

WARDENS of the Eastern Marches



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5th
EDITION

WARDENS of the Eastern Marches



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THE EASTERN MARCHES

Welcome to The Eastern Marches! This particular section of the mainland Asura continent is bounded on the east by the vast and depthless Sapphire Sea and on the west by the Kolmenus Mountains. The region was dubbed “The Eastern Marches” generations ago by Hembarian immigrants from the far side of the Sapphire Sea. The name has stuck ever since.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EASTERN MARCHES

Like really anywhere inhabited by an enduring society, The Eastern Marches is in large part defined by its colorful past.

It is presently the 146th year of the Third Age in the Marches. The start of the Third Age was unilaterally declared such by the Council of Antiquities at Halstead’s College in Trillium at what they deemed to be the conclusion of the final remnants of the great Orcish empire of Sharak the Implacable and his progeny – the end of the Second Age.

THE SECOND AGE

Clan Sharak rose to prominence among the Orcish Clans in the Kolmenus Mountains more than a thousand years ago. King Sharak the Implacable as he became known established a lasting and far-flung empire encompassing much of the current Marches from the coast of the Sapphire Sea to well west of the Kolmenus range.

King Sharak’s reign was noteworthy for several reasons. The first was the great advances made in metal ore mining and refining, advances in complex and enduring metal work, and related engineering accomplishments from these advancements made by his kingdom. Many of the still existing iron and stone bridges that span any number of waterways in the Marches were built by King Sharak’s engineers.

Second, from his citadel perched high in the Kolmenus Mountains, a then aging King Sharak called for the establishment of a universal set of laws by which all citizens of his empire would be subject. The purpose was to first establish a predictable system of justice as well as to create a reliable set of trade and contract regulations to govern the burgeoning economy growing under King Sharak’s reign.

This edict from King Sharak led to the rise of the famous Orcish legal scholar, Kharzug. Kharzug, a woman fiercely dedicated to the principles of a dependable and equal handed legal system, authored an entire legal code which remains largely in place to the current day. The Courts of Inquiry in Trillium, recognized as the highest

courts in the region, still resolve trade disputes based on the legal code originally authored by Kharzug. In fact, “a Kharzug” is a term of common expression used just about anywhere trade is done in the Marches meaning a full, final, and binding transaction or deal.

In the generations following King Sharak's death, his descendants increasingly fell to squabbling over power and control of the empire until it finally collapsed hundreds of years ago. The last vestiges of anything resembling an Orc led central authority disappeared nearly two hundred years ago. This combined with the great Hembarian Migration which pushed increasingly westward of the Oriana River clearing forests and tilling the fertile ground for farmsteads, for all practical purposes marked the end of the Second Age and the beginning of the Third. With the clans scattered and divided, the majority of the Orc population gradually migrated west and back to the Kolmenus Mountains in the face of growing population pressure from the great numbers of Hembarian immigrants arriving on the eastern shores of the Marches.

Beyond the enduring engineering works and the legal code of Kharzug, the only tangible legacy to the reign of King Sharak is the now mostly abandoned stronghold, *Cloud Citadel*, alight high in the Kolmenus Mountains. The diaspora of King Sharak's empire is scattered in and around the Kolmenus Mountains living as independent clans.

THE FIRST AGE

Far to the north and east of the Kolmenus Mountains and thousands of years before the rise of Sharak, sits the long-abandoned remnants of the ancient regional power, the Mageocracy of Hyseria. The period of time over which Hyseria existed is now called the First Age.

The Mageocracy of Hyseria reigned for over a millennium centered on the city of Aneroch, now known as Marabiza, far to the north in The Eastern Marches. Most of what was Hyseria has been lost to the ravages of time, but there are still remnants here and there in the northern region of the Marches. Most notably, the series of wizard towers that formed the outer perimeter of their domain. Deeply xenophobic, the mages of Hyseria closely watched their borders and were quick to unleash blasts of eldritch power on any who sought to trespass.

Several thousand years ago, a time when most scholars agree marks the end of the First Age, the last mage-king of the Hyseria, Amhun-Athun, unleashed a massive blast of entropic and magical energy that destroyed much of Hyseria and permanently changed

the terrain and environment of the north. What little is known about Amhun-Athun, is that he was obsessed with his own mortality and sought any means necessary to unnaturally extend his own life. This obsession led to a series of experiments and rituals that are commonly believed to have attracted the attention of other strange and powerful beings from different realities and planes of existence.

What is far from clear and remains a subject of fierce debate among modern arcane scholars is whether this mage-king, Amhun-Athun, intentionally caused this calamity in an effort to protect Hyseria from the potentially corrupting influence of these bizarre beings or whether the devastating blast was an accident on his part. What is largely agreed though is that, regardless of intent, Amhun-Athun, and his tower were ripped from this plane of existence and have since been lost to this reality for all time.

With Amhun-Athun gone and much of Hyseria sorely damaged by the corruptive and massive magic blast, the end of Hyseria was not long in coming. The mageocracy was able to hang on for a generation before Aneroch was razed by imperial forces of King Sharak, which marked the end of the First Age and the beginning of the Second.

The north was forever changed by the extemporaneous energies unleashed by Amhun-Athun. Pockets of weird magic still exist all over the north. These strange effects do not seem to be anchored to any particular place or endure for any particular reason.

PRESENT DAY EASTERN MARCHES

Well met traveler! I am the region's greatest merchant and well-known mover and shaker, Baldin Zunskar, here and at your service! While I have never really traveled anywhere in the Marches, I have certainly done a lot of reading about them. No please, do not scoff. I felt such study was necessary in order to help secure some of the biggest trade deals the Marches have ever seen. How else to effectively communicate with a victim, I mean trading partner, than by understanding where they come from?



