths of time while on a hunt. Scavengers on par with any of their peers (and with an ego to match), a typical Manhunter can always find ways of making the wasteland work to his benefit, but still yet be able to adapt to the varied landscapes his prey may lead him through. It’s not unheard of for a Manhunter to venture quite far for his quarry… especially if the pay is high enough!

Among native Outcasts, the Manhunters also tend to be the most skilled in espionage, sabotage, and especially assassination, making them highly sought after by any Warchief with enough gelt to afford their services; even if they’re only hired on to the gang for their combat ability, though, most successful Warchiefs would still claim it money well spent. Usually seen wielding powerful flechette guns and heavy bastard swords, any intelligent adversary will avoid approaching a Manhunter, even in what could be considered a “fair fight.” Unfortunately for their foes, however, these devious warriors have learned to stack the deck whenever possible and will apply paralyzing toxins to their weapons before battle, all but ensuring victory so long as they score the first strike.

Following a code of honor all their own, once hired a Manhunter will hunt his target unceasingly until he either confirms his kill or dies trying. Self-aggrandizing to the last, any Manhunter will stake his valuable reputation to tell you there are no fiercer warriors in all of the wasteland.

Few would dare to say otherwise.
“Strength an’ speed ain’t nuthin’ without the smarts ta stay alive.”

Despite the incredible variance in styles and “uniforms” found among the plenteous of roaming gangs and battle-hardened militias of the Outcasts, it is always remarkably apparent which one of them is a group’s appointed Warchief, the common title given to the man or woman capable enough to lead their fellows in battle. And while that person may look right at home being in charge, keep in mind that being a Warchief in the wastes of Samaria is no easy task, as the individual must balance a combination of their own combat prowess and tactical know-how to prove worthy of staying at the top of what little chain-of-command they’ve established, while simultaneously being the most politically cunning of the group in the downtime between battles, and be capable of making the best use of whatever scrap the gang can find throughout the wastes. Often ignorant of the considerable responsibility it entails, there is never a shortage of fellow warriors ready to take the mantle of Warchief for themselves, whether through direct challenge or more devious means, even amongst the most trusty of crews. The stresses of knowing half of their camp is out to claim their job can make even the quietest days at camp feel just as dangerous for a budding Warchief as whatever enemies might oppose them in open battle!

The average Warchief cannot rely upon the same sense of duty to rank provided by the unquestioning faith of Forsaken soldiers, nor do they share the absolute psychic dominance over their warriors that their Skarrd counterparts possess; he or she must make up for these deficiencies with sheer guile, inspiration, and by earning respect through example. Every Warchief aspires to earn a name for themselves, such as the altruistic Kristoph Broyleson, the soft-spoken Andreu Bruteslayer, or even the legendary mercenary Hoj, Warlord of Samaria, and gain the comfortable respect such a name would grant them.

Utilizing the best of the scrap found during their outings to craft them, the most common weapon found in the hands of a Warchief is a powerful battle mace, used deftly enough to parry incoming blows and sweep the enemy off their feet. Others find success hanging back from the front line and firing their enforcer pistols into the fray, commanding their warriors to certain victory from a safe distance. While there are many paths to glory for a worthy Warchief, he must always be several steps ahead; to falter on Samaria, even for an instant, often means certain death.
Wasteland Warriors

“There’s riches in them wastes… long as ya know who to kill an’ take it from, anyhow.”

Living amidst the harsh conditions of the desolate wastelands and salt plains of Samaria has forced the Outcasts to become scavengers without peer, utilizing every last piece of scrap they can find as a valuable resource in all aspects of their daily lives. The crafting of rough-hewn tools, armor, weapons, and even their very homes from the waste heaps and rusting hulks of ancient equipment and buildings that litter the otherwise-barren landscape is a powerful testament of the enduring spirit of the Outcasts as a people, showcasing their ability to not only able to survive with such hardship, but to thrive in it.

The common able-bodied Outcasts most typically referred to simply as “Wasteland Warriors” comprise the majority of any Outcast tribe, fulfilling nearly every role within their small communities while still representing the bulk of their fighting forces. Born into such an unforgiving environment, these Warriors come to know their home intimately, with only the strongest and most capable children succeeding in surviving long enough to achieve adulthood at all. Even at a very young age, a child must learn to fight and even kill for their own survival, while their peers who are safe inside of tall city walls are simply learning to walk. As soon as they are large enough to possess enough strength and skill to begin working the scrap, they are left alone to arm themselves with more capable weaponry; true Wasteland Warriors must rely solely on their own wits and scavenging abilities to create and maintain their gear, ensuring no two Warriors you might come across will ever look just the same.

Favoring makeshift clubs, maces, or even the weapons retrieved and pieced together from their fallen enemies, Wasteland Warriors are fearsome melee combatants. Utilizing uniquely developed zip guns designed to aid in rapid movement between the peaks and crevices of the enormous scrap heaps in the wastes, they have become adept at using the surrounding terrain to their advantage while engaged in combat. Ever crafty in a tight spot, they have even learned that those same zip guns can become formidable weapons in the hands of any skilled Wasteland Warrior, who have mastered the ability to shoot the cruelly barbed hooks into their targets and drag them off their feet before finishing them off with their brutal bludgeons.

Pit Fighters

“Have to admit, I like it when they’re chanting my name…”

Across nearly all of the Samarian territory that mankind can claim as its own, the ancient human practice of spectating live combat has returned and quickly taken root as a normal part of their roughshod society. Most common among the Outcasts (for obvious reasons), a majority of the more permanent settlements now have a fighting pit, no matter the size or grandeur. Ranging from the heights of luxury at Warden’s massive ‘Colosseum’ of Chains Barrow, down to the most basic ring scratched roughly in the dirt and surrounded with lively spectators sitting on the scrap between the derelict huts they call home, pit fighting has become a powerfully entrenched means of entertainment, settling scores, and bringing together the various roaming gangs of the wastes.

While their fractured society would typically be characterized as a mismatched myriad of individuals of all shapes and sizes, when considered as a whole the Outcasts take their pit fighting tradition very seriously; in short order, universally recognized rules for weapon selection, victory conditions, and even honorable surrender were developed and summarily enforced. Except for those outlier cases involving personal duels, the Outcasts have learned the hard way that strict rules and terms of engagement are necessary to prevent serious injuries, as wounded fighters only become a burden to their gangs. Like any other trade, there are those few who specialize and train themselves for these measured bouts, seeking the glory and fame awarded to them by seeing their opponents crumpled and bloody in the sand at their feet.

Trained for up-close and personal combat with a number of different weapon styles and by honing their reflexes to maximum efficiency, these Pit Fighters become a fearsome advantage for any Outcast gang in a true battle. So long as they are properly supported at range, the Pit Fighters can travel rapidly across the field to close on enemy positions and bring their specialized skills to bear. Typically armed with paired weapons from their arena stockpile and sporting light armor to allow for better movement, once upon a group of enemies there is little than can be done to stop the fury of a Pit Fighter. More than just powerful melee combatants, though, it’s because of their familiarity with combat games and positioning that a Warchief will assign them to hold critical battlefield objectives, knowing the Pit Fighters’ pride would sooner see them die gloriously than relinquish anything to their enemies.
BRUTE ANCHORS

“We fight not with hate for those before us... but with love for those behind us!”

For those first few chaotic generations after the Abandonment, the newly freed Brutes found little else to be required than their raw physical power to thwart any who would seek to do them harm, their intimidating size and newfound confidence as a people keeping others at a safe distance. Repelling attacks from wild animals and men alike with only their sheer strength, the small, growing settlements of Brutes even became miniature safe havens scattered throughout the wastelands for a short time. That all changed, however, as time crawled on and saw the return to more devious and cruel means of harm in the hands of the roaming gangs across Samaria, and the Brutes were forced to adapt. Their unnatural bulk no longer enough to withstand the growing sophistication and deadliness of their enemies’ weapons, they quickly found a means of protecting themselves in battle perfectly suited to their unique methods of combat.

Devising the role of those they would call “Anchors,” select Brutes would wield massive shields on the battlefield to protect their companions until they could close ranks with the enemy. Not a job that just any Brute could handle, though, those selected were the largest and most intimidating Brutes to be found, usually even larger than their frightening and offensive counterparts, the Pushers. Anchors would become something not unlike a perpetual “big brother” for their squad mates, striving to protect the others at any costs to their own well-being, seeing each and every squad mate as their sole responsibility. Wielding the massive and unfathomably heavy shields with apparent ease, the Brute Anchors would act as a form of living armor for their aggressive squad mates as they issued commands from the front line to those safely behind them. Their massive forms weaving to and fro with a grace only truly incredible strength can grant, they would deflect incoming projectiles and guard their fellow warriors with a fervor still yet to be matched by any other warriors in Samaria.

Still utilized today, but in a more active combat role, the Brute Anchors’ shields now serve equal purpose as an incredible weapon, often covered in thick pieces of scrap metal and all manner of sharp odds and ends from leftover junk piles. Ramming into their foes hard enough to knock even the stoutest fighters onto their backs, the Anchors then lash into their downed adversaries from behind their shields with brutal scourges, crafted from heavy pieces of scrap attached to lengths of chain wielded with deadly accuracy, slicing and smashing their enemies to bits.

BRUTES

“Be like boulder. Up, over, or around... but never through.”

Were you to ask a common resident of Samaria today what they could tell you about the day of Abandonment, they would describe the type of legend only remembered for its horror, a time of nightmares manifested as reality, with their voice probably never reaching above a whisper as their eyes nervously shifted about, as though simply speaking of it too loudly could inspire such an event to occur again. Were you to ask one of the resident Brutes, however, you would witness a reaction quite the opposite, as their kind remembers that fateful day very differently; in their community, it is celebrated as the day fate awarded the Brutes with their freedom.

Once bred and sold as a self-sustaining workforce more easily replaced than machines but with all the same capabilities for heavy lifting and durability, Brutes were the laboratory creation of corporations striving to meet a better bottom line. The planet Attr, during the years of its interstellar sociability before the time of the Abandonment, was a world full of illicit (and unfathomably profitable) activities. Even years after the wider galaxy had ceased their production and use, Brutes still formed the backbone of the labor workforce on Attr. When finally the day of Abandonment came, the Brutes at last saw an end to their servitude, and their true beginnings as a free people.

Finding themselves shunned in the larger cities by the guilt stricken and prejudiced Forsaken in the years after the Abandonment, the Brutes found their particular skillsets and enhanced genetics to be perfectly suited for life in the wasteland. Though welcomed by the Outcasts for their ferocious skills in combat and their friendly natures, the Brutes ultimately still found themselves left alone in the times between fighting alongside the other denizens of the wastes. Sticking together in multiple small communities over the years, the largest of the groups have finally combined their efforts to build the town of Freeton, a place for their own people to live and thrive together, complete with their own laws.

Brute mercenaries can still be found elsewhere in the wastes, though, as their inherit toughness and profound strength are always in high demand and always worth the asking price. While capable of utilizing the crude and easily replaced weapons too heavy for a regular human to lift, most Brutes typically stomp into battle wielding massive blocks of stone or concrete to devastating effect, crushing anything – or anyone - not fast enough to move out of their way.
BRUTE PUSHER

“You call that a lashin’? I’ll show you a lashin!”

Though all of the varied residents of the wastelands – and especially those most commonly grouped together as “Outcasts” - have been forced to re-evaluate their very natures as people in order to survive the intense hardships of Samarian life, it is without a doubt the Brutes that have been forced to make the most dramatic compromises. They are a people with gentle souls, who value honesty and fairness, who truly care and watch out for each other in their communities… but their herculean statures are built for intense labor and unmitigated violence. Quite literally created in laboratories as a for-profit enterprise, the original Brutes were bred, enslaved, and sold as a hard-labor workforce until such practices finally became outlawed in the more civilized portions of the galaxy. Unfortunately for the kind-hearted Brutes, Attr continued to thrive as a backwater planet where profits were more important than the rights of its citizens, and their enslavement continued there until the Abandonment. Thriving as their own masters since those first days of freedom and only recently building a permanent home for themselves outside the towering walls of New Ashkelon, known as the fair and just city of Freeton, even several generations later the shadow of their past enslavement still rears its ugly head in Brute society.

Cleverly using the traits built into their genetic structures to make them better slaves to instead gain an edge in battle, the Brutes have developed a strategy in combat where one among their number in each battle group is designated as the Pusher. A violent symbol of their unfortunate heritage, the Pusher is armed with a weighted length of chain and tasked with whipping his fellow Brutes into a frenzy while shouting obscenities in their direction, inciting the rage burning deep inside all Brutes that would originally keep the hulking men and women working tirelessly to instead push the warriors beyond the limits of their normal capabilities in combat.

The Pusher has perhaps the most difficult role in all of Brute society, his job requiring the considerable mental fortitude necessary to ignore his natural senses of compassion and empathy out of his mind to complete his hateful task. Often those few selected to become Pushers will adopt a characterful persona of what the modern Brutes assume their original slave masters must have been like, distancing their true selves from their actions and showing an uncharacteristic pomposity, contempt, and aggression to spur their fellows to victory through pain and anguish.
BULLY

"Ya need an iron fist an' a velvet glove. ...mostly just th' fist, though."