Baldin Zunskar

I live in lovely Trillium, the vast trading bastion in the south of the Marches. I have lived in Trillium my entire life. In fact, I have never

been more than a few dozen paces outside the walls of the City of Enchantment. why would I ever go anywhere else?

But all that aside, I am willing to share a bit of my vast knowledge with you, fair traveler. I know that you will appreciate the quality and wisdom of my research.

Let's start with some generalities. The Eastern Marches, the easternmost region of the Asura continent, comprise a vast and varied swath of geographies and terrains spanning several hundred miles both east/west and north/south on the shores of the Sapphire Sea. As diverse as the topography of this region is, its inhabitants and major settlements and cities are even more so.

Generally speaking, the south is far more populous than the north. The south tends to be more agrarian and is a bit more settled than the north, but that is more of a function of geography and good soil than really anything else.

More specifically, what follows is a resuscitation of what I remember reading about concerning many of the colorful places and exciting locales in the Marches! While hardly comprehensive, what follows is a list of some of the major points of interest in the Eastern Marches, from north to south.

THE EASTERN MARCHES; A BRIEF TOUR

PORT VANKA (SOURCE FT2) ---

Port Vanka is a small, bustling seaside village that thrives on sea trade and fishing. Goods coming out of the north often ship through the port. There are a number of hostels, apartments and boarding houses for workers in the processing warehouses as well as sailors on shore leave. Last year one sailor reported seeing a beautiful mermaid just offshore.

WINTER'S EDGE (SOURCE FT2) ---

Winter's Edge is a true frontier town where only the strong survive the harsh territories that surround it. It is the last bastion of civilization before the lawless wilds. Fur trappers and wildcat miners work out of the village as their base of operations while they seek fortune in the cold northern wilderness. Although the residents have managed to domesticate a few types of animals, good meat and milk is still hard to come by in the north.

KNIFEPOINT (SOURCE ES1) ---

The seaport city of Knifepoint lies at the mouth of the great Bay of Turick. Knifepoint's history is a sordid one. It began as a pirate stronghold in part due to the archipelago off its shores known as

the Blood Isles, which for hundreds of years provided shelter for pirates hiding from the authorities.

It would be an overstatement to say the city is lawless. There is a ruling council made up of wealthy shipping families. Peace is kept by a local militia which includes coastal guard ships that protect the shipping lanes from danger. However, Knifepoint definitely has a frontier-justice atmosphere. Deadly force is allowed when defending oneself or one's business interests. Small crimes such as petty theft, fighting and racketeering are often ignored unless they affect the wealthy elite.

While piracy has been mostly eliminated, occasional reports still come of brigands operating off the coast. Locals suspect the Blood Isles still provide refuge for pirate vessels...and their treasure.

THE BLOOD ISLES (SOURCE ES1) ---

The Blood Isles is an archipelago off the tip of Knifepoint, a large peninsula named after its shape. It contains many islands of varying size that have been mapped over the years. The islands are considered to be uninhabited although they were long used by pirates as strongholds, places to stash treasure and to hide from authorities.

MARABIZA (SOURCE FT2) ---

The city of Marabiza, in the distant past known as Aneroch, is the largest in the northern tier. It is a major trade port and seat of knowledge and culture for the region. The city has grown steadily



since its founding over 500 years ago. Some of its residents have amassed great wealth and power. Whether by land or by sea, much of the important commerce of the northern tier flows through Marabiza to the rest of the Eastern Marches (and sometimes even far off lands across the sea or past the great mountains to the West).

WEST GALEN (SOURCE FT3) ---

West Galen is a town built on lumber from the western forests. Numerous lumber camps bring in wood that is processed and sent to other locations to meet building needs. It is rumored that even a few trees from the Dying Forest in the Deadlands have made their way to the West Galen saws. What the town lacks in refinement it makes up for in grit and hard work.

The town is run by the lumber consortium headed by the Longwood family. The family rules the town with nepotism and graft being the norm. Workers who run afoul of the lumber bosses are dealt with harshly.

ROBERTSHIRE (SOURCE FT1) ---

Robertshire is a larger town in the northern tier. It is ruled by a noble family with longstanding ties to the area, the De Matros family. Baron Elivan de Matros's sons are coming of age, and looking to make names for themselves. The lifestyle here would best be described as pastoral. Farming, fishing and hunting provide for the prosperity of the area. The wealthy of Marabiza will often come to Robertshire for professionally guided hunts or to just relax in the quiet rolling hills. There are a number of public and private hunting lodges where patrons can be guided on wilderness hunts.

FALLMARCH (SOURCE FT1) ---

Fallmarch is a small waystation along the trade route known as the Great South Road. The village center consists of an inn, small general purpose store, modest temple and town hall. The main village is ringed by a stockade-style wall and the majority of citizens reside within.

RAWLINSRIVER (SOURCE EG3) ---

Rawlinsriver is an unwallled town with a permanent population of over 4,300 folks, situated only on the east bank of the Rawlinsflow River, which is navigable (and often crowded with moored barges) for its entire run alongside the town and as far as the eye can see up and downriver. It has only one bridge across the river, at about the town's midpoint, but several quite separate "shuttle-lines" for

goods (usually bundles of lashed-tight hide or canvas wrappings, hanging on cross-river cables and towed from bank to bank by pull-lines) exist and are called into use on the rare occasions when everyone wants to use the bridges at once.

RODHAM (SOURCE EG2)

Those few who've heard of it at all know "Rodham" is the abbreviated name for Rodney's Hamlet (also known to its inhabitants as Rod's Wood). Situated in deep forest some 25 miles west of Ockney's Hold and the Oriana River, Rodham is a remote, intentionally isolated forest commune of about nine square miles, founded 90 years ago and almost entirely unknown to the wider world. Eighty humans (15 families) call it home.

MIDDLESMITH (SOURCE EG1)

A rustic village located in the center of the Marches, the way stop village of Middlesmith is no longer dominated by the three smithies for which it was named, though the Middul family still shoes horses and forges tools at their place down the lone side-road. Middlesmith is now best known for its well-respected Free House Inn & Tavern, that stands at the rural settlement's crossroads.

OCKNEY'S HOLD (SOURCE AK1)

Ockney's Hold is an old walled town whose founding dates back at least one thousand years. A rural hub, it serves as the seat and major trade center of the Barony of Rawn. The lands of the surrounding countryside are reasonably tame and dotted with farmsteads spread across rolling terrain.

Originally located on the east bank of the Oriana River, the original town expanded over centuries to occupy a good deal of the west bank as well. Ockney's Hold owes its existence to the nearby Copper Hills, some three days' ride to the east. The Copper Hills are rich with copper ore, which can be cheaply shipped down the easily navigable Oriana River. Based on the wealth of the mines, Ockney's Hold grew from a hamlet to become the seat of the barony.

The last fifty years have brought a new level of prosperity to Ockney's Hold, as the process of creating azurite—a semiprecious stone—from copper ore was perfected. This new technology has helped transform this small, backwater mining town into something resembling a civilized settlement. The production of azurite has also meant the presence of more skilled miners in the area, as well as related artisans such as refiners and jewelers seeking their own personal fortunes.

DUN DELVE (SOURCE AK2)

Deep underground and well to the east of Ockney's Hold sits Dun Delve, an ambitious project undertaken by the criminal syndicate known as the Ceaseless. Members of the organization try to maintain a low profile in the world, where they are involved in illicit activities in most major cities. However, they do not have the same secrecy concerns when it comes to the Deep Dark. The Ceaseless founded the stronghold of Dun Delve in an attempt to establish a presence in that underground realm, gaining access to the markets, products, and potential profits to be found there.

The stronghold is built within a massive gallery cavern, which stretches over one hundred feet across at its widest, has a ceiling that soars to nearly ninety feet above, and runs generally in a north-south direction. The fortress is built on the west side of the cavern, where a broad natural ramp leads up to a series of caves that were the former home of a clan of troglodytes. The Ceaseless forcibly evicted the troglodytes, then used the plateau at the top of the ramp and the caves beyond as the site of their fortress.

TRILLIUM (SOURCE AK3)

The sprawling and southern coastal city of Trillium is an ancient bastion of trade and wealth. While officially self-referenced as the "City of Enchantment," it is also known as "Bridge City" for the complicated and well-engineered network of bridges that connects three major islands at the mouth of the Oriana river—Tyle, Jesper and Gill's Rock—with the banks to north and south. The estuary of the gently flowing Oriana as it empties into the Sapphire Sea combines with miles of protected and deep harbor to make for excellent anchorage.

In addition to the trio of major islands in the mouth of the river, the city's main geographic feature is the four hills that define it. Two hills stand on the north side of the river (Orison and Gull's Reach), as do two to the south (Westhill and Eastend). They vary in size but have this in common—the heights of each hill contain the most sought-after and expensive real estate in the city. And below those heights, the areas around the hills make up the four primary regions of the city, each broken into many districts that have developed organically over time.

Trillium offers probably the widest array of goods and services in the entire region. Residents of Trillium believe that one can buy just about anything here. And given sufficient coin, they might just be right.

WARDENS OF THE EASTERN MARCHES

ORGANIZED PLAY PLAYER'S GUIDE

Welcome to the Eastern Marches, a land of peril, intrigue, and adventure! This guide will provide you with everything you need to create a character for play in any Wardens of the Eastern Marches game at Gamehole Con, your home, or elsewhere.

HOW DO I CREATE A CHARACTER?

From the outset, this program will be very light on rules. Rather than creating an elaborate framework of guidelines, we would rather the impetus be on the players to create reasonable characters with the goal of creating an enjoyable play experience for all who participate rather than trying to “hack” or “power game” in our games. Ultimately, your DM will be the arbiter of whether or not you have created a fair and/or good faith character. So, please don't show up with a laser beam wielding ninja hydra as a character (although that does sound awfully cool). And speaking of lasers, the Eastern Marches is a fantasy setting, not a science fiction one. The technology level in this setting is Medieval, the same as virtually every classic fantasy setting.

CODE OF CONDUCT

To that end, the following Code of Conduct is mandatory and absolute. We are not going to tell anyone how to run their characters or how to play beyond this simple maxim and that is, we are running this program with the explicit understanding that playing in it is going to be fun for all. Character vs character combat is expressly forbidden. Engaging in any sort of play or conduct that interferes with other participants' fun will not be tolerated. An example is taking character actions to deliberately foil a fellow player's opportunity to complete an Alliance mission. That sort of stuff is simply not allowed. Additionally, while you may be excited about your character, there are some sources that offer the creation of characters whose back stories have a darker tone, if you choose to make a character like this know that it might not be welcome at every table, safety tools will be available at our tables to help facilitate cohesion in tone around tables. *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* is a collaborative experience, and we expressly expect everyone to play together in a way that is fun for everyone.

CHARACTER CREATION

All *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* characters will start at Level 1.

What follows are our guidelines for character creation in our inaugural season of *Wardens of the Eastern Marches*. We are affording our players an unprecedented amount of freedom of choice when it comes to character creation.