Life for any capable and healthy (relatively speaking, of course) resident of the harsh, unforgiving wastelands of Samaria is a dangerous enterprise, but exponentially so for the seemingly death-seeking Scuts. Nature has a way of seeking those weakest within a herd for culling, and while the Scuts can be surprisingly resilient, if left untended death almost certainly manages to find them in short order. The few leaders among the Outcast with any foresight saw the necessity of keeping their population in check within their first few decades in the wastes, not only for the general strength of their communities, but also in seeking a solution to the dwindling numbers of young men and women surviving until adulthood to become fully capable warriors. It was then, for the betterment and longevity of their way of life, that the role of what would come to be known as the "Bully" found its place in Samarian life. In the absence of regular family units to manage the upbringing of the youths in Outcast society, it would be up to the Bully to wrangle a gang of Scuts into a productive unit, able to eventually grow into a tight-knit band of Wasteland Warriors.

Required to spend all hours with his adopted gang of Scuts, the Bully will often be the only true parental figure they will ever know. It is vital during this period that the Bully earn the respect of his Scuts, which in Outcast society typically involves a healthy dose of hectoring and cajoling around the fire pit, hence their now-common title. It is a surprisingly delicate art form, however, as cruel or abusive Bullies have an unfortunate habit of finding poisoned critters in their boots or succumbing to other similarly unfortunate - and often fatal - pranks.

Most importantly, though, the Bully must teach his Scuts how to handle the various elements of war, making them useful despite their diminutive size and physical weakness, yet still keeping them safe enough to survive and fight another day. He must relay to them the vital skills of using their scavenging abilities to improve their weapons and armor in the heat of combat, and more importantly instruct his Scuts in the ways of stealth infiltration, often even accompanying them on their scouting missions personally. For the protective Bully, venturing into the field with his Scuts is very common, with the best instruction for the youths to be through his own brutal example.
Throughout mankind’s sordid history, and especially in Samaria, it has proven necessary for each successful society or culture to have ways of managing the development of their youth population to ensure that the cycle continues, to foster and to educate them in ways that will help them be able to handle the responsibilities they will face as adults. Unfortunately in Samaria, beyond the walls of New Ashkelon in the outskirts of human civilization scattered among the wastelands and the junk heaps, the types of responsibilities adults tend to face mostly involve the pure necessities of survival and violence, leaving little time to raise children. In fact, the children of these harsh environments are usually forced to fend for themselves and consequently form makeshift gangs, banding together to survive the harsh lessons of Outcast life. The best these gangs of Scuts can hope for is the tutelage of a Bully, a construct of Outcast society designed to help the wild-born youths of today live long enough to become the Wasteland Warriors of tomorrow.

These gangs of Scuts can prove useful to a squad while away at war if they are utilized correctly, however, and the wisest Warchiefs have learned to keep a gang of Scuts close as hand for a plethora of reasons. Beyond the long-form social politics of raising and training these gangs together in the field to help form battlegroups bound together with simulated familial loyalty, and even beyond the children’s usefulness in maintaining day-to-day camp functions and chores, the scrappy Outcasts have actually found a way to employ the young Scuts during battle itself.

The Scuts’ relatively diminutive size and seemingly-endless reserves of youthful energy make them extremely effective scouts, capable of creating distractions behind enemy lines or alerting their companions of an incoming threat. Forced to rely upon only their own abilities when far afield, the youths quickly adapt to become capable scavengers as well, able to sift through junk heaps and wreckage to fashion useful equipment for themselves or for their gang. Favoring a unique type of roughshod boomerang as their primary weapons of choice, the Scuts hurl their weapons through the air to stun their enemies from a safe distance, softening them up for the rest of the gang to close the distance and deliver the killing blow. One Scut may not look like much, after all, but a gang of the hard knock youths is not a foe to be taken lightly!
“Power is a slave to the wise man... but the master of a fool. I have known few masters, and many more fools. Which will you be?”

– The Warden

Inheritors of a centuries-old trade, the Outcasts now collectively known as the Slavers of Chains Barrow have managed to grow and spread their influence across the wastelands, revamping their methods of business (and war) to secure their place in the modern commerce of Samaria. After the decimation of slavery on Samaria following the Abandonment, and the subsequent liberation of the Brutes, its current return to prominence can be traced to the founding of New Ashkelon itself. Requiring a sizeable labor force to rebuild the shattered Port City (as well as a myriad of other less-than-savory practices), the newly empowered Church of the Forsaken was unwilling to sully its christened populace and so utilized again the unfortunate habits of humanity to hire groups of Gang Bosses from those already among the Outcast for “contracted labor”, using any means necessary. The entrepreneurial Gang Bosses agreed with knowing enthusiasm, and with the backing of the Church set about the enslavement of thousands of Outcasts Scavengers and Salt Flat Nomads for their new deep-pocketed employers in short order. Though this relationship has become less obvious in recent years, and the wealth and power among various groups in the Outcast territories has seen new market growth, the Slavers still balance their books largely on the 'gelt provided by New Ashkelon.

In recent years, however, there has been significant change in how business is handled thanks to the unifying power of a man known simply as “the Warden” and the formation of Chains Barrow under his direction. Rising to power from the lowly beginnings of pit fighting and as a hired guard, the Warden was able to use the knowledge gleaned from the people he fought and worked for in order to form his own entourage, making sure never to owe anything to anyone else, and instead capitalizing on trades and favors whenever possible. Moving into the rundown, scattershot settlement called Slaver's Hollow just northeast of New Ashkelon, he used his business savvy to establish his own slave trade and secure his place at its head before growing his enterprise to employ all of the smaller gangs in the entire settlement. Renaming the town to Chains Barrow after establishing contracts with several powerful factions within New Ashkelon, the Warden held the power of a king practically overnight. Surrounding himself with valuable underlings by sharing his wealth and power in a pseudo-corporate structure of management, the Warden quite literally rules with an iron fist while simultaneously breaking the stereotype and delegating many of his responsibilities to trusted “employees”. Luckily they have proven capable of managing the structure on their own, as the Warden's best and brightest have had their hands full lately during his absence.

At the top of the proverbial heap are the Warden's adopted daughters, Aja & Devon, who have served as his generals, with his role as leader being filled by his second-in-command and personal sharpshooter, Finn Deadeye. All rescued – in one form or another – from desperate or savage lives among the wastelands, the Warden saw the potential in each of the young women and brought them into his home to raise them into the strong and capable warriors they are now. Finn took command shortly after the Warden's alleged death while recovering from nearly being killed at the hands of the Moonless Night herself, and has maintained respect of her command admirably. Sharp and succinct in her decision making, Finn's grasp of the necessities of leadership has proven as exacting as her aim. Aiding Finn in Shouldering the responsibilities are Aja & Devon, the pair maintaining the martial forces of Chains Barrow while still managing to search for their father's killer whenever possible. An inseparable duo since their first days in Chains Barrow, the women balance each other's personalities as though two halves of a single person, one incomplete without the other. Devon's calculating precision and tactical prowess serve to facilitate Aja's savage and nigh-unstoppable rage as they put every last slavers' trick their father taught them to good use.

Chains Barrow at it stands now is filled with thousands of people (though admittedly many aren't allowed much say in the status of their citizenship) thanks in no small part to the cruel genius of the Warden's lackey Bonner Spyte and his array of assistants and apprentices. A twisted, insane version of the common Fixer, Spyte was another taken in the status of their citizenship) thanks in no small part to the cruel genius of the Warden's lackey Bonner Spyte and his array of assistants and apprentices. A twisted, insane version of the common Fixer, Spyte was another taken

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to Spyte always having a slew of capable apprentices ready to take his place as the chief Fixer of Chains Barrow, in the likely event that an experiment not work as planned one day.

The Frenzied are not the only uniquely valuable asset to the marshaled forces of Chains Barrow, though, thanks again to the corporate structure the Warden applied to their trade. Each captive slave in Chains Barrow is managed and evaluated on his or her merits as individuals, with the Slavemasters and Gang Bosses spending large portions of their time finding the most efficient uses for each slave. The system’s structure thrives on recognizing those slaves who are capable of rising above their duties to become loyal slavers themselves; for those rarer few content to be enslaved, the key is finding the proper motivation to maintain their usefulness. The Unbound are just such an idea, for example, with drug-addicted slaves being loosed from their chains to infiltrate the enemy and complete their missions for wildly varying rewards should they succeed… but only death awaiting failure.

As you might imagine, the bulk of the combined forces of Chains Barrow are still the common Chain Gangers pushed forward with the crack of a whip, their newly promoted fellows among the Gang Bosses urging them into battle. Of course, Chains Barrow still has its share of free residents and traders ready to earn a quick gelt from the Coffersmen in battle the same as any other Outcast, with a seemingly endless supply of Wasteland Warriors, Fixers, and Scuts ready at a moment’s notice; the Slavers of Chains Barrow are an equal opportunity employer, and are always ready to hire capable fighters for the right price. Just be careful when negotiating your wages!
"He’s the best of us... but definitely the worst of us."

The Warden of Chains Barrow has been, for years, the most feared human being in all of the wastes of Samaria. A natural giant of a man, the Warden has never encountered an apparent equal in his life, neither in devilish cunning nor sheer brutality. Always the type of man with the mental fortitude and determination to clear any obstacles in his path, rather than simply finding ways around them or excuses to avoid them, the Warden instead chose to become the most powerful slaver on Samaria.

Raised in the fighting pits, early on the Warden put his mind to always making the best of his situation, utilizing whatever edge necessary in order to win and become more powerful. A natural master at reading the personalities of other people, he worked for years to learn how to use his talent to better control the people around him, whether through direct physical intimidation, mental domination, or a sly cunning most would assume such a brute of a man incapable of possessing. Utilizing those groups of people brought under his control, he not only managed to earn his freedom from the pits, but also to carefully spin a web of owed favors and debt for his services; when the time was right, the Warden collected on those debts and favors without hesitation. Once he had finally amassed enough followers in his gang for the founding of Chains Barrow, those who couldn’t pay back their debts became its first slaves, instead paying with their freedom.

When it came to maintaining Chains Barrow, the Warden proved to be a very hands-on master. Always wanting to be in direct control of slaving raids, he was no stranger to brutal conflict, using the opportunity to personally select any new slaves to serve his own schemes. In combat, the Warden was feared by friend and foe alike as a monster of a man, utilizing fully his combination of brute strength and skillful intellect. Armed with an atrocious chain lash capable of inspiring panic in any foe and his incredible wrist mounted multi-launcher, no enemy could stand against the Warden for long.

After the Warden’s apparent “death” at the hands of Hood, Chains Barrow has been forced to carry on under the control of Finn Deadeye, who has been managing things in a fashion she hopes would make the fallen Warden proud. There have been rumors, however, that Hood has been seen in the slavers’ territory, speaking closely with a huge man concealed completely by dark robes and a golden mask... the same man, it would seem - according to Finn’s intel, at least - that has recently been seen with the Holy Prevailer Council of New Ashkelon.
BONNER SPYTE

“A man’s face will tell everythin’ you need ta know…”

Serving dual roles as the primary Fixer of Chains Barrow and the Warden’s right hand man, Bonner Spyte was the type of man Bullies throughout the wastes used for inspiration when crafting late night horror stories for their bands of adventurous Scuts. Sporting the kind of face not even a mother could love, Spyte was rescued from execution by the Warden, knowing instinctively that the scarred Fixer was just the kind of despicable person able to serve at his side without question. Adopting the hateful man into his camp, the Warden was insistent upon making good on his investment, testing Spyte both mentally and physically to discover the newcomer’s true capabilities. To the Warden’s delight, Spyte proved capable of withstanding significant abuse, and his ingenious mind found unusual and cruel solutions for all of the problems thrown his way.

Taking Spyte under his wing proved to be a huge boon for the Warden; Spyte’s particular aptitude for working with chemicals quickly revolutionized the slaver industry, with Chains Barrow sitting comfortably at the heart of it. Capable of crafting neurotoxins that would allow control over not only the emotional states of humans, but also their susceptibility to pain, Spyte managed to wield a type of control over their imprisoned slaves unlike anyone else in the history of Samaria.

Unbelievable as it may be, however, Hood is very much real. Originating from the now-revealed Shadow Caste, it was Hood who sought out the Warden at some point in recent years, partaking in a mysterious meeting the details of which have never been revealed. Since that day, when the Warden would wish to make an example of someone in the most gruesome way possible or to rid himself of a problem simply too difficult for his slavers to handle, Hood handled it in short order and without question.

Few slavers have ever actually fought beside Hood in battle, though, and fewer still of those could explain what it was they actually saw the Dragyri do to their enemies. Wielding large hooked blades made of a bright crystal material seeming to literally buzz with a foul and sickening energy, the Dragyri axeman would vanish and reappear across the battlefield, horrifically ripping his opponents apart before they even realized he was among them. Some have even blubbered that he seemed to wield darkness itself as a weapon, dragging foes down with their own shadows before pulling them in for the slaughter.

Since the Warden’s untimely death, only a handful of sightings of Hood have been reported, leading many to believe that he actually was a very real weapon of the Warden’s. Others have postulated, though, that if the infamous Hood has indeed gone back to his people after the Warden’s death… why has he been returning at all?

HOOD, THE EXECUTIONER

“Have you ever seen ’im, slave? I didn’t think so!”

Many among the resident slavers within the boundaries of Chains Barrow question the existence of the infamous Hood, having convinced themselves - and each other, in hushed tones around the fires at night - that he must actually be a tale crafted by the Warden to help keep the slaves in line, inspiring pure fear of the hooded murderer coming to find them as they run. Among the slaves, the tales are similar, but in their version it’s the slavers themselves who are kept in line, never speaking out against the Warden or trying to keep too much wealth for themselves. The general populace only knows the Dragyri to be gigantic, hulking creatures made for violence, unmistakable in their stature, and under no circumstances peaceful with humans. The very notion that one would live among humans, always hidden away, is more than enough to keep imaginations in check, but the notion that such a creature would do those things at the bidding of a human, no matter how powerful, is just too much for most people within Chains Barrow to truly believe.
Finn Deadeye

“This? This is my rifle. There are many like it... but this one will kill you.”

In the merciless settlement of Chains Barrow, there are only two options for handling runaway slaves or dealing with traitorous members of the establishment: Capturing the unfortunate soul alive and hauling them into the pits by a loyal slaver, or the much less common – but comparably desirable – punishment of a swift death. In those rare cases that such an individual is deemed no longer worthy of any value in being kept as a slave, or the Warden is willing to write off the cost in order to set an example for any other slaves thinking about making a run for it, it becomes a job for the infamous Finn Deadeye.

Finn first found a home with the slavers of Chains Barrow when, around the age of 18, she managed to earn the Warden's respect by delivering several of her fellow Outcasts to him during a slaver raid, saving him from the potential loss or damage of acquiring them by the regular means, in exchange for a place among the slavers. Taken under the Warden's wing, he gifted Finn a long-bore rifle after she showed an aptitude for precision shooting, with which she quickly earned herself the surname “Deadeye” for her tendency to favor gruesome, but skillful headshots. Focusing her training solely to her strengths, Finn became the deadliest shot in the wastes, achieving killshots even the most boastful of Bounty Hunters would claim impossible, and earning her a job as the Warden's personal hitman. Serving as a powerful tool for the Warden to inspire fear in his subordinates and enemies alike, Finn's name became known as a death sentence, with anyone facing off against the slaver gangs of Chains Barrow living in constant fear of being struck down before ever even reaching the battle.

Things have changed since the Warden's death and the ensuing conflict with the Salt Flat Nomads, however, which saw Finn nearly meet her own demise at the ink-black hands of the assassin known as Moonless Night. Due to the severity of her injuries, Finn's recovery has been slow, but she has made sure to accompany her slavers on an outing as often as she can manage; the thrill of landing her shots against living targets has helped her to recover mentally, if not physically. Otherwise, Finn has been running the overall day-to-day operations of Chains Barrow in the Warden's sudden absence, which she has handled excellently despite the very large shoes she's needed to fill.

AjA And Devon

“Sisters? They must take after their mother...”

Before becoming the adopted daughter of The Warden himself, Aja had been a roiling force of raw violence and hate when the slavers found her and brought her back to Chains Barrow. As a small child, Aja had been captured, tortured, and enslaved by the Skarrd forces of the Heretic. Managing to escape those horrendous slave pits, perhaps in part due to the resilient Baniss blood in her veins, Aja roamed the wastes alone for years thereafter, little more than animal. Finally, during one of the Warden's recruitment raids on a small Outcast settlement, Aja wandered into the battle and began killing with wanton abandon, her fury like nothing the Warden had ever seen. Knowing the girl to be a child after his own heart, the Warden subdued her and brought her back to Chains Barrow himself, choosing to become her adoptive father and to hone her violent tendencies into something useful.

Always practical, the Warden knew within the first few days of her training that she would require a companion to help temper her furious outbursts. He began personally reviewing each new slave brought to Chains Barrow on a daily basis seeking a companion for Aja, but it was by a stroke of luck only a few weeks later that the Warden received word about a nearby camp of laborers under attack by a Skarrd hunting party. Seeking to swoop in and “recruit” any survivors strong enough to fight off the bloodthirsty Skarrd, upon arriving they found the survivors had barricaded themselves in a building and that a young girl, roughly the age of his Aja, was faring well by dropping the Skarrd vermin with her crossbow. Slaying the remaining Skarrd, the Warden rescued the girl, named Devon, and brought her back home to his Aja. The two girls bonded almost immediately, becoming inseparable.

Becoming a fearsome duo among the slavers of Chains Barrow, Aja and Devon would storm the battlefield together at every opportunity. The deadly combination of Devon's skill with her crossbow and Aja's unbridled fury quickly became the stuff of legend, with the two operating in tandem flawlessly, implementing the many slaver's tricks taught to them by their father's training. The two girls enjoyed testing themselves with those times of violence and danger immensely, proving themselves worthy of their father's adoration time and time again.

Since the moment the Warden of Chains Barrow was reported dead, however, the fearless sisters have become inconsolable in their rage and heartfelt distress. Aja's latent psychogenic abilities (thanks to her Baniss heritage) have finally surfaced, and Devon has become the only person capable of pulling her back from her rage. Worried for Aja, Devon never leaves her sister's side, holding on to the memories of the many lessons taught to them by their lost father.
SLAVEMASTER

“I ain’t never seen a Slavemaster I din’t respect... not that I had a choice, or anythin’, though.”

Even in the days long ago when Samaria was commonly known as the planet Attr and still a member of humanity’s galactic community, back when the megacorporations ruled the land in the place of the governments of old, slavery was a key component in the everyday function of industry. Near the top of the food chain, serving as a middle ruling class, there have always been men and women in charge of ensuring the industry runs in the fashion of a well-oiled machine. If anything holds true in the harsh outskirts of “civilization” on Samaria today, it’s that the old methods of a machine-like workforce, lubricated with the blood, sweat, and tears of the slaves that power it, shows no signs of breaking down. Generation after generation, the weak have always been pressed into service by the strong, with only the means and methods evolving throughout the years.

The Slavemasters, serving as the middle ruling class in Chains Barrow, could be most aptly described as one part military general, one part business manager, and one part prison guard. Managing the day to day tasks of their various Gang Bosses and their crews, it is up to the Slavemasters to not only handle the defense and well-being of those beneath his care, but to also maintain a good business sense for when to buy, when to sell, and when to lead gangs into the field to acquire new product. They often only leave their stations at camp to personally lead their slavers on raids for capturing new means of business, able to gauge while in the field whether or not the captives will be worth the supplies and effort necessary to condition for their own gangs, or if they should be scavenged off along with their belongings for whatever meager profit can be turned.

With the full resources of the slave camp at their disposal, Slavemasters commonly holster a pair of high quality pistols to deal with any potential threats from a safe distance. Those who have grown comfortable in their positions of power, however, are more often seen brandishing their vicious barbed whips, obviously enjoying the fear and pain they inspire with their work.
COFFERSMAN

“He who controls the ‘gelt controls the world. The ‘gelt must flow!”

The majority of Samaria’s commerce is still managed with the use of a direct bartering system of goods and services, or as owed favors for managing debt, but within many trade circles coin still proves to be necessary sometimes. Outside the walls of “civilization” and among the wastes, this primarily holds true for caravan route leaders, bounty hunters, but for slavers most of all. Because so many buyers and sellers are coming and going at a slaver’s camp, the only way for the Slavemasters to ensure they consistently get proper value for their wares is to lock in a system of pricing and put only a few people in charge of managing it. Businessmen at heart, despite their grisly trade, slaver outposts are never without a handful of loyal and shrewd accountants - the Coffersmen.

Coffersmen are not only in charge of keeping a schedule of values for what constitutes a slave’s worth, but they also protect and balance a ledger that explains their customers’ buying habits, preferences, and most importantly their overall history of transactions. Any slave camp of worth will keep a team of multiple Coffersmen working together to maintain the books, with each Coffersman placed in charge of a different aspect of the camp’s commerce. Especially powerful camps might have a Coffersman for each aspect of their responsibilities as a community, managing everything from food stores, to equipment maintenance, and even to lines of communication with other allied camps nearby.

Because of their extreme importance in the slaver society, the Coffersmen are unusually well guarded by their fellow slavers; it is still important for them to possess the means to protect themselves and their ledgers, though. Most Coffersmen prefer a scattergun, which typically requires no actual skill to fire, and is capable of discouraging just about anyone - or anything - from getting too close. Every Coffersman also carries a long, honed blade at their side most often drawn to cut the rope bonds on a newly sold slave, but kept sharp enough so as to never have a problem slicing into the guts of a would-be attacker. Luckily a good Coffersman rarely needs to resort to such means; it turns out the man carrying all the money tends to find friends rather easily.
**THE UNBOUND**

"Where else would I go, Boss? Ain't nothin' so freeing as killin' a man, anyways."

Comprising an elite caste from the most bloodthirsty of the slaves ready for battle, the Unbound are trained to operate as machines, to be cold and callous when others would be driven by their passions. Given a set of rules for their temporary release, the Unbound are unshackled, armed accordingly, and given a strict set of objectives they must complete to earn special rewards. Rewards are a simple matter for the wealthy slavers of Chain Barrow to provide, as most want things as easily acquired as particular drugs, or perhaps a “companion” slave, or even something as simple as a few nights’ sleep in a soft bed or a hearty meal prepared by the camp’s chef. Of course, as the slaves have learned through harsh lesson, there is always a catch; should they attempt to run or fail in their mission, then only death awaits them. The Unbound are permanently marked for identification to further discourage any attempts at escape, and those who agree to the terms know by example of their fellows before them that there will be no renegotiations of the deal should things go south. Whatever the motivation for service may be, those determined enough to become the Unbound will wade through muck and gore, killing anyone in their way without a second thought to achieve their mission.

Often, there is a common skillset among those who become the Unbound that makes them the most optimal killers to operate alone behind enemy lines. Chosen from the ranks of murderers and similarly assorted scoundrels, they are cold hearted, stealthy, and vicious. Equipped with long, close-fitted punch daggers, they use the diamond-angled blades to shear through armor and flesh with ease, while the stone-sharpened edges can slash flesh into bloody ruin. If used successfully, the Unbound can end a life in seconds without worry of their foe calling for aid or the alarming retort of a gun blast ringing out and calling others to the scene.

Because they are used almost exclusively as infiltrators and operate without any support whatsoever, those chosen for the Unbound must also be capable scavengers. Cut off from the supplies of the main force once behind enemy lines, they must be able to use their environment to their advantage, upgrading their weaponry and armor as needed to complete their objectives in whatever sadistic fashion they see fit and claim the reward waiting on them back at camp.

**THE FRENZIED**

"AaaAaaaAArrrrrgh!!!"

Even for the extremely skilled slavers in Chains Barrow, successfully capturing and enslaving any member of the Baniss tribes has been no easy task, and to enslave a Skarrd warrior without severe consequence was a substantial feat. Physically stronger and tougher than normal men of the Forsaken or Outcast ilk, the warriors of the Skarrd are also commonly afflicted with an insanity allowing them to push beyond a common man’s limits, making them that much more dangerous to handle. Many slavers have lost their lives trying to wrestle manacles onto the wrists of a Skarrd maniac, and attempting to subdue them through force almost always ends with the casualty of either the slave or the enslaved. To further complicate matters, when slavers would attempt some form of chemical sedation (as they would with other dangerous slaves), the methods proved useless against the Skarrd, whose bodies were already oversaturated with drugs and toxins enough to stop the heart of a normal man or woman; all but the most severe tranquilizers would have little-to-no effect, stimulants ran the risk of making them even more powerful, and common nerve agents would just intoxicate them in a fashion similar to alcohol.

All of that changed, however, thanks to the machinations of the twisted genius Bonner Spyte. The slavers of Chains Barrow now have the powerful “Leash” in their arsenal, an addictive two-part stimulant and sedative that can transform even the most vicious and beastly slave into a guided weapon. The Red makes the recipient open to suggestion, pushing up the slave’s adrenaline to dangerous levels, with the only noticeable side effect being a rabid and insatiable hunger. In contrast, the Blue is designed to bring the slave down into a stupor and creates a torpor-like euphoric state, making the slave sluggish and passive. Once addicted, a slave must consistently have the Leash administered in regular doses, up and down again and again, their entire internal chemistry under the control of the Slavemaster.

Strapped with blade-covered gauntlets doubling as manacles, these former Skarrd then become grouped into packs of the Frenzied for use on the battlefield. Kept in small, single cages stacked together like animals, they are released onto the battlefield immediately after receiving the Red, amplifying their bloodthirsty and cannibalistic nature. Should they survive the battle, the Frenzied will shamble back to their Slavemaster as their bodies burn out from their exertions while under the Red, begging to be taken back for their regular medicine.
GANG BOSS

“Save it, none ‘round to hear yer screamin’ but me. Do I look bothered to you?”

For nearly every slave within Chains Barrow, no matter their duties, no matter their state of health or their particular living conditions, not a day goes by without feeling the heart-wrenching agony of desire to for their own freedom. Many may never truly hope for it, their desires only baseless longings ringing loudly in the long moments between the sharp crack of a whip, but for the overworked, abused, and obviously expendable Chain Gangers, there is a path available... if they prove strong enough to take it.