This freedom comes with an understanding on the part of our players: We expect each and every player who builds a character to do so with your fellow players in mind. The focus of this program is fun for all. This is not a refuge for people hoping to “win” D&D. If a character negatively impacts the fun of others, DMs are empowered to notify the Admin team, and that character will be disallowed.

You are free to create fun, interesting, and weird characters, but please refrain from min/max and power gaming logic, instead consider the growth of your character through the adventure and story arc.

Character Creation Sources: For this campaign, players are welcome to create their character using select sources from the following publishers:

- Wizards of the Coast (WotC)
- Kobold Press
- Ghostfire Gaming
- Frog God Games

Step One: Choose a Race/Lineage/Heritage. Again, you may choose any such from any of the resources mentioned above.

Step Two: Choose a Class. As above, you may choose any class from any of the resources mentioned above.

Step Three: Set Your Ability Scores. You may choose one of the following three options:

- Standard Array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8) and place each score with each ability of your choice;
- Specialist Array (15, 15, 14, 10, 8, 8) and place each score with each ability of your choice;
- Generalist Array (14, 13, 12, 12, 12, 11) and place each score with each ability of your choice.

Step Four: Tell Us About Your Character. This is the best part of character creation. Consider adding a colorful **Backstory**; pick a **Deity** or **Patron** if you want. Examples of popular temples/faiths in the Eastern Marches are:

- The Mother (birth and agriculture)

- The Tides (seafarers and travelers)
- The Scales (justice and truth)
- The Sun (trade and commerce)
- The Stars (luck, travelers, and wanderers)
- The Leaf (environmental stewards, protectors)

Finally, religions in the Eastern Marches are organized around the domain they espouse. For example, followers of the Mother are focused on the domains of agriculture and birth, while devotees of the Sun attend to matters concerning trade and commerce, and so on. There can be any number of specific faiths and deities that fit under any one of the broad domain categories.

Step Five: Choose an Alliance. Alliances are what we call the player character organizations that strongly influence all life in the Eastern Marches. Membership in an Alliance is **required** in any *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* game. The Alliances are the source of your missions. They can provide you with aid and supplies. They provide you titles, status, and specific level-based Alliance Rewards (See Table 1.1: Eastern Marches Alliance Ranks and Rewards). Finally, they help define what your character is about. Completing Alliance objectives is an important component of character advancement. There are six Alliances to choose from. They are:

EASTERN MARCHES ALLIANCES

ORDER OF THE INTREPID

– “*Friendship, connections, family ties, trust, loyalty, and over everything else, obedience.*”

The Order of the Intrepid is the Alliance of the various organized crime cabals in the Eastern Marches. Some of the more prominent such organizations include:

- The *Ceaseless*, who have operations and operatives throughout the entire continent;
- The *Doves* and the *Crux* who are active in the south and central regions of the Marches;
- The *Golden Fingers* and the *Palms*, who are active in the northern reaches of the Marches.

While these organizations are most commonly engaged in the sorts of activities that one would expect - larceny, fraud, loan sharking, protection and confidence schemes, etc., members of the Order of the Intrepid see themselves as the great levelers of Eastern



Marches society. They believe they are the true protectors of the common people and are not limited by the rules of law enforcement or the scruples of gentler society. Through self-reliance and a clarity of purpose guided of course by the chain of command, the Order of the Intrepid fights against inequity, poverty, and sickness while simultaneously seeking personal wealth and status.

Leader: Raziel Winter

Raziel joined the Doves as a young Tiefling boy. His genetic gifts made him a natural both in the crowded alleys of Trillium and the winding caverns of the Deep Dark underground. As he quickly rose through the ranks, his abilities drew the attention of not only his superiors in the Doves, but also among the leadership of other organizations. He was subsequently recruited into a leadership position with the Ceaseless where he serves to the current day. Raziel is known for his deep and intense stillness. He is famous for his ability to breakdown informants with nothing more than his unflinching stare and preternatural calm. Raziel is currently most commonly found either in Ockney's Hold or deep underground in Dun Delve. The major families and organizations agree on a new Alliance leader for the Order of the Intrepid each year. The agreement is that heads of families/organizations do not serve in this capacity. This prevents overt favoritism and thereby, unnecessary conflict.



THE ENTERPRISE GUILD

– *“Commerce is the true engine of society.”*

Merchants, guild members, shopkeepers, traders, shippers, and exporters are the most visible and active members of The Enterprise Guild. Beyond the obvious shared goal of making money, they believe that through commerce and trade, society is advanced and improved. Constantly seeking new markets, members of the Enterprise Guild are often travelers and explorers pushing into the wild in search of new trade partners and novel goods. Some of the largest trade concessions in the Eastern Marches include:

- *Stafford Drayage* in Trillium;
- *Rawn Mining Company* in Ockney's Hold;
- *Flowers Artisans* in Marabiza;
- *Westhill Consignment* in Trillium;



- *The Endless Sea Tradewinds* operating up and down the east coast.

These businesses are frequently hiring adventurers for any number of trade and commerce reasons, from simple guard duty to assistance with delicate trade negotiations, to recovery of a specific item or thing.

Leader: Baldin Zunskar

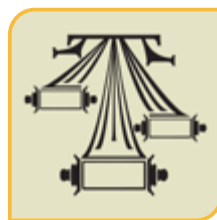
Baldin is well-known for brokering deals across the Marches. He is a stout fellow in his early 60s. Known to be vain and somewhat pompous, but also shrewd and relentless as a negotiator. He is the current premier of Stafford Drayage in Trillium. While not a Stafford himself, he rose through the ranks to attain his current position as head of one of the largest trading concessions in the Eastern Marches. Baldin lives in Trillium, specifically in the Garden District of Westhill. He is excruciatingly familiar with geography and the power hierarchy of just about everywhere in the Marches, despite never having traveled outside of Trillium himself. The Enterprise Guild chooses a new leader every five years. This leadership position rotates through the great trading houses of the Marches to help insure impartiality.