The only way for one to make his way out of the slave pits is by proving that he holds no ties of allegiance with his fellow slaves, and would instead earnestly serve his masters of his own volition, and would make a capable slaver himself. Like any hierarchal structure, there must be an order to things, with each step up the ladder earning greater privilege alongside greater responsibility; the first rung on that ladder is to serve as a Gang Boss.

Once trusted enough by his own Gang Boss, and the decision is made to be tested as a potential Gang Boss himself, the Chain Ganger must successfully lead a group of his fellows in three outings of minimal importance, such as hunting wild game for his Gang Boss’s dinner or overturning a caravan like common thugs, and returning with the spoils. Only when these trials are complete and reviewed by the Slavemaster can the new Gang Boss become an employee of the Warden, his chains removed, and officially enter the ranks of the slavers.

The transition from servitude to authority is often a difficult one, with the new Gang Boss usually being assigned to manage his former fellow slaves, while his former Gang Boss moves up to manage a larger or more specialized gang. All Gang Bosses are trained to use a brutal studded baton to help reinforce their authority, and are issued a simple revolver with a limited number of rounds to help keep order.

Inspiring his Chain Gangers to acts of ferocious brutality in combat is the Gang Boss’s primary job when not simply keeping his charges in line. Turning the same tools used to keep his Chain Gangers in order upon the enemy, the brave Gang Boss and his retinue of slaves has been known to cause panic in even the deadliest of foes in the hopes of moving up the ladder once again.
CHAIN GANGERS

“Ain’t no rest for the weary ’round here, son. Stay in line and do as they say, lest we have ta drag yer body back with us when shift ends…”

Throughout the wastes the Outcasts call home, there are slaves of all shapes and sizes in the stocks and cells of any number of typical slaver camps, and in that regard the scrawling and intimidating Chains Barrow is no different. Laborers, concubines, grafting dolls and more are all common enough, of the decidedly human variety or sometimes otherwise, but based on the necessities of life for the Outcasts the fighters outsell all of the other specialties combined. Common practice sees all of the slaves who share the same tendency to violence become grouped together into chain gangs, allowing the slaves themselves to separate the weak from the strong before the slavers of Chains Barrow manage them into the backbone of their fighting forces.

Through the use of simple bribery, the slavers can easily create useful squads of makeshift soldiers from nearly any chain gang available. The Slavemasters of Chains Barrow have grown canny in their ability to understand what will drive their stock the hardest in battle and have nearly unlimited resources at their disposal; given the promise of drugs, favors, contraband, greater liberties, or even in rare and unusual cases a modicum of freedom, the squads are fitted with heavy chains to link them together, equipped with crude makeshift weapons scavenged from prior battles, and ushered out onto the field of battle with the crack of a whip.

Because they are in constant contact with their fellow Chain Gangers, the surprisingly capable slave soldiers learn quickly that in order to survive, they are required to act as one when the blood begins to flow. The successful Chain Gangers, when left on their own, almost universally adopt a strategy to surround weaker targets like pack animals, distracting them until an opening is found and a rusty hammer or jagged blade is driven home.

The more sly Slavemasters have learned, though, that pushing their groups of Chain Gangers to distract bigger and more deadly prey is often worth the sacrifice; distracting the sharp edges of an enemy’s blade with the body of a lowly slave is often enough exactly what the Slavemaster needs to secure the kill!
“It is for the good of the tribe – our tribe, all of us – that we now fight and honor those who fought before us.”

– Bendahrin Durshe, Bladelord of the Durshe Tribe

Roaming the arid, desolate plains in the northernmost lands of Samaria are a people so hardened, so profoundly resilient and steadfast in their way of life, that they have set themselves apart from all others who would call themselves Outcasts. Largely comprised of descendants from those original souls brave enough to find their own way outside of the sheltering walls of Port City – now known as New Ashkelon – in the first horrific years following the Abandonment, these tribal-minded hunters and gatherers have survived for centuries by adapting themselves to the land in which they reside. Unable to farm or stay in one place for an extended period of time thanks to the volatile atmospheric conditions and water-starved climate, these Outcasts have become known as the Salt Flat Nomads. Having divided themselves long ago into competing tribes based upon grouped familial lineages, until recently the other civilized humans of Samaria have had little contact with the “salties” with the exceptions of limited trading or swiftly-resolved conflicts. Recent times, however, have seen the rise of the Durshe tribe, which has finally united the wandering tribes under a single banner and given them new and vengeful purpose.

Ruling with strict countenance but few words, Bendahrin Durshe oversees the Salt Flat Nomads as their esteemed Bladelord. As a culture with little tolerance for those unable to carry their own weight, Bendahrin is no puppet master, instead leading the members of his tribe from the tip of the spear as one of their most capable warriors and master, instead leading the members of his tribe from the tip of the spear as one of their most capable warriors and master. Born as the younger sibling to the heir, surprisingly he never sought the mantle of Bladelord for himself, though fate has decided otherwise and placed him upon his capable shoulders. Seeing the folly in his people being divided amongst the tribal lines of their past, Bendahrin led his tribe to war again and again, finally absorbing all other tribes into his own in an effort to unify his people's strength.

Wise in ways beyond just those restricted to the battlefield, the Bladelord has been careful to surround himself with diehard allies and companions throughout his rise to power and his current reign. First, serving as the right hand to the Bladelord and as his personal bodyguard, the silent and indomitable Kane stands against all threats that would see harm come to the Durshe tribe, his methods as blunt and brutal as his physical appearance. Next, the tribe’s Chief Herder and the Bladelord’s own wife, Lynette, now the mother of the Durshe heir, manages the stables of beasts prepared for war with natural ease. Finally, the Bladelord’s personal assassin, known only to the tribe as the “Moonless Night”, is capable of infiltrating even the most powerfully guarded strongholds and encampments to swiftly remove adversaries Bendahrin sees worthy, knowing that to strike off an enemy's head will see the body wither and die.

The Salt Flat Nomads themselves are a harsh people of strict countenance for their traditions and lifestyle; while the history of their centuries spent in the salt flats is rife with bloodshed between their warring tribes, making internal strife not an uncommon occurrence in their newly unified tribe, they are steadfastly loyal first to their people, as a whole, against all outsiders. Bendahrin's wisdom of this trait has seen to their unification under the Durshe name, true, but it has also been a result of the common tenements of the Salt Flat Nomad way of life. Residing in an unforgiving land requiring extreme measures to extract the elements for life from its dry bones, the Salt Flat Nomads have built their understanding of war around expending as few resources as possible when resolving conflict.

Finding a true artistry and beauty to combat and the physical prowess required to excel at it, the Outcasts of the salt plains are unmatched in all of Samaria when averaging the martial skills of their people, with each man, woman, and child capable of being a considerable threat to an enemy force. The Tribal Warriors or Thornwinds of one group, and the Caravan Keepers who lead them into battle, are in actuality the same nomadic families other groups seek to protect; they are all members of the military structure, their basest level of society a fair match for the specially trained warriors of enemy nations.

When it comes to the elite warriors of the Salt Flat Nomads, however, you can expect a caste of men and women with a devotion to seeing a violent end to their enemies unlike any on the rest of the planet. Should a warrior prove skilled enough to become a member of the Hands of War, that individual will learn ways of turning the body itself into a weapon, becoming a master of lethal techniques devised to end battles before the enemy can muster a single blow. Marking themselves with permanent tattoos of their station for life from its dry bones, the Salt Flat Nomads

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Rounding out the forces of the Salt Flat Nomads in a manner only devised since Bendahrin’s rise to power – but now serving as perhaps their most defining characteristic – are their scores of powerful wild beasts led into battle by the fearless Herders. Having always relied heavily on the use of herd animals for sustenance in their nomadic society, it has proven immensely valuable to restructure some of their herds to comprise more dangerous animals for the express purpose of hunting their enemies. Humongous Dust Bulls sculpted of rock hard muscle, lightning-quick terror birds with razor beaks known as Vrock, and even a breed of sand crocodile called the Moloki are pushed forward under the limited control of their Herders into the lines of the enemy, thwarting all conventional understand of warfare to confound and decimate their foes.

War may be a way of life to some of the Outcasts of Samaria, but for the Salt Flat Nomads, the harsh necessities of their homelands and constant war have shaped every facet of their society to a razor-keen edge. Now unified, they are finally venturing beyond the salt flats of their homeland, bringing vengeance to their enemies.
BENDAHRIN DURSHE, BLADELORD OF THE DURSHE TRIBE

“We move forward by looking back. Only by knowing where we’ve been can we know where we’re headed.”

As one of the few tribes capable of the discipline necessary to be able to trace its lineage directly to the days of original twelve tribes of the salt planes, the Durshe tribe has always been comprised of fierce and formidable warriors, known for their bravery, loyalty, and commitment to honor. And while this knowledge has helped them maintain a powerful sense of unity, the other tribes have viewed them as somewhat conservative and tradition-bound, often to the point of difficulty in times of negotiation or war. The Bladelord of the Durshe has always been, since the first days, the ruler and protector of the people in his tribe, forced to make the hard decisions necessary for their survival in the desolate salt flats.

Bendarhrin Durshe was born as the second son of Jindahra Durshe, the tribe’s honored Bladelord at the time. Ever in the shadow of his older brother, Bendahrin developed his skills at becoming an expert hunter and tracker rather than focusing on wits and politics. Embracing the traditions of his tribe full tilt, Bendahrin came to see right and wrong as cleanly as seeing only black and white, with no shades of gray to confuse his feelings. He maintained his sense of honor at all times, never slipping, and his willingness to help anyone should they only ask made him ever the more popular with the people of his tribe. Indispensable in a fight, Bendahrin never backed down if he felt he was honorably in the right, even if it meant extreme danger to his own person. His speed, strength, and skill with a tulwar had become nearly unmatched, with only his closest friend and adopted brother, the powerful Kane, able to stand against him for any length of time in the sparring circle.

Now, as ever, Bendahrin is a quiet man of action, disliking sitting in tents and talking through problems in favor of finding the answer through hard work or bloodshed. After the dramatic incidents saw to the mantle of Bladelord being placed onto his capable shoulders, Durshe took to using the inherited Death Dervish of his station as though it were an extension of himself, leading his tribe to war successfully time and time again. Conquering and absorbing other tribes into his own, Bendahrin has strengthened his following more so than any Salt Flat Nomad before him. Ever austere to all but his closest council, in privacy Bendahrin is haunted with nightmares powerful enough to wake him screaming in madness, claiming that the Death Dervish speaks to him of blood he has yet to spill with its razor edge. After especially frightening episodes, the Bladelord has been known to storm from his tent and stalk the rows of his warriors’ encampment, ultimately singling out an unlucky warrior and finding lapses in honor enough to declare a challenge of combat. Slaying the unworthy opponent quickly and with ease, only several paces away from where the unfortunate soul had been sleeping mere moments before, Bendahrin stalks away with a troubled countenance, the corpse left wastefully in the dust.
KANE, HAND OF THE BLADELORD

"Ask your questions. He'll never answer."

Only three siblings survived the horrific massacre of the Shaive tribe at the hands of Father Mayhem: A capable boy on the cusp of manhood named Benoit, his beast-friendly baby sister Lynette, and his stout younger brother Kane. Left to die in the salt flats by the cruel hands of fate, it was in a rare act of mercy that the Bladelord himself, Jindahra Durshe, adopted the trio into the Durshe tribe when they wandered into camp nearly a week later. Benoit, however, already nearly a grown man, harbored a need for vengeance so great that he spoke little after their rescue, and slipped away into the night once his health recovered several weeks later, managing to avoid even the skilled Durshe sentries. Word reached the Durshe tribe in short order of the horrific actions committed by Benoit to a former rival tribe of the Shaive, forcing his younger brother Kane to account for the deed by taking a vow of vengeance against Benoit, appeasing his adopted tribe's honor; loyal to the last, though, Kane was not willing to fully denounce his brother, instead sacrificing his speech in a vow of silence until the deed was finished.

In the years that followed, as Lynette found her place amongst the beast pens and herd animals, Kane took another route. Kane became fast companions with the son of the Bladelord, Bendahrin, and the two found inspiration and rivalry in each other during their martial training, pushing one another to new heights. Always an able hunter, he quickly learned the many ways to kill a man, and spent the years thereafter crafting those skills into an art form all his own, becoming a frequent volunteer in the Durshe tribe's many raiding sorties to further hone his abilities. Kane's skill with the unusual weapon called a kestrel grew along with his mastery of the obscure and esoteric martial arts necessary to wield it, the boy filling all his hours of silence with physical exertion. A Shaive form of combat now lost on Samaria to all except Kane, the kestrel is a complicated design, combining a series of blades set in a fan pattern with a heavy staff. Heavy enough that only the strongest warriors can even so much as lift it, Kane wields it deftly, his favored tactic to decapitate an unlucky foe with a single strike.

Since Bendahrin's rise to the title of Bladelord, Kane has maintained as his most trusted warrior and closest friend. A silent executioner, Kane has become the Hand of the Bladelord, tasked with handling Bendahrin's most sensitive missions and serving as perhaps the most capable bodyguard in all of Samaria. Tensions have been high, however, since Benoit (now calling himself "Blades") has returned to the tribe. Sworn by the Bladelord to stay his vow of vengeance made so many years before, Kane still stands mute, his furious gaze often upon his newly returned sibling.
"Sometimes, you really can find your way back home again."

The infamous Blades, one of the most reputable Bounty Hunters throughout all of Samaria, has known a harsh and tortured life. A the last surviving warrior of the Shaive clan, and easily the most notorious salt nomad alive, he only recently has given up his life of solitude and reunited with his brother and sister, finally affirming his oaths to the powerful Durshe tribe.

As children, during the final days of the politically unpopular Shaive tribe, Benoit (as he was known then) and his siblings were orphaned after a blood feud between the Shaive and the Ashabe escalated, forcing the Shaive to take their chances and flee into dangerous Skarrd territory, knowing that no fellow tribes would come to their aid against the Ashabe. Skarrd raids became a constant threat, the crazed lunatics attacking almost every night despite their own heavy losses. Finally, in a single night’s span, Father Mayhem and his cultists arrived in force and exterminated the Shaive tribe, slaughtering every last man, woman, and child.

Or so they believed, anyway. Three now-legendary siblings escaped, and the nomads of the Durshe tribe found the mercy to take the youngsters in as their own. For the younger two, a sturdy boy named Kane and his sister Lynette, the Durshe tribe quickly became home. The same would not be true for the oldest sibling, however, as Benoit was already a trained Shaive warrior in his own right and on the cusp of leaving his final days of boyhood behind him. Benoit harbored the burden of their extreme loss alone, bottling his rage within himself, and only stayed long enough to recover from the wounds he had received leading his siblings away from the deadly cultists. Revenge strong in his heart, Benoit secreted away into the night, seeming to disappear from civilization altogether for a span of months.

The youth reappeared soon enough, though, clad in ceremonial Shaive garb, at the entrance to the Ashabe’s camp. In a heated rush, Benoit slew the Ashabe chief with his Shaive blades before disappearing back into the salt flats, and single-handedly set the third and final Clan War in motion between the honor-bound Durshe tribe and the shamed Ashabe.

Outlawed by the adoptive tribe of his siblings, Benoit left the salt flats, and began to make a new name for himself taking contracts from various gangs of Outcasts and even some from among the Forsaken. The final master of the Shaive fighting arts, Blades’ unique style was without equal in the southern societies, his “Blade Dance” becoming a common fireside topic of debate between cocky wastelanders and holy believers alike.

After recent events have seen to Blades being pardoned and welcomed back amongst the Durshe tribe, he still secrets away for the occasional contract to keep his reputation intact. He has matured, though, and finally finds comfort and happiness in being with his people, where his Shaive fighting arts have found a welcome home.
Lynette, Master Herder

“I understand my animals better than people, sometimes. Actually, make that most of the time…”

Lynette Stanger has always had a unique kinship with animals, typically more so even than with her fellow man. As a child of the Shaive tribe, her friends and family could always find her at the beast pens, carrying on lively (if one-sided) conversations with the various creatures. Like too many Samarians, however, her relatively stable upbringing would not last. The tribes of the Salt Flat Nomads are no strangers to peril and hardship because of the lifestyle they’ve made for themselves, but even their relative isolation has not made them immune to catastrophe at the hands of the wicked; and so it was that young Lynette and her two older brothers found themselves literally orphaned overnight at the hands of the monstrous Father Mayhem and his blood-crazed cultists. As the only surviving members of the Shaive tribe after that fateful night, the girl and her brothers Kane and Benoit were lucky enough to find the mercy of the Durshe tribe, which adopted the unfortunate youngsters as their own.

Time heals all wounds, as they say, and life does indeed go on. As luck would have it, the chief Herder of the Durshe tribe was a childless widow, devoted solely to the beasts in her care, and upon recognizing the traumatized girl’s immediate kinship with the animals in camp, volunteered to take the young Lynette as her own. The widow was harsh and exacting in her routine, knowing almost nothing of the emotional needs of a child and only how to care for the needs of her beasts, so she made no delay in teaching Lynette the unique ways of the Durshe Herders. Even in those years, the Durshe tribe was much larger than the Shaive had ever been, with a huge herd of tauran and many beasts uncommon to smaller tribes in general, such as the vicious Vrock. Lynette proved an apt student, quickly learning how to herd the bulls and manage the terror birds, even aiding in the development of a process for taming the first of the tribe’s Moloki. In her final months before assuming the mantle of the tribe’s Chief Herder, she even fostered a pair of the notoriously wild and “untamable” dust jackals, managing to assume the role of pack leader to the savage pups she had named Ideo and Vox. It proved a wise decision, as fiercer allies do not exist on the face of Attr; Ideo and Vox have been at Lynette’s side ever since, protecting their adopted mother with their very lives.

In the years since, Lynette has tamed even the heart of the young Bladelord Bendarin Durshe himself and given birth to his sole heir, the infant Raanigahn Durshe. Ideo and Vox have matured, as well, now providing a shining example to Lynette’s first newly-bred litter of dust jackal pups… and young Raanigahn, too, of course.

Nomad Herders

“The beasts of the salt flats have been trying to kill us for centuries… now we are just giving them a proper target.”

The salt flats, as one of the more unique ecosystems of Samaria, are inhabited by very few living creatures, and its wild beasts can be easily categorized by the Herders as only two overarching types. The first type of creatures - which are oddly more difficult to manage on average than the others - are the herbivores, or plant-eaters, tough enough to survive eating the rough and nutrient-poor native flora. The short list of herbivores worthy enough of a Herder’s time to cultivate include large swooping birds with razor-sharp feathers, rodents with a natural defense mechanism of generating a blinding neurotoxin it can then spit into a predator’s eyes, and foul-smelling worms who secrete acid through their pores, enabling them to burrow through solid rock. The second type of animal, then, of course, are the more varied predators that prey upon anything they can; from gigantic sand spiders to vrock, to molokoi, etc., the food chain only gets bigger and nastier with each step.

Among the tribes of the salt nomads, Herders are some of the most valuable members of their community, holding an elevated status in the hierarchy within each tribe. Viewed within any tribe as an invaluable resource, the Herders, along with their family members, helpers, and apprentices, are excused from many of the traditional military duties expected from each member of a tribe. Setting aside the necessities of the battlefield in favor of tending livestock is not glamorous, but a Herder’s job is just as essential to her fellows’ well-being as any combatant; warriors are easier to replace than a trained Herder, and if the herds ceased to be, the tribes themselves would soon follow. Make no mistake, however, in assuming the Herders are anything less than dangerous combatants in their own right. Like all Salt Nomads, Herders are able warriors who have spent countless hours throughout their lives practicing for bloody conflict, and are more than willing to defend their beasts to the death. They have learned from experience, though, that often the best way to protect their charges is to simply let them defend themselves.

Before the rise of Bladelord Durshe, Herders and their beasts had never been used to wage war, and were always kept at a safe distance from the battlefield. Now, the Herders have become another powerful and unpredictable weapon in the Salt Nomads’ arsenal, leading their magnificent beasts to the heart of the fray and directing them to unleash their primal fury upon whatever unlucky foe is in their path.
Dust Bull

"If you lose control... just make sure you run faster than the other guy!"

The wild taurans found roaming the salt flats in small herds were the first beasts tamed by the Herders of the Salt Flat Nomads as they learned to live as an active piece within the harsh ecosystem. Placid and easily tamed, the bovine herd-animals were a hybrid of ancient terran cows, buffalo, and several alien livestock species, originally brought to Samaria as ideal cargo for start-up off-world colonies. Extraordinarily resilient beasts, they possess tough hides capable of turning the teeth and claws of many predators found in their environment, which has proved doubly valuable for the thrifty, conservative Nomads when sundering the beasts down for their component parts. The beasts do not wander, and their rapid breeding cycles make them a dependable food source, as well – provided the herd is properly managed.

While the tauran cows are docile and easily managed creatures, the bulls are a different story. Standing over ten feet tall, they are utilized in limited numbers to protect the herd. Bones as thick as steel rods, dense musculature, and off-the-chart testosterone levels make them well-suited to just such a task, fearless in the face of even the most horrifying beasts native to Samaria. A Dust Bull will not hesitate to kill to protect his harem, with most potential predators ending up gored by its massive horns or trampled under rock-hard hooves.

Seeing how protective the Dust Bulls were of their herds – and, surprisingly, the tribe members that fed and cared for them as well – the Herders began harnessing their aggressive natures for war and the advantage they could bring to the tribe over their enemies on the battlefield. With the aid of urine trails, hormone pastes, and limited physical goading the tribes with the bravest Herders have brought Dust Bulls into battle with them to great success. Once enraged, Dust Bulls will keep blindly fighting until either they are dead or all enemies in their path have fallen, leaving the beast without any targets for its rage. The Herders must be extremely careful, though; an enraged Dust Bull’s hormone-fueled rage can render it incapable of telling friend from foe!

Almost all others among the Outcasts of Samaria have shied away from keeping taurans and the bulls because of the extreme hazards of doing so, except for the hardy Brutes of Freeton. Because of the honor found in their extreme honesty, the Salt Flat Nomads have found strong allies in the Brutes, who they have begun to help train how to maintain herds of the oddly companionable Dust Bulls for themselves.

Vrock

"Never mistake them as simple birds; their origins as a species belies something far more deadly."

The most numerous of the profoundly dangerous wildlife of the salt flats is the dominant, predatory avian species commonly referred to as the Vrock. Reptilian in appearance, and having lost their ability of flight long ago in their evolutionary path, the bipedal Vrock are perhaps the most commonly sighted native creatures north of New Ashkelon. Roaming the landscape together in close-knit mobs, they are easily the most successful wasteland scavengers in Samaria, preying upon whatever weak or dying creature they can overpower with minimal risk - even other Vrock from competing mobs! Over the course of their history in the salt flats, the Salt Flat Nomads have come to respect and admire these avian predators, even learning to adapt some of the Vrocks’ hunting techniques into their own methodology.

Covered with drab, oily feathers, a typical Vrock stands two meters tall from the crown of its skull to the bottoms of its scaly feet. A broad, powerful neck supports its raptor-like head, where a tight mane of colorful feathers lies dormant until the beast is running at full clip across the flats, its body aligned almost perfectly parallel to the ground. Its sturdy legs, as strong as corded steel, can propel the Vrock to incredible bursts of speed, but are still capable of allowing the bird to gallop for miles without even the smallest sign of exhaustion.

Discovering quickly that taming fully grown wild Vrock was impossible, the canny Herders devised a way to steal clutches of leathery eggs from their nests and began raising the beasts in captivity. This was no easy task, as even infant Vrock are powerfully savage, and hatch fully capable of defending themselves. The Herders persevered, however, and eventually found the methods of bringing the Vrock to heel. Never affectionate, the Vrock can be tamed but must be closely monitored at all times, and never allowed to intermingle with any Vrock from other hatchling groups. Over the course of their history in the salt flats, the Salt Flat Nomads have come to respect and admire these avian predators, even learning to adapt some of the Vrocks’ hunting techniques into their own methodology.

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**MOLOKI**

“That thing came up out of the ground, grabbed Marko, and shook him like a rag doll! A rag doll filled with blood and meat instead of stuff... but you get my point.”

– Cesspool, Bounty Hunter

The salt flats are home to a number of fearsome beasts, but the undisputed alpha-predator of the wastes is known by the tribes of Salt Flat Nomads as the Moloki, a breed of humongous sand crocodiles. Appearing in nearly all of the tribes’ most treasured sculptures and engravings passed from one generation to the next, this massive beast is longer than three or four men put together head-to-toe. Native creatures of Samaria, the Moloki were discovered stalking the flats when the first colonists settled the wastes, and have continued to thrive despite humanity’s presence.

Ravenous predators with a marked desire for human flesh, the sand crocodiles are nearly impossible to track as they bury themselves deep within the sands beneath the flats, lying in wait for their prey. Grand stories told between children claim the Moloki swim beneath the salty crust of the wastes, traveling the sands as easily as fish in water, maintaining the natural fear of the powerful creatures as the children learn to navigate the flats for themselves. The children’s frightening tales are only partially untrue, however; the salt dragons’ massive forepaws make them great diggers, allowing them to burrow down through the sandy substrate a few feet below the surface, where they gain access to the vast interconnected network of tunnels riddled beneath the flats.

Because of the new mandate to bring Herders to war with the tribes, the Salt Nomads have recently learned to utilize the frightening Moloki as a powerful weapon against their foes. Through dangerous experimentation, it was discovered by an insane-but-brave assistant to Chief Herder Lynette Dursh that the Moloki have a rabid desire to consume the disgusting sweatfly maggots found in the flats, and that with even the slightest whiff of their scent the Moloki will pursue that taste before all other potential meals in their path. The maggots act as an aphrodisiac of sorts to the brain chemistry of the Moloki, causing the great beasts to frolic and roll about the dunes before falling into a deep sleep enough to allow the Herders to physically handle them.

The Herders have since begun feeding a steady diet of maggot-infested meat to their captured Moloki at infancy, raising the great beasts to be somewhat trainable. Each tribe may only maintain a single fighting pair, however, of one male and one female. Any more than that and the beasts become uncontrollable, their instincts taking over any amount of training to devastating consequences.
OATHPOURER

“Our ways are the old ways. The ways of blood and water, both precious, and sadly too often lost.”