THE QUILL SOCIETY

– *“Knowledge and education are the most powerful forces in the world.”*

The undergirding principle of The Quill Society is that the pursuit of knowledge, *all* knowledge, is the highest and most axiomatic calling of any sentient being. Members include scientists, wizards, engineers, archaeologists, historians, and virtually every other type of academic imaginable. Discovering ancient secrets, unearthing a new process or technique, or establishing a new set of guidelines are all general examples of subjects of interest among members of the Quill. While the major universities and academies of the Eastern Marches are almost invariably associated in some fashion with The Quill Society, its members include individual inventors, tinkerers, and hobbyists as well. The most prominent, recognizable, and powerful members of the Quill include:



- *Halstead's College* in Trillium;
- *Mordinello's School of Thaumaturgy* in West Galen;

- *The Academy of the Arcane* in Trillium;
- *The Anduwyne* of Marabiza, the famous library of the north.

Leader: Kaya Grinallis

Kaya is the head archivist at the Anduwyne. While relatively young, her archival and research skills earned her prominence within the Quill Society and she quickly rose through their ranks. Her responsibility at the Anduwyne, the great library in Marabiza, has also steadily increased. A very good researcher and generally pleasant to be around, she is nonetheless extremely busy juggling the duties of maintaining such a huge library and leading the premier knowledge organization in the Marches. Kaya regularly organizes a lecture series that holds conferences all around the Marches. The best and brightest of the land can be found at these meetings presenting their theories, research, and studies. Due to her busy schedule, Kaya does not have an open-door policy and will only take meetings by persons bearing letters of introduction from someone of authority in the Marches, or a wealthy library patron.



ORDER OF THE PONTIFICATE

– *“Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.”*

Members of the Order of the Pontificate ascribe to the principle that faith holds the moral elements of society together. The Order sees themselves as the moral bulwark against evil and chaos in the Eastern Marches. As the Marches are a polytheistic region, representatives of any conceivable faith or deity are welcome. A member of the Order can count on the assistance and aid from other members and institutions of the Order. Regardless of the specific denomination or doctrine, the overarching goal of the Order of the Pontificate is to give aid to the good and righteous, provide support for the needy, and provide protection to the weak and powerless.



Leader: Ilyria Ross

Originally from Marabiza, as a young woman Ilyria emigrated to Trillium to take a position at the Temple of the Mother in the Temple District. Over the years she rose through the ranks of the Temple and now serves as the Prelate of the Mother in Trillium, the largest church in terms of both size of the campus and the number of parishioners in the Eastern Marches. Ilyria is now a middle-aged woman of dark complexion and reserved manner. Known for her keen organizational mind and steadfast dedication to the mission of the temple, Ilyria exudes an aura of strength and calm. In addition to overseeing virtually every aspect of the largest religious enterprise in the Marches, Ilyria agreed to additionally serve as the head of the Order of the Pontificate Alliance, a term of three years. Every three years, the eminences of each of the major religious organizations in the Marches gather to, among other things, pick a new Alliance head for the coming term. Ilyria was an easy choice as Order of the Pontificate head based on her deeply held convictions that communities are strengthened and maintained by faith and that all citizens of the Marches have the fundamental right to a prosperous and healthy life free from the influence of the evil, corruption, and immorality.



THE GOLDEN CONSERVANCY

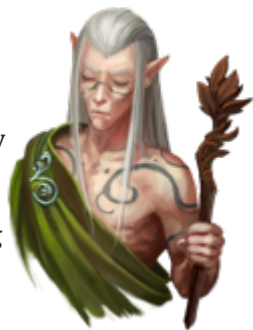
– “Nature belongs to us all as every living being belongs to nature.”

The Golden Conservancy is certainly the least centralized and organized of the Alliances of the Eastern Marches. Rather than a formal leadership structure, The Golden Conservancy is a collection of common ideals and goals, namely the protection of the natural world and living in harmony therewith. Undergirding principles include the concept that no one has the moral authority to lord over or destroy nature and that the protection of nature is the highest possible calling. The Conservancy counts as members everyone from common gatherers, herbalists, holistic providers, rangers, and druids. *The Way of the Leaf* is one of the more prominent sects tied to The Golden Conservancy in the Eastern Marches. Finally, while there are no uniform, mandatory, or daily rituals, members frequently celebrate the “golden hours,” the hour after sunrise and the hour before sunset.



Leader: Shon Vanwise

Shon is a reclusive and mysterious elf who hails from the northwestern elven enclave of Illanivar-Illumuth (although he is almost never found there). Very old even by elf standards, he routinely wanders the wilderness of the Marches, most often seen as a solitary hooded pilgrim quietly walking through the forests, or as a great red stag with golden antlers. Meeting Shon in the dark woods is often a transformative and terrifying experience for those that have done so. Shon makes no secret of his disgust for the industrialization and expansion into the wilds that humanity's growth has brought. However, the decentralized nature of the Golden Conservancy means his views are not the alliance's platform. Still, he possesses great wisdom and provides guidance when the beneficiary is the natural world. Shon presides over the annual Conclave of the Golden Conservancy which happens on the fall equinox. He has done so for ages, and presumably will continue to into the future due to the great influence he wields among the Alliance.