– Oathpourer Zahriq

The Salt Nomads have become the most careful of survivors, able to thrive in their harsh environment by utilizing every resource available to them and wasting nothing. Most desperate of all, however, is the need to wring every precious droplet of water possible from any and every source; the fleeting rains, wells dug for the limited fluids buried far within the cracked earth, their own urine, rendered fat and blood from slain herd animals and men alike, literally any source they can find, all harvested for the precious water stores of the tribe. Through generations of tradition, careful maintenance, and practice, these water stores have come to represent the very prosperity of the owning tribe. Low water stores mean the tribe is being wasteful and acting without honor for their own well-being; when stores swell, so too do a tribe’s worth and standing amongst the communities of the salt flats.

Oathpourers are a select few chosen members of the tribe charged with watching over the water stores, tasked with the solemn duty of managing all the debts, wagers, and challenges for the shares of water owned by each Tribal Warrior. The Salt Nomads – who rarely stay in a single location for longer than a season or two – require these responsible individuals to keep tabs on the tribe’s most precious resource. Each Oathpourer holds a unique place of power and honor within the tribe, their station having evolved into their being the keepers of all laws and traditions, so that they now serve as the ultimate guardians of each Tribal Warrior’s worth and value within the tribe.

Like any of their fellow Salt Flat Nomads, however, every member of the tribe must fight when called, and the Oathpourers are no exception. Setting aside the typical bone-bladed tulwar of the Tribal Warriors, they are usually seen wielding staffs made of bone and etched bronze, and burdened with pots and tuns marked with the current debts and oaths wagered while on the battlefield. This cudgel serves as a quick reminder of the stakes at hand to any member of the tribe who happen to glance its way... as well as a bone-breaking weapon to any foes unlucky enough to find themselves in its path, of course.
MOONLESS NIGHT, THE UNSEEN BLADE

"Her blades give to the world what honor demands – blood of those who would stand in the way of destiny."

– Bendahrin Durshe, Bladelord of the Durshe Tribe

Since the earliest days of the Durshe tribe, each Bladelord has hand-selected a secret avenger of honor, a single crafty and cunning Hand of War chosen to serve outside of the system of rank, devoted solely to the Bladelord’s assigned missions. Those chosen were required to surrender their identity completely, even as a Hand of War, to be replaced with the title of Moonless Night and become the tribe’s singular blade of vengeance. They would bathe their entire bodies in the same tarry black-and-purple dyes used to brand the Hands of War, willingly – and permanently – marking themselves with the indelible stain from head-to-toe. There was to be no turning back from such a decision, the sacred pledge taken to see that no one who would bring dishonor to the tribe could ever truly be safe from vengeance.

Like her name implies, the Moonless Night is the personification of darkness, moving across the salt flats as swiftly as the winds of death. Clad only in stained leather and mirrored goggles, and wielding unfathomably sharp twin blades, she moves like a nocturnal predator through the night to hunt the prey assigned to her by the Bladelord’s sure hand. Granted a near invisibility while in the shadows because of the dyeing process, she typically avoids the daylight hours unless absolutely necessary, existing only in the darkness of the night. The members of the Durshe tribe know the Moonless Night exists, but until recently it was the rare soul who had seen her with their own eyes and lived to tell the tale.

The current incarnation of the Moonless Night has performed admirably, required to contest with forces the likes of which none of her predecessors ever encountered. The Hand of War once named Relyssa has managed to seemingly appear from nowhere and make short, bloody work of any target standing in the way of her tribe’s goals. Dedicated beyond what could typically be described as ‘fanaticism’ in her continued training to combat the unknown forces of the frightening Shadow Caste, she has begun developing new combat techniques for facing off against her much larger foes. She has even continued to re-apply the toxic dye of her namesake to her skin in secret, absorbing the venomous substance in such amounts as to affect her once vivacious personality. Now, more detached and determined than ever before, the Moonless Night is seen as the spectre of death, floating through the camps like a traveling shadow while mumbling to herself. In fact, Lynette, whom the Moonless Night has been charged to protect, has noticed a particular interest in the Bladelord’s titular sword...

HANDS OF WAR

"Of course it’s permanent!"

Forced to begin fighting for survival from their very first breaths on the hellish salt flats of Samaria, all Salt Flat Nomads are consequently trained during their upbringing of the strength in unity, that to always put the defense and well-being of their tribe first will bring them success where others fail. Like with any skill, there are always those special few who exceed all expectations, transforming the necessary tasks from the ordinary and into an art form. Training their martial prowess is an important part of any Salt Nomad’s life, but those rare few admitted into the Hands of War take such dedication to a higher level than potentially any other humans on the face of Attr. Candidates must first show their worth in a series of grueling challenges, wherein they must prove their endurance and strength are at a level high enough to even begin the specialized training. Among those limited few that prove able in body, still yet only those most able in mind, with the strongest will and deepest wells of determination, will be chosen.

Those chosen few are left alone to consider their choice and recover their bodies for a single night, knowing that to follow the path of the Hand is to forsake all other options for their futures; once marked, a Hand of War may never turn back. The following morning, as light first cracks the sky and crosses the flats sending the living creatures into their cool hiding places, those who have found the courage to continue are escorted to a secret ceremony, its whereabouts unknown to the rest of the tribe, attended by all other Hands available. One by one, the inductees plunge their arms up to the elbows into a boiling stew of ink, salts, mild toxins, and their own precious blood, pledging their lives to the tribe and becoming forever marked as Hands of War.

In battle, the Hands forego the use of the longer blades of the Tribal Warriors in favor paired knives, following in the footsteps of the founder of their elite group. The knives, becoming an extension of a Hand’s martial abilities, are capable of slicing flesh to the bone and puncturing armor with a plunging stab, are wielded with such mastery few can ever hope to keep up with the Hands’ fluid movements. Each warrior learns hundreds of secret fighting maneuvers, capable of changing fighting style and form from one movement to the next in battle, adapting their stance to any foe. Serving as the most elite forces of the tribal Salt Flat Nomads, the Hands of War have seen little rest in these most recent troubled times.
CARAVAN KEEPER

“Seek discipline, and find your liberty.”

Similar to their brethren throughout the wastes, Salt Nomads are fighting for their very survival from the moment of birth. Violence and war, against people and the environment alike, are constants in the daily struggle of living on the salt flats, resulting in the traditional divide between military and civilian populaces no longer existing within their society. If a nomad can work a trap, pull the lever of a crossbow, or even simply heft a sword, that member of the tribe is expected to fight with every ounce of his or her being, honoring their fellow warriors in the shared stresses of the life they lead.

Because of this meshing hierarchy of civilian and military lifestyles, the ranking systems within the tribes of the salt flats combine typical job tasks with militaristic responsibilities. The Durshe tribe, specifically, has grown larger than any other tribe before it since the Outcasts first roamed the wastes of Samaria, forcing the Bladelord to give his Caravan Keepers additional duties to help keep order during their assimilation of new tribes. Serving as his officers in the field, these Caravan Keepers now take a greater role in enforcing the tribe’s laws with the aid of the revered Oathpurers, doling out punishments to wayward members with the full authority of the Bladelord himself. They are his lieutenants, his honor shared with their own, tasked with ensuring that every Salt Nomad is properly armed and equipped for the next inevitable battle to come. Sharpening daggers and bone tulwar swords, lashing armor to their brothers and sisters, and telling the Herders when to goad the beasts into their pre-battle frenzy, they must serve as the overseers who marshal the tribe to war.

Among the tribes, the Caravan Keepers are selected from the most experienced Tribal Warriors the Salt Nomads can muster. Using the same gut-strung crossbows as their brethren, they are often the best shots in the entire camp, and become even more dangerous when the battle closes into the inescapable press of dust-swirling melee. A Caravan Keeper must work tirelessly to maintain his or her training at a higher level, always striving to lead by example, displaying a prowess as beautiful as it is deadly.

TRIBAL WARRIORS

“Take up your blades, my Tribal Warriors, and drink deeply of the waters of courage, and our honor will swell like the tide.”

– Bendahrin Durshe, Bladelord of the Durshe Tribe

The Salt Flat Nomads prosper in managing their society so that honor rules all aspects of their day-to-day lives, coinciding with their essential human need to simply survive in the extremely dangerous environment they choose to call home. And while there is honor in all necessary tasks for maintaining the well-being of the tribe, whether that’s managing the herd animals, repairing equipment, or simply digging the tribe’s waste troughs, honor is at its most valuable on the fields of battle. All Salt Flat Nomads of any tribe must be raised to fight for their lives and become warriors - a vital skillset as essential to a tribe’s survival as any other. The tribes of the salt flats have many enemies that regularly encroach upon their territories; there are roaming bands of bloodthirsty and merciless Skarrd hunting for food and trophies, their own despicable cousins the Outcast Slavers making their way in the world at the expense of innocent, the holy crusaders of the Prevailers and their bands of fanatical warriors, and even rival tribes among themselves or the wild beasts of the salt flats. When a Caravan Keeper blows his tauran horn with the call to war, all members of a tribe must be prepared to answer.

Adapted to the harsh environment of the boiling salt flats, these Tribal Warriors wrap themselves in dried leathers reinforced with plates of salt-hardened cartilage, and wear goggles fashioned from the crystalline red glass native to their region to protect their eyes from the stinging winds and harsh sunlight. Air filters and water reservoirs are hidden in their cowls, allowing them to survive in the wastes for days longer than the average invader during prolonged conflicts.

Equipped with crossbows engineered primarily for ease-of-maintenance in their harsh environment, the fang-tipped bolts they launch can plunge into foes from a considerable distance, designed to inflict significant bodily harm with as little bleeding as possible. In melee combat, the Tribal Warriors are masters of the traditional tulwar, a lightweight, razor sharp weapon crafted from the long leg bones of the Vrock. These tulwars are wielded like a surgeon’s scalpel, slicing and stabbing with incredible precision to avoid larger arteries and veins in favor of nerve clusters and vital organs, allowing the Tribal Warriors to kill their foes with as little waste as possible. All resources must be harvested to survive in the salt flats... even those of their dishonorable enemies.
“You know what really makes me unhappy? Picking glass out of my face. I’d rather take a bullet, I tell you!”

– John Carter, Bounty Hunter

Thornwinds are comprised of groups of those Tribal Warriors within each tribe who have chosen to specialize in setting aside their crossbows for a closer-ranged, but painfully effective blowgun crafted from the hollowed leg bone of the mighty Dust Bull. With a simple blast of air they are able to hurl six-inch long slivers of red glass with deadly accuracy at a medium distance to their target, slicing through cloth and light armor to puncture vital organs and cause intensely painful and debilitating wounds to their foes. The red glass itself is strong, relatively speaking, but will shatter if it hits metallic armor or something similar like the hard chitin of Brood creatures, making a Thornwind’s aim under pressure a crucial skill.

The average Thornwind claims they can put a single spike of glass directly into the eye socket of a raging Vrock charging across the heat-rippled shale, showcasing the discipline necessary when forced to maintain a sense of calm and control their breathing to take the shot before certain death reaches them.

Their weapons silent, Thornwinds are at their best when infiltrating behind enemy lines and eliminating targets at their discretion. However, while their pinpoint accuracy is what makes the simple blowgun they wield deadly, when discovered and forced to face multiple foes at once they must consider another option. Lone Thornwinds can deal with one threat, and usually even two with the aid of the trusted tulwar strapped to their hips – but when rushed by too many foes there is simply not enough time to handle all of the threats in their usual manner. In such cases a Thornwind must use the infamous splinterstorm technique.

Grabbing fistfuls of glass from their ammunition pouches, the Thornwinds crush them into fragments and pack them tightly into the end of the blowgun. Using all of their strength, they send a powerful blast of air through the tube and shower their enemies in a cloud of tiny razor sharp particles. The shards are too small to cut deep, but are so numerous and invasive that all of the targets’ sensitive areas will be shredded by hundreds of miniature cuts as the shards work their way into the victims. Eyes are turned to pulp, exposed skin is flayed, and anyone taking a breath when the cloud hits will die choking on their own blood. Even the mindless Skarrd savages quickly learn to be wary when rushing a Thornwind on the battlefield after witnessing the horrors suffered by their fellows by the splinterstorm technique.
BERSERKER

“Wear your scars proudly, and with honor.”

Because of their extreme living conditions, the Salt Nomads must never let anything in the salt plains go to waste. Lacking the prodigious amounts of workable scrap and remnants of civilization left behind in the realms of their fellow Outcasts, they are forced to find a valuable use for all parts of even the most dangerous beasts roaming the salt flats they call home. Spiny rock sloths, for example, were a beast found to be too stubborn to train for even the most rudimentary tasks by the various tribes’ Herders. Instead, they became one of the animals hunted for harvest, their meat salted for travel, their bones dried for weaponry, and their organs pulped for stew. The thick, spiked carapace was cleaned and tanned for use as armor, but the Tribal Warriors soon discovered that it was permeated with pungent pheromones so powerful that no method could be found to remove them, and their powerful odor would cause the wearers to fall into a fugue-like state. The warriors wearing the armor experienced vivid hallucinations and began foaming at the mouth, lashing out at anyone around them. Anything that moved became a threat in their mind that needed to be torn limb from limb. Incapable of assigning this portion of the beast as a waste, the Nomads made even these unique attributes of the material work in their favor, as they have learned to do with all things. Thus, the new battlefield role of the Berserker had been born amongst the tribes of the salt flats.