SOVEREIGN MILITARY

ORDER OF ASURA

– *“The highest honor and privilege is to bear arms in a just cause on behalf of another in need.”*

The Sovereign Military Order of Asura is one of the most organized Alliances in the Eastern Marches. It acts as a formal union, and membership requires the payment of annual dues. In exchange, members receive tangible benefits like discounts on equipment from certain purveyors and discounts on medical care from specific healers and physicians. Members include both active and retired soldiers, guards, members of the watch, adventurers, and anyone with a strong interest in martial pursuits. Even though many sell swords and mercenaries are members of the Order, the Sovereign Military Order of Asura is a beneficent one, often providing aid to those individuals or communities in need with the expectation of compensation.



Leader: Solsora Swordbane

Solsora Swordbane hails from the northern spur of the Kolmenus Mountains just south of the Withers. This is the location of the Swordbane clanhold where she was raised with her five siblings. Her father, Torthal Swordbane served as First Shield to the clan chieftain, Chief Crag Swordbane. As a result, Solsora was immersed in leadership and military fundamentals from an early age. As three of her five siblings were older than her, she did not have any immediate or inherited roles with clan Swordbane. Because of this, Solsora left the clan as a young dwarf lass to find her own path - initially choosing the life of an adventurer. Her reputation, based on her considerable combat prowess, quickly grew. Starting out as a caravan guard, she has since served in several of the more prominent military organizations in the Eastern Marches including the Griffon Guard in Trillium and the City Guard of Marabiza. Solsora Swordbane is a direct, to the point, and at times, a painfully blunt personality. Her core principles are honor, truth, and bravery. Solsora, as are all Sovereign members, is currently retired from formal military service. She has since returned to the Swordbane clanhold where she resides. She is in the middle of a five-year term as head of the Sovereign Military Order of Asura.



Step Six: Choosing Gear. Your starting gear, gold, and resources are determined by whatever published 5e resource you are using to build your character. Be reasonable in your gear selection. Just as with your overall character build your GM will be the ultimate judge of whether any given piece of starting gear is reasonable. As an example, a gatling gun is not a reasonable piece of equipment, while studded leather and a short sword certainly are.



WARDENS OF THE EASTERN MARCHES PLAY

Wardens of the Eastern Marches adventures will initially be available at Gamehole Con, but will shortly thereafter be available to purchase and download online. Each *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* adventure will have a level range associated with that adventure. To play in that game, you must have a character of the appropriate level within that level range.

PLAYING ADVENTURES, LOGSHEETS, AND LEVELING UP

Each *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* adventure will have a level range associated with it. You can play any adventures you'd like as long as you meet the level requirement for that adventure.

For each *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* character, you are required to keep a log sheet to track experience, treasure, rewards and note any other important information from play of an adventure. Each adventure must be identified by listing the adventure code for that adventure on your log sheet. Log sheets will be available at the Admin Desk and are currently available as either a download or a savable file on the Gamehole Publishing site

Leveling up in this system is mostly a matter of choice for each player. You decide when you want to level your *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* character up as long as you complete an adventure and the accompanying Alliance mission. After completing both an adventure and Alliance mission, you can level up if you like. If you would rather continue playing at your current level, that is fine as well. You are not required to level up. You keep any rewards/treasure earned in the adventure and Alliance mission whether you level up or not.

To level up, the number of adventures required depends on your current level:

Levels 1–10: 1 adventure

Levels 11–15: 2 adventures

Levels 16–20: 3 adventures

You gain hit points listed as the fixed value for your class (plus any modifiers) when you level up.

Finally, once you have chosen a class, you cannot change it to another class. However, when you level up, you may choose to add a level(s) of another class assuming your character meets the base requirements for that new class. A similar prohibition exists with respect to your chosen Alliance. You may not change your character's Alliance at any time. To play for another Alliance requires creating a new character.

CHARACTER DEATH

Adventuring is dangerous and hard. That is why very few do it. Sometimes, despite good play, a character meets their end. That is unfortunate but it is an intrinsic aspect of fantasy RPGs. The Wardens program does not have an “auto resurrection” feature or any other non-base rules remedy for character death. If a character dies and the party does not have the means to bring that character back, so it goes. Our players will have to play carefully and smart. Adventuring without the risk of such consequences can result in a diminished experience for all. Again, adventuring is not for the faint of heart.

TREASURE

We will have physical **Magic Item Certificates**. But there are other tasty treasure types that your character may acquire during *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* including coins, gems, and so on. Beyond all that good stuff, your Alliance will provide specific level-based rewards, (See Table 1.1: Eastern Marches Alliance Ranks and Rewards).

When a magic item is discovered in the course of an adventure, the party determines who carries/uses the magic item for the duration of the adventure. After the adventure, any number of players who want the magic item may have it. The only limitation is that *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* characters of levels 1-3 are limited/capped at three (3) total Magic Item Certificates, including consumables, at any one time. At each subsequent level after level three, Wardens character can add another Magic Item Certificate, e.g. 4 at level 4, 5 at level 5 etc.

The prohibition against a character attuning to more than three (3) magic items at one time stands. The exception to this rule for *Wardens of the Eastern Marches* play is that magic items requiring attunement that are gained as an Alliance level-based rewards only count as one half of an attunement slot each. So, for example, a Wardens character could attune to two different discovered magic items as well as to two different Alliance rewards magic items at the same time.

Finally, coins and other treasure will be converted to their gold pieces value at the end of the adventure and divided equally between all players.

EASTERN MARCHES ALLIANCE

RANKS AND REWARDS

SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF ASURA

Level	Title	Item	Benefit
1	Cadet		Advantage on any CHA based skill checks when dealing with members of your own Alliance
2	Apprentice	Silver Epaulet of Alliance Symbol	
3	Trooper		Free meals at most pubs/inns
4	Specialist	+1 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
5	Corporal		50% discount on purchasing potions of healing (limit 2 potions purchased with this discount between adventures)
6	Sergeant	<i>Ring of Protection +1</i>	
7	Lieutenant		50% discount on blacksmith services
8	Veteran	<i>Medal of Inspiration;</i> or +2 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
9	Protector		50% discount on purchasing mounts (limit 1 mount purchased with this discount between adventures)
10	Major	<i>Alliance Ring</i>	
11	Captain		Advantage on all Athletics and Acrobatics checks
12	Marshall	<i>Weapon (simple or martial type of choice) of Retribution</i>	

THE GOLDEN CONSERVANCY

Level	Title	Item	Benefit
1	Loamer		Advantage any CHA based skill checks when dealing with members of your own Alliance
2	Grower	Carved Wooden (from deadfall) Alliance Symbol	
3	Worm		+1 to all Survival checks
4	Gardener	<i>Never Fail Compass</i> ; or +1 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
5	Greensmith		+2 to all Nature checks
6	Seedsman	<i>Cloak of Protection</i> +1	
7	Apidae		When you forage, you find enough food to support a group of six one per day
8	Greenskeeper	<i>Dragon Scale Mail</i> (Color of Choice)	
9	Marmot		You cannot be lost in any form of wilderness except by magical means
10	Preservationist	<i>Alliance Ring</i>	
11	Caretaker		Advantage on all Nature and Survival checks
12	Naturalist	<i>Weapon</i> (simple or martial type of choice) <i>of the Gloomwood</i>	

ORDER OF THE PONTIFICATE

Level	Title	Item	Benefit
1	Novice		Advantage on any CHA based skill checks when dealing with members of your own Alliance
2	Apostle	Silver Holy or Alliance Symbol	
3	Abhyasi		May take sanctuary in any non-evil religious structure or territory
4	Teacher	<i>Necklace of Augury</i> ; or +1 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
5	Ovate		50% discount on purchasing potions of healing (limit 2 potions purchased with this discount between adventures)
6	Elder	<i>Amulet of Protection from Evil and Good</i>	
7	Primate		+1 to all Medicine checks
8	Abbot	<i>Ring of Protection +2</i>	
9	Sadhu		+2 to all Insight checks
10	Deacon	<i>Alliance Ring</i>	
11	Uztaz		Advantage on all Medicine and Insight checks
12	Lama	<i>Weapon</i> (simple or martial type of choice) <i>of the Devout</i>	

THE QUILL SOCIETY

Level	Title	Item	Benefit
1	Novitiate		Advantage on any CHA based skill checks when dealing with members of your own Alliance
2	Disciple	Bottomless Inkwell and Alliance Symbol	
3	Learner		One day access pass to the Anduwyne
4	Teacher	<i>Scarf of Comprehend Languages</i>	
5	Mentee		50% discount on purchasing spell components (limit 2 components purchased with this discount between adventures)
6	Pundit	<i>Eyes of Minute Seeing; or +1 Ring of Protection</i>	
7	Scholar		+1 to all History checks
8	Sage	<i>Lantern of Revealing</i>	
9	Docent		+2 to all Arcana checks
10	Litterateur	<i>Alliance Ring</i>	
11	Pedagogue		Advantage on all History and Arcana checks
12	Savant	<i>Robe of the Savant</i>	

THE ENTERPRISE GUILD

Level	Title	Item	Benefit
1	Associate		Advantage on any CHA based skill checks when dealing with members of your own Alliance
2	Handler	Exquisite portable map of the known world and Alliance Symbol	
3	Entrepreneur		Speak two additional languages
4	Broker	<i>Bag of Holding</i> ; or +1 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
5	Merchant		Free passage on any merchant ship, caravan, or other trade mission (Enterprise Guild member only)
6	Dealer	<i>Loun Stone of Protection</i>	
7	Mediator		+1 to all Deception and Persuasion checks
8	Consigner	<i>Handy Haversack</i> ; or +2 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
9	Aggregator		+2 to all Insight checks
10	Operator	<i>Alliance Ring</i>	
11	Innovator		Advantage on all Deception, Persuasion, and Insight checks
12	Tycoon	<i>Bracelet of Persuasion</i>	

ORDER OF THE INTREPID

Level	Title	Item	Benefit
1	Doma		Advantage on any CHA based skill checks when dealing with members of your own Alliance
2	Apprentice	Order tattoo + 50 GP "travelling money"	
3	Traveler		Sanctuary within any Alliance member's property
4	Outlaw	<i>Dust of Disappearance</i> ; or +1 Simple or Martial Weapon of Choice	
5	Soldat		+1 to all Intimidation checks
6	Mercenary	<i>Bracelet of Burglary</i>	
7	Underboss		+1 to all Deception checks
8	Praetorian	<i>Boots of Elvenkind</i> ; or +2 Armor of Choice	
9	Consigliere		+2 to all Stealth checks
10	Reprobate	<i>Alliance Ring</i>	
11	Boss		Advantage on all Deception, Intimidation, and Stealth Checks
12	Don	<i>Cloak of Archnida</i>	

Notes:

On service-related benefits, those services must be generally available in the area where the services are sought.

Bonuses to checks via a "benefit" do not apply to saving throws.

On either "Simple of Martial weapon of Choice" or "Armor of Choice" the "choice" refers to the weapon or armor type, not its composition meaning you cannot choose a material that has rules or mechanics already associated with it.

Specific Item Stat Blocks:

Medal of Inspiration (requires attunement) - As a bonus action, when an ally that can perceive you rolls a d20, but before the results are announced, 1x/day provide inspiration to a party member for one roll.

Weapon of Retribution (requires attunement) - +3 weapon, reaction to make one melee attack against any creature in your reach that deals damage to you.