Within virtually no time at all, the Berserker became a source of extreme danger to be recognized and feared by the Salt Nomads’ enemies on the field of battle. Clad only in the spiny, stinking rock sloth carapace and sporting spiked claws lashed onto their forearms, the man-made-monsters could be spotted from a considerable distance, striking fear and doubt into the hearts of their foes.

Rushing into battle head first and diving fearlessly into crowds of enemies, the Berserker brings the whole of his blade-covered body to bear to inflict horrible gashes upon anyone foolish enough to come within reach. His claws tear huge furrows into even the strongest armors and the thickest hides, and his spiky carapace punctures the unprotected flesh of his enemies while still offering his vitals a moderate form of protection.

Living weapons, Berserkers who survive their experience are celebrated with honor; their faces are marked with tribal scars and inked markings to celebrate and tell the tales of their psychedelic journeys, and they wear their tattoos proudly.
“I pledge to bring honor back to my tribe, at any cost. Even my own life.”

Though resembling a harsh, even sometimes ragtag-looking motley band of whipcord-thin warriors at a glance, the Salt Flat Nomads live in a tightly honor bound society, not unlike some of the Dragyri residents of Samaria. And, like any societal group tied together through the power of each member’s personal responsibility for the well-being of the whole, there must be a strict system of punishment and retribution for times when that honor is broken. Throughout the salt flats, this form of punishment in the tribes is called mataht, roughly translated in the common tongue to mean “a repayment of honor.”

When a situation arises calling for a mataht, such as when a Salt Flat Nomad is responsible for the loss of significant resources or survival assets like food, water, or herd beasts, or perhaps something as horrible as a show of cowardice on the battlefield, the repayment to the tribe is harsh, but never unfair. A tribe must survive as a unit, with all members doing their part to contribute to the whole; to overburden any single person would ultimately weaken the group.

However, when a more significant crime occurs such as being responsible for the death of a fellow tribe member through malice or negligence, a different type of mataht is called for – the mata’raht. The transgressor is stripped of all duties, and his name inscribed on an Oathpourers’ empty tun along with the weight of their debt to be repaid, the empty water urn is then placed in one of the repositories. The bearer of the mata’raht must regain their honor by becoming a lone hunter, banished from his tribe and family until the debt is paid.

The Dishonored must survive the wastes alone, spending weeks or even months hunting his assigned prey in the salt flats, or sometimes even beyond into other territories. When the Dishonored returns with his bounties, his fellow tribesmen must bear witness to his deeds, adding some of their own water to his tun should they find his deeds of merit. If worthy, the Dishonored’s tun will fill, bearing the shared weight of his tribe and restoring his honor.

A Dishonored, for all his shame, still proves an invaluable asset for tribes headed to war. Equipped with powerful arbalests meant for hunting, the Dishonored can cripple or outright kill foes at great distances. Glory won on the battlefield can even help the Dishonored settle his score, so he carefully records every bolt shot and tulwar stroke that hits home, each victory aiding to the tale that will repay his debt to the tribe.
The use of the bio-engineered laborers universally – and some would say rudely – called Brutes, was commonplace throughout the corporate endeavors on Samaria and for several generations beyond their departure. The original pure strain Brutes quickly segregated into their own bloodlines and families, some of which resulted in well-respected circles of Brute “nobility.” Even the odd genetic mutation caused by Samaria’s unique weather systems and xenosathic saturation has sprung up within the Brute offspring, such as the most famous Titan Brute, Mongo. It took many generations, but eventually the original gene-enhancements of the manufactured Brutes disappeared altogether, and a fully self-sustainable Brute subspecies of human took their place in the world. No matter their physical strength, resilience, or upbringing, the homo brutius subspecies of human would spend centuries in chains of one form or another at the hands of their fellow man. Slavers, whether in literal name or only in figurative function, have made good use of the Brutes’ best and worthy qualities for hundreds of years. At one time there were ten times the number of Brutes in some kind of servitude as there were Brutes living free lives.

Then came the Brute Revolution. Leaders within the Brute bloodlines as well as respected icons within their communities rose up together and threw off their collective shackles. Slavers and “employers” trying to force Brutes into unwanted service would find them to be a difficult and dangerous commodity to work with. No one can tell a Brute what to do if they decide to refuse, and after generations of feeling the crack of a whip at their back they have become numb to the idea of doing anything because of physical coercion. The Brutes had gotten together and decided— they were going to be their own people, no matter what.

This fierce independence has helped carve out a special niche for them, socially speaking. Life within the walls of New Ashkelon is too regimented and constantly under the watchful scrutiny, not to mention ironclad control, of the Prevailers’ agents. Venturing too far out into the wasteland with the tribes of the Skarrd is just throwing their lot in with a new set of masters even sicker and more twisted than the last. It came to be a perfect arrangement instead to cast their lot in with the Outcast settlements. Everything they bring with them; their strength, tenacity, and traditional laboring skills passed on from parent to child, all provide useful talents to help fit in and become extremely welcome within a Scavenger outpost or frontier town. Seeing Brutes running around in outlying towns like Dresyn, Talen, and Tuskelan became as normal as finding Bounty Hunters looking for work in Trent. This became especially true in the bustling trade hub of Fringe Town.

Fringe Town, a day or two south-southeast from New Ashkelon, has served as the gateway of trade for communities to the south. For decades it gathered resources and salvageable goods from the various ruined corporate compounds across the southern stretches, and it grew into one of the most concentrated areas for Brutes to gather and commiserate. With so much barter and commerce taking place there, Fringe Town quickly traded its wire fences for corrugated steel walls and transformed from a small successful outpost to a booming urban sprawl. As the amounts of goods and sound assets passed through its gates grew, so did the internal population—and the strain on necessary life supporting goods like food and fresh water became as honest a threat as the idea of Skarrd raids from the wastes.

Brutes of all types might be able to sustain themselves on barely-edible starches and successfully metabolize water that would cause a normal human to evacuate from both ends, but they pay for this hardy constitution—and their great strength—with a relatively constant need for incoming nutrients of some kind. This famous Brute capacity for food intake put them in the social crosshairs of Fringe Town gossipmongers, adding to the natural prejudices they already suffered for being different from the vast majority of the city’s populace. The Brutes of Fringe Town suffered economic and social injustices on a daily basis, coloring them at best as second-class citizens and at worst subjecting them to verbal hatred.

It was then that Remington Books, a Brute so named for his unique love of ancient literature, claimed a full city block of Fringe Town and aptly named it—Brutesland. He invited all the city’s Brute population to come and live in safety, away from the hardships being thrown at them from the “common man.” Over the course of months, Brutesland started to become a reality. Less than a year of Brute migration to the new area of the city saw throngs of the musclebound laborers eking out their lives in almost union-like groups when at work, and raucous social clubs when at leisure. They truly had become their own community within the greater city surrounding them, and an oddly unique Brute culture began to grow.

"Our freedom was purchased with hundreds of lives and gallons of blood. If tenfold that price will be paid to maintain it, so be it."

- Judge Remington Books, Brute Chieftain of the Independent Brute City of Freeton
 Threatened by what the opposition claimed was “an army of mutants living down the road from good people”, it took a single generation of Brute self-segregation to cause the more ignorant and fearful masses around Fringe Town to treat Brutesland with as much indignity and suspicion as they did the individual Brutes years before. The people of Brutesland began to feel the pinch of outside passive-aggression in the form of withheld work contracts, shoddy wages on what they could get, and the purposeful rerouting and blockading of necessary supplies heading into the area. Brutesland was being pushed into a ghetto of sorts, and when their livelihoods were in jeopardy, many turned to gang mentality and physical intimidation in order to put ammo in their guns and food on their plates. These new conditions and revelations were turning the Brutes of Fringe Town into the very cretins outsiders were painting them to be. In Remington’s eye, this simply would not do.

Books and a close crew of skilled scavengers left Brutesland and travelled along an old path he had read about in his extensive collection of Old World texts. A series of “industrial catalogs” in Books’ possession led his cadre to a collapsed valley filled with jagged rocks interlocked with half-buried sheet metal, and through raw Brute determination and with their calloused hands they cleared the way and discovered something magnificent. Nestled between craggy cliffs that even the black rams dared not traverse in most weather was a mile-wide stretch of buried wonders. What was once an industrial complex that built shuttlecraft and stone crushing machinery was now a vein of salvageable materials sunk deep below the clay and stones of the valley. As soon as Remington realized what they had discovered, he sent word to his friends and compatriots all around, and made sure everyone knew about the Brutes’ claim upon this sovereign vein. Before anyone could know more, Books sent for as many Brutes and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. 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Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friendly scavengers as could meet him at this new founding. Brutesland all but emptied in a fortnight, and Brute-friend...
Remington Books lived the same early life that most Brutes do – pick that up, move that there, pull that apart, repeat. It was not a glamorous life to be sure, but it was one that he always did well. By his middle teenaged years he was being picked for large deconstruction jobs and cargo hauling caravans normally reserved for older or more seasoned workers. Remington threw himself into each contract with as much of himself as he could muster, and it was always this way until one particularly poorly researched endeavor landed him and his fellows in a Chains Barrow ambush.

In what was a furiously chaotic twenty minutes, the Warden of Chains Barrow led a savage assault against Remington’s caravan that sent workers scattering to avoid capture or the grave. Remington managed to find a hideaway in a collapsed building, shoving a stack of rotten timbers in front of the entrance to bar the way. While the slavers were scouring the area, dispatching or taking away his fellows outside, he stayed hidden away, fearful for his freedom and his life. Even after the sounds of the ruckus died down, Remington lingered for three more days just to be sure.

It was during that time, those days of waiting, that Remington first truly knew hatred. His temper seethed and almost forced him out of hiding prematurely, but something caught his eye in the darkness of his hiding hole – a sealed plastic case filled with preserved literature and texts. Sealed away from the ravages of time by their container as well as the half-buried structure, Remington found story collections dotted with inspiring illustrations, technical manuals with schematics he couldn’t possibly fathom, research texts for a university class long since forgotten, and his personal favorite – a manual of civil law and legal enforcement codes. Even after he was safe from the slavers, Remington stayed and dove into the reams and reams of written knowledge. Again and again he would return to this place, and it was not long before his surname landed him and his fellows in a Chains Barrow ambush.

When the opportunity to turn the ill-fated Brutesland into the bustling city of Freeton, Remington Books jumped at the chance. Taking on the moniker and leadership duties of the city’s Judge, Books became the head of the single largest and most talked-about community of Brutes there had ever been. With the help of his loyal Marshalls to keep unruly types in line, Judge Books erased that scared young caravan worker he once was from existence – and replaced it with a powerful symbol of Brute independence and genetically enhanced physique.

Judge Books tends to remain within the city limits of Freeton most of the time, only venturing out when the collective populace has voted to mobilize as a warband or when he is called away to larger Outcast communities like Trent or Fringe Town. The Judge holds himself up to a slightly higher standard than the rest of his own community, trying to be an example to the world that Brutes can be just as smart, just as tactical, and just as politically savvy as any “regular” human can be.

At home in Freeton, the Judge holds “Court” in the town square as often as three times a week. Grievances and requests for summary judgments are brought in front of a large podium that he calls a bench, choosing the degree of innocence or guilt of those brought before as well as mediating disputes and aiding with general arbitration. On matters that affect the entire town, voting supersedes the Judge’s rulings, but that is only ever a situation called upon when matters are indeed dire. Otherwise, Judge Books’ word is law and the peace is his to keep.

When the Judge is called to arms however, peace is the last thing on his mind. Physically as tough as any veteran Brute and self-educated in a variety of wartime tactics, Remington is a mighty leader in any conflict – and the number of Brute fighters willing to follow him into battle is a testament to that. His morale and leadership skills aside, Judge Books is a ferocious fighter in his own right. Anyone surviving a blow from his reinforced hammer, the Gavel, will most often find themselves flat on their backs staring down the cold barrel of his modified hand-cannon, the Gallows Revolver. Merciless to those he finds guilty, Books wastes no moment finishing off a foe in a compromised state. Victory, to the Judge, is far more important than pride in how it was achieved.

It was recently that Books and the city of Freeton was called to conflict in the largest numbers in which they have ever used. After informing the Court about difficulties between the nomads and the slavers, a deal was made between the infamous Warlord Hoj and the biggest Brute ever to live, Mongo. Weeks later, both of these esteemed allies to Freeton were said to be in chains, held by the insidious Jon Woe. Knowing that their cousin Mongo – and to a lesser extent the human he travelled with – was in real trouble, a citywide vote was called and the word went out to Brute and ally alike.

The Judge was taking the Brute Court on the road.
BRUTE MARSHALS OF FREETON

“Stop resisting... it’ll hurt less.”

Starting with an elite group of veterans trained and subordinate to Judge Books’ own nephew, Captain Marshall Bryant Forgiveless, the Freeton Marshals are the direct hand of the law in the Brute-governed town. When the Judge wants something done, the Marshals ensure it gets done. They are the most loyal and seasoned Brute soldiers the Judge has at his beck and call, sworn into a position of honor and glory revered by all his or her peers.

There are three conditions that must be met before being chosen by the Judge or Captain Forgiveless to join the marshals. First, the Brute must have shed blood – either their own or another’s – in protection of a fellow Brute. Second, they must live within the city limits of Freeton. Lastly, they cannot have any outstanding debts, liens, or favors against them on behalf of anyone that might call those to bear and sway a Marshal’s judgment. If all of those facts are verified true, a Brute is taken in front of the entire Marshal Corps and sworn into their new role. Before the ink is dry on the logbook they are given their uniform – ironshod boots and a bull-leather vest adorned with a riveted brass star of office. Any necessary tailoring to the uniform is done quickly, but then a great celebration is had that sometimes encompasses the entirety of the town. As there are normally only a dozen or so Marshals at any given time, the induction of a new one is a big deal for the people of Freeton.

A Marshal’s best friends are his weapons. Striding into any situation with confidence they can handle it, all they need is a stout piece of metal-wrapped-metal in one hand and their oversized, breach-loading Brute gun. One bone-cracking swing with their marshalling stick can bring nearly any offender to their knees, exactly where a Brute Marshal wants a foe to be – looking up into the barrel of their gun.

Built to withstand the adrenaline-risen strength of a Brute in combat, each Brute gun would require a normal human to hold in two hands and likely some kind of help to yank back on the trigger. The weapon gets loaded with two kinds of munitions, often color-coded in a marshal’s bandolier for rapid selection based on the situation. The most common shells are simple buckshot, milled and poured from Freeton’s own salvage mine. A blast of flesh-shredding projectiles can tear someone apart, but are also very good and knocking someone off balance; the collective impact of the cloud can hurl someone to the ground as well. Their more specialized ammo is affectionately called a “sentence shell”; a wad of powder propelling a single solid rivet-like slug at short range with ferocious penetration. Sentence shell rounds are powerful, but when a target is against something solid – such as lying on the ground – the shot’s power is doubled back into the target, enhanced by the force of a sudden stop. This is why the sentence shells get their name; they are most frequently used as a Marshal’s method of execution.

Brute Marshals are good examples of what their fellow Brutes are capable of in their lives, but for the most part they want to do well by their kin and comrades. When a Marshal is dug into a battle, just seeing one of their own kind nearby can inspire them to do great things. Not only have they sworn to be the best servant of Freeton’s laws that they can be, but each one wants to do even more for their brothers and sisters. With how effective the Marshal Corps are, it is no surprise how revered they are in Freeton and anywhere Brutes are known to tread. The Judge and his Marshals are the core of the Brute Court, and their enemies are wise to fear them.
Brute Wrecker

“There ain’t much a diff ‘rent from scrap for tearin’ and a Slaver’s gut-sack to a steam chisel rig!”

Brutes have been in the “deconstructive labor” industry for centuries. Like any other industry, technology grows and gets better as its role becomes more important to the world around it. What began with hammers, mattocks, and chisels evolved eventually into automated rock-breakers and steam-driven awls. The old huge machines would get tinkered with, re-designed, broken down, and turned into handheld versions. “Handheld,” that is, for the enormous Brutes. A “regular” human would have a great deal of trouble holding up a fully-fueled impact chisel rig – let alone swing it about with enough dexterity to wield one as a weapon. This is where the Brute Wrecker comes into play.

Wrecker is a collective term for Brutes that specialize in the use of automated demolition tools in both the salvage yard and the battlefield. In effect, their job in any deployment – for work or fighting – is as simple as taking something whole and ripping it into much smaller pieces. Most of the time this is a rockcrete wall or buried, pre-Abandonment structure; when the object of their industrial attentions is an enemy combatant the results are far more gruesome and spectacular.

Surging a tempered alloy wedge-chisel at several thousands of pounds of force to its tip again and again, the impact chisel rig of a Brute wrecker is a mighty machine. With a rough forward thrust it can punch through several inches of the toughest materials in the blink of an eye, inflicting horrendous wounds on anything unfortunate enough to get caught in the way. A skilled wrecker though, can swing his rig in a more up-and-down motion on a target, dragging the chisel’s wedge across something like a carver nicking a stripped layer from it and exposing its insides with a single swipe. Not much can withstand the destructive focus of a Brute wrecker for long, and everything has a breaking point they can find.

Digging in and tearing stuff apart is a wrecker’s job, and they are outfitted in such a way to do it far better than their fellows – and survive the tiny shrapnel that blows back from their aggressive deconstruction. Clad in protective gear to cover their softer parts – eyes, ears, and mouth – a wrecker tries to armor up their feet and the tops of their legs to protect themselves from falling scrap parts, too. The end result is a well-protected Brute warrior wielding a loudly savage instrument of demolition.

There are many Brutes in any of their communities that would gladly pick up the tools and go to work as a wrecker, whether in the salvage yard or in a fight. The trouble is, however, that the actual machinery and protective gear they use is in short supply, and what does exist is oftentimes in repairs and requires constant maintenance. This does mean that even the currently-used rigs are prone to breaking down – sometimes spectacularly – at all the worst moments. After all, what could go wrong with a four hundred pound industrial machine fueled by crude diesel, revved up to unsafe speeds, and strapped to the back of a genetically-altered superhuman?
**Brute Hurler**

“Not much ruins your day quite like havin' a piece of sharpened rebar staple you to the ground from thirty paces.”  
- Warlord Hoj, commenting on seeing Brute Hurlers in action

The use of scrap materials and deconstructed supplies as tools or weapons has been a staple in Brute society for as long as there has been a Brute society. When Brutes were almost universally slaves and servants, they were never allowed to carry weaponry, and so learned to adopt the fruits of their labors in ways to defend themselves from wild animals or raiders. Lifters started carrying specifically-shaped blocks of stonecrete, cutters started wielding heavy chisels like spears, and those that would collect the discarded rebar learned that it could be made – with the right amount of power put behind a hastily sharpened bar – into an impressive impromptu javelin. Thus, the role of the Brute Hurlers was born.

Each Hurler is a lightly armored Brute that carries a quiver of cut and sharpened rebar lengths “designed” to be perfect for throwing like javelins. Any Brute can grab a chunk of rebar and try to throw it at an enemy, but a practiced Hurler can sink two feet of crude metal into a target over ten meters away with surprising precision. The best Hurlers can do so even while on the move, running and planting their javelins like tribal plains hunters spearing game. Their lighter armor and frames – for Brutes, anyway – helps them utilize this skill as well as forces them to stay on the move.

Unlike most Brutes that simply like to run headlong into battle and crush their enemies with raw strength and perseverance, Hurlers use mobility and ranged techniques to cripple their targets. They are great when paired with other Brute heavy hitters, jogging around their enemies and planting stout rods of cold metal into something, slowing it down enough for their partner to find the best approach and set up a crushing charge. This is not to say that Hurlers are inept in close combat, however. A sharpened length of rebar is just as deadly when used as a stabbing implement as it is when thrown!

Brute Hurlers are a battlefield asset most of the time, but they are also the couriers of the Brute community. Tireless and steady on their feet, Hurlers can often be found jogging between frontier towns transporting messages, telegrams, and parcels. Travelling in small numbers - three at a maximum - makes them hard to find or ambush on the wasteland routes. Unlike larger caravans that attract trouble from miles around from their dust plume alone, a few Hurlers running between settlements will most often go unnoticed. When combined with the fact that a handful of Brutes will be protecting the item in transit as well, it is a well-regarded service. It might cost a few ‘gelt extra to have a Hurler run something for you, but for important parcels, it is well worth the price.

Whether running a shipment between Brute communities, spiking foes to the ground with their rebar javelins, or prying the armored plating off an enemy by hand – Brute Hurlers are an impressive asset to their people.
FACTION RULES

The collective Outcasts faction represents a scattered and fractious classification of frontier folk. They live in loose groups, small families, and outpost cultures all across the wilds of Samaria. They do whatever it takes to survive in such a hellish environment, and they often lean on one another for support when times get tough. Within such camaraderie there are still old grudges and enmity to deal with between groups, but a tightly knit outcast group – when of like minds – can be a remarkable force to behold.

In addition to normal Force Construction rules, the following special rules apply when playing an Outcast Force:

• Any Outcast force may include models classified as Bounty Hunters. If an Outcast force is made up of nothing but Bounty Hunter models, it is automatically considered to be aligned with the Slavers of Chains Barrow sub-faction.

• An Outcast force must choose one of the four sub-factions of the Outcasts: Scavengers, Slavers of Chains Barrow, Salt Flat Nomads, or the Brute Court of Freeton. If it does so, it gains access to the special rules, restrictions, and models listed under that sub-faction.

• An Outcast force may only align itself with 1 sub-faction at any time.

• The different sub-factions and their distinct special rules are as follows:

SCAVENGERS

The following models are available for use in a Scavengers Outcasts force:

• Mongo, Brute Titan
• Hoj, Scavenger Warlord
• Oz, Gladiator Champion
• Happy Hour, Wasteland Trader
• Brute Pusher
• Manhunter
• Warchief
• Brute Anchor
• Fixer
• Brute
• Brute Hurler
• Brute Wrecker
• Bully
• Pit Fighter
• Wasteland Warrior
• Scut

An Outcast Scavengers sub-faction force has the Scavengers of the Wasteland unique bonus. At the start of each Preparation Phase, 1 friendly non-Character model within 6” of a friendly model with Scavenge may gain 1 Scavenge Counter (note that a model is always considered to be within range of itself). This bonus is applied once per full 500 points of the force.

Scavenge Counter: This model gains +1 AR, and +1 AS and +1 PW to all attacks, for each Scavenge Counter. If this model is killed or removed from play, place all Scavenge Counters it has in contact with it before it is removed. A model may have up to 3 Scavenge Counters at any time.
SLAVERS OF CHAINS BARROW

The following models are available for use in a Slavers of Chains Barrow Outcasts force:

- The Warden, Tyrant of Chains Barrow
- Hood, The Executioner
- Bonner Spyte, Mad Engineer
- Finn Deadeye, Master Sniper
- Aja, Tyrant’s Daughter
- Devon, Tyrant’s Daughter

- Happy Hour, Wasteland Trader
- Manhunter
- Slavemaster
- Bully
- Fixer
- Gang Boss

- The Unbound
- Coffersman
- The Frenzied
- Pit Fighter
- Wasteland Warrior
- Chain Ganger
- Scut

An Outcast Slavers of Chains Barrow sub-faction force has the We Have Our Ways unique bonus. Enemy Non-Living models, when facing an Outcast Slavers of Chains Barrow sub-faction force, can be given Panic Counters as if they were Living models. Additionally, friendly models with a cost of 75 points or higher in this force have the Suppression (Never Panic) special ability at all times:

SUPPRESSION(x): While within 8” of this model, the (x) ability is ignored on models.

SALT FLAT NOMADS

The following models are available for use in a Salt Flat Nomads Outcasts force:

- Bendahrin Durshe, Bladelord Supreme
- Moonless Night, The Unseen Blade
- Blades, Benoit Shaive Oathsworn
- Kane, Hand of the Bladelord Oathsworn
- Lynette, Master Herder
- Ideo, Lynette’s Guardian

- Vox, Lynette’s Guardian
- Dust Bull
- Berserker
- Caravan Keeper
- Bully
- The Dishonored
- Fixer
- Hand of War

- Moloki
- Oathpouwer
- Thornwind
- Tribal Warrior
- Wasteland Warrior
- Vrock
- Nomad Herder
- Scut

An Outcast Salt Flat Nomads sub-faction force has the Honor of the Tribe unique bonus. Each time a friendly model is killed, add 1 Vengeance Counter to the owning player’s collective pool. Vengeance Counters may be discarded at specific times to gain the following various effects and benefits:

- When a friendly model spends an AP to attack, you may discard 1 Vengeance Counter to gain +2 AS for all dice rolled in the attack.
- Whenever an enemy model is hit one or more times by a melee attack from a friendly model, you may discard 2 Vengeance Counters to increase the PW of the hits by 2.
- After a friendly model attacks, you may discard 3 Vengeance Counters to re-roll one or more dice made for that attack roll.
- NOTE: Each benefit may only be applied once per attack (You couldn’t, for example, discard 2 Vengeance Counters to give an attack +4 AS. Or discard 4 Vengeance Counters to give an attack +4 PW).
The following models are available for use in a **Brute Court of Freeton** Outcasts force:

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<th>Model Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Mongo, Titan Brute</td>
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<td>• Judge Books, Brute Chieftain</td>
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<td>• Happy Hour, Wasteland Trader</td>
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<td>• Dust Bull</td>
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An Outcast **Brute Court of Freeton** sub-faction force has the **Brutish Tenacity** unique bonus. Each time an enemy model passes an AR Save due to a Charge Attack made by a friendly Size L or larger model, the force adds 1 **Tenacity Counter** to the owning player's collective pool.

**Tenacity Counters** may be discarded during the Preparation Phase to remove an equal number of Bleed, Exhaustion, Immobilized, Panic, Paralyzed, Stun, Toxic, and/or Whiplash Counters from friendly models with “Brute” anywhere in their Model Name (**Brute Pusher; Mongo, Brute Titan; etc.**).