Never Fail Compass - 3 charges, 1d3 renewal each day, Advantage on Survival checks.

Weapon of the Gloomwood (requires attunement) - +2 weapon, *speak with plants/animals* at will.

Amulet of Protection from Evil and Good (requires attunement) - Per the spell of the same name; once per day.

Necklace of Augury - Per the spell of the same name; once per day.

Weapon of the Devout (requires attunement) - +2 weapon, extra 2d8 radiant damage to undead, once per day bonus action to cause the weapon to ignite, extra d6 damage, emitting light in a 30-foot radius, flame duration of 10 minutes.

Scarf of Comprehend Languages - 3 charges, 1d3 renewal each day.

Robe of the Savant (requires attunement) - confers an AC of 15 + your Dexterity modifier, once per day as a reaction provides advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects, and can cast *Misty Step* once per day regardless of class

Bracelet of Persuasion (requires attunement) - grants a +3 bonus to all Charisma skill checks.

Bracelet of Burglary - grants of +2 bonus to any Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks or any lockpick attempts.

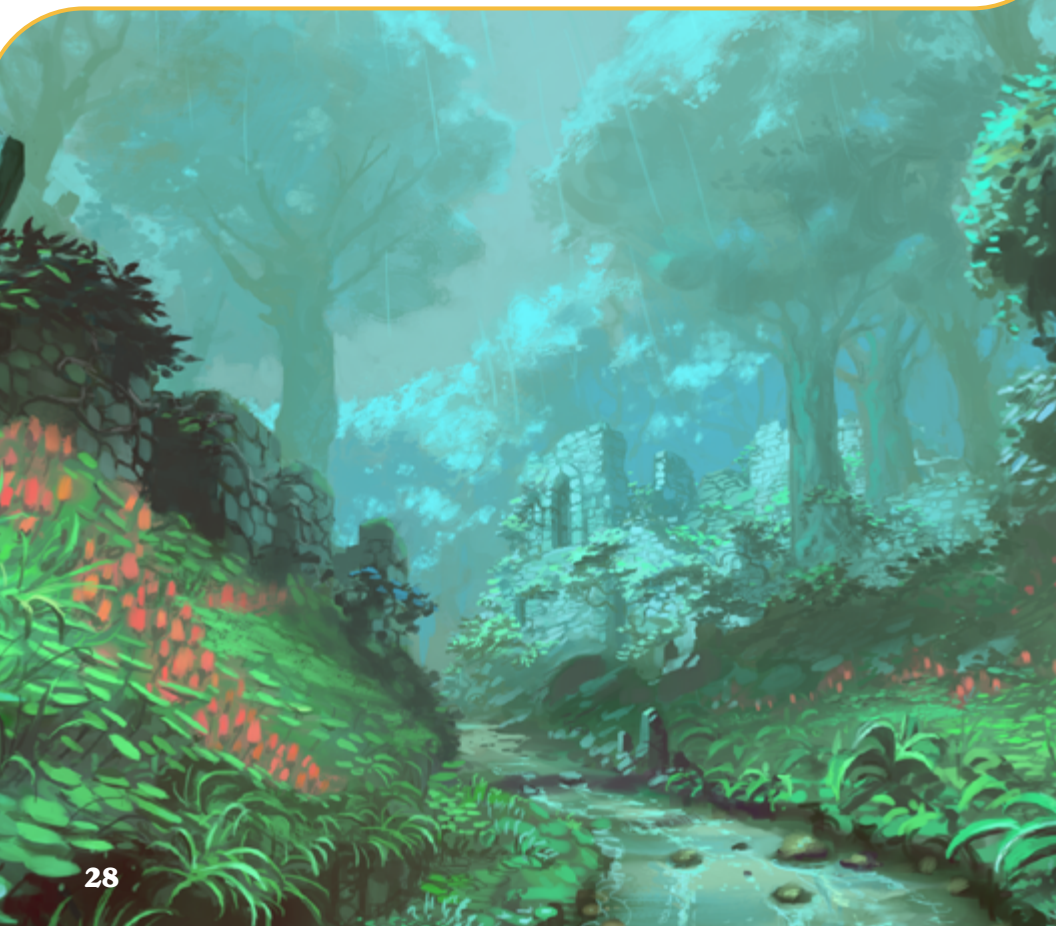
Alliance Rings (requires attunement) - These rings are adorned with the respective symbol of an Alliance and allows the bearer to cast one spell closely associated with that Alliance as indicated below. Such rings are bestowed after attaining 10th level in the chosen Alliance.

An *Alliance Ring* has 3 charges, 1d3 renewal each day. While wearing it, 1 charge to cast the associated spell (Save DC 15). The wearer can opt to spend all 3 charges at once to achieve a greater combined effect. If that greater combined effect lasts longer than 1 round, the duration in rounds is equal to the wearer's proficiency bonus. Finally, spells cast using an *Alliance Ring* do not require concentration or material components.

Alliance	Single Effect	Combined Effect
Sovereign Military Order of Asura	<i>Shatter</i>	<i>Flame Strike</i>
The Golden Conservancy	<i>Pass without Trace</i>	<i>Greater Invisibility</i>
Order of the Pontificate	<i>Aid</i>	<i>Globe of Invulnerability*</i>
The Quill Society	<i>Locate Object</i>	<i>Legend Lore</i>
The Enterprise Guild	<i>Detect Thoughts</i>	<i>Telepathic Bond</i>
Order of the Intrepid	<i>Knock</i>	<i>Fabricate</i>

*The *Globe of Invulnerability* is cast on a target of the wearer's choosing and lasts for a number of rounds equal to the wearer's proficiency bonus.

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